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On Yeti and Being Just

Carving the Borders of Humanity in Early Modern China

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THE MOUNTAINS AND FORESTS OF THE SOUTH WERE THICK WITH wild women.

These hairy she-beasts were lewd, dangerous, and possessed ravenous appetites. Many people who had seen wild women (*yenu* 野女) compared them to naked, barefoot apes wearing the barest strips of leather to cover their loins. They stalked the forests looking for human men, dragging away unlucky captives and forcing them to mate. Just once, according to a popular report, one of these men fought back.¹ After killing his captor, the man cut her open and was astonished by what he found: the wild woman's heart looked just like a piece of lustrous jade, apparently covered in some sort of writing.

What, exactly, had this man just cut into—a fierce woman run wild or a beast with inhuman lusts? How scholars and doctors made sense of this tale is

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part of a much larger question that occupied early modern naturalists in China: what distinguished humans, beasts, and things? And why did it matter?

Seeing Things

A person is not simply a person; what person is not also a thing? A thing is not simply a thing; what thing is not also a person? Moreover, where is there a person who is not also a thing? I am a special thing, imbued with spirit. Things are in some small sense imbued with me, are combined with me. Familiarity has made us forgetful, and we don't understand the relationship between things and people.

—Lü Kun 呂坤 (1536–1618), 1580 preface to *Jian Wu* 見物 [Seeing Things]²

Early Chinese writings had been full of reflections on the relationship of heaven, earth, and man, the great conceptual triumvirate. Though he was ultimately a thing (*wu* 物) like the other creatures in the universe, man was the ultimate perfected form of a thing, embodying and recapitulating the structure of heaven itself.³ In the early modern period, a trend toward naturalization of the exalted reignited scholarly debate of this issue. Lü Kun was one of many late Ming dynasty (1368–1644) scholars whose writings sought to ground an understanding of man's qualities and nature within a more general notion of material objects in the universe: "The Maker's single bellows fires the creation of ten-thousand kinds, breathing into each an aspect of person and of thing. Can these aspects then be separated in two? Man himself built the fences and walls between them."⁴ This question of naturalizing man was taken up quite explicitly in *materia medica* and natural history texts in the late sixteenth century: Were people things? Were they beasts? In either case, how ought one understand and draw the boundaries of humanity? Naturalists turned to wild women, Bigfoot-like beings, and monsters to address these questions.

Human Oddities

Li Shizhen 李時珍 (1518–1593) knew a thing or two about monsters. The doctor and naturalist, famous today as a founding father of modern science and medicine in China, was in his own time centrally preoccupied with understanding the metamorphoses of the natural world.⁵ In his *Bencao jiangmu* 本草綱目

(*Systematic Materia Medica*, hereafter *Bencao*), a massive compendium of information about medical substances and directions for their use, Li classified the stones, plants, animals, and other objects in nature into a hierarchical system that began with the most basic (waters, fires, earths, and stones) and culminated with mankind.⁶ Li was most fascinated with the entities that occupied the borders between categories and the metamorphoses that engendered them, and he devoted a significant part of his encyclopedia of *materia medica* to puzzling over things (*wu*) that were difficult to classify. For Li, humans were among the most problematic entities in nature.

Starting from some of the same premises as his contemporary Lü Kun, Li came to a very different conclusion. People and things were indeed different, according to Li.⁷ However, when something went wrong with the universal *qi* 氣, the vital organizing life-force that permeated the entire cosmos, boundaries became more fluid. In a special section on "Human Oddities" (*rengui* 人傀) in the *Bencao*, Li enumerated a host of cases of unusually shaped humans that he felt could be understood within the context of the transformative processes of the universe at large. The changes of men, however, sometimes fell outside what was typical and expected.⁸ Any scholar of broad learning or doctor charged with protecting another's life was obligated to know about such changes, Li urged, and he thus justified his inclusion of a section on "human oddities" at the end of his text.

There were women who were sterile or androgynous, men who were likewise ambiguously gendered,⁹ and people who split the month between acting like a man and a woman: these were all people (*ren* 人), but they were strange. They had a form, but no reproductive function.¹⁰ Women in tribal communities gave birth after anywhere from six months to three years. Some people were born from a mother's rib, from her head, or from her back if the normal channels of *qi* in the womb were disturbed.¹¹ Kings had been born in extraordinary circumstances, from pustular sores or swollen ribs. Histories include stories of women conceiving by stepping in the footprints of a giant or by swallowing birds' eggs and of men getting pregnant, producing milk, and nursing their young.¹² Spontaneous sex changes were not unheard of. In all of these cases, there was a common thread: though these odd occurrences were strange and thus worthy of noting in historical records, the subjects discussed were nonetheless all people, in fact some were kings, and they were formed from unusual behavior of the normal forces and material of the universe.

After recounting records of people giving birth to worms and hatching from eggs or lumps of meat, however, Li made a telling statement. In remote,

wild, and border areas,¹³ people were born in the environment of such unusual *qi* that they might have three heads, tails, or the faces of birds.¹⁴ These odd folk were included in the People category of the *Bencao's* classification of the natural world. As people, however, they were more like "birds and beasts" than Li would like; he found them so unlike his fellows of common descent (*tongbao zhi min* 同胞之民),¹⁵ that he placed them at the very end of the People category and indeed of the entire *Bencao*.

Upon closer examination this seemingly straightforward classification looks quite a bit more complicated. The boundary group that closes the section on Beasts and immediately precedes the section on People reveals the tensions underlying both categories.¹⁶ The *yulei* 禽類 or *guaili* 怪類, the "strange and unusual" beasts, included monkeys, monkey-men, corpse-eaters, Bigfoot-like creatures, and voracious wild-women.

Ming Sasquatch: On Yeti and Being Just

It is not that a poem or a painting or a palm tree or a person is "true," but rather that it ignites the desire for truth by giving us, with an electric brightness shared by almost no other uninvited, freely arriving perceptual event, the experience of conviction and the experience, as well, of error. . . . It comes to us, with no work of our own; then leaves us prepared to undergo a giant labor.

—Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just*¹⁷

Oddly shaped anthropoid figures had appeared in Chinese literature for most of its history. The distinction between apes and men was relatively fluid before the late Ming, and authors frequently attributed human-like characteristics to creatures that would now be classified as nonhuman primates. Much as the contemplation of wild men and Bigfoot in contemporary American society provides a medium for working out social and cultural anxieties, the study of humanoid creatures was also a study of the idea of humanity itself.¹⁸

According to Elaine Scarry, beauty "ignites the desire for truth" by providing the dual experiences both of certainty and of error. The experience of beauty, for Scarry, entails what Alexander Nehamas has called a "radical decentring" that makes us rethink our conceptions and beliefs.¹⁹ The contemplation of wild women and Yeti-like beasts required a similar reconceptualization for sixteenth-century thinkers like Li. As the contemplation of beauty remakes

one's experience of truth, the contemplation of wild men and humanoid beasts similarly shaped Li's conception of mankind. These beasts were, at the same time, both human and utterly nonhuman. The effort to decide which way to understand them came from a need to know where to place them in his categorization of nature. Li Shizhen described many of the most famous examples of the borderline beasts in his *materia medica*.

According to an early dictionary, said Li Shizhen, the *mihou* 彌猴²⁰ beast (see figure 2.1) looked like a person of Hu 胡 descent and even had a special name (*maliuyun* 馬留云) in the Hu dialect.²¹ The *mihou* was one of many "unusual" beasts in the *Bencao* who occupied a southern natural habitat, and many of the animals in this category were believed to dwell in the mountains or forests of southern China. Li himself went on to embellish the account given by the *Shuowen* by adding that the *mihou's* eyes were like that of a worried Hu person.

This similarity to humans was further detailed: The *mihou's* appearance, its hands and feet, its walk, its gestation, and the sounds it made were all humanoid. It washed its face and could be tamed. According to the *Majing* 馬經 [Horse Classic],²² people kept these creatures in stables to keep horses from getting sick: the menstrual blood of the *mihou* was spread over the horse fodder each month and kept disease away.²³ This was an important example of the role of gender in Li's drug descriptions. The *mihou* is one of the only beasts whose menstrual blood is prescribed as a drug in the *Bencao*, further underscoring its place as a boundary being between animals and men. People in the South and in the Yue and Bajiao regions reportedly liked to eat the heads and flesh of *mihou* as a delicacy.

The *mihou* beast underwent several transformations over the course of its potentially lengthy life: after 800 years it metamorphosed into a *yuan* 猿; after 1,000 years it became a toad. Before these changes, when the *mihou* was only 500 years old it became a different kind of creature known as *jue* 獮 (see figure 2.2).²⁴ The *jue* was another southern humanoid—though this Sichuan native looked like a *yuan* monkey, it walked like a person and had a habit of taking human consorts.²⁵ Known from several texts to live in communities of strictly males or females, the *jue* frequently stole into houses to kidnap girls or men, took them home, and forced them to mate. People living in the South ate the heads of these beasts, according to Li.

The *guoran* 果然 liked to hang itself in trees with its tail shoved up its nose. This behavior became an identifying trait of the creature, and illustrators typically depicted the *guoran* with its tail stuffed in a nostril (see figure 2.3).²⁶ The



FIGURE 2.1. The *mihou*. From Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu*, in *Wenyuange Siku quanshu*, Zhongguo kexue jishu dianji tonghui, vol. 6, pt. 1 (Zhengzhou: Henan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), 310. Reproduction of 1778 edition.



FIGURE 2.2. The *guo*. From *Gujin tushu jicheng* [Compendium of Images and Texts, Ancient and Modern], vol. 322 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1934), 20b. Early eighteenth century.

texts that Li cited (an assortment of poems, classical works, and tales) largely concurred in their claims that the *guoran* traveled together (with the aged in front and the young in the rear) and demonstrated qualities of kindness, filiality, respect, and wisdom. They were generous with food, lived peacefully, and could be counted on to rescue one another if attacked. Some early authors claimed that the *guoran* could call out his own name.²⁷ According to the *Bencao* discussion, the term *guoran* was often used as a nickname for suspicious people due to the reportedly suspicious nature of the beast. A rhapsody on the *guoran* by Zhong Yu 鍾毓²⁸ and the early encyclopedic work *Lishi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋



FIGURE 2.3. The *guoran*. From Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu*, vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian chubanshe, 1988), 102. Reproduction of 1885 edition.

[Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals]²⁹ provided accounts of the delectability of the flesh of these southern mountain-dwellers and their kin.

The *xingxing* 猩猩 could predict the future.³⁰ This beast, mentioned in several classical texts, generated no small amount of debate: though its hair and ears resembled those of a monkey and pig, its face and legs were quite human-looking, and it cried like a human baby (see figure 2.4).³¹ Local people in Fenxi (an area that today is just north of Vietnam) would catch the beast by placing wine and straw sandals on the roadside. The *xingxing* would come to the spot, call out the

names of the ancestors of the people who placed the things on the road, drink the wine, and try on the sandals. While the beasts were thus distracted, the locals caged them and kept them for meat. The fattest ones would be chosen first, and reportedly wept just before being killed. They were bled to dye fabric, in a rather cruel procedure that involved flogging the creatures while asking them how many times they'd like to be beaten. Several texts claimed the *xingxing* could speak, though this was debated among the authors Li cited.³²

So what kind of thing was this *xingxing*? Li claimed it had the shape of a person but perhaps ought to be grouped with the beasts like the *mihou* we saw above. The classification of the *xingxing* was a difficult question for him. According to one of the main texts he cited, the *Erya yi*, the creature was very much like a naked, barefoot woman with long hair and no knees, and it traveled in groups.³³ Many people called them "wild people" (*yeren* 野人). According to this account, said Li, it seems that this might be the same thing as the "wild woman" (*yenu* 野女 or *yepo* 野婆), which was described next in the *Bencao*.

