
Book Reviews

British author promotes cannibalism, murder, as good for 'ecology'

by Mark Burdman

Dark Nature

by Lyall Watson

Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1995

283 pages, hardbound, £16.99

I am seriously suggesting that headhunting, the practice of ritual killing, is not necessarily evil. If it serves to promote ecological equilibrium, population stability, and social cohesion—as it does in Asmat—it is well worth considering as a valid choice of lifestyle. Perhaps murder and even cannibalism are not bad in themselves. There are good arguments in their favor, as there are for abortion and the death penalty in our societies. Everything depends, as usual, on context.

—*Dark Nature*, p. 138

Lyall Watson's book could be classified either as an ecological *Mein Kampf*, or as a text submitted by a prospective speechwriter for Newt Gingrich—or both. *Dark Nature* uniquely combines a sensitive feel for justifying policies of mass extermination, with the kind of rambling psycho-babble that has, justifiably, made the U.S. Speaker of the House notorious.

The above quote is taken from a section in the book in which Watson lauds the Asmat tribe of the delta area of Irian in Indonesian New Guinea, which has perfected cannibalism into a ritualistic component of daily life. One has the temptation, on reading it, to simply close the book, and call the Homicide Squad. Alternatively, one might simply assume that self-described naturalist Watson produced such verbiage at a moment when he was feeling very hungry. Unfortunately, he can't be let off the hook so easily; there is a bigger conspiracy of interests involved. *Dark Nature* has been pub-

lished by one of Britain's "respectable" publishing houses, which has put out an aggressively worded promo, extolling Watson's genius. Worse, the chapter where the above quote appeared, was excerpted for one and a half pages by the City of London's leading mouthpiece, the *Financial Times*, on July 15, under the heading, "The Case for Cannibalism: Headhunting Can Be Seen as Good Ecology." Whether out of caution, or duplicity, the paper omitted the above quote.

Watson's book is a marker, for a trend now spreading in Europe. Cannibalism, infanticide, and related themes seem to be in vogue these days, in various of the European press and policy institutes and foundations. Recent conferences on these themes have been held in various German cities, sponsored and patronized by leading institutions. "Cannibalism and European Civilization" was the theme of one recently held in Bad Homburg, funded by the Reimers Foundation. It was covered, *in extenso*, in the daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on Sept. 15, under the heading, "Europe's Cannibalistic Order." On Sept. 18, the daily *Frankfurter Rundschau* devoted a full page to the presentation made by Hubert Markl, a zoologist from Konstanz, Germany, at a foundation in Frankfurt. Markl, like Watson, argues that during 99% of its existence, mankind has proven its capability to limit the size of its population, over a period of many ten-thousands of generations in which "hunting and gathering" was the mode of existence. Throughout this vast period, mankind demonstrated the "cultural development of methods for self-controlling habits of reproduction." Among such "methods," Markl cited "infanticide."

With Jonathan Swift's famous *A Modest Proposal* in mind, one might cherish the hope that this is all a grand satire, a parody, being cooked up by some witty souls, to attack the Malthusian lunatics of our time. It isn't. The revival of cannibalism and other forms of ritualized, or institutionalized murder, has become increasingly "thinkable," and commendable, in the minds of an oligarchy that has decided that the brute force imposition of a new Dark Age, is the only

“solution” it has, to maintaining power, as the entire financial system on which it has based its power, collapses.

As grotesque as it may sound, cannibalism is, after all, a neat solution to the rigged era of food shortages and zooming food prices. Are you hungry? Eat your neighbor! And, like the Asmat, walk around town with his skull around your neck.

Watson’s promotion of ecologism, hunter-and-gatherer societies in which only a few million people could be sustained on the planet, and related ideas, is one expression of the ideologies being created and spread by Prince Philip’s World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and its various offshoots around the world.

From Aristotle to Asmat . . .

Like Gingrich, Watson pours out observations on a wide array of themes, rambling incoherently as he discourses on the universe. We read about everything from the homosexual practices of “parasitical worms” and salamanders (although no mention of newts), to the comparative size of testicles of chimpanzees and human males (the chimpanzee’s is bigger, so he has more sex), to the rape practices of various birds, and on to psychedelic observations on painting, the “left” and “right” parts of the brain, and more.

