

“The Blood of Every Beast”: Mormonism and the Question of the Animal

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And surely, blood shall not be shed, only for meat, to save your lives; and the blood of every beast will I require at your hands. (Gen. 9:11, Joseph Smith Translation)

Man will live here until he has made this planet a garden, this orchard, with no question about the animals. Man debases himself by his use of animal food. There was no butcher in Paradise.—Amos Bronson Alcott¹

The eyes of the future are looking back at us and they are praying for us to see beyond our own time. They are kneeling with hands clasped that we might act with restraint, that we might leave room for the life that is destined to come. . . . Wild mercy is in our hands.—Terry Tempest Williams²

The recent collections *New Genesis: A Mormon Reader on Land and Community* and *Stewardship and the Creation: LDS Perspectives on the Environment* both demonstrate in myriad ways that the time is right for LDS scholars in the humanities and other Saints to speak up about the environmental crises which, as President Gordon B. Hinckley has asserted, render creation ugly and offend its Creator.³ However, whether we participate in Christian conversations on “creation care” or secular debates on the idea of wilderness, or both, it is impossible to avoid noticing some troubling gaps between Mormonism’s unique doctrine and history, which have challenged the anthropocentrism of mainstream American attitudes and behaviors toward the nonhuman world in a number of important ways, and the current LDS status quo, in which environmental concerns are often dismissed as the province of “extremists.” Everyday LDS life bears less and less of a resemblance to that

of the early Saints, for whom sustainable agriculture and green building techniques *avant la lettre* were practically as integral to the gospel as baptism by immersion or the Book of Mormon.⁴

One of the most awkward, and yet also most profound, of these tensions between past and present, doctrine and behavior, has to do with the contemporary role of animals in Mormon culture. LDS scripture clearly teaches that animals are “living souls” (Moses 3:19) who existed before this earthly life and will be resurrected after death; as such, they should be killed only in situations where human survival depends on it. Yet most of us today quietly support production regimes that put to death billions of animals every year for food and for less defensible purposes: cosmetics testing, fashion, recreation, even the pet trade.⁵ Similarly, we seem to have little to say in the Church about the worldwide extinction crisis, despite our doctrinal mandate to care for the non-human creatures which, like us, were designed to “fi[ll] the measure of [their] creation” (D&C 88:19) and that also received God’s blessing/commandment to “be fruitful, and multiply” (Moses 2:22). Uncomfortable as it may be, perhaps the time has come for a serious reconsideration of Mormon relationships with animals.

In this article, I try to contribute to just such a reconsideration by placing several key LDS doctrines and historical events in dialogue with some of the central questions that subtend the growing interdisciplinary field of animal studies. Both theoretically rich and ethically challenging, the best work being done in animal studies offers ways of thinking about human-animal relationships that powerfully unsettle speciesist assumptions even as they carefully historicize and analyze the lived complexities of these relationships. While it is probably too early to hope for a First Presidency letter calling for a boycott on factory-farmed meat or announcing a new Church fund to support research in conservation biology, taking a close look at animal studies can at least help Mormon scholars place our religion’s traditional concern for animals in a broader historical and cultural context. And finally, it is my hope that this article will help us theorize ways to work toward a future in which “the enmity of all flesh” (D&C 101:26) shall cease.

A brief note on my purposes here: As an enthusiastic violator of the “meat clause” of the Word of Wisdom until seven years ago, I do not wish to harangue anyone about his or her decision to eat

meat, wear leather, and so on. Rather, although I can barely scratch the surface of this topic in a short article, I hope to foster discussion in the Church on the past and possible future status of animals on an earth where the righteous dominion advocated in Mormon scriptures has unquestionably been superseded by the worst kinds of “extortion” (D&C 59:20).

For now, I will concentrate on a foundational tension in early Mormon thought between a sort of practical millennialism, in which concern for animals and a semi-vegetarian diet are linked to the prophetic promise of a future without violence, and a frontier farming and hunting culture in which native animal species, particularly predators, were viewed not as fellow souls but as dangerous adversaries, perhaps even allies of the Adversary himself. Viewed from a slightly different angle, my argument (to borrow Mary Sayre Haverstock’s formulation⁶) concerns the implications for early Mormons of a competition between visions of the American landscape as, on the one hand, a peaceable kingdom, and, on the other, a howling wilderness. While this early American discursive conflict has mostly given way to others, such as the ongoing war between views of earth as biosphere and earth as resource, studying the first Mormons’ oscillating relationships (both imagined and lived) with animals can contribute to what Foucault termed a history of the present—a present in which the liberatory potential for animals of latter-day revelation has been largely, but not completely, foreclosed.

My explorations begin with the Book of Mormon, a sacred text that, from beginning to end, registers powerful anxieties about the dangers posed by wild things and wild places. On many occasions, Book of Mormon authors tap into the fear of what Australian environmental philosopher Val Plumwood has called “being prey,” or what Nephi, son of Helaman, characterizes to the rebellious people of Zarahemla as the likelihood that they will “become meat” if they do not repent.⁷ This Nephi, Helaman’s son, would have known that, in fulfillment of an earlier prophecy, the dead citizens of Ammonihah, after being completely annihilated by Lamanites, had been “mangled by dogs and wild beasts of the wilderness”; their remains are referred to in Alma 16:10 not as “bodies” but as “carcasses” [sic].⁸

This kind of rhetorical dehumanization indexes the Book of

Mormon authors' approval of the Ammonihahites' horrible but just punishment, but it also adumbrates a fear that may run even deeper than the nightmare of being consumed by wild animals: namely, the terror of *becoming* animal, the possibility that one might trade one's salvation and divinely imaged human identity for the savage delights and counterfeit sacraments of the wilderness, leaving behind the life of a settled, peaceful omnivore for the fully carnivorous and totally amoral life of a wandering predator.

In the Book of Mormon the prime example of the dangers of becoming-animal is set, of course, by the Lamanites.⁹ The numerous analogies in the Book of Mormon comparing Nephites to sheep and Lamanites to wild beasts¹⁰ hinge on a more than metaphorical, even more than metonymical (i.e., herding-farming culture versus hunter-gatherer culture) logic; Enos describes a *physical* process of devolution when he writes that the Nephites' diligent efforts to "restore the Lamanites unto the true faith in God" were "vain" because of the Lamanites' "evil nature." "They became wild, and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people," he continues, "full of idolatry and filthiness; feeding upon beasts of prey; dwelling in tents, and wandering about in the wilderness with a short skin girdle about their loins and their heads shaven; and their skill was in the bow, and in the cimeter, and the ax [rather than in agricultural implements]. And many of them did eat nothing save it was raw meat; and they were continually seeking to destroy us" (Enos 1:20).

Through their disobedience, the Lamanites have suffered a kind of second Fall; and, as with Adam and Eve, the curse against them involves a significant change in diet as well as physiology. In the chapter where the nature of the curse is detailed for the first time, Nephi notes not just that the Lamanites are cursed with a "skin of blackness" but that "because of their cursing which was upon them they did become an idle people, full of mischief and subtlety, and did seek in the wilderness for beasts of prey" (2 Ne. 5:21, 24). As the Book of Mormon continues, the Lamanites' violations of the Mosaic proscriptions against eating predators and consuming blood and meat that had not been prepared correctly, to say nothing of the unwritten cannibalism taboo, represent less a conscious rejection of Nephite faith traditions than an instinc-

tual and progressively expanding taste for flesh. Again and again the Book of Mormon demonstrates that the interlinked and often coterminous boundaries between humans and beasts, Nephites and Lamanites, and sinners and saints are actually, in the American Promised Land, frighteningly porous liminal spaces that must be watched and guarded with great care.

Like Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, the Book of Mormon is large, it contains multitudes, and would seem to contradict itself regarding the connections between human savagery and such practices as hunting and consuming raw meat. Doesn't Lehi's family survive on raw meat in the Arabian desert without "going wild" (1 Ne. 17:2)? Why doesn't Nephi himself become cursed for hunting beasts in the wilderness (1 Ne. 16:31)? How is Enos able to experience his powerful conversion on a hunting expedition (Enos 1:3)? Moreover, why is it that some Lamanites, such as King Lamoni and his people, raise flocks like the Nephites and are capable of overcoming their "evil nature" to the extent that they take an oath against shedding human blood and practice an early form of what we would now call nonviolent resistance (Alma 24:15–27)?

