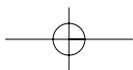
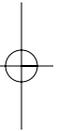
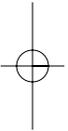


# ELEPHANTS AND ETHICS

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Edited by  
CHRISTEN WEMMER AND CATHERINE A. CHRISTEN

# ELEPHANTS AND ETHICS

TOWARD A MORALITY OF COEXISTENCE

Foreword by John Seidensticker

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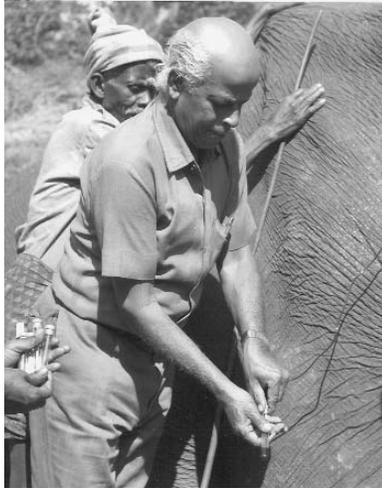
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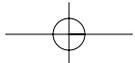
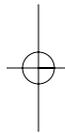
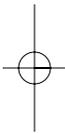
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**V. Krishnamurthy**  
(1927–2002)

This volume is dedicated to the memory of Dr. V. Krishnamurthy, a remarkable Forest Veterinary Surgeon of India's Tamil Nadu Forest Department. Doc devoted his humble life to the care and welfare of Asian elephants. He enriched his colleagues by sharing his peaceful wisdom and his penetrating understanding of elephants. His unwavering ethical convictions are a legacy of hope for those who carry the torch.



## CONTENTS

Foreword, by John Seidensticker / xi

Preface / xv

**1. INTRODUCTION / 1**

NEVER FORGETTING THE IMPORTANCE OF ETHICAL  
TREATMENT OF ELEPHANTS

Christen Wemmer and Catherine A. Christen

PART I. OVERVIEW OF ELEPHANT PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

**2. ELEPHANTS IN TIME AND SPACE / 00**

EVOLUTION AND ECOLOGY

Raman Sukumar

**3. PERSONHOOD, MEMORY, AND  
ELEPHANT MANAGEMENT / 00**

Gary Varner

**4. ELEPHANT SOCIALITY AND COMPLEXITY / 00**

THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE

Joyce H. Poole and Cynthia J. Moss

**5. ELEPHANTS, ETHICS, AND HISTORY / 00**

Nigel Rothfels

**6. PAIN, STRESS, AND SUFFERING IN ELEPHANTS / 00**

WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE AND HOW CAN WE MEASURE IT?

Janine L. Brown, Nadja Wielebnowski, and Jacob V. Cheeran

PART II. ELEPHANTS IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE: CULTURAL  
DIFFERENCES AND ETHICAL RELATIVITY

**7. ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE IN INDIA / 00**

HISTORICAL PATTERNS OF CAPTURE AND MANAGEMENT

Dhriti K. Lahiri Choudhury

**8. CARROTS AND STICKS, PEOPLE AND ELEPHANTS / 00**

RANK, DOMINATION, AND TRAINING

John Lehnhardt and Marie Galloway

viii CONTENTS

9. **CANVAS TO CONCRETE** / 00  
ELEPHANTS AND THE CIRCUS-ZOO RELATIONSHIP  
Michael D. Kreger
10. **WHY CIRCUSES ARE UNSUITED TO ELEPHANTS** / 00  
Lori Alward
11. **VIEW FROM THE BIG TOP** / 00  
WHY ELEPHANTS BELONG IN NORTH AMERICAN CIRCUSES  
Dennis Schmitt
12. **THE CHALLENGES OF MEETING THE NEEDS  
OF CAPTIVE ELEPHANTS** / 00  
Jane Garrison
13. **MOST ZOOS DO NOT DESERVE ELEPHANTS** / 00  
David Hancocks
14. **ZOOS AS RESPONSIBLE STEWARDS OF ELEPHANTS** / 00  
Michael Hutchins, Brandie Smith, and Mike Keele
15. **CAN WE ASSESS THE NEEDS OF ELEPHANTS IN ZOOS?  
CAN WE MEET THE NEEDS OF ELEPHANTS IN ZOOS?** / 00  
Jill D. Mellen, Joseph C. E. Barber, and Gary W. Miller
16. **GIANTS IN CHAINS** / 00  
HISTORY, BIOLOGY, AND PRESERVATION  
OF ASIAN ELEPHANTS IN CAPTIVITY  
Fred Kurt, Khyne U Mar, and Marion E. Garaï

PART III. ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE IN NATURE: THE ETHICS OF  
CONFLICTS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

17. **RESTORING INTERDEPENDENCE BETWEEN  
PEOPLE AND ELEPHANTS** / 00  
A SRI LANKAN CASE STUDY  
Lalith Seneviratne and Greg D. Rossel
18. **SUMATRAN ELEPHANTS IN CRISIS** / 00  
TIME FOR CHANGE  
Susan K. Mikota, Hank Hammatt, and Yudha Fahrimal
19. **HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICTS IN AFRICA** / 00  
WHO HAS THE RIGHT OF WAY?  
Winnie Kiiru
20. **PLAYING ELEPHANT GOD** / 00  
ETHICS OF MANAGING WILD AFRICAN ELEPHANT POPULATIONS  
Ian Whyte and Richard Fayrer-Hosken

ix CONTENTS

- 21. TOWARD AN ETHIC OF INTIMACY / 00**  
TOURING AND TROPHY HUNTING FOR ELEPHANTS IN AFRICA  
Rebecca Hardin
- 22. THE ETHICS OF GLOBAL ENFORCEMENT / 00**  
ZIMBABWE AND THE POLITICS OF THE IVORY TRADE  
Rosaleen Duffy

Contributors

Index



## 21 TOWARD AN ETHIC OF INTIMACY: TOURING AND TROPHY HUNTING FOR ELEPHANTS IN AFRICA

REBECCA HARDIN

Elephants' interactions with people are particularly revealing of power and status relations between humans. These human relationships, often gendered or racialized in nature, and often reflective of postcolonial politics, can determine elephants' fates. I set forth some historical, ethnographic, and ethical ideas not only about the relationships of elephants to humans but also the roles—real and imagined—elephants play in human histories and cultures. In particular, I explore through brief historical commentary two familiar and economically significant modes of human interaction with elephants, safari hunting, and tourism in Africa. I then present in more ethnographic depth some highlights from a case study of elephant conservation-through-tourism in a protected area of southwestern Central African Republic (CAR). My review of historical relations of domination and appropriation of elephants disaggregates European attitudes and actors from the colonial era and also integrates an analysis of symbolic and embodied practices in a contemporary site. This approach enables a more nuanced analysis of conservation efforts from the colonial era, moving beyond the common but sterile categories of “western” or “African” in thinking about human-elephant relationships. Such rethinking reveals conceptual, as well as philosophical and political alternatives. It enables what I call a practical ethic of intimacy, which respects and values various sustained interactions with elephants.

Ecotourism—tourism activity integrated with wildlife conservation—is a relatively new but rapidly growing industry. Its development in relation to another widely practiced form of nature tourism, “trophy,” or “safari,” hunting,” is underdocumented. I use trophy hunting or safari hunting in reference to leisure hunting practices for the collector of animal trophies (such as antlers, or the whole head); these practices are, for the most part, distinct from subsistence hunting, or hunting for management purposes. I recount several key historical elements of the practices of ecotouring and of trophy hunting for elephants in Africa and particularly the CAR. I argue that the salient categories for conflicting philosophies on touring, trophy hunting, and the treatment of elephants are not those of western versus non-western. Rather, within and across these categories exist regionally specific relationships between humans and wildlife within Europe, and within

## 420 ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE IN NATURE

Africa. In their encounters with one another under colonial and post-colonial circumstances, these traditions have given rise to distinct kinds of touring and trophy hunting industries, reflecting different philosophies or attitudes.

