AMERICAN ANIMALS, AMERICAN MEN:
POPULAR LITERATURE
FROM 1830 TO 1915

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ABSTRACT

Critics of animal rights often deride the movement's proponents for having a sentimental, juvenile misconception of what animals really are, an argument bolstered by the fact that few twenty-first-century Americans besides those engaged in the industries of animal exploitation have any prolonged contact with real animals other than their pets. Until the first decades of the twentieth century, however, American cities teemed with diverse animal residents and workers, and a rapidly increasing percentage of humans grew in their conviction that these animal neighbors should be extended considerations and rights. Shifting ideas about these animals' roles within United States society were captured in a number of new bestselling literary genres centered around "realistic" depictions of animal characters. Because animals are often conceptualized as a "contrast class" to humanity—a fundamental "Other" by which humans establish what qualities make themselves distinct and (typically) superior—analyzing these texts and their circulation within nineteenth-century culture reveals how Americans understood authority and systems of governance, and in particular how they modeled an ideal American manhood nourished by animal bodies. What forms of exploitation and control were permissible in a man's treatment of his animals often reflected other power dynamics within society, and so these texts also provide insight into issues of class, race, and gender. Although the historical trajectory of popular culture depictions of realistic animals shows a general increase in compassion, egalitarianism, and the extension of rights, the successful removal of much animal exploitation from visibility has allowed that exploitation to grow in spite of the increasing popular sentiment to the contrary.

For Biz & the banhjies, with love

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION:
SEEING THE INSCRUTABLE
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Imagine a residential block in Philadelphia on a warm afternoon in April of 1785, and the leaves of a red oak are just beginning to bud. A black cynipid wasp, whose parthenogenetic life cycle scarcely requires the need for males, inserts her ovipositor into the petiole from which a new leaf is springing, and she deposits an egg (Stone et al. 633-7). In time, her larva exudes a growth chemical, the oak reacts to the parasitic invasion with a buildup of hormones, and a spherical green gall forms, looking very much like a woody fruit that the tree might naturally produce alongside its acorns (Townsend and Eliason, Boggs). In this grape-sized "oak apple," the immature wasp nourishes herself, protected from predators, and in two years she bores a hole through her nursery chamber and flies into the late summer sunshine, past the lot where this block's milch cow grazes, past a horse dropping a grassy load on the cobblestones as he hauls a cart, past a semi-feral pig rooting through fish guts on a Delaware River wharf, past a sailor negotiating the sale of a pet monkey he nabbed in Saint Martin, and away out of sight. Meanwhile, the abandoned gall dries, turns brown, and droops, whereupon it is plucked by the hand of thirty-seven-year-old Jacob Shallus, a veteran of the recent revolution and an assistant clerk to the Pennsylvania Assembly.

It is the morning of Friday, September 14, 1787, now, and the eleventh assembly of the legislature of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania is finishing the second week of its third session (Vile 705). Crossing the courtyard to the Pennsylvania State House on Chestnut Street, Shallus overhears George Mason telling his colleagues of a riotous

backwoods “gander pulling” he once had the peculiar pleasure of witnessing on the southern banks of the Ohio some thirty years ago.[1] Mason is one of the Virginia delegates to the Constitutional Convention, which has been occupying the first floor of the State House for exactly four months now. His tone is just a tinge condescending as he conjures up his recollection of one inebriated gander puller, the eldest son of a Kentucky tobacco planter—quite a prestigious figure in the region, with numerous slaves to his name—flying from his horse into the mud with the prized gander head firmly gripped in his hand. Mason’s small audience cannot stop laughing.

But Shallus does not dally. He heads upstairs, where he adds his pocketed oak gall to a half dozen others in his mortar and grinds them into the finest possible powder, which he soaks in water. Tomorrow he will strain the solution through cheesecloth, pouring it over a heaping of green vitriol he has acquired from the chemist—vitriol being the resultant form of iron ore passed through sulfuric acid. Into this concoction, Shallus will stir a quantity of French-imported, honeylike gum arabic, the dried sap of the West African acacia tree, producing several ounces of lustrous black iron gall ink (Raftery).

It is a good thing he is well prepared, for on Saturday the delegates who will one day be called the “founding fathers” finally agree upon a text that most of them are willing to sign, and they hope to do that signing on Monday, before any unforeseen complications. These 4,497 words which will establish the formation of “a more perfect union,” however, cannot simply be printed on cheap paper like the annotated working copies they have been sweating and arguing over for weeks. The stateliness of this hopefully enduring

[1] This entire scenario is mostly imagined—such details are not typically within the domain of recorded history—but for the possibility that Mason might have witnessed a gander pulling, cf. Banta 65, 334, 403.

foundational text requires fine engrossing on more permanent materials, an "immediately durable" record which "without any further treatment" will be "capable of lasting for a thousand years" (Reed 119): not a basalt stele nor two tablets of sapphire, but four sheets of supple parchment each measuring 28.75 by 23.625 inches (Molotsky). They need a dependable man with exquisite penmanship who can get the job done in forty hours, and so they pay the sizable sum of thirty dollars to Shallus, who abandons his weekend plans, hunkers down in the State House, carefully sharpens the tip of a gray thirteen-inch feather once plucked from the edge of a goose's wing (Vile 705, Raftery), dips it cleanly into his fresh gall ink, sets his quill to the parchment right beneath the first hole where it was once hooked to stretch and dry, and writes, in large, bold letters, "We the People."

The Constitution of the United States, with its oblique reference to "other Persons" divisible by fifths, contains no mention of nonhuman animals, not even in a symbolic sense, yet the 10,867.5 square inches on which all those words and signatures are inscribed had only recently been, in the words of former Acting Archivist of the United States Frank G. Burke, the skin of a "calf, goat or sheep. We don't know which" (qtd. Molotsky). Perhaps each sheet was flayed from a different young individual, whereupon it was soaked in water to remove the blood, soaked in lime to remove the hair, stretched taut along a wooden frame by leather straps, left to dry, and then scraped with a crescent knife to fully cleanse the collagen of any irregular tissues that might betray its carnal origins (Reed 32, 47-51, 119-20). In *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990), Carol J. Adams calls the carcass on the twentieth-century American dinner table "the absent referent" (40-2)—some sliced ham, vaguely quantified, selected in its cleanly wrapped plastic package from the orderly refrigerated display of the suburban supermarket, bearing only a ghostly reminder of the

hind leg of the pig whose birth from artificial insemination, life of total captivity, and death in the windowless confines of a sanitized slaughterhouse have made the meal possible. The calf(s), goat(s), and/or sheep with their unknowable identities and histories are the absent referents whose bodies allowed the language of the Constitution to be ritually encoded as monumental and everlasting. Even after twenty-seven amendments, nonhuman animals appear in the Constitution only as entities potentially subsumed under the category of "property" (Schaffner 153).

This dissertation charts the interplay between animals real and imagined, texts, founding fathers, and systems of governance. On the one hand, there is the mutable and culturally contingent "law of laws"—the theory of governance underlying who is entitled to power, what entitles them to it, what behaviors are acceptable in the enactment of that power, what permissible benefits may accrue from that entitlement, and what internal and external forces may threaten the achievement, sustenance, or enactment of that power; from this theoretical "law of laws," a society enacts literal laws hoping to accord lived experience with their worldview and philosophical ideals. On the other hand, and seemingly unrelated, are the variable images that humans perceive whenever they look at or think about nonhuman animals, as well as the representations yielded from those perceptions whenever they speak or write of them or otherwise incorporate them into the cultural imaginary. As anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss wrote in 1962, animals are not just "good(s) to eat" but also "good(s) to think [with]" (qtd. Leach 126), and I contend that charting a culture's popularly available models for perceiving and interacting with animals maps directly onto the fundamental notions the culture has about the dissemination of

power in ways which influence the lived experiences of both animals and humans within that society and beyond.

This is so because animals are foundational to a people's construction of its identity. They are the fundamental "Other" by which humanity defines its uniqueness and, often, its supremacy. They collectively form the "contrast class" to the category of "human being" (Kasperbauer 1). Archeologist Nerissa Russell notes that almost all human groups have developed a category of "animal" defined in contrast to humanity (4), even though, as philosopher Jacques Derrida explains, the comprehensibility of this singular category of "the animal" is somewhat puzzling given the vast class of seemingly disparate individuals encompassed by it, ranging from barnacles to bonobos (34). Conviction in a human/animal binary is nevertheless widespread and may even be an inescapable component of English language in its current form; as green criminologist Piers Beirne explains, even scholars dedicated to animal liberation cannot agree on a term which suitably subverts the dichotomous assumption of human superiority—the popular "nonhuman animals" and "animals other than humans," for instance, while reminding readers that humans are a part of the animal kingdom, nevertheless carry the same problematic orientation as would a reference to women as "nonmale persons" (17-8). As sociologist Eileen Crist demonstrates in *Images of Animals: Anthropomorphism and Animal Mind* (1999), this psycholinguistic division between humans and all the other animals is compounded by the top-down pressure exerted throughout the twentieth century by authorities in the scientific disciplines, who insist that it is never proper to "anthropomorphize" animals and instead enforce a "mechanomorphic" style of discourse which robs animals of subjectivity through passive voice constructions and which rigorously removes all allusion to animal thought

and emotional feeling, effectively making them more like mechanical objects than people (89-90). The prestige of science has caused derision toward "anthropomorphizing" to trickle into everyday conversations as an antidote to supposedly childish thinking, even though, as Crist writes, "anthropomorphism has no precise definition; its meaning is tied almost strictly to its aspersive connotations… used to undermine the credibility, or realist force, of accounts that in some way picture animal life and human affairs as permeable to one another" (7). Notably, as Russell observes, the charge of anthropomorphism is used only to police the "historically and culturally variable" traits which are valorized as the unique possessions of humanity (4). The charge of "anthropomorphism" is a means of protecting a uniquely human uniqueness; there is no similar guideline which polices people from, for instance, thinking of cats in doglike terms.

It is the determination of these "unique" traits which carves the boundary line between humans and animals, and the ensuant valuation of these traits often results in a hierarchical dissemination of rights and power on both sides of the line. "Animals" lack whatever distinctions the culture believes that proper "people" are supposed to possess (Russell 2)—be that a soul, abstract language, learning, rational thought, "higher" emotions, the modification and use of tools, lineage from some legendary or divine figure, or something as anatomically simple as a chinbone.[2] From whatever is believed to be the basis for this distinction, a hierarchy tends to unfold in both directions: as some animals (say, dogs) appear to approach the line, they may be afforded greater consideration, and as

[2] The evidence for human distinctiveness in most of these categories is up for debate, but humans are definitely the only known animal to possess a chinbone extending from their lower jaws. Neither chimpanzees nor ancient hominids like Neanderthals had chins (Yong). To my knowledge, however, no society explicitly constructs its notions of superiority around chinhood.

some humans likewise appear to creep closer to or even beyond the supposed line, their entitlement to rights may dwindle—hence, "dehumanization" and the tendency to belittle other people by referring to them as "animals," "rats," or "bitches" (Kasperbauer 2-3). Field ethologists and other researchers have disproven the human distinctiveness of most of these traits by recording their existence among other species (Russell 2), such as Jane Goodall's discovery of tool use and modification among chimpanzees, and posthumanist theorists like Cary Wolfe, in an effort to develop an ethic that is not anthropocentric, have conversely questioned the relevance of these binaries by posing questions about these traits' lack of universality among every individual classed as a human person.[3] Nevertheless, the evaluative framework established by such distinctions remains an ideologically firm foundation for developing arguments about worth, and perhaps even a majority of animal rights activists account for such criteria in formulating their ethics.

Philosophers since at least Karl Marx have insisted that energy exerted toward animal advocacy is squandered while human rights abuses remain rampant within the same culture, yet many have argued that both/all forms of oppression are intertwined in the same system, feeding from the same ideological core. In her landmark book *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993), ecofeminist Val Plumwood charts how Western philosophy from Plato to the present day has mapped the evaluative presumptions of the human/animal and culture/nature binaries onto others (male/female, European/non, civilized/primitive,

[3] For instance, if language and rational thought are fundamental to defining "person" status and the rights pursuant to it, then what is the status of a human who has permanently ceased to have higher order brain functionality? If she is still a person deserving the legal rights of personhood, then what is the justification for that exception? Is that justification not clearly anthropocentric, thus revealing that the entire foundation of the definition is presupposed upon guaranteeing anthropocentrism?

urban/rural, free/slave, etc.) in ways which extend and reinforce interlinked systems of exclusion, marginalization, and exploitation, and she posits an alternative model, influenced by aboriginal Australian cosmologies, which envisions a law of laws sustaining less divisive interrelations. Literary historian Marjorie Spiegel likewise argues in *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery* (1988) that ending intrahuman oppression cannot fully be achieved until the speciousness of the animal inferiority metaphors used in dehumanization are exposed. She writes, "By eliminating the oppression of animals from the fabric of our culture, we begin to undermine some of the psychological structures inherent in a society which seems to create and foster masters. With a philosophy of universal respect for others' lives, treating anyone—human or non-human—in a cruel manner begins to be unthinkable" (32). While this dissertation notes many unsettling instances in which writers championed the interests of animals while still drawing upon racist or classist arguments, I hope to reveal that the existence of underlying theories of governance which allow those beliefs to coexist does not rule out the possibility of other theories which would see both beliefs as unacceptable.

Unfortunately, what links theories of governance, perceptions of animals, notions of mastery, the creation and execution of laws, and the lived experiences of humans and animals is not always straightforward and clear. The complex interlacing of the network makes identifying and breaking such systemic chains of exploitation difficult. Or to put it another way, can't a virulent racist love his dog, and, as critics of animal rights are fond of pointing out, wasn't Hitler a vegetarian (Adams 152)? When analyzing such complex systems, even what should be the obvious thread linking the perception of animals to the treatment of them cannot be cleanly drawn, as can be demonstrated by looking at what

seem to be contradictions in the United States of the present day. Although constitutional law continues to secure the blessings of liberty only for a strictly anthropocentric conception of "ourselves and our Posterity," it is true that new anticruelty and welfare laws over the past two hundred and thirty-five years have made unthinkable certain exploitative uses of animals. In 2020, organizing a gander pulling, a sport in which a live bird is tortured to death over a protracted period of time, would yield prison sentences, psych evaluations, and a thousand outraged headlines. Hunting has also been on a steep decline, falling by over two million participants between 2011 and 2016 even as the number of Americans who engage in non-hunting wildlife watching activities has surged by over fourteen million participants (U.S. Department of the Interior 34, 53). A fluffy Pomeranian pup named Jiff has 10.7 million followers on Instagram, the pet industry in the United States generated 95.7 billion dollars of revenue in 2019 ("Pet Industry Market Size"), and the second-highest-rated television show of all time on the Internet Movie Database is the nature documentary *Planet Earth*. How much has really changed in the lives of animals, though? In 2018, Americans ate a record 235.6 pounds of meat per person ("Per Capita Consumption"), subjected 802 of the 35,221 nonhuman primates in research laboratories to "activities involving pain or distress" without providing any pain-relieving drugs ("Animal Report Animal Usage" 2, 7-8), and continued, in so many mundane ways, to contribute to a human-driven mass species die-off that is occurring at such a rapid rate that biologists have deemed it "the sixth extinction" in league with cataclysms like the asteroid that annihilated the dinosaurs 66 million years ago (Tennesen 6-7). There were thousands more nonhuman primates confined in U.S. laboratories in 2018 than there were humans living in Philadelphia when the Constitution was signed (Redner). Individual sentiments

towards animals have softened to perhaps an all-time empathetic high, yet American society continues to exploit and kill animal bodies in unprecedented numbers.

Visibility, or rather invisibility, accounts for much of this apparent contradiction; after all, if most people feel compassion whenever they see (certain) animals, then the cognitive dissonance will be too unpleasant if they are also made to witness or participate in harming those animals in order to exploit their bodies. If exploitation is to be blissfully sustained, it must be removed from sight. Eighteenth-century clerks were undoubtedly aware of the sources of their gall ink, feather quills, and collagenous vellum, and those as well as more obvious animal-dependent products like horse-drawn phaetons, ox-drawn ploughs, feathered hats, and fur stoles have been largely replaced by synthetic and machine technologies, except as indulged in by a minority of vintage-minded aesthetes. Twenty-first-century consumers are less aware, however, of the sturgeon swim bladder tissues (isinglass) that go into their Guinness; the sheep sebaceous gland grease (lanolin) that makes their lip balm smooth; the lac beetle's reproductive secretions (shellac) that coat their school desks, prescription pills, and jelly beans; or the pig cartilage (gelatin) that binds sand to sandpaper and makes marshmallows firm. As Brian Luke details in *Brutal: Manhood and the Exploitation of Animals*, the industries which profit most from animal exploitation have developed intricate strategies for concealing their methods (172-93). Some of these obfuscation strategies began in the nineteenth century, as when cities in France began moving abattoirs to the outskirts due to sanitation concerns, the increased segregation of classes, and moral panic that routine public bloodshed might awaken the appetites of a lurking criminal class (Weil 89-90). According to Luke, however, this movement toward obfuscation reached full efflorescence in the twentieth century:

mechanized and tightly controlled factory farms; euphemistic discourses that turn animals into objectified *it*s ("products" to be "harvested," "dressed," and "processed" in a "meat plant," for example, or laboratory "specimens" whose "aversive behavior" during "negative stimulation" may require them to be "dispatched"); and public relations campaigns that celebrate idyllic farmers, hunters, scientists, and slaughterhouse designers like the famous Temple Grandin as the cultural heroes who are the true, knowledgeable "animal lovers" (174-8, 187-9).

These deliberate obfuscations in turn fuel the disparagement of public sentiment on behalf of animals as something that is ignorant and irrational, even infantile. What typical exposure does a twenty-first-century American have to animals, beyond the cats in funny neckties they watch on YouTube, the ants they spray with Raid in their kitchens, the singing computer-generated lions they watch in theaters, the silly squirrels they might notice during lunch in the park, and the "black panthers," "bat men," and "spider men" they dress up as for Halloween? The farmers, hunters, slaughterhouse workers, and laboratory scientists are indeed the experts who actually know and interact with real animals, and even though their sympathies are counteracted by myriad incentives, rationalizations, and systemic indoctrinations, their jobs depend upon a knowledgeable empathetic engagement with the exploited animals. As Luke explains, workers engaged in animal exploitation industries "often cannot practically afford the luxury of a complete denial of animal subjectivity… due to the fact that the process of exploiting animals usually requires anticipating their actions, and this anticipation is nearly impossible without acknowledging the animal's mental states" (187). Who are we to judge, eating our quarter pounders, who cover our noses while driving in our leather-interior cars past the deer carcass on the shoulder of the

highway, and whose knowledge of animals extends only to our neutered pug and a Disney documentary about a penguin family? Are we not childish in our fairy tale assumptions? Shouldn't we just get real and leave the dirty work of progress to those who know what they're doing?

Studying the nineteenth century provides an insightful counterpoint to this argument. The most radical shift in sentiment toward animals in the United States occurred in the final thirty-five years of the nineteenth century, an "eruptive, revolutionary establishment of rights" accompanied by substantive legal and systemic changes (Pearson, S. 6). (England was the vanguard for many such changes, typically preceding American developments by a decade or two.) During this period, even despite increased industrialization and urbanization, animals both wild and domesticated were still a very visible, integrated sector of the population. A writer in 1889 estimated that there were about a fifth as many horses as there were people in the United States and that two million of them lived in cities (Grier 245, 247). In 1900, a quarter of all animal enclosures were located within towns and cities of more than 2,500 residents, and about 9% of the labor force worked directly with these animals or the products derived from their bodies (Grier 252-3). In New York City in the 1850s and '60s, pigs roamed the streets and there was roughly one milk cow to be shared by every five neighbors, and in Wilmington, Delaware, in the 1880s and '90s, most families owned hens and roosters, as they did in Baltimore in the 1910s (Grier 253-7). *Keeping One Cow*, a guidebook published in a revised edition in 1906, informed readers that a "family cow is a usual, if not indispensable part of the domestic outfit of the village or suburban dweller" (qtd Grier 257). Urban Americans witnessed and participated in the lives of a wide variety of animals in the late nineteenth

century, and their growing conviction that these animals commanded rights and respectful consideration was thus well-informed and presumably rational.

One might assume that these useful animals nineteenth-century Americans saw in their daily lives were simply objects on the periphery, noticed as living bodies only to the extent that seeing them was necessary to controlling them, like the animals grinding within the machinery of *The Flintstones*, grumbling when out of their masters' earshot. Quite the contrary, Americans were fascinated by what they saw and sought to indulge their imaginations by incorporating real animals (or realistic representations of them) into new forms of popular entertainment. In addition to the new enthusiasm over circuses, zoos, natural history museums, and dog and cat fancy shows, United States culture in the nineteenth century produced numerous new popular genres of writing centered on depictions of realistic animals, including the comedic horse racing, dog fighting, fox chasing, and gander pulling stories that comprised a major subset of Southwestern Humor; big game hunting adventure narratives both fictional and factual; popular natural history textbooks; petkeeping manuals; literary nature essays suffused with reflections on birds and bears; novels with wild animals as their protagonists; the "literary naturalism" associated with such classics as Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* and Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*; and "autobiographies" written in the voices of dogs, horses, and other domesticated animals. Unlike the fantastical, allegorical, emblematic, or simply marginal animal characters who have perhaps always been a part of storytelling traditions, the animal figures who defined these new genres seemed to exist on their own terms, possessing realistic animal bodies and performing behaviors appropriate to their species. Historical analysis easily adduces some of the general reasons for this development, and this

Introduction will explore those contexts. Revolutionary scientific insights were especially important in opening new perspectives on animals, and these infused the literature of the era. Americans were already accustomed to seeing animals regularly, but now science, literature, and politics taught them to see these animals differently, evoking a fascination free from the usual fantastical invention. Imaginary talking animals still existed in the culture, such as the Brer Rabbit folklore popularized by Joel Chandler Harris beginning in 1880, but they took a backseat to more mimetic portrayals in a way that has not persisted into the pop culture trends of the twenty-first century. I argue that the sudden qualitative expansion of animal visibility rendered the exploitation of living animals less palatable to public tastes, so that justifications of exploitation required increasingly dire and metaphysical rhetoric; for exploitation to be permanently sustained in light of these new perceptions, it had to be removed from visibility and thus less accessible to popular imagination. Twenty-first-century Americans who share their homes with cats and dogs are quite open to ascribing "humanlike" intelligence and interiority to those animals of cherished, protected status they observe on a regular basis, assuming that those "other animals" on their plates, in their shoes, or beneath their car tires must lack the meaningful distinctions that would protect one from exploitation. When nineteenth-century Americans had greater opportunities for observing cows, canaries, and foxes, however, they increasingly concluded that those animals, too, possessed "something more," something "humanlike."

Real animals other than pets have largely disappeared from our lives and from our imaginations, and this lack of tangible visibility bodes poorly if we are to break the patterns of behavior that contribute to animal exploitation and the destruction of global biodiversity.

Petkeeping manuals are still relevant today, and nature documentaries and nature writing continue to attract an ardent minority of fans, but the only genre that still maintains a comparable level of bestselling status is the "dog autobiography," as evidenced by W. Bruce Cameron's 2010 *A Dog's Purpose*, which remained on the *New York Times* bestseller list for forty-nine weeks (D'Allesandro). Fundraisers for wildlife protection agencies have long known that individualized portraits of "charismatic megafauna" like pandas and elephants elicit far more action than other, more impersonal forms of appeal (Daston and Mitman 9-10). If representations of realistic animals are to play any role in establishing a less exploitative law of laws, it is useful to understand how such genres emerged from their historical circumstances in the past, what contributed to their rise and fall in popularity, how they presented and justified the acceptable and ideal relationships between humans and animals, and how they influenced the experiences of real animals and people. These works do not only provide insight into how the perception of nonhuman animals has changed over time, nor guidance on how the successes, failures, and blind spots of past advocacy might inform future activism. Rather, what is often at stake in these works is the construction of a theory of American governance itself, and in particular the modeling of an American manhood nourished by animal bodies. This nourishment has often been predatorial, charting the path to power as a rapacious ascent to the apex of the food pyramid, but it is "lonely at the top," and precarious. In other models, the nourishment is sensuous, an interdependent nursing on each other's shared worlds, a commensality (*com*, "with, together" + *mensa*, "table") in which subjectivities bring their bounties and feed at the same table.

The new animal genres of the nineteenth did not all serve the same purpose, nor did they produce the same affects, yet their overall trajectory reflects a growing population within American culture that was increasingly receptive to individuating and empathizing with real animals, making their exploitation less thoughtlessly acceptable and transforming those sentiments into a tangible extension of legal rights and protections. The genres I analyze follow a chronological trajectory of apparent progress in which the distance between animals and humans narrows and the line dividing them blurs. Animals begin as fundamental others for our personal enjoyment, morph into threats to our survival that must be vanquished and then exploited as resources for physical sustenance, grow in formidability as foes who vitalize our spirit in combat, become underdogs in that combat when our numbers and technology outmatch them, move into our cities and homes as workers and dependents, and finally rise as valuable members of the family and society. Concomitant with these shifts is an expanding vision of the United States as a potentially more egalitarian place for all marginalized groups, though even for the most idealistic of these writers, the fruition of this progress remains a distant prospect.

In addition to charting the cultural streams that formed the headwaters of these new animal literary genres, this Introduction provides a crash course in multifarious ways of perceiving nonhuman animals by looking at the nineteenth century's most famous one, the titular character of Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale* (1851), who within the book is considered from perhaps the whole spectrum of available (and novel) perspectives for envisioning animals. Is he visual proof of the awesome plenitude of God's creation, an emblem of some virtuous or evil tendency, a mythical antagonist in Ahab's epic quest, an allegory of white supremacy, a raw resource to be exploited for oil, a noble foe in man's

ongoing pursuit of dominion, a data point in the empiricists' endeavor to tabulate the entirety of the universe, an innocent creature trying to survive man's predations, or a unique individual, no better or worse than any man, simply trying to exist in a chaotic world? I argue that by satirizing authorities and critiquing power, Melville ultimately settles on the final stance, presenting the whale as a not fully knowable other, nonetheless deserving respectful affinity—a stance Melville likewise adopts towards all *humans* in the book. Like the book itself, this perspective, although based on precedents from previous centuries and informed by contemporaneous attitudes, would not become significantly popular in the United States until later in the twentieth century. The ensuing chapters chart some of the shifts that allowed that perspective to become more tenable.

Chapter 2, "The Gander Pulling is 'Really Real' Only to the Gander: A Good Old-Fashioned American Blood Sport," analyzes a game widely practiced in the United States until the early years of the twentieth century, as well as the minor genre of comedic stories dramatizing that game, the most famous of which was Augustus Baldwin Longstreet's "The Gander Pulling" from his 1835 short story collection *Georgia Scenes*. In gander pulling, a live male goose (always male) was suspended from a branch or pole while men on galloping horseback (always men) competed to sever his head. While the tendency to personify the goose and acknowledge his suffering argues against the possibility that these men simply viewed animals as unfeeling objects, they nevertheless viewed the birds as entities for whom no human sympathies need be afforded. This sport was carried from Europe, where as "goose riding" it was a medieval folk custom looked down upon by the middle and upper classes. With its raucous likelihood of the cavaliers being flung into the mud, it may have originally been a farce of aristocratic chivalry. In the United States,

however, it took on a distinctively masculine valence, and elite young men in the American South adopted it as a genuine contest of manliness, much to the chagrin of more patrician Southerners and to the contempt and ridicule of northerners and the English. I argue that gander pulling democratically leveled all distinctions of family, property, education, and profession (but, crucially, not race, gender, or species) so as to reduce the meaning of manly power to a violently sexual physical prowess. Whiggish moralists in the early nineteenth century nearly rendered the practice obsolete with their assertion that self-restrained anticruelty was a prerequisite to an enlightened republic, yet the sport remained in practice in the slaveholding Jacksonian South and Southwest as a brazen public confirmation of the white man's prerogative to enjoy his violent, sexualized dominion over animals, women, and nonwhites.

Chapter 3, "The Mighty Hunter-Naturalist; or, On the Trail of *Homo americanus*," looks at the big game hunting adventure novels of Captain Mayne Reid, one of the most widely read children's authors from the 1850s until the end of the century. Reid was a radical republican from Northern Ireland, and he railed against the suffocating institutions of European empire. In novels like *The Boy Hunters; or, Adventures in Search of a White Buffalo* (1852), he deliberately models a self-reliant American manhood for his "boy readers" as a way of ameliorating the tyrannizing influences of high civilization with the primal independence of nature. His is an autodidactic and democratic way of life, critical of the increasingly elitist professionalization of mid-century scientific "learnedness" yet eager to claim whatever he can of the preeminence associated with being a scientific authority. His model, which he terms the "Hunter-Naturalist," instructs men to shape their knowledge, skills, and will toward exploiting animals as raw resources for their own

physical sustenance, though the adventurous qualities of his plots paint this task as heroic and exhilarating rather than simply pragmatic, as was customary in prior American depictions of hunting. Rather than a conviction in man's stable dominion over animals, Reid envisions men engaged in a constant "chain of destruction" with animals and other men, and there is no guarantee as to who will triumph as the "last link" in this chain. Man is thus not simply *entitled* to his violent conquest over the animal world; rather, such conquest is *necessary* if he is to survive. In Reid's proto-evolutionary viewpoint, a man's (continued) survival proves his fitness, the ends justifying the means, yet he also must remove himself from the dusty libraries and ivory towers and expose himself to this proving ground in order to substantiate his authority. Although Reid espoused sincere egalitarian, anti-elitist, and abolitionist beliefs, his indebtedness to "scientific" sources that were saturated in racist and imperialist presumptions led him to posit a worldview in which the survival of the American way depended not only upon the exploitation of the environment but also the extirpation of other human "species," such as the indigenous population of California. His bestselling blends of thrilling genre conventions, racialized evolutionary pseudoscience, and anxious attestations of true manliness anticipated an American imperialist worldview that would not become mainstream until his boy readers came of age.

Chapter 4, "'A Volume of a Hopelessly Unscientific Kind': The Hunter-Naturalist Confronts the Artist-Naturalist," follows Reid's most influential "boy reader," Theodore Roosevelt, a writer and editor of factual big game hunting narratives who referred to himself using Reid's "Hunter-Naturalist" label—a variety of natural history avocation that by the late nineteenth century was considered at odds with the increased institutionalization

of science. Roosevelt raised the stakes of the battle depicted by his childhood idol, portraying the "chain of destruction" not just as a physical contest but a psychical and spiritual one. Even though the frontier was "closed" by the final decade of the nineteenth century, and even though most powerful men in the United States no longer needed to engage in sustenance hunting, in Roosevelt's Reid-inflected philosophy, the primordial engagement between man and beastly foe remained vital to feeding one's virile spirit. This was necessary only for white, urban men (like Roosevelt) whose white collar jobs did not entail much physical exertion; for them, the rampant changes of modern civilization had an enervating effect which threatened genteel white society with "race suicide." When overseas empire proved a too costly means of expanding the American frontier, the conservation of wilderness spaces to be used as sporting grounds became a means of perpetuating elites' access to regenerative frontier spaces.

In the "nature fakers controversy" of 1903–1908, President Roosevelt publicly railed against a small, diverse group of bestselling authors who made sympathetic wild animals their protagonists. I have termed these authors "Artist-Naturalists" using the self-appellation of Ernest Thompson Seton, whose *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1898) originated the genre and became its most beloved production. These writers likewise envisioned wild animals in competition with humans, yet they sided with the animals, seeing them as innocent underdogs struggling against the violence of men who were unnaturally cruel in their rapacious destruction. For the Artist-Naturalists like Seton and Rev. William J. Long, as well as their defenders, the *observation* of animals was the only elixir necessary to counteract the degrading influences of modern civilization; individuals in the animal kingdom, if only they were listened to, provided lessons in survival and

civility that could prevent modern society from wandering astray, and it was hunters like Roosevelt who were in fact guilty of polluting the last refuge from the turbulent cities by gleefully killing its denizens in the name of manly progress.

Chapter 5, "The 'Firm, Kind Hand' of Paternalism in Humane Movement Literature," shifts the focus to animals in the domestic sphere, whom early animal welfare advocates portrayed as devout servants eager to convert their masters' kindness into worship and profits. I chart the origins of the American animal welfare movement immediately following the Civil War, and I analyze some of the "animal autobiographies" which were published in the 1890s to raise awareness for these organizations, most especially Margaret Marshall Saunders's massive bestseller *Beautiful Joe* (1894). Preoccupied with distancing their movement from accusations of "womanly" sentimentality, these works, albeit written mostly by women, draw heavily upon supposed male virtues, incentives, and arguments, including paternalism, utilitarian efficiency, and law and order. Although these works are presented as animal voices, and although they undoubtedly moved popular discourse in the direction of greater concern for animal lives, their rhetoric nevertheless ventriloquizes a human superiority that endorses the rightness of subjugation, including along classist and anti-immigrant lines.

In Chapter 6, "'The Only Animal Who Enslaves': Envisioning Manliness without Godliness," I continue to look at works that were created for the animal welfare movement, but I move forward into the first two decades of the twentieth century, when pets and show animals engaged in spectacles like circuses and bullfights were becoming the only visible animals. In these works, including "A Dog's Tale" (1903) and *A Horse's Tale* (1906) by Mark Twain and *Jerry of the Islands* and *Michael, Brother of Jerry* (both 1917) by Jack

London, knowledge of evolution renders the animal characters literal kin and valuable members of human society, and the distinction between humans and animals, if not completely blurred, is at least freed from traditional assumptions of human superiority. In suggesting human–animal affinities and in critiquing authority, these works illuminate how animal exploitation is merely one cog in a system of interlocking oppressions. They envision a future of respectful interdependence across all boundaries, even if that future seems quite distant.

Finally, my Conclusion, "The Lonely Species," asks what becomes of our lives and our imaginations when the animals start to disappear. Like Melville's Ishmael before her and Ernest Thompson Seton after, Sarah Orne Jewett in "A White Heron" (1886) was not certain there was any realistic happy alternative to the manly march of progress and its objectification of animal specimens. Edgar Rice Burroughs has roused imaginations for more than a century with *Tarzan of the Apes* (1912) and its many sequels and derivatives, but although he imagined a mythical man as being the exemplary animal because of his ability to ape and master the talents and bodies of other species, his fantastical tale of African tigers and anthropoidal apes had very little that an American boy of the twentieth century could truly emulate. Meanwhile, a less popular novel in its time, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915) perhaps more accurately resembles the future of human–animal relationships from the twentieth century to the present day: a conscious sympathy for animals and concern about their suffering accompanied by a scientific pursuit of progress so thoroughly anthropocentric that one hardly notices all the animals have in fact disappeared.

Coming Into View: 1750-1900

Historical developments of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries make it easy to understand why depictions of "realistic" animals suddenly took on a central role in popular literature, especially in the United States. These developments can generally be explained by the cultural cachet that the study of "natural history" took on in the western world in the century preceding this period and how that study redefined the boundaries of what constituted knowledge and truthful observation. In the United States, this study took on especial relevance, not only because contact with vast numbers of wild animals—including wild animals of previously unknown species—was an awe-inspiring novelty in contrast to the more tamed environs of Europe, but also because mapping and evaluating these new natural resources was an essential first step in converting the frontier into a space that would thrive in the capacities in which Europe was seen to be deteriorating. Furthermore, the structure and promise of American democracy in the early decades of the new republic made scientific education a personalized group effort, and popular writing was the medium by which this group effort was sustained. Finally, animal bodies were central to proving the major ideological paradigm shifts of the era—namely, the discoveries of extinction and evolution—and thus their lives took on new resonance as a key to understanding the universe.

Of course, the cave paintings at Lascaux are proof that people have always been fascinated enough by animals to incorporate them into their art, and undoubtedly the necessities of animal husbandry as well as the knowledge necessary to survive animal predations have meant that people for thousands of years have also possessed fairly accurate knowledge about the behaviors of actual animals, yet popular stories in western

traditions tended not to fuse the two. To be sure, there are plenty of examples of what we would consider "realistic" animals in the Western literary tradition prior to the eighteenth century, from the honeybees of Virgil's *Georgics*, to Michel de Montaigne's musings on a cat (*"When I am playing with my cat, how do I know that she is not playing with me?*"), to John Donne's flea. Yet for every noteworthy mimetic animal in the early canon, there is a host of fabulous, fantastical, chimerical, mythological, and blatantly emblematic animals that spring to mind: Aesop's mouse and lion, Reynard the fox and Chanticleer, St. George's dragon, the Big Bad Wolf, the ermine which the Renaissance bestiary tells us would rather die than see her virginal white coat sullied, and so on. Only in the late eighteenth century, around the time Robert Burns apologized to a field mouse in verse, did an ostensible realism become widespread in Western depictions of animals.

What is meant by "realism," however, must first be briefly interrogated. In *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (1966), philosopher Michel Foucault cautions against anachronistically superimposing our present-day epistemological division between "realistic" biological facts and "fabulous" animal-themed legends onto eras when such distinctions were differently constructed, noting that for the sixteenth-century Italian naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi, it was "useless and impossible to choose between the profession of naturalist and that of compiler" because "realistic" knowledge in that episteme encompassed "all that has been *seen* and *heard*, all that has been *recounted*, either by nature or by men, by the language of the world, by tradition, or by the poets" (39-40). For Aldrovandi and other naturalists prior to the eighteenth century, establishing and circulating comprehensive knowledge of an animal required gathering what would only later seem "an inexplicable mixture of exact

descriptions, reported quotations, fables without commentary, remarks dealing indifferently with an animal's anatomy, its use in heraldry, its habitat, its mythological values, [and] the uses to which it could be put in medicine or magic" (39). All recorded representations were truthful and useful in some dimension, not simply the information that accorded with broadly verifiable, empirical facts (Barrow 4). Thus, when I note that what we would consider "realistic" portrayals of animal characters did not take on prominence until the late eighteenth century, this is in part only to say that the criteria by which we determine scientific realism is of the same episteme initiated around that time. It is important to note that a debate like the "nature fakers controversy" of the early twentieth century cannot arise unless people in the culture are primed to believe that observable externalities can indeed be translated into language in a purely objective manner superior to more biased perceptions. As art historian and animal studies scholar Steve Baker reasons in *Picturing the Beast: Animals, Identity, and Representation* (2001), however, "any understanding of the animal is inseparable from knowledge of its cultural representation" (25). Animal characters in the genres this dissertation charts do not whisper lies to little girls, do not walk upright in fancy boots, and do not hold councils in which each species is a clear reflection of some party in a human political debate, yet insofar as they might comport with real animal lives, their representations are nevertheless bound to the authors' subjectivity within a cultural context.

The narrowing of what it means to provide a factual depiction of an animal can be traced to two figures who reformulated the objectives of natural history in the 1730s and '40s. Prior to the emergence of these two men, "natural history" was an informal avocation principally practiced by elite gentlemen and royals, who maintained curio cabinets,

pleasure gardens, and menageries in part as a means of exhibiting their worldly reach. Such collections were "a necessary accouterment" to one's display of wealth, though until the mid-eighteenth century, any potential scientific value for these specimens was recognized only by a tiny number of natural historians (Farber 22, 29, Mayr 180). Indeed, although the curious diversity of the specimens collected within a cabinet represented access to excess wealth, it was the "paradoxical quality" of "valuelessness" which made something worthy of inclusion in the cabinet, since it would "have no function but to be looked at" (Benedict 3). Two collections of particular importance were the Amsterdam garden, hothouses, and private zoo of George Clifford III, the director of the Dutch East India Company, and the Royal Garden and Cabinet du Roi of Louis XV in Paris (Farber 8, 13). Like many such extravagant repositories of the era, Clifford's collection, which included tigers and rare birds from Africa, Asia, and the Americas, demonstrated not only that he had access to markets around the globe but also that he had the means to maintain these exotic beings in his cosmopolitan Northern European estate. In 1735 and 1739 respectively, the Swedish physician Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778) was hired as Clifford's family doctor (and thus the superintendent of his medicinal garden), and the French mathematician Georges Louis Leclerc de Buffon (1707–1788) was appointed the director of the Royal Garden, tasked with compiling a catalog of the Cabinet du Roi which could broadcast the French monarchy's extensive exotic possessions. From his botanical observations of Clifford's collection, Linnaeus would write the twelve-page *Systema naturae* (1735), outlining the binomial nomenclature classification still used by biologists today and popularizing the notion that a taxonomic organization of nature's productions could reveal higher truths about divine order. Meanwhile, Buffon's responsibility to catalog the items in the Royal

Garden would blossom into the ambitious goal of vividly describing in factual terms every known mineral, plant, and animal in the world, which would result in the thirty-five volumes of the *Histoire naturelle* published from 1749 until his death in 1788, an encyclopedia "[t]hat was the second most frequently owned item in private libraries in France at that time" (Farber 2) and that was "read in French or in one of the numerous translations by every educated person in Europe" (Mayr 330). Buffon's skepticism that nature's diverse individuals could be categorized into a taxonomic system made him diametrically opposed to Linnaeus, yet historians of science agree that the combined influence of both these men initiated the life sciences as we know them today.

Both Linnaeus and Buffon insisted that their work was far more than meticulous data gathering and that discoveries yielded from their new scientific methods would produce values surpassing the utilitarian. Linnaeus, who boasted in writing of the special favor given to him by God, argued that his classification system, despite being an admittedly "artificial" lens through which to view nature, would nevertheless unlock the secrets of Creation, revealing the perfect orderliness and harmony of God's plan (Farber 9-11). In a more deist worldview reflective of the French Enlightenment, Buffon argued that a total understanding of nature's forms would not so much reveal God's "perfect" design as rather demonstrate the *plenitude* of the universe—the balanced coexistence of *all* that was possible, both beautiful *and* monstrous (Farber 17-9). In line with the growing empiricism of the era, and in contrast to practices of past centuries which substantiated truth-claims via reference to written authorities, both Linnaeus's and Buffon's methods invested the faculty of "*sight* with an almost exclusive privilege, being the sense by which we perceive extent and establish proof" (Foucault 133, emphasis mine). For Linnaeus, the

means of understanding God began with counting, measuring, describing, and ordering species. For Buffon, the secrets of the universe were available to those who abandoned hearsay, lore, and fables and instead looked at nature's produce with unvarnished sight. For the nineteenth-century natural historians who considered them the founding fathers of their discipline, the study of nature was thus of paramount importance, perhaps the very heart of progress and enlightenment. By the beginning of the nineteenth century and for decades thereafter, most natural historians likewise subscribed to "natural theology"—the idea that studying and discovering plants and animals was as important to spiritual knowledge as reading scripture (Baym 12, Farber 16, 56). To see animals in all their specific varieties was to see the intricate wonders of Creation.

Natural history began as a luxury display for elites, became a source of intellectual and spiritual rewards, and by the early nineteenth century was recognized as a direct avenue to national and imperial wealth. Historian of science Paul Lawrence Farber writes, "Domination of markets, natives, and nature all went hand in hand. The greater presence of Europeans worldwide and the potential commercial value of many natural products stimulated systematic collecting on a hitherto unimaginable scale" (24). Farber notes that a naval explorer like Captain James Cook, whose main directives were imperial, geographical, and astronomical, was nevertheless also commanded by the British monarchy to provide a record of all plants, animals, and minerals that might possess commercial value (27). Although early naval expeditions often included a specialized naturalist on board, like Charles Darwin on the famous voyage of the *HMS Beagle* from 1831 to 1836, the time and expense of accommodating these curious, theoretical-minded scientists and their specimen collections led government-funded voyages to increasingly

assign the tasks of natural history documentation to officers on board, who could also perform other military responsibilities and who would not ask the crew to expend time and energy on less utilitarian research queries; as a result, Farber argues, these "later voyages served more commercial and political ends" (72).

As a pathway to monetary, medicinal, and technological incentives, in addition to being a method for establishing spiritual and intellectual enlightenment, the pursuit of natural history would have held especial charge for a new nation in a "new" continent trying to carve a superior, self-sufficient civilization from a "hideous and desolate wilderness." Mark V. Barrow, Jr., succinctly summarizes the promise of natural history study at the dawn of the nineteenth century: "An aesthetic interest in nature, a conviction that the natural world offered a window onto the mind of God, a belief in the didactic value of nature study, and a desire to exploit the commercial potential of natural resources undergirded the continued expansion of popular interest in natural history" (3). In the *tabula rasa* of the United States, Nina Baym writes, this new field offered a core identity that would ensure national progress: "Nationalists who imagined the United States as an especially modern, especially progressive, especially entrepreneurial nation made the fruits of scientific knowledge central to American values" (2). That the Americas had far more animals to observe than Europe gave the new nation an advantage in this field.

Exposure to species previously unknown to Europeans—and, at times, prodigious numbers of them—was a circumstance that encouraged many Americans to take an interest in observing animals. Passenger pigeons, who may have been the most numerous bird species on the planet in 1800, comprising as much as forty percent of the North American bird population (Fuller 9), were especially noted for the tremendous stupefaction they

induced in European Americans seeing their flocks for the first time. As a man of diverse intellectual interests, the Puritan minister Cotton Mather wrote two letters in 1714 and 1716 about the passenger pigeon to the Royal Society in London for Improving Natural Knowledge, combining, as Aldrovandi might have done, precise observation of their nesting and feeding habits with numerous scriptural details said to be confirmed by the bird's existence. For Mather, observing this unique American bird was proof of God's benevolent watch over the American experiment, for "*it is impossible duely to consider*" the ingenious manner in which they incubate their eggs "*without being rapt into admiration of y^e^ Divine Architect*," and the abundance of meat readily offered by them certified that "o^r^ people, enjoy as much of a Divine Mercy in such a Supply for o^r^ Table in y^e^ Wilderness, as if y^e^ Bird *Racham,* which y^e^ *Talmud* tell of, were making his Appearance…. The Talmudists have a Saying, That when this Bird appears, the Mercy of God and His Messiah is then coming to the World" (qtd. Schorger 474-6, emphasis original). A century later, the ornithologist John James Audubon skipped the scriptural references and simply reported on his own experience during a trip to Kentucky in the autumn of 1813: "[t]he air… literally filled with Pigeons; the light of noon-day was obscured as by an eclipse," "the flapping of their wing [*sic*] a noise like the roar of distant thunder" produced an "uproar [that] continued the whole night," like "a hard gale at sea," "the branches of many of the largest and tallest [trees]… given way" under the weight of their perching, "as if the forest had been swept by a tornado," and beneath it all a layer of dung "several inches deep" (554-5). The massive herds of bison offered another sublime sight unknown to Europeans, with Meriwether Lewis recording a "moving multitude, which darkened the whole plains… [of which] twenty thousand would be no exaggerated number" in the Dakotas in 1806, and

John Kirk Townsend writing of the Columbia River in the 1830s that "[t]he whole plain, as far as the eye could discern, was covered by one enormous mass of buffalo" (qtd. Barrow 93). Even massive fossil bones discovered in marl pits in the late eighteenth century suggested wondrous creatures lurking somewhere in the untamed wilds of America. Compared to the long-established agriculture, enclosure laws, poaching fines, deforested plains, and overcrowded cities of England and Europe, the animals on display in America evoked a new fascination and new possibilities.

Celebrating the magnificence of American fauna became a patriotic endeavor, as well, given that Buffon in 1766 had written that the soil and atmosphere of North America was such that greatness of any kind could not be sustained—not in wild animals, not in domesticated livestock or crops, not in a healthy and intelligent population, nor, presumably, in the development of a strong, independent nation. Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785) devotes a lengthy chapter with extensive measurement tables to debunking Buffon's claim. In his argument for American abundance, Jefferson spotlights the mammoth (mastodon), which he believed to still be living in some secluded habitat of the uncharted Pacific Northwest, calling it:

> the largest of all terrestrial beings. It should have sufficed to have rescued the earth [i.e. the land] it inhabited, and the atmosphere it breathed, from the imputation of impotence in the conception and nourishment of animal life on a large scale: to have stifled, in its birth, the opinion of a writer [Buffon], the most learned too of all others in the science of animal history, that… nature is less active, less energetic on one side of the globe than she is on the other. (45)

J. Hector St. John de Crèvecœur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) likewise challenges Buffon's popular hypothesis, characterizing *Europe* as the degenerated place riddled with the "ruins of temples" and constant reminders of "revolutions, desolations,

and plagues" (14-5). In a dialogue with his minister, the fictional yeoman persona who is the purported writer of Crèvecœur's epistolary book is encouraged to imagine himself as a viable production of the fertile American soil, soon to flourish where others in Europe would fail:

> You will appear to [your English penpal] something like one of our wild American plants, irregularly luxuriant in its various branches… Do let Mr. F. B. see on paper a few American wild cherry trees, such as nature forms them here, in all her unconfined vigour, in all the amplitude of their extended limbs and spreading ramifications—let him see that we are possessed with strong vegetative embryos. (19)

In a passage representative of much of the book's patriotic natural history, Crèvecœur later rhapsodizes on "the great number of hummingbirds with which our country abounds… profusely lavished" with the "most splendid colours; the most perfect azure, the most beautiful gold, the most dazzling red…. The richest pallet of the most luxuriant painter could never invent any thing to be compared to the variegated tints with which this insect bird is arrayed…. [I]t is a miniature-work of our great Parent; who seems to have formed it the smallest, and, at the same time, the most beautiful, of the winged species" (170-1). Such imagery suffuses Crèvecœur's letters, painting the new nation as a potential paradise where sensible family men can do honest work on the fruitful farms they alone own, and where the bounties of a fresh, unstifled environment provide constant invigoration to physical, mental, and spiritual health. Both his book and Jefferson's assume that natural history will authenticate the new nation's enduring greatness.

It was especially important that natural history achieve popular appeal in the United States, given that the country did not have the same system of royal and aristocratic patronage which funded most scientific research in Europe. Although the U.S. government

financed some natural history expeditions from early on—President Jefferson's commission of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1803–1806) was partially motivated by his hope that the explorers would find where animals "deemed to be rare or extinct," like the mastodon, were hiding out (qtd. Barrow 19)—much responsibility fell on popular literature to spread awareness of and financial support for the sciences, as Nina Baym documents in *American Women of Letters and the Nineteenth-Century Sciences* (2001). Baym details, for instance, the publicizing role played by Sarah Hale, the editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*, who regularly included scientific material in what was the most widely circulated women's magazine of the 1860s (36). These science "affiliates," as Baym terms these popular writers, many of whom were women, "by bringing science to the people, made a market for the scientist and his product. Without that market, science could not survive the rigors of democratic competition. If women needed science to launch them into the modern world, science needed women equally to help them maintain the position it was seeking to occupy in the nation's intellectual and material life" (14). A popular scientific tome like Louis Agassiz's *Methods of Study in Natural History* (1863), which was entirely ghostwritten by his wife, Elizabeth Cary Agassiz, channeled sales profits into research (and the financial freedom to do research) (Baym 93). Moreover, the popularization of scientific study encouraged greater numbers of Americans to imagine themselves as practitioners of science, so that by the second half of the nineteenth century, an esoteric field that had once attracted only a small number of hobbyists was now an array of specialized disciplines taught in universities (Farber 29). One should not underestimate the influence exerted by writers like Samuel Griswold Goodrich (1793–1860), whose natural history lessons published under the name "Peter Parley" were the most widely read children's literature of

the 1830s and ‘40s, or Captain Mayne Reid (1818–1883), who took over Goodrich’s mantle in the 1850s and ‘60s and, at the very least, inspired a young Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919) to study biology at Harvard. In his autobiography from 1857, Goodrich explicitly clarifies that his goal was to provide child readers not with the typical false “tales of horror, commonly put into the hands of youth, as if for the express purpose of reconciling them to vice and crime”—his examples of which include “Little Red Riding Hood” and “Puss in Boots”—but with truthful (and thus moral) information about animals as they really are (166). Reid similarly emphasized the discernment of scientific truth over credulous hearsay as a characteristic of the wisest and strongest men. Hale, Goodrich, Reid, and many other such popular science writers encouraged readers to imagine the sciences as an interesting and noble profession.

Even for those who did not aspire to be professional scientists (or for those whom, as Baym notes, any attempt to become a professional scientist would have been impeded by gender discrimination), popular works of natural history encouraged regular citizens to participate in what was rapidly becoming a crucial component of a well-rounded education. At least in the early decades of the new United States, an ideology of republicanism stressed that the well-rounded accumulation of knowledge was a civic responsibility necessary for citizens to make well-informed decisions within the smooth functioning of the body politic (Baym 18). Women, although denied suffrage, were likewise encouraged to possess this knowledge at least insofar as they could provide early education for their sons. Inexpensive new printing technologies made educational material accessible to working class citizens (even as these technologies also allowed the proliferation of increasingly specialized, abstruse monographs and journals which ultimately made science increasingly *less*

accessible to nonprofessionals) (Farber 30-3). A surge in interest in educational content, which was boosted by late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century moral panic surrounding the licentious effects of strictly fictional novels, caused geological, astronomical, mechanical, and biological lessons to slip into unexpected places, like Susan Warner's bestselling sentimental coming-of-age novel *The Wide, Wide World* (1850) (Davidson 101-20, Baym 157-60). It is no wonder, then, that the United States in the mid-nineteenth century would herald works of popular literature focused on realistic portrayals of animals.

Finally, animals were especially fascinating to curious individuals of the nineteenth century since they were central to the radical paradigm shifts of the era: the discoveries of extinction and evolution. No matter how obvious extinction may seem to us today, and how controversial evolution remains among religious creationists, it was extinction that was the more revolutionary and extreme theory in the nineteenth century. In the European world, a *scala naturae* or "Great Chain of Being" had provided the framework for conceptualizing the universe for two thousand years, definitively theorized by western philosophers from Aristotle to Leibniz (1646–1716). In this totalizing worldview, every mineral, plant, animal, human, celestial body, and divine spirit could be hierarchized in imperceptible gradations from the lowliest speck of dirt to the brightest diamond, from the sea sponge to the lion, from imbecilic peasant woman to His Majesty the King, from the lowest orders of angels to the one supreme God (Barrow 19-23). In this sanctified reification of the status quo, professed by both the religious and the secular, every individual had its sanctioned place in a flawless universal order, and thus no piece could be changed or removed without sacrificing the stability of the whole; Alexander Pope in

his “An Essay on Man” (1733-4) describes a cataclysmic chaos as the inevitable result of any disruption to the chain:

> The least confusion but in one, not all
> That system only, but the whole must fall.
> Let earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,
> Planets and suns run lawless through the sky;
> Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
> Being on being wreck'd, and world on world;
> Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod,
> And nature tremble to the throne of God. (129)

Extinction was thus existentially impossible, which is why Jefferson insisted in *Notes on the State of Virginia* that the “mammoths” who had left such extensive fossil evidence must still be alive somewhere: “Such is the œconomy of nature, that no instance can be produced of her having permitted any one race of her animals to become extinct; of her having formed any link in her great work so weak as to be broken” (54). One of Jefferson’s correspondents, the French naturalist Georges Cuvier (1769–1832), would, however, compare the bones of European mammoths, American mastodons, and African and Indian elephants and conclusively determine in 1796, to the shock of the world, that they were four distinct species and that two of them were extinct (Barrow 40-1). Cuvier’s pioneering work into paleontology and comparative anatomy would unearth numerous species of monstrously sized creatures whose present absence as living creatures incontrovertibly proved that they must be extinct (Barrow 42). These discoveries—the bursting onto the scene of whole orders of massive and peculiar animals never before seen—combined with geological evidence suggesting that the earth had to be considerably older than the generally agreed upon Biblical age of 6,000 years, made the earth seem a much less stable, comprehensible, and purposeful place than was previously possible. Nevertheless, for a

few decades, the existence of extinct dinosaurs was knowledge that, however shocking, could still be safely tucked away into the ancient primordial past, the result of unfathomable cataclysms that likely bore only a minor threat to humanity and present circumstances. As the nineteenth century wore on, however, and the visible extirpation of once abundant species like the passenger pigeon, the bison, and the great auk proved that extinction events were actively happening, it became reasonable to imagine that humans played a role in such cosmically destructive events—and that they might even be threatened by them.

The history of evolution is better known today than the discovery of extinction, but in the nineteenth century, it was simply another shocking theory to supplement the revolutionary instability introduced by Cuvier. Although Cuvier "more than anyone else" paved the way for establishing evolutionary theory, he himself denied such thinking, believing that extinction rather than change was the end result for any species unfit to continue surviving (Mayr 363-7). Other naturalists, like Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744–1829), disagreed, suggesting various models for how organisms might be primed to improve or degrade over time, might inherit the acquired traits of their parents, or might consciously adapt to their surroundings. Charles Darwin (1809–1882) introduced nonteleological natural selection with his publication of *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, based largely on analysis of Galapagos finches and a Patagonian rhea he had observed on his *Beagle* expedition over twenty years prior (Farber 56-63). Darwin's younger colleague Alfred Russel Wallace independently reached the same conclusion at the same time, and their theories were given a concrete foundation when Mendelian genetics were rediscovered in the first years of the twentieth century. In the four intervening decades, however, professional scientists were largely unimpressed by the theoretical speculations

of evolution, the million-year pace of which could not be verified by empirical eyes. They preferred the kind of laboratory research that could be tested by the experimental method, such as vivisection—medical experimentation on live animals (Farber 63, 67, 72-9). Revealingly, the findings of vivisection were predicated upon evolutionary affinities, since it would have been folly to assume that experiments conducted on a canine brain could be extrapolated to surgery on human brains if the two organs were so fundamentally different, yet the horrific nature of much vivisection forced its practitioners to disavow any suggestion of kinship, justifying their research by insisting upon the unfeeling, mechanical, soulless nature of their laboratory objects (Fudge 101-5). While vivisection was increasingly the method by which professional biologists honed their scientific knowledge, however, several pseudoscientific extrapolations of Darwinism bled into popular culture and other academic disciplines, so that by the turn of the century a framework of predetermined, goal-oriented evolution and "survival of the fittest" was being used to interpret everything from forest growth and economic systems to civilizations and the individual behavior of adolescent boys. Such varied interpretations of evolution underpin many of the works examined in this dissertation—sometimes to quite contrary effects, since the conclusion that *we are animals* can lead to empathetic kinship just as well as it can justify behaving like a voracious predator.

In the nineteenth century, all eyes were on animals, and in the United States particularly, popular writers and their readers turned to animals as a means of understanding their own power and place in the universe. One book that recognized the astonishing extent to which men were suddenly trying to mine animal bodies for economic resources, virility-enriching strength, imperial power, scientific prestige, and existential

meaning was Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick,* which models and deconstructs perhaps every available mode of gazing at, representing, engaging with, and utilizing its titular white whale.

Animal Authorities and Animal Alterity in *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*

Herman Melville (1819–1891) knew he was working on a commercial failure when in June of 1851 he wrote to his friend and idol Nathaniel Hawthorne. "What I feel most moved to write, that is banned,—it will not pay," he laments in an affecting letter which precariously juggles a cheeky self-disparagement with insecure attempts at ego-boosting. "Yet, altogether, write the *other* way I cannot." Melville had rocketed to national fame five years earlier with his first book, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* (1846), a semiautobiographical account of his time spent hiding out among Marquesas Islanders after abandoning his post on a merchant marine ship. Satirizing the ethnographic explorer accounts popular in the era, which emphasized the oddness and savagery of foreign peoples, Melville had injected just enough cultural relativism into his prose to satisfy his own worldview of "unconditional democracy in all things" without alienating his readership—using the islanders' cannibalism as a suspenseful plot device, for instance, while suggesting that it was in fact an extravagant myth, and relishing in the islanders' nudity and exoticism while critiquing hypocritical missionaries' attempts to "civilize" them. Those crowd-pleasing elements—the adventure, the sex appeal, the relatable protagonist—are "the *other* way" to which he could no longer resign himself, and later in his letter he scornfully writes of being remembered as the author of a book fit for "babies… given to them, perhaps, with their gingerbread." He hoped to accomplish something more

substantial in his new book, a fictionalized blend of Owen Chase's *Narrative of the Most Extraordinary and Distressing Shipwreck of the Whale-Ship Essex*, the survivor's testimony of a ship rammed to ruins in 1820 by a vengeful sperm whale, and Jeremiah N. Reynolds's "Mocha Dick: Or the White Whale of the Pacific," an 1839 account of an albino whale with a reputation for sinking ships. Yet he feared his ambitions were in vain. "What's the use of elaborating what, in its very essence, is so short-lived as a modern book?" he asks, resolving to simply finish his "Whale" "in some fashion or other" and be done with it. Marketplace be damned: "Though I wrote the Gospels in this century, I should die in the gutter," he laments.

Four months later, *The Whale* was published, first in England and then in the United States as *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*. He was correct; the "*other* way" was what readers would have preferred, and one newspaper reviewer, referencing the voluptuous island maiden of *Typee,* cursed Melville for failing to include a love story in his new book: "There is no Fayaway in it. Alas! Fickle and forgetful Melville" (qtd. Stone 180). Gone was the "charming romance," wrote another critic in 1857, replaced instead by what, in the words of a twentieth-century scholar, his contemporaries deemed "the fogs of dark philosophy and obscure meanings and… extravagant, half-insane writing" (qtd. Stone 178). In fulfilment of his prophecy, *Moby-Dick* would sell only 3,215 copies in the following three and a half decades (Nierman 11). In comparison, the not dissimilar Captain Mayne Reid's *The Boy Hunters: Adventures in Search of a White Buffalo,* published six months later, would sell 3,500 copies within the first eleven months of its release and would continue to produce new editions throughout the nineteenth century, and W.H.G. Kingston's *Peter the Whaler,* published the same year as *Moby-Dick,* was so profitable that it allowed its author

to abandon his other commercial pursuits and take up writing as a full-time profession (Tryon and Warren 235-439, Kingsford 178).

Nearly two centuries later, many now consider *Moby-Dick* a major contender for the title of "The Great American Novel" (Buell 2), so why was it such a flop upon its release even in spite of tapping into the themes of high seas adventure, whaling, and natural history that the culture was so taken with? Comparing *Moby-Dick* to Reid's and Kingston's contemporaneous bestsellers about the hunting of megafauna reveals that the lack of a romantic arc cannot fully account for the novel's failure, since Reid's book is even more devoid of female characters than Melville's. Critic Evert Duyckinck, a close friend of Melville's, could find no more positive way to label *Moby-Dick* than as "an intellectual chowder of romance, philosophy, natural history, fine writing, [and] bad sayings" (qtd. Cotkin 41), but even to blame nineteenth-century readers' lack of patience on the hodgepodge nature of the book seems an insufficient explanation of its failure. To be sure, many less forgiving readers up to the present day have puzzled over and ultimately given up on the book's discordant structure, which weaves together a somewhat conventional revenge narrative centered on the monomaniacal Captain Ahab with the more metaphysical, discursive, and citational narration of Ishmael—two characters who never interact despite living together on the same ship, the *Pequod.* David Dowling, who has studied twenty-first-century group reading marathons of the book, writes that the Ishmael chapters, and in particular those that are abstracted from the events on the *Pequod* and instead devoted to cetology (the study of whales), have a reputation even among fans as being "the only chapter in high school that I skipped" and "a chore to sit through," eliciting "the anguish and teeth-gnashing tedium of the equivalent of a whaling encyclopedia" (123).

Yet to argue that nineteenth-century readers would have been bored by Ishmael's cetological tangents seems anachronistic, since Reid's book is no less (and perhaps far more) discursive in its tedious interjections about, for example, Linnaeus's pretentiousness, the discordant political symbolism of eagles, and the historical uses of each of the four species of mulberry trees. Factual and philosophical digressions were not at all uncommon in the era's literature.

Rather, what seems distinct about *Moby-Dick* is its critical interrogation of what it *means* to look at animals. The other two novels, like so many other works of the era, gain their allure from the conviction that it is important and interesting to look at animals, and in their conception, that gaze initiates a process that extracts meaning, authority, and value for the viewer. What may have been especially off-putting about *Moby-Dick* is Melville's refusal to ground the observation of animal bodies in any process that will cleanly generate all the manifold values the culture expected such bodies to yield. In *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times* (2009), Nicole Shukin argues that late capitalism recycles and "renders" animal bodies to manufacture as much human benefit on as many levels as possible. Melville knew that his culture sought to render animal bodies into an exhaustive multiplicity of economic, virile, personal, spiritual, imperial, and educational rewards, yet his rendering of Moby Dick undermines most of these values, instead presenting the whale as an irreducible other deserving of magnanimity.

It would be misleading to say that Melville was an author "before his time," presciently proposing an ethical vision of agential, individualized animal alterity that could have no foothold in American culture until the twentieth century. Such pronouncements both belittle and excuse his would-be contemporaneous readers, suggesting a narrative of

moral progress which falsely assumes the march of time will of itself make everything better. To the contrary, Melville, like any author, was very much *of* his time, recombining common cultural threads into a message capable of counteracting some of the crueler and more rapacious attitudes of his society. To study Melville within his historical context is to assert our capability to think outside of prevailing ideologies. As Valerie Babb explains in *Whiteness Visible* (1998), such talk of "'different time[s] back then'… conveniently absolves past figures… as victims of supposedly monolithic attitudes of their time, and it ignores contestations to social inequity discoverable in every epoch of American history" (89-90). Melville's thoughtfulness, she explains, should inspire us all to resist resigning ourselves to the social inequities of our eras and to recognize our own capacity for thinking "prophetically."

That said, although *Moby-Dick* is an exquisite novel, it was by some measures an ethical failure, unable to translate its metaphysical reveries on subjectivity and its satirical treatment of objectification into an accessible takeaway; indeed, when *Moby-Dick* did resurface in film adaptations, abridged versions, and pop culture allusions beginning in the 1920s, it was the thrill of the hunt, the monstrosity of the beast, and the manliness of the hunters that initially attracted the most attention. An analytical appreciation of the cetological chapters, as I am about to perform, has been largely confined to academic exercises like the writing of animal studies dissertations. In *Subhuman: The Moral Psychology of Human Attitudes to Animals* (2017), moral philosopher T.J. Kasperbauer stresses that advocates for concrete change must prepare for the unconscious psychological obstacles that are likely to inhibit the application of their seemingly sound idealistic proposals. For a writer hoping that his "Gospels" do not swirl down the gutter, this requires

first getting one's story into the minds of readers. While incorporating a voluptuous Fayaway into *Moby-Dick* may not have been the solution that would have made Ishmael's exuberant appreciation of radical alterity yield popular support and imitation, it is imaginable that some less despondent attempt to finish his Whale "the *other* way" might have left 1850s readers with something less ambiguous than the final image of a lonely Ishmael floating on a casket amongst a sea of sharks. This is not to fault Melville for his despondency or *Moby-Dick* for its esoterism, since the text remains available and valuable to readers; rather, I wish only to stress the value of studying popular culture, which may be less poetically compelling or impressive than canonical works, yet which reveals the operations of social change in real time. While *Moby-Dick* was moldering on shelves, Jack London's *Michael, Brother of Jerry*, however pulpy it may be, was inspiring hundreds of thousands of people to form political action campaigns. Melville's bottomless subversion of the many methods by which nineteenth-century American men sought to extract value from animal bodies critically illuminates the anxieties of the era even if the infinite loneliness of his imagery failed to assuage them.

The most basic means by which nineteenth-century men sought to extract value from whale bodies was the economic incentive that drove the American whaling industry: sperm whales were natural resources that could be processed into oil, which not only lubricated the machinery of an increasingly industrialized world but was also, prior to the refinement of petroleum and the application of electricity, the cleanest and most smokeless way of lighting indoor lamps, preferable to coal, tallow, and other fuels (Armstrong 99). The bestselling boys' books of Captain Mayne Reid, including *The Boy Hunters:*

Adventures in Search of a White Buffalo, keep their animal characters at this basic level of natural resource. The white buffalo of the title achieves nothing of the preeminence Melville accords to his white whale. In fact, he is nearly a nonentity in the text. Like scores of other animals killed in the book's plot, he is not at all individuated, and the entirety of the boys' encounter with him, his demise, and his slaughter is dispatched with in a single sentence on the final page. Reid keeps his focus on the hunters, not the hunted; to fancy that the individual animals are somehow unique or noteworthy would perhaps undermine the urgency and permissibility of killing them. Reid's interchangeable prey are the fungible commodities of Melville's first mate Starbuck, who "came here to hunt whales, not my commander's vengeance. How many barrels will thy vengeance yield thee even if thou gettest it, Captain Ahab? it will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket market" (139). Starbuck is the sole resister who pushes back against Ahab's "mad," almost "blasphemous" attempt to seek revenge against "a dumb brute… that simply smote thee from blindest instinct" (139), but it is merely Ahab's inefficiency—his wasted energy pursuing one particular resource, Moby Dick, rather than the biologically equal resources ready at hand—that strikes Starbuck as recklessly self-centered. Starbuck's wish, the employment for which he is contracted, is to reduce *any* passing whale into barrels of oil, the task which will sustain his position of authority over the other men contracted to do the same work.

The manliness least susceptible to Melville's satirizing dismissal is the manliness of the common sailors, and his democratic paeans to these men who risk their lives and limbs to light their families' parlor lamps seem generally free from sarcasm. It seems overstepping to suggest that Melville was wholly against *all* exploitative interactions involving whales. Notably, however, the manliness he praises in his sailors is one stripped

of any individual desire for domination. To the contrary, as Peter Coviello analyzes, the work scenes culminate in Chapter 94, "A Squeeze of the Hand," a chapter which eroticizes the ego loss of teamwork in a way that Coviello interprets as homoerotically charged, an "obdurately unyielding mutual affection" at odds with the divisiveness rampant in the United States in the 1850s (121). These men perform pragmatic work deemed essential by society—it is undeniable that the whale's body can be converted into oil, spermaceti, meat, and ivory, and it is likewise undeniable that the work required for this is dangerous, difficult, and fascinatingly intricate—and Melville does not hesitate to valorize such democratic labor in its earthy simplicities.

Viewing whales as natural resources, an undeniable fact of the nineteenth-century industrial economy, bled seamlessly into a more imaginary way of seeing them: as heroic prey engaged in courageous combat with brave whalers. This imaginary perspective supplanted the uglier reality that whales were harmless creatures being butchered and exploited. The first whaling narratives, like Chase's and Reynolds's, likely overemphasized the might and aggressiveness of sperm whales, which are typically docile and evasive creatures, in order to invest the hunting of them with the kind of courageous manliness that could serve as both publicity and a recruitment tool for the industry. Dowling writes that these works:

> provided the whaling industry with a dramatic character that would transform the business into narrative…. The culture gloried in the idea that an animal might calculate an assault on a whaleship, the paragon of all industry and the most lucrative trade in the world, for the whale embodied a common enemy against which whaling could galvanize its social purpose and professional mission. (Dowling "Revenge" 52-3)

Philip Armstrong concurs that such works "augment the epic and heroic connotations of whaling, which is thereby elevated beyond its vulgar status as mere commerce, and comes instead to encode the supremacy of the human over the natural world" (105-6). Industrial progress required continual battle with massive, wild whales, a job that was high risk, demanding, and not terribly profitable for most of the common sailors involved in it. The whaling narrative genre of which *Moby-Dick* was a part sought to supplement grim economic realities with lofty cultural honors, ensuring that the industry would persist, and such a task required elevating the hunted above the status of mere exchangeable commodities.

Personifying the hunted in order to better valorize the hunters was a literary device that took on greater regularity as the century progressed. Reid's later works, like *Bruin; or, The Grand Bear Hunt* (1860), accord more detailed and sustained characterization to the animals involved in their plots than *The Boy Hunters* does, even if these animal foes never quite become three-dimensional individuals. The many bears killed in chapter after chapter of *Bruin,* for instance, are all referred to by the same nickname, Bruin, as though the bears themselves can never truly die so long as bearhood in its Platonic form persists. Individuating the animal antagonists with specific details made hunting narratives more exciting and thus more profitable, but it also risked misdirecting readers' sympathies. As founder of the Boone and Crockett Club and editor of its hunting publications, Theodore Roosevelt in the late 1880s was emphatic about excising any passages that might incline readers to construe sympathy for the beasts. That the so-called "nature fakirs" at the turn of the century deliberately sought to evoke such sympathy was, in Roosevelt's mind, a national catastrophe. How could American men fulfill their destiny as apex predators if

instead of smiting monstrous wild beasts it turned out that they were actually just massacring weak, defenseless individuals with families to feed?

Some recent literary scholars, influenced by the past century and a half of animal rights arguments, insist that one way in which Melville sees the whales is as empathetic victims, but to the extent that that is true, it is not true in the same manner that the Artist-Naturalists like Ernest Thompson Seton extended empathy to wild animals. Insights later gained from evolutionary theory teach us that cetaceans bear the same prosocial brain structure as we mammalian primates, with the same dense bundles of complex spindle neurons which neuropsychiatrists speculate are involved in "self-awareness, empathy, and any other complex social cognitive function" (Bering 37), and thus to extrapolate "human" emotions onto the creatures would not be a difficult task—yet although the book contains several tenderhearted depictions of whales, including a memorable scene between a nursing mother and her cub, Armstrong points out that such humanizing of whales was routinely used by writers with a vested interest in *killing* animals.[4] This rhetorical strategy may seem "incongruous" today, but in a work like Thomas Beale's *Natural History of the Sperm Whale* (1835), "a vigorous apologia for the industry" and one of Melville's major sources, "a descriptive emphasis on the gruesomeness of the [animal's] death serves to demonstrate not concern for the suffering of the animal, but romanticized admiration of the dangers faced by [hunters], as heroic crusaders" (106). Armstrong asserts that modern readers' desire to see anthropomorphism in Melville as a sign of interest in the whale's subjectivity is an "anachronistic… misunderstanding" (104), though certainly it is no

[4] This will be seen in Chapter 2, where writers amused by gander pulling somehow had no qualms about personifying the suffering birds and elaborating the humorousness of their pain in excruciating detail.

stretch of the imagination to surmise that many midcentury readers could have similarly "misconstrued" such an ill-conceived strategy as humanizing the enemy.

Although the basic pragmatic exploitation of whales as natural resources is not something that Melville ever fully commits himself to opposing in *Moby-Dick*, he certainly deconstructs and subverts all the extraneous, metaphysical meanings superimposed by the culture over this simple industry. One such superfluous meaning is the belief that the sacrifice of an animal can generate manly rebirth, an ideology explored by the religion scholar Nancy Jay and the historian Richard Slotkin. Ahab's obsessive quest to make himself whole again by finding the whale that ate his leg is the book's most obvious attempt to extract this meaning from Moby Dick, and his hunt is ultimately a prescient parody of the late-nineteenth-century idea that hunting big game might restore one's threatened or fading masculinity. To lay bare this dimension, it is worthwhile to look ahead to the book's first film adaptation, the silent Warner Brothers blockbuster *The Sea Beast* (1926), directed by Millard Webb, which was technically Melville's "first popular success" in the eighty years since the publication of *Typee* (Stone 179). Screenwriter Bess Meredyth reshapes the plot to a simple love triangle involving Esther Harper (Dolores Costello), a missionary's sweet daughter; harpoonist Ahab Ceeley (John Barrymore), her soft, handsome, and jovial fiancée who loses his leg to a whale after being pushed overboard by his jealous half-brother; and Derek Ceeley (George O'Hara), the duplicitous half-brother who convinces Ahab that Esther could never freely and truly love a man missing half a leg since she would never be able to see past her obligation to pity him. Ahab's mid-film transformation into a grizzled captain hellbent on killing the "dumb brute" who sabotaged his engagement reduces the supporting character Moby Dick to a mistaken deflection from the story's true

conflict: Ahab's missing leg becomes a castrated phallus, forever preventing him from marrying and reproducing, and killing the castrator can at least give the ruined man the satisfaction of revenge. When Ahab is informed in the final act that it was Derek who pushed him overboard, and that Derek furthermore lied about Esther's feelings, the truth of Ahab's sexual frustration is revealed. His virility was never truly lost, and it was certainly never jeopardized by an unthinking animal; it was merely called into question by a lying, incestuous *half*-brother not nearly as manly as himself. The climax of the film thus becomes Ahab's struggle with Derek, in which he secures the upper hand by steadfastly inserting his prosthetic ivory phallus into a hole in the deck as he wrestles his enemy over the prow to a watery death. The subsequent fight with Moby Dick becomes mere denouement, and the film ends with Esther, Ahab, and their cuddly pet dog happily ever after, standing before a home with a white picket fence, ready to raise a family. In a wry analysis of the movie's publicity material, Edward Stone notes that the filmmakers considered their portrayal of Ahab "enlarged and clarified," since the "greatness" of the man required him to have "further cause for [his] derangement than this single misfortune" of losing a limb in an accident with an animal (173). Only if that leg were clearly a symbol of Ahab's lost masculinity in the most traditional and heterosexual of terms, they seem to suggest, could the film make any sense to viewers, an interpretation which the filmmakers claimed to have constructed from details clearly present in the novel.

Meredyth's screenplay was informed by seven decades of rhetoric from men like Reid and Roosevelt, who argued a direct relationship between hunting and sexual potency, but even if Melville's novel was not so straightforwardly phallic as it is portrayed in its first Hollywood adaptation, it is nevertheless true that Ahab seeks to make his manhood

whole through an encounter with the whale, and the novel's treatment of this single-minded need reveals that the construction of any such correlation between sacrificial animal and reinvigorated manhood only narrows the scope of one's self-value. Will encompassing the whale enlarge Ahab? Is Ahab incomplete or inferior otherwise? How precisely does several tons of blubber fill that void? Ahab becomes the apotheosis of the individuating strategies deployed by whale narrators like Reynolds, Chase, and Beale. Having encountered Moby Dick in his fearsome individuality, in his self-defensive agency, in his mirrored opposition to the heroic captain who heretofore had seen his antagonist merely as so many barrels of oil, Ahab can no longer see a whale as simply an object. Moby Dick as active, animate subject has cost him his leg and his worldview of human supremacy. The killing of other whales ceases to be of interest. Only an encounter with the individual Moby Dick can resolve whatever eludes him, whether that be confirmation of his mastery or a complete revolution in how he perceives the subjectivity of others.

Ahab's belief that destruction will restore him impedes other lives and other meanings from thriving, reducing the universe to a leg-sized void which only the whale's body can potentially fill. Eyal Peretz argues that Ahab's "drive for mastery" of the hunted whale becomes his singular sustaining purpose, leeching outward so "that everything and everyone has to be mastered as tools to achieve this single purpose" (60). Sharon Cameron sees his obsession as a contagion that virally overtakes the other crewmates' attempts to create their own autonomous meaning, making "the stories of the men on the Pequod into a single story, as Ahab in fact succeeds in doing: 'They were one man, not thirty'" (43). Peretz agrees: "The hunt thus reduces into oneness the multiplicity and plurality of life on the Pequod" (61). The 1956 film version, written by Ray Bradbury, directed by John Ford,

and starring Gregory Peck as Ahab, foregrounds this dimension alone, turning the story into an allegory of populist authoritarianism—of men who fascistically bind themselves to the elevation of one hero via the annihilation of the Other (cf. Dowling "Revenge" 61). If Starbuck's free-market goal is at odds with Ahab's, it is not wholly incompatible, and thus he never acts on the mutiny which he knows would be legally justified and life-saving for the crew. In the end, it is only Ishmael, the sole survivor of the *Pequod*'s wreck, who seems to have been immune from Ahab's quest to plug an existential abyss with an eighty ton whale.

It would be erroneous, however, to claim that the Ishmael chapters are not equally invested in trying to extract superfluous metaphysical meanings from the body of the whale, and it is indeed these chapters which contain Melville's most salient critiques about the relationship between animal bodies and authority. The Ishmael storyline, which can itself be subdivided into chapters devoted to cetology and chapters devoted to narrative interactions with characters like the Polynesian harpooner Queequeg, also suggests the possibility that a whale hunting excursion *might* make a man complete—might, indeed, literally supplant one's normal course of living. After all, in his introductory paragraph Ishmael explains that shipping out is merely his means of confronting suicidal urges—though whether he hopes that sailing will take away such urges or simply do the job for him is ambiguous. "Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship," he admits (23). Much like a frazzled neurasthenic, his depression is induced to some extent not only by an urban congestion that has led him to the desire of "deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off" but also by mental labor that has estranged him from his body and muddled his sense of authority, causing him to seek manly

satisfaction in the base and juvenile pretense of "lording it as a country schoolmaster, making the tallest boys stand in awe of [him]" (25). A whaling voyage strikes his fancy because the "nameless perils" attendant upon meeting "[s]uch a portentous and mysterious monster" seem the only fit companions to match the foreboding specter of self-annihilation with which his thoughts always abide: "Not ignoring what is good, I am quick to perceive a horror, and could still be social with it—would they let me—since it is but well to be on friendly terms with all the inmates of the place one lodges in" (26). The "grand hooded phantom, like a snow hill in the air" that floats into Ishmael's "inmost soul" at the end of the first chapter is a presentiment of Moby Dick but likewise a terrifying entity fit for agon with his suicidal daemon (27). An interest in *killing* whales does not motivate him, perhaps no more than Ahab's desperate need to come face to face with Moby Dick may reveal compulsions more complicated than simple bloodlust; rather, it is merely the idea of confronting "the overwhelming idea of the great whale himself" that propels Ishmael's narrative (26). Whether this confrontation with the whale will fulfill him with the desire to live or "complete" him in a more terminal sense is unknown at the beginning, and perhaps irrelevant. Such uncertainty likewise motivated the sportsmen hunters like Roosevelt who went to the woods in order to revive through combat the virile energy that the cities had sapped from them, for it was only a potentially lethal black bear that could yield a truly salubrious and life-affirming adventure, not a harmless cub tied to a tree.

Ishmael's preoccupation with "the overwhelming idea of the great whale himself" may make him the truer successor to Ahab's personalized hunt than Starbuck or the other sailors; whereas Ahab self-defensive ego translates his compulsion into bloody revenge, however, Ishmael's suicidal and perhaps ego-free or self-fleeing mindset embraces a

potentially nonviolent opportunity to see himself and the world from the perspective of some other subjectivity. If we imagine that each subjectivity is a lamp radiating a light that illuminates that subjectivity's worldview, then Ahab assumes that his goal is either to snuff out Moby Dick's light or else to add the whale's oil to his own lamp so that his own subjectivity can burn all the brighter. With Ishmael, however, and perhaps unconsciously even with Ahab, we see the circular glow of two lamps approaching each other, doubly illuminating a shared space as in a Venn diagram, while two separate worlds shine adjacently. This is Ishmael's ultimate ethic, that two lamps burn brighter than one big one, but before he reaches this conclusion he must pass through all the methods of Western scientific inquiry.

Critics sometimes frame Ishmael's cetological content as an unnecessary distraction from the novel's main themes, and these are the chapters likeliest to be cut in abridgements and adaptations, yet these chapters are in fact the core of Melville's inquiries into authority. Lori N. Howard writes, somewhat dismissively, that Melville turned to the cetology sections as a way of freewriting through his writer's block—that, unable to fill the great white blankness of the page with the *real* story, "he avoided the confrontation by penning something infinitely easier," something largely borrowed from other whaling texts (31). For Reid and countless other bestselling writers of the era, however, such factual digressions into natural history *were* the "meat" of the book and an appreciated literary quality. Howard's argument linking the "great white whale" to the intimidating "blank white page," however apt the comparison between the whale's (lack of) face and a *tabula rasa* may be, trivializes the manner in which Melville parodies the genre. As Elizabeth S. Foster explains, Melville "had studied, with enough care and interest to reproduce at least

a part of the data with extraordinary accuracy, precisely those discoveries of the new science which were proving most dangerous to religious faith," yet despite the "gradual erosion of his pristine Christian optimism" in the years leading up to 1851, he nevertheless "steadily denied the competence of all sciences to plumb the profound mysteries" (65, 50). Melville's extensive "scientific" writing, far from being a senseless diversion, satirizes a natural theology which sought to reveal the mysteries of the universe through the proliferation of orderly facts about the anatomical details of animals. As Gabriele Schwab writes, they are a "maniacal attempt to chase down the whale on paper" that "ties Ishmael's intellectual pursuit to Ahab's passion of penetrating the white whale and its secrets" (61-2). In his quest to document the total, empirical, cosmological truth about whales, Ishmael enacts the entire genealogy of western methods of authenticating scientific authority, from etymological analysis of the logos, to classical textual citation, to emblematic bestiary, to taxonomy and natural theology, to anatomical dissection and empirical measurement, to, finally, a conception of evolution as an invitation to accept change, revolution, uncertainty, and otherness.