One obvious way of answering these questions has to do with obedience and agency. Nephi represents the animals he has killed in the desert as earthly blessings contingent on his family's obedience; he is directed to them by the Liahona and, in a direct reenactment of stories recorded in Exodus, God himself blesses the meat so that it, like manna, becomes "sweet" and does not need to be cooked (1 Ne. 17:12). Enos lays down his bow to pray when his spirit begins to hunger more for eternal life than his belly hungers for meat. God's cursing of the Lamanites, like all of his curses and blessings in the Book of Mormon, comes with the proviso that it may be overturned at some point based on how His children exercise their agency individually and collectively.

When we move beyond the Sunday School answers and consider these episodes from an animal studies perspective, however, the stories begin to yield important insights into the development of a viable Mormon ethic of interspecies and intercultural care that, according to Mormon thought, has (or should be perceived as having) implications of eternal significance. Lehi's family's experience in the desert illustrates the doctrine that would shortly be articulated more directly in the Book of Moses (1830) and Jo-

seph Smith's translation of Genesis 9:11, in revelations that would be canonized as sections 49, 59, and 77 of the Doctrine and Covenants (1831–32) and, most explicitly, in the 1833 Word of Wisdom: the idea that animals are eternal beings possessing spirits, are subject to Christ's atonement, are more than Cartesian automata or symbolic screens for human spiritual needs and truths, and that their lives—like human lives—are to be taken only under strictly defined conditions.

When we apply later revelations to 1 Nephi 16–17, it becomes clear that Nephi's hunting episode is a sort of companion piece to his account of killing Laban; both stories help define the bounds that God has set on the uses of violence in a fallen world. Without question, the animals that Lehi's family eats have been "ordained [by God] for the use of man"; eating meat saves Lehi's family from "famine and excess of hunger," and they use meat "sparingly" as well as "with thanksgiving" (D&C 89:15, 12). Nephi undoubtedly goes about killing the animals "with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion" (D&C 59:20). Nephi's unusual use of the word "sweet" for the meat seems to indicate that, when the time comes for God to "require" the blood of the animals at the family's hands (JST Gen. 9:5), he will hold them as blameless as if they had eaten fruit.

The adjective "sweet" also calls to mind, perhaps deliberately, the verses in the King James translation of Genesis 1 where God articulates what animal theologian Andrew Linzey calls his "original will for creation,"¹¹ instructing Adam and Eve that they are to share fruit and other plant foods with animals as their only "meat" (Gen. 1:29, 30). Together with the narrative of the transformation of King Lamoni and his people, Nephi's hunting story suggests that "nature," whether human or nonhuman, is not as immutable as it was, and is, generally taken to be. If human wickedness could exacerbate the effects of the Fall, human righteousness—in our dealings with all living beings—could help undo them. Through "the wisdom and power of God, and the wisdom, obedience and faith of man combined," as Hyrum Smith put it in an 1842 address on the Word of Wisdom, the howling wilderness could in reality be transformed into the peaceable kingdom—not instantly, by divine fiat, but "eventually" and collaboratively, perhaps in a process of reorganization and re-creation that would parallel the

process, as revealed in the Book of Abraham, by which the earth was originally created.¹²

Hyrum Smith had learned this lesson in what Richard Lyman Bushman calls “millennial ecology” (241) from an excellent teacher.¹³ The corporate authors and editors of the *History of the Church* relate that Joseph Smith taught it to the brethren in a particularly forceful way during the Zion’s Camp march of 1834. “We crossed the Embarras river and encamped on a small branch of the same about one mile west,” they write in their prophet’s voice:

In pitching my tent we found three massasaugas or prairie rattlesnakes, which the brethren were about to kill, but I said, “Let them alone—don’t hurt them! How will the serpent ever lose its venom, while the servants of God possess the same disposition, and continue to make war upon it? Men must become harmless, before the brute creation; and when men lose their vicious dispositions and cease to destroy the animal race, the lion and the lamb can dwell together, and the sucking child can play with the serpent in safety.” The brethren took the serpents carefully on sticks and carried them across the creek. I exhorted the brethren not to kill a serpent, bird, or an animal of any kind during our journey unless it became necessary in order to preserve ourselves from hunger.¹⁴

This “beautiful lesson,” as Joseph F. Smith characterized it, is famous in the Church.¹⁵ It became one cornerstone of a nascent Mormon animal theology in Utah and is still invoked on camp-outs by LDS youth leaders to stop young Mormons from harassing small animals and insects. But the second part of the lesson is less well-known, perhaps because its power to shock remains undiminished—and, indeed, has probably grown over the last 170 years. The “Joseph”-narrator continues:

I had frequently spoken on this subject, when on a certain occasion I came up to the brethren who were watching a squirrel on a tree, and to prove them and to know if they would heed my counsel, I took one of their guns, shot the squirrel and passed on, leaving the squirrel on the ground. Brother Orson Hyde, who was just behind, picked up the squirrel, and said, “We will cook this, that nothing may be lost.” I perceived that the brethren understood what I did it for, and in their practice gave more heed to my precept than to my example, which was right.¹⁶

Paul, Amulek, and other prophets had taught that Jesus Christ’s atonement had ended the need for animal sacrifice, but

Joseph Smith's Abrahamic test of his followers exemplifies, along with an unerring feel for what it takes to destabilize ossified ways of knowing and perceiving the world, a mature understanding of the deeply entrenched role of violence toward animals in human culture: an awareness that, in practice, animal sacrifice has never ended, and that the Millennium will not come to pass unless we confront our tendency to "make war upon . . . the brute creation" as directly as possible. Jacques Derrida would have probably viewed the first LDS prophet's sacrifice of the squirrel as one more example of how religion has been used to shore up what he named the "carnophallogocentric order," a "sacrificial economy" underpinning all of Western culture in which animals and animalized humans are subject to a noncriminal murder by those in power over them.¹⁷ But it would be fairer, I think, to regard the killing of the squirrel as a new kind of sacrifice: one that manages, paradoxically, to escape this sacrificial economy altogether. Joseph Smith did not sacrifice the squirrel to atone for human sins or to point up some purely "spiritual" human truth—it was not standing in for anything human at all. True, Smith objectified and instrumentalized the squirrel, but he did so with the goal of encouraging his followers to save many other animals in the future. Wordlessly (at least according to the official account), without imposing any meaning on the act or providing the brethren with any additional means by which to interpret it, their prophet gives them a brutal and unforgettable object lesson in the nature of "extortion."

Numerous accounts of Zion's Camp demonstrate that one or both sides of the lesson—the millennial and the extortionary—bore immediate fruit in Joseph Smith's colleagues' improved treatment of animals.¹⁸ Echoes of the lesson can also be heard many years later in statements by Brigham Young,¹⁹ as well as by leaders who did not participate in Zion's Camp, such as Joseph F. Smith and George Q. Cannon. In fact Cannon, a first counselor to Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and Lorenzo Snow, was instrumental in advocating the humane treatment of animals and promoting a "Humane Day" that was observed in LDS Sunday Schools every spring from 1897 to 1918.²⁰ Cannon was interested in more than emulating non-LDS groups like the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; as

Aaron R. Kelson notes (quoting Cannon), his efforts were rooted in the millennial conviction that “the time will come when man and animals which are now wild and ferocious will dwell together without hurting each other. . . . But before this day comes men will have to cease their war upon the animals, the reptiles and the insects. . . . When man becomes their true friend, they will learn to love and not to fear him. The Spirit of the Lord which will rest upon man will also be given to the animal creation—man will not hurt nor destroy, not even tigers and lions and wolves and snakes, and they will not harm him—and universal peace will prevail.”²¹