Today's activities of elephant hunting and elephant tourism not only draw from distinct philosophies but also connect to divergent political agendas for the scientific and technical management of contemporary wild elephant populations. Whereas trophy hunting evidences more of an ethic of domination, tourism works through an ethic of appropriation—terms about which I shall have much more to say. This chapter looks at the cultural and ethical frameworks within which elephant trophy hunting and elephant touring have developed. The two activities also share some attributes, including their history of having become global industries during the era of colonial encounters and their propensity to make an abstraction of elephants as symbols of power, wildness, or wealth. Such attitudes now circulate beyond geographical boundaries, creating new political and practical challenges to the protection of elephants from ever-expanding and intensifying capitalist processes of consumption.

Considering the deep historical relationships between people and elephants means considering how symbolic lines between animals and people have been constituted across different times and places, and how this relates both local and trans-local economic exchange and integration to social differentiation among groups of people. Such questions are far from merely academic. Differences within Europe, or within Africa, between types of hunters (subsistence, trophy, or otherwise), between hunters and animal rights activists, between scientists and managers, and between wealthy and impoverished communities, will determine the future of elephants and many other species alongside them. Taking a historical view of these different economic, cultural, and ethical stances has the advantage of allowing new philosophical categories to emerge in our thinking about elephants and about wildlife in general. This expansion of philosophical possibilities occurs even as new forms of engagement with elephants emerge and coexist with more traditional forms.

I suggest the notion of an ethic of intimacy—in general, a state of intertwined or interdependent lives. Intimacy is a concept that can include persistently uneven power relations and elements of suffering that exist alongside caring, compassion, and respect in human relationships, and even in those relationships that cross species boundaries. As a base for a system of ethical thinking, it also has normative elements: it privileges the knowledge and experience of those who have lived in close contact with elephants, be they ecologists, horticulturalists, or safari hunters.<sup>1</sup>

Engaging an ethic of intimacy advances the concerns and contributions of those who otherwise must struggle to wrest recognition of their author-

## 421 TOWARD AN ETHIC OF INTIMACY

ity from the increasingly market-driven global discussion of the value(s) of elephants. This is not to suggest that intimacy can exist only outside of markets. However, many dominant, marketable visions of human-elephant interaction, on television, in ecotourism brochures, or at safari club conventions, romanticize relationships between individual humans and individual elephants. There is a particular and growing fascination with watching celebrities feed, bathe, or medically treat elephants. A brief discussion of recent film and television and film productions to follow illustrates this point. Such performed moments, delightful for popular consumption, are anathema to the sorts of intimacies I describe as central to this ethical framework.

There are many humans living and working in close contact with elephants, whose lives and stories seem nearly invisible in the popular imaginary. For instance, field ecologists' conservation-oriented publications are largely confined to a specialized professional audience. Although they are not necessarily socially marginalized to the same extent as small-scale farmers living in elephant home ranges, neither group is easily heard in global marketplaces (Naess 1995). Wealthy ecotourists and trophy hunters, however, are conferred instant authority by the attentions of global markets and the conventions of contemporary reality television. An ethic of intimacy values and encourages us to search for and recognize the knowledge and experience of all these entities and recognizes their connections to one another despite distinct or even opposed practices of knowing elephants.

The notion of intimacy thus takes into account the varying contexts (historical, geographic, economic, and cultural) that have shaped connections between humans and elephants (Bird Rose 1999). Yet this notion does not preclude consideration of new forms of connection across these species, and attendant responsibilities. A full explication of the relationship between intimacy and responsibility is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, I do embrace the idea that there are more "organic" (inherited, subsistence-related, or landscape-based) and more "contractual" (professional, intellectual, political, or commercial) forms of intimacy with elephants, each giving rise to distinct but equally valuable and profound forms of responsibility. These potentially overlapping forms are crucial for the future (Jonas 1990). Finally, the idea of intimacy binds together the ethics of humans and wildlife, not by making wildlife commensurate with humans, but by recognizing the intense and persistent interdependence between the two, at both material and symbolic levels. It also allows us to escape from stale debates over intrinsic versus economic value of elephants.

In analyzing my own field research results and other relevant publications, I both draw from and diverge from philosopher Peter Singer's influential work, which presents sentience and personhood as morally relevant differences qualifying some animals to stand within a rights framework.

## 422 ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE IN NATURE

Singer is firm in his conviction that such advocacy of animal rights is not anathema to humanism. In fact, he argues, it springs from the abstract universalism of Enlightenment thinking (Singer 1999). He also claims this intellectual participation in a “western way of thinking that dominates our society” (1999, 156) and enables one most effectively to reach as many people as possible. Since Singer’s initial work on the topic of animal welfare, related approaches have proliferated, either refining a rights-based framework, advocating less universalistic and more contextual compassion, or both.

These approaches have been concomitant with debates about the well-being of individual animals, or groups of animals, vis-à-vis a broader systemic sense of ecological or environmental ethics (Rolston 1994). As a social/cultural anthropologist, I cannot foreclose on the validity and possible concomitant power of alternative philosophical approaches, however, especially those emerging from the traditions of intimacy with elephants that are often marginalized or subjugated by dominant ways of thinking. Investigating today’s dominant representations of human-elephant interaction calls first for a careful historical look at the history of human efforts to dominate elephants through hunting and display of their bodies.

#### Histories of Hunting for Trophies

Distinct regional hunting traditions within Europe had profound effects on hunting and wildlife management policies in former European colonies. As we shall see, ritualized trophy, or sport, hunting by individuals in northern Europe contrasts with the collective hunting of more Mediterranean regions. The former, increasingly powerful within Europe from the 1500s through the early 1900s, created clear parallels between patrician social mores and increasing class stratification at home in Europe, and the etiquette or economy of hunting and game management in different parts of Africa where Europeans were striving to assert their dominance—both over one another, and over Africans (Beinart 1989; Neumann 1996). These multiple rivalries are important to remember, to aid in thinking through the political impasses of today’s increasingly polarized confrontations between, for instance, animal rights activists and hunters. Today, these same distinct European histories of hunting also contribute to varying traditions of animal rights and wilderness protection across European regions. This, in turn, helps shape conflicting visions for wildlife management in elephant habitat such as the forests of the Congo basin.

French anthropologist Bertrand Hell (1994) notes that the Germanic regions of northern Europe, as well as several Central European countries, share a tradition that dates to the Middle Ages or earlier, of hunting as selective harvesting. Socially speaking, this northern European management regime entails vast territories managed with minute attention to the details

## 423 TOWARD AN ETHIC OF INTIMACY

of trophy-bearing species, under completely private territorial control by the elite. From Alsace to Austria, Hell argues, the fundamental traits of this system are the same: limited numbers of land owners, legal provisions about minimal surface for hunting parcels (at least 200 hectares), and purchase of small private forests where “round up” hunting methods for mass prey, often involving large groups of hunters, are forbidden.

France and Mediterranean Europe, however, tend toward more collective “gathering” or round up hunts, described by residents of this region as ancestral. Such practices are based on convictions that stock replenishes itself and must be controlled to prevent a menace to agricultural production. Here, hunters reject strict management; elite and nonelite hunters have varying arrangements to share forests for hunting, and the only important distinction is between wild and domestic, or cultivated, spaces.

The Vosges Mountains, in the historically disputed territory of Alsace Lorraine, exemplify this divide: in the Alsatian watershed, descending the crest of the Vosges eastward toward Germany, the German occupiers enforced the law of 1881, letting purchasers have vast hunting grounds for individual hunting only in search of trophies. Toward France, on the western slopes, there have long been village-based hunting organizations that carry out less-restricted hunting in teams, with complex meat-sharing practices. In 1981, densities of hunters in relation to overall population on each side of the Vosges demonstrated the continued relevance of these distinctions, as they reflected broader regional realities within Europe. Less than 1% of the population were hunters on the eastern side, versus between 2% and 6% on the western side. The former corresponds to the sort of figures one finds in Germany; the latter is much closer to those percentages found in general throughout Italy, Spain, and Greece.<sup>2</sup>

This corresponds to cultural and political differences such as the limit between Germanic and Romance languages, or the dispersed modes of political organization among the onetime Northern Tribes of Europe versus the Mediterranean traditions of commercial and fortified city-based Republicanism. Such distinctions have persisted ever since the initial, fragile unification of Western Europe under the Carolingians, an empire led by avid huntsmen who drew from northern hunting traditions and spread them southward, without, however, completely displacing alternative regional traditions.

