

drama itself had developed. Many ideas now taken for granted had only come into critical discussion recently, for instance, scholarship on women's cultural influence and artistic production. This book testifies to the rich and exciting developments in early modern studies as a whole and Renaissance drama in particular.

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Edward Berry. *Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp xii, 253.

This book is ambitious, illuminating, and provocative. The author moves from an eye-opening account of actual hunting practices in Elizabethan and Jacobean England to a specific analysis of Shakespeare's many uses of hunt imagery in his works. Individual chapters deal with *Venus and Adonis* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Julius Caesar*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *As You Like It*, and *The Tempest*. Finally, in his last chapter, Berry moves directly to confront the overwhelming question: what do the works show about Shakespeare's attitude toward hunting?

Granting the inevitably subjective search for implied authorial attitudes, Berry quotes the opposing views of two major commentators on the hunt: D. H. Madden, who concludes that Shakespeare was 'beyond doubt a sportsman, with ... rare skill in the mysteries of woodcraft, loving to recall the very names of the hounds with which he was wont to hunt'; and Matt Cartmill, who notes that Shakespeare consistently links hunting to rape and murder, and creates characters for whom 'a distaste for the hunt is a sign of common decency'.<sup>1</sup> Berry sides strongly with Cartmill, concluding bravely and for the most part convincingly, that '[i]ndividually, each of the works implies a critique of the culture of the hunt; collectively, the recurrent patterns of the critique imply a coherent authorial point of view' (209).

In his introduction Berry emphasizes the importance of hierarchy among both hunters and prey. Hunting was an aristocratic sport. Berry points out that 'those who hunt in Shakespeare are invariably royalty, aristocracy, or privileged gentry' (12). Hunters also observed the hierarchy, apparently familiar to Shakespeare, among different classes of deer, an order topped by the adult male red deer usually known as a 'hart' (17). By its aristocratic practitioners hunting was defended as a recreation and as providing experience for war, but ambiguities in attitude were widely apparent. There were, of course, lower class hunters, possibly including Shakespeare, but they were regarded as poachers.

Given the aristocratic nature of the hunt, Shakespeare's use of its imagery may seem surprising. Berry says that the poet's extensive use of hunt imagery is unique both in its frequency and its technical mastery among dramatists of the period. He attributes this phenomenon to the fact that 'throughout his life Shakespeare was situated – economically, socially, and geographically on the margins of the culture of the hunt' (14).

In his commentary on individual works Berry begins with *Venus and Adonis* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. It is an illuminating conjunction. He finds hunting to be a metaphor for male aggression as an initiation into the arts of war, but also a metaphor for female aggression as an initiation into sexuality. The early play repeats the image of the aggressive female in the figure of the Princess of France, who kills a deer even though she sympathizes with it and admittedly does so only to earn praise. Sexual undercurrent also permeates this hunt as the 'preyful Princess' both arouses and rejects sex.

The Roman plays, *Titus Andronicus* and *Julius Caesar*, are joined by the effort in each to conceive hunting and murder as attempted ritual – an effort which disintegrates into chaos. In each the imagery of the hunt has been expanded far beyond the source. In Berry's discussion of *The Taming of the Shrew*, the focus shifts from the deer hunt by hounds to the falcon to which Petruchio relates Kate. Emphasis is placed on the reciprocal co-operation between bird and trainer. A sustained analysis of the contemporary marriage of Lord Henry and Lady Katharine Berkeley imagines the possibility that Shakespeare's play might be in fact a satiric wish fulfillment fantasy of the hunting lord of the induction. The effort is admirable but it doesn't save the play.

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Falstaff becomes a 'rascal' deer – a rogue, knave, or inferior member of the breed. Berry concedes that the play is not about hunting, but Falstaff admits to poaching at the start and deer imagery pervades the play. Berry incorporates in his analysis the notion that the play enacts the social customs of the charivari, the social punishment of the 'rascal' member. He suggests that this ceremony evokes the spectre of poaching in another guise. His is an appreciative discussion, but it seems to me to push interpretation too far.

One of the best chapters in the book is the one on *As You Like It*. Berry sees the play as a merging of the aristocratic world of the hunt and the pastoral society of the shepherds. Rosalind comes to represent both worlds. In both killing for food is acceptable, but killing for sport is problematic. Berry focuses understandably on the curious behavior of Jaques, who both weeps for the deer and seems to participate in the celebration of its death. Berry takes for granted that Arden is in England and spells out its contemporary resonances.

In his chapter on *The Tempest*, Berry suggests a parallel between the supernatural powers of Prospero and the autocratic behavior of James I. The link between them is their absolute power. It is manifested in the image of the hunt; but the tie between James's life-long passion for hunting and Prospero's brief engagement with an abbreviated version seems rather tenuous. James hunted deer with dogs who killed their prey, and he never gave up the sport. Prospero seems to have ordered Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo to be chased by dogs who will grind their joints and cramp their sinews. It seems to be a hunt without human hunters and occupies some eight lines – barely a hunt at all (4.1.255–62). Still, the association of Prospero and James with tyranny is persuasive and perhaps makes Prospero's final change of heart more satisfying

I found *Shakespeare and the Hunt* compelling and wonderfully learned in the depth and breadth of its use of both classical and Renaissance contexts. Suggestions of several possible new sources, suggested but not insisted on, enrich our thinking about the plays. Berry's coupling of poetic and dramatic works is consistently illuminating. However, his work bears signs of being long in progress and perhaps even a little dated. The 1991 work of Alden T. and Virginia Mason Vaughan on Caliban is mentioned perfunctorily in a note but never used and never makes it to the index.<sup>2</sup> And the great majority of modern works cited predate the 1990s. Finally, in spite of my admiration for Berry's knowledge and courage in identifying Shakespeare's view of the hunt, I'm not fully convinced that it needs to be so categorical. It seems to me likely that Shakespeare's ideas shifted and varied with the circumstances and perhaps even evolved. I have argued in *The Shakespearean Wild* that the age's and the poet's attitude toward animals was changing, and surely this affected views of the hunt. But one doesn't have to agree completely to be impressed and educated by the breadth, ambition, and insightful revelations of this book.

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- 1 D. H. Madden, *The Diary of Master William Silence* (London, 1907), ii; Matt Cartmill, *A View to a Death in the Morning: Hunting and Nature through History* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 79.
- 2 Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban: A Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1991). Cited by Berry on 248, note 1.