In a 1912 editorial titled “Kindness to Animals,” Church president Joseph F. Smith—deliberately invoking the memory of his uncle’s lesson on Zion’s Camp and unconsciously echoing eighteenth-century European explorers who detected traces of Edenic or pre-millennial harmony in the Galápagos and Falkland Islands and New Zealand—looked to Yellowstone National Park for earthly proof of the validity of this doctrine.²² “In the Yellowstone Park,” President Smith wrote,

where the use of guns and other deadly weapons is prohibited by law . . . the animals and birds are becoming as tame and fearless of human beings, their deadliest foes, as domestic animals and barnyard fowls. . . . The birds do not fly away with fright at the approach of men; even the brown, cinnamon and grizzly bears are friendly, some of them so tame as to take their food from the hands of men—all because, for a few years, they have not been hunted, shot at and slaughtered by the lords of creation. Thus it may be seen, in harmony with the sentiments expressed by the Prophet Joseph Smith, that if man did right, were humane and merciful toward animals, they would, in time, lose their fear and dread of him, and would also lose many, if not all, of their own bad traits.²³

Statements by Joseph Smith and his successors openly situate themselves within a scriptural rather than a secular genealogy, with Isaiah 11 being the most obvious antecedent. But, consciously or not (and this question, like many more raised below, merits serious scrutiny), they were also placing Mormons in distinguished literary company. A few years before the Zion’s Camp episode, Percy Bysshe Shelley was using poetry and the essay form to explore the “emerging proto-evolutionary theory that species could change their nature over time.”²⁴

However, it doesn't take a graduate degree in ecology or environmental history to recognize some of the major problems involved in imposing a millennial vision inspired by the Bible (or, for that matter, by ecosystems such as those of New Zealand, which had evolved over the millennia to flourish without predators) on a place like Yellowstone, where grizzlies, wolves, and other large predators play a crucial role in maintaining delicate ecological energy flows. If carnivory among animals is not seen as part of the natural order but is considered as one of the "bad traits" (Joseph F. Smith) introduced to the world by human wickedness, then well-intentioned humans motivated by this view may actually exacerbate rather than abolish the "war" between humans and animals, predators and prey.

When the "bear shows" that Joseph F. Smith seems to have had in mind began at hotel garbage dumps in Yellowstone a few years before his editorial was written, bears *did* start to "lose their fear" of human beings. That was the problem. Their fearlessness grew as individual tourists started feeding bears from the windows of their automobiles. The National Park Service created feeding areas such as the large Otter Creek facility, where, by the mid-1930s, up to 1,500 people per night were crowding into an amphitheater to watch between fifty and seventy grizzly bears emerge from the woods to eat the Yellowstone visitors' garbage.²⁵ There was an "ugly reality behind the 'magic'" of human-animal encounters in Yellowstone, notes Alice Wondrak Biel: not only were wild bears being transformed into garbage-eating pets, clowns, or beggars; but "between 1931 and 1975, visitors reported 1,897 bear-related injuries; 1,101 bears were recorded killed due to the 'bear problem'; and many others were hurt or maimed, either after being hit by automobiles or in the course of trying to obtain foods—even natural foods such as fish—that people didn't want them to have."²⁶ While the vast majority of Yellowstone tourists would not have interpreted the "bear shows" as precursors of millennial harmony, many of them undoubtedly came to the park expecting to witness and participate in what Yellowstone's first National Park Service superintendent, Horace M. Albright, described as an "era of friendship between mankind and bears."²⁷ Biel's book shows that it took decades to overcome

the damage to bears, and to the human view of them, caused by this variety of “friendship.”

The “peaceable kingdom” attitude may seem antithetical to the “howling wilderness” view of the more-than-human world, but it would be more appropriate to think of the visions as two sides of the same coin. Predators that could be induced to give up their “bad traits” counted as evidence of the coming millennium, but “carnal, sensual, and devilish” animals (Alma 42:10) that persisted in their bloodthirsty ways needed to be eliminated.²⁸ In December 1848, the same Brigham Young who would advocate interspecies peace as part of the work of building the kingdom of God in Utah authorized a two-month “war of extermination” in the Salt Lake Valley in which 1,026 ravens, 1,192 canids (foxes, coyotes, and wolves), and numerous bears, mountain lions, eagles, hawks, owls, and other “wasters and destroyers” were put to death in exchange for prizes and bounties.²⁹ The pioneers’ choice of the word “destroyers” to refer to predators and scavengers connotes not just the fear of losing valuable livestock, but, most likely, the suspicion that carnivores were spiritually allied not with Christ, the Lamb, but with Satan, the “ravenous wolf” and “destroyer” of souls.³⁰ The term “wasters,” of course, emblemizes a post-lapsarian worldview in which carnivores and herbivores are seen as perpetually warring enemies rather than partners in a fragile and dynamic dance of ecosystemic energies. Needless to say, this misunderstanding of ecology has produced much more devastation in the U.S. West and around the world than the “peaceable kingdom” view, which has actually yielded some conservation benefits in places like the Galápagos that would seem to offset Yellowstone’s failures.³¹

Some of the effects of treating predators as unnecessary “wasters” are described memorably by the pioneering ecologist and environmental writer Aldo Leopold in his 1944 essay “Thinking like a Mountain.” The essay centers on a 1909 experience (Bill McKibben calls it “the key Damascus Road story of American environmental conversion”) in which Leopold—then a young, inexperienced ranger involved in a “steady war” against predators in Arizona’s Apache National Forest—began to understand, as he put it elsewhere: “You cannot love game and hate predators. . . . *The land is one organism.*”³² Remembering what it was like to watch

a “fierce green fire” die out in the eyes of a wolf he and his colleagues had just shot, Leopold stresses that his youthful belief that “no wolves would mean hunter’s paradise” was tragically misguided. “Since then,” he writes, “I have lived to see state after state extirpate its wolves. I have watched the face of many a newly wolfless mountain, and seen the south-facing slopes wrinkle with a maze of new deer trails. I have seen every edible bush and seedling browsed, first to anaemic desuetude, and then to death. I have seen every edible tree defoliated to the height of a saddlehorn. . . . In the end the starved bones of the hoped-for deer herd, dead of its own too-much, bleach with the bones of the dead sage, or molder under the high-lined junipers.”³³

Leopold conjures up an infernal, rather than a paradisiacal, vision of a world without wolves; in his hands the deer become worse “wasters and destroyers” than the wolves ever could be. Sadly, Leopold’s thinking-like-a-mountain philosophy still isn’t shared by everyone. As I was writing this paragraph, I received a mass email from Defenders of Wildlife dealing with the current plight of wolves in the Southwest. Descendants of Mexican gray wolves reintroduced to wild areas, including Leopold’s Apache National Forest, in 1998, these animals face a daunting array of threats: “anti-wolf politicians, lawless wolf-killers and well-funded wolf opponents” in addition to the usual survival challenges.³⁴

In anatomizing some of these problems I do not mean to side with one letter writer quoted by Clark S. Monson, who ridiculed (perhaps unwittingly; was he a Mormon?) the idea of allowing wolves to return to Utah as the product of “a desire to live in a pristine world, a kind of holy nostalgia for a time that no one really remembers . . . [the] pursuit of a dream of Eden.”³⁵ Nor do I wish to suggest that Mormons have been especially hypocritical or cruel in translating the “howling wilderness” view of nature into ecocidal behavior. In some ways, the entire history of western colonialism has been one long—if often unintentional—“war of extermination” not just against unwanted animals and indigenous peoples but against native plant species, ecosystems, and landforms. As we contemplate this heartbreaking legacy of destruction, Mormon environmental doctrines and practices, while far from perfectly aligned (as Jeanne Kay and Craig J. Brown, Thomas G. Alexander, Aaron R. Kelson, and other scholars have observed), can of-

fer us many useful and hope-inspiring lessons along with the humbling ones. For instance, George Q. Cannon understood the vital ecological role of predators ten years before Aldo Leopold's epiphany (and almost fifty years before "Thinking like a Mountain"), arguing in his forcefully titled 1899 editorial, "Why Continually Want to Kill, Kill, Kill!": "An all-wise Creator has arranged many things which puny man does not fully understand. In our attempts to improve on nature we frequently make hideous mistakes. In most cases these bounty laws [against wolves, bears, raptors, and other animals] are among the gravest of these mistakes. Nothing was created in vain."³⁶

