ANIMAL SANCTITY AND ANIMAL SACRIFICE:
HOW POST-DARWINIAN FICTION TREATS ANIMAL VICTIMS

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Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay
"Animal Sanctity and Animal Sacrifice: How Post-Darwinian

Fiction Treats Animal Victims"

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyses animal victims appearing in fiction written since 1859, the year Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species*. It assumes as a premise that the Darwinian idea of continuity between human and nonhuman animals has altered the fundamental character of cultural conceptions of animals. It assumes, further, that post-Darwinian culture recognizes the need to acknowledge the experiences of animals independent of the usefulness or significance animals have for humankind. Modern culture strives to understand the value life has for the animal itself. That effort is crucial to approaches to animal victims, because culture, which knows animals best in their role as victims, is itself founded upon human domination of nonhuman animals. Social, scientific and technological progress has steadily increased human authority over the natural world; psychically and morally, the civilized person is presumed to have suppressed the beast in himself or herself. Darwinism, however, has upset the anthropocentric bias, and, as a consequence, the animal victim has now become a source of conflict for modern culture.

The dissertation explores the ways in which particular stories try to address the reality of the autonomous animal, and notes the kinds of resistance evident in the stories' attempts to derive meaning from the animal victim. It examines the specific challenges the animal victim brings to bear against the conventions of indifference or compassion that reinforce anthropocentrism. The modern treatment of animal victims pushes fiction into boundary situations where conventions collapse and ways of knowing the world are shaken. At the same time the animal victim shapes the narrative world and addresses significant conflicts in modern life.

Fiction manifests contemporary discomfort with the animal victim. In this investigation, analysis proceeds primarily upon close reading of the conflicts surrounding animal victims in individual works of fiction. In terms of overall structure, stories are classified according to specific kinds of conflicts embodied in the animal victim. The
opening chapter provides an historical background and notes several theoretical complications involved in aggression against animals. The next five chapters deal one-by-one with categories of fiction in which the victimized animal is more and more deeply implicated in diverse cultural dilemmas. The categories are these: animal victims in the wild, animal victims in urban settings, sexual conflict and the animal victim, myth and the animal victim, and animal victims doubly abused by narrative strategies.

This study speculates that, with respect to art and its faithfulness to life, modern fiction has realized that animals are not passive recipients of human projection, and that violence against animals is perpetrated upon beings whose reality places a legitimate claim upon cultural attention. The aim of the discussion is to establish that modern fiction is exploring ways in which ethics and art can truly acknowledge animal identity.
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INTRODUCTION

Although this discussion concentrates upon animal victims in modern fiction, it is necessary first to supply some brief preliminary remarks suggesting the magnitude of the conflicts that have come to surround animals in modern culture as a whole. The primary factor in the shift of historical concern towards animals is Charles Darwin's timely exposition of the theoretical conditions whereby the human species is shown to be intimately inter-connected with other animal species. Ultimately, Darwinism has shaken faith in human supremacy. Nonhuman animals are no longer negligible among cultural interests. Ethics is one domain in which Darwinism has worked its effect. The loose ethical values that hovered precariously over animals in pre-Darwinian times now have a theory on which to ground themselves. The conscience of modern culture has been awakened to the lives of the animals that share the planet with the human species.

Despite the manifestly global extent of human power, it is not a given, anymore, that our species is entitled to appropriate all of nature for human use. By the same token, it has become apparent that culture does not possess final authority over all regions of thought. The implementation of ethical practices is difficult enough, in view of the pervasiveness of human uses of animals. But the acknowledgement of animal reality in cultural consciousness is shot through with complications. Darwinism calls attention not only to the animals living at large all around humankind, but also to the animal that resides in the human being. Cultural alienation from animals, therefore, infiltrates the sense of being of each individual person. Having assumed and acted upon the belief that culture separates humans and animals, culture now scrambles to retrieve vital connectedness with animal
reality, if only because something essential in human nature depends upon rightful interpretation of the nonhuman animal. Products of modern culture--specifically fiction, in this discussion--are trying to realize the animal in both its cultural and anti-cultural dispositions, and are encountering formidable areas of confusion in the process.

Culture is being edged out of its position as sole arbitrator of human perplexities. Due largely to Darwin's influence, the natural animal now lays claim to significant aspects of life over which cultural expression tends to falter.

Down through the long ages, animals have remained constant while culture did its dance around them, treating them as gods, as totems, as demons, as talismanic and heraldic images, as the little persons of fable, and as symbols. Simultaneously as the human species has exercised greater and greater power over nonhuman animals, domesticating them, putting them on display, buying and selling them and invading their environments, it has conceptualized and re-conceptualized them to satisfy whatever needs culture has at the time. If there happened to be a serious contradiction between the use and the conception of animals, that contradiction has not mattered greatly because human authority has passed unopposed. Symbolizing the son of God did not save many lambs from slaughter. Animals have always acquiesced helplessly to both physical and ideational impositions. Such meaning as the animal has for itself has abided with the animal, while the human species went on worshipping, sacrificing, reviling, moralizing and poeticizing animals at will.

Modern culture has now generated a singular predicament for itself in its need to know animals truly in order to achieve full understanding of the human species. The theory of evolution has obviously done more than alter perceptions of human history. As if it were not disturbing enough to Darwin's contemporaries to think of apes as ancestors of humans, it has dawned on culture that humans have not left behind their animal heritage. While the immediate effects of this revelation have not been especially appealing, modern
culture has not concluded that it would be much better if humankind could transcend the
animal completely. That kind of thinking is retrogressive; it relies upon the
anthropocentric world-view that Darwinism has upset. In any event, omitting the rest of
animal creation from speculation about human nature has become a virtual impossibility.
The deep contradictions in conventional beliefs about animals are now a true dilemma.
The strain placed upon animals by vast discrepancies between cultural and economic uses
plagues attempts to reconcile any view of humankind with notions of animal being. How
can we determine where human existence meets animal existence when animals are at one
moment the personification of wickedness and at the next the embodiment of innocence, or
are at one moment individuals exactly like ourselves and at the next the slab of meat on
our dinner-plates?

Current scientific explanation has not articulated, and likely cannot articulate, the
full sense of felt correspondence between the human and the nonhuman animal. Such
mechanistic reductionism as arises from ethology, sociobiology and psychobiology
represents typical failure of imagination. Professing to have overcome valuation,
reductionistic theories in fact adhere to the long-standing hierarchy of values in which
animals are relegated to decidedly inferior status. The fear of viewing humankind as a
natural species akin to other animal species originates in the habit of thought that
perceives animals in terms of negatives. Science tends to think of animal reality as
"merely" this or that—merely physical existence, merely mechanical operations, merely
sensation without reason, life without soul, consciousness without content, action without
will. With all the negatives that science bestows upon animals, it is little wonder that
there is scant appeal in empirical description of ways in which we and they are inter-
related. We may find a temporary amusement in viewing human acts as unconscious
modifications of pre-determined animal behaviour. Works like Desmond Morris's The
Naked Ape popularize the belief that seeing connections between humans and animals
means interpreting human acts as involuntary and formulaic. One-upmanship constitutes part of the pleasure of adopting this approach, since it catches "the other" in embarrassing automatism, while leaving the observer a fully interpreting being. In the long run, however, the idea of continuity between humans and animals calls upon deeper intellectual and emotional resources than empiricism has shown signs of incorporating.

Darwinism is, of course, a scientific theory. From one point of view, Darwinism has appeared to foster reductionism in subsuming culture under the blind workings of an indifferent Nature. Change, from this point of view, is either adaptive or maladaptive and survives or disappears accordingly. The few thousand years of cultural development means little in the grand unfolding of natural events; and should civilization and the human species vanish, nature will quietly grow over the gap as if nothing of moment had occurred. Accepting continuity between humans and animals appears to involve accepting this vision of human effort as expendable in the great scheme of nature. It seems to entail conservatism on a scale larger than political conservatism and infinitely more impersonal. Yet it should be apparent that animals as we know them in our daily lives do not support this vision of universal indifference. Although people have difficulty experiencing themselves as animals, it is more likely than not that they feel a living and immediate affinity with the animals they know, however few in number those animals might be. That sense of attachment militates against conceiving of Nature as inhumanly abstract design. Animals stand between conceptions of Nature and Culture, and expose deficiencies in our understanding of both realms.

There are indications in Darwin's work itself that his understanding of animals is not predicated upon reductionist belief. Some of his observations about animals reveal a distinct Romanticism. In answer to those who protested that evolutionary theory stripped humankind of its special significance, Darwin gave the pointed reply: "When I view all beings not as special creations, but as the lineal descendants of some few beings which
lived long before the first bed of the Cambrian system was deposited, they seem to me to become ennobled" (Origin, p. 373). He finds awe in the seemingly mundane evidence of inheritance; for him, inheritance is a "deep organic bond" uniting species across widely disparate regions of the earth (p. 280). Along with occasionally investing the fabric of life with a romantic spirit, his writing sometimes departs radically from empirical discourse to instill poetic value in the individual animal. Of, for example, some ants whose nest has been destroyed, he observes that "two or three individuals of F. fusca were rushing about in the greatest agitation, and one was perched motionless with its own pupa in its mouth on the top of a spray of heath, an image of despair over its ravaged home" (p. 195). In The Descent of Man, he says that "the brain of an ant is one of the most marvellous atoms of matter in the world, perhaps more so than the brain of a man" (p. 436). Also in The Descent, Darwin reports, and does not criticize, a charming anecdote about affection between a couple of snails:

[An accurate observer, Mr. Lonsdale, informs me that he placed a pair of land-snails (Helix pomatia), one of which was weakly, into a small and ill-provided garden. After a short time the strong and healthy individual disappeared, and was traced by its track of slime over a wall into an adjacent well-stocked garden. Mr. Lonsdale concluded that it had deserted its sickly mate; but after an absence of twenty-four hours it returned, and apparently communicated the result of its successful exploration, for both then started along the same track and disappeared over the wall. (p. 614)]

Anecdotes like this occur frequently throughout The Descent of Man.

But it is not in anecdotes alone that Darwin surpasses reductionism. The qualities he finds in animals when he presents evidence for the idea of continuity are tinged with a romanticism which subsequent empirical judgement would reject. He devotes the third chapter of The Descent to demonstration that "there is no fundamental difference between

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1Page numbers refer to specific editions noted in the "Works Cited" section of the Bibliography. This section is divided into "Primary Sources"--i.e., the works of fiction that are foundational to the discussion--and "Secondary Sources," which are the remaining literary and critical works quoted directly in the text.
man and the higher animals in their mental faculties" (p. 446). Many of his assertions about animals would be questioned by current scientists, but from his perspective they are self-evident. He notes, for example, that the "fact that the lower animals are excited by the same emotions as ourselves is so well established, that it will not be necessary to weary the reader with many details" (p. 448). "It is almost superfluous," he remarks, "to state that animals have excellent Memories for persons and places" (p. 452). It is also obvious to him that animals exercise reason; he says that only "a few persons now dispute that animals possess some power of reasoning. Animals may constantly be seen to pause, deliberate and resolve" (p. 453). "All animals feel Wonder, and many exhibit Curiosity" (p. 450), he states. Where males of any given species of birds display brilliantly coloured plumage, he says of the female bird that "it is impossible to doubt that she admires the beauty of her male partner" (p. 467). Within his world-view, animals not only emote and reason, but recall events, wonder at unusual occurrences and respond to aesthetic dimensions of their experience.

Two points Darwin makes in this chapter are crucial to understanding the difference between the perspective that generated evolutionary theory and the reductionism that purports to take its cue from Darwinism. The vision of life that legitimates the kind of appeal he makes in the anecdote about the snails and the tragic image of the homeless ants can be discerned in his simple assertion that the fact that "animals retain their mental individuality is unquestionable" (p. 460). For Darwin, animals do not exist in some neutrally collective state, as both human use and empirical evaluation assume. Animals know themselves as individuals. Furthermore, "animals not only love, but have desire to be loved" (p. 450). Following up on this point, Darwin will later mention signs of affection among social animals and altruistic acts performed by animals (pp. 475-478). At the time that he first notes love in animals, he cites an incident that has moral implications decidedly out of step with a value-free notion of science:
In the agony of death [Darwin writes] a dog 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 the operation was fully justified by an increase of our knowledge, or unless he had a heart of stone, must have felt remorse to the last hour of his life. (p. 449)

In view of testimony like this, it is not surprising that Stanley Edgar Hyman derives from Darwin's writings the message that "Everything that lives is holy" (p. 78).

Darwin's vivid apprehension of animal subjectivity validates the grand theory he presents to culture. In its original state, the idea of evolution does not neutralize the world; it depends upon the recognition of qualities in other animals that philosophy and religion have treated as the exclusive preserve of the human individual. Describing this aspect of Darwinism as romantic might seem to discredit at least this one feature of his theory as unscientific. Nevertheless, aspects of Darwin's thought that may be discounted as romantic or even sentimental from an empirical point of view are neither anomalous nor decorative, but a substantial part of his theory as a whole. If a distinction in kinds of discourse must be assumed, then the least that can be said is that the two ways of interpreting life--romantic and empirical--mutually inform each other in Darwin's work. Despite scientific resistance, moreover, culture has not remained oblivious to the romanticism in evolutionary theory. The inherent romanticism in the idea of continuity between humans and animals is working itself out at present in the animal rights controversy and in attempts to establish environmental and ecological ethics.

Margot Norris perceives greater than idealistic import in Darwin's works. In Beasts of the Modern Imagination, she takes Darwin as the "founder" of what she calls the "biocentric tradition" in which writers write "with their animality speaking" (p. 1). In view of the disparate meanings that attach to the idea of "animality," Norris's assertion is extraordinarily difficult to prove. She means more than that authors like Darwin, Nietzsche, Kafka and Lawrence respect animals, or place animals in the forefront of their philosophies. She means, as she says in her conclusion, that somehow in these authors'
works "thought 'acts' as life does" (p. 238). Life acts in ways that are quite different from the normal workings of the intellect. In order to cause thought to act as life does, in Norris' analysis, these writers build hostility to art and philosophy into the form of their works in ways that approximate the program of deconstructionism. In clearing away cultural and intellectual impositions, these writers introduce animality as a positive force, as an end-in-itself released from subjection to interpretation and evaluation. Nietzsche, for example, executes "the bestial gesture" in his "need to erase the anthropomorphic interventions of pedagogy, mimesis and intellectual influence itself" (p. 2); in *Ecce Homo*, he strips away all the authorial masks that represent concessions to "the other," the reader, and "reveals himself behind them all" (p. 98). In this fashion, his "demythification" of cultural constructs enters the form of his works, and he confronts the reader "organism to organism" (p. 88). The animal becomes important to Kafka, Norris argues, "because the radicalness of his ontological vision required a negative site of narration: the site of animal being" (p. 133); his narration "constitutes a bestial gesture that marks the trajectory from signification to its obliteration, from remembering to forgetting. Becoming the beast is remembering to forget, as being the beast is forgetting to remember" (p. 119). Similarly, the animal in Lawrence's works exists as an absence which art cannot represent: the "biocentric universe Lawrence substitutes for the anthropocentric one is, finally, silent and unconscious, an ontology founded on the negation of the self-conscious subject and therefore inaccessible to literary inscription" (p. 171).

Norris proposes that Darwin initiates this tradition of discovering the creatural through self-repudiating texts by removing the idea of an Author from Nature. Darwin's theories challenge the most fundamental of the oppositions on which Western culture depends, oppositions, Norris notes, of human and animal, male and female, Nature and culture:

With the disappearance of the Author from Darwin's universe [Norris writes] these oppositions, which have been elevated virtually to the status of logical categories or necessary ways of thinking about the world, collapsed into a kind of Derridean
freeplay. In reading the traces of natural life, the interplay of presence and absence in the fossil record or in the vestigial or rudimentary organs in living creatures, Darwin discovered form as linked not to the eternal action of mind or the intelligence of a Creator, but to the absent action of force: force extinguished and obliterated, or deferred in its effects, by time. (pp. 37-38)

It is alarming to think that any genuine introduction of the animal into culture has to take negative form, the form of forgetting, of erasure, of absence, of deconstruction. Hints of reductionism float suspiciously around such a view. Nevertheless, Norris does demonstrate convincingly that Darwinian theory is not just one cultural phenomenon among others, and that Darwin has originated the demand to break out of culture and pointed the way towards doing so. Her book also warns tacitly against premature syntheses of the deep oppositions questioned by the autonomy of animals.

One way or another, then, it is obvious that Darwin has problematized the world in a new way for modern culture. It is equally obvious that the nonhuman animal resides at the heart of the dilemmas that Darwin has left to us. Culture has become aware that the haecceity of the animal stands in conflict with the global schemes under which the animal has been philosophically subsumed. Where science was busily neutralizing nature, converting nature into mechanical process opposing culture’s ethical and aesthetic values, animal reality now intervenes to confound the tidy separation of nature and culture. With the animal at the crux of the problem, Darwinism is dialectically disposed either to infuse nature with an objectivity so supreme that it is immune to culture, or conversely to endow nature with subjectivity (or "holiness") so pervasive that culture begins to looks woefully solipsistic. In either case, culture is left conscious of its own ineptitude and insufficiency. The living presence of the individual animal has turned nature into a genuine obstacle for human belief.

Communication is no longer a one-way proposition, whereby the human mind has free and absolute authority to explain what nature is all about. A natural being, the nonhuman animal, responds meaningfully to nature in ways humankind would like to
know. Indeed, the animal’s ways of living in nature exist in the human mind and the human body, regardless of the difficulties consciousness has in grasping the animal in the person. The point is not that there is now no difference between humans and animals; the important historical change hinges, rather, upon the fact that animal distinctiveness now bears authority of its own. The reality of other minds, other experiences, or simply other eyes watching us, places the demand upon culture to comprehend the language of Nature.

Language, however, is itself a major difficulty in the effort to clear a place for the natural animal in culture. Language, we have believed, separates humankind from the rest of the animals. Language shapes thought and presents the human mind with a world quite different from that which animals occupy. Now that animals have assumed importance in our ways of knowing the world, doubts arise as to the power of language to escape culture and address nature. The language of science adheres adequately to the visual surface of animals and their acts; it records and tabulates, and suppresses interpretation as far as it is able. On one side of the linguistic dilemma, science appears to have muted its discourse to allow the natural animal to come through. On the other side of the linguistic dilemma, where culture tries to locate meaningful connections between humans and animals, the language of science appears instead to have deprived the natural animal of intrinsic significance.

When culture seeks language appropriate to the eloquence of the natural animal, it suffers discomfort. As soon as language begins to articulate the vital inner experience of animals, the suspicion arises that culture is learning more about itself than about animals per se. Anthropomorphism has become one of the great anxieties of the modern age, which is strange, considering the license evolutionary theory gives to finding correspondences between humans and animals. Fear of anthropomorphism does attest, however, to the intensity of the modern desire to know the animal directly. It also attests to the dominance of the neutralizing language of science. Where language tries to go beyond
formulaic description of animals, it risks the charge that it is anthropomorphizing animal experience. Since it is obvious, now, that the world does have meaning for animals, meaning which may correspond to human meaning at some points and may not at others, the need to bring language into line with animal reality is not a trivial matter. In view of the sense of holism that marks the apperception of animals, radical divisions in language that attempts to cope with animals promote the fear that language isolates humankind from nature. Because animal life expresses important aspects of human reality, the failure of language to convey the totality of human understanding of animals suggests that crucial regions of the human psyche stand beyond the reach of language. Dependent on culture, language appears to be incapable of criticizing culture fundamentally enough to convey the essential connections between humans and animals. We know that human individuals are not made wholly by culture, and animals certainly are not. Since human "being" and cultural "being" are not identical, culture evidently does not subsume the totality of realizable life. If language operates, then, only upon human projection, when the external world in the form of animals is clearly communicating nonhuman meaning, then language truly divorces humans from nature—and in a fashion that hardly feeds the pride of our species. Can we expand to nothing what language is? Are animals nonhuman entities that define us?

According to Gillian Beer, all major scientific theories like Darwin's "disturb assumed relationships and shift what has been substantial into metaphor" (p. 3). Until Darwin's time, culture sustained what seemed to be a substantial connection with the animal in the form of anthropomorphic metaphor. Indeed, animals lent life to the metaphors of the cultural imagination. It "is not unreasonable to suppose," John Berger notes, "that the first metaphor was animal" (p. 504). One of the great ironies of the theory of evolution is that it arrives at a time when humankind is losing touch with nonhuman animals, when animal species are vanishing with frightening rapidity and day-to-day existence involves little contact with natural animals. Loss occurs across the whole
spectrum of human experience. The physical loss of other animals leaves the human species lonely and isolated. Just when we need to know animals in some substantial and meaningful way, moreover, previous linguistic attachments to the animal collapse into metaphor. Berger concludes his observations on the metaphoric use of animals with this distressing comment:

Until the 19th century, . . . anthropomorphism was integral to the relation between man and animal and was an expression of their proximity. Anthropomorphism was the residue of the continuous use of animal metaphor. In the last two centuries, animals have gradually disappeared. Today we live without them. And in this new solitude, anthropomorphism makes us doubly uneasy. (p. 505)

Although it is a moot point that metaphor had expressed the "proximity" of humans and animals, the contrary language of science speaks primarily of human alienation from animals. If reductionist and mechanistic theories are not especially compelling as summaries of authentic experience, it can hardly be accepted that their discourse epitomizes the totality of knowable correspondence with animals. Certainly, empirical understanding represents one of the boundaries of the modern view of animals. And certainly, metaphor gave something we thought was animal an intelligible presence in language and culture. But if anthropomorphic metaphors do express human affinity with animals, then they too represent one of the boundaries of linguistic apprehension of the idea of continuity. They cannot be easily dismissed or overcome. In a way, though, skepticism about the power of language to encompass the full significance of animals has contributed to the liberation of the animal.

If animals had remained silent, discourse could have remained contentedly self-enclosed. Philosophy and science could have continued unchallenged to makes assertions about what animals are and are not. With the stirring of the once dormant animal in the human psyche, the natural animal now has something to address. Contrary to recent attempts to teach chimpanzees to use human signs and grammatical forms, the point is not that animals can communicate our own meaning back to us. Rather, humanity is
obliged to seek out significations in itself which may meet up with the animal's state of being. What the animal means--the obsession of past and present thinkers--is secondary. That the animal means in our century is crucial.

Naturally enough, modern fiction reflects the upheaval to relations between humans and animals caused by Darwinian theory. Fiction wrestles with the historical conditions in which it finds itself, and animals possess exceptionally pressing significance in the modern age. Where other kinds of discourse, scientific, philosophical and even poetic, are attempting to lay the animal to rest, fiction recognizes the singular difficulties animals bring to culture. In modern fiction, animals take an active part in human conflicts. Animality represents one of the problems faced by humankind in fiction, as in life. Because the animal state of being has concrete presence in human existence, and because language is having trouble encompassing the nonhuman and yet vital meaning of animals, animals lead fiction into territories where disputes between nature and culture emerge. Modern fiction is acutely aware of the great difficulty of knowing the real animal through culturally defined methods of representation. The problematic character of the real animal, in its location beyond the bounds of realization, throws the depiction of human reality into question. Margot Norris argues that, in the biocentric tradition she explores, mimesis "is the negative mark, the mark of absence, castration, and death, an insight that required artists to reevaluate the ontological status of their media as negative being, as mere simulacra of life" (p. 5). But since fiction does not close off the world, it is in a unique position to give material representation to the inadequacies of language, and thus to sustain, without finality, the multi-sided and conflicted being of the animal. Fiction elicits the reality of the animal by revealing the fragmentariness of human responses. The impenetrability of the natural animal in turn discloses that culture presents humankind only with "simulacra of life." Mimesis, then, does not arise solely from describing animals directly, but also from revealing those places in culture and the human psyche that distort,
abbreviate or obliterate animal being. Conscious of the estrangement of culture from nature, modern fiction restores value and meaning to the total animal which other modes of discourse disavow.

It should be apparent that of all the roles animals assume in culture and in life, their role as victims is fraught with especially active conflicts. Until this century, culture has believed that we live in a broken world because the lion will not lay down with the lamb. If only the animal, the "beast," could be tamed, then morality would reign over the earth. Sometimes, of course, it would occur to philosophers that the human animal is the most vicious of all of nature's creatures. The idea of original sin lays responsibility for earthly afflictions at humanity's feet. Yet the Edenic world is a product of anti-animal moral belief, and that moral belief has held sway over readings of nature for long centuries. Thus, one of the seemingly "substantial" approaches to life that Darwinism has converted into metaphor is the idea of the domestication of the beast. In moral terms, the act of domestication and the process of civilization are virtually synonymous. The utility of bringing certain animals under human control was rationalized and lost, effectively, in the moral scheme that suppressed human misgivings about victimizing animal nature in taming animals. It must be good and right to domesticate animals, for did they not, once tamed, comply obediently with human authority? And would it not produce a happy, harmonious world if all of humanity would likewise submit unprotestingly to hierarchies of dominance? Resistance, revolt, and even plain depravity came to be equated with the acts of the wild animal. In this manner, civilization inverted its most invasive way of victimizing animals, and translated a grossly material advantage to the human species alone into a metaphor of moral relations. This double victimization, physical and then moral, is ingrained in civilization's attitude towards animals. Attempts to counter aggression against animals seem to be trapped between these polarized prejudices, colliding first with the economic utility of continuing victimization of animals, and alternately with
the cultural metaphor that reifies human morality at the expense of the animal in Nature and of "the animal" in human nature.

When modern fiction tries to assimilate the animal victim, it encounters the kind of fundamental dialectic that the domestication of animals generates. Bound to cultural history, fiction has an extraordinarily difficult time breaking out of this dialectic. One thing that becomes clear after looking at animal victims in modern fiction is that fiction is not dismissing the animal victim as unimportant. It may adopt a variety of conflicting approaches to aggression against animals, but at least it opposes pre-modern culture by elevating the issue of human oppression of animals to the level of a genuine problem. No matter to what human meanings fiction subordinates the animal, the power of the animal victim to splinter human certainties reveals the extent to which even the animal victim defies human authority. The complexity and profundity of the cultural conflicts in which animal victims have significance indicates the breadth of the command animals have over the modern imagination.

One of the aims of the following examination of animal victims in modern fiction is to suggest the range of cultural conflicts in which the victimization of animals has relevance. Recognizing that those animals which humankind chooses to use or to torment were not always counted as "victims," the first chapter begins with a survey of some of the historical conditions that fostered the necessary sentiments for perceiving the suffering animal as a victim. The plight of animals began to weigh upon the general social conscience during the early Enlightenment period, when science and religion were competing for epistemological primacy. Out of the combination of public interest in natural history and the necessity to ground spirituality in earthly matters, a concern emerged for the well-being of the nonhuman animal. Compassion for animals became a feature of moral refinement. Romanticism, in one of its aspects, took up the refined sentiments of the Enlightenment and sought to convert those sentiments into a passionate appreciation
of the wildness in animals. The mid-period of the nineteenth century juggles with passion and sentiment, and generally produces static images of the animal. Post-Romantic and pre-Darwinian passion seems in large part to follow the precept of Tennyson's dismay at "Nature red in tooth and claw."

Despite the Darwinian challenge to ideological readings of Nature, Tennyson's line survives in modern culture as an encoded justification for human dominance over animals. Since strong animals in the wild prey upon weak ones, the most powerful animal in nature, the human being, should show no compunction in its conquest of other animals. Moral reservations about killing animals bind the animal in the human psyche to anti-animal cultural fabrications. Granted, the most prevalent forms of human use of animals bear scant resemblance to inter-species predacity in the wild, but that discrepancy should not trouble the sovereign animals whose evident invincibility assures compliance from other animals, whatever the chosen method of victimization or rationalization. The undeniable fact of human omnipotence should circumvent arguments for restraint in the matter of aggression against animals. These sorts of arguments, at any rate, can be raised against those who seek to defend animals. Power, pure and simple, is clearly a crucial issue in any philosophical approach to the subject of the animal victim.

Thus the second and longer section of the first chapter seeks theoretical grounding for the subversion of the seemingly absolute authority humans hold over other animals. At base, the argument of this section is that the questions raised by the animal victim are not as simple as they appear. The dictates of compassion are not sufficiently powerful to root out inveterate habits of thought that weaken the nonhuman animal's claim upon reason. Humankind bends down to bestow compassion on animals; indeed, compassion tends to enhance our feeling of spiritual superiority. Examining several of the complications surrounding the victimization of animals, it becomes apparent that rectification is possible only if animals defy human dominance at some tangible level. The
very complexity of the theoretical considerations constitutes one form of animal resistance. As these introductory remarks suggest, animals are, in effect, turning the tables on culture. They make culture nervous.

In a certain respect, the rest of the analysis takes up the theme of animal resistance to the physical and conceptual victimization practiced by the human species. Although animals succumb to aggression in the works of fiction surveyed, their deaths destabilize or overthrow cultural presuppositions. The animals do not die quietly; they speak clearly and forcefully of the unreality of the cultural and psychic mechanisms that oppress them.

Stories are classified here accordingly as the animal victims are more and more deeply entangled in specifically cultural dilemmas. The order of the categories represents an attempt to show the significance of animal victims striking closer and closer to the heart of cultural alienation from animals. These categories are not presented as rigid or exhaustive. Rather, the aim is to suggest an organizational scheme and a direction for material that might otherwise appear chaotic and unintelligible.

The first proposed category is that of the wild animal story. Since wild animals oppose culture by their very nature, one might think that authors would be greatly perplexed in the effort to build narratives out of the life of the wild animal. Instead, one finds that wild animal adventures dramatize fairly straightforward moral questions. The chapter which deals with this category follows the chronological trend in stories of animals in the wild. It begins with works by Ernest Thompson Seton, Charles G.D. Roberts and Jack London, in which personified animals act out such late-Victorian moral programs as character-building, strength in virtue (and vice versa) and social Darwinism. Henry Williamson’s *Tarka the Otter* (1927) and Allan W. Eckert’s *The Great Auk* (1963) also bring moral issues to bear upon their animal victims, but they are emancipated from both Victorian notions of virtue and the need to personify animals. These two novels manage to
sustain the sense of the naturalness of the wild animal, while castigating humankind for its abuse of other species. As Eckert's work demonstrates, even when victimization reaches the furthest and increasingly familiar stage of annihilating a whole species of animals, animal resistance endures in cultural guilt.

Where the first category investigates literary approaches to animals in their own environment, the second looks at the kinds of conflicts that arise from contemplation of animal victims in the wholly alien setting of the city. Stories in this category tend to broach existential rather than moral conflicts. Chronological order comes into play here, too, because antipathy to urban values grows over the course of the twentieth century. Thomas Mann's "Tobias Mindernickel" (1897), Katherine Mansfield's "The Fly" (1923) and John Steinbeck's "The White Quail" (1938) condemn the domestication of humanity required by urban life. In these stories, the characters' anger at repression breaks out in violence against animals. The animals themselves embody opposition to urbanism. The most recent story covered in this category is Giorgio Bassani's The Heron (1968). Set in Italy in 1947, The Heron shows the urban centre in decay. The heron of the title is the most coherent and lucid element in the story. With the death of the heron, the protagonist of the novel claims as his own a diffuse sense of victimization that has plagued his being. The heron confounds the reader's effort to determine whether the protagonist's decision to commit suicide is existentially authentic or an act of bad faith.

The third category delineates some of the ways in which animal victims comment upon humankind's perennial obsession with sexuality. In Frederick Philip Grove's Settlers of the Marsh, Thomas Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Mary Webb's Gone to Earth, and D.H. Lawrence's "The Fox," humans and animals die largely because of cultural failure to bring love into accord with carnality. Roughly speaking, pity for the animal is associated in these novels with a sexless, spiritual world, while the victimization of animals aligns with sexual lust. Thus even Hardy's Tess, the "pure woman," crunches snails underfoot
as sexual interest draws her towards the man who arouses her passion. Although Hardy would like to find compassion for animals co-existing in Nature with healthy sexual love, he does not believe that nature and culture dovetail in any fashion that permits sexual tranquility. Webb, too, tries to integrate compassion for animals into a poetic vision of Nature, but she finds that sexual expression, of a variety that most people would characterize as pedestrian, completely opposes the lyrical vision and instead naturalizes violence against the body and against the animal. Grove equivocates noticeably on the issue of sexlessness and mercy, aggression and lust: he tries to incorporate both contrary dimensions into one act, in which the extraordinarily innocent Niels Lindstedt shoots his own horse, and his wife, on learning that his wife is the local prostitute. Niels and the horse are kindred spirits, but the horse articulates phallic meaning (its name is Jock) and castration imagery (it is a gelding) simultaneously. It is therefore extremely difficult to conclude whether Niels is left sexually whole or sexually crippled after shooting his animal alter ego. Lawrence comes close to removing the emotional freight of victimization from both the animal and sexuality, but he cannot finally depict what sexual intercourse would look and feel like under the new conditions he posits. His fox denotes more sexual force than his human characters can achieve.

The penultimate category is the last in which fiction struggles earnestly with the meaning that animal victims impress upon culture. In this category, animal victims cast deep and devastating skepticism upon prevailing myths. Whereas myth is assumed to cross the gap between nature and culture, works of fiction in this category are inclined to demonstrate that the opposite is the case: that distrust of myths re-introduces the natural animal to culture. In *Salammbô*, Gustave Flaubert locates a time in history, the time of the Punic wars, in which history and myth collide to produce almost inconceivable cruelties in battle and in the breakdown of the social order. Animals are caught in the cross-fire, but they articulate, nevertheless, Flaubert’s desire to wring reality out of the monstrous
distortions of the era. Flaubert's acute apperception of animal death enters also into the
cynicism of his approach to Christianity's exaltation of death in his tale "The Legend of
St. Julian Hospitator." Only in fantasy and dream, this story tells us, do animals rebel
against victimization, and yet Flaubert's critique of the legend of the saint relies upon the
animal body's implicit defiance of glorification of death. Likewise, in "Pigeon Feathers,
John Updike uses the mute death of the natural animal to expose the narcissism in the
Christian myth of death. The protagonist, David, takes his power to kill pigeons as a sign
of God's concern for his soul, but Updike sees through David revelation to the meanness
and fear that motivates the illusion of importance. Death is one of the concerns of
Timothy Findley's Not Wanted on the Voyage, as well. In Findley's re-casting of the myth
of Noah and the flood, however, the primary loss to culture after the flood is the loss of
direct communication with animals. Findley argues, in effect, that the reification of myth
in the face of disbelief silences animals. The myth of the flood and the image of the ark
utter a loud "No" to Nature. Such disillusionment as informs Flaubert's, Updike's and
Findley's stories also informs Faulkner's The Bear. The killing of the totemically invincible
bear signals the collapse of culture into history, and the collapse of the mythically-
weighted hunt into sheer pettiness.

Stories in the final category conspire with culture to negate the animal victim.
Although they purport to elevate animal victims, these stories place particular strains
upon literary invention in order to suppress consciousness of aggression against animals.
If one interjects a true sense of animal suffering as a test of these stories, the
inauthenticity of their fictional and linguistic devices becomes clear. The legendary
plainness of Ernest Hemingway's style of writing, for example, disguises a
disingenuousness on the matter of animal victims. While The Sun Also Rises builds up to
climactic scenes of the bull-fight, the bulls are almost non-existent; Hemingway writes
around the bulls, leaving a vacancy in the midst of matador's artistic flourishes. "The
Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" co-opts the animal victims of the hunting safari in an ideological battle between the sexes. Blunt, emotionless speech, such as Hemingway himself likes to affect, proves the superiority of the male. At the other extreme in literary expression, surrealism appears to be no more competent than the stripped style of writing in conveying the gravity of the victimization of animals. Even though an epileptic husky is central to Graeme Gibson’s *Communion*, and the ultimate death on the highway of the dog is the pivotal event, the method of the novel is so bizarre that its ending implies that none of the previous events happened at all. Jerzy Kosinski’s *The Painted Bird* has to be trusted as an attempt to cope with the atrocities of World War II, and yet all of the gruesome tortures are used to magnify the personal tragedy of the narrator. Animal victims in *The Painted Bird* exist only as analogues for the narrator’s misery. Both *Communion* and *The Painted Bird* are fundamentally narcissistic works; the animal victim has no chance to penetrate the sense of personal misfortune. The horror tales *Monkey Shines*, by Michael Stewart, and *Cujo*, by Stephen King, temporarily allow animals to victimize human beings. Indeed, there is a hopeful sign in these novels in their deployment of perfectly natural animals, familiar animals of the everyday. But both novels permit animals to torment people with the ulterior aim of enacting all the more savage vengeance upon the animals at the conclusion of the story. Thus *Monkey Shines* and *Cujo* serve cultural hostility towards the animal.

Although much of this analysis focusses upon the human conflicts illuminated by animal victims, there is an underlying question which guides discussion and that is, "What benefit does this have for animals?" "This," of course, is any aspect of fiction which bends thought or emotion towards the animal. Certainly Darwinian theory has generated some novel, not to say bizarre, programs for social reform, among them eugenics and social Darwinism. But however much the idea of continuity might have to say about human social and political interests, the following investigation attempts to subordinate our
species' prepossession with itself to the interests of other animals. It is necessary, of course, to be wary of ideological imposition, even when the particular ideology preaches kindness to animals. Throughout the discussion, any device that makes the animal safe for cultural use is viewed with suspicion. This study is seeking out those places where fiction comes close to achieving the near-impossible task of honouring the difference of the nonhuman animal while simultaneously recognizing continuity between the human species and others. But whether fiction accomplishes this task or not, it does acknowledge the autonomous reality of the animal. What challenges preconceptions and disrupts sanctities is not some phantom animal produced by cultural conceptions, but the genuine animal. When post-Darwinian fiction victimizes this genuine animal, furthermore, it does so with clear signs of discomfort.
CHAPTER I
THE ANIMAL VICTIM IN ITS CULTURAL CONTEXT:
A BRIEF HISTORY AND SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The animal victim occupies a secure place in the modern psyche. From early images of overburdened horses beaten by their drivers, liquid-eyed stags dying under the gaze of the hunters who shot them, caged birds pining for freedom, flies with their wings torn off by malicious boys, kittens thrown into sacks and drowned, dogs cringing beneath their masters' furious assaults and foxes run to exhaustion by packs of hounds, to more contemporary images of circus elephants tormented by their trainers, rats skittering painfully over the electrified bars of Skinner boxes, porcupines squashed on the highway, battery hens jammed by the hundreds into tiny cages, baby seals clubbed into semi-consciousness and skinned by fishermen, oil-soaked sea-birds and Beluga whales killed by the chemical soup in the St. Lawrence river, the animal victim pervades domains of memory and diverse regions of modern life. Other, grimmer images live their furtive lives on the fringes of culture and consciousness, in jokes—"What is red and green and moves at 400 miles an hour"—"A frog in a blender"—in news items about pets baked in microwave ovens, and in sexual perversions as inconceivable anatomically (how does a man penetrate a chicken phallically to achieve orgasm while tearing its head off?) as psychically. These

1This particular act, I have heard, is recorded by the Marquis de Sade. Whether it falls into the category of fantasy or anecdote, I am unable to say. Actual cases of what is ironically called "bestiality" are described in Richard Von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* ([1886] Franklin S. Klaf, trans. [New York: Stein and Day, 1978]) pp. 82-85 and 374-381); in the sixth chapter of Wilhelm Stekel's *Patterns of Psychosexual Infantilism* ([1930] Emil A. Gutheil, ed. [New York: Washington Square Press, 1966)]; and in Ernest A. Rappaport's "Zoophilia and Zoosteria" (*Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 37 [1968]), pp. 565-87. In these works, descriptions of the torture of animals for sexual pleasure are ugly enough to lend credibility to the image of the man and the chicken.
gruesome tales provoke a nervous titillation and gratifying revulsion which indicate the depths of ambivalence tapped.

Even images of animals in the wild carry by convention the cultural freight of victimization. In the closing years of the last century and the first half of this one, "the wild" typically meant unrelenting predation among animals, with human participation taking the form of big game hunting. More recently, the educative presentation of the lives of natural animals conveys the sadness of dwindling numbers, the tenuousness of the wild animal's hold upon its existence. So widespread, then, is the conception of the animal as victim that it has become difficult to separate the animal from that particular role. We have come to accept the victim aspect of the animal as definitive, forgetting that the bulk of what is "animal" in animals has nothing whatever to do with victimization.

It is true that, as the above examples illustrate, animals are made victims when they collide with civilization. In a material sense, of course, animal domains disappear as human populations swell and human demands upon natural resources increase. But it is also true that culture creates the consciousness which perceives the animal as victim. While we might conceivably ignore the threat to our species implicit in evidence of the damage we do to other animals, modern culture impresses upon us a set of values from which the animal victim emerges. A product of the advance of civilization, the animal victim is simultaneously a product of cultural history. Signs of cultural prompting do not deny the reality of animal victims; they suggest, more likely, that the human animal is obtuse and requires external aids to sensibility.
A Brief Cultural History

Over the centuries, providing aids to sensibility has not been the aim of those infrequently appearing philosophers who preach consideration for nonhuman animals. From the time of Pythagoras and the Buddha in the sixth century B.C. to the start of the eighteenth century, thinkers have found it necessary to propose rational arguments against the abuse of animals. Granted, the transmigration of human souls into the bodies of animals (Pythagoras' position) may not seem particularly rational. But humankind had become so accustomed to using animals in whatever way it chose that extraordinary justifications were required to make any progress against entrenched habits. The greatly attenuated debate over animal souls, or lack of souls, evidently had little power to induce the populace to treat animals well. The centuries Christian dominance occasionally produced arguments to the effect that wanton cruelty to animals is an affront to God. Appeals to systems under God, however, could be used equally well to support insensitivity to other animals, as Augustine's observations on injuries to animals attest: "We can perceive by their cries . . . that animals die in pain, although we make little of this since the beast, lacking a rational soul, is not related to us by a common nature" (quoted by Passmore, p. 197). Quite plainly, people "made little" of the suffering of animals, tales of gentle animal-loving saints notwithstanding. If, as Keith Thomas reports, the fifteenth-century mystic Margery Kempe "had a vision of Christ being beaten" whenever she saw

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someone striking a horse (p. 152), such visions were not the privilege of the ordinary person. Butchering, bloodsports and the routine torture of animals on ceremonial occasions inured the public to whatever divinity each animal was supposed to possess by the visions of saints and mystics. How could the tormented animal represent Christ, when torments proceeded unrelentingly? God's world would be unthinkably cruel if animals warranted the same moral concern as humans or their betters. Of necessity, Christian dogma blinded believers to the life of animals; that blindness was a pre-condition of its triumph over competing religions. In his article "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," Lynn White, Jr. blames Christianity for promoting disregard for the interests of the nonhuman world: "By destroying pagan animism [he writes], Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects" (p. 1205). Whether pagan animism would have led to greater kindness towards animals is a question buried deep beneath centuries of non-pagan thought.

One philosophical variant of pagan animism which emerges from time to time was no more effective than doctrines of mercy in cultivating sensitivity to the interests of animals. This variant finds humankind at a great disadvantage on comparison with other animals. Born naked, human beings have no natural weapons and no natural knowledge. Animals live in accord with nature; they do not need of the arts of reason or of medicine which human beings must achieve in order to survive. The idea of the "happy beast" occurs outside of folklore among the Cynics of the fourth century B.C., and in a first century revival of cynical philosophy. Plutarch gives extended treatment to the inferiority

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of humankind to animals in the dialogue *Gryllus*, and Pliny adopts the same position in his *Natural History*. The idea then apparently disappears until the sixteenth century. Its most notable proponent at this time is, of course, Montaigne. In his *Apology for Raimond Sebond*, Montaigne summarizes the position:

> Why do we ascribe to I know not what slavish instinct of nature those works that excel anything we can do by nature or art? Herein we unconsciously give [animals] a very great advantage over us, in making Nature, with maternal kindness, to accompany and lead them as it were by the hand, to all the activities and conveniences of their life; whilst she abandons us to chance and fortune, and forces us to seek by art the things necessary for our preservation; at the same time denying us the means of attaining, by any education or mental effort, to the natural skills of the animals. So that their brutish stupidity surpasses in all their contrivances everything we are able to do with our divine intelligence. (p. 384)

In this essay, Montaigne also addresses the perennial problem of the barrier of language standing between humans and animals: "That defect which hinders communication between us and them, why may it not as well be in ourselves as in them?" (p. 382) It is significant that Montaigne’s probing of the issue takes the form of a question. His primary aim is to rattle human confidence, not to preach on behalf of animals.

While "theriophily," as George Boas has labelled argument based upon the idea of the happy beast, has little historical influence, it is an important theoretical marker for the spirit of the times. In his entry on "Theriophily" in the *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, Boas notes that "To see society from the point of view of a foreigner . . . was a favorite device for gaining distance and apparent objectivity; to see it from the point of view of an animal was even better" (IV, p. 387). Such skepticism as Montaigne demonstrates indicates the possibility for mistrust of the anthropocentric vision. Pity for animals may not spring directly from skepticism, but at least skepticism undermines reliance upon those rational arguments that had been applied variously in support of and opposition to compassion. Skepticism appears to have been a cultural prerequisite to empathy with animals.
Philosophical debate over the correct way to incorporate animals into moral systems continues to this day. But the sensibility which inspires modern debate becomes a stable facet of Western culture around the start of the eighteenth century. As part of their brief introduction to the collection of essays entitled *Animals and Man in Historical Perspective*, Joseph and Barrie Klaits quote in full a description of the death of a bull given in 1714 by Bernard Mandeville. They are following the lead of Wallace Shugg who also gives the passage in full in "The Cartesian Beast-Machine in English Literature (1663-1750)." Mandeville's description unquestionably merits attention in any history of humanity's relations with animals, however brief. It occurs in "Remark (P.)" of his *Fable of the Bees*:

> When a large and gentle Bullock, after having resisted ten times greater force of Blows than would have kill'd his Murderer, falls stunn'd at last, and his arm'd Head is fasten'd to the Ground with Cords; as soon as the wide Wound is made, and the Jugulars are cut asunder, what Mortal can without Compassion hear the pitiful Bellowings intercepted by his Blood, the bitter Sighs that speak the Sharpness of his Anguish, and the deep sounding Grones with loud Anxiety fetch'd from the bottom of his strong and palpitating Heart; Look on the trembling and violent Convulsions of his Limbs; see, while his reeking Gore streams from him, his Eyes become dim and languid, and behold his Strugglings, Gasps and last Efforts for Life, the certain Signs of his approaching Fate? When a Creature has given such convincing and undeniable Proofs of the Terrors upon him, and the Pains and Agonies he feels, is there a Follower of Descartes so inur'd to Blood as not to refute, by his Commiseration, the Philosophy of that vain Reasoner? (p. 181)

The attack on Descartes (who will be touched upon momentarily) is not the point of citing Mandeville's report on the death of the bull at this juncture. If his philosophy were at issue, one would have to place Mandeville in the camp of opponents to the animal's claim upon morality. F.B. Kaye's introduction to the edition of *The Fable* I am using states that Mandeville's "code condemned all such acts as were caused by traits men share with the animals" (pp. cxx-cxxi). There is nothing the least bit atypical about the belief that human beings are dragged down from the heights of virtue by their animal nature. What is new in this one passage is the vivid entry into the bull's state of consciousness. All questions of argument aside, Mandeville wishes his reader to put himself or herself in the bull's place
and to experience what the bull is experiencing. The bull's anguish, moreover, is animal anguish; Mandeville is not personifying the bull. Perhaps even more remarkable than this move towards identification is Mandeville's use of an everyday occurrence. This "large and gentle Bullock" is not suffering abuse as part of a sporting event or other special occasion. It is simply being slaughtered in the customary fashion. The cruelty depicted is not of the spectacle variety which so many eighteenth-century writers will decry; it is an aspect of the butchering for human use that the eighteenth century will rarely condemn. Mandeville is obviously not making a case for vegetarianism; nor is he particularly concerned to encourage kindness towards animals. The passage articulates a new worldview, not an ideology.

Between Montaigne's time and Mandeville's, the animal had become an object of thought valuable for itself and not simply for what it had to say about humankind. The interests of animals began to arouse concern. Before Mandeville's time, the death or torment of animals would provoke hardly a twinge of conscience in the collective mind. Sentiment was unprepared to extend to animals, and cruelty was not cruelty because it was practiced upon entities that did not exist in conscience as suffering beings. In effect, then, animals evolve into victims around the turn of the eighteenth century.

No single author augurs the change in perspective which slowly weakened established human attitudes towards other animals. Ironically, Descartes made his contribution to the change by expounding a view of animals the antithesis of that which eighteenth-century sensibilities would foster. Descartes' infamous "beast-machine" incited vigorous counter-argument. No doubt the bloodbath in dissecting theatres which followed upon Descartes' assertion, graphically described by Dix Harwood (pp. 77-80), was also too much to stomach for an age that admired reason. Furthermore, the denial of souls to animals was a virtual irrelevancy, since the idea of the soul itself was losing conceptual power. Descartes' theory seems, indeed, like a last desperate effort to hold back
humankind against the slide from divine status into kinship with the rest of nature. It is
even possible that the eighteenth century detected a certain pettiness in the human refusal
of souls to fellow creatures. A conversation reported by Joseph Spence to have taken place
between Spence and Alexander Pope in 1743 or 1744 suggests precisely that. Spence
opens by speculating that dogs have reason:

[Pope:] So they have to be sure. All our disputes about that, are only disputes
about words. Man has reason enough only to know what is necessary for him to
know; and dogs have just that too.

[Spence:] But then they must have souls too; as unperishable in their nature as
ours?

[Pope:] And what harm would that be to us? (Shugg, p. 289)

One way or another, then, the Cartesian theory of the beast-machine unwittingly gave
philosophical legitimacy to animals. It was a short step from this debate to the
authorization of animals as having emotional and moral significance for culture.

Philosophy moved toward asserting likenesses between humankind and animals. Systems of thought such as Locke's and Shaftesbury's grounded the supposedly human
distinctions of knowledge and moral virtue not in divine mystery but in Nature. This
relocation of sources for human knowledge and virtue curiously echoes arguments from
theriophily. It shows philosophy attempting to transfer to humans the same certainty of
instinct theriophily attributes to animals. Later, towards the middle of the eighteenth
century, one finds Julien Offray de la Mettrie seeking to establish a primitive psychology
upon biological processes: "From animals to men," he wrote, "the transition is not violent"
(quoted by Thomas, p. 123). The extent to which this period anticipates modern thought

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Leonora Cohen Rosenfield describes the philosophical extension of the machine
analogy from animal to man, at least as it occurs in France, in *From Beast-Machine to
Man-Machine: Animal Soul in French Letters from Descartes to La Mettrie* ([1940]; enlarged
Shugg's "The Cartesian Beast-Machine in English Literature (1663-1750)" (*Journal of the
History of Ideas* 29 [April-June 1968]: 279-92) shows that the debate was just as lively in
England as it was France.
may be judged from La Mettrie's proposal to develop methods for teaching apes to communicate using sign language. The thought that Nature might be made to speak in human terms signals the gradual closing of the conceptual gap between human and animal creation. It was only logical, therefore, that if people felt pain and deprivation, animals must feel something similar. And since the pains and deprivations of people were no longer received as a pre-heavenly given of this "vale of tears" but were beginning to demand political attention, animal suffering was likewise converted into a correctable ill.

The torment of animals was an ugliness that humankind by its better lights could eliminate, at least where that torment was needless as in cock-fighting or bear-baiting. Although the voices of protest then and now tend to appeal to the effect on the human mind of cruelty to animals, even this argument depends upon a premise of continuity: the pain we give to animals alters our own moral and emotional state.

Recognition of similarities is oddly connected with the physical and mental distance from Nature achieved in the eighteenth century. Progressive urbanization decreased the threat of the natural world. Such terrors as nature could possess for the urban sophisticate had to be re-invented in Gothic tales; that primitive intimacy which might produce genuine fear was past recall. The strange animal monsters of legend shrank dramatically to the menagerie's placid and no doubt sickly beasts confined to small cages and displayed for the amusement of the public. For a large portion of at least European citizenry, the world really was "man-made"; people could regard in safety a mute Nature standing ineffectual beyond city-limits.

At the same time, of course, the spread of the scientific attitude increased confidence in the human mastery of nature. Nature could be known, could be subjugated by the power of the human mind. The possibility that rationalization of the animal might itself constitute a kind of victimization would hardly have occurred to the eighteenth-century zoological enthusiast. The effect, instead, was the conceptual domestication of
even the wild animal and the metamorphosis of the animal into a curiosity. Presenting thus a graspable and untroubling image to the mind, the animal could become a concern of sentiment. The sentiments necessary for seeing the animal as a victim did not, however, have to be particularly full-blooded. A mere desire for an orderly existence, completely in keeping with the scientific attitude, would have been sufficient to isolate the misery of animals as a source of disturbance. Empiricism assisted that perceptual keenness which enhanced the emotional piquancy of the plight of suffering animals.

Nevertheless, compassion for animals was a long way from becoming a regular feature of ethics for adults. It may be sweet, and it may even constitute a cultural breakthrough, when Tristram Shandy's Uncle Toby opens a window to let a fly escape instead of squashing the insect, but the act testifies more to the character's innocent eccentricity than to the fittingness of his virtue. Uncle Toby is not a model of expected conduct. Worldliness prompted examination of the human state. As far as public concerns went, sentimental regard for animals was more of a decoration than a dictate. Despite empirical interests, sympathy was extended to animals only by categories. Those that were timid and harmless to humans aroused pity. Those that were useful to humans could be used without compunction. Those that defied civilization, beasts of prey like wolves and wild bears, were taken still to be legitimate targets of human hostility. Uncle Toby's fly would normally fall into the category of "noxious" creatures justifiably destroyed by humans.\(^5\) No publicly generated political movement on behalf of the animals was likely to arise from this situation. Adult sentiments were too far regulated and too much under human authority to submit to animals in general.

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\(^5\)As to flies, one enlightened moment occurs in a children's story written by Dr. Aiken and Mrs. Barbauld. A father responds to his child's question "What are flies good for to people?" with the logical observation that one might just as fairly ask "What are people good for to flies?" (Cited by Harwood, p. 258.)
It was more or less safe, however, to preach to children about the need for kindness to animals. Literature for children in the later years of the eighteenth century frequently deploys animal victims for the moral improvement of the young. At the same time as the spirit of Romanticism is beginning to emerge, pre-Romantic notions of proper conduct seem to sink into instructions to children, at least where animals are concerned. Fairy tales fell into disfavour, and in the absence of this more penetratingly imaginative mode, the animal victim becomes a somewhat rarified entity. Beings more helpless than children could induce in the child the appropriate spirit of duty towards others. Mary Wollstonecraft goes as far as to inform her young readers that, "It is only to animals that children can do good," since "men are their superiors" (Original Stories, Ch. 2, p. 15). Feeling for animals was represented, moreover, as a species of gentility for the poor and the middle-classes. Animals provided the disadvantaged child with access to that condescension which the wealthy could exercise in wider fields.

In fact, the wealthy come in for considerable rebuke in children's stories of this period. Not the least among their failings is cruelty to animals. As one of her Original Stories (1788), Wollstonecraft relates the tale of Jane B., a spoiled child, coddled by her nurses and mother, and fed unwholesome treats instead of healthy foods for the prevention of diseases. The one episode chosen to emphasize the child's failings is that in which she throws a stool at a pregnant dog, instantly killing the pups and causing the dog itself two days of "the most excruciating torture" before it too dies. Jane's ill-temper eventually kills her mother also, for the mother dies of a broken heart. Finally, she herself dies from her own anger, prematurely and with a soul wholly unprepared for heaven. No one cries at her funeral. Thus the wicked ways that cause ill-treatment of animals pursue a person to the other side of the grave (Ch.4). The self-indulgent Jane B. has neglected her soul. As the first lessons in these Original Stories relate, the healthy child can "retrace the image that God first implanted in him" (Ch. 1, p. 10) in loving attention to animals. The wise
Mrs. Mason, who delivers these lessons, initiates instruction by stepping off the path into the high grass, to avoid crushing some snails. Her young companions are incredulous, but she counters their squeamishness with encouragement to observe the wonderful ways of such lowly creatures as spiders, worms, ants and snails. Empirical interest will then lead to delight in nature, and to good deeds. Where other creatures "only think of themselves," children can set themselves on the road to godly virtue with altruistic regard for animals. Wealth, as the tale of Jane B. implies, fosters the vice of selfishness.

The story of Miss Goody Two-Shoes (1766) suspends lectures on kindness to animals until the orphaned girl has become comfortably middle-class. The homeless child demonstrates virtue first in travelling from door to door to deliver instruction in reading to other children. An accident of fate allows her to save a well-to-do family from death at the hands of thieves. The family rewards Goody Two-Shoes with a position as a school mistress. It is at this point in the narrative that the young woman's compassion for animals emerges. Her income helps: she is able to buy animals from the boys who are tormenting them (Pt. II, Ch. 1). This development shows considerable canniness on the part of the writer (possibly Oliver Goldsmith). Where other writers present malicious children experiencing a change of heart through talk, the author of Goody Two-Shoes realizes the implausibility of that device. The preaching that does occur in the story is directed at children emerging from ignorance by means of books such as Goody Two-Shoes. The structure of the narrative imitates its ideals in predicking virtue upon learning. The following passage lays out the argument for kindness to animals:

Mrs. Margery [Goody Two-Shoes], you must know, was very humane and compassionate; and her Tenderness extended not only to all Mankind, but even to all Animals that were not noxious; as your's ought to do, if you would be happy here, and go to Heaven hereafter. These are GOD Almighty's Creatures as well as we. He made both them and us; and for wise Purposes, best known to himself, placed them in this World to live among us; so that they are our fellow Tenants of the Globe. How then can People dare to torture and wantonly destroy GOD Almighty's Creatures? They as well as you are capable of feeling Pain and receiving Pleasure, and how can you, who want to be made happy yourself delight in making your fellow
Creatures miserable? Do you think the poor Birds, whose Nest and young ones that wicked Boy Dick Wilson ran away with Yesterday, do not feel as much Pain, as your Mother and Father would have felt, had any one pulled down their House and ran away with you? To be sure they do. Mrs. Two-Shoes used to speak of those Things, and of naughty Boys throwing at Cocks, torturing Flies, and whipping Horses and Dogs, with Tears in her Eyes, and would never suffer any one to come to her School who did so. (pp. 68-9)

One wonders, of course, how children given to torturing animals were supposed to overcome that vice without the benefit of the educational institution. Perhaps they had to wait for wise orphaned children to come to their homes. In any event, Goody Two-Shoes earns the appropriate reward for unwavering devotion to virtue: she marries a wealthy widower. By means of her husband’s wealth, she is able finally to punish the landowner who ruined her father many years before and brought about the death of her parents. Riches earned through goodness and privation apparently represent no danger to moral character.

Thomas Day’s History of Sandford and Merton (1783-1789) is built upon the moral superiority of the honest labourer over the indolent person of wealth. This three-volume work records the lengthy process whereby Harry Sandford, son of a farmer, converts Tommy Merton, a gentleman’s child, from mental and physical slothfulness to moral and physical rectitude. Several of Tommy’s lessons come from being pitched into bogs and ponds by frightened animals he assaults. The History requires that the wealthy child be humiliated. The rationale for the critique of the rich, however, is supposed to originate in Nature. "The History of the Two Dogs," in volume one, illustrates the point. Accustomed to pampering and gluttony, the dog Jowler fails his wealthy master when the man is threatened by a wolf. As Jowler flees the scene with his tail between his legs, Keeper, a poor man’s dog, rushes in to slay the wolf in terrible battle. The rich man and the poor man exchange dogs. After a period of time in which Keeper is now pampered and Jowler lives the frugal and healthy life, the rich man goes again into the woods. He is once again threatened by a wolf, and this time Keeper beats a cowardly retreat. Jowler, of course,
appears out of nowhere to kill the savage wolf (pp. 53-60). Quite frequently throughout these stories, the clean-living poor are shown to have superior strength in encounters with ravening beasts. Volume two, in fact, ends with a black beggar saving Tommy Merton and his gentlemanly friends from an enraged bull. The volume closes with Harry Sandford walking away from Tommy in the company of the beggar. Evidently outright poverty produces a moral courage superior to all the refinements of wealth.

Along with the heroism demonstrated in combat with wild beasts, however, The History of Sandford and Merton also advocates mercy. In winter, Harry sometimes goes to bed without food, having given his supper to the poor little starving birds. He never hurts the toads, frogs and spiders that other people despise, and will walk around worms that are in his path (vol. 1, p. 5). Harry, it should be noted, is all of six years' old at this time. Evidently, as the story insists, righteousness must have a great deal to do with diet and exercise. What other explanation could there be for such fine sensibilities in so young a child? In addition to steeling the person for the good fight with savagery, tenderness possesses the additional benefit of instilling love in the frightened heart of the beast. "If you want to tame animals," says the good Mr. Barlow, "you must be good to them, and treat them kindly, and then they will no longer fear you, but come to you and love you" (vol. 1, p. 122). This advice follows an incident in which Tommy has been dragged into the mud by a pig he has abused for failure to cooperate with him.

Many bribes are thus offered to young readers of the late eighteenth century. Images of a St. Francis-like power to attract animals through love was one sort of bribe. Courage to defeat the wild beast was another (for adventure-loving boys, at any rate). Satisfaction to the soul was propped up with hints of financial gain. If no monetary

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6This act of stepping aside for crawling creatures takes on more than moral significance in Thomas Hardy's novels. As will be noted in the later comments on Hardy (Chapter IV), Jude Fawley carefully avoids treading on worms, while Tess steps out of character in stepping on snails in the grass.
reward were forthcoming, the disappointed child could always content himself or herself with a sense of moral superiority over the idle rich. For all the talk of animals and their feelings, one has the impression that the main purpose of these stories is to promote obedience, quietness, and extraordinary tolerance for the preaching of adults. With the political and religious bribes to the juvenile audience, the pain of the animal is largely obscured. The animal victim seems to be a means to foster a generalized moral tone. The frequent references to God and humankind's dominion, however, do suggest fears that somehow the climate of the times will conspire with the stories to elevate the animal victim to a true object of compassion. History outside of stories for children was gradually bestowing that independent status upon animals which would make their victimization an end rather than a means for emotional and ethical instruction. Romanticism is that historical development which fills out the charitable approach to the animal.

Many aspects of Romanticism have, however, a deleterious effect upon recognition of animal victims. The Romantic spirit of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries seems most comfortable in wild landscapes, populated at best by incidental beasts. Raging cataracts and mountain crags worked the appropriate exaltation upon human imagination. Much of the time, the individual animal seems to have been too mundane to inspire the proper Romantic emotion. In many of the European Romantics, one discovers that the effort to locate Godhead in Nature tended to undo previous ethical attention to animal victims. A counter-example to this assertion appears to occur in Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther* when Werther bemoans universal destructiveness:

> There is not a moment [Werther laments] in which one is not a destroyer and has to be a destroyer. A harmless walk kills a thousand poor crawling things, one footstep smashes a laboriously built anthill and stamps a whole little world into an ignominious grave. (p. 63)

This outcry, however, is at once unusual in Goethe's literary works and somewhat specious. The destruction of "poor crawling things" panders to Werther's mood of despair;
the creatures themselves do not appear to matter greatly. Indeed, in Goethe’s *Elective Affinities* and *Faust*, the very few places in which animals are mentioned at all occasion expressions of disgust. In *Elective Affinities*, Ottilie devotes a journal entry to her contempt for those who paint monkeys: "How can anyone bring himself to expend such care on depicting horrid monkeys!" she begins (p. 215). Instruction in natural history, she says, "can easily push aside more immediate and worthier things":

The teacher who can rouse our feelings by a single good deed, a single good work of art, achieves more than one who can pass along to us in form and name whole rows of inferior natural creatures, for the only result of that is what we know anyway, namely that the human form bears uniquely the image of the divine. (p. 216)

Granted, some of this revulsion stems from annoyance at having to regard an animal wrenched from its natural surroundings. Ottilie and Eduard (she quotes him) can make "'immediate living contact’" only with the trees, shrubs and little birds of their native landscape. Exotic jungle animals oppress their spirits. Also in evidence, of course, is the customary opposition to the cataloguing urge of science. Nevertheless, if there is any doubt that Goethe concurs with his character’s disgust, the fact that he situates a pair of monkeys in the "Witch’s Kitchen" in *Faust* hints at his own dislike of this particular animal, and likely of the beast in general. No doubt the similarity of the ape to the human being depressed Goethe. For him, as for others working out Germanic idealism, contemplation of animals apparently blocked the road to discovery of the divinity of humankind. In its religious and supernatural mode, the Romantic imagination was inclined to jump from the individual person to the wide vistas of Nature, overleaping the animal in the process.

The wide vistas of Nature had a curious effect upon the Romantic psyche. Instead of overawing the observer and impressing him or her with the smallness of the human person, the scene tended instead to inflate the idea of self. Grandeur could be Nature’s gift to the individual, and especially to the artist. In the mind of the Romantic, identification
occurred between the person and the infinite in Nature, between the imagination and the universal spirit moving through particular forms. Empiricism was tedious, its conception of Nature, lifeless and soul-destroying. The right of the artist to impose upon Nature a "new mythology," such as Friedrich Schlegel demanded, sprung from the sublime individuality Nature had granted to the human being and denied to the rest of creation. In keeping with this perspective, Schopenhauer establishes his hierarchy of the beautiful in art upon this notion of individuality combining with the universal "Idea." By this hierarchy, representation of the beautiful in human form fills the observer with "unspeakable satisfaction" (p. 182) because objectivity and subjectivity are perfectly united. Animal painting falls two grades below representation of the human. In animal painting,

the characteristic is wholly one with the beautiful; the most characteristic lion, wolf, horse, sheep, or ox is always the most beautiful also. The reason for this is that animals have only the character of their species, not an individual character. (p. 220)

In view of the Romantic glorification of artistic activity, such thought as this does not bode well for the animal victim.

Among the idealists, however, Schopenhauer is atypical in expressing also genuine indignation at the mistreatment of animals. In On the Basis of Morality, he says,

The unpardonable forgetfulness in which the lower animals have hitherto been left by the moralists of Europe is well known. It is pretended that beasts have no rights. They persuade themselves that our conduct in regard to them has nothing to do with morals or (to speak the language of their morality) that we have no duties towards animals; a doctrine revolting, gross and barbarous. (In Wynne-Tyson, p. 308)

While sometimes raising the old argument that cruelty to animals leads to indifference to other people, he is also capable of viewing kindness to animals as an end in itself:

Genuine morality is outraged by the proposition that beings devoid of reason (hence animals) are things and therefore should be treated merely as means that are not at the same time an end. . . . Thus only for practice are we to have sympathy for animals, and they are, so to speak, the pathological phantom for the purpose of practising sympathy for human beings. . . . I regard such propositions as revolting and abominable. (On the Basis of Morality, quoted by Midgley, p. 52)
In these sentiments, Schopenhauer transcends the conventional approach to the animal victim. It is not entirely clear, however, that the Romantic strain in his philosophy has contributed to his feelings for animals. When moral concern for animals does arise in Romantic poetry, that concern tends to look very much like a return to Enlightenment thought.

Romanticism does make some crucial changes to thought on animals, changes advantageous to the animal victim. For one thing, as mentioned above, the domesticated nature of science, ever obedient to human reason, was the enemy to Romanticism. The wildness in the wild animal could therefore be honoured in art, and is honoured in Blake’s "Tyger," for instance, and Southey’s "Dancing Bear." The wild animal is honoured also in painting, in, as examples, Antoine-Louis Barye’s Tiger and Delacroix’s Lion Hunts. Arnold Hauser’s comments on Delacroix are informative in this context. Delacroix, Hauser says, is the "greatest representative of romantic painting, [but] also one of the enemies and conquerors of romanticism" (vol. 3, p. 206). For Hauser, Delacroix’s romanticism resides in the fact that "man still stands in the centre of his [the artist’s] world" (p. 207). Looking only at Lion Hunts, however, one finds "man" thoroughly tumbled about by the wild animal; the human participants in fact seem to be at the mercy of the lions. Human control is surrendered to the animal. Even the artist himself has conceded the power of aesthetic organization to the rage of the hunted beast. Romantic idealism does bestow absolute authority upon the human psyche. But Romanticism’s challenge to the authority of the scientific approach to Nature yields the opposite view of the status of the human being in creation. Juggled awkwardly with idealism is submission of the spirit to the forces of Nature. Both of these contrary strategies have serious theoretical consequences for animal victims.

Among the English Romantic poets, Coleridge was most affected by German idealism. Although didactic element in The Rime of the Ancient Mariner has become
something of a cliché in the course of time, its approach to the animal victim reveals the intensity of the moral struggle between Enlightenment and Romantic belief. Idealism tended to produce personified animals of an almost decadent type, as may be seen in Goethe's "Fairy Tale" or Hoffman's "Murr the Tomcat." An allegorical reading of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner based upon idealism could easily find symbolism in the albatross. The albatross could be a Christ-figure, for example. That kind of reading, however, risks reinforcing those qualities in the poem that have turned it into a cliché. If we forego the temptation to view the albatross as a symbol, the poem may not increase in rationality but it does gain on the score of terror and historical significance.

In some ways, of course, the poem begs for a symbolic interpretation; for most readers, it is simply too hard to accept that the killing of a mere bird should disarrange reality as it does in The Ancient Mariner. The Mariner's moment of liberation argues against symbolic readings of animal life in the poem: he blesses the snakes because they are beautiful. As a Christian man, he has a thick obstruction of symbolism to overcome before he can see snakes plainly as the natural creatures that they are. Coleridge's invocation of spirits and other supernatural paraphernalia gives what seems a naïve morality of love of animals its intellectual credibility. The moral drawn from the tale improves little upon instructions given to children at this time. But the inherent submission of the poem to the inhuman value of the albatross and the snakes elevates its morality beyond previous sentimentalism. The application of Romantic principles to the ideological issue of the animal victim lends dignity and power to the animal. Whether Coleridge was aware of it or not, he has felt and imaged forth the double-sided and profound significance of the animal victim in modern life. Truly, that mindless approach to animals--if it moves, kill it--vitiates claims to superiority in civilization; wanton assaults upon animals returns humanity to a primitive state wherein the occult rules. On the other side of the issue centred on the albatross, that intellectual distance which scoffs at the
supernatural and neutralizes animal existence, represents to the Romantic imagination the disordered universe, the universe without meaning. Unfortunately, the poem also demonstrates typical narcissism in imagining that one man's evil could unhinge the whole universe.