The story of the wild woman should now be a familiar one—this is the creature whose inscribed heart was examined at the beginning of this chapter. Li was fascinated by the apparent language of the wild woman's viscera; he knew that Chinese characters in seal script were also found on the eggs of male mice, and on a mirror-like image under the wing of a certain *zhiniao* 治鳥 bird.³⁴

Since these two other cases existed, Li surmised that the case of the wild woman was not strange (*fei yi* 非異), and he classified the wild woman as a subcategory of *xingxing*. By drawing an analogy between the writing on the wild woman's heart and cases of seal characters found in beasts, and by extension comparing the wild woman to an animal, Li classified her as subhuman and grouped her along with beasts. Conceiving the wild woman as an animal was itself an innovation: The wild woman, or *yenu*, was typically treated alongside foreign and minority peoples in scholarly texts. To help prove all of this, Li reminded readers of the long anecdote about catching, killing, and eating this beast. He went on to cite at least three other texts that described how delicious the meat of this *xingxing*, or wild woman, was and how it made one more intelligent, live a longer life, and walk more surely. The lips were particularly tasty.

The *feifei* 狻狻 (see figure 2.5) skulked throughout early texts and other natural histories that Li cited. Alternate names for this creature included "man-bear" (*renxiong* 人熊) and "wild man."³⁵ It lived in the Southwest and both resembled and had a habit of eating people. Immediately before it attacked, it apparently started to laugh so hard that its upper lip covered its eyes.³⁶ The varied qualities of the beasts included their ability to predict the future, their ability to speak somewhat like humans, and their tendency to launch into hysterics and flap their lower lip around before eating a person.³⁷ The last bit reportedly made it easier to catch the *feifei*: while the beast was laughing, hunters would take advantage of its distraction and nail the creature's lip to its forehead. After it was captured, its hair could be used to make wigs, its blood made an excellent dye, and eating its flesh allowed a person to see spirits.³⁸ In his description of the *feifei* Li provided several accounts of people eating its paws and hide.

Finally, before the corpse-eaters that ate the brains and livers of dead people, Li listed a number of mountain-dwelling monsters.³⁹ Previous and later works grouped these with spirits and demons or described them in completely different



FIGURE 2.4. The *xingxing*. From *Gujin tushu jicheng* [Compendium of Images and Texts, Ancient and Modern], vol. 522 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1934), 22a. Early eighteenth century.



FIGURE 2.5. The *fei*. From Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu*, in *Wenyu-ange Siku quanshu*, Zhongguo kexue jishu dianji tonghui, vol. 6, pt. 1 (Zhengzhou: Henan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), 311. Reproduction of 1778 edition.

terms from plants and animals, but Li decided instead to categorize them with beasts (as a subcategory of *feifei*) and place the group almost immediately prior to People. (Recall that Li's classification system for the *Bencao* to a large extent was determined by likeness, so if he placed two animals next to each other in his classification it usually indicated some kind of relationship.) These mountain monsters all were described as being or looking like people, though many had one leg, reversed feet, or very short stature. A number of them spoke like people, some buried their dead like people, and some even traded in special ghost-markets with people.⁴⁰ They used stones to catch shellfish, roasted them over a fire, and ate them.⁴¹ The "mountain husband" and "mountain auntie," a southern set of beasts who had only one foot (attached backwards), were known to knock on doors at night to beg for things.⁴² These creatures might sneak into houses at night and have sex with women, causing and spreading disease. They could be banished from houses by calling out their names, by finding a thousand-year-old

toad to munch them to death, or simply by behaving virtuously.⁴³ Like the previous monkey-like creatures, many of these monsters were said to live in the South, and their flesh could be cooked and eaten. (Li provided a recipe.)

To sum up, discussions of these creatures centered on a few major tropes. First, ethical behavior plays an important role in the classification process and is one site where these unusual creatures appear similar to humans: many were filial and polite. Also notable was the analogy to humans in their appearance and habits. Some traded in markets with humans. They spoke and acted like people, they mated with people, and many were characterized by human-like gender roles. Monkeys and Sasquatch-like beings were some of the only animals in the *Bencao* whose menstruation was discussed and whose menstrual blood was prescribed for its medicinal and magical effects. Many of these man-beasts mated with humans, and sex, reproduction, and the gendering of medical drugs played important roles in the Human Oddities discussion.

These two issues (ethics and analogy) also took center stage in the next section of the *Bencao*, the category of People.

A third concern also bound these sections and the debates within them—the importance of eating.

Eating the "Two-Legged Sheep"

Li Shizhen was particularly concerned with eating.⁴⁴ He used culinary preferences to differentiate communities, to determine what was "normal," and to distinguish between more and less civilized people and beasts. Eating habits served on numerous occasions as evidence supporting a claim that on the surface would seem to have little to do with food or consumption.⁴⁵

The wild women and other beasts discussed above all looked and acted like people and, according to some authors, were nearly indistinguishable from foreign peoples or people born with deformities. According to Li, however, these boundary beasts were not properly human. Li's decision stemmed in part from the fact that they ate human flesh, but also in part from the claims of several authors in varied genres that men ate the flesh of these creatures and cited the various medical and gustatory benefits of doing so. Although most accounts of cannibalism acting as a boundary-making device between proper men and some "other" emphasize the importance of eating human flesh as an act that makes one less human,⁴⁶ here we have a reversal of that logic. For Li, it was instead *being eaten* that, by analogy with the act of eating animal flesh, made one into a beast. The People section of the *Bencao* was the critical stage on which Li worked out this issue.⁴⁷

Modern accounts of Chinese cannibalism tend to generalize the practice of eating human body parts as somehow typical of "traditional" Chinese medicine, but the practice was hotly debated among naturalists and medical scholars in early modernity.⁴⁸ If both eating human flesh and being eaten, as in the case of the wild men, proved that one was somehow less than human, then why was it permissible to consume human body parts that might confer significant health benefits? Anthropophagy was an active issue in late Ming scholarly society. Many Ming novels contained accounts of cannibalism, famously epitomized by a fictionalized inn that served dumplings filled with human meat in the *Shuibu zhuan* 水滸傳 [Water Margin]. The issue of human-meat-filled dumplings is prominent in four sections of the novel, but the real action starts in section 27. In this scene, the hero Wu Song enters the inn and argues with the proprietress over the contents of the meat-filled buns she serves. When he asks if they were filled

with human or dog flesh, she slyly answers that they were made with high-grade beef (*huangniu*). The truth eventually comes out, of course. (It's people! The buns are made of people!)⁴⁹ A plethora of late Imperial Confucian and Buddhist texts extolled the benefits of stewing up one's flesh or internal organs to serve up as medicine to sick parents, routing the miraculous healing effects that resulted. Such acts of filiality were rewarded by merciful goddesses like Guanyin.⁵⁰

