


1946

UA3/2/4 Man is a Beast

Paul Garrett
Western Kentucky University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_ua_records

 Part of the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#), [Mass Communication Commons](#), [Social Influence and Political Communication Commons](#), and the [Speech and Rhetorical Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Garrett, Paul, "UA3/2/4 Man is a Beast" (1946). *WKU Archives Records*. Paper 7143.
https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_ua_records/7143

This Transcription is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in WKU Archives Records by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.

Man is a beast of bestial descent, his actions motivated by body hungers and a determination to seize what he wants from any weaker who possesses it. So through the ages out from his place of abode by himself, or with his brother, or with others of his tribe or as one of a great army he goes to seize by force the women and the live stock and the land and its produce with, in modern times, a special eye to the manifold mineral wealth which the land contains, from those more fortunate who chance to be in possession. The nature of his objectives may change but not the idea.

He comes on the stage a predatory savage. Clubs, stone, bronze, iron weapons add strength to the grasp of his hands and spears, arrows, slings, guns, and machine guns add length to his arm and the rapidity with which it can strike death to his fellows. The hungers of the beast always prompt his action; only his weapons change.

The misguided heathen did his best with poisoned wells; the poor red man had some ingenious ideas as to the use of fire on his enemy's roof or even about his enemy at the stake. Some say Dionysius of Syracus first enjoyed the use of a catapult; Hannibal so annoyed the Romans with his war elephants that you will remember as one of the interesting provisions of the agreement at the close of the Second Punic War that Carthage was required to surrender along with her ships her war elephants; the Normans at Hastings had well placed confidence that arrows shot upward would come down. I do not mean to belittle these accomplishments, but it took years of civilization to advance man to our day when for the comparatively meager results of poisoned wells, burnings at the stake, catapults, war elephants and showers of arrows he could substitute the glorious carnage produced by waves of poison gas, flame throwers, big berthas, tanks, and high explosives dropped from bombers. It was the same idea, but the technique was improved.

In what were comparatively modern times to you historians the Assyrians set a very high standard for mistreatment of their captives by boring out their eyes with spears, tearing out tongues, cutting off hands and feet, or noses, ears, and lips, or flaying them alive, or adding color to a procession of captives by tying about the neck of a ruler the severed head of one of his chief counsellors. Nero perhaps deserves special mention for his human torch idea and the throwing of Christians to the lions has considerable merit. The Inquisition brought the effective use of the thumb screw and the rack to an all time high. The French use of the guillotine as a more rapid and economical method of dispatch is worthy of note, so in such matters not even in this progressive age could we expect much improvement. However if the author of "Out of the Night" is to be believed modern dictators and their hellions are not lacking in the application of methods of torture to break the individual and for inhuman treatment of masses of conquered populations they certainly need acknowledge no peer.

The record of man's excesses in the name of religion even omitting unspeakable sex orgies is a revolting story. Recall the burnt offerings to Moloch, the quivering hearts torn from the breasts of thousands of human sacrifices on Aztec altars, as samples of ancient frenzy and mourn their ignorance, but save some tears for the memory of Galileo at the age of 69 compelled to recant his belief in the teachings of Copernicus, the 14 year imprisonment of Roger Bacon for daring to ask that men think, the burning of John Huss and Jerome of Prague by the Council of Constance, then save some more for the thousands condemned to death in later times as witches, oftentimes on the testimony of their enemies or children and don't forget the 19 victims in our own town of Salem. Lament the superstitious frenzy that sent

armies of children marching to rescue the Holy Land but in reality to death or slavery and the politically tainted religious hatred that occasioned the slaughter of St. Bartholomew's Day, but again do not forget the religious hatred manifest in our own recent Ku Klux Klan, or the superstition of the snake handlers in our Kentucky hills.

One would think that the common troubles to which men are prey might cause them to deal kindly with their fellows except in times of war, but that has never been true either. Where the chance for gain comes in, humanity goes out the window. Consider slavery. Touch the ancient world where you will and you are likely to find a captive population often the equal of their masters, sometimes superior in education and culture since at the end of war the opponent if left alive was likely to be made a slave. The Israelites making brick without straw, the slave population in Attica three times as great as that of the free, the Mohammeden merchants selling Christians, Romans watching slaves fight in the arena and the revolt of the slaves under Spartacus, the Barbary corsairs selling their captives taken in raids on the European coast, the age of serfdom, negro slavery, middle passage.

Do you hear the children weeping, O my brothers
 Ere the sorrow comes with years?
 They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
 And that cannot stop their tears.
 The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;
 The young birds are chirping in the nest
 The young fauns are playing with the shadows;
 The young flowers are blowing toward the west;
 But the young, young children, O my brothers!
 They are weeping bitterly.
 They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
 In the country of the free.

Industrial slavery. Long hours, dark, dangerous.

Gilbert Murray says of Greece, "Their outer political history like that of all other nations is filled with war and diplomacy, with cruelty and deceit. It is the inner history, the history of thought and feeling and character that is so grand."

So in any people whose civilization has reached any great stage of advancement we must look for this inner history behind the savage and unchanged front. There have always been those unconcerned with war and cruelty for whom

A book of verses underneath the bough
 A jug of wine, a loaf of bread, and thou
 Beside me singing in the wilderness
 Oh wilderness were paradise enow

as Omar the astronomer sang.

Back in Egypt there were those as in Babylonia and Persia who were concerned that men live justly. Micah and Jeremiah and Amos of the Hebrews you are familiar with as they base Jehovah's promises on the condition that they oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow and that condemnation will come because they are treading upon the poor.

Here is Socrates dying in the faith that the only virtue is true knowledge. Here is Plato with a great anxiety for the betterment of social relations. Here is Diogenes so sold on the idea that one can rise above emotion and learn to bear with fortitude that all he wanted from a ruler was that he move so the sun might shine on him.

Here is the whole host of philosophers who rather than worry about conquest and pillage have in the main devoted themselves to the inquiry as to what can man do for happiness and coming to the conclusion in the main that in the simple life and in self dependence and honesty of thought. Here is Zoroaster calling on men to take their stand on the side of the light. Here are the Hebrews coming through long travail to a realization that Jehovah is no tribal God but rather the father of all men.

Here is St. Francis calling on men to follow a life of service to men with him. Here is Buddha leaving his palace to devote himself to a study of the ills of human life and how to find happiness and salvation through honesty and purity of heart, through charity and compassion toward all creatures that have life.

Here are these who accepted the way of Jesus that he that would save his life shall lose it. Here are the unselfish followers of an ideal who have served-- William Carey in India, David Livingston in Africa, Jane Adams at Hull House.

Courage:

Thermopylae
Swiss Guard

Beauty: Parthenon, cathedrals, paintings, sculpture.

Let's forget that he has destroyed but rather that he built.

Poets:

O yet we trust that somehow good
I remember well
Rather I prize the doubt
One who never turned his back
Nothing is broken here that will not mend