English Romanticism in its second phase is less inclined towards religiosity. Logic dictated to both Shelley and Byron that genuine feeling for animals demanded a vegetarian diet. While Byron practiced vegetarianism only sporadically and largely out of vanity, Shelley went so far as to write philosophical treatises on the matter. In his notes to *Queen Mab*, he offers semi-scientific arguments for vegetarianism: humans, he says, are biologically "frugivorous" not carnivorous; vegetarianism will slow the spread of disease and soften the war-like and tyrannical spirit. The myth which speaks to him of the change in human diet is the myth of Prometheus. Prometheus introduced humans to cooked meat, "thus inventing an expedient for screening from his [man's] disgust the horror of the shambles." The passage of *Queen Mab* to which these notes pertain offer a vision of humankind becoming once again "immortal upon earth":

... no longer now
He slays the lamb that looks him in the face,
And horribly devours his mangled flesh,
Which, still avenging Nature's broken law,
Kindled all putrid humours in his frame,
All evil passions, and all vain belief,
Hatred, despair, and loathing in his mind,
The germs of misery, death, disease, and crime.
(VIII, ll. 211-18)

In contrast to *Queen Mab*, the high Romanticism of *Prometheus Unbound* precludes talk of dietary reform. After the fall of Jupiter and the release of Prometheus, however, the "Spirit of the Earth" does find that the previously repulsive "toads, and snakes, and loathly worms" have become beautiful: "And that [she says] with little change of shape or hue:/All things had put their evil nature off" (Act III, Scene IV, ll. 76-77). One hears echoes, again, of children's literature, in which empirical interest was supposed to achieve
just such a change of attitude towards toads, worms, spiders and the like. Shelley’s allegory in *Prometheus* suggests, rightly, that the seemingly simple change in perspective requires a revolution in thought. But the disappearance of such frank political assertion as appears in *Queen Mab* has the disturbing effect of putting change beyond human intelligence and will. Myth concedes the power of reform to mystical forces in Nature. The mythic dimension of *Prometheus* rests, nevertheless, upon an earthly plane where even lowly creatures assume importance. Shelley’s hostility to Christianity and interest in science would have made him suspicious of any religiosity which had negative implications for animals.

Christianity’s view of animals is the source of conflict in Byron’s *Cain*. Byron uses the animal victim to turn Christian orthodoxy on its head. The first murderer of Christian belief becomes, for Byron, a modern figure striking out against placid acceptance of God’s construction of life. The suffering of animals is the point of departure for Cain’s rebellion. Something is unfair in the universe when animals, who did not sin along with Adam and Eve, must die (Act II, Scene II, ll. 153-160). Worse, it looks as though Jehovah smiles upon the sacrifice of animals: when Cain offers his bloodless altar as an alternative to Abel’s where spring lambs have been sacrificed, the fire on Abel’s altar flares upward to heaven while Cain’s is destroyed in a whirlwind. According to Abel, Jehovah has shown his "immortal pleasure" in the ritual killing of the lambs. Cain reacts:

> *His!*

> *His pleasure!* What was his high pleasure in
> The fumes of scorching flesh and smoking blood,
> To the pain of the bleating mothers which
> Still yearn for their dead offspring? or the pangs
> Of the sad ignorant victims underneath
> Thy pious knife? Give way! this bloody record
> Shall not stand in the sun, to shame creation!
> (Act III, Scene I, ll. 297-304)

That Lucifer has encouraged Cain in his revolt is not evidence of Byron’s disavowal of Cain’s anger. The indictment of Jehovah is unanswered; the drama surrounding God’s
choice of the bloody altar itself supports Cain's revolt. The Angel of the Lord appears not to exonerate God but to punish Cain. And although Cain mourns in the end the death of the "gentle race" that Abel might have begun, one senses that Byron prefers a world full of questioning, exiled Cains to one in which faith accepts blindly what reason sees clearly as injustice. That piety which does not balk at inflicting an unnecessary death on animals, when it is bad enough that animals should ever die in the first place, presents an aspect too terrible to credit as love of God.

G. Wilson Knight, who is particularly sensitive to Byron's poetic treatment of animals, observes that Byron "feels in and with the animal" (p. 204). He cites as evidence Byron's description of the wild horses in *Mazeppa* which live freely, with "Wide nostrils never stretched by pain, /[and] Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein" (XVII). With feeling such as this for the untamed animal, it is little wonder that Byron abhors animal sacrifice. There appears, though, to be a schism between this representation of the energy of the wild animal and the argument made for animals in *Cain*. For one thing, *Cain* uses domestic lambs and sheep to demonstrate its thesis. The poem points to the dam's love for its offspring to emphasize the cruelty of the sacrifice. This view of animals stands at considerable conceptual distance from appreciation of the freedom of the wild creature. The request for mercy in *Cain* appears intellectually to be almost indistinguishable from pre-Romantic argument. Yet there is a way in which Romanticism arises from the two altars in *Cain*. Elaine Scarry's observations on sacrifice in *The Body in Pain* point to the juncture at which love of animal freedom and intellectual revolt at victimization meet. The substitution of sacrificial animals for humans is a step in the right direction. Scarry asks the reader to visualize the image of human sacrifice being supplanted by an image of animal sacrifice:
But if one now holds steadily visible not two pictures but three—the child with the
knife looming above, giving way to the lamb and the knife looming above, and now in
turn the lamb moved out of that location and replaced by a block of wood under the
still looming knife—so great is the transition from the second to the third picture is
the revolution in consciousness that the object itself is now re-perceived as a wholly
different object, a tool rather than a weapon, and the anticipated action of the object
is no longer an act of "wounding" but an act of "creating." (p. 174)

Scarry's analysis intensifies Byron's denunciation of Jehovah. Jehovah aims to "wound"
humans by demanding the sacrifice of living beings. Jehovah rejects Cain's offer of a
creative sacrifice in place of the destructive one. The spirit of Jehovah opposes Romantic
creativity. Cain proposes a "revolution in consciousness" with his bloodless sacrifice. The
substitution appeals not simply to reason but to that spirit of freedom in Romanticism
which honours the wild animal.

Perhaps Romanticism's celebration of wildness in Nature and in animals taxed
consciousness too greatly, since the years that follow its flowering are grim years for the
animal victim. With the introduction in England of legislation purporting to protect some
animals, the formation of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in England
and America, and the decline in popularity of bloodsports other than the hunt, complacency
set in rapidly. The feebleness of methods for rectifying the now-perceived ill-treatment of
animals reflects the immaturity of the mid-nineteenth-century's recognition of the animal
victim—a legacy, perhaps, of the vapid morality of children's stories. As to scientific
enthusiasms, the fondness of the eighteenth century for natural history yielded to
admiration of humanity's manifest technological prowess. There would be little time for
gentle contemplation of animals amidst the rush of invention. Aspects of Romantic fervor
transferred from Nature to the machine. Romanticism's feeling for the vitality of animals,
wavering in any case, gave way to a desire that the natural animal conform to regulated
sentiments.

Among the arts, literature between Romanticism and Darwinism pays scarce
attention to the animal. Fiction took up social concerns, particularly vibrant during this
period. Animals became the subject of the static art of painting. The use of the word "static," here, is not intended to disparage the painter's art. Certainly Delacroix's canvases show the intensity of activity that can be achieved in painting. If one is following the history of animals in culture, however, one cannot help but note the fixedness of the animal subject in mid-nineteenth-century paintings. Animals are frozen, in effect, by nostalgia. According to John Ruskin, as Walter E. Houghton relates, painting was supposed to counterbalance "our loss of fellowship with Nature." Houghton quotes Ruskin further; the aim of painters who depict Nature should be

   to possess us with memories of her quietness; to be solemn and full of tenderness, like her, and rich in portraiture of her; full of delicate imagery of the flowers we can no more gather, and of the living creatures now far away from us in their own solitude. (Houghton, p. 80)

Thus, Houghton points out, the "countryside is to save the 'spiritual' values now being destroyed in the unspiritual city" (p. 80). From the urban perspective, evidently, those "spiritual" values in the countryside were not especially exciting.

Ruskin's aesthetics show Romanticism in washed out form, watered down by sentimental attachment to the strictly human and social. The naturalism of the age is no more vivid than the vision of nature expounded in Ruskin's theories. Arnold Hauser's observations on naturalism are particularly true of this transitional period. Naturalism, he says, is "always aiming at a particular and immediate goal, always concerned with a concrete task and confining its interpretation of life to particular phenomena." In sum, he remarks, naturalism "is not aimed at reality as a whole, not at 'nature' or 'life' in general, but at social life in particular" (vol. 4, pp. 25-26). Hauser's commentary provides a good explanation for the curious combination of near-perfect naturalism and unabashed anthropomorphism in paintings of animals to the mid-point of the nineteenth century. Animals have become the object of undisguised social programs. The wildness of the animal is no longer a fit subject for art, except as a focus for hostilities (as in Tennyson's
oft-quoted terror of "Nature red in tooth and claw"). In painting, the animal sits transfixed by whatever social ideal it is meant to illustrate.

William Holman Hunt’s *The Scapegoat* (1855) epitomizes this peculiar phenomenon. The painting shows a long-haired goat, its head decorated with the red wool of the ritual sacrifice, panting under the heat of the Dead Sea climate. The sun and the red symbol seem equally to weigh the goat’s head down towards the arid mud of the shoreline. Hunt travelled to the Dead Sea with this image in mind, purchased a goat and spent days in the heat reproducing on canvas the goat’s manifest exhaustion. Despite such concern for realism, Hunt’s aim is spiritual; if others missed the symbolism and saw only, in Kenneth Clark’s phrasing, a "silly old goat" (p. 22), the whole experience was for Hunt an ecstatic one. Ruskin, who praises the religious aim of the subject but is unaffected by the technical naturalism, voices the typical attitude:

> The beauty of the animal form is in exact proportion to the amount of moral or intellectual virtue expressed by it. . . . There is not any organic creature, but in its history and habits will exemplify or illustrate to us some moral excellence or deficiency, or some point of God’s providential government, which it is necessary for us to know. (Clark, 1977, p. 103)

Between the actual physical circumstances of the painting’s origins and the burden of symbolism, the strain placed on the goat is immense. Evidently the fact that the painting shows genuine animal suffering is not sufficient to impress either the public or the aesthetic theorists of the age.

More to public taste are the animal images offered up by Edwin Landseer. The dog in his *Old Shepherd’s Chief Mourner* (1837), for example, is suffering visibly; with its head resting on its master’s plain wooden coffin and its ears pulled back in pain, the dog expresses grief more fully than most humans can. But the animal is locked into the stylized sentiment; within the fixed terms of the painting, no possibility exists for the dog to go on its way in natural insouciance. Not surprisingly, Ruskin admired this picture. The formal arrangement of dog and coffin conveys the moral virtue he expected of artistic
representations of the animal. The viewer wavering in his or her loyalty to family could come away from this painting refreshed in belief in both the naturalness of pathos and the deep feeling of nature for humankind. The overt message is that humankind is loveable; the subtext speaks for the absoluteness of human control.

One might expect such civilized productions from English painters, in view of the long centuries British culture had to subordinate that country's wilderness to human ideas. One would hope for something less confining from the American artist surrounded by scenes of untamed Nature. In fact, the American painter demonstrates, if anything, even greater tyranny over the animal subject than English counterparts. Oppression of the animal is evident in the works, half-art, half-science, of American nature-illustrators like John James Audubon, George Catlin and Thomas Hewes Hinckley.

With the premise of cataloguing wildlife for the non cognoscenti, Audubon's pictures do not stint on accuracy. Where they depress is in the unlivingness of the animal tableaux. Audubon is of course to be forgiven for working from dead animals and birds; one can hardly expect memory to rise to perfection in realism when the object it is asked to reproduce takes flight after an instant's glance. It must be granted, nonetheless, that the static animal of the taxidermist is a poor substitute for the living, moving original. Something is awry when the immobilized animal is hailed as true-to-life.

George Catlin's *Buffalo Bull Grazing on the Prairie in His Native State* (1832) is another case in point. The buffalo is a frozen creature, standing with its front legs planted firmly, its eyes staring at the spectator, and its tail curved in a perfect parabola. Yet this stolid beast was drawn from life, as Mary Sayre Haverstock (1979) relates; the artist, she explains, took the sketch "at a full gallop through a stampeding herd" (p. 65). Bringing a buffalo to a visual standstill under these circumstances is little short of a miracle. This particular buffalo looks as though he is saving the idea of stampeding for another day. The painting itself and the story of its creation give homage to human power. It is to
Catlin's credit that he does not go as far as to omit the buffalo bull's testicles. When Catlin does record running buffaloes, as in *Buffalo Hunt* (1855), they become cartoon buffaloes, unlikely to shed a drop of blood when the arrows of the Indians chasing them hit their target.

Hinckley's animals attain a perfection of detail like Audubon's and yet without the strain of being posed in "natural" contortions evident in the earlier artist's animals. The cow and bull in *Head of a Cow* (1869) and *Head of a Bull* (1869) are almost studio beasts, divested entirely of their usual environment. The background looks remarkably similar to the back-cloths used by today's portrait photographers. They are beautiful animals, but if they express the moral or intellectual virtue Ruskin demands, it is only in their calm acceptance of domestication. The slight wariness in the bull's eye suggests a hint of rebellion which is nevertheless held firmly in check by the artist. James Jackson Jarves, a contemporary art critic, apparently considered it praise of Hinckley to observe that he could paint animals "with the animal left out" (Haverstock, p. 152).

A phenomenon more openly telling than these nature paintings is the popularity of lithographs (1829-1842) by J.J. Grandeville (pseud. Jean Gerard), forerunner to other artists in the animal-fabulist line like John Tenniel, Edward Lear and Beatrix Potter. The imposition of social values upon the animal is the *raison d'être* for Grandeville's works. Grandeville's lithographs show a wide range of animals, birds and insects dressed up in human costume and sitting at writing desks, delivering toasts at dinner, or--an owl; most offensively to the creature itself--hunting birds with a rifle. Grandeville's aim, of course, is to satirize humanity, not to insult animals; he gains permission to appeal to comic worries, such as excess weight, romantic complications and the fondness of the master of the house for the hired maid, by the patent absurdity of his personification. Granted the objects of his satire are strictly conventional, and yet the use of animals does, most peculiarly, illuminate human foibles. As with most of this century's depictions of animals,
Grandeville's drawings show patient attention to accuracy. And yet all that effort on whiskers and beaks and antennae is devoted to a bizarre purpose wholly remote from animality. His animals, indeed, cushion the supposed assault upon human society. Like Catlin's running buffaloes, the Grandeville animal will not bleed or threaten human order with chaos.

One cartoon swerves close to the edge of true assault. In it, three crows are dissecting a cadaver composed of human legs and thorax and a crocodile head; the hands of the crows are buried in the intestines of the corpse. Human and animal skeleton parts are piled up beside the table. A parrot dressed as a woman peasant, with a loaf of bread under her arm, is making a gesture of decline. The caption, spoken by the crows, is: "Won't you stay and have dinner with us, Mother Pilon?" Given that crows are scavenger birds frequently imagined pulling off bits of human corpses, the lightly humorous suggestion has grim implications. The human dress very nearly drops away and the danger of the genuine animal to human complacency almost emerges. It remains an open question, though, whether gallows humour like this reminds us of situations we'd rather not think about, or instead makes the unthinkable tolerable.

For the most part, Grandeville, like the other artists of this period, uses the animal to reflect back to humankind a quaintly sanitized version of society. Realism in formal details is made consistent with a desire for control over the "animal" in humans and the animal itself. Fur and feathers drawn with infinite care could also be artistically arranged and cleansed of the evidence of living in the nature that tends to adhere to real animals. Groomed and posed, the animal reassured humanity of the sanctity of its virtues and sentiments.

With the care the post-Romantic reaction took to present well-ordered sentiments, it is little wonder that the animal victim became persona non grata in the arts. There should, of course, be at least one exception, and that is in depictions of the hunt. With
respect to paintings of the hunt, Kenneth Clark observes that "Here man met animals on something like animal terms, and the heaps of the slain were his proof that he had conquered them" (p. 218). "Heaps of slain" might characterize earlier scenes of the hunt, but the slain are not the object of such scenes from the early and middle years of the nineteenth century. British artists focus typically on horses and dogs racing across the landscape. They transfer animal energy from the victim to the hunters themselves, frequently transferring the idea of victimization too, in downed horses and riders tumbling over the ground or dropped into streams. Henry Alken will occasionally include the quarry on the run ahead of the pack; the uncivilized business of the kill, however, is left remote. In one of his aquatints, The Death (No. 4; 1813), a dead fox is being draped over a tree limb, but the bulk of emotional impact resides with the assembled hunters and dogs. They seem largely indifferent to the fox which should represent their triumph—a truth inadvertently expressed. In his etching Easter Monday (1817) Alken could almost be mocking the pretense that humankind asserts its prowess against nature in the hunt. In his note on this work, David Coombs draws attention to the fact that the distant quarry is "a carted (that is, domesticated) stag, whose benign spirit and undignified posture are suggested by the large bow tied around his neck" (p. 147). Is this animal going to be dragged down by the hounds and killed? The etching tells the comforting lie that it will not. Nature may be "red in tooth and claw,/ With ravine," but the British are not interested in killing animals, or so say their images of the hunt. What was meant, in this period, by meeting the animal "on something like animal terms" contradicted the aims of society too deeply for English artists, hunters and public alike to contemplate.

The split between British and American representations of the hunt tends to confirm stereotypic notions of national character. That tendency in the British print to dot the pageantry with a few human and horse victims is counterposed in the American print by a taste for the intrepid hunter looming large in the landscape evidently able to handle
any danger that comes his way. Occasionally, slain birds or deer lie at the feet of these
big men or tucked into the back of a canoe. Most frequently, the artist will suspend the
action at the point at which the hunter is taking aim at a distant animal target. A
development late in the century is the popular cabin-door picture, which shows the
hunter's gear and animal trophies hanging, in magic realism style, upon a rough-hewn
door redolent of the pioneer spirit. Given that the myth of the hunter meeting the animal
on "animal terms" holds greater sway over the American imagination than that of most
other nations, it is odd that human prowess should be given such unequal visual presence
in the American shooting print.

Kenneth Clark makes his observation in reference to two pre-nineteenth-century
paintings, Oudry's Dead Roe (1721) and Desportes' Self-portrait as Huntsman (1699), in
which the slain animal, mangled and bloody, does have significance. He uses a hunting
scene by Gustave Courbet, Hallali du Cerf (1867) to illustrate the "celebration of death"
(p. 223) in animal art, and speaks of this hunter-artist's sensitive love for animals (p. 58).
That sensitivity has led Courbet into a true representation of the animal victim's place in
the hunt with respect to the hunter. In this painting, a physical and conceptual gap
divides the hunters from the stag being worried by hounds and straining back its head in
the moment before its death. Far from looking triumphant, the hunters gaze mildly at the
scene, apparently content to let the dogs do their work. Their tranquility denotes the
victory of civilization over the whole natural system of predators and victims. Hallali du
Cerf serves as a fine counterpoint to Hunt's The Scapegoat. Whereas Hunt seeks to fuse
human meaning onto his goat, Courbet isolates human meaning from the dying stag and
sets an invisible barrier between the two domains. In one, the domesticated animal is
further oppressed by religious ritual; that religious ritual obscures the simple fact of the
goat's misery. In the other, a wild animal is doubly victimized, once by the hunters and
again by the failure of its victimization to influence the hunters' self-possession. Both
works indicate the great difficulty the animal victim had in asserting its own meaning before Darwinism took hold of the cultural imagination.

Before moving on to a theoretical discussion of the modern animal victim, I must mention one work from this period which does do justice to the animal. *Moby Dick* anticipates by eight years the effect that Darwinism will produce in cultural thought on animals. Like Darwin, Melville compels the cultural mind to attend to the animal as it exists beyond the pale of civilization. He creates a total world in which the energy of the wild animal can exist. Matter-of-fact to the point of un-novelistic reportage where the ordinary whale is concerned, Melville enfolds the anomalous white whale in myth. Yet the aura of myth serves paradoxically to give force to the generalized animality of the leviathan, in outright antagonism to culture-bound distortions of the elemental beast. With *Moby Dick*, Melville sums up the polarized aspects of nature that will plague modern representations of animals. In his meditations on the whiteness of the whale, Ishmael finds that *Moby Dick* addresses the deceptiveness of humanity's deification of the natural; the colour, he reasons, is secondary, a product of the eye, and whiteness the greatest delusion of all, since it is all the colours combined. Until the last three chapters of the novel, *Moby Dick* exists like this, in theory and anecdote alone. He exists in the doubloon nailed to the mast, in Ahab's wooden leg, in Ahab's obsession and his bitterness. For Ahab, *Moby Dick* exists profoundly. The captain and the whale form a unity; the mind of Ahab, in the magnitude of its workings, has been shaped by *Moby Dick*. By means of Ahab's mania, Melville brings the Romanticism of the animal to actually endanger civilization, to shake the faith of humanity in the reality of its supposed virtues. The long absence of the white whale from the narrative is constitutive; it is an absence around which primitive cultures built myths, and which the accretions of civilization had hidden from consciousness. Until the whale is sighted, "*Moby Dick*" is a name for all the inexplicable potency of the wild animal. Following Darwin, when humanity attempts to
subdue nature, it attempts to subdue all the patient, resistant energy Moby Dick embodies. Following Darwin, as Melville implicitly predicts, humanity will not be able to destroy the Moby Dicks of the world without psychic and actual damage to itself. Moby Dick is no victim. Compassion, humanitarian sentiment, cannot contain the modern animal victim. Indeed, the inability of culture to rationalize animal reality is the reason animal victims gain ground in serious literature for adults. The modern animal does not make an easy victim, hence the power of the post-Darwinian animal victim to subvert conventional belief and disclose unacknowledged cultural material.

Some Theoretical Considerations

The power of the animal to resist victimization is of critical importance to any theoretical consideration of the animal victim in culture. In a material sense, human dominance of the animal kingdom seems absolute, from control of numbers in any species right down to the matter of genetic manipulation to produce different animals (often for our dining pleasure). In domains of thought, too, humanity seems to possess absolute freedom to conceive of animals in ways that either acknowledge or discount victimization. It could well be argued that current ethical concern for animals is merely a cultural phenomenon, a fashionable piety now, perhaps, but one that can easily evaporate with the vicissitudes of cultural need and desire. Ethics which include animals have, of course, a great weight of long-standing cultural resistance to dislodge. Indeed, ethical systems alone may not have sufficient force to counter human aggression, since the victimization of animals is in all likelihood foundational to culture and civilization. In Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets, Yi-Fu Tuan goes even further than this to suggest that "Cruelty to animals is deeply embedded in human nature" (p. 89). This observation is true only insofar as human nature has been altered by culture, for it is difficult to imagine how the animal ancestors of our species came to distinguish themselves from other animals in
whole wholesale enmity without some rudimentary cultural assistance, such as weapons. If eons of actual power over animals have determined our ways of thinking about them, then other ways of thinking about animals can disturb humanity's confidence in its self-assumed entitlement to use other animals at will.

To grant this point is not to agree that the whole question of ethical treatment comes under the absolute authority of culture. The position that culture is all-in-all is itself part of the larger issue of humanity's victimization of nonhuman animals. That position depends, moreover, upon the convention which imagines a schism between the human animal and other species. Today's ethical debate takes place in a very different context from that which presupposes essential dissimilarities between the human species and others. The conception of culture which would have it that human dominance over other animals falls within the power of cultural vagaries runs into a philosophical hornets' nest with the Darwinian notion of continuity between humans and animals. Although the theory of evolution might seem to license human supremacy, it also places the animal in a position to challenge culture.

The image of the hornets' nest is, obviously enough, not used casually. In modern times, when we run into hornets' nests in the natural world, we cannot be quite as certain as we once were of our right to eliminate the "noxious" insect. We also acknowledge that from the hornet's perspective, it has its own, very good reasons for stinging us. Let us suppose, though, that post-Darwinian difficulties surrounding the status of humans in animal creation are only a mental "hornets' nest." That is to say that, for one reason or another, Western culture has chosen to plague itself with the idea that the human species is interconnected with animals existing outside of culture. Culture may indeed represent an insuperable barrier to human understanding of the animal's reality. Yet the idea of continuity situates some of that extra-cultural reality inside of the human individual. The very least that can be said, then, is that culture has created a grave problem for itself in
generating the idea of continuity. The possibly unreachable meaning of the animal has become integral to comprehension of the human being. Animals have an epistemological claim upon us, and victimized animals have a moral claim upon culture. Conversely, cultural arguments are not confined to culture alone when they deal with humanity's trespass upon the lives of other animals. Granted, attempts in the last three centuries philosophically to cross the conceptual abyss between humans and animals have had little effect on our habitual practices. We are fortunate in the modern era at least to be confused over the right way to think about animals.

I shall return to the issue of culture in the last part of this discussion. It is, of course, a crucial issue, and one that makes for a persistent undercurrent of disquiet in the contemplation of less sweeping subjects. Philosophical tangles occur, however, at almost any point of entry into consideration of animal victims. The first problem to be addressed in this discussion is that of the individual identity of the animal in contradistinction to the collectivity of the animal's ontological status. This problem has particular implications for the means by which cruelty is discerned and invalidated, as is suggested by the highly useful insights into the subject found in Philip P. Hallie's book *Cruelty* (1969; 1982). The question of individuality versus collectivity stands at the core of two approaches to animals which rationalize victimization: behaviouristic science and the ethos of the hunt. The contrary methods used to disguise victimization in the hunt and behaviourism will be examined and challenged. Analysis of hunting and behaviourism leads naturally into the broad issues of domestication and wildness, which are foundational to interpretation of the way in which culture came to distinguish itself from nature. Working hypotheses for this part of the discussion will be drawn from Freud's observations on animal sacrifice in *Totem and Taboo* and René Girard's exploration of the subject in *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*. The overall aim of these theoretical speculations is to establish that animals are no longer passive recipients of human tyrannies. Their resistance to
human domination elevates our victimization of them to the level of real significance. In the meantime, of course, there are weak methods of repudiating violence against animals to be considered.

It would appear, for example, that a carter beating his horse represents a clear-cut instance of cruelty. In our age, the total innocence of the animal, and indeed its patient submission, arouse the anger which defines the act as cruel. But would the beating be cruel if the animal were assumed to be simply a tool requiring force, an object like a car or lawn mower on which frustrations could be vented without the question of ethics arising? No philosophy, one hopes, would condone beating animals. At a certain point (though not normally at the point at which the horse is harnessed to the cart in the first place), emotional equipment engages and informs us that this act violates some ill-determined line between use and abuse. It remains odd, nevertheless, that the animal can be an instrument for human use at one moment and a being with pains and rights at the next. If this contradiction in attitudes were not troubling enough, the sentimental anthropomorphism which might set restraints upon the carter's violence represents another kind of violation. With sentimental anthropomorphism, what suffers is not the animal per se but a phantom person standing in for the animal. The approach may well prevent abuse, and that is a fine thing, but animal autonomy has evaporated in the process.

In his book *Cruelty*, Philip P. Hallie stresses that cruelty is a flexible concept contingent upon issues of power and identity. Before he added a postscript to his book in 1982, Hallie had concluded that the only method for rectifying cruelty is retaliation from the victim. In order to make headway with this idea, it must be granted first of all that speaking of victimization in the abstract is faulty both politically and emotionally. Real bodies are hurt, genuine rights violated, when one being is cruel to others, and recognition of this fact is essential. As an experiential phenomenon, power itself requires a
materialized rather than an abstract victim. Yi-Fu Tuan delivers an observation to this effect when remarking upon some people’s relations with their dogs: "Power over another being [he writes] is demonstrably firm and perversely delicious when it is exercised for no particular purpose and when submission to it goes against the victim’s own strong desires and nature" (p. 107). Perhaps pity can be blamed for the belief that abject passivity is a necessary aspect of the victim’s role in any act of cruelty. Sentiment and morality seem to favour helplessness in victims. Compassion merely repeats, however, the power relationship instituted by maltreatment. Revenge re-establishes what Hallie describes as the victim’s "particularity and force" (p. 44) against the oppressor’s desire that the victim become a faceless abstraction.

As an example of a true depiction of the dynamic of abuse, Hallie cites Hogarth’s *The Four Stages of Cruelty*. Even in the first engraving where the boys torturing the animals seem most powerful and secure against retribution, Hogarth depicts the animals’ pain and thereby impresses the viewer with their individuality. The dog tormented by Tom Nero is "a strong dog, ... accustomed to his own way of moving, his own way of satisfying his needs" (p. 28). The cruelty in Hogarth’s series attains full ugliness because Hogarth is acutely aware of the victim’s identity. It is no accident, either, that Hogarth has created, in Kenneth Clark’s words, "possibly the best cat in art" (p. 187) in his painting *The Graham Children*, nor that that cat achieves its stature because of its open-mouthed and open-clawed attention to a caged bird. Although Hogarth’s point in *The Four Stages of Cruelty* is to show that cruelty to animals leads to crimes against people, the strength of his case may be seen at the first "stage," where nature forcefully condemns acts of cruelty by means of the animal’s struggle for freedom. Hogarth is not afraid of animal identity and seems even to enjoy the animal’s less than civilized urges. That is why he is one of the few of his age to see cruelty to animals truly: his cats and dogs are fully cats and dogs, with their own loveable individuality.
There seems, however, to be a paradox at the outer edge of the process of cruelty where the generalized animal victim resides. Hallie speaks of the "innocence" of cruelty in the Marquis de Sade's works. Because Sade's victims are stylized out of existence, "the cruel ones seem to be maiming or killing no one" (p. 53). If the aim of cruelty is to deprive the victim of identity, then what abuse remains once this purpose is accomplished? "No one," in effect, is being hurt. It will be apparent how crucial this paradox is to the legitimation of animal victims. Total victimization, to which animals have been subject, tends to negate itself. By Hallie's paradigm, therefore, the resistance of the victim is at once an obstacle and a requisite to cruelty proper.

The nature of animal resistance is clearly peculiar. Biting and clawing under abuse may qualify as assertions of animal freedom because such actions are anti-human, in as much as they are instinctive rather than reflective. Viewed as instinctive, however, these reactions seem to lose particularity, to revert to being an abstract property unrelated to animal identity. Objectively, perhaps, human beings cannot be transformed into the complete "zero," the total abstraction, that apparently negates cruelty. We ascribe to ourselves ontologically a personal self, a "soul" as this quality is sometimes designated, and thus human suffering always has emotional and moral force. The necessary, defiant "self" of the animal is hardly as secure as that of each human being. Between primitive and modern times, objective opinion held that animals have no identity, and certainly are devoid of soul (or else what would distinguish the human being?). In circles claiming the highest of objectivity even now, the attribution of identity to animals is regarded as sentimental foolishness.

Since souls have fallen into decline, language is often asserted as the primary point of demarcation between humans and animals and the sine qua non of identity. In their rather too-confident discussion of animal vacancy, Horkheimer and Adorno use the argument of language to deny to animals that power which by Hallie's account actualizes
cruelty: "Escape from the dismal emptiness of existence [they note] calls for resistance, and for this speech is essential. Even the strongest of animals is infinitely weak" (p. 247). It is this premise that undermines Adorno and Horkheimer's attempted defense of animals against particular ills in human attitudes. They are perceptive in their critique of bourgeois substitutes for recognition of animal identity. Their analysis, to be sure, highlights the obvious point that animals cannot enact revenge upon their oppressors. Nonhuman animals cannot organize revolutions, or write letters of protest to politicians, or bring criminal charges against scientists, farmers and hunters. But in light of this truism, Adorno and Horkheimer seem to find it necessary to capitulate to the traditional refusal of identity to animals. They assume that language is an essential attribute, not only for communication of personal subjectivity, but also for the existence of that subjectivity in the first place. Having assumed that, they must also assume that animals have no persuasive power to counteract the selfsame ills in human attitudes the writers denounce. Divested of internal experience all its own, the individual animal cannot be the subject of cruelty because it is not a subject. Its pain is denied reality. It falls into sameness with every other animal, and the whole issue of victimization is thereby neutralized.

Treating animals as a collectivity is the time-honoured approach to suppressing the sentiments that are aroused by cruelty. Up until recently, the issue of primary importance in killing animals was whether or not another animal was still available to be killed and used. The conversion of animals into products for human use or into anonymous entities for scientific manipulation, could continue endlessly without disturbance to human peace of mind were it not for the idea of continuity between humans and animals. However much personal feeling might disconfirm such continuity, modern humanity is obliged to confront the problem of a more intimate fellowship with animals than orthodox thinking of the past had allowed. Whether continuity implies that human-like identity must be granted to animals, or conversely that animal-like non-identity (as the customary
contrast has it) must be accepted as the true human state, the very existence of this dilemma represents a threat to human self-possession. Each animal embodies this threat, particularly (as will be seen) in the arts. In a generalized way, the possibility that culture itself came into being not in some divinely mysterious way but by determinable evolutionary principles challenges the presumption of distinction for the human species. Since human distinctiveness has collapsed to that extent, does it also follow that the human species should be viewed as a collective, as we have viewed animals, and treated accordingly? Most people would find this proposition offensive to any idea of morality or humanity. But if the human person is to preserve his or her claim to moral consideration under the authority of the idea of continuity, then the individual animal attains moral status of a greater than sentimental variety. Once the locus of the disowned demons of humanity's moral structures, each particular post-Darwinian animal now compels moral attention, if not, at present, moral rights. We may have no precise idea of the nature of animal identity, but we are required nonetheless to give animals a legitimate place among our thoughts. Indeed the indeterminacy of animal being renders the animal all the more unsettling to a culture wondering about its own animal origins. By this roundabout and somewhat grandiose route, the modern animal attains the power of resistance, the freedom, that makes its victimization important.

Thus far, I have been extrapolating from Hallie's original conclusions about cruelty. In the 1982 postscript to his book, he recants on his earlier feeling that the potential for counter-aggression on the victim's part is the only way to dismantle the structure of dominance and subordination established by cruelty. As an example of an alternate method of rectification, he cites the protection given to refugees from the Nazi occupation by the entire French village of Le Chambon. The attitude of the villagers, he notes, was one of welcome rather than compassion. He proposes that hospitality gives the
necessary recognition of the victim's identity, and replaces the "I-it" power relation with "I-you" equality.

Hallie's new solution is, of course, a highly civilized one. That is what makes it so difficult to apply to animals. By convention, social graces like hospitality have been developed in opposition to animality; such graces would seem thus to be inherently hostile to the animal way of life. Hospitality coming from humankind to other species would likely imply to most people treating all animals as pets. With regard to pets, we welcome into our homes the smaller animals we have domesticated but could not tolerate having an untamed hyena or wild boar rushing about the house. Our mental houses are much the same: wild, or dirty or slimy creatures throw into disarray the tidy, rational world we like to live with in our minds. Hostile animality may well have residence in subconscious hinterlands and jungles, but the civilized mind by definition wants its animals under control.

The actualization of this figurative process may be seen in qualities desired in pets. Sexual freedom, for one thing, is out of the question. Yi-Fu Tuan points out that "neutering makes it possible for [pet-owners] to forget the insistent sexuality of all animals" (p. 89). Despite the obvious benefits of neutering, it is significant that so pointed an assault upon the animal's sexuality is almost never noticed as such. An aversion to animal mating habits might also enter into the taste for simulating lifelong immaturity in pets, which Tuan notes:

It suits human purpose . . . to breed animals such that they retain juvenile anatomical and behavioral traits through their entire life span. Other than size, the retention of foetal and juvenile traits is used by archaeologists as a criterion for evaluating whether a particular skeleton belongs to a wild or a domesticated animal. (p. 101)

As, if not more pernicious, are the actual deformities bred into pets, the squashed noses in pug dogs, for example, that interfere with the animal's breathing. These acts of violence are signs of a fundamental aversion to the natural animal. When it takes the form of
aesthetically motivated pruning and impairing of animal bodies, that aversion is clearly condemnable. Such aversion has become reprehensible, too, when it leads to wanton destruction of wild animals. How, though, are we to express hospitable intentions to animals we have not first made into pets, if only in our minds? The wild animal will not likely respond with gratitude to human gestures of friendship, despite what children’s stories may say. Friendly feeling towards the wild animal, moreover, seems to alter the animal’s essential identity in human consciousness. Part of our understanding of the wild animal’s identity, that is to say, depends upon the fruitlessness of humanity’s sociable designs. Current conventions of hospitality will not work with wild animals. Before inviting animals into our homes and lives, we have compelled them to relinquish definitive qualities of free and natural growth, movement and mating. The true animal "you" (if the inherent anthropomorphism of "you-ness" may be temporarily forgiven) has been outcast from such civilized attitudes as hospitality.

However wrong it is to think of sexuality, appetite, ferocity and the like as animal qualities, and to reserve love, altruism and strategy for humankind alone, the idea of culture itself depends upon this distinction. Culture is formed out of suppression of traits associated with the wild animal. We tend to think that cruelty in general originates with animality. When we wish to describe the people who commit appalling acts of violence, the most extreme expression we can find is that they are "animals." Our word "bestial" carries the same insult to animal nature. The morality and righteousness which counters cruelty, we call "humanitarianism" and thereby perpetuate the long-standing belief that in overcoming violence, humanity conquers the beast in itself. To become good and kind, the traditional distinction says, people must suppress their animality, from which flow such crudities as selfishness and aggression. When the aim is to rectify violence towards animals, this paradigm would have it that that aim is satisfied by anti-animal aspects of human nature. The paradox arises that a kind of arrogance is inherent in programs that
advise transcendence of nature. This is clearly evident in Tennyson's lines: "Move upward working out the beast,/ And let the ape and tiger die" (In Memoriam, CXVIII). Tennyson may have intended the ape and tiger to be metaphors for human qualities, and the suggestion that these qualities be eliminated is malevolent enough. But the worse effect of such thinking is the death of real apes and tigers. In 1875, John Colam, secretary for the RSPCA and thus an individual who should have the finest of feelings for animals, supported the idea of exterminating tigers because he could not see "why the noxious, ferocious and deadly enemies of mankind should not be destroyed" (Turner, p. 128). It would appear that virtue has had little trouble with the destruction of undomesticated animals. It is even possible that virtue has licensed such destruction. In real terms, the assumption that human life has superior spiritual value over that of other species leads both to negligence with the resources that sustain the lives of other animals and to outright killing of those animals whose death satisfies whatever caprice people choose. Animals suffer for our rejection of what we consider to be the animal aspects of human nature.

Tennyson notwithstanding, however, a crusading spirit has never honestly motivated the victimization of animals. One does not find hunters believing that they are on a moral mission to sweep the world clean of the animal enemy for the sake of civilization. If the rationalization for hunting were victory over nature, the re-stocking of dwindling supplies of wild animals to hunt would make nonsense of that claim. This is not to say that moral fervor does not enter into this ritual killing of animals. Notions of nobility, manliness and heroism unfailingly attach themselves to philosophies of the hunt. The hunter cannot seek to weaken nature; he or she has an ideological investment in a powerfully resistant victim. In fact, people who hunt animals claim for themselves a mystical sympathy with the beast which is incomprehensible to urban dwellers. Randall L. Eaton makes this claim when he remarks that the "hunter is the animal he
hunts and the environment in which it lives” (p. 10). He goes on to cite Buddhism as the archetypal opposition to his philosophy:

Though the Buddha forbade the killing of sentient life, ... the skilled hunter, the true hunter, knows something the Buddha does not know. The gray fox ... is a true hunter, and the ground squirrel it [kills and eats] is also a hunter of grasses and seeds, and as one works back from stomach to stomach there is a secret and a secret hidden deep in that. The gray fox and the skilled hunter have no need of what is forbidden by the civilized prophet, precisely because they have not been corrupted by civilization in the first place. Only civilized people need prophets ... because only civilized people have lost the transcendence, humility and oneness with Nature. (p. 18)

The critique of civilization seems fair enough: it is true that, as Ortega y Gasset puts it in his Meditations on Hunting, the "urbanized and cultivated man has always felt a funny snobbery towards anything wild, man or animal" (p. 80). Distaste for what is perceived as the vitiation of nature by civilization informs Ortega's position that "There is ... in the hunt as a sport a supremely free renunciation by man of the supremacy of his humanity" (Ortega’s italics, p. 59). Conquest of nature is at issue in blood-sports, but the nature participants claim to confront is one that they also claim to vivify by their acts. Unlike the urban person, the hunter is alert to nature and to the ways of the natural animal. The argument in a nutshell is that civilization elevates humanity to the enfeeblement of its conception of animals, while in blood-sports people voluntarily abandon their prestige to become one with animals, stalking as they stalk, killing as they kill. Note, though, that this argument relies totally upon the conventional dichotomy; the animal, actually and psychologically, is still viewed as the source of traits opposing culture. Conceived of as the source of corruption or the source of virtue, civilization is still set up as the antagonist of animality. The moral scheme is the same as that with which Tennyson was operating, only inverted.

One might have greater faith in such claims, too, if hunters did not arm themselves with the tools of civilization for their sport. But as Konrad Lorenz observes in On Aggression, "No sane man would even go rabbit-hunting for pleasure if the necessity of
killing his prey with his natural weapons brought home to him the full emotional
realization of what he is actually doing" (p. 208). If Lorenz is right, the actual distance
that separates the person with the gun from the animal he or she shoots runs parallel to a
psychic distance that alone enables the pulling of the trigger. Both the overall morality
and the technology of the hunt, therefore, manifest the traditional abyss dividing humans
and animals. And despite the hunter's presumed humility and mystical union with nature,
the animal is nonetheless dead at the end of all the philosophizing. One doubts very much
whether the big-horned sheep or grizzly bears who become the object of the sport
appreciate being so honoured by the hunter's renunciation of his or her humanity.

The question arises, then, whether an amoral or even anti-moral approach to
animals counteracts humanity's proclivity to victimize them. The promising aspect of anti-
moral approaches is that they take away from natural animal acts the negative morality
that humanity falsely applies to them. The wolf's attack on the lamb can be viewed with
equanimity, as behaviour appropriate to the predator and necessary for its survival. The
whole machinery of symbolism which converts the wolf into the slavering beast of horror
stories instantly disintegrates into ludicrousness. Traditional ideas of morality have not
been particularly kind to animals.

Behaviourism is one example of an epistemology doing its best to adopt an amoral
stance for its program of explanation. It professes to adapt Darwinian principles to the
field of human psychology, replacing purpose, in B.F. Skinner's formulation, with
"contingencies of reinforcement" as evolutionary theory replaced "antecedent design" with
"contingencies of survival" (p. 224). The only useful information for the behaviourist is
that which can be seen and measured. Moralizing may be interesting as something that
human beings do, but it has little relevance to what can be truly known. With the
behaviourist approach, there should be no titillation from giving pain to animals, since the
connection that links the behaviourist with his or her subject is scientific rather than personal.

The following sample of the language of animal experimentation illustrates the effort to overcome the personal connection. The quotation pertains to John Garcia's discovery of the "stimulus fittingness principle" and describes the experimenters' application of painful or noxious conditions to a rat as it drinks water:

An audiovisual stimulus was made contingent upon the rat's licking at the water spout, thus making it analogous with a gustatory stimulus. When the audiovisual stimulus and the gustatory stimulus were paired with electric shock the avoidance reaction transferred to the audiovisual stimulus, but not the gustatory stimulus. Conversely, when both stimuli were paired with toxin or x-ray the avoidance reactions transferred to the gustatory stimulus, but not the audiovisual stimulus. Apparently stimuli are selected as cues dependent upon the nature of the subsequent reinforcer. (p. 123)

First of all, by the use of the passive voice, the experimenters never appear in this description. An objection to the use of personal pronouns as immodest is one explanation for this peculiar style. That style also has the side benefit of absolving the experimenter of blame in the matter of hurting animals. By the second sentence of this description, the rat has also disappeared; it becomes an "avoidance reaction"; its need for water has become a "gustatory stimulus." Although this particular experiment gives the animal more credit than ever before in the behaviourist tradition, inasmuch as animals are assumed to respond to injury intelligently rather than by simple association, the language shows no comparable advance in recognizing that greater animal intelligence. The passive voice moves from the acts of the experimenter to those of the rat, so that the rat is not credited with choosing well between harmful circumstances or understanding that its nausea likely resulted from consuming something toxic rather than hearing or seeing something. Linguistically and hermeneutically, responses are taking place quite independent of the rat who is giving them.
Furthermore, the elimination of the rat from final sentence serves the purpose of
generalizing from rats to humans. It is that kind of generalization that lends zeal to the
behaviourist's activities. As John B. Watson explains, "The interest of the behaviorist is
more than the interest of the spectator--he wants to control man's reactions as physical
scientists want to control and manipulate other natural phenomena" (p. 11).

Behaviourism employs animals analogically, and persistently, as a step towards the goal
of predicting and controlling human conduct. The view of the animal in the above
quotation, therefore, implies a view of the human being as likewise vacant. The use of the
passive voice discloses this view, which extends to the point of subsuming the
experimenters themselves.

I hope it will be granted that the demystified animal of pure behaviourism is also a
fundamentally devitalized animal. Because animals and their visible acts are taken to be
one and the same, no residue of animality escapes human explanation. The animal is
thoroughly conquered; it is simply a system of behaviours to be isolated, manipulated and	abulated. What does victimization of the behaviourist's animal matter? All that has
value are its responses to applied stimuli, the benignity or harm of the stimuli entering
into the project only as properties to be recorded--and recorded without reference to the
person committing these acts, as if they originated not with people but with some grand
anonymous design. Behaviourism coalesces with hunting philosophy in the claim to cast
off human evaluation. There is in fact a unity between human and animal in
behaviourism in that the anonymous animal, the animal without identity, meets the
anonymous human being, the human being without identity. Such disownment of values
represents an honest attempt to arrive at truth, and truth of a highly modern character,
that is, stripped bare of what is taken to be cultural distortion.

Yet a certain irrationality pervades the multiplication of facts. The futility of a
purely objective approach was discovered by D.O. Hebb in his studies of chimpanzees at
the Yerkes Laboratories of Primate Biology. He found that when anthropomorphism was prohibited, researchers could not make meaningful assessments of chimpanzee behaviour:

All that resulted was an almost endless series of specific acts in which no order or meaning could be found. On the other hand, by the use of frankly anthropomorphic concepts of emotion and attitude one could quickly and easily describe the peculiarities of the individual animals, and with this information a newcomer to the staff could handle the animals as he could not safely otherwise. Whatever the anthropomorphic terminology may seem to imply about conscious states in the chimpanzee, it provides an intelligible and practical guide to behavior. The objective characterization therefore missed something in the behavior of the chimpanzee that the ill-defined category of emotion and the like did not--some order, or relationship between isolated acts that is essential to comprehension of the behavior. (p. 88)

Hebb's reference to safety in the handling of animals is a gesture of defense against the skepticism of colleagues. To the non-behaviourist lay person, the idea that animal acts become meaningful only when the animal is granted internal purpose and emotion is simple common sense. Hebb allows that anthropomorphism leads researchers out of the realm of the strictly measurable and into qualitative questions where agreement and control are less assured. For meaning to exist at all, however, it seems that the observer must come out from behind the veil of impersonal detachment and relinquish total explanatory control. From this concession follows the return of import to the matter of victimization.

In many significant ways, behaviourism and the philosophy of the hunt stand at polar extremes with respect to the animal victim. Between them, they delineate a crucial conflict that inheres with the animal victim in modern culture. With the hunt, victimization counts for too much; it is elevated to a spiritual level, to a mystical fatedness which is presumed to invalidate whatever mercies civilization dictates. The nature of the animal is imprisoned in predation; the whole of nature becomes an endless round of pursuit and conquest or, which is more likely, an endless game. The hunter requires each individual animal killed to embody a value system hostile to culture. With behaviourism, victimization counts for too little; the collectivized animal becomes an abstraction
unamenable to moral import. The world explained by the behaviourist's animal is a neutralized world, full of facts but cut off from moral consciousness. The victimization of the animal in the hunt is of the character of biological mandate; in behaviourism, it is of the character of biological accident. In effect, both behaviourism and the philosophy of the hunt blame the victim for its own suffering or death. In asserting unity with the animal and relinquishment of cultural significance as the virtue of their projects, the behaviourist and the hunter seek license for their activities from the animal itself. The hunter transfers responsibility to the animal's own natural appetite and predatory characteristics; the behaviourist transfers responsibility to the animal's indifferent relation to cultural construction. Previously the victim of the conceptual rift between humans and animals, the animal now becomes a sacrifice to the theoretical sacrifice of human distinctiveness. What remains stable in this reversal in perspective is the victimization of animals.

One detects a certain sense of guilt in rationalizations for hunting and scientific experimentation on animals. Hunters like Eaton and Ortega are aware that the assertion of human prowess in conquest of nature has fallen into disrepute. Though it survives among a few, usually wealthy and usually male persons, the safari mentality which sees the individual heroically conquering the wilderness with his virility and his arsenal of weapons has become an absurd anachronism. Now the killing of animals must express deep humility before nature. More than this, if Ortega is to be believed, the hunter willingly assumes the guilt and repugnance associated with the spilling of blood. Noting that a "white rag stained with blood is not only repugnant, it seems violated, its humble textile material dishonoured" (p. 105), he insists that a hunter makes a great sacrifice in confronting the bloodshed which the non-hunter cravenly avoids. His reaction to blood on a cloth is as markedly peculiar and jittery as the argument he is making. That he must aspire to martyrdom manifests the shakiness of his position. Likewise, the relinquishment of self in behaviourist language is a response to growing societal hostility towards practices
that give harm to animals. Post-Darwinian vivisection controversies elicited from physiologists claims of mystical prowess similar to those coming from contemporaneous devotees of wilderness hunting expeditions. A perceptive analyst of the far-reaching implications of the late nineteenth-century vivisection uproar, Coral Lansbury quotes a statement made by the harassed physiologist, Claude Bernard:

The physiologist [Bernard argues] is no ordinary man: he is a scientist, possessed and absorbed by the scientific idea he pursues. He does not hear the cries of animals, he does not see their flowing blood, he sees nothing but his idea, and is aware of nothing but an organism that conceals from him the problem he is seeking to resolve. (p. 132)

Lansbury also cites a phrase from John Davidson's *The Testament of a Vivisector* (1901): the vivisector is, according to Davidson, a person "sublime and terrible in martyrdom" (p. 169). The naivety of such overblown bids for heroism reveal the depth of discomfort produced by victimization of animals in modern culture. Causing pain to animals found little favour with respectable society, hence the invention of mystic dramas among physiologists who strove to justify their work. The conquest of the wilderness could still, at the end of the last century, assume heroic proportions for itself because the wilderness was a place beyond the reach of culture. Ethics and reservations about assaulting animals simply did not by definition apply to regions where civilization did not hold sway. Thus the defensiveness of the modern hunter shows the expansion of culture into the once alien territory of the wilderness.

There is, it will be observed, a kind of see-saw action between the hunt and scientific experimentation on animals. Where the hunt was at one time self-evidently noble, science was having to protest loudly as to the nobility of its victimization of animals. As laboratory science found the linguistic and epistemological tricks which conceal animal suffering from cultural attention, the hunt lost ground as a respectable activity. The judgement of barbarism shifted from the laboratory to the wilderness. The wilderness has been naturalized in this century; acts of violence against wild animals continue
unrelentingly, but they are no longer morally tolerable. On the other hand, culture may not have been sold on the vision of the scientist heroically suppressing tender-hearted impulses, but it has tacitly acknowledged the sanctity of the laboratory by conceding that moral judgements do not apply there. The willingness of present-day society to turn a blind eye to the often pointless torment of animals in the research laboratory suggests how deeply entrenched in culture is the victimization of animals. The transfer of sanctity from the wilderness to the laboratory has proceeded so smoothly and subtly that one almost suspects an intransigent need in humanity to go on subjecting animals to pain.

Victimization is more than a matter of ethics. Modern theories tend towards locating victimization at the root of culture itself. In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud speaks of the deliberate shedding of blood as a mechanism for uniting members of primitive tribes. Freud's interest is primarily to indicate the importance of the father, and the killing of the father, as a point of contact between anthropological and personal psychological history. When he does discuss the sacrifice of animals, he does so to stress the significance of the animal as a substitute for the father (p. 141). How else, he implies, can one explain the intensity of emotional ambivalence surrounding the ritual killing of animals? Freud relies upon the anthropological work of William Robertson Smith for his comments on animal sacrifice. At one time, by Smith's account, the tribal killing of all animals was attended by ceremony and every member of the tribe was required to eat the flesh so that all would be responsible for the deed. All sacrificed animals, by virtue of being sacrificed it seems, linked the tribe with its gods. Later, distinctions were made between ordinary animals and those that were unclean or taboo. Only the killing of taboo animals required ceremony and the sharing of the flesh, and only the blood of those animals held the sacred bond between gods and tribal members. The widespread domestication of animals for slaughter gradually put an end to the guilt associated with the shedding of animal blood—or so runs Freud's summary of Smith's findings. For Freud's purposes, the primitive link between
totem animals and the gods remains in personal psychology where the child associates particular animals with the father. The object of his comments is not animals per se, and yet it is interesting that he should choose to note the sacrifice of animals as a mechanism deeply embedded in the development of culture. It is interesting, too, that Freud finds cultural progress occurring alongside the isolation of sacred animals for sacrifice from ordinary animals who could be killed without a tribal need for collective atonement. The normalization of the killing of animals apparently goes hand-in-hand with the rationalization of moral stricture. With the domestication of animals, emotional intensity surrounding the shedding of animal blood shrinks from a collective to a personal level. This, at any rate, is the process implied in Totem and Taboo.

René Girard has recently espoused a much different view of the issue of domestication and sacrifice of animals. In Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World, he argues that domestication proceeds out of the urge to sacrifice animals. Domestication is not a separate, economic process which precedes and eventually overtakes primitive violence towards animals. Rather, it is a necessary stage in the culturally formative sacrificial motive. To satisfy the point of ritual killing, he says, the victim had to be different from and yet similar to members of the tribe. Thus animals destined for sacrifice had to stay with the tribe for a time and seem to assimilate tribal habits before they became legitimate objects of the ritual. This idea seems credible, since it is difficult to imagine an animal brought in fresh from the wild making a suitable sacrifice. In a way, although Girard does not make this point, the sacrifice of a wild animal would mean challenging powers too great for the mechanism of sacrifice to bear. Freudian interpretation lends such magnitude to the sacrifice of animals in equating the animal victim with the father. That is to say, the wildness of the animal would have equivalent alienness and potency to the father; equal psychic force would have to be mustered to assault either the father or the undomesticated animal. But by Girard's
analysis, sacrifice is a kind of culmination of the process of "hominization." He notes that imitation is an impulse evident in all higher mammals, and that acquisitive imitation–in simplest terms, an impulse to reach for the same object as another animal has reached out to appropriate–is prohibited among all animals because of the rivalries it creates. By a theory of mimesis too abstruse to tackle here, Girard suggests that the origins of human culture reside in the ritual humanity discovered for overcoming the prohibition against acquisitive imitation. Since the bonding together of the community inherently creates conflicts associated with imitation, the sacrifice of a scapegoat works to discharge those conflicts and reinforce community cohesiveness. Instead of going after each other in violence, tribal members single out a victim to crystallize and take responsibility for a diffuse tension. The victim of sacrifice, Girard says, "is even believed to have brought about its own death" (p. 27) and is taken to be sacred because its death really does defuse community tensions. Thus the "victimage mechanism" is foundational to culture.

Girard is aiming towards establishing the essential and even anthropological truth of the Gospels. Victimization is indeed at the heart of culture, he notes, but to make this finding is also to think in Christian terms (p. 276), hence, tautologically, the truth of Christianity. Yet Girard wants simultaneously to claim that he has "gone further than [his] predecessors in [his] rejection of anthropocentrism, since [his] anthropology is rooted in the animal kingdom" (p. 443). This desire to have it both ways, to invoke the authority of both religion and science, is puzzling and to a degree annoying. Just when one thinks one has found an interpretation which makes sense of the persistence in culture of victimization of animals, that interpretation launches off into dogma departing utterly from the solid ground given by attention to animals. It is an even greater irritation then to find this specifically Christian ideology justified by recourse to animal ways, when religion is a phenomenon at the furthest extreme from animal existence and has rationalized indifference at best and at worst aggression towards animals.
With the animal, instead of Christianity, as the aim, Girard’s theory works well to account for the totality of cultural victimization of animals; it removes complacency from the process of domestication and thus restores to domestication of animals the dynamic of victimization. It is also pleasing to find what could be an abstract totality grounded in a psychologically plausible mechanism of defusion of conflict. Extrapolating from Girard towards rather than away from the animal, one can see that the entrenchment in culture of victimization of animals is humanity’s response to its own tendency to subsume the world. Instead of falling victim directly to human appropriation, animals are the scapegoats for humanity’s legitimate revulsion against its own proclivity to anthropomorphize, to "hominize," the whole of nature. Clearly humankind cannot endlessly impose its own myths upon nature without cost. At some point in time or in the chain of reasoning, the difference of nature from human constructions asserts itself and generates fear and anger in the collective mind. The animal makes a perfect object for the need to sacrifice which arises from that fear and anger, for it represents that difference which has caused the fear and anger in the first place and, at the same time, it sustains the anthropomorphism which has become so excessive as to call attention to itself. Rather than assaulting nature wildly in an explosion of emotion, the community reinforces the sanctity of its myths through controlled sacrifice. Ritual anthropomorphizes killing, where killing is an act most hostile to culture. By means of animal sacrifice, the community can mollify nature without risking internal disintegration.

Between Freud’s theory and Girard’s, we have an anthropological conflict similar to the philosophical conflict defined by the hunt and behaviourism. For Freud, victimization is primal; for Girard it is global. Culture represses the connection between humanity and its animal victims for Freud; for Girard, culture embodies that connection. With the Freudian account, culture naturalizes the animal so that culture itself can exist; that is to say, culture separates itself by breaking primitive attachments to the animal.
The sacrifice of taboo animals may have represented a sublimated murder of the father, but culture relies on the energy that comes from repression of violence. For this reason, the ritual sacrifice of animals has ceased with the evolution of culture. With Girard's account, culture naturalizes the victimization of animals; culture is violence in that it sanctions the acquisitive mimesis prohibited among animals. The concentration in a surrogate victim of tensions arising from the exercise of acquisitive mimesis permits culture's ever-expanding subordination of all that is alien to human purposes. Since acquisitive mimesis is itself a kind of violence in its intolerance of difference, the disappearance of animal sacrifice speaks less of the kindness of culture and more of its imperialism. The actual domestication of animals, the expansion of humanity into wild regions of the earth, and the symbolic domestication of wild animals by means of empirical objectivity may well negate the need for sacrifice but only because these processes supercede the natural prohibition against appropriation.

In the conflict which pits culture against the animal, domestication is clearly a pivotal phenomenon. It is pivotal because it expresses in one process radically opposed relations between humans and animals. Nowhere is the double-sided nature of domestication better illustrated than in the difference between the death of a pet and that of a farm animal. The pet will go to its grave attended by grief often equal to that which follows the death of a human being. The farm animal is despatched and dismantled with as little feeling as that which attends a car to the scrap heap. Where ethical practice is concerned, the logic established by pets leads to full moral status for animals within strictly anthropocentric moral codes. The logic of the farm animal argues for the total absence of moral status for animals. That is why, when arguments against cruelty to animals arise, farm animals represent the most contentious issue: farm animals are so profoundly entrenched in society as economic units that the attempt to find moral significance in their situation seems laughable. If farm animals do not merit activation of
conscience, then why should any other animal? Even with this line of reasoning, however, pets stand as an unanswerable obstacle. Pets may well be bought and sold; they may be used to lighten the lives and improve the health of prisoners or senior citizens in extended care homes. Yet there is no doubt that conscience is aroused when pets are subjected to harm. Acts of sadism against pets can in fact generate greater horror than acts of sadism against adult humans, since pets, like children, do not have such psychological defenses as martyrdom at their disposal. The emotional quality, in Western culture, of a cat's being hung up by its back paws and its throat slashed is utterly different from, and even antipathetic to that which is elicited from the quantities of pigs and chickens subjected to exactly the same treatment. The pet and the farm animal express such highly polarized relations with animals that one might be tempted to posit two attitudes rather than one as the genesis of these creatures. On the one hand, human beings project human identity onto the animal, with all the moral and emotional value that attends regard for another person. On the other, human beings reduce the animal to materiality, setting at nothing whatever claims it might have upon conscience. From the animal's point of view, the diametrically opposed results springing from the single drive for domestication would have to be puzzling.

A third kind of animal, the wild animal, has destroyed the unity of the domesticating urge. Both the pet and the farm animal are achievements of past culture; at one time, both the dog and the cow represented the triumph of culture over the wild beast. Human morality could cope with contradiction because human morality, whether aimed at technological control or at befriending the natural world, was absolute. Subjugation of the wild animal, actual or metaphorical, was so crucial that culture could bear any contradiction to accomplish that aim. As long as the animal manifested human ideas of order, humankind did not feel the need to examine its conceptions of animals closely. Since Darwin, the wild animal has intervened in the cultural narrative written by
domestication; animals untainted by human contact are demanding their place in the story of what is right and wrong, true or untrue, in life. Because culture and domestication are deeply interlinked, the disruption caused by the legitimization of wildness is profound.

Attention to the problem of domestication and wildness turns the modern moral relationship with animals on its head. If it is true that only the uncivilized human being is alarmed at the killing of animals and requires mechanisms for assuaging conscience, then current concern for the lives of animals does not necessarily indicate urban squeamishness over the shedding of blood. Instead of signalling an extension of pre-established ethics to accommodate animals, the present effort to find grounds for what is called animal rights might originate in the subversion of known culture by as yet unarticulated and long-buried forces in the collective mind. All animals are wild animals for the uncivilized person; all are his or her equals or superiors and demand atonement for trespass upon the sanctity of their lives. Domestication may well teach humanity to kill dispassionately by seeming to transform the cows herded off to the slaughter house from animals into commodities, but the cows are living beings nonetheless, with all the potential for awakening the ancient guilt obscured by domestication. Unlike people of different ethnic backgrounds, animals will not truly come over to the side of those who conquer them. Domestication is a cognitive trick which blinds humanity to animal resistance. A herd of cows grazing placidly in a field may not seem to be withholding much from humanity's purposes, but their apparent blankness originates with human perspective. If the cows come when called or gather without much protest for the journey to the butcher, their conformity is a matter of indifference to their nature. The artificiality of animal conformity is manifest most clearly in performing animals, where the imitation of human tricks which so delights some spectators is clearly a travesty occurring outside of the essential animality that remains beyond the reach of human interference. Culture eclipses animal identity but cannot eliminate it. Animal identity abides, waiting only for cultural recognition. Primitive
animal sacrifice, rather than calculated collectivization and slaughter, articulates the gravity of aggression against animals. Why we have needed to kill animals (apart from mundane self-interest) is an open question. If we are to go on killing animals, it would seem better that there at least be some guilt accruing from the act than that the slaughter passes as an unremarkable event congruent with the steady progress of civilization. Guilt at least honours the difference of the animal from ourselves, even if it does not prevent killing.

We have travelled a great distance from the carter beating his horse. A reader would be justified in thinking that such high-flown and possibly fantastic remarks on culture have little to do with any given instance of abuse of animals. Perhaps the animal victim in art cannot bear as much meaning as is expressed in centuries of cultural development. Yet art is, of course, a product of culture, and that is, naturally, how theories of culture enter into determination of the status of the animal victim in modern art. In addition to the internal theoretical dilemmas delineated above, modern art has the overarching dilemma that it must violate its own terms to cope with the post-Darwinian animal. Culture may not seem to be as much of a blessing now as it once seemed, especially when theories like Freud’s and Girard’s speak of repression and victimization as generative drives. Culture is having doubts about itself. Accurate or inaccurate, theories like Girard’s and Freud’s express modern culture’s misgivings about the previously self-evident value of culture itself. The demand upon modern culture to wrestle with the reality of the animal is a crucial aspect of its current self-doubt. If culture is now beginning to feel a little like a victim instead of striding confidently forward to expropriate every phenomenon in the natural world, it is largely because the lives of animals are threatening the authority of culture. Indeed, animals have become the source of current uneasiness in culture because they provide a stance outside of culture from which culture may look at itself.
Thus it is valid in our century to effect the kind of reversal Margaret Atwood makes in her discussion of what she sees as a particularly vivid Canadian attachment to animal victims:

[It is likely [she says] that Canadians 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. (p. 79)]

The logical awkwardness at the heart of this statement is useful. Within the bounds of the conventional dichotomy of culture and animality, it is impossible for the feeling that one's culture is under threat to translate into the polar opposite feeling that one's animality is under threat from culture. This apparent illogicality works, however, because Atwood is positing an especially strong bond with the animal in Canadian culture. Canadians identify with the animal victim, she proposes, because their own culture is closer than others to being itself "animal." This idea goes wrong only in confining the "deep-seated cultural fear" to Canadians alone. Modern Western culture in general is under threat—and under threat as specifically and directly as Atwood's remark suggests—from the animal. When modern culture reaches out to victimize the animal, it wounds itself. Each animal victim is a revelation. Each animal victim opens a path to modern culture's insecurity.

From the range and variety of dilemmas touched upon in this discussion, it will be apparent that the animal victim is the locus of much meaning and little resolution in modern culture. Argue for kindness to animals and one is immediately entangled in paradoxes and conflicts unknown amongst pre-Darwinian habits of thought. What if humanity in fact serves its own feeling of superiority by taking pity on animals? What if gentleness to non-human creatures is the ultimate expression of humankind's pretensions to moral dominance over nature? Animals are not kind to one another, and human beings are, after all, animals themselves. If the law of survival of the fittest applies, then human animals violate nature in countermanding the scheme that has set them up as masters of
other animals. Continuity from animal to human, it seems, licenses the free exercise of the power nature has given to humankind. Humanity debilitates its own animal nature with its moral strictures. Only by casting off those moral strictures can humanity view aggression among animals fairly, not as the source of evil but as a part of life. The best approach, by this line of argument, is to learn coolness in killing from the animals, to cease from suffering pangs of conscience in the business of death because pangs of conscience spring from a false view of life that the human animal has imposed on itself by means of culture. Instead of demonstrating human superiority, then, morality would seem paradoxically to signal humanity's failure to live in the world as the world is. The animal who kills without regret is as one with the world, while humankind neurotically denies life with its moral structures. At any rate, these are the conclusions that appear to arise from humankind's statement, "We are like them."

What conclusions, then, come from the opposite assertion, "They are like us"? Continuity from human to animal would expand the progressively widening sphere of moral concern into the animal domain. Just as morality has advanced to embrace previously outcast groups of people, so too does it follow logically that morality could eventually acknowledge animals as autonomous beings with the right to be left in peace. Since the direction of this expansion of moral concern--what we think of as "humanitarianism"--has been ideally to avoid bestowing an alien morality upon non-conforming cultures and to accept the ontological moral status of those cultures independent of specific codes, viewing animals as subjects of morality need not represent a threat to animality in general. The problem resides in the utopian vision projected by such moral ideals. The hope for a universal "Peaceable Kingdom" in which killing has ceased and no being persecutes another certainly does exclude the habits of the natural animal. Humanitarian acceptance of animal predation would appear culturally to entail the establishment of two moral communities, one for a population of gentle, vegetarian human
beings, and another for the amoral, carnivorous animal--a kind of moral "game preserve," as it were. In terms of ethics, there is nothing especially wrong with this vision of two worlds, except insofar as it divides species even more thoroughly than they are currently divided. One way to cross this divide may be to argue that humans are biologically vegetarian (as Shelley does), that their animal nature is therefore violated by exploitation of other animals. Another may be the assertion that animals in fact demonstrate rudimentary acts of moral conscience such as self-sacrifice. That arguments like these are appearing in modern thought on the rights of animals testifies to the need in culture to encompass animality in its moral sphere. It must be admitted, however, that at present these arguments are not very compelling against the global victimization founded upon the setting of a moral cut-off point where humankind ends and animals begin.

Certain fundamental principles in humanitarian belief can, nevertheless, be plausibly applied to animals. The belief in individual freedom, for one thing, has relevance to human as well as nonhuman animals. So do the rights of expression and of justice even for those who transgress against social laws. More pertinently in this discussion, the right to influence institutions of power is germane to animal victims. While that principle might conjure up absurd images of animals in voting booths, it applies, in a practical sense, to the obligation of social institutions to acquiesce at some level to the life of the animal. The words of Thomas Tryon (1682), which might once have been dismissed as sentimental nonsense, now have political implications: "The lives of all the beasts [he sensibly observes] are as sweet to them and they as much desire to continue them as men do and as unwillingly part with them."

It will be observed that the one issue of continuity with animals produces vastly different views of humanity's status in nature. While civilization is too far advanced to permit the return of humankind to the animal state as it is stereotypically imagined, humans can be treated collectively, and viewed in the abstract as economically or
genetically useful, or the reverse. Conversely, the idea of continuity situates the highly-valued individual human in a world of other beings whose individual lives mean much to them. Human culture will have to suffer some loss of prestige in either case. The contradictions that de-throne our species can no longer be discounted by isolating the human from the animal world. If only out of pragmatic interest for our shared environment, the human species will have to begin thinking globally and caring about animals. Neither can it be argued on a theoretical level that if the idea of continuity between humans and animals produces irreconcilable conceptions of humanity’s place in nature, then we’ll just do away with the idea of continuity. Culture has committed itself to accommodating the animal. Since Darwin’s time, animals have come to lay legitimate claim to authority in humanity’s theorizing over its own state.