This is a time for ecologically minded Latter-day Saints to renew, not reject, our people's "dream of Eden." The challenge is to avoid repeating the "hideous mistakes" of the past. I believe that we can do this, in part, by allowing our beliefs and history to enter an authentic (open, mutually respectful, spirited, honest, nonparochial) dialogue with other faith traditions' environmental histories and beliefs, with evolutionary theory and ecocritical literary theory, with the sciences of animal consciousness and behavior, and with the philosophies of animal rights and animal welfare. We must also rethink how we define Eden or what the earth's "paradisiacal" state may look like. We have much to learn from an "eartheist" (a play on "atheist") like Edward Abbey about perceiving more of Paradise in the "here and now, the actual, tangible, dogmatically real earth on which we stand." "Now when I write of paradise," Abbey insists in *Desert Solitaire*: "I mean *Paradise*, not the banal Heaven of the saints. When I write 'paradise' I mean not only apple trees and golden women but also scorpions and tarantulas and flies, rattlesnakes and Gila monsters, sandstorms, volcano[e]s and earthquakes, bacteria and bear, cactus, yucca, bladderweed, ocotillo and mesquite, flash floods and quicksand, and yes—disease and death and the rotting of the flesh."³⁷

As we struggle (and fail and struggle again) to free ourselves from Eurocentric and anthropocentric approaches to the nonhuman world, while trying to remain true to LDS doctrines and covenants, we may discover that our visions of heaven look a bit less like the celestial room of the temple and a bit more like the redrock wilderness of southern Utah, or like the granite mountains from which that temple was hewn. Better yet, we may find

ways to demolish the relatively new dichotomy between temple and natural world altogether, learning to appreciate again what Heber C. Kimball meant when he told his fellow Saints in 1857 that “those that will live the religion of Christ will have orchards.”³⁸

One major obstacle to living the religion of Christ in our dealings with nonhuman “living souls” remains to be addressed: our un-Christlike pride in Mormonism’s—and, for that matter, in human beings’—apparent uniqueness. In reviewing Mormon animal doctrine and the history of institutions like Humane Day, it may be tempting for Latter-day Saints to interpret Mormonism’s approach to animals as one more example of its exceptional or even superior status. George Q. Cannon himself seems to have succumbed to this temptation, to a certain degree, in his editorial in the May 1871 issue of his *Juvenile Instructor*. He condemned the lassoing of horses as a practice “fit only for savages” and for a “rude, barbarous people, like the Californians were when we settled this valley.” Lassoing “is a very cruel way of catching horses,” chides Cannon, “and ought never to be practiced by people like us.”³⁹ In a mild way, the editorial reminds us—as does Jonathan Burt’s incisive study of legislative attacks on *shechita* (traditional Jewish slaughter methods) by Nazis and others—that a position of humaneness toward animals by no means exempts one from less-than-humane attitudes toward one’s fellow human beings.⁴⁰ Indeed, some of Cannon’s writings explicitly deny but implicitly substantiate the point that kindness to animals and unkind attitudes toward humans (whether whites who are cruel to animals or Native American “savages,” Mexican-Americans, and members of other groups viewed by Europeans and Euro-Americans as subhuman) can sometimes converge in decidedly uncharitable ways.⁴¹

A simpler message to be drawn from Cannon’s editorial, as well as from virtually every other statement about animals by LDS leaders, is that, while such doctrines as the immortality of animals do help set Mormonism apart from mainstream theologies, most average Mormons seem to have viewed the unorthodox teachings as relatively minor points of faith or else have conveniently chosen to ignore them, just as large numbers of early Mormons selectively applied the Word of Wisdom’s counsel on alcohol, tobacco, and coffee. “Mormons are not actually more humane than their

neighbors,” many of the nineteenth-century pronouncements imply, “but they *should* be”; pre- and proscriptive utterances must not be misconstrued as accurate descriptions of lived human/nonhuman relationships.

But the disconnect between belief and action is not the only factor complicating the study of Mormon animal theology. Mormonism’s animal doctrines themselves, while thoughtful and even radical compared to the unexamined assumptions and knee-jerk invocations of the Bible that have subtended most Americans’ treatment of animals from the beginning, limit but fall well short of entirely dismantling religious anthropocentrism, much as some Latter-day Saints (including me) may wish that the truth were otherwise. It must also be acknowledged, in light of Tristram Stuart’s formidable scholarship on the history of vegetarianism, for instance, that Joseph Smith’s revelations on animals, instead of bursting into his time and culture *ex nihilo*, grew out of an inspired dialogue with nineteenth-century American culture and, in many cases, with much older and more widespread traditions than Mormonism.

Without making a single reference to Joseph Smith or LDS doctrine, Stuart’s recent cultural history *The Bloodless Revolution* drives home the point again and again that the origins and contours of LDS animal theology will come into much sharper focus when scholars address the philosophical, scientific, medical, political, and agricultural contexts within which the theology emerged. For example, Joseph Smith may have backdated his animal doctrines to the time of Noah by reworking Genesis 9:5 as “And surely, blood shall not be shed, only for meat, to save your lives; and the blood of every beast will I require at your hands” (JST Gen. 9:11), but the restored scripture (along with the Word of Wisdom and other revelations) bears a striking resemblance to a statement by the British radical prophet Richard Brothers in his 1801 book *Description of Jerusalem . . . with the Garden of Eden in the Centre*: “To eat also of fish, flesh, or fowl, clean and unclean, ever was and ever will be lawful, when distress or hunger requires it for human preservation. But if there was, or is, not any necessity to do such things, then indeed the crime becomes presumptuous and the sin of the blackest nature.”⁴² Since, according to the WorldCat database, multiple editions of at least two books by

Brothers were published in the 1790s in such places as West Springfield, Massachusetts, New London, Connecticut, and Albany, New York, the possibility of a direct influence on Joseph Smith merits further investigation.⁴³ But whether Smith had read Brothers's book, it is clear that both of the self-described revelators and gatherers of Israel were using the language of prophecy to respond to the same vital questions: questions that their contemporaries were addressing through the lenses of natural history, philosophy, medicine, and many other fields.

To be sure, the differences between Smith's revelations and Brothers's writings also demand attention. Although the word "extortion" is used in Doctrine and Covenants 59:20 to characterize unrighteous dominion over animals and plants, latter-day scriptures never propose that animal abuse, sport hunting, unnecessary meat consumption, and so on should actually be criminalized. By the same token, while such practices are unequivocally redefined by LDS scripture and commentary as sins, they are not considered as serious in the moral scale as murder or apostasy. Comparing Joseph Smith with Richard Brothers (and with dozens of other figures profiled in Stuart's book) demonstrates that LDS "concern for animals" is equally a question of concern for humans.

Joseph Smith reportedly said during the Zion's Camp march, in words that echo those of many earlier thinkers, that excessive anger and abuse of animals can cause humans to "place themselves on a level with the beasts" when they should "be possessed of a more noble disposition."⁴⁴ The Word of Wisdom does not spell out why it is "pleasing" to God that meat "should not be used, only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine" (D&C 89:13), but medical explanations—having to do with old and influential ideas about the dangers that meat posed to human health—probably deserve as much attention as explanations centering on interspecies ethics.

