

animals are usually male). Luke makes a compelling case that hunting “by North American white men is structured and experienced as a sexual activity” (82). He provides countless examples of popular pro-hunting writing which describes the hunter’s “love” for his prey, the “shaft” of his weapon, the joy of successful “penetration”, and the “climax” of the kill (88-92). Implicit in these descriptions is possession and dominance, as the beast must be chased and subdued in order for the hunter to fulfill his goal. Luke shows how popular men’s magazines, such as *Playboy* and *Sports Illustrated*, also reinforce the erotics of predation by depicting sexualized woman as game animals (most often as birds, large cats and fish).

Overall, *Brutal* stands up to its bold assertions. While applying an analysis of gender to animal exploitation is not entirely new, Luke takes this analysis in new directions. He looks at how the animal rights movement (which is comprised mostly of women) has absorbed the same sexism that underlies the structures it is trying to resist; and also deconstructs the gendered assumptions present in the works of the ‘fathers’ of the animal movement. While there are definitely parts of the book that would benefit from stronger evidence and more rigorous analysis, Luke makes a compelling case that constructions of manhood are deeply connected with the exploitation of animals.

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D. Graham Burnett, *Trying Leviathan: The Nineteenth-Century New York Court Case That Put a Whale on Trial and Challenged the Order of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

Trying Leviathan dissects the whale as a butt of legal and natural philosophical argument in early nineteenth-century New York City. The book centers on a trial of 1818 which decided whether the oil obtained from whales should be subject to statutes governing the inspection of fish oil, a proceeding which hinged on the definition of the natural category of whale: fish (as the traditional triple division of life into inhabitants of land, air and sea would have it) or mammals (as the latest, post-Linnaean naturalist expertise had—more or less—ascertained)? At stake, Burnett, argues, was the authority of the natural philosopher and his learning in the civil economy of the young nation. In a neat parallel of subject and strategy, Burnett uses social classification to disentangle his story of natural classification and its significance, as he organizes his study around four groups of people who ‘know’ whales: the naturalists, the whalers, the merchants who sell whale products, and finally, everyone else, who account for whales using sources as diverse as Bibles, spelling primers and popular literature. So was a whale a fish? Fish oil, obtained from the decomposition of fish livers, was of haphazard quality, subject to packaging fraud, and required inspection; whale oil, obtained from boiling down