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"Lions and Christians: Animals in Sport"

Laura Hobgood-Oster
Professor of Religion
Department of Religion and Philosophy
Southwestern University
Georgetown, TX 78627
hoboster@southwestern.edu

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Chapter Two

"Lions and Christians: Animals in Sport"

Do you give the horse its might?

Do you clothe its neck with mane?

Do you make it leap like the locust?

Its majestic snorting is terrible.

(Job 39:19-20)[1]

My writing of this chapter began an hour after watching the beautiful filly Eight Belles give all that she had to the sport that caused her death. Eight Belles literally ran her heart out, coming in second out of twenty horses at the oldest sporting event in the United States, the Kentucky Derby.[2] This is a rare feat for any horse, much moreso for a filly. The fillies are smaller, as females of many mammalian species are, so running competitively in a field of stallions is alone amazing. Nevertheless, this magnificent horse died as a result.

We humans have manipulated these fabulous animals, these equine symbols of strength, throughout much of human history. We ride them in battle and we position ourselves on them to show political and military prowess. Four of them even call forth the Apocalypse in Christian scripture. In recent years, however, we have changed their bodies so dramatically that at the end of the Kentucky Derby beautiful Eight Belles broke both of her front legs, a death sentence for any horse and certainly for a racing filly. Eight Belles was euthanized on the track within five minutes of the end of the race, after running the race of her life.

Paul Moran, a commentator for espn.com, observed, "When veterinarians reached the spot at which the gunmetal-grey filly lay motionless, there was no choice. Eight Belles was euthanized. Her heart had carried her to a place beyond where her legs were meant to go."

His analysis rings true on more levels than he might have imagined. Had her heart carried her there? Had her legs carried her there? Had her jockey and owner and breeder carried her there? This young girl was dead because we humans asked her to run as fast as she could on legs that could not do it. We have bred for speed and nothing more – and ask them to run at such a young age, before their bones are fully matured. Furthermore, we likely push them to their limits by the injecting them with performance enhancing supplements like steroids.

At the end of her ordeal, her visibly distressed trainer Larry Jones had this to say: "She ran the race of her life. We were through racing; all we had to do was come home. There's a reason for everything, but I see no reason for this. The main thing is that she didn't suffer. She went out in a blaze of glory ... Losing an animal like this ...I don't know what to say."[3]

This issue is far bigger than this one trainer and this one horse, and I do not want to lay blame at the foot of this man who clearly had compassion for his horse. However, why do we humans not know what to say in such an instance? Where were Eight Belles' legs meant to go? We figured out a way to force them to go somewhere else, somewhere that her bones and muscles could not reach. And can we really say to ourselves that she didn't suffer? She died quickly, yes. But for a few agonizing minutes she must have suffered. And, moreover, her life ended when she was a child, with only three of potentially thirty years of life lived.

We use them – animals – for sport, for leisure, for entertainment, for financial gain. Two years before the Eight Belles tragedy in 2008, the renowned stallion Barbaro won the Kentucky Derby. The entire nation waited anxiously for him to win the Triple Crown. No horse has done that for three decades. Then, leaving the gate at the Preakness Stakes, the second leg of the three-race series, his leg broke. Together we slowly watched the tragedy of Barbaro's death unfold. It took months. Veterinarians worked on him. People worldwide prayed and mourned and … he

died.[4] Could Eight Belles and Barbaro be two of the four horses of the apocalypse? Could they hail our demise, reminding us that not only have we made them fragile, but, in so doing, made ourselves fragile as well.[5]

Since the earliest days of Christianity and before, sport that involved the bodies of "others," a complicated category of those both human and animal thought to be expendable, was central to many dominant cultures including those of the Mediterranean world. Some generalizations about such sports are part of popular Christian legend. We hear about "throwing Christians to the lions," but the entire story is much more complicated. The dominant members of these societies would select those who were exploitable and expendable and put them into the gladiatorial arena for entertainment. In the first several centuries of the Common Era, as Christianity was growing slowly throughout the Roman world, those who chose this new religion often faced death along with animals.

Though very troubling, reading some of the accounts of Christians and the animals with whom they shared the Roman arenas provides a helpful lens for considering animals and sport in the contemporary world. There are several other important junctures in history, including nineteenth century England, when Christianity and animals in sport once again intersect. These episodes of connection raise questions of how Christians in the contemporary world might respond to how animals are used for sport and entertainment in dominant and even mainstream human culture. In studying these episodes can one find anything that Christianity has to say about the ethics of using animals for entertaining humans?

Throughout human history we find examples of entertainment or sport at the cost of other lives - sometimes other human lives but often other animal lives.[6] How does this loss of life, this cost of life, for the purpose of entertaining those privileged enough to participate as safe

spectators, or as powerful contestants (the ones with the weapons, for example), fit in Christianity? After watching the majestic and beautiful Barbaro and Eight Belles die so tragically and being reminded so strongly of Job 39:19-20, I am convinced these questions must be seriously considered.

There are a number of "sports" that involve animals. I chose only three for the focus of this chapter – thoroughbred horse racing, dog fighting, and trophy hunting. All three are "blood sports," and self-designate as such, so that moniker is not to be read as a derogatory category into which I have placed them. Thoroughbred horse racing is a blood sport in a different way, on some levels, since it relies on the "blood" of the animals to make sure they are, indeed, bred thoroughly (from specific lines). Dog fighting and trophy hunting rely on blood being shed for the "sport" to be successful, at least from the perspective of the humans involved. These blood sports are particularly appropriate ones for Christians to consider, as for three centuries, Christians were the object of such sport themselves in the Roman Empire.[7]

Throwing Christians to the Lions

> "And Thecla … was stripped and received a girdle and was thrown into the arena. And lions and bears were let loose upon her. And a fierce lioness ran up and lay down at her feet. And the multitude of the women cried aloud. And a bear ran upon her, but the lioness went to meet it and tore the bear to pieces. And again a lion that had been trained to fight against men, which belonged to Alexander, ran upon her. And the lioness, encountering the lion, was killed along with it. And the women cried the more since the lioness, her protector, was dead." *(The Acts of Paul)*

Thecla as a virgin companion of Paul the Apostle during his journeys. In the apocryphal Acts of Paul she shares the limelight in the accounts of his life. The passage above is one of several relating what happened with Thecla and "beasts" in Roman arenas.[8] In her book Animals in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, Janet Spittler details various accounts from the Roman era of lions befriending humans, particularly females.[9] As Spittler points out, Thecla's faith allowed her to escape death a number of times. The theme of the "beasts" responding to her recurs frequently when she is captured and becomes part of the spectacle of the games. For instance, elsewhere in the Apocryphal Acts of Paul, Thecla is bound between two bulls, "red-hot irons" were placed "under their genitals so that they, being rendered more furious, might kill her."[10] At this point another divine intervention burns the ropes that tied her to the bulls and she stood in the arena unharmed.