Then again, it is undoubtedly misleading to draw too sharp a divide between human self-interest and compassion for animals, in light not just of modern ecology but of Joseph Smith's revelations on the materiality of spirit (D&C 131:7) and on the ways in which the fates of all living souls on earth are bound together, from creation to millennium to exaltation and beyond. Joseph

Smith's animal teachings, not excluding the killing of the squirrel, look remarkably consistent and even biocentric when compared with those of René Descartes, whose theories on the soullessness and a-rational status of animals (or "beast-machines," as he styled them) have authorized innumerable horrific acts of cruelty in the vivisection chamber and the animal testing lab, but who preferred keeping to a vegetarian diet for the sake of his own health.⁴⁵

Beyond allowing us to gauge more precisely how revolutionary or reactionary Mormon animal doctrine may have been in its evolving cultural contexts, scholarship like Stuart's opens up fascinating research possibilities for LDS scholars by helping us understand the degree to which Joseph Smith and later Mormon leaders were intervening in centuries-old and complexly interrelated discourses and debates that have continued to develop and have, in fact, attained a greater importance now than at any point in human history. These include questions about the nature of human physiology vis-à-vis that of nonhuman creatures (are humans by nature carnivores, omnivores, or herbivores?); about the meaning of key scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, having to do with animals; about the connections between meat consumption, bad health, and spiritual impurity; about animals' capacity to feel pain, sorrow, joy, and other sensations that the Cartesians would generally limit to humans; about the links between abuse of the more-than-human world and unjust treatment of the poor by the rich; about the most efficient and ecologically sound forms of agriculture (grain for "food animals" or grain for humans?); and, crucially, about a set of "prelapsarian" and millenarian ideas centering on the conviction that humans could, in Stuart's words, "reform the world to the conditions of Paradise."⁴⁶

It is both humbling and inspiring to learn that, around 150 years before Mormon animal theology was born, Sir Isaac Newton was engaged in a (mostly private) search for traces of God's original laws for humankind in the religions of Egypt, India, and other cultures; one of the most important of these laws, he wrote in the unpublished essay "Irenicum," was "not to feed on the flesh or drink the blood of a living animal, but to be mercifull even to bruit beasts."⁴⁷ Newton scholar Richard S. Westfall has argued that "in his innermost heart," Newton may "have dreamed of him-

self as a prophet called to restore the true religion.”⁴⁸ It would be all too easy to use this information as evidence that Newton was a failed prototype of Joseph Smith, a herald *manqué* of the true restoration to come. But what if, instead of treating all human history as a lead-up to the wonders of Mormonism, we were to follow Newton and Smith’s examples in pursuing a humbler line of questioning: one in which we could set aside both our exceptionalist tendencies and our deeply engrained habit of “anthropodenial” and accept that animal representations and human-animal relationships are at the core of everything we, like members of other traditions, consider most sacred, most “cultural,” and, indeed, most human?⁴⁹

My sense is that grappling with the so-called “question of the animal” as LDS scholars and members of the LDS community will yield two very important sets of benefits. The first set will comprise the insights to be gained by pondering questions like these: What were the exact pathways through which Joseph Smith and other early Mormon figures were exposed to animal-related elements of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century millennial thought? What about their knowledge of the Pythagorean tradition and vegetarian practices in India? How well-versed were they in the tenets of Enlightenment-era science, including the belief that science could not merely explain but transform and restore a fallen world? Compared (for instance) to the Shakers, how deeply were they influenced by the theories of Sylvester Graham (1794–1851), the controversial U.S. vegetarian health reformer?⁵⁰ Why, unlike Graham, did early Mormons avoid drawing a strong connection between meat consumption and sexual carnality—particularly masturbation?⁵¹ Everyone knows about the role that tobacco use among the early Saints played in the origins of the Word of Wisdom, but what about the cholera epidemic of 1832? Specifically, to what degree might the Word of Wisdom’s valorization of fruits, grains, and vegetables and concomitant warnings against meat constitute an inspired rebuttal to the doctors and health boards who were advocating a diet low in fruits and vegetables and high in meat (and, in some cases, alcohol) as a safeguard against cholera?⁵²

What can we learn by comparing early Mormon approaches to animals with those of Transcendentalists like Emerson, Thor-

eau, and their friend Amos Bronson Alcott, who envisioned his vegetarian utopian community Fruitlands as an American “Second Eden” in which the “divine seed” was to “bruise the head of evil, and restore man to his rightful communion with God in the Paradise of Good”?⁵³ How might evolving Mormon conceptions of a restored Eden or a millennial earth parallel and diverge from the visions of an artist like Joseph Smith’s contemporary Edward Hicks (1780–1849), a Quaker painter whose well-known series of more than sixty *Peaceable Kingdom* depictions uses animals to allegorize human characteristics⁵⁴ but also devotes an incredible amount of energy to exploring the beauties and mysteries of the animals themselves? How common was the blessing of sick and injured animals in early Mormonism, and how did (or does?) the Mormon version of this practice relate to the blessing of animals in the Franciscan and other traditions? How indebted to Darwinian discourses are Mormon narratives about “*evolving* into a God,”⁵⁵ as Joseph F. Smith’s First Presidency put it at the end of their 1909 message “The Origin of Man,” despite their official disavowal that humans had evolved from “lower” animals?

The second set of questions, focusing on Mormonism’s lopsided application of the Word of Wisdom and related doctrines, may benefit everyday Saints more than scholars, and animals even more than humans. In *Mormonism in Transition*, Thomas G. Alexander notes that, in 1898, as president of the Council of the Twelve, Lorenzo Snow argued that the Word of Wisdom “was a commandment and . . . should be carried out to the letter,” including its injunction to avoid meat “except in dire necessity.”⁵⁶ Why was the “meat clause” largely forgotten, while the use of alcohol, tobacco, coffee, and tea came to be regarded as serious transgressions? How did rank-and-file Mormons respond to Snow’s declaration that sport hunting was a “murderous amusement,”⁵⁷ and how much of an impact did similar statements by Joseph F. Smith, Joseph Fielding Smith, and Spencer W. Kimball have on hunting in “Mormon America”? Richard N. Ostling and Joan K. Ostling claim that “Mormons, in contrast to Seventh-day Adventists, have no vegetarian tradition,”⁵⁸ but, given the evidence that Snow, Heber J. Grant, George Albert Smith, Joseph Fielding Smith, and other leaders and everyday members have made a point of consuming very little or no meat, if only for health reasons at certain

periods of their lives, how accurate is this statement? How many nonhuman living souls would be allowed to live out their natural life spans if the “forgotten verses”⁵⁹ of Doctrine and Covenants 89 were restored to prominence, and how would the economies and ecologies of Mormon-populated areas adapt? How will Mormon animal theology and policy themselves adapt to pressures from within and without, including the rising financial, ecological, social, medical, and climate change-related costs of raising animals for food according to the factory farm and industrial slaughterhouse paradigm of meat production and consumption?⁶⁰ What about the increasingly complex ethical challenges posed by animal testing, xenotransplantation of body parts from animals to humans, genetic engineering and plastic surgery resulting in human/animal hybrids, and eye-opening scientific discoveries in the fields of animal communication, culture, and emotion?⁶¹ Finally, to return to one of this essay’s central concerns, is the ideal of the peaceable kingdom worth reviving as we work to prevent another era of “hideous mistakes,” to borrow George Q. Cannon’s term—namely, cataclysmic extinctions?

In his 1967 essay “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” Lynn White Jr. forcefully contended that “we shall continue to have a worsening ecologic crisis until we reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man.”⁶² Readers who accept this claim may find it hard to get past Mormonism’s proud declaration that “all things which come of the earth . . . are made for the benefit and the use of man” (D&C 59:18), regardless of the scriptural caveats having to do with excess, extortion, and animal souls. Anti-Mormon critics may argue that a smug and slothful “soft” anthropocentrism will ultimately prove as deadly for the endangered species and “food animals” of the world as the relentless “hard” anthropocentrism of the rain forest loggers and bush meat hunters, the fast food CEOs and meat industry tycoons, and the multinational animal testing corporations.

But, perhaps perversely, I derive a measure of hope from White’s article, especially from this statement: “The whole concept of the sacred grove is alien to Christianity and to the ethos of the West” (12). Alien to *mainstream* Christianity, that is, but where would Mormonism be without a certain sacred grove in upstate

New York? Just as White ends his article by nominating Saint Francis of Assisi as a heretical patron saint for scientific ecologists, I would propose Joseph Smith as a heterodox patron Saint for latter-day millennial ecologists and restorationists of our world's ruined groves. Hyrum Smith foresaw in 1842 that escaping our fallen condition would require a "restorative that man has not in his possession—wisdom which is beyond the reach of human intellect . . . and power which human philosophy, talent and ingenuity cannot control."⁶³ Restoring the peaceable kingdom was never going to be easy. But through "little wheels in God's designs" like the Word of Wisdom, Joseph and Hyrum Smith fully believed that the earth would eventually be "revolutionize[d]" and all things would be restored.⁶⁴

It is my fervent hope that Mormon scholars in the humanities and everyday Saints will return to whatever sacred groves are left to them to pray to the God of all living souls—animals, trees, people—for guidance not just for themselves and their families, but for the many nonhuman beings that they have the power to save or destroy. As we wait to hear the whisperings of inspiration from above, let us not discount the voices of reason, humility, and forbearance emanating from within and around us. Let us pay closer attention to the broader historical trends and dialogues, the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual ecologies, of which our tradition is a part. And, above all, let us listen to the chorus of myriad other voices—buzzing, squawking, howling, clicking, peeping, grunting, trilling, burbling, whinnying, and echoing silently across the landscapes of extinction—that have been inspiring and answering our prayers all along.

