

First Annual Beastly Conference

Presented by HARPY



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HONORS HOUSE 196

Hosted by HARPY, the Honors Association
for Research and Publication

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First Annual Beastly Conference Schedule

11:00 - 11:05 -- Opening Remarks and Welcome from HARPY
Mackenzie Tubridy and Bailey Flannery

11:05 - 11:10 -- Bailey Flannery, “Urban Animals” (Senior, English)

11:10 - 11:40 -- The Natures of Genesis

Kristen Leer, “Eve and the Serpent: A Retelling” (Senior, Psychology, Classic Civilization, Religious Studies)
Amanda Niebauer, “Eden’s Garden” (Sophomore, English)

11:40 - 12:10 -- Animal Affairs and Beastly Relations

Jessica Plotkin, “Beauty Turns to Beast: The Animal Groom Story-Type as Female Liberation” (Sophomore, Biochemistry)
Corinne Kronschnabel, “Progression of the Wolf: Changes in Little Red Riding Hood” (Freshman, Anthropology)

12:10 - 12:20 -- Chuck Wimpee, “Fantastic Beasts, Imagined and Real” (Associate Professor, Biological Sciences)

Break 12:20 - 12:30

12:30 - 1:00 -- Wisconsin Flora and Fauna

Sydney Steinbach, “Finding Spirit” (Freshman, Global Studies)
Marie Freres, “A Wisconsinite’s Vision for Conservation” (Freshman, Biological Sciences)

1:00 - 1:30 -- Animal Artistry

Francesca Bisi, “Renaissance Catastrophe” (Senior, Art History, Italian Studies)

Hannah Sallmann, “Reconciling Trauma Through Animal Art” (Senior, Psychology)

1:30 - 1:40 -- Glen Fredlund, “Mapping Mortality at UWM: Advocating for a Bird-Safe Campus” (Associate Professor, Geography and Anthropology)

Break 1:40 - 1:50

1:50 - 2:20 -- Running with the Pack... or Not?

Brianna Schubert, “Pack Mentality: Alpha, Omega, and Instagram” (Freshman, Psychology)

Bailey Flannery, “Religion, Sexuality, and Gender in the Female-Led Bullfight: A Personal Journey” (Senior, English)

2:20 - 2:50 -- The Animal Primitive in the Modern Age

Kimberly Laberge, “Bitches, Cocks, and Pussies: The Beastly Implications of Animal Epithets” (Freshman, Theatre Practices)

Lillian Pachner, “Man and Animal: Conflicting Disease” (Freshman, History)

2:50 - 3:00 -- Closing Remarks

Bailey Flannery

The Natures of Genesis



Eve and the Serpent: A Retelling Kristen Leer

The story of Adam, Eve, and the serpent is thousands of years old but it still maintains a monumental impact on our modern society. I argue that the 2017 Oscar winning film *The Shape of Water* is a re-telling and a re-meeting of “Eve” and the serpent many, many years after their separation by God.

Genesis is the first book within the Old Testament. It explains the creation of the universe, earth and humans. God speaks his creations into existence and gives life to the first human, Adam. God places Adam within the Garden of Eden to look after it– a seemingly tranquil place that knows no evil. Within the garden, however, is the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:8). God explicitly says that Adam can eat any fruit from the garden except from the tree of knowledge of good and evil – for the day that he eats it God says “you are surely doomed to die” (Genesis 2:17). After God says that it is not good for man to be alone and that he should have a suitable partner, Adam in turn names each living creature. Each creature is seen to have a partner and Adam does not, and amongst these living creatures he finds no suitable partner. God then creates a partner for Adam from one of his ribs. Adam names his partner “woman” – this act of naming is seen as an act of power. And when “both were naked, the man and his wife...they had no feeling of shame (Genesis 2:24). There is no shame attached with sex or nudity at this point. It is important to notice that there is also no direct

dialogue between man and woman, Adam and Eve – the only dialogue is between God and man.



Then enters the serpent, said to be the most cunning of creatures. Interestingly, he isn't shown to be with a partner as well – compared to the other animals which Adam names. The serpent is the first creature to speak to the woman and she speaks for the first time to him. Neither the serpent nor Eve speak to God or Adam. Only the woman and animal speak to each other. When the serpent speaks with Eve, their relationship

challenges what God has spoken into existence and his rules – to not eat the forbidden fruit. The serpent persuades Eve to eat the fruit, to be knowledgeable like God and she gives it to man as well. When God finds out about this, he punishes Adam, Eve, and the serpent. God forbids Eve from communicating with the serpent completely (Genesis 3:15) and makes Adam the only person that she can converse or have a relationship with (Genesis 3:16).

Now the story of Eden is shown to reappear in *The Shape of Water* (2017) an Oscar-winning film by Guillermo del Toro. The film is set in 1962, following a mute protagonist Elisa who works as a janitor for a top-secret military facility. There is no clear explanation for her

muteness except for the suggested scars she has on her neck that could have been the cause of her inability to speak. The general of that facility brings in an unknown creature later to be identified as a humanoid reptilian and who will be identified as “creature”. The creature is said to be from the Amazon, where the natives see him as a sort of deity, and brought to the facility to be tested on. Elisa establishes a relationship with him through sign language.

Their moments together become more emotionally intimate. Eventually, she falls in love with him and they have sex. Elisa is then motivated to save the creature from the military compound, from the general.

Elisa is a modern-day Eve. The creature is a modern-day serpent. However, there is no clear God or Adam within the film. There isn't a clear Eden either. Instead, the general who runs the military facility is a combination of God and Adam. He is sexually dominating, and he has the power to both give and take life – he is in control of his world, the military compound. The military compound is a sort of Eden, for it is an isolated place, separated from the outside world and is governed differently; however, it is without tranquility.

Elisa, like Eve, cannot speak in a man's world. However, unlike the original Eve, Elisa is able to overcome the separation between human and animal that is the norm in this male-dominated world. God took something away that now Elisa tries to get back.

In Genesis, the serpent is punished by having to crawl on his belly. This suggests that he may originally have had limbs. The creature also has limbs and looks like a hybrid of a reptile and a

man – he has an ideal masculine body. There is no biblical evidence that the serpent itself was a deity although he was clearly special as he is the only one of two animals to speak in the entirety of the old testament. As well, the creature is told to be considered a god by the Amazonian natives and is shown to have the power to heal wounds. Therefore, the creature within *The Shape of Water* might be very much like the serpent in Genesis – a reptilian humanoid with animalistic desire and knowledge. In the secret facility, the general, the “God” of this “Eden” is trying to control the creature. Who is a hybrid of Adam and the serpent – therefore he is a threat to “God”.