This drive to figure out the whale, to chase down his fundamental meaning, and to conquer him as a knowable object begins before Ishmael even introduces himself, for the iconic "Call me Ishmael" is not truly the opening line of the book, which in fact begins with an etymology of *whale*, "Supplied by a Late Consumptive Usher of a Grammar School." This etymology pedantically admonishes that those who pronounce it *wail,* "leaving out, through ignorance, the letter H, which almost alone maketh up the signification of the word… deliver that which is not true," as though an aspirated sea-spray syllable could define the difference between truth and falsehood (10). In *The Order of*

Things, Foucault argues that the rise of taxonomy and the rise of philology and prescriptive grammars were part and parcel of the same worldview which sought to organize the visible world into plain representational truths about the totality of existence. Melville's etymology evokes a cosmological logos, as though the very essence and animus of the whale is contained within those signifying sounds: the Viking *hval*, with its "roundness or rolling" of the mouth, or the Feegee *pekee-nuee-nuee*, such a mouthful it must be repeated. The whale is contained within the word, and thus the truth of the whale can be anatomized and extracted through a literary dissection like his novel.

Ishmael next evokes the classical, pre-empirical methodology of scientific authority, which authenticated truth-claims via textual citations. After the etymology, a "Sub-Sub-Librarian" provides eighty-two "Extracts," a comprehensive nod to the wisdom of established authorities, which is nevertheless merely "a glancing bird's eye view of what has been promiscuously said, thought, fancied, and sung of Leviathan" (11). This "promiscuity" already bleeds into Ishmael's research, which like Aldrovandi's compilations blends together Biblical myth and Classical bestiary, legendary history and political allegory, fanciful verse and unembellished navigational account, fiction and philosophy, and even a "'Something' unpublished" (20), which, according to Frank Shuffelton, is "an entire fabrication by our author" deliberately constructed to subvert the preceding extract by foregrounding how authorial subjectivity underpins every claim to truth (535-6). Counteracting what would appear to be the entire purpose of these extracts, the narrator urges that, "however authentic" they may indeed be, they "must not, in every case at least" be taken for "veritable gospel cetology" (11)—as though such gospel were possible, even though the Bible, Shakespeare, and Darwin himself have failed to achieve

it. Coviello calls the novel as a whole "a text positively glutted with precedents: a text that boldly announces its indebtedness to narratives, rhetorics, symbols, myths, and idioms," all arranged so as to "undermine their accumulated authority" (93). Before the story has even begun, Melville pledges the possibility of gospel truth while nevertheless cautioning skepticism.

When the first official chapter of the narrative begins, Ishmael explicitly renounces his desire for authority. Chapter 1 famously begins with the fictional narrator's offering of a name which may not even be his real name, a much studied line which Edward Sugden deems "an ostensibly declarative statement of self-assertion [that] holds a universe of ontological, existential, and sociopolitical dissonance in tense abeyance beneath its surface" (1). According to Foucault in "What Is an Author?", the proper name was the very signifier of authoritative meaning in the pre-empirical era, not yet wholly forgotten in Melville's time, when intertextual citations were still the chief method of substantiating truth-claims. After dispensing with such certification, the uncertain "Ishmael" next details his own deliberate rejection of authority, explaining that he would never set sail "as a Commodore, or a Captain, or a Cook. I abandon the glory and distinction of such offices to those who like them" (24-5). As Peretz explains, Ishmael purposely swaps "his position as a schoolmaster—that is, the master of the meanings to be transmitted to the students" for a position of powerlessness on the ship (43). "[A] *crisis of authority*, a crisis in the stability of meaning" is thus built into Ishmael's very character (Peretz 43), which renders suspect from the very outset all the flippant scientific judgments he later expounds.

Ishmael undermines, too, the emblematic clarity of the classical bestiary. If truth is to be found in the plenitude of all collected knowledge, sayings, and representation, then

the diversity of knowledge gained from modern globalization threatens to annihilate truth with its contradictions. The classical bestiary used resemblance and a narrow range of cultural assumptions to present each species as a clean and simple natural exemplar of some vice or virtue, like the fiercely protected virginal purity emblematized by the ermine's white fur. Humans alone possessed the expanse of character and mind to learn from the narrow instincts of animals and shape their lives accordingly. Melville, however, refuses to reduce Moby Dick to any simple allegorical usage, and this refusal can be seen as a rejection of attempts to reduce and objectify otherness. For instance, scholars interested in examining the novel's critique of race, like Coviello, Babb, and Mark K. Burns, often focus on "The Whiteness of the Whale," a subject which receives its own thorough investigation in Chapter 42. White light, which carries all the colors of the visible spectrum yet paradoxically appears as a total absence to the naked eye, is the central motif of a chapter which articulates a comprehensive, cross-cultural overview of the manifold interpretations inherent to whiteness. Peretz writes that "Ishmael seems to privilege examples that mostly pertain to various kinds of institutional power and mastery, such as the symbols of empires, kings, priests, and judges, or those suggesting the mastery of the white race" (74). However, rather than proving some universal essence of greatness, the examples cancel one another out. What is pure to one culture is horrific to another; what signals purity when worn by a priest evokes savagery when draping the polar bear. This intangible, irreducible, and awe-inducing nature of whiteness is precisely how a master race would seek to define itself, for, as Toni Morrison explains in *Playing in the Dark*, it is only the Other that can be simplified and generalized. To the white supremacist, blackness can be deciphered in simple terms, whether innocent or evil, whereas whiteness is too vast and individuated to

pin down; as Morrison writes, "Whiteness, alone, is mute, meaningless, unfathomable, pointless, frozen, veiled, curtained, dreaded, senseless, implacable. Or so our writers seem to say" (59). As Peretz clarifies, however, “in the case of the white race it is quite obvious that it is not white at all and that whiteness is thus used as a metaphorical attempt of this race to master the meaning of that which undermines every stable meaning and identity” (75). Despite his exhaustive accumulation of possibilities, Christopher Sten writes, “Ishmael cannot at this stage get beyond the point of seeing the whale as a hideous blank screen on which every observer projects his own torment…. Instead, he concludes that they must have their origin in the subjective consciousness of the observer, each in effect cancelling the other out in a final blank meaninglessness” (35). This is hardly a stable foundation on which to build white supremacy—or, indeed, any empiricist dominion. The simplicity of the classical bestiary, in which each species earns its value by embodying a human rule to live by, is rejected in the casuistry of Ishmael, whose knowledge of the plenitude of individual cases insists that no theoretical axiom can resolve and reduce the whole.

Ishmael’s rejection of emblematism and his preoccupation with plenitude takes him into the episteme of Buffon, Linnaeus, and natural theology. He first models in depth what a modern, empirical academic authority concerning the observation of whales would look like in “Cetology,” the most famous of disliked novel chapters. “Cetology” parodies the era’s obsession with taxonomy first by questioning whose perspective should anchor the framework. Among Ishmael’s most famous proclamations is his insistence that, contrary to the most reputable research performed by learned authorities such as Linnaeus, “the whale is a fish” (118). An educated reader seeking to learn objective scientific facts about

reality from the novel might very well throw the book down at this point, but Ishmael declares that the anatomical internalities classified by Linnaeus as mammalian are utter "humbug" when put to the study of Simeon Macey and Charley Coffin, of Nantucket, friends of Ishmael who have actually hunted whales in the open sea. The seafaring Ishmael knows better than some librarian in an ivory tower that a finny creature of the sea is a fish, regardless of its binocular heart and mammary glands. Thus, wresting authority from scientific professionals, "waiving all argument… [t]his fundamental thing settled," Ishmael moves to a matter of real importance: "how shall we define the whale, by his obvious externals, so as conspicuously to label him for all time to come?" (118) Having waved away all precedent in a manner which privileges his own credentials, Ishmael is now prepared to glibly pronounce an eternal verdict.

When Ishmael selects the criterion which will determine his entire classificatory system, he chooses the most changeable and perhaps superficial of their externalities, their "magnitude" or physical size, thus rooting his project in blatantly shaky ground. Ishmael ranks whales according to their most noticeable visible aspect—i.e., how big a full-grown male can potentially become—yet his knowledge of the variability of individual specimens undermines his own reliance on externalities. Burns explains, "These external characteristics… lack the consistency that they at first appear to have and thus 'they form such irregular combinations… as utterly to defy all general methodization formed upon such a basis.' So in spite of earlier indications in the chapter, Ishmael finally rejects external appearance as a reliable basis for the classification of whales" (202). The Linnaean system, although it could be easily applied with the assistance of a book by amateur naturalists in the field, was only slightly less arbitrary than Ishmael's system, requiring, for instance, the

counting of stamens and pistils, the numbers of which frequently deviated from specimen to specimen of the same species (Baym 31). That this system might provide "a device for imposing order on the world whose reliability guaranteed that law and order really existed in the universe" (Baym 21) was an increasingly farcical promise to a mind such as Melville's.

Ishmael's choice of a plainly visible yet ludicrously mutable foundation for organizing the diversity of whales reveals how any taxonomy is always subjectively bound by a culture's epistemic conceptions of what counts as perceivable, meaningful distinctions. In his 1942 essay "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins," Jorge Luis Borges includes a fictitious taxonomy supposedly taken from an ancient Chinese encyclopedia in which "animals are divided into":

> (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs [*sic*], (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) *et cetera*, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies. (qtd. Foucault xv)

Foucault begins *The Order of Things* by quoting this taxonomy, which requires simultaneously reckoning with the contingencies of time, space, emotion, the perceptions of the observer, the authority of the classification system itself, the shortcomings of all perceptual apparatuses, as well as the infinite possibilities contained within an "*et cetera*" that is not even the concluding item on the list. "It is not the 'fabulous' animals that are impossible," Foucault writes, "since they are designated as such, but the narrowness of the distance separating them from (and juxtaposing them to) the stray dogs…. where could they ever meet, except in the immaterial sound of the voice pronouncing their enumeration,

or on the page transcribing them? Where else could they be juxtaposed except in the non-place of language?" (xvi-xvii). As Burns elaborates:

> [O]bjects never present themselves in some natural, self-evident system of classification… and because there is no magic attraction or magnetic pull between disparate objects in the real world, categories and classifications need to be chosen and imposed from the outside, leaving open the possibility for alternate, competing ways to organize and order the infinity of objects in the universe. Even a relatively concrete project such as the classification of animals, then, presupposes assumptions about the characteristics that constitute similarity and difference within that realm, criteria that are themselves the result of subjective choice. (199-200)

It is not Ishmael's ignorance that renders his taxonomy "an artificial, arbitrary, subjective exercise in hopelessness," Burns writes; rather, "establishing an accurate, objective, meaningful order among things is always a necessarily flawed enterprise" (203). Unlike Linnaeus, Buffon believed that a category such as "species," despite being a helpful shorthand, oversimplified the diversity of individuals (Mayr 261-2, Weil 13), and Darwin would likewise come to regard flexible and unpredictable variability among individuals as an indispensable tenet of his theory of natural selection (Crist 41-2, Mayr 46), yet the taxonomists were triumphing and would continue to proliferate, and Melville acknowledges their principal and continued hold over the culture.

Everything about Ishmael's taxonomy is confessedly spurious and artificial. In labeling the genera and species, it is fitting that he draws upon the publishing terminology of "folios," "octavos," and "duodecimos" subdivided into "books" and "chapters." His attempt to write *The Whale* is a literary event, strictly fictional, as though living beings could be reduced to words on a page. Many of the species described by Ishmael in his taxonomic enterprise are unclear to present-day marine biologists, and some of the recognized species appear to overlap or be repeated across "chapters." Even within the

confines constructed by Ishmael's classificatory scheme, however, an uncertainty still lingers, for "there are a rabble of uncertain, fugitive, half-fabulous whales, which, as an American whaleman, I know by reputation, but not personally" (125). As Peretz explains:

> Reports of still more "uncertain whales" he suspects are but "mere sounds, full of Leviathanism, but signifying nothing" for he himself has not witnessed them, but merely found references in some "Icelandic, Dutch, and old English *authorities*." This is a very strange science indeed, where the authority of the testimony of another stands under an essential suspicion of fabulation. Why should we, in our turn, accept Ishmael's testimony, which by claiming its status as a sole witness also demands we accept his authority without opportunity to defend our suspicions? (103-4)

Around 1836, American scientists like Asa Gray began to replace "artificial systems" like Linnaeus's with more complicated, specialized "natural systems" that could more accurately reveal what an organism "naturally, essentially, really was" (Baym 31-2). These artificial systems required more specialized knowledge of anatomy—molars, heart valves, spinal structure, phrenology, and so forth—yet the truths promised to be unlocked by such specialized focus surpassed anything possible in Linnaean natural theology. Thus, Ishmael delves deeper, evolving from the taxonomist to the vivisectionist.

In the Book of Job, God plainly explains that fathoming the mysteries of the leviathan is something no man can ever accomplish, yet via an allusion to this story, Ishmael assures readers that modern methods of anatomical dissection have made such mastery possible. He invokes an almost sexual violence with determination and gusto: "Since I have undertaken to manhandle this Leviathan, it behoves me to approve myself *omnisciently exhaustive* in the enterprise; not overlooking the minutest seminal germs of his blood, and spinning him out to the uttermost coil of his bowels" (349). This manhandling takes the form of surgical autopsy. Lawrence Buell explains how in the

second half of the book "[t]he chapters move, roughly, from outer to inner and front to rear" as the inquisitive Ishmael probes into everything from the whale's skin to his brain to his penis and tail (367). These cetological dissections are mirrored in the interlaced narrative chapters; as Christopher Sten writes, "All the world seems rushing to gain entrance [into the whale's interior], to search for its riches, to experience its transforming power, to *know* the beast from inside" (49). Brian Luke writes of how vivisectionists cloak their endeavors in the language of religious ritual, referring to euthanasia as "sacrifice," for instance, and writing of their hopes to save children's lives through "miraculous" discoveries (131-4). Ishmael's penetrative manhandling of the leviathan likewise is sanctified with allusions to religious rite, as though anatomy can provide a secular theology. In the brief and allusive Chapter 95, "The Cassock," with its oblique references to Mesopotamian phallus worship, Ishmael explains that the crewman tasked with the dangerous job of mincing the blubber can safeguard himself from lacerations by slipping into the whale's circumcised foreskin, which becomes both a protective uniform and a holy garment. Circumcision, a token of God's covenant in Genesis, yields the vestment that will allow the whale's body to be transformed into a bibliographic and biblical object of ravishment. Ishmael describes the ritually slaughtered flesh dropping "fast as the sheets from a rapt orator's desk": "Bible leaves! Bible leaves! This is the invariable cry from the mates to the mincer. It enjoins him to be careful, and cut his work into as thin slices as possible" (325). The division between bodies, texts, and divine truths is blurred once again. This abject dismemberment—this division of the whale's corpse into a proliferation of blank parchments on which holy truths might be inscribed—can be seen as one salient example of "how this imperial drive toward the unlimited expansion of boundaries is

culturally enforced by a formation of ancient rituals in order to conjure, as a defense against the thought of annihilation, the phantasm of absolute male power and invulnerability" (Schwab 49-50). By disarticulating the animal's body and then rearticulating it into new scientific truths, man's dominion expands.

Once dissected, the whale needs to be measured and recorded, another source of nineteenth century objectivity. In line with the methodologies of Alexander Humboldt, the highly influential naturalist, geographer, and explorer whose publications in the late 1840s stressed meticulous, comprehensive "quantitative measurement" as the key to unlocking the cosmos (Farber 35), Ishmael's investigations suggest that empirical imperialism will assure total mastery. There is no longer any thing on the earth visible to the eye that cannot be unraveled to reveal its inmost truth. Matthew Edney termed this "the empiricist delusion": "[T]he empiricism of the later Enlightenment posited a direct, visual link between an entity, and the individual's inscription of that perception on paper. The inscription could involve any combination of numbers, written statements, or graphic sketches but, regardless of form, it was assumed to be an 'essential' and literal copy of the original entity" (qtd. Anne Baker 191). This inscription ultimately resides on Ishmael's very body, permanently altering his essence with his supposed knowledge of that which he has penetrated. In Chapter 102, "A Bower in the Arsacides," Ishmael physically enters the whale by trespassing into a massive skeleton that functions as a holy shrine for the inhabitants of a Pacific island. After measuring the arbitrary size of the dead individual's bones, he has those sacred measurements tattooed on his own flesh. The whale, in an abstracted sense reduced to a few measurements, has literally become a permanent part of his body. Likening this scene to Melville's likely source, Charles Wilkes's *Narrative of the*

U.S. Exploring Expedition (1845), in which the crew gain access to a forbidden temple and proceed to measure and record all the sacred relics contained therein for no ostensible reason other than to exhibit their "mastery" over the islanders, Anne Baker asserts that "measurement can be a means of defining or laying claim to what one sees" (189). As Ishmael describes it, however, the final inscription of this whale on his own living, crowded body emphasizes the inescapable subjectivity of his attempts at objectivity.

Readers familiar with Melville's work would have known the seriousness of tattooing, for it is the autobiographical protagonist Tommo's resistance to the islanders' desire to tattoo him in *Typee* that he anxiously resists even more than the threat of cannibalism; as Michael A. Elliott observes, Tommo's refusal to allow the islanders to penetrate his body with ink reveals the power dynamic inherent in his own inverse act of circumscribing the islanders' bodies into the book of ethnography he is writing. According to Elliott, it is that reduction of life into language/representation that proves a more horrifying "incorporation" than the mere annihilation of cannibalism (489). Nineteenth-century taxonomy, ethnography, and navigational accounts were often at their core a tool of imperialism that worked "by turning 'terra incognita into a mapped and bounded colony' and by consolidating the colonizers' sense of themselves as possessors of scientific knowledge and so as justifiable rulers of less 'civilized' peoples" (Burns 185). If Tommo fears being tattooed by the islanders, it is not simply because he worries about the propriety of appearing such a way when he returns back home, but also because he fears that their representation of him, written by them on his body, may contract his sense of self, making him permanently bound to their perception of him, just as he knows that writing of them within the confines of his book will make them a commodity to be consumed by his readers

and potentially even a touristic commodity to be consumed by the imperial wayfarers interested in seeing the idyllic, exotic people he has described. If measurement and written representation reduces the Other to a colonized space, a map showcasing the cartographer's imperial mastery and providing a blueprint for future exploitation, then what does it mean for Ishmael to inscribe this representation on his own body? Is this the final, definitive incorporation of the Other into his manhood? Has he become the foundation on which the Other's existence is predicated?

In a sense, this is true: the Other cannot be seen without the seer, cannot be represented without the representer, yet what Ishmael actually tattoos is so antithetical to the Humboldtian project of precise measurement that the very act becomes something less imperialistically sinister and altogether more playful. Ishmael explains that he tattooed the whale's measurements on his body so that he would not forget them in the "wild wanderings" of his life, but he felt it necessary to also leave a substantial portion of his body "a blank page" to serve "for a poem I was then composing" (the book which we are reading?); in saving this much-needed space for his personal composition, he abandoned recording "the odd inches" of his precise measuring adventure, not even certain that inches should "at all enter into a congenial admeasurement of the whale" (347). What difference would inches make for something so vast? The approximation sufficiently serves as "valuable statistics" alongside the rest of his own body, which is already "crowded for space." Ishmael knows that the crowded space of his own life prevents him from fully recording an "objective" record that would itself be uncongenial folly, a finicky diminishment of what he hopes to record; he is content to know and to remember without

shedding more blood over the finer details. *Moby-Dick*, as Ishmael's tattooed "poem" suggests, is fashioned merely from Ishmael's own image.

Ishmael's hierarchized evaluation of other representations of whales lends credence to the idea that objectivity and subjectivity are a spectrum in which the former is not simply superior to the latter or vice versa. In Chapters 55, 56, and 57, Ishmael critiques the accuracy of representations of whales, ascending a scale of accuracy from the "Monstrous Pictures" of antiquity that depict them as fearful sea serpents; to "the Less Erroneous Pictures of Whales" found in the illustrated tomes of museum-based naturalists like Cuvier; to the "True Pictures of *Whaling Scenes*" (emphasis mine), which, it should be noted, insinuates only that the hunter's *act* can be truly recorded, not the totality of the animal himself (of the "finest" of these "true" engravings, he even admits, "Serious fault might be found with the anatomical details of this whale, but let that pass; since, for the life of me, I could not draw so good a one" (216-7); to, finally, "Whales in Paint; in Teeth; in Wood; in Sheet-Iron; in Stone; in Mountains; [and] in Stars," wherein the last recorded and hence the truest representations of the whale seem to be the glimpses of remembered similarity one catches sidelong in craggy mountainsides or the flights of fancy one conjures while gazing at the night sky. That Ishmael seems to believe that the utmost of faithful representation is that which is pure subjectivity—a reverie inspired by the stars—reveals the futility of attempting to capture anything beyond a brutalized body through "objective" means. As John Bryant writes, "the essence of life is contained within the substance of life and cannot be 'extracted' without killing life; full transcendence, therefore, is impossible" (x). Faith in the other's subjectivity is achievable without rendering that other into dissected, apportioned bits.

In the final chapters of the book, as the various entities that Ishmael has anatomized in the book—the whale line, the harpoons, the boats, the flukes, the tail, the massive bulk of cetacean forehead—collide with one another in a three-day battle that ultimately kills everyone except for Ishmael and, possibly, Moby Dick, the novel turns to the newest possible scientific paradigm, evolution, as a means of resisting the rigid forms of authority that have already been detailed. *Moby-Dick* was published eight years before *On the Origin of the Species*, but speculative evolutionary accounts already existed as a means of making sense of extinction and geological change. Eric Wilson argues that, to use Darwin's phrase, Ishmael ultimately embraces an "inextricable web of affinities" as a means of navigating an always contingent, always relational, always *evolving* understanding of the world (qtd. Wilson 131). Wilson argues that obsessively anthropocentric men like Ahab who are fixated on a singular worldview are doomed for extinction whereas adaptable, open-minded men like Ishmael will "thrive and flourish" in the unpredictable variations of the future (131). When Melville finally uses the word "evolution" in *Moby-Dick*, notes Joseph Andriano, it is literally in the sense of the whale's tossing and turning as he fights with the ship, the boats, the harpoons, and the whale lines (6):

> But at last in his untraceable evolutions, the White Whale so crossed and recrossed, and in a thousand ways entangled the slack of the three lines now fast to him, that they foreshortened, and, of themselves, warped the devoted boats towards the planted irons in him…. the whale wheeled round to present his blank forehead at bay; but in that evolution, catching sight of the nearing black hull of the ship; seemingly seeing in it the source of all his persecutions; bethinking it—it may be a larger and nobler foe; of a sudden he bore down upon its advancing prow. (420, 429)

Moby Dick is unquestionably triumphing in the battle described in these scenes; the whalers do not stand a chance. In both uses of the word "evolution," and particularly in the

second instance, it is possible to read a second meaning: that Moby Dick's adaptations have fitted him to survive this battle. Philip Armstrong interprets Melville's strategy in *Moby-Dick* as a network of agencies—Moby Dick's tail, his flukes, the two eyes on opposing sides of his face, the lethal whale line rope, Ahab, Fedallah, and so on—each of these entities, whether human, animal, or inanimate, whole or part, exerts its own intentionality so that no individual subjectivity is wholly independent or supreme. This interpretation from systems theory and object-oriented ontology aligns with reading "evolution" in the second instance of the above quoted passage to mean "evolutionary adaptations," for why else are his eyes so strangely placed if not to prepare him for this moment? Rather than Armstrong's thesis of networked agency, however, the more salient takeaway from Melville's deployment of "evolution" in the final battle is the roiling, rolling revolution that allows one to take in perspectives from all sides, to float and coast and adapt rather than remain fixed by a line to an obsessive idea that will drag you to your death. As Wilson writes, "[T]rue systems are ever uncompleted… the world, like [Ishmael's] book, is Darwinian—a work in progress, always open-ended… to avoid the *hypos,* depression, monomania, melancholia, all of which affect the static Ahab, one must *circulate*, evolve, become an eddy in the forward flow" (Wilson 146). This seems to be the final verdict of Ishmael's inquiries into scientific truth.

In the end, Melville's white whale remains an irreducible other, but so, too, do some phantoms in our own minds remain unfathomably otherlike. Ishmael substitutes a desire to get to the bottom of things with the infinitely more freeing experience of embracing alterity. Gabriele Schwab asserts, "Ishmael's negative demonstrations of the failures of representation, as well as his endless enumerations of what the whale is not, ensure that the

order of the text appears as the order of his own narration and not as the order of things or events" (70). Sten elaborates:

> What keeps Ishmael from presenting a slanted or distorted view of this creature is that his view is never so simpleminded, or so intractable, as to be unqualified. It is always provisional, the product of what he admits to be personal opinion and not what he claims to know with absolute certainty. Typically, his view is as free of egotism as is humanly possible… he himself never presents a final, authorized view of the whale or its meaning. He knows how difficult it is to get a clear, unobstructed view of the thing itself in its living, moving form. (43)

Coviello terms this "a perpetually achieved relation to the world" (102). If we are willing to concede that such groundlessness is inescapable and thus acceptable, Ishmael's model can "soothe our own anxieties about interpretive powerlessness and befuddlement" and "instruct us in interpretive evenhandedness, which for him amounts to the fine art of noncommittal contemplativeness: a reading style that places a very high premium on the extraction of speculative possibilities, and a very low one on the specification of facts, answers, and rigid conclusions" (Coviello 104). This strategy requires "the sustained adumbration of *potential* meanings that, as they accrue, will propagate along new and expanded lines of signification" (104). It is with this spirit of "unconditional democracy in all things," as Melville wrote in his dreary letter to Hawthorne, that a man can recognize the fellow feeling in a tattooed cannibal, an enslaved cabin boy, a crazed ship captain, a white whale, and one's own melancholy feelings of estrangement. Barring the need for self-defense, it would seem that keeping the Other alive and free promises the possibility of delivering more value than any profit to be extracted from its confinement or sacrifice, for only then can the unpredictable, the serendipitous, and the astonishing inscrutability within the other have the fullest opportunity for working its spell.

Melville queers binaries like scientific/irrational not so that he can merely upend the framework, making irrational speculation the new science, nor so that he can abandon all pretense of meaning, making murder and meat-eating as moral as moongazing. Ishmael's method of interpretive stalemate within the "wild wanderings of life" instead offers readers a rupture wherein they can pause and weigh the facticity of their own subjectivity against the urgent presence of alterity—a moment of self-reflection in the face of the other, even when that face seems nothing more than a vast, inscrutable blankness. This message was not appreciated by readers in 1851, who expected more so than ever before that studying animals would provide some clear answers about who we were and where we were going. It was not much appreciated in 1926 either, when, as George Cotkin explains, moviegoers impressed by the Warner Brothers picture bought up abridged versions of the book which heavily excised the Ishmael plotline and thus returned Moby Dick to his antagonistic role of "sea beast."

As mentioned, the Warner Brothers film ended with Ahab, his fiancée Esther, and their dog, happily reunited within a white picket fence. The novel ends with Ishmael, "another orphan," clinging to a water-sealed coffin as though it were a life-buoy, all remnants of the *Pequod* and of Moby-Dick now submerged beneath the waves, floating like worthless driftwood among disinterested "unharming sharks" and "savage sea-hawks… with sheathed beaks" (432). The ending recalls the temporary stranding at sea of the cabin boy Pip, who is safely recovered but with his mind permanently addled, "an idiot; such, at least, they said he was," in the same sense that Shakespeare's truth-uttering fools are idiots:

> The sea had jeeringly kept his finite body up, but drowned the infinite of his soul. Not drowned entirely, though. Rather carried down alive to wondrous depths, where strange shapes of the unwarped primal world glided to and fro before his passive eyes; and the miser-merman, Wisdom, revealed his hoarded heaps; and among the joyous, heartless, ever-juvenile eternities, Pip saw the multitudinous, God-omnipresent, coral insects, that out of the firmament of waters heaved the colossal orbs. He saw God's foot upon the treadle of the loom, and spoke it; and therefore his shipmates called him mad. So man's insanity is heaven's sense; and wandering from all mortal reason, man comes at last to that celestial thought, which, to reason, is absurd and frantic; and weal or woe, feels then uncompromised, indifferent as his God. (321-2)

Ishmael likens his own stranding to Pip's fateful ego-death, and although he is rescued in the final sentences, it would appear that this is so only so that he can write the "the fogs of dark philosophy and obscure meanings and… extravagant, half-insane writing" that his contemporaries slammed shut in befuddlement. A verse from Job, "AND I ONLY AM ESCAPED ALONE TO TELL THEE," begins this brief epilogue, a loneliness so profound he says it twice. A tearful Ahab petting a dog is a ludicrously cheap way to end Melville's story, especially since his affection for the dog has in no way prevented the man from wanting to kill the "sea beast," even after his true antagonist, his half-brother, has already been slain. Far be it from me to suggest revisions for a masterpiece, but perhaps a less despondent ending would have registered better with Melville's desired audience. Ishmael's ethic of acceptance, after all, is the antithesis of loneliness—a willingness to let others keep shining their lights, to fill the world with overlapping subjective worlds, to keep the harmless Other's agency alive and independent simply because that otherness in and of itself can perhaps be most interesting and valuable and helpful if left animated by its own vital spark. The opposite worldview—the mission of Starbuck—is the loneliest position, an inexhaustible rapacity that has removed other species from our lives, either to

the factory farms where they can be securely slaughtered without disturbing our sentiments, or to oblivion because we could find no reason to justify protecting their habitats and their living conditions. Ishmael's rejection of exploitation may have seemed a hopelessly lonely vantage point in the United States in 1851, but his message of solidarity is one that need not be seen as hopeless. This dissertation will show how in the intervening decades it has become possible for more writers and readers to see in animals and in each other not simply something to be processed, categorized, used, and reduced, but a reflection of our own irreducibly perplexing and infinite selves.

CHAPTER 2
THE GANDER PULLING IS "REALLY REAL" ONLY TO THE GANDER: A GOOD OLD-FASHIONED AMERICAN BLOOD SPORT

> "It puts me in mind of 'Gander Pulling;' you know what that is, don't you?"
> "No," he said, "I never heard of it. Is it an American sport?"
> "Yes," sais I, "it is; and the most excitin' thing, too, you ever see."
> -Judge Thomas Chandler Haliburton,
> *The Attaché; or, Sam Slick in England*, 1843

On Tuesday, the Fourth of July, 1899, a Natal Day procession paraded down Main Street in Stanford, Kentucky. At its head, local undertaker J.C. McClary performed Uncle Sam on an elevated dais, followed by some two dozen floats and "fancy vehicles" representing the town's industries, businesses, and prestigious families. The local newspaper, the *Semi-Weekly Interior Journal*, presented a carriage sporting Miss Jennie Warren, who passed free copies of the paper to a jubilant crowd while bedecked in a dress, hat, and parasol made of newsprint. Alongside her was the handsome twenty-four-year-old Lieutenant Henry Rowan Saufley, dressed in his uniform from the previous year's Spanish–American War. Their photographs are prominently displayed on the front page of Friday morning's edition, under a headline celebrating the festivities as "A Creditable Exhibition to All Concerned" and claiming that thousands were in attendance.

Other crowd-pleasing entertainments soon followed, including soaring oratory from the Honorable Fontaine Fox Bobbitt, a firework display and firefighting demonstration (presumably unrelated), a bicycle race with three contestants, and three footraces with a total of seventeen competitors divided into men, boy, and "Negro" classifications. Other scheduled races garnered fewer entrants and were canceled, yet an activity not on the official roster saw no such shortage of participants, and despite supposed

condemnation from the celebration's organizers, this rogue competition managed to continue for hours.

The newspaper report saves this detail for the final paragraph of three congratulatory columns:

> The management asks us to state as emphatically as can be that it had no part nor lot in the barbarous gander neck pulling, which alone marred the doings of the day. The poor bird was suspended to a wire for hours and when finally a number of young men rode rapidly under it and tried to pull off its head, its shrieks of pain were pitiable to hear. Every body was relieved when Logan Wood at last jerked off the head. Gander head pulling is the relic of a dark age and ought not to be permitted in these days of law against cruelty to animals.

One wonders, with a crowd of thousands including the mayor, a judge, and the esteemed police magistrate in attendance, what civic action might have been necessary to put an end to such illegal, "barbarous" activity. Who, if not the official Natal Day preparations committee, organized—presumably right on Main Street—the elaborate setup that goes into a gander pulling, and if the majority felt that this unexpected activity was marring the day's pleasantry, could nothing be done to stop it, especially during all those hours between when the game was evidently set up and when "finally" the game was begun? One wonders also what tenor the relief might have comprised when Logan Wood at last put an end to those hours of pitiable suffering, not by any act of disruption or arrest but rather, simply, by following the game to its predetermined conclusion. What forces drove these creditable exhibitors to emphatically condemn this amusement even as they felt compelled not to leave the champion Mr. Wood's accomplishment off the roll of honor?

This ambivalent news report conjoins two overlapping amusements that were practiced in the United States throughout the nineteenth century and before: the historical

practice of what North Americans most frequently called "gander pulling" and the narrative recounting of such gander pullings, as circulated in newspapers, magazines, travelogues, and popular novels. The actual practice of gander pulling followed the predetermined rules and regulations of sport, building like a linear narrative to a definitive, climactic resolution. The narratives reproduced these motions through literary tropes that recurred with such frequent iteration and so few exceptions that these stories could be said to constitute their own minor genre.

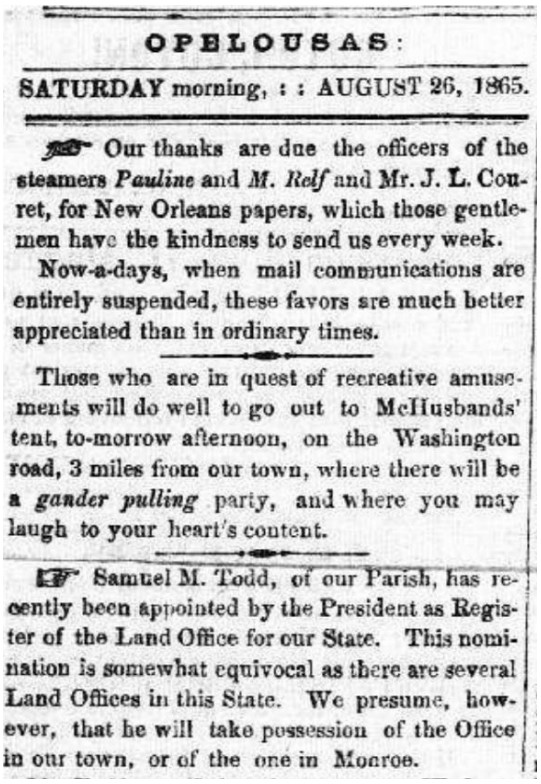
In most of these narratives, an effort is made to distance the writer and reader from the actual practice of gander pulling. Those possessing ready knowledge are situated at some remove from the assumed reader—either in *time* (the gander pulling is a "good old fashioned" sport that has recently fallen out of favor), in *space* (as something done only way down in North Carolina, only across the border in Illinois, or only in one of the other eighteen states where, at a minimum, gander pullings are reported to have happened), or in *social strata* (a practice partaken only by the "barbarous"—by the drunken lower classes perhaps, or by the formerly enslaved, or Native American "savages"). The author from his travels may have acquired detailed knowledge of this strange custom, but even narrators sometimes recount their path from ignorance to understanding in the course of a sketch. A further degree of distancing may come from the author's *moral stance* as positioned against the gander pullers—whether that be detachment, condescension, or outright indignation—a stance that the author typically assumes the sensitive reader will share.

Participatory roles yield another significant degree of distance. Actual gander pulling contests may have begotten gander pulling narratives and even the narratives may have spawned real-life events, but aside from this act of inspiration, there was very little

overlap between the participants of the two pastimes. No gander pulling narrative that I could find from over one hundred examples, factual or fictional, was ever explicitly written from the perspective of a "gander puller," and many of the observer-narrators provide ample critical remarks about either the sport or its participants. A possible explanation for this divergence may be the one suggested in some of the narratives—that the participants of real gander pullings were illiterate bumpkins, incapable of writing grammatical prose and uninterested in reading it; regardless of the explanation, to have been a participant in the narrative that was the gander pulling itself seems to have foreclosed the need to then transcribe that action into a literary text.

The distance between these two pastimes—*actual* gander pulling and the genre of gander pulling *narratives,* as reported most frequently by avowed outsiders—presents a methodological challenge to one seeking to interpret the meanings underlying the sport's cultural practice. The historical archive comprises advertisements for upcoming gander pulling tournaments, which never bother to articulate the details of the game (e.g. **Illustration 1**). These advertisements, typically no longer than a sentence, represent the likeliest evidence of a firsthand account written by an actual gander puller, yet these succinct notices reveal almost nothing. Authentic news reports from areas where the sport was commonly practiced are also sparing, sometimes only listing the name of the winner. These cryptic notices, mixed in amongst the more straightforward farm auctions and wedding announcements, may have fueled an investigative tone found in some of the more literary narratives, which with their inciting questions may have been attempting to resolve once and for all for the confused casual reader what in tarnation a *gander pulling* might

be.[5] The terseness of the archive requires the historian to turn to the fictionalized narratives to fill certain gaps, though these narratives may consist of the hyperbolic or prejudicial attestations of mere observers who may be mistaken in their perceptions.



OPELOUSAS:

SATURDAY morning, : : AUGUST 26, 1865.

☞ Our thanks are due the officers of the steamers *Pauline* and *M. Relf* and Mr. J. L. Couret, for New Orleans papers, which those gentlemen have the kindness to send us every week.

Now-a-days, when mail communications are entirely suspended, these favors are much better appreciated than in ordinary times.

Those who are in quest of recreative amusements will do well to go out to McHusbands' tent, to-morrow afternoon, on the Washington road, 3 miles from our town, where there will be a *gander pulling* party, and where you may laugh to your heart's content.

☞ Samuel M. Todd, of our Parish, has recently been appointed by the President as Register of the Land Office for our State. This nomination is somewhat equivocal as there are several Land Offices in this State. We presume, however, that he will take possession of the Office in our town, or of the one in Monroe.

Illustration 1. A typical advertisement for a "*gander pulling* party." From the *Opelousas Courier* of Louisiana, August 26, 1865

[5] In fact, the editors of the *Port Gibson Reveille* in Mississippi appear to have leveraged this allure to sell papers. In the top left corner of the third page of the March 9, 1853, edition appears this bit of non-news: "The Junior of this paper took his affectionate leave of this town some days since, for a short so-journ in the land of Pine Trees (Copiah.) It has been hinted to us by a friend, that he has taken himself to those parts to be present at a 'Gander Pulling,' (a modern game,) which is shortly to take place there." A week later, in almost the same spot, the tension is not resolved but instead rises: "Our senior was kind enough to inform our readers that we had left the country to attend a 'gander pulling.' We found that this affair had been set for the 26th inst., and as we could not wait until then we employed some six reporters to take notes. The description of the *grand* scene will probably occupy several numbers of the paper, and those who are not subscribers and wish to hear all about it, had better send in their names soon. Borrowers will pay particular attention to the fact." To my knowledge, new subscribers never received the gratification promised by these editors but instead remained ignorant of the "grand" details of this "modern game."

In this chapter, I will provide a history and a deep reading of gander pulling, knowing full well that to label such a reading "definitive" in the absence of anthropological fieldwork, firsthand accounts from actual participants in the sport, or direct observation on my own part would be an act of either foolishness or arrogance. The historical record will be supported by the more literary, fictionalized narratives, which often vividly articulate the instructions for the game in a manner that might be likened "according to Hoyle." After first recounting the history of this now forgotten sport and its literary counterpart, this chapter will interpret the meanings that may have underscored the gander pulling contest. Building on the work of anthropologists like Clifford Geertz, Alan Dundes, and Simon J. Bronner, who have studied the cultural meanings of other bird-related blood sports, this chapter will examine how participants, organizers, spectators, and protestors may have attached meaning to the particularities of this sport, which has never been studied in-depth or in isolation from other pastimes. The role of the male goose as the object and victim of the violent game is especially vital here. Despite writers rarely ascribing any symbolic importance to the role of the gander *qua* gander, can some interpretation of his essential role in the proceedings be gleaned from nineteenth-century accounts?

I argue that the gander pulling contest was a masturbatory spectacle in which the societal privileges pursuant to name, class, education, age, ethnicity, professional stature, political persuasion, and other outward distinctions were theatrically leveled, reducing the qualifications incumbent upon being titled "the best man" to only those elements of physical, sexual prowess necessary to win the game. Gander pulling conflated exemplary manhood with subdual of the wayward phallic symbol figured in the gander's body, and this conflation allowed participants to simultaneously valorize man's mastery over his

sexually violent animal impulses while also publicly wallowing in them. Although the sport imagined an egalitarian arena where a private might best his officer, a blacksmith might best the mayor, or an orphan boy might best the wealthiest man in town, this arena was circumscribed by explicit exclusions along gendered and often racialized lines. The importance of these exclusions—of who was allowed to inflict violence on the goose, and thus of who was entitled to a manhood predicated on sexual violence—shaped constructions of the American body politic throughout the nineteenth century.

The fate of gander pulling as a social practice was intertwined with its translation into narratives which achieved more widespread exposure. On the one hand, the explanatory detail that abounds in many of the texts ensured that interested readers would be able to reproduce the sport in their own backyards, and it is likely that although the sport's practice was fading in the early 1800s due to concerns about its cruelty and impropriety, one particularly popular comedic story by Augustus Baldwin Longstreet in 1833 unintentionally served to revitalize it for the remainder of the century. On the other hand, the detail devoted to explaining the gameplay was also often extended to the object of the game, the gander, whose sustained presence in the spotlight sometimes led him to emerge as the main character. Participation in the actual game would have allowed each man to act as an active subject, reinforcing that there is no joy to be had in being someone's object and thus encouraging them to strengthen a powerful manly subjectivity that was not afraid or ashamed to assert itself violently and sexually. The distanced narratives, however, sometimes achieved a different subject–object orientation between the reader and the event's participants. Since the gander pullers are rarely figured as protagonists and never function as narrators, and since they are often numerously described in opposition to one

another as objects of spectatorship rather than emulation, readers would have likely found themselves identifying with the observer-narrators of the event, who often mock it, or the gander himself, whose suffering may have penetrated through the air of ridicule often surrounding it. In time, gander pulling counternarratives which explicitly encouraged readers to empathize with the object of men's rapacious cruelty became early examples of anticruelty literature, found in venues which historians of the animal welfare movement have generally dismissed as having been immune to animal welfare sympathies, such as newspapers from rural Southern and Western counties where the sport was actually practiced. The evolution of gander pulling narratives, which increasingly sought to enumerate all the novel details of the sport, including the goose's protracted torture, therefore helped to popularize both the sport's support and resistance to it, even though its final push into complete oblivion at the beginning of the twentieth century likely had more to do with unrelated technological changes than with the effectiveness of the anticruelty-themed narratives.

What the Devil is a *Gander Pulling*?

But what, pray tell, is a *gander pulling*, you will probably be asking. A question such as this begins or is presumed in over a quarter of gander pulling narratives. "'What the d---l is a *Gander Pulling?*' the unsophisticated reader may exclaim," writes the author of a tidbit in the *Southern Telegraph* of Rodney, Mississippi, from June 10, 1836. The omniscient narrator of William Gilmore Simms's 1851 *As Good as a Comedy; or, the Tennessean's Story* interrupts the action to inquire, "Reader, do you know what a gander-pulling is?" (113), and Edgar Allan Poe, anonymously reviewing Augustus Baldwin

Longstreet's *Georgia Scenes* for the *Southern Literary Messenger* in March 1836, remarks, "What a '*Gander Pulling*' is, however, may probably not be known by a great majority of our readers. We will therefore tell them."

Such a question is perfectly valid in the twenty-first century, when comprehensive knowledge of geese, let alone games involving them, is far from widespread. Yet even in the days when gander pullings made frequent appearances on newspaper pages, the author of a gander pulling narrative did not always presume the reader would understand the strange phrase, a fact which reveals how literary accounts spread awareness of, popularized, and perhaps disseminated the actual practice of the sport. This section will detail the schematics of the game, its European origins, and the history of its spread through America.

One of the earliest preserved accounts of gander pulling in the United States, from the June 13, 1793 edition of the *General Advertiser* of Richmond, Virginia, gives this description:

> A gander's whole neck is stripped of feathers, and whose head is well soaped, is suspended by the feet to a strong elastic branch or twig, about the height of a man's head on horseback; one of the company then sets off, full gallop; and the speed of his [gallop] is urged by the application of the whips of his companions. In passing the gander, he endeavors to get hold of its head, and wring it off, the probability is, that the gander will elude his grasp; if, however, he gets hold of the head, he will either pull it off, or be dragged off his horse. In the event of pulling off the head, he is crowned victor, and the subscription money is devoured to a drinking match. If he does not succeed, another of the company follows close on his heels with equal speed, to try his fortune. (qtd. Haynes)

Later accounts tend to be more specific, in a manner which evokes the era's association of authority and authenticity with mapping, measurement, and thorough empirical observation. A paragraph of several hundred words in *Ten Years in Texas* (1881), for

instance, written with breathless meticulousness by A.B. Greenleaf[6] of Selma, Alabama, details the construction and placement of the "empty cigar box" into "which the entrance-fee of fifty cents must be deposited by each one that participates"; the physical construction of the rack from which the gander will be suspended, built of "two posts set firmly in the ground, some fifteen feet apart, and about ten or twelve feet high, with a cross-bar on top reaching from one post to the other"; the precise positioning of the horse whippers "some thirty feet from the rack, one on either side" whose job it is to make sure the contestants move at breakneck speed; the "ten inches of black loblolly mud" that comprises the track and into which the contestants are frequently flung; and the arrangement of the pullers on horseback "in single file some eighty or a hundred yards distant" (20-21). He even notes "that in this instance, when the head was pulled off, the box contained over one hundred dollars," clarifying that at fifty cents per attempt the gander's head must have been pulled at some two hundred times prior to being severed (21). Greenleaf's minute observations attest to the veracity of his travel narrative, but they also position him as a superior outsider, for although he observed every detail of the scene, he "failed to see where or when ["the funny part of the thing"] came in" (21). The presence of many such similar stories in the pages of *Spirit of the Times,* a sporting magazine that aimed at standardizing the rules of gameplay and proper sportsmanship across the country, may also account for the emphasis

[6] Perhaps a penname meant to mimic the most canonical of all gander pulling authors, Augustus Baldwin Longstreet. In my research, I could find no other solid evidence to substantiate the existence of an "A.B. Greenleaf," though his detailed narrative certainly seems unimpeachable in its facticity. Though a gander pulling is only one of many incidents narrated in his travelogue, an illustration of it serves as the book's frontispiece (**Illustration 2**). If A.B. Greenleaf did indeed style his *nom de plume* after the A.B. Longstreet of "The Gander Pulling" fame, then combined with the frontispiece this would be evidence of the apparent profitability of writing about the sport.

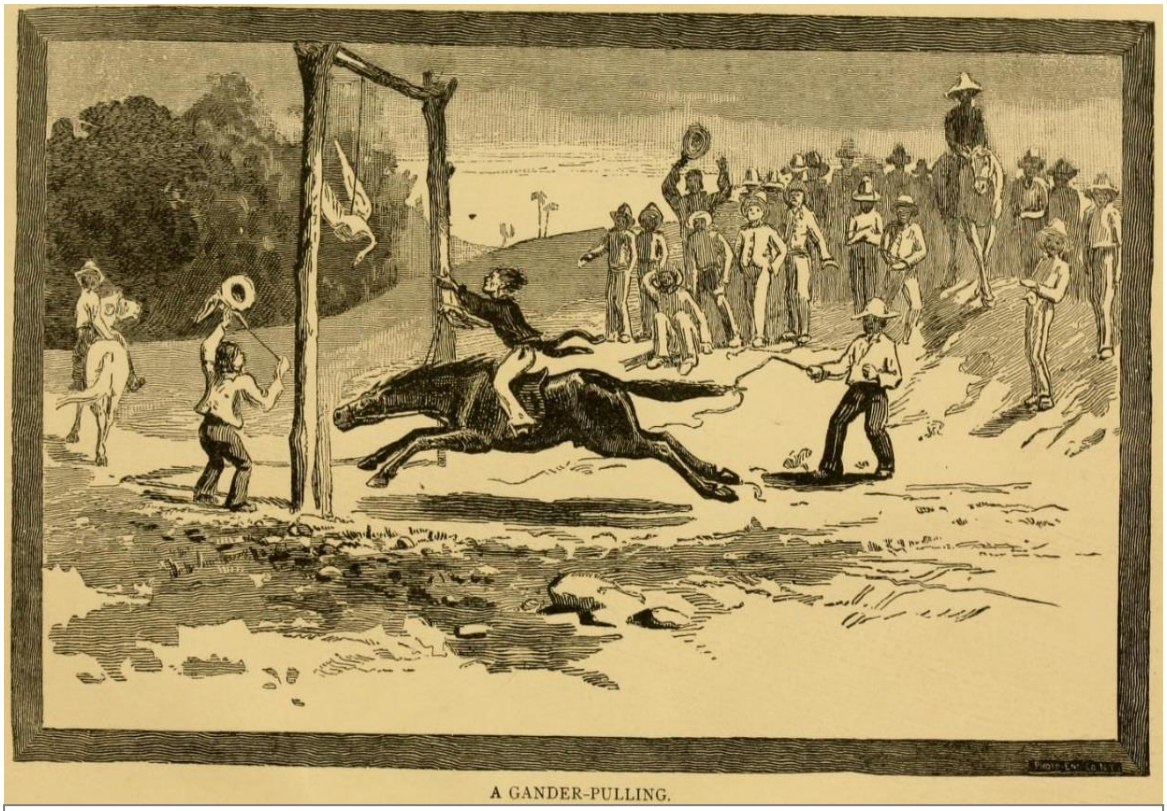


Illustration 2. The frontispiece of A.B. Greenleaf's *Ten Years in Texas,* 1881.

on concrete, reproducible detail. Regardless of whether the narrator's tone expressed amusement, ambivalence, or outrage, a formerly naïve reader could finish most of these stories with a solid understanding of how to organize a tournament of his own.

The origins of gander pulling are uncertain and frequently contested. The most comprehensive study to date was written by Dutch anthropologist and art historian Marjolien Efting Dijkstra, whose Eurocentric inquiries mapped the blood sport from its medieval origins to its continued (albeit transformed[7]) practice into the twenty-first century

[7] Instead of pulling at the heads of live victims, today's European contestants pull at either mechanical contraptions—which may or may not resemble actual birds—or goose carcasses euthanized by a veterinarian immediately prior to the game.

in certain rural communities of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany. Known as "pulling the goose" or "riding the goose" in its European incarnations, the sport appears to have emerged as part of a medieval tradition of pastimes revolving around the decapitation, slashing, or clubbing to death of animals as diverse as wrens, cats, eels, and rabbits (Efting Dijkstra 119). Blood sports involving geese were especially prominent in the Low Countries of Holland and Belgium, emerging prior to the thirteenth century as a peasant tradition associated with both the feast of Shrove Tuesday (in February or March) and the harvest festival of St. Martin's Day, an 11 November feast frequently celebrated with the slaughtering of fattened cattle. Related games involving geese were soon played in Germany, England, France, and other parts of the world (Efting Dijkstra 121-6). These folk traditions may have begun as either humble imitation or farcical parody of knightly jousting tournaments and other equestrian skill-at-arms games, where the ability to be dexterous and precise while on horseback distinguishes cavalier from coward.[8] Perhaps goose riding fell somewhere on the spectrum of spectacle between traditional jousting, where the human competitors could face lethal injuries, and "tilting at the ring" (or other quintain lance games), where the only targets were inanimate objects.

Illustrations of related games involving the clubbing or beheading of geese appear in the depiction of the month August by Flemish miniaturist Simon Bening in *The Golf Book* (ca. 1540) and in the distant background of *The Harvesters* by Dutch painter Pieter Brueghel the Elder (1565), but the first literary reference to "riding the goose" may have

[8] Numerous nineteenth century American accounts draw upon Arthurian imagery, such an article in the *Daily Dispatch* of Richmond, Virginia, from September 16, 1853, that playfully likens a recent gander pulling to a "grand effort to revive the age of chivalry" or an article from the April 10, 1897, edition of the Louisiana *Lafayette Gazette* that refers to the pullers as "some 30 knights."

been Gerbrand Adriaensz Bredero's ballad "Boerengezelschap" ("Company of Peasants"), anthologized in his posthumous 1622 *Groot Lieboek* (*The Great Songbook*). A popular Dutch poet and playwright, Bredero (1585 –1618) was most famous for his *boertige liedjes*, or "Boisterous Songs," which recounted the farcical exploits of the peasant class, as voyeuristically filtered through the refined lens of a touristic burgher. In "Company of Peasants," Arend Pieter Gijsen and his troupe of farmer friends travel to the rural village of Vinkeveen "because old Frans gave up his goose for riding" (Barend-van Haeften 83, my translation). The goose riding is the main attraction that compels the peasants to go on their adventure, yet the sport is never defined or directly mentioned again in the subsequent ten stanzas. That the audience would understand the meaning and allure of *gansrijden*, despite Bredero's construction of his audience as urbane Amsterdam "gentlemen" far removed in sensibilities from the peasants of his tale, is taken as a given.

Bredero's song fulfills the same function that many nineteenth-century American gander pulling narratives would also serve: the unique sport at its center becomes a convenient means for reflecting on how people of different regions conduct themselves. Rural amusements frequently serve such purpose, and in Bredero's treatment, the competition and excitement of the sport devolves into a chaotic spiral of drinking, gambling, fornication, brawling, and manslaughter. As the comic bloodshed builds, the level-headed and passive narrator-observer, figured as a bourgeois tourist from Amsterdam, manages just barely to escape to tell the tale:

> Gentlemen and burghers, virtuous and sensible,
> Go not near a peasant festival.
> They are not always fun, but often instead
> Cause someone to lose their head.
> Drink with me rather a good glass of wine,

> For that is the much more pleasant pastime.
> (Barend-van Haeften 85, my translation)

The "someone" whose head is lost may or may not be an allusion to old Frans's goose, bringing the song full circle and implying that these ruffians' willingness to play fast and loose with a goose's head may reveal their inability to keep their own screwed on straight.

The Dutch settlers of New Amsterdam, descendants of Bredero's satirical targets, were likely the first people of what would become the United States to practice "pulling the goose," and a legal ordinance by Director-General Peter Stuyvesant outlawing the game in 1654 technically doubles as one of the earliest American animal protection laws.[9] A staunch adherent to the Dutch Reformed Church and an opponent of religious plurality in New Netherlands, Stuyvesant balked at the Catholic and pagan undertones of the Shrove Tuesday bacchanal. Quoting from legal records, historian Esther Singleton notes that Stuyvesant's justification for imposing fines and imprisonment on settlers who participated in "riding the goose" was that the sport was "an unprofitable, heathenish and Popish festival and a pernicious custom" that needed to be punished "in order to prevent more sins, debaucheries and calamities" (qtd. 293).

Proscription by law rarely halts folk customs, however. On February 19, 1654, days after the ordinance, the arrest and imprisonment of several farm servants instigated a power struggle between the Director General and the local Burgomasters (magistrates) and

[9] Stuyvesant's decree, however, appears to have been motivated by more anthropocentric concerns than the limiting of wanton cruelty against geese, much like the 1641 Puritan regulations against "any Tirranny or Crueltie towards any bruite Creature which are usuallie kept for man's use," which green criminologist Piers Bierne notes probably had less to do with compassionate concern for animals and more to do with protecting the Sabbath, codifying the sacred distinctions between humans and animals, and emphasizing the importance of agriculture and its necessary animal resources in a new and fragile community (Bierne, *Confronting Animal Abuse* 69-96).

Schepens (aldermen) tasked with executing his decrees. The local constabulary sided with the peasantry in favor of leniency, while Stuyvesant and his Council insisted upon his authority to regulate the predilections of the "rabble." The Council justified its ban against the folk tradition on the grounds that a tradition must already have an established history in order to have the weight of custom on its side, something that cannot possibly exist in a colony less than a generation old: "Besides its never having been practiced here in their time, it is moreover altogether unprofitable, unnecessary and censurable for subjects and neighbours to celebrate such pagan and popish feast and to practise such evil customs in this Country, even though they may be tolerated and looked at through the fingers in some places in Fatherland" (qtd. Singleton 294). Preoccupation with the new-world cleansing of outmoded practices and a purification of the Protestant church seem to have rendered concerns for the suffering of the animals secondary at best, and the need for subsequent reiterations of the edict in 1655 and 1658, as well as in Albany in 1677, illustrates that the law could not stop the people's demand for gruesome sport.

How the game was transmitted from New Netherland to other parts of America or whether it originated independently in different regions is unclear. One news report published in the *Montgomery Tribune* on February 14, 1902, for instance, explains that a unique variation of the game practiced on Shrove Tuesday in Rhineland, Missouri, "originated in Germany and was kept up by the early settlers after landing in this country 50 or more years ago." Knowledge of the game may have also been carried by immigrants from England, where the sport seems to have already been on the decline before a reawakening in the colonies; the historians Elliott J. Gorn and Warren Goldstein trace the transmission of amusements, including blood sports, from English to American soil (21),

and a dictionary of thieves' cant from 1793 attests that "goose riding… has been practised in Derbyshire within the memory of persons now living" (Caulfield n.p.). The sport's European origins were largely forgotten by the nineteenth century, however, and many onlookers presumed it was a unique product of the South or what was then deemed the "Southwest" of frontier states like Tennessee.

A predilection for communal sports, a general predisposition for cruelty, and a cultural premium on skilled horsemanship (a prerequisite for the game) may have primed Southerners for readily adopting gander pulling whenever the sport made its debut on some plantation, and it was in that region that the game especially thrived. Gander pulling was one of several public contests which reified social hierarchy in the antebellum American South, and it was likewise only one of many blood sports practiced. Sports in the antebellum American South, particularly blood sports, were inseparable from their socioeconomic and racial context. Although in New England rough games such as mob football had existed since the colonial period, Puritan opposition to all non-religious congregation had given those sports a status outside the sanctioned social order. In New Amsterdam, as well, General Director Stuyvesant saw folk sports as a threat to civic life. For the American South, however, participation in sport was central to reifying social hierarchy. Historian David Hackett Fischer argues that the Cavalier settlers of Virginia, hailing largely from the second sons of Wessex royalist nobility, were always on the lookout for amusements to fill their idle time. According to Fischer, these cavaliers were not destined to inherit the properties and titles in England passed by primogeniture to their eldest brothers, yet they deemed themselves too respectable for work on their acquired land in the colonies. They thus passed the burden of labor onto enslaved Africans, using the

justification that the swampy, malarial climate of the Tidewater South was less lethal to robust, "insensate" African bodies than it was to refined aristocratic blood (Fischer 251-2, 363-73, 380-1). With no desire to work and no need for aspirational education due to their assured aristocracy, sporting competitions became a primary means of socializing and "killing time." Such socialization represented much more than just the passage of idle time, however. Historian Jamal Ratchford writes:

> To the British, work aligned with pain, toil, and servitude—play with freedom and gentility, a necessity and sin juxtaposed against pleasure and ease…. For elite white men in colonial America, sport confirmed honor and masculine empowerment. Work then coincided with arduous labor and an inferior social status, and granted space for white constructions of inclusivity and exclusivity in sport and society…. Blood games and early sport were not enacted for the profit motive. On the contrary, elite whites used it exclusively in seclusion to confirm their class status. (112-3)

This assessment finds support in several critical accounts of gander pulling. Charles Grandison Parsons's 1855 abolitionist polemic *Inside View of Slavery: Or a Tour Among the Planters* deems gander pulling "[o]ne of the most frequent amusements in some parts of the South" in a chapter on "Southern Sports" set in Milledgeville, Georgia (137). He observes:

> The slave States are proverbial for their amusements. The families of wealthy slaveholders are seldom taught to labor, or to engage in any kind of business. Life is to them but a play-day, and the question of every morning is—how to kill time? […]—and the theater, the billiard table, the drinking saloon, the horse race, the cock fight, are but so many ways devised to banish *ennui*, and prevent life from being a burden. (135)

As Parsons wryly notes, after a gander pulling, a "fox-chase, and perhaps a nigger-hunt, close the festivities" (138), reinforcing the idea that the ostentatious display of violence—as *leisure*—towards animals was an extension of the violence—as *social control*—towards humans. The public display of violent sport thus presented a microcosm for the power structure of society at large.

The relationship between gander pulling, slavery, and a general disposition of idleness and cruelty in the South was not lost on abolitionist writers, and descriptions of the sport in Northern newspapers in the antebellum years used it to exemplify moral decay. For example, a report published in the *Vermont Watchman and State Journal* of Montpelier on August 7, 1845, details a gander pulling witnessed on the Fourth of July, 1842, in the "Northern part of Georgia." The opening hook—"Don't start, gentle reader"—promises the Vermonter turning the page a glimpse into a haunted land of alien horrors, a "scorned, hated, detested, loathed… region of God's earth, which was covered with such unutterable moral darkness." The author foregrounds the bird's suffering in gruesome detail, writing that "[t]he poor creature's head soon swelled to thrice its ordinary size, and exhibited nothing but a quivering mass of bleeding, bruised flesh." That such "Southern refinement" is orchestrated by a "barefoot master of ceremonies" exposes the brutal sport's practitioners to mockery and shame.

Although both denunciatory and celebratory reports of gander pullings were abundant throughout the United States in the two decades prior to the Civil War, the sport appears to have previously been on a swift decline in the United States from 1800 to 1832. The writer of the *Vermont Watchman* article was shocked to discover that the sport was still in practice in 1842. "We had read something of this sport in an old volume of American

travels, published in 1815," he writes, "but supposed that it had grown nearly obsolete." This may be hyperbole designed to characterize the sport as outmoded and barbaric, yet even sources without abolitionist intent suggest the sport was on the wane. Two unsigned letters from 1810 and 1811 in the *Thomas Henderson Letter-Book* attest to its local practice in Moore County, North Carolina, though even at that early year, one of the letters confesses that the sport was only "formerly" practiced by sporting clubs in the area, explaining, "The present religious impressions of the people has laid [it] aside… as cruel and barbarous and contrary to benevolence and humanity" (Newsome, ed. 293-4). A source from 1818—possibly the same travelogue referenced by the Vermonter—attests to its contemporary practice in Kentucky, but otherwise mention of the sport rarely made it into print in the decades prior to 1832. If it was practiced, at least, it was not publicized.

The sport's initial path to obscurity prior to the 1830s was likely in part due to the period's growing association between one's delight over explicit acts of animal cruelty with anxieties concerning self-control, sin, tyranny, and societal decay. Although significant state laws against animal cruelty in the United States would not be created until the years following the Civil War, a moral philosophy connecting harm against animals to idleness, criminality, and tyranny had existed in English-speaking culture from before the American Revolution. This philosophy was most famously depicted in English artist William Hogarth's popular 1751 series of engravings entitled *The Four Stages of Cruelty*. In his *First Stage*, Hogarth depicts young men and boys gleefully torturing birds, anally raping a dog with an arrow, setting up a cockfight, and cheering on a spectacle in which two cats, suspended by a rope from a streetlamp pole, claw at each other. In an inscription

beneath, Hogarth calls attention to the rare but pleasing presence of a lone compassionate boy amidst the mob of leering caricatures:

> Learn from this fair Example—You
> Whom savage Sports delight,
> How Cruelty disgusts the view,
> While Pity charms the sight.

In the second panel, the protagonist of the series, cruel Tom Nero, has found an outlet for his childhood passion for blood sports in his position as a coachman. He zealously beats his fallen workhorse while in the background an overladen donkey, a clubbed lamb, and a baited bull succumb to similar violent subjugation from their overseers. In the third panel, *Cruelty in Perfection*, Nero graduates to adultery, armed robbery, and other crimes against fellow humans, including the murder of his pregnant lover, and in the final panel, *The Reward of Cruelty*, his grisly executed corpse is dissected by medical students while, in a wry bit of poetic justice, a dog feeds on his discarded heart. The moral of the story, painfully clear in both the imploring verses and the sickening juxtaposed images, is that unchecked "Crime to Crime succeeds" until "What Int'rest springs from barb'rous deeds" is merely "dire disgrace" and a "Monument of Shame."

In the United States in their first few decades, for a young man to indulge in gander pulling boded poorly for the sustainability of democracy. The notion that a childhood predilection for cruelty towards animals might betoken moral corruption within the body politic of the young republic was supported by sentiments such as these from English philosopher John Locke, whose 1693 *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* was a pivotal childrearing manual in the nation's foundational stages: "For the custom of tormenting and killing of beasts, will, by degrees, harden their minds even towards men; and they who

delight in the suffering and destruction of inferior creatures, will not be apt to be very compassionate, or benign to those of their own kind" (90-1). Locke's ideas about self-discipline were foundational in the formation of a government of the people, where democratic consent of the governed radiated outward from one's control over his own impulses, a self-regulating discipline passed on firmly but compassionately from father to son. The need for young masters—and Locke's treatise was deliberately concerned only with the education of *boys*—to learn how to master themselves as they would their subordinates without succumbing to moral weakness and its ensuing thirst for tyranny was evident in other contemporaneous commentaries on the consequences of the cruel usage of dependents, as seen in Thomas Jefferson's 1785 *Notes on the State of Virginia:*

> There must doubtless be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people produced by the existence of slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal…. The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose to the worst of his passions, and thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious particularities. (172-3)

Temperate anticruelty was a gift to oneself and one's progeny—not only the continued salvation of one's soul, but also the guarantee of a self-sustaining, civic-minded republic to safeguard the continued interests and equality of all propertied, white males. Cruelty, as vividly exemplified by blood sports, jeopardized future generations.

The moral imperative to uplift society by first mastering the immature whims of the individual overlapped with the growing temperance movement, the Second Great Awakening, and what was already by the 1830s an anxiety over the imminent demise of

America's pastoral promise. In a series of five landscape paintings from 1833 to 1836, collectively entitled *The Course of Empire,* New York artist Thomas Cole tells a visual narrative not unlike Hogarth's *Stages of Cruelty,* depicting America's rise and inevitable fall from *The Savage State* of aboriginal wildness to pastoral harmony, decadent imperial civilization, the violent *Destruction* of rape and war, and the eventual *Desolation* of crumbled ruins overtaken by a depopulated land. Viewers of Cole's cynical sequence of paintings debated whether the United States was already succumbing to the moral degradation of its citizenry and if this decay was due to Southwestern electoral policies that extended the franchise to white males with less education, property, and prestige than was customary, as personified by Tennessee Democrat Andrew Jackson and his presidential victory over John Quincy Adams in 1828. With the rise of Jacksonian Democracy, the "early national ideology" of "a republican government by statesman chosen by an instructed, enlightened people" was already on the wane (Baym 19). Cole was a born Englishman, however, and thus he could be dismissed as a villainous foil to the hallmark of the era of Jacksonian Democracy: the iconic frontiersman, whose wholesome, unpretentious physicality injected much-needed virility into the stagnant customs inherited from Europe.

Gander pulling was snatched from its initial slide into obscurity beginning with the publication of two similar, politically themed narratives in 1832 and 1833, and this resurrection may have been part of a larger reckoning with England's moral influence as the United Kingdom moved to abolish slavery, an act finalized in 1833. The Kentucky account from 1818, mentioned above as one of very few sources that mention gander pulling from 1800–1830, is Englishman Henry Bradshaw Fearon's *Sketches of America. A*

Narrative of a Journey of Five Thousand Miles through the Eastern and Western States of America; Contained in Eight Reports Addressed to the Thirty-Nine English Families by whom the Author was Deputed, in June 1817, to Ascertain Whether Any, And What Part of the United States Would Be Suitable for Their Residence, the report of a fact-finding mission about where respectable English emigrants might relocate to in America. Having witnessed slavery, gander pulling, uncouth manners, and other unpleasant scenes, Fearon concludes that the answer is nowhere. His report would later be used as evidence in an antidisestablishmentarian pamphlet about the ill effects of not having a national church. Fearon's denunciation of American cruelty, ignorance, and filthiness anticipates another, more famous guidebook by an English traveler to America: Frances Milton Trollope's 1832 *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, a searing and controversial indictment of American customs, including slavery.

Although Trollope makes no reference to gander pulling in *Domestic Manners*, a sarcastic rejoinder to her comprises the punchline of a lighthearted August 1832 feature in *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine* about a gander pulling in Mobile, Alabama. The final nod to Mrs. Trollope suggests the whole joke-riddled piece has been a deliberate attempt to offend refined European sensibilities with the crudest that America has to offer. As befitting inclusion in a sporting magazine, the brief feature is presented as a description of the game's regulations, but a preponderance of italics and scare quotes, compounded with oddly oratorical allusions to *Macbeth* and Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and repeated comparisons to "some politicians" who "stoop past recovery, as some men do from the line of principle, in search of office," suggests a resonant political subtext. A peculiar usage of the verb "nullified" early in the text hints at the Nullification

Crisis of 1832, in which South Carolina claimed it was a state's right to nullify federal tariffs and laws with which it did not agree. South Carolina had previously attempted nullification in 1822, when a federal judge ruled that the nation's treaties with the United Kingdom superseded the state's passage of the Negro Seaman Act, which would have imprisoned free black sailors on British ships while they conducted business in the port at Charleston; in that first incident, South Carolina had succeeded in ignoring the judge's order without any federal reprisals. President Andrew Jackson would write on May 1, 1833, as the second nullification crisis was resolved in favor of the federal tariff, that "the tariff was only a pretext, and disunion and Southern confederacy the real object. The next pretext will be the negro, or slavery question" (qtd. Abbott 453). South Carolina's ultimate nullification would of course occur with secession on December 20, 1860, with the protection of slavery as the primary motivation. The right of Southern states to defend slavery against federal and international intrusion therefore seems to be the coded subtext of this joking description of gander pulling from late 1832. Gander pulling in this strange anecdote, however, is its own "peculiar institution" of the South, undoubtedly "*no fun for the gander!*" and seemingly embraced precisely for its ability to offend.

Although it may never be clear if there was any direct relation between the two, the *American Turf Register* article bears several similarities to what would become by far the most popular gander pulling narrative, Augustus Baldwin Longstreet's "The Gander Pulling," which was first published in 1833 in his newspaper, the *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*. I contend that the popularity of this story revived interest in the blood sport, even though Longstreet deliberately frames it as an allegorical thing of the past. In its recounting of four vying townships and the champion rider chosen to represent each one, "The Gander

Pulling" explicitly allegorizes the nullification crisis. According to Kenneth Silverman, what seems most important to Longstreet is that the gander pulling contest "is held on the point midway between" four "symbolic towns" representing various degrees of explicitly stated federalist or states' rights doctrines (548). Silverman writes, "Thus unionism and sectionalism are the ideological setting for the contest, whose prize, the gander, plainly represents the plantation system" (548). The riders of the tournament likewise represent political types rather than genuine people, with the winner, Fat John Fulger, symbolizing "the lubber-lander, the lazy, clay-eating poor white," who, according to Silverman, represents the southern ideal's ultimate decay from within rather than at the expense of northern interests or western expansion, both allegorized as losing contestants (549). Kurt Albert Mayer notes that the story "teems with catch-phrases of political doctrine of the day—'*single body*,' '*public welfare*,' '*Social Compact*,' '*separate bodies*,' '*private welfare*'—all italicized so as to make sure that the reader will not miss the point, and capped with the assertion that in due course one of the towns 'was literally *nullified*'" (106).

Tellingly, "The Gander Pulling" is emphatic about removing the action to 1798, four decades prior and in a previous century, a displacement which may have worked to emphasize that the issues at stake had their origin in the earliest days of the Constitution yet which also corroborates the idea that gander pulling was a bygone institution by the time of Longstreet's writing. To accentuate the passage of time, he gives the reader precise geographical instructions for locating the place where the action once occurred, citing the demise of two small villages, the rise of industrial civilization, and "the great fire" of 1829 as moments of upheaval that have rendered that setting a place outside of time, unrecognizable to the citizen of today's flourishing Augusta (98-99). Although sketches he

would later write about subjects such as horse racing were typically set as recently as "a few evenings ago" (56), Longstreet situates his story about gander pulling in the "good old days," suggesting a certain archaism in the act (62). In an interview, Longstreet illuminates the thematic device that framed his literary endeavors, writing, "I have chosen the first fifty years of our republic in the course of which short space of time the society of the Southern States underwent almost an entire revolution, and at this date hardly a trace of the society of the first thirty years is to be found" (Fitzgerald 165). Just as the *American Turf Register* had begun with the reporter's bedevilment over the meaning of the phrase "gander pulling," in "The Gander Pulling" Longstreet deliberately revived a largely forgotten practice so as to symbolize a heated contest over the destiny of Southern society.

Longstreet's continued reputation rests on his short story collection that includes "The Gander Pulling": *Georgia Scenes, Incidents, &c., in the First Half Century of the Republic,* which he published in 1835. The 3,950 books of the first edition sold quickly, leading to a second New York edition in 1840 that was so popular it was reprinted every year until 1860 and then about once every four years from 1870 to 1897 (Wegmann 23). The nullification crisis soon passed—and not with the outcome that Longstreet would have preferred—yet the story persisted in the American imagination despite being so heavily laden with the political commentary of such a specific moment. "The Gander Pulling" occasionally appeared as leisure reading in newspapers such as the *Wilmington Journal* of North Carolina in 1847, the *Saint Mary's Beacon* of Maryland in 1902, and the *Yorkville Enquirer* of South Carolina in 1906.

The vividness and sheer strangeness of the sport at its center surely kept the story interesting for many readers even as the bulk of its intended meaning slipped into oblivion.

The vibrancy of Longstreet's animal characters likely also kept the story fresh. The victims of "The Gander Pulling," which include not only the gander but his "wife," whose body is reduced to grease so that her husband's neck might be made more slippery for the game, are afforded by Longstreet a rare degree of compassion that is worth quoting in full:

> The devoted gander was now produced; and Mr. Prator, having first tied his feet together with a strong cord, proceeded to the *neck-greasing*. Abhorrent as it may be to all who respect the tenderer relations of life, *Mrs.* Prator had actually prepared a gourd of *goose*-grease for this very purpose. For myself, when I saw Ned dip his hands into the grease, and commence stroking down the feathers from breast to head, my thoughts took a melancholy turn. They dwelt in sadness upon the many conjugal felicities which had probably been shared between the *greasess* and the greasee. I could see him as he stood by her side, through many a chilly day and cheerless night, when she was warming into life the offspring of their mutual loves, and repelled, with chivalrous spirit, every invasion of the consecrated spot which she had selected for her incubation. I could see him moving with patriarchal dignity by the side of his loved one, at the head of a smiling, prattling group, the rich reward of their mutual care, to the luxuries of the meadow or to the recreations of the pool. And now, alas! an extract from the smoking sacrifice of his bosom friend was desecrated to the unholy purpose of making his neck "a fit object" for Cruelty to reach "her quick, unerring fingers at." Ye friends of the sacred tie! judge what were my feelings when, in the midst of these reflections, the voice of James Prator thundered on mine ear, "Darn his old dodging soul; brother Ned! grease his neck till a fly can't light on it!" (100-1)

If this extended description "plainly represents the plantation system" whose future is at stake in the battle over states' rights, as Silverman perhaps rightly insists (548), then not too much credit should be given to Longstreet for seeking to dignify animal victims. It could be reasoned that the narrator's melancholy reflections are meant to be bathetic, the absurd degree of anthropomorphism bestowed on two silly gooses representative of his oversensitive and impractical misreading of rural life. Yet the narrator's "melancholy" over the sacrilegious end to this devoted family's lives, as one protective mother is sacrificed so as to make the husband's body a fitter source of amusement at the rough hands of a

swearing, half-illiterate bumpkin, is one of the most vivid and memorable moments in a story otherwise bogged down by political jargon. Longstreet's political symbolism is difficult to track—the gander himself is the patriarchal planation system, not a slave, and gander pulling, a contest over who has a right to the plantation system (which will itself destroy that system?), is a good thing, though unfortunately it has been seized by low elements. Ultimately, in this story and the others in his collection, Longstreet's worldview seems to have been ordered by what Mayer deems a "patrician disdain" for the "world gone under," in which he clings to a "prescriptive ordering of Augustan ideals" while yearning for "a prelapsarian pastoral" (110). His view of uneducated folk customs like gander pulling is thus largely cynical, although Scott Romine counterargues that Longstreet's intention was to instead "elide the social distance between [the classes]… in an effort to negotiate consensual participation in a common social field" (3). While this seems a dubious takeaway from Longstreet's nuanced allegory, it is certainly true of later appropriations of Longstreet's revived sport, and it is no wonder that these later imitators abandoned Longstreet's complicated political framework in favor of simpler, more amusing aims.

Perhaps a driving force in the popularity of "The Gander Pulling" came when *Georgia Scenes* was anonymously reviewed by Edgar Allan Poe in the *Southern Literary Messenger* of March 1836. "The Gander Pulling" receives a lengthy paragraph of glowing praise in which the tedious political content goes unmentioned in favor of a detailed description of how to arrange the sport. Traveling northward, in July 1836, *Atkinson's Casket*, a Philadelphia periodical, lifted Poe's instructional paragraph without context into its miscellany. The diction, phrasing, and pacing of this paragraph, which may have been

reprinted elsewhere as well, seem to have next supplied the Nova Scotian judge Thomas Chandler Haliburton with a bit of plagiarism for his bestselling novel *The Attaché; or, Sam Slick in England* (1843), which is prefaced by the narrator's confession that "[w]hether the following story of the gander pulling was a fancy sketch of the Attaché, or a narrative of facts, I had no means of ascertaining" (59). Although this depiction of gander pulling was probably only the result of several transmissions of literary retellings, John Russell Bartlett in his *Dictionary of Americanisms* of 1848 nevertheless defines "gander-pulling" simply as "[a] brutal species of amusement practised in Nova Scotia," citing Sam Slick as evidence (59). Already the sport's propagative life in the literary realm had begun to blur some of the clearer distinctions between its existence as an actual practice and its more widespread life as a multifaceted symbol in the collective imagination of North America.

Although my research has uncovered only five references to American gander pulling or goose riding in the forty years prior to publication of *Georgia Scenes*, after 1835 the sources pour in, many of them clearly modeled after Longstreet's story and Poe's review: six sources from 1835–1837, twelve in the 1840s, twenty-one in the 1850s, and an additional fifty-seven from 1865–1919. While an increase in cheap print production and stabler archiving practices may account for some of this trend, it seems likely that Longstreet's *Georgia Scenes* played a significant role, a view further supported by gander pulling's metonymic relationship with Georgia. Georgia is by far the most frequent setting of purely fictional narratives, occurring in nine distinct narratives that I have studied even though the actual evidence of gander pulling advertisements suggests the sport was more predominant in the Carolinas. For instance, a farcical column of "Original Correspondence" to editor James Gordon Bennett of the *New York Morning Herald* of June

24, 1837, containing letters to the editor presumably written by Bennett himself in the voices of regional stereotypes, contains a letter from an "Edw. Bucket, Jr." of "Hollewagus" in the "Georgia Settlement" inviting the editor to a Fourth of July gander pulling.[10] By 1851, the sport's association with Georgia was so ingrained in popular imagination that William Gilmore Simms in *The Tennessean's Story* used gander pulling as an exemplar of the unique backwardness of Georgian character as set against the more refined sensibilities of the rest of the South. That the sport was practiced also in the narrator's Tennessee and more prominently in Simms's South Carolina is ignored.

As the sport's popularity as comical literary material spread through books and newspaper reprints, it is reasonable to assume that the texts themselves propagated real-life instantiations of the sport. One news report suggests just this. According to an article originally published in the *Jackson County Herald* and reprinted in the *Anderson Intelligencer* on March 13, 1884, the unexpected arrival of "a very respectable company of fantastics" one morning in the town square resulted in a day of impromptu amusements. After five hours of spectacular horsemanship, "some one suggested the day's sport would be wound up with an old-fashioned 'gander pulling.' Every one has doubtless read in 'Georgia Scenes' of the manner in which the first settlers of Georgia amused themselves in this rather barbarous sport, and at this time but few of the oldest inhabitants can remember having been at a gander pulling." Would the amused crowd have been interested in seeing this "old-fashioned" sport enacted before them if not for the pervasive popularity

[10] That gander pulling should be included as a synecdoche of backwards Georgian culture in a New York newspaper is ironic given the sport's American origins in New Amsterdam.

of Longstreet's sketch? Would they have known how to organize the sport if not for the explicit detail of Longstreet's story and its many fascinated imitators?

In the postbellum years, a sport formerly critiqued as an indulgence of a cruel, slaveholding aristocracy could be easily repurposed as a unifying and reinvigorating force in the national spirit. This may be in part due to abolitionists writers' own reluctance to regard the gander's suffering as a serious issue in its own right, instead hollowing out his body as a metaphorical vessel to be filled with the author's agenda. Even the author of the *Vermont Watchman* article cited above, for instance, indulged in humor at the gander's expense, mockingly referring to him as "his anserine majesty" among other ludicrous epithets. Of course, as Gail Bederman documents, northerners were no less willing to condone and even indulge in that other cruel "amusement" of the postbellum white American South, lynching. The desire for national healing, at least among the white populace, often trumped the antiracist initiatives of Reconstruction, and this theme surfaces in gander pulling narratives, salvaging the sport as a colorful element of the country's unique culture. In Fred Mather's autobiographical *In the Louisiana Lowlands: A Sketch of Plantation Life, Fishing and Camping Just after the Civil War, and Other Tales* (1900), the sport heals the divide between North and South. One theme of Mather's story is the peaceful resolution of the tension between himself, a teetotaling "Yank," and a drunken "Reb" who is convinced that Mather is the man who fired the bullet that cost him his leg. The carnival atmosphere convinces Mather to imbibe, and as he succumbs to the spirit of revelry, he wins over a crowd of men who had previously been his battlefield enemies (233-42). In Mather's telling, gander pulling is a Southern tradition over which all men can bond, including the African American man responsible for greasing the geese. Although a

brief flash of racist malice from a whip-brandishing participant towards some of the browbeaten African American spectators gives Mather pause, the overall tone of the story is such that convivial pastimes in the public sphere will have the power to heal (for male citizens, at least) all national wounds.

The tonic nature of gander pulling as a promoter of national strength and virility was further supported in the postbellum years by pseudoscientific extrapolations of Darwinian thought, which lent an aura of scientific authority to the idea that masculine power is best preserved and displayed through violence. Ironically, as animal protection societies first flourished concurrent with the post-Darwinian realization that the rest of the animal kingdom might bear similarities to humanity rather than being mere soulless automata, this same evolutionary discourse broadened justification for violence against animals. The idea that there exists a continuity between humans and other animals encouraged some to see humans as justified in fulfilling their natural, violent, and morally neutral role in the cycle of life. Lions kill sheep without remorse or sin, the story goes, so why should humans deny their animal impulses and exhibit a restraint not found among other species? An interstitial reverie within Mather's account of the gander pulling serves solely to endorse this very idea, as a meditative sojourn into deceptively tranquil woods leads him to witness a hawk seizing "a half-grown rabbit whose piteous cries turned my thoughts into another channel. Nature had shown her beautiful, holiday side, and at once turned to show how pitiless and unrelenting are her laws! Hawks are hungry, rabbits are good food; and so the train of thought led to man and the fact that ganders are good food, and so to dinner" (228).