The games of the Roman Empire were clearly dangerous places for humans and for animals. They followed a fairly standard pattern, with animal hunts (venationes), followed by executions (Christians would have been part of this entertaining display among other criminals and captives), then finally the gladiatorial fights. Sometimes these different stages would be conflated, so animal fights and executions of criminals could happen simultaneously. A number of stories tell of animals sent out to attack Christians.

However, while early Christian history is replete with stories of martyrs, particularly of those killed by the Roman Empire for refusing to sacrifice to the state, if sheer numbers are any indication it was likely safer to be a Christian in the Roman system of games than to be an animal. According to a variety of sources, a vast number of animals were killed as the empire displayed its wealth and power. Animals were imported from throughout the growing Roman territories in order to astonish the citizens with these exotic prizes. As the games grew in

importance, so did the number of animals killed for this violent sporting enterprise. Elephants, leopards, lions, crocodiles, and even the occasional hippopotamus, sometimes considered among the spoils of war, were used in the games to please the crowds and instill a sense of the dominance of the emperor and of Rome itself. If Rome could capture these majestic beasts while defeating people throughout the world, then it went without saying that the Empire was terrible and mighty.

As the games progressed through the centuries, an increasing number of animals were killed as each emperor would outdo his predecessors. So, while Marcus Scaurus boasted of a venatio that included 150 leopards and five crocodiles in 58 BCE, Pompey's games in 55 BCE, a mere three years later, "included the slaughter of 20 elephants, 600 lions, 410 leopards, various apes, the first north-European lynx to be seen at Rome, and the first rhinoceros."[11] By the time of the dedication of the massive Colosseum in Rome in 81 CE the stakes had risen significantly and the emperor Titus presided over the death of at least *nine thousand* animals during the inaugural games (Kalof: 116). The slaughter continued in the year 107 CE after the emperor Trajan won a military victory and Rome celebrated with 120 days of events. Reports indicate that *eleven thousand* animals were killed during this stretch of entertaining games.[12] J. M. C. Toynbee, one of the first modern art historians to examine animals in the Roman world, writes that the "numbers of animals slaughtered on specific occasion are recorded cold-bloodedly and, indeed, as a matter for congratulation." Her list of these recordings is powerful and covers the chronological escalation of violence. Toynbee seemingly caps her account with the "animal holocausts" of Domitian, also well-known for his early persecutions of Christians, who "is said to have slain with arrows 100 wild beasts of different kinds on his Alban estate." But then, even Domitian is surpassed:

> Trajan, however, beat the record by the butchery of 11,000 beasts to celebrate his Dacian triumph. But for refinement of cruelty to animals Commodus took the palm. He kept animals at home in order to kill them: in public he dispatched with his own hands 100 bears, 6 hippopotamuses, 3 elephants, rhinoceroses, a tiger and a giraffe; and according to Herodian, who also mentions lions and leopards as Commodus' victims, he shot ostriches with crescent-shaped arrowheads devised to decapitate the birds, whose headless bodies went on running.[13]

There was little mercy, and apparently much bloodlust, for animals in these Roman games.

Inscriptions from cities like Pompeii served as advertisements to lure crowds to the games. Some of these inscriptions listed the animals in a hierarchy of dangerousness, "four days of games at Beneventum starred … wild cats, sixteen bears, four other dangerous animals the rest being herbivores." Even those animals who were no threat to humans were slaughtered: "and you yourselves remember, excellent citizens, that on each of the four days all the herbivores were killed."[14] In addition, mosaics throughout the Roman world depicted the hunts and the circus scenes with animals fighting each other and fighting the gladiators.

While numerous Roman sources brag about the animals killed in the games, early Christian texts also provide interesting accounts of the animals as well as the humans. Not only were many executions performed *ad bestias* (with the condemned being thrown to the wild beasts), but, according to early Christian sources, sometimes the executions did not end as planned. At times the "beasts" (lions, boars, bulls) did kill the Christians, now martyred in the games. But there were also incidents when *ad bestias* backfired and the wild animals *refused* to kill the Christians. Reminiscent of Daniel in the lions' den, the animals instead offered up their own lives in defiance of the Roman masters.

Texts in the Apocryphal New Testament, particularly those focusing on the lives of the apostles, include fascinating stories of animals in the arenas who seemingly recognize and cooperate with these early Christians. The story of Thecla, mentioned above from "The Acts of Paul," is among several in that text alone. One of the most powerful encounters is between Paul and a lion. Paul was in Ephesus and had been arrested. The governor asked the crowd what to do with him and the crowd answered (as was expected), "To the beasts with this man!" So Hieronymus, the governor, made "a display of animals," including a lion who roared so loudly that even Paul "broke off his prayer in terror." The citizens of Ephesus, always ready for the games, began to cry out at dawn, "Let us go to the spectacle! Come, let us see the man who possesses God fighting with the beasts!" Then, an interesting twist changed the anticipated scene completely. Rather than attacking and killing Paul, the lion gazed at him with recognition. Earlier in their lives, they had encountered each other; and the lion requested that Paul baptize him. Now, both prisoners of Rome, they met again in the arena. The baptized lion will not attack Paul. Hieronymus decides to send other beasts and even archers to kill both Paul and the Christian lion. To save the two faithful victims from the Roman onslaught, God intervened and sent a mighty hail-storm. Paul and the lion escaped from the arena and, both now fugitives, went on their way – Paul on a ship and the lion into the wilderness.[15]

Other martyrologies that report encounters between Christians and animals in the arena abound. Seemingly divine intervention or communication with the animals is sometimes implied, as in this account reported by the early church historian Eusebius:

> Again you would have seen others – there were five altogether – thrown to an infuriated bull. When others approached from outside he tossed them with his horns into the air and mangle them, leaving them to be picked up half-dead; but

> when in his fury he rushed head down at the long group of holy martyrs, he could not even get near them, but stamped his feet and pushed with his horns in all directions.[16]

The infuriated bull might easily have been another one who was subjected to torture in order to anger him. In the case of Blandina, a slave who was one of the martyrs of Lyon in the late second century, Eusebius writes that she was "hunt on a post and exposed as food for the wild beasts let loose in the arena." Eventually, however, since "none of the beasts had yet touched her" she was removed and "kept for a second ordeal."[17]