Elisa sees that the creature isn’t just an animal. He represents an opportunity for her to communicate with another being. In Genesis, it was the serpent (the animal) that spoke first to the woman. Now it is a woman that first “speaks” – or communicates – to the animal. Almost as if there is a nod to the punishment given by God in Genesis – that the woman and the serpent would always be at odds – the two cannot literally speak to each other. They now must communicate physically. She first teaches him sign language, and later they are sexually intimate with each other.

Sex within a man’s world is violent and demeaning for women. The only heterosexual human sex act in the film is when the general forcibly rapes his wife and covers her mouth – silencing her. But in Genesis, Adam and Eve are said that when they are naked within union of each other they were unashamed. The sex between Elisa and the creature is non-violent and non-shameful. They reclaim the original union of Adam and Eve.

By the end of the movie Elisa is reborn into the creature's world. She rejects the general who is God and instead picks a new god – the creature – who is also her equal, also known as the Adam. In turn the creature gives her a voice and a new power. The creature initiates her into his world by transforming her scars, which she has had throughout the entirety of her life, into gills. She can breathe within his world, finally liberated from the suffocation of a male-dominated world.



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The Holy Bible, King James Version (1999). New York: American Bible Society.

Toro, G. (Director). (2018). *The Shape of Water*. Beverly Hills, California: 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment.



Eden's Garden

Amanda Niebauer

Eden spent hours in the garden her father made for her. She slipped easily between thick bushes and towering trees, her feet making their way along paths of stone, sand, and grass that were as familiar to her as the feeling of dirt between her toes. Birds in the trees sang a chorus with the frogs and the tumbling water in the stream. Sometimes she hummed along with them, her tiny feet making smooth figure eights in the pond. Tracing her steps from yesterday and the day before and the day before, she had made a routine for herself. Despite the miles of fields, the animals always knew where to find her at whichever time of day.

This is all yours, her father had said to her the day the light first shined on what he created. She had been sucking her thumb, eyes wide with wonder. *Everything. Everything you need, my only.*

She could roam anywhere in her garden, drift across lush grasses and loose rocks in the riverbend, drink the river's constant, crystalline water, nap in the golden sunshine coming from the gleaming windows high above her as the birds kept her company. She could even gaze lovingly at the young flower her father had raised himself. But she could not reach her slim fingers through the metal bars that sprouted around the flower. *Everything is for you, everything but this*, her father had said that first day in the garden. *This you must never touch*. She had tried only once to caress its soft white petals and stroke its delicate stem before her father snatched her hand away with a burning grip and an icy gaze. After that, she obeyed her father's

command unblinkingly, unthinkingly, though she returned to the flower each day, casting side-long glances at its metal cage before she heard her father's voice in her head – *everything but this* – and continued on her path.

From the hazy windows forming a dome both above and around her that kept the outside where it should be, to the smell after the artificial rain, she knew everything about her garden, her sanctuary. And when she found the boy with the dark hair and slender body sitting by the stream's mouth, she knew he was not supposed to be there. He seemed to have risen from the dust before her eyes or slithered out from underneath the brush.

“Your father did a good job. Didn't spare a penny building this place,” he said to no one in particular, leaning back on his young, lean arms and basking in the sun. The birds in the tree tops lowered their voices to listen.

The girl nodded dumbly. Something in some buried corner of her mind had woken up and tugged at her conscience, like a child pulling on her mother's shirt sleeve.

“It's beautiful here.” His head swiveled to gaze at the flowering colors around him. His dark, shining hair sent scalpels of light into her eyes as the sun caught its movement.

She only stared.

He turned to her. His eyes were mossy and deep as they snaked across her face, taking in every inch. They were greener than the plush grasses and the full bushes around them.

“You're beautiful too,” he said softly.

The twittering song from above hiccuped.

Heat rose into her cheeks. Tiny wings of some newborn creature stretched and fluttered in her chest. She pried her lips open and felt the inklings of a smile crawl onto the corners of her mouth.

“Thank you,” she said. Her father always told her to be polite.

The boy smoothly stood and slinked towards her. He licked his lips, as if tasting the air around him. “I can’t believe your father lets you wander around here alone. You must be something special.”

She had heard it before from her father; she was special. But coming from him the word sounded new. That newborn creature in her chest shook its sleepy head and blinked once, twice, coming awake at the cadence of the boy’s low voice and the craving in his eyes.

“Special,” she said. It tasted sweet on her tongue like the sweetest chocolate.

She hadn’t even realized he had stepped closer until he was close enough to touch her. He raised his hand, to brush away a stray curl maybe, and she found herself leaning towards his touch. Instead, he swept his arm around the garden, marveling at the arching trees, the hiding animals, the bubbling river.

“Beautiful,” he whispered. “What is the most beautiful thing here? Besides you.” When he smiled, his mouth was crooked, like they were in on a secret together.

Her heart glowed and hopped around her ribcage while above, the birds shifted from foot to foot.

“I can show you, if you like.” Please say yes, she thought. The animal within her held its breath.

The boy took her hand. Her breath hitched. He smiled again.

“Lead the way.”

They walked under sturdy branches, past flowers dripping with vibrant colors, and towards the garden’s edge. She felt charged with a wild energy. His touch was electric, new. Her skin sung and tingled where he touched her. Overhead, finches

and swallows chirped loudly and hopped from branch to branch with them.

There at the back of the garden stood her father's greatest prize. The flower, once slim and pliant with its delicate white petals, had changed. Where the soft, unblemished petal once grew now sat a red, round fruit. The plant was tall and achingly beautiful in its graceful pose, and the ripe fruit pulsed on the thick stems. It was growing too big for its cage now.

"Can we try some?" the boy said. The juicy fruit hung tauntingly. Feathers flapped rapidly, eagerly, against her chest and the creature babbled "yes yes yes."

Everything but this.

In her mind chimed her father's warning to never touch the flower, never eat from it. But her boy was looking at her with those eyes and her very blood seemed hot and her heart was racing, light racing through her nerves. How could she say no?

Sensing her answer, his hand reached up to the lock on the harsh metal bars that were crushing the plant. His nimble fingers worked expertly. Finally, it sprung open and Eden gasped, suddenly, urgently, desperately hungry.

The bars now open, the plant seemed to bend towards her touch. She stretched out her hand, grasped the bursting fruit, and pulled. *Snap*. Squawks and screams rained down from above as she raised it to her lips.