As the Hodder and Stoughton promotional for him exults,



LaRouche Campaign Is On the Internet!

Lyndon LaRouche’s Democratic presidential primary campaign has established a World Wide Web site on the Internet. The “home page” brings you recent policy statements by the candidate as well as a brief biographical resumé.

TO REACH the LaRouche page on the Internet:

<http://www.clark.net/larouche/welcome.html>

TO REACH the campaign by electronic mail:

larouche@clark.net

Paid for by Committee to Reverse the Accelerating Global Economic and Strategic Crisis: A LaRouche Exploratory Committee.

his last claim to fame was a book entitled *Supernature*, “a watershed book on the occult sciences which took a reasoned scientific approach and a positive view on everything from paranormal, to astrology, to ESP.”

The ramblings in *Dark Nature* are woven into a conceptual design of sorts, to demonstrate that evil is “part of nature,” part of the “genetic order,” and must be seen as part of the “scheme of things,” more or less along the lines of the theories of the pagan-gnostic psychologist C.G. Jung, a figure whom Watson greatly admires. The substance of the argument, as per the endorsement of Asmat cannibalism, is that what must be determining in our judgment, is whether an action fits into the overall “ecological balance.” In essence, as Lyndon LaRouche stressed on being apprised of Watson’s advocacy of cannibalism when the *Financial Times* piece appeared, this is the argument of the 18th-century Dutch-British writer Bernard Mandeville, whose *Fable of the Bees* codified the idea of “private vices, public virtues”: Individual acts of “evil” add up to an overall “good.”

Watson is truly in the tradition of oligarchical philosophy, but, as he demonstrates, his roots go back much further than the 18th century. He claims that the inspiration for his so-called ideas comes from Aristotle. Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* is his bible: “The text shines with the sort of down-to-earth, outdoor common sense one would expect from a thoughtful naturalist. . . . What strikes me most forcibly is Aristotle’s feeling for ecology. . . . Aristotelean ethics is the ethics of ‘just enough.’ Neither too much, nor too little. Enough is enough, even of a good thing. Any more or less falls outside what he called the ‘golden mean,’ and fails to contribute to the whole good, the *totum bonum*. . . . Looked at in this way, good and evil are not a matter of taste or fashion, like or dislike. They are ideas rooted in our tissues. . . . Reading between his lines, it looks less like ‘survival of the fittest’ and far more like ‘the fitting of as many as possible to survive.’ . . . If ‘good’ can be defined as that which encourages the integrity of the whole, then ‘evil’ becomes anything which disturbs or disrupts such completeness. Anything unruly or over the top. Anything, in short, that is bad for the ecology.”

Aristotle, indeed, is the “mother” of all sorts of philosophical perversions in the western world. He was, himself, launched as an oligarchical project, to counter and eradicate the influence of Plato, in the world in and around Athens-centered classical Greece. It is no accident, that the late Lord Bertrand Russell, conceptual author of many of the leading programs for Malthusianism and genocide in this century, was, for years, head of the Aristotelian Society in Britain.

What is, clearly, “bad for the ecology,” are human beings, for Watson. He makes no bones (to use a perhaps unfortunate colloquialism, in this context) about the fact that he regards human beings as, fundamentally, intruders. Better, in his belief, that humans had remained, as they once were, hunters and gatherers. “Farming introduced a new fac-

tor into a society of happy-go-lucky foragers . . . separating us from the symmetries and satisfactions of the hunting-gathering way of life," he muses.

It is one small step, from Aristotle to Asmat: The Asmat "encourage acts which are good for the ecology, and discourage acts which are bad. . . . At a biological level, the difference between good and evil is relatively straightforward. It is not so much a matter of taste and fashion, as something deeply rooted in our tissues. Evil in nature, in short, is anything that is bad for the ecology. And it is by no means clear, that eating one another falls into that category." The Asmat, he exults, have "turned population dynamics into an intricate and strangely beautiful game. They eat each other, happily. . . . [Their practice of head-hunting] has nothing to do with war. It is the formal and ritual expression of a need to keep things in balance . . . a radical but realistic solution to the problem of overpopulation. Whatever you may feel about it taking place, you have to admit that it works. . . . This is not war so much as the necessary and carefully controlled adjustment of local equilibrium. . . . There is hope in this, but only if we follow the Asmat example, and learn how to bend, in favor of that which best allows equilibrium to be established. . . . Perhaps the Asmat really do know best."