Of course, in addition to the stories of animals who befriend or at least refuse to kill Christians there are reports of "wild animals" or "beasts" killing them as well. Many of these are deaths welcomed by the human martyrs. Ignatius, a first-century bishop of Antioch who iconography depicts being eaten by a lion, says in states in one of his letters, "May it be for my good that the wild animals are ready for me … I shall coax them to devour me promptly, unlike some whom they have been afraid to touch."[18]

Tertullian, one of the early fathers of the church, is the likely recorder of an account of the martyrdoms of Perpetua, a young noble woman, and her servant, Felicitas. These two women were martyred in the year 203 CE in Carthage. Theirs is arguably one of the most significant stories of martyrdom from the first three centuries of Christianity. Just before she was imprisoned, Perpetua gave birth to a son who she "suckled" and then "commended" to the care of her mother and brother. Felicitas was herself pregnant when she and Perpetua were apprehended and was greatly relieved when she gave birth early. "Pregnant women are not allowed to be publicly punished" and Felicitas longed to be martyred at the same time as the other prisoners. When the two women were taken into the arena, "stripped and clothed with

nets," the crowd "shuddered as they saw one young woman of delicate frame and another with breasts still dropping from her recent childbirth." A "fierce cow" was sent out to attack them "for that purpose contrary to custom, rivaling their sex also in that of the beasts."[19] In order to humiliate the prisoners completely, the cow was sent rather than the bull as a way of taunting the women.

It is striking to compare this account of Perpetua and Felicitas, with its focus on them as mothers who recently gave birth, to an account recorded by Martial, a first-century Roman poet who described the opening games of the Colosseum in his work "De Spectaculis Liber." He describes the death of a pregnant pig who was "stabbed with a spear," before giving birth:

> Nor did the piglet lie still; instead, as its mother fell, it ran away … At one and the same time, the sow lost life and gave life…By her fatal wound she became a mother. O, how ingenious are sudden and unexpected events.[20]

While the crowd is seemingly entertained by the mother and tragically orphaned baby pigs, it is shocked by the human women who recently gave birth. At least there is some sense of dismay expressed at the death of the two human mothers, but the crowd seems to have no sympathy for the sow.

Interestingly, even contemporary observers drew connections between different aspects of the games, as evidenced by an announcement found at Pompeii that promised the crowds "crucifixions along with animal hunts and gladiator duels."[21] The series of events were all part of the same gathering, whether it was the execution of a human on a crucifix or the death of an animal in a duel. Christians in the arena were killed parallel to the myriad animals, both humans and animals sacrificed for the entertainment of the human crowds.

With this history in mind, it seems appropriate for Christianity to consider the state of animals as part of the sports-entertainment system of the contemporary world. Dominant cultures, those with power, use the "other" in order to amuse. The shared history of Christians and other animals in the games of the Roman Empire gives new meaning to the idea of "throwing Christians to the lions," since, by all accounts, the lions were as likely to be victims of that system as the Christians. If we are serious in following Paul's lead, then, perhaps the lion should also be freed from the abusive power.

Case 1: Thoroughbred Horse Racing

As a child I met the most noble, the largest, the most beautiful creature I still have ever seen. I was a lucky little girl who had family in Kentucky and they took me to Claiborne Farm to meet the retired, mighty "Big Red" – Secretariat. If I close my eyes today, I can still see him standing next to me and towering over everyone. He had intense, but sweet, eyes. Secretariat loved to run. They all do. Horses thrive on running. Whether or not horses love to run is not the question in thoroughbred horse racing. The problem is with the conditions under which they are compelled to run: their physical make-up, their genetics, and the pressure imposed on their bodies by their owners and trainers, as well as all the spectators and gamblers.

If one considers the overall numbers, it might seem that relatively few horses die racing. According to the Associated Press, five thousand race horses died between 2003 and 2008 in the United States.[22] In comparison, in 2005 alone over 91,000 horses were slaughtered for food for either human consumption or for the pet food industry.[23] In general, because thoroughbred horses garner heavy financial investments from some quite wealthy human beings, they are more valuable alive than dead. But the numbers are still staggering and they were difficult for the Associated Press to gather. As a matter of fact many states and racetracks do not even keep the

statistics on thoroughbreds who die either on the racetrack or as a result of racing injuries. It is not much of a leap to assume that 5,000 is a conservative number at best. And this is to say nothing of what happens to these horses after their racing career ends, as we will discuss later.

Horse racing has ancient roots, possibly dating as early as the seventh century BCE. Xenophon (c. 430 – 335 BCE), a contemporary of Socrates, wrote *The Art of Horsemanship* over 2400 years ago' and it is still in print.[24] In addition to the many games discussed above, Roman chariot races were a central part of their games; the horses used for these races, though occasionally sacrificed by the winning team as a way to thank the gods, were highly sought after. Thoroughbred horse racing in its relatively modern form began after the Civil War, though it has roots before that in England, and has always been tied closely to the gambling, or gaming, industries. Winning purses of over $1,000,000 are seen with frequency in the major races; the owners of Mine That Bird, the winner of the 2009 Kentucky Derby, took home over $1.4 million.

Many familiar with the sport agree that horses die on the racetracks too often. On June 4, 2009 *The New York Times* reported that, "Since the beginning of the year, 20 racehorses have been euthanized after breakdowns in racing or training accidents at Belmont Park or Aqueduct."[25] The magazine *Blood-Horse*, one of the major reporting tools of the thoroughbred racing industry, reported that the National Thoroughbred Racing Association recognizes it to be problematic that the "horseracing industry had no systematic program for collecting data on equine injuries or fatalities at racetracks."[26]

While millions of dollars are invested annually by veterinary schools and the horse racing industry to improve the physical characteristics of these horses, speed is always the primary factor in their selection and endeavors. Is detrimental to the overall health of thoroughbred

horses? Some evidence points to that possibility. First, most thoroughbreds weigh over 1000 pounds but have ankles the size of those carrying a human who weighs under 200 pounds. Second, the genetic pool is sometimes questioned as well. Studies conducted on 500,000 thoroughbreds show that in "95% of these modern racehorses, the Y-chromosome can be traced back to a single stallion - the Darley Arabian, born in 1700." This genetic pool carries certain defects and, according to Matthew Binns of the Royal Veterinary College in London, "One tenth of thoroughbreds suffer orthopaedic problems and fractures, 10% have low fertility, 5% have abnormally small hearts and the majority suffer bleeding in the lungs."[27]

Even the most accomplished thoroughbred racing horses can have tragic deaths. A famous case is that of Exceller, a horse who won seven major races and even defeated two Triple Crown winners. Exceller earned over $1.6 million in races and upon becoming a stud, his breeding fee was $50,000. Unfortunately his offspring did not fare well and his fee declined significantly. He was sold to a Swedish breeder who eventually declared bankruptcy and slaughtered Exceller in 1997.[28] We should also remember Ferdinand, the winner of the 1986 Kentucky Derby. Initially retired to Claiborne Farms, the same farm where I met Secretariat, Ferdinand also had an unsuccessful stud career and was eventually sold to a company in Japan. According to *Blood-Horse*, Ferdinand is believed to have been slaughtered for pet food in 2002.[29] The huge public outcry following his death led to the introduction of the Horse Slaughter Prevention bill in the U.S. Congress, which passed in 2006. While this bill closed down the last remaining horse slaughter operations in the U.S., it is still possible for horses to be shipped from the U.S. to Canada and Mexico for slaughter there.