The popularization of a simplified version of Darwinism birthed many new pseudoscientific theories, among them a political framework which encouraged violent, primal recreations as a preventative to the degenerate effeminacy of excess civilized refinement. Such themes appear in numerous writings about blood sports. "The Innate Love of Sport," an anonymous editorial published on July 2, 1859, that seems to have been written as a mission statement for the *Spirit of the Times*, surmises that "the foundation of the human character is *destructiveness,*" that "this evil propensity… can never be destroyed," and that "the love of what is termed sport is so general" because "the people at large have but little taste for harmless recreations, approaching necessarily toward the barbarous standard." Such remarks are made with no air of satire or moral judgment. Here, gander pulling is listed alongside baseball, wrestling, rat catching, dog and cock fighting, and "even the ambition of the school-girl to jump the rope longer than her companion" as "continual examples" of "so many unsuppressed and determined sentiments of the lingering savage, that the gospel and all the moral instructions of ten thousand pulpits, at work for centuries, have failed to more than modify and keep within the bounds necessary for self-preservation." To indulge in sport thus is to deny the feeble efforts "of centuries of enlightenment" in favor of the truly admirable core of human nature: a bloody desire to conquer and destroy, which "is more admired than the inventor, the scholar, artist, or statesman." According to this writer, gander pulling is simply an instinctive indulgence in the thirst for bloodshed that has always been the primary motivation of all humankind, and something of no substantial difference from jumping rope. To admonish humanity's drive for bloodshed and competition would be to ignore the natural order, and, even worse—to take a step towards the overcivilized emasculation that foretells the doom of a society.

Such normalization of cruelty is seen in the comical illustrations (**Illustration 3)** that accompany the Fourth of July schedule published in the *Wood River Times* of Hailey, Idaho, on July 2, 1888, a celebration which included a gander pulling. The accompanying text, beneath the headline "FOR OUR BOYS," notes that the local boys are too "remarkably well-behaved" and thus not "very proficient in deviltry," requiring guidance on how to "make things lively." Although gander pulling is not depicted in any of the seven illustrated panels, one devilishly grinning boy with an arched brow points a pitchfork at two sweating cats who have been tied by their rear paws to a clothesline while another crowd of jubilant boys fire a cannon pointblank at a terrified canine. These illustrations, a flagrant subversion of Hogarth's *Stages of Cruelty*, follow the tropes of the popular "bad boy" genre inaugurated by authors such as Thomas Bailey Aldrich in *The Story of a Bad Boy* (1870) and Mark Twain in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), literary works which sought to rescue and validate the wildness of middle-class American boyhood from the putatively feminizing influences of modern American civilization. As Glenn Hendler demonstrates in *Public Sentiments,* these books illustrated how even a boy who indulged in the most rapacious and ferocious of his savage, uncivilized impulses could eventually refashion himself into a respectable judge, editor, or statesman. Violence and mischief were not symptoms of degradation nor anathema to mature civilization but rather a healthy and productive part of its development. The gander pulling held "at intervals during the whole day, for prizes" in Hailey in 1888 was therefore not a sign of a backsliding into barbarity but rather proof that the otherwise "remarkably well-behaved" boys of the "respected paternal parents" of the town did not need to be in an unhealthy denial of their natural male

FOR OUR BOYS.

Hints that May Assist them to Having a Good Time on the Fourth.

As our boys are remarkably well-behaved, they cannot be very proficient in deviltry and may, therefore, not know how to make things lively for their respected paternal parents and others, at this time. The TIMES therefore come to their rescue by publishing the high-class engravings which follow. They will be found much more suggestive than a whole volume of hints on the subject, even if printed in small type:

Illustration 3. The "remarkably well-behaved" boys of Hailey, Idaho. From the *Wood River Times*, July 2, 1888.

instincts. To step too far from barbarity toward civilization would be to render that civilization overly feminized and thus impotent.

Although the defense of blood sport was vocal in the late nineteenth century, one must not forget that the same pseudoscientific premises led others to moral conclusions of an opposite nature. American anthropologist Simon J. Bronner in his work on late-twentieth-century pigeon shoots resists the idea of singular readings of cultural texts. Rather, Bronner theorizes the existence of a "semiotic layering… in contested traditions where conflict arises over the symbolic meanings perceived in, and communicated through, intensified folk events" (414). While examining the same event and drawing upon the same terminology and dichotomies, observers and participants assume oppositional stances, and with blood sports in the nineteenth century, the contested meaning was the proper balance along the human–animal and savage–civilized boundary lines.

Such oppositional readings can be found in the newspapers of the era. On September 16, 1892, a writer for the *Semi-Weekly Interior Journal*—the same Stanford, Kentucky, newspaper that was the source of the ambivalent news report that began this chapter—observed that "an old time goose pull" had been scheduled in Casey County, some seventeen miles south. "Is that old time cruelty which has been done away with for 70 or 80 years on account of its being a relic of a barbarous age, to be re-instated and that too within the shadow of Janie Wash Institute?" the writer implored. The Janie Wash Institute had been built that year to provide higher learning to the area, and one subsection of the school's mission statement expounds this thesis: "Man has two natures—animal and spiritual." The founders insisted, "The animal nature needs food and clothing, but the essential feature for schools to notice is the curbing of those animal appetites and passions

which so often blast and ruin the hopes of youth forever…. It is our aim… to lift [the spiritual nature] nearer to God, while endeavoring to change, curb, or totally prohibit the indulgence of the lower desires, appetites, or passions" (Watkins, ed.) The author of the *Interior Journal* editorial, observing the county's youth a few months after the school's incorporation, must have thought the founders had their work cut out for them.

Given the tendency of historians of the animal welfare movement to characterize the early rise of organizations like the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals as an outburst of Progressivism that was confined to middle class, white, and predominantly female activists in Northeast urban centers like Boston, bearing little influence on the nonwhite, working class, and rural inhabitants of the broader United States (cf. e.g. Pearson 6-8, Beers 51-2), it is interesting and perhaps encouraging to note the preponderance of editorials condemning gander pulling in local newspapers from rural counties where the sport was actually practiced. Such editorials are free of the regionalist condescension sometimes found in Northern newspapers condemning the sport in the antebellum years, and thus their message is more attuned to actually admonishing the sport in an effective way. The *Daily Phoenix* of Columbia, South Carolina, for instance, published a lengthy poem on November 11, 1870, condemning the "enormity" of a recent gander pulling by likening the martyred goose to Christ and suggesting that gander pullers risked damnation. On January 6, 1885, the *Watchman and Southron* of Sumter County, South Carolina, which the Library of Congress deems to have been a "reliably conservative" paper with Confederate sympathies, nevertheless compared a "most brutal" gander pulling held on Christmas with a destructive dynamite explosion that happened in town the same day and concluded that such cruel recreation "deserves the reprehension of

all." The South Carolinian *Yorkville Enquirer* on December 4, 1901, likewise sympathized with the "helpless creature[s]" killed that Thanksgiving by a group of young men, coaching readers in their legal right and responsibility to intervene should they ever witness such "torture" themselves.

Although both critical and amused accounts of gander pulling coexist from the beginning until the end of the historical archive, texts which urge the reader to empathize with the birds occur more frequently in the final decades, and it is reasonable to assume that the visibility extended to the sport by its exposure in popular narratives precipitated this transition. From its earliest iterations, the gander pulling narrative was framed by its authors as an attempt to describe to readers a curious practice they had probably never heard of before. Meticulous details helped to paint this ludicrous picture as well as vouchsafe the authenticity of what might otherwise have seemed like a rural version of an urban legend. This elaboration of details extended to describing the gander, the centerpiece of the show, even in accounts with no ostensible interest in evoking reader sympathy. For instance, "A Gander Pulling at 'Old Man Hinkle's,'" which ran in the *Spirit of the Times* in late 1846 under the heading "Scraps from the Notebook of a Missouri Lawyer," meticulously dwells on the torturous plucking of the gander's neck, his failed attempt to escape his persecutor's grasp, and the possibility that he may have witnessed one of his companions be victimized in the past and may therefore possess a terrible awareness of his oncoming doom. All this is written in a spirit of lighthearted good humor, though it is easy to imagine how readers trained in the empathic reading practices of midcentury sentimentalism would find it difficult to be nonjudgmental about such descriptions, so that when the sport made its first appearance in the rural settlement of Washington Corners,

California, half a century later, as initially reported by the *San Francisco Chronicle* and later reprinted in the *Weekly Expositor* on November 24, 1893, a similar detail could be rendered in undeniably commiserative terms: "The neck of the bird had been stripped of feathers and well covered with soft soap. The soap seemed to sting and torture the poor bird terribly. It was continually frantically plucking at its neck and breast with its beak." The exposure granted to gander pulling by humorous narratives may have allowed the sport to propagate when it might have otherwise been forgotten, but the narratives also helped to expose the cruelty at its core.

Of the more than one hundred gander pulling documents I have analyzed, only two do not end with the death of at least one goose[11], yet the most significant of these accounts still grapples with the propriety and perhaps necessity of violence in American society. Mary Noailles Murfree's regionalist novel *The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains*, published in Boston in 1885 under the pseudonym Charles Egbert Craddock, depicts the standoff between Appalachian local authority and an outsider sheriff seeking to enforce state and federal laws. Murfree's tone depicts the morality of the mountain men as degraded and estranged from the national character, and this conflict is especially visible during a gander pulling that doubles as a political campaign rally (Craddock 103). Murfree details the aggressive masculinity of the blacksmith who decides that playing the role of a horse whipper will give him the greatest "element of domination" even though "it cost him a pang to forgo the competition in which he felt himself an assured victor" (107). For a few

[11] One of these survivors is featured in "A Gander-Pulling in Florida," a factual account reprinted in various newspapers such as the *Saint Paul Daily Globe* of February 19, 1888. That amused report, in which "everybody laughed until they cried," ends with the shocking (as far as gander pulling narratives go) news that "[t]he poor old gander was taken down and sent home as well as usual, from all appearances" (7).

pages, the gander becomes the central character of the narrative, and Murfree bestows full empathetic interiority on him: "Aghast at his disagreeable situation, his wild eyes stared about; his great wings flapped drearily; his long neck protruded with its peculiar motion, unaware of the clutch it invited. What a pity so funny a thing can suffer!" (107). Murfree calls attention to the humor that so many spectators saw in this situation, but rather than partaking in the laughter, she continually reinforces the gander's panic at the center of the "wide-eyed, wide-mouthed delight" of the "gaping crowd," directly contrasting "the screams of the delighted spectators mingled with the shrieks of the gander" (107-8). Although "the hurrahing settlement could not remember when it had enjoyed anything so much" (108), such riotous laughter remains horrifying through the perspective of the gander: "The gander was in a panic by this time. If ever a fowl of that gender has hysterics, that gander exhibited the disease. He hissed; he flapped his wings; he squawked; he stared; he used every limited power of expression with which nature has gifted him. He was so funny one could hardly look at him" (109). Murfree's language reveals ostensible humor to be revulsive horror.

The stage is set for a gander pulling like dozens of others in which the tortured bird eventually dies until Parson Kelsey, the "prophet" of the title, arrives on the scene. "I'm a-goin' ter take this hyar critter down," the prophet announces:

> The pains o' the beastis he hev made teches the Lord in heaven; fur he marks the sparrow's fall, an' minds himself o' the pitiful o' yearth… The spark o' life in this fow-*el* air kindled ez fraish ez yourn, --fur hevin' a soul, ye don't generally prove it; an hevin' no soul ter save, this gaynder hain't yearned the torments o' hell, an' I 'm a-goin' ter take the critter down. (110)

His rationale prefigures an argument made by Andrew Linzey in *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*: "If, for an animal, this life is all that he can have, the moral gravity of

any premature termination is thereby increased rather than lessened" (qtd. Luke 10). Parson Kelsey's religious argument, however, proves ineffective. Murfree writes, "This objection to the time-honored sport hardly seemed less eccentric than an exhibition of insanity. To apply a dignified axiom of humanity to that fluttering, long suffering tumult of anguish familiarly known as the 'gaynder' was regarded as ludicrously inappropriate. To refer to the Lord and the typical sparrow in this connection seemed almost blasphemy" (110-1). Although the crowd is at first cowed with reverence for their preacher, the blacksmith applies his whip to the parson's horse, eliciting laughter and a prompt resumption of the game. The parson soon returns, however, and pulling a gun upon the blacksmith, secures enough authority to rescue the bird: "The sport ended in great disaffection and a surly spirit" (113). With his persistence to do what he believed to be right, his ability to go against the groupthink surrounding a popular activity, and his willingness to threaten violent resistance in the face of opposition, Parson Kelsey stands alone as the only person in the recorded history of gander pulling who actually saved a gander. Nevertheless, his need to back his nonviolent resistance in the name of pacificism with the threat of violent reprisal—the pulling of the gun—causes him moral anguish. Murfree writes, "The prophet, too, was perturbed and out of sorts. The sustaining grace of feeling a martyr was lacking in the event of to-day, in which he himself had wielded the coercive hand" (114). Murfree disquietingly suggests that even in the pursuit of compassion, violence may be a prerequisite to authority.

In the early nineteenth century, Americans had looked back on gander pulling as something that deserved to remain merely a relic of the barbarous past, yet Longstreet's popular tale, which mined the practice only for its historical and allegorical possibilities, fathered a minor comic genre which repackaged the sport's convivial appeal and likely

revived interest in the sport itself, so that by the early twentieth century, those reminiscing about the sport saw its bygone and primitive nature tinted by a rosy hue of nostalgia. In his analysis of 238 *New York Times* articles about pigeon shoots, another bird-related American blood sport, Bronner observes that public debate reached a peak twice: at the turn of each century. He writes, "As fin-de-siècle periods, they engendered reflection and heated public debate on society's future directions, as well as on the status of traditions threatened by what was widely perceived as an accelerating rate of change, especially as the new millennium approached" (423). Similar reflection is present not only in the few gander pulling texts dating from the turn of the eighteenth into the nineteenth century but also in those from the dawn of the twentieth. At least ten narratives from the late nineteenth century refer to the sport using the nostalgic and affectionate language of its good "old fashioned" or "old-time" nature. For example, a "J.B.A.", writing about "Sports that are no Longer in Vogue" for the *Fort Mill Times* of South Carolina on December 5, 1900, notes that gander pulling "is now looked upon (by the aesthetic) as a barbarous pastime, tending only to cruelty, vitiating what otherwise would be a refined taste and should not be countenanced by good people."

The last evidence I have of a real gander pulling having been conducted in the United States was at the Tennessee State Fair of September 29 to October 4, 1913, when a "Big Gander Pulling Contest" was billed as a main attraction in an advertisement found in the *Nashville Globe* edition of September 26, 1913. This event may have been a modified, less brutal version of the activity than was typically practiced, however.[12] It is likely the

[12] The February 9, 1919 edition of *The Sun*, reporting from Sewanee, Tennessee, describes the "Gander Tourney Mountaineer Sport" sometimes practiced "[i]n the Southern Appalachian Mountains here and there"

illegal practice continued without public broadcast into the twentieth century. Written accounts likewise dropped off throughout the twentieth century, with occasional sketches framed as the distant reminiscences of elderly men appearing as late as 1955 in John A. Parris's journalistic *Roaming the Mountains*, and more recent textual appearances of the last half century occurring only infrequently in academic books about animal cruelty or frontier history.

It would be comforting to believe that the rise of animal welfare discourse in the United States following Henry Bergh's formation of the ASPCA in 1866 consigned blood sports like gander pulling to the rubbish heap of history along with antiquated practices such as bearbaiting. I could find no documentation of any gander pulling in the United States in the past hundred years, yet a query on Google News about "cockfighting" yielded a result from two days prior to this writing. Peter Salter for the *Lincoln-Journal Star* notes that an unspecified "portion" of the 186 roosters and breeding hens seized in a raid in Cass County on November 24, 2018, had to be euthanized by the Nebraska Humane Society since, according to vice president of field operation Mark Langan, their aggressiveness makes it "very difficult for humans to deal with a cockfighting bird." One need not read about NFL quarterback Michael Vick's involvement in the Bad Newz Kennels underground dogfighting ring in Surry County, Virginia, to find evidence of twenty-first-century American blood sports—a glance at the scarred, traumatized pit bulls sure to be

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as being the "[c]apture of [a l]ive [b]ird" in vague details suggesting something slightly less lethal than the game described in most older texts—something akin to grabbing a skittering gander from the ground while on horseback and hoisting it high above one's triumphant head.

seen during a visit to any local shelter will suffice. Blood sports persist in the United States and yet gander pulling does not. Why?

The likeliest answer may be disappointing. Gander pulling was, first and foremost, a sport about horsemanship. Although this chapter has focused on the sufferings of the birds, horses were also exploited in these contests, made to be ridden at breakneck speeds by frustrated riders, repeatedly lashed by men or boys bearing whips that were themselves made from the leather of dead cows. As Ann Norton Greene writes in *Horses at Work: Harnessing Power in Industrial America*, "the advent of the automobile marked a distinct break with the past and the beginning of the modern world… the first time in history there was a mechanical alternative to animal power that replicated both its scale and its self-propelled versatility" (245-6). As horses gave way to horseless carriages, the relevance of a controversial sport that depended upon skillful horsemanship must have sank quickly into obscurity. If automobiles could have been integrated into the sport without losing any of its "fun," perhaps it would have survived, but the driver of a car does not often get ejected from his seat and tossed into the mud. The demise of gander pulling in the United States should be seen foremost as a technological shift.

One of the final newspaper stories about gander pulling was printed in the *Evening Star* on December 24, 1910. The writer notes with misguided nostalgia that gander pulling and other "Old-Time Christmas Customs" have become "nothing more than reminiscences" due to the dissolution of the Southern plantation system (8). On that same page, however, an illustrated news story about an event off the coast of Los Angeles heralds "the best thing that had ever been done in the history of aviation, as it opens a new field for the sportsman": "Shooting ducks from an aeroplane bids fair to become a popular sport"

(**Illustration 4)**. The innate love of blood sport did not fade; it simply adapted with the times.

Latham's Duck Hunt in Airship Latest Sport

Los Angeles, Cal., Dec. 24.—Shooting ducks from an aeroplane bids fair to become a popular form of sport, it was said by aviators here to-day, as the result of an exhibition given by Hubert Latham in his Antoinette machine.

Latham was told that there was a large quantity of wild ducks at the Chico hunting grounds, whereupon he said:

"Well, we will have some sport. I shall get a shotgun and go out and hunt them." Then he secured a gun, climbed into his machine and went flying over the Chico preserves. A flock of ducks flew up. The French aviator pursued them three miles out to sea, caught up with the birds, and then, quickly aiming his gun, fired and brought down one duck.

Upon his return to Dominguez Field he was congratulated on his successful trip by Glenn H. Curtiss, who said that it was the best thing that had ever been done in the history of aviation, as it opens a new field for the sportsman, and aeroplanes can be constructed which will be adapted to the sport.

Illustration 4. A vision of the future. From the *Evening Star*, December 24, 1910.

The Gander Pulling as Cultural Text

> It is in the final analysis precisely the unconscious content of folklore (as fantasy) which allows it to function as it does, that is, as a socially sanctioned outlet for the expression of taboo thoughts and acts.
>
> -Alan J. Dundes,
> *The Cockfight: A Casebook,* 1993

American gander pulling has never been studied in isolation from other communal pastimes and blood sports. Does meaning speak beneath the surface of such a structured event, and is that meaning explicit to the spectators and participants? Men (and some women), often as part of the festivities of a day like Christmas or the Fourth of July, gathered to have fun according to a precise set of gaming rules and instructions, and in doing so they relished in the very visible, audible, and deliberately protracted suffering of a living being. Why build a game around such a specific animal? In firsthand observations the goose is never given any explicit symbolic value, except in one instance where an erudite writer alludes to the goose's legendary status as the "savior of Rome" for having honkingly alerted sleeping citizens to the presence of Gallic invaders ("Gander Pulling. – Christmas in the Backwoods"). The gander's prolonged slaughter was not done out of necessity or market interest; if his mutilated carcass was ever consumed as meat afterwards[13], such uses were rarely even implied. Must we simply dismiss the game as merely one form of "fun" that is now shocking to our more humane sensibilities?

[13] A consideration I note in response to a student of mine who suggested that perhaps the game was an elaborate method for tenderizing the tough meat of the gander. While this is a rational assumption, especially given the fact that some bullbaiting sports were specifically designed with this culinary purpose in mind, the fact that gander pulling narratives almost never refer to the gander as meat or a potential meal for the winner seems to indicate that this possible motivation was not a foremost concern.

To a callous and bored nineteenth-century sportsman, a goose's body must have seemed a perfect object for play. A similar game could have utilized an inanimate object such as a ball strung from a cord, but the lack of animation would have decreased the skill required to succeed. The goose's long, slender neck would have distinguished a clear target at the head in a manner that would not have quite sufficed with a duck or a chicken. The gander, as a domesticated animal, would have been more easily subdued than a swan or perhaps a turkey.[14] The head of the goose—the place of its beak and thus the site of its only line of defense—would have further been a fit target for the increase in difficulty it would have granted to the game. The bird's lack of claws and teeth, however, would have put a natural limit to the possible dangers human participants could expect; this might explain why "weasel pulling" does not exist in the archive of American sport. When the age of the gander is sometimes mentioned, in the range of eighteen to twenty years, there is the implication that the bird was nearing the end of his life and thus his exploitable usefulness on the farm. An older goose, especially a male one, would have made for a stringy Christmas dinner. Using his body toward some alternative end would have been in keeping with Nicole Shukin's thesis in *Animal Capital* that the animal body in human society is "rendered" into as many exploitative uses and meanings as is physically possible; depicting that body's demise in an entertaining short story would have added a metaphorical level of rendering to the many values of goose capital, among them down feathers, eggs, meat, sport, and pastoral synecdoche. Perhaps the furcula, the forked neckbone at the meeting

[14] The historical archive does contain rare references to "turkey grabbing," most notably in an editorial cartoon by New Yorker Samuel Ehrhart from *Puck* magazine dated September 8, 1897. Despite the illustration, this sport seems to have been infrequently practiced, and when it was, it was likely conducted differently, with the turkey buried in the ground instead of suspended from the air.

place of the bird's clavicles, which would have been straining throughout the pulling, was later extracted as a "wishbone" to bestow good luck. At the most superficial layer, all of this may have been the extent of meaning behind why a gander's body became the specific target of so much brutal amusement.

Blood sports, which depend upon violence toward non-human animals, have often been interpreted as generators of masculine power and creative change. Nancy Jay in *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion, and Paternity* argues that the attempts of men to establish patriarchal control over the right to grant and take life—a right that otherwise would be vested in women as the natural child bearers—has been the cause of many animal murders. By choosing to sacrifice an animal in place of a human, the male priest's substitution bestows the continuance of life on the human survivor. The rebirth that is the survival of potential human sacrifice supplants the natural birth from one's mother. Jay cites Abraham's slaughter of a ram instead of his son Isaac (pursuant to divine command and intervention) as a Judeo-Christian exemplar (102), but such patrilinear appropriation of the life-giving power through ritualistic killing is not confined to the religious practices of ancient centuries. Brian Luke applies Jay's thesis to modern medical experimentation, where animal "sacrifice" (a euphemism routinely used in vivisection) is framed as the miracle of saving the doomed lives of human children, placing the power of life in the hands of (mostly male) doctors, who must dispassionately destroy in order to prolong creation (129-60). Literary historian Richard Slotkin similarly conjoins destruction and rebirth in his landmark *Regeneration Through Violence*, proposing that Americans

have always initiated progress through bloodshed and environmental conquest.[15] Murdering a goose may be the most patriotic way to celebrate Independence Day according to that thesis, though it is doubtful any participant ever drew a connection between the gander's severed head and the continued prosperity of the nation.

Ritualistic meanings in a religious or superstitious context certainly seem not to have been a conscious factor in the American practice of the game. Indeed, even in its native European practice, the ritual subtext, if there ever was in fact such a singular meaning, seems to have vanished centuries ago. Dutch anthropologist Marjolein Efting Dijkstra's investigation into the late-twentieth-century legal battles between animal rights groups and goose riding clubs ultimately determined that any symbolic meaning bestowed on the activity was done after the fact, simply as a creative means of legitimizing the supposedly sacred lineage of the practice. A man she refers to as "the song writer," the most enthusiastic champion of the goose riders that she encountered, argues (quite vaguely) for its historical associations with seasonal change (i.e. migration) and the sacrificial idea that "death brings new life," though Efting Dijkstra notes that none of the other goose riders she interviewed were aware of this sanctifying rationale and that she could find no evidence of this explanation in her exhaustive search of several centuries of goose riding materials until the song writer purportedly discovered it in 1984 (146-9). These "constructed" symbolic meanings "played no significant role whatsoever before 1984" and were only

[15] Anyone skeptical about the role of geese in the formation of the United States should recall—as one example of many—the Tory from New Milford, Connecticut, who on August 8, 1775, was made to carry his own goose twenty miles, pluck it, and then kneel before the Sons of Liberty for tarring and feathering (Brinton 176). Numerous gander pulling texts likewise note that a gander pulling tournament was a surefire way for political candidates to draw a large crowd for campaigning purposes (e.g. Craddock 101-3).

"instrumentalized" so "that they could start to turn the potentially undermining idea of goose pulling as 'mere play' into a positive image of goose pulling as serious ritual" (147). Did the nineteenth-century pullers, who did not face the same legal pressures to legitimize their playmaking through sacred history, bestow any deeper meaning on the act at all?

A deeper layer of meaning does seem to have existed in the game's organization, and in making this tentative interpretive leap I must draw upon the work of anthropologists who have studied cockfighting for support. Clifford Geertz, whose 1972 "Deep play: notes on the Balinese cockfight" is a landmark in the field of ethnology, asserts that "cultural forms can be treated as texts, as imaginative works built out of social materials" (83) and thus argues that cockfighting, a central event in the village life of Balinese men despite being criminalized since the time of Dutch colonization, "provides a metasocial commentary upon the whole matter of assorting human beings into fixed hierarchical ranks and then organizing the major part of collective existence around that assortment. Its function, if you want to call it that, is interpretive; it is a Balinese reading of Balinese experience; a story they tell themselves about themselves" (82). According to Geertz, cockfighting provides a medium through which Balinese men can resolve interpersonal, interfamilial, and intertribal rivalries, lending an air of cosmic, violent, fully-invested struggle to hierarchies that are otherwise quite stable and predictable:

> The cockfight is 'really real' only to the cocks—it does not kill anyone, castrate anyone, reduce anyone to animal status, alter the hierarchical relations among people, nor refashion the hierarchy; it does not even [through gambling] redistribute income in any significant way. What it does is what, for other peoples with other temperaments and other conventions, *Lear* and *Crime and Punishment* do; it catches up these themes—death, masculinity, rage, pride, loss, beneficence, chance—and, ordering them into an encompassing structure, presents them in such a way as to throw into relief a particular view of their essential nature. It puts a construction on

> them, makes them, to those historically positioned to appreciate the construction, meaningful—visible, tangible, graspable—"real," in an ideational sense. An image, fiction, a model, a metaphor, the cockfight is a means of expression; its function is neither to assuage social passions nor to heighten them (though, in its play-with-fire way, it does a bit of both), but, in a medium of feathers, blood, crowds, and money, to display them. (79)

In a final footnote, Geertz speculates that examining Indonesian society through a worldview in which cockfighting is a significant social construction helps to make the civil war, rioting, and mass murder of 1960s Indonesia seem "if no less appalling, less like a contradiction to the laws of nature" (86), an echo of the means by which many abolitionist writers used gander pulling descriptions as a focal point for critiquing the careless cruelty of the slaveholding elite.

In Geertz's interpretation, what makes the cockfight an especially salient medium for depicting struggles of manhood is that—despite a deep aversion towards "animalistic" behavior and towards all animals, including dogs—there exists a "deep psychological identification of Balinese men with their cocks" (60). Geertz intends this statement in precisely the manner it sounds, explaining that because the Balinese conceive of "the body as a set of separately animated parts," the roosters have come to acquire the status of "detachable, self-operating penises, ambulant genitals with a life of their own" (60). He notes that the wordplay between cocks and "cocks" exists just as clearly in Balinese as it does in English, if not more so.

Using Geertz's brief remarks on this metaphor as a springboard, American anthropologist Alan Dundes in 1993 published the cleverly titled "Gallus as Phallus: A Psychoanalytic Cross-Cultural Consideration of the Cockfight as Fowl Play," in which he presents an extensive ream of linguistic, visual, and cultural data elaborating the

psychological link between cocks and "cocks" not just in Balinese society but in all societies where cockfighting is practiced. Dundes draws upon the reports of anthropologists who have studied cockfighting in various global locales, including Garry Marvin, who noted of Andalusian cockfighting that "[i]t is a totally male-oriented event, the audience is almost totally male, the birds which fight are male and the virtues which are extolled are male virtues," and Ondina Maria Fachel Leal, who observed in Brazil that "cockfighting is a celebration of masculinity where men, through their cocks, dispute, win, lose, and reinforce certain attributes chosen as male essence" (qtd. Dundes 249).

Compiling this comparative international data, Dundes argues that the "cockfight itself cannot be understood without being seen as an exemplar of a more comprehensive paradigm involving male gladiatorial combat… of which all those games and sports are essentially variations on one theme. That theme involves an all-male preserve in which one male demonstrates his virility, his masculinity, *at the expense of a male opponent*. One proves one's maleness by feminizing one's opponent" (250, emphasis his). Dundes proposes a "hypothesis that the cockfight is a thinly disguised symbolic homoerotic masturbatory phallic duel, with the winner emasculating the loser through castration or feminization" (251). In making this bold claim about a sport still practiced worldwide by men who are for the most part decidedly *anti*-homoerotic, Dundes writes:

> Since my analysis of the cockfight presumes the existence of an *unconscious* element in the participation and enjoyment of cockfighting, I would hardly expect most cockfighters to be consciously aware of this element…. It is in the final analysis precisely the *unconscious* content of folklore (as fantasy) which allows it to function as it does, that is, as a socially sanctioned outlet for the expression of taboo thoughts and acts. That is why making the unconscious content conscious is always intellectually dangerous and why it inevitably encounters powerful resistance. (241-2)

Dundes's hesitation here may have been a presumptive defense against the ire, death threats, and ridicule that his provocative publications frequently inspired, typically as a result of his tendency to read (homo)sexual meanings onto practices he observed only from the outside. Nevertheless, the evidence presented in "Gallus as Phallus" is comprehensive and broadly supported.[16]

Like Geertz, I see in gander pulling a site in which the standard hierarchies of manly status were briefly contested. The tenor that age, ethnicity, class, political persuasion, and professional stature can give to the construction of masculinity in daily life is challenged in the narrower confines of the game, where success is dependent on a few variables that any man can potentially master: the ability to remain stable on a reliable horse, a handgrip that is strong and determined but also precisely coordinated, and the judgment to know the difference between when to fully commit oneself to the pull and when to pass. The combination of these qualities could make the difference between someone whose failure was unnoteworthy and without shame and someone whose ill-timed eagerness garnered him a face full of mud and an assault of humiliating jeers. Like Dundes, I see in gander pulling a deeper layer of masturbatory symbolism, in which the victor's ability to "get off"

[16] A 1978 paper entitled "Into the Endzone for a Touchdown: A Psychoanalytic Consideration of American Football" presented football as "a ritualized form of homosexual rape," and its 1985 sequel "The American Game of 'Smear the Queer' and the Homosexual Component of Male Competitive Sport and Warfare" doubled down on those assertions. The latter article relies on questionable evidence, however, mostly overplaying the sexual connotations of sports terminology like "score" and "pass" (183). As an "illustration of how folklore data can 'validate' a hypothetical symbolic equation," for example, Dundes presents a "folk cartoon [which] *confirms in no uncertain terms* the symbolic association of tooth extraction and castration" (180, emphasis mine). The evidence of a single vulgar cartoon in which a dentist accidentally extracts a traumatized patient's genitals dangling from the long root of a molar, however, may say more about penis jokes being the lowest common denominator of cheap comedy rather than confirmation "in no uncertain terms" of a farfetched psychoanalytical assertion. My hope is that my own analysis which follows will more closely resemble the persuasiveness of Dundes's later scholarship rather than the dick jokes of his earlier work.

the greased head at precisely the right moment seems to mirror the distinction between a rhythmic, skillful lover and someone whose ejaculation is either premature or impotent. In elaborating this interpretive framework, I will establish the decidedly masculine composition of the game; describe notable contestants, the characteristics attributed to their triumph or defeat, and what appears to have been at stake for them in winning or losing the game; and note the frequent sexual overtones associated with the outcome of the game. The key difference between cockfighting, in which two animals fight each other as surrogates for their trainers or owners, and gander pulling, in which humans compete against each other directly by each opposing themselves to the same unpredictable, intermediary object that is the gander, is also an essential factor in this interpretive framework, and these phallic implications will also be explored.

Gander pullings in North America were pronouncedly gendered, though not always to the extent of the Balinese cockfight, from which women were expressly prohibited. Although European versions of the sport (even in England) utilized gender neutral names like "goose riding," the North American version specifically emphasizes the male gander, even though either sex of the bird, which exhibits little sexual dimorphism, would likely suffice the needs of the game. Animal rights philosophers like Joan Dunayer and Arran Stibbe have theorized that the first step in the objectification of a non-human animal is to turn the individualized body into an undifferentiated thing, an "it" rather than a "he" or a "she." From the "harvesting" of "product" at the farm and slaughterhouse, the linguistic annihilation continues to the dinner table, where hungry gourmands consume "some ham" rather than "the charred flesh from a murdered pig's leg." Oddly, however, this linguistic objectification is not prominent in gander pulling narratives. Of the 48 gander pulling

narratives where a third-person singular pronoun is used to refer to the gander, 37 of them (77%) use the pronoun "he."[17] Masculine identity is emphasized even in a case where linguistic objectification would seem most helpful to the consciences of the participants.

This gendered personification of the male gander goes beyond pronoun use. The narratives that seem most amused at the antics of the blood sport are unexpectedly the ones likeliest to personify the victim, and this personification typically presents the bird as a tough and cantankerous gentleman of advanced age: Longstreet's gander is a married man who exhibits "patriarchal dignity" (100); a *Spirit of the Times* article from August 1, 1846, calls the goose both "an elderly gentleman" and "his gandership"; and an amused report published in the *Saint Paul Daily Globe* on February 19, 1888, and a separate account published in the *Pascagoula Democrat-Star* on September 7, 1894, both refer to the bird as "Mr. Gander," with the latter noting that he was "the oldest and toughest gander that roamed the circuit." Many accounts draw on militaristic imagery: to Red Rowel, writing his Civil War reminiscences for *The Southern Bivouac* in 1885, the victim acquired for a pulling on Christmas 1861 was a "stalwart, middle-aged gander, with a neck as tough as a piece of commissary beef." J.W. Todd, in a letter to the editor of the *Watauga Democrat* in North Carolina published on April 18, 1907, recalls that the gander of his own Civil War

[17] Only nine of them (19%) exclusively use the objectifying pronoun "it," and these nine date as early as 1793. (Strangely, two of them use the pronoun "she" despite calling the game a "gander" pulling, a slip which Brian Luke would perhaps attribute to man's tendency to feminize victimized animals. In *Brutal*, he notes that Bambi is now a stereotypical name for a female stripper despite Bambi being the "Great Prince of the Forest" in both the original Felix Salten novel and its Disney adaptation.) It should also be noted that seven of the accounts that use "he" or "she" also vacillate between using "it," but any attempt to map an historical progression towards linguistic objectification would be fruitless. No pattern exists. Texts that seem amused by gander pulling use "he" or "she" just as texts that seem outraged sometimes use "it," and the average publication date of the works that use "it" is actually earlier (1865) than the overall average publication date (1868). The linguistic turn toward animal objectification seems to have reached critical mass later in the twentieth century, perhaps with the rise of late capitalism.

recollection from the winter of 1864–65 "had to surrender like Lee to Grant" due to "the continual trying and fresh troops" that assaulted him.

Indeed, in line with the interpretations of cockfighting by Geertz and Dundes, the personified gander seems not just a gentleman foe but a symbol of manhood itself in the genital sense. In many narrative accounts where the competition itself is detailed, it is hard to dismiss the sexual innuendo that must have provided an added layer of amusement for readers and spectators: a hodgepodge of men, some of them sloppy with drink, some of them overwhelmed by their "excitement" or "eagerness," trying to perfectly time their rhythm and their grip in order to properly "get off" the head of a bare, slippery appendage with a mind of its own. For example, in his 1880 memoir *My Southern Home: or, The South and Its People*, the formerly enslaved William Wells Brown provides an excessively anatomical description of the gander, articulating his physicality almost as though readers would otherwise be unfamiliar with the appearance of a bird that is widespread throughout the northern hemisphere. "The bird had a long neck," Brown writes, "which was large as it rose above the neck, but tapered gradually, for more than half the length, until it became small and serpent-like in form, terminating in a long, slim head, and peaked bill. The head and neck of the gander was well-greased" (62). Would any reader have required such a thorough description, or is the gratuitous, supple detail here meant to evoke phallic imagery? Many authors describe the bareness of the plucked neck, slicked and slippery with soap or grease, extending outward from the body. A.B. Greenleaf observes that an unspoken rule demanded the men not be *too* hasty in bringing a climax to the game, yet the deliberate prolongation of the game brought with it an exhaustion and flaccidity that increased the difficulty of achieving the desired end: "As a general thing they all make a

clear miss in their grab for several rounds. The old gander, notwithstanding his bound-up, greasy-eyed, and seemingly awkward condition, uses his long wiry neck on the dodge with a great deal of dexterity, and it is not until his visionary and physical abilities become somewhat exhausted that the most expert grabber can seize his head; and then it is so far sleek that it slips through the grasp as quick as made" (21). Sometimes, Brown adds, "the rider having taken a little too much wine, he would fall from his horse, which event would give an additional interest to the 'Snatching'" (62). Perhaps it is not too far-fetched to note that in the poetic consciousness of the English Renaissance, "dying" was an oft-used euphemism for orgasm and that in many gander pulling accounts, news of the goose's death is sometimes uttered within a sentence or two of the removal of his head, sometimes followed by a shower of blood and almost always followed by the climactic jubilation of the crowd. "Suddenly a wild applause burst forth," writes the author of a *Washington Bee* account from December 9, 1893. "I looked and saw a tall, young fellow, a handsome man for that region, borne on the shoulders of a crowd. 'He's got it!' was the cry. 'He's the best man!'"

In addition to the goose's maleness, the gander pulling was a predominantly, although not exclusively, masculine affair. "The young men of the vicinity of Piercetown" extended a "cordial invitation… to the young men of the County" in an advertisement in the *Anderson Intelligencer* of South Carolina on December 23, 1880; the "Marion's Men of Winyah" did likewise on December 11, 1877, in the *News and Herald* of Winnsboro, South Carolina; as did "[t]he boys of Bishopville" in the *Watchman and Southron* on January 4, 1905, and "[t]he wild men of Fannin" in the *Weekly Caucasian* of Missouri on October 11, 1873.

More literary accounts often detail three or four main competitors in the contest, with the characterizations figured as a crosscut of the varieties of manhood eligible for the prize. For example, in a lengthy farce published by the *New York Herald* on January 12, 1879, a sanctimonious bartender and "ex-parson" allows fourteen competitors to demonstrate their manliness. Peter, "a son of 'Afric's sunny clime,'" endures "rough jokes" about his race and poverty with good humor because he knows he possesses "a hand whose grip was too well known in the neighborhood not to be regarded as a formidable rival for the honor of decapitation." His most daunting opponent is "a lank, red-headed ex-candidate for Sheriff." Having failed to achieve through democratic means the position of the most powerful authority figure in town, the ex-candidate now seeks to actualize his feelings of superiority through a purely physical sport. The same ineffectual "bony" grip that "had lately shook hands as a soft and purring candidate near on to seventy-two thousand times" during his failed campaign, however, likewise proves overconfident, "reckless," and incapable of seizing victory in the physical competition. Not until the third round, when the gander is already dead from having been pulled at some thirty times, does "a beardless youth of twenty" named Si Bazeman successfully wrest the head from the corpse. In the aftermath of the contest, following a brawl "inaugurated by the ex-candidate, who knocked down a Bazeman partisan," the young victor becomes "royally 'corned'" on "tangleleg" with "a half dozen boys of his own age." The tale's conclusion hints at the imperialist aspirations of the young generation currently coming of age in the United States, with the boastful Bazeman waving the "greasy and bloody head of the gander" in his hand while "[h]is comrades, one and all, joined him in this dare to South America": "I'll be goldarned if I can't outganderpull any man in South America."

In nineteenth-century America, "gander" was likewise a word that was sometimes comically used to refer to human males. Richard A. Proctor's "Notes on Americanisms," in addition to defining "gander-pulling," notes that a "gander party" was a "masculine social party" (230). He writes, "I once heard a lady in America speak of a club as a 'gander gang,' a term pleasingly alliterative if not strictly complimentary" (230). To see women compete for mastery over the phallus might have been an unconscious layer unacceptable for public amusement. Indeed, the gander pulling's unsuitability for women is a source of mockery in Fred Mather's account from 1900, "A Gander Pull in Arkansaw." The day after witnessing his first gander pull, the New Yorker Mather exchanges lighthearted banter with a blacksmith who was one of the organizers of the event. Joking about his intentions to organize the game in Central Park when he returns home, he remarks that "a gander pull seems to be the only one that Northern women can't rob of us, because they are not strong enough in the wrist" (243). Not missing a beat, the blacksmith retorts, "Ef they take a notion they'll go at it on bicycles and use canary birds, ef what I heah about 'em is true" (243). This ludicrous image, of stubborn suffragettes appropriating the last territory of male enjoyment by using modern technology and a symbol of domesticity to adapt the game to their more delicate constitutions, ends the chapter.

In the rare instances when women were described as participants in blood sport activities, these sports are notably distinct from the gander pullings described alongside them. A report published in the *Montgomery Tribune* on February 14, 1902, describes what happened after 17 male riders from Rhineland, Missouri, competed: "Then came the unique sport of rooster pulling for the ladies, which is conducted on the same plan in which a great number partisipated [*sic*]. Miss Emma Groteweil was successful in securing the prize for

the ladies." The writer later reports, "The prizes awarded were a hat for the gentleman and a fine pair of shoes for the lady." Not to be confused with the "rooster pulling" which seems to have been popular in Arizona around the turn of the century, in which riders on horseback competed to pull from the sand a live rooster buried up to his neck, to whose claw was tied a bag containing the cash prize, this ladies' rooster pulling of Missouri involved the mutilation of the male bird. The *Professional World* newsletter of Columbia, Missouri, in a report published on February 28, 1902 provides further details: "[T]he lady who gets his scalp is the honored lady at the ball. The people of that community do not consider the sport of doubtful propriety." This ladies' version seems to have been the exception that proves the rule, however, and the *Montgomery Tribune* even argues that "[t]here is probably not another place in the United States where the old time gander pulling takes place as it does in Rhineland." The reporter likewise notes that the gander was "smothered" prior to being "hung on a rope," suggesting that the sensibilities of this community in organizing an event that "is always looked forward to by young and old" were somewhat distinct from the more violently chaotic spectacle practiced elsewhere.

Many narratives do however suggest that the *spectators* of a gander pulling comprised a considerable cross-section of the community. For instance, William Wells Brown writes that the "Gander Snatching" that happened about "[o]nce in three months… never failed to draw together large numbers of ladies as well as gentlemen, the *elite*, as well as the common" (61-2). Yet the principal actors in most gander pulling narratives seem to have been men. Indeed, while Longstreet at first announces that "a considerable number of persons, of different ages, sexes, sizes, and complexions, had collected from the

rival towns and the country around," he quickly checks himself by adding "[b]ut few females were there, however; and those few were from the lowest walks of life" (100).

When women do feature prominently in gander pulling narratives, whether fictional or factual, they are figured as sexual objects for the male participants. Indeed, the regulations of the game sometimes imply that a woman is part of the prize to be won by the champion of the tournament. A feature published in *The Sun* on February 9, 1919, about the "Gander Tourney Mountaineer Sport" practiced in Tennessee describes horsemen riding with "the ribbon of their best girl fluttering in the breeze," each one trying "his best… to make the lady whose colors he carries the Gander Queen." A brief description in the *Manning Times* of South Carolina published on April 10, 1889, is more decisive: "The successful rider is entitled to crown his best lady as queen of love and beauty." In a reminiscence attributed to former Governor Thomas Clement Fletcher about his childhood on the Missouri frontier in the 1830s, an article published in the *Pascagoula Democrat-Star* of Mississippi on September 7, 1894, concludes its description of this "Strange Sport" with the declaration "Of course, it wound up with a dance, and the hero who pulled off the gander's head danced with the prettiest girl." From there, the sexagenarian's mind rambles to the "[p]retty girls" and "rosy-cheeked lasses" who flourished in his day.

Anxieties over manhood are also evident in the historical record, and many observers note that winning or losing the game carried great pressure. The high stakes of the game position it as what Geertz would term "deep play." Liberal reformer Jeremy Bentham coined the term in 1802 to describe gambling games where the cost of potential loss greatly outweighs any potential gains through winning. Bentham condemned such games for their mathematical irrationality, yet Geertz argues that such games manufacture

symbolic value through the dramatization of what it means to win and to lose. In gander pulling, exemplary manhood was the ultimate prize. In an account attributed to "Vevo Vombo" published in the *Spirit of the Times* on February 5, 1853, a "young Sub" at a frontier military encampment in Texas proposes that "a gander pulling would be the most amusing and novel sport [that] could be engaged in." Soldiers are dispatched to the nearest villages to procure ganders, but none can be obtained and thus a "drake" (a male duck) is substituted. The maleness of the victim is again critical, even in one of the rare instances where a goose is not used. The "amateur Sub." who arranged the event is given the first try at pulling, and his attempt is a tense disappointment:

> Bounding under the exciting influence of the spur, his proud steed shot onward, — an intense excitement was manifested, and each beholder, in breathless anxiety, watched the strained eye of the rider, as he approached the unsuspecting victim,—his hand is raised, he is under the scaffold; itching for blood, his hand seizes the dangling neck. Now he has it! now he hasn't! or, 'may-be-so! yes! may-be-so! no!' as an Indian spectator observed, for as the rider pursued his onward course, the drake disgusted flapped his wings, and shaking his greasy head, prepared for the next onset.

The next challenger is a "youthful commander" who, "standing erect in his stirrups," "makes a bold effort" that fails and is thus met with "[p]eals and peals of laughter." The "equally anxious" drake meanwhile "continue[s] its eel-life efforts to elude the grasp" of "[m]any a gallant pull." When "a stout Irishman, rendered obstinate by repeated failures," makes his attempt, he instead finds himself amorously groping at his "steed" and facing what ultimately seems like a romantic rejection:

> at the critical moment, his stirrup leather broke, and Pat hugged with convulsive grip his horse's neck; unused to such tokens of endearment, especially when accompanied with a simultaneous blow of the spur, his horse launched out both heels, and then reared high in the air. Pat dexterously changed sides, but his steed scorned all his untimely caresses, and finally landed him amid peals of laughter upon his mother earth.

Failing to conquer the phallus, the Irishman fumbles, fails, and is forced to return to the infantilizing bosom of his mother, figured here as a pile of mud. Vombo does not elaborate on who the ultimate victor was; instead, he simply writes, "Finally the neck came off, and with it a great deal of our day's sport." Yet despite the conclusion of the contest, the unresolved sexual energy of this young man in an all-male preserve keeps the story going. In the aftermath of his loss, the "young Sub.", now drunk on eggnog, insistently tries to become "satisfied," first challenging "another Sub." to a horse race (and losing) and then turning to "a young Sub. about his own size" and proposing a wrestling match, resulting in a bump on the head "which has not yet been found in any of our books on phrenology." Whatever satisfaction this young man has hoped to achieve through entanglement with and domination over his male peers remains unresolved by the story's end, instead providing only a source of amusement to the detached, older onlooker who records the tale.

The humiliation at stake in such sporting events was considerable, and thus many narratives end with defeated contestants trying to regain a semblance of restored dignity through other sporting events, brawling, or accusations of cheating. Such attempts are always anticlimactic, however. The man who has been bested at gander pulling never regains his claims to superiority, and the denouement of these stories serve only to ridicule these failed men by reinforcing their unfitness. Prof. I.E. Allen, a regular contributor to the *Pensacola Journal*, recalls in meticulous if rambling detail "A Gander Pulling 60 Years Ago," published on December 16, 1906. Allen gives a thorough accounting of the gander pulling, for which one dollar was the entry fee and $28 was the ultimate prize, going to "a man well and favorably known in those days" named James Elliot. Of particular note,

however, is a side event which Allen claims he "will never forget." A man named Arch Oxendine, having already lost the gander pull, loses a footrace so disastrously that six decades later Allen continues to recall the shamefulness of his defeat. "Poor Oxendine!" Allen writes of a man who may in all likelihood have been dead at the time of his writing, "He looked pitiable."

Two fictional accounts that explore the sexual connotations of gander pulling give further credence to the idea that the sport possessed a phallocentric subtext, though these fictional texts notably satirize these themes by incorporating heretofore unseen significant female characters. The most significant female presence in any gander pulling narrative is the young lady who is the source of a climactic brawl in "A Vacation in Virginia with Some Incidental Frills," an award-winning short story by Henry F. Williams published in the *Washington Post* on October 3, 1909. In this picaresque story, two men and a servant boy travel from Georgetown to the Luray Caverns, but the visit to their destination receives only a brief epilogue. The third act and most protracted scene is instead devoted to the "fantastic sight!" they stumble upon while traveling down the road—a gander pulling in which all the "rustic gallant… beaus of the neighborhood" compete before an audience of "some twoscore of mountain belles, their bare feet twined tight in the rails" of a meadow fence. Williams, who has fashioned his urbane narrator as the only sensible man in a world of buffoons, describes these half-dressed rural ladies as "[e]ager beauties as ever watched a horse show in New York, wriggling their brown toes with all the enthusiasm that a lady waves her fan in her box at the Metropolitan." He observes that "[h]e who achieves that feat [of "wrench[ing] off" the gander's head] gives it to the girl on the worm-fence whom he loves best." When "one huge Telamonian Ajax" finally succeeds, "he took it to where

a buxom lass sat with toes grasping the fence like a bird. In her arms she held a bundle. Unwrapping it, she drew forth a pair of tennis shoes, and, putting them on, singularly walked to a small stand, where the hero presented her with the trophy." The girl is one of so many birds, flocking to this worm fence to judge this mating display. Only when the dead gander's head is presented to her does she trade one bundle for another, putting on the shoes that will turn her into a semi-civilized human. The earthy and animal barefootedness seems to be the preferred state, however, until one is elevated to play a role as a victor in the blood sport ceremony.

By and by, however, "another gallant of the hills, who… had a love for the girl with the shoes and the gander head" confronts the "hero," and soon a "half hundred of these rustic cavaliers" erupt into "a free-for-all, a battle royale. Up and down the meadow the tide of battle surged, the sturdy mountaineers using hands and feet and teeth and any handy cudgel that came to their grasp." As this ruthless pell-mell of male bodies ensues, "the grandstand of barefoot ladies sat and squealed their delight, howling as this or that champion showed his prowess." This violence seems to be an expected extension of the game, with the spectators making animal sounds to show their support for the barbarity. Ultimately however, the "man who had wrung the gander's neck felled everything before him," his opponents somehow no longer deserving even of the personal pronoun "everyone." As seen in the factual accounts, the gander pulling is a definitive test of manhood, and the victor of Williams's story achieves not just mastery over other men but also the vindication of the female class. His "barefooted lass… Miss Metropolitan Cooser," still perpetually barefooted in the narration despite having put on her tennis shoes, an animal of nature despite her faux-urbane name, continually associated by Williams with

her two icons of triumphant yet provisional humanity—"the girl with the shoes and the gander head"—remarks that "he is my real fellow; that other 'n ain' worth nuthin'."

Notably, there is a key distinction between gander pulling and other sports like cockfighting or football. If cockfighting is indeed an attempt to prove that one's manliness is superior to another's, and if that is achieved through a symbolic "castration" in which one man's cock destroys another's, then it is easy to track how one competitor's phallus can be adjudged mightier. In a sport like football, which Dundes likened to "homosexual rape" but which perhaps more resembles the rutting of stags prior to the breeding season, a physical competition between male bodies decides which is more masterful, more masculine. How is gander pulling, in which all the men compete by directing their energies towards the same phallic symbol, different from these other examples? Is this sport truly a celebration of heterosexual reproductivity, or is it simply masturbatory? Or, practiced in the exclusive company of men, is it in fact homosexual in its orientation? The conclusion, with the "best man" crowning his "Gander Queen," directs it away from this subversive subtext, aligning it toward progenitive aims, yet the slipperiness of the symbolism seems to undergird at least one notable gander pulling narrative.

To fail at gander pulling makes a man worthless, and one such failed attempt at gander pulling is an especially resonant moment in William Gilmore Simms's 1852 novel *As Good as a Comedy; or, the Tennessean's Story,* where the very participation in the act is repeatedly figured as a definitive characteristic of a man who, for better or worse, is ill-fit for marriage. Modeled after *The Canterbury Tales*, the novel includes a frame story in which nine men who are allegorical representations of nine states travel together from Madison, Georgia, to Montgomery, Alabama. The Tennessean, an eloquent gentleman,

passes the time by telling a supposedly true story about the "western counties of Georgia" (xxi), which comprises the bulk of the novel. A picaresque tale of Southwestern buffoonery, the story's central episode details a disastrous gander pulling tournament, throughout the telling of which the Tennessean provides ample condescending commentary about the barbarity of rural Georgians. In a chapter entitled "Some Talk of Marriage," the gadfly Tom Nettles mocks the romantic desires of the main character, a man of fortune and leisure named Jones Barry. Nettles mocks what would become of Barry if he were to marry a proper woman. He jests, "She'd be your master in no time, and she'd rule you with a rod of iron" (177). Of the examples he gives of what forms of independent manly self-expression would be lost were he to surrender his freedom to such a controlling wife, he twice references how he would no longer be free to enjoy "jerking at a gander's gullet" (178). "[H]e pulls no gander's neck," the friend speculates in imagery rich with innuendo, "since his wife makes him tender-hearted by pulling his" (178). The hopelessness of such a constraining situation ultimately leads to the worst of all disasters that could befall a free man: "he hates the very sight of a pretty woman, as it tells him that, instead of a mistress, he has got a master" (178). For these rural Georgian gentlemen, themselves a source of condescension for the more genteel narrator of the tale, the right to freely "jerk" at a gander's greased neck is a byword for virility. The virile stakes of the sport add gravity to Barry's ignominious failure when he attempts to compete in the game.

A chapter titled "The Gander Tournament" unearths the utter hollowness of Barry's pretensions of manhood. The episode begins with an explanatory aside to the reader in the Tennessean's voice where he describes the gander pulling as "one of those sports which a cunning devil has contrived to gratify a human beast. It appeals to his skill, his agility, and

strength; and is therefore in some degree grateful to his pride; but, as it exercises these qualities at the expense of his humanity, it is only a medium by which his better qualities are employed as agents for his worser nature" (114). The Tennessean emphasizes both the "severe" and "excessively uncomfortable" suffering and "screaming" of the gander as well as the mob mentality of the yelling crowd (115). The reader, meant to identify with the politer sensibilities of the narrator, senses that a culture of masculinity which places such a high premium on such a base and inhumane sport is flawed at its very core, adding an additional layer of insult to the injury Barry will soon face. Described as distracted in his excessive "excitement," Barry accidentally grabs with both hands the rope instead of the gander's neck (118). Simms writes, "The cord, calculated to sustain one goose only, broke under the double weight and down came the pair together, the gander uppermost" (118). The "[l]udicrous" scene, which leaves the "half-stunned and thoroughly bewildered" Barry scratched and bleeding from the furious attacks of the crazed bird, elicits "a most royal delirium" of laughter from the crowd, who had previously viewed the gentleman Barry as a respected elite but now sneer at his utter foolishness (118). His two-handed eagerness renders him submissive to the gander that should be under his control. If they are now both geese hanging from the same rope, the gander uppermost, and if the gander is a phallus, then he has become nothing more than a dick in the mud, subtly feminized in not even being conferred the status of a full-fledged gander. His humiliation in front of the "vulgar" mob (117) stings all the more when a scrappy young "gypsy boy" triumphs as "the hero of the county" (120), but the humiliation of this isolated episode does not end with the conclusion of the chapter.

If gander pulling in the world of Simms's story is meant to represent a robust and untrammeled male sexuality, one that Barry publicly has no control over despite his pretensions, then it is at the same time representative of the inherent flaws of defining male sexuality in such a manner. After all, Barry *does* want to marry a proper woman, despite his friend's jesting, yet his indulgence in the gander pulling serves as proof of his unreliability in marriage. His friend hammers home the point that there is "no sort of danger that [his beloved will] ever marry" him: "Why not! When you prefer to stay here at a horserace, to seeing her home. When you let her go off under the escort of your rivals, while you go a gander-pulling" (143). The excessive preoccupation with gander pulling, itself a masturbatory act (and in Barry's case an emasculatory one), has caused Barry to neglect the needs of the woman who should be the object of his amorous attentions while directly allowing for usurpation from his rivals. Removing the ostentatious display of masculine prowess from its rightful place in the company of females to an all-male preserve with a fowl at its center, Simms argues, is a misguided manner for negotiating masculinity.

As a final word on the sexual undertones of the gander pulling, and one which situates the game's symbolic construction within the larger body politic of the United States, note the seamlessness with which the author of a local news notice printed in the *Democrat* of North Carolina on August 16, 1888, slips into an imaginative act of racist sexual violence. Under the apparent guise of wishing to save birds from cruelty, the writer freely voices his condescension toward African American literacy and his willingness to see the African American body suspended, sexually humiliated, and mutilated in a manner evoking the lynchings of the period:

> *The Rambler*, a little sheet about as large as a medium sized cotton handkerchief, published at Rocky Mount by a colored man (we suppose), has come to this office once or twice. We were just glancing at it through curiosity when we noticed among the amusements that are to be enjoyed at the Rocky Mount Colored Fair notably is "gander-pulling." We spare space enough to say that if it is such "gander-pulling" as we have heard described in our earlier years, the man who would institute such a cruel amusement ought to be hung up by the thumbs, let down after awhile and married to some virago who would pick every hair from his head and have it as slick as a ball of bees-wax.

Starting by belittling the idea that a "colored man" should be capable of producing a newspaper worth anything more than an idle glance, the author of this tidbit soon dismisses gander pulling as a relic of more immature times before passing on to his true *raison d'être*—the violent humiliation of an African American man. Clifford Geertz saw a continuity between Balinese cockfights and the Indonesian mass killings of 1965–6. Perhaps the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898, catalyzed by racist outrage over an African American-owned newspaper, can be said to be an extension of a culture in which violent mutilation of animals is above all an amusing signifier of masculinity. If the gander pulling practiced in the antebellum South had served a dual purpose of reifying privilege through public play and of parading one's masculine sexual prowess, then to see a free Black citizen publicizing his right to gather for the sake of an amusement that might unconsciously display his virility must have caused the imagination of a bitter post-Reconstruction racist to make an automatic leap to hanging and the sexual retribution of an emasculating "virago." Perhaps it was a good thing that the sexual subtext of gander pulling, as Dundes would say, remained unconscious and unavailable to its participants—the sexualized violence displaced onto the animal object of gander pulling made the sport "amusing" and thus resulted only in this ostensibly humorous literary act from this newspaperman; if the

sexual subtext had been more conscious, then like the aftermath of so many *perceived* sexual crimes against white women, a pretext for lynching which Ida B. Wells exposed as fraudulent, perhaps the repercussions would have been more tragic.

CHAPTER 3
THE MIGHTY HUNTER-NATURALIST; OR, ON THE TRAIL OF *HOMO AMERICANUS*

In dedicating his 1852 adventure novel *The Boy Hunters; or Adventures in Search of a White Buffalo* to "The Boy Readers of England and America," Captain Mayne Reid expressed his wish that he might "create a taste for that most refining study, the study of nature," later noting that although history may be "eclipsed by the more brilliant and sanguinary triumphs" of military men, the "true hero" is the "student of natural history," whose "quiet researches… may be looked upon as so many conquests in the kingdom of Nature" (17-8). The Captain was in fact only a second lieutenant in the Mexican–American War, honorarily elevated to first lieutenant after a thigh wound in 1847 ended his brief military career, but his self-bestowed promotion on the title page aptly captures the narrative persona contained therein: a clear-sighted pilot, marshaling his "boy reader" into enemy territory while equipping said charge with the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary to survive and subdue.

In the third chapter, Reid provides his first lesson in the careful evaluative skills requisite for the noblest of callings, that of the *Hunter-Naturalist*, whose knowledgeable eye appraises all which he surveils, converting everything into potential fuel for his own continued survival. The animals being espied, however, are the boy hunters themselves, along with their father and his assistant. Our stealthy incursion into the natural habitat of these specimens of noble European American masculinity is treated with the immediacy of the present tense: "It is a lovely morning in Spring as we approach their dwelling. We enter the lawn by a side-gate. We need not go into the house, for there is no one within doors. The weather is too fine for that" (19). Before glimpsing the three sons, we first observe the

widowed Colonel Landi, a "fine-looking man" whose adolescent yearning for a life of science was interrupted by his personal acquaintance with the Bonapartes, who pressed him into a soldiering career that has cost him a leg. Although his war wound and his age have taken a toll on his physical appearance, although his frequent wanderings out-of-doors have made his aristocratic "complexion bronzed and somewhat ruddy," and although "[h]is dress is simple," there remains some tell-tale physical signifier in his bearing and dress that conveys his superiority over his assistant, Hugot. "[A] very small Frenchman … not over five feet four inches in height," Hugot is the Colonel's former corporal, an adult man who now, on another continent, the war long lost, is still thoroughly devoted to his commanding officer as a "cook, valet, groom, butler, and errand boy" (15-6). "I have already stated that no other domestic, male or female, lived in the house," the Captain continues, preparing to emasculate the "errand boy" in addition to infantilizing him: "Hugot, therefore, was chambermaid as well." Although these two men share a history, a home, and an austere lifestyle, the hunter-naturalist narrator still arrives by induction to the conclusion that Hugot is naturally just a little inferior, for although they are "dressed after a *somewhat* similar fashion… the material of [Hugot's] jacket and trousers is *coarser,* and his hat is of the *common* palmetto leaf" (19-20, emphasis mine).

Our observation of the three sons utilizes physiognomic evaluation to draw conclusions about ethnic inheritance, which in turn is used as a means of assessing personality. The oldest boy, Basil, age seventeen, is "the son of his father—a true Corsican" (20). This means that "his form betokens strength" and he "has a courageous expression," both of which suit him to be a "mighty hunter," a key term Reid encloses in quotation marks and defines as one who "delights in… dangers" and possesses an ever-increasing

ambition to kill more challenging game. In contrast, the middle brother, Lucien, "is more like what his mother was, for she was fair-haired and blonde, as are many of her people—the Basques." Lucien, who is "[u]nlike [his brother] in almost everything… is delicately formed," with a passionate fondness for "books and study," yet still courageous enough to accompany his brother "on all hunting expeditions" (20). Despite his effete appearance, the young scientist's "rare good sense" has guaranteed that he "is usually received with respect by the others. Such is the secret influence of intellect and education." The youngest son, aptly named François, is "more of a Frenchman than any of them" for being "quick-witted… merry to madness—cheerful at all times—changeable in his tastes and likings—[and] versatile in talents," his nomenclature in perfect harmony with the being signified (21). Although the five males all come from the same place and live in the same habitat, and although four of them share the same heredity, a unique morphological expression of ethnicity is used as shorthand to determine their temperaments and behaviors. Interior qualities such as education and class make an ineffable contribution to the external display, exerting an innate influence on the observable externalities: one's height, one's attire, one's manner of speaking. If Hugot were a genuine equal to Landi, it is assumed that he would be a few inches taller and a little more striking in his wardrobe.

As Reid demonstrates throughout his oeuvre, when determining the worth of a man or an animal, external appearances tell all; that beauty may be in the eye of the beholder is a consideration that never enters his objective empiricism. With his taxonomic obsession over strictly visible details, humans become merely another observable animal specimen. Reid reiterates throughout his works that what separates humans from animals are rather superficial physical markers: an Anglocentric view of clothing as a means of both

practicality and modesty, a Eurocentric appreciation for permanent architecture, the ingenuity to fashion local resources into efficient and lasting tools and artifacts, an English standard of cleanliness, and the belief that morphology (height, muscularity, and comeliness) is reflective of an intelligent relationship with one's surroundings. His biographer notes that in his personal affairs and in his writings, Reid was "obsessed with surfaces—of plant life and clothing and behavior—but seldom went beyond appearance to examine interior psychological realities… content to concentrate on the details of dress rather than the content of being" (Steele 51). It is fitting, then, that before nonhuman animals even enter the story, we are already sizing up our potential heroes from a distance as objects of our hunter-naturalist gaze; for them to rise above such tacit animal status, they will have to prove themselves. The Landis' prospects bode well, if only because they have been born with some of the physical markers that Reid "objectively" deems superior; other humans may not fare quite so well in his evaluation.

Whereas many gander pulling narratives took for granted that it was a (white) man's prerogative to treat animals as the objects they were, even if only to amuse himself in wholly counterproductive and violent ways, the big game hunting adventures of Mayne Reid betray an anxiety about this objectifying drive. The churnings of early evolutionary thought, the eclipsing of the Great Chain of Being that had so assuredly placed humans above animals, and the classificatory comparisons of natural history have blurred the fine line separating humans from the rest of the animal kingdom such that killing them for pleasure can no longer be quite so thoughtless an act. The cocksure killing of animals requires a worthy justification now that we ourselves are not so existentially different from them: for Reid, hunting thus becomes a vital act of survival that must be embraced and

lauded for its life-sustaining properties. While it can still be fun, one no longer kills animals simply to kill time. Although Reid himself and likely most of his readers did not live under such circumstances, Reid insists one must kill animals to keep from being killed. Only he who successfully keeps himself from ever becoming the object of an other is entitled to call himself a subject.

In the adventure that follows, these three "boy men" (28) fend for themselves in the hunt for an elusive white buffalo across howling wilderness and hostile Indian territory west of the Mississippi. They do so while collectively modeling Reid's vision of the ideal American man (or *Homo americanus*, if you will): a self-sufficient Hunter-Naturalist whose clearheaded actions pursue cleanly from his commonsense appraisals, naturally blessed with the gifts of whiteness, physically capable of providing for his own unfastidious needs, intellectually able to discern any faultiness in received authorities, and morally willing to assume the position atop an hierarchical taxonomy he himself has charted. Whether predominantly Corsican like Basil is said to be, Basque like Lucien, French like François, Scots-Irish like Reid himself, or Dutch like his most famous boy reader, Teadie Roosevelt, the white American boy, if freed from the corrupting influences of civilization's most tyrannical authorities, can tap into his inherited potential, master his body, and triumph as the concluding link in the remorseless "chain of destruction."

Reid himself was born in Northern Ireland in 1818 but sailed for New Orleans in 1839. As documented by his biographer Joan Steele, his resistance to slavery, inability to find stable employment, and wanderlust carried him to various cities throughout the United States, until in December 1846 he enlisted to fight in Mexico. As a war correspondent for the *Spirit of the Times*, he produced his first significant published writings, and after

retiring from the army in May 1848, he moved to Philadelphia and began a career as a playwright and novelist. In 1849, he returned to London, where his writing career took off. Beginning with sensational adventure novels for adults, often set along the Mexican border, he wrote almost exclusively of American locales—a fact true of many British authors of the day, but especially advantageous for Reid, who had actually spent a formative decade traveling the vistas he described. In 1851, he met the thirteen-year-old Elizabeth Hyde, whom he married in 1853, around the time he began to write specifically for an audience of boys. In 1868, having driven himself to bankruptcy building an extravagant Mexican-style hacienda in England, he once more returned to the invigorating American landscapes of his youth, hoping to revive his artistic inspiration, the dwindling reception of his newer works, and his flagging health. The formation in 1869 of *Onward: A Magazine for the Young Manhood of America* and the rerelease of some of his earlier works as abridged dime novels helped him to achieve the former two, but his dwindling mental and physical health sent him back to England in 1870, where he was hospitalized for "acute melancholia" for several months. Neither his career nor his health ever fully recovered, and he died in London in 1883. Although never an official United States citizen, Reid regarded himself as an honorary American and was often treated as one.

Although surviving records regarding book sales in the nineteenth century are elliptical in their data, the works of Mayne Reid were undoubtedly a mainstay of the publishing industry for the entire second half of the century. As a case in point, between December 1852 and September 1858, Ticknor, Reed & Fields of Boston published at least fifteen editions of *The Boy Hunters*, totaling more than 12,500 copies (Tryon and Warren 235-439). American publishers alone produced at least thirty-eight additional distinct

editions between 1854 and 1910, and the book appears to have never been out of print until the twentieth century (Sternick). *The Boy Hunters* was one of the more popular of Reid's works, yet his fifty-one other titles, including all those to be discussed in this chapter, were similarly kept in print, often as part of collectible series like Hurst & Company's Cosmos Series of Representative Authors (1902–3) or G.P. Putnam & Sons' Knickerbocker Series for Young Readers (1890–1910). An article in an 1861 edition of the long-running weekly literary magazine *Littell's Living Age*, noting that only Reid's name is worthy of mention among the many other midcentury writers who "have trod… and have failed" in the field of frontier literature, cites his readership at "tens of thousands" ("Gustave Aimard" 467). These numbers grew to the point that the eminent literary critic Richard Henry Stoddard (1825–1903) regarded him as "one of the best known authors of his time." In his introduction to an 1889 edition of *The Desert Home*, Stoddard writes, "No one who has written books for the young during the present century ever had so large a circle of readers as Captain Mayne Reid," adding that he had earned "the admiration of the millions of young people who read his books" (1-4). Reid's works were especially a fixture of the boys who came of age during the Civil War, and their reflorescence in the 1880s and '90s seems to indicate that these boys later desired to pass this nostalgia onto their own children.

To an American spectator from the early twenty-first century, the model of manhood that Reid championed in the 1850s may seem unremarkable insofar as many of its elements have so long persisted as to now seem primordial; however, the Reidean model was once novel for having rejected prior and alternative modes of manhood available in competing popular juvenile books of the era. Unlike his literary compeers, Reid balked at the status quo and the systems of empire, presenting a children's literature that was

uniquely individualist and libertarian. Unfortunately, he was also a promiscuous reader who wrote foremost in order to profit from the public's appetites. Although he valued his own discriminating intellect above all else, he borrowed freely from a wide range of (pseudo)scientific, literary, and politicized sources, often regurgitating principles of imperialism and white supremacy that stood in contradiction to his own self-professed radical democracy and furthermore finessing them with the high-stakes drama lazily supplied by battles between stereotyped forces of good and evil. While no particular strand of his ideology—not his valorization of self-reliance, nor his utilitarian perception of animals as raw resources, nor his belief in the evolutionary progress of societies—can be said to have wholly originated with him, his unique convergence of these threads, spun into the fabric of entertaining adventures tropes, spread wide coverage of these beliefs in the second half of the nineteenth century. Reid was thus an early and very visible articulator of the often harmful linkages between masculinity, science, animals, and race that would become mainstream when his boy readers came of age.

Surveying the Surroundings: Reid's Literary Ecosystem

The worldview surrounding self-reliant masculinity that the Captain shaped for his boy readers cannot be said to be a radical anomaly within mid-nineteenth-century Anglo-American discourse, which was likewise shaped by Jacksonian democracy, James Fenimore Cooper, Emerson, Thoreau, and the edict to "go west, young man." The uniqueness of Reid's vision, however, can be seen by comparing his themes with those found in other books popular with American boys in the 1850s, which were often written by men who, like Reid, were from the British Isles yet often set their novels in the

Americas. The themes most prominent in these books all vouch for the preeminence of Western civilization's institutions—the church, the schools, the class system, the military, the empire—as well as the imperative to replicate these forms in lush new lands. The works of Reid either abandoned or critiqued these conservative themes, perhaps spurning the confidence with which these works presumed the stability of civilization. Drawing instead from scientific sources that warned of empires overcivilizing themselves to the point of cannibalistic tyranny and of individuals so ill-equipped to deal with material reality that they starved themselves to extinction, Reid envisioned success only for those individuals willing and able to fight for it.

One strain notably missing from Reid's works was Christianity, which, as in previous decades, was an overt, guiding influence in much of the literature popular with boys in the United States of the 1850s and '60s. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), still a favorite a century and a half later and the inspiration for Reid's first foray into juvenile literature, was admired in part for its religious conversions, with one reviewer in 1856 deeming it "a great religious poem, showing that God is found where men are absent" (qtd. Melani). Likewise, the eponymous narrator of William Henry Giles Kingston's bestselling naval yarn *Peter the Whaler* (1851) never forgets the instructions of his priestly father, even as he travels the globe battling slavers, pirates, and ferocious whales.

The innovation in religious expression of this period, however, was what one critic defined in 1857 as "Muscular Christianity," referring to the works of Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes. In Hughes's *Tom Brown's School Days,* published to great success in 1857, a major plotline involves the successful reintroduction of prayer into the Rugby School dormitories at the clasped hands of George Arthur, a frail newcomer. Although the

other boys in this all-male domain view such devotions as effeminate and childish at the beginning of the book—in line with a growing midcentury ideology associating mothers with religious virtue and moral education—the support of the athletic, charismatic Tom Brown quells any bullying and instead transforms praying into a popular trend. The bond between George and Tom, fusing the (putatively feminine) spiritual virtues of the former with the (obviously masculine) physical strength of the latter, embodies the new ethic, and in the 1859 sequel, *Tom Brown at Oxford*, Hughes would write, "The Muscular Christians have hold of the old chivalrous and Christian belief, that a man's body is given to him to be trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes, and the subduing of the earth which God has given to the children of men" (170).

Reid certainly concurred that a man's body should be trained to subdue the earth, but his commentary on Christianity borders on the radically critical. Juvenile books that were more explicitly American tended to be less overtly religious overall, but Peter J. Hugill notes that American protagonists were still "usually represented as good churchgoers" with proper devotional tendencies (322). And lest it be assumed that Reid's scientific interests foreclosed religious thought, Nina Baym documents how Natural Theology, the mission "to discover as much of God's mind as God permitted," was the "ultimate intellectual goal" of science "at least until the 1870s," with scientists widely considered to be "the most religious group after the ministers" (12). In *The Boy Hunters* and Reid's other adventure books, however, nary a thought is spared for church or God except in the form of blasphemous exclamations—a telling omission, given that Reid was descended from generations of Presbyterian ministers and had begun his education on that

same path before embarking to the United States. Without ever analyzing his religious views, his biographer admits "[a] more unlikely candidate for the ministry can scarcely be imagined" than the "rebellious, independent, and iconoclastic" Reid (Steele 17-8).

His unexpected attitude toward religion is most apparent in *Odd People: Being a Popular Description of Singular Races of Man*, an 1860 second-hand ethnology of "savage" people from around the world, written in much the same style as his nonfiction compendium of quadrupeds. Predictably, he makes much ado when a group appears to lack religion, and he is totally dismissive of animist or shamanic beliefs. Even theistic religions that are recognizable to him, such as "Mohametanism," receive only a cursory dismissal. Notably, however, he saves his most extensive denunciations for missionary attempts at "Christianizing" savages, particularly as done by the Spanish. Anti-Catholicism may inform these screeds in addition to his contempt for the competing Spanish presence in the Americas, but Reid's unwillingness to provide any counterpoint endorsing some "true" Anglican Christianity insinuates that the people in his book could *never* practice any true civilized religion, including Presbyterianism, not because they are "savages" but simply because religious belief itself seems antithetical to his idea of civilization. Of the Tongans, one of the peoples he views most favorably, he writes:

> Their late wars are solely due to missionary influence…. A usurper, who wishes to be king over the whole group, has embraced the Methodist form of Christianity, and linked himself with its teachers,—who offer to aid him with all their influence; and these formerly peaceful islands now present the painful spectacle of a divided nationality,—the "Christian party," and the "Devil's party." The object of conquest on the part of the former is to place the Devil's party under the absolute sovereignty of a despot, whose laws will be dictated by his missionary ministers. (209)

Here, the introduction of doctrine leads to divisiveness, hypocrisy, and bloodshed; elsewhere, religion is associated with idolatry, ostentation, and subordination. One seeking religious instruction in the works of Reid will find only a hint of the opposite.

Schooling was another favored institution prominent in the juvenile fiction of the era, albeit not in Reid's works. School was a place where boys were divided into teams and classes, encouraging them to respect, as Hugill writes, "the formation of *esprit de corps*, in particular through organized team games" (321). In *Tom Brown,* this manifests as continual scenes of rugby and football, interspersed with odes to the benefits of sport. The solidarity forged on the field carries into other domains, as in a subplot involving a "war of independence" against the tyrannical reign of the school bully; how such teamwork might one day translate into the defense of the nation is clear in these scenes, which speaks to another purpose of the schools: to instill in young men respect for their place within an harmonious hierarchy in which they bear responsibilities toward family, country, and God. One of the major developments in Hughes's book, for instance, is when Tom learns to appreciate the wise discipline of a just teacher.

Education in the books of Hughes, Kingsley, and Kingston is also valued insofar as it gives way to introspection and the development of moral character—namely, one's duties toward others. *Peter the Whaler*, for instance, contains frequent internal monologues in which the young sailor worries over such other-oriented anxieties as the moral obligation of keeping a promise made in self-defense to a murderous pirate. Moral education is common in literature intended for young people, and that education usually concerns accepting one's role in society. Toward the end of *Tom Brown's School Days,* Hughes includes a sermon emphasizing the need for selflessness: "It is only for those who seem to

us to have lost compass and purpose, and to be driven helplessly on rocks and quicksands, whose lives are spent in the service of the world, the flesh, and the devil, *for self alone, and not for their fellow-men, their country, or their God*, that we must mourn and pray without sure hope and without light" (270, emphasis mine).

Although all of Reid's boy characters are well-read, their education is vigorously autodidactic and self-serving. Reid boys receive their schooling in the woods and in streams, and instead of team sports like baseball, cricket, and foot-ball, featured respectively in the work of American children's authors Oliver Optic, Peter Parley, and Jacob Abbott, they engage in individual shooting competitions. In *The Boy Hunters,* Reid writes of the very physical education the brothers have received and of the self-directed aims of that education, a description which also hints at a very personalized vision of imperialist expansion from shore to shore:

> And truly had [their father] trained them to a complete self-reliance, as far as lay in his power. He had taught them to ride, to swim, to dive deep rivers, to fling the lasso, to climb tall trees, and scale steep cliffs, to bring down birds upon the wing, or beasts upon the run, with the arrow and the unerring rifle. He had trained them to sleep in the open air—in the dark forest—on the unsheltered prairie—along the white snow-wreath—anywhere—with but a blanket or a buffalo-robe for their beds. He had taught them to live upon the simplest food; and the knowledge of practical botany which he had imparted to them… would enable them, in case of need, to draw sustenance from plants and trees, from roots and fruits—to find resources where ignorant men might starve. They knew how to kindle a fire without either flint, steel, or detonating powder. They could discover their direction without a compass—from the rocks, and the trees, and the signs of the heavens; and, in addition to all, they had been taught, as far as was then known, the geography of that vast wilderness that stretched from their own home to the far shores of the Pacific Ocean. (28-9)

The deemphasis on teamwork is likewise evident in the structure of Reid's narratives. Although Reid's boys occasionally must work together, their adventures are more likely to

be individual feats, and a common setup involves boys regaling each other around a campfire with stories of their solo pursuits. Teamwork is downgraded in the Reidean education, where the goal is not to accept one's destined status in the hierarchy but rather to make oneself the preeminent authority. As for books, authorities are often cited, but it is a definitive lesson that teachers and books can be wrong.[18] Moreover, introspection is nonexistent in Reid, where knowledge is useful only insofar as it contributes to self-sufficiency, without regard for any moral calculus.

That Reid furthermore rejected the faith in aristocracy and the class system found in British authors like Kingston and Kingsley is not surprising given his preference for the United States and radical democracy, but it would be mistaken to believe that genteel attitudes were confined to one side of the Atlantic. As Beverly Lyon Clark demonstrates, Americans were still celebrating inherited gentility in 1885, when Frances Hodgson

[18] Reid's elevation of autodidacticism over formal education reflects apparent anxieties in his personal life that his biographer Joan Steele has unearthed. Reid enrolled in the Royal Academical Institution in Belfast in 1834 at age sixteen with the intention (perhaps not his own) of being a Presbyterian minister like his father and several of his ancestors, yet Steele finds it "doubtful that he completed the prescribed course" (18). Steele seems not to have realized that the Royal Belfast Academical Institution was a grammar school formed in 1814, serving pupils as young as eleven, with an anti-Catholic Collegiate Department that functioned as a preparatory school for the ministry. Thus, while it may not be "suspect," as Steele says, that Reid successfully graduated in 1838 at age twenty, it nevertheless does seem a suspicious inflation of his credentials when in November 1840, while living in Nashville, Tennessee, he advertised himself as the schoolmaster of a "New English, Mathematical and Classical School" by professing himself "a graduate of the Royal College" with a degree that "qualifies me to teach any of the above mentioned branches," including Greek, Latin, Hebrew, geometry, trigonometry, surveying, mechanics, hydraulics, astronomy, history, geography, and elocution (Steele 18-19). "Perhaps the incredible range of courses listed above was more than the twenty-two-year-old Reid could handle," Steele surmises, noting that after running this ad through January 1841, he withdrew it and introduced a new ad in March "shifting the school's emphasis toward the more utilitarian branches of learning" (19). In this ad, which ran until June, Reid expressed his conviction of "the absolute inutility of the Classical studies," which he could only "acknowledge… as branches of Education" because he was "compelled by the trammels of custom and hoary usage, and by respect due to the authority of others," whereas "the practical application of the useful arts of life will form the primary elements of my school" (qtd. Steele 19). Reid's academical aspirations ended with the school's dissolution on July 1, and when he set his 1861 adult novel *Wild Huntress* at a Tennessee school, he portrayed its schoolmaster as an "archvillain" (Steele 19). Still on a quest to find his place in the world, the young Reid conceded that such a place could not depend upon the pretenses of formal education.

Burnett published *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. Genteel manhood was the mode of masculinity against which Reid's model appeared most revolutionary; this was a model of fashionable refinement, cultural high taste, religious faith, and philanthropy, emblematized by young Fauntleroy, whose prowess at horse riding and foot racing complement his polish, his poise, and his paternalistic concern for *his* poor people. Reid's British contemporaries stressed the necessity of blood inheritance as the conferrer of this grace, and Anne M. Windholz documents how most adventure sagas written for young British men fret over the uncouth American frontier's potential to unmake a man's gentlemanly status, which could certainly be forfeited but which could never be gained except through birthright (633). Although Horatio Alger and others would soon decouple American respectability from its hereditary requisite, a transfixion with magical blood persisted, as in Pauline Hopkins's *Winona* (1902), Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan of the Apes* (1912), and countless other American novels where a third-act discovery of aristocratic European lineage provides physical substantiation of one's already self-evident greatness. Even Reid's literary successor Robert Louis Stevenson, a devoted fan as a boy, would reassert classist essentialism in the denouement of *Treasure Island* (1883).

In Reid, however, genetic inheritance is far more unstable than the class system allows. As will be shown, racial inheritance in Reid can bequeath certain intellectual and physical advantages, which are especially important due to Reid's sense that a person's worth can be entirely assessed through externalities. Nevertheless, externalities are changeable, and it is only through a properly exploitative relationship with one's environment that one can achieve the physical stature that proves moral worth—a mastery that can be squandered by the civilized and approximated even by those deemed ethnic

savages. Reid's apparent conviction in a "Lamarckian" inheritance trumps the stable essentialism of aristocratic lineages.