The issue of consuming human flesh played an increasingly important role in the medical literature of the late Ming.⁵¹ The only human-derived drug that had been included in the earliest known *materia medica*, the *Shennong bencao jing* 神農本草經 (*Divine Husbandman's Materia Medica*, hereafter *Bencao jing*), was human hair. In his preface to the People category of his own work, Li cited this paucity of human-derived drugs as evidence of an important difference between people and the rest of the things of the world.⁵² He claimed to record in detail only those human parts whose use did not "harm" (*hai* 害) his sense of human justice and propriety (*yi* 義).⁵³ Li noted that adepts justified their use of all manner of human parts (including bones, flesh, gallbladder, and blood) by calling them "medicine" (*yao* 藥), and he found this practice to be utterly inhumane. The arrangement of the objects listed in the People category reveals Li's apprehension about its contents. The arrangement of items in any category of the *Bencao* was usually from the most mundane or common to the most strange or problematic. In the People category, Li placed human flesh almost at the end of the entire section, followed only by "human mummy confection" (*munaiyi* 木乃伊), a general description of geographic differences among people, and "human oddities."

Despite his misgivings, however, the preceding few hundred years of *bencao* work demanded that Li expand on the *Bencao jing's* treatment and add his own commentary. The use of human body parts as medicine had been recorded and advised by one of the *bencao* authors Li cited most prolifically, doctor and military official Chen Cangqi 陳藏器 (fl. eighth century), perhaps the first author to include so many human drugs in a medical text. Categorizing them within the "beasts and birds," Chen suggested the medical use of such materials as human saliva, blood, flesh, organs, facial hair, and corpse parts.⁵⁴ Though he did not provide much description or commentary to supplement his indication of the illness each drug cured, Chen's innovation and his work were cited in many later Song and Ming compendia of *materia medica*, and given this precedent Li seems to have felt compelled to weigh in on the issue. In contrast to Chen, Li repeatedly denounced the use of several human body parts in medicine and had harsh words for the doctors who advocated their use. Indeed, eating some human parts was definitely not permissible. But where to draw the line?

Chen Cangqi had recommended the use of human skeletal remains, but Li was skeptical: after all, he urged, even dogs did not eat the bones of other dogs.⁵⁵ Human skulls were typically not eaten by a gentleman, but in cases where it was the only thing available then Li judged it permissible to use a skull in medicine if it had been buried for a very long time.⁵⁶ Human placenta had not been frequently used until the Ming, when a famous doctor included it in a life-prolonging pill that reportedly enjoyed wide distribution.⁵⁷ Some texts recorded women from Liuqiu (*liuqiu guo* 琉球國) eating the placenta after a baby was born.⁵⁸ Ferocious people from the Bagui 八桂 region served up the placenta of newborn male children with Chinese five-spice.⁵⁹ The consumption of human placenta raised a question for Li, and it was left open in the *Bencao*: there was much proof that this drug invigorated people, but was it right for people to eat parts of others or did it violate the rules of morality? Li seems to have had no problem with using placental fluid in medicine. The umbilical cord, as well, was fine: Li compared its drying and falling off to that of a "ripe melon falling off a vine," an act of botanical analogy that rhetorically made the consumption of placenta permissible.⁶⁰

Human gallbladders presented an interesting case. The use of human bile by soldiers on the northern borders to heal wounds during battle was described by Li as a remedy that should only be used in emergencies.⁶¹ However, gallbladders that were gathered up and dried made a perfectly good drug that did not offend against ritual or morality. Li drew the line at the behavior of bandits who killed a person, ripped out his gallbladder, and ate it with wine.⁶²

Human flesh was a major issue for Li. Chen Cangqi had written that taking human flesh could help cure wasting disease and apparently this idea, along with the widespread Confucian and Buddhist anecdotes about the miraculous medical effects of cooking one's own flesh and serving it up to one's parents, had prompted much of the consumption of human meat, livers, gallbladders, and the like to treat illness. Li protested that this practice was extremely unfilial, supporting his position with an anecdote about the first Ming emperor criticizing such behavior as improper, against morality and ritual, and worthy of being banned.⁶³ He then repeated a passage from the jottings of fourteenth-century author, Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (fl. 1360–1368), who provided lengthy and somewhat pornographic accounts of the eating of human flesh. Tao described soldiers and people in dire circumstances preparing human flesh in various ways, including a sort of people-jerky. That of young children was supposedly tastiest.

The above examples (bone, placenta, gallbladder, flesh) provoked varying degrees of moral questioning for Li. At the same time, however, there were

some parts of people the medical use of which Li treated as unproblematic, and for which he provided long and detailed prescriptions in the *Bencao*. Human hair,⁶⁴ dandruff, earwax, toenails, and teeth were all permissible. Newborn baby feces could be used to remove tattoos from a criminal's face.⁶⁵ Li provided more than forty ways to use urine (especially that of young boys), including to quench thirst, to treat headaches, and to maintain a youthful appearance. He recommended a sure-fire cure for sudden cramps in the abdomen: the patient should have someone sit on him and urinate into his navel. (This was also apparently a good way to wake up a traveler suffering from heatstroke).⁶⁶

Li also included *pishi* 癖石 [Obsession Stone], a kind of concretion that was thought to form in a person's body when he or she was extremely devoted to something.⁶⁷ Li provided several accounts of bodies that were cremated but whose hearts refused to burn, were cut open afterward and revealed various kinds of obsession-stone inside: a mini-landscape in a woman who had loved staring at landscape paintings when alive; an image of the goddess Guanyin in the heart of a Buddhist monk. Eating these was a way to dissolve hard masses.