Thoroughbred horse racing raises the question of human dominion over animals in ways that, at first glance, are not always obvious. Horses have been used as draft animals to pull plows

for agriculture. They have been used as pack animals to carry our loads. They have provided transportation for generations and still do today. Examining horses' lives in all of these settings is certainly valid. The well-known and treasured novel *Black Beauty*, written by Mary Sewell in 1877 in response to the abuse of cab horses in Great Britain, is one of early modern calls to humans to treat horses with dignity and compassion. However, the purpose of using thoroughbred horses for racing points to an extreme situation as we humans manipulate, slaughter, and ride these animals, sometimes to their death, simply for the purpose of sport and gambling.

On May 17, 2009, Rachel Alexandra, another fabulous filly like Eight Belles, won the Preakness Stakes. The huge television and live audience seemed to share a collective sigh of relief after she completed the race uninjured. Just two weeks earlier, eight bells tolled at Churchill Downs, the site of the Kentucky Derby, in tribute to the filly who died there on that day the year before. And, on the day following the 2009 Kentucky Derby, the mantle of roses won by Mine That Bird hung over the neck of the new statue of Barbaro, the only horse buried on the grounds of the famous track. The inscription under Barbaro's status quotes Eric Liddell, the 1924 Olympic Gold Medal winner: "I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. And when I run, I feel his pleasure." Surely Barbaro and the many other horses who have died on the thoroughbred racing tracks loved to run, but their bodies were pushed too hard and manipulated too drastically by humans for them to fill this God-given purpose.

Case 2: Dog Fighting

In April 2007 police raided a now infamous property in Surry County, Virginia, uncovering evidence of a dog fighting ring. In June, federal authorities entered the property and

found sixty-six dogs, mostly pit bulls, being used for dog fighting. Dog-fighting is a widespread "sport" in the United States and one that has a long and graphic history in other parts of the world as well. The owner of this property – Atlanta Falcons superstar quarterback Michael Vick. The descriptions of the scene are beyond chilling and because media jumped on the story this horrific sport has finally reached much of the public's awareness. For those who did not hear details of the story, witnesses to the events that took place on Vick's property describe dogs being killed by "hanging, drowning, and/or slamming" them to the ground if they did not perform well in testing sessions.[30] They were coldly executed, forced to breed in order to perfect the fighting drive, and made to fight to the death.

While the disturbing and horrifying scene in southern Virginia on Vick's property captured the news media's attention in 2007, dog fighting was not and is not limited to that one well-known, celebrity-focused incident. After the Vick case, in July 2009, the biggest dog fighting raid in U.S. history took place, with 450 dogs seized across eight states and human perpetrators arrested in several of these raids as well. According to prosecutors in Missouri, members of this multistate dog fighting ring killed injured dogs by shooting them "in the head, throwing the dogs into the river or burning the dogs in a barrel."[31] This coordinated effort between law enforcement and humane organizations focused on the widespread illegal and violent activities associated with dog fighting. As Scotlund Haisey, Senior Director for Emergency Services of the Humane Society of the United States, reported:

> After months of coordination and preparation, the sweet release of relief is finally beginning to wash over our exhausted team. This feeling is ushered in by the comforting sight of dogs being settled in at the emergency shelter. Knowing that without our intervention these same animals would have faced a future of untold horrors is my

> ultimate reward. Tonight I can truly celebrate a belated Independence Day, as I contemplate the 450 lives that have been saved from the clutches of the dogfighting industry. By shutting down these operations we have saved untold generations of fighting dogs the pain and misery of being bred only to quench the blood lust of those involved in this hideous industry.[32]

As discussed in chapter one, for hundreds of years dogs and humans have lived together, in close relationships and companionship. Two species in interesting symbiotic concert for at least 15,000 years. But evidence suggests for at least the last *two thousand* years dogs have been used not only to protect humans and their property but, for a variety of human-centered reasons, to fight other animals, including other dogs. The Roman Empire's use of animals opens a window into this early history of dogs fighting, guarding, and engaging in other violent acts at the command of the humans with whom they live. The mastiff breeds, likely emerging from the culture of the Greek and Roman empires, are still central to dog fighting as it is one of their remote descendants, the pit bull, that has become the victim of choice in the contemporary dog fighting world. Dog fighting is not unique to the Mediterranean and European cultures, however. There is a history of this particular blood sport in areas of eastern Asia and South America as well.

The particular type of dog fighting taking place in America in the early twenty-first century, however, has a more recent history of development. Starting in sixteenth century England, dogs were used as part of a growing interest in "baiting" sports. Large animals, such as bulls or bears, would be chained or otherwise weakened and powerful dogs would be loosed to attack them. Often these fights would take place in a "pit," a type of fighting ring for the animals. And from there was derived the name of the primary type of dog used in fighting in America, the

"pit" bull terriers.[33] In the first half of the nineteenth century in England, baiting became illegal, so the fights were staged between two dogs rather than between a dog and another, larger animal. In the twentieth century, in rural, urban, northern and southern areas of the United States, dog fighting emerged as a major component of gambling cultures.