The aim of this study is not to investigate the much-examined question of the true state of human nature. The point, rather, is to show that animals are not negligible. Indeed, they have become essential to culture’s ways of understanding the human being. The indeterminacy of the animal’s reality only enhances the animal’s portentousness. In turn, the way in which humanity views itself has serious import for animals. The animal victim takes this whole issue out of the domain of theory. If the idea of continuity disrupts accepted belief about the human condition, how much more disruptive to sanctities is the victimization of animals? How is culture to cope with continuity between humans and animals when humans continue to practice aggression against the beings that are supposed to be telling them something about themselves? The discomfort this question is likely to provoke speaks for the power of the animal victim. What we learn about ourselves from abusing animals is hardly flattering.
Where Literature Enters the Picture

Up to this point, I have been ranging freely over large ideas which simultaneously locate and complicate the matter of the animal victim. The time comes now to attempt to apply some of those ideas to fiction in which the animal victim plays a significant role. In literature the victimized animal cannot be a statistical entity whose performances are charted; nor can it be a mere commodity destined for the market-place. By its very nature, literature cannot help but grant some degree of autonomous identity to animals. At the same time, however, the author cannot cast off the legacy of culture and create the pure animal, the animal without reference to human constructions of the world. The need to make literary meaning out of the animal requires anthropomorphism, however tentative that anthropomorphism has become with the tension placed upon culture by the new demand to acknowledge animality.

More than any other kind of animal in literature, the animal victim is conditioned for anthropomorphism by cultural history. In the simple act of making a story out of animal life, victimization is virtually unavoidable since there seems to be little else from which drama can be drawn. The animal victim makes an easy subject for pathos; animals seem so helpless before human interference that cruelty generates immediate outrage. The animal’s suffering or death elicits sentiment because of the contrast between animal innocence and human rationality. Pathos nevertheless represents wholesale anthropomorphism in that it renders animals fully amenable to sentimentalism. Pathos falls in line with the forces that domesticate the animal. If sentimentalism is scorned, as it usually is in modern fiction, the author finds himself or herself obliged to wrestle with non-human aspects of the animal victim. As soon as this demand is upon the writer of fiction, the human world becomes a little less comfortable, a little less sacrosanct, than it was before. Victimizing animals becomes more difficult and the source of greater unease when animal resistance is acknowledged.
Under these conditions, the animal victim in fiction reverts to the state of the sacrificial animal of the primitive past. The destructive act recognizes itself for what it is, and mechanisms of justification must be deployed. Just as sacrifice of animals occurred in defiance of larger forces, either natural or deistic, that militated against the sacrifice, so too does the sacrifice of the animal in post-Darwinian fiction occur in defiance of ethical and theoretical values demanding reconciliation between humans and animals. Within the bounds of civilization, animal sacrifice is one way of restoring wildness to the animal. Given that civilization has decreed the incorporation of all animals by means of domestication, the reinstatement of wildness represents a healthy achievement. In contrast to the pathetic victim, subsumed by pity, the sacrificial animal threatens civilization. It threatens civilization, on the one hand, by pointing to a region in life where civilization does not have dominion. On the other hand, the sacrificed animal threatens civilization by informing us that we are not as civilized as we like to believe. In view of the conflicts adhering to domestication and wildness, it is appropriate to begin examination of the animal victim in modern fiction with stories that attempt to introduce the wild animal to readers grown accustomed to domesticity in animals and in themselves.
CHAPTER II

TALES OF ANIMAL VICTIMS IN THE WILD: LITERATURE ATTEMPTS TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE ALIEN CHARACTER THE ANIMAL

Stories about animals in the wild have their own history. That history is shaped out of the writers' efforts to overcome anthropomorphism and represent the nonhuman and anti-human features of the wild animal's life. In this chapter, the works of five writers will be examined. Of those five, Jack London, Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G.D. Roberts conflate human moral dramas and animal life. Deeply affected by the ethos of the late Victorian period, these three writers evince the struggle to persist in dragging messages to the human community out of a Nature that was equally determined to say nothing at all to people. Both Seton and Roberts were born in 1860, and while their writing careers span the years from the last decade of the nineteenth century to the 1930's, evidence of their first forty years under the dominion of Victorian culture endures through all their stories. London, by contrast, was born in 1876, and was already dead by suicide in 1916. His brief life seems to concentrate the forces of the period, for in his wild animal stories, moral fervor dictates a value system of even greater specificity than that informing the works of Seton and Roberts. The two writers whose stories will be used to illustrate twentieth-century efforts to cease inflicting moral doctrine on wild animals are Henry Williamson and Alan. W. Eckert. Although Williamson's *Tarka the Otter* is published in 1928, at a time when Seton and Roberts are still producing animal stories, Williamson is younger than these two writers. Born in 1895, he suffers little from the Victorian proclivity to read anthropomorphic moral import into Nature. Instead, he
isolates the animal world from the human world, envisioning what the human world would look like from the animal's perspective. The human world does not look especially humane; in fact, Williamson's depiction of the animal world depends upon the contrasting iniquities practiced by humans. The same is true of Eckert's *The Great Auk*. Published in 1963, *The Great Auk* reflects the nascent conservationist ethics of the period. By means of almost unrelieved disgust with the attitudes of humans towards animals, Eckert is the most successful of these five writers in devoting his art fully to the natural habits of the animal. Both Eckert and Williamson find it necessary to articulate hostility towards humans in order to achieve naturalism in the representation of wild animals. This need demonstrates the complexity of the problems arising from endeavours to bring art, the wild animal, and the idea of continuity between humans and animals together in some sort of accord.

In conformity with attitudes of the late nineteenth century, tales by London, Seton and Roberts manifest a direct Darwinian influence in their efforts to illustrate that popular code for Darwinian theory, survival of the fittest. What is taken for realism in these early animal adventures is the contradistinction of the wild animal's morality to civilization's moral laws. In their divergent ways, London, Seton and Roberts confound Darwinism with the conception of nature as "red in tooth and claw." For them, realism means facing squarely the struggle for survival in the wild. They display to readers the gashed throats, crushed skulls and torn bellies that, in their reading of the wild, figure persistently in the drama of the natural animal's life. Their aim is to supplant Victorian neurosis over bloodshed among animals with assent to the ongoing battle in the wild. They do not seem to realize that they have not transcended Victorian assumptions, but perpetuate those assumptions in their reactionary phase.

Some of the judgements behind the supposed realism of these late-Victorian stories may be discerned from comparison with the pathos one finds in works like *Bambi, Black*
Beauty, and Lassie Come-Home. Whereas these latter stories soften violence by enfold ing it in the morality of compassion, tales by Seton, Roberts and London highlight violence as a counterpoint to pathos. Bambi, Black Beauty and Lassie Come-Home affirm civilization’s aversion to cruelty by sentimentalizing over domestic and humanized animals. Animal suffering occurs as a narrative necessity, but that suffering reinforces the message of love which overrides brutality. The love and good sense of one "Mr. Thoroughgood" saves Black Beauty from a life worn out and broken from abuse and mishandling by cab drivers. Love draws Lassie along a 400-mile journey towards the boy who "never wants another dog" besides Lassie; and love unites the boy’s family in the deception intended to hide Lassie’s return from the man who has purchased the dog. Love also prevents the man from revealing that he sees through the family’s trick. The community of love and friendship among the talking animals in Bambi in the end wins its moral victory over persecution by hunters. At the climax of the story, Bambi’s father shows him a dead poacher, saying, "'Listen, Bambi. He isn’t as all-powerful as they say. Everything that lives and grows doesn't come from Him [pronouns denoting humans are capitalized in animal dialogue in this story]. He isn't above us. He's just the same as we are"' (Ch. XXIV). The final words of the old stag to his son are "'I loved you dearly.'"

Although familial love such as this appears also in Seton’s stories and London’s and, to a lesser extent, in Roberts’, a rival morality where virtue resides in strength, cunning and freedom directs the narratives. These writers find, with some justice, that compassion distorts the alien character of the wild animal. In erecting a morality contrary to the generalized ideal of love, they hope to undermine that anthropomorphism which allows wild animals to be assimilated by the tender sentiments of the reader.

It will be apparent already that realism is strained by this programmatic replacement of the morality of love with the morality of strength. Indeed, one detects in operation ideals singularly characteristic of this period in cultural history. Nietschzean
notions of nobility hover around the animal heroes, particularly in Jack London's stories. In Seton's stories, young animals are trained by their parents in woodlore much as young boys were being so trained by their leaders in the scouting movement. Within these early stories of the wild, Nature is asked to perform the task of character-building that it was being asked to perform outside of these stories. The codes of the wild, as represented in these tales, would show readers how to liberate themselves from the artificial moral constraints of civilization. The long-standing characterization of these stories as "realistic" demonstrates culture's readiness to beguile itself with its own romanticization of nature, even when that romanticism has proven dangerous in its fanaticism. In his article "The Revolt Against Instinct" (1980), Robert H. MacDonald admires the overriding concern with morality he finds determining the narratives of Seton and Roberts; for them, he argues, the animal story is

an affirmation of man's need for moral and spiritual values. The animal world provides models of virtue and exemplifies the order of nature. The works of Seton and Roberts are thus celebrations of rational, ethical animals, who, as they rise above instinct, reach towards the spiritual. This theme, inspired as it is by a vision of a better world, provides a mythic structure for what is at first sight, realistic fiction. (p. 18)

This imposition of moral and spiritual values upon animals may be all very well when the object is revitalization of the human psyche, but it does little to foster a realistic appraisal of the ways of the wild animal.

Animal victims are the source of much awkwardness in the spiritual quests of London, Seton and Roberts. Although victimization is constitutive to the philosophy of heroism through strength, it is not wise to be honest about the victims scattered along the path of the hero, even when those victims are animals and not humans. Honest regard for the animal victim might rouse the indignation of civilized readers. Thus, according to the specific needs of the narrative at the time, pathos continues to envelop some animal victims, while sensationalism, that emotional harmonic to pathos, envelops others.
Vacillation over animal victims discloses the insecurity of the moral vision inflicted upon
the wild. Ruthlessness is fine in fantasy, and such fantasies do, no doubt, emancipate the
imagination from suffocating moral strictures. But when fantasy arrives at actual
aggression against actual bodies, fictional mechanisms become necessary in order to
prohibit revolt in the witness to violence. The devices used by London, Seton and Roberts
to mystify the victimization of animals expose the peculiarly insidious form of
anthropomorphism they apply to the wild animal.

This is not say that their stories are totally worthless to readers seeking
trustworthy representation of wild animals. Sentimentalism effaces the animal victim as
effectively as the celebration of bloodshed, if not more so. Nor is it strictly fair to raise the
neutrality of empiricism as a measure of the right approach to the animal victim,
although, as will be seen in the discussion of Williamson and Eckert, wild animal
narratives do need to incorporate aspects of empiricism to articulate the contrast between
the ways of the natural animal and the ways of human beings. Empiricism has its own
programmatic ideals, and among those ideals is the dictate to remain dispassionate before
the spectacle of victimization in nature. Empiricism mandates objectivity, against the
human inclination to respond emotionally to victims, animal or otherwise, and even to
intervene. Admittedly, intervention is wrong in life when it means stopping an animal
predator from killing its prey. In art, intervention falsifies nature when it compels
animals to exemplify spiritual values wholly alien to both animal and nature. Still, the art
of the modern fiction-writer must cope in some way with the interconnectedness of human
and animal. Story-telling does not have to be quite as bombastic in its moral appeal as
that of London, Seton and Roberts, but neither can it sever the emotional bonds that
extend from the reader to the animal victim. However explicitly these writers might
profess to educate urban readers in nature's ways, their fiction is not the same as natural
history.
The first way in which stories about the wild animal depart from natural history proper is in singling out individual animals for the focus of their stories. For some reason, the weak, inferior or simply ordinary animals will not meet the narrative purpose, and so the individual animals focussed upon are usually the best and brightest, the most intelligent, the most resolute, the most courageous and powerful, even the largest or most colourful (Roberts' Red Fox is, as Robert H. MacDonald points out, "redder" than his siblings [p. 19]). The needs of drama seem to demand the singular animal; the tale of the ordinary creature would apparently descend towards simple scientific statement. For what events of note could befall the undistinctive animal? The common animal's discoveries about the world are not exciting; the course of its life is routine; its death is not tragic. Quite likely, the ordinary animal would die before it could have any adventures recognizable as such. It is hard enough to give the animal literary life without having to struggle against the lack of value. This, at any rate, is the problem that confronts London, Seton and Roberts; if they are to create a taste for animal tales in a skeptical public, they need to offer the best specimens within the bounds of plausibility. The trick, of course, is to maintain natural even-handedness while honouring the superior animal. But having departed as far from scientific objectivity as to reject the lowly animal in favour of the finest, the author is naturally tempted to press further towards moral distinctions. Again, it seems as though there must be good animals and bad animals (barring human intervention) for stories to emerge from the animal realm. It must seem to be an iniquity when one kind of starving animal, say a hawk or wolf, attacks the favoured animal, and a boon when the favoured animal kills a weaker one. Thus the weaker animals tend to fall before the protagonist's skills with due neutrality, while the main animal's struggle for its life against a stronger foe (and these animals do become "foes" in such encounters) takes on the lusty moral overtones of the good fight. Those who write about natural, that is, undomesticated, animals are virtually helpless against this kind of problem. Their animals
are highly volatile, ready at an instant to shift from hero, to victim, to plain animal. Distortions would not be noticeable, however, were it not that the wild animal's impersonal relation with humankind is definitive from a scientific point of view, that point of view representing one half of cultural ambiguity over wild animals.

The singling out of an individual animal has less perilous consequences in Williamson's and Eckert's stories than in those of the earlier writers because rugged individualism is highly esteemed in the late-Victorian ethos. Pulling one animal out of the collective has automatic moral resonance in this period; it is almost impossible that the animal thus isolated could represent all of its fellow creatures. Williamson's otter and Eckert's auk can represent other otters and auks because their species exist in enmity against humans. The lone animal in London's stories, or Seton's or Roberts', must be a moral exemplar because any lone but yet sentient being speaks powerfully to the mind of the times. The voice of individualism is particularly strident in London's stories. As an American, London is much more attracted to the qualities of the solitary victor in battle than are his Canadian contemporaries. Oddly enough, London also distinguishes himself from Seton and Roberts in contemplating the soft life of urban domesticity. Granted, he tends to subject that life to contempt, but the other two writers rarely bother to leave the woods at all.

London's best known animal stories, Call of the Wild (1903) and White Fang (1906), share a narrative scheme based on polarized domains of domesticity and wildness. The distinctions he draws between California, "the Southland," and the Arctic, "the Northland," are so unambiguous that the formula he applies is easily reversed from one novella to the next. In California, dogs are pets; or, to put it in terms appropriate to London's scheme, they are wimps enjoying a life of ease. In the Arctic, dogs work hard or they die; their life is a constant battle against cold, hunger and brutality. If from sheer
physical strength, Southland dogs survive in the North, London will grant them the advantage of superior intelligence over their less civilized cohorts. The Northland dog, transported to the South, distinguishes himself (the formula would not work with female dogs) in his instinctive courage and will to survive. Moral formulas are already evident in this schematic of qualities and locations. Before one accuses London of operating upon clichéd thought, however, it must be pointed out that with this simplistic dichotomy, he is striving for the elementality of animal existence. What is obvious anthropomorphism to us would be only slightly romanticized reality to him. At the time, the wild meant vigorous battle, conquerors and conquered. At least London’s dogs do not talk.

In *Call of the Wild*, Buck, a domestic but unusually powerful dog from the "Southland" is stolen for work as a sled-dog in the Arctic. After numerous adventures which toughen his spirit and resolve against the unrelenting hardship of the North, Buck falls into the hands of a wise old prospector, a man skilled in the ways of the North and duly appreciative of the mighty dog’s virtues. Buck is spared a return to the soft life, potential in his master’s discovery of the proverbial mother-lode in gold, when Indians kill his master and unintentionally relieve the heroic dog of all obligation to civilization. The Indians suffer the consequences of their unwitting liberation of the dog. To this point, Buck has lived by his moral credo never to attack human beings. Returned fully to the wild with his master’s death, Buck is freed from responsibility to this one last ethical tie to civilization. Buck is empowered to kill humans. He exercises this new freedom liberally upon the Indians who had killed his beloved white master. Within London’s hierarchy of values, it must be noted, Indians fall somewhere between animals and white people in their susceptibility to violence. Buck can kill other dogs without compunction and without much provocation. The morality of the story allows him ultimately to kill primitive people out of righteous revenge. In fact, Buck is so moral and has such a long memory, that he goes on wreaking his revenge upon the Yeehat tribe for many years after his master’s
death. The blood of Caucasians, however, remains sacrosanct, narratively speaking. By London's formula, an animal's running wild does not mean assaulting humans for no good reason. Human beings are not animals for him, except, as will occur in White Fang, when they lack all respect for moral codes. Where killing is concerned, he draws a strict line between animals and humans, other than humans who are savage or criminal. In that respect, he goes against the Darwinian codes he wants to illustrate. Even so, the fact that Buck has now shed human blood marks for London the dog's total reversion to the wild animal state. Buck sheds all trace of domesticity. Generally a loner after his dramatic liberation from the authority of civilization, Buck will at times run with wolves, as the appearance of unwolflike patches of colour in the subsequent generation of wolves attests.

White Fang, the half-canine, half-lupine hero of the story named for him, is also rewarded with paternity at the end of his tale, although he follows a reverse course in life to that of Buck. The offspring of a wolf and a sled-dog, White Fang leaves the wild to be passed down a succession of increasingly civilized owners. He is beaten, neglected and eventually sold by an Indian master, beaten and compelled to fight other dogs by the "mad god" Beauty Smith (one of the "race of superior gods" [p. 214] by virtue of being white, despite his savagery), and finally rescued by Weedon Scott who transports White Fang to his estate in "the Southland." This man of the rather unvirile name London also likes to describe as the "love-god," because Weedon Scott earns White Fang's total loyalty with kindness. White Fang is not, however, completely denied the benefits of his wild nature in his new state of domesticity. Happily for him, the sanctity of his master's estate is threatened by an escaped murderer, "a human beast" (p. 286), whom White Fang can and does kill with the high approbation of the civilized world. In contrast to Buck, whose mating activities are signalled with subtle signs of genetic variation, White Fang becomes a father in the most human sense of family relations. In the last moment of the story, we see White Fang, now recuperating from his encounter with the murderer, licking his
puppies and then dozing off in the sun while they tumble and play around him. A human protagonist could not present a more wholesome image of fatherhood than that which surrounds this creature from the wild Northland. White Fang is the great protector fresh from victory in battle; he has enough time to caress his children but, like all conventional fathers, retreats into the patriarchal prerogative of the afternoon nap.

Some confusion of values is evident even from these simple plot outlines. London writes animal romances, using any convenient occasion to enhance the heroism of his animal champions, whether that means endorsing natural robustness or favouring alternately the virtues of civilized morality. Although he depicts the benefits of these conflicting spheres as wholly opposed, it seems to matter very little which one is drawn upon so long as Buck and White Fang come out charged afresh with super-human strengths. Even their responses to victimization are super-human. Buck pulls loads and endures beatings beyond the powers of any other dog. White Fang, too, survives beatings that would have killed any other animal; he also recovers from gunshot wounds when the surgeon has given him only a one in a thousand chance of living, a mistake pardonable in this surgeon since his experience has been with "frail and flabby" and above all, human patients (p. 291), not with valiant wolf-dogs.

The flexibility of London's ethics is evident also in his judgement about the dog-fights in which White Fang is forced to engage. While he is quite aware that the sport exploits and victimizes the dogs, he is also free to admire White Fang as the virtually indomitable victor in these contests. Only when it becomes necessary to introduce the love-god from the South does London bring his noble animal to the point of death and allow the alien voice to condemn the spectators as "cowards" and "beasts" (p. 237). The other dogs, victims of White Fang's superior intelligence and tenacity, subside before the conqueror without much complaint from the author. When White Fang is despatching fellow dogs, London is reserved on the score of blood and injury. When the fight is equal,
when, say, the whole pack of sled-dogs gang up on White Fang, London does not stint on graphic detail of slashed flesh and gleaming fangs. Under attack from all sides, White Fang becomes "a lightning flash of slaughter" (p. 213), an incarnation which London esteems. Weedon Scott is possessed of a similarly flexible moral code. Down in the Southland, where other laws besides fighting and conquering are supposed to prevail, Scott grows impatient with three dogs who persecute White Fang. "Go to them, old fellow," he directs White Fang, "'Eat them up'" (p. 279)—a cheery command for the rout that follows. All three dogs are killed, with White Fang actually pursuing the last, retreating animal into the middle of a field to slay it. The Southland, it seems, can also be cowed by such displays of might; instead of bringing a lawsuit against the owner of the dog who killed their pets, the men spread the word that White Fang is not to be molested in the future.

Likewise, only deserving animals fall victim to Buck’s prowess. A bizarre sequence of events marks one stage in Buck’s reversion to the wild state. One evening when their work is over for the day, the sled dogs flush out and pursue a snowshoe rabbit. Buck leads them, experiencing for the first time the urge to "kill with his own teeth and wash his muzzle to the eyes in warm blood." Among the pack is Spitz, the current leader of the dogs against whom Buck has been rebelling in small but persistent ways. By cunning, for Spitz is "cold and calculating even in his supreme moods," Spitz takes a shortcut to catch the snowshoe rabbit:

The rabbit could not turn, and as the white teeth broke its back in mid air it shrieked loudly as a stricken man may shriek. At the sound of this, the cry of Life plunging down from Life’s apex in the grip of Death, the full pack at Buck’s heels raised a hell’s chorus of delight. (p. 49)

Elevating the death of this snowshoe rabbit to an illustration of the ineffables of Life and Death constitutes dramatic preparation for the inevitable fight to the death between Spitz and Buck. But it is not Buck who has killed the innocent victim and brought the forces of Life and Death into play. Spitz has invoked the dreadful powers, and done so, it is hinted,
by cheating. The actual and quite simple death of the rabbit is negligible as far as the narrative is concerned. The foretaste of grim detail, the broken back, slides quickly into ponderous figuratives. By means of the grand theme, prompted into action, it must be remembered, by the death of a rabbit, the battle between Buck and Spitz becomes a battle of Titans. Buck's desire to "kill with his own teeth" will be satisfied morally. Although the assault on Spitz is in fact unfair, and ends with the entire pack closing in on him and tearing him to pieces, Buck could almost be avenging the death of the rabbit when he first tackles his enemy. At least Buck is innocent of the blood of the only real victim in the episode, the rabbit whose death provides an excuse for London to inject moral fervour into the dog fight. So when Buck does "wash his muzzle up to the eyes in warm blood," he does so with the sanction of moral provocation, and not out of simple appetite or predatory impulse. The blood is the blood of an enemy. Furthermore, he wins the battle because he possesses "a quality that made for greatness--imagination" (p. 51), a quality for which he may thank, presumably, his life as a domestic pet in California. As with contests between White Fang and his canine rivals, that between Buck and Spitz is delivered in full, bloody and bone-crunching detail. What makes it possible for London to present these naturalistic specifics is his having cast the situation in moral terms.

Much later in the story, when Buck has shucked off all attachments to civilization, London gives a long description of the dog's pursuit of a moose, writing of his cleverness in preventing the moose from drinking water and so weakening his prey. The moose's increasing exhaustion has the quality of pathos, but its death is barely touched upon: "At last, at the end of the fourth day, [Buck] pulled the great moose down. For a day and a night, he remained by the kill, eating and sleeping, turn and turn about" (p. 96). There is clearly a vast difference between this death and the snowshoe rabbit's. The omission of gory detail (typical also, incidentally, in media presentations of the slaughter of farm animals) exonerates Buck of the guilt that would attach to his attack on the moose if the
author's own judgements were consistently applied. It is apparent that Buck can remain heroic only if he does not overtly shed the blood of weaker creatures.

London makes bold moves against the soft sentiments. Buck's vitality and virility emerge from the rough life of the Northland dog. It pleases London to write that:

Mercy did not exist in the primordial life. It was misunderstood for fear, and such misunderstanding made for death. Kill or be killed, eat or be eaten, was the law; and this mandate, down out of the depths of Time, [Buck] obeyed. (p. 76).

He also takes pleasure in drowning, beneath the thin ice of spring, some especially ignorant and hence cruel Southlanders whose mawkish compassion is expressed thus by the female of the party: "The poor dears [i.e., the sled-dogs]! Now you must promise you won't be harsh with them for the rest of the trip" (p. 63). Pity, it seems, is not only useless but wicked, bringing down righteous death as punishment. And yet London makes the concession to sentiment that neither Buck nor White Fang will rend the flesh of innocent victims within the reader's field of attention, despite the fact that his interpretation of nature is predicated on such necessities. Thus his "primordial code" is an act of bravado not carried through to its ultimate conclusion. The sensationalism surrounding the fight with animal foes revels in the blood and disguises pain and injury. Using animals to explore the assertion of personal power has a dual function: first, it is an inoffensive way to advocate human aggression and support self-serving behaviour; second, it excuses such behaviour by locating it in primeval and deterministic ways of being. The urban reader is tacitly encouraged to muscle ahead in the struggle for life, leaving behind a trail of "enemies." In a way, London's animal heroes give him temporary relief from the socialist views he advocated outside of his animal adventures. The suppression of bloodshed in the matter of less able victims is therefore not mere delicacy on London's part. It is a sign of repressed sentimentalism. Given the unabashed zeal with which London imposes codes of honour in battle upon the wilderness, it is little wonder that he should take fright at victims that speak for a gentler creed. London is delivering a
message to the civilized; conventional ideas of the wild are useful to his anthropocentric purposes. This is why he appears never to have found it necessary to defend his animal stories as realistic.

Ernest Thompson Seton, by contrast, did seek the cachet of natural history for his animal stories. He worked as a naturalist and did illustrations of animals and birds. He claimed that his stories told the truth about wild animals, that he had seen animals perform the various acts of cunning or sacrifice that they perform in his stories. He had to make these assertions of defense against the charge that both he and Roberts were "nature-fakirs." Seton is not embarrassed about the spiritual values he asserts in his tales. What did annoy him were suggestions that he invented the incredible feats of love and sagacity out of which his animal adventures are spun. "These stories are true," he declares at the beginning of his "Note to the Reader" in *Wild Animals I Have Known*. He has, he says, personal knowledge of every one of the animals named in the stories, although he admits that three of the animals are composite portraits. He also tacitly defends the assignment of personalities to animals.

Natural history, Seton remarks in his "Note," "has lost much by the vague general treatment that is so common" (p. 7). Despite the slight defensiveness, there is justice in his statement. He even has good reason for discerning (p. 8) hostility in the generalizing approach. What else could explain the irrational denial to animals of internal experience? He offers a corrective to the anonymity of natural history's animal by telling the story of individual animals, and tracing that story to the animal's inevitable death. Perhaps Seton oversteps the confines of credibility in translating animal "language" into English, but his program for story-telling is not quite as insistently human as London's. The morality he attributes to his animals is directed at the self-improvement of readers. But unlike London, he aims also to increase the reader's sensitivity to animal suffering. When Seton
complains, while his Don Valley partridge "Redruff" hangs dying in a snare, "Have the wild things no moral or legal rights? What right has man to inflict such long and fearful agony on a fellow creature, simply because that creature does not speak his language?" (Wild Animals, p. 297), he is appealing to the plight of the animal as animal, not as a model for human virtue. Certainly, he makes a large leap from the one pheasant caught in the snare to the abstract generality of animal creation. But the personified Redruff stands for him as a representative of the whole kingdom of personified and victimized animals. Granted the human who has set the snare is an especially vile example of our species, a man who hates work and hunts partridges out of season, a man who has shot Redruff's mate while she lay before him on the ground moaning "as though begging for mercy" (p. 285), and who has trampled Redruff's chicks underfoot. Granted, too, a kindly, honest man could not have been the one to cause such suffering to a partridge in a Seton story, even though Seton himself is not averse to shooting down the occasional anonymous squirrel. But by its very simplicity, Seton's ethic strives for compassion for the wild animals. He believes that he does not humanize animals, but is simply recording their natural behaviour. He believes that Nature licenses humanization, where human science would cut off any move to attribute character and purpose to animals. It is clear, nonetheless, that he has felt it necessary to impose moral interpretations upon animal acts in order to win empathy for his animal protagonists.

Pathos abounds in his stories. Convinced that the "life of a wild animal always has a tragic end," (Wild Animals, p. 11), he steers each tale towards victimization. Unfortunately, the fate of his animals never really does rise above pathos, partly because Seton tends to fudge the issue of victimization for literary and emotional effects. In "Lobo, the King of Currumpaw," for example, he describes the death of the king-wolf Lobo's mate, Blanca, as a tragedy, and even as an "inevitable tragedy" (p. 36), somehow overlooking the fact that blood is bursting from Blanca's mouth and her eyes are glazing
over because men are strangling her with lassoes drawn tight by their horses. One is inclined to protest that there is nothing "inevitable" about this death, that the idea of tragedy is a superfluity. It is interesting, furthermore, that the gore interferes with pathos. While we are supposed to be thinking of Lobo howling for his mate, Seton has let slip by him a bit of realism--the human cruelty and the gruesome death--which jars against the sentimental evocation of the male wolf's grief.

Mothers and sons, however, are more apt than mates to stir Seton's sentiments. There is, in fact, an embarrassingly Oedipal episode at the centre of "Raggylug, the Story of a Cottontail Rabbit," in which Seton seems to adopt the emotional outlook of the son for his reading of the mother rabbit's mating with a tough old buck. Now, perhaps animal mating in truth fails to reflect the romance human culture needs in its own approach to sexuality; and perhaps, too, a certain amount of violence and pain does occur in animal mating. But Seton finds Mother Cottontail very much ill-used by the buck. Knocking her down and tearing out lumps of fur, the buck "treated her shamefully." Before Raggylug's outraged adolescent eyes, his mother is driven near death from "long persecution" by the "hateful brute" (p. 103). In fine but totally unrealistic Oedipal fashion (unrealistic even as regards the psychoanalytic phenomenon), Raggylug avenges his mother's suffering by maneuvering the offensive buck-rabbit into the path of a hound-dog on the hunt. Even wild mothers, from Seton's perspective, are not allowed to become sexual beings.

Mother and son live happily together thereafter, until the "thoroughly bad and unscrupulous fox" (p. 77) from Springfield chases Mum out amongst some icy weeds where she freezes to death. Unalloyed pathos surrounds her death: "In a little while the cold, weak limbs ceased to move, the furry nose-tip of the little mother Cottontail wobbled no more, and the soft brown eyes were closed in death" (p. 112). Seton is aiming for more than cuteness in the mother rabbit. The furry, wobbly nose and large brown eyes are meant to contribute to an impression of her courage in living the difficult life of the wild
animal, and to the courage of all like her: "Poor little Molly Cottontail! She was a true heroine, yet only one of unnumbered millions that without a thought of heroism have lived and done their best in their little world, and died" (p. 113). As to the cuteness of rabbits, there is one other point worth noting in this story. Early on, the mother rabbit rescues her son from the coils of a Black Serpent (capitalized thus). The pathetic cry of Raggylug, muffled in the coils of the snake, is "Mam-my, Mam-my." This tiny bleating is all very charming, but objective reports tell us that the cry of a rabbit in mortal distress is in high degree penetrating and eerie, belying the creature's reputation for timidity. To reduce the shrill voice of the natural victim to sweetness for the purpose of pathos does the wild a disservice. Had Raggylug let out a true piercing shriek, Seton might have attained the tragedy he aspires to.

"The Springfield Fox" relates the tale of a mother fox and her son. The mother fox could indeed be the selfsame animal that drives Mother Cottontail to her death, since the fox sustains her predatory ways alongside deep attachment to her cubs: "Some animals [Seton observes] have so much mother-love that it overflows and benefits outsiders. Not so old Vixen it would seem. Her pleasure in the cubs led to most refined cruelty" (p. 158). In one instance of that cruelty, old Vixen and her mate trick a woodchuck into thinking that it is safe to sit on its usual stump in the sun. Old Vixen hides behind the stump, but refrains from killing the woodchuck outright. She knocks the senses out of the creature and carries it back to her cubs so that they may learn how to kill. Several times, the injured woodchuck tries to crawl away, with the cubs pulling at its hindquarters. Old Vixen herself hauls the wounded animal back to the cubs more than once. All of the foxes worry the woodchuck until the mother fox decides to kill the suffering creature and "serve him up at once" (pp. 160-161). Live mice are also brought for the education of the cubs. The eldest cub catches one: "he quivered with excitement and ground his pearly little milk-teeth into the mouse with a rush of inborn savageness that must have surprised even
himself" (p. 162). These representations of viciousness have an air of naturalism. Less realistic are the examples of foxy cunning Seton offers. At one point, old Vixen escapes from some hounds by leaping on sheep's back (p. 170). At another, she leads some hounds onto a railway trestle to be killed by the oncoming train (p. 177). He does not quite lose sight, however, of the fox's imperviousness to sentimental love. He acknowledges that foxes make victims of other, innocent animals. Since the animal personalities in his tale are foxes, he does not call them "thoroughly bad and unscrupulous," as he has done when his subject was rabbits. The foxes are cruel and savage, but, as personalities, they are immune to the moral condemnation that occurs when the animal victim is a cuddly and conventionally innocent rabbit.

Seton uses Vixen, nonetheless, to exemplify a form of love, a love which he links with the moral qualities of the wild animal. The people in the story, the "guilty ones" (p. 171), find Vixen's earth and kill all but one of her cubs. They chain up this last of Vixen's offspring, and for several nights Vixen sneaks into the yard to gnaw at the chain in a vain effort to free the cub. When she realizes that the attempt is fruitless, she brings the cub some poisoned chicken heads to eat. "The wild mother's heart and hate were true" (p. 179), Seton writes; "now at last when she must choose for him a wretched prisoner's life or sudden death, she quenched the mother in her breast and freed him by the one remaining door" (p. 180). Vixen, like Mother Cottontail, is a heroine. She employs the exceptional insight she has demonstrated all along to free her cub from an unbearable existence as a captive. Her act illustrates simultaneously the percipience of which Seton wants to inform his readers, and the high moral spirit of the wild. The tale is designed, in turn, to refresh the moral spirit of the civilized reader. Whereas Seton wants to draw pity towards non-predatory animals like pheasants and rabbits, his fox nourishes the repressed love of freedom in the civilized breast.
One could go on picking out contradictions in Seton's stories, noting where wood-
lore degenerates into the mode of the morality play and where his animal personalities
become too human. His literary skills do not quite measure up to the aim he has adopted
for himself. Yet he is correct in his assumption that his reader's sensibilities will not be
kindled by the collectivized animal, since the collectivized animal shuts out human
response. Sympathy engages with the individual, human or animal, not with the mass.
And while he seems unable or disinclined to broach the truly inhuman aspects of the
animal, he must be granted his point that animals do have experiences, that there is what
we now call "bonding" between individual animals, and that those bonds are not broken
without some pain or at least puzzlement to the animal. He may well miss the robustness
of animal resistance to the kind of humanization he effects. He may have some spiritual
design uppermost in his mind. Nevertheless, by their very imperfection, his stories reflect
the modern struggle to present wild animals fairly, in their opposition to anthropomorphic
interpretation.

Margaret Atwood perceives distinctively Canadian qualities in Seton's and Roberts'
treatment of animals. American animal adventures, she says, are told from the hunter's
point of view, and animal death thus represents the successful accomplishment of
narrative action:

The animal stories of Seton and Roberts [she writes] are far from being success
stories. They are almost invariably failure stories, ending with the death of the
animal; but this death, far from being the accomplishment of a quest, to be greeted
with rejoicing, is seen as tragic or pathetic, because the stories are told from the point
of view of the animal. 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. (p. 74)

This statement does reinforce the valid point that writers are locked into their respective
cultures in their interpretation and use of animals. We have seen in London the
celebration of the victorious animal which conforms to moral ideals in the American
Zeitgeist. Certainly, too, the sentimental observances bestowed upon the animal victim
appeal to stereotypical Canadian diffidence. Yet the statement begs the question as to what "the point of view of the animal" would be. Seton has had to humanize his animals insistently in order to draw from them the moral import of victimization which apparently pleases Canadian sensibilities. Skepticism arises as to whether or not the natural animal actually responds to victimization in the manner Seton imagines. For disparate purposes, both Seton and London infuse the wild animal with strictly human significance. Roberts does the same, on specified occasions, but his stories display greater variety of purpose and method. Unlike Seton and London, Roberts can build a narrative out of the anti-human qualities of the animal victim.

One trick that Roberts discovers for impressing upon readers the alienness of animal life is to devote time and art to the animal's environment. While London likes to alienate the reader from the environment, implying that "the Wild, the savage, frozen-hearted Northland Wild" (White Fang, p. 105; note the moral pressure manifest in the capital letters) would be too much for urban folk to bear, Roberts opts to draw the reader into his landscapes and there to offer the animal's experience. In "On the Roof of the World," the landscape is more frozen and savage than London's Northland, and yet Roberts involves reader and polar bear and Inuit hunter in the inhuman scene. Negatives convey the ungraspable nature of the setting. The hills of snow are "insignificant" serving only to "emphasize the immeasurable and shelterless flatness of the surrounding expanse" (p. 43). The abstract "expanse" becomes "unfeatured levels" which dissolve all distinction, including that between sea and land. This place is an "it," a presence without subjectivity, as the very first word of the story tells us. The polar bear partakes of the negatives, appearing first as "something" moving and then as a "startling shape." Through the course of the story, the polar bear never entirely loses the initial aspect of impersonality. Roberts has set up the tale too well for the bear's "cruel" eyes (p. 44) to counteract the
general impression of elementality, although the adjective from the moral world is clearly a lapse.

Such action as there is in this story is appropriately muted and schematic. Bear and hunter approach, from either side of a hollow in the snow, three seals that have come out from under the ice. They wait. The aurora borealis flares up twice to illuminate the scene. When the bear, ignorant of the hunter’s presence, does make its move on the seals, we are given the event from the hunter’s perspective. Since it is dark, he can only hear what happens, "a scramble, a heavy splash, a second splash, a terrible scuffling noise and a hoarse, barking scream" (p. 51). This sequence, stripped of emotional impact, represents the death of the seal from the claws and fangs of the polar bear. The tripartite tableau has provided Roberts with a convenient and clever method for shifting the particulars of the killing off-stage. Because Roberts refrains from personalizing the death of the seal, the bear’s "bloody jaws," revealed briefly by another flare up of the Northern lights, are just that, bloody jaws simply and not "bloody" with connotations of hellish ravening. The inevitable confrontation between the polar bear and the hunter has no moral implications. Having been equally weighted sides of a three-sided figure, either the bear or the man could triumph and there would be no greater satisfaction to be had from one outcome over the other. The bear has size and terror on its side, the man has the gun. The gun tips the balance in favour of the man, but this climax gives no reason for celebration or mourning. The blankness of the landscape has deactivated judgement and sentiment. It is more true of this story than of many other Roberts stories that "man is [here] an animal competing with his fellows" (William H. Magee, "The Animal Story," p. 160): the Inuit hunter could have fallen beneath the polar bear’s ferocity and the wasteland would not have opened up a pocket of special meaning for the human corpse.

Roberts does not always have available to him so fortunate a landscape as he hits upon in "On the Roof of the World." As he heads south to the forests of Ontario, his
resistance to anthropomorphism undergoes a corresponding deterioration. "Black Swamp" operates upon the same kind of device as "On the Roof of the World." The swamp, however, cannot be reduced to the sheer negatives of the Arctic. Nature takes bizarre form before Roberts' fascinated gaze. There is "something monstrous" about the "heavy, indeterminate masses of dark mud," the "windless shadow," and the "gigantic tangle of trunks and roots"; over the whole scene there hangs a "strained stillness that is not of peace, but of a nightmare" (pp. 2-3) Once again, the bear that is the centre of the tale emerges gradually from this landscape: "Suddenly it seemed as if the spirit of the monstrous solitude had taken substance" (p. 3). This "spirit" is the bear taking shape, emanating out of the swamp in search of grubs and small fish.

No human beings appear in this story. A racoon determines the plot by knocking a hornets' nest down into the arms of the sleeping bear, which in turn causes the bear to seek relief in a treacherous mud pond and thence to drown when it cannot recover a stable footing. Formally, the action is the same as that of cartoons in which cartoon bears become victims of hornets. The difference, of course, is that the cartoon bear does not feel pain; nor does it drown with "gaping muzzle, strained straight upward, [emitting] hideous gasps and groans" (p. 15). Even so, that slightly farcical aspect of the main action does have its effect upon the story as a whole. The bear hovers uncertainly between seeming a monstrous beast, "a portion of the swamp come alive" (p. 11), and metamorphosing into a simple shambling creature browsing for maggots in whimsical unselfconsciousness. The racoon, for contrast and conflict, is "a gay little figure that seemed an embodied protest against all the dark and enormous formlessness of the swamp" (p. 8). The two animals are symbolic adversaries, not merely formal ones like the polar bear and the Inuit hunter. And yet empathy does not seem to fix itself anywhere; empathy is elicited but is given no secure hold for its gratification. In the end the nightmare element attaches to both the pathos of the bear's drowning and the "untriumphant curiosity" (p. 15) of the racoon as it
observes the bear's agony. The strangeness that Roberts has written into the landscape discomposes assessment of the event, so that the victim's death defies author and reader as to the appropriate tenor of feeling for the occasion. The confusion of compassion is not an ill effect, especially given the entanglement of reason in the swamp setting. In a sense, Roberts produces an accurate reflection of modern perplexity over the correct way to respond to animal victims. In this fashion the needs of human culture begin to intervene in Roberts' conception of the animal story.

Perhaps it is the peculiar combination of clownishness and ferocity in bears that leads Roberts to write most frequently about this particular inhabitant of the wild. He can make stories out of the experiences of smaller animals, down to fish and mice, but bears are his favourite subject. He works the angle of native animal innocence to achieve pathos in the death of the bear in "The Return to the Trails." To attain that innocence, however, the bear has to have been a virtual pet most of its life. Sold to a circus as a cub, the bear escapes at the age of five into his old homeland in the wild. He is an incompetent hunter; an apt illustration in the edition of the story I am using shows an appealingly mild-eyed bear sitting up in the grass picking blueberries.

The bear does not know enough to be quiet to sneak up on small animals, and while that failure means that the bear creates no victims of his own to deflect sympathy, it also means that he is unable to sustain his freedom. In his first deep winter back in his home, he ambles into a logging camp expecting the humans to feed him as they had fed him in the past. He "felt that he had come home" (p. 48). It does not take an especially acute reader to see what is coming. The loggers assume that he is a fierce bear coming to attack them and kill him with a blast from a rifle. For the sake of readers not inclined to fondness for bears, Roberts has a logger articulate the point of the drama on discovery of this bear's collar: "'I swan, boys,' said he, presently, 'if that ain't the b'ar that run away from the circus last fall! I heard tell he was reckoned always kind!'" Whether they are
still convinced that the bear was vicious or are expressing regret is unclear, but the fatal injury to the bear’s character is obvious. Notice, though, the strain that Roberts has had to put upon the bear to invoke pity for it. Had the bear been a truly wild animal and not a virtual pet, it seems, readers could not be expected to experience sadness at its being shot. Innocence arises from the bear’s trust in humankind’s generosity towards animals. If the bear had been bent on attacking people, pathos in the matter of its death would give way to a sense of entitlement, of victory in combat. Animal innocence is apparently incompatible with any kind of threat to human well-being. The conflict in this story occurs on the level of native states, with the tame falling victim to human aggression against the wild. Tameness, however, is what makes the bear the tragic hero of the story.

Whether Roberts is aware of it or not, he evidently finds it necessary to deploy, as London does, the extremes of sensationalism and mysticism to justify sparing the life of the wild animal in its confrontation with the more powerful human species. One last bear story illustrates his dilemma. He establishes two plot-lines in "With His Back to the Wall," the one belonging to a black bear who becomes the object of a pack of wolves’ hunger, and the other belonging to Job Thatch, a trapper who is slowly starving in the desolation of winter and who has broken his leg as an additional hardship. The pronoun in the title, then, is ambiguous; the bear is driven to a rock-face by the wolves and Job Thatch is driven to desperation by "the White Death" (Thirteen Bears, p. 63) closing in on him. The wolves are the mutual enemy of both bear and trapper; their cry, as they approach the bear, has "a ring of hate in it" (p. 58). As the story-lines converge, Job Thatch too hungers for bear-meat, but witnessing the black bear’s courage as it defends itself against the wolves, he joins in the fray, killing wolves right and left with his rifle and his axe. With the requirement upon him to conjoin the efforts of human and bear, Roberts yields to sensationalism. One mighty swipe of the bear’s paw "smashed [a wolf’s] head and hurled a lifeless mass clear over the backs of the pack" (p. 71). One blow from Job
Thatch's axe is followed by a "fountain of scarlet" (p. 73). As the battle subsides, the wolf victims drop in "kicking and writhing paroxysms" (p. 74). The remainder retreat ignobly, with "grey, feathered tails curled down beneath their haunches" (p. 74). Now comes the time when Job can get his bear-meat, but he has a change of heart when the bear raises its "gaunt and bleeding head" to defy the rifle as it had defied the wolves. Addressing the bear as "old pardner," as he has throughout the battle, he foregoes the temptation to assure his own life with the death of the bear. A less perceptive writer might now have had the bear and the man become fast friends. Roberts, however, lets the bear revert to its animal state and leave the scene without gratitude. But with his act of charity, Job Thatch has scored a victory, over the "White Death," the "Silent Adversary," of the wild: "In his mystical imagination he could perceive the vast, silent unseen powers of the wild, which had so treacherously conspired against him, drawing back in grave defeat" (p. 76). Chivalry triumphs over the inherent hostility of the wild, both the hostility that Roberts concentrates in the wolves, forgetting that they too are starving creatures, and that holistic (for Roberts) hostility of wild nature which slowly erodes the moral defenses of the civilized person. In order to have Job Thatch show compassion to the bear, Roberts has had to present the act in terms of his human hero's transcendence of animal necessity. The quality of mercy is decidedly strained.

Thus even a skilled writer like Roberts reveals doubt as to what to do with the human being within the domain of nature. Joseph Gold makes this point when he offers the opinion that the "strongest, the purest [among Roberts'] stories are probably those without human presence in which the forces of survival can be isolated, captured, and presented in a world uncomplicated by morality or philosophy or human psychology." Gold is definite on the point that the "stories free of human interference are the most aesthetically pleasing" (p. 84; the Inuit hunter hardly counts since the landscape effaces his humanity). This latter assertion is odd, and yet it is true. An animal tale "free from
human interference," one is likely to suppose, would lose aesthetic interest as it gained scientific objectivity. Without the human interference of the author, it could be imagined, there would be no tale at all, just a series of events barely distinguishable from accident. As we have seen in the wild animal stories so far discussed, the imposition of human values is particularly salient when victimization is at issue. Authors have been resisting mightily the neutrality of science when they come to animal victims. Yet their art, too, has been prone to going awry over animal victims, descending to pathos or sensationalism or lurching into mystical abstractions. Their moral allegiance may be with the animals. Their aesthetic allegiance, however, remains with humanity. The two writers we turn to now, Henry Williamson and Alan W. Eckert, also give their moral allegiance to animals, but for them the voice of humankind is, with very few exceptions, repulsive. This approach may seem unkind and unwarranted, but it appears to have been a necessary step in the liberation of art from the kind of spirituality evident in the first authors of the wild animal's story. Devoted to the animal alone, the aesthetics of Williamson and Eckert succeed in creating literature out of a naturalistic view of the animal.

It is particularly apt to speak of "the voice of humankind" when analysing Williamson's *Tarka the Otter*. The actual voice of humankind is the most salient and most deadly announcement of the intrusion of the human being into the animals' world. In this story, the presence of human beings is confined mainly to what an otter would experience, with the crude "*Tally-Ho!*" of the otter-hunters signalling the arrival of people into the otters' peaceful domain and emblematizing humanity as a whole. The otter-hunters cannot be entirely excluded from the text; they are, after all, of crucial importance to the drama since they cause Tarka's death. But their appearance as fragments, as harsh cries and as rubber boots in the water or as glimpses of distant crowds, negates identification at
the same time as it imitates the otter's point-of-view. Holism exists in the otter's world; the upper world of the human being is grotesque.

There are no bad animals in *Tarka the Otter*. There are no good animals either, for that matter. The owl that attacks Tarka when he is a cub is not a marauder; he is a predatory bird who has mistaken the otter for a rabbit and is therefore unprepared for the counter-attack from both Tarka and Tarka's mother. The owl dies, with half its feathers torn from its breast by the mother otter, not because it is a wicked owl for menacing our hero but because of misjudgement, unfortunate timing and the roused strength of the otter (p. 34). Williamson clearly seeks to overcome his readers' prejudices about animal victims of other animals. More than once in the novel, he collapses events to give the "feel" of the food chain. On one of those occasions, the otters have made a meal of some frogs:

[The otters] left some of the frogs uneaten, for there were eels in the ditch. Iggiwick, the vuz-peg [hedgehog] . . . found the remains and was gleefully chewing when a badger grunted near. With a squeak of terror the vuz-peg rolled himself in a ball, but the badger bit through the spines as though they were marram grasses. Iggiwick squealed like marram grass in flame. Later in the night nothing was left except the trotters, teeth, and spiny coat of poor Iggiwick. (p. 49).

Despite Williamson's assignment of a name to the hedgehog, and the pitying adjective "poor," the animal is introduced and killed too swiftly for sympathy to concentrate upon it. One would be justified in suspecting that Williamson has given the baby name Iggiwick to the hedgehog for the very purpose of disabusing readers of their juvenile sentiments for animals. The hedgehog and whatever personality it might possess are subsumed under the pressures of the natural system of eating and being eaten (not, as London has it, "kill or be killed"). Even the simile likening the cry of the dying hedgehog to marram grass in flame tends to obstruct compassion, for while the reader might gain a vivid auditory impression of the sound and its piercing shrillness, grass is insentient and does not suffer. The sound is inhuman, as is the import of the animal's death. The hedgehog's remains,
furthermore, have a quality of absurdity about them, although they can easily be
envisioned as pathetic as well.

Since the "anti-story" effect of these evocations of the food chain is foundational,
another instance merits examination. This time, Tarka has brought his mate White-tip a
lamprey which had been attached to the side of a trout before Tarka happened along.
White-tip is not much interested in the gift, but Tarka persists:

He dropped it before her again and again, pretending to have caught it anew each
time. She swung way from his offering as though she had caught the lamprey and
Tarka would seize it from her. The sickly trout, which had been dying for days with
the lamprey fastened to it, floated down the stream; it had been a cannibal trout and
had eaten more than fifty times its own weight of smaller trout. Tar from the road,
after rain, had poisoned it. A rat ate the body the next day, and Old Nog [a heron]
spearred and swallowed the rat three nights later. The rat had lived a jolly and
murderous life, and died before it could fear.
The lamprey escaped alive. . . . (p. 87)

It will be observed here that characterization marks off the trout and the rat in this
sequence. This flourish, however, works less to humanize the natural cycle than to
demonstrate that animals can have individual lives and still be impersonal objects of
natural processes. The "cannibal" trout might seem to be subject to just retribution for its
evil ways, but because its apparent punishment is accidental, its moral status is a non-
issue. The trout could just as likely have been the most upright trout-citizen ever created,
a fond husband and father, and a born leader. Probably perfectly innocent fish were also
poisoned by the tar. In fact, given the impartiality of the event, the cannibal trout is
absolved of guilt: it is an innocent fish like any other. Likewise the rat, that much reviled
object of human antipathy, briefly attains the flair of pirates before it is spearred by Old
Nog. Its life is filled out only to be immediately extinguished, and thus it too sustains the
quality of innocence. The only creature that survives this particular series of events is the
lamprey, which has had no attributed personality whatsoever. It starts out as the flaccid
object pure and simple of Tarka and White-tip's exchange, and then fate ironically selects
it over the other, personified animals for escape. Although one can discern here some
uneasiness between literary playfulness and scientific neutrality, the two drives are at least able to co-exist.

The logic and temperateness of the natural chain of victimization, the undramatic cycle as Williamson presents it, discloses the illogicality of the otter-hunters' activities. Because Williamson focusses intently on animal experience, and because he disallows sentimentality as he chronicles the daily and seasonal habits of animals, the hunters' determined assault upon the otters is incomprehensible. The meaninglessness of the hunt on comparison with the orderliness of natural proceedings renders the hunt condemnable, and cruel. The natural system has a totality of its own; the humans are barbaric invaders. The "Tally-ho's" break insolently into the animals' peace; the hound dogs churn up the water. In the otters' view, human beings are monstrous, not morally (for them) but physically. White-tip experiences a crowd of hunters and spectators as "cries and tongues and legs" pursuing her from pool to pool; watchers on a bridge are to her "faces and waving arms" (p. 143). Later, as he glides silently through the pack of dogs, Tarka sees the legs of the hounds "joined to their broken surface-images. From underwater he saw men and women, pointing with hand and pole, as palsied and distorted shapes on the bank" (p. 231). Undoubtedly a troop of happy, harmless bathers would appear equally nightmarish. Yet the human world's lack of organic coherence from the otter's perspective points up the unintelligibility of the purpose of the hunt. Happy bathers might well look bizarre to an otter but at least they keep their peculiarities to themselves. Thus animal consciousness determines the moral reading, not spiritual values imposed from without.

The death of Tarka's cub Tarquol does approach tragedy. All through the novel, Tarka has lost family--siblings, cubs, a mate--to humanity's strange hatred of his kind. Tarquol is singled out from the rest as most like Tarka himself. The loss of fellow-otters has been so unrelenting that the reader is acutely aware of the vulnerability and likely brevity of the life of Tarka's beloved cub. The animals play together, but Williamson
wisely resists the urge to invoke a father-son bond between the two. He swerves from strict realism only to allow a dream to Tarka "of a journey with Tarquol down to a strange sea, where they were never hungry, and never hunted" (p. 205)—a slight departure which rationality forgives, for surely one can imagine that dreams of peace, perhaps without specifics, come to animals. Realizing Tarquol’s inevitable fate, the reader begins to hope for acts of heroism and impossible cunning, for Tarquol to elude the hunters and find a place of ultimate safety, for Tarka to rush in as his cub is being mauled and rescue him. In an earlier animal story, narrative could stretch to implausibilities like these. Williamson’s story, however, rules out the incredible escape. Nature, naturalism, forces the reader along the implacable course of events.

The description of Tarquol’s death holds a curious place in the paradigm of pathos and gore. It would not be correct to say that the cub’s death has the same neutrality as that of Iggiwick the hedgehog. Nor would such neutrality be appropriate since the cub’s death occurs not in nature but in the nightmare world of the human being. That is where tragedy enters the scene. Only the subtlest manipulation is required to create grief over Tarquol’s death; there is no need for jets of blood to splash or Life and Death to obtrude into the action. Neither, and more importantly, is there any need to humanize Tarquol:

Deadlock [an otter-hound] seized [Tarquol] and shook him and threw him into the air. Tarquol sprang up as soon as he could feel, snapping and writhing as more jaws bit on his body, crushed his head, cracked his ribs, his paws, his rudder. Among the brilliant hawkbits--little sunflowers of the meadow--he was picked up and dropped again, trodden on and wrenched and broken, while the screaming cheers and whoops of sportsmen mingled with the growling rumble of hounds at worry. Tarquol fought them until he was blinded, and his jaws were smashed. (p. 227)

This description marks the end of a chapter. The suspension of the obvious conclusion to the conflict tends, from one perspective, to establish Tarquol’s heroism: he fights until his power to fight is exhausted. Nevertheless, the smashing of the jaws and all the other injuries are simply truthful aspects of what happens when a pack of dogs worries an otter. With effort, the reader can step back from the scene and view each dreadful injury as
straightforward reportage on Williamson's part. The death of Tarquol, an otter with a
name and a history for the reader, is no different from the death of any other otter caught
by hounds. Emotional impact may be greatest at the level of the individual otter, but
empathy at this level extends also to the whole world of otters persecuted by the alien
world of humanity. Readers are confronted, then, with a cruel injury to nature itself;
revulsion arises from the spectacle of so peaceful and steady a life being wrenched and
riven for no purpose. The wholeness of the otters' lives is destroyed with the progressive
rending of Tarquol's body. The grotesque fragmentariness of humanity inflicts itself upon
the otter's body. Animal harmony, therefore, is as much the victim in the death of
Tarquol as the otter cub itself.

Tarka disappears at the novel's conclusion also in a state of suspension—literally,
in that the last of his life is given to the reader in the form of bubbles suspended on the
surface of the water, bubbles cast up by Tarka's final exhalations. Williamson does not
present to the reader the Tarka's experience as the otter drowns, only the signs of the
drowning. The collapse of the body to the bottom of the pool, the bursting lungs and fading
consciousness, are left to the reader's imagination. Perhaps Williamson himself could not
quite face the death of the otter whose history he had filled out with his literary craft and
perspective. The suppression of somatic detail, however, is emotionally effective.
Presentation of Tarka's experience as he drowns might have produced pathos. The
anonymity of the death creates the effect of tragedy. Williamson generates sadness for
the animal way of dying. In his final struggle, Tarka has managed to kill the otter-hound
Deadlock, but such heroism as that feat might imply is repressed. The final paragraph of
Tarka the Otter runs thus:

They [the otter-hunters] pulled [Deadlock's] body out of the river and carried it to
the bank, laying it on the grass, and looking down at the hound in sad wonder. And
while they stood there silently, a great bubble rose out of the depths, and broke, and
as they watched, another bubble shook the surface, and broke; and there was a third
bubble in the sea-going waters, and nothing more.
Oddly, the "sad wonder" experienced by the otter-hunters at the death of their hound transfers to Tarka; and "sad wonder" is indeed the appropriate response. The last two words of Tarka's story collapse the two dimensions of animal death in fiction. For the impartial Nature given by the scientific perspective, the death of any individual animal is "nothing more" than yet another disappearance from the collective. It is an event unmarked and unmeaning. On one side of the dialectic, the "nothing-more" of Tarka's death implies a shrug of the shoulders, a noncommittal reaction. From the perspective of literature on the other side of the dialectic, however, the fact that there is "nothing more" to come after the last bubble has the cathartic impact of tragedy. One does not need to apply human distortions to Tarka to explain the tragic effect; Tarka is not our little animal friend, nor a plucky little hero, nor a survivor (in the modern jargon) of many hardships. That which is alien and animal in Tarka has become real. The fact that there can be an empirical "nothing-more" only serves to heighten the emotional devastation of Tarka's death.

When we arrive at the absolute "nothing more" of Eckert's description of the death of the last great auk, empirical reality is compelled to align itself with literature. The Great Auk illustrates the point that art is truer than life. The actual circumstances of the death of the last great auk are in all probability quite different from those Eckert invents. The logical likelihood is that a scant few great auks survived the human onslaught and died unable to regenerate their numbers. However dismal that lonely fate might be, the depiction of hunters smashing the last great auk's body is an historically accurate representation of what humanity has done to the species. I say historically, and not symbolically, accurate because what Eckert is dealing with is implacably concrete and factual. There are no more great auks in the world, and humankind is to blame for this fact. The guilt that humanity must bear for eliminating a species of birds is as potent as
that embodied in the individual human being wantonly clubbing to death the last individual
of a race of animals, no matter what really happened.

The ineluctable factuality of the tragedy could well grant Eckert considerable
liberty in the matter of anthropomorphism. That he resists descent into personification
attests to the faithfulness of his art to the animal and its cause. He does not name any of
the birds in the story. If the last great auk is one of the finest of his kind, larger by inches
than others and empowered by the flock to lead them, these qualities are aimed not so
much at impressing the reader as at indicting humanity. The most distinguished of the
species (and the last) is still only an economic proposition to the men who kill the great
auks. In fact, of course, the best of any animal species is the object of hunters; economics
has little to do with the hunt per se. The rationale of economics completely fails to justify
the slaughter in The Great Auk since, as with Tarka the Otter, the animal’s perspective has
narrative omnipotence. Eckert does not attempt, however, to enter the great auk’s mind
and translate its thoughts into human language. By 1963, when The Great Auk was
published, the public might tentatively be trusted to find at least as much interest in
natural history as in the self-flattery of anthropomorphism.

Nothing says that natural history has to be flat and unliterary to be accurate. The
amusement Eckert gets out of describing the "ludicrous and awkward" movements of the
great auks on land does not distort the reality of the birds. He describes vividly the
"grossly exaggerated wobble" and related aspects of their gait:

Far, far to the left they’d lean as the right foot shuffled forward several inches, then
equally far to the right as the weight shifted to this foot and the left shuffled
forward. Their stubby flipper wings thrashed the air constantly and futilely for
purchase. Frequently they slipped and fell onto the hard rocky surface in a tangle of
swinging wings and frantically pumping feet, but always they scrambled up unhurt,
cushioned by the thick down of their breasts. Their progress toward the higher
portions of the island was for all the world like the extravagantly awkward
bumblings of a troupe of circus clowns. (p. 13)
These, and other jovial particulars of the great auks' habits, increase delight in the natural bird without eliciting the luxurious sentiment of compassion. The reader is convinced of the authenticity of detail, not pressured to identify with birds. Yet the invocation of the great auks' happy clumsiness on land turns out to have been keenly purposive when the time comes to give the circumstances of the last great auk's death. Struck by a man with a club, the great auk "rolled over, scrambled back to his feet and continued his pitiful wobbling run to the cliff edge" (p. 125); the futility of the bird's attempt at escape is achingly obvious. What was a sweet absurdity in the great auk, and should have guaranteed the friendliness of humankind, fatally betrays the last great auk to human aggression. Our pleasure is betrayed as well, for art has drawn us to this creature to show us that humanity will never again enjoy in life the quaint, determined solemnity of so simple an attribute of the great auk as its comical gait.

In an italicized section of the story, Eckert lends poetry to the hatching of the great auk chick. The italics do not stress the action so much as they encapsulate it from the rest of the story. The reader sinks into the inside of the egg, away from the daylight world of normal print. The passage opens biblically, with "In the beginning. . . ." If it is to the reader's taste, this description could be experienced as the miracle of life, its holiness at its origin. But while this particular chick has special significance as the very last of its kind, it is still a bird. The biblical lyricism inherent in "in the beginning" has traditionally been reserved for humanity and its spiritual quest. There can be perceived, therefore, a subtle chastisement of our species in Eckert's brief digression into the biblical. What follows is not the least bit mystical. Poetry emerges from the physical, from the hardening of the spine, the first flexing of the muscles, the somatic complaint against confinement. When the chick's egg tooth finally breaks a hole in the shell, it is not "Life" that rushes in but fresh air: "two pea-sized lungs were inflated for the first time" (p. 20). Microphotography has exposed pre-natal existence to human sight. Technology assists poetry in this
instance. In a way, science keeps the poetry in line, preventing a flight into the
metaphysical or lapse into sentiment.

Another aspect of the novel showing the enlistment of empiricism in literary and
emotional purposes is the periodic count of the numbers of great auks. So paltry a feature
of the lives of these birds as number takes on acute significance, both as a measure of
threat and as a narrative element. Hopes rise and fade with the increase and decrease of
the flock. There is cause for elation when the great auk's pathetic flock of one hundred
and twenty-six suddenly meets up on their migratory route with an armada of over forty-
three hundred birds (p. 60). At once, it seems that a story which looks as though it will
creep painfully through the slow disappearance of each great auk could end in triumphant
survival. The number climbs to five thousand and two with the addition of another flock.
Who cares about the alarm of bird lovers and naturalists (p. 69) at the skimpiness of the
number?--we have mingled with the great auk's own particular flock and witnessed the
numbers drop disastrously. In amongst the great auks, we have temporarily forgotten the
novel's view of humankind. The larger numbers only foreshadow a more terrible
catastrophe when people discover the flock.

There has been a "harvest" of Eldey Island birds early in the novel. The
fishermen drive the clumsy fowl along planks into waiting dinghies, smacking them on the
head with clubs as they witlessly follow the flock. In another encounter with humankind,
the cluster of great auks making their migration southward become the victims of a hail of
shrapnel blown into their midst by men firing from boats for no discernible reason, no
doubt for no reason whatsoever. The leader of the flock is struck; he "flopped
spasmodically as a jagged chunk of metal tore away most of his skull" (p. 64). Clearly it
is better to die by natural causes than from the attack of this terrible animal, the human
being. It is almost a relief when a one-eyed female, also a leader and one whose
reappearance delights the reader and the great auk himself, becomes the victim of killer
whales. When the inevitable carnage does take place, upon the increased flock of nearly
five thousand birds, we anticipate learning nothing pleasant about our species.

Compassion for animals is too puny an emotion to cope with the scene of the slaughter of
over forty-eight hundred birds. The hours of clubbing, the endless swish-thump as the
great auks' heads are broken, the boats piled full with carcasses--these elements rudely
shake the reader out of any illusion that pity for the animal can do battle against
aggression. And if we are inclined to excuse the massacre as a tragic mistake caused by
economic necessity, Eckert will not allow us this illusion either. As the day wears down,
some of the men begin to play a horrifying game with the great auk fledglings, useless as
meat but a too easy target for play. The game begins with one man throwing a fledgling
at another:

The throwing game rapidly degenerated into a kicking game and now the men
turned into overgrown boys delightedly kicking at the animated black lumps of fuzz
on the ground, seeing who could kick them highest or farthest. The best ones to
kick, of course, were those which were still able to stand up on their hindquarters,
because those would loft high into the air and plop to the ground dozens of feet away
in a broken heap. After all, the men had worked hard. All day they had worked
hard. Let them have this little bit of fun. What could it possibly matter to anyone?
(p. 95)

Literature cannot produce an uglier scene than this one--or at least not that I have found.
Life spawns some fairly revolting sexual perversities involving animals, but personal
history tends to explain and forgive these. There are a few sickening scenes in stories to
be discussed in later chapters, such as, for example, the moment in Jerzy Kozinski's
Painted Bird when a rabbit, half-skinned and presumed dead, returns to consciousness:
"The partially skinned carcass started to jump and squirm on the post where it was
suspended" (p. 133). With this event, however, a specific set of aesthetic demands, largely
driven by bravado and self-indulgence, cushions the reader from the reality of the gore.
Eckert's scene is not properly defined as gory, nor as tragic. In spite of the fact that the
scene is invented, it is experienced as truth. The reader can and will grieve over the final
seconds of the last great auk's life. But grief over the terrible waste of the fledglings and the fact that the game dooms the species to extinction is overwhelmed by hatred of humanity. One could protest that the fishermen represent a particularly low form of our species, that tender-hearted ladies and gentlemen would love the fledglings and leave them alone. The implacable logic of the narrative and of this development, however, reduces the voice of faith in humankind to a whimper or even a whine. A more powerful connection with nature than the tender heart is necessary to overcome the temptation to kick a helpless baby bird in the rear end. Readers will say that they feel no such temptation, that the century and a half which has passed since these events has worked to civilize humanity beyond habits like these. Yet we go on setting our species above the rest, and symbolically kick baby birds with our undying arrogance.

Polemics arise naturally from this scene in the story; outrage plays havoc with the critical stance and needs to be discharged. And yet polemics, like compassion, fail to do justice to the effect Eckert has produced. Moral fury is gratifying, but it does not free us from our constitutional and definitive sense of entitlement over nature. Eckert has accomplished as much as art can accomplish towards upsetting human sanctities and tangling up both reason and sentiment. That he himself feels the need to relieve anger in manipulative irony--"Let them have this little bit of fun"--is understandable. But let us step back from the story and see what has occurred with this development. Convinced of the truth of this representation of humanity, the reader struggles to divorce himself or herself from the prevailing value that allows people to victimize animals in this way. That value is culturally all in all; nothing besides belief in human primacy rationalizes the playful destruction of the fledglings. If readers are moved, then, to any emotion, value has come from a successful literary evocation of the lives of animals in their natural state. Efforts to reach into humanitarian sentiments to repudiate the fishermen's act are headed off by undeniable realism. Cultural differences that license hunting founder upon the
gratuitousness of the cruelty. Although the episode is shocking, the cruelty has emerged naturally from the exigencies of the narrative. In fact, as one realizes afterward, Eckert’s story would have been inconsistent if it did not offend convention and sentiment with some revelation of this kind. Only naïve optimism in both the ultimate goodness of humankind and the willingness of authors to spare us from truth leaves readers unprepared for this display of absolute recklessness. Recklessness with the species as a whole, we learn, originates in the attitude exhibited by the fishermen. Remaining insensitive to the episode is a near impossibility. But if passionate denunciation of human cruelty eases conscience, it cannot obscure the factuality of this scene behind an overlay of spiritual value. Nothing soothing can come out of this event.

So let us try again the argument that the extinction of the great auks did not happen this way, that all we have before us is conservationist propaganda and that those who are moved by the story have been duped. That the extinction did occur is indisputable, yet this line of defense does not get at the essence of the objection. A critique like this is aimed at the warping of life to convert it into art, and not very good art since its purpose is moralistic. This complaint arises normally when the moral is obvious and rather simplistic. For an answer, it must be granted first of all that Eckert does not preach; didacticism is most evident not in instruction to the reader on how to behave but in explanation of the great auk’s habits and migratory routes. These details cannot, I believe, be faulted as imaginary; nor can they be dismissed as aesthetically unnecessary or boring. As to moralism, the earlier wild animal stories generate more obviously than Eckert’s the simple instruction to "be kind to animals." The early works, moreover, are not even remotely capable of stretching to as grim a scene as that of the fishermen’s game with the great auk fledglings. They are held back by tender sentiments, by a desire to impart wholesome values to the reader. These values demonstrate ultimately that Nature speaks with a human voice, and that animal victims reconfirm culturally-based ways of
knowing and feeling. Thus the early stories are afflicted with a kind of romanticism of the
wild, however impoverished that romanticism might be on comparison with the high
Romanticism of the early nineteenth century. While romanticism might well express
truths about wild animal lives, it rules out the totally inhuman.

"Inhuman" here has, of course, a double meaning. Unimaginable acts of cruelty
are described as inhuman; wild nature may also be properly so designated. Simplistic
moralism falters in the encounter with either one of these regions of fact. It takes
considerable effort to look at truly inhuman cruelty without tempering knowledge with
sensationalism, just as it takes considerable effort to look at the inhuman in nature
without shutting down consciousness in favour of empirical tabulation or succumbing to
neurosis over blood and death. One might almost imagine that culture is fond of
victimization, it works itself up so intensely when victimization is at issue. In any event,
Eckert's adherence to the inhuman quality of the great auks' lives has forced him to set
down nakedly in print the unthinkable among human acts. Had we before us a
predominantly romanticized view of nature and the animal, the inhuman in human
practices would never arise. If every work of literature purporting to give the wild
animal's story were as faithful to animal experience as The Great Auk, it would scarcely be
safe to open the covers of the book: one would never know when one's unexamined
sanctities were going to be subject to desecration. This is not to say, however, that all The
Great Auk achieves is to represent nature and humankind at irreconcilable odds with each
other. That kind of conflict, too, is easily effected and has been in operation for a long,
long time. What is best in culture reaches across the abyss between human and animal to
found aesthetic and literary value in the animal as animal. The inherent beauty of the
great auk as it was, left alone, acts by itself as an indictment of human ignorance.