Sticky juices flooded into her mouth. As she swallowed the first bite, she opened her eyes, already ravenous for more.

Her garden was darker now. The brilliant colors seeped away into the air and escaped. Her ears were ringing with the weight of the silence and she felt the vines and tree branches press in around her. For the first time, her friends in the treetops were silent.

The glass that had once kept her in her garden had shattered, leaving a jagged hole that all the garden's light and life seemed to have flown through. And the boy was looking at her with insatiable desire. His earnest smile made the animal in her chest roar in delight. She smiled back and noticed her teeth, her eyes, her appetite felt sharper now. Her father's warnings words were left behind without a second thought as she stepped across the gray landscape and out of her garden, her cage.

Animal Affairs and Beastly Relations



Beauty Turns to Beast:

The Animal Groom Story-Type as Female Liberation
Jessica Plotkin

Beauty and the Beast: a tale as old as time, a song as old as rhyme; a story of the transformative and healing powers of feminine compassion over masculine beastliness. A story that proclaims the boundless potential for love and kindness to overcome the most wild of beasts. Perhaps this is so. However, I argue that the archetypal story of Beauty and the Beast speaks less to the superiority of humanity and more to the enduring strength of the animal nature within us all. This ancient story reveals the liberation and empowerment available to those humans, especially women, who choose the wild and beastly over so-called human perfection.

There are many variations of “Beauty and the Beast,” the most familiar of which for many Americans is the 1991 Disney animated film. What some may not know is that the Disney film was adapted from the mid-18th century story “La Belle et la Bête” which itself is a much later adaptation of the Ancient Greek story *Psyche and Eros*, though I will use the more commonly known Roman name, *Psyche and Cupid*.

Though the names, locations, and details differ, common elements unite all variants of the Beauty and the Beast tale-type. As the root of all Western variants of Beauty and the Beast, a

summary of Psyche and Cupid serves as a template for the tale-type.

Psyche and Cupid tells the tale of a beautiful princess, Psyche, prophesied to marry a beast. Psyche's new husband visits her only at night and commands her never to look upon his face, igniting suspicion that he may be a beast after all. After defying her husband and gazing upon his face despite the taboo, Psyche discovers her mate to be no monster, but the god, Cupid. However, her disobedience leads to their separation. Psyche is only reunited with her beloved Cupid after completing several impossible tasks, for which her reward is immortality, godhood, and a happily ever after.

Most of these stories come from times and cultures in which the role of women in society was much different than it is today. In these cultures, the woman's role existed almost entirely inside the house as wife, mother, and caretaker. The qualities most valued in a woman were obedience, patience, silence, and dedication to hard work in the house. Marriage in Ancient Greece or 18th century France was not a private affair between couples but a financial and political arrangement among families, states, and countries in which participating members had little to no say, especially the women.

While these stories may at surface level seem to indicate that the subservient woman who does not question the orders of gods, father, or husband ultimately succeeds in life, I argue that these stories show something much different. I argue that the woman who rejects the training of her youth and the shackles of human civility, while embracing her inner wildness to seek and fight

for that which she desires- she is the woman who succeeds. The Beauty, as we see in both the specific examples of Psyche and Disney's Belle and generally as the Beauty throughout the tale-type, defies her husband, father, and sometimes the gods themselves in a quest to maintain her freedom and individuality. Her blatant defiance of her husband's command- not to look upon Cupid's face or go to the Beast's West tower- and later individual quest to regain her desires represents an unheard of independence characterized as wildness in her culture. Yet this divergence from expectation, rather than triggering the Beauty's fall from grace as may be expected by her culture, leads to her happily ever after.

The Beast cannot be interpreted literally as a non-human animal, but as a metaphor for the wild human who deviates from the rigid structure of mainstream society. He is the bad boy in the leather jacket on a motorcycle labeled "dangerous". He is the homeless philosopher mocked as "bum". And he is the punk boy with huge ear gauges and umpteen tattoos branded "rebellious". Beasts in this sense are simply humans who live for their own pleasures and desires rather than to conform to the desires of others, and this is exactly what Beauty becomes.

The Beauty chooses to leave behind the world of her upbringing to join her husband. In *Psyche and Cupid* this means leaving behind her humanity entirely to become a goddess. This transition is often depicted in artwork through the addition of butterfly wings to Psyche. In Disney's version, Belle's change is less dramatic - she becomes the co-leader of a new society which values traits different from the hierarchy of her birth such as individuality and compassion for others of differing

backgrounds. This change represents the power of embracing the animal natures of self-interest and pursuit of freedom.

One final aspect of the tale-type is a failed attempt by Beauty's family to bring her back into the rules of humanity. These attempts represent human society's attempts to rein in any dissenters who may seek the freedom and happiness attainable outside the bounds of their rules and customs. Likewise these attempts demonstrate the futility in appealing to a Beast's sense of conformity. In *Psyche and Cupid*, jealous sisters find that Psyche has not been sacrificed to a fearsome monster but is thriving as mistress of a magical mansion. Meanwhile they are bound to restrictive lives as the wives of feudal monarchs, so they attempt to recall Psyche to their world so she can suffer as they have. In the Disney film, the intended human mate of Belle, Gaston, makes the attempt to drag Belle back to a world of restrictions. Her father, Maurice, initially makes the same request to Belle, though he himself is disliked by his community for his nonconformity. Despite these attempts, the Beauty refuses to relinquish the freedom she found in marriage to a beast, proving her liberation from society in her power to reject the summons to return.

Now that each element of the archetypal story of a Beauty and her Beast is clear, I seek to prove with another, more modern example of the story, that the central theme is the liberation of a woman who chooses the wild over supposed human superiority. In *Shrek*, the 2001 animated film from DreamWorks, a woman escapes a childhood and adolescence of captivity to live in the wild with an ogre beast for her happily ever after. Fiona, our beastly Beauty, demonstrated a tendency towards beastliness in

her childhood by transforming into an ogre every night. Her parents responded by locking their daughter in an isolated tower. They would only allow her release if Fiona completely abandoned her beastly ways and conformed to human society by marrying a human prince.

Much to her surprise, Fiona's liberator is not Prince Charming but an ogre named Shrek. Shrek finds himself intrigued by the princess who appears to him entirely human, for she hides her beastly self away at night out of shame and fear that he would reject a woman who did not conform to the stringent confines of feminine worth of her society. Eventually, Fiona reveals her beastly self to Shrek. He openly chooses her in that form, allowing Fiona to live permanently as an ogre, loved, rather than despised, for her beastly nature.