Finally, the Reidean oeuvre differentiates itself from the literature of the period (juvenile and adult) in its ambivalent stance toward the expansion of Empire. The literature of the era celebrated the burgeoning of civilization in savage lands, optimistically believing old forms would flourish through their encounter with the New World. The first book Reid wrote for a juvenile audience was a "Robinsonade," a genre in which a person or people stranded in an unfamiliar locale (usually an island) must decipher the indigenous flora, fauna, and terrain in order to not only survive but moreover rebuild their familiar civilization from alien raw materials. Martin Green suggests Defoe's prototype was "the fountainhead of all Western fictional materials" for establishing the archetypal myth of Old World forms (societal, natural, and textual) being metamorphosed, reinvigorated, and improved by New World encounters (Maher 93). Reid's first juvenile work, *The Desert Home; or, The Adventures of a Lost Family in the Wilderness* (1852), distinguishes itself from others of the genre, and not simply because it is set in the American West rather than on a desert island. J.S. Bratton notes that the pious thanksgiving toward divine providence common throughout other Robinsonades receives only "small lip service" in *The Desert Home*, replaced instead by an acquisitive outlook obsessed with converting animal bodies into a material fortune (137-8). Meanwhile, Susan Naramore Maher argues that, most importantly, Reid substitutes the progressive structure of Robinsonades, in which Providence guides the successive transformation of primordial wilderness into a complete replica of European civilization, with "a Sisyphean narrative of inconclusive purport," where "dominion is never fully attained" and the "forbidding landscape… diminishes their

achievement and underscores their vulnerability in the shadow of nature's daunting forces. The culture they bring is insubstantial in comparison" (101, 104). Reid's frontier is an eternal proving ground, where dominance is contested continually and only the ablest of New World bodies can survive.

Reid's books also lacked the faith in manifest destiny common to American authors of the era. Reid evidences a clear contempt for the indigenous tribes who were then a direct impediment to the westward progress of the United States—a contempt that is in marked contrast to the esteem afforded similar groups occupying less strategically desirable territories—yet his sentiments toward the imperialist project are outspokenly critical. His political tangents reveal a cynicism toward the ruling classes not just of the Europeans, who indulge in feudalism and warmongering, but of the Americans as well, who rely on slavery to fund their democratic endeavors, and of much of the "civilized world" as a whole, which sustains itself through unfair gender inequalities. Overall, Reid's pessimistic attitude toward empire-building can be seen as a skepticism of big government in all forms, as summarized by his view of the Esquimaux[19] in *Odd People*: "Neither have they any political organization…. This absence of all government, however, is no proof of their being lower in the scale of civilisation than other savages; but, perhaps, rather the contrary, for the very idea of chiefdom, or government, is a presumption of the existence of vice among a people, and the necessity of coercion and repression" (90).

[19] Despite his obsession with the importance of names, the demonyms Reid uses in *Odd People* and elsewhere are almost universally problematic—derogatory, misspelled, externally bestowed, combining disparate groups, etc. To include more accurate names of the groups likely intended by Reid would be to falsely suggest that his descriptions of said groups are indeed apposite. I have chosen to employ Reid's original terminology, while sometimes deploying scare quotes for emphasis, so as not to suggest that the generalizations described in Reid's writings bear any relation to real communities. In other words, Reid's savages are literary creations, and thus it is his words that best describe them.

In Reid we thus find the first major instance of a popular individualist children's literature. The Captain does not advise one to listen to one's parents, as Peter Parley did, nor to have faith in one's God, as Kingston did, nor to fight for one's country, as Hughes did. His cursory, ambivalent, and sometimes critical references to religion, schools, and government demonstrate not only that they were blind spots in his knowledge but also that his encyclopedic curiosity neglected to heed these areas precisely because he did not value them as true markers of civilization. Instead, Reid urged boy readers to study hard not so they could be good subjects in the body politic, but so they could sustain their own bodies with roots, bark, and animal flesh while pursuing their own lonely paths. In his worldview, this self-development was more than just self-interest—it was the very foundation of civilizational progress, a belief that was possible because he took as his sources not the usual conservative influences that sought to reassert the status quo, but instead contemporary scientists, who in the 1850s were articulating a worldview of progress through change: evolution.

The evolutionary theories brewing by midcentury uncoupled one's status from any fixed, stable essence. In 1859, the Darwinian theory of natural selection would assert that evolution is nonteleological: mutations are random and often unfavorable, and their likelihood of increasing an individual's chance of survival depends upon specific contextual parameters, which are themselves subject to abrupt changes. Just because a species is perfectly suited to survive in an environment today does not mean the environment may not change tomorrow, putting the species at a disadvantage. No species is evolving toward perfection. Adaptability is unpredictable, and thus natural selection provides no rules to live by. In the time when Reid was writing his first boys' books,

however, it was often assumed that evolution was by some means oriented towards either improvement or degradation. In some formulations, wise individuals or societies could rein and leverage these forces. Reid had what is now referred to as a "Lamarckian" understanding of evolution, after the French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744–1829), who was *not* in fact the first or the only natural historian to believe that acquired characteristics (such as muscular strength) could be passed onto offspring. Moreover, Reid's understanding of such self-directed development might be deemed proto-Spencerian, after the English sociologist Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), who in 1864 coined the phrase "survival of the fittest" to represent evolution as a teleological tautology in which the ones with power were the ones biologically determined and thus naturally, rightfully destined to possess that power, a misunderstanding of natural selection later known as "Social Darwinism." Social Darwinism was widely embraced by self-made men like Reid and Jack London in the final decades of the nineteenth century because it posited a world of perpetual struggle in which a dedicated achiever could rise above his circumstances. Reid's interpretation of evolution reckoned with proving a superiority for humankind that was merely *achievable* rather than inherent; this unstable superiority had to be maintained constantly through the active effort of individuals. An unfit man can indeed be eaten by a grizzly bear, and a man who does not know how to kill a buffalo, or who has too much sentimental altruism to eat his own dog, can very well starve to death; certainly, no such man is the master of the universe.[20] Likewise, slaves, serfs, and

[20] The Landi brothers' faithful hunting dog, Marengo, nearly gets eaten in both *The Boy Hunters* and its sequel, *The Young Voyageurs.* The boys are certainly not happy about having to do this, and they prolong the necessity to the brink of starvation, but Reid makes it clear they are prepared to do it in order to survive. Only

sycophants direct their own energies toward the survival of a few despots, so any society structured around such a narrow distribution of the invigorating energies could not hope to survive for long. Reid's disinterest in powerful institutions like the church and the universities is ultimately a fear of such parasitism.

Reid also saw the path of evolutionary progress reflected in the rise and fall of societies, and in this he was revolutionary but not alone. According to this progression, from "brute" animality, "races of man" (sometimes deemed separate "species") ascend through various stages of animalistic "savagery" and warlord "barbarity" until they reach the pinnacle: "civilization." The New York politician and anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan would formalize this theory with his book *Ancient Society* in 1877. Eventually, two stages of devolution were added: if civilized people failed to mitigate the enervating aspects of industrial society—excessive leisure, a decreased interest in the responsibilities of reproductive sexuality, uteruses depleted by female education—then they would *decline* and, unable or unwilling to combat their less civilized and more prolific competition, they would go *extinct*. The environmental stressors in the urban centers of the East Coast (and throughout Old Europe) were the foremost culprits in this devolution, exerting a polluting effect on bodies which physically required some salubrious exposure to the natural environs of their evolutionary past in order to fully develop.

Reid was unique among writers of the 1850s is his early conviction that progress was not necessarily limitless, that devolution and decay were possible. Environmental historian Miles Powell observes that this framework did not become mainstream until the

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last-minute ingenuity concerning the discovery of edible substances hidden in the landscape saves the dog's life, twice.

era of Theodore Roosevelt, one of Reid's most devoted boy readers. In Reid's time, according to Powell, sport hunting as a restorative practice had only just begun to achieve popularity among urban gentlemen in the United States, and most Anglo-Americans were so comfortable in their supremacy that there was no reason to imagine their extinction was possible. Nonetheless, Reid's writings of the 1850s and '60s not only fully endorse the restorative effects of wilderness for white men but also formulate a clear theory of racial decay. The concept of "barbarity" does not have in Reid's work the taxonomic specificity that it would acquire later in the century, yet *Odd People* follows a similar system to what would be formalized later by thinkers like Roosevelt. *Odd People* has no clear geographical, alphabetical, or otherwise thematic organization to its eighteen chapters about "odd" societies from around the world, yet a recurring insistence on an hierarchical evolutionary scale of civilization sustains the entire project.

In Reid's conception, it was not the *enervating* but the *brutalizing* aspects of high civilization that made people barbarous, allowing a civilization to decay through savage-like stages to a final extinction. The true threats were political organizations that reduced self-reliant individuals to mere pawns in the machinations of despots. Reid's most unexpected assertion is thus his argument that the "Feegees, or Man-Eaters" have passed *beyond* the heights of civilization and onto the downward slope of degradation. Having established throughout the book that locating civilization is merely a matter of identifying exquisite externalities, Reid cannot deny the extensive evidence in favor of the Feegees: tall, proportionate, muscular statures surpassing even those of Europeans; "good" and "well-shaped" features; attire that incorporates a standard of modesty perfectly suited to their tropical environment; a "proficiency in the industrial arts" that "is entirely an

indigenous growth" and "often excels the white man"; and such a variety and complexity of "substantial" architecture and "beautiful" manufactures that "it would be a tedious task to illustrate" them all (171-84). In fact, though Reid has no trouble generalizing about any of the other groups in the book, he finds it impossible not to accept that the Feegees are complex individuals, incapable of being reduced: "our task would require more space than is here allotted to us: it would in fact be as much as to describe the complete social economy of a civilised nation; and a whole volume would scarce suffice to contain such a description" (180). After calculating all the criteria of civilization, Reid admits "that the standard possessed by the Feegee islanders is incomparably above that of the lower orders of most European nations" (171). How is it, then, that this beautiful, accomplished society, blessed with a luxuriant environment that they have productively utilized, is guilty of cannibalism?

Reid addresses this question by arguing that the "simple and primitive state, which men glibly call *savage*, is *not* the condition favourable to cannibalism" (169, emphasis his). Rather, "These are not men in their primitive state ascending upward, but a condition altogether the reverse. They are the decaying remnants of some corrupt civilisation, sinking back into the dust out of which they were created" (170). Cannibalism is the byproduct of an "absolute and monarchical" social organization: "This condition of things is absolutely necessary, before man can obtain sufficient power to prey upon his fellow-man to the extent of eating him. There can be no 'cannibal' without a 'king'" (170-1). Indeed, whenever Reid speaks of barbarity, he upends the term from its common usage, labeling it a symptom of high civilization.

Reid reserved most of his analysis of the decline of civilizations for a familiar enemy to both the English and US Americans: the Spanish. On the banks of the Orinoco, for instance, he sees only "a languid commerce,—characteristic of the decaying Spano-American race,—and the declining efforts of a selfish and bigoted missionary zeal, whose boasted aim of 'christianising and civilising' has ended only in producing a greater brutalization" (333). On the Patagonian plains, he mocks the Spaniards' inability to leave a lasting civilization: "But these Spanish settlements have all decayed, or are fast decaying; and when the Spanish race disappears from America,—which sooner or later it will most certainly do,—it will leave behind it a greater paucity of monumental record, than perhaps any civilised nation ever before transmitted to posterity" (397). Reid had fought Spanish-Americans in President James K. Polk's landgrab, the Mexican–American War, and his first adult books profited from his belief that Texas and the borderlands belonged in the hands of the United States. It is difficult not to see the Captain's conviction that the Spanish-American presence "will most certainly" disappear as wishful imperialist thinking, however contrary that may seem to his cynical commentary on empire elsewhere.

One takeaway of the doctrine of social evolution was that societies were not bound by some indigenous essentialism. Thus, any invasive person or race who could master another's place-bound knowledge and practices, and perhaps do so in an even more graceful and efficient way, would add to their own fitness and superiority and thus be more entitled to survive on that land. When Reid advocates that his boy readers must learn to become mighty self-reliant hunters, he prepares them to master the American frontier and thereby assert their dominion over it at the expense of any other would-be competitors in the struggle for existence.

The Mighty Hunter

The hunt is the impetus of most of Reid's juvenile plots, as evidenced by his titles: *The Young Yägers; or, A Narrative of Hunting Adventures in Southern Africa* (1856), *The War Trail; or, The Hunt of the Wild Horse* (1857), *Bruin; or, The Grand Bear Hunt* (1861), *The Giraffe Hunters* (1867), and even *The Plant Hunters; or, Adventures Among the Himalaya Mountains* (1857). In *The Boy Hunters; or, Adventures in Search of a White Buffalo*, a request to obtain the pelt of a rare albino bison initiates the Landi brothers' quest westward, but the white buffalo they eventually find and kill is little more than a MacGuffin, swiftly dispatched in the final paragraph of the 364-page book. Reid's tone renders this long-anticipated hunt a tedious afterthought:

> I might narrate many more adventures that befell our Boy Hunters; but I fear, young reader, you are already tired of the prairies. Suffice it, then, to say, that after some days spent in hunting with the Indians, a white buffalo was at length killed, his skin taken off in the proper manner, and, after being saturated with a preserving ointment, which Lucien had brought along with him, was carefully packed upon the back of the mule Jeanette. (363)

The white buffalo has no sensational value in and of itself; by that point, the boys have killed other buffalo, and it is presumed that the white buffalo, despite being a phenotypical anomaly, poses no unique challenge in terms of his behavior, for one member of a species is apt to act in much the same mechanical way as any other in the Reidean worldview. Nevertheless, the title of the book is still apt, for the plot is replete with the boys hunting, shooting, bagging, trapping, and killing an abundant miscellany of wild game. Some children's authors make their adventures so singular and wondrous that the fantasy could never escape the page. For Reid's boy readers, the invigorating, toughening thrill of hunting was made palpable and attainable for almost any reader.

Hunting was by no means a feature that was unique to Reid among other popular works of literature in the nineteenth century, but the details with which he colored his hunting stories did emphasize novel themes. Certainly, hunting was downplayed in the books of Reid's contemporaries in the British Isles, where medieval laws designating game as the private property of the monarchy and the aristocracy made the chase a class-bound pursuit. Kingston's *Peter the Whaler*, for instance, begins with the poaching of a pheasant on the property of a lord, an act depicted as a sinful transgression of societal rules. Hunting features in *Robinson Crusoe*, Johann David Wyss's *Swiss Family Robinson* (1812, first translated into English by William Godwin in 1814), and other such Robinsonades, but the instructive killings in that genre are always geared toward practical aims: physical sustenance, self-defense, or both. The thrill of the chase, the rush of bloodlust, and killing for the mere satisfaction of having killed are never the goal, nor is there much focus on violent cycles of predation and prey—"Nature, red in tooth and claw," as Tennyson would phrase it in 1850. Reid's glorification of the former and insistence in elaborating the latter are what distinguish his hunting scenes.

Richard Slotkin argues in *Regeneration through Violence* (1973) that the American origin story called for sacrificial destruction of the environment and its indigenous inhabitants so that a new society could be reborn from the ashes. Scenes of hunting were prolific in the literature of the United States in its first hundred years, but even the most celebratory of such works cautioned restraint and mourned wanton violence. In *The Lay of the Land* (1975), Annette Kolodny notes that initiation into this lifestyle of destruction was often accompanied by sorrow, as she illustrates by analyzing John Woolman's haunting reflections (published in 1774) of having stoned a mother robin and her nestlings when he

was nine (22-4). Or consider two of the most famous predecessors to Reid's Hunter-Naturalist, John James Audubon and James Fenimore Cooper's Natty Bumppo, whose stories are not without considerable self-reflection about the consequences of gunpower.

Audubon was the quintessential hunter-naturalist, much admired by Reid. He traveled the continent extensively, living off the land, and in his endeavors to supply the world with detailed information about the birds of North America, he killed, tasted, and frequently stuffed at least one specimen of every species he ever encountered. Though the most famous bird protection society would later take his name, Audubon had no qualms about killing some animals so as to better understand and appreciate their kind. Nevertheless, in the semi-autobiographical narratives that intersperse his *Ornithological Biography* (1831)—sketches which themselves fashion a model of the ideal self-reliant American frontiersman—Audubon frequently voices despair over violent excess. Such remorse can be found in *"*Scipio and the Bear," where a cacophonous undertaking to kill a bear who has been pilfering a farmer's corn "destroy[s] more corn within a few hours, than the poor Bear and her cubs had during the whole of their visits" (517), or in "The Eggers of Labrador," where he witnesses the "war of extermination" that will soon kill the last of the great auks and condemns as a "massacre" the "filthy," "cruel," and "brutal propensity to destroy the poor creatures" (471-4).

The tracker and desperado Natty Bumppo of Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales likewise bore no qualms about feeding himself at the end of a rifle, but he, too, balked at the wanton waste that frequently accompanied the frontier's transition into settled territory. For example, when in *The Prairie* (1827), astonished by the abundance of bison roaming the plains, Bumppo's companion boasts he will supply them with fresh meat by killing a

new buffalo each and every day, Bumppo swears he will take no part in such a rapacious plan. Most famously, in *The Pioneers* (1823), old Leather-Stocking anticipates by nearly a century the extinction of the then prodigious flocks of passenger pigeons, deriding settlers who "kill twenty and eat one" of a creature he lovingly describes as a companion:

> [H]ere have I known the pigeon to fly for forty long years, and, till you made your clearings, there was nobody to skear or to hurt them. I loved to see them come into the woods, for they were company to a body; hurting nothing; being, as it was, as harmless as a garter-snake. But now it gives me sore thoughts when I hear the frighty things whizzing through the air, for I know it's only a motion to bring out all the brats in the village at them. (44)

Of all creatures in the early nineteenth century, bison and passenger pigeons were especially known for their inexhaustible numbers; for Cooper to admonish killing these particular animals is especially noteworthy. Such restraint and regret are nowhere to be found in Reid.

In *The Boy Hunters* and its sequel *The Young Voyageurs*, hunger ostensibly motivates much of the killing, yet the sheer quantity of game consumed belies that rationale, and numerous scenes explicitly portray hunting as a mere game. Early in *The Young Voyageurs*, Reid clarifies that the thrill of executing an especially challenging kill and the glory pursuant to such an accomplishment are perfectly fine motivations, writing that François "was very desirous of bringing down one of these noble [swans], partly because the taste he had had of their flesh had given him a liking for it; and partly because their shyness had greatly tantalised him. One is always more eager to kill shy game, both on account of the rarity of the thing, and the credit one gets for his expertness" (58). Later, Reid does not admonish them for their plunder: "These seven great birds almost filled the little craft to the gunwales, and you would think that our 'torch-hunters' ought to have been

content with such a spoil; but the hunter is hard to satisfy with game, and but too often inclined to 'spill much more blood' than is necessary to his wants. Our voyageurs, instead of desisting, again set the canoe in motion, and continued the hunt" (73-4). The appetite for the hunt is inexhaustible in Reid. It not only sustains life—it *is* life, for no other events occupy the narrative, and when characters do occasionally stop at towns to replenish their supplies, Reid is quick to dismiss such details as irrelevant. As the father in *Bruin* explains, "There is a great deal to be learnt in cities, but much that would be better not learnt at all. I have no objection to your passing through cities—for you must needs do so on your journey—but one of the conditions which I shall prescribe is, that you make stay in no city, longer than you can arrange for getting out of it" (13).

In *Bruin,* even a slaughter that more sentimental writers might have considered too taboo to depict without some sufficient wringing of hands is eased onto the boy reader by a sensational sleight-of-hand. In the book, two aristocratic Russian brothers, Ivan and Alexis, are tasked by their baron father with circumnavigating the globe for the purpose of killing and extracting the pelt of a member of every known species of bear. They are accompanied by the gruff, fifty-year-old Corporal Pouchskin, their father's personal bodyguard and gamekeeper. Throughout their travels—to Borneo, Peru, and the Arctic Circle, among other destinations—they must learn the habits of the local species so as to outwit them. And outwit them they do, killing bear after bear, chapter after chapter. Each bear is a lonely male, until a climactic encounter with "the old she."

In *The Boy Hunters*, Reid had speculated that the only reason the bears of North America had not long ago been "extirpated" by hunters is because "the old she-animals are never killed during the period of gestation"—not because of any code either sustainable or

sentimental but simply because "they are never met with at that time. It has been said, there is no hunter to be found in all America who remembers having killed a she bear with young" (184-5).[21] This thus makes the killing of a mother bear with her cubs the most extraordinary of accomplishments. When an "old she" polar bear is first encountered in *Bruin*, she is in battle with a pack of wolves, having already killed four of them. One of her cubs clings to her shoulders, the other cowering beneath her, and Reid notes that the mother is "half-famished, perhaps, and feeble from having suckled her young" (247). It is these cubs the wolves are after, "thinking to separate these from their mother, and so destroy and devour them" (248). In the next chapter, the father bear arrives at last and frightens off the wolves. Afterward, Reid writes that the father "ran up to his mate; and, throwing his paws around her neck, appeared to congratulate her upon her escape," at which point, the danger having been averted, "the little fellows… began tumbling about over the grass, and rolling over one another in play, the parents watching with interest their uncouth gambols" (250).

Given the sympathetic and domesticity-tinged descriptions, one might expect that the famished mother and her young children would not become objects of the boys' pursuit—that some psychoanalytic projection onto the maternal figure might still their trigger fingers. Reid entertains this possibility:

> Notwithstanding the well-known ferocity of these animals, there was something so tender in the spectacle, that our hunters hesitated about advancing. Alexis, in particular, whose disposition was a shade more gentle than that of his companions, felt certain qualms of compassion, as he looked upon this exhibition of feelings and affections that appeared almost human. Ivan was even touched; and certainly neither he nor his brother would have slain these creatures out of mere wanton sport. They would not have thought

[21] Miles Powell notes that by the early twentieth century, sportsmen hunters had incorporated chivalrous ideals into their code, arguing that there was "gentlemanly deference due to all ladies, irrespective of their species" (102). These regulations are now recognized primarily as practical game management tactics.

> of such a thing under ordinary circumstances; and it was only from the necessity they were under of procuring the skin that they thought of it at all. Perhaps they would even have passed this group; and taken their chances of finding another, that might make a less powerful appeal to their compassion; but in this they were overruled by Pouchskin. The old grenadier was afflicted by no such tender sentiments; and throwing aside all scruple, before his young masters could interfere to prevent him, he advanced a few paces forward, and discharged his fusil, broadside at the biggest of the bears. (250-1)

This menacing gesture precipitates an action scene with quick, kinetic paragraphs, one in which it becomes unclear who exactly is acting in self-defense. The three humans escape to their boat, the ferocious father roars and lunges and nearly drowns them, and in the end, sheer luck causes a wedge of steel from the boat to crush the beast's skull. They had promised their father that the pelts they procured would only come from bears killed by their own shots, however; with the menacing potential of Bruin having been reawakened and directed towards themselves, the boys no longer dwell on their quibbles and instead remember the object of their global quest. Reid ends the chapter thus:

> Our young hunters would have been contented to have left the others alone—neither the female nor her cubs being required by them. But the voyageurs—who were desirous of obtaining the skins of all three on their own account—proposed returning to effect their destruction; and in this proposal they were backed by Pouchskin, who had a natural antipathy to all bears.
>
> It ended in the killing of the dam, and the capturing of her cubs alive; for, encumbered as the old she was with her offspring, she was soon overtaken, and fell an easy victim to the volley of bullets that were poured into her from all sides at once.
>
> With the skins of the old bears, and the cubs tied in the bottom of the canoe, our hunters started back down stream; but they had scarce parted from the place, before the ravenous wolves returned—not only to devour the carcases [*sic*] of the bears, but also those of their own comrades that had fallen in the encounter! (254-5)

Brian Luke has proven, contrary to claims that animal rights sympathies are an unnatural affectation, that compassion towards other species is inherent to human children and that

the quelling of such concern must be taught, a damaging process necessary for the maintenance of institutions built on animal subjugation. This scene in *Bruin* demonstrates that process in the lives of brothers Ivan and Alexis, and scenes throughout Reid about the "cycle of destruction" prepare his boy readers for their own acceptance of such "facts."

To that end, concluding this chapter about being "afflicted by such tender sentiments" with "ravenous wolves" devouring "their own comrades" is a calculated bit of grisly depravity that reinforces Reid's sense that nature is saturated with violence. Reid calls this the "Chain of Destruction," and this lesson is explicitly articulated in many of Reid's books. The "Chain of Destruction" is a view of ecology focusing on its bloodiest propensities, since Reid omits plant providers, the sun, and other immotile agents in the environment. In a chapter thus titled in *The Boy Hunters,* comprising twenty-five pages of the first edition, the boys attentively watch as a blue-winged fly is eaten by a ruby-throated hummingbird, who is crushed by a tarantula, himself devoured by a chameleon, who meets his fate in the belly of a scorpion lizard, who is quickly consumed by a red snake, himself snatched from the air by a hungry kite, who is intercepted and killed by a bald eagle. As the boys ruminate in the following chapter on the essential lesson they have just witnessed, Lucien must inform them of the most important takeaway: that Basil, who then shot the eagle out of the sky, was "the *last* link in the chain of destruction" (119, emphasis mine). In the boys' only non-expletive reference to divine powers, Lucien ponders, "And who knows the reason why a mysterious Providence has created those beings to be the food of each other? That is a question about which we can arrive at no satisfactory conclusion" (120-1). Such is the divine order of things, the only meaningful cosmology ordering Reid's

universe: that some beings were created to be food for others, and that humans should endeavor to make themselves the terminus of the chain.

If such is the order of things, then there can be no sin in hunting. Humans are no guiltier for enjoying bloodshed than are wolves or kites. To indulge in destruction is to be natural.[22] A few decades prior, cloaking this under a religious argument would have been heretical: the existence of carnivores was seen as evidence of postlapsarian imperfection in the material world; in so-called "Happy Family" menageries throughout the century, exhibitors trained lions to resist eating the lambs on display with them, evoking an image of Heaven akin to the painter Edward Hicks's "peaceable kingdom" (Pearson 52).

By emphasizing these unimpeachable ecological facts of the "chain of destruction," Reid bridges the gap between what Marti Kheel terms "the happy hunter" and "the holist hunter": the former a midcentury phenomenon, popularized by sportsmen's magazines that turned the frontiersman's necessary quest for sustenance into the urban man of leisure's "sporting" attempt at finding "game"; the latter a mid-twentieth-century philosophy, associated with Aldo Leopold, in which hunters play "a vital, ecological role, comparable to other predators in the natural world" ("License to Kill" 92-6). For Reid, however, it is not simply the case that, as Kheel writes, "The violence that [hunters] inflict merely reflects the violence of the natural world and is, therefore, beyond ethical reproach" (98-9). Rather, as Susan Naramore Maher clarifies, "Reid's West is… a place where the weak succumb to

[22] In *Brutal: Manhood and the Exploitation of Animals*, Brian Luke examines the proliferation of such arguments in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, quoting pro-hunting writers such as James Swan, who wrote, "Hunters do not prefer death to life; rather, they simply seek to participate in the reality of life and embrace it, deriving joy from accepting life" (qtd. Luke 53). Luke's book presents a thoughtful moral and religious argument against such thinking.

violence, where brute nature continually wages battle to dominate and survive. Without grit, without predatory instinct and calculating reason, men and women soon perish, leaving behind only bleached bones to mark their existence" (104). Lucien's wry suggestion that Basil may *not* be the very last link in the chain of destruction should they encounter the natives on whose land they are trespassing—a suspenseful encounter that indeed becomes the climax of the novel in place of the hunting of the white buffalo—reminds readers that in America, swiftness with a gun is not merely a matter of sport.

The *True* Naturalist

A telling detail in *The Boy Hunters* is a false description Reid gives when introducing Lucien: he "talks but little—not half so much as most boys, but although habitually silent he possesses a rare good sense; and when he offers his advice upon any question, it is usually received with respect by the others" (21). As it turns out, Lucien's discursive monologues comprise entire chapters; at the merest of promptings, he will articulate the visible differences between every known and speculative species of carrion bird on the planet. Lucien's style of discourse readily blurs with Reid's own encyclopedic mode, which of itself was not unusual in the literature of the preceding decades. In the 1830s, Samuel Griswold Goodrich built a lucrative business around didactic natural history for children, and Susan Naramore Maher notes that by the 1840s, with works like Captain Frederick Marryat's *Masterman Ready* (1841), "the Robinsonade became a genre of choice among children's writers" (96). Such books emphasized instruction over plot or character, with each scene devoted to some new lesson in practical mechanics (like making a compass) or sustainable resource management (like using quills to sew). Although lessons

in geology may weary twenty-first century readers, Joan Steele asserts that children "respond positively to facts" and that although Reid's tone may come across "as pedantry, or at best as an attempt to insert 'useful knowledge' into children's books… bright children seeking knowledge would devour Reid's work eagerly" (101, 104-5).

Enjoyment of instructional content in leisure reading extended even to adult readers. Merle Curti argues that the educational material in the new, inexpensive dime novels of the era sated the desire in the increasingly literate working classes for triumphant tales of self-improvement; with the knowledge gained, readers could prove as successful as the protagonists. Such writing also served to advance American science, which was itself a driving theme in popular culture in an era when such advancement carried the patriotic hope of progress (Baym 2-3). As Baym notes, in a republic without royal patronage for scientific study, the popularization of scientific knowledge in books and magazines was a way of raising revenue, and the production of new scientific knowledge would in turn benefit the populace with more helpful technology (22). Such "affiliative" scientific work was routinely the arena of *female* writers. In many ways, Reid's attempt to yoke his own amateur status to both the "prestige" of science and a style of literature figured as robustly masculine reflects the more widespread cultural anxiety over the gendered authority of science that Baym documents throughout the second half of the nineteenth century (Baym 14, 154, 198). For although Reid styled himself as a preeminent captain of manly science, Baym notes that "[i]n the 1840s a network of influential scientists… began working deliberately to redefine… the image of scientist from whimsical gentleman amateur to well-networked, certified professional" (123-4). She adds, "the amateur in part was

discredited by feminizing it" (124). This tension seeps through the work of Reid, whom the scientific professionals would have undoubtedly deemed a prattling amateur.

Punctuating Reid's works are persistent jabs against the highly educated. The topic that is most likely to get Lucien's blood boiling—and which perhaps makes the character most unrealistic, since few real boys are likely to expend so much emotional energy on such a dry theme—is the distinction between *true* hunter-naturalists and *learned* "closet-naturalists," whose knowledge is gained from dusty tomes and whose conclusions fail to have any meaning outside the ivory tower. If Basil is an exemplar of the fortitudinous "mighty hunter," then Lucien is a reader *par excellence*, for his reading extends beyond the library and into the real world, where knowledge is verifiable. Immediately following the boys' introduction, Reid illustrates Lucien's ability to decipher by having the boy accurately deduce which steamboat is approaching up the Mississippi from hearing only "the sound of [its] steam-pipe" (24). A closet-naturalist, on the other hand, knows only the babel of nonsense speech that has no meaning beyond the page.

Understanding why Reid felt such vehement contempt for so-called "closet-naturalists" illuminates the value system undergirding his belief that the naturalist was the "true hero" of society. Part of his distaste for the leading scientists of the day involved anti-European sentiment as well as accusations of gullibility, plagiarism, and unoriginality, yet all these supporting arguments ultimately do not stand up against Reid's underlying motive for defining the practice of the "true naturalist": to justify through science the preeminent position of men like himself who were, in fact, no longer classed among the ranks of true professional scientists.

Reid's two most frequently cited (and disavowed) closet-naturalists are Buffon and Cuvier. That these naturalists were French seems to bear some weight on Reid's distaste. Anti-Buffon sentiment became a patriotic act with the publication of Thomas Jefferson's 1785 *Notes on the State of Virginia*, a rebuttal to Buffon's meritless speculations that the environment of the American continent was too feeble to support greatness of any kind. Jefferson, himself an avid naturalist, corresponded with Cuvier, however, and Cuvier was less associated with nationalistic concerns. In his screeds, Reid at one point notes that "the Frenchmen… are fonder than all others of making a parade of science" (*BH* 317), but the Hunter-Naturalist Landi and his three sons are themselves identified by their French heredity rather than their American residence, and, aside from the Spanish, contempt for continental Europeans does not seem to be a concern for Reid.

That the closet-naturalists are overly credulous is a flaw Reid continually needles in order to demonstrate his own discernment. They gain their knowledge from other written reports rather than first-hand experience, so this lack of verification causes them to amplify falsehoods by reprinting them. These naturalists' gullibility is sometimes considered willful since, according to Lucien, such "fabulous stories… have been propagated by men who, perhaps, never saw a vulture in the air, but who, *in order to make their books amusing*, have readily adopted the exaggerated tales of every Munchausen they could meet with" (*BH* 306, emphasis mine). Nevertheless, the need for vigilant skepticism is *not* Reid's ultimate lesson, and in *Odd People* he even warns, "Incredulity carried too far is but another form of credulity" (15). Fine discernment is not easily practiced.

On the other hand, a closet-naturalist's accuracy is also a sign of his sin, for any accuracy from such writers must be stolen. This truth is most fully expounded when

Lucien, after reflecting upon the mess recent science has made of the study of crocodiles, first mentions the "*closet*-naturalists, old mummy-hunters of museums! Bah! it makes one angry!" (*BH* 56). In one of the only scenes of heightened emotion experienced by the three teenage boys in the book's entirety, Lucien's "usually mild countenance exhibited an expression of mingled indignation and contempt," prompting an astonished Basil to ask, "What is there in it to make one angry?" (57). Lucien steams:

> Why, to think… that these same closet-naturalists should have built themselves up great names by sitting in their easy chairs measuring, and adding up, and classing into dry catalogues, objects which they knew very little about; and that little they obtained from the observations of others—true naturalists—men like the great [Scottish-American ornithologist Alexander] Wilson—men who toiled, and travelled, and exposed themselves to countless dangers and fatigues for the purpose of collecting and observing; and then for these men to have the fruits of their labours filched from them, and descanted upon in dry arithmetical terms by these same catalogue-makers.—Bah! [… M]any of the *philosophic* naturalists, now so much talked of, shall be forgotten, or only remembered to have their quaint theories laughed at, and their fabulous descriptions turned into ridicule. Fortunately for Wilson… he knew no great Linneus [*sic*] or Count Buffon, else the vast stores which he had been at so much pains to collect would have been given to the world under another name. (*BH* 57-8)

While "pedantic compiler[s]" are "sitting in their easy-chairs," "pass[ing] off [others'] knowledge as their own, by giving a slightly altered paraphrase of [others'] language," the "*true* naturalist[s]" are those who have "underwent the most dreadful hardships and perils" in order to confirm their observations (*OP* 420, *BH* 57, *YV* 220).

Plagiarism and secondhand research are an odd accusation to be coming from Reid. In his books, Reid wrote extensively about locales he had never traveled to, which necessarily required the use of unverified research.[23] Sometimes he quotes these authorities

[23] Even the extent of his travels within the United States is cloudy and undocumented. Reid boasted of having embarked west from St. Louis in 1843, possibly with John James Audubon to Fort Union (on the present-

for numerous uninterrupted pages. Furthermore, his biographer notes that in his later life he supported himself by plagiarizing and reselling in Britain the work of American contributors to his short-lived periodical *Onward* (Steele 38). Textual analysis also supports the possibility that Reid profited from seven novels (not discussed here) that were not his original compositions (Steele 33). His valorization of authentic worldly experience as the only guarantor of accuracy is thus in contradiction to his praxis.

Ultimately, the chief sin of the closet-naturalists is what they must resort to in order to contribute something of their own to the field of science: the fabrication of useless complications. As Lucien explains, "the absurd multiplication of genera and species […], in the absence of any real knowledge of the habits of the animals, gives them an opportunity of adding something to what has been already said; and leaves the reader under the impression that these learned anatomists know all about the thing; and that is what such gentlemen desire, and nothing more" (*BH* 317). The pretense of being "learned" is the sole object and accomplishment of the closet-naturalist. When used as an adjective by Reid, *learned* almost always drips with acrimony; in one moment of palpable consternation in *Odd People*, Reid punctuates the sarcasm of the identification "learned ethnologist" by following it with a caustic parenthetical exclamation mark. Those who learn the minutiae of academic disciplines learn but a nonsense purposely designed to be abstruse, an irrational arcana meant to limit access to the uninitiated, propagated by "multiplying high-

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day border between Montana and North Dakota) or possibly with William Drummond Stewart to Wyoming, but his biographer Joan Steele notes that the known chronologies of either expedition do not match Reid's stated facts, and even his friends doubted the authenticity of his anecdotes. Edgar Allan Poe, an acquaintance during their mutual days in Philadelphia (a relationship that, ironically, was itself a source of evident exaggeration on the part of Reid), is said to have once called Reid "a colossal but most picturesque liar. He fibs on a surprising scale, but with the finish of an artist, and that is why I must listen to him attentively" (qtd. Steele 20).

sounding names to such an extent, that the mind of the student is quite bewildered with what would otherwise prove a most simple study" (*BH* 317). "[L]oath to a confession of limited knowledge," learned men must cloak their frail egos in high-sounding, useless utterances (*OP* 220). In truth, even the statements of Amazonian savages "are usually more trustworthy than the speculations of learned anatomists" (*OP* 242), and "[t]he most ignorant boor of South Africa" knows more about reality than many "learned" naturalists (*The Bush Boys* 242).

In Reid's view, learned scientists insufficiently prioritize externalities, instead favoring the invisible, the abstract, or the hidden as bases for truth-claims. At the turn of the century, Cuvier's theories on comparative anatomy allowed him to extrapolate entire skeletons from single bone fragments, hypotheses often proven correct by later fossil discoveries. Although Cuvier's findings revealed that the study of internal bones (say, a molar) could reveal much about external behavior (say, a grassy diet), Reid was obsessed with disproving such methods. Perhaps because a hunter in the field cannot perform such exacting study of skeletal tissue, Reid sought to undermine the entire practice. These "babblers about teeth," as even Basil "contemptuously call[s] them," do not limit their study to *meaningful* distinctions (*YV* 217). As Lucien explains in *The Young Voyageurs*:

> As regards the marmots, the closet-naturalists, as usual, have rendered their history as complicated and difficult to be understood as possible. They have divided them into several genera, because one kind happens to have a larger tubercle upon its tooth than another, or a little more curving in its claws, or a shorter tail. It is true that in the thirteen species some differ considerably from the others in size, colour, and other respects. Yet, for all that, there is such an identity, if I may so express it, about the mode of life, the food, the appearance, and habits of all the thirteen, that I think it is both absurd and ill-judged to render the study of them more difficult, by thus dividing them into so many genera. They are all marmots, that is what they are; and why

> confound the study of them by calling them spermophiles and arctomys, and such-like hard names? (216)

They are all marmots; that is what they are.

For Lucien, as for Reid, taxonomy is self-evident. An object's truth is defined by its use as assessed by the observer viewing it. For example, it does not matter that Spanish moss is neither a lichen nor a moss (nor technically even Spanish) but in fact an epiphytic flowering plant of the same bromeliad family wherein is classed the pineapple tree:

> "Ha! ha! ha!" roared François; "Spanish moss the same as a pineapple plant! Why, they are no more like than my hat is to the steeple of a church."
> "They are unlike," continued Lucien, "in every respect—in appearance, in properties, and uses; and yet, were you to consult the dry books of the closet-naturalists, you would learn that this Spanish moss (Tillandsia) was of a certain family of plants, and a few particulars of that sort, and that is all you would learn about it. Now what is the value of such a knowledge? What is it to compare with a knowledge of the appearance, the structure, and character of the plant—of its properties and the ends for which nature designed it—of its uses to the birds and beasts around—of its uses to man—how it makes his mattress to sleep on, stuffs his sofas, and saddles, and chairs equal to the best horse-hair, and would even feed his horse in case of a pinch? In my opinion, these are the facts worth knowing; and who are the men who publish such facts to the world? Not your closet-naturalists, I fancy." (*BH* 59-60)

Externalities are changeable, however, and values assigned by observers are as likely to reveal as much about the observers as those being observed. A scientist who focuses on bones, genes, or another obscure feature of biology may not be more inclined to grant an inner life or dignity to animals, but one like Reid who focuses solely on externalities and assesses those visible criteria according to use-value is almost certainly likely to ignore any more abstract data that might interfere with such uses. Reid was certainly not alone among the scientifically minded men of the nineteenth century for prioritizing empirically verifiable externalities. Especially in modern animal sciences, the complete erasure of any

conjecture about unobservable internal states possessed by animals has largely foreclosed the possibility of ascribing emotions, intelligence, or agency to them, thus widening the apparent divide between us and them and providing "scientific" justification for continued exploitation, a development which will be explored in Chapter 4. In the late 1850s, however, the complete avoidance or denial of animal interiority was not yet a widespread practice among naturalists, including Darwin himself, who, as Eileen Crist has shown, frequently wrote of animals in terms of their feelings and intentions.

By focusing on visible appraisal and on commonsensical utilitarian values, particularly those that could be applied in the field by adventurous individuals who presumed that possessing such knowledge would stave off their imminent deaths for at least one more turn of the page, Reid accomplished the overlapping goals of identifying the preeminent scientist as the type of man who most resembled his own self-image; of presenting such science in an unabstracted, uncomplicated, and unpretentious way to readers looking for both thrills and useful knowledge; and of thus cashing in on an American conviction that progress and power would come through applied science. Historian of science Paul Lawrence Farber notes that the pursuit of natural history was increasingly overtaken by utilitarian, imperialist interests in the 1840s and '50s (72-3), so Reid was likely justifying this state of affairs for his own personal reasons in addition to simply reiterating some of the priorities found in his research. Unfortunately, his presentation of a no-frills, democratic scientific practice that any eager boy could master led to conclusions that were strikingly at odds with his democratic principles.

The Hunter-Naturalist as Apex Predator

Reid styled himself a nonconformist and a champion of democracy. Throughout his books, frequent asides about the natural justness of gender equality, the depredations of European colonialism in Africa, and the "ignoble" atrocity of slavery attest to his progressivism, yet his patriotic calls for the expansion of this progress are reinforced upon a foundation of white supremacy. As an attentive researcher, he imbibed and regurgitated the currents of racist thought that streamed through the American scientific discourse of the day. As environmental historian Miles Powell demonstrates in *Vanishing America*, the discourse surrounding animals, wilderness, and conservation in the nineteenth-century United States was often inseparable from the discourse of racist science. Examining Reid's natural history lessons reveals the insidious manner in which the discourses of science, politics, and prejudice can intertwine. In presenting these themes in unobtrusive terms to a generation of boys, Reid prepared men like Roosevelt to accept the triumph of the Anglo-American man over the rest of creation as a natural—albeit not guaranteed—development.

A salient example of the way in which natural history was used to justify imperialist exploitation can be found in Reid's *Odd People*, which straddles a shifting paradigm of nineteenth-century anthropological thinking. Until midcentury, most European and American scholars had subscribed to a theory of *monogenism* wherein all humans descended from Adam and Eve. By the late 1830s, however, Lamarckian evolutionism and Cuvier's comparative anatomy combined to create a theory of *polygenism*, articulated by Philadelphia physician Samuel G. Morton. Imitating Cuvier, Morton measured skulls and compared anatomical differences among humans and other primates to determine that the visible races had been separately created by God and were in fact "biologically distinct"

with "the white race constitut[ing] a superior strain" (Powell 18). Within a generation, Morton's innovations into racist science had received broad support from the American scientific community. In 1854, for instance, Alabama surgeon Josiah C. Nott together with Egyptologist George Gliddon published *Types of Man*, in which they argued the indigenous peoples of America were essentially wild animals incapable of being "domesticated," who would sooner die fighting than waste away in captivity—a rationale that would come to sanctify many acts of genocide and theft. Their domestication metaphor similarly argued that free blacks were innately unable to survive in competition with white society, since, like chickens, they had come to rely so fully on their tended status that they could no longer survive "in the wild."[24] Louis Agassiz, considered the leading scientist in all of America, continued to assert that individuals from different "species" of humanity could not reproduce viable offspring until his death in 1873, several years after polygenism as a literal scientific fact (if not as a useful political philosophy) had fallen out of favor (Baym 91-7).

In *Odd People*, Reid weighs the evidence and sides with the leading scientific innovators of the era in favor of polygenism, deeming monogenism "a doctrine, which, though popular, is difficult to reconcile with the rational knowledge derived from ethnological investigation" (220). By focusing on the essentials, "his personal appearance, dress, dwelling, mode of occupation, and subsistence," Reid determines to rank eighteen

[24] The inverse of this argument is still used in the twenty-first century to justify the continued subjugation of farm animals, even though ethologists like Karen Davis, by examining the adaptability of chickens and other domesticated animals in the wild, have demonstrated the fundamental wrongness of such assumptions. Nott's animal metaphors diminished nonwhite humans, but, as Marjorie Spiegel likewise illustrates in *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery*, even the metaphoric vessel is forged from a fallacy about animal unfitness.

societies from around the world according to their level of animalistic savagery (349).[25] Four groups are repeatedly classed as vying for the title of "most wretched" or animal-like: the "Bosjesmen, or Bushmen" of Southern Africa; the "Yamparicos, or Root-Diggers" of central California; the Andaman Islanders of the Bay of Bengal; and the "Fuegian Dwarfs" of Tierra del Fuego. It is highly unlikely that Reid had personal experience with any of these people, and much of his rhetoric could have been gullibly lifted from his sources. By espousing in popular children's books an unquestionably degrading association between nonwhite races and wild animals—and in particular, in the case of the "Yamparicos," a nonwhite race currently occupying a desired site of American territorial expansion—Reid assisted in elevating white Americans to the position of the most evolved man.

The "Bushmen" of the Kalahari are the only African group to receive a chapter, and this first chapter of the book is saturated with animal comparisons of the same sort that Josiah C. Nott used to endorse the subjugation and extirpation of nonwhite races in America. Reid can hardly make an observation about the appearance or behaviors of the "Bushmen" without referencing a species of animal. He writes that they have a "range" rather than a country (10), and within this desert range, "his style of architecture does not differ greatly from that of the orang-outang" (22). "This nest, or lair," as Reid consistently styles it rather than calling it a home, was "[b]eyond a doubt… borrowed… from the nest of the ostrich!" (23). In this "nest," they sleep "[c]oiled together like monkeys." Reid notes, "They have not the slightest idea of a provision for the future; even the lower animals seem wiser in this respect" (32), and though he faults the men for taking multiple wives, he

[25] The generalized singular third-person pronoun is utilized here, as throughout the book, since it is taken for granted that savages are invariable in their instincts.

nevertheless insists that they have "no form of marriage—any more than mating together like wild beasts" (35). Bushmen children, consistently referred to as "curs" and "imps," are painted as utterly inhuman: "The little imps leap about, tearing raw flesh,—their yellow cheeks besmeared with blood,—and the lean curs seem to have been exchanged for a pack of fat, petted poodles" (32).

Much as Nott likened Indians to "symbiotes" of bison, both fated to decline with the inevitable and mandated spread of white civilization (Powell 21-3), Reid compares the Bushmen to wild animals who cannot survive in captivity or in unfamiliar ecosystems: "The Bushman requires a desert for his dwelling-place. It is an absolute necessity of his nature, as it is to the ostrich and many species of animals" (11). The destruction of their habitat by the Boers "has had the effect of extirpating these unfortunate savages; and, like the elephant, the ostrich, and the eland, the true wild Bushman is now only to be met with beyond the frontiers of the colony" (12). Rather than submit to domestication, Reid writes, "Just as a badger he ends his life,—his last struggle being an attempt to do injury to his assailant" (20). The notion that a people would "choose" death over the supposedly self-evident good of succumbing to colonialism was a prevalent ideology that Powell extensively debunks (119-157), yet Reid's work affirms such comparisons.

More telling than the textual comparisons, of which the above represent only a small sample, is the illustration that accompanies the chapter (**Illustration 5**). Unlike the other seven groups who receive illustrations in the book, the "Bushmen" are the only people who are not actually depicted in their picture. Although the illustration that begins the first chapter is captioned "THE BOSJESMEN, OR BUSHMEN," three ostriches (one of which appears to be dead) are the only figures seen. A credulous young reader, learning

Illustration 5. "Bushmen" or ostriches? From Mayne Reid's *Odd People: Being a Popular Description of Singular Descriptions of Man* [1860], Ticknor and Fields, 1861.

from the facing page that begins the book that these "peculiar" "little yellow savages of South Africa" have only grown more curious as Europeans have learned more about them (*OP* 9), could be inclined to mistake these birds for African human beings.

The insidious effect of Reid's comparison between colonized African men and wild animals as far as American policy would be concerned is not what one might expect. Reid makes no comparisons between the Bushmen and African Americans—indeed, elsewhere in *Odd People* he seems to consider the "black negro of Carolina" its own unique racial category (350). Instead, the insidious effect of his comparison of "Bushmen" to "ruminant animals" on a "range," less capable than "the lower animals" of making "a provision for the future" is that such details provide analogic evidence justifying the moral neutrality of eradicating Native Americans whom Reid felt considerably more animosity toward;

indeed, Reid even emphasizes the "very striking resemblance" between the "Bushmen" and the "Diggers" (313).

What is surprising about Reid's comparisons between the "Bushmen" and animals is the infrequency with which such analogies are made throughout the rest of the book. The Amazonian Indians, Esquimaux, Mundrucus, Tongans, Comanches, Pehuenches, Guaraons, and Laplanders, who each receive their own chapter of equal length, are not compared to animals at all, despite being "savages." The sum of animal comparisons in the other seventeen chapters are not so numerous as they are in the first, with the majority wielded as weapons against the "Diggers" of the western United States, an umbrella term used as a derogatory catchall for the native peoples of California. An observation of externalities allows Reid to justify his most fervent hypothesis in *Odd People*, using the science of polygenetic inheritance to endorse American expansion:

> The Digger is different from other North-American Indians,—both in physical organisation and intellectual character. So low is he in the scale of both, as to dispute with the African Bushman, the Andaman Islander, and the starving savage of Tierra del Fuego, the claim to that point in the transition, which is supposed to separate the monkey from the man. It has been variously awarded by ethnologists, and I as one have had my doubts, as to which of the three is deserving of the distinction. Upon mature consideration, however, I have come to the conclusion that the Digger is entitled to it. (314-5)

As elsewhere, Reid deduces this entirely from the same worldview that saw "the Patagonians" as being fine because they were tall "giants" but viewed their island neighbors the Fuegians as wretched because they were "dwarfs."

In describing the "Diggers," Reid stitches together a global menagerie of mixed metaphors. He writes:

> This miserable *creature* is of a dark-brown or copper colour. […] He stands about five feet in height,—often under but rarely over this standard,—and his body is thin and meagre, *resembling that of a frog stretched upon a fish-hook*. The skin that covers it—especially that of an old Digger—is *wrinkled and corrugated like the hide of an Asiatic rhinoceros*,—with *a surface as dry as parched buck-skin*. His feet, turned in at the toes […] *have some resemblance to human feet; but in the legs this resemblance ends*. The lower limbs are almost destitute of calves, and the knee-pans are of immense size,—resembling a pair of pads or callosities, *like those upon goats and antelopes*. The face is broad and angular, with high cheek-bones; the eyes small, black, and sunken, and sparkle in their hollow sockets, *not with true intelligence, but that sort of vivacity which may often be observed in the lower animals, especially in several species of monkeys*. (315, emphasis mine)

Allowances made toward other groups are uniquely denied the "Diggers." For instance, note Reid's recognition that "the Esquimaux have made the most of the circumstances in which they are placed":

> It is certainly not correct to characterise the Esquimaux as mere savages. On the contrary, they may be regarded as a civilised people, that is, so far as civilisation is permitted by the rigorous climate in which they live; and it would be safe to affirm that a colony of the most polished people in Europe, established as the Esquimaux are, and left solely to their own resources, would in a single generation exhibit a civilisation not one degree higher than that now met with among the Esquimaux. (91-2)

But for the "Diggers," who occupy deserts "as wild, waste, and inhospitable as the famed Sahara of Africa," Reid allows no such consideration. Although he is well aware that there is no big game to hunt, that the streams are too briny to bear fish, that "[e]ven the hand of cultivation could scarce wring a crop from the sterile soil; and Nature has provided hardly one article that deserves the name of food", he nevertheless seems to fault "this abject and miserable race of human beings" for their own starvation. Despite being well aware of the many ingenious ways these people have cultivated insects, birds, grasses, roots, bears, small mammals, and mesquite legumes in order to survive in a land with sterile soil and

minimal water, Reid can see nothing in their resilience but "the mere semblance of a human being" (310).

The reason for Reid's contempt is that the "Diggers" have been "wicked and hostile… and predatory" toward the whites they have encountered (313). Their encounters with "emigrant trains of California adventurers" have often devolved into carnivorous feeding frenzies, and it is thus acceptable to treat them as the hostile wild beasts they appear to be. Though Reid chastised the Dutch Boers who killed Bushmen, he has only esteem for "the more daring Saxon travelers" (more daring, that is, than the previous "Spanish caravans") who see to it that "not unfrequently a terrible punishment is the reward of [the Diggers'] audacity" (313-4). Since races and societies were themselves separate species, all fighting to live off the same resources, then the endless, remorseless "chain of destruction" that demanded one must eat the polar bear before she eats you was a hunting ethic that equally applied to other humans.

In *Conservation Refugees*, Mark Dowie notes that the people deemed "Diggers" in Reid's day, including the Southern Miwok and Northern Paiute people, lived in and utilized what is now Yosemite National Park for two thousand years while preserving its "pristine," "primordial" appearance. Beginning with the first Anglo-American settlement of California in 1846 and increasing after the gold rush of 1849, atrocities against the indigenous population were legally sanctioned in what Governor Peter Burnett would call in 1851 a "war of extermination" in which extinction was "the inevitable destiny of the race… beyond the power or wisdom of man to avert." Historian Benjamin Madley estimates that between 9,492 and 16,092 California natives were killed by white settlers from 1846 to 1873, in addition to the legally sanctioned practice whereby white families

could abduct native children to keep as de facto slaves (11). This decimation began as a means of clearing land for gold prospecting, and it continued as the land itself became a source of national wealth; the congressional enactment of the Yosemite Grant in the midst of the Civil War represents the first instance of federal land protection. As Lisa Mighetto concludes from an examination of statements made by early conservationists like Roosevelt, William T. Hornaday, and George Bird Grinnell, the creation of national parks was done not to protect the ecosystems within, but to maintain "future targets" for a sport hunting that had a unique restorative effect for elite white males (41). Although the conservation movement would insist that "wilderness" spaces should remain "untrammeled" by human presence and thus home to no human beings, that "untrammeled" nature was an erasure achieved through genocide, slavery, and forced removal. As Powell and Dowie note, after the removal of the local population, the new Anglo-American conservators, having eradicated indigenous stewardship methods such as supervised burns and introduced ill-conceived "scientific" methods like predator control, actually induced changes in the landscapes they were trying to preserve.

Reid was not alone in painting indigenous Californians as animalistic to justify their removal. Even John Muir, often deemed the father of American environmentalism for his non-extractive view of nature, was revolted by the Diggers' eating of ants, which he associated with "uncleanliness," writing that "such debased fellow beings" were somehow even worse than animals since "nothing truly wild is unclean" (304). By the end of the century, pseudoscience would fully cohere to see their subsistence diet as a personal moral failing—in 1881, the protoclimatologist Charles Dana Wilber would famously claim that "rain follows the plow," falsely arguing to disastrous effect that the Western deserts were

only inhospitable because the native inhabitants refused to practice agriculture and that only Anglo settlers could fulfill God's directive to make the land bountiful (Powell 27). Reid's works were only one flashpoint in a stream of racist discourse justifying the extirpation of Native American "pests," but his popularity, combined with his insistence upon his scientific accuracy, undoubtedly helped to propagate antidemocratic ideals in spite of his outspoken egalitarianism.

This belief finds its echo in the plotline of *The Boy Hunters,* for it is not the confrontation with the white buffalo that serves as the novel's climax but rather a confrontation with Indians, whose intentions of killing the captured boys are thwarted only when Basil produces "a simple pipe-head" gifted to him by his father for this very purpose, which produces a "sudden and mysterious effect" upon their captors, almost like an instinctive response (361). This "red calumet," Reid explains "in as few words as possible," once belonged to a formidable chief known as "the Prophet" who, like his brother Tecumseh, "endeavoured to excite the Indians to a general rising, for the purpose of driving all white men from the soil of America." Tecumseh, "the greatest Indian warrior that ever lived," a decidedly *past-tense* identification, failed in his mission, and it appears that the Prophet's similar "crusade [among] every tribe of Indians in the Western part of America" has likewise failed. At some point, "through some circumstances which happened," the Prophet befriended Colonel Landi and gifted him the red calumet, the almost mystical identification of which induces the hostile Indians to immediately free their trespassing captives (362). An external handicraft, passed from Indian to white man, represents the forfeiture of sovereign power, and soon "the Indians were filled with astonishment as well as admiration for the courage of these young hunters" (363). Though Elswatawa once

prophesied that he and Tecumseh would free their land from foreign invaders, their tribe is "now but a remnant" (362), and the Prophet's most enduring legacy is initiating the chain of events that will allow the names of three white boys and their father—quintessential, rightful Americans—to redound with glory in the museums of Europe for having stuffed and preserved an auspicious white member of a fading species once deemed sacred by a fading people who failed to preserve themselves. The American territory is the rightful habitat of those willing and able to surveil, exploit, and survive on it: the mighty hunter-naturalists, who all happen to be white.

Unregrettably, Captain Mayne Reid's name and his work are all but forgotten today, but the children's novels in which he modeled the ideal American man, books which were persistently popular for half a century, did much to shape the Age of Conservation that came to fruition once his boy readers came of age. Those grown-up boy readers are the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4
"A VOLUME OF A HOPELESSLY UNSCIENTIFIC KIND": THE HUNTER-NATURALIST CONFRONTS THE ARTIST-NATURALIST

> The nature student must seek from his own individuality which is the only thing that he knows absolutely… to interpret truthfully and sympathetically the individual before him. For this work he must have not only sight but vision; not simply eyes and ears and a notebook; but insight, imagination, and above all an intense human sympathy… by which alone the inner life of an animal becomes luminous, and without which the living creatures are little better than stuffed specimens.
>
> -Rev. William J. Long,
> "The Modern School of Nature Study and Its Critics," 1903

On April 8, 1869, the charter to form the American Museum of Natural History was signed in the front parlor of 28 East Twentieth Street in Manhattan, home to four children between fourteen and seven. This parlor was a space reserved for special occasions, a showcase for the family's most exquisite furnishings. Among its adornments was a wood engraving that hung from the wall. A work of questionable proportion and perspective, in its foreground loomed an overlarge hunter, rifle in hand, peering over a ridge, in its background a Swiss Alp rendered impossibly small, and in between, not yet alerted to the encroaching threat, a herd of chamois antelope, too massive when compared to their surroundings yet far too tiny in contrast to the hunter closing in on them. Such is how the second child, a boy of ten at the time his father founded the museum, described the engraving in his *Autobiography* of 1913, where his reminiscences of the parlor are detailed in the very first paragraph in which he narrates his own entry into the world. The engraving "always fascinated us," he writes, shifting into a collective first-person plural amidst other memories rendered in the more intimate singular, "but there was a small chamois kid for which we felt agonies lest the hunter might come on it and kill it" (7). His painful empathy

for the animal child, forever frozen in the moment right before that mighty hunter might end his life, is one of his earliest recollections, though as an adult chronicler he disperses any potential accusation of childish sentimentality by sharing it with his two sisters and his younger brother.

The boy, Teadie, considered his father "the best man [he] ever knew" (8), but there were other male influences in his life, all of them converging on the incipient American conservation movement. He studied under a taxidermist tutor who had traveled with John James Audubon. His influential and colorful uncle was a novelist who had founded the New York State Fishery Commission. But perhaps the idol who did the most to stir his imagination was his favorite writer, Captain Mayne Reid, whose books he "so dearly loved as a boy": "the adventure part and the natural history part—these enthralled me" (20, 19). The son of a wealthy glass manufacturer, descended from socialites, politicians, and businessmen, this fey, nearsighted boy reader, whose asthma was so severe it often left him housebound, yearned for the boundless, bison-strewn prairies described on the Captain's pages. He imbibed Reid's insistence that a man's physical stature is visual evidence of his moral worth, and in doing so, perhaps he scorned the telltale inferiority of his own frail constitution and vowed to fashion himself into a real man according to Reid's hunter-naturalist model.

When, perhaps about age nine, Teadie encountered the body of a seal at a market on Broadway, he saw his destiny. "I felt that this seal brought all these adventures in realistic fashion before me," he writes, detailing his obsession with observing, measuring, and recording "the strength of that seal," now dead and on sale for parts (17). "I had vague aspirations of in some way or another owning and preserving that seal," he writes, and

when the merchant succeeded in selling the seal's body for blubber, the boy succeeded in retaining the skull, which became the first item in a "Natural History Museum" of animal cadavers and remnants he would store—sized up, classified, and documented—in his bedroom (18). "The adventure of the seal and the novels of Mayne Reid together strengthened my instinctive interest in natural history," he writes, pinpointing the moment that fostered the guiding aspiration of his life (18-9). The objectification and empirical charting of animal bodies that had thrilled him on the pages of Reid's stories now manifested before him in corporeal form. By this point, any infantile agonies he may have once shared over the death of animals seem to have subsided in favor of a conviction of man's primal role in the "chain of destruction." Twenty years later, as the founder of the Boone and Crockett Club, today the oldest wildlife conservation organization in the United States, he would pivotally shape the sports hunting ethos according to the Reidean model, and as a diligent editor-in-chief of the organization's publications, he would exert a major influence over stylistic standards for writing about animals, robbing them of all human resemblance. Twenty years after that, on an expedition to Africa to collect specimens for the Smithsonian, he and his teenage son would kill at least 512 animals, including lions, rhinoceroses, and elephants. He boasts of these trophies in his autobiography's second chapter, entitled "The Vigor of Life," and in a separate book recounting the trip, *African Game Trails: An Account of the African Wanderings of an American Hunter-Naturalist* (1910), he channels Reid's Lucien Landi when he rhapsodizes about the heavy, water-proofed "pigskin library" of fifty-nine books that accompanied him: "Often my reading would be done... beside the carcass of a beast I had killed.... The books were stained with blood, sweat, gun oil, dust and ashes" (515). Throughout his life, he would build his legacy,

his scientific knowledge and reputation, and his own sense of manhood around accumulating and evaluating animal bodies.

Although in retrospect he would dismiss one of his childhood icon's nonfiction books of natural history as "a volume of a hopelessly unscientific kind" in a supercilious vein very much like that repeatedly modeled by Reid and his characters (21), by then Teadie had undeniably grown to embody Reid's archetypical man to a T. "[F]rom reading of the people I admired… the heroes of my favorite stories… I felt a great admiration for men who were fearless and who could hold their own in the world, and I had a great desire to be like them," he writes, documenting his transition from "a sickly boy, with no natural bodily prowess" to all American man's man (32). Captain Reid is all but forgotten now, despite having shaped a generation of American boys through his bestselling books; however, that impressionable boy reader, now remembered as President Theodore Roosevelt, has a legacy and an influence that persists into the twenty-first century.

Three hundred and fifty miles northwest, on a frontier farm in Lindsay, Ontario, another boy reader less than two years younger than Roosevelt flipped through the culturally ubiquitous pages of Reid and was somewhat less impressed. Although the Captain appears in the index of Ernest Thompson Seton's 1940 autobiography as "Reid, Mayne, his books a great help, 99," referencing a page where he also cites *Swiss Family Robinson*, the legends of Robin Hood, "and, above all, the Beadle Dime Novels" as fuel for his childhood imagination, an earlier, unindexed reference to Reid carries a subtle insult. When Seton's father moved his wife and ten sons from a coastal English city to the backwoods of Canada in the summer of 1866 in order to live "the life of an English country gentleman," Seton speculates that the works of Mayne Reid must have been "the principal

guide books that [he] had consulted" (12). His father's consultation of juvenile fiction as a resource on how to provide for his large family paves the way for Seton's admission that they were thus "doomed to continual disappointment; the hunter-dream faded slowly but surely" (12); four years later, they would move to urban Toronto. As he depicts him in his autobiography, Seton must have considered his father by far the *worst* man he ever knew, a stingy, lazy, self-important tyrant at odds with reality, and Seton's connection of the man's planning with Reid's guidance cannot be said to be a positive reflection of the Captain's value.

Like Roosevelt, Seton would also build his legacy from animals, both as a professional artist who specialized in them and as a writer who pioneered a very popular genre of fiction focused on realistic depictions of wild animal protagonists. Prior to Seton's work, stories with major wild animal characters were usually fantastical, with animals talking and behaving in an allegorical, mythical, or fairy tale mode. Beginning with the publication of "The True Story of a Little Gray Rabbit" in the September 1890 edition of *St. Nicholas Magazine* for children, however, Seton endeavored to give "in fiction form the actual facts of an animal's life and modes of thought," distinguishing himself not just from stories like *Reynard the Fox* but also from "the vague general treatment that is so common" in natural history essays (*TAN* 352, *WAIHK* 7). Seven of his animal protagonist stories were compiled into the 1898 book *Wild Animals I Have Known,* which within its first two months of publication went through four editions at Scribner, its first run of 2,000 copies selling out within three weeks. In the following three years, it would sell an additional twelve printings (Lundblad 19), and its bestseller status would immediately spawn other popular "animal biographies" by authors like William J. Long, Charles G.D.

Roberts, Clarence Hawkes, and Jack London. Lori Jo Oswald deems Seton one of the most significant "founders" of a literary legacy in which she includes such twentieth-century animal classics as Fred Gipson's 1957 *Old Yeller* and Wilson Rawls's 1961 *Where the Red Fern Grows* (135-6).

In his lifetime, Seton certainly hunted and killed no small number of animals, but the tenor of his 1940 autobiography, *Trail of an Artist-Naturalist*, is mournful and rebuking of such destruction. In one exemplary anecdote, he recalls the determination with which he and his brothers sought to shoot an elusive squirrel. Their eventual triumph is short-lived, replaced by "a surge of remorse" when they discover they have killed a mother caring for "five blind and naked little squirrels" (45). In their shame, they decide the most merciful course of action would be to feed the now hopeless litter to their cat, whose own kittens had just been pragmatically drowned, yet they discover that the cat's instinct is contrary to their own, for instead of eating them, she gently licks, tends to, and suckles them as her own. "Our overwhelming impulse had been to hunt and murder the escaping wild things," Seton writes. "The cat's sole prompting had been one of sympathy and pity…. I felt rebuked, I had received a stinging rebuke from that kind old mother cat" (46). Such moments resonate throughout his book, earnest attempts to document his pangs of empathy and the resolutions he made because of such instruction in the feelings of fellowship. Whereas Roosevelt learned to disregard his youthful agony for the fictional chamois kid, instead following Reid's model of the Hunter-Naturalist, Seton reversed course, rejecting Reid's life lessons in favor of a more careful and compassionate attunement to the shared suffering of animals, which would be central to his work as an Artist-Naturalist.

Roosevelt and Seton met several times, beginning in 1895, when at a gallery showcase in New York City, Police Commissioner Roosevelt purchased Seton's painting of a pack of snarling wolves, which, according to Seton, the future president deemed "the best wolf picture I ever saw" (291). In 1896, Roosevelt invited Seton to the annual gala dinner of his Boone and Crockett Club, allegedly later informing Seton that one of his stories about wolf communication "was easily the hit of the evening" (351). Seton deems that night "the beginning of a lifelong friendship" (351), yet the lasting image of that relationship is an acrimonious divide. By 1903, the works of Seton and his literary progeny had become a staple of nature study curricula in public schools, a nationwide educational innovation which Roosevelt had originated in May 1899 when as the world-famous governor of New York he approved funds to equip classrooms with the books of natural historians such as Audubon (Brinkley 352-3). Roosevelt's friend, New York nature writer and fellow conservationist John Burroughs, upset by the dissemination in America's schools of what he deemed dangerous falsehoods about animals, published a denunciation of Seton and his ilk in the March 1903 edition of *Atlantic Monthly*, initiating a debate that would rage across the editorial pages of newspapers, magazines, and scientific journals for the next five years. Eventually dubbed the "Nature Fakers" controversy, it would include a scathing attack published by Roosevelt in September 1907, the first and only time in which a sitting American president has embroiled himself in a debate over literary criticism. Although Roosevelt does not cite Seton by name in his article, readers would have known he was one of the sham naturalists "incapable of observing aright the most ordinary facts" (Roosevelt "Nature Fakers" 196).

This chapter is ultimately an analysis of the rhetoric used in this debate, which I argue was a battle between competing models of manhood in which both sides defined themselves as the better and more rational empiricists, using animals as the objects of their observation. The increasingly exclusive "professionalization" of science introduced in Chapter 3 forms the backdrop to this debate; ironically, Roosevelt, whose Reidean-inspired attempt to become an "outdoor scientist" was frustrated by the certified professionals who controlled Harvard's science department, consigning him instead to a life of politics and mere natural history *avocation*, was nevertheless able to seize the mantle of "scientific authority" by invoking correlative claims to other martial, political, and cultural forms of masculine prestige.

I term the competing models in this debate, using Roosevelt's and Seton's respective self-appellations, the Hunter-Naturalist and the Artist-Naturalist. The former is the same model popularized midcentury by Mayne Reid and detailed in Chapter 3, though in this chapter I track how Reid's admiring boy reader Roosevelt came to exemplify the model as he came of age and how he amplified a version of that ideology updated to include the Social Darwinism of the Progressive Era. Like Reid, Roosevelt's notion of masculinity saw hunting as a natural and morally neutral source of virility, saw taxonomy as an ultimately utilitarian endeavor, and saw societies and races competing on an evolutionary path of progress and decay. This prescription for progress took on new urgency, however, in an era of urbanization, increased immigration, and burgeoning imperial aspirations, as many influential white progressives sought a preventive for their own possible extinction. Hunter-Naturalists viewed animals as exploitable natural resources with the potential to vitalize a strong, manly empire, and they viewed the "nature fakers" as deluded, weak-

minded city dwellers whose effete, childish resistance to hunting would lead to "race suicide." To Roosevelt, hunting did not just nourish the body, it nourished the reproductive faculty itself; hunting became almost synonymous with sex in a society terrified of its own sterility.

Conversely, the Artist-Naturalists, influenced by the same societal pressures and anxieties, feared that modernity was turning life into a depersonalized tragedy and, instead of "progress," sought a nostalgic return to a primordial past. Feeling kinship with animals faced with habitat loss and extinction, they prioritized animal individuality and interiority—emotion, aspiration, and adaptability—all of which were destroyed by the Hunter-Naturalists obsessed with killing and harvesting them. In contrast to the masculinity of the progressive Hunter-Naturalist model, the Artist-Naturalists gained much of their support from the conservative genteel manliness from which Roosevelt had deliberately sought to separate himself. Unfortunately, this star-crossed affiliation with animals, as modeled by Seton and the others, provided readers with no clear method by which human society might reproduce and prolong itself in concert with wild animals in some alternative, better way.

Although the Artist-Naturalists exerted a lasting influence on literature and popular sentiment, the Hunter-Naturalist model ultimately prevailed in the discourses of science, policy, and gender for the first half of the twentieth century—albeit with some concessions from Burroughs and Roosevelt—not only because their appeals to authority were supported by the office of the presidency but also because the tragic mode of the Artist-Naturalists' refusal to "grow up" provided few viable paths forward for the readers sympathetic to their message.

The Boy Readers Come of Age: 1860-1900

The demographics of the United States underwent many changes between 1860, at the close of Mayne Reid's most prolific decade of publication, and 1900, two years after the publication of Ernest Thompson Seton's *Wild Animals I Have Known* and one year before Theodore Roosevelt's assumption of the presidency. The population of the United States increased by 142%, from 31.4 to 76.2 million residents, almost certainly outpacing the rate of world population growth despite losses of roughly two percent of the population during the Civil War. In these four decades, the population per square mile of land area nearly doubled from 10.6 to 21.5 people. The number of urban areas, defined by the U.S. Census as incorporated places with a population of at least 2,500, more than quadrupled from 392 in 1860 to 1,743 in 1900, and the percentage of the national population who resided within those cities increased from 19.8 to 39.6 percent. At the dawn of the Civil War, about four-fifths of the population had lived on farms or in very small rural towns; increasingly, these people sought manufacturing work in large cities, so that by 1900 only about one-third of the 29.3 million persons over age ten for whom the Census recorded an occupation were classified as engaged in "agricultural pursuits." At the dawn of the new century, thirty-eight US cities had populations of over 100,000, a dramatic increase from the mere fourteen that had existed following the Civil War. As famously documented in the photography of Jacob Riis, these large cities came to be known for their overcrowded tenements, oppressive working conditions, hazardous construction, minimal ventilation, poor sanitation, and increased communicable disease, which was itself a paradigm-shifting discovery of the period.

This population growth changed the racial composition of the nation. The vast majority of formerly enslaved black persons remained in the rural South until the Great Northward Migration of 1916–1970, but a massive influx of immigrants, many of them considered nonwhite, was met with anxiety and hostility by many Anglo-Americans. Nearly a quarter of the population growth came from foreign-born immigrants, an unprecedented and never again repeated amount (Husband 20). The percentage of residents who had not been born in the United States was 13.7% in 1860. This proportion peaked at 14.7% in 1890 before declining to 13.6% in 1900, but although these numbers remained fairly stable, the geographic origins of these immigrants changed dramatically. Whereas 87.8% of non-native born residents in 1860 hailed from the Northern and Western European countries traditionally considered to be compatible with white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant "American values," including England, Germany, and France, this number was only 69.7% in 1900. Meanwhile, the percentage of residents hailing from the Catholic, Orthodox, and Jewish regions of Southern and Eastern Europe—including Italy, Spain, Greece, Poland, and Russia—increased from 0.8% to 16.2%.

These immigrants entered an unstable nation that seemed to be losing its roots. Politically, in the forty years between Lincoln's inauguration and Roosevelt's, the country underwent ten presidential administrations, including three assassinations, one impeachment, the nonconsecutive terms of Grover Cleveland, and the contentious election of 1876, which had required four months to determine that Republican Rutherford B. Hayes, the loser of the popular vote, was the victor by a single Electoral College vote, a conclusion popularly believed to have been the result of a backroom compromise in which northern Republicans ceded their commitment to protecting the interests of former slaves

in the South. During this period, the Constitution underwent its first changes in over sixty years, and although these three amendments expanded citizenship rights, an unexpected consequence of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment was a Supreme Court ruling in 1886 that deemed corporations persons with constitutional protection. Thus, the formidable Southern Pacific Railroad Company was extended the privilege of a more favorable tax rate. Economically, the boom and bust of the new railroad industry contributed to both the Panic of 1873 and the Depression of 1893, which led to falling wages, violent suppression of strikes, an unemployment rate around 25%, the cross-country march of "Coxey's Army" of up to 300,000 unemployed protestors, and the failure of more than 15,000 businesses and 158 banks (Skrabec 105-6). The railroads, which seemed to collapse time and space at speeds never before experienced by human beings, also exasperated anxieties over technological changes. Transcontinental travel, electricity, photography, the telegraph, typewriters, steel skyscrapers—although these innovations carried many benefits, they also forced people to reckon with new ways of perceiving and navigating reality. These technologies made the continent, once a vast Eden of inexhaustible potential, seem suddenly smaller, with less homesteading land for the taking and fewer opportunities to roam free. In 1890, the superintendent of the census, Robert B. Porter, announced that the density of the population meant there was no longer a place in America which could be called the frontier, leading historians like Frederick Jackson Turner to wonder what could come next in the tale of American progress. Even nature, which many consider immutable, seemed to be undergoing a visible revolution. Forests were shrinking, Darwin wrote of evolution, industrial pollution filled the rivers and sky, invisible microbes could kill you, the dead Benjamin Franklin had invented a system by

which mediums could communicate with spirits through the ether, and suddenly the Great Chain of Being, an ideology by which Western scientists, theologians, and poets had for centuries imbued the cosmic order with unshakeable, divine harmony, was shattered by the discovery of extinction. By the 1880s, the noticeable disappearance of the once endless flocks of passenger pigeons, the fading bison herds (in part extirpated to make way for railroads), the annihilation of the great auks of Newfoundland, the increasingly empty cargo holds of whaling ships—these were undeniable proofs that extinction was happening now, and that humans were probably to blame, and that they were possibly not safe themselves.

These were the turbulent conditions under which Reid's scores of boy readers came of age and attempted to fulfill his prescription for life. Notably, the final fifteen years of the nineteenth century possessed four popular literary genres which attempted to reconcile the anxieties of the age by reckoning with animality in different ways. As Robert H. MacDonald writes, at the turn of the century "the power of the Logos was found in the kingdoms of the brute beasts" (234). The most studied and canonized of these four trends today is the literary naturalism of writers like Stephen Crane, Jack London, and Upton Sinclair, who saw men as animals in the struggle for existence, competing against not just each other, the elements, and their own brute instincts but also the grinding machinery of modern society. Michael Lundblad in *The Birth of a Jungle* (2013) explores how the "law of the jungle" and the discourse of competitive animality shaped many works of naturalism. My focus, however, is not literary naturalism but the other three popular trends: the natural history and sports hunting essays which fulfilled Reid's hunter-naturalist legacy and were championed by Roosevelt; the "realistic wild animal stories" written by Seton and his

fellow artist-naturalists in opposition to Roosevelt's ideology; and the domestic animal biographies and "autobiographies" that were central to the newly formed animal welfare movement, which will be the focus of Chapters Four and Five.[26]

The Colonel Heeds the Captain's Call

Theodore Roosevelt was born on October 27, 1858, in one of the largest cities in the world to a family wealthy enough to vacation in Europe, Egypt, and Constantinople, yet his physical limitations made his early world seem quite small. His asthma was so severe it frequently interrupted his sleep and forced his family to carry him about the house in search of a space where he could breathe. For the most part, this asthma kept him from attending schools with other children, so that he instead received his instruction and socialization from tutors, governesses, and his family. Although he dreamed of being a naturalist, his extreme, undiagnosed myopia prevented him from observing the world he was so interested in learning about.

Delicately sized, half-blind, clumsy, and unable to breathe without difficulty, Roosevelt's prospects for adventure seemed very limited, yet in books he found an outlet for his aspirations. His childhood reading receives ample space in his autobiography, and the books of Mayne Reid, although he deems them "impossible" reading for an adult, are

[26] Jack London occupies at least three of these categories. His *The Sea-Wolf* (1904), which is not about an actual canine, is considered a hallmark of literary naturalism. *The Call of the Wild* (1903) and *White Fang* (1906) were specific targets in the "Nature Fakers" controversy, although they, too, are works of literary naturalism that bear little resemblance to the works of other so-called "nature fakers." Furthermore, *Jerry of the Islands* and its sequel, *Michael, Brother of Jerry* (both 1917), were foundational texts for the Jack London Club, an offshoot of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. An analysis of these last two novels, which were used to advocate the boycotting of trained animal exhibitions, will be taken up in Chapter 6.

given pride of place in his childhood heart. Although the adult chronicler claims that good children's stories should excel at "teaching manliness, decency, and good conduct," Roosevelt nevertheless makes it clear that "it was the relation of adventures that most appealed to me as a boy" (21). Indeed, the section of *Robinson Crusoe* where the hero is confined to the island, "although it is unquestionably the best part," left him restless. He preferred the less memorable scenes that bookended Crusoe's isolation—scenes of sailing the world and of battling wolves. *Swiss Family Robinson*, another desert island tale, likewise dispirited him, although as a lifelong exacting naturalist he claims he disliked it "because of the wholly impossible collection of animals" Wyss corrals into one small ecosystem (21). Roosevelt instead found thrills from stories like Arctic explorer Isaac Israel Hayes's "Cast Away in the Cold," from the June 1868 edition of *Our Young Folks*, which precisely details how survival in the Arctic depends upon fashioning a weapon from the environment, closely observing and then clubbing a seal to death, then knowing how to maximize the usefulness of the seal's body. Perhaps in obsessing over his measurements of the Broadway seal's body, Teadie believed he was preparing to survive a future Arctic adventure.

Roosevelt credits an altercation with other boys as a turning point in his life. Following a particularly severe asthma attack, he was sent to Maine to recuperate. Traveling alone on a stagecoach, he encountered two bullies his age. What stung him most about the encounter was the assurance with which they demonstrated their mastery over him. He writes, "The worst feature was that when I finally tried to fight them I discovered that either one singly could not only handle me with easy contempt, but handle me so as not to hurt me much and yet to prevent my doing any damage whatever in return" (33).

This moment of ridiculed masculinity led Roosevelt to resolve a complete revolution in his life. “I made up my mind that I must try to learn so that I would not again be put in such a helpless position,” he writes, “and having become quickly and bitterly conscious that I did not have the natural prowess to hold my own, I decided that I would try to supply its place by training.” Such self-mastery, with its very physical priorities, was of course a fixture of Reid’s adventure stories, and it is at this point in his autobiography that Roosevelt gives credit to the “fearless” “heroes of my favorite stories” for teaching him how to be a man.

Biographer Douglas Brinkley characterizes Roosevelt’s commitment to exuberant physicality as a tale of personal accomplishment, noting that the small boy whose asthma had doomed him to a life of hushed repose instead conquered his limitations through a self-imposed regimen of weightlifting, boxing, swimming, and hiking. The entire repertoire of physical fitness was practiced by Roosevelt, from tennis to polo to jujitsu. His classmates at Harvard saw him as something like a Rocky Balboa, an indefatigable boxer who may have ultimately lost some matches but nevertheless persevered to the last round (Brinkley 121-3). The strenuous life Roosevelt began in his early adolescence was a restless, self-directed striving that linked physical stature, endurance, and adaptability with “virile qualities” and the “great fighting, masterful virtues” (Roosevelt, “The Strenuous Life”).

His unwillingness to be confined extended to his studies. He disdained that his professors “utterly ignored the possibilities of the faunal naturalist, the outdoor naturalist and observer of nature. They treated biology as purely a science of the laboratory and the microscope, a science whose adherents were to spend their time in the study of minute forms of marine life, or else in section-cutting and the study of the tissues of the higher organisms under the microscope” (29). Echoing Reid’s contempt for learned “closet-

naturalists," Roosevelt instead longed to be "a scientific man of the Audubon, or Wilson, or Baird, or Coues type," one "devoted to *out-of-doors* natural history" (28, emphasis mine). Harvard, however, could not accommodate such outdoors adventuring within the orderly confines of professional science, so Roosevelt would have to find an outlet for his hunter-naturalist aspirations outside of his professional training. Instead, he enrolled in Columbia Law and pursued a life in politics.

Although Roosevelt's personal convictions of manhood were shaped by the emerging models of self-reliance and the masculine primitive, his instinct upon entering public life defaulted to more antiquated ideals of aristocratic, urbane gentility. This was a mistake. Upon first being elected New York State Assemblyman in 1882 at age twenty-three, Roosevelt was derided by his political opponents for his effeminate manners and appearance. The legislator John Walsh describes Roosevelt's first appearance in Albany, hinting at the mockery that would soon follow:

> Suddenly our eyes, and those of everybody on the floor, became glued on a young man who was coming in through the door. His hair was parted in the center, and he had sideburns. He wore a single eye-glass, with a gold chain over his ear. He had on a cutaway coat with one button at the top, and the ends of its tails almost reached the tops of his shoes. He carried a gold-headed cane in one hand, a silk hat in the other, and he walked in the bent-over fashion that was the style with the young men of the day. His trousers were as tight as a tailor could make them, and he had a bellshaped bottom to cover his shoes. (qtd. Morris 1)

Biographer Edmund Morris lists "some of the milder" smears by which the opposition invoked his age, stature, class, and sexuality in order to ridicule his masculinity: Oscar Wilde, Young Squirt, Weakling, Punkin-Lily, JaneDandy, and a "half-member" of the House (1). Roosevelt had spent years cultivating his physical prowess, yet the first impression he gave could not erase his genteel background and diminutive genes; as Tom

Lutz explains, it would take a trip to the West, after which he would consistently present himself as the "Cowboy of the Dakotas," to reshape his public image and prove his potency (79-82).