Chen Cangqi had recommended a method for extracting human blood by piercing the skin and drinking the stuff while it was fresh and hot. Li did not endorse this vampirish technique: "Those who began this practice of prescribing [fresh blood] are inhumane. Will this not have consequences? Brutal soldiers and savage evildoers also drink human blood with wine. These people should be slain by heaven, so that evil shall be rewarded with evil."⁶⁸ Li did, however, permit the use of human blood that had been collected in what he considered to be a humane manner. He went on to encourage the use of underwear stained with menstrual blood, an excellent remedy for bloody wounds and poisons because the stuff itself was so foul and filthy that it killed evil spirits.

Taken together, these examples indicate is that there was nothing taboo about a body part just because it came from a human. Rather, the parts of people the use of which was most vociferously denounced were those parts that were regularly removed from animals and used in medicine: flesh, gall-bladders, organs. The problem with eating human flesh can in part be understood as a problem of an act of consumption that analogized men to animals and thereby destabilized that which ostensibly made humans unique. In contrast to some of his contemporaries, Li did want to make men into something special, both a part of nature and somehow above it. More than a century later, Zhao Xuemin 趙學敏 (1719–1805), the most well-known commentator on the *Bencao*, went even further and denounced Li Shizhen for including a human

drug section at all, a move which Zhao deemed "unethical." Zhao's commentary (the *Bencao gangmu shiyi* 本草綱目拾遺 [Correction of Omissions in the *Bencao gangmu*]) recapitulated the structure of Li's work except that he left out the People section altogether.

Ugly Custard: Steps Toward a History of Euphemism

The issue of consuming human flesh is particularly interesting both because the act was rationalized by analogy to animals and because it lent itself to the prolific use of euphemism in writings that discussed cannibalism. Terms for human meat appeared in many Ming texts, and the source that the vast majority of these works cited for accounts of cannibalism was the twelfth-century *Jilebian* 雞肋編 [Chicken-Rib Stories]. The *Jilebian* included many terms for consumed human flesh. There were general names as well as more specific ways to refer to meat from particular folk. The meat of pretty teenage women was called "Ugly custard" (*bumei-geng* 不美羹) or "Won't miss mutton" (*buciyang* 不羨羊, the meat being so tasty that it was better than mutton), depending on which edition of the text the reader had at hand.⁶⁹ The meat of children was called "Cooked with bones" (*hegulan* 和骨爛, ostensibly because the meat was so tender, bones were added to the pot to keep the flesh from melting straight away). The flesh of old, emaciated men who died of hunger or cold was dubbed something roughly translatable as "Intense fire" (*raobakuo* 饒把火, indicating the extra-hot cooking conditions under which the tough meat that came off these thin men was stewed).⁷⁰ The *Jilebian* also provided a general term for consumed human flesh as a whole: "Two-legged sheep" (*liangjiaoyang* 兩腳羊). Tao Zongyi included all of these in the *Chuogenglu* 輟耕錄 [Notes Made on a Rest from Ploughing] and supplemented them with his own contribution, a general term used by soldiers to apply to all kinds of human meat: "Thinking meat" (*xiangrou* 想肉).⁷¹

By the time Li Shizhen used the *Chuogenglu* in the People section of his own work, he further transformed this parade of euphemisms. Omitting all of the specific terms from the *Jilebian* that Tao had cited, Li included only two terms for human flesh: "Thinking meat" and "Two-legged sheep," attributing both terms to evildoers.⁷² This was a significant deviation from the *Chuogenglu* itself and was consistent with Li's interest in demonizing the consumption of human meat and his general tendency to denigrate soldiers and bandits in the *Bencao*. Eating and naming human flesh were practices Li attributed largely to military men and rascals: "This is done by thieves and evildoers devoid of

human nature—putting them to death would not be punishment enough!⁷³ At the same time, he did not attribute cannibalistic behavior to foreigners, as had many Song and Ming accounts of people living outside or on the boundaries of the empire. These earlier texts provided occasionally graphic descriptions of foreigners or ethnic minorities consuming human meat. The *Taiping yulan*, for example, had included discussions of human meat used in yearly sacrifices to gods in the land of *Zhenla* 真臘 (Kampuchea); *Hu* people and hermits using human flesh from corpses to make medicine; soldiers in the land of *Jianguo* 兼國 cutting off the heads of people, eating their flesh, and drinking their blood; and a city in Chengdu where human meat was sold in street markets.⁷⁴ Li's choice to attribute this practice to bandits and soldiers and not to mention it in his description of foreigners or of *fangmin* is a fascinating deviation from the prevailing norm of his time.

This brief chronicle of the discourses that surrounded the consumption of human meat through the Song, Yuan, and Ming periods allows some concluding thoughts in this preliminary step toward a history of how the borders between humanity and animality shifted in early modern China. It also provides a window into the significance of analogy and euphemism to knowledge-making in the *Bencao*. Unlike Li, later authors seemed to prefer using euphemisms for cannibalism that related men to animals. Ming and later editions of the *Jilebian* used different forms of the euphemism for the meat of pretty young girls that almost all included “sheep” (*yang*) in the name. In a further analogy, the stuff was often compared to dog and pig meat, as were some of the slaughtering techniques used to prepare human flesh for consumption. It was just this comparison and analogy to an animal that was supposed to make a cannibal inhuman. However, by continually juxtaposing man or man flesh and animal vocabulary, just the opposite occurred: over the course of the early modern period, man became more of an animal through a kind of naturalization via analogy.

What was it to be human in the late Ming? The answer for Li Shizhen, as we've seen, was rooted in an understanding of man's place in nature that made humans and human-derived drugs both part of the natural world and above it. Though a gentleman and fellow countryman was *not* an animal, once he consumed part of a human that could be analogized to that of an animal he compromised his ethics and humanity. The act effectively dropped both the eater and the eaten (city man or wild man) down into the realm of the boundary-creatures and the subhuman. Later authors such as Zhao drew this line at any human part whatsoever—but in the sixteenth century, the boundary was still being drawn.

