

walked a great distance. Gradually he grew weak and collapsed to the ground.

He dreamt he was a human being, running frantically to save his life. The dread of extinction was in his mouth. They were gaining on him, and there was no escape. Never again would he walk the earth, never again hold those whom he loved. They were almost upon him when suddenly he felt an unbearable pain. The beam of light had found its mark.

Then he sensed a mysterious presence, and a voice was heard which engulfed his soul: "You now begin to see with the heart. We are all of us creatures in the abyss of this world. We are here for a moment and then are no more. Death and oblivion await us all. But even while we are here, no matter what our place on creation's scale, we are all of us assailed by pain. Pain is life's Dumb Brute. It does not see life's beauty or brevity. It sees only its victim whom it wants to destroy. We are as one with every creature--the weak, the lowly, the helpless--sharing its fate. Pain unites us and makes us one. In this harsh, dark night, how can we see pain and not be saddened? How can we cause it and not feel shame?"

Ramox awoke. Lying there numbly, he stared at the heavens. Then he arose and made his way back to the awaiting ships. As he walked, he could see the markers busy at work.

At home, Ramox soon began to protest. The voice in his dream would give him no peace. Inflicting pain, however artfully disguised by words, was nothing else but inflicting pain, a strange sort of pleasure, and one which left the self befouled.



THE SACRED PAW: THE BEAR IN NATURE, MYTH AND LITERATURE

By PAUL SHEPARD and BARRY SANDERS

Reviewed by

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For the growing numbers of people who are concerned with the relationship with nature, and for inspiring those who should be, The Sacred Paw is an important book. Drawing upon data about bears from many disciplines, the authors provide the vital perspective needed in today's fast-paced and often fragmented world, for their approach to their subject is holistic. Shepard and Sanders have demonstrated how one particular animal is not just a biological entity (though interesting enough on those terms), but rather represents the sum total of diverse concepts about its species in the human consciousness. The reader learns that beliefs about bears, and the symbolic meaning with which the animals are imbued in folklore, mythology, and literature, determine, even as they are determined by, human interaction with living animals.

Even though relatively few people in modern times may have contact with actual bears, the authors point out that many concepts related to these once-abundant animals have penetrated into human thought processes and thereby have become relevant to everyday life. Beginning early in American history, the bear has been especially significant, looming large in frontier consciousness both as a symbol and a real denizen of the wilderness. And throughout the world, from prehistoric times, evidence indicates that wherever the bear has ranged, it has generally been looked upon by those societies living in or near its domain as the most majestic of animals, inspiring fear and awe as well as respect and admiration. Somewhat paradoxically, the bear has been viewed as the epitome



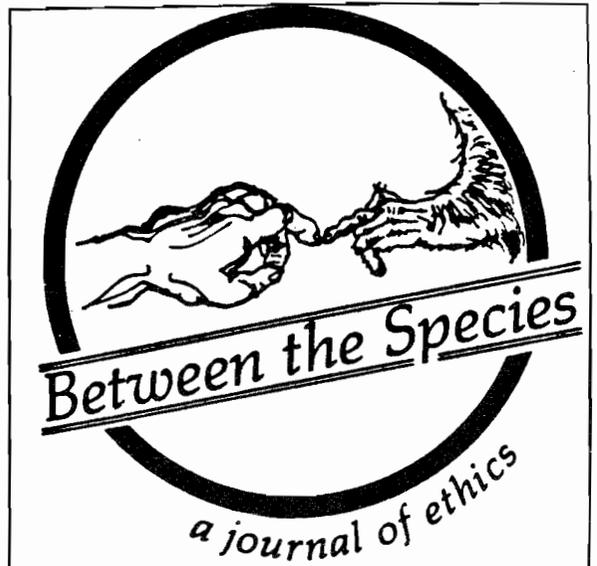
REVIEW



of all game animals for the hunter, while at the same time being perceived as the beast that most resembles humankind, a wise teacher, and often a supernatural being with the ability to communicate with the spirit world. Through its particular life cycle, the authors point out, the bear has become a metaphor for rebirth and is a significant religious symbol in diverse cultures.

The Sacred Paw reveals that in all its differing roles, from Teddy bear toy and fairy tale hero to honored kin and revered god, the bear enriches human experience even as it illuminates many aspects of the human condition. Insights about such issues as our own spirituality and mentality, the role of the individual versus society, and the nature of fear and the value of risk are gained through the explorations of bear lore contained in this book. Through the use of cross-cultural data that reveal widespread belief in a special intimacy between people and bears, the universal dilemma of humankind's status with regard to the animal kingdom is brought sharply into focus.

In the present day, many species of the magnificent bears which have given such a meaningful dimension to human life and thought are rapidly declining in numbers and disappearing from much of their range, due to loss of habitat and competition with human interests. As the authors point out, the tragic destruction of bears, and indeed of so many elements of the wild in recent times, have resulted from our having traded an old sense of harmony and inter-relatedness with nature for the short-sighted goals of economic growth and material profit. This book, making clear that the world will be infinitely less rich and satisfying without wild bears, should help us to make wiser decisions about sharing the earth with other creatures before it is too late. Human interactions with bears in earlier times and in certain non-industrialized cultures have exemplified a sense of community with nature and a deep appreciation of the earth's beneficence. Such interactions contrast sharply with modern over-exploitation and selfish destructiveness of the wild. Because the many-faceted explorations of Shepard and Sanders have revealed the bear as so superb an animal, preeminent not only in its natural history, lore, and role in the human ethos, but in its resemblance to humankind, the book will help to awaken people to a new ethic of more empathetic interaction with all living creatures.



"BETWEEN THE SPECIES has its origin in fiction, the name of a journal mentioned by one of the characters in George Abbe's novel, Negavit.

"Martin Buber wrote about the way in which humanity arises in the space between persons, in the realm of dialogue, of moving to meet that which is moving to meet us...

"Between The Species is that space in which a humanity not limited by the species bounds of Homo sapiens arises... Between The Species is a journal of ethical thought...."

"I've been starved for something well written and of interest."

Larry Chase
Prof. of Philosophy
University of Kent

"... an excellent first issue. I hope the journal will take off and find the large audience it deserves."

Joseph Meeker
Editor, Minding The Earth