

Animal Studies: Oct 19

Wild Animals, day 2: Focus on Hunting

Modernity and alienation

- (various kinds of) hunting
 - Hunting is definitely one way to 'reconnect'...what are some others?
 - Controversial cases
 - the Newfoundland seal hunt
 - whaling
 - Trophy hunting (Safari Club International and the 'big five')

Alastair S. Gunn, “Environmental Ethics and Trophy Hunting”

- Conventional criticisms of hunting (465)
 - Are you convinced by Gunn’s responses (Do you have others), and/or by his subsequent defense of trophy hunting?

Angus Taylor, *Animals and Ethics*, ch. 4, “Is it Wrong to Eat or Hunt Animals” (107-118)

- Rights-based, utilitarian, ‘spiritual’, and virtue ethical views on ‘sport hunting’ (and the risk of fascist undertones?)
- What do you make of the “claim that human beings are natural predators who have a hunting instinct”?
 - And could this ‘instinct’ be channeled in other, less violent ways?
- “the confrontation with death [would be] made all the more meaningful if hunters were to restrict themselves voluntary to *hunting each other*” (!)
- The case of fishing (112)
- The Inuit and the case of subsistence hunting
- The case of cannibalism
- We’ll return to the issue of diet and vegetarianism next week...

Marti Kheel, “The Killing of Game: An Ecofeminist Critique of Hunting”

- Urbanization and public opinion
- Is hunting a ‘sport’? Kheel says no (why?)...what do you say?
- Three “types”
 - the **happy hunter**
 - Teddy Roosevelt (and others’) fear that “hunting was a necessary corrective for men who had become overly feminized by the encroaches of civilization”, or, with Leopold, that hunting is an “instinctual urge”
 - the **holist hunter**
 - “population density”, sustainable yield”, “harvesting the excess”...in some cases, yes, but where might this argument collapse a bit?
 - Aldo Leopold's reading from last week would probably fit in this category
 - the **holy hunter** (and the “wisdom of native peoples”)
- Is it fair to say that “a problem arises...when living beings are forcibly conscripted into an artificial world to play the role of symbols themselves.”

Are there any perspectives on hunting that aren't raised in today's readings?

Segue into food animals: **Jeff McMahan's “The Meat Eaters”**. In effect, McMahan is trying to address the root cause of Schopenhauer's nihilism: “one simple test of the claim that the pleasure in the world outweighs the pain...is to compare the feelings of an animal that is devouring another with those of the animal being devoured.” McMahan proposes that we contemplate 'intervention' in various forms. What do you think?