Such differences continue today and are constantly reconfigured. They explain some of the contemporary distinctions between animal rights and wilderness protection activities across European regions. In the Anglo-Saxon northern European regions such as Germany and the United Kingdom, Protestantism and Victorian social mores combined to create philosophical perspectives such as John Locke’s sympathy toward animals, Charles Darwin’s observations of our “closeness” to them, and Jeremy Ben-

## 424 ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE IN NATURE

tham's claims that animals' "sensitivity" makes them deserving of some rights. France, however, better exemplifies an Aristotelian legacy of dominion over animals, transmitted via Zeno and the Stoics to Augustine, then to Catholics more broadly via Thomas Aquinas (Plender 2001).

Present-day intellectual and philosophical divergences regarding the treatment of animals can be seen at various scales, but nearly all have intellectual histories that are not merely about "the West" but rather connect to different local and regional human relationships to animals, broadly, and to wildlife, specifically. Within the United States today, such differences are at play both regionally and nationally, with important religious and scientific overtones. Some thinkers (often from the right side of the political and social spectrum; see Scully 2002) advocate merciful "dominion" over animals from the God-given distance between them and humans; others (often from the left side of the U.S. political and social spectrum—think of Jane Goodall and other primatologists) are concerned with preservation of animals who are our "closest relatives" in an evolutionary sense.

These differences, past and present, are also linked to different wildlife management paradigms throughout the developing world and offer us a way to think about the connections between political, economic, and ethical issues. Scholar and translator Martin Thom (1990) notes how rivalries between France and Germany after the Franco-Prussian War, when the race to colonize Africa mounted to its final pitch in the late 1800s, politicized the aforementioned regional differences within medieval Europe anew. Evidence from colonial archives in France and Germany supports this vision of continually reinvented cultural differences; when the ivory trade was at its peak at that century's turn, the management of elephants became a major conflict between France and Germany as they vied for control over the forests of today's Cameroon and CAR, and Germans deplored French hunting management strategies as unscientific and rapacious—in Africa, as at home (Hardin 2000). The Germans lost out entirely by the time of World War I, but their competition with France was a major factor in French efforts to assert colonial control in this resource-rich equatorial African region.

The Dzanga Sangha Reserve area is located in areas historically contested by colonizing French and German forces, and there are running tensions even now between French and German economic interests. Mostly, French loggers draw from an ethic of domination that dovetails with a vision of the forest as a multiuse forest concession and has long proven compatible with French trophy hunting operations and even culling elephants to protect crops. However, a suite of U.S.- and German-led forest conservation projects favors the appropriation and protection of the forest through ecotourism and research. They advocate ceding hunting concession and quota allocations to conservation agencies. Each side has its alliances in regional

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## 425 TOWARD AN ETHIC OF INTIMACY



Figure 21.1 Schematized map showing the location on the African continent of the trilateral Sangha River Conservation Region, including the Dzanga Sangha Dense Forest Reserve in southwestern Central African Republic.

*Map by Rebecca Hardin; based on a hand-drawn sketch by Stephanie Rupp*

and national political structures, and this has often produced paralysis in the long-range planning for the area (Hardin 2001).

In this face-off, “western” management practices are not pitted against African cultural understandings of elephants. Rather, various African traditions of human and animal relations mingle with the vestiges of distinct European ones, producing heated debates today. These European and African regional traditions have been intersecting, overlapping, and shaping human interactions with wildlife since European colonization of Africa began, with several implications for the ethics of elephant hunting, then and now. I have drawn out some of the distinct cultural and historical elements of competing philosophies of elephant management today (hunting as “wise use” integrated with logging, versus conservation through touristic support for “protected areas”). Let me now turn to analysis of the colonial

## 426 ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE IN NATURE

history that these apparently opposed views share, and to the transformation of such ancient European differences into nationalist discourses and transnational market systems suffused with images of white male dominance over the natural world.

Kenneth Cameron, historian of the safari, traces the transformation of the journeys called "*safir*" (a word in both Urdu and Arabic) by early Indian and Arab traders, and tells the story of a handful of British men who went about "wrenching the industry away from Indian control; redefining it" (1990, 46). Earlier safaris, originally coordinated by Hindu and Moslem traders for inland travel from the East African coast, sometimes even included Hindu women traders. They operated quite differently than their British colonial counterparts with regard to the organization of porters, camps, and payment. Their camp layouts often constituted circles around sleeping women or key expedition members. The safaris run by British men out of their offices in Mombasa and Nairobi emphasized the militaristic aspects of the expeditions, inherited from the Arab slave-trading caravan camps that would later inspire the starkly divided and gridlike "Native" and "European" camp styles of Henry Morton Stanley and others.

Robert Baden-Powell served in the British colonial armed forces, where he both relied on the wilderness skills of African soldiers and trackers and transmitted to them European traditions of military organization and disciplined hierarchy. He fused these forms of knowledge into a single cultural activity, founding the Boy Scouts, and thus popularizing a powerful combination of virility, wilderness, and warfare (Mackenzie 1987). Such dominant and male-dominated cultural practices all too often belie their own remarkably multicultural roots and become emblems of national culture, as the charisma and influence of Theodore Roosevelt's outdoorsman persona illustrates.

Cameron notes: "Nothing can be done easily now about the gender prejudices of safari or about its racialism; they are part of the excess baggage that we drag into the 21st century" (1990, 191). Yet, his work is a careful and conscious departure from the mainstream literature about safari hunting's "pioneers." For instance, this literature, largely published by specialized presses such as Rowland Ward and Safari Press (which focus on works by, for, and about big game hunters) praises women trophy hunters and explorers for their ability to emulate the military discipline of their husbands or fathers, while remaining "feminine and sensitive" (Dyer 1996, 81). In contrast, Cameron describes in detail one seventeenth-century traveler of Africa, Mary Hall Celia Fiennes, who departed from then dominant military-style camp practices, to "sleep in the middle of her camp, her tent or netting surrounded by African companions for protection, rather than set back from their sleeping space" (1990, 69). Unlike the celebrity speaking tours enjoyed by many return travelers from the colonies, when she returned to London,

## 427 TOWARD AN ETHIC OF INTIMACY

“the Royal Geographical Society had her make only one speech on her accomplishment—for an audience of children” (1990, 70).

Adult audiences in Europe craved violent tales of virile daring against wild animals. This relates to the popular feminization of nature as female—profoundly seductive, prolific, and fertile but also potentially dangerous (Ortner 1974). Such complex economies of images are found repeatedly in the writing and thinking of explorers and hunters, from early European voyages (Raffles 2002), through colonial expansion (Spurr 1993), to today’s conservationist discourse (Sawyer and Agrawal 1997). They even characterize the present era of packaged hunts and tours, perhaps especially with respect to Africa. The Swanepoel and Scandrol safaris’ publicity material for a 1997 hunting tour in Zambia proclaims: “Africa with her mystery, her freedom, her untrammelled spaces, and her barbarism had become my mistress.” Such images from today’s travel brochures echo those of publicity materials from the colonial era. They remind us of how the natural world can be conflated with those social worlds that are being subjugated in a context of expanding empire, thereby reinforcing political processes of appropriation and domination of both culture and nature.

Dyer’s work on “lady” hunters reminds us that those engaged in such domination need not be, and have not historically been, only men. Cameron, however, cautions us that those, often women, who attempted to create more balanced encounters across social and geographical boundaries, were themselves frequently marginalized by the dynamics of intertwined celebrity and expert knowledge formation perpetuated through social clubs and scientific societies of that era.

Cameron and Dyer concur, however, that “[U.S.] President Theodore Roosevelt . . . spent a year in Africa, hunting extensively, and was the first client to make really full use of the best of the new ‘white hunters.’ His safari . . . did a great deal to popularize the modern safari” (Dyer 1996, 46). Cameron notes: “Through the enormous publicity that his presence generated—countless newspaper articles, a feature film, magazines, his own books—he shared the experience with the world. Thereafter, ‘safari’ was an institution, very shortly a fashion” (1990, 49). The hunting safari of eastern and southern Africa became “The Hunt,” a crucial part of the fabric of British colonialism, as well as a global commodity (Mackenzie 1987).