This modern example shows a cultural trend in America towards the acceptance of beastly women. DreamWorks, a company which specializes in creating content for children that is likely to inspire similar behavior in their audience, gives us this clear example of a woman taught to comply who chose a better option. Though her family harshly shamed and rejected her for her nightly transformations, in adulthood, Fiona gained liberation through embracing her beastly side. In this variant of the Beauty and the Beast tale type, the Beauty, Fiona, abandons the life of a princess for the life of a swamp ogre. Though her status in human society degrades completely, perhaps she becomes a Queen of sorts in leading a generation of young women who do not fear or hide those parts of themselves that society dislikes but embrace their individuality.

Though not strictly variants of “Beauty and the Beast,” even more recent film and television has provided a plethora of support for beastly women. Look at the wildly popular HBO television show *Game of Thrones*. Women in Westeros and across the Narrow Sea learn that their own desires, though perhaps beastly to their old community, will let them live better lives. In fact, the women who learn to sharpen their claws and perfect their bite have a markedly longer life expectancy than those who choose the modest and obediently sexual route. The lioness, she-wolves, and Mother of Dragons survive a world that burns flowery women, because the beasts learn to fight for their desires. Rather than submit to the whims of the men around them, these beastly women embrace the animal inside them to protect what they love and strive for what they want.

Game of Thrones may have no happy endings, but the worlds of the Beauty and the Beast tale type do. Yes, in these stories, love conquers all. But not love of a young maiden for a beastly man—the love of a beastly woman for herself. And this woman, the one who embraces her beastliness and lives for herself rather than to conform to the desires of others, she earns her happily ever after.



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Progression of the Wolf: Changes in Little Red Riding Hood Corinne Kronschnabel

Before my poem I would like to chat with you all a bit about the story of Little Red Riding Hood, and more specifically, the progression of the wolf.

Originally a story with a very specific meaning, Little Red Riding Hood and the characters within it have transformed over the years into something that many consider to be unrecognizable from the original.

In the common versions we see now, there tends to be a specific sequence of events. Mother gives girl goodies in her basket. Girl goes down path into forest to visit grandmother, she meets a wolf, wolf eats grandma, little red comes to the house and either gets eaten and is saved by a hunter, or runs and goes get help to kill the wolf. The wolf takes on the role of many villains we see today—that of the loser. The original story—the folktale—does not have the same sequence of events. Instead of the wolf being the conquered, the wolf is the conquerer. Grandma is killed. Little Red is killed. No one comes to help. The wolf wins. But there is a little more to the story than just that.

Fairy tales like Little Red Riding Hood were originally known as folktales, generally passed on orally from mothers to daughters, relaying crucial information about life. You see, Little Red Riding Hood is originally a story about puberty. The iconic

basket actually represents Little Red's womb or the general concept of virginity, with the path in the forest acting like a path to womanhood. Her mother sends her down the path to grandma's house, grandma being the guiding maternal figure at the end of this feminine path that Little Red must reach on her own. The wolf represents a man—trying to take Little Red's basket before she reaches the end of the path. And in the end, Little Red does come to the end of the path, and is consumed by the wolf. If you connect this to the setting that this story is being told in, it makes sense, because in small villages everyone knows everybody. Strangers don't really exist. Young girls don't stay young for long, and are eventually married off, generally to a man that they are acquainted with but don't necessarily know. The story isn't exactly a warning from mothers to daughters, but more of a "this is what you should expect." Everyone knew a wolf—a man that was familiar and unavoidable; however, as time passed the story of Little Red started to change. The role of the wolf changed as well.

Society shifted dramatically—urbanization and the changing family dynamic led to the story discarding its traditionalism and taking a different form. Instead of being a story that mothers tell to their daughters about the realities in life, it became a nursery tale for children with the aim to control. The Brothers Grimm version of Little Red Riding Hood is an excellent example of this. In their version Little Red's mother gives her a list of things she must do—don't stray from the path or else you'll break the glass of milk meant for grandmother, say good morning when you see grandmother, don't go peeping around the room, etc etc. It's filled to the brim with lessons on manners. The original did not contain this almost... lecturing tone.

Little Red eventually meets the wolf and goes off the path. The wolf eats grandma, and later Little Red. Eventually a hunter saves them and kills the wolf. Little Red vows to herself that she will never again stray from the path when her mother has forbidden it. In these versions of Little Red Riding Hood, the wolf is no longer someone familiar—not even really a man or person anymore. It’s a creature, changed from a he to an it, used by storytellers to scare and control.

The years go on, the story changes. The wolf becomes a creature to laugh at rather than to fear. In a version by Roald Dahl, Little Red monologues with the wolf for fun and then shoots him dead with a pistol she pulls from her knickers. The wolf’s demise is frankly, ridiculous. Shot dead by a child? Unfeasible! Laughable! The story turns into one without a broader purpose, and instead into one meant for entertainment. And even within the realm of entertainment it fluctuates between entertainment meant for children, and entertainment meant for adults.

Just look at all the adult versions of Little Red Riding Hood we see today. There are sexy Halloween costumes, movie adaptations with love triangles and mentally unstable characters, literature that borders on the pornographic, and literature that is straight up pornographic. Little Red becomes this controlling, almost dominatrix like character, and the wolf is just... there... not even it’s own thing but instead almost an extension of Little Red herself.

Today, there are so many different, contradicting versions of Little Red Riding Hood that it is literally impossible to answer the question: what does this story mean to us today? But... is

that really such a bad thing? Art is intoxicating because it allows us to project our own emotion and meaning onto it, even if it may contradict with the original idea. We connect with art because it is personal. The story of Little Red Riding Hood and its purpose changed to fit the perspectives and thoughts of those who interacted with it. The setting of today does not match the original setting of Little Red Riding Hood and its characters by a long shot. But that doesn't mean the story stops being relevant—that's because we make it relevant. The wolf progressed—moved on to other forms both similar and different to the original. Today, many view the story as a warning about stranger danger. That's certainly the version I grew up with—don't talk to strangers or else you'll get gobbled up. It uh, didn't really sink in I guess considering I was almost kidnapped as a child in a forest but hey. That's a story for another time. To others, it's a tale of seduction and desire with the wolf either being the seducer or the seducee. Some consider it a story about being brave and confronting fears, or even confronting higher powers.

And all of these are valid—because after all, stories are personal. So why can't their meanings be too?