Roosevelt's manhood, like that of any man but especially that of a major public figure, was performative, and after his political humiliation he deliberately refashioned his public image in line with shifting paradigms of American masculinity presaged by Reid. Gail Bederman observes:

> On his first trip to the Badlands in 1883, he was giddy with delight and behaved as much like a Mayne Reid hero as possible. He flung himself into battle with nature and hunted the largest and fiercest game he could find. As a child, he had been attracted to natural history as a displacement of his desire to be a Western hero. Now, shooting buffalo and bullying obstreperous cowboys, he could style himself as the real thing. (175)

Obscuring the fact that he was a Manhattanite, an Ivy Leaguer, and a lawyer who had recently received a sizable inheritance from his father, and eliding also the fact that his foray into ranching in the Dakota Territory was a financial disaster, he persuasively insisted that he was a frontiersman of the West. This image was bolstered by the publication of *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* (1885), *Ranch Life and the Hunting-Trail* (1888), *The Winning of the West* (1889), and *The Wilderness Hunter* (1893), books which often included carefully staged photographs of Roosevelt dressed in jodhpurs and coonskins, brandishing a rifle and straddling the carcasses of his prey.

Roosevelt's ceaseless accumulation of physical and mental proficiencies would become the defining philosophy of his life and his politics, which he termed "the strenuous life." A speech of the same name, delivered in Chicago in April 1899 while he was Governor of New York, targets a clear audience of wealthy male heirs whose comfortable

position has made it financially unnecessary for them to work with their hands. He advises that such privileged men cannot resign themselves to "ignoble ease" and "timid peace… for wisely used leisure merely means that those who possess it, being free from the necessity of working for their livelihood, are all the more bound to carry on some kind of non-remunerative work in science, in letters, in art, in exploration, in historical research—work of the type we most need in this country, the successful carrying out of which reflects most honor upon the nation." The wealth inherited from generations of forefathers who worked with their hands must not be squandered by the present generation but instead refashioned into new sources of strength to be passed onto future generations: discoveries, conquests, prestige. American greatness must continue to evolve and must actively endeavor for such evolution, and thus the strenuous life is "the only national life which is really worth leading." Roosevelt's speech ultimately becomes a paean to imperial wars and a rebuke to those Congressmen who refuse to fund them, but in Roosevelt's personal life he knew that national strength and imperial triumph began with the fine-tuning of the individual body. In Roosevelt, Reid's beliefs in self-reliance as a Lamarckian guarantor of racial progress became a national agenda.

Roosevelt's call to men to strengthen their bodies carried racial implications for the future of America. Tom Lutz, Thomas Dyer, and others have examined Roosevelt's paranoid belief in "race suicide," the idea that profligate white Americans were succumbing to the enervating leisure of urban civilization, which he called a "vapid and ignoble" life of "self-indulgence" (Roosevelt, "On American Motherhood"). If men wasted their time at the bar and the theater, and if women wasted their time getting educated and being employed, they would lose interest in reproductive sexuality and resist the

responsibility of multiplying their race, ultimately allowing themselves to be outcompeted by the more prolific nonwhite and immigrant races. This ideology can be traced not only to Reid and the other Social Darwinists who applied evolutionary theory to the rise and fall of civilizations but also to many prominent nativist intellectuals of the burgeoning eugenics movement, who promulgated pseudoscientific reasons for blaming society's ills on immigrants and nonwhites. In a jeremiad for the June 1896 edition of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Francis Amasa Walker, the president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the superintendent of the 1870 and 1880 censuses, decried the "vast throngs of ignorant and brutalized peasantry" who were degrading "the American rate of wages, the American standard of living, and the quality of American citizenship." His vitriol burns with animalistic and subhuman imagery, using Social Darwinist assumptions about evolution to stress the importance of maintaining hereditary purity. These "masses of alien population… some millions of Hungarians, Bohemians, Poles, south Italians, and Russian Jews":

> are beaten men from beaten races; representing the worst failures in the struggle for existence. Centuries are against them, as centuries were on the side of those who formerly came to us. They have none of the ideas and aptitudes which fit men to take up readily and easily the problem of self-care and self-government, such as belong to those who are descended from the tribes that met under the oak-trees of old Germany to make laws and choose chieftains.… Their habits of life, again, are of the most revolting kind…. miserable beings who try to burrow in those depths of unutterable filth and slime in order that they may eat and sleep there! Was it in cement like this that the foundations of our republic were laid? What effects must be produced upon our social standards, and upon the ambitions and aspirations of our people, by a contact so foul and loathsome?

While Anglo-Saxons yearned for the slow-growing majesty of oak, the new immigrants swarming into the United States by the millions were thriving comfortably in slime. While

the present turmoil of the "social, political, and industrial system" was not necessarily the fault of immigrants, the danger lay in their ability to subsist in such degraded conditions, their fitness to survive in an abject environment that any true-blooded American would prefer to first improve. Sociologist Edward A. Ross likewise warned that white Americans were pushing themselves to extinction, outcompeted by more fertile ethnicities. Upon reviewing the 1900 census and seizing upon the fact that the white population's birth rate was declining, Ross published a 1901 article in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* entitled "The Causes of Race Superiority," in which he writes, "It is true that our average of energy and character is lowered by the presence in the South of several millions of an inferior race. It is true that the last twenty years have diluted us with masses of fecund but beaten humanity from the hovels of far Lombardy and Galicia" (384). His hypothesis was supported by the findings of Harvard physician Edward H. Clarke, who, as Holly Jackson writes, found that because of changes in blood flow "higher education not only made women unwilling to marry but actually biologically unfit to give birth" (265-6). Although some viewed Ross's opinions as controversial, enough so that he was fired from Stanford University in 1900 after arguing for violent resistance to immigration from China and Japan, his theories carried considerable cachet, invoked even in a speech to the National Congress of Mothers on March 13, 1905, by President Roosevelt.

At age forty-one, Roosevelt became President William McKinley's running mate during the latter's campaign for a second term. Roosevelt's spot on the ballot was partly earned by his highly publicized adventures in Cuba during the Spanish–American War, where Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt had led the 1st United States Volunteer Cavalry to

victory at San Juan Hill. Known as "Roosevelt's Rough Riders" in reference to the extended name of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, this regiment was reflective of Roosevelt's own paradoxical image, comprised largely of both Ivy League athletes and western cowboys and rangers. In many ways, these rough riders' actions, in addition to similar, often brutal military conquests in Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines, were an attempt to find new frontiers beyond the ocean now that the one within America's shores was officially "closed." When he became president, following McKinley's death from assassination on September 14, 1901, Roosevelt eventually abandoned the contentious pursuit of an overseas empire in favor of restoring something akin to the generative wilderness frontier within continental boundaries.

Sports hunting, which had served Roosevelt well in his quest for physical confidence and political success, became Roosevelt's antidote to race suicide, and thus he championed the conservation movement that would secure the most lasting effects of his legacy. "From his earliest youth, then," writes Gail Bederman, "Roosevelt's understanding of nature was tinged by the genre of the Western adventure story. As TR saw it, nature was brutal and primitive—a proving ground of manly prowess" (174). Whereas Reid had constructed this hunting around the pragmatic needs of physical sustenance, however, Roosevelt's derivation of the Reidean model in fact induced a *simulation* of struggle in the lives of men surfeiting on affluent ease. The men whose personal survival was most assured sometimes forgot that they were caught within a perpetual "chain of destruction"—that hordes of invasive species were quietly waiting beyond the gate. They had to be reminded, by coming face to ferocious face with the animal enemy, that even if they were safe and comfortable, their race was not. Thus, while Reid's boys hunted to feed themselves,

Roosevelt's men hunted to feed their lineages. Their material bodies were not threatened, but their progeny, territory, and legacy were. As Miles Powell argues in *Vanishing America,* the early conservation movement was self-serving, an attempt for wealthy white urbanites to claim as their own personal property parcels of land that gave their own lives vigor and value, and in which only *they*—and not the indigenous inhabitants, nor even poor white "pot hunters" seeking meat to feed their families—possessed the justified privilege of managing and destroying life. That Roosevelt's conservation priorities were spiritual and existential rather than strictly utilitarian is revealed by the opposition he faced from industrial-minded politicians throughout the country, who saw no reason not to immediately plunder every natural resource for economic gain, as Leroy G. Dorsey has illustrated in analyzing Roosevelt's tour-de-force of public relations at the 1908 Governors' Conference. Roosevelt aggressively used his bully pulpit to preserve environments whose continued existence has thus ensured the lives of untold numbers of creatures who otherwise would have been lost, yet he did so with sustainable resource management in mind, not wanting to squander the healing properties of animal sacrifice all at once. It was essential to maintain a *perennial* frontier for forging manhood.

Roosevelt's innovative conservation policies were in many ways a blessing for animal life in the United States, particularly now that hunting is banned on nearly two-thirds of national park space ("Hunting and Fishing"). Peter Matthiessen is correct when he writes that Roosevelt's inauguration "was one of the most auspicious… events in the history of American wildlife" (qtd. Kheel 87). Roosevelt's legacy is responsible for 234 million acres of preserved non-urban space (Brinkley 19). As editor Zachary Michael Jack has substantiated in *The Green Roosevelt* (2010), Roosevelt was certainly attuned to

nonhuman animals and (with some exceptions, like wolves) found a beautiful dignity in their presence. A well-circulated bit of presidential trivia reminds readers that he and his large, rambunctious family cohabitated the White House with a menagerie of beloved pets, including a bear, a pig, a badger, a macaw, and four snakes, and even on his rambles through Washington he kept close track of individual bird and squirrel neighbors. Yet despite these feelings of sympathy, Roosevelt was among the earliest and most rigid practitioners of the anti-anthropomorphic style that would come to dominate scientific writing about animals in the twentieth century.

It was in his literary pursuits that Roosevelt's legacy has had its most pernicious effect on animal lives, although, certainly, the role of animal objectification in Western science long predated Roosevelt and even Reid. Francis Bacon (1561–1621), the originator of the "novum organum" or "new [scientific] method," innovated the idea in his *The Masculine Birth of Time* (1603) that truth should be derived solely from an observation of the visible world. This New Science was a religious mission for Bacon, for proper mastery of empirical facts "would increase the power of humanity… for whensoever he shall be able to call the creatures by their true names he shall again command them… the absolute original form of dominion" (qtd. Fudge 94). For Bacon, scientific mastery would return man to the ideal established in Genesis 2:19-20, where Adam names the wild creatures and thus, according to some Judeo-Christian traditions, establishes dominion over all animals.[27] For philosopher René Descartes (1596–1650), thinking about animals was also foundational. He wished to abolish the fanciful anthropomorphisms of fables and fairy

[27] It should be noted that many Jewish and Christian thinkers, both classical and modern, have rejected this relationship of dominion in favor of other interpretations, cf. Andrew Linzey, St. Francis, Mark West, etc.

tales, or, as he would collectively call them in his *Meditations* (1641), “the large number of falsehoods that I had accepted as true in my childhood” (qtd. Fudge 96). Descartes turned the search for truth entirely inward. Sense perceptions were not sufficient grounds for truth because they could be the result of deception, hallucination, or dreaming. In fact, only doubting itself could not be doubted to exist, since to doubt one is doubting is still to doubt. Descartes’s *cogito ergo sum* established a fundamental split between mind and body, with the mind as the only sanctified reality. And since, according to Descartes, the only way to demonstrate one’s possession of a mind is through the expression of convincing human language, it must follow that animals possess no mind and thus no worthwhile soul—that what you saw with animals was truly all there was.

In the *Discourse on Method* (1637), Descartes reasons that an extremely well-made machine (as one made by God, the master machinist) could be made to mimic the instinctive impulses of animals. Only the machine’s ability to communicate its internal life through undeniable signs of language would prove that it was not merely imitating consciousness. It cannot be proven that a tortured cat who writhes and yowls and hisses is not simply fulfilling a mechanical stimulus-response: "Language is evidence of a rational soul, whereas an animal's bark, moo, mew or roar was mere instinct, signifying nothing,” writes Erica Fudge (98). The cat cannot persuasively proclaim, “You are hurting me!” Nor can it convincingly convey that it can *think* of pain as abstractly “painful,” even if it does appear to be responding to a physical state that might be deemed “pain.” Therefore, its pain is not “real” in the sense that only abstract cognition communicated through human language is “real.” This new conception of the “beast-machine,” as Descartes’s follower Julien Offray de La Mettrie termed it, paved the way for the complete objectification of

other animals, including their use in medical experimentation.[28] "What had been a faith in dominion now became, for some, a scientific fact of nature," Fudge writes (100). Descartes himself was explicit about this accomplishment, writing that his discovery was "not so much cruel to wild beasts as favourable to men, whom it absolves... of any suspicion of crime, however often they may eat or kill animals" (qtd. Fudge 98).

In *Images of Animals*, Eileen Crist demonstrates that the empiricism of Bacon and the "beast-machine" of Descartes did not coalesce into a rigidly enforced "mechanomorphic" style of scientific writing about animals until well into the nineteenth century, though I contend that Reid at midcentury and Roosevelt at the end certainly assisted in this movement. As founder in 1888 of the sportsmen's organization the Boone and Crockett Club, Roosevelt took it upon himself to "mercilessly prune and edit" the big game hunting narratives contributed to the club's publication (Brinkley 303). In a letter to conservationist George Bird Grinnell in 1897, Roosevelt describes his style guide thus: "Wherever the young idiot speaks of papa, father should of course be substituted, and, if possible, the allusion should be left out all together…. It is not advisable to put in nursery prattle" (qtd. Brinkley 303). Crist contends that "in the depiction of animals language is never a neutral medium" (10). As she documents, in the objectifying technical language that came to dominate writing in the animal sciences at the beginning of the twentieth century, the policing of sympathies, affinities, and any trace of agency or interiority on the part of observed animals made palatable overlapping practices of exploitation such as

[28] To be sure, Descartes's findings were not universally accepted. For instance, the English philosopher Henry More in 1648 deemed his thinking "deadly and murderous," writing that "you snatch away, or rather withhold, life and sense from all animals" (qtd. Fudge 98).

vivisection. Roosevelt's role as an editor of big game hunting narratives served to maintain a style that would preserve the virile benefits of the hunt, which would have been dampened by expressions of sympathy and other such "nursery prattle." Roosevelt's dangerous overreach came later, when as President he involved himself in the "nature fakirs controversy." In doing so, he collapsed the boundaries between the sportsman's magazine, scientific writing about animals, and other popular presentations of animals, conflating them under one rubric of values supercharged by dire rhetoric about the extinction of white American manhood, and using his authority as chief executive to attempt an enforcement of this alignment. Although Roosevelt had been discouraged from pursuing professional science at Harvard, in his role as president he could advocate that the Reidean ethos of the hunter-naturalist should be the guideline of *all* writing about animals that was not blatantly fantastical. The hunter-naturalist could finally tell the book-naturalist how things were going to be. If the fate of the nation ultimately depended upon man's dominion over animals via the sexual enhancement pill that was sports hunting, then any mode of discourse that interfered with such aims was a threat to national strength. Thus, at the dawn of the twentieth century, what philosopher Jacques Derrida has termed "carnophallogocentrism"—the primacy of the meat-eating man as the master of meanings—expanded from the pages of field and stream magazines to all levels of American discourse engaged in thinking about animality.

Roosevelt was neither a trailblazer nor a maverick for possessing a constellation of beliefs that linked physical indefatigability and rational objectivity with masculinity, the conservation of natural spaces with the prolonged greatness of the white race, and the killing of animals with the development of progress. Such beliefs had a foothold among

many of the prominent scientists, politicians, academics, and authors of the day. Yet as a popular and prolifically outspoken president using his bully pulpit to profess the hunter-naturalist avocation, he was an especially puissant spokesman for the idea that dominion over animals was central to man's evolutionary progress. Like his childhood idol before him, Roosevelt was a bullhorn through which discourses of masculinity, progress, race, and animality were concentrated and amplified.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, a new generation of bestselling authors would turn their sights toward animals and see in them compassion, conviviality, and consciousness, but the influence of President Roosevelt and of other field naturalists like John Burroughs, whose belief in animals as instinctual machines had calcified, worked to hamper an open-minded investigation into animal being.

We Will Never Be Ruled by Man: Ernest Thompson Seton

"These stories are true," Ernest Thompson Seton attests in the first paragraph of his introductory Note to the Reader of *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1898). "Although I have left the strict line of historical truth in many places, the animals in this book were all real characters. They lived the lives I have depicted, and showed the stamp of heroism and personality more strongly by far than it has been in the power of my pen to tell" (7). Seton sometimes made himself the narrator of the collection's eight stories, but often he embodied the perspective of a wild animal. While he admitted to sometimes constructing composite characters out of multiple individuals he had observed, he nevertheless insisted on the overall realism of those depictions. And so he begins a book with animal characters that noticeably deviated from those in contemporary works like Anna Sewell's *Black*

Beauty (1877), Joel Chandler Harris's Brer Rabbit stories (1880-1908), Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894), and all the other fantastical, allegorical, or explicitly anthropomorphized works of fiction that had come before.

This novel approach to storytelling was an immediate critical and financial success. In a March 1899 review for *The Bookman*, James MacArthur notes that the "convincing realism" of Seton's stories was achieved "with an imaginative force that finds expression in art of a high order" and that the book was "a contribution to literature that will be of never-failing interest to… every reader who has a soul" (71, 74). The *New England Stationer and Printer* of February 1900, calling it "[o]ne of the most valuable contributions to animal psychology and biography that has yet appeared," notes that 41,000 copies had already been sold and that Seton had "more [speaking] engagements than he can fill" (31). In the November 1902 edition of *The American Monthly Review of Reviews*, Francis W. Halsey, charting some of the major figures in the recent "Rise of Nature Writers," a genealogy encompassing the "intellectual children" of John Burroughs, observes not only that Seton's "books have almost rivaled in sales some of the popular novels of the day" but that, unlike such works of fiction, Seton's "success was achieved on legitimate lines": "It made its way distinctly on its merits, as an authentic record of things known and seen,—things no one else had known so intimately, seen so accurately, and described so delightfully" (567, 570). Likewise, T. Digby Pigott, writing for the November 14, 1901, edition of *Nature*, calls the book an "almost altogether perfect work," although, feeling incumbent as a reviewer to cite some criticism, he confesses that "the vein of melancholy which runs through much of his writings is not a little strained" (25-6).

Melancholy is indeed a defining feature of *Wild Animals I Have Known* and many of Seton's other animal stories. Every major animal character in *Wild Animals I Have Known* succumbs to a miserable death from starvation, competition, man's cruelty, or the brutal elements. In one of the eight stories, for instance, a mother fox, having witnessed all her other cubs die by various means, purposely feeds a piece of poisoned bait to her youngest cub, who is stuck in a human's trap, so that he might die a swift and merciful death. At the tale's close, Seton speculates that the mourning mother may have then "deliberately" poisoned herself (180). Explaining one of the book's major lessons, he writes, "No wild animal dies of old age. Its life has soon or late a tragic end. It is only a question of how long it can hold out against its foes" (94). A mournful tone likewise predominates his 1899 *The Biography of a Grizzly*, which follows Wahb, a mateless, orphaned, sullen grizzly bear with a disgust for the smell of humans who grows up to become the most powerful creature in his Wyoming territory. He is outwitted, however, by Baldy, a migrant from a neighboring mountain range who uses logs and other aids from the environment to falsely advertise that his size is much larger than it is. Wahb's greater physical strength would easily vanquish the diminutive Baldy if they were to ever cross paths, but because he is deceived by Baldy's trail, the anxious, aging Wahb avoids the encounter, ultimately choosing a painless suicide instead.

This melancholic theme is what more recent literary critics, like Margaret Atwood and Miles Powell, tend to focus on when reviewing Seton's work. According to these scholars, Seton's themes of tragic sacrifice, postlapsarian corruption, and alienation reveal more about his personal anti-modern worldviews than any true account of the wilderness. Atwood writes that the stories of Seton and of Charles G.D. Roberts "are almost invariably

failure stories," and she argues that this is due to the "distinctively Canadian" psychology of those two writers. Her essay "Animal Victims" from her 1972 *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* is foremost concerned with proving that the realistic wild animal story, the only literary production which can be said to be have originated in Canada, is not, as other scholars have termed it, "a rather isolated and minor kind of literature," but rather "a *genre* which provides a key to an important facet of Canadian psyche": "That's the key: English animal stories are about 'social relations,' American ones are about people killing animals; Canadian ones are about animals being killed, as felt emotionally from inside the fur and feathers" (215-6). To substantiate this claim, she summarizes work by biologist Desmond Morris suggesting that people's favorite animals are reflective of "symbolic anthropomorphic values":

> Small children like large 'parental' animals such as bears and elephants; slightly older children prefer white mice and squirrels and other things smaller than themselves which they can control; adolescents like companion or sexual-power figures such as dogs and horses; childless couples tend to favour substitute children such as cats, lapdogs and housebirds. (220)

From here, Atwood extrapolates that Canadians prefer thinking of animals as victims *not* because of the "national guilt" of Canada having been "founded on the fur trade," an argument which in a broader sense could also be applied to the United States, but because "Canadians themselves feel threatened and nearly extinct as a nation, and suffer also from life-denying experience as individuals—the culture threatens the 'animal' within them—and that their identification with animals is the expression of a deep-seated cultural fear" (220).

Atwood's argument, however, seems to bear no relation to Seton's personal identity as a Canadian. He was born in England, had Scottish roots that were so important to him that he legally changed his name, spent formative years in Europe and the United States, set many of his most successful stories during his time spent in New Mexico, achieved most of his literary success while living in New York City, and says nothing at all about the differences between Canada and the United States in his 400 page autobiography. More importantly, Atwood's argument misapplies her own summary of Morris's findings, all of which point to a *surrogate relationship* between human and preferred animal, by instead supplanting the archetypal Canadian's preferred animal with a projection of the Canadian's supposed self-image; whereas Morris's toddler might see an elephant as a mother, Atwood's Canadian sees a hunted rabbit as *herself*. In collapsing this relational distinction, Atwood overlooks a role Seton sometimes occupies in his narratives as the first-person *killer* of his animal characters—one who forms a remorseful relationship with them—and she moreover denies Seton his primary and most revolutionary motivation: to foreground *animal* lives.

Interpretive work by Miles Powell insists upon a similar downplaying of the animals qua animals. Directly linking Seton's work to the same fears that aroused Roosevelt, Powell interprets *The Biography of a Grizzly* as a "subtle and complex allegory" "drawing parallels between nonwhite immigrants and invasive species" (109). Placing heavy emphasis on Wahb's name, which Seton claims is a Native American word for "white bear," Powell interprets the story's tragic plot as a premonition of race suicide: "Would white America follow Wahb into the abyss, as wave upon wave of purportedly treacherous immigrants poured into the country, and old-stock citizens lost their fighting

virtues while producing ever fewer offspring?" (110). This reading seems tenuous, however, since the prevailing discourse of race suicide attributed the upper hand of invasive immigrants to their fecundity and shamelessness rather than their cleverness. Baldy, however, is an isolato just like Wahb. If *The Biography of a Grizzly* is to be read on racial terms, it seems more likely that Baldy, who knows how to selfishly manipulate the environment in order to deceptively claim another's territory, would represent encroaching white settlers, with Wahb, despite his name (or perhaps because of it), standing in for a "tragic Indian" type; indeed, Seton greatly admired Native Americans and, in forming a direct precursor to the Boy Scouts of America, hoped that the children of America would continue to model "Indian" virtues (e.g. *TAN* 376). In his autobiography, he praises not only Indians of the mythical Fenimore Cooper sort but also genuine Native Americans he encountered (e.g. 237-8, 254-5, 262). In contrast to many nineteenth-century white American writers, who only lauded those Indians who were no longer a threat—a feeling Renato Rosaldo terms "imperialist nostalgia"—Seton even writes approvingly of individual natives who were in conflict with him (e.g. 273-5).

Reading national or racial dynamics too heavily into Seton's work, as Atwood and Powell do, discounts Seton's ostensible intentions: to show that *animals* were the ones suffering, that *men* (who were indeed typically white) were too often an unnecessary source of this suffering, and that *all* men should strive for a more compassionate approach. While Seton's works abound in tragedies, these are *animal* tragedies, which may coincide with but should not simply be supplanted by human tragedies. Seton's animal stories may be filled with loss, but his autobiography is a lighthearted success story with ample scenes of humor and triumph, suggesting that his concern for animals was not merely a displacement

of his own feelings of victimhood. He includes frequent remorseful reflections on animals whose deaths he has witnessed or caused, but the only mournful tone he strikes insofar as humans are concerned is occasional befuddlement over why many white men possess a "hellish mania" that drives them to pollute paradise with "unmentionable human filth" (107). While it is true that this autobiography was published in 1940 and may reflect a different climate, it is also true that many of Seton's stories of the 1890s and 1900s endeavored to dramatize a less exploitative *relationship* between hunter and hunted, just as Desmond Morris suggests. If a psychoanalytical reading is to be done of Seton, as Atwood has implied, one might find better analytical fuel in Seton's relationship with his father, a neglectful tyrant who exploited his children and wife, than in his supposed feelings of Canadian identity. Nevertheless, one need not resort to such a biographical reading; Seton's dramatization of affective relations between humans and animals is sufficient material for analysis.

Sometimes, his conclusion about the feasibility of such a connection is despairing. In the purportedly true "The Winnipeg Wolf" from his collection *Animal Heroes* (1905), an abused boy develops a powerful friendship with a wolf pup whose entire family has been slaughtered by fur trappers. It is only due to human superstition that the pup, Garou, survives. Garou and the boy, Jim, are pitted against a town of spiteful alcoholics, violent men, profiteering hunters, and evil dogs, whose connections with men have corrupted them. Jim's greatest enemy is his own father, who beats his son "not because he had done wrong, but because he had made his father angry" (296). Garou hates all grown men, especially those "that smelt of whiskey," yet "his love for the child—and all children seemed to be included to some extent—grew with his growth and seemed to prove the

ruling force in his life" (299). When Jim dies, Garou is horribly grief-stricken (307). He flees his home and launches on a violent, vengeful killing spree. Seton writes, "His only path was the warpath, and all the world his foes. But throughout this lurid semi-mythic record there was one recurring pleasant thought—Garou never was known to harm a child" (310). The story ends with a description of the tombstone of "Little Jim, the only being on earth that ever met [Garou] with the touch of love," as a wolf mournfully howls in the distance (320). Seton links children with animals, but he positions both outside of human society in a way that seems to render Little Jim's death at age nine a saving grace. Left alive, he would likely grow to become as cruel and disgusting as all other adults in the story.

In *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century* (2009), Kathryn Bond Stockton explains that the child who is unable to conform to a society's traditional milestones for "growing up," such as the assumption that adolescence will be accompanied by heterosexual courtship, can sometimes delay those unachievable expectations by instead "growing sideways" through an exploration of affinities that are neither officially sanctioned nor prohibited; the alternatives are either the death of the self or else a literal death. In a society where the president directly connotes manhood and national progress with the killing of animals, what pathway forward exists for the child who instead feels affinity for wild animals and does not wish to dismiss those agonies of empathy as nursery prattle? A reclusive life in the woods, apart from other humans? Or is it the same fate of tragic death that awaits all wild animals?

This dilemma is dramatized in Seton's *The Wild Animal Play for Children with Alternate Reading for Very Young Children* (1900). This musical depicts a procession of

wild animals who fight against a Sportsman, the "villain" of the dramatis personae. Seton provides illustrations and instructions for how the child performers can better dress and act like animals, and the stage directions call for growling, prancing, and howling (**Illustration 6**). Yet the lines delivered by most of the children reveal that their characters have already been killed. In the alternative reading for "very young children," a suicidal mustang declares, "I am the wonderful Mustang, / No creature could pace with me, / The sportsman betrayed me to make me a slave, / But I leaped to my death to be free" (31). Vixen, a mother fox, enters the stage escorting her cub Tip, a nonspeaking role which Seton explains can be played by a "two-year-old baby" (40). Vixen announces:

> We made a nice den in the butternut glen,
> A home for ourselves and our brood.
> And there we were happy together,
> My mate and my little ones four,
> Till a cruel man found us and digged all around us,
> And murdered them there by our door.
> Only my poor little Tip was saved,
> To be chained like a slave to a box;
> …
> They tortured my darling, my innocent Tip,
> Till they ended his life's little span. (41)

A baby boy, dressed like an animal, is brought on stage to portray a baby animal who has been enslaved, tortured, and murdered by a man. Seven times throughout the play, all of the characters repeat the chorus: "We are the lords of the forest / Since ever the forest began, / We rule and we fight, and we fighting die, / But will never be ruled by man" (23). By speaking and performing these tragic roles, what view of the world do the child performers internalize? To be an animal is to be noble and die fighting, and to be a man is to be cruel and thoughtless. The children can never truly become animals, but can they rise above the cruelty of their fathers? Will Seton's empathetic worldview construct a future

VIXEN AND TIP

A girl-fox with fox mask, cap and fox tail, leading Tip by the hand.

The smallest possible little boy-fox. A two-year-old baby would do, as he is simply led around by his mother.

Illustration 6. Two wild animals with tragic fates. From Ernest Thompson Seton's *The Wild Animal Play for Children with Alternate Reading for Very Young Children*, 1900.

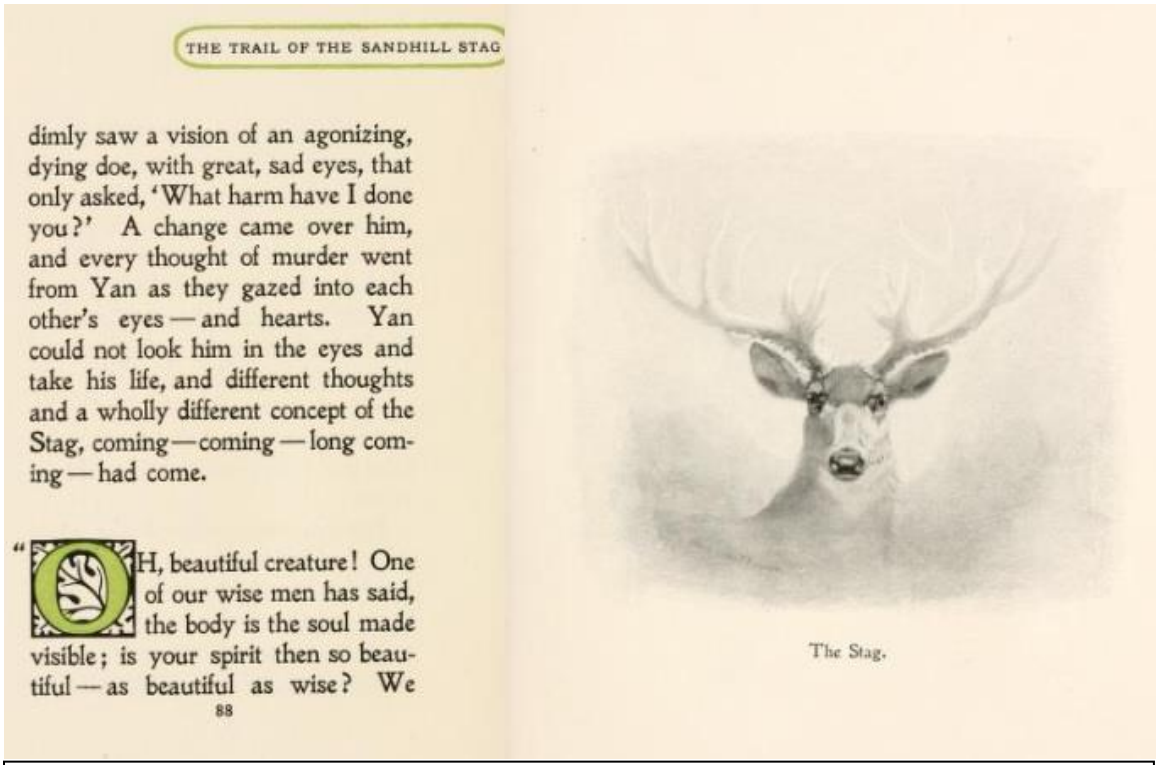
world that provides more fruitful paths for animals and the children who possess a queer, countercultural affinity for them?

Seton was not wholly tragic in *all* his animal stories, and in *The Trail of the Sandhill Stag* (1899) he at least provides a happy ending even if the book concludes before detailing what a path forward might look like. The book follows a young man, Yan, who is inspired to track and hunt a mysterious stag. The stag eludes him for over a year, but at one point Yan manages to kill a doe. Yan's minor victory is marred by a dismal reflection: "After long weeks, with the ideal alone in mind, after countless blessed failures, was this the vile success—a beautiful, glorious, living creature tortured into a loathsome mass of carrion?" (66). The next day, however, his horror abates, and he continues pursuing his main goal, the stag. When he finally corners the stag at the novella's conclusion, Yan undergoes a spiritual epiphany: "A change came over him, and every thought of murder went from Yan as they gazed into each other's eyes—and hearts" (88). The last words of the book are Yan's declaration of spiritual love to the stag:

> Oh, beautiful creature! … we stand face to face, fellow-creatures looking in each other's eyes, not knowing each other's speech—but knowing motives and feelings. Now I understand you as I never did before… We are brothers, oh, bounding Blacktail! only I am the elder and stronger… never more shall I follow your trail with the wild wolf rampant in my heart… But if only you would come sometimes and look me in the eyes and make me feel as you have done to-day, you would drive the wild beast wholly from my heart… I have found the Grail. I have learned what Buddha learned. I shall never see you again. Farewell. (88-93)

Human civilization may be powerful and advanced—people are the "elder and stronger" brother to animals—but this physical and intellectual power is a useless match for the spiritual vitality of the animal. For Yan, to gaze in a wild animal's eyes is to see the face

of God, a stupefying vision from which he may never recover. Even the narrator is unable to speak, for the book ends here (cf. **Illustration 7)**.



THE TRAIL OF THE SANDHILL STAG

dimly saw a vision of an agonizing, dying doe, with great, sad eyes, that only asked, 'What harm have I done you?' A change came over him, and every thought of murder went from Yan as they gazed into each other's eyes — and hearts. Yan could not look him in the eyes and take his life, and different thoughts and a wholly different concept of the Stag, coming — coming — long coming — had come.

"OH, beautiful creature! One of our wise men has said, the body is the soul made visible; is your spirit then so beautiful — as beautiful as wise? We

88

The Stag.

Illustration 7. The face of the other. From Ernest Thompson Seton's *The Trail of the Sandhill Stag*

On the Powers of Luminous Human Sympathy: Rev. William J. Long

Seton was the founder of the genre, but the most significant target in the "Nature Fakers" debate was William J. Long, whose tone was the whimsical opposite of Seton's. His books are no longer in print, but at the turn of the twentieth century, until President Roosevelt effectively destroyed his career, the writer from Connecticut could be found on the reading lists of elementary through high schools throughout the United States (Lundblad 19-20). The illustrated sketches found in *Ways of Wood Folk* (1899), *The School of the Woods* (1902), *Northern Trails* (1905), and his other books depicted wild animals of

all species, with an especial focus on observing the mannerisms and problem-solving skills of individuals uniquely grappling with the demands of life. At a time when literary naturalism as presented by Upton Sinclair and Frank Norris saw humans as little more than brute beasts fighting for survival and often failing, Long asserted that not even real animals were subject to such tyrannizing influences. As Ralph Lutts writes, Long "denied there was a Darwinian struggle for survival in nature based on his belief that wild animals have no awareness of such a struggle. He believed that life in nature is a 'gladsome' life and that death comes swiftly and without trauma" (5-6). Whereas Seton was an agnostic, Long studied religion at Harvard (1892), Andover Theological Seminary (1895), and Heidelberg, where he received a Ph.D. (1897). His chief profession was Congregationalist minister, with nature study and writing being only an enthusiastic hobby, although one he claimed to pursue with intellectual rigor. Long's religious outlook may account for why his "gladsome" woods are a realm of perseverance and triumph despite hardship. It could even be hypothesized that his beliefs as a Congregationalist—a denomination, reflective of its name, in which each church community is vested with the authority to determine its own rules and leaders—may have played some role in his opposition to the rigid top-down certification of scientific truth insisted upon by men like Burroughs and Roosevelt.

In an age of overcrowding, mechanization, and economic uncertainty, Long emphasized the uniqueness of dogged individuals, that "[e]very animal has an individuality, however small or dim; that is certain" ("The Modern School" 147-8). A glowing review in *The Christian Register* of Boston on December 28, 1899, gathers from his work, "[N]o matter how well you know the ways of crows, for instance… watch the first that comes in your way quite as if he were an entire stranger; and you will surely find

some new thing, some unrecorded way, to give you fresh interest" (*William J. Long and His Books* 17). In "A Woodcock Genius" from *A Little Brother to the Bear* (1903), for instance, a shorebird fashions a cast for his broken leg from clay, feathers, and twigs (101-6). In "Kingfisher's Kindergarten" from the same book, a bird introduces graduated learning to her children, each day bringing them larger and more difficult fish to catch (179-90). Danger still makes frequent appearances on Long's pages, but not every animal is inevitably doomed. In "Wayeeses the White Wolf" from *Northern Trails,* for instance, the outnumbered wolf hero escapes a herd of larger animals by biting one of them through the heart. These specific stories are mentioned here because they were central to the controversy that would follow Long, but they are also representative of the general theme of wondrous optimism that pervades his work.

Long's books sold well, and his initial critical reception was very positive. William Lyon Phelps, a Professor of English Literature at Yale, praised Long's "remarkable productions": "His powers of observation are extraordinary; the simplicity of his style exhibits artistic powers of a high order; and his sympathy with animals is shown in a beautiful way. From the point of view of natural history, as well as that of literary art, these books are masterpieces" (*William J. Long and His Books* 17). *The Christian Advocate* called his works "marvels of terse, vivid English" and "by far the best animal books which have yet appeared," and the *Boston Advertiser* on July 20, 1903, called his name "a guarantee of quality" (23-4). Sara A. Hubbard, writing for *The Dial* on September 16, 1901, claimed that "[m]ore charming entertainment for readers of varied taste has seldom been provided within book covers" and that this entertainment was furthermore "education in a high sense" and a "service to the public" (20). Richard Burton of *The Boston Transcript*

concurred: "One is enlarged in the soul by reading it" (16). Even *Our Animal Friends*, a publication of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in New York, was careful to distinguish the exemplary value of Long's books. In the August 1901 edition, a writer emphasizes that Long's books avoid the "mawkish sentimentalism" of "many goody-goody books… [which] have been doing a considerable amount of harm by making the impression that the love of animals is not a rational sentiment, but is founded, to a large extent, on silly pretense" (21). This is reflective of the welfare movement's concern about portraying compassion towards animals as a manly endeavor, which will be explained in the next chapter, but it also seems to be a jab at Seton's "overly humanized" animals. In a comment that ironically mirrors the accusations Long's detractors would level against him two years later, the writer praises Long's educational merit: "Children ought to be taught nothing but the truth; and they ought to be taught the lesson of mercy to animals, wild and tame, not because of fictitious virtues which those poor creatures cannot have, but just because they are poor creatures to whom mankind owes a duty of humanity" (21-2).

Long's popularity in schools was what prompted John Burroughs in the March 1903 edition of *Atlantic Monthly* to publish "Real and Sham Natural History," which began the "Nature Fakers" controversy. Many reviewers had likened the works of Seton, Long, and their contemporaries to the earlier works of Burroughs, and perhaps this comparison urged Burroughs to distinguish himself. In his article, he vociferously ridicules Long's claims and his character, insisting that his misleading accounts of animal intelligence must have been fabricated since they bear no resemblance to the total reliance on instinct allegedly uniformly observed in animals by every other reputable naturalist in the field.

Burroughs provides the antidote to these lies by peppering his editorial with firm, unsensational statements of scientific truth: "[T]here is nothing in the dealings of animals with their young that in the remotest way suggests human instruction and discipline" (137). What defines every nonhuman action is "simply obedience to instinct… and there is no departure from it" (138).

Defenders of Long who approached the argument using Burroughs's terms of scientific verifiability, including Long himself, were quick to point out the dogmatism of such beliefs. An essayist for the *Connecticut Magazine* points out that Long had derived his observations from years spent in the woods of Maine and Canada, whereas Burroughs was chiefly acquainted with his farm in upstate New York; while Burroughs's "observations of the smaller animals and birds of the farm are accurate and excellent… there is absolutely nothing in these observations to preclude the possibility or even the probability of those recorded by Dr. Long" (*William J. Long and His Books* 4). A writer for *Our Animal Friends* in August 1903 insisted that Burroughs "gives no better reason for his rude denials than that John Burroughs does not happen to have seen the same things," dismissing his "conception of science" as this absurdity: "no observation in natural history is to be believed if it happens to be at variance with what we have already learned… nothing in nature is to be believed unless we know it already!" (*William J. Long and His Books* 5-7). Some defenders gleefully pointed out that in December 1879, Burroughs had publicly disparaged the flower imagery of Romantic poet James Russell Lowell, only to be rebutted in the *Atlantic Monthly* in March 1880 by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who clarified that Burroughs's accusations were the result of his false, provincial assumption that the buttercups growing in his own backyard were the only species of buttercup in existence

(27). In his response to Burroughs, Long faults the New York naturalist for presuming himself to be the "final authority in a matter of which he has not sufficient knowledge" (25). In this respect, Long claims, Burroughs behaves as a religiously intolerant Puritan who has "built a fence around [the truth]; called it a creed; limited the divine wisdom and ordination to [his] own small horizon; and sent all those to endless perdition who dared to see the truth differently and without fences" (25-6). He thoroughly cites names, dates, and locations to substantiate some of his claims, and, despite mentioning that he "differ[s] radically from Mr. Seton," he also provides support for some of Seton's dubious passages. "I shall probably continue to watch animals for myself and believe my own eyes rather than listen to the voice of authority in these matters," Long writes at the end of his response, "for otherwise of what use is it to either watch or write?" (25-32).

Burroughs's article was mostly a catalog of what he deemed Long's most inaccurate and fraudulent observations, contrasted with the claims of nature writers he deemed more reputable. In justifying the need for such a public denunciation, he insists upon the importance of purity in the scientific knowledge of the broader American population. He accuses Long and his peers of making a "deliberate attempt… to induce the reader to cross… and to work such a spell upon him that he shall not know that he has crossed… in[to] the land of make-believe" (129, 132). Such deliberate deception, particularly in the classroom, was "misleading the minds of many readers. No pleasure to the reader, no moral inculcated, can justify the dissemination of false notions of nature, or of anything else" (137). He accuses Long of profiting on readers' taste for wild, original stories: "This is the old trick of the romancer: he swears his tale is true, because he knows his reader wants this assurance; it makes the thing taste better" (133). Those who go seeking

what Long has promised them will only be disappointed, and their respect for nature, and for science—for *truth* itself—will hence be diminished. Truth is fragile and easily corrupted, he seems to argue—it must never be handled by clumsy, unprofessional hands. In 1905, he would write that his goal in publishing this editorial was not "to make the reader love the animals less, but rather to love the truth more" (*Ways of Nature* vi-vii).

Burroughs's argument likely overestimated several things: the intention and ability of Long's readers to actually take vacations into the wilderness, for one, as well as their desire to go into the woods with the sole intention of verifying specific anecdotal claims recalled from their leisure reading. More revealing, however, is the argument by which Burroughs achieves his goal. Who is the hypothetical reader of Long that Burroughs imagines, whose whole worldview will be shattered by having read something interesting but false? Burroughs's own nature writing, as in "The Art of Seeing Things" and "Footpaths," was certainly beautiful, and he made a stirring case for the spiritual rewards one could derive from watching birds, taking long walks, and being attuned to one's surroundings, but even if it is presumed that his essays are more factually accurate than those of Long, as is probably the case (though Burroughs also made errors), does it follow that his works are more edifying? That they are more effectual in the fight to conserve nature? What would become of a Manhattanite woman who reads Long's *Wood Folk at School* and is thereby motivated to journey to the Housatonic to watch kingfishers? She might indeed be disappointed when she fails to find a marshland "kindergarten" and instead observes only instinct-driven mechanical animals. Along the path, however, she might find some other suggestion of animal intelligence, or, even though she might feel as though Long has described it in an exaggerated way that does not quite match the description she

would give, she might indeed find that the kingfishers she sees are intelligent, thoughtful, and dignified. Will a predisposition to believing in animal interiority color her perceptual apparatus in a way that attunes her toward finding positive evidence of such that others might overlook, or is the rational Cartesian split destined to prevail? Whose is the more jaundiced eye? Disappointed or not, she has at least gone to the wild and seen Burroughs's "reality." What purpose does Burroughs serve by asserting a truth that he knows to be inherently disappointing, one which will "make the reader love the animals less"? By preemptively draining any sense of wonder from nature, he makes the case that a reader such as her might as well stay home. How fragile such science must be!

Indeed, as Mayne Reid noted, pervasive incredulity also leads to error. Science's blanket refusal of animal intelligence has often forced ethologists to ignore observations that reveal the kinship between humans and animals, or to obscure such observations with "mechanomorphic" language devoid of agency or emotional or moral connotation, out of a fear of appearing too sentimental, too juvenile, or too biased by own's own internal projections. Zoologist Donald Griffin termed this "anthropomorphophobia" (qtd. Crist 36). The primatologist Jane Goodall writes of having had to quell terminology such as "personality" or "war" to refer to undeniable aspects of chimpanzee life, and of having faced significant backlash once she refused to continue denying such things. It was her discovery in October 1960 of chimps in the Gombe manipulating twigs in order to more efficiently extract edible termites from their mounds that led her excited patron, paleoanthropologist Louis Leakey, to announce, "Now we must redefine 'tool,' redefine 'man,' or accept chimpanzees as humans" (qtd. Peterson 212). Much of the scientific study of animals is in fact an articulation of what makes animals different from humans; when

those barriers blur, the supremacy of man becomes less tenable, and what is science if not a celebration of the progress of man?

The rule that "objective" scientific discourse must banish all anthropomorphism as fabulous fancy is itself grounded in the subjective motivation to insist on human superiority. For example, Rebecca Giggs notes that since much research into cows is funded by and thus oriented toward the interests of the industrial farming industry, it was not until 2018 that ethologists openly admitted that cows, despite being "bred for uniformity," "not only recognize one another as individuals, but have friends they prefer" (26). Previously, the researchers saw only what they were interested in observing, i.e. those qualities which influence the productive efficiency of the industry, and even the turn toward identifying "humanlike" emotions such as friendship was motivated by the same economic factors. Giggs writes:

> For decades, behavioral studies of livestock have tended to focus on aggression, because fighting between animals can result in physical injuries and economic loss. Bovine companionship, a less conspicuous dynamic, long went underrecorded—at least as a subject of scientific inquiry. As herd sizes have increased and greater numbers of cows have been subjected to intensive stall-feeding, the incentives to understand cow stress, and cow resilience, have grown. (26)

When a researcher need not find evidence that supports the inferiority of animals, the possibility of perceiving, recognizing, appreciating, and reporting evidence of "human-like" animal intelligence expands. Although Burroughs adamantly forswore all possibility of animal learning, some recent developments include the discovery at the University of Bristol in 2006 that ants, via "tandem running," develop a teacher-student relationship when directing others to new food sources; the finding at Kyoto University in 2013 that chimps teach others more efficient ways of using tools (specifically, juice box straws); and

the discovery at the University of Cambridge in 2008 that meerkats, just like in Long's kingfisher kindergarten, teach their young how to hunt and kill progressively larger and more aggressive scorpions. The discovery in 1996 at the University of Auckland of hook-tools used by New Caledonian crows, the observation of communicative bee dancing, and the realization that urban crows use traffic flows to crack nuts are some more established findings that are contrary to Burroughs's insistence on pure instinct. As Verlyn Klinkenborg wrote in his 2007 *New York Times* obituary for Alex, a grey parrot who could complexly discriminate in spoken English statements between an impressive and growing number of colors, shapes, materials, emotions, and other concepts, "Most humans are not truly dispassionate observers. We're too invested in the idea of our superiority to understand what an inferior quality it really is" (A20(L)).

As Crist documents, the science of animal study legitimated itself as an objective science by stripping its published findings of all reference to animal interiority, which, as Descartes argued, cannot be seen and thus cannot be scientifically assumed. Naturalists from Descartes to Darwin generally denied animal cognition, and ethologists after Darwin—as the study of animals became not just a gentleman's hobby but an institutionalized academic discipline—prescinded all possibility of representing animal cognition by demanding a "mechanomorphic" rhetorical style predicated on passive voice descriptions of external occurrences—focusing not on observed animals as agents considering and reacting to perceived causes, but on environmental objects evoking stimulus responses within instinct-driven encounters. Darwin himself, however, relished his recognition of animal intelligence and emotions—not just fear and anger, but love, shame, and pride. As Crist documents, he extensively and intentionally

"anthropomorphized" even invertebrate animals, never doubting their agency. His theory of evolution depended upon such mental continuities across species, and he disagreed with his contemporaries, like his friend T.H. Huxley, who thought of nonhumans as "conscious automata": "I wish to God there were more automata in the world like you," he wrote with loving irony in his last letter to his friend (qtd. Crist 13). Darwin's intellectual inheritors of the next two centuries would roundly dismiss their progenitor's prolific anthropomorphism as promiscuous sentimentalism or prescientific ignorance, but according to Crist, these overlaps were essential to his thinking.

How Darwin—and how any other field observer wishing to prove animal individuality and ratiocination, such as Long—must prove such mental qualities is by relying on evidence roundly ruled out by scientific ethologists as being non-evidentiary: anecdotal narrative. "Anecdotal bias" is a well-known logical fallacy, yet if one is seeking to prove the variability of the individuals in a species, then only reference to unique embodied behaviors in singular moments of lived experience will verify that these individuals behave in ways beyond generalizable instincts. As Crist explains, "The shift from essentialist to evolutionary thinking hinges precisely on the recognition of the importance of variance, which is the very basis of species transformations over geological time. Darwin notes that 'individual differences are highly important for us, as they afford materials for natural selection to accumulate'" (19). Darwin rejected typological thinking, seeing instead an imperceptible gradation "between individuals, lesser varieties, well-marked varieties, subspecies, and species" and writing that "[t]he variability of the faculties in the individuals of the same species is an important point for us…. I have found on frequent enquiry, that it is the unanimous opinion of all those who have long attended to

animals of many kinds, including birds, that the individuals differ greatly in every mental characteristic" (Crist 41-2).

Ratiocination likewise cannot be proven except through inference derived from anecdotal narration. Internal emotions are often bound to recognizable external expressions, yet in humans there is no physical expression that universally accompanies silent cognition; only inference from cause and effect can suggest that thinking has occurred, and only in human interactions are such assumptions freely granted. Furthermore, problem solving is not deemed to be noteworthy unless the problem and the solution are both unique—the rarity of such moments is precisely what makes them signs of intelligence. Long's "woodcock genius," who crafted out of mud a splint to heal his broken leg, may have indeed been a fiction or a misreading, but the many vehement detractors who claimed that Long and others simply could not build a case for animal cognition by relying on such singular anecdotes thereby foreclosed the admission of *any* evidence which could possibly suffice for proving such a singular event as circumstance-bound problem solving. Crist does not mention Long or the "nature fakers" in her book, but as she notes of a 1984 discovery that echoes Long's observations of a "kingfisher kindergarten," it was not until the development of advanced photographic technology that dedicated ethologists were able to convince the broader scientific community of the "exceedingly rare" but still very much real practice by which a small percentage of intelligent green herons use bread to bait fish (48-9). Crist concludes, "With the disparagement of the anecdotal method in twentieth-century behavioral science, this central method of documenting versatility, which Darwin utilized when necessary, was largely excluded from the outset" (49).

Long's observations are perhaps beyond the point of verification, and it may in fact be true that his writings abounded with errors, either accidental or deliberate. Marti Kheel observes, however, "The validity of the specific anecdotes under dispute is of no less significance than the belligerence with which Roosevelt and Burroughs responded to Long, and their attempt to claim reason as a unique human attribute" (*Nature Ethics* 95). In "The Modern School of Nature Study and Its Critics," Long cautioned that the true observer of the natural world must orient his inescapable solipsism toward empathetic reflection rather than egoistic prejudice. He writes, "The nature student must seek from his own individuality which is the only thing that he knows absolutely… to interpret truthfully and sympathetically the individual before him. For this work he must have not only sight but vision; not simply eyes and ears and a notebook; but insight, imagination, and above all an intense human sympathy… by which alone the inner life of an animal becomes luminous, and without which the living creatures are little better than stuffed specimens" (148).

As the controversy played out in magazines, newspapers, and books from 1904 to 1907, it became less a scientific debate about the mental capacities of animals and more a war over which kind of man could lay claim to utmost rationality.

I Am the Very Model of a Modern Manly Animal

Of everything that would be written as part of the debate over the next four years, the editorials of John Burroughs show the most restraint in lodging *ad hominem* attacks. Even so, Burroughs concludes his first editorial with a personal jab at Long, a challenge to the authenticity of his professional identity: "Mr. Long's book reads like that of a man who has really never been to the woods, but who sits in his study and cooks up these yarns from

things he has read in *Forest and Stream*, or in other sporting journals" (139). By stating this, Burroughs initiated a powerful undercurrent that would influence much of the conversation for the next four years. His dichotomy resembles Reid's conflict between the true hunter-naturalist and the contemptuous "*learned* book-naturalist," which echoes the broader conflict of the gentleman (and woman) hobbyists banging at the locked doors of the scientific institutions' ivory towers. Technically, Burroughs and Roosevelt were *not* certified scientists. Roosevelt was discouraged by the laboratory science at Harvard, so different from his Reidean fantasy, and instead pursued a law degree. Burroughs had a modest education, and he was considered less a scientist than a "literary naturalist," memoirist, and popularizer of nature study. Thus, although the argument appears to have scientific knowledge at stake, what was actually contested was the authority to disseminate scientific information throughout popular culture. How would the culture model the "scientific man" of progress? How would such a man style himself as an evolved animal, and what might that stylization betoken for the future of man's evolution? And, most importantly, who was permitted an authoritative voice to enunciate this model and this future? Burroughs was a birdwatching farmer, Roosevelt was president, Long was a minister, and Seton was a painter; none of them was a licensed zoologist, yet they all sought to define man's relationship to animals.

According to Reid's model, Burroughs's jab, and Roosevelt's later elaboration, the hunter-naturalist is preeminent, for he has spent time in the wild, encountered actual beasts, and learned how to survive the elements. His survival depends upon his ability to properly read his surroundings; hence, he understands the true workings of the world. He is not blinded by his own emotions, preconceptions, or fantasies, which could serve a utilitarian

disadvantage. Burroughs writes, “He tells the thing for what it is. He is entirely serious. He reports directly upon what he sees and knows without any other motive than telling the truth” (130). If the true scientist is “serious,” then the book- or artist-naturalist is duplicitous, irrational, and frivolous. He cares only for the ornamentation of his self-centered prose, writing “style for its own sake” (131). He always runs “the danger of… putting in too much sentiment, too much literature” (130). Those who write such literature are weak-willed and licentious. Burroughs writes, “Fact and fiction are so deftly blended in [Long’s] work that only a real woodsman can separate them” (132). Long, of course, is not a “real woodsman,” nor is he a real scientist, nor perhaps anything at all that could justify the label “real.”

This dichotomy between the real scientist and the literary poseur is further elaborated in the editorials of Burroughs’s supporters. W.F. Ganong, writing in March 1904, articulates the difference between “the scientific and the literary man” (157). “The literary man,” he writes, “seems to view nature chiefly in the light of a fresh supply of literary material.” Out of touch with the natural harmony of the wilderness, he is merely a profiteer, extracting “material” resources from the forest for his own personal gain—an industrialist ransacking the woods. He dismissively states that Roberts’s “knowledge of New Brunswick animals has been gained chiefly in the public libraries, museums, and menageries of New York City,” the largest urban space in America (157).

Edward H. Eppens, writing for *The Critic* in August 1904, goes so far as to suggest that the sham naturalists are guilty of destroying the wilderness by converting it into an urban space via their corrupting presence. In the poem that begins his editorial, he writes, “They typewrite and snap-shot the whelps and broods, / And tell about Nature’s varying Moods /

For the pale puny reader in town" (149). Nature is meant to be a restorative against the enervating influences of modernity, yet by tramping their urban sensibilities into the forest, bottling up the wilderness by means of smoky cameras and noisy typewriters, and then exporting it back to the city, the artist-naturalists have begun to destroy the wilderness itself. The pure pleasure and spiritual beauty it once provided "has become Americanized and bussinessified" (149) by "the hungry hordes rushing to the woods with all sorts of murderous tools and other impedimenta to 'study nature' by the book" (151). He provides a delirious catalogue of new technologies that the writers now haul in a "furniture van" into the forest—everything from "binoculars" to "phonographs" and "theodolites" (150). Because of their zeal to capture and categorize nature, they have turned the woods into a vast industrial complex no different than the inside of a factory. Nature itself has begun to disappear, and with it all of the beauty, romance, and spirit it once possessed; soon it will exist only as a commodity, part of the vast urban network that reduces everything to commerce: "Soon there will be correspondence schools of nature-study with certificates of proficiency and paying positions guaranteed, fee only twenty-five dollars and postage!" (149) If the forests are the breeding grounds of manliness and character, then soon that character will be thoroughly modernized, systematized, and commoditized.

The dichotomy between the real men of the wilderness and the urban tourists reached its fullest expression when President Theodore Roosevelt began to contribute his remarks in June 1907. The article through which Roosevelt entered the conversation, an interview with Edward B. Clark, begins by affirming the unshakable manliness of the president. Up against "utterly preposterous" "fraud[s]," only Roosevelt is capable of "fir[ing] the first gun" of protest (Clark 164). His words themselves are violence of the

swiftest and most just kind. Only he, with his "vigorous, clear-cut, earnest English," can put a stop to the literary poseurs. The emphasis on English may serve to vilify the authors by connecting them with the harmful, un-American influences of immigrants; indeed, Long's Irish ancestry and German education, despite the fact that he was born in America, were frequently used to dismiss him as impulsive and prone to irrational imagination.[29] Clark quotes Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Chief of the US Biological Survey, in order to testify to Roosevelt's legendary status. Merriam calls him the "World's authority" on American animals, with a knowledge of nature "fuller… more complete and accurate than… any other man." Roosevelt is not just knowledgeable about nature. He is *the greatest* naturalist there is, his knowledge not just broad but quantifiably "full" and robust.

In articulating his objections to the "nature fakirs," as he calls them, a name that further exoticizes them in opposition to his earnest American English, Roosevelt reiterates the binary between the true, professional hunter-naturalist and the pitiful literary pretender. Whereas the Cowboy of the Dakotas is one of the few "[m]en who have visited the haunts of the wild beasts, who have seen them, and have learned at least something of their ways" (167), a brave soul venturing into dangerous territory and living to tell about it, the writers like Seton are mere "make-believe realist[s]": "they wish to be known as teachers, or possibly they have a feeling of pride that springs from the belief that their readers will think of them as of those who have tramped the wilds and met nature in its gentleness and in its fierceness face to face" (169). They are boastful children, playing dress-up as real men. In

[29] For example, see Frank M. Chapman's article in *Science* from March 1904: "Mr Long. is of Irish extraction—inflammable, poetic and volatile in temperament. No matter how great his learning up to a certain point, he is continually in peril of making irrational ventures beyond that point, lured forward by pure imagination" (387). Chapman's piece is, surprisingly, a *defense* of Long.

his own editorial from September 1907, Roosevelt further condemns the reckless profligates who surfeit on their own irrational imaginations: their "excessive indulgence in invention tends to atrophy the power of accurate observation," their ability to distinguish reality from fiction wasting away under gluttonous draughts of lies (195). He likewise condemns the "credulous stay-at-home people" who have made the books successful (192). None of these city folk understand what it means to be "real outdoor naturalists, real observers of nature… who went into the wilderness to find out the truth" (192).

The wilderness was the cure-all for the ailments of twentieth century modernity; the "nature fakirs," insofar as they sold bottled "wilderness" to gullible, sickly urbanites, were nothing but quack doctors hawking poison. Roosevelt's choice of the word "fakir," in addition to its orientalized flair, carried a connotation of quackery in the first decade of the twentieth century. The "In Lighter Vein" column of the *Colorado Medical Journal* of 1901, for instance, has an anonymous poem entitled, "The Fakir":

> He gets a smattering of truth,
> The Fakir,
> Then Claims to know it all, forsooth,
> The fakir….
> He deals in generalities,
> In mumbling incoherencies,
> And then demands "a dollar, please,"
> The fakir. (236)

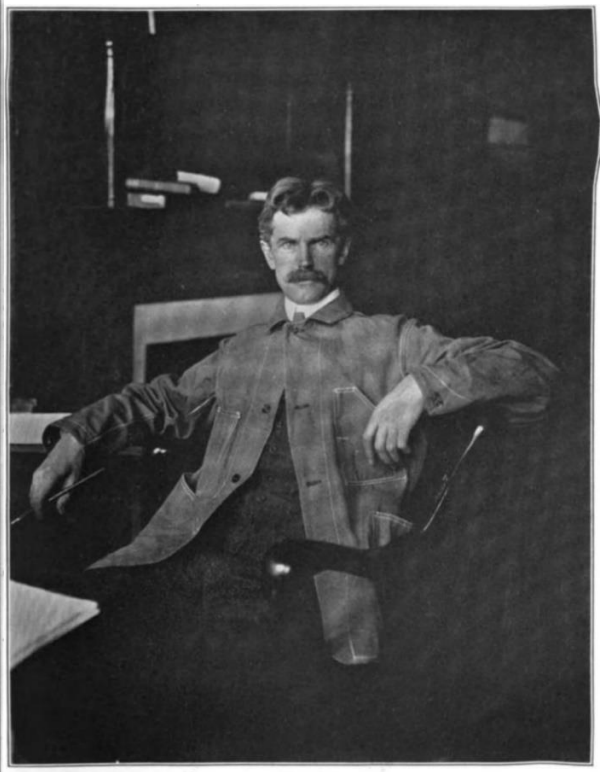
While for Burroughs, the conservationist and scientist, the biggest sin of the "sham naturalists" was that they might complicate the populace's understanding of scientific truth, perhaps causing danger to the ecosystem when disappointed people realized that nature was not quite as fantastical as they had been led to believe, for Roosevelt, the politician, the greatest sin of the "fakirs" was far more deadly. By feeding Americans urban

sentimentality under the guise of robust American wilderness, they were weakening the strength of the American nation, endangering the white American race itself. The contest was not just one between real men and pretend men, but one between real men and the destroyers of manliness.

After Roosevelt's involvement, the argument became more explicitly gendered, as evidenced by an anonymously penned article in *The Bookman* from July 1907 that referred to the nature authors as "hysterical" and "mawkish" ("Chronicle and Comment" 454). Though Freud, since at least 1897, had begun to conceive of hysteria as a disease capable of affecting men, the word "hysterical" would have nevertheless connoted an effeminized madness (Tasca). The article contrasts photographs of Seton, Long, and Jack London, dressed in suits and looking neurasthenic in gloomy offices, with a picture of "The President in Characteristic Surroundings"—in a sunny forest, his stout body dressed in hunting gear, a rifle in his hand and a dead bear at his feet (450, see **Illustration 8**).

Interestingly, the responses of Long and his supporters were modeled on very similar notions of authenticity. Whereas Burroughs called Long a man who got all his knowledge of nature from sporting magazines, Long insisted that Burroughs "weighs the universe with the scales of his own farm and barnyard" ("The Modern School" 148). Long, however, did not cling to masculinity as a byword for authenticity. The difference between an institutionalized, insular scientist and someone who truly understands the sublimity of nature, he writes, is "the difference between the woman who cherishes her old-fashioned flower-garden and the professor who lectures on Botany in a college class-room" (145). It is "the difference between a man who loves animals, and so understands them, and the man who studies biology." Reid had condemned closet-naturalists who never left their offices.

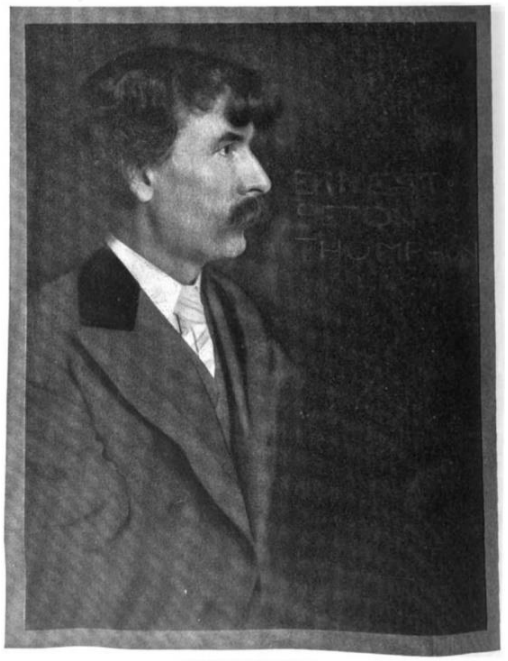
THE PRESIDENT IN CHARACTERISTIC SURROUNDINGS



W. J. LONG

Mr. Long was singled out for special attack in the President's interview on the "Nature Fakirs"

of the characteristics of many of our native animals. Mr. Roosevelt himself, in his hunting stories, sets down a great deal of accurate and interesting natural history. The stories are not at all like his messages to Congress. In the first place, they are shorter. Then, again, he does not solemnly assure us that there are



ERNEST THOMPSON-SETON

Mr. Seton is one of those writers whose books Mr. Roosevelt regards with disfavour

Illustration 8. "The president in characteristic surroundings." Theodore Roosevelt as a virile outdoorsman (*top left*), contrasted with the gloomy neurasthenics William J. Long (*top right*) and Ernest Thompson Seton (*bottom*), in the July 1907 edition of *The Bookman*.

Long went a step farther, implying that any man who walked in nature was tainted insofar as he was at all educated in formal science. A poetic imagination was the only worthwhile aid to nature study. True understanding of nature, according to Long, "sweeps into our hearts without the might of a Latin name added" (144).

True understanding also requires a peaceful temperament, something that, according to Long, Roosevelt lacked. In his interview in the *New York Sunday Times* in 1907, Long characterizes the president as a "primitive" monster, a violator of nature, a "hairy man with [a] club" who has a "blood-lust" (qtd. "I Propose" 181, 174). He is "a man who takes savage delight in whooping through the woods killing everything in sight" (172). While the nature writers were accused of bringing metaphorically murderous tools like cameras into the forest, Long accuses Roosevelt of entering the woods with genuine weapons and an actual premeditated intent to murder. "Mr. Roosevelt is like a man of the stone age who sallied forth with his club to brain some beast and drag it home to display before his wives," Long writes. If, as Roosevelt insists, contact with nature will be vital to keeping the people of the twentieth century sane, strong, and pure, then it is not Roosevelt's stone age methods of slaughter that will keep that contact intact. A modern method of nature appreciation is required for the new modern age.

This modern method paradoxically prioritizes the Old World values of aristocratic, genteel civility. For Long, leaving the city and entering nature is not a transition from civilization into primitivism. Nature is not—or should no longer be—a place of unbridled savagery, of hunting and barbaric impulses. In the modern approach, the naturalist maintains his gentlemanly decorum even as he cavorts with wolves and deer. The animals, who according to Long have schools, courts of justice, and codes of honor, can teach us

how to behave virtuously. Burroughs was uncivil because he did not honor the claims of a man who was "by reputation and by the testimony of all who know him, a gentleman of honor and integrity" (*William J. Long and His Books* 2). If Seton, Roberts, and Long insisted that their works were true, then Burroughs should have taken their words for proof. As an anonymous writer puts it in *The Scrap Book* of July 1907, "Public opinion has settled down to a pretty sensible conclusion on this subject, holding that no man knows everything about animals, and therefore ought not to question the truth of what some one else reports concerning them" ("Dr. William J. Long" 305). Some critics drew upon explicitly classist rhetoric in attacking Burroughs's ungentlemanly behavior; for instance, the August 1903 edition of *Our Animal Friends* haughtily reasons:

> Mr. Burroughs is a gentleman who started life under heavy educational disadvantages which it has been his great merit to overcome to a considerable extent. He has acquired, for example, a correct and even graceful style of writing English, though it is not free from curious solecisms ; but when he sets himself up as a critical appraiser of 'literary values,' his judgments are worth just as much and just as little as those of any other man of like attainments. (*William J. Long and His Books* 5)

Roosevelt, who had once traveled thousands of miles to shake off his gentel image, was even more uncivil and less sportsmanlike than Burroughs for having used the office of the presidency to attack private citizens, violating the "unwritten law of the camp that you may go after game when you need it, but must spare the animal that comes confidingly to your own door" (175). Nature is not a source of unbridled energy. It is a place of law and order, perhaps even more civilized than the crime-ridden, reckless cities. It is no surprise that Seton and Long played founding roles in the Boy Scouts of America, which stresses obedience to the Scout Law. At a time when authors of literary naturalism were articulating

the unavoidable laws of the universe that people must blindly obey, Long emphasized the rules of civility, laws that were simultaneously manmade yet natural.

Jack London, whose name was dragged into the controversy by Roosevelt even though he had never claimed that *The Call of the Wild* (1903) and *White Fang* (1906) were anything other than fiction, published his own defense in *Collier's Weekly* on September 5, 1908, and he likewise argues that the artist-naturalist position is the more "modern" and progressive approach, though he does so not by invoking conservative patterns of decorum but instead by illuminating how scientific advancement must use knowledge of the past and discoveries of the present to overcome "homocentric" errors and envision the more universal truth which enlightenment has revealed. He writes:

> They believe that man is the only animal capable of reasoning and that ever does reason. This is a view that makes the twentieth century scientist smile. It is not modern at all. It is distinctly medieval. President Roosevelt and John Burroughs, in advancing such a view, are homocentric in the same fashion that the scholastics of earlier and darker centuries were homocentric. Had not the world been discovered to be round until after the births of President Roosevelt and John Burroughs, they would have been geocentric as well in their theories of the Cosmos. They could not have believed otherwise. The stuff of their minds is so conditioned. They talk the argot of evolution, while they no more understand the essence and the import of evolution than does a South Sea Islander. (200)

"We who are so very human are very animal," he adds at the end of his essay. "Kinship with the other animals is no more repugnant to Mr. Burroughs than was the heliocentric theory to the priests who compelled Galileo to recant. Not correct human reason, not the evidence of the ascertained fact, but the pride of ego, was responsible for the repugnance" (210).

The artist-naturalists' modern method of nature appreciation sees the expansion of perspective away from solipsism and towards a more universal vision as the greatest lesson

of scientific enlightenment, and it also positions peacefulness as a progressive strength. In contrast to the bloody barbarism of the big gamesman president, Long describes himself as "an inoffensive person" and "a gentle mollycoddle who can't bear the sight of suffering in beast or man," who "go[es] about with a pencil and a notebook instead of a rifle" (172). He insists that Roosevelt "could understand these wild hearts better if he left them beating warmly under their own soft skins" (173). Nevertheless, though his methods are peaceable and civilized, he is not weak or a coward. He writes:

> The President has broken out against me, a private person, with an unprovoked and vicious attack upon my honor. I will not endure it. I will fight him on this issue until he is whipped…. He has stepped down from his high position to fire his shot, and having fired it he hurries back to the refuge of his office…. I want to know whether he proposes to play the man… or to remain in hiding…. I shall do Mr. Roosevelt justice before the eyes of all men. (172)

Here Roosevelt is the one who hides inside, his connection to the city of Washington proof that he is not a true outdoorsman, while Long roams free outside, ready to handle whatever shocks may come his way. At this point, the anonymous conductor of the interview gives the reader a physical description of the author, an odd bit of information to include in a scientific debate about animal instinct. The writer observes that Long "is six feet tall, and would weight [*sic*] about 175 pounds. He has an open and engaging, a rather boyish face; is nervous, and swift of foot and hand, looks you in the eye and talks with immense frankness and rapidity" (173). The writer notes that Long "still shows a slight tendency to the stoop of the scholar, corrected, however, by much out-of-door life." Here are the benefits of nature writ large. Long's education may have made him nervous and given him a stoop, but his frankness and energy are proof that he has been exposed to the wild. He is himself the embodiment of the nature cure, so his approach cannot be flawed or false. As

Long states, "I have taken bear cubs from their mother and let them go again; have crawled into a cougar's den; have had hungry wolves too near me at night in midwinter, and I have still maintained that there is practically no danger to a quiet man from wild animals" (178). While the wilderness preserves newly created by Roosevelt were indeed a proving ground where manliness was tested and virility was reinvigorated, it was not through destructive *sacrifice* of the animals that such enrichment occurred but rather a productive *communion* with them.

For Long, nature provides an opportunity to cultivate one's individuality, surely a difficult thing to experience amongst the statistics, schematics, and demographics of the city. Long's insistence that every animal possesses a unique personality free from the predetermination of instinct or the basic nomenclature of species positions him against the bulwark of urbanization with its numbered populations, replaceable workforce, and mass-produced living. Long's first response to Burroughs in 1903 is key to understanding his resistance to the trials of the era. He writes that nature "is an immense and almost unknown world of suggestion and freedom and inspiration" and that animals "must struggle against fact and law to keep [their] own individuality" ("The Modern School" 144). He is ostensibly speaking of animals when he writes that they possess "individuality struggling to express itself amidst a hundred dangers and unknown problems" (147), yet his concern for the animals as they struggle for self-expression and a voice against the cold system of science and modern thought sounds more like the personal plea of a man drowning in an overwhelming modern world. The minister W.E. Barton, coming to Long's defense in the August 22, 1907, edition of *The Christian Register*, likewise warns against the scientific mindset that would reduce the wonders of nature to the banalities of everyday urban life:

"They tell us that the sound of the waves breaking on the shingle and dying away is mathematically identical with the sound of the shoveling of coal into your neighbor's cellar.… [but] you make no progress without imagination as well as vision" (14).

Though one may be inclined to think of Long, Barton, and others of their ilk as idealistic dreamers nostalgically yearning for a lost Eden, it is not the savage past that they dream of. Barton understands the need for progress, London takes a long view of enlightenment, and Long embraces both modernity and the civilization that comes with it. The artist-naturalists valued the wilderness but did not believe it necessary to draw firm boundaries between it and the cities. Whereas Roosevelt emphasized the dichotomy between the wild forest of bloodshed and manliness and the stifling city with its effete confinement, Long sought to make the bridge between the two more freely crossable.

Neither Burroughs and Roosevelt nor Long and Seton were responsible for destroying the wilderness. The landscape of the United States was growing increasingly urban for a complex of reasons beyond anyone's control. This transition caused many problematic developments at the beginning of the twentieth century, including overcrowding, threats to individualism, feelings of weakness, and fear of immigrants. The nature fakers controversy can be seen as an attempt to assign blame for the side effects of modernization. Within the editorials produced by the controversy can be seen the anxieties and desires of American men at the beginning of the twentieth century—desires for strength, for order, for preservation on one's own terms, for civility, and for individual control.

In general terms and in a long view, the objectives of the hunter-naturalists have more measurably prevailed over those of the artist-naturalists. As historian Adam Rome

notes, although "[i]n the mid-1890s, many men supported the humanistic approach to nature study," which was increasingly being taught by women in public schools, by the early twentieth century, "almost all the men in the field upheld the scientific ideal" as a result of the "many male commentators [who had lamented] the 'feminizing'" and "sentimentalizing… of education" (454). As Eileen Crist documents, the mechanomorphic style of writing about animals using passive voice constructions, statistical generalizations, and the strict exclusion of all but visible phenomena has remained the rigid standard in science disciplines, bolstered by behaviorists like B.F. Skinner and Konrad Lorenz, to the detriment of ethologists who wish to posit theories about animal interiority. And as Marti Kheel documents, sports hunting has likewise prevailed as a masculine endeavor with spiritually enriching properties, given further philosophical justification by conservationists and "deep ecologists" like Aldo Leopold, Paul Shepard, Gary Snyder, and José Ortega y Gasset, who sometimes claim support from Eastern and Native traditions to naturalize man's vital role in the chain of destruction (Kheel "License to Kill" 85-125). While popular American literature has since been saturated with classics which attempt a realistic or semi-realistic portrayal of major animal characters—Marguerite Henry's *Misty of Chincoteague* (1947), William Rawls's *Where the Red Fern Grows* (1961), Walt Morey's *Gentle Ben* (1965), William H. Armstrong's *Sounder* (1969), Robert C. O'Brien's *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* (1971), and Philip Reynolds Naylor's *Shiloh* (1991), to name a few—these stories largely remain the domain of children's literature, as though such interests are purely juvenile, the prattling timidity of a boy who frets over the fate of an antelope calf in an artist's engraving. Regionalist bias may have weakened the image of the hunter within urban circles, but a steak dinner remains an icon of powerful manhood

and cold objectivity when dealing with animals remains the defining personality of the rational scientist.

As individuals, however, the fates of the major figures involved in the nature fakers controversy converged ever so slightly. After meeting each other at a party at Andrew Carnegie's house in 1904, Seton and Burroughs were able to appreciate each other's perspectives and begin a friendship, and Seton claims that upon showing Burroughs his extensive collection of detailed field note journals, hand-taken photographs, personally collected specimens, and natural history books, he was able to impress upon the older man the authority of his personal experience and observation (*TAN* 371). In the July 1904 edition of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Burroughs reevaluated Seton: "Some [nature students] are dryly scientific, some are dull and prosy, some are sentimental, some are sensational, and a few are altogether admirable. Mr. Thompson Seton, as an artist and *raconteur*, ranks by far the highest in this field, and to those who can separate the fact from the fiction in his animal stories, he is truly delightful" (42). Nevertheless, Burroughs maintained his conviction that animal intelligence was a flight of fancy. In the preface to his 1905 book *Ways of Nature*, he writes with some regret about the "bitter and acrid" responses dredged up by his editorial, but defends it for being "as vigorous a protest as I could make against the growing tendency to humanize the lower animals" (vi). Seton likewise moved away from such "humanizing" in his work. He never published a defense of his work during the controversy, and spurred by Roosevelt's demand that he publish his field notes, he compiled a four-volume work of natural history written in a less controversial style, entitled *Lives of Game Animals* (1925–1928), which won the Burroughs Medal and the Elliot Gold Medal of the National Institute of Science. As Seton proudly writes of having met his

detractors on their own terms, “This is the highest recognition offered in America, and effectively silenced all my critics. Every scientific library in America today points to *Seton’s Lives*, as the last word and best authority on the subject” (*TAN* 373). Meanwhile, *Wild Animals I Have Known* has remained in print; two editions, by Firefly Books and by Gibbs Smith, were published in 2020, the latter with a foreword by Sir David Attenborough, the famed narrator of countless popular nature documentaries. William J. Long, however, who sought acceptance as a thoroughly factual writer, never recovered from the controversy. Although his publishers, Ginn & Company, circulated a thirty-two page pamphlet compiling numerous essays in his defense, it would be twelve years before he would publish another book about nature.

Perhaps most interesting, however, is the subtle transformation enacted upon Roosevelt by a confluence of his friend Burroughs, children’s culture, and the humanization of a hunted animal: the “Teddy Bear”. Roosevelt did not shoot the inspiration behind the legendary “Teddy Bear” in 1902, but only because his companions had robbed all the excitement from the chase by first capturing the cub and tying him to a tree. The bear had served one purpose in Roosevelt’s mind: like the boys in Reid’s *Bruin*, he wanted to add to his list of accomplishments having stalked and killed a Mississippi black bear all by himself with his own Winchester; devoid of this singular sacrificial purpose, the cub was not set free but was instead, on Roosevelt’s command, knifed to death by John M. Parker (Brinkley 439). Reid would have understood his disappointment.

Nevertheless, Roosevelt’s alleged gesture of compassion toward this bear precipitated a subtle change in Roosevelt’s public posture, which provides further evidence for how something as seemingly trivial as children’s culture can have widespread political

ramifications. A political cartoon by Clifford Berryman in the *Washington Post* depicted Roosevelt as a man too steadfast in his anti-cruelty to harm a poor, defenseless creature, and as this imagery was recycled, the cub became more cartoonish and "cute" over time (see **Illustration 9**). A cuddly stuffed animal marketed by New York toymaker Morris Michtom made Roosevelt's name (or, rather, a nickname he despised as infantilizing) synonymous with children's affection for the animal kingdom. Soon Burroughs, a known friend to the president, was receiving panicked letters from his readers urging him to convince Teddy that one who loved observing animals should not also love killing them. The attentions of what Brinkley deems the "Teddy Bear constituency" meant that while he remained president, he could not indulge his hunting expeditions too publicly without risking the alienation of some of his admirers. Almost as soon as he left office, he did sail to Africa with funding from the Smithsonian Institution in order to kill a documented 512 animals with his son in the name of science, but there is also evidence that Roosevelt's lust for blood softened late in his life for reasons beyond the demands of political expediency.

Part of this evolution may have come from a conviction that hunting was not a sign of manliness but rather boyishness. "Mr. Roosevelt," the preservationist John Muir once asked him on a camping expedition, "when are you going to get beyond the boyishness of killing things…. Are you not getting far enough along to leave that off?" (qtd. Brinkley 544). Mark Twain, himself now a foremost name in books for boys as well as a defender of animal welfare, was more public and less gentle in his criticism, writing that Roosevelt was "still only fourteen years old after living a half century" and pejoratively calling him "the Tom Sawyer of the political world of the twentieth century, always showing off; always hunting a chance to show off; in his frenzied imagination the Great Republic is a

Illustration 9. The evolution of Clifford Berryman's increasingly neotenous "Teddy Bear." *Clockwise from top left:* first 1902 sketch for *Washington Post*; revised 1902 version, 1906 sequel, 1904 self-portrait with caption "This is quite as near the 'real thing' as I wish to get."

vast Barnum circus with him for a clown and the whole world for audience; he would go to Halifax for half a chance to show off, and he would go to hell for a whole one" (qtd. Brinkley 705). "As I grow older I find myself uncomfortable in killing things without a complete justification," Roosevelt would write to the author Hamlin Garland, "and it was a real relief this year to kill only 'varmits,' and to be able to enjoy myself in looking at the deer, of which I saw scores of hundreds every day and never molested them" (qtd. Brinkley 386). The boy reader had grown up.

CHAPTER 5
THE "FIRM, KIND HAND" OF PATERNALISM IN HUMANE MOVEMENT LITERATURE

By the time artist-naturalists like Ernest Thompson Seton and Rev. William J. Long were suggesting that quiet observation of wild animals could help Americans to progress with decency, self-assurance, and resolve into a modern era that threatened to be turbulent, those wild animals were becoming less readily visible. The bison which Meriwether Lewis had once called a "moving multitude, which darkened the whole plains"—perhaps 29 million at their peak—had diminished to a few hundred by the 1890s, their extirpation aided by a railroad system that not only made their leather hides a lucrative national commodity but also required their removal in order to clear uninterrupted paths for railways, telegraph poles, and electrical wiring (qtd. Barrow 93, Cunfer and Weiser ix-x, 21-2, Brinkley 155). The railways did bring wild animals to the cities, but in the form of delicacies: Lisa Mighetto remarks that the holiday menu of the Grand Pacific Hotel in Chicago offered white-tailed deer cutlets, black bear ham, boiled buffalo tongue, antelope steak, roast elk leg, braised rabbit with cream sauce, and roasted mountain sheep, cinnamon bear, opossum, raccoon, jackrabbit, and hare (30). Like shooting fish in a barrel, the easily harvested dinner staple that was the passenger pigeon, thunderous flocks numbering billions of bronze and bluish-gray birds in the 1870s, had dwindled to a few dozen wild remainders by the 1890s, their devastation largely precipitated by the annihilation of their woodland habitats (Powell 51). Natural historians worriedly penned monographs like Joel Asaph Allen's *The American Bisons, Living and Extinct* (1876), Madison Grant's *The Vanishing Moose, and Their Extermination in the Adirondacks* (1894), and William T. Hornaday's *Our Vanishing Wildlife* (1913), and although conservationists like Theodore

Roosevelt were motivated principally by their desire to kill diverse species of big game indefinitely, Mighetto concedes that they at least "demonstrated remarkable farsightedness" in factoring in the need to make such commodities sustainable (33). The Carolina parakeet, the heath hen, the sea mink, the Labrador duck, the eastern elk, the beaver—all were vanishing from sight, and it was becoming harder and harder, to paraphrase Seton, to personally know wild animals.