. . . and on to Kissinger

Watson's argumentation is the logical conclusion of various forms of pseudo-science that have come to increasingly dominate our times. His self-professed specialty is what he calls "evolutionary biology," which a hodgepodge of genetics, anthropology, ethology, Darwinian evolutionism, Freudianism, and the "game theory" of John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern, all in one seemingly never-ending breath. Only the Unabomber seems to have been forgotten. But never one to be forgotten in such ill-begotten circles is Henry Kissinger, who receives positive mention for his belief that "power is a great aphrodisiac." In terms of the number of countries he destroyed, Kissinger would, certainly, have to be considered one of the more accomplished serial murderers of this century. Be on your guard, if you are invited by Kissinger for dinner!

Watson seems to have procured a "LaRouche enemies" list, of people whom he sees as his mentors and guides. For example, he waxes exultant, about the notion put forward by Oxford Darwinian/genetics kook Richard Dawkins, that belief in religion is tantamount to the passage of a virus from one person to the next. It was that very notion, that LaRouche singled out for his attack, in his "On the Subject of God" work (published in *Fidelio*, Spring 1993, pp. 17-48). (Perhaps fearful of a visit from the Homicide Squad, Dawkins himself has recently been telling interlocutors that he has nothing whatsoever to do with Watson, whom he regards as nuts. Indeed, no honor among thieves.)

One of Watson's positive citations, is the anthropological

works, in Africa, of the late E.E. Evans-Pritchard, whose son, Ambrose, is a key orchestrator of British operations in the United States to destroy the American Presidency.

'As old as ants and apes'

Dark Nature is "relevant," for yet another reason. As Watson ceaselessly points out, we live in a world where untold horrors and evils are committed, right before our eyes, from the genocide and butchery in Rwanda and former Yugoslavia, to serial murders and savage killings committed by youths as young as ten, and in which the world is increasingly moving, as he puts it, toward "chaos and political disintegration." It is not surprising, that there would be a sudden spate of books by "experts" trying to "explain" to us, why this is happening. Among these, are creatures like Watson, who feel compelled to prove that good and evil are just "in our nature," part of the "cosmic," or "genetic" order, to be explained in "evolutionary biological" terms.

Watson begins, explicitly, from the axiomatic premise from which evil proceeds: the denial that man is made in the image of God (*imago Dei*), and above the other creatures on this planet. This further establishes Watson as the "child of Aristotle." For him, as he repeats incessantly, man is "the naked ape." He did his basic training at the London Zoo, under Desmond Morris, author of the widely hyped book with that title. It is only a wonder that Watson was ever let out of his cage.

One of Watson's attacks on the idea of mankind being superior to the beasts, comes in the form of a protest against a statement made by a group of international scholars in Seville, Spain in 1986, who declared: "*It is scientifically incorrect* to say that we have inherited a tendency to make war from our animal ancestors; or that war or any other violent behavior is genetically programmed into our human nature; or that in the course of human evolution there has been a selection for aggressive behavior; or that humans have a 'violent brain'; or that war is caused by 'instinct' or any single motivation" (emphasis in original). To this, Watson responds: "War-waging and peacemaking are as old as ants and apes. There is no point in downplaying the reality of genetic inheritance, or trying to mask the extent of continuity between ourselves and other animals. . . ." Not surprisingly, Watson denounces the Augustinian Christian humanist concept of "just war" as irrelevant.

More generally, he opposes the philosophy of St. Augustine, by name. He dismisses this philosophy as the "standard Christian answer to the existence of evil in a universe designed and presided over by a good God."

To argue against the notion of *imago Dei*, and against the truth that mankind stands above the animal kingdom as the "crown of creation," is to axiomatically deny "the good," and to begin from the standpoint of evil. To put it another way: Asking Watson to discuss evil, is like asking the plague bacillus to give a dissertation on public health.