To me, Little Red Riding Hood is a story about intergenerational relationships. A child interacting with people of various ages, but all of them older than her and giving her different advice. To me it's a story about trust and who deserves it. As a child we hope that every adult has our best interest in mind, but that's simply not the case. As we grow we have to pick and choose carefully who we listen to and trust, and find people that care for us instead of trying to deceive us. Just like Little Red we have to follow a path of some sort. That path can change or we can veer

off of it—that's fine. It often moves with us. And to me, the wolf walks alongside the path. Sometimes we see it, and sometimes we don't. We may even stop to listen to what it has to say. It is something familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. Sometimes, it looks just like us. Other times, a being we cannot recognize. Intrusive yet helpful all at once. And as we progress, so does the wolf, for we are one in the same.

And on that note, I would like to present to you my poem.



A Cautionary Tale

Beware beware
Says your mother
as she hands you your basket.
The beast is real here.
He hunts in the light of day
with greed and arrogance abound.
A familiar face
with eyes asleep.
You must guard yourself
from the beast
or risk being devoured.

Beware beware
Says the hunter,
eyeing your woven basket.
The dark forest is not for you.
All by your lonesome

on winding paths
you would be smart not to stray from.
That is where the beasts are,
in their lupine form.
If you see them it is too late for you.
You are already theirs.

Beware beware
Says your grandmother
bedridden and small.
You should not be here.
Humans fear death and rightly so
for unlike animals we are bound by time.
Animals live their lives without worry
and they do not fear the beast.
They are the only ones
who truly die in peace.
Humans only depart with rage.

Beware beware
You say to the wolf,
as you stand outside your grandmother's home.
The beast has no power over me.
I do not fear him or death
for I am an animal of my own creation.
Unbound by the thoughts of others
I can dictate my own life.
I have strayed from the path
with my basket intact
and I have seen there is nothing to fear.

Beware beware
Says the wolf,
sitting at the edge of the path.
For you are your own downfall.
You are not the only one with motivations.
There are always others,
watching from the edges
with wide eyes and careful smiles.
You would be smart to take notice of them
or risk being devoured
for they are the very same people who warn you.

Beware beware.



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Animal Artistry



Renaissance Catastrophe

Francesca Bisi

The Renaissance saw a rise in naturalistic depictions of animals, with one jarring exception. Images of cats were often distorted and unnatural, presenting the viewer with fiendish sneers and contorted faces. This pattern persisted for centuries throughout Europe, as did the reputation of cats, which was tarred by associations with women, paganism, the plague, and the devil. I will present three theories that attempt to explain why cats did not receive the same veristic treatment as other animals during the Renaissance and were instead depicted in these unfavorable ways.

First, it is crucial to define the Renaissance and the stylistic innovations that marked this artistic period. A renewed interest in classicism, namely Greece and Rome, permeated all aspects of culture. From art to religion, the Renaissance was characterized by a distinct shift from the modes of thinking of the Middle Ages. Artists looked to nature for inspiration and abandoned the stylized images of illuminated manuscripts. These two images show the dramatic shift from abstraction to naturalism, in this case in the representation of lions (Figure 1, 2). Most animals will receive an extensive make-over in the subsequent centuries, but the cat didn't quite complete this transformation.

Before discussing the reasons as to why cats may have been depicted this way, it is important to raise the question: why is it significant that cats look so odd? The aforementioned interest in

naturalism leads us to expect realist renderings of the world around the artist. There is also the often-stated fact that the large eyes, round face, and small body resemble the proportions of a human baby, leading most of us to consider cats cute. In China, Japan, Egypt, and even in the British Isles, cats were loved and, sometimes, worshipped. Since people from across the globe have been so captivated by cats since prehistory, it is unexpected that so many European societies vilified them. Lastly, cats served a very practical purpose. During outbreaks of the plague, it was convenient to have efficient hunters protecting your home or city from infestation. With all these reasons to love cats, it seems strange that they held such a low standing in so many European societies. With that said, let's explore three possibilities as to why cats may have received such a negative treatment in Renaissance art.

First, one could say that cats were just hard to draw. Something about those pesky felines proved too difficult for the "Old Masters" to reproduce. This theory is easily dismissed simply due to the fact that nearly all other aspects of the natural and human world were integrated into the Renaissance artist's portfolio. Further, while domestic cats may have looked grotesque, their bigger cousins received an increasingly naturalistic interpretation. These two examples show how artists were able to deftly reproduce large felines, and from this we can infer that the unflattering depiction of domestic cats was a conscious decision and not evidence of lack of skill (Figure 3, 4).

The second theory is closely related to the role that cats played in society. Their low status and negative connotation may have

led to artists regarding them as not important enough to be rendered as favorable subjects. Unlike dogs, which were elevated to the role of companion, appearing next to nobility and divinity as symbols of fidelity and class, cats remained on the outskirts. Their role as hunters of vermin made them essential to protecting food stores and preventing disease, but their inability to be trained and contained prevented them from being integrated into the home and urban life. Cats were essentially workers who entered human life to perform certain duties, and then retreated into the realm of wild animals.

In the Middle Ages, cats did perform an important function in church life. As hunters of rats and mice, cats protected the Eucharist, the consecrated bread. Due to the Catholic belief that the Eucharist literally represents the body of Christ, cats became guards against the desecration of His flesh. However, this position was undermined by Pope Gregory IX, who issued a papal bull in 1232 which associated cats with devil worship and witchcraft. This standardized the hunt for cats alongside women perceived as “witches”, setting the stage for the long-standing distrust of cats that persists to this day.

Up until Pope Gregory IX designated cats as the companions of witches, cats were rarely mentioned in Christian writings. Their sole appearance is in Baruch 6:21, where they are mentioned only in passing. In the Renaissance, artists began to insert cats into biblical scenes which they previously had no part of. Often, they were added to represent sin, divergence from social norms, cunning, and betrayal. This image shows the Virgin with the infant Jesus, while a sinister cat lurks in the shadows (Figure 5). The purpose of this felines is explicitly negative, probably proving a foreshadowing of the trials, sacrifices, and betrayals

that Christ will face later on.

In depictions of the Last Supper, a cat might appear beneath Judas, indicating his future betrayal and emphasizing the untrustworthiness of cats. Alessandro Allori includes not one, but two cats in his Last Supper, which he painted in the convent of Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence (Figure 6, 7). Neither cat is placed in the vicinity of Judas, however, making their connotation less clear. They might be referring to the two main betrayals of Christ-the first when Judas revealed him, the second when Peter denied him three times. However, Allori could have included cats to merely make the scene more relatable to the nuns who would have seen it, connecting the scene of the Last Supper to the presence of cats in everyday Florence. The fact that one of the cats is wearing a collar emphasizes domesticity and control, perhaps revealing that these particular felines do not carry a negative connotation. The unusual rendering of their faces may simply be carried over from the cats Allori would have seen in the art around him. Since cats were either mundane or associated to the enemies of the Catholic church, they would not have been hailed as desirable subjects.