To say that Americans in this period were isolated from animals—or to claim, as some do, that the rise of the animal welfare movement only occurred after this violent estrangement—would, however, be absurd. In 1900, 82,000 horses lived in Chicago, roughly one for every twenty humans, and 3.5 million lived and worked in cities throughout the United States (Mason 82). Although Philadelphia passed a resolution restricting cows, goats, sheep, and pigs from wandering "at large" on the city streets in 1855, it was not until 1912 that inner-city hog ownership became officially illegal, with abattoirs excepted provided they were not within a half mile of a church, school, or hospital (Grier 276). Companion animals flourished from midcentury onward, and not just dogs and cats. Pet canaries, for example, were so ubiquitous they were nicknamed the "Universal Parlor Bird" by 1867 (Grier 62). Many hobbyists occupied their free time in the experimental "fancy breeding" of pigeons, goldfish, mice, chickens, dogs, and cats (Grier 271-3). Even the most urban of human settlements in the United States at the end of the century teemed with animal residents and workers, animal neighbors whom many Americans "believed to share humans' affinities for civilized life," according to cultural historian Jennifer Mason (2-3).

Soon, automobile engines would make literal horsepower largely unnecessary. Refrigeration technology would push farms and slaughterhouses farther from the

marketplace, out of sight and out of mind. Animal experimentation, the cutting edge of medical research and scientific progress in the late nineteenth century (Farber 73-9), would successfully conceal itself from the horrified eyes of the public, leading physician Albert Leffingwell in 1894 to remark that much vivisection was now safe from censure, performed in "comparative secrecy, behind locked doors" (qtd. Beers 121). Pets, whose affectionate relationships with their human companions had led many to recognize affinities among the other animals surrounding them, would soon provide the only intimate encounters with nonhuman animality for many Americans.

Before the most exploited animals among us were either removed from sight or replaced by machine technologies, however, several decades of transition occurred in which many Americans sought to reconcile the lively intelligence evident in their pets, the recognizable suffering of laboring animals, the kinship between all species espoused by Darwinism, a liberal progressivism that sought to extend rights and dignity to an increasingly larger sphere of citizens, and the fact that, in the eyes of many, development, progress, and profit depended on animal bodies. How could such competing affects coexist? The height of this anxiety is perhaps most visible in the attacks on petkeeping frequently to be found in American newspapers in the first decade of the twentieth century. If the pets seen by people every day in their homes were the source of their belief that animals were not simply mechanical objects, then it was necessary to rout out such unproductive irrationality.

In newspaper articles condemning excessive love of animals, women were typically the targets, ridiculed for displacing their wifely and maternal affection onto objects who could neither appreciate it, dutifully return it, nor convert it into anything tangibly

productive for the home economy. An article on "The Wife with a Pet" by Dorothy Fenimore in the December 14, 1905, edition of the San Francisco *Call* begins with outrage over a woman who ceded custody of her children to her ex-husband in exchange for keeping the family dog. This cautionary tale of a man forced to do a mother's job leads Fenimore to warn that "[a] woman with an abnormal love for animals is a poor matrimonial investment" (8). As Ella Wheeler Wilcox suggests in a broadside on "Silly Women and Their Pets" published in the Salt Lake City *Truth* on June 8, 1907, such women are bitches: "There are names registered among fanciers for the mothers of animals. No woman would be pleased to hear herself spoken of by one of these names. Why, then, should she place herself in a position by calling the pet animal 'mother's precious baby,' to suggest a class of female animal to the listener?" (6). To similar ends, the author of a March 5, 1908, article from the Stillwater, Minnesota *Mirror* seized upon a report that pets could harbor contagious disease, arguing that medical science's death blow to "this fondness for pet animals" would allow potential reproductive partners to once again become rational adults and sensible progenitors, leaving behind "a degree of childishness that almost borders on lunacy" and instead returning their proper attentions to their *sons*, the true inheritors of the title "Mamma's darling" (2). It seems the increased presence of pets in the home, newly regarded as beloved members of the family, were seen as a threat to the true patriarchal blood ties towards which all devotional energy should be directed.

As in the *Mirror* article, alarmist appeals to the masculine discourse of medical science were often invoked in arguments belittling women's excessive love of animals. An article from the Charleston, West Virginia, *Advocate* on May 27, 1909, bore the headline, "Science Decrees the Doom of the Domestic Animal Pet: Dog and Cats, Parrots and

Monkeys Among the Most Active Agents in Spreading Dangerous Diseases" (3). Newspaper articles which invoked contagion in order to distance animal lovers from their pets advanced medical research by undercutting the work of antivivisectionists, who often appealed to their readers to imagine how their own dogs would feel under the scalpel (Harde 13-5). As Roxanne Harde contends, antivivisectionist works, like Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's *Trixy* (1904), also triggered female readers' memories of their own painful experiences under the scrutinizing gaze of male gynecologists, psychiatrists, and surgeons (13). Along these lines, the author of an article printed in the Washington, D.C. *Sunday Evening Star* on January 7, 1906, which is worth quoting at length, offers a muddled slew of anxieties about sexuality, gender roles, religious transgression, and societal decay in order to justify keeping animals at a distance:

> [Is it] because man has become so callous and engrossed in business that he can no longer give the necessary caressing attention to woman that she thinks is her due that she now goes to animals for it? Woman wants to show affection as well as to receive it, and we read here that a woman whom Dr. Magnin impolitely called degenerate had adopted a turtle which was cruelly treated by a former master, and which she placed in the warmest corner of her bed to nurse it and cure it of a cold which she was afraid would turn into consumption…. She was sorry to learn that no specialist exists to cure turtles of tuberculosis …. The habit of having animals instead of children for pets is not only foolish, but animals transmit their diseases to man. It has been proven now that dogs can transmit tuberculosis. Catching it from one human being, they can give it to others. The taenial echinococcus in the dog transmits its eggs to man, finds a home in his liver, decomposes it, transforms it into a liquid tumor, which, in medical phrase, is called "hydatid cyst." Must not all of us come to the conclusion that human creatures are heirs to enough diseases, without catching those ordinarily confined to animals? The brute world is one of the most beautiful works of the Creator, but should it not be left in its place, as everything else is? There is no doubt that such intense individual love of animals is one of the serious symptoms of degeneracy in man. (4:8)

Ostensibly because her husband has invested too much of his virile energy into the pursuit of money to "give the necessary caressing attention" required of a spouse, this "degenerate" wife (the impolite doctor said it out loud, not the writer!) finds both surrogate child and lover in an abused turtle, whom she "nurse[s]" "in the warmest corner of her bed." The author bombards the reader with impressive medical jargon and graphic descriptions in order to instill a morbid fear of the abject consequences incumbent upon the transgressive dragging of a reptile from out of "its place" in the divine order into the sacred matrimonial bed. The "liquid tumor," the alien "hydatid cyst," grows inside the animal lover's body, a hydra-like bastard of interspecies mongrelism, parasitically "decompos[ing]" its host from within. The author confuses parasitic echinococcosis with tuberculosis, and perhaps the whole story is a fabrication. I could find nothing to corroborate Dr. Magnin's case study of a turtle-nursing degenerate, nor am I certain whether the Dr. Magnin in question is physician Antoine Magnin, whose 1878 *Les bactéries* was a hallmark in the rising field of bacteriology, or Felix Magnin, a sensational "psycho-harmonial" mesmerist known for treating hysterical women in the first decade of the twentieth century (Pearson *Psycho-Harmonial Philosophy* 162-8); perhaps the author was not certain either, for the doctor cited in the article seems to combine the two. The contagion he describes is not merely destructive of the individual humans caught up in the transgressions—the reptile-loving wife, her callous husband, both of them writhing with parasitic infection—but is furthermore symptomatic of a perversion that threatens the race: "There is no doubt that such intense individual love of animals is one of the serious symptoms of degeneracy in man" (4:8).

If such were the derogatory arguments wielded against women whose "excessive" love of animals was deemed queer, then one would assume that men associated with such affections would be emasculated and ridiculed even more aggressively. Indeed, in a cartoon by Paul Terry on the front page of the San Francisco *Call* on December 13, 1909, preservationist John Muir is shown in an apron, dress, and lacy shoes, with a ribbon and flowers in his hair, attempting to sweep back a dam project supported by conservationists like Theodore Roosevelt (**Illustration 10**). In contrast to conservationists who endorsed wildlife appreciation on masculine terms, as a method for managing resources and

Illustration 10. An effeminized John Muir. Illustrated by Paul Terry "Sweeping Back the Flood," *The Call*, December 13, 1909.

promoting the virile energy unleashed by sport hunting, Muir saw an aesthetic and spiritual value inhering to nature. The image accompanying a previous *Call* article on September 2, 1909, wherein forester and conservationist Gifford Pinchot announces his support for the dam proposal, had shown the man "outfitted in a dapper suit, [with an] exposed jawline, full mustache, and perhaps ostensibly gazing into a future landscape full of scientific progress… the epitome of Progressive Era manhood" (Phend 59). Muir's opposition to hunting, industry, and progress, however, made him a charwoman. In his article on the gendered rhetoric of male environmentalists during the Progressive Era, historian Adam Rome argues that "the charge of effeminacy dogged men" who engaged in a wide range of reform movements at the turn of the century (Rome 443). With some exceptions, however, the accusation of effeminacy was *not* an argument leveled against male supporters of the animal welfare movement; the attempt to slur male vegetarians as sissies seems to have been a development of the later twentieth century.

To the contrary, typical denunciations of *men* involved in the animal welfare movement in the nineteenth century tended to depict their love of animals as ignorant yet supercilious misanthropy. "Zoophilists" who cared about the suffering of work horses did not care about the working men who suffered while driving them. An agent employed by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals might step on a starving beggar in his myopic mission to right an upside down turtle or, worse yet, might snatch a ham sandwich from the starving man's hand and have him fined for his cruel usage of the hog. A joke written by popular Iowan humorist Robert Jones Burdette for the widely circulated *Brooklyn Eagle* on February 13, 1887, encapsulates some common criticisms of such men:

> The little brindle mule in the nigh lead slipped on the icy pavement, and Mr. Bergh's best man was on the spot. "Take that mule and have him sharpened before you drive him another foot." "He is sharpened," said the driver, "rougher than a file. Look at them hind shoes—corks on 'em that 'ud wedge a hole through an ice house." The officer lifted a hoof to see and straightway looked over the top of a four story building. Buzzingly ran the word through the telephone: "One of your men has been nearly killed by a mule." Tenderly back came the muffled order: "See if the mule is hurt, and if it is arrest the man."

Mr. Bergh is Henry Bergh (1813–1888), the founder of the ASPCA, whose name quickly attained the notoriety of mononymity; New York City newspapers often invoked "Bergh" as a wry punchline in articles having nothing to do with animal cruelty, and even though Bergh's jurisdiction spread no farther than New York, Burdette's joke was reprinted in numerous, largely rural newspapers throughout the country in the following months, including in Wisconsin, Nebraska, Nevada, and even the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* of the Hawaiian Islands. The squib illustrates the officious animal welfare man's undeserved access to authority: he is indifferent toward the hard-working laborer and his fate; through haughty ignorance, fails to appreciate the laborer's skill at his job in spite of the difficult conditions under which he must work; and furthermore knows nothing at all about how to interact with a mule. That the mule nearly kicks him to death for his intervention shows that even the animals who were supposedly being protected did not appreciate the zoophilists' meddlesome behavior.

Sympathy for animals has come to be stereotyped as a woman's sentiment, whereas the exploitation of animals in the name of progress, such as in the all-male domain of vivisectionists, has been painted in masculine hues (Beers 124-5), and advocates of the early animal welfare movement recognized this predicament from the very beginning. Humane literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which was often

commissioned, publicized, and circulated in large numbers by animal welfare organizations such as the American Humane Education Society, possessed the obvious goals of calling attention to institutionalized cruelties and educating readers about gentler practices. As fundraising apparatuses, they also aimed to entertain and to sell, and as political tools they sought to convert readers' tears into reform and action. These works gave voice to the voiceless by formulating an ideology of compassionate inclusion within the home, the farm, the city, and the nation. Given the stereotype of effeminate sentimentalism and the reality of gender discrimination in the era, however, these works possessed an additional goal of "manning up" their movement, though how they achieved this goal in the early stages often ignored or exacerbated the actual grievances felt by their detractors.

At a time when the levers of state power and legal reform were wholly controlled by men, members of the early animal welfare movement endeavored to paint their philosophy as a manly enterprise. They hearkened back to older forms of Christian gentility and temperate self-restraint, situating the animal's inclusion within a hierarchy of compassionate paternalism. The wife's womanly fondness for animals would not lead to bestial sterility, as the newspaper articles above suggest, since the rational paternalist would provide a check to any overly sentimental notions. The man's loving relationship with animals was not effeminizing and would not result in the impotence of his lineage; rather, the man's sensual mastery over his obedient animals had the power to make even queer men progenitive. The consensual relationship between compassionate master and devoted animal affirmed a man's right to rule; he knew how to read animals and how to make them work for him. Furthermore, the zoophilist's supposed love of animals instead

of his fellow men would not lead to societal degradation since the orderliness, education, and justice he conducted improved the health, safety, and wealth of the community. The presence of a beloved animal in the home was not a dead end to reproductive futurity; instead, the animals enriched the home and the family, educating children in industriousness, business, leadership, and political organization; providing utilitarian value to the home in the form of, for instance, cleaner milk and larger eggs; and often literally saving the home and the family from burglary and destruction. The movement also emphasized the importance of self-reliance, efficiency, and productivity within a society that increasingly saw the gospel of wealth as a manly undertaking. The moral richness of the compassionate paternalist yielded the greatest material wealth, making him the ruler not just of the domestic sphere but of the public sphere as well.

Writers of the early humane movement strove to demonstrate that the tamed animal's successful incorporation into the domestic and public spheres reaffirmed the orderliness and justness of a hierarchy of dependents subservient to their compassionate paternalist; however, the ideology of paternalism, which organized workers both human and non in the Gilded Age, was coming under increasing scrutiny in the 1890s. In *Authority* (1980), sociologist Richard Sennett charts a roughly historical progression distinguishing *paternalism* from *patriarchy* and *patrimonialism*. Patriarchy, evident in explicit monarchies and tribal societies, is a power structure rooted in essentialist blood ties, where one's familial relation to a male leader determines one's status, inheritance, and authority in very fixed ways. Patrimonialism maintains a core of patriarchal stability, but also allows for relations not determined by blood ties; in Sennett's example, mid-twentieth-century Japanese businesses where the owner's son is almost certain to inherit the company are a

version of patrimonialism, since there may be plenty of other powerful stakeholders who are not related by blood to the CEO. In patriarchy and patrimonialism, both the right to power and the responsibilities incumbent to it are fixed and clear, and since family members inevitably age and die, it is also true that the subordinates of one generation may become the authorities of the next. Sennett defines paternalism, however, as "male domination without a contract" (54). He sees this as largely a development of the high capitalist, urbanized United States of the nineteenth century, where strangers came together as bosses and employees without any familial entitlements or obligations to one another. A manager could earn respect by presenting himself as a fatherly philanthropist, but he bore no real connection to his "children" and no incentive to keep them around should they ever disobey. More importantly, a paternalist organization does not age like a system organized around blood; the subservient "children" may be expected to stay dutiful underlings forever. As Sennett writes, "It is an authority of false love, the authority of paternalism. It operates as a parade of benevolence which exists only so far as it is in the interest of the ruler and which requires passive acquiescence as the price of being cared for" (131). Not every working American was sold on this illusion of fatherly care, however, and as a case study of resistance to paternalism, Sennett describes the strike of the workers of the Pullman Palace Car Company against their "father" George Pullman—a word Pullman himself used to characterize his relationship to his employees (qtd. Sennett 68)—in the company town of Pullman, Illinois, in 1894—a strike which was violently suppressed by federal troops after three months, killing thirty workers (62-77). The interests and needs of the children did not always align with those of the father, which were paramount.

The Pullman strike occurred a year after many of the humane works in this chapter were published, and in some cases it can be seen that the authors were aware their ideology carried aristocratic associations unfashionable in a United States increasingly populated by an urban working class with access to democratic power. The humane authors thus sometimes strove—not always successfully—to distance their model of compassionate paternalism from elitist overtones, yet their rhetoric of inclusion frequently depended upon circumscribing an exclusionary zone: the wild, the undesirable, the uncivilizable, the criminal. Sometimes these binaries applied to animals, sometimes to other humans, and often, as has been demonstrated elsewhere in this book, to both at the same slippery time. Many of these books are narrated directly by the animals themselves, or at least give the reader access to their speech or thoughts, yet in addition to speaking up for animal concerns, these no-longer-dumb voices also ventriloquize the interests of the human, white middle class in a manner that often reinforces anthropocentric, classist, and racist discourse and power structures. These diverse works are united in their concern for animal subjectivity and interiority, yet they construct a vision of paternal power rather than brotherhood.

Bergh's Men on the Ground

The animal welfare movement arose in the Northeast following the Civil War, an especially momentous rupture in American legal and societal organization. In the years before and during the war, unaffiliated individuals such as Philadelphians Caroline Earle White, Samuel Morris Waln, and Mark Richards Muckle as well as Bostonian George Thorndike Angell had undertaken separate, incipient attempts at organization (Beers 24).

Their chief source of inspiration was England's Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which had been formed in 1824 and had become the *Royal* SPCA upon attracting the endorsement of famed pug enthusiast Queen Victoria in 1840. It was not until April 10, 1866, however, that New Yorker Henry Bergh successfully petitioned the Albany legislature to form the continent's first legally recognized animal welfare organization, which he would serve as president of until his death in 1888. Although Bergh called his organization the *American* SPCA, its official reach extended no farther than New York. With the blessing and assistance of Bergh, however, now united activists soon chartered branches in other cities: a Massachusetts SPCA based in Boston on March 31, 1868; a Pennsylvania SPCA headquartered in Philadelphia on June 21, 1868; as well as branches as far as San Francisco (1868) and Charleston, South Carolina (1880) (Beers 48-51). By 1908, there were 289 organizations in the United States dedicated to ending cruelty towards animals (Pearson 2-3).

Bergh was able to secure legal victories with the passage of numerous anti-cruelty laws, but the key to his success was his legal authority and personal willingness to enforce those laws. As legal historian Joan E. Schaffner notes, a statute is merely words if nobody is authorized to enforce it, or if those who are authorized either lack incentive to do so or, as is often the case in issues of animal welfare, are chosen from the ranks of interested parties who would be motivated *against* enforcement (80-2). On the contrary, the law forming the ASPCA's charter required the state of New York to prosecute as a misdemeanor any act of cruelty toward an animal, regardless of issues of ownership, and it allowed the organization to appoint its own "cruelty agents" to bring these prosecutions to the courts (Beers 44). Bergh soon earned a reputation for unleashing righteous violence

in the streets, physically throwing passengers from overloaded streetcars into the snow in order to lighten the load of overworked horses, or smashing the heads of a cattle cart driver and his assistant "together with a thud" to make them empathize with "how the heads of those poor sheep and calves feel" (qtd. Mighetto 49). He likewise emboldened his deputies and encouraged them to be provocative—stopping traffic to arrest cab drivers, storming stockyards to perform inspections, and raiding dog fighting dens with club in hand. Although angry citizens often returned violence upon these agents, within years the public grew to respect the authority of anti-cruelty laws and their appointed enforcers, and the number of successful prosecutions rose: 66 convictions in New York within Bergh's first year, for example, and 4,716 total convictions by the MSPCA by 1896 (Beers 28, 61). These physical, fearless acts of comeuppance would also become a motif in the literature of the movement, with justice often meted out by the animals themselves or by a righteous providence.

One narrative popular among animal rights historiographers interprets the movement's origins immediately following the Civil War as a testament to its enlightened, intersectional intentions. Diane L. Beers argues that the victory of the abolitionists had "inaugurated hopeful discussions among some reformers that perhaps society would consider an even broader definition and application of natural rights that would include other species as well" (Beers 22-4). Political theorist Christophe Traïni concurs that the increased democratization of the mid-nineteenth century was characterized by a "softening of manners," a decrease in hierarchical thinking, and a "reduction of alterity" that promoted an "extension of sympathy" toward unfamiliar groups, developments which made the country ripe for suffrage, labor rights, and egalitarianism across all boundaries (93-4).

Indeed, as Beers writes, many humanitarians were "actively involved with more than one human reform initiative, including abolition, women's rights, urban reform, worker reform, and civil rights… a wide spectrum of social justice interests [which] effectively smashes the image of the myopic, misanthropic animal lover" (9). She notes that publications by the movement frequently included articles about "abolition, penal code reform,… woman suffrage, pacifism, the rights of workers, and child welfare" alongside articles about animals (51). These historical narratives thread a continuity between early animal welfare advocates and more recent ecocritics, posthumanist scholars, and animal rights activists, who reason that the tools of exploitation are turned against *all* marginalized groups similarly and that overcoming injustice and oppression must be an intersectional effort. Early animal welfare advocates certainly saw their efforts as synonymous with abolition.

Union victory, emancipation, and the authority of constitutionally inscribed freedoms fueled this movement, as did a history of abolitionist literature. Susan J. Pearson, whose *The Rights of the Defenseless* expertly details the overlap between the protection of children and the protection of animals in Progressive Era anticruelty organizations, argues that the humane movement combined two successful strategies of the abolitionist movement: 1) a willingness to use state and legal power to establish and enforce laws against cruelty and 2) an educational publication campaign, often directed toward children, that used the conventions of sentimentalism in order to direct societal feeling toward compassion and empathy (8). These two strategies were fractured on gendered lines. While the former expressed itself largely on the streets and in the courts at the behest of male anticruelty agents and lawyers who exulted in their righteousness, the latter was the domain of the movement's educational outreach wing, which was largely shaped by the

movement's female members yet nevertheless strove to present compassion as manly. Thus, the overall impetus was toward the masculinization of the animal welfare movement.

Just as twenty-first century animal rights activists are routinely dismissed as "crazy cat ladies" and emasculated men forced to become vegetarians by their girlfriends[30], the organizers in these formative years were attuned to gendered perceptions and how they might inhibit the movement's success. As in most areas of life in the United States in the nineteenth century, gender discrimination also dictated the structure of the early animal welfare movement. Although women represented over half of all membership (Mighetto 50), many female organizers were denied recognition and leadership positions within the organizations they had helped to found (Beers 53). The work of anticruelty police agents and their attorneys was likewise assumed to be "the province of men" (Pearson 154). Legislators tasked with granting authority "could not countenance" women in such positions, and when female officers did attempt to bring about prosecutions on their own, judges were more likely to dismiss them as "stirring up scorn and resentment" and "appear[ing] meddlesome rather than just" (Pearson 156). Many female activists were pushed into more appropriately feminine roles, such as humane education, under the assumption, as expressed by a member of the MSPCA, that women are "endowed with a much greater sensibility" and are naturally "born to pity, to relieve, to console" (qtd. Mighetto 50). Some women formed female auxiliary groups, yet—with noteworthy exceptions, like the powerful Women's Branch of the Pennsylvania SPCA, spearheaded by Caroline Earle White—these organizations were less effective and were taken less

[30] I have been asked this many times, and while I always answer with an emphatic "no," clarifying the reasons for my independent decision, I know better than to add that I have never *had* a girlfriend since I am gay.

seriously (Beers 53-7). For women to possess any particularly prominent role within the movement "constantly jeopardized the credibility and, thus, the effectiveness of their reform efforts" in an era where only men were privileged with the assumption of rationality (Beers 57). Animal advocates, male and female, thus "tried to obviate their ridicule as weepy sentimentalists by emphasizing the heroic and manly aspects of their enterprise," and, as Pearson argues, much humane literature therefore presents "an elaborate balancing act" of negotiating manly benevolence without teetering into effeminacy (146-7).

For his part, Bergh attempted to immunize the ASPCA from *ad hominem* attacks by distancing his own eccentric personality from the principles of his organization. A foppishly dressed man of leisure and a would-be poet with a gaunt and severe demeanor, Bergh indeed possessed colorful inconsistencies in his personality that journalists routinely attacked. He and his wife had a fondness for wearing furs, and a substantial early endowment to the ASPCA came in 1871 from Louis Bonard, a miserly and extremely wealthy furrier who, according to his jilted heirs, left his property and wealth to Bergh's "insane" cause only because he feared reincarnation as a cab horse (Lane and Zawistowski 24). Bergh enjoyed well-done steak dinners, supporting vegetarianism only "in the abstract" and confessing rather gutlessly that "the least appearance of blood, by reason of insufficient cooking, shocks my sensibilities and causes my stomach to revolt" (qtd. "Mr. Bergh on Matters" 4). Furthermore, as perplexed admirer Clara Morris wrote for *McClure's* in 1902, he had no pets and possessed no particular affection for any actual animals, making his "sort of justice… calm" and "impersonal" (qtd. Mighetto 49). Because he strenuously divorced his convictions from any personal affectation or gendered notion of sentimental virtue, he could frame the issue purely as a straightforward religious truth.

As he explained in a speech in February 1866, "This is a matter purely of conscience. It has no perplexing side issues. No, it is a moral question in all its aspects… it is a solemn recognition of the greatest attribute of the Almighty Ruler of the Universe, mercy" (qtd. Beers 44).

Nevertheless, critics seized on Bergh as a caricature of displaced reason and cruelty towards humanity. Lisa Mighetto notes that on both sides of the Atlantic "humanitarians often were accused of misanthropy" and of having "exclusive sympathy for animals and total indifference to human interests," a characterization that was apt for only some of the movement's members (49). Given Bergh's demeanor and background as a diplomat in Europe, American editorialists further spun his genteel sentiments as relicts of a vaguely European, anti-democratic aristocracy, which a writer for the *Sun* on June 23, 1871, claims "may have done for England more than half a century ago, but… will not answer for New York in these modern days." The political cartoons in **Illustrations 11** and **12** illustrate Bergh's hypocrisy and "inhumanity," showing a well-dressed, towering Bergh weeping over bulls and horses while whipping working class men and evicting their families from their homes. As an article reprinted in the *Iron County Register* of Ironton, Missouri, on August 12, 1880, alleges, Bergh was the owner of "some rickety tenement houses" with front steps that were so "dangerous because of their broken, crumbling condition" that they caused a washerwoman to "[break] her collar-bone" and her oddjobbing husband to likewise "[get] hurt and [become] disabled for work." Already barely able to feed their several children, the now unemployed pair pleaded to Bergh for a forbearance of their rent and supposedly received his assurance that they would not be molested, but when an

Illustration 11. Henry Bergh: "I will take care of the animals; humanity must care for itself." From the front cover of the *Daily Graphic* (New York), August 3, 1880.

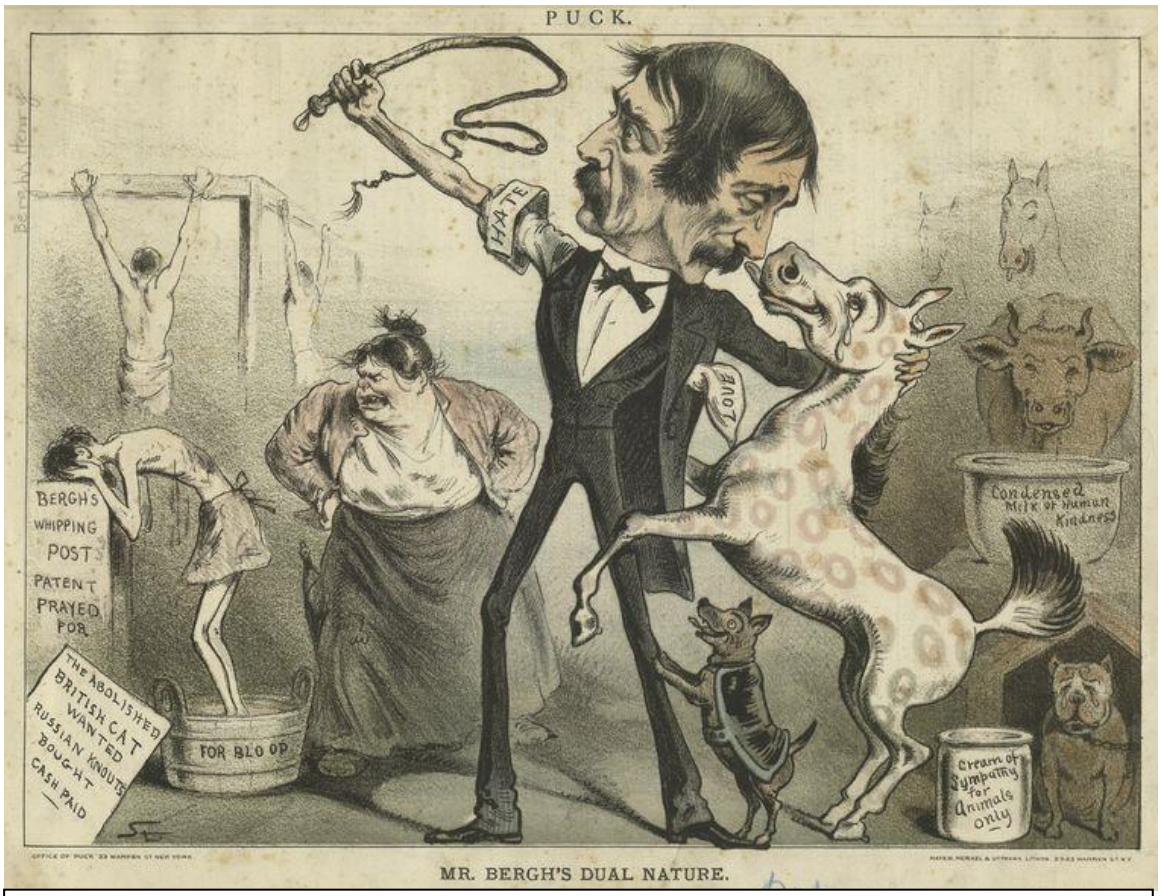


Illustration 12. "Mr. Bergh's Dual Nature" loves animals but despises man. Originally from *Puck*, ca. 1888.

eviction agent showed up, Bergh was nowhere to be found: "He was busy [protesting] the announced bull fight, and the poor, roofless family were fed by the neighbors, as the[y] crouched among their ruins. The people around there thought that all the bulls of Bashan and Texas and Mexico and old Spain were not of as much consequence as this poor family of Bergh's house" (1). In the cartoon depicting this event, Bergh himself is the cold-blooded evictor.

These arguments were not without merit. While many of the organizers and members of animal welfare organizations moved in the wealthier circles of society, most

of the people who were subjected to their interventions, fines, and jailing were working class men forced to do the "dirty work" of driving cabs, hauling cattle, and working in slaughterhouses. The privileged membership of the organizations should not in and of itself be presented as proof of bias; as Beers explains, the "[e]arly animal protectionists were hardly unique" among "the general reform impetus of the late nineteenth century," which, due to its dependence on donations and bequests, tended to seek out "the middle and upper levels of society" without specifically abjuring the involvement of "the working class or African Americans" (53). Furthermore, that the men working alongside the animals were the target of prosecutions is the result of an institutionalized structure that allows some men to maintain a safe distance from exploitation while still benefiting from its effects. Unfortunately, animal advocates often professed a mantra of "[l]egislation for the old and hardened, and education for the young and tender" (Saunders *Beautiful Joe* 137), and determining the distinction between who was capable of education and who was incorrigible was often predetermined by the workings of this labor system and by prejudicial thinking. As Gail Bederman documents in *Manliness & Civilization*, the ascription of a naturally civilized predisposition at the turn of the century was construed along lines of race, class, and nationality. Targeting such men was often "a clear signal that the cruel man in question was not only poor, but also likely foreign-born" (Pearson 70). Typical editorial illustrations in support of the movement tended to emphasize how much more intelligent horses were than their drivers (Pearson 69). The class-inflection of such rhetoric often took on racial and ethnic overtones, as well. Pearson writes, "As reformers positioned kindness to human and animal dependents high on the civilizational scale, they often identified cruelty as a habit of the low—of immigrants, the poor, and of nonwhites"

(68). Speeches on behalf of the animal welfare movement often freely assumed that because of their "uncontrolled passion or thoughtless neglect," African Americans were naturally inclined to be "extremely cruel" to their animals in a way that could only be corrected through punishment rather than education (Pearson 70). Although there were some influential African American animal welfare activists, such as F. Rivers Barnwell, John W. Lemon, and William Key (Clifton), Beers and Pearson find that organizations made limited efforts to recruit nonwhite members, likely in part due to their assumption that compassion was a superior quality possessed only by the most evolved Anglo-Saxon race (Beers 52-3, Pearson 70).

Many of the editorials criticizing the movement, however, argued Bergh's inhumanity in blatant bad faith, and it seems that these critics were more concerned with retaining carefree dominion over animals than with protecting marginalized peoples from hardship. In an article for the New York *Sun* on June 23, 1871, for example, a letter to the editor from Bergh is introduced with the clarification that he is "not a philanthropist. He does not love men, but he does love animals" ("Mr. Bergh Speaks for Cats" 2). In defense of a recent prosecution, Bergh's letter then details the legal and moral grounds for why a man should not be permitted to lure cats onto his property for the sole purpose of amusing himself by torturing them to death. Balking at Bergh's claim that God would not want men to "destroy [His Creation] capriciously," the editor wonders if that logic likewise applies to rattlesnakes; he makes no attempt, however, to prove that Bergh does not care for humans, rendering the accusation hollow. As a flippant squib in the *Daily Phoenix* of Columbia, South Carolina, summarized a similar case in its February 16, 1875, edition: "At the instance [*sic*] of Bergh a man ha[s] been sent to the penitentiary for three months,

for killing his cat. The man had a wife and three children dependent upon him for support, but the cat had nine lives" (5). An editorial from the *New York Herald* on August 3, 1868, betrays similar insincerity. When the author speculates that no "feeble" vegetarian society could possibly compare to the "intense and manifold human activity" of a meat eating one, he offers for belittlement a rebuttal Bergh had previously given on the subject, the "triumphant… case of an Arab" who was able to keep pace with Bergh's horse, running twelve miles in the desert "without betraying the least sign of fatigue" despite having "never tasted meat." Shifting the terms of the argument, the author responds that "this citation most forcibly illustrates only the proverbial 'inhumanity to man' which is characteristic of tender-hearted reformers… [who] could keep a poor, hungry Arab of the desert running at his horse's tail for twelve miles," yet would grow weak at heart to see "a turtle lying on its back." Of course, at the column's close, the meat-eating author's punchline reveals that neither sufferer truly matters: "Mr. Bergh may reply that the Arab was 'used to it,' but so, said the fishwoman, were the eels to being skinned."

The headline-grabbing actions of the early welfare movement's law enforcement wing often fell easy prey to the criticisms of editorialists who never wanted to see a human being punished on behalf of a lowly animal, especially when such punishment was being ordained by those who already wielded great power over them in other arenas of life. It thus fell to the movement's educational outreach wing to not only justify the positive benefits of animal welfare, but to do so in a way that would appeal to men. Unfortunately, by focusing their appeals on the men who were privileged enough to be authoritative paternalists, they may have only further exacerbated the sense that the animal rights movement was out of touch with working class interests.

Angell's Men on the Page

While Henry Bergh personified the movement's utilization of state power, the figure who would come to represent the movement's educational and literary apparatus was George T. Angell[31] (1823–1909), the founder in 1868 and president until his death of the Massachusetts SPCA. Angell's knack for fundraising, combined with the international reach of his monthly newsletter, *Our Dumb Animals*, allowed "the MSPCA [to experience] a meteoric growth that outshone even Bergh's organization" (Beers 49). Combining illustration, reportage, fiction, poetry, paid advertisements, tutorials, and calls to action, much of it suitable for child readers, *Our Dumb Animals* was founded upon the idea that although animals could not speak in human words, it would be obvious what they would say if they could. As J. Keri Cronin documents of it and similar British and American publications, the paper often drew upon the sentimentalist tropes of martyred heroes as a means of moral suasion, with, for instance, an image of a Newfoundland dog under the threat of a vivisectionist's scalpel juxtaposed against the story of how that dog had once saved a boy from drowning, alongside the oft-repeated slogan "SAVE ME! I WOULD SAVE YOU" (212-6). Such illustrations showed that because animals provided beneficial relationships for humans, the extension of care to them would not detract from care towards fellow humans. "When the rights of dumb animals shall be protected," Angell wrote, "the rights of human beings will be safe" (qtd. Mighello 52). His message was popular. In his *Autobiographical Sketches*, he boasts of distributing between 36,000 and 75,000 of each monthly issue throughout 1890 (98), and in his obituary in *The New England Magazine* in

[31] In his *Autobiographical Sketches*, he explains with satisfaction that his surname is pronounced like "angel."

1909, author Mary Olivia Sumner speculates that Angell's newsletter "has undoubtedly reached more conditions of people and has gone regularly to greater distances than any other publication in the world" (693).

Central to Angell's proselytizing was an 1877 book written by a Quaker woman from England in the voice of a sensitive male horse. Angell touches upon *Black Beauty* repeatedly in his memoirs as though it were a holy relic. Though he purportedly remained unaware of its existence for the first thirteen years after its publication, when in February of 1890 a woman in New York City mailed it to him "without comment," its miraculous arrival spurred him into immediate, "I think I may truly say *Providential*" action (*Autobiographical Sketches* 94, 111). Blending a worshipful transfixion for detail with casual product placement, he "read each of its *two hundred and thirty-eight beautifully printed pages, from its cheerful beginning to its happy end*, and then called in the printers" (95). Learning that the author, Anna Sewell, was dead and had no descendants, within days of first reading it he pirated a first American edition with an initial run of ten thousand copies (96, 95). Realizing its existence in the American public domain meant that any printer with less humanitarian motives could profit from competing editions, he sold it at what he claimed was the lowest possible price: twelve cents (plus eight cents postage). Additional thousands of free copies were sent to cab drivers, newspapers, schools, and humanitarian organizations throughout the country. Undercutting the competition meant that all interested parties would be sure to buy the version that contained *his* introduction, in which he deems it "THE 'UNCLE TOM'S CABIN' OF THE HORSE," hoping it would have the same legendary impact Stowe's book had had on the abolition of slavery (94).

Within a few years, millions of copies, translated into multiple languages, were circling the globe, preaching compassion (Fishkin 31).

It is fitting that Angell's initial instinct was to liken the book to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a bestseller that allegedly prompted Abraham Lincoln to credit Stowe with having started the Civil War. The use of a decades-old literary style, sentimentalism, helped this animal autobiography to seamlessly carry on the legacy of its antebellum predecessors and also, in the eyes of adults, was palatable to children. Sewell had not written *Black Beauty* with children in mind, instead intending its chief audience to be cab drivers, but when the book became part of the American humane movement's paternalist mission to educate the still-malleable, it was rebranded as children's literature (Pearson 43-4)—a transformation not unlike Stowe's book over time. Ever the publicist, Angell must have also hoped that the animal welfare message would reach the same number of readers as Stowe's book, "the first American novel ever to sell over a million copies" (Tompkins 124). He dreamed that, like Stowe's success in helping to precipitate emancipation and Sewell's success in outlawing the use of fashionable but harmful bearing reins, new works adopting other voices and tackling different animal issues might translate into further legislative successes.

Thus, in March of 1892, readers of *Our Dumb Animals* learned that there was "a new field of literature hitherto almost untrodden," and they were tasked with helping to fill it with what Angell, carrying through on the metaphor in his autobiography, hoped would become "a harvest… to be reaped which will make this world a happier dwelling place for all, *both human and dumb*" ("American Humane Education Society – Three Prizes" 2, *Autobiographical Sketches* 112). He offered "*three prizes of two hundred dollars each* for

the most interesting and useful stories, *of not less than a hundred 'Black Beauty' pages* on… [t]he kind and cruel treatment of domestic animals and birds" in each of three regions of the United States: Southern, Western, and Northern. Since "in regard to horses and mules no better guide can be found than '*Black Beauty*'," Angell implies that stories espousing other species' voices, where "the field is at present comparatively new," would be of greater interest. By the due date of November 1, 1892, twenty-one manuscripts had been submitted, thirteen had been deemed eligible, and a jury comprised of three male Bostonian writers and reverends chose their winners, all of which were likely written by women: Margaret Marshall Saunders's *Beautiful Joe: An Autobiography*; the anonymous *The Strike at Shane's: A Prize Story of Indiana*, believed to be the work of Gene Stratton-Porter[32]; and the anonymously published *Our Gold Mine at Hollyhurst: A Prize Story of Massachusetts* by Mary Matthews Bray ("World Biographies" 326). The most celebrated of these by far was *Beautiful Joe,* set in Maine. [33]

Margaret Marshall Saunders (1861–1947), who obscured her sex by dropping her first name from the covers of most of her books, carefully followed the stipulations of the

[32] Biographer Judith Reick Long argues that *The Strike at Shane's* was the first published novel by Gene Stratton-Porter (1863-1924), who from 1903 would publish numerous other novels, nonfiction studies, children's books, and poetry collections about the birds and other animals of Indiana. She cites numerous biographical similarities to the book's plot, setting, and characters; the repetition of several unique linguistic constructions; and Stratton-Porter's own attempts to publicize the book in her hometown. Long reasons that Stratton-Porter may have withheld her identity out of fear that her father might recognize himself in the character of Shane, a cantankerous, miserly, and misguided failure of a patriarch (124-9).

[33] Though Angell's apparent divide-and-conquer strategy for spreading his missionary crusade throughout the United States had pledged one winner would represent the South, that "our Northern States" received twofold representation suggests the Boston contest's reach into the South must not have been successful. According to Beers, "the situation was… bleak" for animal advocacy organizations in "rural regions throughout… the country," particularly the South, where many states' supposed chapters of the SPCA "existed primarily on paper" (52). Then again, given that one of the winners, *Our Gold Mine at Hollyhurst,* is not even written from the perspective of any animals, the submissions as a whole may have simply been somewhat less than Angell expected.

contest. Almost every domesticated animal known to the country receives a role in her story, a "scrawled comment" on a map she designed to assist her in developing the book notes that her native Halifax was changed to the fictional Fairport, Maine, "to comply with conditions for taking prize" (Davies 175-6), and her dog narrator directly comments on *Black Beauty*'s influence in the first few pages, stating, "I have seen my mistress laughing and crying over a little book that she says is a story of a horse's life, and sometimes she puts the book down close to my nose to let me see the pictures" (14). [34] Nevertheless, at the urging of her father, Saunders accepted the celebrity offered by the judges but declined the two-hundred-dollar prize in favor of keeping the publication rights (Waterston 145). When the book, dedicated to Angell and with an introduction from one of the contest's judges, Hezekiah Butterworth, was published in 1894 by the American Baptist Publication Society of Philadelphia, and later when it was translated into at least fifteen languages, *she* received the royalties (Davies 170). "Force it certainly had," writes biographer Elizabeth Waterston. "The first American edition sold out in ten days and by 1900 had sold 625,000 copies. The Canadian edition had sold 558,000 copies by 1900, and the British 146,000 by the same date" (147). With her American *Black Beauty*, she, like Stowe, became the first *Canadian* writer to sell more than a million books, and by her death in 1947, she had

[34] Gwendolyn Davies suggests Saunders would have written *Beautiful Joe* regardless of the contest, as it is "a work original to [her] own experience" (176). Davies notes that the Morris home resembles Saunders's own childhood in a home so infused with dogs, cats, birds, calves, and other pets it was nicknamed "Noah's Ark" (Davies 171). Although Saunders herself has no obvious fictional counterpart in the novel, Miss Laura is modeled on her sister, who had recently died at the age of seventeen (Davies 175). Beautiful Joe himself was also a real Ontario puppy, "abused by his owner, a tenant farmer, by having his ears and tail cut off. Bleeding and torn, he crawled to the side of the road where a local miller, William Moore, found the mutilated dog, wrapped him up and took him home" (Davies 175). That local miller was to become Saunders's brother-in-law, and she "befriended the skittish but recovering dog" and learned of his story around the time the contest was announced (175).

composed numerous short stories and twenty-two additional books, with nine of the novels focused on animals, including a 1902 sequel to *Beautiful Joe* (Waterston 137).

This massive success initiated a slew of imitations across species lines and, as Angell had hoped, precipitated some genuine legal change. Virginia Sharpe Patterson's 1899 *Downy Dicky: The Autobiography of a Bird*, for instance, carried an introduction from Representative John F. Lacey of Iowa, who a year later would author the Lacey Act criminalizing the interstate trafficking of wild birds and game. Many of these imitations, like S. Louise Patteson's *Pussy Meow: The Autobiography of a Cat* (1903), had a limited shelf life, but the genre itself persists into the twenty-first century in the form of bestselling yet critically maligned works such as W. Bruce Cameron's *A Dog's Purpose* (2010), a *New York Times* bestseller for forty-nine weeks.

Angell's comparison between animal autobiographies and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was also apt—or perhaps self-fulfillingly prescient—insofar as Harriet Beecher Stowe and her sister Catharine Beecher had been two of the most influential proponents of the "cult of domesticity" in the midcentury United States, and a repurposed, masculinized version of this domestic ideology extended throughout much humane literature. As Jane Tompkins contends in *Sensational Designs* (1985), the Beechers' calibration of domesticity was actively revolutionary in its millenarian resistance to slavery, capitalist objectives, and male prerogatives. They sought to replace a national system of brutal economic exploitation with a positive model of a loving, orderly, Christian home with a strong, compassionate, productive mother exemplifying moral education at its core. This system, a detailed economic science precisely quantified in popular housekeeping manuals written by the Beechers (Baym 61-2), envisioned a fundamental inversion of American society,

reducing the male "public sphere" to the mere acquisition of raw materials while elevating the domestic sphere to the center of American moral, economic, and political output. Although some scholars have downplayed the influence of sentimental works like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by arguing that they were only successful insofar as the weeping wives who read them were able to exasperate their husbands into voting according to their whims, Tompkins insists upon a more "revolutionary" force underpinning the Beechers' philosophy (145). She clarifies, "Stowe is not opposed to concrete measures such as the passage of laws or the formation of political pressure groups, it is just that, by themselves, such actions would be useless. For if slavery were to be abolished by these means, the moral conditions that produced slavery in the first place would continue in force" (133). What was needed first was a change in *moral* outlook, and since the only domain in midcentury American life in which women were accorded a greater and more natural authority was precisely the realm of moral education, it thus followed that women would be the primary agents of political change. This philosophy had "revolutionary potential," Tompkins writes, because:

> it puts the central affirmations of a culture into the service of a vision that would destroy the present economic and social institutions; by resting her case, absolutely, on the saving power of Christian love and on the sanctity of motherhood and the family, Stowe relocates the center of power in American life, placing it not in the government, nor in the courts of law, nor in the factories, nor in the marketplace, but in the kitchen. And that means that the new society will not be controlled by men, but by women. (145)

Guiding this domestic system was an "affective economy," in which the family practiced, strengthened, and exhibited its goodness—and thus its civic responsibility—by showering love and affection on the most powerless members of the household—pets and petted children—who, unlike in former economic structures, were not expected to contribute any

significant profit or utilitarian value to the family. Lesser known works by Harriet Beecher Stowe, such as "Our Dogs," showcase pets as cherished recipients of affection whose value comes not from their hunting, shepherding, or other work but rather from their ability to define the family's identity as a space of exuberant love and order.

The sustaining framework of *Beautiful Joe*, as is true of most of the other animal autobiographies of the period, is an ideology of domestication, but unlike the mothers who are the moral core of the Beechers' homes, as exemplified by the Quaker abolitionist Rachel Halliday of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the head of Saunders's ideal home is a strong, compassionate, masterly *man* whose interests are never fully separated from the marketplace. His happy home is clean and orderly, full of kind words but also sharp ones intended for education and discipline. *Needless* suffering is curtailed, but the emphasis ultimately lies on the need: there are clear chains of command, and the suffering of the less powerful on behalf of the interests of those in command is not only inevitable but proper; only in a millenarian afterworld can true equality be fathomed. The happy home is a fragile institution, naturally tending towards entropy and corruption from within and always under siege by the forces of filth, crime, savagery, and evil from without. This ideology applies not only to the individual home but to the nation itself, a network of homes constantly threatened by indigent elements.

Beautiful Joe is the memoir of its ironically named eponymous narrator, "a brown dog of medium size" (13). Joe is born to a mother owned by a sordid milkman named Jenkins who, objecting to their unsellable ugliness, kills all of Joe's littermates by dashing their brains against the barn stalls or otherwise stabbing them with his pitchfork (22). This act of cruelty hastens the dog mother's death of grief, and when Joe retaliates by giving the

milkman's ankle a "savage bite," Jenkins butchers his tail and ears (24). A college-going passerby, Cousin Harry, violently intercedes on Joe's behalf, and soon the dog is adopted into the well-to-do home of Harry's relations: clergyman Mr. Morris and his humanitarian wife, their five children, and a veritable menagerie of domestic and semi-wild pets. This home is a clean and orderly haven of "good nursing, good food, and kind words" (37). Mild hijinks, minor scandals, and lengthy discussions on the proper treatment of animals ensue, including a visit to neighboring Riverdale and the idyllic Dingley Farm of Cousin Harry's stepfather, Mr. Wood.

Although the only Morris daughter, the saintly Miss Laura, becomes Joe's closest companion, it would be wrong to infer that Saunders prioritizes femininity as the source of compassion in this domestic sphere, and the book's aim is not to supplant masculine power with traditionally feminine virtues. Occasionally, Saunders's characters check the women and girls in the book for being too soft-hearted. "[W]ith a good-natured laugh," wise Mr. Wood chastises his wife for attempting to muddle his objective philosophical argument with narrowminded personal niceties. "Isn't that like a woman?" he jests (190). At another point, he dismisses her for suggesting that men should never go hunting: "You're a woman… and women are more merciful than men. Men want to kill and slay" (200). And when Miss Laura suggests "[t]here ought to be a brotherhood of nations" encompassing "Chinamen, and Negroes, and everybody," Cousin Harry gently chides her with the appellation "Miss Enthusiasm," a personification of feminine naivete often juxtaposed against "Old Mr. Experience" in the late nineteenth century (cf. e.g. "Teachers – Students" 324). While it is not impossible that these manly dismissals are simply pro forma refutations allowing Saunders to plant her genuine convictions in her narrative without fear

of reader reproach, the narrative itself offers no corrective, implicit or otherwise. The essentialism that proposes that women can perhaps be *too* thoroughgoing in their aversion to *all* cruelty is presented as a lovely quality of a lady but not a necessary feature for a man or a society.

Rather, biographer Elizabeth Waterston notes Saunders's tendency to "tilt… the balance of virtue toward male values," painting male characters as the most sensible heroes throughout her writing career (154). She notes that Saunders often adopted male narrative voices, writing as a first-person female only in her final novel (162). Speaking in a male voice, Waterston surmises, gave her the "vicarious pleasure of… release felt by a female artist when she lets the male 'animus' of her personality express itself" (147). Animal protagonists are frequently male, including Bambi, Black Beauty, and all four of Jack London's canines (despite two of them having been modeled after a real-life female). The need for a manly center in humane literature seems to speak to an attempt at distancing the message from the supposed irrationality of an emotion-based ethic. The introduction by Hezekiah Butterworth explicitly frames *Beautiful Joe* as a blueprint for the varieties of manhood capable of leading the home and the nation, and he presents Moses, William Cowper, Robert Burns, and a conscientious young Lincoln as evidence that the heart that attends to the suffering of animals is the one "trained to be a leader of men" (8). He writes, "The conscience that runs to the call of an animal in distress is girding itself with power to do manly work in the world" (8). Similarly, Mary Matthews Bray's *Our Gold Mine at Hollyhurst*, one of the other prizewinners, features a thirteen-year-old boy protagonist, well-esteemed by his peers, unshakeable in his principles, who is simultaneously empathetic toward animals yet no mere "soft-hearted goose," a "first rate ball player" who

"can give and take hard knocks as well as anybody," a "peaceable fellow" yet able to vanquish a stout bully two years older than himself, industrious as a "steam engine" at his schoolwork, but also not "priggish" with his intelligence (Bray 22). All three contest winners were male-oriented in this manner, eager to prove compassion toward animals as compatible with strength, intelligence, productivity, and plainspoken good humor.

Tellingly, although *Beautiful Joe* is presented as the unadulterated voice of a dog—and dogs, of course, do not dissemble—this dog frequently defers to the superiority of human knowledge. The preponderance of Joe's story is in fact given to human voices and actions, to the extent that Joe as a character sometimes seems to disappear. When two women engage in a conversation about the proper disciplining of children, Joe says, "I kept close to them, so that I should not miss a word" (166), and elsewhere, prior to providing a verbatim transcript, he admits that, "Her ideas about the bringing up of children I cannot explain as clearly as she can herself, so I will give part of a conversation that she had" (40). Joe reveals, "I like to have human beings talk to me," and he is not shy about admitting human superiority in matters of understanding, even when that understanding involves himself and his own behavior, as when Miss Laura explains to Joe the instinctual (and thus somewhat irrational) reasons behind his bedtime ritual, which prompts Joe to admit, "Of course I did not know [why I do what I do], so I only stared at her" (150). His self-disparaging comparison between himself and humans extends to his own physiology, as when he highlights what must be his own irrationality by explaining, "If I opened my mouth, and breathed through it, as I have seen some people doing, I should be more comfortable, but dogs always like to breathe through their noses" (108). Joe even confesses, quite oddly for the author of a rather lengthy autobiography, "Sometimes I wish

very much that I had the gift of speech, and then at other times I see how little it would profit me, and how many foolish things I should often say. And I don't believe human beings would love animals so well, if they could speak" (183).

If *Our Dumb Animals* was conceived upon the ease with which advocates would be able to speak on behalf of animals and the great good that would come from hearing those voices, then what is the source of this anxiety? Might animals say something contrary to the ventriloquisms of their advocates?[35] Narratologist David Herman, who writes extensively about animal narrators, explains that such stories often combine elements of "chipping in," in which the human author's rendering of the animal voice is in harmony with the ostensible needs, desires, and perceptions of the animal subjectivity, and "butting in," in which the author inserts her own agenda into the animal's story ("Animal Autobiography" 6). Poet Thalia Field has said of the latter tendency that "assuming that one can tell stories in [another animal's] voice" is "a species ventriloquism" (qtd. Herman, "Hermeneutics," 21). In *Beautiful Joe*, the animal subjects speak not only so that they can voice their devout consent to their masters but moreover to sanctify their natural subjugation.

Indeed, according to Joe, domesticated animals derive emotional and physical satisfaction from their subservience to such masters, and it is their "faithful and grateful" worship, as well as their usefulness, that incentivizes men to behave accordingly (325). In a remark Joe himself echoes at the book's close (325), an onlooker informs Miss Laura of

[35] *Our Gold Mine at Hollyhurst* is forthright about this, with one character quoting George Eliot to the effect that animals are only likeable because "they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms" (25). Despite the *Black Beauty* theme of the contest, the book is told entirely through the perspectives of human characters.

the book's spiritual core: "Man is a god to the lower creation. Joe worships you, much as you worship your Maker. Dumb animals live in and for their masters. They hang on our words and looks, and are dependent on us in almost every way" (259-60). A man's right to rule is a given, since his dependents cannot survive without him and will remain enamored of him no matter what. As proof, Joe notes with despair that Jenkins's maltreated horse nevertheless remained "so anxious to please him" (21). Even Joe's mother "liked Jenkins so much that she wanted to be with him" in spite of his kicks (21). Annie Dwyer notes that, in contrast to the similar genre of the fugitive slave narrative, animal autobiographies chart "not an increase of autonomy nor an improvement in circumstance but the growth of the animal narrator's contentment within situations that remain, well, largely the same" (20). Joe's independence is never fathomed, and wise Mr. Wood even recommends that all "ownerless" dogs should be killed (145). Power is assured, but the true *manly* master is justified in his position by the devout consent of his subjects, worshipfully given when that man treats his dependents with compassion.

Because kind words and deeds peaceably achieve and sustain subservience, kindness itself seems only a means to an end, along the lines of positive reinforcement. Kindness, the book's human characters frequently aver, will produce better profits than rash, directionless punishment, and so the display of kindness becomes proof of rational efficiency—temperate self-control in exchange for the promise of greater rewards. Readers learn that the flesh of *cruelly* treated animals is "rank poison" that causes cancer (135), that hens who are given the light, heat, and clean water they desire produce more eggs (160-1), that better working conditions yield draught animals who "last longer" (187), and that even "some kinds of snakes are a help to the farmer, and destroy large numbers of field-mice

and other vermin" (194). Says Mrs. Wood, the proprietress of Dingley Farm, "If you are going into the business for the purpose of making money it pays to take care of them" (161). Pets, whom one might assume would be free from the utilitarian demands of the farm, likewise serve moral and educational uses. "A child can learn many a lesson from a dog," Mrs. Morris explains, adding that the work required to maintain animals keeps her children from "the lingering about the street corners, the dawdling around with other boys, and the idle, often worse than idle talk" (44-5). Giving her sons the responsibility of animal maintenance, including one son who raises canaries for sale, has made them "real, manly Christian boys" and has assured their standing within the middle class: "Now they are men of business" (44). Kindness is never the goal in Saunders's vision; it is merely the means to an end. That the animals in *Beautiful Joe* are able to voice their adoring gratitude for this kindness, however, without ever conceiving a life independent of their masters, sanctifies their willing subjugation.

The Strike at Shane's, one of the other prizewinners, likewise relies on an in-group mentality in which rights are accorded in respect to usefulness. A briefer and less renowned book than Saunders's, *The Strike at Shane's* tells the story of farm animals who, upset with the brutal overburdening of the penny-pinching Farmer Shane, decide to unionize and strike. At the first meeting in which they establish their union membership, various species, including a stray mule from a nearby city, must argue to the more obvious laboring animals the valuable services they provide. Each of the animals agrees to stop performing these roles within the farmyard ecology: the birds will stop eating insect pests, the horse will feign sickness and stop hauling loads, and so on. In discussing these plans, it becomes obvious that universal consideration for sentient animals is *not* their guiding principle:

> "I will not kill another rat or mouse on the farm, if they eat up all the grain," said Puss.
>
> "Thank you for that," said a big rat, that came up out of a fence corner, where he had been hiding and listening.
>
> "I want you to understand that it is not out of any consideration or respect I have for you that I made that statement," said Puss, and she walked over towards the rat, who immediately dropped back into his hole.
>
> "Quite right and proper," said Dobbin [a horse]; "we want no such characters in this convention." (27)

Although the rat can clearly reason and feel like the other animal characters, his lack of a clear contribution to the farm excludes him from respect. Although the author notes in the introduction that "[i]t is true the relation of employer and employee does not exist between man and his domestic animals, but rather that of master and slave," and although the author hopes that one day "the law-making power" will "regulate and restrain man's dominion over them" (2), the book's story nevertheless argues toward an audience of men for whom animals must prove their monetary worth in order to justify kind treatment.

Utilitarian justifications for animal welfare were customary in the first century of the animal welfare movement, and the belief that animals possessed rights in and of themselves did not become widespread until the late twentieth century. As Roxanne Harde explains, by always focusing acts of kindness on the net profits to be gained by humans, this "continued attention to how the humane treatment of animals benefits humans undermines the pedagogy of humane education," which, by twenty-first century standards, would instead focus on the inherent dignity of animal lives (94). As historian Adam Rome explains, most Progressive Era environmentalists were similarly attracted to utilitarian rather than spiritual, aesthetic, or moral rhetoric, as this allowed them "to maintain their manly authority by describing their goals in unequivocally masculine terms. They knew

they could argue in other ways. But they chose to emphasize economic and scientific arguments, because business and science were overwhelmingly male worlds" (448).

Although animals revolt against cruel treatment in all three prizewinners, it is telling that Saunders recognizes how subservience often must be compelled through a display of force aligning wayward instincts and desires toward the orientation of the productive and profitable home. Obedience must first be goaded. An Italian showman, Bellini, whom Saunders commends for using cruelty-free methods to train his troupe of performing animals, and whom Joe notes is warmly beloved by them, nevertheless admits that "Sairteenly, [I] whipped zem just as ze mammas whip ze naughty boys, to make zem keep still when zey was noisy or stubborn" (270). Even Miss Laura, whose eyes swell with tears to hear of animals in pain, is shown giving a new puppy "two or three slaps with a bootlace" while scolding him, later stating that "sticks were for big dogs and switches for little dogs, if one had to use them" (54-5). Her punishment of "Bad Billy" persists, with him "very much ashamed of himself" despite "not knowing that he was doing wrong," as she "patiently scold[s] him for each" in a long series of indiscretions, "till at last it dawned upon him that he must not worry anything but a bone. Then he got to be a very good dog" (54-5). Joe also participates in the new puppy's rectification, helping him to understand that what he thinks he wants would actually "kill him" if he got it (55). His agency, destructive as it is to the orderliness of the home, is in fact an irrational danger. Elsewhere in the book, Mr. Wood expounds at length on the art of breaking in horses, which he compares to the disciplining of children. "You've minded me from that day, haven't you?" Mr. Wood asks his favorite horse, Scamp, after telling the story of how he made her submit

to his will. “Horse, or man, or dog aren't much good till they learn to obey, and I've thrown you down and I'll do it again if you bite me, so take care” (154).

In his analysis of three animal autobiographies, including *Beautiful Joe* and *Black Beauty*, Justin Prystash likens such breaking-in scenes, in which a good and superior master utilizes a precise whip to render affectionate submission from a wayward wild thing, to Victorian pornographic scenes of “sexual domination,” an interpretation which other scholars, such as Monica Flagel and Tess Cosslett, have likewise investigated (Prystash 46-7). Though at face value this seems a farfetched explication, Joe’s description of Scamp, right on the heels of Mr. Wood’s threat to “throw [her] down,” supports the idea that an erotic affection inheres in the master–servant relationship rendered in these books: “Scamp tossed her pretty head, and took little pieces of Mr. Wood's shirt sleeve in her mouth, keeping her cunning brown eye on him as if to see how far she could go. But she did not bite him. I think she loved him, for when he left her she whinnied shrilly, and he had to go back and stroke and caress her” (154-5). Other animal characters express similar attitudes of pleasurable submission, vindicating the use of force if it gets the job done.

This erotic sadomasochism suggests a reproductive potency in contradiction to the mongrelized sterility suggested in the newspaper articles that began this chapter. The sensuality of the compassionate man’s mastery over his submissives suggests a physical finesse even though Saunders largely divorces her model of manhood from the discourse of muscular masculinity which Gail Bederman documents as being on the rise in this period. Three of the role models she presents are explicitly queered in their descriptions. One, Mr. Maxwell, causes Joe to stare because “he looked just like a girl” (180). He is “so bright and happy, in spite of his lameness, which kept him from running about like other

young men" (181). Another man offered up for emulation is a "queer-looking old gentleman" who "looked like a poodle" (134). Even Mr. Wood, the book's apotheosis of pragmatic, rational manhood, is subtly queered; in a wholly unnecessary complication of his backstory, Joe informs readers that his son, Cousin Harry, is in fact the result of his wife's previous marriage (143). This detail may simply be a result of the story's basis on autobiographical fact, but it also suggests that the lover of animals can be a patriarch even if he has no offspring. With the help of his animals, whose intimate veneration for him attests to his sensuous mastery, he can manage and safeguard the home, the seat of moral and economic power for the nation.

Mr. Wood views family life as an organizing principle, despite having no biological family in the novel, and Dingley Farm is an exemplar of paternal hierarchy. As Joe explains:

> Mr. Wood never had his hired men live in his own house. He had two small houses for them to live in, and they were required to keep them as neat as Mr. Wood's own house was kept. He said that he didn't see why he should keep a boarding house, if he was a farmer, nor why his wife should wear herself out waiting on strong, hearty men, that had just as soon take care of themselves. He wished to have his own family about him, and it was better for his men to have some kind of family life for themselves. If one of his men was unmarried, he boarded with the married one, but slept in his own house. (266-7)

Like a small-scale replica of George Pullman's company town, in which authority over employees extends into their private homes and family lives, Mr. Wood is careful to restrict these strong, hearty bachelors from sleeping with each other, forcing them to serve as their own wives until a genuine wife can be found. In an interview in 1890, Pullman admitted that it was necessary for him to maintain ownership of his employees' houses so that he could exert control over their living arrangements, not wanting them to cohabitate with

persons outside of his sphere of influence who might not be "sufficiently accustomed to the habits I wish to develop" (qtd. Sennett 63). Mr. Wood is like a father to his hired men, but his wife is not their mother but instead *his* wife; all persons in his sphere are exclusively oriented toward him. He controls his men as though they will remain his children until they become husbands and fathers themselves, yet, typical of a "contract-less" paternalism, he does not feel the responsibilities toward these strangers that he might if they were his biological kin; he's not running a boarding house, after all. While Richard Sennett, drawing upon 1920s philosopher Guido de Ruggiero, notes that paternalism is a power structure in which there is no guaranteed moment in which the subordinates can "transcend the terms of power used by their oppressors" (72)—in other words, no natural transition point in which the children become the fathers—*Beautiful Joe* does at least narrate a subplot in which Mr. Wood guides one of his disobedient "children" toward becoming a powerful, propertied paternalist in his own right.

This subplot takes the form of a minor mystery in which one of Mr. Wood's farm hands, Jacobs, steals an elderly neighbor's life savings. Perceptive Mr. Wood, who maintains such a complete and intimate mastery over his horse that he is able to detect subtle hints in her behavior, unravels the clues pointing to Jacobs's involvement. In confronting his employee, he gracefully commands his words to politely insinuate his total knowledge and control over the full story, including a series of petty embezzlements which the preternaturally observant Mr. Wood has secretly been tracking down to "every quart of oats, and every bag of grain, and every quarter of a dollar" (231). The farm hand, "a young fellow, twenty-three or thereabout," realizes that he has utterly overestimated his ability to manipulate the reality of his father figure and thus seize some power for himself, and upon

learning, through Mr. Wood's gentle insinuation, that his boss has been in control the whole time, he "sob[s] like a baby… sunk down all in a heap on the stable floor, with his hands over his face" (231). After Mr. Wood reduces Jacobs to servile tears, he forgives his employee's embezzling debts in exchange for a "long talk" about manliness and the state prison. He infantilizes him with the threat of imprisonment so that he can reshape him into a proper man, not unlike how he breaks in his horses with a whip to conform them to his will. Later, after given forgiveness and a chance to atone for his crimes, Jacobs thanks his employer "in a real manly way for the manner in which he had always treated him" (233). The farm hand's growth into an "honest man" is described according to his employer's need: "He had been a kind of sullen, unwilling fellow, but now he turned handy and obliging" (232). Having accepted that Mr. Wood is capable of reading his intentions and conscience like a book—that there is no escape from Mr. Wood's control over the narrative—Jacobs conforms himself to being a productive member of a paternalist system which has no outside other than the penitentiary.

This, however, is not the end of the subplot, for Jacobs eventually does learn to control the narrative by working within the proper limitations of the system, and he, too, is able to ascend to a position of paternalist power in his own little homestead. The conditions for this development are first evident in the description of Jacobs's victim, the elderly neighbor, a "miserable old creature, known as Miser Jerrold," who "had the name of being half silly" and is incapable due to his "imbecility" of even describing the mystery of his missing cashbox in words, let alone solving it (229, 233). Mr. Wood allows Jacobs to secretly return the cashbox without needing to inform the imbecilic Miser Jerrold, and the subplot ends with Jacobs acquiring all the original stolen property and then some through

legally sanctioned and respectably manly means: he marries Miser Jerrold's daughter. Saunders writes, "[He] makes his wife comb her hair, and he waits on the old man as if he were his son, and he is improving the farm that was going to rack and ruin, and I hear he is going to build a new house" (233). He has become the paternalist, with the imbecilic neighbor now dependent upon him, a situation which seems sanctified by the overall national order since the clever Jacobs is more capable of converting the antisocial miser's uncirculated cash and unproductive "rack and ruin" into generative property. Even this happy union is vaguely queered, however, for Mr. Wood is never able to determine:

> whether he had fallen in love with Eliza Jerrold or whether he was determined to regain possession of the box, and was going to do it honestly, or whether he was sorry for having frightened the old man into a greater degree of imbecility, and was marrying the girl so that he could take care of him, or whether it was something else, and so on, and so on. He had a dozen theories, and then mother says he would burst out laughing, and say it was one of the cutest tricks that he had ever heard of. (233)

Whether Jacobs's attraction was to the daughter, the father, the farm, or something else is uncertain; even the master reader Mr. Wood cannot decipher the full story, although the outcome of these events—the reaffirmation of an orderly, capitalistic, paternalist economy—means that such "cute" minor details can be left unresolved. Jacobs's original plan to abscond West with the stolen cash was a selfish violation of Mr. Wood's worldview, likely to lead only to further devastation of the neighboring farm, but his manly plan to marry into Miser Jerrold's family and thus increase the property values earns Mr. Wood's approval. The story of Jacobs is the rare instance in *Beautiful Joe* in which the firm, compassionate paternalist's intervention and discipline helps to guide the subordinate into a position of authority rather than keeping him in a state of perpetual subservience, though

it may be fairer to say that Jacobs, by learning from Mr. Wood and creating his own family, *escapes* from his master's control by reproducing it under his own autonomy.

Discipline of animals and humans is the foremost theme guiding *Beautiful Joe*, and in detailing many examples of this theme, Saunders envisions an ideal world in which everything is ordered by the firm hand of the compassionate paternalist, everyone works toward generating, protecting, and improving property, and there will one day no longer be a perilous outside beyond the system. "Breaking in" aligns a wayward creature's unproductive autonomy toward the whims of the master through eroticized physical coercion, but "breaking in" in an alternative sense is another motif used to structure Saunders's disciplinary scenes, for three burglaries provide much of the dramatic action in this rather plotless novel, including Jacobs's theft of Miser Jerrold's cashbox, an attempt by two beggar boys to rob clothing from the Morris home, and, in the most dramatic moment of the book, an attempt by Joe's former owner, Jenkins, to steal the silver from a home Joe is visiting and then burn the house down in order to destroy the evidence. These breaking in scenes dramatize the importance of private property, with the victims often leaping to the conclusion that their very lives have been at stake whenever their belongings are under siege, and the crucial role animals play in using their unique abilities to prevent or rectify each of the crimes allows Saunders to give paramount value to the presence of animals in the home. They are not just property, but the first line of defense in guarding all property. Mr. Wood's horse helps him to crack the case of the pilfered cashbox, a parrot's proffered extension of hospitality cues the Morrises to the beggar boys' presence, and it is Joe's powerful nose that detects Jenkins when he catches a whiff of the foul outside world, anathema to the orderliness of the good home: "There was a smell there; a strong smell like

beggars and poor people" (117). In fact, stench permeates the novel's depictions of poverty, and Joe's canine nose is especially attuned to distinguishing between, for instance, the stables of poor farmers with their "terrible" and "foul smell[s]" and the "delicious air, and the lovely smell of flowers and grass" found on well-to-do farms (149, 143). The putrid stench of the underclass is a miasma that Beautiful Joe is best equipped to rout out, making him a naturally gifted detector of invasive contagion. Most importantly about these scenes of breaking in, however, is what they reveal about the outside world. What exists outside of the ordered home of the compassionate paternalist? Is there life, value, and liberty in that outside world? Can it be colonized in the name of the ideal world order? And what should be done about outsiders who cross the threshold, who break in?

The justice meted out to the home invaders reflects the animal welfare movement's prevailing concerns about the possibility of redemption and education. When Mr. Morris catches one of the beggar boys robbing his house, the choice given to him is emblematic of the paternalistic authority exerted over working class children by the all-powerful benevolent state of the late nineteenth century. Neglected by their alcoholic father and unable to find any other employment, the boy and his brother are guilty of stealing clothes and pawning them with the help of an older sister in exchange for sustenance. Mr. Morris, concerned that they should "get [their] living in an honest way," tells the boy that he will call the police if they do not "take leave of [their] father" and consent to be shipped by train to work on the farm of one of Mrs. Morris's brothers, "where they would have a chance to make honest men of themselves" (77). This ultimatum—familial estrangement, relocation, and indentured labor or else the involvement of law enforcement—is negotiated without the father, the older sister, or even one of the two affected brothers being present. Within

his home, Mr. Morris is the only father and lawgiver. The arrangement he offers is reflective of a prevailing custom of the time, most famously conducted by the Children's Aid Society from 1854 to 1929, where children of the slums of Northeast cities were, with negligible oversight, permanently "placed out" on western farms whose owners often treated them as cheap labor rather than members of the family, as documented by historian Stephen O'Connor in his *Orphan Trains: The Story of Charles Loring Brace and the Children He Saved and Failed* (2004). The "poor, ignorant lad, half starved by a drunken father" is "not one-half so manly" as the eldest Morris boy, but hopefully he is still malleable enough to be incorporated into the system, where he may either become a man like Jacobs did or, at the very least, produce something of value for the extended Morris family.

For the adult Jenkins's interrupted attempt to steal silverware, and for his interrupted *plan* to commit arson—"for his wickedness," as Joe terms it—he is "sent to prison for ten years, where I hope," Joe writes, "he will learn to be a better man" (125). Such a late transition to respectability seems unlikely, however, which hints at the dark underbelly of Saunders's beliefs about reformation. In her survey of Saunders's works, Elizabeth Waterston notes that the author had an ongoing preoccupation with "the recurring mystery of individual evil," which often took the form of villains who, in Saunders's words, have "something wrong in [their] makeup" (Waterston 159). Her belief in an inborn, incurable viciousness undermines her logic in an essay for which she won another writing contest sponsored by *Our Dumb Animals*: "What is the cause of and best plan for stopping the increased growth of crime in our country?" This essay, for which she won a three-hundred-dollar prize and publication in 1907, likewise reveals the limitations of kind

education and the necessity of severe control. Framed as fourteen distinct causes and their proposed "cures," the essay problematically slips between framing criminality as an unfortunate product of bad circumstances and characterizing it as an inborn, inherited essence.

First, Saunders repeatedly presents incorrigibility and disorder as an inborn quality of the working class. A persistent assumption is that the criminal class is coterminous with the working class, a group she figures as having its own essentialist identity. The poor "don't envy the rich their social privileges. It would be a bore to them to 'dress up' to entertain" (387). Their needs and interests are baser. While it is true that "[t]he wheel of fortune revolves with strange rapidity in this country," Saunders seems certain that such a reversal is only a rather distant and hypothetical threat to her readers, suggesting only that they should "[d]o something for your great-great-grandchildren who may be in the slums," a century being the necessary time for her respectable readers' lineage to fall so far (388). While proper education for the poor can make "the next generation… a warm-hearted one," this education must be paternalistically spearheaded from above, for if left amongst his kind, an "infant of the lowest class" is "predestined to crime" (389, 388). While clean housing, open air, and playgrounds might prevent the animalistic poor child from becoming "semi-nocturnal in his habits," the "unhappy child" who has "lapse[d] into foolish and vicious idling" may quickly turn into a lost cause (390).

In *Beautiful Joe,* Saunders regularly associates low-income urban spaces with impurity, cruelty, and crime, and only the active supervision of the middle class can civilize such spaces. During a rare solitary ramble down "a quiet, out-of-the-way street, with only poor houses on it," Joe watches a man whip a horse to death and reasons that he will be

able to get away with the crime because "the man probably knew that none of the members of the society would likely be living" in the poor neighborhood (277). The Humane Society is no doubt what Joe means by "the society," but the elision is telling—this out-of-the-way street scarcely merits inclusion in civilized society. The artistic impetus for Joe's lone independent excursion seems to be to provide Joe—and by extension the reader—an opportunity to witness the cruelty and disorder that takes place outside of the middle-class home's sphere of influence, for nowhere else in the book is Joe free from the supervision of his masters.

Additionally, Saunders implies that incorrigibility and disorder possess an ethnic cause. In her *Our Dumb Animals* essay on crime, she argues that the genetic inheritance of the slums is corrupted by "[a]n unduly stimulated flow into this country of vast numbers of aliens, many of whom are defective and criminally inclined," who stream into the country like a contagion at "six or seven thousand a day" (387). These constitutionally "defective" aliens are, in fact, the very first cause of crime that she diagnoses. Saunders is quiet on the subject of immigration in *Beautiful Joe,* but a few oblique references suggest her distrust of foreign influences. When Joe attends a meeting of the Riverdale Band of Mercy, an actual nationwide SPCA organization for children, he overhears some child speakers present various dubious anecdotes about animals who have saved human lives. At the end of the chapter, the club's president specifically calls for "some stories of foreign animals"—as though nationality is an important distinction in the discussion of animal rights—and when a young boy shares a story of an Indian monkey mother who refused to part with her dead baby, nursing him as though he were alive, the president embarrasses the boy by doubting the authenticity of his tale. Although this story seems no more specious

than the American animal stories that have preceded it, and although the novel elsewhere depicts both a cat and Joe's mother grieving in very similar, even more outlandish ways, the chapter abruptly ends in tacit agreement with the president when he declares, "I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings; but you know there is a rule in the Band that only true stories are to be told here" (171). His increased skepticism seems to derive solely from the story's foreign provenance. Saunders could be subtly satirizing the young president's prejudices, yet this superfluous moment of xenophobia aligns with some of the concluding remarks of the book, when Joe notes with admiration that "[t]he Riverdale people are very particular about what sort of strangers come to live among them," mentioning their willingness to tell undesirable new residents that they "had better move on to some other place" (323). Extending the home's orderly structure of inclusion and exclusion to the entirety of the city seems a progressive conclusion to the book's themes, with the suggestion that the nation itself should be organized on such principles.

If crime is a poor choice to which people of all classes and social groups are potentially susceptible, then humane education has an egalitarian potential for uplift, but if crime is a vicious essence that is bred among the lower classes and inherited from immigrants, then Saunders's philosophy of humane education seems to be a form of national class coercion. Indeed, some historians have interpreted the rise of petkeeping, the cult of domesticity, the genteel literature of the late nineteenth century, and the animal welfare movement itself as self-centered attempts to promote the values and cultural influence of the white, urban, Protestant middle class of the Northeast. Although Tompkins maintains that the so-called cult of domesticity was an earnest millenarian effort to uplift all souls, built from a conviction in feminist and egalitarian strength, more cynical critics,

including sociologist Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929), have denounced this restructuring of the domestic sphere as a self-centric display of conspicuous consumption aimed at inflating class power and interests. The freedom to extricate children and animals from financial responsibilities—to keep feeding hungry mouths who contribute nothing to the family's larder—required a certain amount of economic security, and thus, as Foucault has documented with other modes of discipline, this new model of the family was an impediment that the middle class imposed on themselves, only incidentally to be emulated by the lower classes. Of the "genteel tradition" as a whole, most notably excoriated by philosopher George Santayana in 1911, the field of literature of which *Beautiful Joe* was a bestselling part was seen as "an attempt by a group of refined New England intellectuals," who themselves "could control most of the literature written, edited, reviewed, and published at this time" from their universities and publishing houses in Boston, "to control literary and moral standards, maintain social hierarchies, and encourage conservative political reform" which would further consolidate the "cultural authority" of "[t]hese well-bred, educated, and decorous Anglo-Saxon men" (Teorey 413). Perhaps the early animal welfare authors' efforts to show the *philanthropy* of animal welfare advocates—their "love of humans" in concert with their zoophilia—was no more successful than Bergh's arrests of horse drivers, assuming greater understanding, exacerbating class tensions, and betraying an authoritarian impulse toward all those deemed intractable or worthless. In her essay on crime, Saunders does indeed suggest harsh regulation for ill-fitting humans within the national home. "Sentences should be *indeterminate*" for all criminals in penitentiaries, with "rigid discipline" and solitary confinement as the standard, and those who do not reform, including alcoholics, "should be kept imprisoned" (388-9, emphasis mine).

Saunders does not openly endorse the death penalty for intransigent humans, but her readiness to do so for incorrigible animals, when she so frequently likens the two, is unsettling. An estimated thirty-four of the strikers who believed they could organize their lives better than their boss-father George Pullman were killed and many more wounded and arrested in July of 1894 by federal troops under the orders of President Grover Cleveland (Blount). Perhaps the lives of difficult workers were cheap regardless of whether they were human or non.

Whereas Jacobs, the beggar boy, and even perhaps Jenkins may all one day "grow up" to be manly citizens, it is a fact that no animal will ever become a man, and Saunders does not shy from the ramifications of this. Animals wishing to hold onto their positions in the home economy must earn their keep. All animals who resist submission meet a bleak fate, for there is no space in the world for an ungovernable animal nor any compassionate method of dealing with him aside from a mercy killing. A salient example of this is Mr. Wood's dog Bruno, a "snarling, cross-grained, cantankerous beast" (144). Upon realizing that Joe's arrival for a summer stay means that he will now "have a good dog about the place," Mr. Wood resolves to put "an end to the bad one":

> I'm going to kill him. I've no use for a bad dog. Have plenty of animals, I say, and treat them kindly, but if there's a vicious one among them, put it out of the way, for it is a constant danger to man and beast. It's queer how ugly some people are about their dogs. They'll keep them no matter how they worry other people, and even when they're snatching the bread out of their neighbors' mouths. (146)

Preempting any claim that the book endorses an overly sentimental attachment to animals at the expense of human society, Mr. Wood acknowledges that it is "queer" and "ugly" to support a dog who bothers his neighbors. The "good dog," meanwhile, is suspiciously

unforthcoming on the subject. Joe states, “After Mr. Wood took [Bruno] behind the barn, he came back and got his gun. I ran away so that I would not hear the sound of it, for I could not help feeling sorry for Bruno” (156). Though one might think that the narrator’s sorrow over the killing of a fellow dog might occupy a significant part of his reflections, he voices no further thoughts on the matter.

The humans in the book are full of sound advice for eliminating animals who not just threaten the order of the home but also simply fail to provide value to it in their living state. After Bruno’s offstage shooting, the saintly Miss Laura prompts Mr. Wood to a disquisition on the cleanest methods of killing animals. “Uncle, what is the most merciful way to kill a dog?” she asks, leading to some very detailed instructions for death dealing peppered with transitions like, “If ever you want to kill a cat, Laura, give it cyanide of potassium” (158). A death at human hands is the fate of most animals in Saunders’s book, and these deaths are often provided with anthropocentric justification. As for animals within the agricultural system, a vegetarian man concedes without objection that animals “were made for us” and that they “would over-run the earth, if we didn’t kill them” (136). In an exception to prove the rule, one traumatized cow manages to avoid a mercy killing only to fulfill Mr. Wood’s sense of moral revenge against the man (now dead) who allowed her to nearly starve to death in the first place. “I love a dumb brute too well to let it suffer,” Mr. Wood explains, referring to how he would normally have euthanized her, “but in this case I’d give two hundred dollars more if I could make them live, and have Barron know of it” (246). Death is contingent upon the whims of the human master.

