

LARRY YOUNT 1

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mutant solidarities - introduction

Whenever it would snow, my mother would make us snow cones with cherry syrup. It made her happy to take something that was natural and turn it into a treat. Then one snowy day Mom was crying instead of laughing. She'd read an article that said there was nuclear fall-out in the snow, and that children shouldn't play in it let alone EAT it. She was sure that we were all going to die. But we just became nuclear mutants, like all the other creatures on earth.

“...animals—irrespective of size—are susceptible to radiation, with dose-response relations similar to those of man.”¹

On October 20, 1999, then Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson proclaimed that 1000 acres within the Los Alamos National Laboratory would be designated a wildlife preserve, “...an able bearer of New Mexico’s legacy of enchantment.” As part of a DOE project designed to give the agency an environmentally-friendly image, buffer zones around nuclear sites were promoted for their “biodiversity” rather than for their “nuclear toxicity.”

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Crackerneck Wildlife Management Area and Ecological Reserve: radioactive alligators and bass live and breed in the river;

¹ Jane Smith and Tony Smith. **Radiation Injury and Effects of Early Fallout.** *BMJ* 1981, 283(6295): 844-846.

Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem Reserve: big-eared bats carry radionuclides to nearby territories;

Hanford Reach National Monument: Russian thistle flowers break off to become radioactive tumbleweed;

Los Alamos National Laboratory Preserve: nuclear bees seen as “environmental sentinels” tracking the distribution of radioactive materials through New Mexico and beyond.

While news of the explosion at Chernobyl’s nuclear plant was not released to the press for weeks, animals knew. Bees wouldn’t leave their hives, worms burrowed deeply into the ground, and the cattle wouldn’t drink from the river. “...we need to learn from them in order to survive...their cultures, their civilizations. After Chernobyl, a bird flies past and it is closer...We are all living time.”²

Sci. inventory extract

Then softly draws fourth pointed pervade

For 3 weeks after the Fukushima nuclear accident, the incidence of dog bite injuries were up 30 %. After 3 weeks, dog bite incidents returned to pre-disaster levels.³

² Svetlana Alexievitch. From her **Chernobyl Notebooks**. *Utne* May/June 2004, 92-93.

³ Mori J et al. **Increased incidence of dog-bite injuries after the Fukushima nuclear accident**. *Preventive Medicine* 2013, 57(4): 363-365.

Nuclear bee manifest

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Red deer, wild boars, wolves, elk and foxes now populate and flourish in the site of the Chernobyl nuclear accident. Birth defects and other illnesses have not been found. The scientists responsible for the study noted that chronic radiation

exposures pale in comparison to how “the removal of humans alleviates one of the more persistent and ever growing stresses experienced by natural ecosystems.”⁴
Da Man (a “mutant solidarities” agitprop)

⁴ T.G. Deryabina et al. **Long-term census data reveal abundant wildlife populations at Chernobyl.** *Current Biology* 2015, 25: R824-R826.

notes:

On October 20, 1999...

Joseph Masco. **Mutant Ecologies: Radioactive Life in Post-Cold War New Mexico.** *Cultural Anthropology* 19(4): 517-550, November 2004. A BIG THANKS to Diane Ward for sending me this article.

While seeming to be “natural”

Isabelle Stengers. *The Invention of Modern Science.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

The Cambridge Declaration of Consciousness animals are hanging out in a park waiting for Jakob von Uexkull to walk by. They want to thank him for everything he has done to promote non-human animals as thinking creatures.

Great ape: Here he comes!

The animals come together and shout: Jakob von Uexkull – you're Da Man!

J von U: um, um

The animals are confused that he's not smiling and happy. So they say: Jakob von Uexkull – you're the BIG GUY!

J von U: um, um

Great ape: Why aren't you happy? We think of you as a frontrunner in getting humans to think that non-human animals are more than evolutionary road markers.

J von U: I'm confused that you're talking to me. That's not one of the things I thought you guys did.

Magpie: We were going to discuss that with you. We talk with one another all the time – just not with you humans. Is that such a big deal?

J von U: Well, no, but it does put a damper on my Umwelt.

Elephant: You've got an Umwelt? Is that like a talking wallet?