Finally, the role assigned to cats as servants of witches, along with their disregard for the fragile barrier between the civilized world of man and the unpredictable, dangerous realm of the wilderness, resulted in an association to improper and uncontrollable women. In his engraving of Adam and Eve, Dürer included a cat stroking seductively at Eve's leg (Figure 8). This highly suggestive depiction emphasizes the role of cats as sexual symbols. This connotation still survives today-for example, we use the word pussy to refer to the vagina. This 17th century German print instead shows a naughty nun chasing after a cat

(Figure 9). She attempts to trade her fish for the penis that the cat carries in its mouth. The emphasis of the nun as a sexual deviant is furthered by her rosary, which ends in a penis rather than a cross.

While dogs could be trained and controlled, a cat that lived alongside humans could not be trusted to be docile and amiable. It might live in or around the domestic space and work to protect the products and safety of men, but if a man's hand got too close it would not hesitate to strike. Witches received a similar kind of distrust, and, although we may associate the systematic hunt for witches to the so-called "Dark Ages", the majority of witch trials occurred during the 16th and 17th centuries. The woman hunted during this age of persecution mirrored in some ways the behavior of cats (Figure 10). She occupied a marginal part of society, not quite wild but not domesticated. She could be a widow, without the supervision of a man, a midwife, who maintained an intimate knowledge of female anatomy and could be seen as challenging the role of trained, male physicians, or a "loud" woman, who did not fit the docile image of the subdued wife.

One significant diversion from this tradition of unfavorable renditions of cats is a similarly unusual artist. Judith Leyster, active in the first half of the 17th century, painted much more naturalistic cats (Figure 11, 12). Her felines still carry the negative connotations that her predecessors and contemporaries portrayed. We can see two misbehaving children, one holding an eel and restraining the cat, while the girl pulls teasingly at the creature's tail. With her gesture, she seems to warn us to not mess with cats, and the sex and sin that they are associated with. In the other, two similarly unruly children play with a cat that

does not seem thrilled to be tossed around, perhaps alluding to the imminent scratch or bite that the child will receive. While these images do carry a moralizing message with denotes the cat as a dangerous animal, she depicts them as small, furry, plainly cute animals. Perhaps this is evidence of sympathy on the part of one of the rare, successful female artists of the period, shown towards an animal so vilified largely through its association to women.

Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, strange depictions of cats can be found in the works of artists throughout Europe. The prevalence of these depictions speaks to a widespread distrust for the semi-domesticated, semi-wild cat, spring from associations with loose women, witchcraft, and the plague. Whether intentional or not, these preconceptions found their ways into art, immortalizing the low status of cats and the role it played in Renaissance societies.



Figure 1: *Bestiary* (known as *'The Ashmole Bestiary'*), early 13th century. Parchment, folio 010v, whole page. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.



Figure 2: Colantonio. *Saint Jerome and the Lion*, c. 1445. Oil on panel, 125 x 151 cm. Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples.



Figure 3: Titian. Detail from *Bacchus and Ariadne*, 1520-3. Oil on canvas, 176.5 x 191 cm. The National Gallery, London.



Figure 4: Peter Paul Rubens. Detail from *Daniel in the Lions' Den*, 1614. Oil on canvas, 224.2 x 330.5 cm. The National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.



Figure 5: Giulio Romano. *Madonna with Cat*, 1522-23. Oil on canvas, 172 cm × 144 cm. Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples.



Figure 6: Alessandro Allori. Detail from *The Last Supper*, 16th century. Fresco. Refectory of Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence.



Figure 7: Alessandro Allori. Detail from *The Last Supper*, 16th century. Fresco. Refectory of Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence.



Figure 8: Albrecht Dürer.
Adam and Eve, 1504.
Engraving, 248 x 191 cm.
National Gallery of Art,
Washington D.C.

Figure 9: Anonymous. *Non
biedt kat vis aan in ruil voor
penis Fleisch macht Fleisch*,
1627-29. Print.
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



Figure 10: Hans Baldung.
Witches' Sabbath, 1510.
Color woodcut.

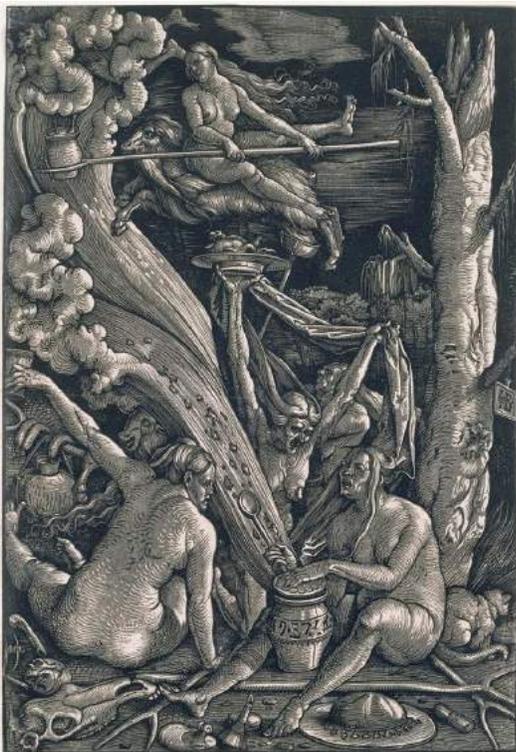




Figure 11: Judith Leyster.
*A Boy and a Girl with a
Cat and an Eel*, c. 1635.
Oil on oak, 59.4 x 48.8 cm.
The National Gallery,
London.



Figure 12: Judith Leyster.
Two Children with a Cat,
17th century. Oil on canvas,
61 x 52 cm. Private
Collection.

Running with the Pack... or Not?



Pack Mentality: Alpha, Omega, and Instagram Brianna Schubert

The pack mentality is a human quality, it consumes our world and determines many of our day to day behaviors. It is also, however, an incredibly beastly quality that dominates not only our culture but our human world. Our natural instinct is to follow the pack, to desire to belong, to have status. At the same time, though, we feel that we are fading away from the need to belong to a group, we feel that we are self-sufficient, and do not need others to validate our worth. We are individuals, our own people. Or are we? In the end, we are just wolves, longing to be the alpha, accepted by our pack.