Notes

1. Karen Iacobbo and Michael Iacobbo. *Vegetarian America: A History* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004), 61.
2. Terry Tempest Williams, *Red: Passion and Patience in the Desert* (New York: Pantheon, 2001), 215.
3. Terry Tempest Williams, William B. Smart, and Gibbs M. Smith, eds., *New Genesis: A Mormon Reader on Land and Community* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1998), ii; George B. Handley, Terry B. Ball, and Steven L. Peck, eds., *Stewardship and the Creation: LDS Perspectives on the Environment* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2006).
4. Brigham Young reassured his followers in 1851: "When the Saints

in Zion are sowing and reaping, and building according to counsel, they are causing the light to shine, as emphatically as though they were abroad in foreign nations, preaching and baptizing for remission of sins. All things needful to be done, are but parts of the great whole, which must be accomplished before men will be prepared to be restored back again into the presence of the Father." Quoted in Jeanne Kay and Craig J. Brown, "Mormon Beliefs about Land and Natural Resources, 1847–1877," *Journal of Historical Geography* 11, no. 3 (1985): 257. As I will stress later, the operative phrase in my sentence is "challenged . . . anthropocentrism" rather than "dismantled" it. Thomas G. Alexander, offers one of the most thorough and perceptive explanations of the origins and development of the gap between stewardship-oriented doctrine and economics-driven behavior in his essay "Stewardship and Enterprise: The LDS Church and the Wasatch Oasis Environment, 1847–1930," in *Stewardship and the Creation: LDS Perspectives on the Environment*, 15–32.

5. "Billions" may sound like an overstatement, but leading scholars in the British Animal Studies Group remind us that several billion chickens and turkeys alone are raised and killed for human consumption in the United States each year, in addition to tens of millions of pigs, cows, sheep, and goats. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has put the tally at nine billion animals per year or more since 2001. Humane Society of the United States, "Farm Animal Statistics: Slaughter Totals." *Factory Farming Campaign*, March 4, 2011, http://www.humanesociety.org/news/resources/research/stats_slaughter_totals.html (accessed March 14, 2011). These numbers do not include the many animals that are driven extinct, "gassed, electrocuted, exterminated, hunted . . . vivisectioned, shot, trapped, snared, run over, lethally injected, culled, sacrificed . . . executed, euthanized, destroyed, put down, put to sleep, and even, perhaps, murdered." Animal Studies Group, *Killing Animals* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 1–3.

6. Mary Sayre Haverstock, *An American Bestiary* (New York: Abrams, 1979), 19–33.

7. Hel. 7:19. The full verse reads, "And behold, instead of gathering you, except ye will repent, behold, he shall scatter you forth that ye shall become meat for dogs and wild beasts." Doctrine and Covenants 29:18–20 foretells a similarly horrible fate for the wicked at the time of Christ's second coming. Val Plumwood's essay, "Being Prey," details a violent encounter in Australia's Kakadu National Park with a crocodile that attacked and nearly killed her. While (or perhaps because) Plumwood's essay challenges conventional Christian spirit/nature dualism, her thoughts on the "forbidden boundary breakdowns" represented by "death in the jaws of a crocodile" are well worth quoting in this context.

The “ultimate horror” involved in this kind of death comes, she writes, from the combination of “decomposition of the victim’s body with the overturning of the victory over nature and materiality that Christian death represents. Crocodile predation on humans threatens the dualistic vision of human mastery of the planet in which we are predators but can never ourselves be prey. We may daily consume other animals in their billions, but we ourselves cannot be food for worms and certainly not meat for crocodiles.” Quoted in David Quammen, *Monster of God: The Man-Eating Predator in the Jungles of History and the Mind* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), 315. At the time of the first publication of the Book of Mormon, of course, the fear of “being prey” or “becoming meat” in the wilderness of the United States was much greater than it is now, even if (then as now) wolves, bears, and other large predators normally avoided contact with humans.

8. This rhetorical device lived on in the Mormon revenge narratives that emerged from the killings of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. N. B. Lundwall, *The Fate of the Persecutors of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1952), compiles several earlier accounts of Missouri and Illinois “mobocrats” who “rotted alive” (297) or were eaten by maggots as a result of a “Mormon curse” (296) supposedly put on them by Joseph Smith or Brigham Young. Many of the stories clearly display the influence of Doctrine and Covenants 29, with its threats of maggots and rotting flesh. Others, such as the story of mob leader James Campbell, bear a stronger debt to Book of Mormon rhetoric. After “the angel of God saw fit to sink the boat” in which Campbell and other mobocrats were crossing the Missouri River on their way to attack the Saints, Lundwall reports that Campbell’s body “floated down the [Missouri River] . . . and lodged upon a pile of driftwood, where the eagles, buzzards, ravens, crows and wild animals ate his flesh from his bones . . . and left him a horrible looking skeleton of God’s vengeance” (353). Brigham Young referred to these accounts as “facts” in an 1860 address: “The bones of those who drove the Saints from Independence, from Jackson County, then from Clay and Dav[iess] Counties, and last of all from Caldwell County, from whence they fled into Illinois, have been scattered over the Plains—gnawed and broken by wild beasts, and are there bleaching to this day, while the Saints who have died on the Plains have, without an exception, had a decent burial where they have died.” Brigham Young, January 5, 1860, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1855–86), 9:101.

9. It would require another essay to unpack some of the problems involved in the Book of Mormon’s treatment of unrepentant American Indians/Lamanites as subhuman “wild men” and to place these descrip-

tions in the context of early nineteenth-century thought. For now, it is worth noting that the Book of Mormon approaches human-animal boundaries in a dynamic way, showing that just as Lamanites—and Nephites—risk growing more animal-like the more wicked they become, they can become more *human* in sync with their growing righteousness (even if, as we would now say, characterizing bad human behavior as “animal-like,” or judging nonhuman animal behavior “good” or “evil,” anthropomorphically fails to recognize the otherness of nonhuman psychologies and ways of being).

10. For instance, Alma 25:12 recalls Abinadi’s dying words: “And he said unto the priests of Noah that their seed should cause many to be put to death, in the like manner as he was, and that they should be scattered abroad and slain, even as a sheep having no shepherd is driven and slain by wild beasts; and now behold, these words were verified, for they were driven by the Lamanites, and they were hunted, and they were smitten.”

11. Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 126.

12. Hyrum Smith, “The Word of Wisdom,” *Times and Seasons*, June 1, 1842, 799–800.

13. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 241.

14. Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev. (6 vols., 1902–12, Vol. 7, 1932), 2:71–72.

15. Joseph F. Smith, quoted in Gerald E. Jones, *Animals and the Church* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2003), 92.

16. *History of the Church*, 2:72.

17. Jacques Derrida, “The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow),” translated by Gary Wills, *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 2 (2002): 369–418; and “‘Eating Well,’ or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida,” *Who Comes after the Subject?* edited by Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy (New York: Routledge, 1991), 96–119.

18. Jones, *Animals and the Church*, 24–25, mentions several examples involving snakes. President James E. Faust, “By What Power . . . Have Ye Done This?” *Ensign*, November 1998, <http://lds.org/general-conference/1998/10/by-what-power-have-ye-done-this?lang=eng&query=faust+power> (accessed March 4, 2011), cites a humorous rattlesnake episode from George A. Smith’s journal. When several of the Zion’s Camp men found a rattlesnake coiled up near the sleeping Solomon Humphrey’s head, Humphrey stopped them from killing it with the words “No! I’ll

protect him, you shan[']t hurt him for he and I have had a good nap together.”