In a sense, Eckert lets us off the hook for the death of the last great auk. The
feeling elicited is the familiar and manageable pain of loss. Pathos is close at hand, but
held back by consciousness that in truth, at some point in the mid-nineteenth century, the very last of the great auks did close its eyes upon the world for the final time. The reduction of numbers to this one lone individual grants permission to empathic identification. One could find in the closing scene an insult to the animal similar to that in Roberts' "Return to the Trails," with the fisherman's discovery of an ugly wound on the great auk's back, a wound which makes the bird useless as meat or as a specimen. The killing is pointless, as is the shooting of Roberts' friendly bear. At least the wound allows the great auk to die in its home environment, not as it is hauled along ingloriously by one foot, upside down, slung over the back of its killer. One can also locate excess of feeling in the crushing under foot of the lonely egg produced by the great auk and its mate: the broken egg makes "an obscene yellow stain on the gray rock." Hard words--"slammed," "shattered," "crushed," "slaughter," "carnage"--pair up with what seems like the standard fare of pathos in death, the film forming over "the once bright eyes," the slowing heartbeat. The "final wheezing breath" could almost represent a parody of pathos, had Eckert not been so careful with sounds all along. It could not have been easy for Eckert to imagine this scene, let alone putting in words the magnitude of its meaning. He achieves some distance from sentiment by compelling the reader to see, as the great auk's final moments of sight, humanity laying waste the island's sea-birds, smashing every murre egg for that season and loading up boats with carcasses. Pathos might have represented the fading vision of the great auk looking out upon a happy, sunny world that it would know no more. Culture has great difficulty with death in any case, and animal death simply increases culture's helplessness. The extinction of a species surpasses available emotion in culture. We can, in fact, be grateful that Eckert allows us the luxury of grief when narrative reaches this pitch. Is this propaganda, then? If it is, it initiates sensibilities too troubling to be accounted for by moralism.
It should come as a surprise, although likely it doesn't, that wild animal victims lend themselves effortlessly to moral values and sentimentality. The literary phenomenon is the same as that which renders the wild animal unamenable to sacrifice: some humanization is requisite to making any sense whatsoever out of victimization of the animal. Given that, before Darwin, no one really cared about the wild animal's story, it is little wonder that the first who attempted to present that story resorted to the most blatant of moral and emotional effects. They were, after all, striving to translate into the familiar that which is alien and inaccessible to civilized readers. As we move now to fiction in which the animal victim, domestic or otherwise, is involved in human dilemmas, it turns out that what is alien and inaccessible in the animal upsets the very moralism it has been asked to articulate in the wild animal story.
ANIMAL VICTIMS OF THE URBAN PSYCHE: AGGRESSION AGAINST ANIMALS IN A CONTEXT THAT DOMESTICATES AND DISPOSSESSES HUMAN NATURE

Animal victims in the urban setting allow the expression of antipathy to the civilizing process. The cities we have built to shut out the natural world seem not to free but to oppress us. Likewise, the urban state of mind subjects human nature to constraints which threaten to overbalance the burden that civilization puts upon the psyche. Unable to dismantle cities, caught up, in fact, in compulsion to magnify to the point of grotesqueness concrete (steel and glass) symbols of the triumph of civilization, humanity begins to complain about the enfeeblement of its personal will. We take pleasure from calling our cities jungles, since that metaphor restores the thrill of conquest to activities which are meaningless at the level of the individual person. In addition, of course, to the actual pressures of city living is the pressure to manifest a corresponding degree of enlightenment—a near impossibility given the distance by which technological prowess has outstripped the capacity of the psyche to advance rationally beyond barbarism. Moral nature is at a loss as to how it can measure up to the might of civilization expressed in cities. Of course human-scale sensibilities cannot aspire to the heights set by gleaming office-towers. There is an immense disparity between the image of human nature as represented in the city skyline and the capacity of human nature to transcend its primitive origins. Human lives are therefore squeezed in ever tighter yet unconceptualized strictures upon will and desire. The city asks of the human being that he or she become fully domesticated, yet removes content from the idea of domestication. How can the individual
be "naturalized" to the urban environment? Erected in opposition to nature, cities dispossess the feeling of at-homeness in the world. The ultimate in human domination of nature, it turns out, escapes human control and puts in exile vital aspects of the psyche. Because identity can find no foothold in the city, lives are lived upon the endlessly superficial. Instead of community, there is collocation. Instead of purposivity, there is the career strategy and networking. Instead of peace, there is the security system. Instead of ethics, there is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Perhaps no place or time in history has fostered the ideals humanity has imagined, but never in the past has so much fakery been required of the individual as that out of which urban life is manufactured.

In the shadow of the metropolis and all that it symbolizes, the animal shrinks to a puny concern, so puny as to be virtually non-existent—which has apparently been the aim of civilization all along. If city life excludes animals, its ideals certainly exclude tormenting animals. The pure urban sophisticate, should such a creature exist, would give no thought to animals other than ornamental ones, and would never dream of stooping to the savagery of shedding animal blood. Animals are not victimized casually by those who live in the city or on its margins. Attending to the actual animal and to animality in the abstract is hard enough for the urban mind; taking hold of the animal to do it harm signals extreme disturbance to fixed habits of thought. The clichéd chain of events which sees the office-worker harassed by his or her boss then arriving home and kicking the cat may well be played out in real life, and yet such acts represent a radical breaking away from the clean, well-lit mental universe in which the city person is supposed to live. The scheme of life denoted by the city negates the animal in the abstract, and that negation is in large part responsible for the neurosis of the urban dweller. It appears that urban people can reach across the chasm separating urban and animal life only in violence. Indeed—and this is a most terrifying feature of urban existence—cruelty to animals in the urban setting muddles up sanity with madness. The disjunction of human and animal is so great that
any genuine contact with animals is the result of warping of the urban person’s mind, but warping away from the bizarre demands of urbanism could easily be construed as a sign of returning health. In the fiction that brings the urban person to the point of cruelty to animals, that cruelty can even signal the individual’s genuine contact with his or her own humanity.

In some ways, it should be said, the city has been a great boon to animals conceptually. Outcast, the animal is under no symbolic or emotional obligation to humanity. It can be its vital, sane self and not excite humankind’s lust to find itself everywhere reflected. The city already reflects humankind so obsessively that the thought that the non-human lives and breathes in some genuine world is a balm to the soul. As to the terrors of chaos and brutality which animals once represented, these have been put back where they belong, on civilization’s doorstep. Outside of the thrill that mutant or supernatural beasts give to fans of the horror movie, the terror elicited by the modern, natural animal is for the unknown in the human species. The substantialness of the natural animal throws human nature into inexplicability.

It is a great irony that humankind, particularly in cities, has upon it the intellectual demand to think of itself as fundamentally animal. What kind of animal produces structures and societies like those we have created? And now the rationale of all that power has been removed with the disintegration of the idea of human supremacy and the interjection of the idea that human beings are simply animals after all. The monuments to human distinctiveness lose their import and their solidity. The Darwinian controversy, settled in Darwin’s favour, has had a greater than ideological effect where technological testaments to pre-Darwinian mentality are concerned. Asked to compare city life, emblem and flower of civilization, with how animals act and what they construct, people are confronted with a blatant absurdity. It is to humanity’s credit that it has not instantly rejected the theory of evolution to overcome the ridiculousness of its own posture
as it tries to regard its works as essentially animal in origin. Indeed, it may be that the selfsame feeling of the growing irrationality of the products of civilization has contributed to the appeal to the animal for stability. Whether that is so or not, acceptance of the autonomy of the animal from human symbolization renders the intrusion of animality into city consciousness all the more meaningful. In stories taking up the theme of the animal victim in an urban setting, therefore, the animal is not simply a fictional device used to make a statement about human psychology. The violation of, first of all, the urban prohibition upon any hint of the creatural, and, secondly, the sanctity of the rare animal visitor to the inhospitable (even to people) urban scene, has bearing more upon culture than upon personal neuroses.

At the onset of the age of psychoanalysis, Thomas Mann gave expression to "civilization and its discontents" in a remarkable little story entitled "Tobias Mindernickel" (1897). The initials of the central character’s name suggest a degree of intimacy between author and character greater than that which has any writer dividing up his or her soul to create personalities in fiction. No doubt the artist feels as unhinged and derelict by city life as the absurdity of Tobias Mindernickel’s name and existence implies. Still, one does not need to work on disguised correspondences to realize the profundity of Mann’s compact articulation of the violence done to the human psyche by urban living. Mann may have been lucky to have detected dislocation to humanity before slums and misery were themselves dispossessed by the unearthly elevation and cleanliness of cityscapes. Persona non grata in 1897, Tobias Mindernickel would now be a positive untouchable among the bright, vacant folks going about their business on city streets.

Mindernickel preserves enough humanity to suffer agonies when he becomes the object of public scrutiny. As happens so frequently to fringe people, his demeanour in the street earns him the jeers and contempt of the neighbourhood children. They pursue him
yelling "'Ho, ho, Tobias!'" Adults gather in the doorways to laugh at the spectacle. A spectacle is the last thing Mindernickel wants to be; in public he seems to want to shrink into nothingness. With some faint irony directed at the hardened spirits of those habituated to city ways, Thomas Mann says of Mindernickel that

there seemed to be missing from him the natural superiority with which the normal, perceptive individual looks out upon the phenomenal world. He seemed to measure himself against each phenomenon, and find himself wanting; his gaze shifted and fell, it grovelled before men and things.

To this point, Mann appears to be appealing to the timid private self in every reader, that self which feels like a caricature out in public. The idea that everyone in the anonymous crowd but oneself possesses a native sense of superiority undoubtedly afflicts most people. No doubt, too, the feeling of being wounded by the public gaze causes most to respond as Mindernickel does, with exaggeratedly self-deprecating politeness. Mindernickel is unquestionably an oddity. Nevertheless, the city does tend to make people feel that their humanity is grotesque. Thomas Mann has not failed to draw empathy to his character.

He does not, however, stop with plain identification; he goes on to have Mindernickel enact the fantasy which attaches itself to the posture of humility. If they only knew, this fantasy runs, they would realize that this clownish exterior hides the soul of a saint. An opportunity arises for Mindernickel to express the nobility of his soul: one of the jeering children trips and falls to the pavement, opening a gash on his forehead. Here is a chance for the persecuted man to play the hero, to display the true Christian virtue of love for one's enemy. Mindernickel binds the wound with his handkerchief, uttering words of compassion. The automatic nature of this reaction, its total conformity to convention, should lead us to suspect inauthenticity or at least compulsiveness. For the moment, however, the character seems a gravely misunderstood man, a saint no less in capacity for forgiveness than in suffering persecution.
Mindernickel's physical circumstances are of equal importance to his personality in establishing that interposing an animal into this life is either hopeless or outright dangerous. The district he lives in is a poor one, evidently in a state of decay. All the buildings look alike; the one in which he lives presents a chandler's shop to the street. The stairway to the upper storeys is "mean and shabby" and "musty-smelling." The scene is too familiar for Mann to bother dwelling upon it; he is not concerned, besides, to make a tragedy out of Mindernickel's domestic and economic situation. The brief description instead invokes the typical experience of enclosure and dreary sameness. Mindernickel's rooms are as cramped as his personal existence. The window has become a mockery, as so many city windows do, with the construction of an adjacent building that blocks off the view. Mindernickel's single contact with nature is a pathetic one: on his windowsill stands a flowerpot filled with soil but growing nothing at all; once in a while, Mann informs us, the man pauses at this flowerpot to sniff the earth. This occasional inhalation of the odor of dirt constitutes the sum total of the character's non-urban experience prior to purchasing a dog. In fact, given the establishing descriptions of Mindernickel's surroundings and psychology, it would be difficult for a reader to predict the appearance of an animal as a motivational element in the narrative. The impression of constriction is so great as to preclude even the thought of animality. The narrative itself imitates the impossible contortion expected of a conceptual union between the man's life and the dog's.

Any reader anticipating some elderly and urban variation upon "lad-and-dog" friendship when Mindernickel buys the dog has allowed optimism and fantasy to obscure the deadliness of the setting. The simple fact that the dog is described on its introduction into the story as "a muscular little animal" presages disaster. This healthy creature will struggle against the oppressive confinement in which Mindernickel expects him to live. Still, there is Mindernickel's unrecognized saintliness to tempt readers into imagining other outcomes than that which takes place. This is, we have been told, a "sinister" story:
perhaps the creature will turn out to have rabies and will cause the death of this unwitting but well-intentioned man; perhaps the nasty street children will kill the kindly man's beloved pet--anything to enhance the impression of Mindernickel's martyrdom.

Mindernickel's martyrdom is, of course, of a very different character than these, actually wholesome, turns of event would indicate. He is a martyr to the need to be a saint in order to justify the pain of existing corporeally in the world.

Esau, as Mindernickel calls the dog, expresses sheer biological exuberance, a joy in bodily existence wholly alien to the man. The dog is an affront to Mindernickel's way of life. Esau has no symbolic import; the beast will not even conform to the, albeit clumsy, training Mindernickel attempts to impose upon it. Animal symbols do not nose potatoes around the room; nor do they use their freedom, as Esau does on his one escape from confinement, to chase cats and eat dung in the street. The contrast between Mindernickel's public behaviour and the dog's could hardly be greater; Esau has no conception of "the public." Outdoors simply means freedom to him. On the score of symbolism, the public character Mindernickel adopts is self-consciously symbolic, while the dog's performance manifests total disregard for even the most obvious human construction of public and private domains. Clearly, then, the dog is immune to the abstract fabrications of vice and virtue. If Mann were aiming for the pathos of Mindernickel's condition, he would not have had Esau, "frantic with joy," greeting the character's juvenile tormentors when he meets them on his flight from incarceration in Mindernickel's rooms. The dog does not discriminate between good and bad people; there is no evil in its world, and that too is offensive to the structure Mindernickel has unconsciously imposed upon life. One is compelled to contemplate the possibility that the cruel street urchins manifest a healthy physicality attractive to canine innocence. And although Esau falls victim to civilization, in the form of Mindernickel's delusions of being super-civilized, he is only the Universal Animal insofar as he epitomizes ardent particularity. He is a dog all unto
himself, and he cares for, and knows nothing about, the woes and virtues invented by civilization. As such, Esau is an unexpectedly cheerful presence in what was promising to be a gloomy tale gratifying only to dour moralism. That he is a natural animal, without symbolic dimension, intensifies rather than detracts from his significance to feeling. Esau’s freedom and energy actualize the reader’s escape from what could otherwise turn out to be a ponderous, ideologically orthodox story about the urban nightmare and its oppression of the poor and marginal.

But what of morality? Surely the pleasure afforded by the insouciance of the dog gives rise naturally to moral outrage when Tobias Mindernickel stabs his pet to death in the seclusion of his apartment. Moral outrage does not in fact occur, and the incident is all the more unnerving for lack of a moral safety net. These urban stories are able to amplify the impression of cruelty by stripping away moral significance. There is a starkness to the events as a whole which prevents moralism from settling on any one feature of those events for condemnation. Cruelty is almost atmospheric, providing a curious contrast with the wild animal stories where cruelty, by convention, should prevail but yields instead to confirmations of moral value. What makes "Tobias Mindernickel" shocking is the realization that the source of the character’s abuse and final slaying of the dog is virtue rigidified, as virtue would be if it followed its precepts to their logical conclusion.

The dog epitomizes the animal vitality Mindernickel wants to extinguish in himself. The man’s obsession with forcing Esau to obey reveals how imperfectly he has repressed his own native impulses. With his public humility and ready supply of altruistic sentiment, he has succeeded only in torturing the animal in himself and diverting it towards viciousness. He forces his animality to serve the delusion of compassion, as is evident in the joy he experiences when he first accidentally wounds his dog with a kitchen knife. The accident discloses to him the perfect mechanism for placating the polarized drives in his personality. He can victimize the intractable animal simultaneously as he
creates a focus for his voracious desire to manifest tenderness. Emotional response moves in the reverse direction as well: the melancholic outlook on life, which sees injury everywhere, caters to the need for pleasure. Mindernickel discovers that he can manufacture misery to delight his soul's longing for hatred of life. Numerous, not especially striking, psychological paradoxes can be deduced from Mindernickel's assault on the dog. One can speak of excessive control driven to total abandon, or of self-effacement constituting egotism, or of the victim mentality going hand-in-hand with a craving to victimize others. Since economy is valued highly among current literary standards, one can marvel at the thrift with which Mann initiates the array of contrarieties. Evocation of such tangled personal complexities would not have been possible without Mann's lucid appreciation of the dog's natural sanity.

Stabbing a pet is obviously not the act of a sane person. Possibly the normal folk, whose sense of "natural superiority" Mann has earlier mocked, would subject their pets to nothing more than routine beatings and deprivations, or might even have sufficient conscience to bestow proper care and affection on the animals in their keeping. Animality is a matter of indifference to the habituated urban "normal." Mindernickel's act differs so far in degree from the arbitrary approaches to the animal of the normal person that a distinction in kind emerges. As Esau lies dying, Mindernickel attempts the usual expressions of pity:

"My poor brute, my poor dog! How sad everything is! How sad it is for both of us! You suffer--yes, yes, I know. You lie there so pathetic--but I am with you, I will console you--here is my best handkerchief--"

This time, of course, the handkerchief, even if it is Mindernickel's best one, is inadequate to rectify the situation. Equally and more saliently inadequate are the verbal utterances of woe and empathy. Esau dies as cleanly as he has lived, without fuss beyond a look of "complaining, innocence, and incomprehension." The absence of pathos leaves the moment free for the man's response, which is to lay his face against Esau's body and weep "bitter
tears." That is all the description that Mann gives, and all that is required to raise the crucial question in the reader's mind. These tears Tobias Mindernickel is weeping, are they genuine tears or are they the ultimate in fraudulent sentimentality? Since Mann does not say whether there is joy or remorse in Mindernickel's heart, the reader is confronted with an existential dilemma. If the tears are authentic, then the whole shocking episode speaks of the greater availability to Mindernickel than to his tough-souled neighbours of healthy appreciation of the animal. It is hard to face a conclusion like this because the stabbing of the dog is decidedly repulsive and Mindernickel's behaviour with Esau prior to the stabbing displays no understanding of the animal's needs. Nevertheless, it could be argued that this misfit has an active relation with his own animality, albeit a hostile one; at least, he is not dead to animality. Authentic tears would indicate a love of the animal underlying delusional hatred.

If the tears do represent false consciousness so abandoned that it cannot recognize itself, however, then the deadly conclusion must be that the urban psyche can sustain an inconceivable degree of delusion. The mind capable of carrying through on faked compassion in the face of indisputable cruelty must be warped beyond salvaging away from animal stability. Thus the story encapsulates the conflict to the urban mind that the animal creates, pitting forced sensitivity against hapless loathing, and authentic empathy against the cultural neurosis of hostility towards animality. Socially outcast, Tobias Mindernickel is certainly mad, but mad in a way that either epitomizes the depravity of the city or pushes that depravity towards a nakedness which gives access to reconciliation with the animal. However one interprets Mindernickel's state of mind, the story that contains him accomplishes the latter effect, that of stripping away the guise of authority from civilization's notions of virtue. The story achieves this effect, moreover, quite simply because it loves the dog Esau.
The idea of virtue in sentiment is likewise the target of Katherine Mansfield's "The Fly" (1923). The dynamic of the narrative is similar to that of "Tobias Mindernickel," though with significant reversals. The most evident among these reversals is the title, which makes the animal victim the centrepiece of the story and simultaneously suggests analogies between the fly and the man. Empathy for Mindernickel attaches at first to the man's misunderstood humanity. Empathy must then tolerate the appearance of indefensible cruelty in this urban victim who is like ourselves. "The boss," in contrast, is not a likeable character. Presumably, he wields considerable power over people much like the typical reader. Mansfield uses the fly to compel readers to confront their antipathy to her archetypal "boss." Initial hostility to "the boss" must suffer the prospect that this obese, wealthy, vulgar man is as much a victim as the fly he himself torments.

However much power "the boss" may be assumed to have, his identity is of less consequence than Mindernickel's. Whereas the name of Mann's character denotes inferiority, Mansfield's has no name. He is one anonymous boss among others; his business, also undefined, is like every other business operation in the city. Less successful persons have names: the office messenger is named Macey; a retired, virtually senile friend, five years younger than the boss, possesses the name "Woodifield," implying, though it is vastly out of character for the decrepit old man, the wide, free expanses of nature. Even "the City" earns the importance of capitalization, while the boss remains devoid of a personal marker. It will turn out, as one comes to expect of these urban stories, that the fly which also lacks a name holds steadier ownership of its individuality than the man, despite its depending for its life upon human caprice.

As in "Tobias Mindernickel," place is of signal importance in "The Fly." The opening line of the story is Woodifield's observation to the boss, "'Y'are very snug in here'"--a comment which should instantly arouse suspicion that "snug" is not quite the adjective for the boss's room. Although its furnishings are finer, the boss's office has the
same sense of crampedness and isolation as Mindernickel’s apartment. One has the impression, too, that the boss does not do much more there than Mindernickel does in his rooms, which is to stare vacantly into space until chance or necessity provides some stimulant to action. There is no mention of a home or domestic situation for the boss. He appears to be entirely ungrounded in the world yet nevertheless confined to one place. Woodifield introduces a sense of spaciousness, though at several removes from the locale of the story. He speaks of his daughters’, not his own, trip to Belgium and of their happening upon the grave of the boss’s son who has been killed in the Great War. In ironic contrast to the office, the cemetery, by the daughters’ report, expresses amplitude in space: the graves stretch for "miles," and "nice broad paths" extend through the beautifully landscaped scene. Even though Mansfield invokes these antithetical places with utmost simplicity, one is justified in sensing reproach to the kind of civilization which treats its dead to the luxury of space but pens up the living in tight little rooms and allows them only third-hand or symbolic ("Woodifield") contact with physical freedom. That restriction to close quarters should correlate with the lack of a true home is typical of the strain to which urban life subjects the human spirit.

The boss has in the past achieved some sort of identity and enfranchisement with his sorrow over the death of his son. He has even bragged about his grief to people, declaring that he for one will never recover from the loss. For six years, he has managed to focus the sense that he exists as a person upon spells of weeping over his son’s death. After Woodifield’s departure, he intends to enjoy another such session in the privacy of his office but finds that he cannot generate the appropriate feelings. Reality is setting in: the photograph of his son, once a cue to sentiment, now seems a particularly unattractive representation of the lad. Perhaps genuine feeling has for months been sliding unnoticed towards contrivance.
A fly comes to the boss’s rescue. The fly is company and distraction; the boss is not alone. The reader, too, is thankful for this new presence, because the fly is the breakthrough which necessitates analysis. A greater boon: this fly is drowning in the boss’s inkwell and requires aid, which the boss abstractedly supplies leaving the drenched creature on a piece of blotting-paper on his desk.

Becoming engrossed in insect activities must be a recognizable phenomenon to all readers, even if they have left behind that particular fascination along with their childhood. One common response to the fly which Mansfield completely disbars is that which sees it automatically as repugnant and dirty, as a "hideous little bat, the size of snot," in Karl Shapiro’s ("The Fly") lavishly disgusted phrasing. Nevertheless, one has to stand back and notice that this is only a fly, that we are witnessing a man with authority in society fooling about with a fly on his desk. To adopt the detached perspective is not to deny the fascination of insects, nor to recommend that casual cruelty which swats insects before they touch upon conscious senses. There is, however, a certain absurdity which should not be missed as the situation gathers importance. Emotional significance does rely upon the reader’s becoming as absorbed as the boss in the fly’s recuperation. The dimensions of that interest imitate the broader conflict of ludicrousness versus emotional intensity: pathos hovers close to empirical appeal. The manner in which the "struggling legs" of the fly in the inkwell have cried out "Help! help!" is only in part an encouragement to sentimentality; the words work also as a simple concretization of abstract distress. Likewise, the clean-up operations of the fly demonstrate painstaking effort and total intentionality. Except to the boss’s vulnerable sensitivities, the fly’s action does not denote manly perseverance in the face of adversity. The simplicity of the now clean fly’s relief mutes the potential anthropomorphism of Mansfield’s observation: "Now one could imagine that the little front legs rubbed against each other lightly, joyfully. The horrible danger was over; it had escaped; it was ready for life again." The "horrible danger" is of course
the dreadful black fluid in the inkwell, truly horrible from the fly’s perspective but tending towards humour from ours. One can certainly pity flies and project oneself imaginatively into their tiny crises; even so, the reader realizes as the boss does not that the fly proceeds with life corporeally and not from moral inspiration.

The provocation of the fly’s natural recovery to the man who looms above should not be strange to readers. The boss is not deviant; the idea of dropping another blot of ink on the fly simply occurs to him, without rationale, without malice. Many of the kindest souls cannot resist testing nature to or beyond its limits. Children will drop the cat off the stairs to see if it will land on its feet, and then carry the cat to an upstairs window to push the experiment farther. The temptation may be cruel and puerile in fact, but it is familiar to all but saints. The unconscious impulse is familiar, that is, though not explicable except by grand theories, such as that which would have culturally generated aggression, lacking an object, turned upon a weaker being. If that explanation will not serve and seems strained, then one is thrown back upon an explanation something like original sin, an innate flaw in human nature which originates cruelty and is corrected only by the forces of civilization. By this theory, the common one, civilization would gradually impress upon the barbaric infant the idea that the cat has its own identity and suffers terror when it is dropped from excessive heights. But since, as far as we know, the mindless cruelty demonstrated in the incitement to drive nature to the breaking point is a gross aberration among nature’s ways of operating, then there is not much left to blame apart from civilization. In either case, it is the breaking point, the point at which nature is destroyed by human curiosity, that cries out for explanation. At that point, theory alternates between corruption born of nature or corruption born of civilization, and yet fails to budge the fixed inclination to manipulate objects in the world past nature’s tolerance.

Herein lies the cleverness of Mansfield’s use of a fly instead of a more obviously sentient creature. Of course no animal more vital than a fly is likely to turn up in the
boss's office, and that too is part of the irony. Should the boss's spirit yearn for communion with the animal, he has only a fly to go upon. No wonder, then, that meaning is subject to maximum stress; meaning wants profundity and has a mere fly on which to exercise itself. One can anthropomorphize the fly and endure the sense of absurdity, or dismiss the fly as simply an insect and put up with the accusatory voice of conscience which calls that attitude cruel. One can indict the boss for obliviousness to another being's suffering, or view the destruction of the fly as an inadvertent by-product of absent-minded experiment. The antinomy resides in the boss himself. His remarks to the fly as it struggles to recuperate imply empathy; he thinks of the fly as a "plucky little devil" and admires its courage, noting that "That was the way to tackle things; that was the right spirit. Never say die." On the third dousing with ink, the boss "actually had the brilliant notion of breathing on [the fly] to help the drying process." At the same time as he esteems and even helps the fly, however, he is systematically killing it. He reads a program for living into the fly's persistence, and yet consciously or unconsciously obliterates the life he is supposedly cherishing. If there were consistency in the illustrated disposition towards animals, the voice of moral zeal and apparent encouragement should correspond to the contradictory feeling of hatred, and not to a neutral empirical interest. Either that neutral interest does reflect hatred, then, or the moral zeal occurs neutrally without true connection to its declared object. As in "Tobias Mindernickel," resolution of revealed contradiction is less important than the annulment of faith in formulas for living.

Several other deaths accompany the death of the fly, and these deaths are the source of the "grinding wretchedness" the boss feels as he flicks the corpse of the fly into his waste-paper basket. The sentiment the boss had managed to sustain over the death of his son dies; in effect, the son himself truly dies at this point, for the boss cannot remember that he had been thinking about his son before he became absorbed in the fly's predicament. By a twisted form of logic, the gung-ho approach to life also dies. The boss's
seeming capitulation to grief had all along hidden a belief in forging ahead manfully against despair. The fact that the fly cannot symbolize the power of life to triumph over the severest obstacle extinguishes simultaneously the luxuriance in pathos and the hope of a moral cure. With the annihilation of the moral consequence he had tried to invest in the fly, the boss is left with a blank life, a life as idle and unmotivated as the act of dripping ink upon a fly. Thus the spiritual value and distinction the boss had attributed to himself in his feeling for his son evaporates; he falls back into neutrality. He becomes one boss indistinguishable from the others, just as flies are interchangeable one with another from an objective point-of-view. For this reason, one comes to feel sorry for this normally unpitiable man.

Between "Tobias Mindernickel" and "The Fly," then, polarized views of the animal assault human claims to moral status. Esau the dog embodies the natural animal's superior joy in life; the wounded animality inside Mindernickel strikes out at this joy. The fly represents that animal blankness on which anthropomorphism founders; the boss's attempt to drag out of that blankness some pseudo-hearty moral value succeeds only in killing the fly and his own illusions of significance. What unites the two stories and distinguishes these urban dramas is the existential nature of the encounter with the animal. It is beside the point whether authenticity consists in the ecstatic bodily freedom displayed by the dog or the amoral submission to anonymous fate demonstrated by the fly. Although they are polar opposites, both aspects of the animal disillusion the human protagonist. Since the animal is already an alien being in the urban setting, it is not surprising that the extreme of victimization disables belief in moral sanctities. Those moral sanctities have themselves depended upon suppression of animality; their groundlessness is realized in the expression of their true directive which is to exterminate the animal in the urban person.
An underlying theme in both these stories is the domestication of humanity. Corresponding to the boss’s incapacity to sustain uncontrolled grief (an oxymoronic activity in itself) is Mindernickel’s incapacity to imitate the bumptiousness of his neighbours. By continuing to grieve over his son, the boss has tried to save himself from becoming "at-home" in his office and in his business persona. His mindless cruelty to the fly forces him to concede to the domestication of passion. He cannot fake sorrow anymore, and thus he loses his last hold upon any identity distinct from that imposed upon him by urban existence. Mindernickel, too, yields to the urban setting’s version of domesticity. Like the boss, he had employed delusion to separate himself from urban life. Even in his delusions of saintliness, however, one can detect an incipient desire for reconciliation with the urban ethos. The dog Esau provides his one chance for authenticity, and he has to destroy that chance in his attempt to appease simultaneously the cruelty of the city and its inhuman ideals of goodness. Mindernickel suffers within his psyche the extreme in antipathetic demands required of the person if he or she is to be at home in the city. One suspects that, following the events of the story, Mindernickel will fall into anonymity, like his neighbours, and like the boss. Mindernickel weeps and the boss experiences "grinding wretchedness." Their feelings signal the pain of entry into urban domestication. In losing the animal, both men have lost themselves.

Cities, of course, are not homey places; at some point, city centres have turned the cultural corner and are heading back towards the inhospitable wildness from which they were supposed to protect humanity. The dream of domestic harmony is driven out into the suburbs where, having been baffled at the location of civilization’s highest achievement, it takes particularly virulent form. The image of the perfect home in the suburbs has become so rigid that it borders on lunacy. It would be foolish to expect an amiable union of the city and nature to occur in suburbia. The city ideals that are designed to oust nature
are simply transported from the centre to the margin. Nevertheless, there is the illusion that just a little contact with nature, a bush or two in front of the living-room window, will assist residents to realize those ideals in civilized conduct that are oppressively unrealizable in the city. The demand of domesticity becomes highly tyrannical under the suburb's seemingly impeccable fusion of urban sophistication and perfectly controlled natural phenomena.

In "The White Quail," John Steinbeck uses the animal victim to indict the suburban version of domestication. Mention of urban existence occurs only once in this tale of Mrs. Harry E. Teller's ideal home; the dangerously bright narrative voice in this instance is largely hers: "If you didn't go round to the front of the house [we are told] you couldn't tell it was on the very edge of the town." Mary Teller's house and yard are sandwiched between "the town" and a wooded hill where nature thrives in free profusion. This hill is to her "the enemy," the "'world that wants to get in, all rough and tangled and unkempt.'" She has planned her own garden for years, even selecting a husband on the basis of whether or not the garden of her imagination will like him. Once the plan is realized, it is set forever; should a plant die, it will be replaced by another one exactly like it. This desire to domesticate nature, to compel nature to manifest the static designs of fantasy, originates in fear and hatred of contradiction to human will, the ultimate contradiction being death. Steinbeck proposes, in effect, that the point of landscaping is not to enable safe contact with the natural world but to display the human mind in power over even its most resilient opponent.

That power is absolute where plants are concerned; yet, as with all absolute power, the greater the control, the closer the whole system is to collapse. Animals are a threat to the vision embodied in Mary Teller's landscaped garden. Birds are welcome, but when Harry wants a dog for a pet, his wife gets a headache from the suggestion alone: "That was the curse of imagination. Mary had seen, actually seen the dog in her garden, and the
dug holes, and the ruined plants." Thus the inflexible mind originates its own downfall. Accompanying unopposed projection of ideas onto nature is the exacerbation of the strictly ideational. Imagination over-heats and, to continue the machine analogy, locks up. Creativity in defiance of the natural world becomes indistinguishable from destructiveness. The actual and metaphorical animal wrecks the actual and metaphorical structures the human imagination strives to impose upon the world.

As with Mindernickel and the boss, there is in Mary Teller a morass of viciousness underlying her apparent fragility and delicacy of sentiment. Her husband admires her "sturdiness" on their nightly slug-squashing rounds, but Mary clearly enjoys the activity. These events make for the couple's greatest happiness and harmony: "'There's a big one, creeping, creeping,' she would say. 'He's after that big bloom. Kill him! Kill him, quickly!'"--as if the phlegmatic creature were some feral beast actually menacing to human authority. How Harry crushes the slugs and snails into "oozy, bubbling masses" is not explained; whether he carries a mallet with him, or stamps on the slimy little invaders is a particular that would have enhanced the inherent absurdity of the scene. Perhaps Steinbeck omitted this detail in order to preserve the sense of the hunt and to prevent the reader from coming to a final decision about the vulnerability or toughness of Mary's nature. Is she making a pathetic attempt to defend her tenuous vision of true loveliness, or does that vision itself come from pathological loathing of all things natural? Does the beast romp brutally through her fragile sensibilities or seek only to move gently on its natural course, against her fanatical will to suppress animality? Although one senses in the story a masculine proclivity to blame the woman for the miseries of domesticity, Mary's need to impose order and permanent beauty upon the world is a failing, or grace, of the human spirit regardless of gender. If there is insanity in this project, it is an insanity shared by any civilized person. We must grant that it is indeed extremely difficult to love slugs.
Mary Teller's delight over the white hen quail that comes to her pond to drink is, however, blatantly narcissistic:

"Why," Mary cried to herself, "she's like me!"... "She's like the essence of me, an essence boiled down to utter purity. She must be the queen of the quail. She makes every lovely thing that ever happened to me one thing."...

... The white quail stretched a wing backward and smoothed down the feathers with her beak. "This is the me that was everything beautiful. This is the center of me, my heart."

How may we forgive such exploitation of nature for self-adoration? There must be some explanation for this narcissism or Steinbeck can be rightly accused of setting up a straw man, or woman that is, for attack. Let us say that loneliness, the note that Harry Teller strikes at the end of the story, is part of the human condition, that in her desperate, overblown fashion Mary Teller has wrung confirmation of her fantasies, and hence of her existence, out of the natural world. Let us propose further that human appreciation of nature does involve, not humble submission, but discovery of correspondences for natural phenomena among the ideas of beauty in the psyche, although obviously not in as extremely egocentric a manner as illustrated in Mary's response to the white quail. Treated as abstract, or broken down into symbols, nature can fill out the otherwise contentless yearnings of the human soul.

Faced with incomprehension from her husband, and pure opposition from nature in its wild state, Mary Teller does need a home for her heart. Even if he does dislike his female protagonist, Steinbeck conveys effectively the dullness of the man's reaction as his wife tries to explain what the white quail means to her: "'Are you sure it wasn't a pigeon,'" Harry says, and: "'Well, I suppose it was an albino. No pigment in the feathers, something like that.'" The threat to the white quail from a neighbouring cat, which has compelled Mary to articulate her feelings in the first place--she wants her husband to poison the cat--means nothing to Harry. An albino quail may be a curiosity, but its death in the claws of a cat is hardly tragic or an excuse for hysterics. If caring about the white
quail means believing that the cat is "after me," is "going to kill me," as Mary claims, then projection has obviously gone too far. Somewhere between Harry's indifference and Mary's obsessional identification resides that affinity which would be sorry over the death of the quail for its own sake, which would feel the loss of the drab, ordinary quail as well, and which would resign itself to the way of the world that brings cats to prey upon birds against human desire that life be different than it is.

That Steinbeck finds aggression in Mary's pathetic attempt at forcing nature to open a haven for her needs and ideas is perhaps signalled in the title of the story. "The White Quail" hints at Herman Melville's magnificent Moby Dick, the "white whale." Hatred drives Captain Ahab to pursue the white whale, hatred and that narcissism which finds personalized hostility in the wild creature's blind return of violence for violence inflicted upon it. Compelling the white whale to operate as a symbol has driven Ahab mad. Even so, the great whale endures symbolization better than the dainty white bird of Steinbeck's story, because the whale fights back and asserts its creatureliness against human imposition. Whether there is or is not an intentional pun in Steinbeck's title, comparison of the white quail with the white whale says a great deal about the paucity of experience available to the suburban person. Instead of the high seas and the leviathan, the suburbanite has only well-regulated gardens and charming little birds on which to build mental adventures. Mary Teller's overwrought and virtually delusional interpretation of the white quail's meaning contains, metaphorically, the high seas and the leviathan, only in a domestic situation which ends up parodying the human impulse to make symbols out of animals. Her antipathy to the animal is evident not only in her hysteria over the cat stalking "her" quail, but in her insistence that any significance the quail might have is focussed upon Mary Teller alone.

Somewhat predictably, Steinbeck causes the combination of suburban domesticity and hostility to the animal to engender an aversion to sexuality in Mrs. Teller. Her
tyrannical rule in the household manifests itself in the "clean, quick, decisive answer" she gives to Harry's unspoken "How about tonight?": she simply locks her bedroom door on him. She thinks it "sweet and gentle" in her husband that he always tries the lock on her door silently, as if he were ashamed of his desire. It is not hard to imagine or identify with Harry's frustration, and to pin the blame for his feeling of shame upon the fragile woman he has married. Nevertheless, that conventional and, it must be said, trite invocation of the woman's withholding of sexual favour should arouse suspicion of the complex of attitudes that are guiding this story. Steinbeck's judgement of female sexuality is ambiguous but not uncommon. In "The Snake," he has a woman experience erotic fascination watching a snake slowly devour a live rat in a laboratory. Her response nauseates the man conducting research. He, it seems, is well removed from perverse lust such as hers. Given the overt cruelty of female arousal in "The Snake," one is inclined to suppose that the door is open to Harry Teller and his sexual needs after the slug-killing expeditions. It should come as no surprise that Steinbeck is given to the beliefs that most prostitutes possess the proverbial hearts of gold, and that a beating from a husband makes the wife loyal and happy (see "The Murder"). One is reluctant, of course, to give the latter idea any credence, and yet it is part and parcel of the raw view of life which opens Steinbeck's eyes to the reality of victimization of animals.

Steinbeck's war with women other than earth mothers and prostitutes establishes the lines of enmity between stances taken on the animal. If the aesthetic approach to the animal of a woman like Mary is repulsive to him, he will demonstrate, time and again, proper cognizance. Men are pragmatic; they kill animals out of necessity, for food or scientific interest. Steinbeck imitates pragmatic detachment in, for example, the pig-killing scene in *The Grapes of Wrath*, which is worth quoting for the tonality of the opposition to Mary Teller's urbanized perspective on the animal. The pigs are young and have been sleeping:
"All right," said Pa. "Stick 'em, an' we'll run 'em up and bleed an' scald them at the house." Noah and Tom stepped over the fence. They slaughtered quickly and efficiently. Tom struck twice with the blunt end of the ax; and Noah, leaning over the felled pigs, found the great artery with his curving knife and released the pulsing streams of blood. Then over the fence with the squealing pigs. The preacher and Uncle John dragged one by the hind legs, and Tom and Noah the other. Pa walked along with the lantern, and the black blood made two trails in the dust. (p. 114)

After the killing, there is a characteristically Steinbeckian description of the gutting and skinning of the carcases. Of scenes like this in Steinbeck's writing, Mary Allen remarks that "the absence of profundity in the case of animals is a function of his detached realism: one may observe but not experience what they feel." He will not, she says, "take the literary license" to stir up compassion for animal victims (pp. 117-118). Realism is in truth the mechanism that allows Steinbeck dispassionately to see and write about the slaughter of animals, contrary to the hypocrisy of the suburban queen as Steinbeck represents her. But one must ask whether it is really "literary license" to imagine the internal life of the animal and thus to provoke sympathy for the animal victim. And besides that technical area of doubt, there is reason to mistrust Steinbeck's own conviction in "the absence of profundity" in the killing of animals in this instance and elsewhere. For one thing, the slaughter of the pigs is not part of the Joad's daily routine; it is an undeniable necessity of the family's packing up to leave their homeland. The pigs cannot be toted along alive on the truck, like pets; the family needs salt pork to eat on the way. These exigencies make for a literary and emotional difference which negates whatever cruelty and blame might attach to the men were they killing the pigs as part of normal, everyday life. Steinbeck likes the Joads too much to expose them to possible censure; perhaps, too, he likes the pigs too much to show them being slaughtered for reasons other than urgent ones. Secondly, he does mention that the men yank the young pigs out of a sleep to assault them with axe and knife, and that the pigs are still squealing even as their blood is pouring out. Finally, his need to describe the gutting of animals has the air of a conscious exhibition of immunity to sentiment. In effect, Steinbeck's preoccupation with
the business of gutting represents a sublimation of suppressed desire to get into the internal life of the animal. He exercises that desire, that is, once the animal's capacity to be hurt has passed.

Steinbeck's feeling for animals is so lucid that it is worthwhile pondering that feeling briefly in order to elucidate the antithesis to suburban neurosis as Steinbeck views it. I digress here, then, to expand the boundaries of discussion of Steinbeck's approach to animal victims. Fascinating in themselves, other instances of victimization of animals in Steinbeck's works serve also to magnify the importance of the anomalous victim, the quail, of suburban pressures.

Steinbeck arrives at an intellectual middle ground between Mary Teller's narcissism and the pragmatism of the farmer when he is alone with the animal and with nature, and no human characters threaten the integrity of creatural life. Steinbeck's ability to wed profundity and simplicity in the animal comes through in the divertissement on the turtle which takes up the third chapter of *The Grapes of Wrath*. In the context of his attitude towards the sexes, it must be noted that a woman driver risks her own life in steering off the highway to avoid killing the turtle, while a man in a truck swerves deliberately to hit it. In contrast to these dramatic departures from the straight line, the narrative course Steinbeck takes with the turtle is stable, perhaps because he knows that this slow, mindless creature will survive the combination of humanity and the author's literary purposes. On the subject of direction, as well, the turtle marks itself off from humankind, as Stuart L. Burns observes (p. 54), by plodding on with secure intention even though chance takes the animal up willy-nilly and sets it down anywhere. For whatever animal reason guiding it, the turtle is heading southwest: "'Where the hell you s'pose he's goin'?' said Joad. 'I seen turtles all my life. They're always goin' someplace. They always seem to want to get there'" (p. 46). Whether the turtle will ever arrive, or whether its life will be different when it does, are questions from the human world,
irrelevant to the turtle and its steady purposivity. Furthermore, while human efforts at fruitfulness disintegrate among social complexities of banks and machinery, migrant workers and starvation wages, the turtle assists the earth’s replenishment unwittingly, simply by shaking off some wild oat seeds from its shell and accidentally dragging earth over them as it crawls along. By means of the turtle’s unwilled contribution to natural regeneration, Steinbeck highlights the sterility of the economic values that have invaded the countryside. Admittedly, the turtle’s accidental husbandry is a little too convenient, ideologically speaking. Perhaps skepticism can be somewhat pacified by the fact that the turtle plants seeds of the wild oat, bane of the farmer’s existence. This turtle helps out its own wild world; it doesn’t plant corn or barley for the benefit of humans. It is interesting to note that critics struggle over whether or not the turtle’s progress is analogous or contrary to the plot laid out for the Joads. Commentary on this problem certainly leads into large themes and philosophical speculation upon humanity’s relation with animals, such as Steinbeck himself liked to engage in. As productive as such commentary might be, however, there is in the chapter a kind of entirety which isolates it from the rest of the narrative. In Steinbeck’s literary approach to the animal, neither the chapter, nor the turtle, needs reference to humanity to make it meaningful.

It must have been a delight to Steinbeck to discover on his scientific sojourn to the "Sea of Cortez" that "turtles are very hard to kill," that even after the turtle’s head is chopped off, its heart goes on beating. The resilience he had written into the turtle in The Grapes of Wrath had been confirmed by biology. Although he gently mocks the sensitivity of a crew member who swears never again to harpoon a turtle because he "identified with the writhing tissue of the turtle and was unable to see it objectively" (p. 46), Steinbeck’s own objectivity is hardly predicated upon ruthless dominance over animals. He jokes about neighbourhood cats being sold by children for scientific experiments (Sea of Cortez, pp. xxi-xxii, Cannery Row, p. 33), enjoys without reservation the frog-gathering escapade of Mack
and the Palace Flophouse boys (*Cannery Row*), refuses to tread delicately over the remains of the Joads’ dog, struck down by a car and left "a blot of blood and tangled, burst intestines" on the highway (*Grapes of Wrath*, p. 141), appreciates the rage that drives Jody Tiflin to smash into a "red pulp" the buzzard that feeds on his pony’s corpse (*The Red Pony*, p. 238), and withholding analysis of the painful increase in heart-rate that signals Jody’s response to pig-killing (*The Red Pony*, p. 269). At the same time, however, he allows the bulk of the gathered frogs to escape alive, believes that the dogs his friend Ed Ricketts smiles at return the compliment with smiles of their own (*Sea of Cortez*, p. xx, *Cannery Row*, p. 16), is gladdened by the salvation and subsequent canonization of a once-wicked pig ("Saint Katy the Virgin"), and is proud that an expedition to hunt big-horn sheep yields only a turd for a trophy (*Sea of Cortez*, pp. 163-7). As to the hunt for the big-horn sheep, some of the hunting party go off in search of the game, while Steinbeck and Ricketts stay behind, sitting by a waterfall and chatting about animals and life in America.

Those who have gone out properly to hunt return with nothing but sheep droppings:

> [T]hey had taught us the best of all ways to go hunting [Steinbeck says], and we shall never use any other. We have, however, made only one slight improvement on their method: we shall not take a gun, thereby obviating the last remote possibility of having the hunt cluttered up with game. We have never understood why men mount the heads of animals and hang them up to look down on their conquerors. Possibly it feels good to these men to be superior to animals, but it does seem that if they were sure of it they would not have to prove it. (p. 166)

He and Ed Ricketts mount the sheep dropping:

> And where another man can say: "There was an animal, but because I am greater than he is, he is dead and I am alive, and there is his head to prove it," we can say, "There was an animal, and for all we know there still is and here is proof of it. He was very healthy when we last heard of him." (p. 167)

This digression into Steinbeck’s general attitudes towards animal victims has been necessary to correct any impression that he adopts the stereotypical stance of American machismo. He speaks of the ecological balance (*Sea of Cortez*, p. 3) and the absurdity of hunting at a time when America still hugs its nostalgia over the coonskin hat and Davy-
Crockett wood-lore, and great American writers like Faulkner and Hemingway are still working off massive literary energies on the myth of the hunt. His pleasure in the sheep dropping indicates, however, that his opposition to bolstering virility through killing animals does not run to the sentimental response to nature. With this friendly testament to the living sheep, he offends anthropomorphism on both sides of the issue of animal victims, both the lusty hunting ethos and the urban tender-heartedness which has difficulty with animal functions.

Returning now to "The White Quail," it should be apparent that although Steinbeck dislikes Mary Teller’s ego-investment in the quail, he does not stand wholeheartedly behind Harry Teller’s shooting of the bird. Shooting animals is not a small matter to him in a general way; neither personally nor in his stories does he stroll casually into the woods and fields to bag a few wild creatures. Thus the complex of marital disharmony and suburban sterility does not rationalize the killing of the quail. Harry is not resurrecting primitive animality against his wife’s abhorrence of the ways of the natural animal. Even if Steinbeck were afflicted with belief in the virility of the hunter, Harry’s little air rifle and the BB shot which scarcely damages the quail’s body would make a mockery of Harry’s manhood. Harry’s foray into bush, following the shooting, has also its parodic overtone: he does not brave the wild but crashes frantically up the slope, driven by fear of his wife’s detection of his crime. In light of Steinbeck’s power to invoke the autonomous purposivity and peaceableness of the animal, and to face squarely the sometimes gruesome death of animal victims, he is clearly depriving this particular narrative of animal significance. "The White Quail" is therefore similar to "Tobias Mindernickel" and "The Fly" in that the author provides no escape into nature for the characters. The domestic nightmare remains intact, its artificial perfection unshaken. Harry may have shot the symbol of his wife, but the woman is still locked in her bedroom upholding for both of them the pretence of suburban decorum. The entire metaphor
equipment surrounding the quail lives on, though it is divested of even the slim plausibility it might have had while the white quail was alive. Like Mindernickel and the boss, Harry achieves his moment of authenticity. Having shot "his wife," he realizes that he is alone; that alive in their domestic arrangement, Mary is as dead to him as the quail is now. Once again, in an existential moment, the act of victimizing an animal discloses the illusory nature of civilized existence. The deadliest aspect of this existential discovery is the certainty that the domestic order will abide despite its having been pried loose from reality.

The ultimate in existential encounters is, of course, earnest contemplation of suicide. Given the depths of unhappiness tapped by animal victims in the urban and suburban story, it was inevitable that some work of fiction should cause the animal victim to combine with urban decay in a way that initiates thoughts of suicide in the protagonist. Giorgio Bassani brings these elements together in *The Heron*. Perhaps it comes as no surprise that, because the narrative moves towards the resolution of suicide, tensions that have inhered with the animal victim in the three previous stories are dispelled in *The Heron*. While Mindernickel, the boss and the Tellers struggle to fortify aspects of their personal lives against victimization, Edgardo Limentani of *The Heron* eventually concedes in total to the condition of the victim. The effect of this complete submission is to release the animal from the kinds of conflict and pressure sustained in "Tobias Mindernickel," "The Fly," and "The White Quail." The heron, of course, is no less dead by the end of the tale than the dog Esau, the fly, or the quail. Nevertheless, the narrative relinquishes the cruelty of circumstance and the cruelty of assault upon the animal, simultaneously as it gives up rationalization of urban existence.

Another factor determines the fragmentation of place and personality in *The Heron* and that is the location in history. The setting is northern Italy in 1947. The anti-semitism suffered by Limentani during the war is supposedly at an end. The communist
agitation that has recently raised hostility against him as a landowner has received a political blow with the exclusion from cabinet of members of the communist party. Understandably, Limentani has little faith in the apparent change of heart of those who supported the Fascists during the war, and takes little comfort from official strictures upon resentment against the wealthy. At this precise time in political history, therefore, Limentani lives in a permanent state of mistrust.

That mistrust is so deep that it has bodily effects. Bassani goes to the heart of trouble when Limentani observes his penis as he urinates:

"It wasn't so much the colourless jet of his own urine that he was staring at, as rather, with a curiosity, a surprise, and a bitterness never experienced before, the member from which the jet came. "Ha," he sneered. Grey, wretched, pathetic: with that mark of his circumcision, so familiar and, at the same time, so absurd ... It was no more than an object, a mere object like so many others."

Later, Limentani has a dream, a good dream at first, which has him almost flying up the stairs to a hotel room, but which ends with him unbuttoning his trousers in front of a prostitute and her noting that where his penis should be, he has "'nothing at all'" (p. 124). This vacancy at the vital place for males is coupled with a contrasting bloatedness of the digestive system.

Right at the start of the story, and throughout, Limentani suffers constipation. At one point, he fills himself with food beyond repletion and then has to put up with the pain in his stomach and bowels. The description of his approach to the meal also reveals the impairment of Limentani's relationship with his own body. He is sitting in a corner of a cafe:

He filled his mouth with the sweet-sour pulp of the shellfish, and swallowed: draining then long gulps of wine, or stuffing himself with bread. Nevertheless, he soon felt disgusted with the food and with himself. What was the use? he thought. His head bowed, in his corner--in that heat, in that stink, in that greasy and promiscuous semidarkness--it was useless for him to chew, to swallow, suck, spit, gulp. (p. 103)
Limentani is a victim corporeally at every point that life is sustained. Taking in nourishment disgusts him. He suffers revulsion both at the source of creation, the penis, and at the dissolution of physical integrity symbolized by the elimination of wastes.

The stuffed feeling which characterizes his internal state of being might well have sly reference to his epiphanic experience in front of the taxidermist's shop window. He has looked at images of himself in reflecting surfaces previously. On the morning of his hunt, he stares at his face in the mirror as if it "didn't belong to him": "How base and disagreeable his face was, too, he said to himself, how absurd it was!" (p. 6). His face, like his penis, disgusts him. And just as his penis disappears in a dream, so too does his reflected image threaten to fade. He sees himself in a mirror on a wardrobe; it is "a distant image, barely hinted at, as if it were about to dissolve" (p. 117). When he sees his reflection in the window of the taxidermist's shop, he at first tries visually to penetrate the glass, to get rid of his image which is "barely a shadow, true, but still irksome" (p. 157); he wants to "give himself the illusion that the glass itself didn't exist" (p. 157). In fact, he wants to join the animals, who seem to exist in a "little theater." The stuffed, posed ducks appeal to him; they are

so close you thought you could touch them, and calm finally, not frightened, not forced to keep aloft suspended on their short fluttering wings, in the mobile, treacherous air. (p. 158)

The stuffed creatures in the display speak to him of immutable beauty in death. There they are, immobilized in postures imitating animal vitality. They have solidity; they are imperishable. They won't disintegrate, but they don't have to struggle with recalcitrant bodies either. The idea of killing himself comes to him. He scans his face again, and sees every feature plainly:

the bald forehead, the three horizontal lines that crossed it from temple to temple, the long and fleshy nose, the heavy, weary eyelids, the flabby and almost womanish lips, the hole in the chin, the wan cheeks, smudged by his beard. (p. 159)
Obviously, he is still experiencing revulsion. The events of the day, however, seem to have scattered "the dust of years and years" over his face. His face is not losing its clarity as much as it is reverting to geographic ambiguity. His idea, the idea of committing suicide, imitates the unequivocal beauty of the stuffed animals. But if Bassani is hinting at correspondence between Limentani's constipation and the state of being stuffed which characterizes the taxidermist's animals, there is reason for skepticism over the logic which leads Limentani to view death as a boon. His hatred of his body, his feeling that it is unfamiliar, has sources outside of himself.

Limentani does not really want to move; it takes him a mighty effort of will to go on the hunting trip and brave the animosity of the valley folk who, since the war, no longer welcome the gentlemen from the city coming out for a day's shooting. The start of his trip has the quality of nightmare: time passes, but Limentani makes no progress. Six-fifteen in the morning is the time at which a hired man will be waiting for Limentani to arrive for the hunt. At eight minutes to six o'clock, Limentani is just finishing coffee in his own home in Ferrara, with still a forty-minute drive ahead of him. He is at last underway when a need to defecate diverts him to the town of Codigoro, to find bathroom facilities. Once there, he is held up by conversation with the cafe owner, the erstwhile Fascist Bellagamba; it takes him ages in narrative time to ask to use the bathroom, and then further ages to climb the three flights of stairs to the best of the lavatories.

Having finally arrived at the toilet, he sits there straining away and reading old newspaper clippings while his bowels refuse to give him relief. Snipped into a jumble of words and half-words, the newspaper clippings are impenetrable to his desire for meaning. He finds one meaningful headline, and then struggles to recall the date of the event. He searches randomly through the other fragments for help:
He was unable to establish the origin of any of them, but not all were cut from the pages of the same paper, and not all were of the same date. IGHT TO REBELLILLED BY CONSTI, another headline said, in letters even bigger than the first. And another: OGLIATTI AND NENNI--ATTACK GOVERNME; and another still: VE JEWISH BLOOD--IN TODAY'S POLAND. (p. 39)

In this manner, the fragmentation of the historical period spirals downward to delay one man, on a toilet, desperately trying to make sense out of his world--or only to enjoy a bowel movement. As he looks out the window, too, he finds the scene of Codigoro and environs incomprehensible: "Like a surveyor without his necessary instruments, he tried to measure distances and proportions with his naked eye" (p. 40). Points, like the Monument of the Dead, a ruined watchtower, and barges' masts, stand out, but how these are related to one another in terms of distances escapes Limentani. Later, as will be seen shortly, the meaning of the structures brought together under the name "Codigoro" will defy Limentani.

In any event, much more narrative time has passed with the mental puzzles Limentani tries to piece together during the chapter that describes his experiences in the bathroom. But when he comes downstairs again, he still cannot get immediately into his car and drive off to the hunt. Further conversation with the cafe owner intervenes, and then a phone call to his cousin, which proves abortive because he cannot get past, first the maid who does not understand his dialect, and next a six-year old child who breathes into the phone instead of going to get his parents. With all these nightmarish delays, it is a miracle that Limentani is only three hours late for his appointment with Gavino, the hired guide.

The clearest image of Limentani's inertia, and a turning point in the story, comes shortly before he discovers the thought of suicide as the one decisive act remaining to him. He means to renew his friendship with the cousin he has phoned earlier in the day, a friendship that faded out shortly before the war. His cousin's wife, at home alone, has invited him up to their apartment to wait for Ulderico and the children to come home.
Limentani has fantasized a brief, adulterous encounter with the wife. Now he stands at the ground floor of the incongruous ten-storey apartment building, the I.N.A. building, off the Codigoro arcades, ready to push the bell for the cousin’s apartment:

With a sudden lucidity, he surprised himself by wondering: he, he himself in his hunting clothes, with the fur cap on his head, at that hour, under those arcades, who was he, who really?

He took off one glove. With his index finger he grazed the bell: not to press that button, but only to touch it, to feel its consistency. . . . (pp. 143-44)

Needless to say, he turns away from the bell and the apartment building without taking that minuscule but terrifying first step of any visit to another’s home. Planted in the centuries-old town of Codigoro, the apartment building becomes a symbol of modern urbanism; the "white, vivid light" this building emits is "more appropriate to the city than to this town" (p. 129). Gazing at this building earlier, through the smokey glass of a cafe across the square, Limentani has experienced it as a "kind of vague beige-pink cliff, like something looming and inaccessible" (p. 48). His cousin actually lives in this structure; Limentani cannot even push the bell that will let him in on a visit. His failure of nerve at the base of this edifice indicates his incapacity to cope with modern reality.

Marking this novella as an urban tale most importantly, however, is not the establishment of buildings oppressively fixed on the landscape but the disintegration of place. A lucid instance of this disintegration is the changing of street names in the ancient part of Codigoro. Three years earlier, at the time of the Liberation, the street names had been replaced with the names of heroes of socialism. The old ceramic signs had simply been whitewashed over, and now the hand-painted letters of the streets’ new identities are already dissolving away. Limentani spells out "LO MAR ['Carlo Marx']; ANTON GRAMSCI; E. CURIEL; IUSEPPE TALIN; C E IA ROTTI," and then mentally fills in the missing letters (p. 148). As much as this dissolution symbolizes the fortunes of communism, it also encapsulates the general unhinging of location. Names of places will not stick, any more than the character of the town will remain stable. The central square
in Codigoro is a jumble of disparate purposes. The cafes where the aged male residents gather to smoke and drink are muddled up with the taxidermist's, a wine shop, an agricultural machinery shop in the window of which is an American tractor described as "Something blind and formless, destitute of any function whatever" (p. 141), the building of the Labor Council, the Church of Santa Maria Ausiliatrice, the former Casa del Fascio (now a carbiniere barracks), the I.N.A. building--and all of these surround the Monument of the Dead which, at its first appearance in the story, is urinated on by a passing dog (p. 29). Like the history given in the newspaper clippings, and like the dissolving features of Limentani's own face, the town is losing its identity. Late in the evening, a fog falls over the discongruous structures of Codigoro. With obvious symbolism, Bassani has Limentani wandering through this fog before the character sees his own face in the taxidermist's window and decides that suicide is the one clear and definite course of action available to him.

It is significant that Limentani wanders at large through this locale, in marked contradistinction to Mindernickel, the boss and the Tellers. While the Tellers, Mindernickel and the boss have bound themselves to urban and suburban circumstances, Limentani finds himself wholly dispossessed. History and place have abandoned him. The hunting trip is his last bid to establish a place for himself in the fragmented post-war reality of northern Italy. But since the hunting trips of gentlemen from the city have become an offensive anachronism, and since he has no real inclination to shoot birds in any case, the plan is absurd at its inception. If he knew of the miserable lives of those who affix their identities to urban values, he might have considered it fortunate that he has been expelled psychologically from the nightmare of modern existence. He might have framed a philosophy out of his alienation, a philosophy of self-sacrifice or of rebellion. Instead, he experiences his life as groundless, materially and ontologically. Only the thought of suicide can consolidate this sensation of utter lostness.
There is nothing secure in Limentani on which to base aggression against the birds he is supposed to be killing on his day’s hunting. He takes this lack of desire as a failure of virility: when he anticipates visiting his cousin’s wife, he briefly considers retrieving some of the ducks he has sold to the cafe owner, all of them shot by Gavino, in order to appear before the woman as the nonchalant male coming home from a successful day of shooting birds on the marshes (p. 133). With only a slight shift in this apathy, we could have had before us in Limentani an active theory of charity such as Mindernickel practices; a simple disinclination to shoot can easily be made to serve the St. Francis ideology of compassion. We have seen, however, the malevolent disregard for the animal which accompanies doctrinaire compassion, pity by rote and delusion.

Disabused of philosophies of life, divested of cultural preconception, Limentani is able to see the waterfowl of the marsh with total clarity. In fact, the coots that approach his blind and of course the heron itself, are visually the clearest and most coherent elements in the novella as a whole. While Limentani cannot get a grasp on the layout and import of Codigoro and environs, he can see and record minute details of colouring on the coot flying past him. He notes: "slate-black feathers, lightly tinged, on the back, with an olive-yellow; head, neck, tail, and crupper black; the lower parts just a shade lighter; the wingtips white; the beak, flat, bluish; the legs green, shading into orange in the upper part; the red iris, wide, glassy" (pp. 84-85). He observes these particulars, as in a nightmare, all in the instant before the coot is shot down by Gavino. Although this perfect image of the coot is followed up by his feeling that "Nothing, any longer, appeared real" (p. 85), the visual immediacy of the bird with its life in threat contradicts, not reality per se, but the unreality of urban modernism.

The heron and its injuries assume narrative reality in Limentani’s mind. That is to say, he sees the heron with complete lucidity and also makes meaning out of its suffering. He comes up with a simile for the heron: it is "like an old Caproni plane"
(p. 85), like "the kind of plane they used in the First World War, all canvas, wires and wood" (p. 87). He observes the heron so closely that he notes that on its "perfectly smooth" head "something fragile stood up, from the back: a kind of wire, an antenna, who knows?" (p. 86). The "antenna," of course, is the fine, slicked-back crest of the heron. The machine analogy that Limentani initially conceives gives way before appreciation of the creatural particulars of the bird. As it comes face-to-face with him in his hogshead, he observes that it is brown "all over, except for the feathers of the neck and breast, a delicate beige tone, and except for the legs, the yellow-brown of fleshless bone, or relics" (p. 89). He imagines, also, what the wounded bird is thinking as it paces around the marsh:

[I]t still tried to get its bearings, to recognize, if not the places, at least the nature of the objects surrounding it. A few steps away, for example, it noticed the punt, half on land and half in the water. What was that? A boat, or perhaps the body of a great sleeping animal? Best to keep out of its way, anyhow. (p. 87-88).

It is no wonder that Limentani identifies with the heron "completely" (p. 88). The injured bird cannot find its bearings, just as he cannot. It too is bewildered; it too is a victim.

The thoughts Limentani ascribes to the wounded heron could well be his own as he moves uncertainly through the post-war landscape: "Where am I? ... And what's happened to me" (p. 87), he imagines the heron thinking. He can't shoot at the heron to put it out of its misery because that would be "shooting in a sense at himself" (p. 91). Despite this identification, Limentani has in fact very little identity to project onto the animal. The process seems, rather, to work in the reverse, with the heron giving a voice, briefly, and a body to the man's diffuse distress. Later, when he is cast adrift in Codigoro, with no plans and the prospect of nothing but more inertia in the future, he hangs on to the heron's experience to understand his own. What should he do? he wonders:

Stay here, then? But to what end? Before its eyes, from loss of blood, had become hooded, the heron must have felt much as he felt now: hemmed in on all sides, without the slightest possibility of escape. (p. 145)
Limentani's predicament is so greatly without resolution in his cultural situation that his state of mind approximates animal perplexity. Just as the heron finds nothing in its store of knowledge to determine how it was wounded, why it cannot fly anymore and what it is supposed to do now, so too is Limentani divested of an explanation for his circumstances and of the power to change them. In part, the unnatural weaponry that has brought down the heron imitates the inhuman city environment: the alien technology of the hunt defeats animal resourcefulness much as the city debilitates the human psyche's capacity to sustain itself. Bassani is less interested, however, in comparing the forces that create the condition of lostness in the heron and Limentani than in having correspondence between the bird and the man focus their mutual experiences as an elemental state of being.

The artlessness of the pain shared by the heron and the man prohibits sentimental anthropomorphism. There is a tender moment during the period of the heron's bewilderment: still preserving its slow-stepping grace, the heron comes right up to the hogshead where Limentani is hiding; it "huddle[s] against the hogshead . . . just like a shivering old man, seeking the sun" (p. 89). From his position inside the blind, Limentani can no longer see the heron; yet he senses its movements by sound and, virtually, by touch through the side of hogshead. The potential for benevolent condescension is great in this instant, but Limentani's lack of ego and the author's existential aim combine to uphold the creatural dignity of the heron in its confusion. Where drama could infuse the analogy of animal and human, we find instead that the human is reduced to the simple yet profound act of seeking the warmth of the sun. No florid symbolic intention informs this analogy; the heron is not, say, a Christ-figure; the sun is not the "Great Father in the Heavens," or any other such fanciful projection. Neither is emotion driven to tragic heights. The weakening of cultural construction in the story as a whole, and in the person of Limentani, provides room for pure animality. Limentani's empathy with the heron is based, then, not
on pre-existing directives of conscience or cultural acquisition, but on the plain physical proximity of the injured animal.

There is, therefore, a noticeable absence of ideology or self-congratulation in Limentani's thought of rescuing the heron and taking it to a veterinarian in the city. The plan originates ex nihilo, simply as procedural rectification of misfortune, and not as moral or sentimental mandate. In a cultural setting where a desire to shoot birds is one of the norms of masculinity, the impulse to pay a veterinarian to heal a conventionally worthless heron is truly incredible. A person more secure than Limentani in his or her alienation from social norms would perhaps have carried through with the plan of saving the heron. Limentani, however, lets anticipation of his wife's complaints feed his apathy: he does nothing. Still, his failure to act is not based on a concession that his idea is absurd, or that he will make himself a laughing-stock in requesting medical treatment for the victim of his own wish to hunt birds. He does not question the scheme in itself; he only lacks the courage to execute it. In his heart of hearts, nevertheless, he truly wants to take the heron to a veterinarian.

It is a pity that he does not follow the impulse to rescue the heron; the creativeness of the plan, in contradistinction to the decomposition of the cultural context, makes it a reasonable alternative to suicide as a solution to the victim mentality. Standing in outright opposition to convention, the plan has a quality of existential authenticity similar to that which has arisen from the death of animals in the previously discussed urban stories. It is a revelation, if not dramatically as the point of climax, then at least in its qualitative distinctiveness from any other type of thought represented in the story. To every person of his acquaintance, from any perspective available in the culture as given, Limentani would have appeared a lunatic had he reached out of his blind, taken hold of the heron, wrapped it in a blanket and bundled it into his car, then driven this wild creature to the urban centre and requested of city mentality and technology that it muster itself on
behalf of a being whose value and even existence is wholly unrecognized in that setting.
The effect would have been much the same as if Katherine Mansfield's "boss" had rushed
his ink-clogged fly into a laboratory for cleaning under a microscope, or Henry Teller had
sought out surgery to remove the pellet from the white quail's brain. Compassion for the
animal victim is fine, apparently, as long as it remains private and theoretical. For the
urban person, to lift that compassion out of the mind and act upon it, is to discover the
limits of urban tolerance for the animal, for charitable feeling towards the animal, and
ultimately for honest self-expression. Since all four of the central characters in these
stories have identified themselves with animal victims, it follows that the refusal of
urbanism to attend to animals is also a refusal to attend to the authentic being of the
person. Madness and anger have been the price paid in other urban stories by individuals
who attempt to live by the inhuman, anti-animal logic of the city. With the idea of the city
crumbling as it is in *The Heron*, those who seek identity suffer disconfirmation both in the
reality they occupy and in the contrary reality they experience in themselves. In
Limentani's situation, nothing legitimates his desire to rescue the heron apart from that
socially illegitimate object, the heron's suffering.

There is no hope, then, for the heron. The faint thought that would have become
Limentani's existential breakthrough into healthy eccentricity is instead converted into its
opposite, an equally existential submission to victimization in its fullest meaning. Instead
of temporizing with victimization, accepting some of it and pretending that the rest does
not truly imply what it implies, Limentani manages to fuse the bodily, hence animal, will
to persist with what is in fact a physical sensation that he is a victim right down to the
substance of his identity.