Notes

1. Account taken from Li Shizhen 李時珍, *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目 (*Systematic Materia Medica*).
2. Li Su 李蘇 1985, Lü Kun's preface: 133. Lü was a scholar-official from Ningling, Hunan. Translations in this essay are mine unless otherwise noted.
3. See Sterckx 2002, esp. 17–18, for a brief discussion of the term *wu* with respect to understanding the general concept (or lack thereof) of “animal” in Warring States and Han China.
4. Li Su 1985, Lü Kun preface: 133.
5. The *Bencao gangmu* was first published in 1596 and is still known to most educated people in China today. For much more background on Li Shizhen and his work, see Nappi 2009. The term “natural world” is not a direct translation of a Chinese concept, but rather my own shorthand for discussing an object of study that included the living beings (and occasionally also materials like stone and fabric) in the universe.
6. A *bencao* 本草 text typically includes information about drug materials used in Chinese medical prescriptions, including the categorization of the drug by qualities such as flavor (*wai* 味), toxicity (presence of *du* 毒), presence of heat, and appearance, as well as a discussion of the derivation and alternate names of the substance. *Bencao* texts could also include discussions of the textual and natural history of each drug.
7. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan* 52, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *rengui* 人傀 [Human Oddities], 1943. I will hereafter use this format to reference quotations and sections of the *Bencao gangmu*: *Bencao gangmu*, *juan* [Chapter], *bu* [Major category, followed by an English translation of the category name], *tiao* [General entry cited, followed by an English translation of the name of the object], subsection of the entry (if there is one), page number. The page numbers correspond to Liu Hengru and Liu Shanyong edition.
8. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan* 52, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *rengui* 人傀 [Human Oddities], 1941. On reproductive oddities in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Furth 1988: 1–31.
9. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan* 52, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *rengui* 人傀, 1942. Among many examples, Li lists the five nonfemale women (*wu bunu* 五不女) and the five nonmale men (*wu bunan* 五不男).
10. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan* 52, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *rengui* 人傀 [Human Oddities], 1942.
11. A litany of examples is provided in *Bencao gangmu*, *juan* 52, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *rengui* 人傀, 1942.
12. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan* 52, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *rengui* 人傀 [Human Oddities], 1943. One example among many: 唐書云: 元德秀兄弟襁褓喪親, 德秀自乳之, 數日乳中漚流, 能食乃止。(According to the *Tangshu*: Yuan Dexiu's brother lost his wife while their baby was still in swaddling clothes. Dexiu nursed the child himself. After several days his breasts flowed with milk and didn't stop until the child could eat [food].)

13. The phrase Li uses is *huangyi zhimai* 荒裔之外, literally, "beyond the border/periphery," i.e., beyond the borders of the empire. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *rengui* 人傀 [Human Oddities], 1944.

14. Any similar exotic cases appeared in daily-use encyclopedias and illustrated editions of the *Shanhaijing* 山海經 [Classic of Mountains and Seas] printed in the late Ming. In these texts, descriptions of animals and accounts of odd foreigners living outside the boundaries of the dynasty were typically juxtaposed both on a single page (creating a kind of explicit visual comparison) and occasionally in the descriptions of foreign peoples themselves. See, for example, Xu Qilong 徐企龍 2002a, 2002b.

15. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *rengui* 人傀, 1944.

16. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 50*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], 1906. These form a section called *shou zhi san: yulei, guaili* 獸之三: 禽類, 怪類 [Beasts Section Four: Strange and Unusual Beasts]. This was one category—though Li provided two names, the *yu* and *guai* were not separated in the text; neither were the individual beasts classified as one or the other.

17. Scarry 1999:52–53.

18. The most lucid accounts of the study of wild men in America that I have found are Blu Buhs 2009; Coleman 2003; and Meldrum 2006. On popular accounts of hairy *yeren* (wild men) in modern China, see Schmalzer 2008:210–245. For an anthropological account of the same topic, see Dikötter 1998:51–74.

19. See also Nehamas 2000:394.

20. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *mihou* 獼猴, 1906–1907. In modern Chinese, *mihou* is frequently translated as "macaque." Though the remaking of early modern animals into modern beasts *via* translation is a common phenomenon, the character of the *mihou* and the other beasts we will see in this chapter did not necessarily occupy the same epistemological space as the renderings that have been used to make sense of them in modern science and medicine. Incidentally, the *mihou* was often depicted in illustrations with a fruit in its hand, and this was likely a means of representing the *mihou tao* 獼猴桃, or "peach of the *mihou*," now identified as a kiwi. The *mihou* was often paired with another apelike beast, the *yuán* 猿, defined as a gibbon in Robert van Gulik's *The Gibbon in China: An Essay in Chinese Animal Lore* (1967).

21. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *mihou* 獼猴, *shiming*, 1906. Li also includes a Sanskrit name: *mosi* 摩斯. *Hu* was often used to refer broadly to the people of Central Asia that came into contact with or resided in the western or northwestern borders of China.

22. The provenance of the *Majing* that Li used is uncertain. Li provides no indication of the date or authorship of the text.

23. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *mihou* 獼猴, *jijie*, 1906.

24. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *mihou* 獼猴, *jijie*, 1906. This is sometimes also pronounced "que."

25. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *mihou* 獼猴, *fulu* 附錄, *jue* 獼, 1907.

26. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *guoran* 果然, 1908.

27. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *guoran* 果然, *jijie*, 1908.

28. Zhong Yu was an author of *fu* 賦 poetry active during the Wei period (220–265) of the Three Kingdoms (220–280). Li listed this *fu* as an independent entry in the non-medical texts section of his bibliography.

29. The previous quotation from the *Guoran fu* had claimed that the flesh of *guoran* was not especially tasty and that the beast was good only for its hide. Li offered this tidbit from the *Lüshi chungju* as a way of raising a question—because the *guoran* and the two beasts mentioned in the *Lüshi chungju* were alike, how could it be that the flesh of the *guoran* was not tasty as well?

30. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *xingxing* 猩猩, *shiming*, 1908. The *xingxing*'s abilities to call out its own name and foretell the future (*zhilai* 知來) are provided as justification for the beast's moniker: *xingxing* 猩猩 means "wise." *Xingxing* is often translated as "orangutan" today.

31. The claims related in this paragraph are found in *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *xingxing* 猩猩, *jijie*, 1908.

32. Medieval travel writer William of Rubruck included a version of the *xingxing* story in the accounts of his travels to China. See van Ruysbroeck 1900:199–200. Different versions of this story appear relatively frequently in Chinese literature. For a translation of the *Shanhaijing* account, see Strassberg 2002:189.

33. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *xingxing* 猩猩, *jijie*, 1909.

34. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *xingxing* 猩猩, *fulu* 附錄, *yenü* 野女 [Wild Women], 1909. See also *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 49*, *qin bu* 禽部 [Birds], *zhiniao* 泊鳥, *jijie*, 1765. Elsewhere in the *Bencao* Li reported additional cases of printed or otherwise marked concretions in human bodies, including a petrified heart with a landscape formed inside it and a monk's heart whose center was found to contain a miniature statue of the Buddha. Some of these cases are discussed in Zeitlin 1991:1–26.

35. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *feifei* 狒狒, 1909–1911. Today this is commonly translated as "baboon."

36. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *feifei* 狒狒, *jijie*, 1909.

37. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *feifei* 狒狒, *jijie*, 1910.

38. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *feifei* 狒狒, *jijie*, 1910.

39. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *feifei* 狒狒, *fulu* 附錄, 1910–1911.

40. See, for example, *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *feifei* 狒狒, *fulu* 附錄, *muke* 木客, 1910.

41. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *feifei* 狒狒, *fulu* 附錄, *shanxiao* 山巢, 1910.

42. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *feifei* 狒狒, *fulu* 附錄, *shanxiao* 山巢, 1910.

43. All of these remedies are prescribed by Li in *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 51*, *shou bu* 獸部 [Beasts], *feifei* 狒狒, *fulu* 附錄, 1910–1911.

44. Vivienne Lo has written extensively on the connection between medicine and the culinary arts in China. See, for example, Lo and Barrett 2005:395-422; and Lo 2005:163-185.

45. Eating habits were also used to justify naming practices, especially with regard to insects. See, for example, *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 41*, *chong bu* 蟲部 [Bugs], *feilian* 蜚蠊 [Cockroach], *shiming*, 1550. Here, Li explains that three bugs (the *feilian*, the *xingye* 行夜 [a kind of beetle, sometimes translated as "bombardier beetle"], and the *fuzhong* 蝻 [grasshopper]) were different creatures that had been conflated and considered to be the same because a minority group ate all three, calling them by the same name.

46. Modern accounts of cannibalism in China include the journalistic Yi Zheng *Scarlet Memorial: Tales of Cannibalism in Modern China* (1996). On cannibalism in Chinese literary history, see Yue 1999. The use of human body parts in traditional Chinese medical recipes has also been a popular topic in modern and contemporary Chinese fiction. Some examples include Yan 1995:172-181; Xun 1990a:29-41; Xun 1990b:49-58.

47. See *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], 1912-1944.

48. On cannibalism and the consumption of mummies and "corpse-medicine" in early modern Europe, see Sugg 2006:225-240.

49. See Shi Nai'an 施耐庵, *Shuibu zhuan* 水滸傳 [Water Margin] (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), 327.

50. Li discusses the issue of *gegu* 割股 ("cutting the thigh/flesh") in *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *renrou* 人肉 [Human Flesh], *faming*, 1939-1940. He criticizes folk who engage in this practice as "foolish people" (*yumin* 愚民). For an example of the *gegu* literary tradition, see de Bary and Bloom 1999:532-534. The selection, "Guanyin and Cutting One's Body (*Gegu*)," contains selections from *Guanyin jingzhou linggan huiyao* and the *Gujin tushu jicheng*. For an exhaustive discussion of cannibalistic practices in Chinese dynastic histories, see Pettersson, 1999:73-182. Pettersson includes a discussion of *gegu* and other piety-related forms of cannibalism.

51. For a classic treatment of the use of human body parts as drugs, especially with regard to correlations with modern bio-medicine, see Cooper and Sivin 1973: 203-272.

52. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *mulu*, 1912. For Li's comments on the moral questions regarding the use of human flesh in medicine, see *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *renrou* 人肉 [Human Flesh], *faming*, 1939-1940.

53. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *mulu*, 1912. The 37 major drugs listed in the People section, in order, were: *fabi* 髮髮 (wig of hair), *luanfa* 亂髮 (hair in disarray), *tongou* 頭垢 (dandruff), *ersai* 耳塞 (earwax), *xidouyou* 膝頭垢 (dirt on the knee, "knee dandruff"), *zhaofia* 爪甲 (fingernails and toenails), *yachi* 牙齒 (teeth), *renshi* 人屎 (excrement), *xiao'er taishi* 小兒胎屎 (excrement of a newborn), *renniao* 人尿 (urine), *nibaiyin* 溺白涎 (white urinary sediment), *qiushi* 秋石 (processed urinary sediment, "Autumn stone"), *linshi* 淋石 (urinary stone), *pishi* 癖石 (obsession stone), *ruzhi* 乳汁 (milk), *furen yueshui* 婦人月水 (menstrual blood), *renxue* 人血 (blood), *renjing* 人

精 (semen, "human essence"), *houjintuo* 口津唾 (saliva), *chiyin* 齒涎 (sediment on the teeth), *renhan* 人汗 (sweat), *yanlei* 眼淚 (tears), *renqi* 人氣 (human qi), *renpo* 人魄 (human po), *cicou* 鬚鬚 (beard and moustache), *yinmao* 陰毛 (pubic hair), *rengu* 人骨 (bone), *tianlinggai* 天靈蓋 (skullcap), *renbao* 人胞 (placenta), *baoyishui* 胞衣水 (placental fluid), *chusheng qidai* 初生臍帶 (umbilical cord), *renshi* 人勢 (penis), *rendan* 人膽 (gall bladder), *renrou* 人肉 (human flesh), *munaoyi* 木乃伊 (human mummy confection), *fangmin* 方民 (humans from different locations), *rengui* 人傀 (human oddities).

54. See Unschuld 1986: 50-52 on Chen Cangqi and his prescription of the use of human drugs.

55. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *rengu* 人骨 [Human Bones], *faming*, 1935.

56. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *tianlinggai* 天靈蓋 [Human Skullcap], *faming*, 1936.

57. This was according to Li. See *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *renbao* 人胞 [Human Placenta], *faming*, 1937; and *baoyi shui* 胞衣水 [Placental Fluid], 1938-1939.