19. “Let the people be holy,” Brigham Young preached on April 6, 1852, “and the earth under their feet will be holy. Let the people be holy, and filled with the Spirit of God, and every animal and creeping thing will be filled with peace; the soil of the earth will bring forth in its strength, and the fruits thereof will be meat [Gen. 1:29] for man. The more purity that exists, the less is the strife[;] the more kind we are to our animals, the more will peace increase, and the savage nature of the brute creation vanish away.” *Journal of Discourses* 1:203. On June 4, 1864, Young blamed human beings for the “savage and destructive nature” of animals, but also argued that humans, with the help of divine powers and through the “law of the Holy Priesthood,” had the capacity to “remove the curse and its consequences from earth,” to “say to the raging and contending elements, ‘peace, be still’ and extract the poison from the reptile’s tooth.” Young described this effort as “the great work of sanctifying [humankind] and the earth for final glorification in its paradisiacal state.” *Journal of Discourses* 10:301–2. He thus shifted the rhetorical (if not theological) focus of Joseph Smith’s Tenth Article of Faith (“We believe . . . that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory”), placing the emphasis as much on human effort as on Christ’s return and other forms of divine intervention.

20. For a very useful overview of George Q. Cannon’s efforts, see Aaron R. Kelson, “‘A Plea for the Horse’: George Q. Cannon’s Concern for Animal Welfare in Nineteenth-Century America,” *BYU Studies* 38, no. 3 (1999): 46–61.

21. *Ibid.*, 57–58.

22. Tristram Stuart, *The Bloodless Revolution: A Cultural History of Vegetarianism from 1600 to Modern Times* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007), 387–88, notes that the reports of interspecies harmony coming back to Europe from places like New Zealand “corroborated the millennial fantasy” of animal advocates like Humphry Primatt. Primatt wrote in 1776 that, if humans obeyed the divine law of mercy, “all would be peace, harmony, and love. Men would become merciful; Savage Brutes, would become tame; and the tame Brutes would no more groan under the lash. . . . [A]ll, both Men and Brutes, would experience the blessing of the renovating change.”

23. Joseph F. Smith, quoted in Jones, *Animals and the Church*, 92–93.

24. Stuart, *The Bloodless Revolution*, 385.

25. Alice Wondrak Biel, *Do (Not) Feed the Bears: The Fitful History of Wildlife and Tourists in Yellowstone* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 20.

26. *Ibid.*, 148.

27. *Ibid.*, 25.

28. Another Yellowstone example: In the same years in which the feeding of bears was becoming one of the defining features of the park, Yellowstone officials were busy exterminating members of a less “friendly” species: wolves. Clark S. Monson, “A House Divided: Utah and the Return of the Wolf,” in *Stewardship and the Creation: LDS Perspectives on the Environment*, edited by George B. Handley, Terry B. Ball, and Steven L. Peck (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2006), 124, notes that this policy resulted not in an enhanced ecosystem but in a “cascade of ecological calamities”: overpopulated and starving elk, overgrazed vegetation, damaged riparian environments, fewer beavers and beaver ponds, accelerating erosion, dropping water tables, and a host of other unforeseen consequences. The reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone, observes Monson, has benefited everything from elk populations to grizzlies to aspen trees to songbirds to cutthroat trout (126, 135 note 40).

29. *Ibid.*, 122–23.

30. For an LDS reference to Satan as the “destroyer,” see Doctrine and Covenants 61’s headnote, describing a dangerous 1831 canoe trip on the Missouri River. William Phelps, “in daylight vision, saw the destroyer riding in power upon the face of the waters.”

31. Charles Bergman, “Obits for the Fallen Hunter: Reading the Decline—and Death?—of Hunting in America,” *American Literary History* 17, no. 4 (2005): 829, writes that the Galápagos Islands “offer new lessons in human relations with animals” through the “intimacy with animals” that can be found there. He adds: “Darwin noted it. . . . Melville did as well. . . . Sea lions swim up to you in the sea or walk up to you on the beach. Mockingbirds land on you. Blue-footed boobies let you approach to within inches. Over five million years of evolution *without* predators gave the creatures this wonderful tameness.” Of course, while ecotourism presents numerous advantages over other land uses in places like the Galápagos, the 100,000 or so ecotourists who flock there every year in search of this “intimacy” pose serious threats of their own. Juliet Eilperin, “Despite Efforts, Some Tours Do Leave Footprints,” *Washington Post*, April 2, 2006, P1.

32. Bill McKibben, “Aldo Leopold,” in *American Earth: Environmental Writing since Thoreau*, edited by McKibben (New York: Library of America, 2008), 265; Marybeth Lorbiecki, *Aldo Leopold: A Fierce Green Fire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 42–43, 167; Aldo Leopold, “Conservation,” in *Round River: From the Journals of Aldo Leopold*, edited by Luna B. Leopold (1953; Oxford, Eng.: Oxford University Press, 1993), 146.

33. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (1949; New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 130–32.

34. Defenders of Wildlife, “Southwest Wolves Face Extinction in the Wild,” email to Bart Welling, October 18, 2007. Anti-wolf hysteria is based, in part, on the misguided notion that wolves frequently prey on humans. A 2002 Norwegian study of records of European wolf attacks dating from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries did find evidence of several hundred fatal or injurious wolf attacks, most of which involved children, but the majority of the attacks were carried out by wolves infected with rabies, which no longer poses the threat in Europe and North America that it once did. Habituation to humans, human provocation of wolves, and anthropogenic damage to wolf habitat were the three other major factors associated with wolf attacks. On the whole, the report’s authors note, fatal wolf attacks have been “extremely rare,” and wolves are “among the least dangerous species for their size and predatory potential.” John D. C. Linnell et al., *The Fear of Wolves: A Review of Wolf Attacks on Humans*, NINA Oppdragsmelding 731 (Trondheim, Norway: NINA-NIKU, 2002), 5.

35. Monson, “A House Divided,” 121–22.

36. George Q. Cannon, quoted in “A Plea for the Horse,” 52. Cannon’s editorial echoes the great conservationist John Muir’s argument in *A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf* (1867): “Many good people believe that alligators were created by the Devil, thus accounting for their all-consuming appetite and ugliness. But doubtless these creatures are happy and fill the place assigned them by the great Creator of us all. Fierce and cruel they appear to us, but beautiful in the eyes of God. . . . The universe would be incomplete without man; but it would also be incomplete without the smallest transmicroscopic creature that dwells beyond our conceitful eyes and knowledge.” John Muir, from *A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf*, in *American Earth*, 86, 88.

37. Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness* (1968; rpt., New York: Touchstone, 1990), 167. While President Cannon and “Brother” Abbey would probably roll their eyes at being mentioned in the same essay, and Abbey’s vision of Paradise obviously contradicts key Mormon doctrines of immortality, his books have much to offer when it comes to appreciating the paradisiacal aspects of the world as it is, rather than as we think it should be.

38. Heber C. Kimball, October 18, 1857, *Journal of Discourses*, 5:335.

39. Cannon, quoted in Jones, *Animals and the Church*, 45.

40. Jonathan Burt, “Conflicts around Slaughter in Modernity,” in Animal Studies Group, *Killing Animals* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 120–44.

41. Some of Cannon's *Juvenile Instructor* editorials fall in the talionic tradition of William Hogarth's 1751 engraving series *The Four Stages of Cruelty*, which explores the connections between cruelty to animals and cruelty to humans. It traces the growth and downfall of an animal-abusing orphan named Tom Nero. In the first print, Nero is leading other boys in torturing a dog and other animals; in the final print ("The Reward of Cruelty"), an adult Nero—having been hanged for murdering his pregnant mistress—has been reduced to a corpse that is in the process of being probed and disemboweled by the sadistic anatomists of the Royal College of Physicians. Beneath the dissecting table the animal world exacts its revenge: a dog is about to eat Tom Nero's heart. William Hogarth, *The Four Stages of Cruelty: Engravings by Hogarth, 101 Prints*, edited by Sean Shesgreen (New York: Dover Books, 1973), 77–80.