The mere specter of independent existence outside of the utilitarian, paternal sphere depicted by Saunders is in fact an unconscionable threat doomed to extinction. Dandy, a

bull terrier "tramp" who arrives at the Morris home in the antepenultimate chapter, discomfits the disapproving Joe by telling the story of his profligate life, then dies of mange before the chapter is over. Dandy seems a fusion of the aristocracy and the underclass; indeed, elsewhere in the book Saunders suggests that the uppermost class and the lowest one converge in their laziness, unemployment, and selfish cruelty—a curvature that would thus place the middle class at the top. With his fashionable breed, his "silver-plated collar," his "well-bred" upbringing by "a New York gentleman," his life among yachts and Fifth Avenue and the "[j]eweled fingers of ladies," and his haughty manner of speaking, Dandy is undeniably upper class (294-7). Nevertheless, his unwillingness to settle down, to follow orders, to respect his masters, or to build a clean, decent life for himself evokes the gangs of hobos that crisscrossed the United States in the 1890s. Joe urges Dandy to mend his ways, but Dandy is constitutionally unable to conform, and he ends the chapter suffering from starvation and skin parasites, dying in "the darkest corner of the stable… suffering very much" (305). "I sat by him, and thought of his master in New York," Joe says. "If he had brought Dandy up properly he might not now be here in his silent death-agony" (305).

This chapter has presented a bleak portrayal of Saunders's efforts on behalf of the early animal welfare movement, but it is important to remember, as Susan J. Pearson writes, that the movement was an "eruptive, revolutionary establishment of rights" that cannot be squarely simplified by any "reductionist account of the complex and diverse set of motivations that guided" the individuals behind it (7). Arguments of this sort can veer toward the anthropocentrism which is definitionally at the center of humanism: the notion that any advocacy on behalf of nonhumans at a time when any humans are suffering must be a misdirected focus on inferior issues. Although Saunders was among the most popular

of the humane authors, hers was not a monolithic voice, contrasting as it did with the works of both Twain and London, whose humane works will be the focus of the next chapter. Yet even within Saunders's oeuvre, there is an irreducible ambiguity suggesting that while she realized her depiction of profitable, compassionate paternalism might have the widest and most persuasive appeal, particularly among men like her father who would be in a position to actually authorize change, her ideals yearned for a more peaceable union. Unfortunately, it seems she believed that only a divine afterlife could bring such equality.

In the final paragraph of *Beautiful Joe*, Joe treads very carefully on the blasphemous assertion that animals might have souls. "[I]f it is not wrong for a dog to say it," Joe broaches, "I should like to add, 'God bless you all'" (325). Nevertheless, it is clear Joe considers either Heaven or complete annihilation after death to both be longed-for solutions to this world's misery. After witnessing the overladen horse get beaten to death with a whip, a somber Joe concludes "that death is the best thing that can happen to tortured animals" (278). The animals who survive their abuse, like Joe himself, live with emotional scarring and chronic melancholy, "not playful like some dogs who have never known what it is to be really unhappy" (251). Old Melancholy, the cow left to live in order to serve Mr. Wood's imagined revenge, is described as staring off into space, her face unlike "the faces of the cows that had always been happy" (252). These animals longingly yearn for the afterlife and speculate if God has made a place for them there (259-65); when Saunders's wrote a lesser-known sequel, *Beautiful Joe's Paradise*, published in 1902, it is set in this exclusively animal quasi-heaven. Waterston notes the irony that, in contrast to *Beautiful Joe*'s constant tales of suffering, her novel about *dead* animals is an Ozian romp, "lively, funny, and bubbling with inventiveness," in which it is the *animals* who educate a kind boy

visitor on vegetarianism, nonviolence, and care as *he* conforms to *their* domain (153-4). Freed from the exploitation of human dominion on earth, animals can finally have their say.

The mostly female authors of the early humane movement were preoccupied with "manning up" a movement that might otherwise have been dismissed as fatuous, womanly, infantile prattle. To the contrary, however, most opponents to the early welfare movement did *not* take the tactic of emasculating male animal lovers but instead attacked their cruelty toward other men. Zoophilists were figured not as homosexuals but, to the contrary, as misanthropes. Though many of these detractors appear to have been arguing in bad faith, more interested in perpetuating animal exploitation than in spreading universal philanthropy, there was ample evidence to support their cutting claims, as most visibly apparent in the contrast between the "Bergh's men," drawn from the most prestigious circles of society and vested with yet more authority, and the victims of their convictions, predominantly drawn from the working class and inordinately foreign and nonwhite. These power dynamics were more likely incidental than motivated by any conscious intention of class coercion—of course the benefactors and volunteers in a charitable organization will be wealthy, and of course the people likely to be arrested or mistreating animals are the working men who must manage those animals on a daily basis—yet they exacerbated the bad faith argument to the detriment of the welfare movement. Surely, most early welfare advocates were motivated by a simple, sympathetic desire to protect animals, and many of them likewise participated in other philanthropic causes, like child protection and labor rights, and, on the other side, most critics were likely resistant only to legal regulations that forced them to be more conscientious toward what they considered their property. By

focusing on the manliness issue rather than the misanthropy issue, much of the early humane literature further exacerbated the divide. By associating compassionate manliness with utilitarian efficiency, benevolent paternalism, law and order, and other such "masculine traits" which reinforced class essentialism and xenophobia, they fueled the argument that compassionate men were indeed self-interested men.

CHAPTER 6
"THE ONLY ANIMAL WHO ENSLAVES": ENVISIONING MANLINESS WITHOUT GODLINESS

> "Man is the only Slave. And he is the only animal who enslaves. He has always been a slave in one form or another, and has always held other slaves in bondage under him in one way or another. In our day he is always some man's slave for wages, and does that man's work; and this slave has other slaves under him for minor wages, and they do *his* work. The higher animals [i.e., *nonhumans*] are the only ones who exclusively do their own work and provide their own living."
>
> -Mark Twain,
> "Man's Place in the Animal World," 1896

At least in the final decades of his life, Mark Twain (1835–1910) was an inveterate news junkie, and (familiar story) the headlines that stayed with him longest were those which painted an apocalyptic portrait of the world. In his speeches, editorials, and autobiographical writings from the dawn of the twentieth century, Twain frequently quotes from such news reports—stories from March 1906 in which President Roosevelt praises the United States Army for annihilating nearly a thousand Filipinos, including many women and children, because of their rebellion against foreign occupation; interviews after the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 with a righteous American missionary in China, who asserts the need to avenge the deaths of Christians in the region by pillaging, decimating, and enslaving peasant bystanders; and scientific reports by the most cutting-edge vivisectors of 1898, who detail how the drug curare can be used to render live specimens in surgical experiments completely immobile yet still conscious with a *heightened* sense of pain (*Autobiography* 9; "To the Person" 162-4; "Mark Twain on Scientific Research" 57). In an essay entitled "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," published in the *North American Review* in February 1901, Twain wonders if American enlightenment in the Progressive Era is anything but:

> [S]hall we go on conferring our Civilization upon the peoples that sit in darkness, or shall we give those poor things a rest? Shall we bang right ahead in our old-time, loud, pious way, and commit the new century to the game; or shall we sober up and sit down and think it over first? Would it not be prudent to get our Civilization-tools together, and see how much stock is left on hand in the way of Glass Beads and Theology, and Maxim Guns and Hymn Books, and Trade-Gin and Torches of Progress and Enlightenment (patent adjustable ones, good to fire villages with, upon occasion), and balance the books, and arrive at the profit and loss, so that we may intelligently decide whether to continue the business or sell out the property and start a new Civilization Scheme on the proceeds? (164-5)

Twain deplored the convergence of scientific discourse, technology, industrial-scale business, imperialism, racism, animal exploitation, and religious and patriotic hypocrisy he encountered daily in the papers, all the more so for its so often being labeled "progress," and he saw all these modern impedimenta most brilliantly personified in the bumptious body of the much-admired President Theodore Roosevelt, whom he deemed "*the* representative American gentleman," clarifying, "of to-day" (*Autobiography* 9, emphasis his). In 1906, he wrote:

> Roosevelt is the whole argument for and against, in his own person. He represents what the American gentleman ought not to be, and does it as clearly, intelligibly, and exhaustively as he represents what the American gentleman is. We are by long odds the most ill-mannered nation, civilized or savage, that exists on the planet to-day, and our President stands for us like a colossal monument visible from all the ends of the earth. (*Autobiography* 9)

Twain met Roosevelt several times, and though he was quietened by the man's geniality—his soft speaking, if you will—he was horrified by the dangerous big stick he so brazenly, clumsily wielded.

In a sketch from his prolific autobiographical writings, entitled "The Hunting of the Cow" and dated October 1907, Twain humorously brings together all these themes—and comments on the ongoing "nature fakers controversy," to boot—while parodying the

complicit tone so often found in newspaper accounts of modern American atrocities. He begins with the grand announcement that "[t]wo colossal historical incidents took place yesterday, incidents which must go echoing down the corridors of time for ages, incidents which can never be forgotten while histories shall continue to be written" (215). The first of these momentous events, which may in fact be a source of trepidation for him, is that "for the first time, business was opened to commerce by the Marconi Company and wireless messages sent entirely across the Atlantic, straight from shore to shore"—communications technology deployed for capitalist globalization. "[A]nd on that same day," he writes, "the President of the United States for the fourteenth time came within three miles of flushing a bear" (215). Not only is the president not overseeing the international event with which he probably should be occupied, he is also not present at his own desperate attempt to shoot a bear:

> As usual he was far away, nobody knew where, when the bear burst upon the multitude of dogs and hunters and equerries and chamberlains in waiting, and sutlers and cooks and scullions, and Rough Riders and infantry and artillery, and had his customary swim to the other side of a pond and disappeared in the woods. While half the multitude watched the place where he vanished, the other half galloped off, with horns blowing, to scour the State of Louisiana in search of the great hunter. Why don't they stop hunting the bear altogether and hunt the President? He is the only one of the pair that can't be found when he is wanted. (215)

These abundant human resources, roped into Roosevelt's cockamamie chase, must surrender their own pride and good sense—in addition to the services they could undoubtedly be better occupying their time with—in order to boost the ego of a powerful man who seems totally at odds with reality. Citing a newspaper article which notes that "the killing was witnessed by one of the McKenzies and by Alex Ennolds," whose "names will go down in history forever," Twain epically boasts, "in the company of an exploit

which will take a good deal of the shine out of the twelve labors of Hercules," he quotes the reporter as adding this to the legendary chronicle: "They say that the President's bearing was extremely sportsmanlike" (217). Twain remarks, "Everybody knows what mere sportsmanlike bearing is, unqualified by an adverb, but none of us knows quite what it is when it is extremely sportsmanlike, because we have never encountered that inflamed form of the thing before" (217). "The probabilities are that the… adverb is merely emotional and has the hope of a raise of wages back of it," he writes, speculating that Mr. Alex Ennolds received twenty dollars for the adverb, got another twenty for insisting that the President was "no tenderfoot," and could have earned yet another twenty if he had thought to praise the sportsman's courage for ending the adventure with a swim in waters which, for all anyone knew, could have been swarming with alligators (218).

The humor of this mock epic is reinforced by the "nature fakir" Reverend Dr. William J. Long's assertion that the "bear" is in fact a cow, an observation supported by "overwhelming" "circumstantial evidence": "It acted just as a cow would act; in every detail from the beginning to the end it acted precisely as a cow would act when in trouble; it even left a cow track behind, which is what a cow would do when in distress, or indeed at any other time if it knew a President of the United States was after it" (216). Nevertheless, Twain writes, "Some say it was a bear — a real bear. These were eyewitnesses, but they were all White House domestics; they are all under wages to the great hunter, and when a witness is in that condition it makes his testimony doubtful" (217). Twain exposes the unfair conditions underlying the nature faker controversy, for how could any private citizen, a minister and humble woods-traipsing dilettante writing books that bring most readers a simple pleasure, attempt to wage war with a sitting president who has

a treasury supporting him, has an arsenal behind him, and has fired the first shot? The situation is likewise dire for the cow/bear, and Twain wonders why the most undoubtedly powerful man in the world would feel the need to prove his masculinity by expending such vast resources to kill a defenseless animal. He has the cow plead, "Have pity, sir, and spare me. I am alone, you are many; I have no weapon but my helplessness, you are a walking arsenal; l am in awful peril, you are as safe as you would be in a Sunday-school; have pity, sir—there is no heroism in killing an exhausted cow" (216). And lest the reader lose sight that more is ultimately at stake in this "wonderful dime-novel performance" than the life of a single wild animal, Twain reminds readers that this bloodthirsty bumpkin, a Mayne Reid boy hero if ever there were one, also happens to wield colossal state and military power. He reports, "His Excellency leaves for Washington today, to interest himself further in his scheme of provoking a war with Japan with his battleships" (215).

This is among Twain's more comical and lighthearted commentaries on the state of the world at the turn of the century. Many of his writings are far more acerbic—and justly so, given the manifold miseries being meted out in the name of American advancement. In an 1896 essay entitled "Man's Place in the Animal World," he gives credibility to critics of the animal welfare movement who characterized its practitioners as misanthropists. "[M]an is the Animal that Blushes," he writes, enumerating the many distinctions between humans and the rest of the animal kingdom which will prove his hypothesis that men are in fact the "lower animals." "He is the only one that does it—or has occasion to" (83). The "man" identifier is no mere sloppy pronoun, for he clarifies that another proof of man's baseness is that "[w]oman's equality with man has never been conceded by any people, ancient or modern, civilized or savage" (80). Man's insatiable greed, his warmongering,

his sectarianism, his jealousy, his hypocrisy, his profligacy, his cruelty, and even the inferiority of his balding, tooth-decaying, graceless body—all prove that man's belief in his evolutionary progress and natural supremacy is a massive misinterpretation of scientific fact.

As shown at the beginning of Chapter 5, the positions Twain fervently held—anti-imperialism, sympathy toward animals, skepticism of science and progress and war—could get a man caricatured in a dress and bonnet on the cover of a newspaper. Twain had no reputation for effeminacy; his *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *Huckleberry Finn* (1885) were hallmarks of the "Bad Boy Book" genre enjoyed by rambunctious men and children, and he frequently lampooned the mawkish, sentimental style of female writers of the day (to be sure, he lampooned plenty of styles by popular writers female *and* male). In some of his earlier humane writings, he drew upon what might be called "masculine traits," such as the violent comeuppance and Berghian righteousness so common to Humane Society literature, perhaps in an effort to forestall what could be dismissed as the effeminacy of a doddering old man. Yet even these appeals are uttered without conviction, as seen in an open letter to the secretary of the London Anti-Vivisection Society, published in the *Journal of Zoöphily* in May 1900, in which he halfheartedly indulges this fantasy: "I am sure I could not even see a vivisector vivisected with anything more than a sort of qualified satisfaction. I do not say I should not go and look on; I only mean that I should almost surely fail to get out of it the degree of contentment which it ought, of course, be expected to furnish" ("Mark Twain on Scientific Research" 57). There was simply no benefit or joy to be found in cruelty, even of a just, reciprocal sort.

The works explored in the previous chapter, predominantly written by women, strove to sell compassion towards animals as a manly endeavor by associating it with profits, paternalism, and rigid discipline, but these strategies may have only reaffirmed the distaste of people inclined to view the welfare movement as elitist. Perhaps because their male identities, their macho reputations, and their literary fame bolstered a sense of confidence that a thirty-one-year-old novice woman writer like Margaret Marshall Saunders could not so freely take for granted, the most significant authors of the humane movement in the early twentieth century, Mark Twain and Jack London, adopted a different ideology than that utilized in the 1890s. Or perhaps this is so because the dawn of the twentieth century had people envisioning what a beneficial future might look like in a way not true of 1893. The triumphs and atrocities of the Spanish–American War and America's subsequent sojourn into overseas empire had forced Americans to reckon with what the nation's ethos of dependency and freedom truly looked like, and they had also been made to pay undue attention from 1903 to 1907 in an attempt by the President to convince them that the beloved animal characters they had wept over, scientifically speaking, had no minds or feelings or responsibilities owed to them. Perhaps because of all these reasons or more nebulous ones, the humane works of Twain and London envisioned man's relationship to animals as a brotherhood rather than a paternalism.

Jack London (1876–1916), who was fascinated by the changing discourse of masculinity, insists in his introduction to *Michael, Brother of Jerry*, the last book he would independently complete before his death, that his choice of animal compassion as a theme is in no way reflective of effeminacy. "Now I am not a namby-pamby," he insists:

> By the book reviewers and the namby-pambys I am esteemed a sort of primitive beast that delights in the spilled blood of violence and horror. Without arguing this matter of my general reputation, accepting it at its current face value, let me add that I have indeed lived life in a very rough school and have seen more than the average man's share of inhumanity and cruelty, from the forecastle and the prison, the slum and the desert, the execution-chamber and the lazar-house, to the battlefield and the military hospital. (v)

Nevertheless, in spite of his "strong stomach" and "hard head," he is revolted and unsettled by "the cold-blooded, conscious, deliberate cruelty and torment that is manifest behind ninety-nine of every hundred trained-animal turns. Cruelty, as a fine art, has attained its perfect flower in the trained-animal world," where it is especially appalling and shocking for taking place "in the midst of happy, laughing, and applauding audiences" (vi). Like Twain, London is not too lily-livered to withstand a scene of depravity, and he details the whippings, the starvations, the executions, and the brawls he has witnessed in his life. To be a *cause* of such violence or, worse, to find *satisfaction* in it, is beyond his ability. The dog fighter, the sportsman, the horse breaker—these do not conform to his model of ideal primitive masculinity.

Twain and London still rely on "domestication" as a central tenet in their philosophy of compassion. In "A Dog's Tale" and *A Horse's Tale*, Twain glorifies the home and the close-knit community as potential spaces of love, bonding, and shared knowledge, and in *Jerry of the Islands* and its sequel *Michael, Brother of Jerry*, London articulates the pinnacle of evolution as a domesticated, communal family unit occupying a liminal space between primitivity and civilization. In this border zone where London argues that true progressive civilization thrives, people (men *and* women) and their animal companions are "primitive" enough to develop their bodies, to enjoy carnal pleasures, and

to set off on adventure with ease and freedom, yet not so primitive as to lose control over their violent instincts; at the same time, however, they are not so civilized and domesticated that they willingly confine themselves or imprison others in the steel cages of commerce, greed, tyranny, and other stifling institutions. London's ideal domestic sphere is a boat on the open sea, and his utopia is imaged as a "feasting-hall" where all persons and animals, lovingly interdependent upon one another, sing together in the same cosmic language. Twain's vision, similarly, is of a frontier outpost, devoid of gates and borders, where all people and animals share their knowledge, their love, and their respect in a "continuous festival." Whereas Saunders and the earlier humane writers, perhaps only out of pragmatic considerations, envisioned the compassionate domestic unit as merely a contributor to the broader American system—a source of profit, law, discipline, and master-worship, where only true blood kin received genuine rights—Twain and London envisioned a compassionate domesticity in revolutionary opposition to the Progressive system, a bulwark against subjugation, mechanization, imperialism, and the whole system of determining value, authority, and privileges through taxonomical hierarchies with "superior white gods" at top. While the early humane movement emphasized personal responsibility through individual education and punishment, Twain and London were among the first animal rights activists to see that ending the exploitation of animals would require fixing a broader system built on injustice.

The Boundless Frontier and the Continuous Festival: Mark Twain

Like the animal autobiographies discussed in Chapter 5, which MSPCA founder George T. Angell hoped would become spiritual successors to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Mark

Twain's "A Dog's Tale," first published in the December 1903 issue of *Harper's Magazine,* has also been read as a commentary on slavery. In a brief reappraisal published in the *Mark Twain Journal* in 1977, Gay S. Herzberg proposes we should read the story not as it "might appear, at first glance, as a melodrama of man's inhumanity to animals, simply a timely piece supporting the anti-vivisectionist movement" but as what may secretly be "a critical work condemning the misuse of language, the cold-bloodedness of science and the evils of slavery" (20). Viewing it in this light would ostensibly rescue it from being *simply* about the torture of animals, would free it from being merely indicative of, as R. Kent Rasmussen labeled it in his *Critical Companion to Mark Twain* (1994), the otherwise manly Twain's "worst sentimental excesses" (qtd. Marcus 226). Though she does not agree, animal ethicist Hadas Marcus excuses critics who absent the animals from Twain's story, who consider it more worthwhile scholarship to consider the dogs an allegory for, as John H. Davis writes, "human slaves' family separations, docile servitude, loss of identity, and roles as children's playthings and guardians" (qtd. 226). Marcus concedes that Twain's depiction of dog psychology is "unconvincing," making it "quite easy to grasp why many readers suppose the story isn't about dogs at all" (226). Twain may or may not have had the analogy of slavery in mind when writing "A Dog's Tale," and that is certainly a subject he frequently returned to, but any alleged conflation of the slave narrative and the domestic animal autobiography that he may have drawn upon is freed from the potential condemnation of critics like Annie Dwyer, who in her denunciatory survey of the genre as a perpetuator of racist stereotypes writes, "In contrast to many slave narratives, the animal autobiography does not recalibrate right action in relation to social and political circumstance, but instead commends the withstanding of

continued mistreatment" (6). Dwyer does not refer to "A Dog's Tale" or Twain's later novella *A Horse's Tale* in her analysis of Progressive Era animal autobiographies, yet in these two tales, in contrast to Saunders's *Beautiful Joe*, is a searing critique of the rationales used to objectify animals and marginalize other human beings. In these two works, and in other essays written for the benefit of the anticruelty movement, Twain imagines a national-domestic sphere with open borders, where dependency demands duty rather than dominion, and where the usual demarcations of difference—rationality, a soul, the use of language, reputation, race, age, and gender—are rendered moot. In Twain's animal imaginary, in fact, the most American man can be a little Spanish girl.

"A Dog's Tale" is, as it is suddenly revealed in its final act, a story about vivisection, which is medical experimentation performed on unanesthetized, conscious animals for the ostensible purpose of achieving breakthroughs in science that can benefit humans. Shelley Fisher Fishkin in the afterword to her anthology *Mark Twain's Book of Animals* speculates that Twain, like many people, may have first heard of the practice while perusing Darwin's *The Descent of Man* (1871), where an aside from the naturalist laments, "The love of a dog for his master is notorious; in the agony of death he has been known to caress his master, and every one has heard of the dog suffering under vivisection, who licked the hand of the operator; this man, unless he had a heart of stone, must have felt remorse to the last hour of his life"; in Twain's personal copy, he marked this passage (qtd. Fishkin 258). According to Fishkin and Patricia Peck Gossel, the practice was fairly rare until the final decade of the nineteenth century, when researchers in the new field of bacteriology began to depend upon laboratory animals for the study of diseases and their potential vaccines (258, 268-9). Opposition to vivisection grew in lockstep, with physicians

like Albert Leffingwell of New York, for example, publicly denouncing an 1894 experiment in which dogs were dropped 141 times from the roof of a two-story building in New Jersey in order to see what might happen. Leffingwell deemed this "a record of the most wanton and stupidest cruelty we have ever seen chronicled under the guise of scientific experiments" (qtd. Fishkin 28). The "knowledge" gained from this experiment was brazenly worthless, but Twain, in a widely circulated open letter to the London Anti-Vivisection Society in 1899, contended that even those vivisection experiments that did provide immense benefit to humans were still unconscionable: "To know that the results are profitable to the race would not remove my hostility to it. The pains which it inflicts upon unconsenting animals is the basis of my enmity towards it, and it is to me sufficient justification of the enmity without looking further" ("Mark Twain on Scientific Research" 57). Resistance to such opposition also grew around the turn of the century, and the large number of newspaper articles mentioned at the beginning of Chapter 5, in which scientists warned of the medical dangers of being too close to animals, was likely due to the profession's interest in dwindling the ranks of animal lovers who might attempt to impede their control over their research.

Literary historians like Rasmussen, perhaps because "A Dog's Tale" seems too feminine to be a proper Twain story, sometimes assume that he wrote it as a courtesy to his daughter Jean, at the time a twenty-three-year-old card-carrying member of the SPCA known to have zestfully blocked traffic in Paris on behalf of cab horses (Marcus 226), but Fishkin argues that he was more likely inspired by his friend Canon Basil Wilberforce, a notable member of the London Anti-Vivisection Society, as well as by the "Brown Dog Affair," a vivisection scandal in England that grabbed headlines throughout 1903 (272-8).

The Brown Dog Affair involved two Swedish women, undercover antivivisection activists Louise Lind-af-Hageby and Liese Schartau, who enrolled in University College London. In collaboration with writer and animal activist Stephen Coleridge, they produced *The Shambles of Science* (1903), an exposé of the unlawful (in England) experiments performed on a nameless brown dog (Fishkin 276). Although an English court in November 1903 sided with a university doctor who accused Coleridge of libel, Fishkin notes that "the tremendous press coverage of the controversy" demonstrated widespread working-class and liberal support for the antivivisectionist cause (276). This scandal attracted headlines in the month before Twain's story first appeared, and a month after the story's publication, Coleridge financed a run of 3,000 copies of a book edition from Harper & Brothers with luxuriant (non-gruesome) color illustrations from W.T. Smedley (Fishkin 276). In the following years, antivivisection organizations in England and America would likewise publish it in pamphlet form (Fishkin 28).

"A Dog's Tale" is narrated by Aileen Mavourneen, whose "father was a St. Bernard" and "mother was a collie" but is herself "a Presbyterian." These "nice distinctions" are taught to her by her mother, though she confesses that to her they "are only fine large words meaning nothing" (588). In the first chapter of this 4,300 word story, Aileen whimsically reflects on her childhood with her mother, a forgivably supercilious socialite who enjoys using big human words like "supererogatory" in the company of the neighborhood dogs despite not knowing what they mean, a habit which she nevertheless gets away with because of her confidence and canny social skills. Despite her gentle mocking of her mother's behavior, Aileen notes in the brief second chapter that she was a virtuous woman who instilled in her daughter a fine moral education. When Aileen is

adopted into the family of the Grays in the third, final chapter, it is her mother's remembered wisdom that compels her to rescue the family baby from a crib fire, an act which causes her confused master to break her leg when he misinterprets her handling of his infant. Later, although Mr. Gray now recognizes the act as an exceptional display of rationality, he nevertheless fails to ascribe a soul or any moral worth as a subject to Aileen or to her puppy, Robin. Instead, after making a wager with his scientifically minded friends, he surgically severs Robin's ocular nerve in order to prove the rather obvious hypothesis that this will make him blind, an experiment which kills the puppy. Aileen, confused by what has happened, mourns over her child's grave until she starves to death. As a pitying servant observes towards the end of the story, echoing a common refrain from *Our Dumb Animals*, "Poor little doggie, you saved HIS child!" (598).

That Aileen rescues the family baby from imminent death resembles *Beautiful Joe* and other animal autobiographies which pleaded for the usefulness of pets by figuring them as literal saviors of the home and the family line. Unlike the Morris family parrot's automatic extension of hospitality to the beggar boy, Beautiful Joe's instinctual predatorial impulses whenever he sniffs the intrusive stench of poverty, or the unconscious betrayal of clues provided by Mr. Wood's horse, however, Twain does not present Aileen as a security device whose instinctual alarm can be taken for granted. Rather, he presents her heroism as a conscious act of courage that runs counter to her natural instinct to preserve herself. Aileen narrates, "Before I could think, I sprang to the floor in my fright, and in a second was half-way to the door; but in the next half-second my mother's farewell was sounding in my ears, and I was back on the bed again" (593). "The memory of her mother's *words* holds her back," writes Matthew Guzman. "Twain seems intentionally to make Aileen first

act on what one could call an 'instinctive' flight reaction to danger, only then to overcome this 'instinct' by a moment of self-reflective thought" (Guzman 32). Unlike *Beautiful Joe*, "A Dog's Tale" also challenges the notion that animals are grateful for their servitude; when Aileen describes her role during her early days in the Gray household and the happiness she derives from that role, she emphasizes mutual exchanges—caresses, romping, taking turns watching over the baby (592). Aileen does not worship any humans nor require a feeling of submission to feel complete; rather, she imagines herself an equal member of the family. When Mr. Gray breaks her leg, she hides in the garret for days and concocts a plan to escape, which she does not execute only because she refuses to abandon her puppy. By the end, Twain is clear that what Aileen provides to her humans is scarcely reciprocated by them, and the story paints Mr. Gray's domain as a space where she will never truly be part of the family.

To be sure, the callous Mr. Gray is in many ways the antithesis to Mr. Wood and the compassionate patriarchs by Saunders and other American Humane Education Society writers. Gray, whom Aileen describes as "quick in his movements, business-like, prompt, decided, unsentimental, and with that kind of trim-chiseled face that just seems to glint and sparkle with frosty intellectuality," seems more a parody of the rational scientist exhibited by Burroughs and Roosevelt than any model of manhood to be found in earlier animal autobiographies (591-2). Twain even inverts Burroughs's reason/instinct dichotomy; as Guzman explains, Gray's impulsive and hurtful punishment of Aileen upon discovering her dragging his baby from the nursery is irrational and "purely instinctive" (33). He writes that while "one might assume that a man of science, and scientific method, would first ask, 'Why is my dog dragging the baby down the hall?' No, the natural reflex [of Gray is] to

correct a dog's 'bad' behavior is physical abuse" (33). While Aileen's reason saves the family, Gray's instinct jeopardizes it. Although "A Dog's Tale" may seem inconsistent with its chapter of humorous dog malapropisms at the beginning and its chapter of tragic cruelty at the end, the story is united in its deconstruction of the pretense of rationality.

The sesquipedalian flourishes of Aileen's mother illuminate the hollow pretension of much authority founded on knowledge and education. Many of her fawning followers at the "dogmatic gatherings" of the neighborhood canines fail to recognize the superficiality of her speech. As Aileen recognizes, her mother has "not really education" but "only show" (588). It is telling that one of her favorite multisyllabic words is "unintellectual." Her haughtiness is a method of socialization which on the one hand is only successful because the other dogs are too "privately ashamed of themselves" to admit they don't fully understand her yet which on the other hand earns her a cult-like following, since the devoted of her "dogmatic" circle who know to accept her cleverness are blessed with in-group communion. When doubters are left "looking profane and embarrassed" by her linguistic maneuvers, "the initiated [are] slatting the floor with their tails in unison and their faces transfigured with a holy joy" (589-90). Later, Aileen likens Mr. Gray's status to such voluminous hot air, noting, "He was a renowned scientist. I do not know what the word means, but my mother would know how to use it and get effects" (592). Mr. Gray's fawning colleagues likewise praise his dull display of brilliancy in his amateur laboratory when they speak of his having blinded his puppy as a sacrificial miracle. They all trumpet, "It's so—you've proved your theory, and suffering humanity owes you a great debt from henceforth" (597). In *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion, and Paternity* (1992), religious scholar Nancy Jay has characterized the ritualistic use of animal

sacrifice as a means of appropriating the life-giving property as a patriarchal authority more vital than the mother's natural childbearing capacities, and Brian Luke in *Brutal: Manhood and the Exploitation of Animals* (2007) has demonstrated the many ways in which this religious discourse of sacrifice and miracles has been adopted by medical science. Twain depicts the hyperbolic religious fervor associated with the pursuit of scientific discovery in the early twentieth century while remaining grounded in the real-life costs of such "progress." The pursuit of biological mastery would lead many experimenters to focus solely on the possibility of miraculous outcomes in order to justify the brutal profanities of their trial and error—the Tuskegee Syphilis Study from 1932 to 1972 is a particularly salient example. Twain keeps his gaze on the actual lives suffering rather than the hypothetical lives saved.

Despite Aileen's mother's ostentatious displays of her prestigious knowledge in social gatherings, she is not wholly superficial, for unlike Mr. Gray, she possesses virtuous principles that guide her to treat others with respect in more meaningful interactions. Aileen realizes that "there was more to her than her education," and she speaks warmly of the many "virtues" that accompanied her "rather vain and frivolous character," including "to be brave and prompt in time of danger, and not to run away, but face the peril that threatened friend or stranger, and help him the best we could without stopping to think what the cost might be to us" (590). In an important distinction between ego-inflating theory and selfless practice, Aileen notes that her mother "taught us not by words only, but by example," and it is revealing that her mother acquires much of this moral education from her time spent at church, a place where she actually attends to and incorporates the meaning of words rather than their mere sounds and effects, "la[ying] them up in her

memory more carefully than she had done with those other words and phrases; and… stud[ying] them deeply, for her good and ours" (591). As Aileen writes of their final exchange before she moves in with the Grays, her mother:

> said we were sent into this world for a wise and good purpose, and must do our duties without repining, take our life as we might find it, live it for the best good of others, and never mind about the results; they were not our affair. She said men who did like this would have a noble and beautiful reward by and by in another world, and although we animals would not go there, to do well and right without reward would give to our brief lives a worthiness and dignity which in itself would be a reward. (590-1)

Twain jokingly identifies Aileen's breed as "Presbyterian" and elaborates on the joke by informing readers that Robin Adair, the Irish setter who is implied to be the father of Aileen's puppy, "was a Presbyterian like [Aileen], and belonged to the Scotch minister" (592). While the notion of a churchgoing dog is a comical one, Twain emphasizes that the presumably soulless dog is the more dutiful practitioner of Christian virtues than the humans who assume as a given their uniquely superior besouled status. Tragically, the same religious moral education which instructs Aileen to overcome her self-centered instincts and save another man's helpless baby is the same ideology which allows that man to condemn her to suffer, for despite the rational scientist's fixation on strictly empirical details, it is the presumed lack of an immaterial soul that justifies treating animals as objects.

The importance of the "soul" as the all-important dividing line between humans and the rest of animality is crucial here since, in contrast to John Burroughs and many other naturalists of the period, Mr. Gray does *not* deny his dog's use of intellect. On the contrary, he fully recognizes her ratiocination despite the opposition of his scientific peers, and he is even willing to elevate her reason above his own. Twain writes:

> [T]he master's friends came, a whole twenty of the most distinguished people, and had me in the laboratory, and discussed me as if I was a kind of discovery; and some of them said it was wonderful in a dumb beast, the finest exhibition of instinct they could call to mind; but the master said, with vehemence, "It's far above instinct; it's REASON, and many a man, privileged to be saved and go with you and me to a better world by right of its possession, has less of it that this poor silly quadruped that's foreordained to perish;" and then he laughed, and said: "Why, look at me—I'm a sarcasm! bless you, with all my grand intelligence, the only thing I inferred was that the dog had gone mad and was destroying the child, whereas but for the beast's intelligence—it's REASON, I tell you!—the child would have perished!" (596)

Buried within his magnanimous and enthusiastic praise of his dog's intelligence is the justification for his cruel usage of the dog's child: animals do not have souls and thus whatever is done to them is of no purport in the grand scheme of things. Parson Kelsey, the titular hero of Mary Noailles Murfree's *The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains* (1885), one of only two gander pulling narratives, fictional or factual, in which the gander actually survives the contest, had argued that nonhuman animals' denial of an eternal afterlife meant that humans were obligated not to add any suffering to their brief experience of material existence, a philosophy espoused by theologian Andrew Linzey. Margaret Marshall Saunders had likewise agonized over this principle of Christian dogma and ultimately concluded, in *Beautiful Joe's Paradise* (1902), that there must be a separate but equal Heaven for animals. In *A Horse's Tale*, Twain mockingly excises the anthropocentric core from such reasoning by having one horse ask another, "When we die, Sage-Brush, do we go to heaven and dwell with man?" The other horse ponders the question before responding, "My father thought not. He believed we do not have to go there unless we deserve it" (669).

A Horse's Tale, a 17,000 word novella originally serialized in the August and September 1906 editions of *Harper's Monthly* before being published as a standalone book the following year, was written at the request of an admirer of "A Dog's Tale," and it builds upon the themes introduced in the earlier story in order to present a fuller and more idyllic—although ultimately still quite pessimistic—vision of what a compassionate America could look like. The story begins as a narration by Buffalo Bill Cody's fictional scout horse Soldier Boy, but it also includes epistolary sections, interspecies conversations, and even sheet music for military bugle calls. The plot follows nine-year-old Cathy Alison, whose father was American and mother was Spanish but who was raised in France until their deaths. Upon becoming an orphan, she is sent to live with her father's older brother, General Alison, who is about to retire from his command of Fort Paxton, a frontier outpost. Young Cathy becomes the most cherished resident of the encampment, forming an especial bond with Buffalo Bill and his horse, but when General Alison, Cathy, and Soldier Boy move to Spain to live with her Aunt Mercedes, the horse is stolen, passed as property among various desperadoes, and eventually sold for a glass of brandy to be slaughtered in a bullfighting spectacle. Cathy, recognizing her missing horse, runs into the arena to save him, and they are both gored to death by the bull.

The idea for *A Horse's Tale* came from Minnie Maddern Fisk, a renowned New York actress known to prohibit her costars from wearing furs or feathers onstage. She wrote Twain:

> I have lain awake nights very often wondering if I dare ask you to write a story of an old horse that is finally given over to the bull-ring…. The story you would write would do more good than all the laws we are trying to have made and enforced for the prevention of cruelty to animals in Spain. We would translate and circulate the story in that country. (qtd. Bradshaw 142)

Twain agreed and diligently encouraged his editor to publish it in a manner that would reach as wide an audience as possible, asking him to consider different serialization strategies in multiple magazines. He had put "a good deal of work" into it, he averred, and wanted "to get it to classes that can't afford Harper's. Although it doesn't preach, there's a sermon concealed in it" (qtd. Bradshaw 142). When a reader of *Harper's* wrote him a letter on August 25, 1906, begging him not to write "any more such heart-breaking stories," he responded that this pitiable tactic was "the only way to move some people to reflect" and informed her of the story's "righteous purpose" of encouraging the children of Spain "to renounce and forsake the cruel bull-fight" (qtd. Rasmussen 299-300). Charles C. Bradshaw finds no evidence that the story was ever circulated in Spain or Latin America (143), but Fishkin notes that its reception in the United States upon being published in book form in October 1907 was warm; a *New York Times* review called it "some of the best flavor of Mark Twain's peculiar humor," and *Book News Monthly* deemed it "one of the most important [books] published this fall in fiction" (qtd. Fishkin 31).

Young Cathy Alison is the model of mastery and power in the story, and Twain configures her as a celebration of blurred fusions. Raised in France by an American émigré, she gains a nostalgic pride for her Spanish homeland from her mother despite having only seen it in her infancy. From the influence of her parents, her French surroundings, and a foreign governess, she has achieved fluency in all the major European languages, and her Aunt Mercedes notes in a letter to her brother-in-law, General Alison (soon to be Cathy's adoptive father), "there is always a faint foreign fragrance about her speech, no matter what language she is talking, but it is only just noticeable, nothing more, and is rather a charm

than a mar" (633). Upon moving to Fort Paxton, a frontier outpost in some unspecified borderland, she is given the "Indian name" of firebug for her capricious energy—sometimes very "quiet" and "soft, like summer night," yet sometimes "in a blaze"—and she learns to communicate in the local Native languages as well (635). Nevertheless, her use of language is freeform and exploratory, as she invents new meanings for words (such as a "cube" being "a native of Cuba") and consciously violates syntactical prescriptions, ending an exuberant run-on sentence in a letter to her aunt with "but this sentence is getting too long and I will start another" (645, 638). As General Alison writes back to Mercedes, there is "still a subtle foreign flavor or fragrance about even her exactest English—and long may this abide! for it has for me a charm that is very pleasant" (645). Under the tutelage of Buffalo Bill, whom she calls by the diminutive "BB," she learns to expertly ride Soldier Boy without a saddle and like a man (astride rather than sidesaddle), and she likewise invents methods of communicating with the horse by teaching him to manipulate his hooves and by playing unique bugle calls, which Twain transliterates for the reader by providing annotated sheet music. Despite having the air of an eternal immigrant, she is adopted by the military men as their honorary leader, and they confer titles on her such as "Corporal-General of the Seventh Cavalry, and Flag-Lieutenant of the Ninth Dragoons, with the privilege (decreed by the men) of writing U.S.A. after her name!" (640). She becomes the very name of a United States American.

There is undoubtedly a jesting element to the fort's ceremonial elevation of a nine-year-old girl to a rank superior to General Alison, yet Cathy's leadership role is never *totally* a joke; there is a performative realism to everyone's respect for her authority. General Alison observes that the soldiers "granted her the *salute*. I am witness that that

ceremony is faithfully observed by both parties—and most gravely and decorously, too. I have never seen a soldier smile yet, while delivering it, nor Cathy in returning it" (640, emphasis his). Although General Alison worries that such displays might evoke the jealousy of the other outpost children, he soon realizes that "there is nothing of that, I am glad to say. On the contrary, they are proud of their comrade and her honors. It is a surprising thing, but it is true. The children are devoted to Cathy, for she has turned their dull frontier life into a sort of continuous festival; also they know her for a stanch and steady friend, a friend who can always be depended upon" (640). When the children organize the "First Battalion Rocky Mountain Rangers, U.S.A." and elect her their "Lieutenant-General *and* Bugler," their playacting involves real discipline and respect for authority, with her leading them through precise drills using real bugle calls and earning their undying respect in return (649). In addition to "BB," the soldiers, and the children, the animals likewise acknowledge Cathy's authority, with Soldier Boy informing another horse that "she [out]ranks her uncle the commandant, who is only a Brigadier" (649). Granted, this is one of several humorous misunderstandings the horse conveys in his conversation, but in *A Horse's Tale* there is a truth undergirding such misreadings.

Another reading which is presented as humorous "nonsense" yet which bears meaningful insight into Cathy's admirable blurriness is the "curious idea that Cathy is *twins*, and that one of them is a boy-twin and failed to get segregated—got submerged, is the idea" (641). This "theory" is posited by Dorcas, a former slave and lifelong companion to General Alison. Although Alison regards many of Dorcas's ideas with patient condescension, the multiperspectival narrative also undermines his skepticism by verifying her claims; for instance, even though he dismisses as "curious superstition" her conviction

that the dog Shekels is eavesdropping on them, scenes told through the animals' perspectives confirm that the dog is indeed the local gossip. Thus, General Alison as narrator ridicules as "a waste of breath" Dorcas's claim that Cathy is both a "girl-twin" who "loves dolls" and is "gentle and sweet, and ain't cruel to dumb brutes" and also a "boy-twin" who "loves boy-plays, and drums and fifes and soldiering, and rough-riding, and ain't afraid of anybody or anything" (641). Nevertheless, he records this "waste of breath" theory in ample detail in his letter to Aunt Mercedes, relating a story in which Cathy pleaded, bargained with, and ultimately physically bested a boy who was cruelly abusing a crow. The end result is the sense that both he and Twain approve of Cathy's noble fusion of "boyish" righteous justice, courage, and physical strength with "girly" sympathy for animals.

Cathy is a celebration of blurred boundaries—European yet with full honors of the U.S. military, a boy-twin and a girl-twin who have refused to be "segregated," a nine-year-old lieutenant general, and a multilingual communicator with animals and all people—and thus it is fitting that she becomes the honorary commandant of a frontier space that itself has open borders. The novella and the fort depicted in it are both meeting places for diverse yet reconcilable identities, where equal exchange is celebrated as a "continuous festival." The short, polyvocal book is animated by a range of voices: an all-American horse, a Mexican horse, a Spanish letter translated into English, English epistles, internal monologues, soliloquys, stage directions, sheet music, and a conversation between a horse and a half-coyote-mongrel-dog who "understands all the languages, and talks them all, too" albeit "[w]ith an accent like gritting your teeth… and with a grammar that is no improvement on blasphemy—still, with practice you get at the meat of what he says, and

it serves" (643). No voice has a total or a faultless grasp on the knowledge presented in the book, and most of the characters bear no pretentious claims to such authority, either. Rather than competitive declarations of superiority, or even the forgivable ostentation of Aileen's mother in "A Dog's Tale," the characters are generous at negotiating compromises of meaning and understanding with each other and in conferring the respect onto others which they would hope to receive for themselves.

This respect has the trappings of aristocracy, lineage, and state power, as in Cathy's accumulation of highfalutin titles, yet in practice, such airs are dispensed according to egalitarian principles. The book satirizes taxonomy and categorical identities as a means of hierarchizing individuals, and it does so using some of the same nimble wordplay that characterized the first chapter of "A Dog's Tale." For instance, Soldier Boy is exceedingly proud to be descended from "the best blood of Kentucky, the bluest Blue-grass aristocracy" on his mother's side and a bronco father whose roots in America date back "two million years," a genealogy he learns from Professor March of Yale University, who upon finding the "skeletons of horses no bigger than a fox, bedded in the rocks" near Fort Paxton, informs the horse that "they were ancestors of [your] father" (631). Soldier Boy glows, "So that makes me part blue grass and part fossil: if there is any older or better stock, you will have to look for it among the Four Hundred, I reckon" (631). His pride combines aristocracy, ancestry, academia, patriotism, and even the new scientifically grounded divinity seen likewise in "A Dog's Tale," for he boasts, "The bones of my ancestors are held in reverence and worship, even by men. They do not leave them exposed to the weather when they find them, but carry them three thousand miles and enshrine them in their temples of learning, and worship them" (646-7). He furthermore attests that he is "the

best-educated horse outside of the hippodrome, everybody says, and the best-mannered" (630). On one hand, these declarations are a parody of human pride in such status symbols, but Twain's mockery of Soldier Boy's pretensions is always gentle, for this best-mannered cavalier never wields his status as a weapon against others. Upon meeting Mongrel, a stolen Mexican horse who has been passed among thirteen "trap-robber[s], horse-thief[s], squaw m[e]n, renegado[es]" and other such unsavory sorts, who confesses of himself that he is "of low birth, and no family" and has little education beyond being able to "blaspheme a saddle-boil with the college-bred," Soldier Boy nevertheless responds to the foreign stranger with earnest graciousness: "I was going to say, you are better educated than you have been pretending to be. I like cultured society, and I shall cultivate your acquaintance" (646-53).

Coming together despite difference is a theme of the book, and even family and the home are rendered as permeable spaces. Most notably, General Alison relates that when his father "set Dorcas free twenty years ago," the woman "considered herself a member of the family, and wouldn't go. And so, a member of the family she remained, and has held that position unchallenged ever since" (641). Admittedly, claims such as these uneasily resemble the ideology of benevolent paternalism espoused by contemporary proslavery writers like Joel Chandler Harris and his "Uncle Remus," yet Dorcas's agency is clarified throughout the book, and her status as a genuine member of the family is affirmed by other characters; Shekels the dog, who has the most intimate glimpse into the innerworkings of their home, identifies her as General Alison's mother (651). Saunders's ideology of domesticity allowed domestics and domesticated animals into the home but never truly regarded them as equal kin, instead forcing them into subservient roles and prioritizing

their usefulness when determining their right to live and to escape violence. Twain's Fort Paxton is in many ways an antithesis to this conception of home and family: a place where usefulness is never considered, where collaborations and communication are fostered, where gentlemanly respect for each other is paramount, where foreign visitors are regarded not as invasive contagions but as sources of new information and relationships, and where a nine-year-old girl can be respected as a genuine authority figure.

Nevertheless, Twain's story is not as idealistic as the above portrait might suggest, for he recognizes that people often come together for more sinister reasons. When a Spanish immigrant, Antonio, fondly recalls to his American compadre, Thorndike, a bullfight he attended in his childhood, the arena is likewise described as a diverse congregation:

> The amphitheatre was packed, from the bull-ring to the highest row—twelve thousand people in one circling mass, one slanting, solid mass—royalties, nobles, clergy, ladies, gentlemen, state officials, generals, admirals, soldiers, sailors, lawyers, thieves, merchants, brokers, cooks, housemaids, scullery-maids, doubtful women, dudes, gamblers, beggars, loafers, tramps, American ladies, gentlemen, preachers, English ladies, gentlemen, preachers, German ditto, French ditto, and so on and so on, all the world represented: Spaniards to admire and praise, foreigners to enjoy and go home and find fault—there they were, one solid, sloping, circling sweep of rippling and flashing color under the downpour of the summer sun—just a garden, a gaudy, gorgeous flower-garden! (666)

Like the gander pullings described in Chapter 2, this organized spectacle brings together happy, smiling people from all classes, age groups, genders, nationalities, and professions; the bullfight is "really real" in a tragic sense only to the horses and bull. The intention of Fiske and Twain to circulate the story as sentimental propaganda in Spain, a plan which Bradshaw calls "an American intervention in a much broader transatlantic conversation about animal cruelty" (143), may lead one to suspect, based on the anti-Spanish legacies

of Mayne Reid's frontier fiction or the recent Spanish–American War, that *A Horse's Tale* carries a latent xenophobia. After all, the entirety of the novella's happy scenes are set in a nostalgic American idyll while the tragic ending abruptly occurs with the characters' arrival in Spain. According to Bradshaw, Twain's satirical depiction of bullfighting is indeed a critique of militaristic "Spanish nationalism" and a practice that had been imported to Latin America "as a theatrical reproduction of Spanish colonial power" (153-4). In bullfighting, horses who had already exhausted their use value as farm or transportation animals were used as cheap fodder to incite a justification for the spectacular punishment of the bull; the bull was goaded into killing these horses so that he could then be "put on trial" and "executed." The matador, a symbol of graceful state power, remained in control the whole time, though the "criminal" bull appeared to be an equal match. Bradshaw argues that Twain uses Buffalo Bill Cody, who was also famous for incorporating animals into a patriotic spectacle, as a deliberate foil to the cruelty of Spanish bullfighting. This conflict had historical precedent in Cody's antagonism of "ignominious" matadors, which led to a heated diplomatic standoff while Cody was touring with his Wild West Show in Europe (150). Bradshaw writes:

> As New World meritocrats, Cody's performers had no respect for the artificially inflated and heavily formalized dramatics of a bullfight, which, as he saw it, had to exaggerate its dangers. Instead, the kind of rough-and-ready coenaesthesis of human and animal that Cody's Wild West shows displayed represented a much more egalitarian form of sport where human and animal were paired together as coparticipants in the entertainment. (150)

In *A Horse's Tale,* Twain uses Cody to symbolize this relationship between man and animal as a counterpoint to Spain's nationalistic power display, though Bradshaw notes that in 1904, Twain, a longtime fan of Cody's, had been incensed by the performer's incorporation

of imperialist, anti-Chinese themes into his show and thus realized the limitations of even this icon (154). Antonio's speech, however, preempts any charge of anti-Spanish sentiment against Twain by also indicting American ladies, English ladies, and respectable persons of every nationality as gleeful spectators of the animal slaughter. Though Twain specifically critiques *Spanish* nationalism here, it is imperialism in general that is the true target of his derision, and Thorndike's response to Antonio's story solidifies that Americans are no less guilty of indulging in cruel performances of violent power: "Well it is perfectly grand, Antonio, perfectly beautiful. Burning a nigger don't begin" (668). Only the horses beneath these two men are capable of recognizing what the bullfight truly is: a "religious service" in which humans indulge in their "brutal" nature. "They are created as they are; they cannot help it," says Sage-Brush (668).

As Fishkin has observed after reviewing his personal library, Twain was an assiduous reader of Darwin, but in his anticruelty writings he did not argue, like Ernest Thompson Seton and others, that animals possessed intelligence, emotion, and interiority and should therefore be considered as relatively equal agents to humans. Twain took it as a given that nonhuman animals possessed at least as much as humans did, which wasn't always very much. Rather, Twain focused on the defects which men possessed that animals did not—rapaciousness, cruelty, hypocrisy, and so forth. In "Man's Place in the Animal World," Twain writes:

> I have been studying the traits and dispositions of the "lower animals" (so-called), and contrasting them with the traits and dispositions of man. I find the result humiliating to me. For it obliges me to renounce my allegiance to the Darwinian theory of the Ascent of Man from the Lower Animals; since it now seems plain to me that that theory ought to be vacated in favor of a new and truer one, this new and truer one to be named the Descent of Man from the Higher Animals. (81)

In "A Dog's Tale" and *A Horse's Tale*, Twain implores readers to examine the pretentious underpinnings of religious, scientific, and nationalistic theories which are used to justify one's violent supremacy over another. Instead, he asks readers to imagine family networks of caresses, caretaking, and romping, of the mutual exchange of knowledge and esteem, and of an American frontier space that is a "continual celebration" rather than a walled fortress. In this respect, he mirrors Jack London's concern over modern civilization's proliferation of cages.

Pitching the Doxology: Uncaged Domesticity in Jack London

Jack London was on a pivotal voyage in the South Seas when he learned in 1907 that Hunter-Naturalist-in-Chief Theodore Roosevelt had denounced him as a "nature fakir." London had never pretended that the canine protagonists of *The Call of the Wild* (1903) and *White Fang* (1906) were anything other than fictional, but in Roosevelt's view, any writer who did not drape his animal stories in the explicit trappings of fantasy must be upheld to reporting the *utter truth* about nature as determined by the preeminently objective scientist masters of the day (Walsh 135). London would write a few months later that his first response upon being challenged was to "climb a tree and let the cataclysm go by" ("The Other Animals" 199). "I thanked God that I was not an authority on anything," he told the Honolulu reporter who broke the story to him, and in a private letter to his editor in 1908, America's most lucrative novelist likewise conceded, "I confess that my field observations, so far as the text of my book is concerned, are rotten" (qtd. Walsh 135).

His confidence would soon return, however, and on March 19, 1908, during a stopover in Tahiti, he penned a lengthy counteroffensive entitled "The Other Animals," which would be published in *Collier's Weekly* on September 5, 1908 (Williams 13). In it, he accuses Burroughs and Roosevelt of being "homocentric" egotists, narrowminded amateurs with a prescientific mentality who dangerously ignore the tenets of evolution. The arguments he formulated in this essay—about human and animal evolution as influenced by domestication, civilization, and technology—combined with ideas formed during that same fateful trip—about illness, colonial exploitation, and an encounter with a special dog named Peggy—would cohere into his final two novels, *Jerry of the Islands* and its sequel *Michael, Brother of Jerry*, both published posthumously in 1917. These books, particularly *Michael*, would become foundational texts of the Jack London Club, an offshoot of the MSPCA dedicated to ending trained animal performances. In them, London would demonstrate that dog minds and lives reflected humans' precarious negotiation of the ladder of evolution—a path of progress that could easily be degraded by oppressive working conditions, tyrannical rule, and stifling institutionalization. In contrast to *Beautiful Joe* and other early humane works, London's novels envision a kind of "free-range domestication," in which love, adventure, and interdependence are paramount, as the antidote to "caged domesticity," where utilitarian demands, conventional structures, and subjugation inhibit the individual's evolutionary potential. Such a philosophy was undoubtedly inspired by both his socialist convictions and his interest in the analytical psychology of Carl Jung, but his support for the Social Darwinist teachings of Herbert Spencer also imbued his ideology with racialized stereotyping, which likewise seeped into the rhetoric of the Jack London Club's humane efforts during the Great War.

Although Roosevelt was the critic who dragged London's reputation into the debate, London quickly dispenses with the president's complaints in "The Other Animals," instead focusing the weight of his argument against Burroughs's dogmatic denial of reason or anything other than instinct as an explanation for all nonhuman animal behavior. London admits that instinct governs much animal behavior, but he contends that many human actions are the result of such irrational impulses, as well, comparing a dog fooled by his human's misdirection to a train robber fooled by a conductor's "Look over there!" ploy (205). London stresses a consideration of the gradations by which human and nonhuman minds are dominated by such instincts, and he insists that Burroughs, who conducted most of his scientific observations from his farm in upstate New York, was limited by the narrow range of local fauna from which he could derive his conclusions; in other words, generalizing the instinct of a black-capped chickadee to the behavior of *all* animals, just like generalizing the intelligence of a Yankee gentleman farmer to *all* humans, overlooks the successive gradations that define evolution: "There are no impassable gulfs, unless one chooses, as Mr. Burroughs does, to ignore the lower human types and the higher animal types, and to compare human mind with bird mind" (209). Human intelligence did not spring fully formed—it "is not a creation, but a growth. Its history goes back to the primordial slime that was quick with muddy life" (208). Essential to understanding the full picture of nature's diversity is possessing firsthand experience of "higher animal types"—such as chimpanzees whom scientists have proven are capable of counting and of reasoning (206-7)—as well as "lower human types"—such as the "South Sea Islander" attempting to "understand the noumena of radioactivity" whom London uses as a punchline for insulting Burroughs's grasp on evolution; the "little Tahitian 'feeding child'" sitting next to him

while he writes his essay, who believes that his phonograph houses a "tiny dwarf"; or the "adult savage" whose "limited knowledge of physics" prevents him from understanding how a telephone works yet who proves himself one degree smarter than a monkey in not being "fooled by a hand-mirror" (200, 209-10).

Mostly, however, London focuses on an intermediate animal that is appropriate to the source of Roosevelt's attacks and that would be recognizable to most readers: the family dog. Pondering both a childhood pet, Rollo, and a more recent companion, Glen, whose parents were both half-wild, London doubts that all their "actions were ganglionic discharges mechanically determined by the instincts that had been developed and fixed in the species thousands of years ago" (203). If dogs only respond mechanically to stimuli, then how have they adapted so readily to a swiftly transforming human culture? How have they learned to interpret people's nuanced facial expressions and tone of voice? How did Rollo's wolf instincts learn to turn the boy's own sympathies against him by feigning injury to score a point in a wrestling game? How did Glen, whose ancestors had certainly never seen an automobile, learn how to detect its sounds, how to safely board it, and how to make the decision that sometimes the fun from riding in its front seat outweighs the necessity of eating breakfast? If domesticated animals adapt to new technologies, new societal structures, and new forms of interaction without developing any new "instincts," then how is this any different from the progress of their human cohabitants? How is this different from the "adult savage" who learns how to use a telephone? "No, Mr. Burroughs," London concludes his essay, "though you stand on the top of the ladder of life, you must not kick out that ladder from under your feet. You must not deny your relatives, the other animals. Their history is your history, and if you kick them to the bottom of the abyss, to the bottom

of the abyss you go yourself" (210). Though he had explored issues of wildness, domesticity, evolution, and freedom through the perspective of canines in *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang*, London's grappling with the accusations of Roosevelt and Burroughs while on his South Seas adventure established the groundwork for what would be a more explicit parable on man's evolution in the modern era: Jerry's adventures among colonized Solomon Islander savages and Michael's tribulations at the hands of barbaric American businessmen.

Jerry of the Islands and *Michael, Brother of Jerry* were products of that South Seas voyage in more ways than one. A heavily publicized twenty-one-month journey originally envisioned as a seven-year odyssey, London's trip would be the subject of three memoirs: *Through the South Seas with Jack London* (1913) by his cook Martin Johnson, *The Log of the Snark* (1915) by his wife Charmian, and *The Cruise of the Snark* (1911) by himself. It was on this voyage that Charmian, with the support of her husband, "deliberately and shamelessly stole" an "adorable Irish terrier puppy, who was smooth-coated like Jerry, and whose name was Peggy" (viii). "Had it not been for Peggy," he writes in the foreword to *Jerry*, "this book would never have been written." From this voyage he would also gain knowledge of the Solomon Islands, his primary setting; of "blackbirding," the brutal, interisland trade of colonized indentured labor in which he and his fictional dogs participated; and of leprosy, a plot device in *Michael* and one among many ailments that London feared he had contracted from the tropical islands. According to biographer Jean Campbell Reesman, London would spend the rest of his short life nursing "his body's failure to meet the challenges of the South Pacific" and his "personal failure as a white man in the tropics," and because the onset of these ailments had hit most severely when he was

in the Solomon Islands, he developed a despairing resentment toward that island chain and its inhabitants in particular (110, 114). “If I were a king, the worst punishment I could inflict on my enemies would be to banish them to the Solomons,” he would write in *The Cruise of the Snark* (qtd. Reesman 133).

And so from this voyage he gained another major element of his final two dog books: a racialist preoccupation with savage, dark-skinned Solomon Islanders, their bodies so animalistically composited that they could survive the environmental brutalities under which he had blistered. Peggy was not merely an “adorable Irish terrier puppy” in London’s foreword; rather, she was a “nigger-chasing, adorable Irish terrier puppy,” the first of eighty-three instances in which London casually uses the epithet in the two books. Trained to menace the “wild” black islanders so as to frighten them into obedience to their white masters, the purebred Irish terriers Jerry and Michael subscribe to race-based hierarchies of capability and worth, though the racism that has been deliberately instilled in their brains is rather more straightforward than the racialism espoused by the books as a whole, with their muddied blend of stereotypical genre conventions, Spencerian fear of racial admixture, socialist concern for how societal structures degrade the true brotherhood of man, and valorization of primitive masculinity. Although the books certainly characterize a particular privileged blend of well-bred Anglo-American manhood as being supreme, a fact which seems naturally validated by the books’ insistence that Michael and Jerry’s purebred lineage is a source of their strength, there remains an irreducible anxiety over whether this supremacy is simply a product of current environmental and political conditions, possibly to be reconfigured should the random process of evolution, change, and potential cataclysm produce different threats to survival. The racial dimensions

inflecting London's model of superior masculinity, albeit important, were contingent upon numerous unstable and conflicting ideas, but his belief that admirable men form loving, interdependent bonds with the other animals in their lives—human and non—remained consistent across racial boundaries.

London's complex and often contradictory view of race is contested by recent scholars. Since his "scientific" theories about racial development in many ways overlap with his philosophy regarding the treatment of "the other animals," it is important to first contextualize London's many competing influences and the approaches he took in reconfiguring and representing those influences. Literary scholar Jeanne Campbell Reesman's critical biography *Jack London's Racial Lives* (2009) is the fullest and perhaps most authoritative treatment to date on this subject, though more recent scholars have adopted a more censorious appraisal of London's work. Reesman argues that London was unique among white naturalist writers of the Progressive Era both in considering race a worthwhile theme to investigate and in depicting whiteness (and particularly his own whiteness) as a constructed subjectivity rather than an objective, universal ideal (37). She theorizes that although London longed to believe that his white blood proved his genetic superiority, his manifold physical failings, particularly while sailing in the tropics, exposed such superiority as provisional rather than guaranteed (110). She notes, for instance, that although his South Seas adventure was undertaken in part to prove his own fettle as a globetrotting explorer, he did *not* in fact "make himself [the] hero" of *The Cruise of the Snark*, instead dwelling on his own infirmities (176). Reesman argues that the supremacy of the independent white male hero was a boogeyman that haunted his writing career. For instance, although many contemporary critics regarded the protagonist of the

autobiographical *Martin Eden*, which London completed while on the trip, as a celebratory (albeit tragic) valorization of the Nietzschean superman, he regretfully admitted after such reception that his *intention* had been to illustrate how the "individualist hero was in fact a failure," believing in socialist interdependence as a more successful path to heroism (44). That inability to translate his intentions into a clear message may also plague *Jerry* and *Michael*, which at once seem to endorse the idea of animalistic black inferiority while also suggesting that European colonization is the truly savage presence.

Reesman furthermore theorizes that London's empathetic experimentation with narrative voice across numerous ethnic as well as species boundaries proves that he was not content presuming that his perspective as a white, scientific man was capable of reaching a total, objective, imminently rational appraisal of the universe (38). Complicating this assessment, however, Reesman notes that London's expression of racial beliefs fluctuated with his ever-shifting identity as a writer, realigning to conform to the expectations he had for the genre, length, intended audience, and ultimate form of publication of whatever he was working on (15-20, 34). He had "an unusually unfettered imagination" for empathizing with nonwhite characters in his fiction, and especially exhibited "more imaginative freedoms in his short fiction," where he often portrayed heroic "islander characters" as "individuals forced to respond to cultural crises precipitated by whites" (16, 116, 114). "[I]n his fiction," she writes, "he eschews white heroes in nearly all the stories and instead offers heroic South Sea Islanders with their own complexities and their own struggles to survive" (176). In his novels, however, he often relaxed into racialized character types and stereotypical genre conventions. In *Michael*, for instance, a Jewish pawnbroker is a lazy stereotype for miserly acquisitiveness, and scenes of page-

turning excitement in *Jerry* rely on potboiler tropes of Pacific Islanders as insensate cannibals and black men as rapacious defilers of white women. These offensive and harmful clichés undercut portrayals that subvert stereotypes elsewhere in the novels, such as his portrayal of the Chinese cook Ah Moy as the cleanest, most medically minded, and most germophobic crew member on a ship in *Michael* (in contrast to what Neel Ahuja has documented of leprosy and filth being central charges in the anti-Chinese propaganda produced by Californian socialists in this era (20)) or the blind Melanesian man Nalasu as the most patient, peaceable, and perhaps intelligent character in all of *Jerry*. Meanwhile, in his nonfiction and journalism, London was most likely to endorse outright racist claims, such as an essay in which he asserts, “I am first of all a white man and only then a socialist!" (qtd. Raney 422), or, as Gail Bederman has analyzed, a newspaper article in 1908 stressing the vital need for white boxer Jim Jeffries to vanquish black heavyweight champion Jack Johnson in order to prove that Anglo-Saxon men possessed both the greatest achievements of civilization and the purest strengths of primitive physicality (40-1, Cassuto 558). Reesman argues it is impossible to paint a consistent, comprehensive portrait of London as a thinker of race issues, and she attributes some of this inconsistency to his intellectual promiscuity.

As a working-class autodidact, and especially as one whose authoritativeness had been scrutinized by the president, London may have felt obligated to substantiate his work by drawing upon scientific sources and the travel narratives of explorers and ethnologists, and, as Miles Powell, Leonard Cassuto, Patrick B. Sharp, and other scholars have demonstrated, "[t]he supposedly objective science of natural history in the nineteenth century was founded on the assumption that there was a hierarchy of races and that the

Caucasians were at the top of this hierarchy" (Sharp 90). Thus, the "authoritative sources" London would have used to support his perhaps "rotten" field notes would have been saturated with the assumption of white supremacy. London's foreword to *Jerry*, for instance, reveals his continued anxiety, seven years later, that he might be called a "faker" by some higher authority. It begins:

> It is a misfortune to some fiction-writers that fiction and unveracity in the average person's mind mean one and the same thing. Several years ago I published a South Sea novel. The action was placed in the Solomon Islands. The action was praised by the critics and reviewers as a highly creditable effort of the imagination. As regards reality—they said there wasn't any. (v)

What London insists upon at the outset of Jerry, however, is not the facticity of his animal depictions but rather that "the adventures of my dog hero in this novel are real adventures in a very real *cannibal* world" (vi-vii, emphasis mine). London's fear is not that his critics will doubt the vast linguistic intelligence and emotional imagination of his dog hero, but that they will doubt his sensational racialist caricatures, the verity of which he could confirm with reams of evidence and firsthand testimonials "which I do make asseveration I possess a-plenty" (vii). Partially inspired by Melville's real-life sojourn among "cannibals" in the Marquesas Islands, as depicted in *Typee* (1846)—a book which is itself quite coy about revealing whether or not the islanders truly do eat human flesh—London had gone to the South Seas in search of cannibal feasts, shrunken heads, and other signs of exotic savagery that he could document with his camera and his pen (Newlin 2). He returned emptyhanded yet filled his island novels, including *Jerry*, with grisly scenes of "headhunting" and "man eating." Keith Newlin analyzes the travelogues and ethnographies London brought with him on his journey and suggests that the novelist's perceptions were

more colored by his book research, his racial prejudice, and his desire to sell action-packed fiction than by anything he actually witnessed in his encounters with the islanders. Drawing upon more recent anthropologists like William Arens, Gananath Obeyesekere, and Shankar Aswani, Newlin notes that not only had British colonialism effectively stifled any attempts at "head-hunting" raids by the time London took his tour, but that cannibalism, which came to define European concepts of Pacific otherness, was in its fullest expression only a religious ritual rather than a culinary habit and that its supposed wide practice had only ever been a scare tactic used by islanders to inhibit would-be colonizers from too eagerly intruding into their land (7-8).

London's depiction in *Jerry* of the villainous warlord chief Bashti as an insatiable torturer and eater of dog and human flesh is certainly the most appalling feature of his racial depictions, but even this is more complicated than it appears, given the unusual understanding of evolution that he acquired from his prolific, promiscuous scientific reading as well as the strange constellation of values he possessed as a result of his diverse, globetrotting experiences. Juniper Ellis argues that London viewed Marquesans' present day *lack* of cannibalism as evidence of their degeneracy; it was European contact that had caused "their decline from racial purity" and distanced them from the practices that had once symbolized their authenticity and strength (62-3). In examining three of his other novels, Anita Duneer notes London's apparent uncertainty about the value of cannibalism, sometimes symbolizing it as the "desire for unbounded freedom" (194). Geoffrey Sanborn similarly writes that cannibalism "enables the civilized man to see in the savage an image of his own limitless energies at a stage in which they are absolutely liberated from any restraining feminine influence" (qtd. Duneer 194). This interpretation, although

substantiated by London's remarks during the actual voyage, has dubious application to *Jerry*, however, since while the spectrum of pure primitivity to barbaric overcivilization is certainly the theme of the novel and its sequel, cannibalism is clearly *not* a habit that London values as pure.

London's other "intellectual" sources likewise stained his depiction of race in *Jerry* and *Michael*, leading most contemporary scholars to quickly dismiss (or, as is more often the case, completely ignore) his final two novels even though it is my contention that London intended the books to be a fundamental disavowal of racist (and speciesist) othering. Reesman notes that London had a particular interest in Herbert Spencer, whom Richard Hofstadter has called the "metaphysician of the home-made intellectual of the era," "widely read by persons who were partly or largely self-educated" (qtd. Reesman 49). Spencer's "survival of the fittest" Social Darwinism championed individual accomplishment and self-evident right by might, and it conceived of these struggles in terms of classist and racist essentialism: "the superior would assume their rightful place by talent, industry, and will" since only the best fitted specimens were fated to survive (Raney 394). As a scientifically savvy Renaissance man who stayed abreast of the latest innovations in genetics, as formulated by scientists like Reginald Punnett in 1905, London even conducted amateur forays into eugenics by breeding cows, horses, and pigs at his Beauty Ranch in California (Raney 423). Mainstream American science at the turn of the century likewise theorized that individual human development underwent a "recapitulation" through ancestral stages of evolution while in utero, during childhood, and throughout adolescence before (hopefully) coalescing into a stable whole in adulthood (Bederman 92-120). As a result, "mongrelization" and miscegenation were derided as

degrading influences, given the implication that a man whose lineage was mottled by competing racial inheritances would fail to reach a full expression of an authentic self (Cassuto 9, Duneer 198). As historian of petkeeping Katherine C. Grier notes, America's emerging obsession with purebred dogs, which did not truly take form until the 1880s, also "described the advantages of the blooded animal over the mixed breed with language that echoed strikingly the early twentieth-century interest in eugenics and racial purity," even though, ironically, such inbreeding actually caused many purebreds to be "unusually fragile and disease prone" (43).

Although London's fictional oeuvre contains some noble "half-breed" characters (including Buck in *The Call of the Wild*), he nevertheless possessed a hesitant conviction in the orderly purity of unmixed bloodlines. The illustrious lineage of Jerry and Michael is detailed several times in the two books. For instance, in describing a fight between Jerry and a feral dog from the islands, London writes:

> The wild-dog was maturer than Jerry, larger-bodied, and wiser in wickedness; but Jerry was blue-blooded, right-selected, and valiant…. The bush ancestors from whom [the wild-dog] had descended had survived by being fear-selected…. In the open they had never attacked save when the prey was weak or defenceless. In place of courage, they had lived by creeping, and slinking, and hiding from danger. They had been selected blindly by nature, in a cruel and ignoble environment, where the prize of living was to be gained, in the main, by the cunning of cowardice, and, on occasion, by desperateness of defence when in a corner.
>
> But Jerry had been love-selected and courage-selected. His ancestors had been deliberately and consciously chosen by men, who, somewhere in the forgotten past, had taken the wild-dog and made it into the thing they visioned and admired and desired it to be. It must never fight like a rat in a corner, because it must never be rat-like and slink into a corner. Retreat must be unthinkable. The dogs in the past who retreated had been rejected by men. They had not become Jerry's ancestors. The dogs selected for Jerry's ancestors had been the brave ones, the up-standing and out-dashing ones, who flew into the face of danger and battled and died, but who never gave ground. (*Jerry* 31-2)

In essence, this comparison privileges a more civilized, scientifically-structured lineage over a primitive, natural one; whereas a being in a natural environment stands a good chance of surviving simply by avoiding conflict, civilization overlays the cultivation of honorable traits over the mere necessities of survival. Elsewhere, London provides a regal chronicle of the dogs' past ancestors, including "the American-bred Milton Droleen" and "the later ancestress, Moya Dooleen" (*Jerry* 95). This "pedigree," "as royal as was possible for an Irish terrier to possess," is used to confirm his and Michael's bravery, intelligence, freedom, and pride. When Michael is imprisoned by a methodically oppressive circus trainer in the second book, the man notes that purebreds are the hardest to break, reinforced by their commitment to their hereditary greatness (95). Even Bashti, an island warlord king who comes into possession of Jerry halfway through the first book, acknowledges the superior selective breeding of the white man's dog and begins to ponder how he might apply such control over his own populace; the narrator deems his speculations "primitive eugenics" (275). Keith Newlin writes that although London's knowledge of Marxism attuned him to the ways in which colonial indenture had brutalized and weakened the Solomon Islanders, he nevertheless viewed them as genetically predisposed to be less intelligent and less technologically capable (16). Historian Janet M. Davis concurs that despite his recognition of "the intentional cruelties of civilization," his hereditary essentialism led him to conclude that "proper stewardship and the rights of ownership" were potential properties possessed only by white people, a conclusion derived from the fact that both novels end with the dogs in the safe and happy possession of the white,

wealthy married couple Harley and Villa Keenan, obvious stand-ins for London and his wife Charmian (339, 344).

These interpretations are credible, yet there is also an ambiguous irreducibility to London's treatment of these themes, as when he uses subtly parodic language to describe the "purple record" of the dogs' genealogy, an "ancient" lineage which admittedly only goes back "less than two generations of men" and which includes a "Breda Mixer" as well as "Bredda Mudler, which royal bitch, as every one who is familiar with the stud book knows, goes back as far as the almost mythical Spuds" (95). Muddling, mixing, a mythical spud—Jerry's status as "son of kings" hardly sounds quite as hardwired into his genetic makeup as the narrator elsewhere suggests. As Duneer writes of a similar scene in London's *The Mutiny of Elsinore* (1914), "Although London disparages the degenerate 'admixture' of non-Aryan blood throughout the novel, he more critically vilifies the veneer of gentility that covers the cold-bloodedness of the aristocracy. London simultaneously celebrates the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race and critiques the feudal ideology that has not progressed from the days of slavery" (198). Likewise, London's depiction of the tyrannical Bashti's opinions on "primitive eugenics" cannot fully be taken at face value, since they are on par with other forms of brutal scientific supremacy he has learned from Western colonizers; at one point, he goads British warships into bombing his own village so that he can rebuild and consolidate his power. His tactics do not seem meant to show his "progressivism" in a positive light. And the "proper stewardship" and "rights of ownership" seen as white prerogatives by Davis may be more provisional than essentialist, as will be explored below.

London's cavalier attitude toward blue-blooded accounts of racial supremacy likely derived from his personal background. Reesman writes that in a letter dated March 24, 1900, to be used as a biographical note in publicity material for *The Sea Wolf*, London jokingly inflated "his hereditary and fitness as an 'Anglo Saxon' adapted to the American frontier" while emphasizing the "nomadic" character of his ancestry, the "rough life" of his adolescence, and his time spent doing "all sorts of hard labor" among "the scum marine population of San Francisco Bay, where I got down to the naked facts of life" (24). As Reesman concludes, "He is who he is, this letter implies, by virtue of his blood and hard work, and in neither case by the privilege of being born into the bourgeois class" (24). My sense is that London may have realized that his "blood" provided only social and political cachet rather than any truly biological upper hand. Concerning his actual heritage, he was hostile towards his Spiritualist medium mother, Flora Wellman, who tried to kill herself in 1875 when her common law husband learned she was pregnant and abandoned her, and who thereafter never formed any close bond with her son. He was estranged from his purported biological father, William Chaney, a charlatan astrologer who tried to have him aborted and later denied paternity on the grounds that he was supposedly impotent, suggesting instead that his mother was a whore and that Chaney himself was the true victim. And he had only a lukewarm relationship with the stepfather who raised him, John London, a Civil War veteran who was kind to young Jack but unable, because of disability and the need for constant employment, to spend much time interacting with him (Reesman 22-4). Instead, the only familial warmth he received was from Virginia "Jennie" Prentiss, a dark-skinned former slave from Tennessee who served as his wet nurse when Flora proved incapable of producing milk, and whom Jack would support and regard as a family

member until his death and even after. He bought her a house and supported her church, she moved in with him in 1903 when the last of her family died, and his wife arranged her funeral in 1922 (Reesman 24-6).

Staking his identity on his actual bloodline would have required him to accept that he had inherited the superstitious hucksterism of his parents, the coldness of a mother who was physically and mentally infirm, and the manliness of a father who would rather claim impotency than have to raise his own son. London's flatulent invocation of his Anglo-Saxon roots in his attempt to market himself seems more of a realization that such an authorial persona would ground the manly image projected in his books rather than a genuine conviction in some firmly embedded ancestral glory; in other words, he may have known the benefits of white privilege had no truly biological basis. Likewise, although Jerry and Michael's happy denouement in the loving arms of Harley and Villa Keenan certainly attest to the couples' loving temperament and compassionate consideration for others, they are not, as Davis suggests, the sole models of "proper stewardship" in the novels, which include several other characters, white and nonwhite, who form equally loving bonds with the dogs yet lack the financial means, social support, and/or sheer luck to sustain those bonds.

My interpretation may be overly generous, and, to be sure, the subtlety and inconsistency with which London posits this worldview is exceedingly easy to misunderstand even if I am correct. Just as *Martin Eden* does not at all seem a denunciation of independent heroism to most readers, a casual reading of London's final two dog adventures is likely to leave readers either confirmed in their racist beliefs or appalled by London's outrageousness, which may be why the books are forgotten today and why very

few critics refer to them. In her book-length study of London's work, Reesman makes only a passing reference to *Jerry* and *Michael*, and occasional remarks on other themes suggest that she had not read them. In fact, in all the sources on London's racial attitudes cited above, only Janet M. Davis refers to either of the novels, and her article, which is an exquisitely researched history of the Jack London Club and its successes, only briefly and disparagingly touches upon the books that triggered the club's formation. Nevertheless, I contend that the books provide a salient entry point for examining London's attempt to reconcile his competing beliefs in the final years of his life. Although Social Darwinism and racialized science were the *causes célèbres* of the Progressive Era intelligentsia, London was also committed to socialist brotherhood, the "New Woman," and, in the final years of his life, the analytical psychology of Carl Jung, which suggested to him both that there was "a global sense of human community" and that "the Other" existed even within oneself as a guiding force (Reesman 117). Although Reesman writes that London did not begin reading Jung until early 1916—a few months after he finished writing *Michael*, but before either book was published—a seemingly inherited memory of an archetypal wolf brotherhood sustains Michael on his journey, invigorating him with a feeling of communion that London ultimately makes accessible to human readers, as well.

In May of 1915, while in the midst of writing *Jerry*, London delivered a speech in Honolulu to the Hands-Around-the-Pacific Organization entitled "The Patriotism of the Pacific," which he would publish later that summer as "The Language of the Tribe" (Labor 358). In it, he eschews the idea of uncrossable racial boundaries, arguing that differences and division are largely a result of people's inability to understand one another. Language is a principal source of misunderstanding and thus conflict, and the speech is chiefly

concerned with bridging divides between Japanese-, Chinese-, and English-speaking persons across the Pacific, an especially vital issue in an increasingly diverse Hawai‘i. “[H]ow hard it is to speak and understand that great tribal language of the world people,” he states. “First you must have sympathy, then you must study out, not what the other fellow says, but what he means, for the language of the world tribe is not always reducible to words—for in this language words often confuse, rather than help to an understanding” (313). Even people who speak the same tongue sometimes fail to understand one another, yet there is a “cosmic language” accessible to all. Although this “cosmic language” concerns only humans in his speech, *Jerry* and *Michael*, by granting readers access to an array of human and animal subjectivities, depict the apotheosis of this vision: the possibility of a boundary-free global community, interdependent, loving, civilized, yet still in touch with primal virtues like strength, courage, and a love for adventure. At the same time, however, London vividly and despairingly portrays the manifold threats to this utopia, which come *not* from the “savagery” of nonwhite people but from the tyrannical institutions of the British and Americans, who imprison people and animals in clean, polished, state-of-the-art cages. *Jerry* and *Michael* are, to an extent even greater than Barbara Hardy Beierl attributes to *The Call of the Wild*, exemplars of the “sympathetic imagination—the extent to which we can think ourselves into the being of another” and thus learn “to recognize what is morally good” and “embrace it and act on it” (213, 216).

London often investigated philosophical ideas by exploring mirrored characters, themes, or storylines in his fiction. In *The Call of the Wild*, for instance, the dog Buck begins on the ranch of a respectable judge in California and ends leading a wild wolfpack in Alaska, whereas *White Fang* begins with the eponymous hero as a wild hybrid puppy in

an Alaskan wolf den and ends with him protecting the property of a loving judge in California. *Jerry of the Islands* and *Michael, Brother of Jerry*, which were written in direct succession from February through December of 1915 (Williams), chart a similar mirrored path, with Michael's story beginning where Jerry's ends, echoing its predecessor through resonant inversions. If the earlier two dog books depicted the progress from domesticity to wildness and back again as experienced within *individuals* awakening or suppressing their primitive instincts, then the later pair explores these themes at a societal level; although they adapt to changing circumstances, Jerry and Michael remain fairly consistent in their beliefs, behaviors, and interests throughout their books, while it is the different workplaces, homes, and environments they tempestuously pass through that symbolize the gradations of evolution from pure, primitive wildness to savagery to barbarism to domestic civilization to brutalized overcivilization and back again. *Jerry* and *Michael* are best read as two halves of one story, with *Jerry* illustrating the complex interplay between "barbarity" and "civilization" within the colonized Pacific and *Michael* dramatizing much the same dynamics within the "civilized" United States.

Jerry begins in Meringe Lagoon in the Solomon Islands, where two cultures clash but a violently enforced imperial hierarchy is already in place. Jerry's first lessons in life equate this power structure with patriarchal divine right. The British Mister Haggin, who runs the plantation, is Jerry's master, a fact substantiated by the fearful reverence with which the other men and animals regard his authority. Jerry is likewise attuned to other power dynamics on the island: that Mister Haggin is a "superior god" who controls the other white "two-legged man-creatures" (22, 1); that they in turn control the black ones; and that the dogs in his family likewise are untouchable and exert control over the black

men, albeit only whenever the white men are present to protect them. Mister Haggin is the "superior god" by which he will measure manhood and mastery throughout the novel, but his reverence for the man is an abstraction derived solely from the man's state-sanctioned power. London describes no personal relationship between Haggin and Jerry; most descriptions of Haggin involve him scolding or threatening his subordinates, and the one time Haggin holds Jerry, it is so the man can sell him without his understanding or consent into work as a disciplinary guard dog on the *Arangi* "blackbirding" ship.

Though the novels are mostly filtered through the dogs' perspectives, they are written in an omniscient voice that slips into a variety of character perspectives, both human and animal, and it is through this omniscience that the constructedness of Jerry's imperialist, authoritarian ideology is made apparent and subtly critiqued. London writes:

> But dogs being dogs, in their dim, inarticulate, brilliant, and heroic-worshipping ways misappraising humans, dogs think of their masters, and love their masters, more than the facts warrant…. "*Mister* Haggin" had the same connotation that "God" has to God-worshipping humans. In short, *Mister* Haggin was Jerry's God. (2, emphasis his)

Although Jerry's devotion to his powerful master is total, London's narration clarifies that such submission is a "misappraisal" of facts and even insinuates that "God-worshipping humans" may be misguided by their worldviews. Jerry's racism is an ascribed status that likewise derives from his indoctrination at birth into a heavily regimented slave system, for "Jerry had been born to hate niggers…. A nigger was something to be snarled at. A nigger, unless he were a house-boy, was something to be attacked and bitten and torn if he invaded the compound. Biddy [his mother] did it. Terrence [his father] did it. In doing it, they served their God—Mister Haggin" (3). Although the excessive use of the epithet is startling and disturbing, and although London's casual use of the word in his own voice in the book's

forward is undoubtedly troublesome, the omniscient narration suggests that the racism is founded in the unworthy yet unquestioned worship of Mister Haggin. Even the essentialism at this early, credulous stage of Jerry's development is already somewhat unstable, however, since the status of "house-boy" somehow elevates one beyond his race. Throughout the two books, and especially in the first chapter of *Jerry*, London emphasizes the extent to which consciousness is dictated by fallacious assumptions, hegemonic insistence, and simple thoughtlessness. Closing the first chapter, he writes:

> He accepted it in much the way he accepted the wetness of water and the heat of the sun. It was the way of life and of the world he knew. His hazy awareness was no more than an awareness of something—which, by the way, corresponds very fairly with the hazy awareness of the average human of the mysteries of birth and death and of the beyondness about which they have no definiteness of comprehension. (13)

Although *Jerry* cannot be lauded as an antiracist satire in its total thrust, the narration nudges the reader to consider the extent to which state and economic violence creates and solidifies racial disparities.