At the point that a person is so far lost as to consider suicide, of course, religion is
supposed to step in and affirm the substantial reality of the spirit. Religion has its chance
to do so in *The Heron*. Limentani discovers a Catholic pamphlet abandoned on the floor of
the church he has entered. The pamphlet does speak of consolation. "Have you ever examined a mole carefully?" it begins. The mole, it argues, has been perfectly adapted for its circumstances by God. If God has taken so much trouble over the mole, he must be extra solicitous for the welfare of humankind. The pamphlet quotes St. Augustine: "God cares for each creature as if it were the only one in the world, and he cares for all creatures as if they were one" (p. 153). God has evidently not cared much for the heron, but this is not the complaint that causes Limentani to reject the advice of the pamphlet to "TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW." Rather, the statement strikes Limentani as unfinished, as a fragment only, just like the rest of the culture in which he lives. To the reader outside of Limentani, the commentary appears as whole as any other item of propaganda. It provides evidence, then closes with counsel for living. How much more pragmatic than this could language and philosophy be? From Limentani's deeply skeptical point of view, however, the blank page that ends the material object he sees before him symbolizes and articulates the immateriality of the utterance. He wants answers to embodied existence, not abstract prescriptions.

The mention of a parakeet within the statement puzzles him most deeply. The logic and purpose of citing the parakeet is obvious to reason: God looks after humans just as humans look after their parakeets. But, "What does a parakeet have to do with any of this?" Limentani wonders. And indeed, what does a parakeet have to do with any of this? The question is silly, but massive. It can be translated into the ideological question, "What do animals and animality have to do with religion and its programmatic ideals?" This is a crucial question, however sententious it might be, since the animality of the human is suffering in modern culture. Less ideologically, Limentani's perplexity cites the irrationality of discourse which can use the specific animal arbitrarily as object in an argument. That is to say, the parakeet, the real bird, has no import within the comment. Linguistically, the "parakeet" could just as easily have been a cat, a goldfish, or even a
favourite pair of jeans; the bird is in fact listed along with shoes, a radio and a bicycle as one of those items that people care about. Although the writer succeeds in invoking real attachments with this catalogue of things, the parakeet is simply not an inanimate object to be inserted arbitrarily into a list at the whim of reason. From the parakeet’s perspective, the logic which includes it in such a list of things is as remote from reality as the idea of God. Limentani’s image of the actual parakeet, as opposed to the "parakeet" which is merely a term in the chain of reasoning, disarms the authority of the words he is reading.

Despite the dominant impression of disconnection among Limentani’s thoughts, the disembodied parakeet of the Catholic pamphlet has an effect, arguably, upon his experience in front of the taxidermist’s window display. The collection of stuffed animals appears to him to have achieved physical stability, to have arrived at a state of corporeal perfection no longer menaced by pain or time. They stand in tableau vivant, alongside an assortment of hunting equipment. The fox posed between a pair of rubber boots expresses "an overwhelming, almost insolent health, saved as if by enchantment from any possible harm, of today or tomorrow" (p. 158). The life of the fox has become immune to the kind of offense given to the parakeet. In its frozen posture the fox exemplifies life, but this is life beyond questioning, life not subject to interpretation and misinterpretation, distortion and injury. To Limentani’s wounded imagination, the stuffed animals represent life in a state of totality, and identity in a state of completion. The exhibited unity of death and physical integrity comes to Limentani as a revelation: suicide will satisfy all the elemental needs of his mind and body. Of course one cannot expect logic at a time like this: the wonderfully life-like animals are actually dead, and Limentani will not be stuffed and preserved in a display case after he has killed himself. Nevertheless, by means of suicide, he can seize control of the victimization his society has inflicted upon him; the question of his existence falls into his own power instead of other people’s.
The narrative follows Limentani and his point of view to the exclusion of other readings of events. When we arrive at the matter of suicide, therefore, it is possible to dismiss the solution as purely personal, as an insulated decision revealing little about the culture in which the character lives. The meaning of the heron would appear to be limited by such localization of interpretation. It strains the text, that is to say, to argue that the heron stands for Nature tormented by Culture: vast metaphysical implications are ruled out by narrative concentration on the individual psyche. The fact that the heron is tormented by culture, even in the sense that cultural indifference to the animal precludes the drawing of vast metaphysical implications from its death, is displaced by one-to-one significance occurring between the man and the bird.

Although this personalized correspondence between human and animal cannot be forced to argue for grand theories of Life or high-flown notions of virtue, it does have significant benefits for the heron--for the heron, that is to say, both as a literary object with meaning, and as a natural animal such as one might encounter in a local marsh. The quality of relatedness between Limentani and the heron in fact stands as a revolutionary novelty against the backdrop of cultural insensitivity. If one accepts the terms of the culture itself, assigning blame in the matters of the heron's death and Limentani's decision to commit suicide is totally illegitimate. The culture can rightly respond that it is not actively hostile towards the heron or the man. Gavino shoots birds as a matter of course; conscience does not participate in the hunt to any degree. Likewise, urban culture is simply going about its business; should a person choose to kill himself or herself, that is none of the city's concern. If someone could present the heron's corpse to this culture and say "Look what you have done," the retort would likely be, "What on earth are you on about?" Correspondingly, nothing conscious in urban culture directs people to kill themselves; when it comes down to suicide, disintegration of place and Weltanschauung looks more like the disintegration of the perceiving mind and not like a real process for
which blindly adopted customs and ideologies may be blamed. Stepping away from the incomprehension of the culture, however, one can submit the accusation of neglect of individuality. That might seem like a trivial complaint, until we think back upon the concrete expression of attention to the individual in Limentani's feeling for the heron. Without the prodding of doctrine or gratification of conceit, Limentani simply experiences the heron as an individual creature in pain. He apprehends the animal integrity of the single bird. It is this fundamental integrity that urban society puts in exile. At base, amidst the clamor and ostentation of urbanism, the life of the individual animal, and the animal life that individual humans share with that individual animal, suffers the supreme and totally irrational offense of being set at nothing.

No wonder, then, that when Limentani takes heed of his own body, in the utter absence of kindliness well-grounded in the world, he mistakes cultural disownment for an authentic discovery. In the sense that urban culture conceals its contempt for the individual, Limentani has indeed encountered truth. Where he goes wrong, and completely wrong, is in imagining that the suicide solution originates with his own psyche, that in killing himself he will act upon his personal, elemental will in opposition to cultural imperatives. The irony is that his culture whispers to him that he is worthless and he has misheard the amplified voice as his own. He thinks he can at last assert his genuine, free decision against social values, but he is instead accepting, bodily, social and cultural rejection of identity. After this paradoxically true and erroneous insight, living on would mean tolerating constant awareness of dissimulation. At this point, the heron takes on critical relevance. The heron gives secure creaturely grounds for living under such conditions, so that the person is not entirely vacant in the face of falsehood. Limentani has truly betrayed himself, and his reason for living, in allowing the heron to die.

From Mindernickel to Limentani, we have reached the place at which polarized tensions invoked by the animal victim stand face to face with each other. The bogus
sentimentality underpinned by authentic viciousness, where we started, now looks across at authentic friendliness undermined by habitual and thus fake aggression. Materialized contradiction has run, chronologically in fact, to general dematerialization, and all with the animal as a steady point of reference. It becomes apparent that, despite its grimness, Thomas Mann's vision contains an element of optimism for urban culture which is simply washed away in the seventy years separating his story and Bassani's. We can cope with civilization and its discontents; we cannot make headway with civilization minus contents--if such obvious word play is not too offensive. We can be at home in contradiction; we cannot be at home in unreality. We can live with disturbed identities; we cannot live with no identity. For the urban person, domestication and victimization become one and the same thing. In all four of these urban stories, the animal is manifestly a crucial source of values. Without the animal, urban civilization wheels off into chaos or nullity. If one tries to imagine what these narratives would be like without animals, the confusion and, finally, vacuity of urbanized existence is left plain to see. Victimized or unvictimized, the animal is essential, narratively and in fact, for the realization of the depths of the human psyche. The fact that in three of the stories cruelty wells up from those depths indicates the profundity of damage done to the urban person by the culture to which he or she must adapt. Worse yet, when the urban psyche happens accidentally upon simple regard for the animal within its own muddled workings, it finds that urban culture is too far gone into valuelessness to support that sensibility. Simple fondness for creatural life slips out of civilization's unsteady grasp. One way or the other, the animal victim stands as an embodied reminder to us of all that civilization has neglected and distorted in its haste to conquer nature.
CHAPTER IV

ANIMAL VICTIMS AND SEXUALITY: VICTIMIZATION OF ANIMALS OCCASIONED BY THE FAILURE OF NARRATIVE TO ASSIMILATE SEXUAL EXPRESSION

It might have been appropriate to follow the pattern of the foregoing chapters and title this one "Animal Victims in a Pastoral Setting." Certainly the dynamics of the stories to be discussed in this chapter are significantly affected by the author’s choice of a rural scene. The author’s choice of locale, however, enables the expression of another vast confusion in culture which generates animal victims. If the stories about animals in the wild raise issues of morality, and stories involving animals in urban circumstances induce existential dilemmas, stories that work with animals in pastoral settings unearth peculiarities in human attitudes toward sexuality.

Now, one would expect to find animals here and there on the landscape in any pastoral story. Part of what makes orthodox pastoralism pastoral is its deployment of comfortable animals, the domestic beasts of the farms and fields, or cheerful little birds and rodents which pose no threat to human control. One would expect, too, that the pastoral story will address problems in sexuality. While sexuality in the city seems, at the level of culture, to invoke prostitutes and pornography, and sexuality in the wild seems to be too frightening to contemplate aesthetically, sexuality in rural circumstances should in theory be emancipated from the taboos and strains produced culturally by these other two locations. In theory, the pastoral setting should be sufficiently natural and yet sufficiently safe to allow for wholesome sexual expression. Where the happy theoretical arrangement, of animals on the landscape and human couples amiably retiring to the fields or woods for sexual intimacies, breaks down, as it inevitably does, sexual conflict reaches across to
those placid animals off in the distance and victimizes them. Apparently, the pastoral mode does not overcome sexual tension; if the animal victims in these stories tell us anything, they indicate the exacerbation of culture's deeply repressed feelings about sexuality.

It is, of course, wholesome in itself merely to look at sexual activity, since our culture has been so overwrought about sexuality that it has had to pretend that men and women do not copulate-like animals. Psychological mechanisms and social institutions have arisen to lend cultural significance to unceremonious coupling. What would otherwise be plain mating is decorated with romance, erotica and bawdiness. Religious and legal rituals convert sexual union into a fundamental social bond. Society and culture cannot bear to have men and women coming together freely to mate and then going on their ways with equal insouciance. The morality that condemns sexual license protects basic social structures and imposes cultural structures upon consciousness. By means of embellishment for disguise and conceptual apparatus for sublimation, humanity has attempted to transform its sexual intercourse into an act utterly different from that in which animals engage. If biology offends our cultural selves, it seems to offend us most intensely at a genital level. We can pride ourselves on having outstripped animals in social development and technological power. But however much mystification we practice, at some point human individuals of opposite sexes are going to have to concede to making genital contact in much the same way as animals do.

Given the importance of sexual neurosis to culture, it is significant that the theory of evolution emerges at a time when sexual repression is in its most tyrannical phase. In an age where people are most vigorously disavowing their creatural sexual acts, they are suddenly required to conceive of themselves as fundamentally interlinked with the rest of animal creation. The ideological and religious arguments that followed upon Darwin's theory may have philosophical importance, but one would expect that the site of deepest
disturbance would have been the erogenous zones. The secrecy already surrounding sexuality apparently prohibited conscious realization of the implications of the idea of evolution for procreative intimacies. But while there may be no direct expression of outrage at the revolution to the perception of sexuality implicit in Darwinism, agitation of pre-Darwinian sanctities manifests itself in efforts to preserve those sanctities. The insecurity of post-Darwinian observations on human sexual habits, that is to say, reveals at least subconscious unhinging of over-constructed elaborations upon natural copulation. When genital union enters the picture, it becomes clear that acknowledgement of the human species’ connection with animals threatens a massive amount of cultural material. It can hardly be surprising, then, that modern authors wrestling with sexuality generate animal victims in the process of undermining cultural categorizations of sexual experience.

One dimension of sexual existence and animal victims has been touched upon already in the previous chapter. It could be argued that part of what is wrong with Thomas Mann’s Tobias Mindernickel and Katherine Mansfield’s "boss" is a fundamental obstruction of sexual need. Both men seem to suffer from psychic castration. Objectless sexual tension could be the source of their violence against animals. There is no need to speculate upon the protagonists of "The White Quail" and The Heron: they are overtly afflicted with sexual debilities. Sexual hostility is obliquely expressed in Mary Teller’s passion for having slugs squashed (those little phallic symbols of the suburban garden) and manifestly expressed in Harry Teller’s act of aggression against the white quail. Unlike the other characters, Edgardo Limentani recognizes and accepts sexual dysfunction. He also evinces unambivalent empathy with the non-human animal; sexual impairment does not run underground in him, creating havoc and hostility. He looks squarely at his penis and finds it pathetic; he dreams that he has no penis at all. He takes ingrained cultural aggression against animals and turns it on himself. He demonstrates, in effect, a culturally based association of sexlessness with compassion for animals.
In the stories to be discussed in this chapter, the converse of this association also comes into play. If those who are sexually naive or neutered in one way or another display fondness for animals, those who are sexually alert kill or torment animals as a mark of their passion. Although this dichotomy is troubled by various complexities, the simple division of associations constitutes a necessary starting place for thought on the subject. What is astounding about this dichotomy is that it is the complete reverse of what one would expect would follow from the Darwinian assertion of continuity between humans and animals. The idea of continuity should validate empathy with animals simultaneously as it promotes calm assent to such fundamental animal functions as sexual intercourse. One should find in post-Darwinian stories that persons in tune with sexual passion are also in tune with animal life, with the result that they leave animals be. Ignorance or prudishness on the score of sexuality should be the qualities that lead to cruelty to animals. Instead, authors who deal with sexuality in the climate of Darwinian thought tend to revert to a pre-modern connection of sexuality with bestiality, of lust for sex with a lust to kill. While this regression to out-moded belief may be rationalized on the grounds that copulation pure and simple had been a taboo subject for centuries, and that quantities of subterranean material had not been dealt with and required articulation, it remains odd that permission to address sexuality elicits the old-fashioned stereotype of nature as, in effect, "red in tooth and claw." Maturity on the matter of sexual desire is difficult to achieve. Writers are, after all, struggling against deep-seated adversity to the whole subject of human sexual encounters. The irritation that arises from the effort apparently spills over to animals that happen to be present on the scene. With the deepest of ironies, animals are sacrificed to human striving for harmony with healthy genital intercourse.

What healthy genital intercourse would look or feel has become entirely unclear in modern culture. The vast residue of yet to be realized material precludes the establishment of ideals, despite strenuous efforts on the part of authors like Hardy and
Lawrence to break down orthodoxies and hint at a better way of being. If there is some
hidden ideal at work in the pastoral story, it is certainly not the blithe gratification of
desire, the casual coming and going, that characterizes animal mating. Authors cling to
the idea of elaborations upon ordinary sexual congress, even though they may object to the
particular romantic or prurient elaborations that culture has enshrined. This inability to
conceptualize explicit ideals does have merit. Ideals tend to produce further repression, as
current demands upon performance in our supposedly liberal era attest. Nevertheless, the
remoteness of any idea of healthy sexuality has left authors puddling about amongst
clichés and neuroses. Since animality appears to be the reason for the struggle in the first
place, the animal falls victim to narrative hostility. Authors are not separating themselves
from the violence their characters practice upon animals. An assumption seems to be that
if the narrative of human sexuality will not come out cleanly, the animal must be to blame.

In all four of the stories to be discussed in this chapter, the authors attempt to
reduce the confusion in attitudes towards sexuality by offering their protagonists two clear
and antithetical choices of person. One of these persons represents, roughly speaking,
asexual love; the other represents, again roughly speaking, unlicensed sexual passion. The
sexual being of the protagonist vacillates painfully between alternatives, producing
considerable unsteadiness in narrative progress. The narrative of Mary Webb’s Gone to
Earth, for example, swerves between the decision of the protagonist Hazel Woodus first to
accept the advances of the squire Jack Reddin who appeals to her sexual desire, then to
marry the minister who offers her respectability, then to escape from respectability to the
squire’s mansion and erotic appeal, then to return to the love of her minister husband, and
finally to plunge with her pet fox into death at the bottom of an abandoned quarry. Niels
Lindstedt, of Frederick Philip Grove’s Settlers of the Marsh, delays proposing to the prudish
woman he loves for so long while he establishes his homestead that he is tricked by his
own naivety into marriage with the local prostitute. The love-life of Thomas Hardy's Tess divagates into disaster not because of conscious errors or decisions on the part of the characters, but because of almost accidental collisions between natural sexuality and the kinds of sexuality authorized by culture. The man Tess loves cannot accept her sexuality; the man who responds to her sexual being is a cad. In Lawrence's *The Fox*, Nell March is never firmly committed to the intruder she eventually marries. As soon as Henry has left the farm, she falls under the spell of her near-lesbian comrade Jill and decides to break the attachment to the man. On Henry's return, of course, Nell is immediately divested of the will to resist him. All of this change occurs in the realm of mystery; none of the conventional feelings attendant on the death and rekindling of love apply. Despite the clarity of the choices available to the focal characters, then, the whole issue of sexuality radically disrupts narrative cause and effect. The consequent strain upon the human need for resolution is evidenced by the fact that all four stories end effectively in murder.

Niels Lindstedt murders a great deal more than his wife and horse at the climax of *Settlers of the Marsh*. He murders, also, his sexual innocence and the related illusion of personal power that had permitted him to create a prosperous farm upon the stark Canadian prairie. Frederick Philip Grove is a master at planting large men upon the barren prairie landscape. His particular genius was for conveying the slow struggle of these men to compel more and more land to produce greater and greater yields against the reluctance of the soil and the vagaries of climate. While the raw work of originating a homestead appeals to his imagination, however, he is sensitive to the point at which mastery of the land over-balances and becomes ostentation. The fortunes of Abe Spalding of his *Fruits of the Earth* begin to collapse once Abe constructs a mansion and barn complete with the most modern technological gadgetry. Likewise, Grove puts Niels' ambition in increasing peril simultaneously as Niels distinguishes himself from his less
successful neighbours in building a large and neatly appointed house which he thinks of as "a palace in the wilderness" (p. 70). The prairie, it seems, is easily offended. The settler's place in the landscape is highly tenuous; should he overstep the point at which hardship ends, he wins only bitter disillusionment.

As disillusionment deepens within Grove's victorious settler, it connects up with the sexual continuum. The uncultivated prairie appears literally to be virgin at the start of a Grove novel. The chaste male patiently romances the prairie, receiving love offerings of acreage and hay in return. The idea of the land as symbolic earth mother bearing fruit under human cultivation is nowhere in evidence. No doubt the barrenness of the prairie itself thwarts notions of natural fecundity; the land rules out any sense of harmonious propagation. Farms are established against the will of the prairie. Only by persistence and main strength can the settler wrest hay and profits from this place. When the life-course of the settler begins to degenerate, the prairie metamorphoses from virgin to slut. The mansions contribute to this metamorphosis in exuding a faint aura of whorish regalia. This transformation becomes explicit at the nadir of Abe Spalding's fortunes. Shame comes to the Spalding family with the public disclosure of the promiscuity of Abe's daughter. As Abe passes by in his buggy, a neighbour calls out, "'Is the great lord stepping down from his shining height? Now he's got a whore in the family like other common folk?'" Abe cannot make out the words of this jibe, but the voice, "unintelligible though it was, sounded like the voice of the prairie" (pp. 261-2). The "fruits of the earth" of the title of Spalding's novel, then, are significantly related to the favours prostitutes concede for payments made. Playing the harlot to human effort, the prairie makes a mockery of the spiritual values that had sustained the settler in his initial endeavours. Bitterness is the fundamental fruit of his labour.

Foreboding punctuates Niels Lindstedt's rise to mastery over the prairie. With his prosperity confirmed in the construction of his "palace in the wilderness," he still
postpones asking the chaste Ellen Amundsen to marry him. The chapter concluding the ascent of his fortunes ends with the words, "Something dreadful was coming, coming . . ." (p. 85). That "something dreadful" appears immediately in the next chapter in the form of Clara Vogel, local prostitute and female predator. Clara Vogel is certainly a recognizable stereotype among culture’s representations of sexual woman. She also ends up as a scapegoat to cultural hostility to sexuality. She inveigles a ride from town in Niels’ wagon. She admires his horses. "Why Niels . . . what a team!" (p. 90), she observes, almost as if she were remarking upon Niels’ virility. The energy of the horses causes Mrs. Vogel to gaze lustfully at Niels: "she smiled at him from her black, beady eyes when the horses bent into their collars and stretched the traces." The description of her eyes as black and beady enhances the association of this woman with animals. With the introduction of sexual connotations, the straightforward economic wisdom of Niels’ decision to buy magnificent Percheron horses gives way to what are for him impure implications. Instead of looking at those implications directly, Niels experiences disquiet at the level of his relationship with the prairie. The heady atmosphere of illicit sensuality emanating from the woman causes Niels to doubt the power he had seemed to effect in his victory over the land:

He felt as if he were thrown back into chaos. . . .
He had thought that he had fought all this down years ago. His conquest had been a specious one. He had conquered by the aid of a fickle ally: circumstances. . . . Something was still stirred in him by this woman, something low, disgraceful. . . . (p. 90)

The suppression of sexual interest evidently represents a foundational element of Niels’ triumph over the prairie, or at least that is what his interpretation of events tells him. He had thought, subconsciously, that his pristine, non-sexual nature had somehow elicited approval and prosperity from the prairie. Evidence of uncontrol in nature and in his own being shakes his faith in personalized mastery.
The third chapter of *Settlers of the Marsh* is not, however, Clara Vogel's chapter; it belongs, instead, to Ellen Amundsen, as its title informs us. Ellen Amundsen, too, is "something dreadful": a woman with a deep loathing for sexual passion. Her loathing has sprung from witnessing her father essentially kill her mother with his demand to exercise his conjugal rights upon her body. Despite her mother's constant illness, her father has insisted upon having intercourse with her, thus initiating the cycle of pregnancy followed by the woman's deliberate hard work out-of-doors to bring about a miscarriage. As her mother dies in her arms, Ellen resolves never to put herself in a man's power, and to become as competent as any man in farm work so that she will never have to submit to a man's sexual needs.

This horror of sexuality is not Ellen's alone. It is evident, of course, in Niels' feeling that his response to Mrs. Vogel is "low" and "disgraceful." It is evident, more pertinently, in the author's preclusion of a conceptual middle ground for Niels between the sensible but frigid woman and the opulent, lascivious temptress. A peculiarly coy episode occurs at the centre of the "Ellen" chapter, an episode which is apparently meant to denote paradiesiacal sexual innocence. Ellen and Niels, it must be remembered, are people of about thirty years' old, mature in most ways except for their immoveable virginity. On the day that the issue of marriage is about to come to a head, the author suddenly starts calling the pair "the boy and the girl." If that affectation were not debilitating enough to any notion of sexual maturity, Grove slides into the present tense in the middle of the episode. The dalliance of "the boy and the girl" remains comfortably in the past tense while the couple stray happily through the rustic scene, observing birds and rabbits and picking berries. But for some reason, Grove wants to be in the present tense when Nature, in the role of a rain-storm, takes up the burden of the sexual tension in the narrative. The circumstance which instigates the shift from past to present tense involves horses.
The pivotal incident occurs when the happiness of these innocents is about to be interrupted by contact with a man and a woman driving a buggy along the road. The impulse of Niels and Ellen to flee from the social responsibility of conversation is certainly understandable. Nevertheless, their flight turns also upon a strangely ambiguous statement concerning the horses pulling the democrat. Horses, Grove explains, "are scary in the bush" (p. 96). Horses, that is to say, are nervous in the bush, in the less familiar use of the word "scary." The meaning that comes automatically to mind, however, would mark the horses as frightening creatures prompting the reflex to escape. Obvious sexual symbolism attaches itself to horses, symbolism which might indeed prove ominous to "a boy and a girl." Niels and Ellen run away from the snorting animals to hide in the "virgin bush". In so doing, they temporarily forestall the conscious awareness of the sexuality that would unite them as two mature people and situate them in time and nature. They enter the idyllic present, where innocence sustains immutability for itself and for the person.

Just as the horses have symbolically isolated and carried away with them implications of sexual passion, so too does Nature, in the material delivered in the present tense, perform the task of sexual expression for the boy and the girl. There is overt sexual energy in Grove's description of the coming storm:

The air is breathless: even the slight wafting flow from the east has ceased. Nature lies prostrate in expectation of the scourge that is coming, coming. The wall of cloud has differentiated: there are two, three waves of almost black; in front a circling festoon of loose, white, flocculent manes, seething, whirling. . . . A winking of light runs through the first wave of black. A distant rumbling heralds the storm. . . . (p. 98)

Note that Grove again invokes the imagery of horses in likening the first wave of clouds to horses' manes. Straightforward details of sexual ardor inhere with the breathlessness of the air and the reference to Nature lying "prostrate in expectation." Much Freudian innuendo could be taken from the fact that Niels and Ellen conceal themselves from the
storm in a cavern Niels has made in the side of a hay-stack: perhaps the boy and the girl have regressed even farther from adulthood in a symbolic return to the womb. In any event, the decidedly unpastoral storm relieves the virginal couple of the necessity to act upon sexual pressures. At the end of the chapter, Ellen tells Niels the story of her revulsion and Niels, disturbed and disillusioned, heads off to his fateful liaison with Mrs. Vogel.

Clara Vogel virtually rapes Niels. Given the novel's preconceptions, forcible seduction seems to be the only way Niels will ever have any sexual experience. Niels is not grateful, and Grove himself does not challenge Niels' censure of the woman. After giving Clara only one brief kiss of passion in the park, Niels "almost hated the woman for what she had done to him" (p. 121). Subsequent events confirm his extreme and almost laughable reaction. When Clara comes to his hotel room that same night and, to use a suitably old-fashioned phrase, has her way with him, Niels is so naïve that he believes he is now obliged to marry her. The marriage is a disaster. As their marriage degenerates, Niels wonders what brought them together in the first place. The line that follows immediately upon this question is delivered with authorial conviction: "Lust was the defiling of an instinct of nature: it was sin" (p. 138). This novel may well posit that remaining chaste is an instinct of human nature; it is difficult to comprehend, however, how Nature may be said to repudiate lust when horses and storms manifestly articulate an amoral version of sexual passion.

Clara Vogel is the author's scapegoat to sexual anxiety. Her charge that Niels has committed a crime in marrying her and then refusing to "reconquer [her] from day to day" (p. 155) falls into the same category as the awkward melodrama which would have the virginal Niels overcome by the temptress. Statements that defend desire for sexual intercourse, in other words, descend to a level of implausible and artificial theatricality. The attitudinal dynamic of the novel requires Clara to lapse into maniacal whoredom. The
aggressive sexuality she employs to punish Niels for his innocence strains credibility. Eventually, she invites strange men to Niels' "palace in the wilderness." At one point, she lies in the arms of a lover, kissing him and gazing mockingly at Niels who has accidentally stumbled upon the scene (p. 174).

All of this abuse, Niels can apparently tolerate. He has his work to do; he shares a separate shack with his young protégé, the farm-hand Bobby. He reads the Bible assiduously and neglects his physical appearance until his long hair and beard transform him into the male image of Biblical suffering. The disintegration of any connection he has had with his wife troubles him but does not leave him lost. He has had, after all, little understanding of what marriage would mean to begin with. Playing the stoic and seeking answers to his life give him a project to occupy him against Clara's attempts at revenge.

As in all tragedy, the crisis that breaks this stasis is precipitated by knowledge. Finally, one of Niels' neighbours supplies him with the information he had not known before: his wife, as the entire district was aware, was the local prostitute. For some reason, this piece of information affects Niels more deeply than all of his wife's blatant infidelities. The news kindles suppressed rage in him and sends him off to shoot his wife and to shoot also, not incidentally, his favorite Percheron Jock. It should be noted, here, that there is no plausible reason for Niels to shoot the horse, outside of the author's frustration with natural sexuality.

It would be pleasant to believe that Frederick P. Grove knew the vulgar meaning of the word "jock." Throughout *Settlers of the Marsh*, he has adopted so coy and moralistic an attitude towards sexual matters that an off-colour in-joke would go a long way toward redeeming him as a commentator. In addition to being a jaunty sort of name for a horse, "Jock," of course, is a slang term for the penis (hence, "jockstrap"). It is already fairly obvious that in shooting Jock, Niels is symbolically annihilating some aspect of his sexual being; but if one could determine that Grove was aiming for a direct correspondence
between the horse and the male organ, the relation between the animal and sexuality
would then rise to a complexity that would in turn lend much needed ambiguity to the
moral scheme of the novel as a whole. The Percherons are a likeable, if peripheral,
presence in the novel. They have appeared on the scene as a sign of Neils’ success; they
are indispensable in his only sphere of power, the farm work. The horses like Niels
unguardedly; they nicker at him when he appears. He is more comfortable with Jock than
he is with the people in the novel, and the horse is kinder to him than the people are. To
say this is not to argue for misanthropy. Rather, if one translates the friendly intercourse
between man and horse into the symbolic value implied by the pun on the name "jock," the
conclusion one comes to is that Niels does express phallic knowledge, although in
sublimated form. Grove cannot, therefore, be as prudish as he seems when only surface
values are taken into consideration. Nor is his novel communicating nothing but aversion
to sexuality. Whether Grove is conscious of it or not, the horses do sustain a natural
energy of a kind that is nowhere else in evidence in the novel. That energy is pointedly
transmuted into sexual energy all in the instant that Niels shoots Jock.

There is, however, a significant complication to the interpretation of the horse as
the traditional embodiment of phallic power, and that is the fact that Jock is a gelding.
Indeed, when he is first introduced into the novel, Jock is described as an "enormous
gelding" (p. 82), which might seem to be something of a contradiction in terms. The
shooting of the horse is so important that Grove goes over it twice in the novel, once when
Bobby discovers Niels with the gun in his hand and Jock "convulsively kicking his last at
[Niels’] feet" (p. 182), and again later when the entire sequence of events is explained in
detail. Grove could have had Bobby entering the house and finding Clara’s corpse, but the
death of the woman evidently takes second place to the death of the horse. It is on the
second re-telling of the incident that the word "gelding" becomes crucial. In fact, so that
we do not miss the point, Grove repeats the word "gelding" twice in the brief description of Niels’ entry into the barn:

Niels, swaying again, came very near to the rump of the gelding.
Jock, as the door was opened, had turned his head. When his master swayed near him, he, expecting a blow, kicked out.
Niels raised his gun and shot the gelding through the head . . . (p. 187)

Given this unmistakable emphasis on the fact that Jock is castrated, Niels could be symbolically abolishing his emasculated self in killing his horse. It could be said, then, that recognition of the true nature of his marriage has launched Niels forcibly into sexual maturity.

Supporting this interpretation of Niels’ act is the achievement of the conventional sexual order at the end of the novel. When Niels comes home from prison several years after these events, he takes on the role of "the man" to Ellen’s long protracted girlhood. Where Niels once played, in effect, "the girl" to Clara’s sexual assertiveness, he now assumes the position of the experienced male beside the properly inexperienced female. The "man" and "the girl" take another walk through the bush. It is spring; the birds are fluttering about and the leaves rustle gently in the breeze. There is not a hint of a storm on the horizon; no horses appear on the road to disturb the couple. Pastoral innocence has returned, and in keeping with this bucolic tranquility is the romance Niels and Ellen are to share: "It is not passion that will unite them; what will unite them is love" (p. 216).

Accepting this new relationship as a happy ending is difficult when one recalls that it has depended upon the scapegoating of Clara Vogel and all that she represents. The antithetical meanings which can be taken from the shooting of the horse also contribute to an unnervingly sinister undertone to the superficially harmonious resolution of the narrative.

It is apparent that entirely conflicting messages may be drawn from Jock and from Niels’ act of shooting the animal. The ambivalence surrounding Jock yields, in turn,
wholly contradictory readings of the novel. Grove may want to wrest healthy sexuality from the cumulation of events. But if Niels is supposed to have won his virility from killing Jock the "gelding," why is passion denied at the end of the story? The moralist in Grove would have it that Niels has annihilated that "beast" in himself which was attracted to Clara Vogel. Having abandoned sexual desire, Niels has become a loving, patient mate for the frigid woman. Following this line, however, love comes to depend upon neurotic asexuality. Work in the other direction--have Niels and Ellen’s relationship be properly and fully sexual at the end of the story--and the novel ends up linking mature sexual expression with the victimization of the animal. Given that, as per convention, the horses have been the locus of phallic potence throughout the novel, the conclusion that the elimination of, symbolically, "the horse" leads to sexual maturity seems a logical impossibility.

This confusion of meaning is a sign of the loosening of culture’s hold upon the animal. The attempt to coordinate human sexuality with response to the animal has led Grove to produce not only confusion of meaning but totally polarized meanings. Because sexual implication will not attach securely to the horse in Settlers of the Marsh, the horse instead discloses the radically ambivalent nature of attitudes towards sexuality. It is a toss-up whether Niels’ derangement or the author’s equivocation is most responsible for the killing of Jock. The docile, nickering animal comes in for aggression because of its steadfast refusal, culturally speaking, to regulate the sexual significance it is asked to sustain.

Frederick Philip Grove owes much to Thomas Hardy. The mute vitality of his prairie recalls the living yet anti-human presence of Hardy’s places. One finds in Grove, as in Hardy, a fatalistic philosophy combined quirkily with melodrama. But whereas Grove attempts and fails to integrate his animals with the sexual progress of his human
characters, Hardy succeeds in having the animals in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* illuminate divergent aspects of sex and love. Hardy succeeds, moreover, precisely because he is aware that animals are not symbolically bound to human construction. Animals, and Tess's response to them, mark off stages in her sexual development, but their lives and deaths remain independent from defining symbolism. The animals in *Tess*, that is to say, do not exist in the novel for the sole purpose of expressing facets of the human psyche. Although Hardy's animals are, like Grove's Jock, victims of narrative pressures, the meaning of Hardy's animals is not determined by contact with humankind. Rather, in *Tess*, the sense of what would be normal in life, were fate or humanity not so cruel, grants autonomy to the lives of the animals themselves. There is a sense, that is to say, that the narrative of the animals' lives would proceed without tragic or symbolic significance were Nature left uninterpreted by humankind. Human beings determine the fate of these animals only insofar as separate narrative courses collide.

Grove omits one crucial region of response to animals of which Hardy is keenly cognizant, and that is the response of the tender heart. Late in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, after Tess has killed Alec, we learn that at one time, in her own words, she "'never could bear to hurt a fly or a worm, and the sight of a bird in a cage used often to make [her] cry'" (p. 437). Jude Fawley, another Hardy character who is to be initiated into sexual conflict, starts off likewise cherishing animal life: an episode from his childhood (Pt. I, Ch. 2) finds him carefully stepping around earthworms which, significantly, have surfaced for seasonal mating. It is not a coincidence, either, that when Jude first meets Arabella, she is slaughtering pigs and playfully hurls at him a pig's "pizzle". There can be little doubt, then, that Hardy is in tune with human attitudes towards other animals, and uses those attitudes to illuminate his characters' fall from innocence.

The accidental impaling of the Durbeyfields' horse Prince hovers uncertainly between confirming and disconfirming Tess's belief that we live on a "blighted" planet.
Since it is this accident that sends Tess off towards her disastrous encounter with Alec, which precipitates all the other tragic events in the novel, one could argue that it signals Hardy's concurrence with Tess's soulish vision of the tragedy of life. Because Prince is a natural animal and not a symbol, however, Hardy's attitude towards the horse's death finds a point of equilibrium between cynicism and compassion. As a natural animal victim, Prince frees Hardy from the pressure of grand tragedy. The mood of Hardy's treatment of Prince's misfortune is, as one would expect, hardly the same as that in which, at the close of the novel, Hardy envisions "the President of the Immortals" ending "his sport with Tess." Hardy approaches Prince's death in a spirit of friendliness, which reduces the philosophical attenuation of fatalism to an amiable personal sympathy. Prince's death, then, stands as a counterpoint to the tragedy of Tess's life. Although it would be a mistake to find sexual symbolism in Prince (the horse as symbol of phallic energy, for example) or in the manner of his death, there is, I believe, a sense in which the tenor of Prince's death parallels Hardy's conception of Tess's sexuality. If Tess's natively agreeable sexual instincts had found expression, free of the moral weight of prurience or romanticism, then the narrative might have reached an accord with her such as it reaches with Prince and Prince's death. Indeed, had Tess chanced upon a man who could receive her sexual passion, the whole ponderous mechanism of Fate, which Hardy needs to convey the magnitude of the human drama, might have collapsed into a congenial empathy resembling that which infuses the details of the horse's death. Of course, the resulting work of fiction would not be a Hardy novel. The ponderous sense of the tragic is essential to his vision of the human condition. The contrasting animal condition, broached in Hardy's attitude towards Prince's death, has a correlative in that aspect of Tess's sexuality which is immune to tragedy. Held separate from the human drama, the calamity that ends Prince's life does not elicit somber or grieving philosophical reflection from the author. But as an element of the plot, integrated into Tess's subsequent
misfortunes, Prince is a victim of the triumph of the fatalistic vision of human experience over naturalized sexuality.

However tentative it may be, Hardy's conviction in the cruelty of fate does take him beyond the sentimentality he imparts to Tess and Jude in their innocence. While his heart might be gladdened by affection for fellow creatures, he knows that nature does not treat animals kindly. The distance he achieves by his philosophy combines with his susceptibility to compassion to allow him to find both tragic and humorous irony in Prince's death. Despite the grimness of the image of the horse's blood "spouting in a stream, and falling with a hiss into the road," Hardy plays with the obvious irony of the name the Durbeyfields have given their horse. The carriage-shaft that gives the mortal wound to Prince is "like a sword," but only "like a sword" and not a sword in fact. Prince bears the wound with knightly fortitude: he "stood firm and motionless as long as he could; till he suddenly sank down in a heap" (p. 42). The description is realistic; Prince's courage as he stands before he collapses, is animal courage. The nobility of the animal's death and a strange kind of humour coalesce in the description of Prince's return to his home: "All that was left of Prince was now hoisted into the waggon he had formerly hauled, and with his hoofs in the air, and his shoes shining in the setting sunlight, he retraced the eight or nine miles to Marlott." The corpse is partly comical; its shoes shine like armour.

The irony that imparts chivalric honour to the horse carries forward also to the Durbeyfield family's innocent belief in the nobility of their ancestry. That belief is one justification for giving Prince a decent burial: the d'Urberville knights, Jack Durbeyfield explains, "didn't sell [their] chargers for cat's meat" (p. 43). Prince's carcass would not bring in more than a few shillings in any case, and perhaps that fact alone provides a post hoc excuse for indulging pretensions instead of being sensible. Hardy leaves undetermined, however, the question as to whether it is desire for display or loyalty to Prince that motivates Jack Durbeyfield to "work harder on digging a grave . . . in the garden than he
had worked for months to grow a crop for his family" (pp. 43-44). He also leaves unanswered the child’s question as to whether Prince is in heaven—unless the shovelling of the earth into the grave is an answer. In any event, the death of Prince has brought together important irreconcilables. Perhaps the authentic nobility of the Durbeyfields is expressed in the fuss they make over burying the horse; or perhaps, instead, their performance expresses only foolishness. Perhaps there is genuine tragedy in this episode; or perhaps, from a distanced view, there is only absurdity. Perhaps Prince’s natural dignity makes sense of the child’s appeal to spirituality; but perhaps, too, the horse is merely animate flesh, subject, like all earthly beings, to blind fate. Prince, in sum, takes the novel into boundary situations. Although Hardy shares the tender-hearted sentiments which find tragic meaning in the death of the animal, he is far from being convinced that nature justifies those sentiments.

Tess’s initiation into life is an initiation into violence. Her sensitivity rules out for her that propensity for calculation which would have prevented the tragedy of her life. If lack of calculation has contributed to her responsiveness to the plight of animals, the quality has a markedly different effect when sexual interest enters the picture. The stirring of sexual passion over-rides compassion for small creatures. Animals are victims of Tess’s negligence in the strange passage which reveals her attraction to Angel Clare.

Drawn by the sound of Clare’s harp, Tess moves purposefully towards him through a heavy patch of weeds, heedless of the cuckoo-spittle, sticky blights and slug-slime that gather on her clothes and arms (p. 145). Hardy may have wanted Tess to arrive at Clare’s location symbolically stained to reflect the "corporeal blight" (p. 147) she is said to have suffered in giving birth to an illegitimate child. She is not, as Clare would have her, "'a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature'" (p. 142). The association of sexual knowledge with such impurities as Tess wears after her progress through the weeds should come, however, from Clare’s moral code, not from Hardy’s. It is Clare who, for all his liberal
belief, cannot tolerate the idea of sexual intercourse undecorated with Romantic and 
literary allusions. Hardy, as critic David Lodge intimates, holds a more complex view of 
Nature than Clare’s; Tess, Lodge writes, is "a child of Nature’ in a sense that extends far 
beneath the surface of conventional pastoral prettiness and innocence which that phrase 
denotes to Angel" (p. 81). The question arises, though, whether that deeper view of 
Nature necessitates the use of such terms as "blight." Certainly the belief that Nature 
has a dark side unaccounted for by "pastoral prettiness" opposes Clare’s understanding of 
the world. But this counterpoint to Clare’s embellishments upon Nature remains within 
the symbolic dichotomy of a moralized world-view. Clare’s world-view is indeed all too 
ready to judge sexual passion impure. It is unlikely that Hardy held the same belief. The 
plain, unsymbolic fact for Hardy might be that Nature makes it difficult for human beings 
to get through a patch of weeds in the spring-time without finding a variety of organic 
materials clinging to them once they are in the clear. Hardy may be engaged in some 
subtle amusement at the expense of those who read Nature as morally tainted because of 
cuckoo-spittle and slug-slime. Nevertheless, the symbolic values are present, whether 
Hardy adheres to them or not. Divested of specific ideological content, the symbolism does 

lend magnitude to unadorned nature.

More troubling than the accumulation of sticky substances are the snails Tess 
cracks underfoot during her determined progress towards the man. Apparently, Tess 
experiences no pangs of conscience, even though the sound made by the crushing of a 

snail’s shell is unmistakable. Pragmatically speaking, of course, it would be virtually 
impossible for Tess to make her way through the weeds without stepping on the slow-

moving creatures hidden in the grass. One cannot imagine her, however tender-hearted, 
parting the weeds at each step to ensure that the ground is clear beneath her feet. 

Hardy’s fatalism could be one explanation for this particular feature of the passage: earth-

bound beings cannot avoid harming other animals and live effectively; Tess has been naïve
to think that she can keep herself free from giving pain to fellow creatures. Even so, it is significant that Tess is shown abandoning her former regard for the lives of other animals simultaneously as she gives free expression to sexual attraction. Interpreting this development thus would have Hardy aligning sexual passion with cruelty, or at least with heedlessness of others’ lives. If sexual passion is natural, then the workings of Nature within the human being would contradict compassion. This line of reasoning puts Hardy in the awkward position of supporting the moralistic notion that sexuality argues for the blightedness of the planet. Either that, or Hardy will have to give up sentimental concern for animals and accept victimization as part of the natural course of life, unamenable to moralizing. He could, of course, have omitted the detail about the snails and avoided the problem entirely. He could even have used a less noisy animal victim and thus allowed Tess true freedom of conscience. It is to his credit that he does not shy away from the possibility that the will to mercy cannot co-exist with the surrender to sexual nature. It must be observed in this context, moreover, that while smashing snails underfoot can be unsettling, the emotional import of such an accident is less evil than the deliberate killing of higher order creatures. Hardy recognizes a predicament; he is not given to that particular crudity that links the lust to kill with eroticism. He wants to articulate, rather, what human sexuality would be like if it could be brought into accord with Nature and stripped bare of the sin and guilt with which civilization has invested sexual interest.

Tess does move up the evolutionary scale for her last encounters with animal victims. Indeed, the woman who "never could bear to hurt a fly or a worm" ends up doing violence to the animal that supposes itself to be the highest of creation, the human being. In between the disaster of her confession to Clare and the murder of Alec comes the episode in the woods in which Tess is compelled out of mercy to kill pheasants wounded by hunters. This episode begins at dusk with a sexually suggestive confrontation between Tess and a man Clare had previously attacked for insulting her. While there may be the
threat of rape in any meeting between a solitary woman and man on a lonely road at
twilight, Tess’s recognition of that threat attests to her loss of innocence in sexual matters.
In fact, the man’s words are fairly neutral; however coarse the fellow might be, he says
and does nothing to give Tess clear reason for flight. Her experiences in life cause her to
perceive menace in any hint of the sexual, and indeed, possibly, to invent sexual threat
where it does not truly exist. Her seduction by Alec is of the nature of mischance, in that
the purity and power of her native sexuality happens to meet up with a man whose ideas
about carnal affiliation are shallow and weaker than her own. Clare’s condemnation has
inflicted upon her a view of the world in which sexual interest has the character of
predation. She connects sexuality with her own status as a victim. She escapes into the
woods, feeling herself a "hunted soul" (p. 313).

In the woods, of course, she finds real "hunted souls," the pheasants, but only after
she has spent one of what human beings consider their own "dark nights of the soul." "All
is vanity," Tess repeats to herself in the dark, and she probes her eyesockets to feel the
skull for a clue to death. The actual death of the pheasants does not harmonize with her
self-dramatizing martyrdom. At the very moment that Tess is wishing she were dead and
a bare skeleton already, the sound of the pheasants’ torments in death reaches her. The
luxury of pathos is denied these birds; they drop to the ground and struggle against death
without the solace of melancholy. Intellectually respectable as Tess’s reflections are, they
are chastised by the plight of the pheasants. The pheasants’ death impresses upon Tess
the falsity of her own tragedy, not just in mood but in origin. Her ordeal, she half-realizes,
is "based on nothing more tangible than a sense of condemnation under an arbitrary law of
society which had no foundation in Nature" (p. 315). This arbitrary law creates sexual
mores and sexual repression. If society and religion did not find sexuality a "blight" in
human nature, then there would be no tragedy for Tess. The pure animality of the
pheasants’ manner of dying discloses to Tess the baselessness of the judgements that have stigmatized her for her innocent physical passion.

Yet if Tess in her innocence could not have hurt animals, adversity to her life and love has attuned her to the tragic side of Nature which is death. Faced with the injury to Prince, the girlish Tess could think only of covering the wound with her hands and seeking hopelessly to save the horse’s life. Faced with the mortally wounded pheasants, the experienced Tess has gained the pragmatic strength to wring the necks of the suffering creatures. All the Christian compassion in the world could not previously have assisted Tess to perform the necessary act of killing the birds. Reason and moral belief would not have had the power to move the young Tess to violence against living beings. On the one hand, then, her education in grief has enabled her to out-nature Nature in pushing tragedy towards mercy, since Fate decrees that the pheasants must die in the course of time and Nature cannot hasten the process. Life, the living pheasants, asks of her that she find the moral courage to kill.

On the other hand, Hardy is acutely aware that the whole misfortune could have been avoided if the "civil persons" who shot the pheasants were civil all the time instead of reverting to the barbarism of the hunt in the autumn. Hardy presents the image of the hunters through the eyes of the innocent Tess:

She had occasionally caught glimpses of these men in girlhood, looking over hedges, or peeping through bushes, and pointing their guns, strangely accoutred, a bloodthirsty light in their eyes. She had been told that, rough and brutal as they seemed just then, they were not like this all year round, but were, in fact, quite civil persons save during certain weeks of autumn and winter, when, like the inhabitants of the Malay Peninsula, they ran amuck, and made it their purpose to destroy life--in this case harmless feathered creatures, brought into being by artificial means solely to gratify these propensities--at once so unmannerly and so unchivalrous towards their weaker fellows in Nature’s teeming family. (p. 315)

The estranged perspective of innocence highlights the incomprehensibility of the hunt. The human activity that has brought the pheasants to their unhappy condition is an anomaly within this novel. While Hardy charges the hunters with barbarism, he does not view the
hunt as closer to Nature than compassion towards animals. There may be a sense in which greater civility, and greater chivalry--to return to the theme of aristocratic heritance--would educate the hunters beyond the lust to kill. But Hardy's view of the natural, expressed in Tess's sensibilities, does not encompass aggression against animals. The hunt is an aberration coinciding with the "arbitrary law of society" which deems sexuality a biological curse. In the double-stroke of the episode with the pheasants, Hardy attempts to condemn both the less-than-civilized behaviour of the hunters and the unnaturalness of civilization's proprieties. The confusion within this attempt is cultural. Hardy does not mean us to pick and choose among natural ways of being, saying that sexuality is natural and lovely, while killing, though natural, is taboo. Modern culture cannot conceive of the holism that might bestow dignity upon both sexual passion and tenderness towards animal life. If Hardy does nothing more than indicate, through his own perplexity, the contradictoriness of prevalent belief, he has still reached deep into the problem of Nature and culture.

The subtitle of Hardy's novel designates Tess "a pure woman," pure all along, it seems, despite the talk of corporeal blights. She is, perhaps, too uncannily pure to negotiate society's contradictions. She is the conventionally pure woman as she suffers helpless sorrow and guilt over Prince's death. In that spiritualized sense that appeals to Clare's philosophy, she is pure when she kills the pheasants. Is she pure, though, as she treads on the snails in her sexually-aroused advance upon Clare? Unworldly in her response to the other animal victims, she seems to become one with the cruelty of the world when she yields to passion. The snails appear to tell us something quite different from Hardy's explicit statement that condemnation of sexual activity has "no foundation in Nature," for if sexual arousal shuts off sensitivity to fellow creatures, it is that sensitivity which has no foundation in Nature and not the abandonment of concern in favour of the gratification of personal desire. If Nature cares for animals, Nature would condemn
human sexuality because human sexuality causes cruelty to harmless creatures. The implications of the snails for Hardy’s philosophy are disturbing; they seem to put Hardy in league with the disapproving world that detects obscenity in any hint of the sexual. The subtext that follows the animal victims in Tess runs contrary to Hardy’s articulated belief. Evidently, where sexuality is concerned, the act of stating belief that opposes convention is not sufficient to overcome convention. Between Hardy’s statements and his animals, however, we at least get a full and honest expression of tangled human attitudes towards purity and animality.

Attitudes towards animals are not helped by the radical schism in the protagonists’ choices in human objects of sexual desire. The spiritual lovers presenting themselves to the protagonists line up so neatly against the sexual lovers in these stories that differentiation among the various novelists’ conceptions of sexuality relies upon degree and not kind. Writers subsequent to Hardy exaggerate rather than mute the dichotomy of persons established in Hardy’s novels, as we have seen already in Grove’s Settlers of the Marsh. It is as if they have become overwrought in the effort to put sexuality on some secure footing. With this exacerbation of already charged material, different kinds of violence against animals emerge. Mere accident such as Hardy depicts with Prince and with the snails disappears from the narrative, and human aggression takes its place. Relations with animals, more than human characterizations, show how each author marks the boundaries of his or her own domain of exploration.

Distinguishing Mary Webb’s Gone to Earth from Tess and Settlers of the Marsh is Webb’s attention to hunting. Hardy, of course, simply dismisses the hunt as a useless barbarity with no place in his moral universe. Even Alec d’Urberville, for all his faults, apparently does not hunt animals, or at least we never see him doing so and he seems too indolent a person to engage in such aggressive sport. In contrast to Hardy, Webb
complicates the issue of sexuality by making Hazel's sexual lover an avid hunter, particularly of foxes. As a further difficulty, her heroine surpasses Tess in tender feeling for animals: sympathy for the wild creatures is a theme of Hazel's life. She has, or should have, a long way to come to submit to Squire Reddin's amorous suggestions. An additional aggravation in Hazel of corresponding qualities in Tess is the fact that Hazel is not so much innocent about sexual matters as downright ignorant. She is four months' pregnant before she learns that she is going to have Reddin's child, but she has to be told she is pregnant by another woman. Even then, she fails to make the connection between sexual intercourse and pregnancy, complaining that Reddin has pulled "'a sneak's trick'" on her to "'make [her] have a little 'un unbeknown'" (p. 250). Hazel never does gain that transcendent view of the tragedy of life which Tess wins from her troubles. Webb's novel, as a whole, is less intellectualized than Hardy's. It is also more promiscuous, in a favourable sense, in that it is not at all embarrassed by inconsistencies. Gone to Earth alternates between frankly naturalistic observations and superstitious moral outbursts as indiscriminately as its heroine wanders between Jack Reddin's estate and the cottage minister Edward Marston keeps with his mother.

Christopher Nash, who uses Gone to Earth as a model for his discussion of animal motifs in the modern novel, asserts that "Hazel is an animal, [and] does perhaps represent the first instance in modern literature in which a true protagonist is more animal than human in the customary sense" (p. 43). This is a curious contention, because every post-Darwinian human being is an animal. Erika Duncan's introduction to the novel tells us that Webb had read The Origin of Species, among other books, with "great eagerness" (p. 7). Despite never having read Darwin, Hazel herself makes the point about humanity and the animals in response to Mrs. Marston's assertion that Foxy is "'only an animal'": "'So're you and me animals,'" Hazel declares (p. 100). This premise, along with methods
of denial and attempts at understanding, is precisely what gives the animal power in modern fiction.

It is interesting to contemplate, nonetheless, how Nash’s observation illuminates what Mary Webb is trying to establish with Hazel. Hazel appears to be an animal to Nash because of her Romantic connection with the woods, her empathy with weaker animals and her persecution by the righteous of the community. Nash centres upon Webb’s comment that Hazel possesses "the divine egoism that is genius" (p. 44 in Nash; p. 88 in the novel). Much of his analysis is directed towards defining this "genius of egoism." He finds himself forced to approach the problem of Hazel’s status as an animal through contrasts, with the two men she is attracted to, and with humanity as a whole. In describing Hazel’s misanthropy, Nash offers the following remarks:

"Humanity" is men [the species, not the people of that gender] in their abstract, organized cultural state—men seeing themselves as beings, rather than men being. Hazel is frighteningly misanthropic—if we insist on translating anthropos as a rational concept rather than as a living thing. So long as man insists on being a concept, a product of an elaborate system, rather than something living, there can be no contact between man and what is quintessentially living, the "principle of life itself." (p. 64)

Hazel is an "animal," then, in part because she does not exist for herself as a concept. Her "egoism" is meant to denote the seamless integrity of her "self" and her "being" in both the physical and spiritual sense. The "principle of life" Nash cites is mentioned in the novel in connection with Undern, Jack Reddin’s estate. At Undern, Webb writes, "the very principle of life seemed to slumber" (p. 29). Undern has an ill effect upon nature. Not only is the atmosphere of the place gloomy, but both its residents engage in unrestrained acts of aggression against animals. Jack Reddin, of course, hunts animals, but his dour man-servant Vessons is subject to more dangerous outbursts of crazed violence against small creatures. Maddened by the possibility that Hazel is to be established as mistress of Undern, Vessons spends a whole day pointlessly shooting robins, swallows, wrens, goldfinches, and sparrows. Undern, represents, therefore, the essence of
human malevolence against the "animal" Hazel is supposed to be. It is difficult, however, for Nash to state directly what Hazel's animality consists of as a positive state of being. He notes Webb's observation that Hazel "seemed to be an incarnation of the secret woods" (Gone to Earth, p. 54), and asks what that secret might be (Nash, p. 49). Unfortunately, the novel only provides mysteries in answer to Nash's question. Hazel reaches out to "something," something "vast, solitary, and silent," which people "stammer of . . . in words such as Eternity, Fate, God" (Gone to Earth, p. 53). Of crucial significance to Nash's reading of Hazel is Webb's comment that "the creeds of men are so many keys that do not fit the lock"--the "lock," presumably, which bars the way to culture's attempt to know and state specifically how the mystery of Nature is embodied in the animal. The best that Nash can say is that Hazel contains "a purpose, a place between the dark past and the dark future, to which no purely human concept gives a key. The key lies elsewhere, somewhere in the secret wood" (p. 50).

Romantic mysticism manifests itself plainly in Nash's exploration of his definite assertion that she is an animal. Whatever he means to designate with the term "animal," it is a wholesome alternative to human mores and dogmas. The novel, however, is not nearly as certain as Nash that the animal affirms everything that is good in Nature. Underneath attracts Hazel, after all; it locates some of the darker aspects of Hazel's character and itself speaks of mysteries remote from the creeds of righteous people. By an unromantic reading of the novel, Hazel could also be described as an animal in her ignorance, superstitiousness and inconstancy. Webb has been wise enough to add these culturally negative qualities into the mix that distinguishes Hazel from the human state as culture defines it. Sexuality lies at the heart of conflicting interpretations of Hazel's affinity to animals. Hazel is, at seventeen, as "sexless as a leaf" and in need of the "spiritualization of sex" (p. 16); Hazel has, not blood, but "volatile sap" in her veins (p. 163), which makes her a singular sort of animal indeed.
Whether her sexlessness and bloodlessness puts her in a category somewhat lower than animals, and the spiritualization of sex will lift her into the human condition, is a problem the novel tends less to reduce than to magnify. It is a serious problem, too, because neither sexlessness nor spiritualization represents the animal way of being. The tension within the novel's view of sexuality is part and parcel with its attempt to exclude violence from the habits of the natural animal. Because Webb has lent to the sexually attractive Reddin a lust to hunt, the elision of predatory drives and death in the natural and the good is more noticeable in this novel than in the others. All the same, Webb has chosen a notorious (to British sensibilities) predator, the fox, as Hazel's totem animal.

Hazel's beloved Foxy does kill chickens, but only backstage. She never appears with blood on her teeth, nor in attitudes of menace towards a weaker animal. Webb avoids the sensationalism of crunching bones and flying feathers, but she does so at a cost. After Foxy has stolen some chickens, Hazel remonstrates with her, "sadly but sympathetically":

"You was made bad. . . . You was made a fox, and you be a fox, and its queer-like to me, Foxy, as folk canna see that. They expect you to be what you wanna made to be. You'm made to be a fox; and when you'm busy being a fox they say you'm a sinner!" (p. 47)

It is only because Foxy's slaughter of the chickens occurs behind the scenes that Webb and Hazel can show this gentle tolerance of the fox's predatory ways. Hazel is supposed to be sensitized to the victimization of defenceless animals; she is supposed to have "a never-broken pact with all creatures defeated" (p. 229). The author cannot, therefore, confront her heroine with the mortal defeat of the chickens Foxy attacks. To do so would be to undermine further an already shaky ethical philosophy. Webb attempts to justify Hazel's terror of the hunting hounds, what Hazel calls the "death-pack": "It was not the killing that gives horror to the death pack so much as the lack of the impulse not to kill. One flicker of merciful intention amid relentless action would redeem it" (p. 185). Were Webb looking at Foxy closely, she would find also a "lack of an impulse not to kill." For the
novel's purposes, however, Foxy herself must be amenable to pitiable victimization. She must bear an "air of martyrdom" (p. 14), and must not evince a thirst for blood. For all the meaning Foxy is meant to convey, she is thus something of a disembodied animal, reflecting quaintness and beauty but not natural instinct. It is little wonder, therefore, that the novel equates wildness with the spirit of poetry.

Webb is frequently more sensible than her heroine, however, on the score of natural events. Hazel uses as a magical omen a flower that has appeared in the centre of a chemise left out overnight on Midsummer's Eve. Sleeping with this flower under her pillow, she dreams of Reddin, and Reddin it is, this flower tells her, who should be her lover. It should be noted that Hazel initiates, and follows, these superstitious rites, even though she is already married to Edward Marston. The decisive factor for Hazel amidst these portents is the simultaneously hopeful and wary conclusion that "Foxy wants [her] to go" to Reddin (p. 187). Webb interposes a tragically ironic, naturalistic explanation for the appearance of the flower: the magical sign "was no faery flower, but only a petal of blue milk-wort--little sister of the bracken--loosed by her own nervous hands the night before" (p. 187). Commonsense notwithstanding, Webb apparently wishes to leave in the realm of superstition the assertion about Foxy's participation in Hazel's decision. Now if Foxy were a natural animal, with the full complement of animal attributes, an instinct for mating in the fox might correspond to a similar instinct in Hazel and truly inform Hazel's attraction to Reddin. It does seem clear that, in spite of the fuss about portents and the later moralizing over the "crime" that Reddin has committed against Hazel, Hazel really wants to make love to the man. He excites her sexually in a way that her husband does not. While not wanting to deny Hazel's sexual desire entirely, Webb still needs to contend that Reddin has taken advantage of the young woman's innocence. Because Hazel must be a victimized creature of the wild wood, Reddin must, for contrast, be "the embodiment
of the destructive principle" (p. 169). Sexuality enters the story and naturalism goes out the window.

The novel's implicit claim to speak for the wild founders upon carnal intimacies. Strong in condemning the Christian community that in turn condemns Hazel's promiscuity, the novel equivocates over what might constitute healthy sexual expression. Webb draws the conventional distinction between body and soul. Hazel is spiritually drawn to Edward but physically drawn to Reddin (p. 232); Reddin's "crime" is that "he had made of a woman who could not be his spiritual bride (since her spirit was unawakened, and his was to seek) his body's bride" (p. 234). In castigating Reddin, of course, Webb cannot help but castigate simultaneously the physical longing for sex which reflects plain animal drive. As the following passage illustrates, this dilemma makes for conspicuous omission and vagueness when the novelist aims to be most candid:

That a woman should, in the evolution of life, cease to be a virgin and become a mother is a thing so natural and so purely physical as hardly to need comment; but that the immortal part of her should be robbed, that she should cease to be part of an entity in a world where personality is the only rare and precious thing--this is tragic. (p. 256)

The process whereby a woman "cease[s] to be a virgin and become[s] a mother" does "need comment" in this novel. Passing over that process has led only to obscure contentions about immortality and personality. Within Webb’s romantic conception of the animal, candor takes the form of repugnance for copulation and procreation. Any sort of candor on the issue of sexual intercourse takes courage, however, since intimacies kept deeply private leave those who want to speak plainly in a lonely position. Carping at Gone to Earth's peculiarities is rather ungracious. Still, the tangles Webb gets into are enlightening; they are tangles we would all face were we as frank as she.

Evidently, the pain of childbirth alarms Webb: "a woman must have an amazing genius if she is still a poet after childbirth" (p. 205), she remarks. The poetic spirit, as seen previously, is for Webb a definitive aspect of the wildness that enfolds the animal.
Thus it is because the "ever-circling wheels of birth, mating and death" (p. 257) are "nothing" to Hazel that the character can sustain Webb's image of poeticized and morally pure Nature. By means of affection for victimized animals, Hazel overleaps the grim business of sex and birth to become a sex-free mother. She is Foxy's "mam" (p. 33); she has been "mothering" some bees (p. 244) before Reddin throws them in the fire. Finally, she offers to be Edward's mother (p. 270) in place of Mrs. Marston who has left the home in disgust. The spiritual tenderness that legitimates Hazel's motherly relation to animals takes on an aspect of perversity when it extends to her mothering of her own husband, especially when she declines to have sexual relations with him. This unnatural development in the standing of husband and wife casts doubt upon the status of Hazel's mothering of the animals. Is that sentiment in her also unnatural? In recent times, it has become fashionable to propose that childless couples turn to animals as substitute children. This would-be shrewd piece of psychology appears remarkably innocent on comparison with Mary Webb's struggle for truth.

Several of the novel's major themes are swept together in one episode involving animal victims. A common event in stories of country life, this scene finds all the rabbits in a field of wheat huddled in one small stand of wheat in the path of the oncoming reaping-machine. Waiting for the last stand of wheat to fall and the rabbits to make a break for freedom are a crowd of rural folk. They carry heavy sticks in their hands. Hazel wants Jack Reddin to call the people off. She thinks about her sexual encounters with Reddin. The first time had been bad; there "had been many times since, in the grey-tinted room, that had been nearly as bad. But for evoking a shuddering, startled horror in her mind, nothing came up to that Sunday night [the first time]" (p. 253). Sexual intercourse, then, is explicitly associated with cruelty to animals, and specifically with the hunt.
This scene also occasions Webb’s clearest synopsis of the dichotomous possibilities for the place of God with respect to animals and society. Among the delighted yells of the people pursuing the rabbits, Hazel’s is the sole cry of opposition to the sport:

Hazel stood alone—the single representative, in a callous world, of God. Or was the world His representative, and she something alien, a dissentient voice to be silenced? (p. 253)

While this assemblage of concerns, of sex and death, nature and religion, is problematic enough, a higher pitch of difficulty is reached before the end of the episode. Hazel observes a single rabbit struck down in flight; she sees "the look of its eye, white and staring, as it fled past her with insensate speed," and then "its convulsive roll over and recovery under the blow; and then the next blow" (p. 254). The vision of the rabbit dying from wanton violence makes Hazel think about birth, and of the pain she has been told is ahead of her during childbirth. This combination of death and birth, pointless violence and pain in the necessary continuance of life, puts the novel’s themes beyond rational resolution. By the logic of this scene, accepting as natural the process of mating and birth naturalizes also the ugliness of the hunt. Pain becomes part of Nature or God’s plan for the world. Hazel’s efforts to protect animals from pain and death represent a denial of animal being.

Leave out the problem of sexuality and birth, and the novel is proof against the viciousness of Reddin and callousness of the God of the righteous. Hazel gives a cogent counter-argument to Edward’s faith in the kindness of God. God does not free animals caught in spring traps and crying out in desperation: "'What for dun He give 'em mouths so's they can holla,'" Hazel asks, "'and not listen at 'em. I listen when Foxy shouts out'" (p. 109). There may be no will to mercy in God, but there is a will to mercy in Hazel, and Hazel is attuned to Nature, while Christian believers are not. Good Christians are prominent members of the fox-hunt that ends the story; a clergyman rides with the hunters, a "large gold cross [bumping] up and down on his stomach" (p. 286). He carries
with him a Prayer-Book, the utter impotence of which is established with the violence of Hazel’s death. With Foxy in her arms, Hazel is chased by the pack of dogs over the cliff-side of a quarry. At the level of philosophy, Hazel dies to point out the murderousness of the sport. Both the murder and the Christian element differentiate the fox-hunt from Foxy’s appetite for blood. Foxy, at least, is not a hypocrite; the animal does not preach morality and practice evil. The violence of the fox-hunt is properly called cruelty; it epitomizes the hatred of Nature inherent in the Christian creed. The clergyman, Reddin and the rest are not behaving like animals. They are, in the novel’s evaluation, behaving like Christians.

If Hazel’s status as a natural being has wavered under the pressures of sexuality, she becomes a steadfast agent of wild nature in the circumstances of her death. Her attempt to rescue Foxy from being torn to pieces by the fox-hounds is unquestionably right. Tenderness is not out-of-step with Nature when Nature is threatened by human malevolence. The disembodied voice that cries "'Gone to Earth!'" after Hazel and Foxy have fallen to their death articulates the return to materiality of two kindred souls of Nature, killed by Nature’s enemies. Persecuted by the community, Hazel can remain the spirit of the wild driven back into a state of nature by violence. But add sexuality into the mix, and the agonized cry that closes the novel adopts a different irony. Incapable of tolerating the violence that attends the processes of life, Hazel has "gone to earth" in the only home for her soul, which is death. Too sensitive to live on earth, she achieves spiritual harmony with Nature only in becoming a victim like the animals she loves.

_Gone to Earth_ lurches its way thus towards a cosmology that incorporates sexuality and animals. Attempting to encompass both compassion for the animal and free sexual expression, the novel arrives at polarized cosmologies, one in which Nature ravages the sensitive flesh, the other in which Nature seeks to protect embodied beings from suffering. The aim of the novel has not been philosophical; the novel is philosophical only incidentally
to the unfolding of the narrative. But in the end, the tensions of narrative succumb to the need for cosmological explanation. The material, for all its apparent simplicity, will not rest comfortably in the narrative and cultural context. Webb has to look for reasons beyond culture to account for the difficulties sexuality and animal victims make for her. Finally, however, metaphysics cannot cope with the physical realities of sexual intercourse and ultimately breaks in two.

As the inconsistencies within *Gone to Earth* suggest, making peace with the physical side of sexuality is interconnected with acknowledgement of the totality of animal nature. Pitying animals and viewing them as, in essence, victims imparts to sexuality the structure of victimization. *Settlers of the Marsh* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* have in fact demonstrated the same phenomenon. Both of these novels, like *Gone to Earth*, steer sexual passion into the realm of tragedy. As we turn now to D.H. Lawrence's *The Fox*, we would hope to find a less tragic vision of human sexuality. Lawrence has the reputation, after all, of being the "priest of love." From his poetry, he is also known as someone who has a particularly heightened consciousness of the richness of animal life. In Anthony Burgess's assessment, Lawrence, as a writer, is unique in his "unpretentious sense of the sacredness of the world of beasts and reptiles, [and] willingness to give up his own raging ego . . . in an almost desperate desire for identification with pure being untortured by thought and feeling" (p. 119). With Lawrence's animals singly, one does see the full-blooded Romanticism that counters such spiritualized Romanticism as perplexes *Gone to Earth* and *Tess*. But even with Lawrence, the combination of animals and sexuality produces animal and human victims.

Perhaps the blame for Lawrence's lapse into convention resides with the "voices" of his "accursed human education," to quote the poem "Snake" (1921). In that poem, of course, the voices of human education determine simultaneously a nervous response to
snakes as snakes, and a neurotic response to snakes as phallic symbols. Mesmerized by the snake before these dictatorial voices tell him to throw a stick at the animal, Lawrence stands in free correspondence with this uncanny being from the underworld. In his novels, he strives to depict a similar pre-conscious state for sexual love. But given that narrative, in contrast to poetry, speaks in the voice of human education, Lawrence treads a precarious course with both the fox and sexuality in his novella *The Fox*.