Wolf packs are very organized and extremely dependent on their hierarchical structure. The alpha male and female are at the top of the pack, one higher than the other based on strength. Out of the entire pack, these are the only wolves that can mate. Wolves can only become alpha male or female by fighting with each other, and the winner always becomes alpha. The next down on the hierarchy is the beta wolf. They are like the next in line to the throne to the alpha male wolf. He is responsible for replacing the alpha male if he dies or becomes too old to fight, and mating with the alpha female in his place. The wolf at the very bottom of this hierarchy is called the omega wolf. Below all other wolves, the omega is the least strong and often is left with the scraps. He is ridiculed by the other wolves and often will even result to leaving the pack altogether to be a “lone-wolf.”

All of the wolves in the pack desire to be the alpha male or female of their pack, just as we long to be the alphas of ours. No one wants to be the omega wolf of their friends, coworkers, teammates. After all, wolves of higher status, stand taller, stronger, and with their heads high, while omegas sit with their tails between their legs. We spend an extreme amount of time attempting to prove that we are the true alphas, not only to others, but to ourselves. However, not everyone can be an alpha to allow for the pack to function, so often we “fake” being an alpha to allow ourselves to feel validated, important, and strong.

We strive to be alpha by masking our weaknesses and highlighting their strengths in one way or another. We fear that if others see us in our vulnerable state, they will see us as the omega, as the bottom of the hierarchy. This explains why we post pictures of us standing tall and proud of the fancy new ice cream we just bought, or why we post pictures of ourselves at the beach, tan and glowing, rather than ourselves on a typical Tuesday night, sitting alone in our bedrooms, watching *The Office*, dressed in sweatpants with our hair in a topknot. This explains why we have fancy cars, why we hide our emotions when we are upset about our most recent test grade, why we stand tall when inside we are standing our tail between our legs. However, this is not an easy thing to do. It takes immense effort to pose as the alpha constantly.

Females who may be beta or omega in real life can fake being alphas on Instagram. On Instagram, our followers are our pack, and we stand tall, with our heads high, strong, as we pose for that perfect picture. The reality is, however, that before that perfect, alpha-status picture, there were likely fifty pictures that

looked incredibly beta, or perhaps even omega. On social media, it doesn't matter if you truly are alpha or truly feel alpha, even. It just simply matters that you are perceived that way by the rest of your pack, your followers, to feel validated.

The wolf who feels self-conscious of herself, the wolf who has something that the other wolves don't have: perhaps it is money, or attractiveness, or the bikini body is often the one deemed the omega in a pack of young adult females. Once she becomes established as the omega wolf, it becomes increasingly more difficult for her to move up from that lowly position. Instagram and other social medias, however, can give her the opportunity to feel empowered as the alpha female of her own pack. She can go off on her own, become the lone wolf, as many omegas do and still remain strong as she finds her new pack. If she is careful, she can create her own form of perfection, her own standards, that allow her to be her own alpha of her life. She can take her "weakness" from the old pack that made her omega and turn it into her strength as alpha of her new pack. On Instagram, she will take her so called weakness of not having the perfect "bikini body" of society's standards, and she will create a body positivity account. Here, she is praised for her confidence, for her defying society's expectations for how women should fit into the cookie-cutter Barbie body. This could be that she is curvier, taller, shorter, has a different body shape, uses crutches to walk, or anything different than societies expectation of what "beauty" can be. She becomes alpha of her new pack; composed of followers who support her courage, her standing tall, her confidence. This is how social media movements and trends can begin. One lone wolf starts it all, and the spark becomes a fire.

Another wolf takes her “weakness” of being a nerd who enjoys books and musical theater. She is able to take her interests to Instagram, create an account where her pack has similar interests, and she becomes the alpha of the nerds. Another wolf takes her interests of photography and alternative music, and she posts cool pictures that she has taken and music suggestions for her followers, her pack. She becomes the alpha in this space where anyone can be the alpha, no matter what their interests. Instagram allows the wolves from all of the world with similar interests to come together, to be a pack, to each feel alpha. I would place myself with this group, as I use Instagram as a platform where I can post pictures that I find artsy, where I can post my photography, my favorite songs, the outfits that I put together that I am proud of. I do feel like an alpha when I post on Instagram, because it feels good to create something aesthetically pleasing and artistic. While I see the highlights of Instagram, I know that with the good, the bad of Instagram can sometimes have greater effects.

Very often Instagram brings out the worst feeling of being omega for a wolf. On a platform where anyone can be alpha if they choose to show only the alpha parts of their life, wolves compare their real, imperfect lives, with the alpha depictions of life on Instagram. Seeing the alpha-parts of every other wolves’ lives can ruin confidence in oneself, make them feel inferior, and make them depressed or anxious that they are not good enough to be alpha. She may be an alpha wolf in her life and yet, she feels subordinate to the other wolves on Instagram. Even in the empowering movements started by the omega-turned-lone wolves, the cycle repeats. Omegas are pushed down, they leave, create a new pack, become alpha, and new omegas are

established. The cycle goes on and on. After all, we are just wolves.

Instagram may make us feel important, like an alpha wolf, but it also tears us down to the lowest of the low, the omega, when we allow ourselves to forget that what we are seeing is not real. If we can remember that everyone on Instagram is *posing* as alpha, that we are posing as alpha as well, it will allow us to gain the alpha confidence that Instagram has to offer, while keeping the omega negativity away. We must remember that everyone is trying to be alpha with everything in them, in some area of their life. Instagram merely levels the playing field for us all, because when we post we are alpha of our pack, our followers, no matter who we are outside of this virtual world. Ironically, the world where we can all pose as alpha is also a world where new pack hierarchies are established every day. Even in a completely manmade platform such as Instagram, we cannot escape our biological and beastly instinct to sustain the alpha and the omega.

Animal Primitive in the Modern Age



Bitches, Cocks, and Pussies: The Beastly Implications of Animal Epithets Kimberly Laberge

In our day-to-day lives, we use animal epithets so frequently that they have nearly become invisible altogether. “Don’t be a chicken!” “He’s an animal.” “Check out that chick.” “What a bitch.” These beastly metaphors have a way of striking at the core of what we value and what we demerit, concisely wrapped into a single word. Why call a man a weak, timid pushover when the word ‘pussy’ says all of that, and with more potency?

In this essay, I have chosen to look at epithets which have a male and a female equivalent, in order to discern what divides the two. We will explore the bull and the cow, the pig and the sow, the dog and the bitch, the fox and the vixen, the kitten, pussy, and cat, and the chick, cock, and chicken. By looking at feminine association, we will then address the son of a bitch and the cuckold. All of these, our most frequently used epithets, confirm that man is meant to be the master, and the woman his subordinate. My purpose here is not to deprive your vocabularies of powerful vernacular, but rather to lift the curtain of language and dissect the subconscious biases beneath.

