

ce domaine où la morale et les valeurs non vérifiées se trouvent exposées que ce type de recherche continuera d'être, par conséquent, un riche filon d'enquête; un domaine qui, plus que tout autre, érige les ponts entre le passé et l'avenir de l'anthropologie dans son ensemble.

Richard W. Bulliet, *Hunters, Herders, and Hamburgers: The Past and Future of Human-Animal Relations*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005, 253 pages.

Reviewer: *Thomas Dunk*
Lakehead University

This study of the past and future of human-animal relations certainly contains information and arguments that will be of interest to anthropologists and other cultural analysts, and at times it draws on anthropological data and theories, although for the latter usually only as straw men [*sic*] to destroy. Bulliet divides the history of human-animal relations into three eras: the predomestic, the domestic, and the postdomestic. The predomestic era is the age before the agricultural revolution. During this time, the majority of human history and continuing today among surviving hunting and gathering societies, humans do not have a strong sense of their innate difference from or superiority over animals. Animal behaviour is understood to be quite similar to human behaviour, and animals are seen as deserving the same kind of respect that humans are. Humans have spiritual and affective attitudes towards the wild world. The anthropological work on the rituals of hunting among hunters and gatherers demonstrates this point well.

The agricultural revolution ushers in the era of domesticity. This is marked by the development and spread of ideologies about human difference and superiority over animals, and a growing economic, as opposed to spiritual, understanding of the place and role of animals in human life. During its full development, animals are understood only from a very anthropomorphic perspective. They are appreciated in so far as they are useful to humans and systems of exploitation eventually develop which to a large extent are devoid of any concern with the emotional or spiritual well-being of animals.

Beginning with the industrial revolution, but really only reaching full development in some post-industrial societies, especially Anglophone nations such as the United States, England, and Australia, is the age of postdomesticity. This last and current phase is different from both predomestic and domestic periods in that the vast majority of the population have very little if any direct experience with animals, particularly the ones that we rely on for food and raw materials. The absence of direct observation of animal copulation, birth, death and the butchering and other processing of animal remains; the spread of Darwinian ideas about human evolution; and the spread of the idea of rights (initially for humans but, as Bul-

liet, points out, Jeremy Bentham himself suggested there was no reason to exclude animals from utilitarian ideas about the need to minimize suffering and maximize pleasure) have contributed to the new consciousness about animals occupying the same moral space as humans. This is what lies behind the emergence and growth of the animal rights movement and vegetarianism. In a reversal of Simmel's famous theory about how societies turn groups in their midst into strangers, the deep concern and empathy felt for animals by vegans and PETA members stems from the virtual absence of experiential relationships with the objects of their concern.

Along the way, Bulliet offers many, often rather speculative, theories about a variety of issues. He sees the current fascination with blood and violence in mass culture as a kind of return of the repressed. We evolved to be hunters, something few of us do anymore. But we still have a subconscious desire to see blood spilled. How else to explain that the society where animal rights is most developed is the also the home of the gory Hollywood blockbuster? With regard to the issue of how and why domestication happened at all, Bulliet suggests that there were three main avenues to domestication. For some animals it just happened by fortuitous circumstance: for example, the wild ancestors of cats who hung around early agricultural communities where they benefitted from an abundance of rodents and humans recognized their value as predators of rodent pests. Other animals, such as camels, are actually quite tame in the wild. Living in environments which lacked serious predators, they never did have a fear of humans and so domestication did not require a significant change in behaviours and genetic characteristics. Finally, he argues that where there was a concerted human effort to domesticate animals, it was due to a demand for a regular supply of sacrificial creatures. He criticizes the economic logic of Jared Diamond on this account and Levi-Strauss's equation of the thought processes of non-Western societies with modern scientific thinking. In other words, neither pre-scientific thinkers nor maximizing *homo economicus* get the credit for one of the watershed developments in human-animal relations. Rather it is religious practitioners and the human need to engage with the supernatural.

This is a book that is full of facts, some interesting in their own right, some significant in regard to theories of domestication, and some apparently just there to fill up space. A chapter on the symbolism of the mule and donkey in Western culture contains a great deal of information but does not seem to have a point, other perhaps than to give Bulliet a chance to demonstrate an almost adolescent fascination with the various connotations of the term ass over several thousand years. Indeed, in the end, there is no consistent explanation of why vegetarianism and animal rights seem to have more purchase in Anglophone nations such as the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom, than in other parts of the world. Although, he eschews economic determinist theories of domestication, he does favour them when it comes to trying to explain modern vegetarianism and animal rights activism. The devel-

opment of modern concerns about the humane treatment of animals began in England and spread to other Anglophone societies "but they were most enthusiastically received in those lands that were not encumbered by indigenous pastoral traditions and that were developing their own forms of extreme animal commodification" (p. 188). The industrialization of meat production in the U.S. and the fact that almost all meat processing is now conducted in a small number of industrialized abattoirs and packaging centres means that the connection between live or even dead animals and the products purchased in supermarkets is rendered invisible. He suggests that vegetarianism and animal rights has not yet caught on in Argentina because their massive beef industry has not succumbed to monopoly capitalism to the extent it has in the U.S. Small neighbourhood butcher shops, and thus more direct experiences of the connection between the product and the animal from which it derives, are still much more common there. While there may be something to this explanation of difference in contemporary Argentine and U.S. cultures, there are other examples where such theory does not hold. The ancient vegetarian practices of Hindu castes, for example, cannot be explained in terms of the extent to which meat production was organized along high-tech industrial capitalist lines.

Bulliet ends his book with a chapter entitled "The Future of Human-Animal Relations." As he says, given that we seem to likely to live in an increasingly urbanized world, isolation from animals will continue and most people will rely upon the

mass media or entertainment industry for their understanding of animals other than their pets. The chapter then focusses on Japan because, Bulliet argues, Japanese culture historically had less involvement with domestic animals, and thus still contains many predomestic attitudes towards the animal world. This has been demonstrated in recent years in films such as *Princess Mononoke* that draws on a very old Buddhist legend about divine deer. As Bulliet argues, Western post-domesticity has problematized the human-animal relation but not erased it. Japanese culture, which in Bulliet's terms skipped the domestic phase and which combines some of the most modern economic and social arrangements and practices with some predomestic ideologies, thus may represent one future direction in which cultural attitudes about human-animal relations will evolve.

Overall, this book gives one much to think about. Anthropologists and others interested in the representations of the boundaries between nature and culture, the animal and the human, and contemporary controversies raised by the animal rights movement and vegetarianism will find many things of interest here. The book is written in a style aimed at the "intelligent lay reader" so should be useful for the classroom. Bulliet is generally a thoughtful and sophisticated thinker on the issues he deals with. His sometimes opportunistic invocations of Freud and biological determinism are inconsistent irritants in what is otherwise an engaging read.