Violence against animals is not a preordained aspect of Lawrence's world-view. When such violence occurs in his novels, protest is usually somewhere in evidence. In *Women in Love*, for example, Ursula's rage at Gerald's brutal treatment of the horse at the railway crossing ("Coaldust") represents genuine feelings on Lawrence's part. In *The Plumed Serpent*, as another example, Lawrence condemns the bloodlust of a crowd witnessing a bull-fight (Chapter 1). He describes the goring to death of a mild-tempered horse by one of the bulls. When the bull nudges out of the horse a heap of steaming entrails, the crowd applauds as if it has seen a fine flourish in an equal battle. But Lawrence makes it plain, in the "dumb incomprehension" of the dying horse, that the crowd's reaction is repulsive. As in *Women in Love*, a woman expresses opposition: Kate senses in the spectacle only "Human cowardice and beastliness, a smell of blood, a nauseous whiff of bursten bowels."

Lawrence's first novel, however, offers an exception to his general incorporation into his fiction of distaste for wanton aggression against animals. The main characters in *The White Peacock* are over-civilized. The novel as a whole reflects the influence of Victorian proprieties. Lawrence fights against those proprieties by means of several shocking scenes of violence against animals. He has the too-genteel Leslie participate in a hands-on pursuit of wild rabbits. Falling upon one rabbit, Leslie almost pulls its "head off in his excitement to kill it" (Chapter 5). Shortly thereafter, the farm-girl Emily demonstrates her distinction from the culturally-educated in-group by breaking the neck of
a wild dog. Lawrence presents readers with the "little jerks of the brute's body" as it dies (Chapter 6). These episodes intrude into the story with a clumsiness characteristic of fledgling writers. They articulate, nevertheless, a deep need to break away from the cultural snobbery of Victorian sensibilities. One aspect of those sensibilities Lawrence evidently wishes to overcome is the tender-hearted response to animals. As he goes on to locate terms of authority for his own vision, he grows less fearful of tenderness. The act of honouring the animal ceases to threaten his unique understanding of animal nature. In *The White Peacock*, he needs to utter indirectly, through the gamekeeper Annabel, the moral edict to "'Be a good animal'" (Part 2, Chapter 1). By the time he writes *The Fox*, he has gained sufficient appreciation of what it means to "be a good animal" to have become less defensive about the animal challenge to civilization.

Before moving on to *The Fox*, however, I wish to pause to consider one instance of violence against animals perpetrated by Lawrence himself. He writes about this incident at length in the essay "Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine" (1925). He struggles, in fact, to justify having shot a porcupine. Argument in support of shooting the porcupine notwithstanding, the guilt Lawrence feels is naked to see. He does protest too much, much as Mary Webb does. It is almost unnecessary for Lawrence to inform us that he had never before in his life "shot at any live thing." Guilt leads him to self-revealing extravagance: the porcupine's tail is "repulsive"; it waddles with a "bestial, stupid motion" and makes "squalor," just as "all savagery has a touch of squalor, that makes one a little sick at the stomach." In sum, the porcupine is "repugnant" (p. 460). It is not the least bit like Lawrence to use the language of disgust on animals. Lawrence maligns the porcupine because he dislikes what he has done. He fears the porcupine, either in advance of, or after the shooting, or both, because he wants to believe that the animal has forced him to kill its innocent, lumbering self. Although he does not say so outright, Lawrence's act is, to him, "repulsive" and "stupid"; he himself has brought on his own nausea. In fact,
shortly after verbally abusing the porcupine, Lawrence bestows the selfsame adjective, "repugnant," upon guns and his previous half-hearted experiences in firing guns at targets (p. 464).

But as if this blatant projection were not bad enough, Lawrence feels compelled to elevate the nasty incident to a fact of the cosmos. "If the lower cycles of life are not mastered," he says, "there can be no higher cycle." (p. 467). Nature is based upon a hierarchy of dominance; tautologically, the "lower" animals are those that are preyed upon by the "higher" ones. A snake is "higher" than a butterfly because the snake can devour a butterfly. Consequently "Life is more vivid in a snake than in a butterfly" (p. 468).

And of course, it follows that because human beings can subjugate all the rest of creation, life is most vivid in human beings, or at least in those races of human beings that can subjugate other races. Here we find precisely the type of declaration that causes some people to denounce Lawrence as a Fascist and bigot--set down heatedly on paper all because he has done what others do without an instant's thought: shoot an animal pest. "One must be able to shoot," he remarks defensively, and furthermore "I, myself, must be able to shoot, and to kill." (p. 464). Lawrence is manifestly incapable of blithely shooting animals. The porcupine masters Lawrence; and Lawrence erects a cosmology of superior vividness to recuperate from the blow to his self-possession. One of the ironies of this rationalization is that, in his unhappiness, Lawrence has turned to the voices of his human education for his hierarchy of dominance.

In view of the vastly excessive denial Lawrence practices in "Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine," it will seem odd now to apply to him Richard Foster's praise of him as demonstrating a "fierce integrity" (p. 325). "Fierce integrity," nonetheless, is the right phrase for characterizing Lawrence's inability to conceal his true feelings behind a mask of objectivity. He may have been in a foul mood when he wrote the essay; he may have been fighting with Frieda, or having a bout with his "bronchials" that led him to doubt his
virility. More likely he was simply suffering pangs of conscience over killing the porcupine. But whatever the explanation for this singularly uncalculated discourse, it is clear that there is a fully reacting person behind Lawrence's words. Lawrence does not adopt that intellectual distance which produces often speciously coherent philosophies. He says what he has to say unguardedly. Integrity, then, or guilelessness, is the quality that permits Lawrence to offer the following unadorned thoughts on a dead mountain lion as poetry:

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And I think in this empty world there was room for me
   and a mountain lion.
And I think in the world beyond, how easily we might
   spare a million or two of humans
And never miss them.
Yet what a gap in the world, the missing white frost-face
   of that slim yellow mountain lion!
(“Mountain Lion”)
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Both the poem and the essay communicate authentic emotion, as disparate as the expressed attitudes towards animal victims may be. The plain speech of the poem expresses unromanticized regret over the death of the mountain lion. The essay, too, aims for an unromantic conception of the animal, a conception that would invalidate the guilt Lawrence feels. It is apparent, moreover, that the potent effect the porcupine has upon Lawrence's imagination has very little to do with pity. He honours animals without falling into sentimentality.

Given the mess Lawrence makes of killing the porcupine--he aims badly and has to finish the job with a stick--it is ironic indeed to find him expounding upon the will of the hunter in *The Fox*. The hunt, he says, is "like fate":

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Your own soul, as a hunter, has gone out to fasten on the soul of the deer, even before you see any deer. . . . It is a subtle, profound battle of wills which takes place in the invisible. . . . It is your own will which carries the bullet into the heart of your quarry. The bullet's flight home is a sheer projection of your own fate into the fate of the deer. It happens as a supreme wish, a supreme act of volition, not as a dodge of cleverness. (pp. 130-131)
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It is ironic, further, that this talk of wills and fate is nowhere in evidence when Henry actually shoots the fox. There is, rather, a simple "dodge of cleverness": Henry calculates where the fox will enter the chicken-house and shoots:

[T]here was the awful crash of a gun reverberating between the old buildings as if all the night had gone smash. But the boy watched keenly. He saw even the white belly of the fox as the beast beat his paws in death. (p. 147)

The description of the hunt applies, not to Henry and the fox, but to the sexual interplay between Henry, Nellie March and Jill Banford. A different context causes the night to go "smash" with the death of the fox, and that is the "spirit of place" created by English civilization:

[S]uddenly it seemed to [Henry] England was little and tight, he felt the landscape was constricted even in the dark, and that there were too many dogs in the night, making a noise like a fence of sound, like the network of English hedges netting the view. He felt the fox didn't have a chance.

He knew the fox would be coming. It seemed to him it would be the last of the foxes in this loudly-barking, thick-voiced England, tight with innumerable little houses. (p. 146)

The will of the civilized has already negated the fox in the English landscape. The rural values Nellie and Jill attempt to uphold in their farming venture would necessitate the death of the fox. By those values, the fox is an "evil" and a "demon" (p. 115) for stealing chickens. The greater evil for Lawrence, however, is the tight civilization that eliminates foxes, in fact and in consciousness, without ever confronting either the sacredness of the fox or the blood from its death by violence. In Gone to Earth, the hypocrisy of the civilized is shown in the fox-hunt, as it would be for Lawrence had the fox-hunt fitted into the vision in The Fox. In The Fox, the cruelty of civilization takes less dramatic and more insidious form than the fox-hunt. Civilization annihilates the animal bloodlessly, placidly maintaining the fiction of its transcendence of violence while steadily overrunning the physical and psychic territory belonging to the fox. Civilized sentiment which opposes the unacknowledged aggression of civilization would doubtless have dramatized mightily the
death of the fox, would have entered its soul for a full-scale presentation of pain, or launched into moral outrage of some sort. Lawrence is aware that natural animal death is not attended by a chorus of mourners. The subtlety of the fox’s death in his novella inherently counters civilization’s fraudulent grief.

It is, however, somewhat hypocritical of Lawrence to attempt to transplant the fox’s significance to the sexual relations of Henry and March—and less hypocritical of him to show the failure of those relations. March’s submission to Henry has irritated feminist critics. Kate Millett suggests that The Fox depicts the typical male fantasy of "anaesthetizing the bride" (p. 265). Anne Smith charges Lawrence with retrograde belief: "the semi-comatose acquiescent stupor of March at the end of The Fox," she argues, "presents woman as the 'gentle domestic beast' of the Victorians" (p. 45). Due attention to the meaning of the fox undermines the premise that March does finally surrender her being to Henry; and while feminists might still be angered at the association of the woman with the animal, from Lawrence’s perspective the animal is a good deal wiser than the human male. Henry turns out in the end to be a whiny, self-important "boy" who does want from his wife the ego-submission that rightly incites women readers to rejection. Lawrence himself has no fondness for the subjugation of women; in his "Study of Thomas Hardy" (1914), he criticizes Christianity for approving of women who "are not Female in any real sense," for worshipping "the Female as she is passive and subjected to the male" (p. 482). March’s lethargy comes not from submission to the importunate male, but from the death of "the last of the foxes." Her friendship with Jill had sustained her in the frisson of making a life on civilization’s terms. She gains artificial energy from playing the man in society’s threadbare understanding of gender roles. The fox was teaching her a kind of alertness that exists fully outside civilization’s nervous vigilance. Henry proves not to be a substitute fox, and thus March languishes for want of animal wakefulness in her world. She is not, then, a "gentle domestic beast," but a woman who has seen what it
means to be untame and has not yet determined how she is supposed to live with that
vision. Political critiques miss the point: dogma cannot lift Nellie out of apathy that has
originated in civilization's suppression of values represented by the fox.

At the time of writing The Fox, Lawrence is honest enough to admit, by omission,
that his conception of unromanticized sexual intercourse stands beyond his imaginative
powers as an artist. Whereas Hardy closes the door discreetly on Tess and Alec, and
Mary Webb peeks in upon Reddin and Hazel to find only horror, Lawrence has infused too
much animal energy into his story for sexual relations between Henry and Nellie to be
anything other than a disappointment. The preliminaries to sexual intercourse are already
overcharged. On Henry’s part, just the thought of Nellie’s breasts beneath her clothes
seems "like some perilous secret" (p. 155). To Nellie, one brief kiss from Henry seems to
"burn through her every fibre" (p. 140). The "deep, heavy, powerful stroke" of Henry’s
heart feels "like something from beyond, something awful from outside, signalling to her"
(p. 160). From the start, she identifies Henry with the fox and feels at peace in his
presence: "she need not any more be divided in herself, trying to keep up two planes of
consciousness. She could at last lapse into the odour of the fox" (p. 125). The images of
burning and signalling come from a dream she has in which the fox sings to her outside
the house, and then burns her mouth in brushing its tail across her face (p. 126). The
strange mastery Henry initially commands over her consciousness originates also with the
fox. Intent upon shooting the fox, Nellie comes face to face with the animal in the woods:
"And he knew her. She was spellbound--she knew he knew her. So he looked into her
eyes, and her soul failed her. He knew her, he was not daunted" (p. 116). How Henry is
to reproduce this wild animal knowingness in love-making is a matter too strained for
physical reality to bear.

All the same, the aspect of victimization in The Fox does not seem to stem from the
author’s frustration at failure to assimilate sexuality into a coherent world-view. What
looks like victimization—the burning, the surrender of conscious self-control—is supposed to be incorporated into a sexually-charged vision of life. Sexually repressed and sexually repressing, Jill Banford is almost an archetypal victim. She is pale, near-sighted and physically incompetent; the others ignore her pathetic attempts at commanding authority. She stands, nonetheless, for the despotism of English distaste for sexual expression. She must die, narratively speaking, to free Nellie’s sexual being from the tyranny of civilized neurosis. The fox, too, must die, to give Henry a chance of his own against Nellie’s will. Unfortunately, Henry is unequal to the challenge, since dead or alive, the fox instills in Nellie a knowledge unassailable by any male conceivable within the terms of the story. Tight little England definitely needs living foxes for psychic health; Nellie’s animal-initiated consciousness does not depend upon the living, individual fox. The fox’s pelt provokes the same wonder in her as its sentient gaze has done. The feel of its fur causes her to quiver; lucid details of the head remind Nellie that the fox’s snout and teeth are made to "thrust forward and bite with, deep, deep, deep into the living prey, to bite and bite the blood" (p. 149). Henry has shot the fox, but cannot claim for himself the fox’s power over life. Henry’s mastery (and Lawrence’s, for that matter) reaches only as far as the exercise of will over pathetic beings like Jill Banford. Pathos is Jill’s domain; she is the one who pities the fox, who looks like "a poor little sick bird" (p. 141), whose crushed neck and head is "a mass of blood, of horror" (p. 174). She is a victim as Frederick Philip Grove’s Jock is a victim, as Hardy’s pheasants and Webb’s rabbits are victims, as, finally, Clara Vogel, Tess herself, and Hazel Woodus are victims. The cultural repression of sexual passion that has produced all these other victims, Lawrence seeks to concentrate in the figure of Jill Banford. The fox is his one clue to sexual power which exists outside of the cultural disavowal embodied in Banford. He successfully removes the emotional freight of victimization from the fox. But he cannot do the same for genital sex between a man and a woman. He can only leave Henry unsatisfied and Nellie sinking into apathy.
Jill Banford's death calls attention to the fact that bodies have been dropping with fair regularity in these stories. The killing in *The Fox* stands out from the other deaths in part because it seems as if, in Mark Spilka's words, Lawrence has "sanctioned murder in defense of the life-morality" (p. 199). It could be argued, contra Spilka, that the "life-morality" is the very quality in *The Fox* that ensures that Jill Banford's death will be disquieting to conscience. That most of the human victims in these stories have been women is not the telling point, although that is a side issue that would certainly be worth pursuing. It is odd, rather, that the assault on bodies in the other novels passes by as somehow natural, while the murder of Jill Banford is likely to excite indignation. One does not want to believe that the difference originates in approval of the killing of those who are sexually alive, for Clara Vogel, Tess, Alec and Hazel Woodus are clearly sexually responsive, where Jill Banford represents the forces in culture that make copulation distasteful. The difference resides, I think, in Lawrence's heightened sense of the body in general, for all the excess he builds into physical sensations. However frigid and pathetic Jill Banford might be, she is not spiritualized as the other victims are. There is in *The Fox* no over-arching tragic vision to naturalize unnatural death.

Even Lawrence, however, cannot let the animal go free. For all four authors, the image of the animal living happily at large in the countryside simply will not accord with human sexual ordeals. The benign setting, in contradistinction to the wilderness or the city, should guarantee narrative friendliness towards animal life. But the selfsame failure to affirm unromanticized sexuality, under cultural conditions that simultaneously demand and prohibit such affirmation, results in failure also to sanctify animal existence. The stories instead end up sanctifying the animal victim. The tenor of violence against animals is, of course, muted relative to the cruelty we have seen in, say, *Tarka the Otter*, *The Great Auk*, and "Tobias Mindernickel." As discussion in the following two chapters will show, the violence associated with sexuality is subdued on comparison, also, with the cruelty
which occurs under the authority of myth and aesthetics. As narrative strives for reconciliation with the animal reality of the sexual act, it at least tempers aggression against non-human animals. The modern attempt to overcome centuries of disownment of sexuality runs parallel with the attempt to understand animals. Although the periodic meeting of these separate paths leaves behind animal corpses, sympathy for the struggling human being does extend to the point of laying the animal victim to rest quietly.
CHAPTER V
MYTH, DISILLUSIONMENT AND ANIMAL VICTIMS:
MODERN VARIATIONS UPON ANIMAL SACRIFICE

Theories about myths, their purpose and meaning, have proliferated since the middle of the nineteenth century. As G.S. Kirk explains in *The Nature of Greek Myths* (see chapters 3 and 4), myths have been seen variously as rationalizations for ritual, as attempts to humanize nature, as proto-science, as charters for social conduct, as mechanisms for overcoming contradiction, and as transmogrifications of the infantile and irrational in the human psyche. Each theory strives to elucidate the quintessential features that will unite the great diversity of myths known to contemporary historians and anthropologists. All theories presume, at base, that current ways of knowing the world permit objective analysis of myth. Modern culture assumes that while certain myths may survive, culture has intellectually transcended the myth-making habit of mind. According to Paul Ricoeur, culture has detached itself from myth by means of historical understanding; Ricoeur states that "In one sense, [modern man] alone can recognize myth as myth, because he alone has reached the point where history and myth have become separate" (p. 161). The theory of evolution also enters into the detection of myth as myth, since evolution generates a picture of the prehistorical past which supplants those pictures created by myth. The empirical attitude explicitly defines itself by its opposition to the metaphysical devices of myth: "Happy is the man," Mathew Tindal wrote in 1730, "who is so far, at least, directed by the Law of Reason, and the Religion of Nature, as to suffer no Mysteries, or unintelligible Propositions, no Allegories, no Hyperboles, no Metaphors, Types, Parables or Phrases of an uncertain signification to confound his understanding"
"Science is the critique of myths," W.B. Yeats remarks, adding that "There would be no Darwin, had there been no Book of Genesis" (Levin, p. 114). Whatever the analytical strategy for divorcing modern consciousness from myth, ours is an age that has greater faith in theories of myth than in myths themselves.

This assumption that the modern mind has outgrown mythic persuasions is crucial to understanding the tensions inherent in post-Darwinian fiction that unites myth and the animal victim. Of all the phenomena that myth tackles, the animal is the most impervious to contrary imaginative approaches. When stories are told about animals, the residue of myth clings to the representation of those animals. For many centuries, the tale of the animal was relegated to that inferior mythic form, the fable. The totemic animal of primitive myth devolved into the personified animals of moral tales, as are found in Aesop's fables, or of trickster stories like those generated around the figure of Reynard the fox. Natural history demotes fables to the status of tales for children, but natural history has also had difficulty in producing credible stories about animals, as we have seen in tales of the animal victim in the wild. Why do modern writers bother, then, to attempt the animal story? It looks as though empirical modes of thought encompass animals satisfactorily; empiricism appears, moreover, to render the animal immune to story-telling. The modern writer, however, is justifiably suspicious of the adequacy of empiricism's interpretation of animal life. To leave the animal in the hands of science, and continue to weave stories out of human situations, is to reinforce the outdated dichotomy of human and animal experiences. The idea of continuity between human and nonhuman animals demands the inclusion of animals in the creation of fiction. But whereas humans have history out of which to construct narratives, the natural animal seems to have only myth to legitimate its place and meaning in culture. Thus the author who incorporates animals into fiction is caught between two formidable sources of doubt: doubt as to the competence
of natural history to articulate the significance of the animal, and doubt as to the value of myth in expressing the truth of the animal.

This chapter focusses upon four distinct ways in which modern authors have brought myth and the animal together in their stories. Gustave Flaubert's *Salammbo* and "The Legend of St. Julian Hospitator" illustrate the first way, which is to draw modern sensibilities back into the mythic mode. Both stories, in fact, pursue myth in so obsessive a manner as to produce nausea. Flaubert's representation of Roman and medieval times omits the objective point of view which detaches myth from history. Flaubert offers no avenue of intellectual escape from the suffocating decadence of his stories. He also produces quantities of animal victims in the process of reconstructing bygone mythic consciousness. From Flaubert, discussion takes a leap into analysis of the unhesitating suspicion of myth expressed in John Updike's "Pigeon Feathers." Animal victims, pigeons in this case, provide a lever for prying consciousness away from conviction in myth. While the boy in "Pigeon Feathers" uses the pigeons to reify the Christian faith over which he was having doubts, Updike uses the pigeons to establish the mythic, and hence fallacious, state of Christian teaching. Like Updike, Timothy Findley condemns human uses of Christianity in *Not Wanted on the Voyage*. He is particularly angry with the patriarchal system which endorses violence against women and animals. Unlike Updike, however, Findley employs the vibrancy of the mythic form to demonstrate what modern culture has lost with the disappearance of myth. This typically modern nostalgia for the potency of myth also informs William Faulkner's *The Bear*. By spiralling backward through the history of one American family, Faulkner hopes to restore mythic qualities to the transitional phase in American life that saw the freeing of black slaves. His history is framed, at the beginning, by the ahistorical myth of the bear hunt and, at the end, by the collapse of the hunting myth into a deeply embittered vision in which the hunter who slew the bear meanly guards some squirrels he wants to shoot. These stories exemplify various
stages along the spectrum of modern attitudes towards myth, from the sickening descent into myth in Flaubert to an equally sickening fall out of myth in Faulkner. Some preliminary remarks on myth in general are necessary to place the animal victims in these stories in the proper context.

The context for discussion of myth and the animal in this chapter is established by historical assumptions and attitudes rather than by definitions. Of course, definitions are helpful, and a general sense of definitional congruity does emerge from examination of attitudes. But whatever definition one employs has a provisional quality arising from the multiplicity of dispositions informing the modern view of myth. The basic definition offered by the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, for instance, reflects only one side of contemporary opinion. According to the dictionary, myth is "a purely fictitious narrative usually involving supernatural persons, actions or events, and embodying some popular idea concerning natural or historical phenomena." In this definition, one hears the voice of the scientist behind the words "purely fictitious," and the elitism of the scholar behind the words "popular idea." Other definitions are less skeptical. As a starting point for his discussion of myth, Jerome S. Bruner offers the elaborate definition proposed by Richard Chase:

Myth is an esthetic device for bringing the imaginary but powerful world of preternatural forces into a manageable collaboration with the objective [i.e., experienced (Bruner's insertion)] facts of life in such a way as to excite a sense of reality amenable to both the unconscious passions and the conscious mind. (Chase in Bruner, p. 276)

Typically modern reservations are still in evidence in Chase's definition. The "world of preternatural forces" is "imaginary," and myths are seen merely to "excite a sense of reality" instead of expressing reality. Nevertheless, this definition does touch upon neutral elements that occur in many attempts to understand myth. For one thing, myth is usually understood as an "esthetic device," most often as a "story" of some sort. For another, the intention behind myth is generally conceived of as an effort to effect accord between world
and mind. The idea of "story" may be at odds with the instantaneous harmony hoped for from mythic utterance, but these two components—narrative and an aim for unity—appear to be foundational to many definitions of myth. Unfortunately, these fundamental components leave most human constructions, from aesthetic constructions to scientific ones, susceptible to being described as myth. The idea that myths are fanciful seems to be essential to modern culture as a means of distinguishing myths from its own ways of establishing truth.

Animals bear the burden of the conflict between science and myth. Determination of the place of nonhuman animals in readings of human history strains between the continuity presupposed by evolutionary theory and the discontinuity presupposed by myth. The impression that humans once existed in an animal state of submission to the forces of nature initiates Joseph Campbell's depiction of one of the fundamental functions of myth. Campbell explains that

Traditional mythologies serve, normally, four functions, the first of which might be described as reconciliation of consciousness with the preconditions of its own existence. In the long course of our biological prehistory, living creatures had been consuming each other for hundreds of millions of years before eyes opened to the terrible scene, and millions more elapsed before the level of human consciousness was attained. Analogously, as individuals, we are born, we live and grow, on the impulse of organs that are moved independently of reason to aims antecedent to thought—like beasts: until, one day, the crisis occurs that has separated mankind from the beasts: the realization of the monstrous nature of this terrible game that is life, and our consciousness recoils. In mythological terms, we have tasted the fruit of the wonder-tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and have lost our animal innocence. (pp. 138-139)

Imagining the origin of myth against an evolutionary backdrop, as Campell tries to do, has obviously had a less than happy effect upon the conception of animals. Animal innocence has become brutish participation in "the monstrous nature of this terrible game that is life." In Campbell's description, there is little sense that humans were ever part of the ferocity that characterizes pre-mythical existence as he views it. The grand gesture of "hundreds of millions of years" is obviated by the necessity for moral consciousness in the
perception of these eons of "terrible" killing and consuming. The "preconditions" Campbell mentions are hardly the same as those upon which the evolution of our species is predicated. For Campbell, humans become humans at the time they split off from the animal kingdom. Myth, in this reading, speaks not of reconciliation with animals but of reconciliation with the distinctiveness of the human species. Why we should need to be reconciled with the qualities that have always been the source of inordinate pride is a question Campbell sidesteps; he simply shifts discussion into the mythological characterization of the event that divides humans from nature as a "fall." It is interesting, though, that the pivotal moment at which myth supposedly emerged has this double-faceted significance, articulating at once humankind's rise into moral superiority over the beast, and humankind's fall out of the native state of grace still possessed by the amoral animal. In any event, it is apparent that pitting myth against evolutionary history is of dubious benefit to the animal.

The idea of evolution is not especially kind to myth, either. Explanations for myth which followed immediately upon circulation of Darwinian theory disparage the myth-making disposition, seeing it as a result of pre-scientific and pre-religious responses to the world. Applied to recorded history, evolutionary theory provided justification for viewing myth as an ancient phenomenon out-distanced by the epistemological advances of modern culture. Evolutionary progress in cultural history placed the nineteenth-century theorist in a confident position of superiority over the myth-making savage. Scientific and historical world-views permitted the detection and analysis of myth as either bad science or bad history. Myths were seen as irrational, as the clumsy attempts of the primitive mind to comprehend and communicate facts of life that are lucidly intelligible to modern philosophers and scientists. The nadir in evaluation of myth was reached in Max Muller's well-known comment that myths represent nothing more than "the disease of language" (p. 12). The aboriginal mind, Muller speculated, perceived meteorological events which
were then corrupted into tales of gods and spirits in the linguistic transmission of those events.

Andrew Lang took on Muller's disease theory but was not much kinder to myth. Observing that not all myths are nature-myths, as they would have to be in Muller's theory, Lang proposed that myths do explain aspects of the natural and social world. He admired the founding spirit of myth, which he saw as religious, but condemned myths as the corruption of that founding spirit. To him, myths were a later phase in the history of human thought and exemplified the enduring human fondness for entertainment: "the religious conception [Lang writes] rises up from the human intellect, in one mood, that of earnest contemplation and submission; while mythical ideas rise up from another mood, that of playful and erratic fancy" (in Eliade, "Myth," Dictionary of the History of Ideas, vol. 3, p. 309). Animism is an emphatic evil for Lang: "every known kind of degeneration in religion," he states, "is inevitably introduced as a result of the theory of Animism" (Myth and Religion, p. 291). It is natural that Lang should loathe animism: he is trying to defend Christianity. Lang, and others who posited the primacy of religion and the decadence of myth, were attempting to salvage Christianity from being dismissed as one myth among others. Anthropological studies of myth were discovering events and figures in primitive narratives uncomfortably akin to features of Christian stories. Since science was the modern thinker's instrument for isolating myth from truth, religion was clearly in danger of becoming a story rather than a system of true belief. The attempt to rescue specific religious belief was largely unsuccessful, but myth did receive better treatment as post-Darwinian hypotheses were challenged and further explored.

Nineteenth-century theories that discredit myth have nevertheless left their mark upon present-day responses. A fundamental aspect of modern attitudes is revealed in the common mistake that interprets the word "myth" as a synonym for the word "lie." Despite being informed time and again of the erroneousness of this equation, the modern
person is likely to experience an ingrained and automatic mistrust of anything he or she hears described as myth. Indeed, the term "myth" is often applied to destructive beliefs in modern life, as in Lewis Mumford's observations about the "myth of the machine" or the pseudo-scientific "myths" which Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski (pp. 92-94) find propping up totalitarian ideologies. Myth can also be held responsible for the merely tawdry and tasteless, as when Gillo Dorfles attributes the kitsch gadgets and ritualistic trappings of men's clubs and popular cult figures to "a spurious mythagogic projection."

This mythagogic projection, Dorfles adds, "is almost always deplorable and ill-omened insofar as it is compulsory and heterodirected and gives rise to the fetishization and mystification of its own achievement" (p. 37). Dorfles does distinguish between the mythagogic and the mythopoeic which represents the healthy manifestation of the mythic spirit. It is easier, nonetheless, for the modern mind to perceive and condemn myth in its negative phase than to retrieve whatever benefits myth might have had for pre-modern culture.

Doubted or reviled, myths appear, even so, to retain abstruse insights to which reason would like access. There is a strain in modern culture which has a liking for what Gillian Beer describes as the "explanation-resisting quality of myth" (p. 121). Alienated from the selfsame epistemologies that enable analysis of myth, philosophers yearn for the holistic integrity of mythic consciousness. At times, modern life feels over-explained, and writers therefore deplore the loss of the mythic capacity to penetrate through rational discourse to the underlying connectedness of nature and culture. From the alienated perspective, current problem-solving strategies, such as those based upon economics or technology, seem to have only an abstract connection with actual experience. The mythic spirit challenges reason, disclosing the ways in which historical and scientific approaches to life have resulted in fabrications of truth rather than substantial realities. Myth could help to overcome that terrible doubt that our conceptions of life are manufactured, and
return us to the sources of reality beneath language and theorizing. Granted, the initial Romantic enthusiasm for a "new mythology" has become jaded in the course of time, and suffered the sobering effect of Fascist cultism. But hope remains for the power of myth to supersede rational epistemologies which have themselves become jaded.

Mircea Eliade, Carl Jung and Paul Ricoeur are three writers who look to myth for knowledge that transcends explanation. Eliade's comments on the creativity of myth reveal this hope for ever-refreshed understanding: "myths [he writes] describe the various and sometimes dramatic breakthroughs of the sacred (or the "supernatural") into the World. It is this sudden breakthrough of the sacred that really establishes the World and makes it what it is today" (Myth and Reality, p. 6). Carl Jung demonstrates similar faith in locating the sources of myth in the "collective unconscious," where the true mythic spirit still lives and from which the dynamic of mythic archetypes may still return to re-vitalize knowledge of life. Even a less eccentric thinker like Paul Ricoeur evinces trust in the intellectual strengths of myth. When, in The Symbolism of Evil, he speaks of the new potential for "conquest" of "the mythical dimension" (p. 162), he means only that modern philosophy can surmount the mythologizing that reached its peak in the nineteenth century and use myth in the "re-creation of language" (p. 349). "The dissolution of the myth as explanation," Ricoeur says, "is the necessary way to the restoration of the myth as symbol" (p. 350). Restoring symbolic power to myth reconnects language to fundamental human experience, so that that experience may be uttered instead of explained.

Perhaps it will have been observed from even this cursory survey of philosophically optimistic evaluations of myth that faith hinges upon an impression of the unifying force of mythical thinking. In Jungian theory, myth articulates the deep resources of all minds, and draws consciousness into accord with nature and with human history right down to its animal origins. Eliade may have less conviction than Jung in the abiding presence of mythic influence in consciousness, but he does not doubt the universal pertinence of the
underlying effect of myth as a general principle. For him, myth is not a faltering attempt to interpret the world; myth actually makes reality for the human mind. The kind of reality myth makes, in Eliade's judgement, may be inferred from the capital "W" he has bestowed upon the "World" established by the mythic apprehension of sacredness: mythic reality forges a large and creative World, not the little shop-worn world of everyday life.

Ricoeur, too, implies that, respected for its timeless symbolic significance, myth can bring the alienated consciousness into unity with the reality of the human condition. Although he deals with mythical treatments of the human sense of sin and guilt in *The Symbolism of Evil*, his aim is to show how myth subsumes and naturalizes the original impression of the imperfection of life: "the myth," he says, "makes the experience of fault the center of a whole, the center of a world: the world of fault" (p. 163). Furthermore, he writes,

> If myth-making is an antidote to distress, that is because the man of myths is already an unhappy consciousness; for him unity, conciliation, and reconciliation are things to be spoken of and acted out, precisely because they are not given.

(pp. 167-8)

Neither Ricoeur, nor Jung, nor Eliade simply genuflects to myth in the abstract; none of them posit unanalysed myth as an ideal. In this sense, they differ from philosophers of the Romantic school. Yet they differ also from the theorists of the decades immediately following the dissemination of evolutionary ideas. Myths are not, for them, quaint stories composed by primitive minds. They are not arbitrary impositions of faulty constructs upon a mystifying world. In their own intellectual way, these three writers seek to show how myth actualizes substantial unities between internal consciousness and the external world. In this sense, their theories suggest an alternate strategy to the biologically-based history of humankind's connectedness with nature. The evolutionary principle rationalizes humankind's progress away from biological accident and fate, but simultaneously returns ontological understanding of the human species to the authority of nature. Myths, in this account, are wholly fanciful tales projected onto nature and history;
they run contrary to the neutral unfolding of events, which is how evolution depicts mutability through time. Conversely, the new faith in myth aims to show how myth acknowledges the culturally-derived rift of the human species from nature. That faith proposes simultaneously, however, that myth points the way past the linguistic and ideational products of the rift towards the ontological integrity of human experience and the natural world.

The idea that there is a rift between culture and nature is critical to speculation about the standing of animals in myth. It could be argued that myths are the seminal attempts of primitive humankind to insert explanation between human experience and the ubiquitous powers of chaos. Chaos, as G.S. Kirk notes (p. 46), means "gap" in ancient Greek, and not "disorder," as we have come to use the term. Myth in its animistic phase, therefore, expresses the desire to anneal the gap between nascent culture and indomitable nature. But as myth evolves into polytheism and then monotheism, it reinforces the gap and comes to serve the interests of culture by isolating the human species as the focus of the creative spirit in the world. The history of myth follows the growth of human power over the rest of nature. The sense of the sacred withdraws from nature to concentrate upon human beings and their acts. Thus Judeo-Christian myth has all the elements in the universe created in a few days, with a few flourishes on the part of one omnipotent deity, and then quickly turns to the story of humankind's initiation into moral understanding. While the myths produced by animism frequently lend creative power to pre-existing animals, nothing much of interest to culture existed prior to humans by the time culture was generating monotheistic myths.

Monotheistic religion, however, precipitates its own demise in rationalizing human supremacy over the natural world. Religion paves the way for empirical detachment from nature, and survives upon the two remaining mysteries in nature that flummox human intelligence. Neither the origin of life, nor death, can be fathomed by empirical methods,
and so religion steps in to provide stories for the human spirit's fear of these dark regions at either end of its own personal history. The theory of evolution arrives now to remove the sense of the personal from life and death, and vastly expands the history that is of interest to humankind. An imaginable animal once again sits at the source of human existence; and personal death is troubled by the idea of natural selection which calmly consigns whole species to extinction. The neutralization of death is probably the primary reason that myth-making still appeals to modern culture. Humans do not wish to die like animals; it feels like a great injustice that a life vivified by culture should disappear meaninglessly. Modern re-enactments of myth are faced with the choice, then, of either asserting the sacredness of the death of individual animals or risking falsity in continuing to fortify the imagined gap between humans and animals.

Current definitions are more likely to see myth as a striving to close the gap between culture and nature, and not as the accomplishment of that closure. Myth is most alive in its intention to articulate the holistic vision, as the following remarks from Paul Ricoeur suggest:

The essential fact is that this intuition of a cosmic whole, from which man is not separated, and this undivided plenitude, anterior to the division into supernatural, natural, and human are not given, but simply aimed at. It is only in intention that myth restores some wholeness; it is because he himself has lost that wholeness that man re-enacts and imitates it in myth and rite. (p. 167)

The profundity of mythic intention would place myth at the summit of story-telling. In his search for a basic definition of myth, G.S. Kirk points out that myths are not only traditional stories, but stories that have "succeeded in becoming traditional" (p. 27). Stories win mythic status, therefore, by working upon perennial qualities of mind. Their power comes from active telling and re-telling, not from automatic revelation. A comment made by Bronislaw Malinowski enhances this sense of the vigorous purposefulness of myth: "Myth [he says] is . . . a vital ingredient of human civilization; it is not an idle tale, but a hard-worked active force; it is not an intellectual explanation or an artistic imagery,
but a pragmatic charter of primitive faith and moral wisdom" (p. 101). Myth aims beyond transience to the permanent and universal. In fact, it appears that the aim in myth is what excites the modern imagination. With its innocent but emphatic intentionality, myth opposes the empirical methods that go on churning out answer after answer to life’s mysteries. As the spirit of Romanticism implies, modern culture needs and wants from the natural world opposition to the seeming omnipotence of the powers of reason. Yet in the twentieth-century, reason has undermined Romanticism to the extent that trust in mythic consciousness now depends upon the intentions of myth rather than its achievement.

This is one reason that pagan animism cannot be retrieved in modern fiction. If animism does close the gap between animals and humans, then it does not truly represent present circumstances either in the real world, where animals are wholly dominated, nor in the world of the imagination, where myth always falls short of expressing the truth about animals. That science also falls short of expressing the truth about animals restores life to mythic renditions of modern ways of experiencing animal reality. There is always, however, an unbridgeable rift between narrative and animal reality, a rift which myth fails to cross, however wistfully it may gaze across at the unreachable animal. Myth does gaze wistfully at the animal, but narrative reflects skepticism and conflict. In terms of content, modern fiction cannot help but depict human dominance over nonhuman animals. Gestures towards animism negate monotheism’s censure of the animal, but myth cannot break through the reality of human dominance and empower animals. What myth can empower is the victimization of animals. Modern approaches to myth, that is to say, separate culture from dependence upon psychic oppression of animals. The incorporation of myth into narrative shows culture that the victimization of animals is not necessary to culture’s survival. In turn, as a product of narrative instead of a product of myth, the
animal victim destabilizes the mythic constructions that reinforce the rift between culture and nature.

Of the four writers discussed in this chapter, Gustave Flaubert is the most aggressive in his drive to force myth to break through rational explanation and mirror life in its totality. Of the stories discussed, his Salammbo and "The Legend of St. Julian Hospitator" contain the most animal victims, and the most sadistic violence against animals. No compassion occurs in these stories to castigate the violence against animals. No modern rationalism occurs to relieve the historical moment of the relentless oppression of oriental mysticism. A comment Flaubert makes during the composition of Salammbo reveals that, in writing the novel, he felt himself subjected to the tortures he was recording. The creation of Madame Bovary generated agonies, but none were quite as focussed as that which Flaubert depicts in his letter of December 19, 1858 to Ernest Feydeau. He is explaining his unhappiness at having to repeat a certain literary effect in Salammbo:

Clever writers would think up tricks to get out of the difficulty, but I'm going to plunge straight into it, like an ox. Such is my system. But how I'll sweat! And how I'll despair while constructing said passage. Seriously, I think that no one has ever undertaken a subject so difficult as regards style. At every line, every word, language fails me, and the insufficiency of vocabulary is such that I'm often forced to change details. It will kill me, my friend, it will kill me. No matter; it begins to be fun.

In short, I have finally achieved erection by dint of whipping and manipulation. Let's hope there's joy to come. (Selected Letters, pp. 198-199)

Many aspects of this statement merit comment, not the least among them being the masochistic metaphor which seems to represent a kind of fulfillment for Flaubert. With characteristic ardor and self-parody, he expands fussing over a minor literary problem into a matter of life, death, impotence and flagellation. He imagines that he is beating Salammbo out of his unliterary animal corpus. The right style, the style that will accurately convey life in ancient Carthage, equals an erection—not insemination, not
ejaculation or orgasm, as one might expect were Flaubert a Romantic writer, but the pre-creative stage in which fertilization or pleasure hang in suspension, awaiting the movement of the phallus. Few images could better reflect frustration with language, and the painful process of wrestling truth from language. No image could explain better why Flaubert piles up animal bodies in *Salammbô* and "St. Julian." He does not quite believe in his art; his body is an actual obstacle to artistic creativity and yields art only under torture. Neither does he believe in the sacred reality that myth is supposed to tap, although he wants to. The decadence of the myth content in *Salammbô* and "St. Julian" discloses Flaubert's disgust and his faith. He drives life to sickening violence to force life to reveal the holiness he doesn't believe in.

It is almost a pity to use Flaubert in this examination of animal victims. Outside of his literary works, he expressed fellow-feeling for animals. In one entry in his *Intimate Notebook*, recorded when he was barely out of adolescence, he observes that "There are days when the sight of animals fills me with tenderness" (p. 41). "At times," Flaubert says in a letter of 1845, "I look on animals and even trees with a tenderness that amounts to a feeling of affinity; I derive almost voluptuous sensations from the mere act of seeing--when I see clearly" (*Letters*, p. 32). "I attract mad people and animals," he notes in the same letter: "Is it because they sense that I understand them, because they feel I enter into their world?" (p. 33). In another letter, written in 1846, he says, "I am as sorry for caged birds as for enslaved human beings" (p. 49) He also writes in his *Intimate Notebook*, "I love to see humanity humbled. That spectacle cheers me when I am tired" (p. 49). These youthful expressions of misanthropy and of affinity for the animal metamorphose into violence as even the language of art fails to articulate the lucid sense impression of reality.

In his philosophical biography of Flaubert, Jean-Paul Sartre links Flaubert's feeling of tiredness with his sensitivity to the animal state. Sartre sees the child Gustave's
response to the household pets as foundational to the shaping of the novelist’s psyche. The family fiction, Sartre explains, was that Gustave was intellectually and verbally incapable. Gustave’s acceptance of that fiction manifests itself in affinity for the domesticated animal. Early in the biography, Sartre notes that "reality is the animality that cannot be decomposed, it keeps its silence" (p. 27). The young Gustave’s muteness begins to attain philosophical significance in the later experience of boredom which he shares with pets:

The experience of universal monotony [Sartre observes] he will later call ennui—with good reason; but "pure boredom with life" is a pearl of culture. It seems clear that household animals are bored; they are homunculae, the dismal reflections of their masters. Culture has penetrated them, destroying nature in them without replacing it. Language is their major frustration: they have crude understanding of its function but cannot use it; it is enough for them to be objects of speech—they are spoken to, they are spoken about, they know it. This manifest verbal power which is denied to them cuts through them, settles within them as the limit of their powers, it is a disturbing privation which they forget in solitude and which deprecates their very natures when they are with men. (p. 137)

Sartre’s analysis is eminently valuable in explaining Flaubert’s frustration with language and his awareness of the failure of culture to penetrate reality. The product of culture that broaches nature for humans is not language but ennui. The undomesticated animal embodies the hope for life without culture, without language. If Gustave the child felt like a "dismal reflection" of the adults who believed him to be simple-minded, and felt his "very nature" deprecated by his family, his art manifests striving for freedom from oppression. That striving also has reference to animals, as Sartre suggests:

Without culture the animal would not be bored—he would live, that is all. Haunted by the sense of something missing, he lives out the impossibility of transcending himself by a forgetful relapsing into animality; nature is discovered through resignation. Boredom with life is a consequence of the oppression of animals by man; it is nature grasping itself as the absurd end of a limiting process instead of realizing itself as biological spontaneity. If Gustave shares this nostalgia with the beast it is because he too is domesticated. (pp. 138-139)

"Biological spontaneity" is ruled out for Flaubert. Culture is ever an obstacle to nature. Flaubert can see and feel the silent reality of the animal; he can struggle to find words
that approximate reality in general. Ultimately, however, culture fabricates reality, and
the best that can be achieved is rage at culture.

Sartre locates the quintessential problem for Flaubert, the man and the artist, in a
story Flaubert wrote when he was fifteen years old. This story is about the life of an ape-
man, Djalioh, product of a scientist's experiment which has an orangutan mate with a
female slave. "It is clear that Djalioh," Sartre says, "represents Flaubert himself" (p. 21).
The narrative unfolds around the question of how to "situate Djalioh in society" (p. 20);
that question is complicated by the ape-man's inability to speak for himself. Djalioh can do
little more than utter a tremulous word or a sigh: "Whether it was a word or a sigh,"
Sartre quotes, "was of little consequence, but inside him there was a complete soul."
Another quotation from the story combines the Romantic responsiveness to nature of
Djalioh's soul with that ennui originating in the ape-man's failure to express the wholeness
of his soul in language:

"Often in the presence of forests, of high mountains, of the ocean, his soul
expanded... He trembled all over with the weight of inner voluptuousness and,
with his head between his hands, he would fall into a lethargic melancholy." (p. 22)

Sartre makes frequent reference to Quidquid volueris throughout his biography. Later, the
story comes in to explain Flaubert's interest in Pascal's understanding of post-lapsarian
humanity. "By his origin, in effect," Sartre notes in this context, "Djalioh, the son of a
woman, escapes the general essence which characterizes orangutans; the son of an ape, he
escapes what the young author believes to be human nature" (p. 201). Djalioh comes in
handy again, much later, as Sartre describes the double-sided skepticism of Flaubert's
response to ideology--his reaction to the materialism inherent in images of the dissection of
corpses, and his contempt for priestcraft's manipulations of spirituality. Djalioh's
linguistic difficulties predict Flaubert's refusal to accede to either ideology: Flaubert, Sartre
notes, "is wrong in Quidquid volueris when he refuses to give his incarnation, Djalioh, the
capacity to make 'logical connections'; it is not these connections that he lacks but the
determined, practical intention of using them to say yes or no" (p. 530). Djalioh is more than a convenient metaphor in Sartre's analysis of Flaubert. Djalioh is truly an "incarnation" of life experiences otherwise unamenable to articulation.

If Flaubert is sensitive to animal reality, if he has an affinity for animals and embodies his adolescent frustrations in a being who is half animal, why, then, does his fiction depict such gruesome violence towards animals? In his novel *Flaubert's Parrot*, Julian Barnes offers an answer to the observation that a lot of animals are slaughtered in Flaubert's stories:

He isn't Walt Disney, no. He was interested in cruelty, I agree. He was interested in everything. As well as Sade, there was Nero. But listen to what he says about them: "These monsters explain history for me." He is, I must add, all of seventeen at the time. And let me give you another quote: "I love the vanquished, but I also love the victors. . . . There is an earthquake in Leghorn: Flaubert doesn't cry out in sympathy. He feels as much sympathy for these victims as he does for slaves who died centuries earlier turning some tyrant's grindstone. You are shocked? It's called having a historical imagination. It's called being a citizen, not just of the world but of all time. It's what Flaubert described as being "brother in God to everything that lives, from the giraffe and the crocodile to man." It's called being a writer. (pp. 134-135)

Novelistic license is clearly in evidence in Barnes' explanation. Granted, Flaubert isn't Walt Disney; nor is he Thomas Hardy, or D.H. Lawrence, or John Steinbeck, or Henry Williamson, or Giorgio Bassani, or any of the other writers whose stories permit an untroubled empathic response to animals. That he has an "historical imagination" constitutes a partial excuse for confronting the reader with scenes of slaughter which doubtless occurred. That he is a writer and not a moralist also alters the task he has to perform as he surveys life. Yet Flaubert is not making a neutral choice among historical phenomena; where animals come into play, he is selecting periods in history and cultural conflicts that necessitate cruelty. This is not to argue that animals are all in all to Flaubert, that he chooses historical periods on the basis of whether or not he can display animals in torment. Still, there is a wide separation between his personal tenderness for animals and the slaughter that goes on in some of his stories. The sympathy he
supposedly feels for both human and animal victims is deeply troubled by sadism. As to the "victors" he supposedly loved, there are none in *Salammbô* and "St. Julian": bloodshed and torture wash out whatever sense of victory in battle there might be in *Salammbô*, and St. Julian's assumption into heaven collapses into the closing irony that the story is simply repeating depictions of St. Julian's life that appear on the stained-glass windows of churches. Myth makes these histories what they are, but Flaubert also perceives the unreality of myth. The violence comes from myth beating its head against the wall of nature. Flaubert concurs in the effort of myth to coerce meaning out of silence; he is willing to sink into the mythic mode to "get down to the depth of matter--to be matter," in the words that his St. Antony utters at the close of *The Temptation of St. Antony*. Still, one does not need the external knowledge of Flaubert's affinity for animals to see that the animals in *Salammbô* and "St. Julian," however oppressed and brutalized, do not submit completely to the mythic intention.

Anthony Thorlby has described *Salammbô* as "a kind of soundless scream, silent violence, sensations burningly intense yet quite abstract." Referring to the critical impression that the vision in *Salammbô* is static, Thorlby says that because the novel "does not move us in any human--let alone humane--fashion, all its violent action does not move at all; it is all aimless, except as aesthetic spectacle" (p. 483). If the reader were particularly sensitive, *Salammbô* might move him or her to revulsion, but that is beside the point. The novel does preclude humane sensibilities; the lavish decadence of the aesthetic spectacle, however, only bars the sentimental and romantic among human responses. Flaubert's attempt to reduce humanity to matter, to "open entrails, scattered brains and pools of blood" (*Salammbô*, p. 216), argues with the dazzling and sometimes ludicrous adornments the Carthaginians heap upon themselves for their religious ceremonies, even when their bodies are too emaciated to support the finery. Observing the ornaments of a crowd of priests attempting to worship Moloch at the height of the seige, Flaubert points
out that "nothing could have been more lugubrious than this silent crowd, with earrings swinging against pale faces, and golden tiaras encircling brows racked with atrocious despair" (p. 237). There is indeed some equality between the decorative items of worship and the hacked off limbs and burned torsos that litter the battlefield; one set of items produces the other. This is not to suggest, however, that religious zeal produces the corpses, or fear of violent death produces the engines and images of worship. Rather, the corpses and priestly artifacts represent conflicting sides in a characteristically Flaubertian quarrel with materialism and spirituality. All of these objects, corporeal and mystical, are swept up in neutrality. That neutrality might well offend those who want spirituality to conquer materialism, or materialism to conquer spirituality; but Flaubert refuses victory to either reading of life. Indeed, in a general way, as Kitty Mrosovsky observes in her introduction to *The Temptation of St. Antony*, Flaubert refuses "to regard human life as the most important fact in the universe" (p. 55). If one wants an epistemology that is indifferent to human life, science and history could qualify. Science and history are immune to the sympathies critics find lacking in *Salammbô*. But *Salammbô* is obviously not a work of science or of history; the extreme violence of the deaths and the inhuman extravagance of the trappings of worship make the novel something quite distinct from exercises in scientific or historical anatomization. Science and history don't exactly refuse "to regard human life as the most important fact in the universe," as Flaubert does. To make his novel art, he needs to surpass the trivially neutral in human experience; and he does so by extending battlefield injuries into a carnival of gore and intelligible myth into an orgy of garish symbols. Polarized merely, the conflict of materialism and spiritualism might lead to aesthetic stasis, but Flaubert drives his images into a progressively reckless refusal of human meaning to the body and to mysticism.

The elephants in *Salammbô* contain the historical struggle between rationality and myth. They participate in both the disease of decoration and the carnage. The 112
elephants Hanno equips for military service are loaded up with useless gear, which one would imagine would hinder their performance in battle. But since the people "cherished them, and no treatment was too good for these old friends," Hanno decks them out with bronze breastplates, adorns their caparisons with heavy purple material, and enlarges the towers the beasts are supposed to carry on their backs. He also has their trunks gilded (p. 93). Despite the weight of equipment, the elephants perform well; they storm the Barbarian troops, disemboweling soldiers and hurling bodies into the air, "so that long entrails hung round their ivory teeth like bundles of rigging on a mast" (p. 148). The elephants go a little too wild, in fact, and their drivers are forced to kill them with the mallets and chisels provided for that purpose. At an earlier point in the war, the use of elephants has backfired on the Carthaginians. The Barbarians send pigs soaked in oil and set aflame into the midst of the elephants, whereupon the elephants trample the Carthaginians with equal enthusiasm to that which marks their assault upon the Barbarians. Beneath the gilding and military display, they are democratic beasts, well-prepared in the heat of battle to crush any human body.

In his book *The Elephant in the Greek and Roman World*, H.H. Scullard confirms the importance of elephants in the victory of the Carthaginians. Noting first the comment by Polybius that this war "far surpassed any that I have ever heard of for cruelty and inhumanity," Scullard observes that "not the least among the factors that finally tilted the military balance in [Carthage's] favour was her possession of elephants, while the mercenaries had none" (p. 153). The sacred meaning of elephants, Scullard shows, is a later development, following upon centuries of useful service in battle. Scullard summarizes the process:

Thus, whereas Cicero, disgusted at the slaughter of the Circus, had felt that a bond of fellowship (*societas*) existed between the elephant and the human race, in later times the elephant had come to be associated with the gods, or at any rate with vague religious feelings which were wrapped up with the majesty of the emperor. (p. 259)
With respect to the elephants, Flaubert alters history in two ways: first, he has elephants worshipped already "as favourites of the Sun" (p. 135), and second, he has the horde of 112 elephants reduced to only one by the end of the war. Flaubert does mute the sacred significance of the elephants; he finds greater import, for history, in their terrifying effect in battle and, for himself, in that "bond of fellowship" which apparently occurs historically between the usefulness of the animal and the attribution of religious meaning.

At the mid-point of the novel, in a chapter on the Carthaginian general Hamilcar, Flaubert juxtaposes a grisly scene of human torture with tender sentiments for elephants. It is worth pointing out that, early in the chapter, Hamilcar has "tried to banish from his thoughts every form, every symbol and name of the Gods, the better to grasp the unchanging spirit hidden behind appearances" (p. 107). In this effort, he is an admirable character, though he participates fully and readily in the cruelty that permeates every aspect of life in this novel. Enraged by the memory of "hundreds of odious things" he had seen in battle, Hamilcar orders mass flogging and branding with irons for slaves and masters who had allowed the necessary work of flour-grinding and sword-making to deteriorate in his absence. Victims are flogged beneath the plane-trees; blood from the flogging "showered up into the foliage, and red shapeless masses howled as they writhed at the foot of the trees" (p. 134). Hamilcar turns from this scene to the elephant pen, where three lonely and maimed elephants survive, the others having died of wounds:

One had its ears split, another a large wound on the knee, the third had had its trunk cut off.
Interestingly, they looked at [Hamilcar] sadly, like rational beings; and the one who had lost its trunk, lowered its huge head, bent its knees, and tried to fondle him gently with the end of the hideous stump.

At the animal's caress two tears sprang from his eyes. (p. 135)

Ironically, this elephant with the mutilated trunk is the locus of the humane feelings Anthony Thorlby says are missing from Salammbo; its caress constitutes the one moment of recognizably civilized tenderness that occurs in the novel. The power of the innocent
beast's gentleness may be measured by the tears of the man who has just sentenced human beings to horrible torments. Untouched by the agonies of the people and obviously accustomed to cruelty, this man is moved to pity by the animal. Of course, the result is that he has the elephant-keeper condemned to death. Nevertheless, for this brief instant, one finds Flaubert's affinity for animals breaking through the sadism. This moment brings to mind one more observation from Sartre on Flaubert's childhood closeness to animals: the child, Sartre says, "can love others and believe himself loved only on the level of common subhumanity" (p. 15). There is no genuine love in Salammbo apart from this one caress from the domesticated elephant. Perhaps that is why Flaubert has this one, mutilated elephant remain alive at the conclusion of the universal slaughter.

It would be easy to read castration symbolism into the elephant's stumpy trunk. Such a reading would fit in neatly with some of the modern associations of tenderness towards animals with sexual dysfunction, as is demonstrated in Giorgio Bassani's The Heron and Mary Webb's Gone to Earth. Whatever sexual energies there are in Salammbo, they are certainly cut off before actual sexual intercourse can take place. Rape is mentioned incidentally, but Salammbo and Matho, the sole candidates for meaningful sexual coupling, stand lusting for each other at a distance. In place of conjugal union, there is the final scene of the much-tortured Matho dying at Salammbo's feet, and Salammbo herself dying of grief at the celebration of her wedding to a different man. Matho, it should be noted, is carried captive into Carthage, tied with "his arms and legs in a cross" (p. 273) on the back of the elephant with the mutilated trunk. While there is too much crucifixion in Salammbo to view Matho as a Christ-figure, and too much sadism to find nostalgia for regenerative phallicism in the sadly shortened trunk of the elephant, it can be argued that the image conjoins the triumph of the crippled beast (Flaubert himself, if Sartre's psychoanalysis is accurate) with the ghoulish victory of a perverse religion. The elephant is not culpable; it serves its masters regardless of their allegiances. It innocently
caresses the torturer, and innocently transports the man whose capture signals the final blow to the Barbarians' cause. The animality of the elephant has been co-opted by the inhuman purposes; the member, its trunk, that identifies it fundamentally as elephant has been brutally disfigured. The stubby trunk is a travesty of elephant trunks. In the final battle, this elephant climbs a pile of corpses, waving its trunk which in this moment looks like "an enormous leech" (p. 272). For all the frightening statues of animal-gods, and for all the mystic and or sacrificial animals they keep around them, the true animal is non-existent to the Carthaginians. The image of the elephant carrying Matho multiplies corruption upon corruption, beginning with the core impairment of animal being, spreading to the perverse, anti-sexual victory over the lover, then further to the rout of almost-healthy heathenism of the Barbarians, and ultimately to the subsumption of any sense of humanity under feverish worship of the god Moloch and the goddess Tanit.

Swept up in the human disease, animals can nonetheless be seen as the saving grace of Salammbo, were one inclined to dismiss the work as simply decadent and abstract. In the second chapter of the novel, the mercenaries, the Barbarians, who have done battle for Carthage and will lay siege to the city, encounter a long row of crosses with lions crucified upon them. The reason local peasants have crucified the lions is illogical but not especially outré: they hope that the display of lion corpses will scare away other lions. Nor are the mercenaries especially oppressed by the sight of the lions; they mock the first carcase they have come across, addressing it as "consul" and "citizen," and throwing stones at its head to keep away the flies, evidently aware that the lion is past caring about a few flies. Gruesome details compose the picture of the lion; Flaubert has visualized the animal completely, the "huge muzzle," the forepaws "widely separated like the wings of a bird," the visible ribs, the hind legs nailed together at the base of the cross, and the black blood flowing through the hair and "collected in stalactites at the bottom of its tail."

Other, half-eaten, lion corpses have their faces "contorted in hideous grimaces." At this
point in the novel, evidently, Flaubert is much more impressed with the crucified lions than are the peasants or the mercenaries. Is he aiming to shock readers, to rattle their bourgeois sensibilities? Perhaps he is. But he is also interested in communicating the full sense of the animal body, splayed, nailed and bloody. The lions are not sacrificial animals for the peasants--they would have had to have been killed before being hoisted onto the crosses--and are not taken to be so by the Barbarians. They are sacrificial animals for the novel's purposes, bearing the savage and not the sentimental connotation of sacrifice. Plain ignorance replaces the religious significance they would have for a Christian culture; yet it is an ignorance obsessively acted upon, for there are many crucified lions and they have been on display long enough for some to have decayed into skeletons only. There is no symbolic point to the crucifixion. The lions do, however, establish the gravity of the violence in *Salammbô*.

In the first chapter, there has been a feast provided to the mercenaries by the Carthaginians. This feast is a confused orgy of exotic food and drunken brawls and strange portents. On the menu are "antelopes with their horns, peacocks with their feathers, . . . hedgehogs in garum, fried grasshoppers and preserved dormice." To eat, also, are "a few little dogs with big bellies and pink bristles, fattened on olive pulp, that Carthaginian delicacy which other people found revolting" (p. 19). At one point in the evening, a fire breaks out and "the half-burned corpses of monkeys fell from time to time into the middle of the dishes" (p. 31). The besotted soldiers snore on, oblivious to the fire and the defilement of their feast. One has the impression that this saturnalia is fairly routine, that the decadent aspects are just part of daily life to the Carthaginians, and to the mercenaries, when they are paid. The spectacle of the lions is the first sign that there is meaning to the images and barbarity. While the animal victims may not matter much to the people about whom Flaubert is writing, they do matter to Flaubert. The Barbarians wonder, "What sort of people are these, . . . who amuse themselves by crucifying lions"
(p. 38). The course of the narrative discloses what sort of people the Carthaginians are. The crucifixion of the lions represents the rural and superstitious tip of a mythical system that is festering inside the walls of the city of Carthage.

The crucified lions return again as a memory, in the second to last chapter of the novel. Dozens of people are crucified in this chapter, Carthaginians and Barbarians alike. Two leaders of the Barbarians are dying side by side on crosses. Spendius, the runaway slave who had sought revenge on his captors and has proven himself loyal and brave in battle, has the highest cross. Vultures are hovering around him. With an "indefinable smile," he asks the other crucified man, "Do you remember the lions on the road to Sicca?" The man catches Spendius' meaning: "They were our brothers!" he says, as he dies (p. 265). Spendius is the most likeable character in the novel. He has useful skills; he can make sandals and spears and nets; he is said to be able to tame wild beasts (p. 37). He has been loyal to Matho, whose love for Salammbo has driven him to rash exploits. Spendius comforts Matho, and guides him through the dangerous adventure to steal the veil of the goddess Tanit from the temple inside the walls of Carthage. A practical man, Spendius does not believe in the mystical powers of the veil; he has no "confidence in its virtues" (p. 76). He wants only to drive the Carthaginians to despair. Spendius "would have spat upon the images of Olympian Jupiter; yet he was afraid to speak loudly, and never failed every day to put his right shoe on first" (p. 96). He is a superstitious man, much as the peasants who crucified the lions are superstitious; but the elaborate ritual and decadent observances of Carthaginian faith provoke neither fear nor attraction in him.

While the crucified Carthaginians, among them the Elders of their religious worship, are dying ignobly, Spendius experiences "a strange courage." At this point, when there is no hope of escape, he "despised life, certain as he was of an almost immediate and eternal liberation, and he waited impassively for death" (p. 265). Spendius, then, is the human link to the lions. His death matters, while the deaths of thousands of others mean little
more to Flaubert than the rending of corpses into charred or bloody pieces of flesh. Spendius goes as far into mysticism as Flaubert himself might license. Spendius' brand of mysticism still has reference to kindly feeling for the body, such as is expressed in the memory of the lions. The novel does progress; it is not a static, aesthetic vision merely. The crucified animal leads towards the crucified human, with "human" here having sensible significance, beneath the pathetic straining for spiritual aggrandizement evident in the gadgetry and human sacrifices in Carthaginian worship.

Flaubert gives the ultimate victory to the lions. Crucified at the start of the second chapter, they sit amongst Barbarian bodies, replete and drowsy from consuming human flesh, at the close of the second-to-last chapter. The live animals and the dead soldiers are promiscuously intermingled: "All over the plain lay lions and corpses" (p. 274). The dead men are heaped up in piles:

In one of the heaps which made uneven humps over the plain something vaguer than a ghost rose up. Then one of the lions began to walk, silhouetted with his monstrous shape as a black shadow against the background of the crimson sky; when he was close to the man he knocked him down with a single blow of his paw. Then lying flat on him he slowly pulled out the entrails with the end of his teeth. This unexpected bounty of human flesh has been a great boon to the wild beasts; they have multiplied, especially the lions. Humanity, in its animal and corporeal meaning, dissolves into meaningless hummocks on a open plain. What faint life stirs among the hills is easy pickings for the robust predatory creatures that prevail over the scene.

The book closes, as it opened, with a celebration. The impression from the first chapter is that these people are like wide-open mouths, consuming every creature that moves on the surface of the planet. Anything that crawls through the bushes, or burrows in the earth, or hides beneath stones, these Carthaginians will snare it and perfume it and decorate it for their feasts. It is little wonder that they succumb easily to worship of Moloch the Devourer. In the final chapter, they are supposedly worshipping Tanit, the female antithesis of Moloch. This means, as one has come to expect, an orgy of sadism.
The citizens line the streets, waiting to torture Matho in whatever way possible. Matho’s "body was something special for them, endowed with an almost religious splendour" (p. 279). With their understanding of religion, this splendour excites them to subject Matho’s body to lavish cruelties. As Matho nears Salammbo, he has ceased to resemble a human being:

Except for his eyes his appearance was no longer human; he was just a long shape, completely red from top to bottom; his broken bonds hung along his thighs, but could not be distinguished from the tendons of his wrists which had been completely stripped of flesh; his mouth remained wide open; two flames came from his eye sockets which seemed to go up into his hair; and the wretch kept walking!

The novel has been aiming all along to convert bodies into animate matter. Flaubert seems driven to discover what of substance remains when pain and mutilation efface all vestiges of recognizable humanity in the person. Incredibly, Salammbo looks into Matho’s flaming eyes and recalls the loving words this entity has spoken to her when he was still a man: "she did not want him to die!" If this love, which sees past the horribly disfigured flesh and conceives a hope for continued life, is meant to represent the novel’s answer to sadism, it comes after too much carnage and ugliness to be plausible. Certainly, Salammbo’s wish that Matho should live runs wholly contrary to everything animal or human that has gone before, with the exception of the elephant’s caress. Up to this point, the goal has been nothing but death, and the bloodier the death, the better. But it is really too late for Flaubert to pull out of the course he has set for himself: Salammbo’s tenderness is flyweight opposition to the great rolling machine that has crushed and dismembered countless bodies. There is no credible transcendent vision for the human players in this novel. The animals suggest a way of life that does not depend upon sadism, but the mass of people are too deeply swayed by their depraved fetishism to even begin to look at the animal in the way that Flaubert does. The culture in Salammbo is quite simply a death-loving culture.
Flaubert descends into another death-loving culture in "The Legend of St. Julian Hospitator." In this story, however, he does offer a transcendent vision in the true sense of the word "transcendent": St. Julian is ultimately borne aloft into heaven in the arms of "Our Lord Jesus Christ." Despite the physical ascent, this vision does not break out of death-worship but only shows a different side of that religious phenomenon. Tales of saints embracing lepers are common enough, and yet few of those who repeat such tales would have been as chillingly aware as Flaubert is of the cultism that informs the presumably rapturous vision. In hugging the leper, Flaubert's St. Julian enacts the corresponding ritual to those which previously found him out in the woods slaughtering dozens of animals. Two simple sentences of description illustrate the association of death and religious faith: "The master-spit in the kitchen could roast an ox. The chapel was as magnificent as a king's oratory" (p. 58). The leap from the master-spit to the chapel seems at first like a non sequitur, and yet holiness in this story is predicated upon lust for extravagance in death. Although Julian chooses a way of life that defies the opulence of his father's kitchen and chapel, he ends up embracing the related opulence of disease.

Within the religious system that generates such stories, this tale is certainly a legend. From the start, Flaubert reports the story of St. Julian as if it were a historical reality, just as legends are so reported despite the magical events that occur. The reader accepts the tale as genuine, to the point of viewing Julian's death as some sort of triumph. A reader might be somewhat suspicious of the flatness of Julian's reception by Our Lord Jesus Christ, might even detect a trace of sarcasm in the grandiose appellation of the Christian figure. Modern readers, however, have become accustomed to the flaccidness and even tedium of legends about saints. It is a surprise, therefore, when Flaubert breaks out of the narrative to close the tale with the remark, "And that is the story of St. Julian Hospitator, more or less as it is depicted on a stained-glass window on a church in my part of the world." After the last line, delivered in Flaubert's own voice, the story shades into
myth; that is to say, it loses the truthfulness it has assumed and falls into the category of
tales rationalized only by a larger cultural context. St. Julian has seemed to be human;
the last line of the story turns him into a fictional being. The last line entirely alters the
character of the events described. The shift into modern cynicism--of a gentle variety, to
be sure--requires analysis of the story on a much different level from that which faith
would offer. Indeed, faith would preclude analysis by disallowing the estrangement that is
required for the perception of myth as myth. Wary, the modern reader is nevertheless
willing to permit the story to indulge an innocent, not to say juvenile, liking for fantasy.
Flaubert's closing statement locates the "legend" in the broad context of a religious system
that is amenable to critical examination.

It is with much relief that anyone who has read Salammbo learns that the kingdom
in "St. Julian" is not at war, and has in fact existed in tranquility for so long that
architectural features designed for military defense have been allowed peacefully to decay.
These are medieval times, and Flaubert imagines that medieval people are not nearly as
crazed in their torment of the flesh as ancient Carthaginians and Barbarians. The
primary problem for Julian, in fact, is to avoid killing his mother and father, which is a
prophecy a talking stag has passed on to him. No one in Salammbo, one imagines, would
have such scruples. Of course, the animals don't talk in Salammbo, either, and so
prophecy there is based on nothing other than human fantasy. Julian can at least have
true faith in the stag's prophecy; he is not left to read portents and guess at future events.
He knows, and the reader knows, that he will eventually end up murdering his mother and
father. Their death, however, will not involve steaming entrails and gruesome
dismemberment. Culture has progressed far enough from barbarity at least to honour the
death of human beings.

This culture works off its appetite for death upon animals. Julian is initiated into
wholesale war upon the animal kingdom when he kills a white mouse that regularly comes
to the chapel during Mass. Julian is "seized with hatred for the creature," possibly because the mouse goes its own way, follows its own habitual paths, in total indifference to the holy services being performed. Julian begins to experience something like sexual excitation from killing animals. A pigeon which resists his effort to kill it provokes both rage and pleasure in him: "He set about wringing its neck, and its convulsions made his heart beat wildly, filling him with a savage, passionate delight" (p. 62). In the course of his hunting trips, and the gratification of his lust, he grows to resemble the wild beasts (p. 64).

Finally, nature and dreams conspire to overthrow Julian's lust for killing animals. Julian wanders into a surreal state in which nature presents an excess of animals for him to kill. An "endless succession" of animals come to him in the forest: they "circled round him, all trembling and gazing at him with gentle, supplicating eyes" (p. 66). He slays them all, ignoring their appeal for love. The next stage of the dream offers to Julian a great herd of deer trapped in a valley. One hears echoes of *Salammbô* in the slaughter:

The maddened stags fought, reared up in the air, and climbed on each other's backs, their bodies and tangled antlers making a broad mound which kept shifting and crumbling.