Far from mere fantasies, such understandings of nature as a feminine force to be tamed and converted to productive use informed the political economy of science and government in the colonial era. Bolstered by the nationalist charisma of Teddy Roosevelt and others, these notions helped justify the exclusion of many women, especially those seeking autonomous and original experiences overseas, from the sources of funding and support that their male counterparts enjoyed. However, perhaps the lack of resources was, in part, responsible for the very different and more “local” ex-

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## 428 ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE IN NATURE

Figure 21.2 Photographs and text about the Central African Republic from the collection of materials on tourism and trophy hunting displayed at France's 1932 colonial fair. Images reproduced by the Archives Nationales d'Outre Mer, Aix en Provence, France, Carton Agence France Outre Mer 357, Dossier Chasse / Tourisme



periences of travel and collaborative work one can discover from the study of female travelers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This was not only true in Africa; historian Pamela Henson chronicles the challenges overcome by early botanist Agnes Chase: “Denied access to institutionally supported fieldwork, Chase broke through the barriers and established more informal and egalitarian ties with Latin American scientists than many of her male colleagues ever had” (Henson 2002, 598).

Responding to social mechanisms of exclusion that functioned along both racial and gender lines, such “ties” and “breakthroughs” altered, yet also reflected, many of the more nationalistic and imperialistic rivalries described in the next section. Such informal and egalitarian ties are the “seeds” of the circumstantial but often consciously crafted intimacies I describe across cultural and species boundaries. The traces of female scientists and travelers, like those of local experts and guides, are harder to find in the historical record than are the exploits of Teddy Roosevelt or Ernest Hemingway. Yet, understanding the genesis of these informal and egalitarian ties may be crucial to the eventual growth of ethically innovative and politically effective systems for sustainable human-nature interactions. For a moment, though, we can step back from the cultural forms in question, and reflect on some of the political and economic ones that are at stake in the management of elephant populations in equatorial Africa.

### Legacies of Rivalry, Not Rationality

In “French equatorial Africa,” a colonial term for several territories administered together in the western Congo basin, the early hunting industry received less international attention and opened up to a worldwide clientele much later than in the British colonies. France and Britain previ-

## 429 TOWARD AN ETHIC OF INTIMACY

ously competed regarding plantation production output and concessions for trade in animal products. However, their rivalry intensified with the advent of tourism and leisure use of colonial territories. The French government generated documents about colonial tourism development that often asked, "Can we not do as well as the English have?"<sup>3</sup>

The interior forests and savannas of French colonial Africa did not develop an expedition-related industry such as the British colonies of southern and eastern Africa. There, as Cameron describes, dynamic commercial and political elites from multiple cultural traditions within and beyond Africa drove the industry's development. In the French Congo, stark confrontations occurred between the Africans from further north who served as guards and militia for the French, and those multiple groups from within the Congo basin, who relied to different degrees on hunting for their traditional economies of foraging, fishing, or farming. Each of these subsistence groups had distinct relationships to elephants, though many shared the element of ritual passages to manhood through the hunting of elephants. Many such groups were more or less forcibly integrated into work collecting ivory and other forest products for more global trade during the 1800s (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1972). Some, however, evidenced enormous ingenuity and brinksmanship in temporarily transforming their societies, and their relationships to elephants, to stockpile and control ivory in light of those trading opportunities (Harms 1981).

Trophy hunting and related tourism in French equatorial African regions have remained, to the present, a "*chasse gardée*." This French phrase evokes heavily protected or managed hunts that are thus not true contests to determine who is most fit or skilled. This hunting metaphor for political cronyism, ironically, captures well the actual politics of hunting in today's former French colonies. Permits and access rights in today's Cameroon, Congo (Brazzaville), and Central African Republic unfold, to a large extent, through intimate conversations among members of several intersecting elites. Since these territories became colonies, concessions within them have been renewed from year to year, unlike in parts of formerly British southern Africa where concession management is more long term.

The process is thus effectively subject neither to policy control nor market forces that would encourage sound management practices for maintaining wildlife populations over the medium to long term. Overhunting in a given season is almost encouraged by such factors, and the year-round presence of hunting professionals is rare, leaving animals vulnerable to poachers during the off-season, despite the relative protection conferred by hunting operations during part of the year (Fay 1995; Wilkie 1998). Poaching, of course, is a tricky, contestable term, a broader discussion of which is regrettably beyond the scope of this chapter. The growth of the arms

## 430 ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE IN NATURE

trade and increasing civil conflict in much of sub-Saharan Africa have rendered the distinction between poachers and other hunters even more difficult but have also made the threat of illegal elephant hunting increasingly dire.

Former British colonies have led the African continent in trophy hunting's transformation from an adventure open to only a select few into a much broader practice, indeed in the transformation of travel into a mass industry. The advent of automobile technology after the turn of the twentieth century led to a major shift away from what had long been only an elite European tradition of pilgrimage and holiday travel to particular seaside, mountaintop, or cultural and religious sites (Urry 1995; Nash 1996). Railroads and road networks became crucial components of broader tourism development. Tourist buses began to define a worldwide genre of group tourism, the "motor tour." In colonial territories, expeditions sponsored by companies such as automobile manufacturer Citroën pitted their new machines against the rigorous terrain of tropical regions, generating publicity for their products as well as interest in the sights and experiences of these "exotic" locales. In the eastern and southern African savannas, buses or vans became crucial for wildlife viewing at a safe distance. They remain so today, as what was once a colonial industry has morphed into a more global one that is largely focused on bringing non-Africans to the continent to explore (Bandy 1996).

Equatorial Africa's advantage in this rapidly shifting competitive economy of leisure use has always been that it offers unique and adventuresome opportunities "off the beaten path" of touring and hunting. The disadvantages are many, however. Rational management, based on assessments of actual elephant population and migration dynamics, is elusive at best. As during the colonial era, management today is mostly mired in the ways that members of elites use wildlife as a resource in their economic and political deal making. Recently established protected areas, and the ecotourism practices and village-based trophy hunting tours they are pioneering, do represent a challenge to these historically rooted systems, and to the gender and race biases built into them (Roulet 2004). However, such newly decentralized practices come with their own contradictions and challenges, as we shall see in a closer look at a Central African forest reserve.

#### The Dzanga Clearing: Today's Ecotourism Encounters

The elephants, having at last found in these reserves a tranquility to which they were no longer accustomed, are now quite numerous.

(Anonymous 1942, 7)

The Dzanga Sangha Dense Forest Reserve in Southwestern Central African Republic, established in 1991, is managed by WWF Germany, WWF-U.S., and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ, the

## 431 TOWARD AN ETHIC OF INTIMACY

German government's agency for international development). It has one principal tourist attraction: a clearing of approximately one by three kilometers called Dzanga, where natural mineral and salt deposits in the soil attract elephants to drink, dig with their tusks, and bathe. The forest surrounding Dzanga is laced with clearings of various sizes, maintained by the activity of forest elephants (*Loxodonta cyclotis*), who fell trees and use clearings for mud baths and other purposes. Other herbivores such as forest buffalo (*Caffir nanus*), bongo (*Tracephalegus euryceros*), sitatunga (*Tragelaphus spekei*), several species of duiker (*Cephalophus*), giant forest hogs (*Hylocherus meinertzhageni*), bush pigs (*Potamochoerus porcus*), and western lowland gorillas (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*) also use the clearings for sunning, bathing, and grazing on tender regrowth vegetation. Dzanga is by far the largest clearing of this kind in the immediate region, and on any given morning or evening one can see from ten to over one hundred elephants along with other animals basking and frolicking.

To promote relatively safe observation, the reserve administration has constructed a platform, perched in treetops at an entrance to the clearing. To get to the platform, one must drive on an old logging road fifteen kilometers from the nearest town, then walk approximately one kilometer through the forest to the clearing, crossing the Modoubou stream, where water is at shin level during the dry season, and waist level in the rainy season. This excursion is most often spoken of as "seeing the elephants" and is the one activity accomplished by almost every tourist who visits the reserve, as well as by local residents on occasional organized day trips.