While dog fighting is illegal in all fifty states and it is a felony in most states, it has rarely been pursued and prosecuted, as is evidenced by the existence of an official publication serving the interests of the dog fighting community: the *Pit Bull Reporter*. The *Pit Bull Reporter* offers this description of the American Pit Bull Terrier (APBT):

> The fact is no other breed has the gameness or ability to consistently stand up to the APBT in an even weight fighting contest. (You may have heard of a pit bull losing an occasional street or backyard fight against this breed or that but we are talking about "professionally conducted" pit matches in this context. Poorly bred, amateurishly handled pit bulls may lose to another breed once in awhile, just as a sorry horse may lose a race to a mule occasionally…).[34]

Breeding operations for pit bulls are widespread and the names of many of these operations leave little to the imagination about the violence inherent in their programs: Bad Newz Kennels, Dead Man Kennels, Short Fuse Bulldogs, Terminator Kennels, Armageddon Kennels, and Silent But Violent Kennels.[35]

A number of arguments propose that dog fighting is a particularly masculine sport. In a recent article in a gender studies journal, sociologists argued that their research "confirms that the dogs employed in the sport of dogfighting do serve as symbols for the traditional masculine ideal of heroism that exists within the subculture of dogfighters and they are the symbols through which their owners gain status as men." Further, dogs who lose the fight or who refuse to fight

are condemned and often killed by their owners if they have not already been killed in the pit. As one dog fighter stated, "If the dog is capable of standing on his feet, he should keep fighting and never quit, I would condemn any dog that chooses to quit."[36]

For a moment, let's put aside concerns for animal welfare and consider the other alarms raised here. Even if one is only concerned with human welfare or if one worries that concern for animals might lessen one's concern for humans, issues of animal abuse and violence to other humans are closely connected. Numerous studies in recent years demonstrate the links between domestic violence and animal abuse as well as between dog fighting and violence toward other humans. Researchers consistently see support for what is called the "graduation hypothesis" of the animal abuse-human violence equation. In short that the "perpetrations of acts of violence toward animals may desensitize the perpetrator to the effects of violence, as well as reinforce violence as an effective means of social control."[37] The links between domestic violence and animal abuse are increasingly obvious according to a number of sociological studies.[38] The more likely one is to abuse an animal, the more likely one is to abuse one's spouse, partner, or children.

Humans and dogs have lived together for tens of thousands of years. Controversial and compelling theories about how and why this relationship came about proliferate. But one thing is irrefutable: dogs have a unique place in human lives. The fact that many humans can enjoy torturing them in pits for sport and gambling reveals the human capacity for cruelty and evil. Randy Grim, a dog rescue worker in Saint Louis, describes the fate of the many of these dogs, particularly the ones who are not the winning fighters. He had rescued one of them and describes him here:

> The golden Chow, the dogs in the woods, and the black dog curled up in the

> backseat weren't fighting dogs, not successful ones anyway. They were either discarded losers or leftover bait. He'd rescued a lot of dogs that had been used as bait: the starving, yellow Lab-shepherd mix chained and mutilated in a yard where a healthy Pit Bull roamed free; puppies skinned alive near a crack house on the East Side; the terrier mix with ribbonlike scars up and down his front legs from the wire used to tie him down.[39]

Grim's account mirrors that reported by the officers who raided Vick's property and who confiscated over four hundred dogs in July 2009.

As I mentioned above, the pit bull is not a breed but a confusing categorization of a particular appearance. Unfortunately, for the dogs so labeled, the classification can be a death sentence. A number of U.S. cities have banned pit bulls and, increasingly, home owners' insurance providers will not cover these dogs in policies. For renters, landlords who allow other pets will not allow "pits" in properties. At the shelter where I volunteer in central Texas, the most common "breed" confiscated, surrendered, or found stray is the pit bull. Because of the stereotypes associated with them and the associated breed specific regulations that unfairly burden them, it is difficult to get these dogs out of the shelter into new homes or into rescue groups. But I see their faces all the time and have encountered numerous gentle, people-loving "pits" over the last decade. A colleague and I get as many of them out into foster homes as possible. But we never are able to bring enough to safety. However, we did get "Sheba" out.[40]

Sheba was a small, brindle female who obviously had been used for breeding and, likely, also used as a bait dog. Her left eye was missing and she was full of worms (heartworms, hookworms, whipworms). Several chunks of each of her ears had been bitten off. She shivered in the corner of her run and hid her head in my lap when I sat down next to her. It took a few

months of good food, veterinary care, and the experience of kind humans, but I will never forget the first time I saw her wag her tail. Suddenly Sheba realized that life was ok. She simply wanted to live, she did not want to fight. During several months in one of our wonderful foster homes, she was spayed, treated for heartworms and the many other parasites that filled her body, she gained weight and her coat started to shine. She and the woman who adopted her bonded immediately. This story had a happy ending.

Too few former fighting, breeding, and bait dogs realize the same happy ending though. Many of the dogs seized from Vick's property were placed with Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in Utah. This well-established, experienced organization worked diligently with these dogs to rehabilitate them and placed most of them in good homes. Some of these former fighting dogs are still at Best Friends over a year later and could end up spending their lives at this sanctuary. But the dogs from the huge raid of July 2009 will likely not be as lucky. It is incredibly difficult to find appropriate homes for dogs who are traumatized. While the HSUS, Best Friends, BAD RAP, and other organizations do everything they can to determine the best final outcome for dogs who were used in dog fighting operations, many will never be saved.[41]

**Image for this section: "Dot" was a pitbull who ended up at the Georgetown Animal Shelter. She had likely been used as a bait dog for fighting practice. She was missing one eye and there were tears in both of her ears. Photo by Jimmy Smith.*

Sport Hunting

During the latter half of the seventh century, in the wilderness of southern France, lived Saint Giles, a "hermit known for his holiness" and for his healing miracles who chose to reside in a cave away from other humans. According to his hagiographies, or stories of his life,[42] the saint was befriended and fed by a doe. She would come and nourish the saint with her milk. Because of this doe, we can learn much about what the stories of Saint Giles have to say about hunting for

sport. Most people living in early middle ages hunted for at least some of their food, the nobility of the time had the luxury of hunting for entertainment as well. The wealthy citizens claimed certain areas of land exclusively for the purpose of sport hunting. The hagiography tells the story of St. Giles and the doe:

> The king's men came hunting in that area and saw the doe. Caring nothing for other game, they pursued her with their dogs, and the doe, hard pressed, took refuge at her foster's feet. Giles wondered why the animal was whining and whimpering, which was not at all like her, so he went out, and, hearing the hunt, prayed the Lord to save the nurse he had provided. No dog dared come closer than a stone's throw, and the pack returned to the huntsmen barking and howling vehemently. Night drew on and the hunt turned for home. They came back the next day, but their labors were thwarted again, and they returned home as before.