J von U: No, it's our senses as a garment – a way to view the world. You have Umwelts, too.

Dolphin: I have an Umwelt? But I don't wear clothes.

J von U: No, you are right. But you do see the ocean differently from humans. That's what I'm trying to say – we all have different Umwelts.

Octopus: But you humans are polluting our Umwelt. Have you heard about the dying coral reefs? Are you going to create a new Umwelt for us when we can't live in the ocean anymore?

J von U: um, um

Dolphin: We don't want to put pressure on you cause you're Da Man, but we do have to talk about what we're going to do when humans destroy our Umwelts.

J von U: There was lots of pollution when I was alive – mines, etc. – but it didn't threaten our Umwelts.

Great ape: That was before you humans caused global warming by driving around in cars and pumping ozone into the air. That's what is killing the ocean – warm temperatures + pollution.

J von U: So what you are saying is that global warming means we all have the same Umwelt?

Octopus: Looking more like that every day.

J von U: OK, since I'm Da Man, I'll appear to the heads of all the polluting corporations and tell them that we'll be taking their profits to create Umwelts for all of us.

Dolphin: Great idea! And could you also appear to Noam Chomsky to let him know that we all have languages.

J von U: Good point. I think you all are Da Man.

Chuck & Fran (agitprop)

Charles Darwin runs into St. Francis of Assisi walking in the woods in Umbria, Italy

CD: Is that you, St. Francis of Assisi?

FA: Yes, and who may you be?

CD: Charles Darwin from the 19th century.

FA: It is so nice to meet you. What are you doing here?

CD: I always wanted to walk in the Umbria woods and watch the birds.

FA: You are right – beautiful birds here.

CD: And why are you here?

FA: Well, I like to come back to the place where I was laid out after I died. It is comforting.

CD: You were laid out in the woods? Not in a church?

FA: Yes, so all the animals could come to say goodbye. And they did!

CD: Why didn't I think of that!

FA: I wouldn't think that someone known for evolution with humans as the "end point" would be into animals coming to say goodbye to them.

CD: The general understanding of my work is skewed. One of my books – The Descent of Man – is really an homage to female birds.

FA: Female birds?!

CD: Yes, some of them have multiple mates and focus on beauty, not "the best traits."

FA: You focus on beauty?

CD: Yes, beauty drives evolution, really.

FA: So with a focus on beauty, we could never have eugenics.

CD: You are so right.

FA: I could never get into eugenics by focusing on animals. Why would we degrade any creature? Why would we see evolution as the “big fist?”

CD: When eugenics started to rear its ugly head, I felt like coming back to life to challenge it. But then I couldn’t because I was an agnostic.

FA: You could have returned. I bet the female birds would have been happy for sure!

CD: They would have squawked “”deep six the genes, deep six the genes!”

FA: So beauty counters genetic determinism?

CD: For sure! If you focus on beauty, the rest is beautiful, too.

FA: I think you need to come back to reclaim your work. Eugenical thinking is so destructive.

CD: Maybe you could do it through the Franciscan order. Your work celebrating all creatures throws a wrench into eugenics.

FA: I will let the Franciscan priests know. When they do the “blessing of the animals” they could talk about countering eugenics as well.

CD: Is this where you were laid out?

FA: Yes!

CD: If I lie down here, do you think the animals will come to say goodbye to me, too?

FA: I’ll lie down, too, and we’ll both be comforted by our animal friends.

Footnotes:

Richard O. Prum. The Evolution of Beauty: How Darwin's Forgotten Theory of Mate Choice Shapes the Animal World – and Us. New York: Anchor Books, 2017.

Jack Wintz. Will I See My Dog in Heaven? Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2009.

Put: A Blockhead (Oxford English Dictionary)

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BLOCKHEAD! Listen to the dolphins!

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BLOCKHEAD! Listen to the polar bears!

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BLOCKHEAD! Listen to the penguins!

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BLOCKHEAD! Listen to the elephants!

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BLOCKHEAD! Listen to the magpies!

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BLOCKHEAD! Listen to the great apes!

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BLOCKHEAD! Listen to the octopus!

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BLOCKHEAD! Listen.