Once at the clearing, visitors may move about, but most often stay on the observation platform, watching and photographing the goings-on beneath and around them, while listening to grey parrots and hornbills in the surrounding trees. Most of the conversations on the platform are variations on a theme and familiar to the guides. Questions and remarks from visitors usually address the varied colors of elephants' coats (because of their use of mud in various stages of dryness to keep insects from them); aspects of their morphology (the enormity of genitals, the size and shape of tusks, the hilarious movements of the young when trying to use their trunks); or their social behavior (group size, gestures of communication with trunks and ears, etc).

Almost all visitor groups notice the research platform of Andrea Turkalo in a nearby tree. Working in collaboration with the New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society, she has been counting, identifying, and observing these elephants since 1991. Her research camp and its personnel (largely local hunters and gatherers known as BaAka, who have experience tracking elephants) have in many ways become part of the clearing. Certainly its presence has deterred poaching in the area, as has the nearby temporary tourist camp.

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—trips.  
[FIGURE] Figure  
21.3 about here

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## 432 ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE IN NATURE

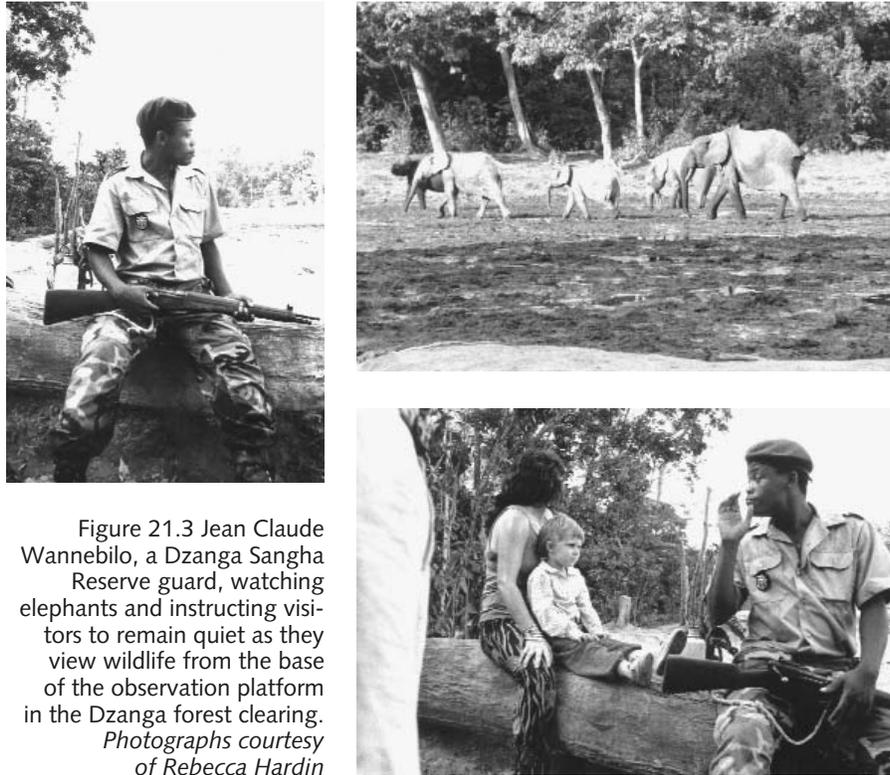


Figure 21.3 Jean Claude Wannebilo, a Dzanga Sangha Reserve guard, watching elephants and instructing visitors to remain quiet as they view wildlife from the base of the observation platform in the Dzanga forest clearing.  
*Photographs courtesy of Rebecca Hardin*

The forest around the Dzanga clearing appears to have the highest density of elephants in the region. Many tourists I interviewed had encounters with elephants on the way to or from the platform; many return to camp terrified but exhilarated. I have seen diplomatic corps ambassadors and their drivers emerge from the stream, splattered with mud, clasp one another's hands with mixed laughter and tears about the elephant that tried to charge them. The trip to the clearing, particularly when interrupted by elephants blocking the road, spraying water with their trunks, or trumpeting at the stream crossing, is a sort of ritual, where normal social orders are upset or reversed, only to be strengthened or reestablished afterward (Turner 1969).

Elements of fear, wonder, connection, observation, and communication collide in this short walk to the clearing. Most visitors return moved, either simply by what they have seen or by the rush of feelings that comes from the real awe and terror that an unexpected encounter with an elephant—let alone with forty or fifty of them—can inspire. All of this is framed by what may be an equally unexpected bonding experience with humans one hardly knows. Facing down an elephant is no small feat, but trackers and guides alike at Dzanga have learned alternate routes back to the parking lot to avoid angering the animals. They are familiar with where to look for elephants and how to assess their impatience.

## 433 TOWARD AN ETHIC OF INTIMACY

One French military commander stationed nearby who brought his troops as tourists in 1995 described it thus:

We ran into an elephant in the water, where we were up to our knees . . . one of us had to move. The guide checked to see if it was a male or a female, since apparently it is the females that charge, usually; the trackers lined up and started hitting the water with their machetes. They told us to follow, but it took half an hour to get rid of the elephant. . . . My men were armed, but with no ammunition. . . . I could have given them ammo, but for what? I asked the guide and he told me particularly NOT to fire into the air, but I think that is what I would have done [if things had not gone well]. . . . Well, since we're supposed to rely on the guide, we did . . . and he was good. . . . We even bought him drinks later, at that bar in the center of town.<sup>4</sup>

Certainly, there is room for improvement in this sort of elephant-human encounter, for much is left to sheer circumstance and to the clarity of communication across barriers of species, language, culture, race, and social hierarchy. Military tourists are particularly tricky for local guides, for they seem least inclined to follow guides' advice in such situations; perhaps this also reflects guides' ambivalence about the French military—memories of colonial conflicts endure and inform today's interactions. Yet, even this difficult example of the tourist experience at the Dzanga clearing demonstrates the power that makes it so popular: the power to suspend the sorts of social hierarchies I have described elsewhere in this chapter as characterizing the history of trophy hunting and ecotourism.

Many things happen in the moments of confrontation with elephants, and in their aftermath, first and foremost the valorization of local forms of knowledge, and the fleeting yet profound empowerment of BaAka, sometimes known as Pygmies, who, back in a village or town setting, may be seen by their other African neighbors or by non-African visitors as little more than mendicants. People are also, in these moments, sharing and exchanging feelings, memories, and material goods that create bonds across social categories that would otherwise divide them. A local guide who might otherwise be unceremoniously tipped and thanked is taken out for drinks and entertained as a local hero after an exciting elephant encounter. The value of such interactions is difficult to quantify and hard to relate to more systemic change but seems to this author undeniably important.

Yet social hierarchies in the broader community are reinforced in some disturbing ways by the new economic activity of elephant tourism. Revenues from this activity are not accruing to the long-term residents of the region, such as BaAka. Rather, those who make the most money are neighboring Africans who arrive from other countries or larger towns to estab-

## 434 ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE IN NATURE

lish businesses or partake in the ever-growing “bushmeat” trade, which develops in relation to such dynamics of economic boom and bust (Barnes 2002). It is difficult to weigh such risks to elephants against the long-term benefits of facilitating human contact with and understanding of these animals (and, through that, with other humans). Such contact can foster new intimacies that might be mobilized for their protection. Economic and ecological monitoring processes are not yet in place to make such calculations with confidence. Until they are, conservative policies that limit tourism and trophy hunting appear most appropriate and would likely increase the lure of the area over the medium to long term.

To summarize, the activities I have described occur in a zone where trophy hunting and logging managed by French interests compete with conservation efforts managed by U.S. and German interests. The current situation thus mimics the earlier struggles between Germany and France for colonial control of the area, echoes the larger colonial rivalry between Britain and France over distinct models for economic development, and even calls to mind the distinctions between more Anglo-Saxon and Mediterranean modes of hunting and managing animal populations. Obviously, none of these past rivalries have been transmitted unchanged through time. Perhaps, in part because of the tradition of elite trophy hunting in northern Europe, the environmentalist and animal rights movements in Germany and England enjoy broad and powerful popular support today relative to France, for example, where movements for hunters’ rights are seen as more “grassroots” and linked to the welfare of farmers, rather than to fox hunting nobility (as in England).