At this point in the story, the hunters are clearly looking for this specific animal, not for animals to kill for food. Unsuccessful in their attempts to kill her, they are accompanied by the king when they resume their hunt the next day. Eventually they surround the cave where the doe is hiding with the saint. The story continues:

> One of them incautiously shot an arrow, hoping to drive out the quarry, but instead inflicted a serious wound on the man of God as he prayed for his doe … they found the old man wearing a monk's habit, white-haired, venerable with age, and the doe stretched out at his feet.[43]

This Christian saint, Giles, not only provided refuge for this doe but took an arrow for her to save her from the sport hunters.[44]

Hunting holds a traditional and powerful place in many cultures; it is usually more than a way to gather food.[45] Historically, sustenance hunting has been central to human survival and has been accompanied by rituals and symbolic layers too complicated to address here. Social class issues, such as those hinted in the story of St. Giles, are only one of many levels of meaning attached to hunting. Humans are omnivores. We can eat a wide variety of plants and animals. True, some argue against this designation and point to religious and environmental reasons for humans to be vegetarians, however that is an issue addressed more fully in the chapter on food. But let's grant here that humans are omnivores. Does that still mean that hunting for sport rather than sustenance is in line with Christian ideals? It is this category of hunting that the story of Saint Giles, and possibly other ideas from Christianity, call into question.

Hunting is a way of life for many people, it is a tradition that has been handed down from one generation to another. Certainly there are hunters whose primary purpose is gathering food and, while various arguments can be forwarded in support of or against this, that is not my goal. It could be argued, and validly in my opinion, that careful hunting for meat is preferable to buying meat at a grocery store since that meat likely came from a factory farm (an issue addressed in chapter four).[46] But sport hunting focuses on trophies, on entertainment, on killing for the purpose of killing, not for survival, not for food. Just as dog fighting provides entertainment and is acceptable in some subcultures, hunting for sport is not only acceptable but expected in some parts of U.S. culture. And often in the same communities where hunting for sport thrives, Christianity thrives as well. Because of this link, it is imperative for Christians to think about the implications of faith on sport hunting.

Here is an interesting experience: Do an internet search for "hunting" and "Christianity." You will be surprised how many connections are made between the two. One of the most

intriguing is “Outreach Outdoors”, a “Christian Hunting Ministry.” Almost every person listed on the biography of the website page is pictured holding up the head of a dead deer, presumably one they recently killed. There is a “harvest” page as well, featuring images of deer, mostly bucks with large antlers, dead on the ground with their heads held up by the hunters. Interspersed are night vision pictures of deer still alive. In the descriptions of the “harvests” they graphically describe the deaths of the deer: how long they survived, which way they ran after being shot or hit with an arrow. Still, according to their literature, “God wants to use hunting” in order “to draw people to Him.” And this is the purpose of the Christian hunting ministry.[47]

Matthew Scully, a senior speech-writer for President George W. Bush, published *Dominion* in 2002. The second chapter of his book, “The Shooting Field,” paints a picture of sport hunting in the U.S. Scully spends the first part of the chapter describing his experience at the seventh annual convention of Safari Club International. There are exhibition booths with vendors selling exotic hunting trips, award ceremonies for those who killed certain combinations of animals, and seminars on a variety of topics from African Bowhunting Adventures to Wild Game and Wine Pairing. And later in the chapter he describes one of the traditions of the convention:

> It is the Christian Sportsmen’s Fellowship breakfast … The fellowship’s motto is “On Target to Catch Men for Christ.” Their logo depicts a deer head beneath a cross. About 250 people are here. There is a raffle: hanging in the balance, a camouflage-covered Bible.

Scully continues his description with a quotation from the main speaker at the event, a former governor, ex-president of the NRA (the National Rifle Association), and Medal of Honor

recipient, Joe Foss. Foss explains his understanding of the connections between Christianity and hunting:

> And that's why SCI (Safari Club International) is so important, because it protects our right to hunt . . . You have to say, 'Lord Jesus, come into my life, forgive my sins' . . . If you have the Lord on your side, you'll win. If you don't, you lose. And hunting and fishing – if you're involved in that, it's tough to go wrong . . . I believe in the Bible and everything in it . . . Every human being is a miracle. It's hard to believe – there are so many of us – but it's true. Think about it. A miracle, the world created for you. You're it.[48]

So it seem, hunting, as understood by the Christian Sportsman's Fellowship, is a sacred expression of the mastery that we have over the world. But did God create the world just for us - the miracle humans?

A search through their website, www.christiansportsman.com, provides some more insight into the group's overall mission. The pictures at the top of the front page include a rifle with a scope, a fishing rod, a mounted fish, a bear, and a buck (the last two are still alive in the images). On the "mission" page their vision statement begins with a quotation from Psalms 42:1: "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God." In juxtaposition the "photo gallery" page contains images of dead deer in the hands of hunters.[49] While many of these hunters are likely not "trophy or sport hunters" exclusively, they probably do eat the meat (though they may mount the heads of the bucks), the presentation of the animal who they just killed is certainly a trophy moment.

Today, in this country, exotic trophy hunters spend thousands of dollars to kill animals on designated hunting ranches. Driving around the barely suburban and rural roads of central Texas,

games fences run along the edge frequently. On one of those ranches, for example, you can spend $4,500 for a five-day Aoudad hunt; the Aoudad is a barbary sheep species native to North Africa but now, apparently, roaming the not-so-open areas of central Texas for sport hunting. An hour north of Houston hunting for a zebra will cost you $6,500, for a wildebeest $4,500. A third ranch advertises a Bongo hunt for $35,000; this is particularly noteworthy since the Bongo, the largest African forest antelope, is on the *threatened species list*.[50]

In his book *Without a Tear* ethicist Mark Bernstein describes a moral principle that he dubs the "Principle of Gratuitous Suffering" (PGS): "It is morally wrong to intentionally inflict (or allow the infliction of) gratuitous pain or suffering on another, innocent individual."[51] This may seem like a less-than-groundbreaking moral statement, but if we took it seriously, think of the difference it would make. In light of the Principle of Gratuitous Suffering, Bernstein examines hunting. He places it squarely in the middle of the dialog of "sport," as hunters frequently refer to themselves as "sportsmen" or "sportswomen." His insights here are provocative, and they apply not only to hunting but to dog fighting and horse racing as well.

> Sporting events involve voluntary participants. All the parties have some chance of winning, with the winner typically rewarded with money, a trophy, or a medal. But hunting has none of these characteristics. Obviously the animals do not voluntarily enter the sport. No doubt, given the chance, the deer, squirrel, or dove would opt out of the event. Nor does the animal have any chance of "winning." The best outcome is to leave the arena a free, uninjured creature.[52]

Indeed, maybe that is the best outcome for the animals in each of these blood sports.