Jerry's first upheaval occurs once he boards the *Arangi*, as he realizes that a world exists beyond the shores of Meringe Lagoon, and it is here that *Jerry of the Islands* first puts the lie to Saunders's insistence that pets worship *and* love their compassionate masters even when that compassion is conditional, occasionally interrupted by disciplinary violence and always oriented toward profitable ends. Captain Van Horn of New York, also known as "Skipper," appears to Jerry "more like a black" than a "white-skinned god" due to his informal appearance and manners (22). Jerry cannot shed his initial conviction in the superiority of Haggin with his formalities and terrible potency. However, in Van Horn Jerry has his first experience of an affectionate, familial human being. Skipper praises his

intelligence and feeds him "morsels of buttered bread and slivers of fried fish" and "a pannikin of oatmeal mush, generously flooded with condensed cream and sweetened with a heaping spoonful of sugar…. His beloved *Mister* Haggin had never fed him from the table at meal time, and Jerry was beside himself with the joy of this delightful experience" (44). Most importantly, Skipper engages Jerry in an intimate, sensual playtime encounter, which awakens Jerry's primitive instincts but keeps him from getting lost in them. Each reads the other and anticipates the other's intentions, ensuring that the encounter remains mutually enjoyable, and with a communication negotiated through words, movements, gestures, and expressions, they each make an interspecies declaration of love. The "bliss" and "ecstasy" elicited by Skipper's kind, considerate roughhousing is "speech to Jerry, full of unmistakable meaning," more akin to his play with Michael than any experience before shared with a human (58-9). In response, Jerry feigns biting and "his most ferocious growl," but all this is done explicitly "lovingly," "a making believe to hurt the one he liked too well to hurt" (59). When Jerry risks losing himself in their playacting, Skipper is able to intuit the change and immediately reestablish a loving stability: "Captain Van Horn, realizing, suddenly, instead of clutching, extended his hand wide open in the peace sign that is as ancient as the human hand. At the same time his voice rang out the single word, 'Jerry!' In it was all the imperativeness of reproof and command and all the solicitous insistence of love" (60). Jerry responds "[i]nstantly" to this "ancient" human signifier of peace, "melt[ing]" from pretend animal viciousness into a display of affection "flashing out in all the articulateness possible for a creature denied speech. It was a veritable love-feast, as dear to one as to the other" (60). Responding to this undeniable declaration of love from his dumb friend, the creature possessing speech declaims, "You're heart of gold, you

golden dog, and be good to me and love me as I shall always be good to you and love you for ever and for ever" (61). While Jerry indeed *worships* Mister Haggin as a superior god, this is done only on instinct and out of survival. With Skipper, however, a mutual understanding, an intimate physical bond, and each's provision of benefits for the other (food and safety for Jerry, work and company for Van Horn) results in mutual *love*. While Saunders's compassionate paternalism insists that worship and love are the same thing, London's depiction of brotherhood divorces the authority of one from the interdependence of the other.

Nevertheless, this particular love cannot subsist, for this scene occurs not within a home or a community but instead on a war-rigged slave ship seething with hostility. The *Arangi* is itself a metaphor of Western civilization's drive to establish dominion. Its possession of a "whaleboat" despite never being used for whaling hearkens to a recent history in which global commerce was tied to another form of exploitation. Now it is the islanders whose bodies grease the ever-turning cogs of industrial production, shuttled from their homes to British plantations in Australia on three-year work contracts with minimal pay and oppressive supervision. The ship symbolizes Western wealth's dependence upon such exploitation. London writes, "Originally a teak-built, gentleman's yacht, brass-fitted, copper-fastened, angle-ironed, sheathed in man-of-war copper and with a fin-keel of bronze, she had been sold into the Solomon Islands' trade for the purpose of blackbirding or nigger-running. Under the law, however, this traffic was dignified by being called 'recruiting'" (15). A sporting rig for a gentleman of leisure, yet armored for military engagement, the ship is now a vessel for consolidating colonial extraction in a process euphemistically associated with voluntary military engagement. The devices of one form

of status consolidation and manly power can seamlessly be repurposed for another. Immediately after Jerry and Skipper's "veritable love-feast," the narrator reminds readers that Skipper "ran cannibal blacks back and forth in the blackbird trade with an automatic strapped to his body waking and sleeping and with his head forfeit in scores of salt-water villages and bush strongholds, and… was esteemed the toughest skipper in the Solomons where only men who are tough may continue to live and esteem toughness" (61). To be sure, Van Horn's softness, which is betrayed by his tearful declaration of love at the end of this chapter and by conversations elsewhere in which he privately weeps while telling the dog of his family back home, is not what ultimately kills him in the Solomons. It remains true, however, that a life of war and violent capitalist exploitation is not a stable home for a dog.

After another upheaval, Jerry experiences home life in the company of a boy best friend, but the power structures at play in the colonized, war-torn islands continue to make the prospect of loving happiness untenable. After Skipper and the other white crewmates of the *Arangi* are killed and eaten in a tactical maneuver by Bashti, the warlord king of Somo, Jerry is likewise marked for eventual consumption. In violation of the community's laws, however, he is rescued by Lamai, a twelve-year-old boy who wishes to keep him for a pet. The community has no concept of pets, however, and this particular pet—property stolen from Bashti—could bring dire consequences to the family. Lamai attempts to comfort Jerry with "cuddling arms," water, and food, but his impatient "boyish savageness," his lack of experience with such a relationship, and his need to keep the dog hidden cause him to rely on restraints, clouts, and even cruel games in order to maintain the relationship. Being "a prisoner [tied] to a stick that rendered him helpless" does little

to conciliate Jerry to his new custodian. He remains in a "torment of desire for Skipper" compounded by his conviction that Lamai is an "inferior man-creature, a nigger," which "Jerry had been thoroughly trained all his brief days" to accept as "the law" (193, 195). Their brief and tepid relationship is cut short when his father, fearing what might happen to them for harboring the stolen dog, confesses to the village priest what has happened, which causes Jerry to enter Bashti's direct possession. In contrast to the domestic ideals of either the Beechers or Saunders, authority on Somo is not at all determined from within the home—Lamai's father, "the house-master and family head," is characterized by "laziness" and "jovial irresponsibility," and his mother rightly fears she will be tortured to death for letting her son raise a dog (186); Lamai's desire for a Saunderslike domesticity is unsustainable in a society where authority constantly exerts itself from outside the home.

When Bashti takes possession of Jerry, he bears the authority to protect Jerry from being eaten, harmed, or restrained, but his sympathy towards his would-be pet possesses only the worst motivations of a farsighted utilitarianism. Bashti appraises Jerry as stock that, if carefully bred, can increase his strength:

> Since all black men's dogs were cowards, all the breeding of all black men's dogs would produce cowards. White men's dogs were courageous fighters. When they were bred they produced courageous fighters. Very well, and to the conclusion, namely, here was a white man's dog in their possession…. The wise thing to do was to regard it as a seed dog, to keep it alive, so that in the coming generations of Somo dogs its courage would be repeated over and over and spread until all Somo dogs would be strong and brave. (206-7)

Bashti is a cunning imitator of his colonizing foes, carefully educating himself in their naval strategies, their technology, their agricultural techniques, and their means of consolidating power. As a leader shepherding his people's progress within a warzone rent

by culture clash, Bashti embodies the worst of both ends of the supposed evolutionary path for societies. His attempt to quickly adapt his island for survival combines the cannibalism, headhunting, and tyranny of "savagery" with the brutal warmongering, exploitation, and population control of "high civilization." He even intends to subject the men in his village to forced eugenicist breeding, threatening a painful death to the unwilling Nalasu, an elderly, blind widower who lives on the outskirts of the village and whose three sons have all died in war.

Nalasu becomes Jerry's final custodian on Somo, after Jerry unwittingly violates a religious sanction and must be exiled. Nalasu is the surest evidence against racist intent on London's part while writing *Jerry*, for Nalasu, a Solomon Islander, forms the strongest, most egalitarian bond between man and dog in either of the two books. The narration suggests otherwise, but it does so while insinuating that Jerry's indoctrination into racism has distorted his mind from recognizing a true love:

> For Nalasu was not a white-god, but only a mere nigger god. And Jerry hated and despised all niggers save for the two exceptions of Lamai and Nalasu. He tolerated them, and, for Nalasu, had even developed a placid and sweet affection. Love him he did not and could not.
>
> At the best, they were only second-rate gods, and he could not forget the great white-gods such as Skipper and Mister Haggin, and, of the same breed, Derby and Bob [very minor characters, workers on Haggin's plantation, for whom Jerry certainly has no genuine love or respect]. They were something else, something other, something better than all this black savagery in which he lived….
>
> In vain did the old man play to gain Jerry's heart of love. He could not bid against Jerry's many reservations and memories, although he did win absolute faithfulness and loyalty. Not passionately, as he would have fought to the death for Skipper, but devotedly would he have fought to the death for Nalasu. And the old man never dreamed but what he had won all of Jerry's heart. (254-5)

"[P]lacid and sweet affection," "absolute faithfulness and loyalty," and a willingness to "devotedly" (albeit not "passionately") fight "to the death" attains in his relationship with Nalasu, which "could not" possibly be a description of *love* due to the man's skin color, whereas such love is of course granted to white men like Derby and Bob, albeit one that is vaguely, immaterially "something else, something other." London deconstructs prejudicial notions of affinity, asking readers to discern nonexistent distinctions between racially sanctioned "devotion" and racially proscribed "passion."

Nalasu likewise exemplifies self-control, patience, and social intelligence. In a feat requiring prodigious concentration and intuition on Nalasu's part, the blind man teaches Jerry to communicate in a "whiff-whuff shorthand language," developed so that both of them are capable of producing its sounds (300). Thus, unlike the commands taught by Skipper or the popular melodies Michael will later learn to howl, Jerry learns an actual language capable of crossing the interspecies boundary in both directions. The language is limited by the decreased capacity for abstraction possessed by Jerry (who is still a puppy), yet the two friends have lengthy "conversation" about the goings on outside Nalasu's hut (253). Jerry becomes Nalasu's eyes, keeping him abreast of local news; in essence, Jerry completes Nalasu's body, and the interdependence is mutual insofar as Nalasu, like Skipper, provides much needed food as well as much desired "fondling and caressing" (259).

One might argue that Nalasu's ability to communicate with Jerry is an extension of London's theory (articulated seven years earlier) that there were "higher animals" and "lower humans," and that these two companions were somehow similar enough in

intelligence that communication between them was a natural, unnoteworthy development. London, however, describes Nalasu's accomplishment in the most praiseworthy of terms:

> Nalasu was a rigid disciplinarian who insisted on training Jerry for longer hours, day in and day out, than falls to the lot of most dogs. Never did Jerry receive from him a blow, never a harsh word. This man, who had slain four of the Annos, three of them after he had gone blind, who had slain still more men in his savage youth, never raised his voice in anger to Jerry and ruled him by nothing severer than the gentlest of chidings…. Possibly no dog in all the world had ever been so vocal as he, and for three reasons: his own intelligence, the genius for teaching that was Nalasu's, and the long hours devoted to the teaching. (252)

This description is remarkable for the degree of simultaneous manliness, education, and patient self-control to which London grants a nonwhite character. Prior to the Civil War, the appeal of trained wild animal performances came from the aggressive mastery of the natural order—man's ability to conquer ferocious beasts and make them harmless, amusing objects (Davis 337). Beginning in 1855, however, John Solomon Rarey championed a new form of animal training, "gentling" or "Rareyism" which sought to cultivate man's rational knowledge of evolutionary science in order to awaken a less primitive side of the animal (Davis 337). This method minimized violence overall and obscured almost all violence from performances, allowing spectators to regard peaceful submission as a more enjoyable form of mastery, but—as Bellini the Italian showman admits in *Beautiful Joe*, as saintly Miss Laura demonstrates with the whippings of her bootlace, and as London extensively details in *Michael*—patterns of violent control were still necessary behind the scenes in order to comport the wild creature's agency with the trainer's desires. That Nalasu is able to achieve the same aim due to "the long hours devoted to" his "genius for teaching" exemplifies a much higher form of mastery. That this restraint is exhibited by a man who has already proven his physical strength and courage in war and, above all, by a "black

savage" at a time when many members of the SPCA believed that African Americans, foreigners, and working class persons in their own communities were incapable of compassionate education (Pearson 70)—all this speaks to a message in *Jerry* that contrasts its ostensible virulent racism. Nevertheless, the tumult of international war means that even this exemplary steward cannot sustain a stable relationship with Jerry; external societal factors forever threaten individuals' attempts at union, and Nalasu is killed by indiscriminate shelling from a British warship, bringing their interdependent relationship to an end.

Nalasu's death is not the end of *Jerry of the Islands*, but it is useful now to turn to *Michael*, which is predominantly set within a Western social environment, for in many ways Nalasu resembles the character with whom Jerry's brother spends the majority of the sequel. Dag Daughtry, nicknamed Steward, a white sailor of unspecified, cosmopolitan origins, is a manifestation of the masculine primitive. London writes, "By luck of birth possessed of a genial but soft disposition and a splendid constitution, his reputation was that for twenty years he had never missed his day's work nor his six daily quarts of bottled beer" (1-2). A hard-working hedonist, a lover of drink, song, and good humor, true to his word, faithful to his friends, and both astute and strong enough to protect himself and those around him, Steward attracts a motley entourage of companions who have somehow managed to escape being ensnared in the competition, acquisitiveness, and aggressiveness of modern capitalism's struggle for survival. This noble ship of fools, which Steward and the narrator five times refer to as a "family," includes Kwaque, a Papuan man whose status in places like Australia requires him to legally be regarded as a slave to Daughtry, yet who is treated by his "master" more as a brother; Ah Moy, an elderly Chinese cook who defies

the anti-Chinese propaganda of the era with his fear of leprosy and the fastidious cleanliness of his quarters; Cocky, a cockatoo from the New Hebrides whose existence as a fungible piece of chattel is charted through numerous detailed exchanges across the Pacific despite his being not an object but "as mortal or as immortal as any brave sparkle of life on the planet" (87); Charles Stough Greenleaf, nicknamed the "Ancient Mariner," once the prodigal son of an illustrious family, now a con artist who swindles would-be treasure seekers with fabricated stories of sunken gold, not so that he can steal their money but more so that he can spend time in their company, out in the world, instead of confined to a poor house; and Michael, whom Steward steals from his blackbirding ship very early in the novel and thus frees from being a pawn in the slave system. These castaways are contrasted with the other men they encounter in their collective journey across the Pacific to San Francisco—men whose selfish, deceitful, and single-minded lust for money endangers themselves and Steward's family.

Neel Ahuja has written—in reference to *other* stories written by London and set in the Pacific—that he was "too steeped in an American masculinist individualism to allow for a vision of interdependence," seeing "extinction" as the inevitable outcome of persons subjected to "the predatory provider role of the colonial power" and "the disabling affects [*sic*] of empire" (24-5), yet *Michael* not only glorifies such interdependent relations but also allows some measure of a free and happy ending for most of their coparticipants. In San Francisco, Steward's "family" functions as a scrappy community, each contributing to the common good until the forces of society isolate them from one another. To be sure, London writes with wry, foreboding realism that upon arriving in the United States, "Ah Moy got no farther ashore than the detention sheds of the Federal Immigration Board,

whence he was deported to China on the next Pacific Mail steamer" (143), but the rest of the crew eke out a pleasant living for a while. Michael uses his musical abilities, awakened by Steward's singing and Kwaque's instrumentation, to busk. Steward appoints himself Michael's "business manager," and he arranges singing engagements at bars, in addition to finessing small-scale hustles that incorporate Michael's ability to perform staged tricks. Michael enjoys the stimulating work, and London writes, "In truth, Michael was the bread-winner for quite a family, each member of which fared well" (157). Kwaque takes care of the "cooking and housekeeping," but lest it sound like he is a servant confined to the house, London also notes that "[l]ittle time was required of him in caring for Daughtry, for they had come to eating in restaurants" (157). Kwaque instead spends most of his days as "a devotee of the moving-picture shows" (157). Meanwhile, the elderly Greenleaf "contributes" to the pot by lying in wait at a fancy hotel, nominally earning his keep by seeking a curious seagoing adventurer to ensnare in his fabulous treasure quest. Steward's words and actions, however, make it obvious that Daughtry is more interested in caring for the old man while protecting his pride than actually expecting him to make any meaningful financial contribution. As he tells Michael, "[I]f he can't snare a sucker we'll put up the cash ourselves 'n' buy a schooner for 'm, 'n' send him out a-treasure-huntin' on his own. We'll be the suckers, eh, just you an' me, an' love to" (156). Everyone (excepting Ah Moy) is content until misfortune imprisons them all.

This misfortune first appears in the form of Harry Del Mar, a high roller representative of high civilization's rapacious acquisitiveness. Del Mar, believing that he can better exploit Michael's talents for maximal profitability, offers Steward a thousand dollars, arguing that he is entitled to have the dog simply because "I like him" and men

with means have a tendency of getting what they like. When Steward counters that the object of their exchange, Michael, should have an equal opportunity of getting what he likes, pointing out that Michael visibly despises Del Mar and that "No man'd want a dog that don't like him," Del Mar is befuddled by the argument, since by his logic nobody else's interests matter (161). Del Mar presses the deal, and the unrelenting Steward adopts his interlocutor's capitalist logic in arguing against him, insisting that one thousand dollars would be a loss on a dog who could potentially net him one hundred thousand dollars. "I suppose you think he'll last for ever, like so much land," Del Mar responds, attaching an expiration date to Michael's exploitability (162). At that, Daughtry drops the capitalist argumentation, realizing that his own beliefs are irreconcilable with the businessman's. "That ain't no kind of business—for me . . . an' him," Steward says. "Besides, when he can't work any more, an' ain't worth a cent, he'll be worth just a plumb million to me, an' if anybody offered it, I'd raise the price" (162). Steward's commitment to Michael, as in his responsibility to the aging Greenleaf and the rest of his family, is divorce from the logic of zero-sum utilitarian economics.

The wealthy Harry Del Mar, seemingly for the first time in his life, fails to get what he wants, yet the encounter is also witnessed by another representative of rapacious American cunning, Doctor Walter Merritt Emory, who utilizes his scientific medical authority to achieve his self-interests. Doctor Emory is "a keen, clever man, undoubtedly able in his profession, but passionately selfish as a hungry tiger," and when Daughtry and Kwaque finally heed the symptoms of their leprosy that have been growing throughout the novel, he preys upon them rather than treat them, so that he can broker his own deal with Del Mar (159). "[A]based by his desire for the possession of Michael," he seizes the

opportunity of using the men's contagious illness to institutionalize them (175). In their forced absence, Michael is stolen from their lodgings, and in the process Cocky is accidentally killed in a scene which vividly renders the tragedy of the moment from within the bird's perspective. Steward and Kwaque never see Michael again, but the story continues to follow them for a while as they endure an imprisoned existence in the "pest-house of San Francisco," where they are legally trapped and forgotten until Greenleaf rescues them and the three remaining family members stumble away in each other's arms towards the shore, literally supporting each other in their infirmities, hoping to find the freedom to live their simple family life on the open sea or somewhere beyond it.

Greenleaf's rescue delivers a satisfying narrative payoff—he has now done his part to save the family—but thematically the rescue is important because the "Ancient Mariner" can personally empathize with American society's numerous ways of caging undesirable others. Earlier in the novel, he had told Steward of the "sordid" six months when he was forced to live "like a beast": "In the poor-farm one is shut out from life…. How shall I say it? One is not dead. Nor is one alive. One is what once was alive and is in process of becoming dead…. That is it—other. And so, in the poor-farm, we, who are yet unburied, are other…. The food, the filth, the abuse, the bullying, the—the sheer animalness of it!" (106). Anticipating Foucault, London likens the "pest-house" that imprisons San Francisco's lepers to the "poor-farm," the asylum for the "insane," the military, and all the other regimented cages where society's outcasts go to die (106). The pest-house is "situated on the bleakest, remotest, forlornest, cheapest space of land owned by the city…. The only class of frequenters [who came nearby] was the suicides, who, sad of life, sought the saddest landscape as a fitting scene in which to end" (184-5). Surrounded by armed guards

who would be "more prone to kill than to lay hands on any escaping pest-man," and enclosed on all sides by eucalyptus trees which are "[p]oorly planted, by politics, illy attended, by politics, decimated and many times repeatedly decimated by the hostile forces of their environment, a straggling corporal's guard of survivors… twisted and distorted, as if writhing in agony," the lepers, adjudged a valueless threat to society, await their lonely deaths (185). London does not only diagnose the depressing inhumanity of this fate when contrasted with, for instance, Steward's respectful caretaking of Greenleaf earlier in the novel; additionally, he condemns the sheer wastefulness of this practice, which does not prevent financial loss by ostracizing the system's unproductive, undesirable, and perhaps contagious members but instead continues to generate new financial exchanges via their marginalization, since "when the expense of the maintenance of armed guards over the pest-house, day and night, throughout the years, is considered," the imprisonment of these men costs "many thousands of dollars to the tax-payers of the city and county of San Francisco," money which "could have been diverted to the reduction of the notorious crowding in school-rooms, to purer milk for the babies of the poor, or to an increase of breathing-space in the park system for the people of the stifling ghetto" (175). London situates the suffering of individuals not just as an appeal to sentimental values but as a condemnation of a system that naturally tends toward utilitarian exploitation, division, subjugation, exile, and annihilation rather than an interdependent, compassionate care that might uplift everyone.

Meanwhile, Michael, who still has longevity as a valuable commodity, nevertheless endures a similar imprisonment in more literal cages. He is sold to Harris Collins, an animal trainer with a sterling reputation. Michael recognizes that Collins is a "high god," since

"[o]nly a high god, a master over ordinary gods, could be so imperative. Will was in [his] voice, and accustomedness to command" (215). Again shattering the illusion that worship *and* love are the entitlements of the benevolent paternalist, the narrator notes that "any dog would have decided that there was no love nor lovableness in the god behind the voice, nothing to warm one's heart nor to adore" (215). The domain of this "high god" is Cedarwild, an "animal hell" used to train animals for the circus and other performances. If the two books are conceived of as an heroic odyssey, then the second half of *Michael* is the visit to the underworld, with protracted descriptions of electrocuted lions, chained monkeys, suffocated tigers, whipped horses, and beaten dogs, all methodically "educated" by tamers who perform as though *they* are the ones in danger and in pain. Nevertheless, "Cedarwild, *to look at*, was anything save a hell. Velvet lawns, gravelled walks and drives, and flowers formally growing, led up to the group of long low buildings" (213, emphasis mine). Collins has already mastered an essential component of animal exploitation in a post-SPCA, post-Darwin twentieth century: it must not be fully visible to the people at large.

In an era when the citizenry would rebel against outright cruelty yet they easily indulge in that cruelty's benefits when the violence is safely hidden in slaughterhouses, factory farms, and high-security medical laboratories, Collins knows it is essential to maintain an orderly, sanitized, aesthetically pleasing institution. In fact, his facility:

> entertained many visitors, who invariably went away with their souls filled with ecstasy over the atmosphere of sweetness and light that pervaded the place. Never, however, were they permitted to see the actual training. On occasion, performances were given them by the finished products which verified all their other delightful and charming conclusions about the school. But had they seen the training of raw novices, it would have been a different story. It might even have been a riot. (209-10)

Indeed, even the private spaces of Cedarwild conform to superficial requirements of cleanliness, sustenance, and prevention of "unnecessary harm"; in this respect, Cedarwild would presumably pass many twenty-first-century welfare laws regarding the "humane" conditions necessary to maintain a stock of laboratory and farm animals awaiting their inevitable deaths at the hands of humans. When Michael and the other animals are not actively being trained, "nothing happened in the way of development of germ diseases, and nothing happened to [them] except regular good food, pure drinking-water, and absolute isolation from contact with all life save the youth-god [attendant] who, like an automaton, attended on [them]" (215). London satirizes a system of humanness that nourishes the profitable body while ignoring the mind and emotional well-being.

Harris Collins is an unusual devil in the history of literary villains who are cruel to animals. His cruelty is not that of a gleeful gander puller, never stopping to consider that the screaming of the goose might reveal something improper. It is not the profligacy of James Fenimore Cooper's thoughtless hunter, who would kill a thousand-pound buffalo every day to provide himself with a single meal. It is not the vicious selfishness of Saunders's Jenkins, who apparently lacks the education and temperament to restrain himself from lashing out at his horses and dogs, nor is it the wanton evil of Hogarth's Tom Nero, who delights in stoning cats. Such villains, if they were considered villains at all, had personal failings, flaws in their temperaments that threatened to spread outward, infecting their societies with dissolution. Collins, however, is a man in complete control, a model businessman, utilizing the system in the manner in which it was intended and benefitting from it maximally. London writes, "He was as cold as the concrete floor, as methodical as

a machine," performing his "scientific and antiseptic" "business from the first tick of the clock to the last bite of the lash," "without deliberate harshness, but without any slightest hint of gentleness or consideration" (213-4). London demonstrates that it is the system as a whole which fosters and abets such villains. It is reflective of the grinding, sterile, industrial workplace in which human men at the turn of the century likewise found themselves imprisoned, as was a continual theme in the literary naturalism of London and others. The mechanized "workplace had become a less viable site" "for assertions of male power," writes Leonard Cassuto, revealing "what Peter N. Stearns calls 'the fragility of early industrial manhood' in the United States at the turn of the century" (2). Michael's plight reflects the anxieties of men like London, but the animals are never allegorically absented from the story, as, for instance, Upton Sinclair insists they were in his graphic descriptions of the slaughterhouse in *The Jungle* (1906) (Lundblad 109). For London, the animals' suffering is also cause for despair.

Thoughtless adherence to the "modern" system mechanically produces idle cruelty, even at the hands of persons who in no way seem villainous. Once Michael has completed his training at Cedarwild, he is sold for two thousand dollars to Jacob Henderson, who travels the country exhibiting Michael as the "Dog Caruso." London describes Henderson as the utmost of strange insofar as he is so perfectly *normal*, "a neutral sort of creature… neither good nor evil… as colourless of character as the neutral-coloured clothes he wore, as the neutral-coloured hair that sprawled upon his crown, as the neutral-coloured eyes with which he observed the world" (287-8). In his thoroughly unremarkable habits, as a man who minds his own business and ekes out a living deemed perfectly acceptable by society, he could be almost any working schmo reading London's book:

> He was a vegetarian without being a bigoted one, liked moving pictures when they were concerned with travel, and spent most of his spare time in reading Swedenborg. He had no temper whatever. Nobody had ever witnessed anger in him, and all said he had the patience of Job. He was even timid of policemen, freight agents, and conductors, though he was not afraid of them…. Nor was he a fool any more than was he a wise man or a scholar. He gave little to life, asked little of life, and, in the show business, was a recluse in the very heart of life. (287-8)

With his vegetarianism and his devotion to Swedenborg, an eighteenth-century Swedish theologian who advocated that people respect animals as a meaningful representation of the divine, Henderson could even lay claim to being an advocate for animals. He certainly never harms Michael in their dealings. In fact, "Jacob Henderson was fair and square, business-like and methodical": "They simply endured together, existed together, because the currents of life had drifted them together. Of course, there was no heart-bond between them. Henderson was master. Michael was Henderson's chattel. Michael was as dead to him as he was himself dead to all things" (288). London carefully distinguishes that it is *not* the requirement that Michael must work for Henderson's profit which produces his misery. Michael had enjoyed being the breadwinner for the family of "his love-god, Steward" and "would gladly have done" any of the same tricks "out of love" (232). Michael possesses no "heart-bond" with Henderson, however, and so they are both dispirited husks in a simulacrum of a free world. "A life prisoner to a lifeless gaoler, life was all grey to Michael," London writes. "He permitted himself to become a sheer puppet slave, eating, taking his baths, travelling in his cage, performing regularly, and sleeping much" (290). As a socialist anticipating Max Weber's concept of the "iron cage," London relishes the dignity, necessity, and value of work, but stresses the drudgery of mechanized labor.

A *deus ex machina* renders the same happy ending for both novels. After British shelling kills Nalasu and Jerry becomes homeless on an island whose surviving residents would consider him food, the dog is discovered and adopted by Harley and Villa Kennan, two obvious stand-ins for Jack and Charmian London—free-spirited, good-humored, empathetic, sensual, adventurous, heterosexual, and, perhaps most importantly, white and fabulously wealthy. The privileged stability afforded by their whiteness and their wealth ensures they will be able to protect Jerry where his other custodians had failed. Similarly, at the end of *Michael*, the Kennans attend a performance of the "Dog Caruso," realize that he is the long-lost brother of their Jerry, and are ultimately able to adopt the profoundly depressed dog into their family. The Kennans possess the same admirable qualities of all the previously good custodians of Jerry and Michael: a physical bond, a willingness to communicate, a respect for the dogs' agency. They even attempt, with some success, to deprogram the dogs' indoctrinated racism. But they seem rather anticlimactic as saviors. They never learn how to decipher Jerry's "whiff whuff" language, taught to him by Nalasu. They never quite possess the largeness of life exuded by Steward. The denouement of each book is swift and perhaps more "antitragic" than truly exuberantly happy. In fact, the only thing they possess in abundance is the cultural prestige and good fortune to provide a stable family life for the dogs—more of an accidental advantage than a personal virtue. In contrast to Davis's argument that the books posit whiteness as an essential prerequisite to "proper stewardship" and the "rights of ownership," London instead suggests that if more people of means aligned themselves toward a compassionate vision and actually had the wherewithal to execute that vision, then more of the characters in the book might have likewise been able to experience happy endings.

Michael ends with a vision of interspecies community. Throughout the book, Michael had dreamed of being part of a primal, archetypal wolfpack where he could run free without being alone. The narration analogizes this wolfpack to human religion and the afterlife, using much the same imagery and language to describe a place sometimes called "heaven" that is "beyond the dark[,] a fairer region, a happier hunting-ground, a jollier and robuster feasting-hall and wassailing-place" (118). In *Beautiful Joe's Paradise*, Saunders had imagined that such an egalitarian utopia, for animals at least, could only exist if a loving God were benevolent enough to provide his creatures with an unknowable afterlife. London, however, unappeased by such millenarian promises, ends *Michael* with a small glimpse into what that "jollier and robuster feasting-hall" might look like on earth, free from any need for a "superior god." As Harley enters the room at the novel's conclusion, he finds that his wife has arranged a dog-centric choir:

> It was Villa who started and pitched the Doxology, but quickly the two dogs joined with their own soft, mellow howling, if howling it may be called when it was so soft and mellow and true. And all that had vanished into the Nothingness was in the minds of the two dogs as they sang, and they sang back through the Nothingness to the land of Otherwhere, and ran once again with the Lost Pack, and yet were not entirely unaware of the present and of the indubitable two-legged god who was called Villa and who sang with them and loved them.
>
> "No reason we shouldn't make a quartette of it," remarked Harley Kennan, as with his own voice he joined in. (344)

It must be stressed, however, that London was not content with the mere catharsis provided by this domestic scene with its four loving, freedom-minded, virtuous individuals harmonizing. In other words, he feared readers might simply close the book with their heart cockles warmed and feel that all was now right in the world, that the recognition of misery and the tears shed over it were sufficient service in the struggle to overcome injustice.

"Practically all of us will weep red tears and sweat bloody sweats as we come to knowledge of the unavoidable cruelty and brutality on which the trained-animal world rests and has its being," London writes in his introduction to *Michael*. "But not one-tenth of one per cent. of us will join any organization for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and by our words and acts and contributions work to prevent the perpetration of cruelties on animals" (vii). We must not be Jacob Hendersons, thoroughly neutral in our thoughtless acceptance of the fellow beings enduring oppression all around us, content that we are at least surviving it ourselves without adding too much to it. Thus, London's introduction also contains a direct, detailed call to action, advising all readers that if they really want the book's happy ending to come true, they must commit to boycotting or walking out on any performance that features trained animals and to furthermore inform the management, in person or in writing, precisely why their seats have been left empty. "Show the management that such turns are unpopular, and in a day, in an instant, the management will cease catering such turns to its audiences" (viii). Even "under the easy circumstance of our own weakness," it is truly "so easy" to make a substantial difference.

Jerry of the Islands and *Michael, Brother of Jerry* were the last original novels that Jack London would complete prior to his death at age 40 on November 22, 1916.[36] Published posthumously in 1917, the books had an extraordinary impact, especially after *Michael* was adopted by the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals as the foundational text of the Jack London Club in March 1918. The Jack London

[36] *Hearts of Three* was written at the tail end of London's composition of *Michael* and was completed three weeks after, technically making it his final finished book, yet this pirate adventure was a novelization of a screenplay by Charles Goddard. London additionally wrote thirteen short stories in the final year of his life, plus an uncompleted novel titled *Eyes of Asia* (Walker 43-5, Williams).

Club, which claimed membership of over 900,000 members internationally by February 1946, was dedicated to exercising the plan laid out in London's introduction, loudly protesting and dramatically walking out on acts that employed animal workers, signaling to the rest of the audience that even if everything appeared fun and harmless, there were invisible cruelties occurring behind the scenes (Davis 334-5). It took time for these organizations to have any lasting effect. In 1919, the MSPCA shepherded a bill through the Massachusetts legislature banning trained animal acts, yet, realizing that the circus—the granddaddy of all trained animal acts—was too powerful and popular to be resisted, they excluded the circus from the ban. This was strategical, and "they still worked hard to ban the circus in the court of public opinion" (Davis 336). In 1925, the general manager of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus banned all "cage acts" featuring big cats, framing the decision as a concession to the people "in many quarters" who possess "a decided aversion" to what *appears to be* "the suggestion of cruelty in training and handling" (qtd. Davis 344). Janet M. Davis notes, however, that the manager had long been motivated to end the performances simply because of how costly and cumbersome the cages and sets were.

The Jack London Club's drive to investigate and limit cruel practices in animal performances continued through the 1940s, but the terms of this engagement strayed from London's reckoning with an exploitative American system and instead took on the divisive rhetoric of xenophobic scapegoating. Growing anti-German and anti-foreign xenophobia during and following the Great War—combined with the facts that many performers who appeared with animals were foreigners and that the number-one supplier of trained animals was a German man named Carl Hagenback—often turned the debate into a denunciation

of *other* ethnicities' more natural, intemperate, and severe inclination toward savagery. David A.H. Wilson, analyzing the rhetoric of testimony in the court hearings leading up to England's passage of the Performing Animal (Regulation) Act in 1925, which he likewise credits to the concerted actions of the Jack London Club, writes, "The 'alien enemy' became an easy scapegoat, vulnerable because of the aftermath of the war, and foreigners, and other races generally, became victims of xenophobia, racism, and beliefs about British moral superiority" (152-3) While a white American man or a British woman could be trusted to treat an elephant gently, an African American attendant or a German trainer could not be trusted to not be beating the animals outside of public view. Davis implicitly accuses Jack London of throwing fuel on these flames because of his derogatory depictions of Solomon Islanders. "Although the MSPCA was fiercely antiracist," she notes, their publication *Our Dumb Animals* heavily publicized London's books alongside the mission statement for the Jack London Club, and the Club in turn adopted "the pervasive rhetoric of the 'enemy alien'" in its critiques of animal entertainments (335). While I contend that London intended to expose racist divisions as yet another cage instituted by a brutal modern civilization, it is undeniable that the subtlety and inconsistency of this message likely did more harm than good.

Jerry of the Islands and *Michael, Brother of Jerry*, with their eighty-three uses of the n-word, their lurid descriptions of Melanesian cannibalism and torture, and their starting place in the mindset of a devoted racist, are not likely to earn a place on any middle school reading lists in the near future. On Goodreads, a social media platform for bibliophiles, *Jerry* is ranked #35 as London's most-read title, with 524 ratings compared to the 440,764 combined ratings for the various editions of *The Call of the Wild* that appear

in the top sixty.[37] (The tendency to think of *Michael* not as the second half of one story but as a sequel, likely to be lesser in quality than its predecessor, means that it ranks even lower—at #54 with 322 ratings—depriving readers of the fact that *Michael* provides much of the counterpoint to *Jerry*'s ostensible racism.) The vast majority of reviews, especially the negative ones, comment on how "staggeringly racist" the book and its author are, with the most generous interpretations conceding, in the words of one reviewer, that they are merely reflective of "Prevailing Attitudes of the Time." Little consideration is given to the possibility that London's intention was to deconstruct and expose the racism and other forms of exploitation on display, and since he died before the books were published, there exists no interview in which, like *Martin Eden*, he can "set the record straight." The books' apparent virulent racism may also explain why they receive extremely little scholarly attention, and their neglect by critics interested in London's views on race, despite the books providing much interesting material on that subject, can perhaps be explained by academia's general dismissal of literature about animals as juvenile, unserious, and unrelated to more pressing human-oriented concerns. *Michael* was a book that was astoundingly successful at initiating political action, even if *Jerry*'s attempt to stage an intervention into racist ideology was a problematic, overly nuanced failure that may have even sullied *Michael*'s success. At best, London's final, understudied books provide his most egalitarian vision of interspecies, interracial, intercultural brotherhood. At the very least, as with *Moby-Dick* and the works of Captain Mayne Reid, they provide a case study in the ways in which popular literary genre tropes, background research culled from

[37] As of October 22, 2020.

perhaps ideologically tainted authorities, and an attempt to envision a new way for structuring a society's systems of governance coalesce and shape their culture in unpredictable ways.

In the end, the Jack London Club succeeded nearly a century after its formation. The last performance of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus was in New York on May 21, 2017. Though several factors probably led to the declining ticket sales that precipitated its demise, including shifting tastes and technological advances that changed the entertainment landscape, the most cited culprit was animal rights organizations like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, who for decades had formed protest lines outside the entranceways to circus coliseums, distributing pamphlets to ticketholders depicting elephants in captivity and describing the methods required to subdue a tiger.

London's vision of "a jollier and a robuster feasting-hall" where everyone is fed and cared for, where systems are designed to promote intimacy, interdependence, and consideration rather than the endless generation of personal wealth, where walls do not confine or exclude, and where everyone of every species speaks a "cosmic language" remains as yet unfulfilled.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION
THE LONELY SPECIES

If I may, some personal snapshots:

When I moved from the suburbs, where the animals I had the most exposure to were cockroaches, to a college town in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, I was, to say the least, quite pleased with the bucolic farm that was a stone's throw from my new apartment. I never saw any human farmers emerge from the two-story, wooden farmhouse that stood at the center of the pasture, but I saw the twenty-five or so cows on a daily basis, sometimes standing near the road, sometimes grazing near the house, sometimes densely packed way back where the trees were. I would say hello to them whenever I passed, and I considered them the best neighbors I had ever had. When after several months the field was suddenly empty, I wondered aloud what trip they had gone on and why. Yes, I was quite stupid. My boyfriend, driving the car, had to point out the most plausible scenario. Eight years would pass before I would eat meat again.

The decision to resume eating meat, a decision which I regret, was made as I prepared to move to South Korea, not wanting to overwhelm myself with additional hurdles as I faced the challenge of living alone in a country that was foreign to me. The first meat I ate, a burger made from a turkey, felt like paper towels in my mouth, like something that was under no circumstances meant to be in there, but eventually the habit became normal again. For a while it was lonely in Korea, but I kept myself moving and I kept my eyes open. One day I hiked to the top of a small mountain in my neighborhood and discovered on a rusted iron gate a tiny, fuzzy white insect that, for reasons I don't understand, I somehow knew to be a woolly aphid. Initially somewhat out of sight on the underside of a

bar that was chest level to me, he or she came out to greet me, boldly traversing the bar until we were oriented face to face, our eyes locked in a sustained greeting. *This thing sees me,* I thought, *and is as interested in me as I am in it*. I thought of my husband, fifteen time zones away, and didn't feel so lonely for the rest of the day.

When we brought "Ash" home in August of 2015, a long-haired black cat whose previous names had been "Bitty" and "Brixton," we discovered that the tag on his cage declaring "I'm an independent boy" meant that he was, in fact, very shy. He hid under the bed, behind the radiator, and under the bathtub, a dark, dusty space we didn't even know existed. One day we found his green eyes peering out from an impossibly narrow space behind an undisturbed row of books on a shelf. I thought of Fortunato from "The Cask of Amontillado," and henceforth his name was Poe.

It was not too long before he stopped hiding all the time. When I groomed the matted, knotted tangles of gray-black fur between his legs and across his belly, that seemed to help him gain some confidence, though I can't say with certainty that the problem all along was merely his shame over what must have seemed an endless bad hair day. When the friendship truly began was the morning he relaxed into my chest, kneaded his long claws into my skin in a somewhat delightfully painful way, and suckled at my t-shirt as though looking for milk. When cats do this—and not all do—it means they were separated from their mothers at a young age, before the nursing stage was complete, probably by some well-intentioned citizen who wanted to save the itty-bitty kitten from the streets (Bering 18). It is a self-soothing ritual that Poe will never "outgrow." Five years later, it has all the accoutrements of an elaborate routine, one which he conducts entirely according to his whims and specifications. It begins shortly after breakfast, when Poe speaks to me

in the closest thing that can be called a bark, a sharp, enunciative meow accompanied by a forceful rollicking of the head and a spitting out of the tongue. This means he wants his blanket prepared, a microfiber throw with a tacky Christmas tree and pickup truck theme given to us by one of my husband's coworkers, immediately commandeered by Poe, and thus present in our home at all seasons. I spread the blanket thickly on the loveseat beside me or across my lap if I'm working at the computer, and when he's satisfied, he settles in, rooting his angular black face in search of a promising spot, extending his long arms outward so that his paws can rhythmically contract, pumping out potential milk which I'm saddened to know will never come, though I'm not sure if he possesses the same level of realism about his prospects. It's not sufficient for me to simply be present during this process. No, I must participate, and if I don't perform my prescribed role, he will interrupt the proceedings, glare up at me, and saucily emit a guttural command that tells me to get to it. My job is to caress his neck and ears, to massage his slender shoulders and the upper half of his back, to transform my fingers and sometimes the tip of my nose into a mother's tongue. He lets me know if my work is subpar. Eventually the tempo of the kneading claws slows to a standstill, a pleasurable sigh escapes his lungs, and he seems to snap back to reality. He glances about the room, then he curls on his side and settles into a slumber. Only then am I allowed to resume my own business.

This is "instinctive" behavior, of course, for plenty of other cats do very similar things in order to feel peaceful and safe, but I would say that Poe's conscious organization of the ritual according to his needs and desires makes it far less instinctive than my own daily behavior. My sleep is plagued every single night by a rhythmic movement disorder that, among other actions that are startling to onlookers, causes my body from the hips

upward to rock side to side at a rapid pace while in the first stage of sleep. This has been an unavoidable part of my daily life since I was thirteen months old, when an unexplained illness turned my skin gray and required me to be kept in isolation in a hospital room, riddled with IVs and wires after having undergone a painful spinal tap. I do not remember this, of course, just as Poe probably does not remember his mother, but I presume that the trauma causes me still, thirty-four years later, to rock myself as in a crib in order to transition into a deep sleep. Doctors advise that someone sharing a bed with a person who has RMD should not attempt to awaken them, as doing so will only cause the process to repeat again as soon as the person nods off; the movements, it seems, are a necessary part of the transition into sleep. I have many times consciously initiated the rocking whenever I had insomnia and thought that I could trick myself into falling asleep, but for the most part it is involuntary, occurring without my awareness or consent. If I am sharing a bedroom with an unfamiliar person and do not want them to see me transform into an infant, or do not want them to fear that I am possessed by the demon Pazuzu, then my only choice is to not actually sleep at all. When I assist Poe in his bedtime ritual, even when it cuts into whatever pressing deadlines I'm worrying about, I know that I'm helping a person I love get the sleep he needs and that he would understand and do the same for me if the roles were reversed, for our weird little babylike habits are very much the same.

Coming into contact with others, especially in a sustained way that allows one to break through superficial first appearances, is an enriching and illuminating experience, and most of the U.S. Americans living in the 84.9 million homes which contain pets are likely to have their own unique stories of connection and identification with their beloved companions ("Pet Industry Market Size"). But while they may feel emphatic that cats and

dogs—and especially *their* cats and dogs—are thoughtful individuals with unique subjectivities and thus a presence that demands to be treated with dignity, they may believe, "anthropomorphophobically," to use zoologist Donald Griffin's term (qtd. Crist 36), that the animals that provide commodities for their food, their clothing, their cosmetics, and their pharmaceuticals, as well as the "pests" that interfere with their attempts to build sanitized, orderly, predictable human environments, cannot possibly be built of the same caliber, cannot possibly merit the same considerations. Yet field ethologists studying cows, bison, wasps, and more conclude that there is indeed something there, something captivating, something more than just a useful, undistinguished object.

The twentieth century hid the slaughtered chickens behind aluminum walls and the vivisected primates within locked laboratories. Automobiles, tanks, and tractors replaced horses, and cities and suburbs replaced woodland habitats. The carbon burned, the temperatures rose, the oceans acidified, the mountains were fracked, deadly dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane seeped into the groundwater, the diverse old growth forests became uniform paper mill orchards, the prairies became monocrops, globalization exposed species to fungal infections and parasites and predators and microbes they were not prepared to handle, and what scientists have deemed "the sixth extinction," a rapid die-off of species, began. Meanwhile, the human population spread from 1.6 billion in 1900 to 7.8 in 2020, while blockbuster science fiction films like Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar* (2014) and Ridley Scott's *The Martian* (2015) decided that our best path forward might be to colonize the barren landscapes of foreign planets. What a lonely future our species has consigned itself to.

When Linnaeus began converting the observation of plants and animals into a systematic science, he believed he was constructing a lens through which to gaze askance upon the face of God. When Buffon dispatched naturalists to gather specimens from colonies around the globe, the plenitude of marvels he bore witness to provided infinite fascination, and he would spend the rest of his life writing hundreds of thousands of words about the diversity of life waiting to be studied. It was not long before the reams of useful data yielded from this study began to be applied toward more utilitarian, imperialistic attempts at human "progress," yet the field itself bifurcated the responses onlookers were likely to have.

Whereas some became experts in animal behavior and anatomy in order to become efficient exploiters and controllers of their bodies, others gazed with interest and empathy on those same particularities. For gander pullers, the cocksure assumption that animals were made to be used for our pleasure meant that the crazed hissing of the goose was no more cause for concern than is a cartoon of Wile E. Coyote being blown to cinders by Acme TNT. In an effort to be as detailed as possible, the authors of gander pulling narratives described these shrieks and gesticulations, leading some readers to focus not on the bumptious men's fun but on their suffering victim, suspended from his feet at center stage. The authors of whale narratives, like Owen Chase and Jeremiah N. Reynolds, and of big game hunting adventure stories, like Captain Mayne Reid and Theodore Roosevelt, sought to make their stories more purposeful, interesting, and profitable—and thus to make their own pursuits seem more meaningful—by increasingly characterizing their prey as formidable foes. These rhetorical tactics turned the hunters into heroes, justifying their exploits in increasingly dire and metaphysical terms even as such exploitation became less

necessary for physical sustenance and survival. At the same time, making the animal antagonists more unique and determined made some readers more inclined to identify with them rather than their hunters, so that writers like Herman Melville, Rev. William J. Long, and, to a greater extent, Ernest Thompson Seton began seeing the embattled wild animals as the underdogs deserving of sympathy. Modern life was challenging enough; why take out one's aggressions on fellow victims? Why not try to learn from their attempts to survive amidst the forces of a rapidly growing human civilization?

With the rise of organizations like John Muir's Sierra Club (founded in 1892) and George Bird Grinnell's National Audubon Society (originally established in 1886), the preservationist ethic of hiking, birdwatching, and other peaceful engagements with nature would largely subsume the conservationist ethic which had sports hunting as its chief priority. Today, far more Americans go to the woods with cameras and binoculars instead of rifles and bows (U.S. Department of the Interior 34, 53). The legacy of early conservationism persists, however, in the form of what type of people feel comfortable in the woods. As Sarah Jaquette Ray demonstrates in *The Ecological Other: Environmental Exclusion in American Culture* (2013), the racist, classist, ableist, gendered, heterosexist, and imperialist rhetoric used to valorize the early "nature cure" has ensured that the woods are still stereotypically the domain of straight, white, middle-class, able-bodied men—a space which, if not still strictly unsafe for or inaccessible to nonwhites, queer couples, women, and the differently abled, at the very least provides little of obvious interest to those groups. The environmental movement at large has faced similar challenges trying to reach an intersectional audience, particularly since "organic," "eco-friendly," "green" consumer choices often carry a high financial premium in today's "sustainable" capitalist

economy, with the price of ethical choices often appearing more as conspicuous consumption and virtue signaling and frequently framed as an elitist threat to the livelihoods of those employed by, for instance, the coal industry. Environmentally ethical choices need not be costly nor detrimental to society. As Tim Morton writes in *Humankind: Solidarity with Non-Human People* (2017), "In a solar economy, you could have a disco in every single room of your house and fewer lifeforms would suffer, perhaps vanishingly few, compared to the act of simply turning off the lights in an oil economy. You could have strobes and decks and lasers all day and night to your heart's content" (120). Nevertheless, perhaps under the spell of powerful industrial influences, the environmental movement continues to carry many of the same elitist aspersions that dogged the early animal welfare movement.

When Americans lived in close quarters with dogs, cows, pigs, hens, horses, pigeons, and canaries in the second half of the nineteenth century, even though the smell must have been something awful, a substantial demographic sought to inscribe protections for their nonhuman neighbors within their laws, their moral codes, and their popular culture. The end result of that movement is a wellspring of sympathy for the animals who are still visible. According to one survey from 2009, half of pet companions considered the animals to be full-fledged members of the family, on equal footing as other humans (Ramirez). A survey from 2019 found 88% of Americans considered their pets family members, though that poll did not specify if they were equal to humans or not (Ballard). Technology and the sanitized cages described by Jack London pushed exploitation out of public view, making the boundary-free, congenial, intersubjective and interdependent brotherhood wistfully envisioned by Twain and London a fantasy rather than a reality for

all except a select company of domesticated animals. The choice now seems to be between Ahab Ceeley with his dog and his picket fence or the orphaned Ishmael alone at sea. How can we find our way to a less lonely place?

As seen in our discussion of the works of Ernest Thompson Seton, as early as the 1890s sympathetic writers feared that the death of animals went hand in hand with the future of American civilization and that the only escape for a human who bore different affinities was an early grave. Though slightly less pessimistic, this belief was present even earlier than that, when Sarah Orne Jewett published "A White Heron" in 1886. Written with the knowledge that the predations of milliners had suddenly made the presence of white herons much rarer on the coasts of Maine, Jewett's tale tells the story of Sylvia, an eight-year-old girl who, because she is "[a]fraid of folks," has been taken from her home in "a crowded manufacturing town" and sent to live with her elderly aunt on the sparsely populated Maine coast (228). Her only memories of the town are a "great red-faced boy who used to chase and frighten her" and a neighbor's pitiful potted geranium that she feels sorry for (229). Jewett writes, "[F]or Sylvia herself, it seemed as if she had never been alive at all before she came to live at the farm" (228). Her aunt agrees, explaining that "there never was such a child for straying out-of-doors since the world was made" and insisting that "the wild creatur's counts her one o' themselves" (231). As the story opens, Sylvia (whose name, of course, means "forest") is at one with the nature that surrounds her. Walking through the twilight woods with her best friend, a cow, she needn't use her eyes to navigate: "their feet were familiar with the path, and it was no matter whether their eyes could see it or not" (227). Gayle L. Smith notes the subtle linguistic cues Jewett uses to create a "truly transcendental vision uniting man not only with green nature but with animal

life as well" (37). The use of "their feet" and "their eyes," combined with the interiority ascribed to the cow, "create[s a] 'subliminal' effect… we are gently led to accept the idea that there is more than unites human and non-human sensibilities than divides them" (39). Smith explains, "While the plural pronouns cannot be said to be deviant, they do encourage the reader to think of the girl and the cow as a pair now. Our linguistic awareness that the sentence could just as easily refer to a pair of equals probably helps us to impute some of that equality to these two." Later, Sylvia's body and mind are linked metaphorically to flowers, moths, birds, and trees, all peacefully coexisting. Sylvia has rediscovered Eden.

Her reverie, however, is harshly interrupted by the appearance of a male "enemy," a "tall young man" referred to only as "the ornithologist" (229). He carries a gun and has "stuffed and preserved, dozens and dozens of" birds, all of which he has "shot or snared" himself (229-32). The ornithologist loves birds, but his love is one of modern objectification—he must kill and contain it in order to appreciate it; it must be a tangible possession, not a living, free creature. His arrival, which is accompanied by an abrupt shift in verb tense, is preceded by the sound of his whistle. The narrator explains that this whistle was "[n]ot a bird's whistle, which would have a sort of friendliness, but a boy's whistle, determined, and somewhat aggressive" (229). He is seeking a rare white heron, and with "the hope of discovering that the rare bird was one of her acquaintances," he offers Sylvia ten dollars for information about its whereabouts (232). Sylvia is tempted by the large sum of money, and her fantasies of "many wished-for treasures" distracts her, causing her for the first time in the narrative to neglect nature, as evident by a toad whose passage to home she inadvertently obstructs (233). Infatuated with the frightening yet fascinating hunter and tempted by the riches he promises, Sylvia considers using her animal affinities to locate

and betray the bird. The next morning, unaccompanied, she ventures into her woods, scales a "great pine-tree… the last of its generation" and spots the heron's nest. Her vision from the top of the tall, ancient tree is transcendental, however, and after "watch[ing] the sea and the morning together" with the bird, "she cannot tell the heron's secret" (239). Richard Brenzo writes that to succumb to the ornithologist's offer, Sylvia would need to "allow herself to be caught, raped, killed, stuffed, and put on display in a man's house, a provocative satirical image of the condition of late nineteenth-century wives" (41). He writes, "For Sylvia, betraying the heron would mean giving up her closeness to the forest, a closeness which is a profound, essential part of her identity" (38). Yet the conclusion of Jewett's story, which labels her a "lonely country child," is not triumphant; Sylvia's choice to protect the bird is not validated. The narrator asks, "Were the birds better friends than their hunter might have been,—who can tell?" (239). Sylvia has aligned herself with nature, but adulthood and loneliness remain inevitable. Her union with the natural world, now tainted by intrusion from the modern world, may never be as complete as she would need it to be.

In unexpected ways, Sylvia's woodland loneliness mirrors that of the titular character of one of the twentieth century's most famous franchises. Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan of the Apes* was originally published in the pulp fiction *All-Story* magazine in October 1912. The magazine was "deluged… with raves," including one letter from a fan who wrote, "To say that it is the best story I ever read would be putting it mildly" (Taliaferro xvii). It was soon reprinted in "at least eight major metropolitan newspapers," and in 1914, it was published in hardcover, selling over 750,000 copies by 1934 (Lundblad 139). It soon "spawned twenty-two more Tarzan novels," "was translated into dozens of

languages," and "was adapted as a daily comic strip, a Sunday comic page, and a radio program" (Taliaferro xi). Burroughs earned so much money from the Tarzan character than in 1918 he purchased a five-hundred-acre estate in the San Fernando Valley that he eventually converted into the suburban town of Tarzana, California, and he was also one of the first authors to turn his own identity into a media corporation (Taliaferro xvii). From the 1918 *Tarzan of the Apes* silent film directed by Scott Sidney and starring Elmo Lincoln to the 2016 *The Legend of Tarzan* directed by David Yates and starring Alexander Skarsgård, there has been at least one film adaptation in every decade, including the Disney animated film which was the sixth-highest-earning film of 1999 (Reid 147). Even a Tarzan virtual reality game is set to be released in 2020. In 1939, the *Saturday Evening Post* deemed Tarzan "the best-known literary character of the twentieth century" (qtd. Taliaferro xviii), and although he may no longer be on the top of the list, it is hard to fully disagree with that assessment eighty years later. Even if the original book is no longer as frequently read, the character *endures*.

Could there be any book more unlike "A White Heron" than *Tarzan of the Apes*? The story begins in 1888 with the aristocratic British naval officer John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, and his wife, Lady Alice, sailing to colonial West Africa to investigate accusations than the Belgians have been enslaving and brutalizing their African subjects. Although the opening hints at an enlightened view of Alice's courage and independence and a critique of European colonialism, these potential themes soon dissipate. After a mutiny on board their ship—one of several mutinies in the book—Lord and Lady Greystoke are abandoned on the African coast, where he builds a perfectly secure and beautiful home at the edge of the jungle, and where she gives birth to a boy and promptly

dies. After Clayton's subsequent death, the infant child is adopted by Kala, a "great anthropoid ape" whose own child has recently died (#). Kala and her tribe raise the boy as one of their own, naming him "Tarzan," meaning "White-Skin" in their ape language (#). They regard his diminutive, hairless body as inferior, but it is a while before Tarzan realizes his own difference. Eventually, upon discovering the cabin his father built, he acquires a weapon that finally gives him an upper hand in his combat with other animals, he develops an awareness of himself as a white man, and (improbably) he teaches himself to read and write English. When, years later, some of his relatives arrive on the shore, hoping to figure out whatever became of Lord and Lady Greystoke, Tarzan engages in hijinks with this ragtag group of British and American travelers, occasionally saving their lives from animals and cannibal African savages, falling in love with the Baltimore socialite Jane Porter, and eventually learning how to speak. By the end of the book, this handsome man of the jungle has become fully civilized, impeccably dressed and driving an automobile. Though he finally learns the secret of his identity—and thus of his aristocracy and immense inheritance—in the final chapter, he keeps it to himself, allowing Jane to marry William Cecil Clayton, his cousin who has unknowingly robbed him of his title, his fortune, and his love. Though Tarzan is the pinnacle of estimable manliness, physically ripened by natural exposure, in full command of his animal spirit, yet blessed with the genetic inheritance of a true civilized gentleman, he ends the novel alone, neither fulfilled in the company of animals nor comfortable within society. Like Sylvia, he could almost be called the "lonely jungle man."

Burroughs was an admirer of Theodore Roosevelt, and the Tarzan character is undoubtedly an apotheosis of the former president's "strenuous life": a genteel Englishman

with the best blood whose upbringing has made it impossible for him to be enervated by degrading urban influences since he has, in fact, never seen a city. Far from a life of leisure, this noble-blooded heir to Anglo-Saxon greatness is the big game hunter extraordinaire, having spent his entire childhood fighting lions and apes in order to survive. His Anglo-Saxon birthright, in spite of no socialization with other humans, has somehow instilled in him an ethical morality: that cannibalism is wrong, that people should wear clothes, that rape is unmanly. There is nothing in his experience to teach him that cannibalism is wrong—the anthropoid apes engage in wartime cannibalism, as do the Africans he eventually encounters. Every community he has ever known performs this practice, yet he, the White-Skin, is able to logically infer that people should not eat their own kind. Moments of insight like this reveal that Tarzan is of a higher order than all the other characters in the book: higher than the barbaric apes who are always fighting each other and who could never master the use of tools and weapons; higher than the maniacal Africans with their sharpened teeth, their disrespect for the cannibalism taboo, and their stupid superstition which prevents them from ever figuring out his cruel pranks on them; higher than a group of working-class mutineers, the first white people Tarzan ever encounters, who trash his property; higher than Professor Archimedes Q. Porter, Jane's father, and his colleague Samuel T. Philander, two overeducated scientists whose extensive book learning and exquisitely civilized manners have made them wholly incapable of safely navigating the jungle; higher than Jane's servant, Esmeralda, who functions as little more than a minstrel show joke; higher than Jane, a damsel in distress who requires Tarzan's graceful intervention to survive; and higher, too, than his cousin Clayton, who despite being respectable, handsome, and perfectly proper, somehow lacks the potent

charisma that Tarzan possesses. Tarzan's upbringing in the jungle has made him the perfect specimen of manhood that he is, but it is his *conflict* with animals and Africans, not his *learning* from them that strengthens him—all his learning he does himself—and it is his highly refined blood that is a prerequisite to all his glory. If he were not Lord Greystoke, it is assumed he would be just another savage African cannibal. Of all the works explored in this dissertation, perhaps none is more rigidly committed to hierarchical divisions than *Tarzan of the Apes*.

The popularity of *Tarzan of the Apes* illuminates an early-twentieth-century culture where animals remained fascinating but were steadily disappearing from everyday encounters. *Tarzan of the Apes* has a reputation as a book about animals, yet the majority of the animals depicted are a mutant race of "anthropoid apes," presumably some kind of subhuman species. The original 1912 text contained references to tigers, which have never lived anywhere in the wild in Africa (Taliaferro xvii). To put it more simply, Tarzan's formative experiences with animals could not have happened *except* in Africa, for nowhere in America did such wildness remain. *Tarzan*'s vital force depended on contact with animals, and his character was presented as a role model for the strong yet sensitive twentieth-century American (white) man, but how could any boy attempt to emulate him in a world devoid of animals? Certainly not amongst the manicured lawns and white picket fences of Tarzana, California.

Perhaps the early-twentieth-century book that provides the clearest glimpse of what civilized modern humanity's lonely existence would look like, however, is Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915), a feminist fantasy that espouses compassion for animals yet curiously has no place for them. At one point, Somel, Zava, and Moadine, the three

Herlander tutors tasked with establishing a culture exchange with the three strange men who have invaded their isolated country, cannot fathom what is meant when the men bring up the dairy industry. "*Milk?*" Somel asks, wondering how the subject of horses and sheep has gotten them to this new topic. "We have milk in abundance—our own" (49). The men "blunder," trying to explain the concepts of cheese, milk pails, and early morning deliveries from the milkman. "Has the cow no child?" the still perplexed Somel asks. "Is there milk for the calf and you, too?" (50). Vandyck Jennings, one of the men, an open-minded American sociologist and the narrator of the book, explains that "[i]t took some time to make clear to those three sweet-faced women the process which robs the cow of her calf, and the calf of its true food; and the talk led us into a further discussion of the meat business. They heard it out, looking very white, and presently begged to be excused" (50).

Somel's home, where the meat industry is unfathomable, is a secluded, uncharted utopia closed off by inaccessible mountains in a tropical land surrounded by "savage" peoples—perhaps Central Africa, the Amazon, or South Asia; Jennings is deliberately evasive concerning its coordinates, not wanting further intruders from "Ourland" (the rest of the world) to compromise the blissful society the Herlanders have manufactured in the two thousand years since a "volcanic outburst" cut them off from the rest of humanity (56). Despite having been descended from "a polygamous people, and a slave-holding people, like all of their time," they have progressively evolved into a people three million strong with "no enemies" amongst themselves, "no wars," "no kings, and no priests, and no aristocracies," for whom the very concept of "poverty" is incomprehensible (61, 78, 63). Work in Herland is enjoyed, for it is done "not by competition, but by united action," and through their conscientiously designed education system, "everywhere there [i]s the same

high level of intelligence" among them (61, 65). "Sickness [i]s almost wholly unknown among them," crime is virtually nonexistent, and despite their "high sense of personal decorum," they have "no shame—no knowledge of anything to be ashamed of"; they have, in fact, "no horrible ideas" whatsoever (72, 71, 113, 102, 111). They have created a perfect, beautiful, efficient, harmonious civilization, and thus their worldview is such that even the thought of exploiting a cow for her milk is nauseous.

What, then, does animal life look like in a civilization that no longer exploits them for their meat, food products, feathers, and fur? Surprising insight is provided by Ellador, a young woman who, in describing how the Herland economy perfectly matches career paths with individual interests and skills, explains the moment from her childhood that inspired her aspirations:

> "It was a butterfly that made me a forester," said Ellador. "I was about eleven years old, and I found a big purple-and-green butterfly on a low flower. I caught it, very carefully, by the closed wings, as I had been told to do, and carried it to the nearest insect teacher… to ask her its name. She took it from me with a little cry of delight. 'Oh, you blessed child,' she said. 'Do you like obernuts?' Of course I liked obernuts, and said so. It is our best food-nut, you know. 'This is a female of the obernut moth,' she told me. 'They are almost gone. We have been trying to exterminate them for centuries. If you had not caught this one, it might have laid eggs enough to raise worms enough to destroy thousands of our nut trees—thousands of bushels of nuts—and make years and years of trouble for us.'
>
> "Everybody congratulated me. The children all over the country were told to watch for that moth, if there were any more. I was shown the history of the creature, and an account of the damage it used to do and of how long and hard our foremothers had worked to save that tree for us. I grew a foot, it seemed to me, and determined then and there to be a forester." (101-2)

When someone explains that a rare, beautiful butterfly inspired her life course, it is not expected that that life course would be the complete eradication of those butterflies, but such is the coexistence between humans and animals in Herland. Although exploitation is

balked at as unjust, their solution is to mercifully exterminate every species that has no role to play in their society. Thus, the horses, sheep, and dogs who once lived among them were left to die long ago since "[t]hey took up too much room—we need all our land to feed our people. It is such a little country, you know" (49). All "gorgeous" and "musical" birds have been allowed to remain, ostensibly only for their aesthetic (and perhaps insectivorous) roles, yet even the ones that live in the perfectly manicured, wholly utilitarian orchard-forests that spread across the Herland landscape are curiously "tame" for reasons never elaborated (16). Cats are ostensibly much beloved cohabitants of their villages, but their behavior has been rigorously controlled by years of purposeful breeding. They are expected to hunt the mice and voles who threaten the granary stores of this vegetarian society, yet they have been bred to never attack the birds. The females are not spayed and are allowed to roam free, but the unneutered males are kept in confinement to limit the overall population and to allow the Herlanders to supervise their reproduction. Perhaps most interesting, however, is this explanation provided by Jennings: "By the most prolonged and careful selection and exclusion they had developed a race of cats that did not sing! … The most those poor dumb brutes could do was to make a kind of squeak when they were hungry or wanted the door open, and, of course, to purr, and make the various mother-noises to their kittens" (51). Biologists agree that many vocalizations from cats are a byproduct of domestication; they are a salient example of a nonhuman species developing a form of communication for interacting with humans, and although this "language" of meows varies from individual to individual, experiments have determined that the human companions of cats are quite competent at deciphering the messages communicated by the various sounds of the cats they know (Nicastro and Owren). The MSPCA reaped

significant benefits for the animal welfare movement by encouraging readers to imagine the voices of "our dumb friends." Why would a society opposed to exploitation purposefully render a species even more "dumb"?

It would be inaccurate to suggest that Gilman was opposed to animal welfare, since many of her arguments are unique extrapolations of customary animal welfare arguments from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, no matter how antithetical they may seem to twenty-first-century messages about animal rights. Gilman's short story "When I Was a Witch" (1910) and her two-part essay "On Dogs" (1911) provide further insight into her views. The theme of "When I Was a Witch" is annoyance. The narrator is frustrated with the many inconveniences and injustices of life in New York City, and one fateful day in which she realizes that she is capable of "black magic" begins with a common irritation that seems to be her breaking point: "The night before, cats and dogs had broken my rest, of course" (208). The narrator (and, it seems, Gilman) was not alone in her irritation. In *Pets in America: A History*, Katherine C. Grier writes that noisy scuffles between alley cats and the lascivious moaning of stray dogs in heat "were both an annoyance in neighborhood life and a standard joke in newspaper and magazine cartoons" during this period (101). Since neutering was not widely practiced in the United States until the 1930s, stray populations experienced a population boom (102). For centuries, such vagrant populations were at least useful for controlling vermin and disposing of edible garbage, but in the early twentieth century, Grier writes, novel scientific insights into bacteriology, a rise in concern over public health, and the ensuing development of effective sanitation departments transformed stray animals from a useful annoyance to an unnecessary and distasteful public health problem; as a result, "hundreds of thousands of cats were captured and killed

between 1890 and 1910" (280). Animal welfare advocates were unaffected by any genocidal implications of mass animal euthanasia, as was seen in *Beautiful Joe* with its preoccupation over the merciful killing of animals. Drowning the majority of a mother cat's newborn litter was seen as the most generous way of ensuring that the one or two surviving kittens could receive a comfortable life (Golden 19), and even a passionate animal rights advocate like Mark Twain was inured to this habit (Grier 104). Given this historical context, it is not terribly shocking that the "witch" narrator of Gilman's story could think "tenderly of all the thousands of hungry, hunted cats who slink and suffer in a great city" and decide that the most just solution for them would be if "every cat in the city was comfortably dead"—a wish which her newly acquired black magic makes so (209-10).

Although the "witch" narrator takes on a variety of issues, including the salaciousness of commercial journalism, the oleaginousness of preachers, and the mismanagement of the subway system, the majority of her concerns involve animals, revealing the extent to which even in 1910 the visibility of exploited and confined animals was eliciting dissonant discomfort in regular citizens. Some of her magical solutions seem just, such as her wish "that every person who strikes or otherwise hurts a horse unnecessarily, shall feel the pain intended—and the horse not feel it," or her restoration of dignity to pet parrots by giving them the power to truly speak their minds to their owners, which results in many insults and demands for freedom (209, 214-5). Others are ambiguous, such as her process for improving the degraded quality of commercially available meat and eggs by forcing "the whole crowd that profit by this vicious business [to] taste their bad meat, their old fish, their stale milk" (210); while her revenge indeed results in improved food, it is unclear if this is the result of more humane living conditions

for the agricultural animals. What actually happens behind the scenes is never explained, only the end benefit for the consumers. At least one of her solutions, however, is quite alarming. When she encounters "a poor, wretched, little, artificial dog" wearing a jacket, a bracelet, and a handkerchief and looking "sick and unhappy," she "meditate[s] on his painful position, and that of all the other poor chained prisoners, leading unnatural lives of enforced celibacy, cut off from sunlight, fresh air, the use of their limbs; led forth at stated intervals by unwilling servants, to defile our streets; over-fed, under-exercised, nervous and unhealthy," and she immediately kills them all with her magic (211-2).

To be sure, it is only the "unhappy" dogs that she wishes dead, and she concludes her essay "On Dogs" with the less shocking proposal that pet dogs should only be raised in the country, unsterilized, in sociable pairs, with the full "use of all [their] functions," and no specialized purebred breeding that would serve only their human masters (38). While this proposal aligns with twenty-first-century animal liberation arguments that see even amicable petkeeping relationships as a form of enforced servitude, Gilman's overall argument still carries a worrisome tinge of anthropocentrism, compounded by her clear displeasure over their barking, their ugliness, their "defile[ment of] our streets," and, as she explains in *Herland*, their status more as the friends of *men* than of women (54). Gilman argues against the keeping of canine "prisoners," but on the whole she seems to adopt a mentality of "out of sight, out of mind" that when taken to its extreme, as in *Herland*, justifies the complete eradication of all useless and disagreeable animals, and in particular those who compete with humans for resources. As Agnes Malinowska writes of *Herland*, "animal annihilation is performed for the sake of an environmental efficiency evaluated strictly in terms of human well-being… animals exist for these women only as they are

destructive or instrumental to human advantage, never as independent cohabitants of a common ecosystem" (275).

Herland combines cutting edge twentieth-century science, the ideology of Progressivism, an optimism about technology, and an anxiety over civilization's systemic exploitations, including those of animals, into a worldview that although earnestly represented as utopian carries numerous dystopian implications. Jennings's emphasis on the Herlanders' "Aryan stock," especially when juxtaposed against the "savage tribe[s]" who live on the other side of the mountain (6), alludes to her white supremacy which Gail Bederman has extensively documented, a belief in Anglo-Saxons as the pinnacle of civilized evolution which differed from other white supremacist Progressives of the era only insofar as she focused on women rather than men as the leaders of this progress (121-69). Gilman's description of carefully orchestrated breeding campaigns in *Herland*, which, as Jim Endersby notes, explicitly allude to the "assisted evolution" of the world-renowned Californian horticulturist Luther Burbank, promise a splendid, efficient future that is predicated on ruthless control and the destruction of all outliers. The Herlanders, whose lack of living space necessitates that their forests only contain trees which produce edible components, have made dreams come true by crossbreeding an aesthetically adored tree which originally served no utilitarian purpose until it finally yielded "nutritious seeds," thus justifying its continued existence (80). Yet some of these modifications, such as depriving cats of their meows for no apparent reason other than to make them less demanding and annoying, are clearly anthropocentric to a problematic degree. Endersby writes, "This is the paradox at the heart of the biotopian mode: nature is both exalted and manipulated. Instead of adapting themselves to nature's constraints and limited resources,

the inhabitants of biotopia are constantly forcing nature to adapt to them" (433). The "made-to-order" biology popularized in magazines in the early twentieth century, while promising an ingenious, perfected future, grounded itself in the belief that "nature is deficient or unaccommodating and must be altered" (424-5). For every tasty new variety of fruit that Burbank produced, there was a host of, in Burbank's words, "outlaw plants," "freaks," and "queer ones," a "mass which give no definite or hopeful perturbations," "failures" which had to be "massacre[d]… in large bonfires" (qtd. Endersby 441-4). The methods of "assisted evolution" were applied to humanity as well in the form of eugenics, and although Gilman describes Herland as an egalitarian commune where "individual judgment" and "a strong well-used will" are the rights and virtues of every person, she also notes that they practice a "negative eugenics" wherein "unfit" mothers are prohibited from reproducing while "Over Mothers," their "nearest approach to an aristocracy," are permitted to surpass their one-child policy by having as many as five children (107, 70). The legacy of eugenics and population control in the ensuing decades makes the utopian promise of Herland difficult to swallow.

As was true of much popular thinking at the dawn of the twentieth century, a teleological conception of *human* evolution is the foundation for *Herland*. As Bernice L. Hausman explains, the evolutionism of the Progressive era was what might be termed "neo-Lamarckian." The random mutations of Darwinian natural selection, which required millions of years to play out and followed no teleological path, were hardly inspiring for reformers looking to improve society; rather, "the idea that acquired characteristics could be inherited by a future generation made evolution into an optimizing process" (499). Gilman, a prolific writer on the subject of women's liberation, used *Herland* to explore via

science fiction the conclusions she had reached about evolution in her nonfiction writings. In Darwin's works, natural selection and sexual selection held each other in balance throughout the nonhuman world. The male of a species (typically) developed appealing physical features like peacock feathers, honed charming skills like mating calls, or strengthened his ability to fight off other male suitors, and the female (typically) decided whether she was attracted and would mate with the male; this "sexual selection" affected only the interaction preceding mating. "Natural selection," which determined whether or not an organism's makeup was fit to survive and reproduce in its environment, exerted a limiting effect on sexual selection, for if a peacock's feathers got too massive, brilliant, and ungainly, although that might be sexy to the peahen, it would make it difficult for him to escape predators (cf. Hausman 496). In Gilman's understanding, however, human males at some point during the caveman era had conquered sexual selection by deciding that it was easier to simply rape the women rather than battle each other in hopes of securing the women's favor (Bederman 140-3, Hausman 497). Not only did this remove women's choice from the sexual selection transaction, but it ultimately inverted the majority of the animal kingdom by turning women into the sex-defined gender forced to modify their physical appearance according to men's desires. By the late nineteenth century, Gilman argued, women had been reduced to bovine chattel, "penned in the private sphere and forced to over-sex their physical bodies so as to make themselves commodities exchangeable for food and shelter" (Chang 323). In her treatise *Women and Economics* (1898), Gilman writes that "in no other animal species is the female economically dependent on the male. In no other animal species is the sex-relation for sale," a situation which, according to Li-Wen Chang, reduced the status of modern American women to an

"enforced economic parasitism" (qtd. Chang 323, Chang 319). In *Herland*, Gilman posits what a deliberate attempt to restore human evolution to a more natural, nonpatriarchal form might look like.

Interestingly, however, this return to a more "natural" evolution involves a rejection of nature. As Agnes Malinowska writes, "The novel, as a whole, may leave us wondering: are Gilman's Herlanders perfect animals or have they perfectly transcended the life of the body? Does utopia entail a return to nature or nature's obliteration?" (267) Humans may have evolved from animals, but their mastery of this knowledge and of the experimental means whereby they might control the entire process, makes them not only the most superior animal—a creator of almost godlike potency—but also, at least in Gilman's perception, the only animal that really needs to exist. Songbirds are pleasant company, and cats are essential (at least for now) insofar as they kill rodents, but why bother with dogs, butterflies, or horses? Indeed, Gilman presents Herlanders not just as an isolated community but as, literally, an evolved species of humanity. When a slave revolt in the early years of their isolation killed all the men in society, the Herlanders believed themselves doomed to extinction until it was discovered that one woman possessed a mutation that allowed her to recreate life through parthenogenesis (47, 56-9, 69-70). While the rest of the initial community technically died off, this "original mother" produced five daughters, who in turn each produced five daughters, and so on exponentially until the community reached its scientifically determined Malthusian carrying capacity of three million inhabitants, at which point the one-child policy (with exceptions!) was enacted. The Herlanders might not be a truly distinct species from the humanity of Ourland, for it is suggested (though never proven) that they might still be able to reproduce sexually, and

their hope upon meeting the three male explorers is that they will be able to restore some of the genetic diversity of a "bi-sexual state" (89). Nevertheless, the Herlanders' two millennia of conscientious, proactive evolution in the absence of men has created a society cured of all of modernity's ailments, including the exploitation of animals—a problem they solve through ruthless efficiency.

Gilman's science-fiction depiction of evolution, despite effectively revealing how the contemporary biological arguments about women as the "weaker sex" were built from sexist cultural presumptions rather than natural facts, fails to provide an ethic capable of extending respectful consideration to members of outgroups. Since the 1960s, evolutionary biologists have theorized that genetic similarity plays a major role in altruism and empathy; in other words, a mother will probably be more inclined to save her daughter from a burning building than her niece, her niece over some woman unknown to her, the human woman over a dog, and the dog over a lizard (Regan xxix). *Herland* takes this thought experiment to a logical extreme. Are the women of Herland such a peaceful society because they are well-educated and free from sexism and patriarchy, or is their society so single-mindedly harmonious because they are, literally, one giant family? The evolution of humanity alone is the task undertaken by the Herlanders, and this is the core of their society:

> their ethics, based on the full perception of evolution, showed the principle of growth and the beauty of wise culture… life to them was growth, their pleasure was in growing, and their duty also… every phase of their work was modified by its effect on the national growth…. That the children might be most nobly born, and reared in an environment calculated to allow the richest, freest growth, they had deliberately remodeled and improved the whole state. (103)

Katherine Fusco, in a book which compellingly compares Gilman's writings to early-twentieth-century factory films, rigorously analyzes the dehumanizing autocracy at play in

Herland's ruthlessly efficient hive mind. "Gilman effectively eradicates the individual as a category," writes Fusco, noting that all of the female characters are essentially interchangeable (172). This is "a fantasy of racial purity" in which the gears of a smoothly running modern society are lubricated by the removal of all variability, otherness, and agency (168)—a circumstance that is especially possible whenever every member in the group is a clone.

How could such a utopian ethic be applied to a multiethnic democracy like the United States? In her "A Suggestion on the Negro Problem," published in 1908, Gilman's implicit solution seems no less severe than her solution for what to do with dogs: "We have to consider the unavoidable presence of a large body of aliens, of a race widely dissimilar and in many respects inferior, whose present status is to us a social injury" (qtd. Fusco 165). In *With Her in Ourland*, the lesser known 1916 sequel to *Herland*, Ellador, who has left seclusion and is touring the United States with her husband Jennings, remarks that slavery was "silly, wicked, and hypocritical" because it brought "a mass of people unready for democracy into a democratic state" (qtd. Hausman 503). Other, nonracial boundaries of difference are also policed in *Herland*; although Anna Lathrop admits that "Gilman's female attachments were profound" and that several of her letters to her friend Martha Luther were teasingly playful about how any interloper would be bound to read lesbianism into their cryptic exchanges (57-8), she also criticizes Gilman for strenuously avoiding any remotely homoerotic content in *Herland* (56). Even though an all-female society might be expected to have a complex culture of homoerotic intimacies in place, the suggestion of such "oversexed" perversity is actually one of the traits that deems a mother to be "unfit," and the only potential romantic relationship that is ever explored is that between Ellador

and Jennings. Even strictly as a work of feminism, the work has shortcomings, for, as Lathrop writes, “True to the mindset of the first wave of feminism, she makes collective assumptions about women being cared for by men, when these generalizations only largely extended to a certain group of White, middle-class women" (59). Gilman developed an effective ethic advocating for a marginalized group that included herself—white, middle-class women—but this ethic fails to break down systemic oppressions across other boundaries. Perhaps if she had begun by considering the needs of those most fundamental others in society, nonhuman animals, then a less problematic ethic may have developed.

Herland was serially published in twelve installments in the monthly editions of the 1915 volume of *The Forerunner*, a magazine completely written, edited, and published by Gilman from 1909 to 1916. Circulation of *The Forerunner* never surpassed 1,500, and there appear to be no contemporaneous reviews of *Herland* (Endersby 428), which was not published in book form until 1979 when it was rediscovered by feminist scholar Ann J. Lane. *Herland* cannot be called popular literature, though it drew heavily on popular scientific ideas. While the Tarzan franchise has tapped into our desire to be the best of the animals because we are so in harmony with their manifold talents, *Herland* has perhaps more closely captured the reality of our relationship, in which our desire to promote and perfect ourselves has caused the animals, through no blatant ill-will of our own, to slowly disappear. When it is taken for granted that so much of “progress” depends upon exploitation of subhuman others—the accumulation of money, the thrill of discovery, the gathering of scientific insight, the beauty of fashion, the confidence of masculinity, or in other words, all the things promised to shy, young Sylvia by Jewett’s handsome ornithologist—it becomes hard to envision an acceptable future in which relations are

reconfigured without sacrificing something valuable. There is, however, ample reason to have faith in the old adage that a rising tide lifts all boats.

Whereas the theoretical "selfish gene" urges organisms to protect those who are most genetically similar to them, evolutionary biology also valorizes the opposite approach. Members of the human species have an incentive to seek out diverse genetic material as a means of strengthening against the ailments brought on by inbreeding, and the maintenance of an ecologically diverse biosystem is seen as the surest protection against population imbalances, soil erosion, pandemics, and many of the other environmental catastrophes of the twenty-first century. Moral philosopher T.J. Kasperbauer argues from extensive social science research that developing a realistic ethic of respectful engagement with animals requires contact with them, even if it is only imagined (182-7). Such contact cannot be achieved if animals are increasingly removed from sight—either through the obfuscation techniques of animal exploitation industries or through the more permanent removals of species die-off. Meaningful imagined contact cannot be fostered either, if the writers, filmmakers, and facilitators of such imaginative media have no knowledgeable foundation from which to operate nor any wish to pay attention to entities which have little perceived connection to their own lives. In 1995, environmental historian William Cronon famously diagnosed "the trouble with wilderness" as being the very existence of such a concept: that there is some natural "there" out there, "untrammeled" by our sullying human footsteps, offering us the promise of salvation if only we preserve a tiny sliver of it for future posterity. The rest can go to rack and ruin—that's what humans do—so long as we don't let the "pristine wilderness" be completely swallowed up. If only we acknowledge that we are already there, always

already a part of "wildness," Cronon argues, then that wildness "can start being as humane as it is natural" and "we can get on with the unending task of struggling to live rightly in the world—not just in the garden, not just in the wilderness, but in the home that encompasses them both" (#). We must accept that humans and animals already form one society, that their bodies are the very fabric of our Constitution, and that if we choose to ignore their suffering by looking elsewhere, then we establish a precedent for other injustices behind closed doors. Our only birthright is our chinbone. We can learn something yet from the tentacled, the flippered, the antennaed, and the gilled.

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