Back in CAR, we see perceptible institutional effects of such deeply historical and cultural legacies, aligning animal protection with the building blocks of civil society at regional and local levels and aligning hunting revenues with the maintenance of state-related infrastructures. Throughout the late 1990s, nonhunting tourism revenues were associated with the CAR Ministry of Environment and Tourism, whose technical counsel came from Germany. These revenues flowed through international conservation nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to support the local conservation NGOs they have spawned. The CAR’s revenues from trophy hunting and logging fees, however, were associated with the Ministry of Environment and Forests, whose technical counsel came from France. These monies flowed through the local mayor’s office to support offices, guesthouses, and related government buildings in the area.

For elephants the result of such competing tactics for human management of the environment is ever more varied and an intense pressure on their populations and habitats. Such competing visions have made rational, sustainable management of the Dzanga Sangha Reserve nearly impossible. Rather it has become a hub of economic activities, attractive to in-migrants.

## 435 TOWARD AN ETHIC OF INTIMACY

As both African and expatriate populations increase, the circuits connecting the area's resources to consumers of elephants, as meat and as central symbols of the tourism and hunting industries also increase. Finding alternatives to such structures of rivalry should thus seem clearly linked to the fate of those few remaining elephants that still live in wild populations. The search for alternatives, however, comes with a prerequisite for further analysis.

### Culture, Ethics, and Elephants

In this chapter, I have considered some of the roots of domination and appropriation of elephants by humans who have not shared their lives with them in any sustained way. I next discuss the broader dynamics these interactions reflect, specifically, appropriation in ecotourism markets and domination in trophy hunting. At the same time, I hope to stay close to some of the historical and ethnographic cases previously discussed. They have given rise to many of my conceptual points, in what Lynn (2002, 314) calls an "ecology of theoretical insights and empirical cases." Like Lynn, I seek a practical ethic, one that responds to recent debates in ethics and philosophy literatures that contrast "abstract, impartial, absolute, universal perspectives versus concrete, local, historically specific, contextual perspectives" (Warren 1999, 131).

#### Appropriation

Even in broad treatises on the topic of environmental ethics writ large, elephants have a tendency to appear as crucial symbols:

Ecological ethics—what is that all about?

. . . It is about the mother elephant who tries in vain to protect her young before a danger for which nature did not prepare her, before ivory poachers with high technology weaponry bent on murder within an ever shrinking elephant habitat. . . . It is about humans who think that they are the crowning glory of creation and the lords of all creatures but behave in the world like an elephant in a china shop—though anyone whom an elephant ever stroked with the velvety lip of her trunk can testify that this metaphor is all wrong. (Kohak 2000, 1)

Philosopher Erazim Kohak is certainly not alone in perceiving elephants as "gentle giants." His consideration of them as a mascot for the environment, as the ultimate symbol of man's violence against nature's "gentle glory," is effective. It illustrates the possibilities for humans, as ethical actors, to identify with and protect even those species whose existence presents us with some conflict or conundrum, often because they are valuable to us and thus worth consuming. His perspective suggests that con-

## 436 ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE IN NATURE

trolling our own technological abilities and economic desires is a prerequisite for being less noxious as actors within complex ecological systems. One is even left with the impression that he has experienced some intimacy with elephants—or at least the “velvety lip” of one elephant’s trunk.

Yet there are two problems with such a perspective. First, it does not take into account the complexity of human-animal relationships, where a cross-species caress of the kind he describes is valued precisely because of the very real possibility of a violent interaction. Elephants, like many wild animals, can intimidate and harm people, even kill them and devastate their property. That such behavior by elephants is most often in response to human incursions into “ever shrinking elephant habitat” does not alter the social fact that humans fear elephants. That fear, inspired by the elephant’s sheer size and fed through generations of tales recounted, can create respect and reinforce a certain “safe” distance between humans and such massive animals. It can also, however, degenerate into anger, especially when the pattern of human incursion entails competition for space and resources.

During my work in the Dzanga Sangha Reserve, I regularly had elephants in my “backyard” at night. With some discomfort, I often deferred a late-night trip to the outhouse to avoid confronting them. My house backed up on a zone newly cleared and planted with food crops to feed the growing population arriving for work in a nearby sawmill. In the mornings, I often saw and heard angry stories from women whose fields had been ransacked by elephants having a midnight snack at their expense. I saw such women march to the Reserve Director’s office, crushed cornstalks and damaged cassava branches in their arms, to demand restitution. More than a mere headache for reserve management, the problem has spurred experiments with electric fences and other approaches to defend family food plots from the elephants. My firsthand account of human-elephant conflict reflects situations repeated throughout elephant range countries, as manifold sources attest (see, for instance, Kiiru’s Chapter 19 in this volume). Such strained negotiations, neither violent and victimizing of elephants, nor gentle and loving of them, nevertheless constitute a component of environmental ethics as it must confront clear land and wildlife management challenges.

A second problem with appropriating elephants as a symbol for mobilizing support in environmental causes is that it renders them as passive victims, awaiting the protection of, and from, all-powerful human beings. This is a crucial contrast with many historically rooted, local negotiations with elephants and introduces interactions predicated on our abilities utterly to destroy them or heroically to save them. Often missing from these new arrangements for interacting with elephants, however, is a more nuanced biological and ecological understanding of elephants as agents,

## 437 TOWARD AN ETHIC OF INTIMACY

who are also capable of adapting, deciding on, defending, and abandoning their own territories.

One area of difficulty in my framework is distinguishing between new forms of intimacy that are personally engaged in with elephants as agents and those performances of intimacy that are more patronizing, or profiteering—that simply appropriate elephants without either recognizing or engaging them as agents. Such performances often rely on stock narratives about adventure and exploration that are evocative of the colonial era attitudes previously analyzed. They are thus tailored to popular demands for storylines that replicate basic cultural assumptions of men as apart from or opposed to nature and women as connected to or conflated with it. This often involves either the destruction of nature (by powerful male figures) or salvation and redemption of nature (by artistic and benevolent female figures), rather than more complex and less predictably gendered interactions over time. A 1996 film about Indian elephants, featuring Goldie Hawn, while in many ways movingly sincere and personally engaged, reflects such market preferences for watching lithe celebrities be “stroked by the velvety lip” of elephants’ trunks.

The trailers for the film, also released as a Public Broadcasting Service Home Video, read: “Goldie Hawn loves everything about India, especially the elephants. On a previous trip she found her special elephant, now she is going back to find her again. She spends time with . . . an Asian elephant advocate with his own pet elephant Tara.” During the film, a charmingly reluctant and nervous Hawn overcomes her fear of elephants to bathe them, ride them, and generally become their advocate. Advocate against what? The primary factor threatening elephants, we are told, is Indian population growth. This leads to situations of “conflict with poor villagers who have no control over where they live.” This voice-over accompanies footage of screaming male villagers with lit torches chasing a confused and frightened elephant through the night (for more on conflict between people and wild elephants, see, for example, chapters by Sukumar [Chapter 2], Kiiru [Chapter 19], and Seneviratne and Rossel [Chapter 18] in this volume).

Hawn’s charmingly faltering intimacy with elephants in the film is obviously no match for the real intimacies lived by pet elephant Tara’s European owner and Indian handlers, who also appear briefly in sequences where Hawn is actually interacting with elephants. It raises tricky questions beyond the scope of this chapter about the distinction between historically and contextually rich forms of intimacy and more performative or strategic ones. Hawn’s own performance is aimed at spurring better advocacy for and public awareness about these elephants among an American viewing public. In this sense, it is like the appearances of *Animal Planet* star Jeff Corwin, who can be seen on camera (and thereafter on Internet sites such as YouTube and MySpace) not only bathing with an elephant, rolling his body

## 438 ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE IN NATURE

over and around hers, but also caressing her face and trunk. Because of screenwriters and voice-over techniques, in a key sequence, the viewer sees him communicate telepathically with the elephant, as she reads his thoughts, and we hear her comments on his haircut, his lifework saving animals, and so on.

The unintended results of such performances, and the market preferences they reinforce, have more difficult implications. First, they create a fantastic notion of instant, complete, and even slightly erotically charged intimacy across species boundaries that belies the long-term, often grueling work of caring for and building trust and communicative capacity across such divides. Second, they play into what one scholar of wildlife management terms “a popular racial stereotype of ‘primitive’ Africans [or, in this case, Indians] as part of the natural landscape” (Neumann 1996, 125).