58. The region *Liuqiu guo* 琉球國 described in Sui Dynasty (581-619) sources has been identified variously as Taiwan or Ryukyu. For other accounts of cannibalism in *Liuqiu* from the *Suisbu*, see Pettersson 1999:127.

59. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *renbao* 人胞 [Human Placenta], *faming*, 1937. The term I translate here as "ferocious" (*liao* 獠) can also be interpreted as an alternate form of the term *liao* 僚, indicating an ethnic minority from southern China. See *Hanyu da cidian suoyinben* 漢語大詞典縮印本 [Major Dictionary of the Chinese Language, Compact Edition] (Shanghai: Hanyu da cidian chubanshe, 2002), 2:2779c.

60. See *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *chusheng qidai* 初生臍帶 [Umbilical Cord], *shiming*, 1939.

61. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *rendan* 人膽 [Human Gall Bladder], *faming*, 1939.

62. See Zheng 1996 for very similar descriptions recapitulated in stories about cannibalism during the Cultural Revolution, stories that often invoked the medical and tonic benefits of such practices. Recall that Li claimed he was *not* including recipes for human drugs that he judged to be immoral or inhumane, though he included prescriptions for each of the three aforementioned drugs: bone, placenta, and even fresh gallbladder.

63. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *renrou* 人肉 [Human Flesh], *faming*, 1939-1940.

64. In no small part because of the *locus classicus* of its discussion in the *Shennong bencao jing*, hair became an important topic of discussion in *bencao* literature. Many authors had credited this seemingly mundane stuff with powers of miraculous transformation, and its importance to medical theory was underlined by the widespread claim in medical texts that hair was one form of human blood.

65. Li included a number of prescriptions from previously published formularies that recommended the use of feces to counteract arrowhead and other poisons. See *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *renshi* 人屎 [Human Excrement], *fufang*, 1921–1923. This prescription (for *xiao'er taishi* 小兒胎屎, or newborn feces) was culled from Chen Cangqi. See *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *xiao'er taishi* 小兒胎屎 [Newborn Baby Feces], *xibuzhi*, 1923.

66. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *renniao* 人尿 [Human Urine], *fufang*, 1923–1925. Another interesting urine-derived drug discussed in this literature was *qiushi* 秋石, now understood to be a kind of processed urinary sediment. Li relates that wealthy customers had long been known to refuse to use urine in medicine, believing it to be unclean, which prompted “adepts” to manufacture (or fake) this stuff as a more appealing alternative. This case is interesting in illuminating what seems to have been a difference in drug markets among wealthy and lower-class patients.

67. See Zeitlin 1991 for an excellent treatment of the relationship between *pishi* and literature on obsession. See also *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *pishi* 癖石 [Obsession Stone]. This was a human version of petrified animal concretions like bezoars.

68. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *renxue* 人血 [Human Blood], *faming*, 1932.

69. The *Gujin yushu jicheng* edition of the *Jilebian* reads “Ugly Custard” 不美羹, whereas the *Siku quanshu* reads “The Unenviable Sheep” 不羨羊. It is clear that a transcribing mistake could generate these differences, and copying mistakes seem responsible for the transformation of these terms in later texts, which include versions like “The Sheep That Goes Into the Custard” 下羹羊 (in a Yuan edition of the *Chuogenglu*) or “The Ugly Sheep” 為美羊 (in a citation of the *Jilebian* included in the *Siku quanshu* edition of the Ming text *Yuzhitang tanhui* 玉芝堂談薈 [Gatherings at Jade Mushroom Hall]).

70. In his citation of the *Jilebian*, Tao Zongyi attributed this name to both old, thin men and women.

71. See Tao Zongyi, *Chuogenglu* 輟耕錄 [Notes Made on a Rest from Ploughing] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 123–124 [想肉]. Euphemistic analogy also occurs elsewhere in the *Bencao*, where the edible flesh of the frog (thought by many to be a foul creature) was called the “Field-chicken” and rats were deemed “House Deer.” This dialogue somewhat resembles the Daoist and Buddhist proscriptions against eating beef, a practice that also encouraged the creation of euphemisms. See Kieschnick 2005:186–212.

72. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *renrou* 人肉 [Human Flesh], *faming*, 1939–1940.

73. *Bencao gangmu*, *juan 52*, *ren bu* 人部 [People], *renrou* 人肉 [Human Flesh], *faming*, 1940.

74. See *Taiping yulan* [Imperial Digest of the Taiping Era] (Beijing: Zhonghua

shuju, 1998), vol. 4, *juan 786*, *Zhenla*, 3483; vol. 3, *juan 549*, *shi* [Corpses], 2485; vol. 3, *juan 506*, *yimin* [Recluses] 6, 2308; vol. 2, *juan 339*, *xubingqi* [Soldiers' Weapons], 1555; and vol. 4, *juan 828*, *maimai* [Selling and Buying], 3693. For examples of foreign cannibalism in dynastic histories, see Pettersson 1999:126–128.

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three

Pastoral Power in the Postcolony

On the Biopolitics of the Criminal Animal in South India

Anand Pandian

EARLY ONE MORNING IN OCTOBER 2001, I WADED ACROSS THE swollen river toward the wide plain of paddy fields at the heart of the Cumbum Valley, a lush agricultural region in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Clambering up onto a narrow rise above the water, I spotted a young herdsman named Surya following behind his small herd of black water buffalo. I tried to engage him in a conversation about these animals, but Surya wanted to speak instead about the moral shortcomings of the people of this village. "They do not know how they ought to live," he complained—they stole from orchards to satisfy their hunger, they plotted and schemed to bring each other down. "You should teach them how to live well," he told me, and embarrassed, I tried to shift the subject back to his animals. They had been crossing the swift waters of a narrow canal one by one as we spoke, making for the grassy cover of a coconut orchard just beyond the banks. Suddenly, a young calf with an injured leg began to slip downstream, unable to handle the current fed by recent rains. Surya stripped off his *lungi* and dashed into the water to hold the calf and guide it to safety. Grazing needed such vigilance, he returned to tell me: a close and careful watch not only against the perils of the environment,