In his article "Unsportsmanlike Conduct" in the *Christian Century*, Dean Peerman suggests that, while hunting per se might not be contradictory for Christians, canned hunting for

sport is. Peerman points out that the animals on the exotic hunting ranches are often raised with humans, therefore tame and unafraid. He even references occasions when animals will lick the hand of the hunter on these ranches before being killed. In response to an article published in the *Christian Century* in support of hunting, Peerman states that Christians should "disapprove of" canned hunts.[53] The display of violence for entertainment and to show power over another, should ring a bell for Christians. This was the idea behind crucifixion in the Roman Empire.

Christian Responses to Animals in Sport

I began this chapter with a description of the powerful filly Eight Belles and the image of her front legs breaking after she ran majestically in a race. Horses, dogs, and trophy animals are among those who die at the hands of humans engaged in "sports." In much the same way early Christians sometimes died at the hands of Romans for entertainment.

Christians have not been entirely silent on these or very similar issues over the course of the last two thousand years. While sources are somewhat scattered, there is a rich history of critique of this unnecessary violence and suffering. I simply offer a sampling of these voices here and leave a more in-depth analysis of conclusions for the final chapter.

The first critique is found in canonical scripture itself. In Matthew 12:11 a man with a withered hand was in the synagogue and the people with Jesus asked him if it was lawful to cure on the Sabbath. Jesus responds to them, "Suppose one of you has only one sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath; will you not lay hold of it and lift it out." Imagine Jesus' words in relation to dog fighting when dogs are thrown into a "pit" together to fight until one can no longer stand and is most likely dead. Here, not only does Jesus tell his disciples to pull the sheep out of the

pit, but he tells them they can break the laws of the Sabbath in order to do so. Is it unreasonable to think that Jesus would expect compassion to our animal companions?

In his seminal work *Utopia* written in the early sixteenth century, Sir Thomas More, a devout Catholic and adviser to Henry VIII, provided a vision of a tolerant, peaceful world. In his description, he takes on the issue of hunting. More states that Utopians "think that this whole business of hunting is beneath the dignity of free men … the hunter seeks nothing but pleasure from murdering a poor innocent beast." More does assume that there will be butchers to provide meat for the population, but the culture of hunting is what is at issue for him. Furthermore, in Utopia, they "never sacrifice any animals, for they can't imagine a merciful God enjoying slaughter and bloodshed. They say God gave His creatures life, because He wanted them to live."[54]

In the 1650s when the Puritans took control of England following the Elizabethan era, as part of their overall restructuring of English culture, they eliminated the blood-sporting Cotswold Games. The Puritans had a different "sporting ideal" than that of their predecessors. The Cotswold games included "blood sports or butchery sports often centered on animals pitted against each other in barbaric contests to the death. Bear-baiting, bull-baiting, dog-fighting, and cockfighting were commonplace and drew audiences from all ranks." The Puritans sought to replace these with "wholesome, clean, non-violent" athletic competition."[55]

For a variety of complex historical reasons, Evangelicals in England contributed significantly to the discourse on the humane treatment of animals beginning in the nineteenth century. This is perhaps surprising to some Christians. The conclusions the Evangelicals drew about humanity's relationship to animals were informed both by classism and, naturally from their perspective, a certainty that Christian culture was the only true and right way to live. As

such, it would be an incomplete picture to remove issues of racism, classism, and sexism from these stages in the development of the humane movement as a whole.[56] Still, there are points about the situation of animals from their perspective that remain helpful in the ethical and moral consideration of blood sports.

First, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) was officially launched in 1824, followed by several other societies that would provide the foundation for the animal protection movement.[57] Their earliest focus was bull baiting and cockfighting. These people continued their efforts into other arenas, such as draught animals and companion animals, but their initial reaction was to these sports. A significant number of their most influential members were evangelical Christians. For example, William Wilberforce,[58] a member of Parliament and of the Clapham Evangelicals, provided one of the strongest voices in opposition to animal baiting fights:

> When we considered that the victim of this human amusement was not left to the free exertion of his natural powers, but bound to a stake, and baited with animals instinctively his foes, and urged by acclamation to attack him, must we not conclude that the practice was inconsistent with every manly principle, cruel in its designs, and cowardly in its execution? … On a comparison of the different sports, it would be found that none of them partook of cruelty so largely as bull-baiting.[59]

Wilberforce was not alone in his denouncements. Preachers, such as Reverend Styles who was a committee member for the SPCA, declared in 1835:

> I should repudiate Christianity if it circumscribed our sympathy. But far different is that spirit of mercy, which “wipes all tears from all faces,” and enjoins us to

> turn out of the path lest we "needlessly set foot upon a worm" … Christianity is no indifferent spectator of animals suffering, but the stern avenger of the wrongs of that defenceless race which cannot defend themselves.[60]

Various articles published in *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* in the early nineteenth century encourage Christians to consider animal welfare. In December 1834 the magazine published an article entitled "On Cruelty to Animals" which declared:

> Should any affirm that they nevertheless enjoy it, let them turn to our bull-baits, our badger-hunts, our multitudinous and multifarious sports, in few or any of which can it be adduced that cruelty to the subordinate animals does not form a prominent feature. Morally, socially, and above all, religiously, we sin deeply in thus causing unnecessary suffering.

The direct engagement of Evangelical Christianity with blood sports in the nineteenth century provides a wealth of resources to ponder in the early twenty-first century as well.

Numerous contemporary Christian theologians, from Carol Adams to Andrew Linzey to Jay McDaniel, have much to say about cruelty to animals as well and their works are cited throughout this book. In addition, there are continuing links between Christianity, humane organizations, and the issue of cruelty to animals in the world of sport. The Humane Society of the United States is, in many ways, a direct descendant of the nineteenth century British anti-cruelty societies. While the direct links to Christianity and the overt connections with evangelicalism are certainly not apparent, the HSUS increasingly makes connections with religious communities from all traditions to address issues of animal cruelty.[61]

Nevertheless, despite these efforts, early twenty-first century American culture continues to support a world of cruelty in sport and, as mentioned earlier this violence does not just involve

animals but certain human “others” as well. Watching those who are not “like us” fight to the death, die at the other end of a weapon we wield, or exert themselves to a point that leads to death, is in many ways reminiscent of the lives of the early Christian martyrs. In the Roman world, they were the “other,” the expendable ones whose suffering was valid for entertainment purposes. After gaining power and influence, however, Christianity slipped too easily into making “others” of its own, and into using “them” for similar purposes.

Still the roots of compassion in Christianity run deep. From images of Jesus healing those who most people would not touch, to Francis of Assisi negotiating for the wolf to live peacefully in the town of Gubbio, to Mother Teresa providing health care for the “others” of Calcutta, Christianity has a rich tradition of bridging the gap and extending a hand of compassion. Surely, as we have seen over and over again, that compassion need not stop with humans.