Geographer Rod Neumann goes on to document how, in the history of protected areas in Africa, sometimes a “native” presence in the parks was tolerated. Such was the case, according to colonial archives, in Parc National Albert, one of the first and largest protected areas created in what is today the Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire. There, local hunters and gatherers were regarded as part of the fauna and therefore “left undisturbed” (Neumann 1996, 125). There is continuity from such colonial ideas to the integrated conservation and development regimes of the Central African Republic that I previously described.

These recent projects prominently feature people like the BaAka as being in need of protection but do not often refer to them in their lists of “stakeholders,” which do include categories such as farmers, logging company officials, and immigrants who work in the logging or diamond-digging industries (Giles-Vernick 2002). An adequate consideration of how distinct groups of Africans have forged various relationships to elephants is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, this relegation of elephants, and of those African hunters and gatherers who have historically known them most intimately, to a “protected” status, with no option to participate actively in establishing or revising the spatial boundaries of protected areas, makes elephants the ideal object for western managers and movie stars to manipulate in their constant search for star-standing, sponsorship, and support.

As powerful symbols, elephants make of sense as mascots for political or intellectual environmental movements. However, we must work hard to understand the ironies inherent in these associations. There are great, worldwide pressures on elephant habitat. Yet, for historical reasons, locals may not see how their own agricultural expansion is a problem for elephants. Instead, they may perceive elephants as powerful individually, and, as groups, capable of changing or expanding their territory. The torch-wielding Indian villagers in the PBS *Hawn* film, or my farming and forag-

## 439 TOWARD AN ETHIC OF INTIMACY

ing neighbors at Dzanga Sangha, may see themselves as fighting with elephants about the limits of human versus elephant space. A certain amount of respect is implied in this conflict, which may reflect centuries of intimate negotiation with elephants. Those engaging in an ethic of intimacy might seek better to understand their conflicts and cohabitations, recognizing and reinforcing elements that can assist with resolving today's challenges to elephants' continued existence in the wild.

The Indian villagers of the *Hawn* film, like the protected BaAka in colonial and contemporary African conservation settings, are at the fulcrum of increasingly global practices of environmental protection that are rooted in the colonial moment. These approaches to protection often reflect the male-dominated cultural norms and compelling narratives of adventure and appropriation that are the legacy of colonial culture (Haraway 1989). The colonial era's gender and class biases often still shape the politics of elephant protection. Even within progressive conservation practices, there remain many biases in key market sectors—fund-raising for protection efforts and ecotourism sales, for example. The prevailing logics still seek the symbolic (and, often, real) appropriation of elephants according to outdated colonial models of great white adventurers with civilizing missions.

Especially ironic is that many western conservationists have trouble seeing the likenesses across the various levels and types of human consumption that conspire to make elephants scarcer despite measured conservation and management victories. This is what leads Kohak (2000, 9) to claim the "innocent greed of the affluent" as the biggest ecological time bomb threatening elephants and other wildlife. Kohak's work reminds us that understanding how some are "appropriating" elephants by using their wealth is crucial to finding ethical ways forward. Those who donate money to conservation, or go on photographic safaris themselves, often are no more able to see their own daily choices (expansion into second homes or third cars) as harmful to elephants than are the villagers whose expansion into new agricultural lands brings them into direct and intimate conflict with elephants.

#### Domination

Advocates of hunters' rights have been quick to notice these ironies of conservationist and protectionist practice. Indeed, they are used in efforts to create new communities across hunting categories. Many wealthy leisure hunters began their hunting careers doing varmint control or subsistence hunting on family farms and nurture a sense of kindred spirits with poor hunters, as opposed to those less emotional links they might create with wealthy naturalists and conservationists. Similarly, many self-identified "native hunters" have commented on their experience of being pushed aside by wealthy conservationist interests that do not acknowledge the le-

## 440 ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE IN NATURE

gitimacy and importance of the kill in human interactions with natural systems:

For Native American people . . . the moral universe includes all animals and plants. Every living thing has basic rights and should be treated with respect, regardless of appearance, personality, or perceived relationship with humans. But within indigenous traditions there is also a deep and lucid awareness that taking plant and animal life is how we survive each day. What matters is that we conduct ourselves respectfully toward every organism, consciously recognizing and honoring this dependence. (Nelson 1992, 30)

Such an argument simply may not extend to the high-prestige stakes of trophy hunting. Yet, for many trophy hunters, some sort of subsistence hunting is in their past, and they see hunting as a nearly primordial need and right. For some, hunting is analogous to sexual instincts in humans (Causey 1989). Few would argue that sex should only occur for reproduction—for it is also an important pleasure in itself, and a crucial building block in human intimacy. Likewise, hunting no longer need occur for subsistence only but is an important pleasure in itself, and a crucial practice for maintaining certain elements of human intimacy with landscapes and animal populations.

This view turns upon an ethical acceptance of death as natural, primordial, and significant to life. Others disagree about the pivotal role of the kill in the pleasure of the hunt. They argue, “To the sportsman the death of the game is not what interests him; that is not his purpose. What interests him is everything that he had to do to achieve that death—that is, the hunt” (Ortega y Gasset 1985, 96–97). Hell (1994) notes that the sociology of leisure, which has given rise to much of the recent research on tourism, has clear limits for the analysis of sport hunting and cannot do justice to this endeavor’s highly ritualized and personalized spilling of blood, which asserts personal virility, mastery of property, social prestige, and cultural identity.

Whatever one’s position on the pleasure of the kill, a broader acceptance of the hunt as crucial to humanity’s relationship with animals demands that the internal motivations and practical scruples of each individual hunter become the relevant ethical boundary to recognize. Many advocates of hunting claim to consider it carefully indeed, developing clear and thoughtful guidelines regarding the material circumstances of the hunt. For these hunters, implicit in the idea of “trophy” is that the game pursued is a wild, free-ranging animal also available as quarry to other hunters, and never subject to practices such as stimulating antler growth with mineral blocks, hormones, or other substances. Any other approach is beyond acceptable ethical practice and diminishes the value of all trophies (Posewitz 1994).

They even extend the notion of ethics to the motivations of a given hunt

## 441 TOWARD AN ETHIC OF INTIMACY

(Ritchi 1995), contrasting externally versus internally motivated hunters to extend the notion of hunting ethics to the pursuit of trophies:

If you hunt these animals because they represent the survivors of many hunts, and you respect that achievement, then you have selected a high personal standard. If, on the other hand, you pursue a trophy to establish that you, as an individual hunter, are superior to other hunters, then you have done it to enhance your personal status, and that crosses the ethical line. (Posewitz 1994, 97)

Elephants are among the most important prestige trophies to be found. They are, along with a very few other species, arguably the most “externally motivated” trophy one can possibly obtain. The body is far too large to transport for a full-mount trophy that would rely on extensive taxidermy and require enormous display spaces. Rather, standard practice is to mount the head, featuring the tusks. In any collection, such trophies are almost always awarded a most prominent place.

This is true not only for Europeans on safari hunts but for Africans who have long used elephant tusks in architecture testifying to the political and spiritual power of particular leaders. For example, the classic ethnographic work *The Nuer* (Evans-Pritchard 1940) features photographs of the remarkable structures used by southern Sudanese prophets. These enormous mounds were each surrounded by rings of upright elephant tusks. Many of these structures, and indeed the men who controlled them, were targeted for destruction by British colonial forces. The British recognized their potentially revolutionary influence on fiercely autonomous peoples who were not necessarily prepared to submit to colonial rule. In fact, the long history of colonial suppression of indigenous African uses of elephants may explain why contemporary debates about legalizing elephant hunting are suffused with the politics of postcolonial political autonomy.

