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Michael Lundblad, *The Birth of a Jungle: Animality in Progressive-Era U.S. Literature and Culture* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013) £41.99, $65.00. pp.218, 7 illus. ISBN 9780199917570

The principal argument of Michael Lundblad's *The Birth of a Jungle* resides in its overarching discussion of the ever-present "discourse of the jungle" and its animality both as a constant in the world today and as a vital element in the history of literature, race and sexuality between the 1890s and 1920s. It sites this discussion in the progressive-era U.S.A as the birthplace of this discourse and adds to the debate on animality and humanity in recent texts such as Anat Pick's *Creaturely Poetics* 0231147872 [2011], which traces the shared physicality of animals and humans in literature and film with a focus on issues of freedom and power, and Christopher Peterson's *Bestial Traces: Race, Sexuality and Animality* 0823245217 [2012], which investigates the concept of the bestialisation of minorities in literature from the turn of the century onwards. Interestingly, neither of these texts appears in Lundblad's bibliography. He does, however, highlight the work of Dana Seitler in *Atavistic Tendencies: The Culture of Science in American Modernity* 0816651248 [2008] as covering much of the same ground as his book, but adds that his work specifically looks at what it is that the animal signifies.

This signification, he states, is based on using the imagery and characteristics of animals to investigate the behaviour of humans in contemporaneous texts which both promote and disrupt the Darwinist-Freudian outlook. He does this in relation to oppression, exploitation and violence using cultural politics surrounding sexuality, the marketplace and race.

Lundblad initially looks to the realm of sexuality to begin his investigation of animality as featured in the work of celebrated writers Henry James and Jack London. He chiefly uses Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's reading of James' *The Beast in the Jungle* [1903] as homosexual as reference for his own reading of the relationship between sexuality and animality. The relationship is one which is both heterosexual and homosexual and deals with the naturalisation of heterosexuality in jungle discourse using the work of Kipling and Freud as cultural reference points. This chapter focuses largely on Sedgwick's reading of James, rather than with a reading of James *per se*, but it successfully positions sexual discourse as identity within the world of the animal.

With London's work, Lundblad considers both the homoerotic in human guise and the human in disguise as animal and what he describes as the "spaces of sexual possibility" [62] which allow men to covet other men sexually by displacing their desires onto dogs/wolves. His exploration of beastiality develops away from the views expressed by critics cited, into this uncomfortable realm of sexuality, but he cleverly and astutely unites the two by linking the confusion readers of the texts may feel in discovering this aspect of sexuality with the unease readings of it can evoke.

The animalisation of both corporations and the working-classes of the period next fall under Lundblad's gaze in two chapters covering the Darwinist- Freudian notion of the survival of the fittest. In the first, Frank Norris' *The Octopus* [1901] is read as a metaphor for big business and as the corporation as monstrous, with particular reference to Andrew Carnegie and Herbert Spencer. In the second, *The Octopus*, alongside Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* [1906], is viewed as allegorising the working-classes as animals. This discourse is complemented and confirmed by readings of real animals of the period serving as symbols of the exploited workforce, most notably Topsy the elephant who was publically electrocuted at

Coney Island fun fair as punishment for her crimes, which included killing keepers and at times refusing to work on a construction site.

In an examination of race at the turn of the century, Lundblad reads the rise of humane reform in relation to the increase in lynchings of African American men. In an era when white men were more willing to believe that they were descended from animals than to entertain the prospect that they were genetically related to "savage" races, Lundblad notes the birth of organisations dedicated to the protection and humane treatment of domestic animals. Organisations which, Lundblad says, encouraged the discourse of humane reform which in turn was used as a tool to assert superiority over other races or societal groups. This thinking, Lundblad points out, continues in Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan stories where the separation is made between savagery, as associated with non-white human races, and the animal, as linked to real animals and the animal instincts dominant discourses drew upon. In this complex separation, the African tribesmen and the "beasts" are viewed as savages on one side of the divide. Tarzan, who is portrayed with the superiority of the white race, and the non-beast-like creatures in the stories are seen as natural animals and they fall on the other side of the division. The outcome of such categorisations results in the discourse of the humane, with the most humanity shown by the least savage individuals or races.

One issue worthy of note is that throughout the book Lundblad problematically pairs the terms "human" and "nonhuman animals" and "human" and "wild" or "real" animals and uses these binaries interchangeably. However, the first coupling of terms places greater significance on the human form by its creation of the nonhuman animal as Other to humans. The second pairing of terms does the opposite with the implication of animals as "real" or "wild" and more significant than humans who are in some way fraudulent or tamed.

The Birth of a Jungle establishes an intelligent and compelling view of society post-Darwin, focused on the cultural, literary and historic U.S. rather than the oft-discussed Euro-centric fin de siècle and more precisely the Victorians and their stronghold on the period. Its narrative goes beyond a mere reflective view of the progressive-era or one concerned with the reactionary nature of the Darwinian/Darwinist discussion at the turn of the century and instead invites a dialogue between the creation of Lundblad's jungle discourse and modern day cultural issues. He successfully narrates a new turn in animality studies with his combination of literary and cultural references in a text which would be of interest to scholars of US literature or history or those whose research concerns animality studies.