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[1] All scripture quotations from *The Green Bible: NRSV*, HarperOne 2008.

[2] The Triple Crown is the most popular horse racing series in the United States. It consists of the Kentucky Derby, Preakness, and Belmont Stakes.

[3] From Moran. Interestingly Paul Moran, a journalist who has covered thoroughbred racing for decades, wrote an article the week before the Derby criticizing the decision to enter Eight Belles in the race. In that article he claimed that, in his opinion, "Eight Belles will be permanently scarred by the experience." (see http://paulmoranattheraces.blogspot.com/2008/04/eight-belles-deserves-better.html, last accessed on 10 July 2009).

[4] The Jockey Club, the breed registry for thoroughbred horses in the United States, commissioned a Thoroughbred Safety Committee in response to these tragedies.

[5] In 2009, as I completed writing this chapter, Rachel Alexandra won the Preakness Stakes. She was the first filly to win that difficult race in eighty-five years. She did not run in the Kentucky Derby (the first leg of the Triple Crown), rather she ran in the Kentucky Oaks that weekend, the race for 3-year old fillies. She dominated the filly field, thus her owner entered her in the Preakness. But he chose not to run her in the Belmont, the final leg of the Triple Crown. Luckily for horse-racing, and obviously for the horses who ran, no deaths occurred as a result of the 2009 Triple Crown races.

[6] For the purposes of this study I consider sport to include activities initiated by humans with a primary purpose of amusing the human spectators/participants and, specifically, those that include other-than-human animals as objects of this amusement, as opposed to sports that feature only human participants.

[7] Hunting for sport, horse-racing, and dog-fighting are the specific "sports" addressed in this analysis, but they are not the exclusive ways that animals are used for entertainment. Cock-fighting, bull running, rodeos, and circuses, along with other less prominent activities such as using animals in the film industry, all come under this umbrella. Certainly zoos and similar animal entertainment arenas, such as Sea World, could be part of this examination; but the particular, complicated issue of zoos in the twenty-first century in the midst of wildlife conservation, captive reproduction programs, and education crises is probably worthy of its own independent study.

[8] Elliott 370.

[9] Spittler, 172-6.

[10] Elliott, 370-1.

[11] Wiedeman 60.

[12] Kalof 117.

[13] Toynbee 21-22.

[14] Wiedeman 59.

[15] Elliott 378-9.

[16] Eusebius 336

[17] Ibid 200

[18] Ibid 146

[19] Tertullian, 700, 705

[20] This report is from Martial, *De spectaculis liber* 14 (12); 15 (13); 16 (14); it is also cited in Shelton, 116-117.

[21] Thompson, 28.

[22] HorsePoint 2008, http://www.horsepoint.com.au/portal/tabID__3435/ArticleID__2946860/DesktopDefault.aspx (accessed June 23, 2009)

[23] Bekoff 1136. In 2006 the U.S. Congress passed the "American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act," effectively closing down all horse slaughter operations in the U.S. But, in 2008, approximately 120,000 horses were exported to Mexico and Canada for slaughter according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

[24] Xenphon, *The Art of Horsemanship*, Dover: 2006.

[25] Joe Drape, "New York Lags in Exams of Dead Horses," June 4, 2009. New York Times. (accessed online June 10, 2009 at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/05/sports/05racing.html?_r=1).

[26] "NTRA Safety and Integrity Alliance Pledge,"

[27] Pickrell

[28] Bekoff 758-9

[29] Paulick

[30] Mark Maske, "Falcon's Vick Indicted in Dogfighting Case," *Washington Post*, July 18, 2007.

[31] Gay, *NYTimes* online, accessed 10 July 2009.

[32] "Eight State Dog Fighting Raid Largest in U.S. History" on http://hsus.typepad.com/wayne/2009/07/dogfighting-raid.html, accessed 10 July 2009.

[33] "Pit bull terriers" are not actually a recognized breed. Rather a combination of a variety of breeds results in a mixed group of dogs popularly called "pit bulls". It is a confusing and somewhat random designation. The breeds that sometimes combine to make these new lines of

dogs sometimes used in the pit are American Staffordshire Terriers, Bull Terriers, American Bull Dogs, Staffordshire Terriers, and, sometimes, small Rottweilers or Boxers.

[34] http://www.pbreporter.com/Guide%20to%20fighting%20breeds.htm, accessed on 15 June 2009. While the magazine is no longer in publication, according to its website, the site itself was updated as recently as July 1, 2009.

[35] Roth 60.

[36] Evans 214.

[37] Henry/Sanders 122.

[38] See Henry and Sanders, Flynn, Gupta.

[39] Roth 63.

[40] I changed the dog's name here since, even after she was adopted, her new person kept her name and I do not want her to be identified.

[41] For news on the July 2009 raid, see http://www.hsus.org/acf/news/ex-fighting_dogs_071509.html (last accessed on September 2, 2009).

[42] Hagiographies are a particular genre that are stories of saints lives recorded or told for the purpose of edification, in other words they have a pedagogical purpose and are open to interpretation. They should not be read as a "biography" necessarily, though that does not diminish their significance. For a more thorough examination of the lives of saints in relationship to animals see *Holy Dogs and Asses*.

[43] Voragine 147-8.

[44] The deer has a symbol-rich history in European Christianity. Not only does the deer become the symbol of

[45] See Nicholas Proctor, *Bathed in Blood: Hunting and Mastery in the Old South* and Daniel Hermann, *Hunting and the American Imagination*.

[46] By careful or skilled hunting I mean skilled hunting that does not injure the animal without killing him or her as quickly as possible.

[47] For more information see www.outreachoutdoors.com; last accessed July 15, 2009.

[48]Scully 71

[49] Website last accessed July 15, 2009.

[50] These prices were gathered from these central Texas exotic hunting ranches: Rio Bonito Ranch just outside of San Antonio, Circle E Ranch north of Houston, Clear Springs Ranch, in central Texas. Similar prices and species can be hunted at a variety of exotic game ranches in the southwestern United States.

[51] Bernstein 7.

[52] Ibid 117.

[53] Peerman, 10.

[54] More, 108.

[55] Daniel 260.

[56] See Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, for a general social history of humans and animal in Victorian England.

[57] For a complete history see the classic work by Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1987.

[58] A film biography of Wilberforce's life entitled "Amazing Grace" was released in 2007 and has a particular focus on his role in the anti-cruelty movement and the establishment of the SPCA.

[59] Parliamentary History.

[60] From the RSPCA Annual Report, 1835. Quoted in Chien-hiu Li, p274.

[61] For more information see http://www.hsus.org/religion/