



During the late summer of 1966 Life Magazine presented in two issues condensations from an about-to-be published book by Robert Ardrey called "The Territorial Imperative." I was pleased about this, thinking innocently that thus I would be able to absorb an entire book in two brief readings. Famous last thoughts! When I came to the last word, I immediately phoned the local bookstore and ordered a copy. Having acquired the book, I was lost to the world until I reached the final period.

In the course of the text there were a number of references to a former book by the same author published in 1961, which was titled "African Genesis." This is now available in a paperback edition selling for \$1.95, put out by Dell Publishing Company as a Delta Book. I suggest that anyone who has not yet encountered either text read "African Genesis" first.

On the back cover of the paperback edition are some quotes from reviewers. The late lamented New York Herald-Tribune claimed: "This stunning testament...could become the scientific and philosophical cause célèbre of the literary season." Time Magazine declared that "The conclusions are wildly wrong," but the Scientific American went on record to the effect that "Ardrey's thesis is completely foolproof." Such conflicting statements should rouse curiosity even in the most blase humans.

Maybe you are wondering about this author. He was graduated from the University of Chicago in 1930 with a major in natural sciences. At that time, he claims, "no hint had reached me that private property was other than a human institution evolved by the human brain...Yet the approximate class of 1960, thirty years later, emerging from its respectable universities as respectably well-educated as were we, has been taught not a whit more." After working during the depression at anything that would pay a wage, he became a successful playwright. His knowledge of human nature and his fantastically clever phraseology contribute much to the exciting readability of his writing. He is a master of metaphors and an artist at alliteration. Just one example of his telling tropes is "giraffes like mobile monuments."

Following a "Broadway calamity" he was commissioned by the publisher to write a series of articles on Africa for "The Reporter." Simultaneously he encountered a rumor that a South African scientist "was about to explode a philosophical bomb." During his African sojourn he managed to track down the latest findings on primitive man and/or humanoid ape.

After his return to this country he "came to apprehend...the terrifying panorama of subjects in which the scientific detective would have to acquire at least modest competence before any responsible judgement could be passed (on the new theories)...Who would ever have the time, the freedom, the resources, and the inclination to choose to take on such an investigation?...With considerable horror, I realized that Oakley (of the British Museum) hoped I would."

And he did. He got financial grants; he visited scientists in museums and in the field; he read all the available literature; and ferreted out much that was not readily available. And in the course of all this research he evolved a philosophy of humankind.

Now bird banders may well inquire just what this has to do with banding. Why should they spend time reading about anthropology and the comparative customs of assorted creatures? Here's why. In the first place the author builds up his conclusions on the evidence contributed by behavior studies of various forms of animal life. During the past year we have been flirting with avian behavior in this corner, and this year it is time to come openly face to face with this fascinating type of investigation. There is no better way to plan behavior studies than by reading about the investigations of others into behaviorism. There could be no better way of conciliating the banding office than by stating that you are considering a definite study in behavior.

(Note. At the moment I am in California where I am indulging in some net banding. In this state a yearly permit is required along with a ten dollar fee - also yearly - in order to use nets. Furthermore, the applicant must state the nature of the investigation for which he needs to use nets. It is helpful to have some ideas.)

Secondly, there is an exposition of the theory of territorialism as developed by Eliot Howard and Margaret M. Nice, along with examples. One of "two scientific cries...was...a quiet statement from an English bird-watcher, and it was widely heard, widely accepted, and widely misunderstood...What Eliot Howard had observed throughout a lifetime of bird-watching was that male birds quarrel seldom over females; what they quarrel over is real estate." Furthermore, "in the 1920's Howard's theories were accepted by most authorities as a remarkable characteristic of birds alone."

In the course of his argument Ardrey presents the gist of many a study in behavior to prove his main thesis: that living creatures from ants and fish to human beings are all territorial in nature. Now you can take this theory or leave it; it doesn't matter. What does matter is that the reader is getting the equivalent of a seminar in behaviorism with all the hard work already done for him. There is a veritable Who's Who of twentieth century anthropologists. There is an enticing bibliography, but the text is a resumé of all the important behavior studies; and if one has a retentive memory, I bet he could pass a college exam after reading the book.

If you remain stubborn and insist that no life interests you but bird life, then skim the book for the accounts of avian behavior. Read about the way a Darwin finch copies the woodpecker's trick, or how the great tits in England learned to open milk bottles left on porches. The chapter entitled "Who Pecks Whom" is of undeniable interest to banders. This includes an account of Konrad Lorenz' observations of jackdaw behavior, and how a neglected, spurned female became over night the leading lady. This is pure drama, and the dramatist author makes the most of it.

Incidentally, we will eventually get to Lorenz who practically invented behavior. It had been my intention to start the new year with him, but then Ardrey burst upon the scene, and it seemed better to start with the general survey and progress to the particular.

In a chapter called "Love's Antique Hand" several pages are devoted to an incident about great tits from Len Howard's book: "Birds As Individuals." Then there was a white peacock who fell in love with a tortoise and a white goose that embarrassed Lorenz by falling in love with a Rhode Island Red rooster. And more entertaining details dealing with jackdaws.

Anyone who is strictly and narrowly interested only in birds can omit the chapter called "The Romantic Fallacy." Unless the subject interests him as it very well may. It contains an exposition of the author's philosophy rather than entertaining anecdotes. It also presents an introductory consideration of the amity-enmity complex which is further developed in "The Territorial Imperative." But do be sure to scan all the pages for the black and white drawings by Berdine Ardrey, the author's wife.

A survey of "The Territorial Imperative" will follow in the next issue as the "something new," and this survey of "African Genesis" serves as the "something old." At this point someone may exclaim: "Do you consider a book published less than six years ago something old?" Well, I claim that at the rate scientific information is swamping



us, a book is apt to be out of date by the time it appears in bookstores. Ardrey, himself, in his more recent book, corrects some of the statements he made in the earlier work.

In closing I must confess that I have somewhat misled you. If I had started off with the following publisher's blurb, you might have decided immediately that, as a bird bander, this would be a book you didn't need. "African Genesis presents a fascinating array of new scientific evidence, largely accumulated over the past thirty years, on the origins of man. It is the author's unorthodox and intriguing theory that Homo sapiens developed from carnivorous, predatory killer apes and that man's age-old affinity for war and weapons is the natural result of this inherited animal instinct. African Genesis will long continue to be read and remembered not only for the startlingly radical ideas which it champions, but also for the exceptional clarity of its style and the sense of mounting excitement which it vividly generates."

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#### RANDOM NOTES ... By Constance R. Katholi

A new resident in our neighborhood this year, a Mockingbird, has established a winter territory in my back yard. He takes a dim view of banding activities there and flies in promptly from the forsythia bush to perch over my head and scold vociferously if any of the captives in the trap, net, or hand utter distress calls.

One day last spring, noticing from the window a net being violently agitated, I rushed outside - thinking it was a Pileated Woodpecker at least - to discover a female Summer Tanager "flycatching" - trying, on the wing, to remove a large brown beetle enmeshed in the net.

Noticing a female Baltimore Oriole attempting to find nesting material in my banded net, I decided to help her. I placed short lengths of string at intervals over the top trammel. In no time at all she found them, and in the bargain got herself tangled in the net - which was, after all, the real reason I assisted her! What does the old adage say, you can catch more flies with sugar than with vinegar ...

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