At last they died, stretched out on the sand, their nostrils foaming, their entrails gushing out, and the heaving of their bellies gradually subsiding. (pp. 66-67)

Flaubert has proven himself sufficiently impervious to such carnage for anyone to realize that this vision alone will not induce Julian to give up killing animals. In his cynical response to sentimentality, Flaubert knows that only incredible measures overpower human aggression against animals. The "gentle, supplicating eyes" of the beast are not enough to elicit tenderness from humans; neither does a scene of massive animal agony possess force enough to overcome human savagery. Neither, as it turns out, does consciousness of familial love among animals convey a powerful enough impression of likeness to humankind for Julian to spare the lives of a doe, her fawn and the stag that
composes the family group. The beast must speak in a human voice before victimization will cease.

Indeed, the stag that speaks to Julian, speaks not of loving kindness, but curses him. It presents a ghastly image, with Julian's arrow stuck in its forehead, as it refuses to die before uttering words of damnation. Julian will pay for his inhumanity to the animal family by murdering his own beloved parents. Terror and threats put a stop to his heedless assault on animals; he dares not hunt for fear of accidentally killing his parents. Mercy is forced upon him since he is incapable of generating compassion for animals out of his own being.

Years of self-denial follow his decision to renounce hunting. The urge to kill remains alive in him, however, and returns with his confidence that he has successfully evaded the dreadful act prophesied. On the night before the prophecy is fulfilled, Julian is once again out in a dream forest. Now, despite his most determined efforts, the animals that appear to him will not die from his arrows. Animals surround him again, taunting him this time: a bear knocks his hat off his head; a panther scornfully drops an arrow at his feet. These animals "seemed to be thinking out a plan of revenge" (p. 77). At last, he throws his cape over some partridges—a method of killing which he has earlier mocked (p. 63) as the business of children and women. Lifting the cape, he discovers only the decomposing corpse of a partridge: even by the facile method, he has not managed to kill as he desires. Thus, his "lust for blood took hold of him again, and since animals were lacking he would gladly have slaughtered men" (p. 78). Ironically, of course, the people he kills in his state of unfulfilled lust are his parents. Such is the revenge of the animals upon the cruelty that is suppressed merely, and not authentically relinquished.

One would not expect Julian to rejoice in life after this calamity. Though the murder of his parents might seem to be the nadir of death-dealing, Julian has to descend further into death, and to accept death into his own being. Flaubert himself finds no
narrative means of honouring life authentically. It is a simple matter of honesty to him to pursue the workings of death to their conclusion. Besides that, the extant legend of St. Julian enfolds personal death in its progress, and so Flaubert has the excuse of simply following the drift of the original tale. Surprisingly, Flaubert does not greatly magnify the physically repellent attributes of the Leper's disease. The breathe of the Leper is nauseating, and there is a hole in his face where his nose should be, but many more signs of decay could have been added to impress the reader with Julian's self-renunciation. It is as if Flaubert has grown tired of extravagant torments, has expended his energy in the slaughter of animals and now finds little enthusiasm for the completion of the legend. At the point that the legend consecrates spiritual submission to death, Flaubert's ennui apparently comes over him. He is willing to strive passionately to reduce human flesh to matter for the purpose of locating what, if any, spirituality remains. Yet he evidently has scant fondness for a religiosity that glorifies human death to the total neglect of the animal body.

The final line, then, has the appearance of being unplanned. It seems to spring spontaneously from Flaubert's boredom, and to be a gesture of dismissal of the whole story. The myth has failed him. It held out the promise of accomplishing the psychic range of death, and then ends in a childish fantasy which does not engage Flaubert's interest. For him, savagery and decadence in the myth-making propensity comes closer to articulating the seriousness of the human/animal connection. The Christian myth only disappoints him in its failure to address the fundamental animal in human death. The Christian myth simply casts up a bogus spirituality instead of tackling directly the violence to the body that death entails, and that due love for the animal renders terrifying.

Flaubert has taken up a considerable proportion of discussion in this chapter, and with good reason. He has by far the most complex attitude towards animals of any author examined to this point. As well as demonstrating conflicts in the modern approach to
myth, Flaubert exhibits an acutely tortured responsiveness to animal victims. Animals are not animals in the abstract for him. When he writes about immense animal suffering (including that of the human animal), he is cognizant of the reality of the animal's experience, of the real pain and real fear animals undergo. Yet however hard he drives his fiction into barbarity, he cannot wrest real pain out of the flesh in the artistic context. That he wants to realize suffering in art is clear enough. Had he been able to do so, he might have permitted himself to express the tenderness for the animal that he feels outside his art. He is unwilling, though, to manufacture pain and indulge false compassion. Myth in its historical context gives him a pretext for looking into a cruelty towards the animal which he himself does not feel. The broken world of myth lets him hunt for a holism which he knows would be false in any cultural context.

John Updike's attitude towards myth is both more and less alienated than Flaubert's. While Flaubert treats myth with a passionate intensity amounting to anger, Updike adopts a distant and rational stance. In Updike's novel *The Centaur*, one finds an almost playful deployment of the gods and goddesses of Greek myth. Persons in a typical small town in America are meant to represent the mighty figures in Greek mythology, with the wife of a garage mechanic, Vera Hummel, standing for Venus, the principal of a school, Mr. Zimmerman, standing for Zeus, a Dr. Appleton, standing for Apollo, and so on. The initial letters in the names are codes for the various gods and goddesses, and the tangled histories of these folk repeat the infidelities and squabbles of their ancient Greek counterparts. This use of gods and goddesses is meant to enhance the profundity of the death of a school-teacher, representing the centaur Chiron, who sacrifices himself so that Prometheus, the teacher's son Peter, will be forgiven for stealing fire and giving it to humanity. This formulaic approach is not particularly successful. Although it might be amusing to locate correspondences between events and persons in myth and events and
persons in the school and the town, one has the impression that the death of the school-teacher could have been just as profound to Updike's sensibilities without the mythological trappings. He appears to have embarked upon the project and then felt compelled to carry it through, even though he is happiest describing the ordinary psychological interplay of the ordinary father and son in the story. The distance between the mythic figures and the everyday characters is too vast, and when the school-teacher dies, his ascent into the skies to become the constellation of Sagittarius feels more like a parody of myth than triumphant confirmation of either mythic values or the human spirit.

Updike achieves a more coherent vision in "Pigeon Feathers," wherein the conception of death as null finality defeats mythic consciousness. "Pigeon Feathers" centres upon the crisis of faith suffered by the fourteen-year-old David. David experiences his first doubts over Christian doctrine when he reads H.G. Wells' account of the life of Jesus Christ. By this account,

[Jesus] had been an obscure political agitator, a kind of hobo, in a minor colony of the Roman Empire. By an accident impossible to reconstruct, he (the small h horrified David) survived his own crucifixion and presumably died a few weeks later. A religion was founded upon this freakish accident. The credulous imagination of the times retrospectively assigned miracles and supernatural pretensions to Jesus; a myth grew, and then a church, whose theology at most points was in direct contradiction of the simple, rather communistic teachings of the Galilean. (pp. 520-521)

That H.G. Wells is trying to salvage Jesus from "the ornamental and unwise additions of the unintelligently devout" (The Outline of History, p. 529) does not impress David. He is not attracted to what Wells describes as the "lean and strenuous personality of Jesus"; nor is David convinced that Jesus "is much wronged by the unreality and conventionality that a mistaken reverence has imposed upon his figure" (pp. 528-529). Wells' refreshingly uncontorted approach to Christ fills David with horror. It is not the "fantastic falsehoods" that frighten him, but "the fact that they were permitted to exist in an actual human brain" (p. 521). The ideas spawned by Wells' brain cast the omnipotence of God into
doubt. Blasphemy would be more acceptable than the plain historical reading of Christ's life. Likely, it is because Wells' account is plausible that David is upset. He catches the underlying import of Wells' appreciative story of the simple man who preaches universal brotherhood against avariciously tribal and private salvation: the conversion of Christ into an historical figure means that David will die. David's sense of his own sacredness falters before the representation of Christ as a human being. The Kingdom of Heaven becomes a metaphoric device invented by a person; heaven is a fiction erected to unite humankind under one symbolic Father. If heaven evaporates, so too does David's soul.

There is a political subtheme in "Pigeon Feathers." The story challenges the anti-communistic rabidity of the McCarthy era in American politics. Indeed, Wells' history of Christ may itself be seen as a challenge to zealous individualism in Victorian political theory. In *The Birth of Neurosis*, George Frederick Drinka points out that Christ's approach to life was at loggerheads with the muscular expansionism of late Victorian times, the self-assured march toward material benefits which seemed the course of human history. In short, Christ seemed a neurotic, the archetype of a great neurotic figure who can be called the Saintly Fool. (p. 260)

While Drinka's statement certainly does not characterize the abiding faith of Victorian Christians, the implications for the image of Christ in Victorian politics appear to be accurate. In human terms, Wells transforms Christ from a politically otiose eccentric into a people's hero. Of course, Wells' image would have little appeal to a culture wishing to rationalize the aggressive pursuit of personal gain. The negation of pure self-interest in Wells' description of Christ's teaching offends David's Americanism. Given the climate of the times, David could hardly have faith in communistic ideology. If the alternative is viewing Christ as a neurotic, then it is far better that Christ remain safely divine and not be demoted to human status. Only a divine Christ can serve David's deep, apolitical need to believe in his personal survival after death. Death, rather than politics, constitutes the overt theme of the story. Nevertheless, a hint of mean-spirited selfishness--a desire to
deny importance to fellow beings—adheres to David’s attitude towards the pigeons at the conclusion of the story. The substitution of animals for people, as the object of David’s contempt, emphasizes the pettiness of his revelation. That substitution also puts the story’s argument on the grand level of the contest between nature and religion for the right to interpret death.

David is honourable in doubt. The natural death he imagines for himself during his crisis of faith is unwaveringly grim. He cannot think of himself without sensations, and so he still feels the clumps of earth hitting his body as it lies in the grave. He leaps ahead in time: a "strata of rock shifts, your fingers elongate, and your teeth are distended sidewise in a great underground grimace indistinguishable from a strip of chalk" (p. 522). He takes upon himself the onus of the minister’s unsatisfying answers to his questions about life after death: "the burden and fever of being a fraud were placed upon him, who was innocent" (p. 526). He feels guilty for exposing the weakness of Christianity against the hideously compelling vision of death. He refuses to accept his mother’s argument that the loveliness of nature proves the existence of God. Nature alone satisfies her soul, and she protests that it is "greedy" of David to "want more" (p. 527). Her faith in nature oppresses him; it only reinforces the ugly thought of his own body being consumed by the earth: "if when we die there’s nothing," he says, "all your sun and fields and what not are all, ah, horror" (p. 528). The thought, it seems, that nature will carry on in blithe indifference to the death of David strikes him as a poor reason to admire the ways of God.

He almost succumbs to nature worship, however, as he scans the miraculous complexities of his dog Copper’s body:

The dog’s ears . . . were folded so intricately, so—he groped for the concept—surely. Where the dull-studded collar made his fur stand up, each hair showed a root of soft white under the length, black-tipped, of the metal color that had given the dog its name. . . . His whole whorling, knotted, jointed body was a wealth of such embellishments. And in the smell of the dog’s hair David seemed to descend through many finely differentiated layers of earth: mulch, soil, sand, clay, and the glittering mineral base. (pp. 530)
He is almost pulled imaginatively and lovingly into the earth he has been resisting. This intense moment of vision looks like a good solution to his unbelief. But he is thrust back into fear and disillusionment by the sight of The Outline of History and other works of the human intellect sitting solidly there on his parents’ bookshelf. These books despoil the sacred for him. In fact, the concrete props of his religion, including the Bible, also depress him: "he detested the apparatus of piety" (p. 526). The promise of Christianity is like that of a fairy-tale so incredible that it outstrips the conventions of all other fairy-tales. Metaphorically, Christianity gives "the prince’s hand" to "the homeliest crone in the kingdom" (p. 526). In other words, the repulsive spectre of death is blessed and softened by Christ’s love. The books on his parents’ bookshelf tell him that it is more likely that the homeliest crone in the kingdom will be married to the prince than that David will ascend into heaven. It is not so much what these books say, since David has ceased to read them for fear of being "ambushed" (p. 529), but the fact of their existence that undermines his faith. If it horrifies him that God would allow the human brain to think calmly of Christ as an historical person, and not to suffer anguish but feel only confident enthusiasm, then the manifold thoughts of humans, recorded in books, must surely cause the Christian promise to dematerialize. Books reify human intelligence and history; they turn religion into a construction of the human brain, a myth.

Ultimately, David uses the miracle of nature to force logic across the abyss between the material and the immaterial. As he goes to bury the pigeons he has shot, he looks closely at their feathers and discovers marvellous patterns such as he has found in Copper’s body.

Yet these birds bred in the millions and were exterminated as pests. Into the fragrant, open earth he dropped one broadly banded in shades of slate blue, and on top of it another, mottled all over with rhythmic patches of lilac and gray. The next was almost wholly white, yet with a salmon glaze at the throat. As he fitted the last two, still pliant, on the top, and stood up, crusty coverings were lifted from him,
and with a feminine, slipping sensation along his nerves that seemed to give the air hands, he was robed in this certainty: that the God who has lavished such craft upon these worthless birds would not destroy His whole Creation by refusing to let David live forever. (p. 533)

His logic is, of course, specious and solipsistic. His revelation depends solely upon personal power. The pigeons are "worthless" only because David has shot them. Killing them, he has felt "like a beautiful avenger"; he has had "the sensations of a creator." He has also had "a sharp, bright vision, like a color slide, of shooting himself and being found tumbled on the barn floor among his prey" (p. 532). Absolute power over the lives of the pigeons grants him a vision of his own body cast off, insensate and entirely separate from the self that destroys the birds. He has needed to assume the authority of God over life and death in order to repress the sensation that he and his body are one and the same thing, that he is a victim of the material world. The whole of "Creation" does depend on David, in his experience: it lives at his sufferance and dies at his will. Whatever form his faith might take after his revelation, it will certainly not be benign. He seems, indeed, to fall from the grace that is disillusionment into a singularly unintelligent view of life.

It has not been necessary for Updike to humanize the pigeons to drive home the ironic deadliness of David's revelation. The live pigeons possess few qualities beyond the richness of pattern that stimulates David's appreciation of nature when he looks at his dog. The motion of the pigeons' heads alone incites David's aggression. He aims at one bird's "tiny, jauntily cocked head" (p. 531); he notices "one little smudge of a head that was especially persistent in peeking out" (p. 532) and fires at the spot where that head will appear again, successfully killing the bird. These small but keen signs of living individuality are sufficient to provoke discomfort. In fact, the very smallness of the pigeons' lives argues powerfully against the self-aggrandizement David attains from shooting them. The creatural is easily victimized. David's victory is an empty one.

Left in the realm of myth, religion at least preserves the integrity of striving to make the sacred actual. It represents the hope of culture, and the admission of culture
that logic has limits. At the end of "Pigeon Feathers," David subjects religion to a
humanization infinitely more despotic and narrow than that which H.G. Wells has brought
to bear upon the life of Christ. One is inclined to wonder what happens to David’s mother
and father in his grand revelation; they too are clearly swept up with the whole of
Creation that is negligible so long as David can live forever. If this represents the drift of
accomplished faith, then religion is a more paltry human construction than myth. At base,
it serves the individual ego in the flight from the material world. In effect, "Pigeon
Feathers" ridicules anthropocentrism, whether it intends to or not. By having centuries of
accumulated value collapsed for the purpose of exalting David’s soul, Updike calls into
question the nature of a religion that is such an eager servant to the fantasies of
humankind. He is not setting up a squabble of species; he is not insisting that the pigeons
be given souls if David is to have one. He stresses, rather, the absurdity of a faith that
has to kill and insult innocent beings who are in no way implicated in the kind of anguish
David experiences at the thought of dying.

There is in "Pigeon Feathers," as there is in Flaubert’s Salammbo, a leaning
towards putting the conflict between nature and culture into the context of the struggle
between masculine and feminine principles. Although Flaubert does not differentiate
greatly between the effects of transferring worship from Tanit, the moon goddess, to
Moloch, the brutish male devourer (worship of both beings promotes orgies of violence),
some great change is supposedly taking place in the souls of the Carthaginians as their
allegiance passes from the goddess to the god. Peering through the chaos of fetishes and
icons, entrails and limbs, one senses that Tanit represents a sickly combination of art and
anti-sexual eroticism, while Moloch just consumes children, with steady and unending
appetite--Tanit the never-hungry, perhaps, versus Moloch the ever-hungry. Neither one
flatters the gender it is supposed to epitomize.
It is possible, though, to see a kernel of correspondence between Flaubert's conventions in gender distinction and Updike's. When David's mother comes up to him after the slaughter of the pigeons, she says "Don't smirk. You look like your father." David's father remarks at one point, "If I had the man here who invented death, I'd pin a medal on him" (p. 528). In this story's terms, it would be a man who invented death. The pigeon-hunt vanquishes David's mother's reverence for nature. The hunt sours her spirit; as she walks away from David, she pays no attention to natural scene that has been the source of pleasure to her: "Unlike her, she did not look up, either at the orchard to the right of her or at the meadow on her left, but instead held her head rigidly, tilted a little, as if listening to the ground" (p. 533). Her unthinking fondness for the natural has been marred by the thought of death. Thanatos is the province of the male; the woman seeks a bloodless affiliation with nature. Whereas Flaubert does not play favourites, Updike apparently sides with the woman.

In Not Wanted on the Voyage, Timothy Findley is openly hostile to most of the male characters. He does not even spare God, Yaweh, from negative judgement, although Yaweh is more a wreck of deity than an evil force. Lucifer, Findley casts as a seven-foot transvestite, campy in his assumed role as a woman, and sympathetic in his alliance with the outcast people and animals who oppose Noah's tyranny. After the flood, Lucifer, or Lucy, is the only magical being left in the world. The Faeries have been too weak to batter their way onto the ark as it leaves; the demons that had survived in the hold are slung overboard in a sack. The Unicorn and its mate are dead. The sheep, which used to sing hymns, can only repeat "Baaaa"s," and the whispers which had produced dialogue in the mind of the cat Mottyl have died. Yaweh, apparently, is also dead, swept away with the flood; he had been encircled by the "crown of flies" that signals death on his departure from Noah's home (p. 112). Noah, Dr. Noyes, who is mad, is left to invent Yaweh's edicts by means of Icons. The decree from "Yaweh" that Noah delivers is that "everything that
lived and breathed and moved had been delivered into their hands [the hands of humans: the hands, more precisely, of men]—forever" (p. 351). The realization that there will no longer be magical opposition to the tyranny of the human mind oppresses Mrs. Noyes. She does not want the mute world wholly subject to the authority of men. The end of the novel finds Mrs. Noyes praying for rain: "She prayed. But not to the absent God. Never, never again to the absent God, but to the absent clouds, she prayed. And to the empty sky." Mrs. Noyes preserves the animistic spirit that will oppose anthropocentric religion on the new earth.

Yaweh's senility might account for his choice of the Noyes family as the sole representatives of the human species destined to survive the flood. Yaweh passes over a much more loving family of honest labourers living in the vicinity of the Noyeses. This is the family of Emma, eleven-year-old bride of Japeth. Emma's father is a finer example of manhood than any of the Noyes males. He is a "good-looking man with a kindly face you could never forget" (p. 116). He and his kind speak "with the low, gentle voices of animals" (p. 257). In total contrast to Dr. Noyes, Emma's father is "devoted to his wife" and knows "that she is not chattel" (p. 117). Frightened and persecuted into silence in the Noyes family, Emma becomes a free and laughing child again during her brief, surreptitious visits with her own family. Yet these gentle people are to be drowned with the rest of the wicked world, while Dr. Noyes and his ill-favoured sons surmount the deluge. They must, of course, suffer the presence of Mrs. Noyes, her tender-hearted son Ham, Ham's wife "Lucy," and the still-virgin Emma, to satisfy Yaweh's decree. These uncooperative others, that is to say, must at least be on board; they can stay below in the dark, with the animals, while Dr. Noyes and his allies ride above deck in the "Castle." In this manner, the community of the elect reluctantly conforms to Yaweh's choice. In this manner, the people who survive the deluge enact the conflicts that will plague the world they make. Had Yaweh been wise enough to choose Emma's family, the present world
would be quite different from what it is. From the characterization of Yaweh, however, it seems that senility has caused the aged deity to save a family group that is a microcosm of the strife that will afflict the new world. The nature of our world has been determined by a battered old lunatic, who excludes female angels from his retinue (p. 72), and who travels the countryside in a caravan indistinguishable from a procession of circus wagons.

Reading Not Wanted on the Voyage as an allegory is partly useful and partly superfluous. Allegory comes into play in finding correspondences between the novel’s vision and modern relations with animals. The people in the story, however, are psychological beings, complete with fears and pomposities beyond their stock significance. Certainly the characters could be interpreted as types, with Dr. Noyes as the scientist-cum-magician-cum-holyman, Mrs. Noyes as a dishevelled and slightly bibulous earth mother (archetypal Mum), Japeth as the warrior, Shem as the vulgar appetites, Hannah as a brittle, angry handmaiden to the male, Ham as the idealistic inventor, and Emma as the unsocialized child, towed unwillingly along for the voyage as are we all. No one seems overtly to represent the arts. Perhaps Lucifer is the artist, since she, or he, combines animality and prophecy: Lucifer’s eyes become "animal eyes, fierce and tender. The eyes of a prophet whose words, like an animal’s warning cries, would be ignored" (p. 344). In any event, it is interesting to contemplate the core values these characters uphold, to understand the kind of world Findley thinks we have inherited. In their various combinations, these people, of course, exist as the originals of manifold forces active in the present world. The problem with an allegorical reading, though, is that Findley’s characters are people not figures. While they do divide into good guys and bad guys, and do illustrate universal characteristics of mutually hostile types, the complexities of their make-up as persons do a better job of disclosing the ills of culture than allegorical figures ever did.
It may be wrong to think of *Not Wanted on the Voyage* as a straightforward elaboration upon one myth about the way in which the world came to be as it is. Interpretation of modern culture obviously informs Findley's reconstruction of the myth. Casting Dr. Noyes as a scientist who experiments on cats, for example, patently reflects contemporary ethical concerns. How the Biblical Noah might lend himself to such an interpretation is hard to see, apart from the fact of his unchallengeable status as patriarch. Findley uses the skeleton of the Noah story to write about modern life; he alters the essence of the original, and in so doing appends mythic miracle to the dialogic novel. His novel contests the religion served by the story of Noah, not only for the values affirmed but also for the lack of both mythic brilliance and novelistic involvement in history. The Bible story generates the silent world, subservient to men, which is the object of Findley's and Mrs. Noyes's antipathy. It is a world in which "holy" means "*no way out*" (p. 270); it is a world in which, as Lucifer observes, humans "'will go on throwing all the apes and all the demons and all the Unicorns overboard for as long as this voyage lasts'" (p. 349). It is a world of the great "No," epitomized in the vision of the retreating ark, shut off to all the beings abandoned to drown in the flood. Against the desperation of those left behind, the ark, Findley writes, "was adamant. Its shape had taken on a voice. And the voice said: *no*" (p. 193).

One phenomenon Dr. Noyes's world says *no to* is the power of animals to speak. Whether Findley has introduced animal speech with such subtlety, or the pre-flood world he invents is of a character that disarms skeptical rationalism, animal discourse is not discomforting in this novel. That is to say, sensibilities are not offended or aroused to opposition by the conversations among animals, or the singing of the sheep, or even by the dialogue shared by humans and animals. There is a qualitative difference between the context in *Not Wanted on the Voyage* that presupposes animal speech and that of the animal fable, which imposes speech upon personified animals. That difference resides
partly in motive. Findley has the animals speak to drive home the loss to culture when animals stop talking. Here, too, the influence of modern ethics and hopefulness is seen, since modern culture, in its own inept fashion, is attempting to penetrate the silence of the animal and comprehend animal language. Fiction, and myth, aids the dull human consciousness to break through the barrier thrown up by scientific cynicism. In conjunction with the creative imagination, ethics lends rational value to animal speech. One can view *Not Wanted on the Voyage* as an ethical work which fabricates animal dialogue for the purpose of discomposing settled belief in the blankness of animal consciousness. But the difference between animal speech in *Not Wanted on the Voyage* and that in the animal fable is determined by conception as well as motive. Whereas the point of the animal fable is to render morals palatable to humans, or to please human needs in some other way, the point of *Not Wanted on the Voyage* is to raise the value of the animal against human beliefs. Animals are an end, not a means. Animal language, then, is only to a small degree tendentious; the mythical, magical context naturalizes animal language. It seems, simply, right that in the "blooming, buzzing" world before the flood, animals should participate in the community of discourse. The change that silences animals is a world-change, not merely an ethical change. Reversing modern epistemology's confident assumption that culture has abandoned myth and found nature, this novel says that culture has dropped out of myth and lost nature.

*Not Wanted on the Voyage* explicitly addresses the evolutionary significance of the ape in current attempts to cross the rift between humans and animals by means of reason. As the above quotation from Lucifer indicates, humans have cast "all the apes" overboard, along with mythical demons and Unicorns. In Findley's conception of pre-flood nature, it appears that apes do not exist as a species independent of humans. The closest species to human primates are lemurs. In this story, humans occasionally give birth to apes, to their great shame. Mrs. Noyes has given birth to an ape-child, as a twin to Japeth. She calls
the ape-child Adam, marking it as "the true inheritor of the Old Adam's name" (p. 165).

Dr. and Mrs. Noyes drown their ape-child in a pond, foreshadowing the psychic destiny of the modern apes. Emma's family has also produced an ape-child, Lotte, but this family cherishes their child, only hiding it from the hostile world of others. Lotte, Emma recalls, "had been everybody's favourite":

What Emma remembered most of Lotte, though, was how soft she had been and how lovely it had been, in their big straw bed in the loft, to lie up close to her and stroke the long, thin downy arms and, in the wintertime, when they were cold, to creep down into the centre of the bed and curl up together beneath the covers while the wind had howled around them and the owls on the rafters had flown down to sit at the foot of the bed. (p. 258)

Here, as with animal language, the novel overwhelms what would likely be the conventional response to the thought of snuggling in bed with an ape. The novel simply disallows suspicions of perversity or grimaces of disgust. While one could protest that the loving response to the ape, both of the novel and of Emma's family, has unduly civilized an animal that preserves its value by dint of its alienation from humans, it must be recalled that Findley is interposing a more intimate human/animal relation between the detached scientific perspective and pride in human supremacy. In a sense, Darwinian evolution tries to give birth to apes, and to embrace apes as part of the human family. That evolutionary theory has a difficult task ahead may be gleaned from the still-born ape-child that Dr. Noyes fathers with Hannah. As life after the flood progresses, the ape is born dead. Allegorically, one could say that culture till Darwin left a gap between humans and other species where the ape should be; the living patrimony of the ape was denied, and hence the concept of "ape" remained still-born. The ape-child, of course, is a monstrosity to Dr. Noyes; had it not been born dead, he would have killed it and thrown it into the sea in any case. Genetically, the ape-child is his, but he repudiates it. Modern science, the scientist, spawns the familial connection between human and ape, but science freezes the familial affection that would affirm the continuity of humans and apes.
But as an allegorical reading of the still-born ape implies, the novel also criticizes the religious attitude that refuses to acknowledge apes as related to humans even as a scientific proposition. Dr. Noyes kills Lotte, for no reason other than that her kind is anathema to him, and reminds him of his own guilt in producing ape-children. On receiving the dead Lotte from Dr. Noyes, Mrs. Noyes declares, "'There is no God. . . . There is no God worthy of this child'" (p. 170). The denial of God is the more blasphemous for hinging on the unworthiness of God before the ape. It was daring enough to depict Yaweh as senile, or to have Mrs. Noyes address him as "you bastard" (p. 154). Now to raise the ape above God, when Judeo-Christian belief views apes as much less valuable than humans, and as related to humans only as metaphoric potential for stupid or loutish behaviour, is iconoclastic in the extreme. The point does not seem to be to make a better God than Yaweh out of the ape. The murder of the ape-child indicates, rather, an incommensurability between the inhuman moral aloofness of God and the tangible virtue of the innocent ape.

On the subject of animals and virtue, it is worth noting a point of similarity between Not Wanted on the Voyage and Salammbo. In Salammbo, it will be recalled, the moment of deepest tenderness occurs when the elephant caresses Hamilcar with its mutilated trunk. A protracted version of this event also occurs in Not Wanted on the Voyage. The elephant in Findley's novel is also injured, if its name "One Tusk" means what it says. If not, then at the very least the elephant is afflicted with ulcers and is suffering depression of spirits from the total darkness on the lowest deck of the ark. One Tusk comes to the cat Motty's rescue when Motty, who is blind from Dr. Noyes's experiments, falls three decks to the bottom of the ark and is paralysed. In the dark, the elephant feels the cat's body with its trunk. The description is quite sensual: "A soft, not unpleasant and very gentle probe was being made of her body" (p. 226). It is a probing for discovery, to make sure that a cat isn't "'anything like a rat.'" In this sense, the
elephant's inspection may be thought of as scientific, as an effort to classify a living creature in the darkness. Having felt Mottyl's body softly for the sake of knowledge, the elephant's trunk is even more impressively able to give tender assistance in raising Mottyl to the next deck above: "Mottyl again felt the soft explorations of the elephant's probe--felt herself being taken very gently and held, just as she might have been held in the crook of a large elbow--the way Mrs. Noyes held her. And then she was lifted . . ." (p. 228). There may be a temptation, here, to read resurrection imagery into this event. With all the gentleness of the elephant's touch, and the raising of the cat out of total darkness and into at least the hope of light and salvation, it would be easy to presume a formulaic imitation of other-worldly myths for humans. Somehow, though, the appeal to stock images of transcendence does not enhance the episode. For one thing, the sensuality is lacking: the vision of transcendence is a balm to the soul, not to the body. "Resurrection in the flesh" is almost inconceivable; it is a kind of booby prize for people who cannot quite believe in souls and might be tempted away from religion. The episode of Mottyl and the elephant is, I think, best read literally; and it can be read literally, despite the animal conversation and the wholly unrealistic offer of aid between species, because the animals are acting in accordance with their own natural world logically conceived as part of a larger history. In addition to imagining why animals no longer speak, the novel may also be said to imagine why animals no longer help one another. Obviously, One Tusk's rescuing of the cat is sheer invention, superficially akin to events involving talking animal heroes in children's tales. The adult motive--to prove animals superior to the brutish indifference imposed upon them by empiricism--is one way of salvaging this episode from demotion to the merely fabulous. Another is to yield to the combination of the mythical and the sensual.

In a way, Not Wanted on the Voyage follows through on the spark of promise in the elephant's caress in Salammbo. There can be little doubt that the pause that Flaubert inserts amidst the violence is realistic, that it is, as noted earlier, an instant of grace in
which the natural clearly out-classes the feverish effects of myth. Like Flaubert, Findley attributes the worst kinds of violence to the human species. There can be little complaint from modern culture that that attribution is unrealistic. It is virtually axiomatic that animals exist harmoniously in nature, where humans live at odds with the natural. Although a leap must be made to get from ecological harmony to the image of one animal saving the life of another, Findley’s consent to the literal value inherent in myth-making tends to override resistance to the incredible. Reason might need the translation of the elephant’s aid to the cat into the abstract of ecological community, but sentiment and imagination go along with the story. It is quite simply true, moreover, that the voluntary touch of an animal, a nudge from a cat’s nose or the light scuttling sensation of a spider running over the skin, has an innocent, exploratory quality which can be gratifying to the heart.

This is not to speak, of course, of the reverse sensation coming from the swipe of a cat’s claws or the sinking of a dog’s teeth into some meaty part of the anatomy. Strict realism would incorporate hostility to human morality in its depiction of the animal. Causing pain to humans out of fear or by accident is part of the animal as we know it, as is extreme wariness of the wild animal who is not remotely likely to extend a paw or nose to touch the human interloper. *Not Wanted on the Voyage* barely mentions the animal in that wild state that shoves humankind away; indeed, the innocence of the novel’s animals hovers close to relying upon human morality, as the incident with One Tusk and Mottyl illustrates. Animal resistance takes the form of tacit moral chastening of the cruel habits of Dr. Noyes and his cohorts. All the animals are in essence domesticated animals, responsive to kindness and living more or less peaceably amongst themselves. The novel does broach the distinction between tame and wild in Mrs. Noyes’s thoughts on the relative values of the ark and the wood:
The wood—though half the animals gathered on the ark had made their living there—had no such potential danger as this place [the ark] had. And yet—Mrs. Noyes felt safer here. Though sadder than she might have in the wood. Safer and sadder: what a strangeness, she thought...

Maybe that was what she... meant by safety and sadness: that she and all these creatures with her shared their captivity in a way they could never have shared the wood. (p. 251)

This comparison of the woods and the ark invokes the true history of the animal. Science and religion have rendered all the animals in the wilderness, and the wilderness itself, safe for human contemplation. The wood is the domain of the animals; humans are not welcome there. The ark represents the world of human construction which effectively says "no" to the wilderness. The ark humanizes and domesticates animals. It represses, too, the rebellious animism in the human spirit, where animism reflects both contact with the animal and nervousness at the difference of the animal from the human being.

At this point, the novel borders on undercutting uncritical pleasure in the talking, kind-hearted animals. Nostalgia for the undomesticated beast runs contrary to the nostalgia for the magical, talking animal which is the note on which the novel will end. The site at which these seemingly irreconcilable moods conjoin is Mrs. Noyes. After the voyage, animals say a collective "no" to even those who appreciate their estrangement from humankind. That quality of mind which is predisposed to listen to the animal’s voice will no longer be able to penetrate animal silence. With the destruction of mythic consciousness the living correspondence of humans and animals is also destroyed. Human language is rejected by the natural world and loses meaning. All that humans are left with is the "noise" of Dr. Noyes and his kind.

The death of Yaweh also reduces human speech to meaningless noise. Although Findley subjects religion to criticism, he targets human uses of religion for attack, as well. The appearance of Yaweh as senile old fool, travelling the countryside with a parade of circus wagons represents what humans have done to the image of God. While disbelief plays its part in reducing God to this state--his caravan is "spattered with the remnants of
excrement, eggs and rotten vegetables" (p. 64) hurled at him by the masses--the acts of
the believers can be blamed, too, for his degeneration. The ritual sacrifice of lambs
contributes to Yaweh's decrepitude. That sacrifice bears scant relation to God; it serves,
instead, Dr. Noyes's need for power over life and over his family. Yaweh says nothing
about sacrificing animals; when he arrives he is childishly beguiled by the magic show
Dr. Noyes has arranged for him. A magic trick, in which a coin is made to disappear
beneath water, gives him the idea for the flood. The ritual sacrifice is utterly out of
keeping with the pleasures of this harmless old man. Whether or not the omnipotent,
angry God had once required sacrifice, the personified, easily-bewildered Yaweh leaves the
rationale for the deadly act at humankind's doorstep. Indeed, Yaweh is something of a
charming character in this guise, and is dangerous only in his power to act upon the
inspirations of dementia.

The absence of external authorization of sacrifice becomes plainer as sacrificial acts
grow increasingly elaborate and unnatural aboard the lonely, isolated ark. To his credit,
Dr. Noyes recognizes that Yaweh has abandoned the world. He had at first taken the
appearance of a strange silver kitten on board the ark as a sign from Yaweh, and had
sacrificed the creature. When he learns that Mottyl has been hidden on the ark, and has
given birth to kittens, he angrily removes the kitten from the altar and replaces it with an
Icon depicting Yaweh. Where previously he had deliberately deluded himself into thinking
that the sacrifice of animals made Yaweh speak, he now unconsciously performs the
sacrifice that articulates Yaweh's disappearance from the world. He burns the Icon,
silencing Yaweh forever (p. 351). Dr. Noyes then substitutes himself for Yaweh and
utters edicts that his sacrifice never revealed to him. The burning of the Icon annihilates
the remotest of contact with Yaweh and confers total authority upon Yaweh's murderer.
In fact, in his madness, Dr. Noyes makes a passable surrogate for the greatly abused
image of God seen earlier. Dr. Noyes reduces Nature to his paste-and-paper magic show, to a fabrication of his own brain. By legerdemain, he originates decrees out of nothing.

Just as the ape-child has passed through phases before arriving still-born into the world, so too does ritual sacrifice descend through phases of disconnection with religion. Before reaching the stage of the apocalyptic destruction of its raison d'être, sacrifice attaches itself to the most brutal of excuses. The most violent event in the novel is perpetrated upon the fragile body of the Unicorn. Of course, driving whole herds of animals into the flames, as Noah has done prior to the voyage, is a terrible act of ignorant aggression. The violence against the Unicorn, however, is focussed upon the one delicate creature; it is also perverse. Noah uses the Unicorn's horn to penetrate Emma's tight vagina so that Japeth can at last copulate with his bride and take the blame for all the apes that will thereafter be born into the world. As Freud's essay "The Taboo of Virginity" relates, this act of artificial defloweration does occur among primitive societies, sometimes at the hands of elderly women, sometimes with aged male priests forcing themselves upon young brides-to-be. In Freud's analysis, the custom supposedly does a service for the bridegroom in saving him from touching the blood of his virgin bride. The custom also has the practical side-effect of easing passage to the clumsy male who, as Japeth is, is befuddled by female anatomy. Dr. Noyes and his followers pay no attention to Emma's outraged protest that Japeth "'couldn't gain entry 'cause I wouldn't let him!'" (p. 269) Emma simply finds Japeth repulsive. The violence done to Emma's vagina is an act of aggression against love. It elevates rape above conjugal love in the world Dr. Noyes is creating.

With the triumph of mechanistic coitus over the love that brings women and men together naturally, there can be no place for Unicorns in the new world. Already dying from savage treatment and psychic abuse of its shy existence, the Unicorn receives the final blow from Japeth; furious, Japeth whacks off the Unicorn's horn with his sword:
"Later, Japeth would come to understand he had acted as the arm of God. Noah would explain this for him" (p. 266). The blatant malignancy of this whole episode compels the desperate Noah to manufacture a transparently factitious ritual to sanctify his deed. Cloven-hooved, the Unicorn is not a proper sacrificial animal, and so Dr. Noyes hits upon the expedient of sacrificing the horn instead. The horn becomes "the sacred Phallus," and thus the male organ is put first before any other consideration. Ironically, the "sacred Phallus" is ground into golden dust as part of the ritual sacrifice. The disintegration of healthy phallicism leaves Noah and his descendants waving veritable dildoes about to intimidate gullible folk.

In Noah's ritual, the word "holy" is applied to cover evil. The thought of apes keeps creeping into his mind and prevents him from believing in the holy illusion he struggles to create. He seems genuinely to suffer remorse for causing the death of the Unicorn. Of course, the death of the Unicorn means that he will not fulfill the mission Yaweh has given him: one pair of the animals he was ordered to save will be missing at the end of the voyage. There will be a gap in the world Yaweh had imagined. As with the ape, that gap would have been a point of meeting between humans and animals: the mate of the magical Unicorn is a "Lady." While the Unicorn's mate apparently assumes Unicorn shape--she leaves hoofprints in the earth--Findley consistently designates her "The Lady." Noah's prayers are aimed at the gap between humans and animals; while he mourns the death of the Unicorn, he prays simultaneously for the death of the ape that Hannah carries in her womb. He is saddened that the loss of the truly magical detaches humans from nature; he does not want the gap closed by the natural animal, the ape, if he is to be blamed for its existence. The whole, craven, faithless performance, he names the "Ritual Ceremony of the Holy Phallus, in Remembrance of Yaweh's Holy Beast, the Sacred Unicorn" (p. 273).
Findley weaves numerous ironies into his modern re-interpretation of the Unicorn. As J.E. Cirlot observes in his *Dictionary of Symbols*, the Unicorn is a highly ambivalent symbol, denoting both chastity and phallicism (pp. 337-338). The Unicorn represents Christ, and the word of God. It is used by the alchemists to symbolize the *Monstrum Hermaphroditum*. It yields gently to virgin maidens. These mythic connotations, surrounding an imaginary beast, have only loose correspondence with Findley's Unicorn. It is unquestionably effective to have the word of God, or the person of Christ, killed with the slaying of the Unicorn. The hermaphroditic ambivalence of the creature links it with Findley's Lucifer, who later on restores the Unicorn briefly to life and causes its horn to grow back—an act simultaneously feminine and masculine. The chastity of the Unicorn renders its forced participation in the defloration of Emma all the more repellent; the use of its horn, the phallic symbol, as an instrument and weapon desecrates the fleshly, life- and love-creating purpose of the phallus. All of these associations are meaningful. But it is the impression of the Unicorn as an animal, and not as a symbol or even as a magical creature, that makes the circumstances of its death unerringly abhorrent. As Findley depicts it, the Unicorn is an especially fragile animal, so retiring as to be almost unearthly. Dragging such an animal into the sordid act of ravaging a female child constitutes an assault on the whole of animality, including that which humankind shares in common with other species. In fact, the novel is generally so empathetic towards animals that only a deep rage against human uses of animals could have permitted Findley to drive his art towards the ugly scene of the Unicorn's death.

*Not Wanted on the Voyage* couples the loss of myth to the modern world with the victimization of animals. Divorced from nature, human belief can only produce myths that are synonymous with lies. The novel allegorically re-enacts the historical progress that has left culture chattering away to itself in the midst of a silent world. The extinction of animal discourse has evolutionary significance, in that the gap where the animal should be
in the human being leaves human language ungrounded. The decrees that deliver animals into human hands are falsehoods invented by humans to lend artificial power to language. Ungrounded, culture requires the living animal victim to declare its materiality. Culture may not know it is being punished with the silence of animals, but in carrying on with assaults upon nonhuman animals, culture winds itself up into layer upon layer of falsity. This is the process that Not Wanted on the Voyage re-creates.

Culture is the enemy of myth in William Faulkner's "The Bear," also, but only in culture’s modern manifestations. In marked contrast to Timothy Findley, Faulkner seeks virtue in the masculine aspect of human existence. He does not, in other words, wholly condemn humankind to artificiality, although in "The Bear," he does eventually undermine the initial images of masculine psychopomp. The hunt initially carries the burden of myth. It stands as an admonishment to life in Memphis, where "men in starched collars and neckties," and "ladies rosy in furs" stroll hard pavements and dine in restaurants. These city people "had never heard" of the great dog Lion or the legendary bear Old Ben, "and didn’t want to" (p. 234). Nostalgia for the demise of the hunting ethos informs "The Bear." But nostalgia for the living bear conflicts with the remembered sanctities of the hunt. Ironically, as Mary Allen astutely observes, all the stories in Go Down, Moses, including "The Bear," "substantiate the hunt as an immoral activity" (p. 153). While Memphis life is inferior to the life of the hunt, the hunt demonstrates its own unworthiness in taking the life of the revered animal.

Faulkner's story, as it is currently published, has a long passage of McCaslin family history inserted into it. In an interview in the late 1950s, Faulkner said that this passage, Section IV, "doesn’t belong in ["The Bear"] as a short story." He encourages the reader to "skip that when you come to it" (Bear, Man, and God, p. 116). Section IV, however, has several beneficial effects upon the text, not the least among them that it
provides, in Irving Howe's words, "an abrasive disruption of the idyllic nostalgia previously accumulated" (p. 257). In Section IV, after Ike McCaslin has related the tale of his meeting with Old Ben and his failure to shoot the bear when he could, his cousin quotes Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" at him: "She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,/ Forever wilt though love, and she be fair!" (p. 297). These lines from Keats are quoted also in the original, 1935 version of "The Bear." In that version, the boy's father speaks the lines to explain to the boy why he (the boy) did not shoot Old Ben. The boy's encounter with Old Ben is the climactic moment in the 1935 version of the story: Old Ben does not die in this version. By a process of successive distancing, then, the lines from Keats come to ring hollow in the extended version of "The Bear." They are delivered by a man whose relation to Ike is more distant than that of the father to the boy in the original. They are isolated from the primary text by the shift in mood and range characterizing the historical passage. More importantly, the lines are uttered against the reader's knowledge that Old Ben has been killed. The memory of the long dead bear, which the assertion in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" should enshrine, in fact makes feeble compensation for the living animal. It can also be granted, with some reluctance, that the masculine myth of the hunt is sufficiently convincing to eclipse Keats' delicate, poetic sentiment. The hunters have the totemic Old Ben; future generations have only the anecdotal bear.

The displacement is similar to the substitution of an old tin coffee-pot full of I.O.U.'s and copper coins for a silver cup filled with gold-pieces, which constitutes the punctuating irony of Section IV. The silver cup and gold coins were to have been the one material legacy to Ike out of a history of failures and progressive decline. Around the cup and coins, a family ritual evolves. Periodically, the family takes down the burlap-wrapped treasure and passes it around, feeling the weight and listening to the jingle of the coins inside. This is "a Legacy, a Thing" (p. 301); it is a true material object, whereas the family history remains tantalizingly fragmented in illiterate diary entries, and is obscured
by guilty suppression of secret sexual liaisons. The replacement of the silver cup with a
tin coffee-pot would not be quite so poignantly farcical, were it not that the theft was
committed by the same man, Hubert Beauchamp, who bequeathed the cup and coins and
set his seal upon them. The I.O.U's tell a sad tale, of humble surrender to the temptation
to take just a few coins, which gives way to embarrassed haste in filching some more, and
then to the hyperbolic pride in misappropriation displayed by the fully guilty conscience.
The last note, which sees the silver cup exchanged for the coffee-pot, communicates the
man's despairing admission that he will never pay back what he owes; it says, simply,
"One silver cup. Hubert Beauchamp" (p. 308). These brief I.O.U's convey a full
psychological impression of Hubert Beauchamp, not only at the moments he is pilfering
coins from his nephew's legacy, but in the whole of his pathetic life. While the revelation
of the old tin coffee-pot makes better literature and better history than a triumphant
unwrapping of a kind of Holy Grail would have done, the event sours myth. As Irving
Howe rightly detects, the whole of Section IV leads up to the disenchantment driven home
by the last section of the story, in which Ike returns to the scene of the hunt.

The conclusion of "The Bear" comes as a surprise, in view of the mythic
ponderousness Faulkner has infused into the hunt in the first three sections of the story.
Everything about the hunting trips appears at first to speak of an immutably superior way
of existence. The hunters comprise a community of men, bonded together so perfectly as
to negate the racial differences that Faulkner himself cannot overlook. At least, that is, a
transcendence of race is one of Faulkner's opening flourishes in praise of the hunt: part of
the "best of all talking" to which Ike is exposed on these trips to the woods concerns "men,
not white nor black nor red but men, hunters with the will and hardihood to endure and
the humility and skill to survive" (p. 191). Even the whiskey these men drink has to be
robed in mythic significance:
[I]t would seem to him that those fine fierce instants of heart and brain and courage and wiliness and speed were concentrated and distilled into that brown liquor which not women, not boys and children, but only hunters drank, drinking not of the blood they spilled but some condensation of the wild immortal spirit, drinking it moderately, humbly even, not with the pagan's base and baseless hope of acquiring thereby the virtues of cunning and strength and speed but in salute to them.  
(p. 192)

Clearly, for Faulkner, these aren't just a bunch of men off on a toot in the woods. They participate annually in a mystic ceremony, a ritual affirming the potent spirit of the wilderness and the "humility and pride"--a key-note--of the hunter in the face of that spirit.

The totality of that spirit is summed up in Old Ben. All the other animals are fair game. Shooting a buck and being daubed with the buck's blood is a mystic rite for the boy. This initiation is described in Faulkner's "The Old People"; in this story, as Ike anticipates shooting the buck, he thinks that soon "he would draw the blood, the big blood which would make him a man, a hunter." Other animals, evidently, have "little blood": rabbits are the target of boys in "apprenticeship" to manhood (p. 195). In the course of time, killing animals has virtually disappeared as a rationale for the hunt. Major de Spain and old General Compson, who preside over the yearly excursion, have already demonstrated their prowess as hunters and men, and seem to spend the whole time back at camp, sharing the "best of all talk" and the mystic whiskey, and not shooting animals. Only inferior men, and the boy, go off to kill the lesser beasts:

Boon and the negroes (and the boy now too) fished and shot squirrels and ran the coons and cats, because the proven hunters . . . scorned such other than shooting the wild gobblers with pistols for wagers or to test their marksmanship.  (pp. 204-205)

"Gobblers" (note the uneasy childishness in the designation: these are not "turkeys"), evidently, are nothing better than moving objects for the lazy whim of the proven hunter. Neither "big blood," nor little blood runs through turkey veins; if it did, the proven hunter would be sinking to the level of boys and "negroes" in shooting the birds. The power that continues to draw these men into the woods, then, is concentrated in Old Ben. The men
return to the woods, "not to hunt deer and bear but to keep yearly rendezvous with the bear which they did not even intend to kill" (p. 194)--or at least that is the impression the boy has. Later, he realizes that the men "had no actual intention of slaying" the bear, "not because it could not be slain but because they had no actual hope of being able to" (p. 201). Already, mythical import is beginning to collapse before disillusionment. The hunters, who will not deign to shoot lesser animals, are in fact brave, or short-sighted, enough to kill Old Ben if it could be done, and thus to bring an end to the mighty, spiritual quest of which only Old Ben could be the object. Testifying to the immorality of the intent to slay Old Ben is the fact that the inferior man, Boon Hogganbeck, kills the bear, and not the distant white hunters. Only a mortal man, it appears, can prove the bear likewise mortal and defile its totemic meaning.

"The Bear" is, in truth, a Bildungsroman. In the eyes of the innocent boy, Old Ben is

not even a mortal beast but an anachronism indomitable and invincible out of an old dead time, a phantom, epitome and apotheosis of the old wild life which the little puny humans swarmed and hacked at in a fury of abhorrence and fear like pygmies about the ankles of a drowsing elephant;--the old bear, solitary, indomitable and alone; widowered, childless and absolved of mortality--old. (pp. 193-194)

When Old Ben wounds a female dog with its claws, "it was still no living creature but only the wilderness which, leaning for a moment, had patted lightly once her temerity" (p. 199).

When the boy grows into the realization that this bear is mortal and can be destroyed, he undergoes physical sensations denoting both fear and lust: he experiences "a flavor like brass in the sudden run of saliva in his mouth, [and] a hard sharp constriction either in his brain or his stomach" (p. 200). He realizes, simultaneously, "his own fragility and impotence": he too is mortal; the hunt does not distinguish him above the animals he kills.

The mortal bear is still far enough removed from the state of the natural animal to be invoked by mystic rites. By some uncanny telepathy, the bear knows when the boy has jettisoned the trappings of civilization. First, the boy leaves his gun behind to walk
unarmed into the bear's territory. This weaponlessness is "a condition in which not only
the bear's heretofore inviolable anonymity but all the ancient rules and balances of hunter
and hunted and been abrogated" (p. 207). When, after nine hours, the boy has yet not
encountered Old Ben, he realizes that the watch and compass he carries are signs of
impurity which repel the bear. Once he rids himself of these remaining instruments, he at
last sees the bear. Even so, the bear is not an animal but a metaphysical emanation
defying natural law:

> It did not emerge, appear: it was just there, immobile, fixed in the green and
windless noon's hot dappling, not as big as he had dreamed it but as big as he had
expected, bigger, dimensionless against the dappled obscurity, looking at him. Then
it moved. It crossed the glade without haste, walking for an instant into the sun's
full glare and out of it, and stopped again and looked back at him across one
shoulder. Then it was gone. It didn't walk into the woods. It faded, sank back into
the wilderness without motion. . . . (p. 209)

Despite having been called up by magic, and despite its physical nebulousness, the bear
behaves as a real bear would most likely behave on encountering a human in the woods.
Old Ben's non-violent retreat in this instance marks one distinction between "The Bear"
and conventional hunting stories. Old Ben is not the ferocious beast of hunting lore, which
threatens humans with its wicked claws and fangs and tests the hunter's virility. While it
would be wrong to say that the boy's gentleness, à la St. Francis, has drawn the bear to
him, it would not be wrong to suspect reluctance on Faulkner's part to approve of
victimization of at least this one animal. The mysticism that surrounds Old Ben, the fact
that the bear safeguards the last vestiges of the genuine wilderness, seems in this passage
to join forces with an unacknowledged empathy for the simple animal who wants to go its
own way undisturbed.

This brief instant of communion with the natural animal quickly disappears under
narrative preparation for the Battle of the Titans, which will see Old Ben pitted against
Lion, the wild dog whose eyes express "a cold and almost impersonal malignance like some
natural force" (p. 218). Obviously, something has to be done, narratively speaking, to
shift the onus of Old Ben’s death away from human beings, if only partially: humans, however humble and proud, are after all too puny to bring down the myth Faulkner has built up around the bear. Besides that, this year’s hunt has to be quintessentially different from the hunts of other years: Old Ben cannot die by mischance alone. Thus Faulkner introduces Lion, an animal who equals Old Ben in strength and mystery. It is a foregone conclusion that Lion will also fall victim to this battle, and die. Humankind has to be deprived utterly of mythic beasts; it would be a violation of progressive disillusionment if Lion were left in human hands, to keep alive the spirit of the untame and inhuman.

Boon Hogganbeck is a kind of scapegoat to Faulkner’s need to eliminate the bear and show myth in collapse. The other men are too pure to commit the awful deed; if the myth of male-bonding in the wilderness is to remain pristine, none of the proven hunters can assume the guilt of invalidating the hunt and consigning the wilderness to human authority for good. Boon Hogganbeck is a peculiar hybrid. He is something of a hero in having saved Ike’s life by throwing him out of the path of a runaway horse and wagon (p. 233). He attends so faithfully to Lion that their relationship is almost marital; the man and the dog sleep together, and when Boon caresses Lion, it is unclear whether Lion is the woman or Boon (p. 220). He kills the bear in the approved mythic manner: with a knife, not a gun. Yet Boon is of mixed blood, part Indian, part white, and has the mentality of a child. He has "the ugliest face the boy had ever seen. It looked like somebody had found a walnut a little larger than a football and with a machinist’s hammer had shaped features into it and then painted it, mostly red" (p. 227). Faulkner has clearly worked hard to compose this face; natural and machine imagery clash to create a picture that is hardly human. At one point, Boon’s face is described as a "huge gargoyle’s face" (p. 225). In sum, Boon is both a likely and an unlikely challenger for the bear. He has the desperate heroism of the oppressed; he is a born victim, stigmatized by his mixed racial origins and
his physical ugliness. He possesses both the psychological and the literary qualities that make him suitable for sacrifice to narrative pressure to nullify myth. Boon has to bear final guilt, too, for reducing the hunt to a pettiness.

Two years after the events which bring about the death of Old Ben, Ike returns to the woods. The annual hunting ritual has come to an end: Major de Spain has sold the timber-rights for the woods to a Memphis lumbering company, and the wilderness itself is about to be destroyed. Trains and city mentality are going to wreck the land. Ike recalls a time when the trains passing through the wilderness had been "harmless" (p. 320). Faulkner links the harmless coexistence of industry and wilderness with sympathy for the animal: he inserts a memory from the distant past in which a locomotive frightens a bear into a tree, and Boon sits beneath the tree for hours, waiting for the bear to come down and making sure that no one shoots the vulnerable creature. Only at this point, when the destruction of the woods will wipe out all the mythic potence of the hunt, does Faulkner introduce compassion for the animal. Before this point, compassion for the animal would have undermined the value of the hunt. Now, with the demise of the hunting myth, it is possible for Faulkner to indulge sentimentality over the animal victim, albeit somewhat speciously. Nostalgia now demands that the hunt appear truly innocent and truly mindful of the life of the animal.

There is a further loss of innocence to come. Passing the graves of Lion and of Sam Fathers, who had guided him through his first hunting experiences, Ike thinks that these beings have not ultimately died, but have merely been "translated into the myriad life which printed the dark mold of these secret and sunless places with delicate fairy tracks" (p. 328). Old Ben, he thinks, has also become inviolable. The crippled paw they have buried with Lion and Sam Fathers will be returned to the mighty bear:

Old Ben, too; they would give him his paw back even, certainly they would give him his paw back, then the long challenge and the long chase, no heart to be driven and outraged, no flesh to be mauled and bled-- (p. 329)
One detects Keatsian romanticism in Ike's fantasy, from the spiritualization of Old Ben down to the "delicate fairy tracks" that cross the once virile wilderness. Fortunately, Faulkner is wise enough not to let this idyllic delusion stand. While he finds it necessary to introduce a rather obvious snake at this moment, he is also going to sever all sentimental attachments to the myth of the hunt. The snake, in effect, is realism; its appearance foreshadows the last scene in the woods that Ike will encounter. In this scene, bear-slayer Boon is sitting under a tree, as he had sat under a tree previously protecting a frightened bear from attack. This time, however, Boon is frantically trying to repair his rifle so that he can shoot the multitude of squirrels running about in the branches above him. He seems barely to recognize Ike, or at least to view Ike only as a competitor for the inferior animals he has singled out as his own personal prey. "Get out of here!" he yells at his friend; "Don't touch them! Don't touch a one of them! They're mine!" With these words, the hunt is reduced to the meanest of human terms, to avarice and selfishness, to a mundanely lustful act whose only object is to kill animals.

With this final scene, Old Ben falls into mortality. Like all the other animal victims, in Salammbo and "The Legend of St. Julian Hospitator," in "Pigeon Feathers" and in Not Wanted on the Voyage, Old Ben pulls down with him human faith in myth. Whether the debunking of myth is a healthy process, as it is with Flaubert and Updike, or an occasion for sadness, as it is with Findley and Faulkner, animal bodies have born the brunt of modern disillusionment. The struggle to resurrect myth as a dynamic, creative language meets its match in the mortal animal. The animal reminds us of our own death. Where myth articulates the hope that humans are not merely material beings, that by some magical power the right kind of language will confer immortality upon nature, modern fiction remains skeptical. Animals carry the force of realism. Their silence acts as a barrier to linguistic intention. Their death closes the gap between nature and culture.
CHAPTER VI
THE DOUBLY VICTIMIZED ANIMAL

By way of rounding off this analysis of animal victims in modern fiction, I turn now to stories in which qualities of the narrative itself perpetrate literary aggression against animal victims. Discussion thus far has traced animal victims accordingly as they are more and more deeply implicated in cultural conflicts. Stories which tell the tale of the wild animal try to come to terms with the difference between animals and humans; in most cases, these stories were seen to communicate clear moral messages to readers, messages which for the most part, particularly in the more recent stories, spoke of the iniquity of human aggression against the innocence of wild animals. The next category saw animals introduced into urban and suburban settings; there, both humans and animals were found to be victims, with the inherent victimization of the urban person finding a focus in violence against the animal. In the third category, the effort to understand the nature of human sexuality was shown to generate animal victims; animals here were discovered falling victim to human failure to bring sexual passion and romance into accord. Last, animals were seen participating in the contest between myth and evolutionary theory for the territory where human and nonhuman animals meet; history, language and death were located as the primary sources of conflict, and animal victims were identified as the site of realism. In stories in all of these categories, animals illuminate thematic concerns. Their deaths are meaningful because the authors are striving to comprehend aspects of life. The totality of the animal is not assimilated into the fictional world. An ethic which would prevail against the victimization of animals is somewhere in evidence, however remote that ethic may be from the necessity to articulate honestly the nature of
actual experience. In other words, aggression against animals is not a given in these stories. Aggression against animals is essential for the expression of the profundity of conflict, but conflict is disclosed as conflict by means of animal qualities that remain aloof and unimplicated.

In the stories now to be discussed, the shaping vision prescribes what looks like victimization of what look like animals. Animals in these stories are, in essence, scarcely animals at all but schematic elements in an aesthetic or psychological design. It is here that the argument that all animals in fiction are merely figures of human constructions and lack autonomous meaning is disconfirmed. When animals are wholly subject to human design, they clearly lose a living connectedness with their own world; they cease to communicate values important to culture and operate instead to reinforce artificial aims in culture. Why victimize them, then, if cruelty means nothing? The fact is that animals per se are not victimized in the stories examined in the following discussion. Violence against animals in stories falling into this final category is fake violence. It is a gesture only, and serves purposes other than understanding. This is not to say that cruelty to animals is rendered innocuous by the aesthetic rationale. Quite the reverse is true: these stories tacitly encourage aggression against real animals by implying that nonhuman animals are devoid of experience worthy of human consideration. Because human subjectivity is likewise bound to formalities of narrative, the obligation to heed the voice of compassion evaporates. These stories reflect the deadening of sensibility which in life allows humans to victimize animals without scruple. The reification of anti-animal and anti-human values makes these stories dangerous, since there is a sense in which modern culture would like nothing better than to be relieved of responsibility to the natural animal and to the animal in each human being.

Commentary begins with two stories by Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun also Rises* and "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber." Hemingway makes an interesting
case, because the famous stripped style of writing he effects should in theory articulate well the elementary state in which animals are presumed to live. That this style has the opposite result, that it negates instead of realizing the animal, suggests either that culture has acknowledged the complexity of animal experience or that the style itself manifests a deliberate refusal on Hemingway's part to confront life squarely. The irony, of course, is that both the style and content of his stories boast of their superior authenticity over more tangled perspectives on life, when in fact Hemingway uses the bluff style of writing to screen animal identity from view.

Since naked prose cheats the animal of its proper experiential scope, one might think that surrealism would convey the full strangeness of animal ontology and its influence upon human consciousness. Surrealism should grasp the irrational in the human/animal connection, where the irrational defies the sterility of empirical conceptions of animals. Yet if Graeme Gibson's Communion and Jerzy Kosinski's The Painted Bird typify the surrealist approach, the animal does not fare well under this mode either. Freed from commitment to representationalism, surrealist narrative evidently finds itself freed from the liabilities of conscience as well. Nothing in the narrative impedes violence against animals. That violence, indeed, establishes the distinctiveness of the surreal vision. Mangled animals enhance the impression of narrative deviation from common reality. In both Communion and The Painted Bird, animals are compelled, moreover, to serve a hyperbolic self-pity transmitted from author to protagonist. Part of the author's mission is to show how horrible life is to his alter-ego. Animal victims feed the fantasy of persecution, not because the animals themselves are persecuted, but because the persistent cruelty to animals proves the protagonist helpless against an obsessively violent world.

Horror tales take similar liberties with animals. Despite the fact that the past few years have seen werewolves, giant insects, and enraged prehistoric creatures giving way to disfigured psychotic killers and demons from hell as images of terror in popular horror,
it is still possible to manipulate animals to make them frightening. The movies *Jaws* and *Alien* attest to the continuing popularity of animal monsters; the shark's musical motif and the image of the "alien" popping out of the stomach fell quickly into common parlance, indicating an abiding fondness in the public for the creatures that frighten. The two horror stories chosen for discussion in this chapter have both been made into movies, although Michael Stewart's *Monkey Shines* did not enjoy as much success as Stephen King's *Cujo*.

One thing that distinguishes these two stories from others of the same genre is that the animals they use are ordinary animals, a domestic pet in King's story and the now familiar laboratory monkey in Stewart's. The ordinariness of these animals highlights the violence to which they are subjected. Both writers labour to infuse the familiar animal with sinister qualities menacing to humanity. Both strive to lend plausibility to the threat the animal must embody. Finally, however, the acts that end the familiar animals' lives in these stories are of a violence that surpasses whatever justification there may be in the threat the animals represent. By means of fictional devices, *Cujo* and *Monkey Shines* distort the animal *per se* into an object eminently deserving of the gruesome punishments which humankind ultimately carries out upon it.

It is easy to accuse Ernest Hemingway of perpetuating the anachronistic ideology of machismo. Certainly that ideology mandates insensitivity to animals, since the power to shed animal blood without squeamishness is fundamental to the establishment of virility under the terms of a macho approach to life. With his admiration for the bull-fight and the safari, Hemingway does flaunt macho beliefs. But the quality of his vision, as Margot Norris discerns, runs counter to the attitude he professes to uphold. His animals are not the full-blooded beings that fall before the power of the male, but aesthetic objects with so scant a genuine presence in the narrative as to render macho posturing pathetic.
In *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*, Margot Norris provides a superb and detailed critique of Hemingway's attitudes as they appear in the prose works *Death in the Afternoon* and *Green Hills of Africa*. Instead of proposing, as one could, that the reduction of the animal to an object immune to injury and pain reveals an underlying sensitivity on Hemingway's part, Norris implies that the language he employs manifests greater sadism than the ideology he preaches. Remarking upon Hemingway's assertion in *Death in the Afternoon* that pain to the bull is "incidental" to the artistry of the bull-fight, Norris writes that

The language itself enacts an order of mental or rational cruelty by stripping the inflicted pain of any intrinsic importance, by denying its centrality to the event, by dismissing it, with a sadist's arrogance, as a mere detail in a larger, abstract project. (p. 199)

Art, then, conspires with the rationalizations bull-fighting needs to adopt in a culture anxious to recognize animal identity. The language is defensively barren; it seeks to fool the potentially hostile reader into believing that no animals are hurt in the arena, because, really, there are no animals present. The bulls are only animate objects in an artistic spectacle. Seen as art, the spectacle in the bull ring does not merely over-ride animal pain; it in fact causes that pain to disappear, since the whole event is just a geometric interplay of abstract forces in any case.

If that defense does not work, Hemingway erects the next barrier to empathy, which is empiricism. Effectively undermining the assertion that the bull's pain is "incidental," Hemingway argues that, anyway, pain is not really felt until half an hour after an injury is inflicted. Bulls are killed before they experience pain. Norris sees this argument as equally specious to that which tries to represent the bull-fight as art. Hemingway, she says, assumes the role of "neutralizer of violence," when in fact his defensive strategies are designed to sanction cruelty to bulls. Whether the scientific
assertion about the onset of pain is true or untrue, Hemingway's argument is factitious in that it is deployed only for the purpose of defending indefensible callousness.

As Norris realizes, the suffering of horses gored in the bull-fight stands as a particularly strong contradiction to Hemingway's defense of the bull-fight. Should a reader be convinced that the bull-fight is an aesthetic event, or that bulls, as Hemingway asserts in *Toros Celebres*, in fact love the combat, the injuries to horses might still elicit the reader's skepticism. Horses do not enjoy combat; they do not ask for the violence done to them, as a Hemingway bull supposedly does. They are innocent victims of a spectacle in which they do not participate psychically or aesthetically. Because of their innocence, Hemingway distances himself from them in a manner that exposes the disingenuousness of his argument as a whole. He has to treat the horses as comical beings, the clowns of the arena. In her critique of this gesture, Norris cites key descriptions from the first chapter of *Death in the Afternoon*:

> Having established the horses' ridiculous and comic character, their disembowellings become "burlesque visceral accidents," more embarrassing than painful, and very funny, like shitting. "I have seen it, people running, horses emptying, one dignity after another being destroyed in the spattering, and trailing of its innermost values, in a complete burlesque of tragedy. . . ."

In order to pull us from the inside to the outside [Norris observes], to disengage us from our site of empathy inside the terrified body of the blindfolded horse, dazed with pain, plunging desperately to expel the horn tearing at its bowels, Hemingway conjures up the metaphor of the comic theater, of circus, in order to make us appreciate only the visual exterior of the spectacle, "the most picturesque incident" in the bullfight, and to distance us emotionally by making us laugh, as though the pain, fear, injury and death we see were no more real than in a theater performance. (pp. 205-206)

Hemingway's blatantly strained rhetorical display in this instance is necessitated by the high probability that readers will identify with the horses, even when culturally fostered misconceptions about the ferocity of bulls prepare readers to accept the cruelty of the bull-fight proper. Ridiculing the horses, whose innocence is unmistakable, Hemingway simultaneously makes fun of the empathic response to animals as a whole. Any
indignation at the scene of animal pain he implicitly attributes to feeble-mindedness. His brand of virility and realism demands the clichéd response of literally laughing at pain.

At one point, Norris’s critique of Hemingway expands into a global critique of culture in general:

Hemingway [she writes] ultimately demystifies the bullfight by creating a new myth. He solves the mystery of how the killing of the animal can be great art by creating its tautological opposite: the mystery of how great art can be founded on animal torture and killing. Hemingway’s specious answer, that killing can be done with courage, skill and technical brilliance to create a spectacle of incomparable beauty, masks another answer, that the bullfight epitomizes the anthropocentric bias upon whose consequent suppression of Nature (the animal, the body, pain) the Western tradition founded culture and art. (pp. 200-201).

Placed in the context of Western culture as a whole, Hemingway’s defense of the bullfight does reflect pre-modern anthropocentrism. Hemingway might not be displeased by this critique, since he scorns the sensitive modern male as an effeminate entity earning the justified contempt of the female. That Hemingway cannot face the animal blood he spills, and must convert the human experience of animal death into art, also says a great deal about cultural process. Honouring animal symbols or the personified animal of fables, pre-modern culture could remain indifferent to the real animal body, which suffers from injury and sheds blood when stabbed with sharp objects. The living experience of the animal was kept isolated from the natural animal by aesthetic displacement. The many stories we have seen in which art strives for the reverse effect, strives to contain the suffering of real animals and comprehend the emotions that follow from that suffering, attest to the disintegration of the methods of negation Hemingway employs. Indeed, without meaning to, Hemingway articulates the deadness of anthropocentric culture.

The reader expecting to find his or her nerve tested upon great lashings of gore in a Hemingway story is going to be disappointed. The polemical demands of the essay require honest description of cruelty. His fiction elides even that basic level of confrontation. The Sun Also Rises promises to rise to a crescendo of violence, with most of
the narrative moving purposefully towards the bullfight; but the novel finally opts instead for a show of technical prowess displayed mostly in pedantic verbiage. Were Hemingway himself not given to machismo, one might suspect him of parodying the attitudes behind the lore of the bullfight. The anti-climactic presentation of the much-lauded bullfight could be seen to bespeak authorial irony sympathetic to his narrator’s sexual impotence. In other words, the transfer of virility from actual gore to verbal ostentation could imitate the tragedy of Jake Barnes’ physical affliction. Barnes could be an anti-hero, pathetic in his neurotic fondness for bullfights and even more pathetic in the pride in didacticism he inflicts upon the other characters.