Some of the epithets we use gently or teasingly with men are “bull”, “beast”, and “animal.” Each of these bears similar traits:

dominance, physical power, and lack of sexual inhibition. Beast and animal indicate a primal sexuality which strips a man of the decorum expected of a gentleman. This is a man who ravages. A bull takes that sexuality one step further by describing a man who makes sport of seducing the wives of other men. This is a man who sees what he wants, heeds no warning, and takes it.

A cow is a strictly female creature - the bull's counterpart. In the context of epithet, it indicates an unladylikeness in a woman. A cow is not elegant or slender. A cow is wide, strong, and practical. You call a woman a cow to shame her for lacking the sexual desirability expected of her gender. She is built strong like the bull, but instead of being admired for it, she is reproached.

When a woman is sexual, however, she is also reproached. You call a man a pig for his chauvinism – a snarky way to call out his pride in his position of power. But the strictly female form of the word, sow, takes on an entirely sexual connotation. Instead of hungering for power, she is lusty. A woman who is a sow is a woman who is sexually forthcoming and aggressive. She sees what she wants and takes it, and for that she is shamed.

When the word ‘dog’ is used to refer to a man, the tone is gentle. It is used teasingly: “Oh, you dog.” It indicates a man who is a flirt, a man who gets his way with women. Yet, this gentle insult becomes harsh when applied to women. A dog is acceptable when it is a flirty and forthcoming man, but when it is a female dog, she becomes a bitch. This popular slander is weaponized against women who are bossy, demanding, or aggressive - in other words, women who step away from docility and assume the role of the dominant. The man’s role.

A fox is a small, nocturnal animal which is unthreatening to humans. When applied to men, the word 'fox' denotes intellect and cunning. Yet, when applied to a woman, it takes on a solely lascivious connotation. Foxes are provocative; they have a captivating slink as they move, and a red pigment to their fur, which has a centuries-old connection to lust. When called 'foxy', women are summarized solely by these physical attributes. She is a vixen now, a vehicle for seduction, a creature of the night – but, she is still not meant to embrace her role as the seducer. Pursuit is a man's role. Unlike the equally seductive dog, a fox is shy. When one approaches a fox, the fox will likely back away. While the dog is a go-getter, the fox is reserved and demure, as a woman ought to be. She is sexually desirable, but never aggressive.

The word kitten is frequently used as a term of endearment, and accepted in the BDSM community as an official label. A kitten is a sexually submissive girl. The animal itself is, for many of the same reasons as the fox, a desirable and seductive creature. The added layer is that a kitten is a domestic animal today, tamed and housebroken for the comfort of its master. So, a kitten is not only sexy, but she is tame. Obedient.

Then, there is a shift when that kitten grows up. Compliment becomes insult. A man can be a cool cat; a suave, clever sort, but a woman who is a cat is entirely different. She is no longer the purring, lap-sitting kitten, but has become the hissing, biting, scratching cat. The kitten is petite and innocent, but the cat is grown and feisty. As violent as a fight between women may be, her fight is diminished to a feline squabble. A catfight. The validity of the argument is watered down to a senseless animal

feud, with no legitimate basis. No matter how reasonable the premise, a fight between women is nothing more than a hissyfit.

The following avian epithets are an interesting sort, because we don't use perfectly mirrored words like cow and bull. Instead, we use different species of birds to outline the attractive, submissive, obedient woman, and the dominant, physically powerful, and sexually uninhibited man.

'Chick', 'canary', and 'little bird' are all words used to casually describe women. These are not large birds of prey, but rather small, fragile birds. They are soft and beautiful, but also weak and require care. A woman who is a bird is decorative, or at least domesticated, like the kitten, for the comfort of her master.

If you call a man a chicken or a pussy, you are directly correlating him to the words that compliment women - birds and kittens. A woman is best to be a bird or a kitten, because they are small and fragile, beautiful and domestic. But when a man becomes those things, the words take on a negative connotation. Instead of being gentle, a man is weak. Instead of being docile, a man is afraid. Instead of being domestic, a man is emasculated.

When referring to a man's member, you might call it a cock. While the cock and the chicken are closely related, the cock is not feminine - these birds are aggressive fighters. They have a temper, and will brawl with other roosters over which one gets the hen. We also casually call a man cocky when he is arrogant, oftentimes to the point of regular disputes. There is a sprightliness to the usage. Both words 'cock' and 'cocky' are used to playfully indicate a man's lack of sexual inhibition.

Because our epithets for men and women both rely so heavily on the woman being limited, we have created special insults to shame men, not for their own behaviors, but for the behaviors of the women in their lives. A son of a bitch and a cuckold fall into this category. A man isn't a bitch, but for his mother to be is a harsh insult - he is bred and raised from poor stock.

A cuckolded man is a man whose wife is cheating on him. The word comes from the cuckoo bird, notorious for laying her eggs in other birds nests. When a man is cuckolded, he has failed to keep his sweet little bird confined to their nest, the home. She acts out in the form of sexual promiscuity. It is this promiscuity for which the husband is shamed.

So, what's the pattern? Men are meant to be like the bull, the cock, or the dog, because it aligns them with the dominant in life and the bedroom. Women are meant to be like the kitten, the chick, the canary, or the little bird because it aligns them with the submissive in life and the bedroom. Other words, when innocuous to a man, become sexually charged or diminished when applied to a woman – she is not a sly fox, but a foxy lady, or a vixen. She is not a cool cat, but catty, prone to hissyfits. Then, when a woman becomes dominant, strong, and uninhibited, she is shamed – the cow, the sow, and the bitch. Lastly, the strongest insults for men are to be compared to or associated with women and their traits – the chicken, the pussy, the son of a bitch, and the cuckold.

However, there's been a fascinating shift in our usage of the word 'bitch'. In recent years women have adopted it as a term of their own. It still means a dogmatic, hard-headed, strong-willed

woman, as it did before, but now it's being applied by women to ourselves. Women now claim those traits. They are no longer weaponized. They have become a source of pride. The reappropriation and reclamation of an insult has already served as a tool for social change within the past few decades – think of how the word 'queer' has become a rallying point for the LGBT community. I ask you to consider, then: must these animal epithets stand the test of time? Should we stop using these epithets altogether, due to the significance they bear? Or, by reclaiming the words which have been used against us, can we reclaim the traits they stand for, regardless of the gender hierarchy?



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