



# Hunters, Herders, and Hamburgers: The Past and Future of Human-Animal Relationships

By Richard W. Bulliet

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Richard W. Bulliet engagingly recounts the dynamic relationship between humans and animals from prehistory to the present. Bulliet explores four stages in the history of the human-animal relationship-separation, predomesticity, domesticity, and postdomesticity. He begins with the question of when and why humans began to consider themselves distinct from other species and concludes with the use of species as raw materials for various animal-product industries. Bulliet discusses the impact of social and technological developments and changing philosophical, religious, and aesthetic viewpoints and closes with a probing look at our current era of postdomesticity, in which many people remain dependent on animal products, though they have no involvement with producing animals. By considering the shifting roles of domesticated animals in human society, as well as their place in the social imagination, Bulliet reveals the different ways various cultures have reinforced, symbolized, and rationalized their relations with animals.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Columbia University historian Bulliet (*The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization*) admits he is not "a scientific researcher in the field of animal studies," but his book presents a provocative look at human-animal relations that offers a heady but highly readable mix of anthropology, archeology, zoology, environmentalism and philosophy. His main argument is that we live in an era of "postdomesticity" in which people live far away, "both physically and psychologically," from the animals whose food and hides they rely on. The bulk of the book is a look at various stages of human-animal relationships from antiquity to today, with remarkable explorations of related issues, such as the real;and nonnutritional;reason for human consumption of milk, and the way the industrialization of animal exploitation has caused a "spiritual and imaginative impoverishment of our outlook on the animal world." But what will surely cause the biggest controversy is Bulliet's fascinating argument that an "increasing fascination with fantasies of sex and blood" among post-WWII Americans is a subliminal reaction to the removal of animals other than pets;along with animal slaughter and animal sex;from their childhood experiences. (*Oct.*)

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From [Booklist](#)

One only has to hear the hair-raising cry of a predatory coyote in a suburban backyard to know that humanity's relationship to the animal kingdom has undergone a sea change. From the first caveman to drag home a woolly mammoth carcass to today's confrontational anti-fur street demonstrations, human-animal relations have always been, and continue to be, more intricately entwined than society has comfortably acknowledged. Bulliet, professor of history at Columbia University, contends that this elemental interspecies dynamic has so evolved since the dawn of humanity to now be at a critical turning point. Just as our Victorian-era predecessors could not envision either the disconnect with which modern nonvegetarians acknowledge the source of the meat on their tables nor the extreme humanizing with which contemporary society treats its companion animals, so, too, will future generations view our present social, economic, and philosophical behaviors as equally quaint, self-serving, and, ultimately, destructive. A precisely researched, logically presented, and candidly intriguing apologia for humankind's inconsistent relationship with animals. *Carol Haggas*

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Review

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(*Publishers Weekly*)

A precisely researched, logically presented, and candidly intriguing apologia for humankind's inconsistent relationship with animals.

(*Booklist*)

Bulliet has an impressive knowledge of archaeozoology and the history of human relationships with animals.

(Juliet Clutton-Brock *Times Literary Supplement*)

Bulliet's writing is irreverent seasoned with humor, and sprinkled with pop references that draw in nonscholarly readers.

(Scott Carlson *Utne*)

This provocative thesis is arresting in its originality.

(Glynis Ridley *Washington Post*)

You may never look at a pet, or a burger, in quite the same way again.

(Mark Thompson *Ecologist*)

The book is notable for many stimulating and original ideas.

(Linda Wiener *Science Books & Films*)

This is an original, well-written and fascinating work, a riveting read.

(Barbara Noske *Anthropological Forum*)

This book is a welcome addition to the literature... We need more such works.

(Edmund Russell *Technology and Culture*)

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#### **Mark Hernandez:**

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