Consider recent debates about downlisting the status of elephants, to a less protected category under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (see also Duffy, Chapter 22 in this volume). The official U.S. position under former President Clinton opposed this change. But Representative Richard Pombo (R-CA) traveled to Zimbabwe to make it clear to the official U.S. delegation, to the animal rights advocates, and to other countries, that “not everyone in the U.S. government agreed with this approach . . . nations should develop and control their own wildlife conservation programs” (Marlenee 1997). A member of the non-official U.S. delegation writes of the successful vote to downlist elephants:

Immediately following the triumphant vote, elated Africans rose in what seemed to be a spontaneous emotional act and began sing-

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—place.  
[FIGURE] figure  
21.4 about here

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442 ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE IN NATURE



Figure 21.4 A hunter's trophy room in his California home.  
*Reproduced by permission from Safari Press, ed., Great Hunters, vol. 1:  
Their Trophy Rooms and Collections (Long Beach, CA: Safari Press, 1997)*

ing the southern African liberation hymn. It was a jubilant and tremendously moving experience to watch as southern African delegates celebrated what they said was a victory in winning respect for their needs, their sovereignty and many years of hard work. (National Animal Interest Alliance 2003)

These divided opinions on the downlisting of elephants should raise questions about the homogeneity of African opinions, as well. There, as in

## 443 TOWARD AN ETHIC OF INTIMACY

North America, it is worth asking whether governing elites truly represent public opinion and whether those most intimately involved with elephants are well-represented at such international negotiations. What is clear is that without the histories of domination through hunting practice, and domination's broader role in forging colonial control over African territories, there could not have been this particular nationalistic political impulse for concerted opposition to protection measures. Any ethical frameworks must be able to respond concretely to such crucial political challenges, as well as attending to the intimacy implicit in hunting's legacies of layered domination: humans over animals, and through that display of power, over other humans as well.

#### Intimacy

All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts . . . a land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such.

(Leopold 1949, 239–240)

Real intimacies with elephants reside in the details of daily life with them—a researcher's day in and day out walks to the same clearing; a safari guide's dogged tramping through urine-filled ditches in swampy terrain; a keeper's time spent cleaning parts of a zoo enclosure; a trainer's daily ritual for bathing a giant pachyderm. They are often at some remove from the pursuit of power, authority, and celebrity that most influences elephants' fates. Yet there are lessons from such intimacies that need to appear more, and appeal more, to key decision makers, many of whom are likely merely to "drop in" to such intimacies briefly for a tour or a trophy—if that.

Such decision makers are increasingly elevated, through the workings of social hierarchy and capital accumulation, far beyond the status of Leopold's "plain member and citizen" of society, let alone of nature. Those who wield the most power to appropriate nature hardly need bother, save perhaps to tip a few coins, with those who daily negotiate their relationships to the elements of nature. The latter individuals may or may not seek at times to dominate or appropriate elephants in the symbolically powerful ways previously described; but they balance such acts with others, inasmuch as they are the bathers and feeders, the trackers and trainers, the persistent ecologists counting elephants in clearings, or the passionate farmers angrily chasing them from trampled crops.

Not many people have this common experience of sharing some significant slice of their life with elephants. The salience of intimacy as a concept for elephant protection lies in its suggestion that those who fall into

## 444 ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE IN NATURE

such a category might do well to consider the circumstances that unite them, rather than the convictions that divide them. In the current political climate, this would entail some acknowledgment of the ironies and contradictions inherent in articulated philosophies for and against hunting. Some hunting advocates truly believe the “anti-hunting movement reflects . . . increased distance from the environment, diminished awareness of how we interact with it, and denial of basic biological processes” (Nelson 1992, 31). Clearly, they have not been in the presence of those conservationists and animal advocates who have repeatedly risked—or even sustained—bodily injury in the course of their work with large animals, or who may have held a frothy-mouthed animal through death throes, trying to ascertain what viral agent could be causing an oncoming epidemic.

Conversely, many animal welfare advocates appear unable to acknowledge the profound ambivalence and power at the heart of hunting as an intimate confrontation with animality:

Every good hunter is uneasy in the depths of his conscience when faced with the death he is about to inflict. . . . The generally problematic, equivocal nature of man’s relationship with animals shines through the uneasiness. . . . Before and beyond all science, humanity sees itself as something emerging from animality, but it cannot be sure of having transcended that state completely. (Ortega y Gasset 1985, 88)

The framework of intimacy helps us acknowledge that the grounds on which we interact with elephants may shift, as our abilities to apprehend different dimensions of human and other life forms improve. It enables us to recognize and to respect historical relationships with elephants even as new circumstances of intimacy emerge that might displace or erase them. Research into cognition and memory, for example, may eventually shift conventional wisdom about what constitutes “personhood” (see Varner, Chapter 3 in this volume); recent work in science studies also takes up such questions (Haraway 2003).

Those who are most intimate with elephants historically may not have access to new academic developments and should not be penalized for that. Nor should they be excluded from dialogue with those who are more connected to new knowledge frontiers. An ethical intimacy framework recognizes that a researcher who has spent long hours studying the memory of elephants and a skilled tracker for elephant hunting both should have some say with respect to how policy and extractive practices are managed. In fact, each would have much to discuss with the other about the knowledge derived from their respective forms of intimacy with these creatures. A member of the South African secret police force in the early 1990s, how-

## 445 TOWARD AN ETHIC OF INTIMACY

ever dependent on ivory revenues for political funding (Ellis 1994), would be out of place in such discussions because of his lack of intimacy with elephants. For him, ivory was a crucial but replaceable commodity and his reliance on it was not predicated on any real sharing of his life with elephants, but rather on the work of trackers and hunters and traders.

A practical ethic of intimacy for elephants calls for us to recognize and value historical and potential human communities of concern for, knowledge about, and interdependence with elephants. It also calls for members of such communities to consider the claims and common interests of others who have experienced or sincerely sought intimacy with elephants. I suggest that certain new forms of engagement with elephants are cause for hope that we may respond to this call. These include long-term research, tourism “off the beaten path” and out of motor vehicles, and perhaps forms of hunting that depart from the slaughter of elephants as mere replaceable commodities (as in the case of our hypothetical South African secret police officer), or for social display of wealth and power through trophies. Such new forms of touring and hunting could occur in historic elephant habitat among remaining wild populations, or in new contexts within which elephants gather such as sanctuaries or very large ranches. The hunting might be motivated either by subsistence and ecological need, or, in the case of trophy hunting, (Posewitz 1994) by the accurate and respectful recognition of individual animals’ life histories of maturity and successive triumphs over hunters. For those forms to take concrete shape, however, they would have to rely on other communities of intimate knowledge about elephants, as populations, and as individuals.

The social obstacles to an effective ethic of intimacy are enormous and a long time in the making. This is due to, in large part, the profoundly gendered and racialized social differences within and among human societies at regional and international scales, reaching from the Middle Ages to contemporary tensions, such as postcolonialism, antifederalism, and increasing social and economic stratification. Until we are better able to confront and reconfigure the seductive cultural and interpersonal dynamics of these human divisions, the ethics of domination and appropriation will continue their twin reign. Their potential contributions to conservation processes at local levels notwithstanding, at a broader scale they will facilitate increasing human consumption of elephants as commodities within concentric local, regional, and global markets. This will likely mean the end of elephants living as complex groups in their natural habitats. It may even mean dramatic reduction of their multiple roles in human lives: as modes of transport, treasured companions, awe-inspiring prey, and remarkable competitors for ever more precious space, all on a planet where elephants are increasingly unable to live beyond the reach of human intimacies.

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### Notes

1. It is useful to distinguish between descriptive ethics and normative ethics, particularly given that the two can overlap rather insidiously despite an author's best efforts at self-awareness on such matters. My work as an anthropologist can contribute to "environmental ethics" as thus defined: "the systematic and critical study of judgments and attitudes which (consciously or unconsciously) guide human beings in the way they behave toward nature" (Stenmark 2002).

2. This watershed between northern and more Mediterranean European hunting and forest use has foundations that emerge in the Middle Ages and can be seen in the very different legislative statutes for hunting across the two regions. In Italy, hunting was subordinated entirely to pastoralism and agriculture, in part because forests

were scarcer and more feared (Chastel 1990). Further north, in the Rhine region, only the wolf could be freely exterminated, and the Badois (or Alsatian peasantry) were much more constrained in their hunting practices.

3. "Serions-nous incapables de faire simplement autant que les Anglais?" *Le Tourisme et la question Hoteliere en Afrique Equatoriale Française* (p. 5). Centre des Archives d'Outre Mer Series: Agence France Outre Mer Carton: 360 d. hotelier.

4. Poulenc. Bayanga. Hardin Interview and field notes from August 5, 1995, conducted with French Foreign Legion and Parachute troops deployed in the French bas Bouar for regional surveillance and security operations.

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