Barnes’ impotence in fact serves the opposite purpose of saving him from being dragged down by womankind. It relieves him of the burden of sexual performance and protects his psychic manhood from possible deterioration in an affiliation with a woman. The other male characters lose their manly aloofness in various courting rituals from which Jake is exempt. In addition, the war injury which has left him impotent has the literary value of making a mystery out of Barnes’ manhood. The novel hints at personal tragedy long before the secret comes out. Even then, the disclosure takes allusive form, with vague references to an accident and an airplane (pp. 115-116). The lack of candor is meant to speak less of Jake’s embarrassment and more of his toughness. Here is a man who means to brave out his impotence all alone; let lesser men leak out their fears in verbal confessions: Jake will bear the stigma without the consolation of talk. This war wound is in fact so enigmatic that Jake’s penis remains a mystery throughout the novel. The critical consensus is that Jake is impotent, possibly castrated, but some critics are not willing to commit themselves to this opinion. While the whole issue may seem somewhat absurd, it is of great consequence within Hemingway’s gender-based belief system. His secrecy draws critical attention to the significant locale, whether there is a penis there or not.
In a way, the literary act of drawing consciousness to a place and then doing a locutionary dance around what seems to be a vacancy pretty well sums up the essential narrative ritual of *The Sun Also Rises*. Evidence confirming that Jake is an "aficionado" (Hemingway makes a considerable fuss over this word [pp. 131-132], as if it might be too technical for the reader to understand) takes the following form:

I had two bull-fight papers, and I took their wrappers off. One was orange. The other yellow. They would both have the same news, so whichever I read first would spoil the other. *Le Toril* was the better paper, so I started to read it. I read it all the way through, including the Petite Correspondance and the Cornigrams. I blew out the lamp. (p. 30)

How, one wonders, does it enhance the story to learn that the papers are orange and yellow respectively? Why is Hemingway making it so obvious that he is withholding information about the contents of these papers? He would have to be more naive than he seems to think that readers will be impressed by the blank fact that Jake subscribes to two bull-fight papers, one orange and one yellow. The writing takes on a Pinteresque absurdity. An incident in Giorgio Bassani's *The Heron* might be recalled at this point--the incident in which Edgardo Limentani looks for meaning in a Catholic pamphlet and finds greater significance in the blank page at the end than in the written contents. Bassani's image conveys an alienation from words caused by the failure of language to cover or ameliorate the experience of existential barrenness. Hemingway's image of the bullfight papers communicates a defiance of meaning, a conscious denial that there is any content worth revealing in the papers. To continue with correspondences, there might be a suggestion of Flaubertian ennui in Hemingway's refusal to get into the contents of these bullfight papers. Saying what is inside the papers would be just too boring; better to say what colour they are and let it go at that. Flaubert, however, is very much interested in the contents of phenomena; he expends desperate artistic efforts on trying to put the truth of essential contents into words. Hemingway, I think, leaves the pages of the bull-fight papers blank because he does not want readers to latch onto the bullfight emotionally. It
is fairly early in the novel, for one thing: it would not do to have readers making up their minds about the bullfight before Hemingway has led them to the arena. For another thing, he wants to prevent the compassion that he knows will arise if he touches directly upon the killing of bulls. Eschewing the contents of the papers has the benefit of forestalling the protest of reason that could form in the reader's mind as a consequence of emotional response.

The bullfight itself is marked by similar omission. The bullfight should constitute a kind of climax; it has been the aim of the characters' travels for at least two-thirds of the novel. While one doesn't exactly hope for carnage, certainly one could expect some increase of emotional intensity or heightening of activity as the action comes to the bullfight. That expectation increases as Hemingway seems to be revealing the details of the fiesta slowly, with the purpose of reaching a dramatic height in the scene in the arena. Let me repeat: anticipation does not necessarily hang upon a vision of a bloodbath in the bull-ring; and of course Hemingway's ideology rules out any ascent into tragedy over the bull and the matador. The least one expects is some sort of ceremony, some confrontation with the reality of the arena, if only at a ritualistic level.

Hemingway does pay some attention to the bulls as they are released from their cages into corrals. This scene finds bulls pitted against steers. Hemingway treats the scene as a kind of boxing match: Jake points out that the bulls use their horns like boxers, with a right and left thrust (p. 139). But even with the applied weight of this analogy, the herding of the bulls by the steers is an anti-climactic event. A few brief manoeuvres, a perfunctory poking of a steer by a bull, and the episode is over. All Jake, the man with "aficion"--i.e., a "passion" for the bullfight--can say after the all-important bulls are revealed is, "'They were nice bulls'" (p. 144). Perhaps the true aficionado is supposed to be taciturn; perhaps it is bad form to express enthusiasm over the bulls. In any event, it is left to the reader to infer that they are healthy, vigorous bulls worthy of the bullfight,
and not "nice" polite bulls that would prefer to stand peacefully in a field instead of being harassed into displays of aggression.

The scene of the running of the bulls is even further stripped of literary effort. Jake watches the running of the bulls from a balcony. From this perspective, he sees a crowd of men running:

Behind them was a little bare space, and then the bulls galloping and tossing their heads up and down. It all went out of sight around the corner. One man fell, rolled to the gutter, and lay quiet. But the bulls went right on and did not notice him. They were all running together. (p. 160)

These five sentences are the sum total of Hemingway's description of the famous running of the bulls at Pamplona. A later repetition of the event, in which a man is killed, receives attention no more animated than the first running of the bulls. The bulls are "heavy" and "muddy-sided"; their horns are "swinging" (p. 196). One bull separates itself from the herd and gores a man. And then the ritual is over for that day, too. Hemingway's literary approach to the bull-running shuts off analysis; it represents a frustrating impediment not only to insight, but also to a simple visual grasp of what is going on.

It hardly seems possible that description could be further stripped down than this, but Hemingway manages to effect greater uncommunicativeness as he arrives at the first bullfight. "It was a good bull-fight" (p. 164), Hemingway observes, and that is all. Something about this "good bull-fight" supposedly establishes the young matador Romero as "a real one." What is meant by Romero being "a real one" is held suspended until the second bullfight. Yet in this second bullfight, most of the literary action takes place in the stands, between Jake and Brett, a woman who is being introduced to bullfighting for the first time. That action, of course, is not emotional or psychological action. It takes the form of Jake telling Brett what to look at in the arena: "I told her about watching the bull, not the horse. . . . I had her watch how Romero took the bull away from a fallen horse. . . . I pointed out to her the tricks the other bull-fighters used. . . . She saw why
she liked Romero's cape-work and why she did not like the others . . . " (p. 167). A hint of sublimated sexual aggression hovers around Jake's instruction. He is forcing the woman's attention here and there, and, in true pornographic style, winning her appreciative submission to being educated. We do get some clues as to why Romero's performance is superior to that of other matadors: "Romero's bull-fighting gave real emotion, because he kept the absolute purity of line in his movements" (p. 168). But where is that "real emotion"? What does it feel like? And what on earth happened to the bulls? They have disappeared. Romero could be a ballet dancer, proving his abilities alone on stage. If "purity of line" is the primary excitement of the event, a reader would be justified in thinking that the skills of the bullfight would be demonstrated just as well, if not better, without the bull.

The third and last bullfight focusses upon the contrasting performances of the aged matador Belmonte, who has lost the spirit of the arena, and Romero, the "real one." Description of Belmonte surveys the artificiality of his flourishes, his demoralization and the hostility of the crowd. The bull comes in as an afterthought: "after his second bull was dead . . . [he] handed his sword over the barrera to be wiped" (p. 214). In other words, Belmonte has killed the bull, has driven his sword into its body and pulled out his sword now covered in blood. The passive voice diminishes the act of killing the bull to a nullity. The bull's blood is not even mentioned; it is only implied in the wiping of the sword.

Since Romero's performance is a virtual raison d'être for the novel as a whole, it is clearly impossible to omit the bull from this last foray into meaning. After all, Romero "loved the bulls" (p. 216), and it would do his fighting techniques a disservice to leave out the animal opponent. Possibly, the inclusion of the bull this time foreshadows the sexual affair Brett and Romero will share afterwards. Hemingway must infuse Romero with some sense of animal carnality, or Romero's participation in the sex act becomes
inconceivably abstract. Thus the bull appears in the last bull-fight, dutifully responding to the matador's tricks. The peak moment arrives:

The bull charged as Romero charged. Romero's left hand dropped the muleta over the bull's muzzle to blind him, his shoulder went forward between the horns as the sword went in, and just for an instant he and the bull were one, Romero way out over the bull, the right arm extended high up to where the hilt of the sword had gone in between the bull's shoulders. Then the figure was broken. (p. 218)

Presumably the effortlessness of the kill is to be attributed to Romero's great talent. The image of Romero charging the bull appears to be something of a lapse from the artistic refinement Hemingway means to present, but his ideology could not allow the bull any unanswered display of power. Apart from this one, swiftly countered act of resistance, the bull falls in line nicely with the choreography of the fight. It plays partner to Romero's moves, as if the pair were on a dance floor. It does not resent the persecution, or suffer, or rebel and act upon its own animal instincts. It even cooperates in death, dropping over in the prescribed manner, with its "four feet in the air" (p. 219). "It was like a course in bull-fighting" (p. 219), Jake observes. Indeed, the description is something like a course in bull-fighting. It is not much like literature. One would imagine, however, that even in a course on bull-fighting, the instructor would want to impress upon his students the possibility that bulls might respond badly to harassment and injury. Simple appreciation of a skillful performance in the bull-ring should demand attention to the physical mass and the hostility of the bull. Otherwise, the bullfight is a game, and the killing of the bull stands in total violation of the spirit of the sport. Apparently, detailed attention to the killing of the bull would detract from Hemingway's literary style. The writing is bloodless; the bull, too, must be a bloodless entity, because Hemingway's aesthetic does not know what to do with a suffering animal subject. Because the whole performance passes by with the serenity of an afternoon of bird-watching, one has little faith in the observation that Jake and his friend Bill "both took a bull-fight very hard" (p. 221). As with the
bullfight itself, there is here a gesture towards feeling, but it is feeling without content: no experience has occurred to ground the feeling in reality.

One kind of animal does preoccupy Hemingway, however, and that is the horses he depicts as comical in *Death in the Afternoon*. Comparing the attitude towards the horses in *The Sun Also Rises* with that of *Death in the Afternoon*, written some six years later than the novel, one senses that the language of farce represents a post-hoc rationalization for discomfort Hemingway previously recognized. Certainly, in the earlier work, he displays distress over the goring of the horses. In fact, he repeats so often that a spectator to the bullfight should not look at the horses that the horses take on a fetishistic aura. True to form, Hemingway never actually mentions what happens to the horses in the bull-ring; he never even shows the horses, injured or uninjured, running around the arena. He simply repeats, obsessively, the advice to avoid looking at the horses, and then repeats after the event how shocking it was that whatever happened to the horses did happen.

With this compulsive repetition, the aficionado's capacity to suffer the never-disclosed injuries to the horses becomes an obvious source of conceit. The horses, rather than the bulls, turn the bullfight into an ordeal, a test of mental prowess, for the spectator. The following conversation among Jake and his friends manifests the furtive pride underlying all the protestation over the horses:

Bill said something to Cohn about what to do and how to look so he would not mind the horses. . . .

"I'm not worried about how I'll stand it. I'm only afraid I may be bored," Cohn said.

"You think so?"

"Don't look at the horses, after the bull hits them," I said to Brett. "Watch the charge and see the picador try and keep the bull off, but then don't look again until the horse is dead if it's been hit."

"I'm a little nervous about it," Brett said. "I'm worried whether I'll be able to go through with it all right."

"You'll be all right. There's nothing but that horse part that will bother you, and they're only for a few minutes with each bull. Just don't watch when it's bad." (pp. 161-162)
After the fight, Brett has proven herself "a lovely, healthy wench" (p. 166) in enduring the event. She goes off into ecstasies:

"Simply perfect [she exclaims]. I say, it is a spectacle!"
"How about the horses?"
"I couldn't help looking at them."
"She couldn't take her eyes off them," Mike said. "She's an extraordinary wench."
"They do have some rather awful things happen to them," Brett said. "I couldn't look away, though."
"Did you feel all right?"
"I didn't feel badly at all."
"Robert Cohn did," Mike put in. "You were quite green, Robert."
"The first horse did bother me," Cohn said. . . . (p. 165)

The way these people fuss about their own feelings would be humourous if it weren't so puzzling. The reader is left absolutely in the dark as to what the dreadful "horse part" is. All the self-congratulation for having endured the true test of strength, which obviously has more to do with the horses than with the bulls, is completely meaningless.

In view of the fetishism surrounding the horses, the one context in which Hemingway does specify the "awful thing" that can happen to a horse in the bull-ring represents a particularly offensive betrayal of Jake's admittedly silly friends. The one brief and explicit note on the wounding of the horses occurs in the context of the long and laudatory remarks on Jake's "aficion." At first the Spanish aficionados assume that "an American could not have aficion," but Jake has the passion, and the Spanish men show they accept him by touching him. Montoya, the leader of the aficionados "could forgive anything" in someone who has aficion. Montoya forgives Jake for having the friends he has: "they were simply a little something shameful between us, like the spilling open of the horses in bull-fighting" (p. 132). At least Hemingway applies a comprehensible adjective to what happens to the horses: the goring of the horses is "shameful." In addition, he offers a physical image on the basis of which a reader can conceptualize the horses' agony: the horses "spill open." The context for these revelations, however, is quite unnatural. Granted, the shared guilt confirms Montoya and Jake's status as initiates into the
bullfighting mystique. Nevertheless, likening Jake’s friends to a phenomenon that degrades the bullfight in the eyes of the aficionados is a reprehensible act. Six years later, no doubt, friends who did not understand bullfighting would become as comical as the wounded horses. The unkindness to friends does not reflect well upon the bullfighting clique. It would be difficult to argue, however, that Hemingway subtly criticizes the aficionados with the betrayal of friendship. The concretization of the horses’ injuries indicates Hemingway’s concurrence in Jake’s contempt: he seeks an image sufficiently demeaning to justify Jake’s disparagement. Since Hemingway does not offer the visual evidence of the horses’ suffering in the proper context, out of some sense of delicacy, he must be serious in this context. What is most insidious about this use of the goring of the horses is that it props up a ritual and an in-group whose ideology preaches exactly the opposite of the compassion for the victim that clear acknowledgement of an animal’s pain should elicit.

It could be proposed that Hemingway has cleverly excluded animal subjectivity from The Sun Also Rises in order to show why his human subjects are part of a "lost generation." The loss of the animal to these people leaves their conversations inane, their pleasures destructive, and their friendships trivial. This interpretation is valid if one places the novel in the larger literary context in which authors are honestly striving to grasp the significance of the victimized animal to the modern condition. Internally, however, Hemingway’s narrative works in the retrograde direction, predating the wholeness of the human psyche upon delight in the negation of the animal. Jake is "lost" only because he is impotent. Were he sexually capable, his love of the artistry of the bullfight would be final confirmation of the perfection of his manhood.

"The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" substantiates Hemingway’s belief that killing animals is the consummatory act of virility. While this story represents an advance over The Sun Also Rises in its direct presentation of animal victims, it also
manifests regression from the earlier vision in establishing morality upon lust for animal blood. Obviously, the kind of aesthetic appreciation that consecrates the bullfight in the novel has little place in the depiction of the hunting safari. The aim of the Hemingway safari is not to kill animals artistically, but simply to kill animals. There are certain moral standards a hunter is supposed to maintain. Wounded animals must be pursued into the bush and killed; it is shameful and even illegal to shoot animals from a moving vehicle; and running away from a charging animal is the supreme sin. These standards, however, sustain the highly specific, dominant standard of purity in power over the wild animal. The good hunter must not deviate in any way from confrontation with muscular animal resistance. The good hunter welcomes danger. Despite the insistence on the value of the "clean shot" which hits the vital spot and brings the animal down instantly, Hemingway's narrative rises to greater excitement when the enraged wounded animal retaliates upon the hunter. Facing the animal under those circumstances is the conclusive test of the hunter's prowess.

The quality of viciousness in "Francis Macomber" can be judged from the reaction of the hunting party to the sound of a lion's roaring. The sound provokes fear in Macomber; he knows that he's "'got to kill the damned thing'" (p. 1339). Wilson, guide and great white hunter, remarks curtly, "'Noisy beggar... We'll put a stop to that.'" Wilson's cavalier attitude looks like affectation. In fact, many of Wilson's expressions seem affected. He says casually of the lion, "'Hope he's a shootable cat'" (p. 1338). He persistently calls the wild buffalo "buff." Yet these seemingly artificial habits of speech are not meant to indicate psychological defensiveness against underlying fear or arousal. They are supposed to signal the coolness of the true hunter. The lion's roaring does not oppress the true hunter's spirit; nor does the sound stimulate a passion for the beast's blood in the true hunter's heart. The true hunter rises above all human responsiveness to the animal. The possibility that there might be a new sensibility, that a party of campers
could hear a lion roaring in the night and find the sound an awe-inspiring symbol of the daunting wilderness, stands wholly outside the range of Hemingway’s epistemology. Within the morality he is establishing, fear must be the neurosis of the civilized, the hunter must demonstrate immunity to the influence of animals, and buffaloes must be good old "buff," the almost friendly target.

It will be apparent that Hemingway gets himself into a predicament with Wilson’s blasé attitude to killing. What virtue can there be in popping off a few "buff"? A "buff" is hardly an animal at all. Unless the animal can be brought down from the coyness of this attribution and made to appear a terrible foe, Wilson’s coolness will only detract from his image as the great white hunter. Hemingway does the work of converting the animal into an enemy on Wilson’s behalf. He depicts the buffalo as "big black tank cars" off in the distance. As the hunters draw nearer to the galloping buffalo, the animals present a "plunging hugeness" to their rifles (p. 1350). The bullets "whunk into" a buffalo, with the sound denoting both the solidity of the beast and the power of the bullet. Now down on its knees, a wrecked victim, the buffalo bellows "in pig-eyed, roaring rage" (p. 1351). Although this buffalo has passed the stage of physical menace to the hunter, Hemingway has to justify the final kill with sustained defiance on the animal’s part. The adjective "pig-eyed" reflects particularly contrived meaning. Far from being purely descriptive, "pig-eyed" carries connotations of wickedness. Worse, the adjective is most often applied to ignominious persons whose presiding fault is greed. Hemingway’s use of this adjective as a defining quality of the buffalo’s natural rage debases the buffalo simultaneously as it authorizes the killing of the downed beast.

Oddly enough, Hemingway evinces pity for the suffering animal when he departs from the hunt to follow a wounded lion into the bush. Even though his description of the lion’s pain is building towards the animal’s furious attack upon the hunters, empathy periodically creeps into his handling of the lion. The first sighting of this lion, like that of
the buffalo, is marked by hyperbole. The lion stands still, "bulking like some super-rhino" (p. 1340). Hemingway makes one concession to realism: the lion is not charging the hunters right off the bat; it would much rather be left alone than terrorize human interlopers. In fact, from the lion's perspective--since Hemingway gives us the lion's perspective this time--the hunters are incomprehensible creatures going through strange motions. The lion trots warily on his way seeking a drink at the stream, when suddenly it hears a crash and feels "the slam of a .30-06 220-grain solid bullet that bit his flank and ripped in sudden hot scalding nausea through his stomach" (p. 1341). A suspicion of boastfulness surrounds the technical information about the size of the bullet, but this time the pedantic note does not distract Hemingway's attention from the animal's physical anguish. As he devotes further narrative observation to the lion, he adds details that enhance the reality of the lion's suffering:

\[
\text{His flanks were wet and hot and flies were on the little openings the solid bullets had made in his tawny hide, and his big yellow eyes, narrowed with hate, looked straight ahead, only blinking when the pain came as he breathed, and his claws dug in the soft baked earth. (p. 1344)}\]

The flies and the spontaneous digging of the lion's claws create a vivid mental picture of torment. While these details amplify the hatred the lion is supposed to feel, they originate in identification. Hemingway has put himself in the lion's position; he has imagined the somatic particulars that would plague him most were he lying shot and dying in the hot African bush. There is a vast abyss, needless to say, between this kind of attitude and that which coolly hopes that the lion is "a shootable cat." Ideology is the primary reason Hemingway does not permit himself to identify with animals more often. He is determined to exalt the values that stand remote from the wounded lion and outside its sanctuary in the bush, waiting for the kill. Although his unlyrical style of writing can evidently do justice to the individual animal's suffering, its paramount function is to suppress affinity for the animal.
In fact, in this story, the ideology of the hunt is itself pressed into service in the overriding purpose of sexual terrorism. The object of the story is to coerce Macomber’s self-sufficient wife into submission to the male. Margot passes through phases of emotion following her husband’s flight from the charging lion. First, she weeps in good feminine fashion: Wilson thinks that "when she went off to cry, she seemed a hell of a fine woman" (p. 1336). She comes back from her momentary surrender to grief primed for ruthless attack upon her husband’s manhood. All women are cruel, Wilson thinks to himself; "'I've seen enough of their damn terrorism,'" he adds. When he lets Margot take him as a lover, he blames Macomber: "why doesn’t he keep his wife where she belongs?" he silently complains (p. 1347). It gladdens Wilson’s heart when Macomber wins his virility back through experiencing the thrill of the hunt. Wilson has some more thoughts:

Be a damn fire eater now. He’d seen it in the war work the same way. More of a change than any loss of virginity. Fear gone like an operation. Something else grew in its place. Main thing a man had. Made him into a man. Women knew it too. No bloody fear. (p. 1354)

Wilson’s barely formed but presumably trenchant thoughts save Hemingway from having to explain the psychic change Macomber has undergone. Explanation, of course, is superfluous: the main point is that Margot has noted the change in her husband and is rattled by it. Apparently, Macomber’s transformation is stunning: the sight of his new masculinity unnerves his wife so badly that she shoots him in the head. Hemingway’s strange ideas about female psychology probably elucidate this turn of events. Neither Margot’s so-called cruelty, nor her agitation, seems intense enough to lead to murder. Hemingway’s primary aim appears to be to demoralize the woman, and to justify Wilson’s sadistic treatment of her at the very end of the story.

What is important to Hemingway plainly has little to do with animals. One irritating aspect of his narrative, then, is the pretense that animals are crucial to his purposes when in fact they are negligible. Even more irritating is the discovery that one is
likely to end up arguing against empathy for animals in demanding realism from Hemingway. Most notably, *The Sun Also Rises* has this effect of cornering a reader who wishes to debate the bullfighting issue. Contend that Hemingway does not give a realistic presentation of animal injuries in the bull-ring, and one finds oneself supporting the aggression that lies at the heart of the bullfight. Hemingway can turn the tables and say that those who want realism are the vicious ones: he, he could assert, has shown due consideration in refraining from focussing upon animal injuries. If he exploits the safari in "Francis Macomber" only as a instrument for magnifying sexual tension to the point of murder and psycho-sexual sadism, he can ask those who object to the hunt whether they would prefer that his story fix its full attention on the slaughter of animals. These stories thus achieve an ideological sleight of hand, managing to encourage the victimization of animals while appearing merely to be making inoffensive use of a few, not very real animals for the purpose of exploring the human condition.

Graeme Gibson's *Communion* and Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird* are as deceptive as Hemingway's stories, but their deceptiveness runs in the opposite direction. Where Hemingway mutes violence against animals with the apparent point of resurrecting lost virility amongst the superficially civilized, Gibson and Kosinski magnify violence against animals with the apparent point of denouncing violence in the human sphere. In a way, the vision in *Communion* and *The Painted Bird* is more treacherous than Hemingway's, since Hemingway does not pretend to speak for an ethic of gentleness, while Gibson and Kosinski saturate their narratives with cruelty under the guise of moral purposes. In assaulting their readers' sensibilities with the ugliness of life, they seem to have remedial motives in mind. They seem bent on discomposing shallow sanctities to show the reader that a bourgeois and mentalized ethic is not good enough for countering the seething mass of violence that life engenders. Within their novels, however, it is life
per se that creates cruelty. Their novels do not allow the reader to separate life from cruelty, to say that this or that aspect of society or culture is wrong and can be corrected. Their narratives are predicated upon violence, constructed out of violence, and indeed enjoy multiplying violent episodes. In this sense, Communion and The Painted Bird are similar to The Sun Also Rises and "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber": all four stories achieve a kind of thrill from cruelty.

The central episode in Communion involves the attempt made by the protagonist Felix Oswald to free an epileptic husky from captivity and impending death in a laboratory. It is a given that this supposed act of charity is misconceived and futile. The whole event has the flavour of a joke against animal lovers made recently in a television program. In this joke, a woman tries to free some lobsters from a New York restaurant. She sets the lobsters down in the street and tells them to "Run like the wind." Felix Oswald is afflicted by similar ignorance of animals. Animal experience is impenetrable to him. He cannot engage with physical reality. In light of the fact that the dog is crippled, the daydream that prompts Felix to mimic the merciful act is more foolish than a Disney fantasy:

He'd like to take it back to the woods. That appears to be the natural course of action: it would be the best thing. Driving north as far as the roads go, if he had a car, past towns and villages, back into winter until somewhere, in a clearing perhaps, by the edge of the bush, he releases it. That's the best thing, the natural thing: it pleases him, seeing it slip from the car, pausing to smell the air curiously, defensively, then breaking into the tireless searching run of wild dogs, the wolf...

(p. 48)

He wants to transform the sick, domestic dog into a creature of the wilderness. The intention might be honourable, however absurd, were it not that Felix is drawn by the fantasy instead of being pushed by true feeling for the animal. He takes the media image of kindness to animals and informs himself, by rote, that this image represents "the natural course of action." He is enamoured with the thought of himself as liberator, and with the picture of the dog running free. There is no correspondence between reality and
image. There is, in fact, no correspondence between Felix and the dog. The title, *Communion*, points ironically to the absence of affinity at the heart of the novel. Kindness becomes a matter of performance only.

In his terrible state of emptiness, Felix stands allegorically for "Everyman."

Cynicism informs Gibson's depiction of the common man, particularly with respect to the common man's sex life. Felix's sexual activity parallels his conduct towards the husky. The form his sexual expression takes is not, strictly speaking, sexual, just as his act of kindness is not an act of kindness. Felix works off his sexual desires on a pair of statues erected in a graveyard. Felix likes to park himself on the bench between the two stone ladies, making sure that his buttocks are placed just so, bisected perfectly along the mid-point of the space that separates the twin objects of his desire. Having two women at his command pleases him:

[S]ometimes he becomes so preoccupied with one, with the intimacy they have, the excitement, that he ignores her sister completely, and still there's no awkwardness. Even when he leans to circle a nipple with his mouth, or when he fondles the breasts, the belly, rubs his hands longingly over her thighs, even when he kneels beside her and takes the stone face in both his hands and covers it with kisses, poking his tongue in at the mouth, her eyes, licking her jaw greedily to the ear, even with all this, there's never a hint of jealousy. It's worked out very well. (p. 35)

With this image, Gibson reduces Felix's sexuality past the point of censure or pity. Gibson creates prurience without an object. From a highly cynical point of view, the habit of fondling dead matter in the shape of a woman represents an adequate metaphor for Everyman's normal sexual intimacies. Felix's caressing and licking of insensate stone does not rise into even the fetishistic or masturbatory range. Because the object of his attentions cannot be imagined to respond, the self-abandonment which would represent one aspect of genuine sexual pleasure remains absurdly enclosed in the one active participant alone. Felix surrenders his ego to a nullity. Is he trying to get pleasure or give pleasure with this act? The novel implies that the unliving object provides the only safe context for both mechanisms of gratification. Unliving objects submit to servicing; they do not object
that something in one's performance does not please them. They do not humiliate or convert self-abandonment into shame. Inject one spark of life into the object of tenderness, the novel insinuates, and performance results in contradiction and demoralization of the ego. This tenet applies not only to Felix, whose intimacies with the statues reveal the kind of psyche that will attempt to release the dog, but to the world in general. In the world Communion creates, all humane acts are manufactured. They are forced upon unresponsive objects and reluctant living beings.

For Felix, the husky dog is as inanimate an object as the statues. Felix goes through the motions of communion with the animal. He begins looking into the dog’s eyes:

At first there was nothing in those eyes, not a thing: no shadows, no light, just yellow diminishing without depth. Then one morning, several days ago, Felix saw something shiver inside the pupil, it was like something opening, something flashing deep beneath the surface. It happened very quickly. Most people would have missed it completely. Indeed it might not have happened for anyone else; it may well have happened because of him. Felix hardly dares to think about it, hardly dares to hope. (pp. 24-25)

The consciousness that stands right up front in an animal’s eyes eludes Felix. He has to struggle to perceive response in the husky’s eyes, and when he does perceive it, he takes it as communication directed at him specifically. All the violent signs the dog gives of having internal experiences--the epileptic fits in which it howls and convulses and foams at the mouth--mean nothing to Felix until he, Felix, receives what seems to be the reaction of consciousness to himself alone. Like the depiction of sexuality, this analysis of standard human relations with animals is fair enough. It criticizes our species for failing to recognize life in animals until human egos want such recognition for their own purposes. It goes further to suggest that the self-flattery arising from this ego-centred, and hence bogus, communion sends the person off into displays of kindness to the animal which totally ignore the animal’s needs. The course of action Felix takes with the husky serves the desires of his own ego and imagination. In the larger domain, Felix represents his culture by imitating the falsified, self-gratifying pattern of events in popular imagery.
which show the animal responding gratefully to human benevolence. Although there is justice in this skepticism, it fosters a vision in which all kindness to animals is narcissistic and doomed to failure. The disastrous consequences of this one sentimental act, performed by one person towards one dog, suggest the futility of any human attempt to make altruistic contact with animals. In effect, the novel indicates that no animal wants to be set free because human belief in the animal’s desire for freedom is an invention of culture. Understanding between humans and animals is completely impossible.

The novel drives Felix into victimizing the husky in order to fulfill his fantasy of releasing the dog into the wilderness. Driving the dog out of the city, he tries to execute the moves dictated by his fantasy: "Clearly he must acknowledge the animal’s fear, he must reassure it with everything at his disposal" (p. 59). He speaks kindly to the dog, to no avail. When it comes time for the dog to run away, the dog only wants to stay in its cage. Felix grows impatient:

If he upended the cage he could shake the son-of-a-bitch out onto the road. That’s a possibility: at least it’s something he might be able to do. Standing against the car he closes his eyes; the dog should appreciate, at least understand that its freedom is being restored, it should, no matter how cautiously, he recognizes that suspicion is natural and therefore desirable, it should at least poke its fucking head out of the cage, it should see what Felix has done, is doing . . . (pp. 63-64)

The fantasy degenerates further into a contest of wills between Felix and the dog. Out of the cage, the dog climbs back into the car. Felix has to pry it out of the car with a jack:

[H]e leans on the red metal jack, it presses cruelly into the sinews, bones and muscle, the whimpering grows in strength. They are both without anger. Felix bending into the car, forcing methodically, he doesn’t think, he has no sensation, the husky resists. It’s only a matter of time, it can’t win. Felix knows that. The only question is how much, what kind of pain will he have to inflict before the animal finally capitulates? (pp. 66-67)

In light of the pleasant vision of bestowing full-spirited freedom upon a grateful animal, this turn of events takes on farcical overtones. The pain Felix causes to the husky is factitious pain, designed less to provoke compassion for the animal than to destroy the fiction of beneficence.
It is almost unnecessary to relate what happens to the husky. Once cars and highways are introduced into the scheme for liberating the dog, the nature of the novel's conception of life makes it a foregone conclusion that the husky will be struck down and killed by a car. It is possible that Felix himself has accidentally driven over the husky: that outcome would certainly conform admirably to the novel's purposes. But as Felix observes, "Even if he did kill it, it doesn't matter" (p. 73). In an absolute sense, it doesn't matter who killed the husky because the husky is only the novel's device for casting cynicism over sentimental ideals. That an animal is the focus of those ideals is unimportant. The ideals themselves are the aim of the novel's disillusionment. The novel runs through the scene of the dog's death several times. Description is realistic: the dog "struggles in small circles." It "flops from side to side like a fish. . . . Bone protrudes from its side, and the snow is black with its blood" (p. 71). The recurrence of the scene imitates well the workings of any consciousness that has suffered such a humiliating assault upon its illusions. Yet a suspicious quality of fervor beyond that which adheres to the illumination of truth hangs about the repetitions of the scene. As the fate of Felix at the conclusion of the novel reveals, the fervor attaching to the husky's death is not sadistic delight in the torments of the animal but luxuriance in pity for "Everyman" and the futility of Everyman's fine intentions.

Several elements are repeated more than once throughout the novel and one of those elements is the following, quoted remark: "'I've never encountered a situation in my own life where I could have behaved differently, everything that has happened, or not happened to me, because of me, all of it has been inescapable'" (p. 60, p. 78, p. 94). This statement condemns human will to the defeat and despair that Felix suffers with his hope to change life for the husky. His kindness is inescapable; he cannot feel or act otherwise, however fabricated that kindness might be. Likewise, the outcome of his act is inescapable. The world inevitably converts humanitarian gestures into dust and ashes.
The world's cruelty does not end, however, with disabusing Felix of his altruistic fantasies. Finally, the cruelty of the novel's world concentrates itself into a group of street children, who pour gasoline on Felix and set fire to him (p. 118). Self-pity reaches its zenith in this development. The closing auto-da-fé is so comically novelistic that one comes to doubt that any part of the novel is intended as verisimilitude. Perhaps Felix doesn't really go into a graveyard and fondle statues. Perhaps he never really tried to free the husky. Perhaps the repetitions, and the novel as a whole, take place only in someone's imagination. In that case, of course, getting worked up about the dog and its pain, about the defeat of humane intentions and about any challenge to cultural myths, is purely pointless. One is left only with an "I" who feels so sorry for itself that it must generate a world that will satisfy its need to feel abused.

Likewise, the litany of tortures in The Painted Bird serves the desire of the individual ego which deplores the world's mistreatment of itself. As with Hemingway, however, protest against Kosinski's vision traps the reader in an uneasy position. Culture since World War II has not recovered from the shock of the magnitude of state-supported evil that civilization can still spawn. Dismissal of the meaning of the images from the concentration camps is rightly judged an evil in itself. When Kosinski translates the abominations of this war into a personal saga of unrelenting persecutions, rejecting his vision swerves uncomfortably close to denial that this war was, at base, as abhorrent as The Painted Bird makes it out to be. Indeed, defending animals against a background of nakedly loathsome tortures inflicted upon persons becomes something of an embarrassment. It is necessary to remember, then, that judgement is being made upon a novel, and not upon the war the novel purports to illuminate. No one denies that people suffered terribly during the war years; nor does one wish to suggest that the torments Kosinski depicts are not a realistic representation of the suffering real people experienced. What can be criticized is Kosinski's pornographic interest in the events he describes, and
that narcissism which focusses the whole misery of millions of people upon one ego. *The Painted Bird* would have been a very different novel if it had been written in the third person. In fact, it seems fair to say that the novel would not exist at all but for the all-important "I" that is subjected to continuous torture.

After the initial impact that any cruelty inherently possesses, the succession of torments the boy undergoes in *The Painted Bird* becomes predictable and loses dramatic power. One begins to wonder, as Kosinski apparently began to wonder, how the narrative can proceed or come to an end when the centre of consciousness is that of a pure victim, object of endless pain, and never an acting subject. About three-fifths of the way through the story, Kosinski seems suddenly to have hit upon the device of having the boy lose the power of speech. With this development in hand, the plot can turn upon the restoration of the boy's capacity to speak. Language returns to the boy at the close of the novel, as he is enjoying a skiing vacation—which represents a jarring contrast to the rest of the story—and when he attempts to speak on the telephone—another incongruity, given that he lost his speech when he was thrown into a sewage pit by enraged villagers (p. 125). The novel loses momentum as it deals with post-war life. Had Kosinski been interested in the particulars of the concluding miracle, bourgeois comfort might have occasioned the marvellous return of speech. As it stands, the boy regains his speech as strangely as he lost it, with little explanation outside of narrative need. There is a detectable narrative difficulty in the novel: the tortures interest the author but will only occur serially and will not drive the story; the mechanisms that will drive the story along take away the pleasures of victimization.

Fortunately, it is not necessary for the purposes of this discussion to detail the rapes, gougings, beatings, killings and castrations that occur in *The Painted Bird*. Humans endure many more terrible agonies than animals do in this novel. Animals do come in for their share of pain. Occasionally, however, humans become the victims of animals. In one
scene, straight out of horror fiction, the boy trips a carpenter into seething pit full of rats. The carpenter deserves his punishment: he means to drown the boy in a sack. In any event, the rats devour him with great gusto: they "dived into the center of the man's body only to jump through another chewed opening. The corpse sank under renewed thrusts. When it next came to the surface of the bloody writhing sludge, it was a completely bare skeleton" (p. 56).

Another episode, one of the first in the book, is a little more plausible than the scene of the rat pit. In this episode, a peasant healer buries the boy up to the neck in the earth as a folk remedy for the plague. Ravens come strolling along and start pulling the hair out of the head of the immobilized boy. Given the bizarre circumstances, the ravens behave with admirable naturalness. They do not even go through the conventional raven-ritual of plucking out their victim's eyes. If their claws look like "huge rakes" (p. 21), that is because of the boy's ground-level, close-up perspective.

Almost as natural is the behaviour of a wolfhound, Judas, who participates in a torture of many months long that a farmer perpetrates upon the boy. Garbos, the farmer, goads his wolfhound to hatred of the boy. Getting tired of beating the boy, Garbos devises a new and ingenious method of torture: he forces the boy to clasp hold of some hooks hammered into the ceiling, and then leaves the boy dangling there for hours, while Judas sits menacingly down below preventing his prisoner from dropping to the floor. Since this torment doesn't at first sound particularly painful, Kosinski supplies a truly ugly and graphic analogy involving a man being hoisted upon a wooden stake driven between his legs (p. 117). Judas does nothing more during these episodes than lie growling on the floor, now and then baring his fangs. Judas is not a demon from hell. Whereas an overheated, vengeful imagination reduces the rats to stereotypic fiendishness, Kosinski's concentration upon the pain of his alter-ego has evidently left the ravens and the wolfhound free to act normally.
Animal victims also react in a natural manner, given the extremes in distress to which the novel subjects them. In fact, in a development we have seen in other novels, the animal victim provides an opportunity at one point for articulating tenderness which the rest of the novel defeats. On this occasion, the boy befriends a horse with a broken leg. The horse nudges the boy with its muzzle, wanting affection, which the boy gives. A farmer, of course, reacts quite differently to the horse, not merely slaughtering it for its hide and bones, but actually shaming the creature beforehand for its gestures of friendship:

When the farmer approached the horse to check the position of the noose, the cripple suddenly turned his head and licked the farmer's face. The man did not look at him, but gave him a powerful, open-handed slap on the muzzle. The horse turned away, hurt and humiliated. (p. 71)

The farmer then proceeds to strangle the horse, having two other horses slowly draw the rope tight around its neck by pulling in opposite directions. This is the one instance in the novel in which an animal unmistakably evinces a conscious need to love and to be loved. It is the nature of the novel that that affection should be spurned and translated into humiliation for the animal. This is the one instance, furthermore, in which Kosinski does not exploit an animal's suffering to assert a direct correspondence between the innocent animal and the innocent boy. Even so, it is clear enough that Kosinski intends the reader to make the connection between the deeply abused virtues of the horse and the likewise abused virtues of the boy.

Other animal victims invariably give rise to overt analogies between the boy's afflictions and the animal's. When some children pour gasoline on the boy's pet squirrel and set it aflame (p. 6), the image returns later in the form of the boy's belief that some soldiers mean to pour gasoline on him and set fire to him (p. 63). In a less subtle episode, the agonies of a half-skinned rabbit produce an immediate comparison between the animal's pain and the boy's. The rabbit tears frantically around the yard; every time "her
loose hanging skin caught on some obstacle she halted with a horrible scream and spurted blood" (p. 133). Infuriated at this scene, a farmer kicks the boy in his stomach: "The world seemed to swirl. I was blinded as if my own skin were falling over my head in a black hood" (p. 134). Much later, the memory of another animal victim informs the return of the boy's power of speech. The boy's recollection of a hare that has escaped but submits inexplicably to recapture (pp. 206-207) corresponds with the restoration of language to the boy: "speech was now mine," the closing words of the novel relate, "and . . . it did not intend to escape through the door which opened onto the balcony" (p. 213). The conclusion one draws is that language does not belong in the confinement of this boy's body. Given the years of physical abuse the boy has endured, muteness would be his natural state. Thus the animal victim is subsumed once again to novelistic and egoistic purposes.

The central metaphor, the painted bird, yields an obvious analogy between the boy's state and the bird's. The title of the novel refers to the habit of a man named Lekh of painting birds and watching the birds of its own kind turn upon the stranger in their midst and kill it. Lekh understands the ways of birds; he indulges his habit mostly when he is deprived of sexual intercourse and is feeling angry. Kosinski infuses true pathos into the plight of the painted bird. Set free in the woods, the bird warbles joyfully in response to the song of its fellow birds, "its little heart, locked in its freshly painted breast, beating violently" (p. 44). The flock tries to drive the painted bird away, and when the bird persists in its efforts to join them, they peck it to death. Kosinski singles out a raven to illustrate the general outcome of Lekh's routine. Lekh and the boy find the raven still alive: its "eyes had been pecked out, and fresh blood streamed over its painted feathers" (p. 45).

The boy, needless to say, suffers the same treatment from members of his own species. Dark-skinned, he is taken for a Gypsy or a Jew, and endures prolonged miseries of rejection and torture at the hands of beings who are human like himself. It is only after
the war is over, however, that Kosinski makes an explicit connection between the boy and
the painted bird. Kosinski re-invokes the painted bird to explain the boy's experience on
meeting his parents, who had handed him over to the protection of the peasants at the
start of the war: "I suddenly felt like Lekh's painted bird," the boy observes, "which some
unknown force was pulling toward his kind" (p. 206). The analogy works well to
demonstrate that this boy has been permanently stigmatized by his suffering. His
humanity lies hidden beneath the overlay of cruel experience. It takes a considerable leap
to extend the analogy to all the children and all the people who passed through the
miseries of this particular war. If the novel had assisted in the effort to generalize the
consequences of the war from the one boy to human beings at large, it would have been a
better novel. What is more, the experiential accretions, the "paint," the boy acquires are
so relentlessly ugly that they pass the point of credibility. Granted, the gruesome realities
of World War II deviate so far from ordinary life that they enter surreal dimensions, but
they are realities nonetheless. Surrealism that permits only endless, almost luscious
tortures prohibits the perceiving mind from discerning the quintessential truth on which
the novelistic representation is founded.

In the case of both The Painted Bird and Communion, then, surrealism backfires.
As much as one would like to believe in Kosinski's shocking portrayal of war atrocities or
Gibson's cynical view of human altruism, the form of the novel repudiates reality. The
animal victims in these stories disclose literary artifice. Violence to the animal is
predictable and repetitious. Although the animal victims are depicted, in general, with
sufficient realism, their pain is nothing more than grist to the narrative mill. They are
instruments used to enhance the artistic purpose and to add to the weight of the world that
oppresses the author's alter-ego. The animals in The Painted Bird and Communion do not
convey independent meaning into the narrative; they do not challenge or alter the course of
the narrative. In this sense, they are not "real" animals because their suffering is patently a means to an artistic end and not an object of contemplation significant in itself.

The enslavement of the animal to narrative purposes does not always have ill effects. The two horror stories, *Cujo* and *Monkey Shines*, exemplify remarkably astute uses of animal victims, despite the fact that their animals exist solely to serve the values of the genre. The perceptiveness of Stephen King’s and Michael Stewart’s approaches to the animal is quite surprising. The genre in which they write, one imagines, relies primarily upon the total corruption of the animal. Horror stories and horror films normally do little else but project human fears into the stereotypic beast. The genre, typically, does not care a whit about the genuine animal beyond its, usually distorted, physical appearance. The animal monster, then, isolates evil from the human species and contains that evil safely in an alien image. It also, in a way, forgives the evil, because the animal monster cannot help itself. The disownment of such human hostilities as the animal monster embodies produces the pleasant effect of simultaneously frightening and reassuring the spectator. The animal monster removes collective guilt from the spectator, isolates and affirms the innocence of the humans that fall victim to the monster, and thus satisfies the polarized urges in the human psyche towards whole-hearted disobedience of social laws and absolute innocence conferred upon the individual by the nature of the world.

*Cujo* and *Monkey Shines* conform to the genre in exploring simple and fundamental concepts of guilt and innocence by shuffling human and animal attributes. Following the usual practice, the animal is central to both novels, and order is restored once the animal is killed. Where these novels break from tradition, as mentioned earlier, is in their use of familiar, scarcely manipulated animals to terrorize the human subjects. Stewart and King work consciously and subtly with the horror story’s projection of human guilt onto animals.
The familiar animal highlights the processes and effects of projection. In addition, both authors load their stories with particulars of contemporary life, brand-name commercial products in *Cujo*, for example, and the vicissitudes of academic research into new drugs in *Monkey Shines*. There is little that can be described as Gothic or outlandish in these novels, including the central animal figures. These two departures from standard form, the modern details and the use of the familiar animal, are not unconnected. *Cujo* and *Monkey Shines* manufacture fear out of the well-known material of everyday experience. These novels take features of modern experience that are supposed to be friendly and make those features hostile to the individual. They transform the tediously safe world of the modern person into a place that can turn on the person at any moment and wreck his or her happy, boring life. Both stories thus satisfy a need in modern individuals to have the over-controlled features of routine existence come to life and threaten them personally.

The threat in these two stories is pointedly directed at the individual. It is less important that Cujo and Ella, the monkey in *Monkey Shines*, savagely kill a few other persons than that they subject the main characters to a prolonged period of terrorization. The gory deaths of Cujo's victims, and the deaths by arson and lethal injection committed by Ella, serve to prove the animal's power and determination. Although in a broad sense these animals do threaten the community at large, the main action of the stories work up to the point that the individual animal traps and menaces the individual person.

In *Monkey Shines*, drug treatments create a telepathic intelligence in Ella which she eventually uses to isolate her quadriplegic master from any hope of outside assistance. Previously the victim herself of conditioning by electric shock, Ella ultimately forces the helpless man to perform as she, Ella, wants him to perform. She employs a program of operant conditioning on him by threatening either to burn his home down, with him in it, or deprive him of the telepathic visions of physical freedom he enjoys on her excursions into the outer world. The final scenes in the conflict find Allan completely trapped by Ella.
She has killed off his mother, who lived with them and opposed the monkey's growing autonomy in the household. She has removed the fuse from the pain-pack Allan had used to control her behaviour, and placed him entirely under her authority. In classic horror-tale fashion, she takes the telephone receiver off its hook. Finally the monkey and the man are alone together amidst the wreckage the monkey has made of his home. In one of her the last sinister gestures, Ella turns off all the lights in the house (p. 239), thereby depriving her impotent victim of every human attachment to the safe, known world.

Like Allan Mann, Donna and Tad Trenton of *Cujo* are immobilized for persecution by the animal. The last half of the novel pins Donna and her four-year old son in that other classic horror device, the car that will not start. The car, it should be noted, is not any old car but a Ford Pinto, a vehicle with a shaky safety record and a reputation for tinny construction. Stephen King trades upon the mechanical imperfections of the Pinto. The failure of the engine to turn over comes as no surprise. The whole vehicle rocks under the battering the dog gives it; the doors cave in nicely under Cujo's attack, and then stick so that Donna cannot ease quietly out of the car to get help. *Cujo* overturns the foremost symbol of human power and mobility, the car, and converts it into a prison in which people are much more helpless than they would be if they were outside the vehicle. In addition to the terrors of confinement, the summer heat conspires with the other sources of danger to turn the Pinto into an oven for the two trapped people. In a moment of insight, the novel notes the reversal of human/animal positions: Donna recalls a pamphlet warning against shutting pets up in cars on hot days; she chuckles: the "shoe was certainly on the other foot here, wasn't it? It was the dog that had the people locked up" (p. 185).

In the same way that *Monkey Shines* turns the tables on humankind in having the animal subject the person to behavioural conditioning, *Cujo* takes a familiar offense against animals, witnessable on almost any summer day in a grocery-store parking lot, and puts the person in the animal's place. In these stories, putting the person in the
animal's place is not quite an extended version of the old argument made to children who torment animals: "How would you feel if someone did that to you?" The question is instead an implicit "what if": What if humans were treated like animals?--a common theme in modern stories: humans are often experimented upon by more powerful beings in recent science fiction, or butchered for food in today's horror tales. The situations that Cujo and Monkey Shines operate upon are more innocent than deadly experimentation or butchery. The transposition of human and animal pivots respectively upon the simple process of animal training and sometimes calamitous but venial neglect of the animal's well-being. In effect, the familiar situation, in contrast to the immense, hidden practices going on in laboratories and slaughter-houses, locates horror in the home of the spectator. While this reversal might serve coincidentally to encourage better treatment of animals, it seems, rather, to profit from an already existing sensitivity to their plight. Cujo and Monkey Shines deploy the modern capacity to imagine the misery of the victimized animal in order to enhance the impression of human powerlessness under these circumstances. The irony of the reversal does not foster contemporary feeling for animals as much as it capitalizes upon contemporary feelings to generate terror.

Another way in which Cujo and Monkey Shines appeal to the modern temperament is the natural causes they supply to explain the change in the animal. Ella and Cujo do not metamorphose into monsters from magical causes. Ella's transformation is the result of pills given to her by a researcher, pills composed of ground-up human brain tissue and numerous unspecified chemicals. Cujo is simply a very large Saint Bernard infected with rabies--infected, of course, by a bat. Vestiges of the traditional tale do cling to these natural explanations. The pills Ella takes hearken back to the mysterious concoctions of mad scientists. While not mad, the researcher who discovers the formula is certainly neurotic; he also suffers the established fate of the mad scientist: his creation turns on him and kills him. Conscious toying with customary features of horror fiction, like that in
Monkey Shines, occurs in Cujo as well. The natural diagnosis of Cujo’s depravity must fight with a supernatural explanation in which Cujo is almost the reincarnation of one Frank Dodd, a local policeman who murdered several women five years before the events of the novel, and then killed himself. Stephen King carefully juggles the rational cause with the demonic hypothesis, so that part of the pleasure of the novel comes from deciding whether plain rabies or undying human evil is the most appealing reason for Cujo’s ferocity. More significantly, in both novels, explanation for the animal’s malice turns upon the guilt of the individual who becomes the animal’s victim.

Cujo is an agent of divine justice in at least one of the three cases in which he kills a human being. His second victim is his owner, Joe Camber. The tyranny Camber exercises over his wife and son constitutes a sub-plot in the novel. The man is vulgar and mean; he threatens to beat his wife with his belt, and she finds it necessary to stifle the rare orgasm she achieves in their love-making because Joe wouldn’t understand what was going on (p. 86). The note on his wife’s sexual dissatisfaction is necessary because when Cujo kills Joe Camber, he does more than tear the man’s throat to shreds, as he has done with his first victim. While the downed man protects his throat with his arms, Cujo charges him once again: "And this time he came for Joe Camber’s balls" (p. 129). One can assume that the disease eventually causes Cujo to lose all sense of discrimination, since Cujo later savages the balls of a perfectly innocent sheriff. Either that, or the idea of demonic possession enters the picture: as he lies ruined on the ground with the grinning dog standing over him, the sheriff thinks, "Hello, Frank. It’s you, isn’t it? Was hell too hot for you?" (p. 272)

When it comes to Donna Trenton’s guilt, Stephen King is careful never to make an explicit connection between the illicit affair she has had and the torment Cujo inflicts upon her. The affair Donna has engaged in is an unwise dalliance with a worthless man who later enters the family home and smashes everything in view in the kitchen and living
room. The man also sends a note to Donna's husband, telling him about his wife's infidelity, so Donna has already suffered some punishment for adultery by the time she encounters the rabid Saint Bernard. As she sits trapped in the Pinto, thinking about Cujo or staring directly into the dog's face after it has popped up at a window "like a horror-movie monster" (p. 150), Donna tries to reassure herself that Cujo "is merely a sick animal" and not "four-footed Fate" (pp. 203-204). More often, however, the dog appears to be purposefully determined to enact vengeance upon her personally. She experiences the feeling that Cujo is "looking at her, not at a woman who just happened to be trapped in her car with her little boy, but at Donna Trenton, as if he had just been hanging around, waiting for her to show up" (p. 150). On another occasion, Cujo's eyes "were fixed on hers: dumb, dull eyes, but not without--she would have sworn it--not without some knowledge. Some malign knowledge" (p. 207). Looking at Cujo, she "knew that the dog was something more than just a dog" (p. 207). Later still, as Cujo looks up from worrying the body of the sheriff, Donna sees on the Saint Bernard's face "an expression (could a dog have an expression? she wondered madly) that seemed to convey both sternness and pity . . . and again Donna had the feeling that they had come to know each other intimately" (p. 275). Donna is not mistaken, either, in detecting personal aggression in Cujo's countenance. King discloses the thoughts running through the diseased mind of the Saint Bernard. The dog seeks to blame someone for its suffering and Donna seems a likely candidate:

> It was THE WOMAN most of all. The way she looked at him, as if to say, Yes, yes, I did it, I made you sick, I made you hurt, I devised this agony just for you and it will be with you always now.
> Oh kill her, kill her! (p. 220)

That Cujo later decides that the sheriff is the one responsible for his misery (p. 270) because he, Cujo, feels hatred towards the man, does not absolve Donna of guilt. The external world verifies the psychological projection upon which Donna's mind operates.
For one thing, Cujo really is bent on killing her, and for another, the sin she has committed is part and parcel with the evil spirit that invades the community and spawns the rabid dog. Following the logic of the demonic elements in the novel, Donna is the source of Cujo's sickness.

Mystery also surrounds the complicity of human guilt in the evils committed by Ella the monkey. Once Allan starts taking the same pills that Ella takes, the boundary that divides the two of them grows hazy. During his trances, when his mind goes with Ella on her tours of the outside world, Allan starts chattering like a monkey. By means of the telepathic communications between herself and Allan, Ella advances farther and farther beyond the natural dispositions of her kind. Whereas natural monkeys are peaceful, as the novel informs us (p. 175), Ella manages to conceive a hatred towards certain persons. She overcomes the normal monkey's fear of fire. Putting these two talents together, Ella sets fire to the cabin where Allan's ex-girlfriend and the doctor who has accidentally caused Allan's paralysis are enjoying their honeymoon. In this instance, Ella submits to the guidance of conscious rage existing in Allan's brain. She is an innocent animal who lacks the moral conscience that usually prevents people from destroying their enemies. Allan can be blamed for her crime. Psychoanalysis could assign blame to Allan's subconscious mind in the matter of his mother's death, as well. Ella locks Allan's mother into her bedroom and then sets the room on fire. But Ella's moral development has reached a transitional phase at this point. She herself dislikes Allan's mother; Allan's mother wants to treat Ella like an animal, wants to keep her penned up and subservient. It is unclear, therefore, whether the idea of killing Allan's mother originates with the man or the monkey. Geoffrey Fish, the scientist whose pills have initiated this effect in Ella, and who is visiting Allan with the intention of killing the monkey, openly charges Allan with the three deaths Ella has caused:
"Monkeys don't kill of their own accord [he says]. Ella's fundamentally innocent. She doesn't know the difference between good and bad. She doesn't have a human value system. But you do, I do, we humans do. That's what stopped you going out and killing Wiseman [the doctor killed in the fire at the cabin], for instance. That's morality, Allan, and it's a product of civilization. But what's being repressed when you do the civilized thing? I'll tell you. You're repressing your primal aggressive instincts, your primitive urge to kill in revenge, the darker side of your psyche. And that has now found an outlet, an agent. Ella." (p. 243)

For this argument to hold up, humans would have to have an evil side peculiar to their species alone. The "primal aggressive instincts" could not be shared by Ella, or else she would possess by nature the urge to kill that she acquires through the change in brain-state and through communication with Allan's mind. Even so, the novel leaves room for the possibility that Ella represents Allan's animal nature freed from the inhibitions of conscience. The novel does not extend to answering the perennial question of whether human or animal nature is responsible for acts of aggression. It seems clear enough that Allan's will to murder acts in concert with Ella's amoral state of being. With further transmutation from her natural state and into semi-human consciousness, Ella does begin to perform acts of cruelty all on her own, without Allan's mental help. At this point, however, Allan is so desperately attached to the monkey that he exonerates her with the excuse that she does what she does out of love for him. Perhaps, in her own animal way, Ella is expressing love. Guilt, therefore, adheres to the human element, whether that guilt is wholly Allan's or comes with Ella's evolution away from animal innocence.

Because both novelists consciously apply the mechanism of projection, Cujo and Ella maintain most of their animal qualities. Rabies, in Cujo's case, and the pills in Ella's, stimulate self-consciousness. Although Cujo does think before he is infected with rabies, King cleverly brings the voices in Cujo's mind to an increasingly heightened tone of specific command as the disease progresses. Blame shifts within the dog's mind. At first, Cujo just wants to get rid of the "BADDOG" feeling (p. 21) he experiences from having nosed his way into the bats' cave. Next he starts dreaming about ripping open the bowels of the boy he loves (p. 94). When he sees the boy at this stage in the disease, the boy looks like
"a monster on two legs" (p. 98). Sickness converts the world into horror for him. Finally, the voices in his head inform him that every person he encounters is the one who has made him ill; self-consciousness articulates and legitimates the desire of Cujo's body to tear into the flesh of the human being. To the degree that spoken thoughts may ever be supposed to belong to animals, Cujo's thoughts remain within the bounds of imaginable animality.

Ella, likewise, goes on being a monkey even when she is deliberately victimizing Allan. Michael Stewart never does speculate upon what Ella's thoughts might be. Visual images as a monkey might see them periodically occur. In the company of Allan's mind, Ella secretly watches Allan's ex-girlfriend and her new husband preparing to make love. Simple declarative sentences reflect the monkey's impressions: "The man's getting up. He comes round to stand behind the woman. His hands are on her shoulders" (p. 173). The vicious thoughts she acts upon are Allan's: "I know what I'd like to do. I'd like to get hold of this candle, this one here. . . ." Simplicity and absence of thought marks the description of Ella's murder of Allan's mother. Allan's mother is asleep:

[A] fair hairy arm stretched out tentatively from under the bed. It was followed by a pink-faced, dark-capped head, then a skinny body, skinny back legs and a long tail. Ella sat on the bedside rug. . . .

She struck a match and held it to the bottom of the coverlet. It went out. With a second match the flame caught and spread fast and greedily. She dropped the matches and turned for the door, but then rose on her hind legs and snatched the door key off the table. (p. 202)

By means of the straightforward description of Ella's physical actions, Stewart bars the imputation of evil motives to the monkey. When she prepares a "love feast" (p. 208) for Allan, she gets the atmosphere right, but botches the meal itself, as a monkey with no insight into human tastes would. She presents Allan with a bowl of meat chunks mixed with fruit salad and unidentified brown sauce. This repulsive mixture Allan eats, partly because he is fond of Ella and partly because it is dangerous to offend her. The compulsion
Allan feels to eat the disgusting stew underscores the value of leaving most of the animal's natural qualities intact. It satisfies the aims of both *Monkey Shines* and *Cujo* to have humans abused by animals that retain recognizably animal traits. Narrative builds fear upon the natural animal, the creature we find in our homes or see in the media, changing slowly and imperceptibly into a terrifying being, a being made more terrifying by its patent innocence.

When the time comes to victimize the animal aggressor, both novels utilize symbols of the civilization that the animals have defied. At one point in *Cujo*, Donna smashes the dog's body and head repeatedly with the car door. The dog's body makes a "heavy *whopping* sound" (p. 229) as the car door thuds against it; its neck and head make crunching noises, but still Cujo does not die. The Pinto fails again. At last, after many more hours of torment, Donna climbs out of the car and attacks Cujo with a baseball bat. The baseball bat breaks in half and she jams the jagged edge into Cujo's eye: "The splintered handle of the bat wavered and jiggled grotesquely, seeming to grow from his head where his eye had been" (p. 288). Cujo dies, and Donna crazily goes on bludgeoning the corpse with the broken bat. The baseball bat is a suitable symbol of vengeance because Donna's son has died from the heat of the car. Once the friendly companion of children, Cujo has committed the ultimate transgression against playfulness and innocence. The baseball bat epitomizes the forces Cujo has violated in changing from a friend to a murderer of children.

Ella comes to her end under the weight of Allan's typewriter. Allan holds Ella hypnotized with his mind, while his friend smashes the typewriter down upon the monkey's head. The typewriter, like the baseball bat, symbolizes the specific aspect of civilization that Ella has defied. She has prevented Allan from pursuing the academic life. She has undermined his intellect and caused him to regress to an animal state. Thus the
typewriter rises up against her and annihilates her, and the human intellect symbolically wreaks its vengeance upon the animal oppressor.

Death is not, however, the final punishment for the animal. Leaving the animal’s corpse whole apparently does not fulfill the need for revenge. In *Monkey Shines*, Allan’s friend shoves Ella’s carcass into the kitchen garbage disposal, to destroy the brain that has originated the violent chain of events. Similarly, in *Cujo* a veterinarian saws off Cujo’s head for an autopsy, and drops the offending object into a garbage bag. Blame, then, falls upon the literal head of the animal, upon the location of thought and of animal identity. The novels transform the animal’s head into garbage. That act alone, it seems, constitutes sufficient retribution upon the animal for its attack on humankind.

*Cujo* and *Monkey Shines* overtly express modern hostility to the growing power of the natural animal. Human culture wants to preserve its supremacy; it does not like having to cope with animals. It experiences the animal’s demand for recognition as aggression against itself. The animal victim instills guilt in the cultural mind. In fiction, animal victims present culture with an incarnate image of both culpability and limitation. The living, autonomous animal knows the world in ways that are impenetrable to culture. The animal victim discloses to culture the debilities culture does not want to confront. The act of victimizing animals reveals the pettiness of culture, the aggression it has not overcome and the artificiality of its pride in dominance. Works of fiction in which narrative enacts a double victimization upon already victimized animals unconsciously illuminate cultural guilt. They adopt specious mechanisms to minimize the animal victim and efface human accountability. Hemingway’s stories tell us that the animal victim does not exist or exists only to serve the ideal of virility. Graeme Gibson’s *Communion* also suggests ultimately that the animal victim does not exist, or if it does, it does so only to magnify the great weight of tragedy that falls upon the individual person. Animal victims may well exist for Jerzy Kosinski, but their pain operates solely as a convenient metaphor
for human suffering. Cujo and Monkey Shines end up relishing the victimization of animals; the message is that animals ask for the violence that culture commits daily against them. These stories illustrate the ways in which narrative can cooperate in cultural self-deception.

By means of contrast, these stories, which negate the animal victim, also reveal the integrity of all the other stories examined in this study. In their highly diverse ways, the narratives discussed in the previous chapters, from Jack London’s wild animal adventures to William Faulkner’s mythic representation of the bear, accept the challenge to culture that the animal victim intrinsically articulates. Where Hemingway, Gibson, Kosinski, Stewart and King work to protect culture from acknowledgment of its aggression against nonhuman animals, the rest of the writers covered in the foregoing categories expose culture to the conflicts culture initiates when it victimizes animals. The works of fiction analysed in this closing chapter use artifice to reinforce cultural alienation from animals. Although alienation from animals is a deeply entrenched factor in pre-modern culture, modern thought seeks ways in which that alienation can be transcended. Writers representing widely divergent periods in the post-Darwinian age, from Gustave Flaubert and Thomas Hardy to Giorgio Bassani and Timothy Findley, attest to the fact that culture continues to victimize animals at a cost to both conscience and authenticity.
CONCLUSION

If this survey has done little more than demonstrate that there is a valuable body of ideas associated with animals in modern fiction, then it has satisfied one of its primary aims. "Value" is a crucial term in the argument offered in this discussion because pre-Darwinian conventions in belief sought to deprive nonhuman animals of full value and to affirm, thereby, the primacy of our species. The irony, of course, is that our species has assumed for itself the power of deciding what is and is not valuable, and so it is hardly surprising that we bent belief in favour of our own attributes and habits. The conceptual tangle facing modern culture is how humankind can break out of its own ways of appraising life and acquiesce to the influence of the other animals. Taking animals into account means more than making a few modifications in preconceived values; it requires radical rethinking of the methods we use to arrive at value systems in the first place. Alienation from animals is a deeply entrenched condition in cultural values. Such alienation, indeed, has represented one of the defining qualities of culture. Human belief now must accept a genuine argument from animals. In more than a metaphorical sense, the animal subjects culture itself to assessment. Obviously, our attitudes towards other species stand in need of examination. Those attitudes are, in fact, being examined, in life partly, but more intensely in fiction. Fiction roots through human attitudes pointing out those that are self-serving and false. It confronts the conflicts inherent to human presuppositions about other animals, and tries to meet the animal on its own terms. By showing that the ideas associated with animals are substantial, I have attempted, then, to establish that the animal itself is a source of value to modern culture, and not just the ideas the animal generates.
Conscious of the self-sufficiency of the animal, modern fiction rattles human complacency. It does so almost helplessly, since the post-Darwinian age is, in a certain respect, intrinsically "rattled," even if the bulk of the human race appears to be unaware of the historical change we are undergoing. Fiction discerns and reflects the historical upheaval. One can see that the natural animal has infiltrated culture from the seriousness of the conflicts that develop when fiction seeks to assimilate animals. The conflicts centred upon the animal are genuine conflicts, not conflict invented to satisfy fondness for tribulation: the tensions invoked by the presence of the animal in fiction penetrate deep into accepted patterns of familiar existence and displace them from their regular courses. As we have seen--to reiterate--discord results from personification of the wild animal; only in combination with misanthropy does morality stretch into the wild animal's domain. The mere sight of the natural animal in the city environment produces instant dissonance; that dissonance, in turn, gives access to the oppression of the human psyche by urban values. When the theme is sexuality, attention to the natural animal intensifies sexual anxieties; sexual performance becomes performance more obviously with animals as witnesses to the human drama. Likewise, myth becomes self-conscious as it seeks to enfold animals; the holistic life of the animals discloses the imperfection of putatively global myths. Finally, fiction unwittingly exposes its own contrivances when it pretends to deal with natural animals but is in fact only reinforcing cultural illusions. Animals will not allow narrative to get away with fakery at any level of experience, neither in contemplation of specific environments like the wild or the city, nor in the realms of the psychosexual and of myth-making, and particularly not in the act of constructing fiction itself.

In the earliest phase of researching this project, I thought that investigation of animal victims in fiction would mean tackling only fairly elementary moral issues. While it is still clear that acceptance of the Darwinian idea of continuity requires adjustment of ethics, it is even clearer that only revolution in belief, and not mere revision, can counter
the degree and extent of humankind's victimization of other animals. The works of fiction examined here reveal that even our best efforts at breaking down cultural constructions and realizing an authentic vision of life rely upon acts of aggression against nonhuman animals. The revolution that fiction effects is to work with aggression against genuine animal subjects. Indeed, the full significance of victimization of animals can hardly be attained where animals are merely literary mechanisms or symbolic figures. Conceiving of animals as symbols protects culture from awareness of its hostility towards real animals. Symbolic animals are immune to suffering because they express as they stand the totality of cultural victimization. In overcoming the perceptual habits that accepted animal metaphors as a true relation to animals, modern fiction shakes conscience out of its indifference towards mistreatment of flesh-and-blood creatures living around us. Living animals are not a resource, neither in life, nor in literature. The subversion of comfortable imaginative uses of animals is a precondition for ethical conduct towards other species.

Admittedly, the primary purpose of most of the stories covered in this study is not to promote ideological reform in our treatment of nonhuman animals. Admittedly, too, the new conception of the animal's substantial reality proves useful in that it drives human dilemmas to the limits of reason. In keeping with the proposition that the essence of human nature is continuous with that of other animals, fiction uses animal reality to locate analogous animality in human ways of relating to the world. Asked to mediate between nature and culture, the animal performs a practical function in fiction's analysis of the human condition. Given that modern fiction broaches genuine animals, it might look as though the genre merely takes advantage of the inherent drama of inflicting pain on and killing real animals to heighten the impact of human conflicts. In other words, it appears that animals are dragged once again into the service of humankind, in violation of their natural autonomy. If fiction thinks it can capitalize upon animals in this manner, however, it underestimates the depth to which animals criticize human readings of the
nature of reality. In the narrative context, animals are more troublesome victims than human characters. Each one embodies a whole world of senses and perceptions which defies our species' belief that its activities are the most important concern on the face of the planet. The fact that animals would live on quite contentedly without us suggests that our much vaunted conquest of nature is a product of our own fantasy. Whatever its intended exploitation of animals might be, fiction endangers faith in culture when it invokes the animal's state of being.

One might think that any period in history could have produced analysis of cultural uses of animals. When talking animals appeared in fables, or doves and snakes were used as religious symbols, surely someone could have recorded these various conventions instead of unthinkingly deploying them. The genuine animal was always sitting there, available for acknowledgement. Pre-Darwinian philosophy, however, had no desire to investigate traditional uses of animals. Ways of thinking about animals evolved and changed radically, but all in the absence of self-examination. There was no perspective whereby philosophy could detach itself from ingrained human attitudes towards other animals. There was, that is, no sense of the real animal from which cultural conventions and habitual exploitation of animals could be judged. Granted, the perspective that allows ethical and cultural criticism in the modern age vacillates wildly between empirical and anthropomorphic abstractions. The grasp of reason and sentiment upon the real animal is clearly precarious. But in some ways contemporary uncertainty in intellectual and emotional understanding of animals is all to the good. Our age is too close to the conventions that permitted indifference to the identity of the animal for optimistic belief that instituting a new myth would work to the benefit nonhuman animals. The danger lies not so much in philosophical prematurity, as in the likelihood that the question of animal reality would be resolved in favour of continuing exploitation. Management attitudes, for example, such as those seeking to preserve a few environmental corners for animals and
regulate ecological balances among animal populations, seem to represent concessions from our species, but they manifest the same tiresome assumption as of ages past that human notions of order possess final authority over the rest of nature. The modern age is still a long way from realizing the extent to which the idea of continuity between humans and animals chips away at human power structures. If the idea that human beings are custodians of the planet is a necessary stage in the process of deposing our species, one hopes that greater humility on our part is to come. Some day, perhaps, the intellectual recognition that we are animals will filter down to the experiential level and such distinctions as exist between ourselves and other species will lose the power to reify the anthropocentric bias that isolates us from nature. Modern fiction tells us that the ideological and epistemological methods we are currently employing do not cross the gap between nature and culture. What modern fiction can and does achieve is the sanctification of the individual animal’s life against all the numerous contradictions that rationalize physical and ideational abuse.
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