42. Stuart, *The Bloodless Revolution*, 340.

43. The only edition of Brothers's *Description of Jerusalem* mentioned by WorldCat was printed in London; but given the dynamic nature of the transatlantic book trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is not impossible that Joseph Smith could have encountered the book. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 14, found that Brothers's most influential book, *A Revealed Knowledge of the Prophecies and Times*, had made its way to "such hinterland towns as Hanover, New Hampshire, where Hyrum Smith attended school near the Joseph Smith family residence." I have not been able to consult *A Revealed Knowledge* to see whether it contains similar teachings on animals.

44. Jones, *Animals and the Church*, 25.

45. Stuart, *The Bloodless Revolution*, 135–37.

46. *Ibid.*, 83.

47. Sir Isaac Newton, quoted in *ibid.*, 111.

48. Richard S. Westfall, quoted in *ibid.*, 113.

49. Primatologist Frans de Waal coined "anthropodenial" to refer to human practices that frame human-animal differences as differences in kind rather than Darwinian differences in degree. Cited in Marc Bekoff, *Minding Animals: Awareness, Emotions, and Heart* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 48. Cary Wolfe, *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), argues persuasively that speciesism should not be regarded as one more "-ism" to be added to the list of politically incorrect views; rather, speciesism's rigid human-animal boundaries lie at the heart of sexism, racism, and even humanism.

50. According to Stephen J. Stein, *The Shaker Experience in America: A History of the United Society of Believers* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univer-

sity Press, 1992), 156–58, 305–6, vegetarianism among the Shakers in the 1830s was inspired by Sylvester Graham’s writings rather than by revelation and was the subject of intense debate—not a matter of settled doctrine. In 1841, Shakers *were* commanded by “divine revelation” from their central ministry to abstain from coffee, tea, and pork; and in 1845 they received word that “meat or fish” would be banned on the Sabbath “except in cases of ill health,” although Stein observes that not all Shaker believers were committed to observing the new “holy laws” (198). It would be interesting to know whether Parley P. Pratt and Sidney Rigdon understood the controversial nature of vegetarianism among the Shakers when, in 1831, they visited the United Society community at North Union, Ohio, with former Shaker Lemman Copley to deliver the revelation that would become Doctrine and Covenants 49. The revelation includes an ambiguously worded reference to Shaker vegetarianism in verse 18 (“And whoso forbiddeth to abstain from meats, that man should not eat the same, is not ordained of God”) but follows up in verse 21 with a strong endorsement of the principle expressed in JST Genesis 9:11 (“And wo be unto man that sheddeth blood or that wasteth flesh and hath no need”). Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 154, characterizes the 1831 meeting between the Mormons and the Shakers as a disaster, not because of disagreements over vegetarianism but because of the Mormon revelation’s affirmation of marriage (as opposed to celibacy) and to Pratt’s “lack of tact” in shaking the dust off his coattails (see Mark 6:11) when the Shakers rejected the revelation.

51. On Graham’s idiosyncratic but influential (as well as controversial) theories on the connections between diet and sexual desire, see Stephen Nissenbaum, *Sex, Diet, and Debility in Jacksonian America: Sylvester Graham and Health Reform*, Contributions in Medical History No. 4 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 32–36, 119–20. “The truth of the matter is simply this,” wrote Graham in *A Lecture to Young Men, on Chastity . . .* (1834): “A pure and well regulated vegetable diet, serves to take away or prevent all morbid or preternatural sexual lust . . . and thus enable [man] to be chaste in body and spirit.” Quoted in *ibid.*, 120. The Word of Wisdom, of course, says nothing about chastity.

52. Ronald M. Deutsch, *The New Nuts among the Berries* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Bull, 1977), 23, claims that in August 1832, the Washington, D.C., Board of Health issued a ninety-day ban on the sale of practically every kind of fruit and vegetable except for potatoes, beets, tomatoes, and onions—“but even these they would admonish the country to be moderate in using.” A few weeks earlier, New York’s Special Medical Council had advised citizens to “avoid crude vegetables and fruits.” Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866* (Chi-

cago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 30. Other prominent doctors recommended diets heavy in meat and port wine. Iacobbo and Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America*, 18. Many in the United States viewed excessive alcohol consumption as a leading cause of death. Sylvester Graham was one of them; he also warned his rapidly growing audience of readers and listeners against coffee, tea, opium, spices, excessive meat consumption, and too much sex. Nissenbaum, *Sex, Diet, and Debility*, 86–104. These theories were wrong, of course, but it would be more than twenty years before the British physician John Snow made the necessary epidemiological link between cholera deaths and contaminated drinking water.

53. Frederick C. Dahlstrand, *Amos Bronson Alcott: An Intellectual Biography* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982), 190–91. In his 1836 book *The Doctrine and Discipline of Human Culture*, Bronson Alcott wrote: “It is the mission of this age . . . to reproduce Perfect Men. The faded image of Humanity is to be restored, and Man to reappear in his original brightness.” At Fruitlands, the foundations of an Edenic revolution in the natural world itself were to be laid. By abstaining from the use of manure for fertilizer and employing other enlightened farming techniques, Alcott wrote in a journal entry titled “Husbandry” that the Fruitlanders could ensure: “The soil, grateful thus for man’s generous usage, debauched no more by foul ordures, nor worn by cupidities, shall recover its primeval virginity.” Quoted in Richard Francis, *Transcendental Utopias: Individual and Community at Brook Farm, Fruitlands, and Walden* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 156, 182. Given the ideological similarities between LDS and Transcendentalist utopian experiments, the community’s short life span (June 1843–January 1844) should not disqualify it from comparison with longer-lasting LDS (agri)cultural projects in Utah and elsewhere.

54. See, for instance, Carolyn J. Weekley with Laura Pass Barry, *The Kingdoms of Edward Hicks* (Williamsburg, Va.: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1999), 51–64, 92, and excerpts from a sermon Hicks delivered at Goose Creek, Virginia, in 1837 (223–32) in which he classifies different types of Quakers according to their dominant humors and compares each type to an animal. For instance, “phlegmatic” individuals are like bears: normally “dull, sluggish, inert creature[s],” but likely to reveal a “powerful, cruel and voracious” side when “agitated by some of the stronger passions” (228).

55. Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anton H. Lund (First Presidency), “Gospel Classics: The Origin of Man,” 1909, edited version reprinted in *Ensign*, February 2002, 30; emphasis mine.

56. Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the*

Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 259.

57. Sandra Bradford Packard, “Animals,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:42.

58. Richard N. Ostling and Joan K. Ostling, *Mormon America: The Power and the Promise* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999), 176.

59. Jim Catano, “The Word of Wisdom: The Forgotten Verses,” *Vegsource.com*, November 8, 1997, <http://www.vegsource.com/articles/catano.htm> (accessed October 26, 2007).

60. Humanity’s growing hunger for meat takes a terrible toll not just on the animals that are killed but on the larger biosphere, including our own bodies. Worldwatch Institute, *Good Stuff?: A Behind-the-Scenes Guide to the Things We Buy*, March 31, 2004, <http://www.worldwatch.org/taxonomy/term/44> (accessed October 26, 2007), reports on some of meat’s not-so-hidden costs relating to oil, water, hormones, antibiotics, land use, methane, animal waste, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (“mad cow disease”), and so on. Researchers at the University of Chicago have reported that “the average American diet—including all food processing steps—results in the annual production of an extra 1.5 tons of [carbon dioxide]-equivalent (in the form of all greenhouse gases) compared to a no-meat diet.” If their findings are correct, going vegetarian would have a bigger impact on global warming than switching from a standard car to a hybrid. Brad Knickerbocker, “Humans’ Beef with Livestock: A Warmer Planet,” *Christian Science Monitor*, February 20, 2007, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0220/p03s01-ussc.html> (accessed October 26, 2007). Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* (2001; rpt., New York: Harper Perennial, 2005), 149–90, follows Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (1906) in documenting the meat industry’s scandalous mistreatment of its human workers.

61. Erica Fudge, *Animal* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), offers an excellent introduction both to problems like these and to the field of animal studies in general. She is a member of the Animal Studies Group.

62. Lynn White Jr., “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” in *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 14.

63. Hyrum Smith, “The Word of Wisdom,” 799.

64. *Ibid.*, 800.