



"Combat of Two Wild Men."
Engraving. Israhel van Meckenem. Germany, ca 1480. (The Art Institute of Chicago)

There is a body of evidence that suggests an affinity of modern giant, hairy hominoids for the company of horses. Dmitri Bayanov writes, *"Wildmen are fascinated by horses and other hoofed animals."* (*In the Footsteps of the Russian Showman*) A few years ago a woman in British Columbia (within an area John Green called *"in the land of the sasquatch,"* and which Chris Murphy has identified as *"The Sasquatch Triangle,"*) related to me that she and a fellow employee or two who worked in a rural stables had seen a sasquatch on the property, walking along a mountainside. When I mentioned possible sasquatch affinity for horses, she said, *"That freaks me out."* On various nights she reported that the horse barn had been entered. Stall gates had been opened and weighty barrels of feed had been moved around.



Turning to more pacific scenes: *“The wild condition from the four conditions of society.”* Loose-leaf illustration attributed to Jean Bourdichon, ca 1500. France.

Four miniatures depicted society divided in four ways: “the wild condition,” “the poor,” “the working,” and “the noble.”

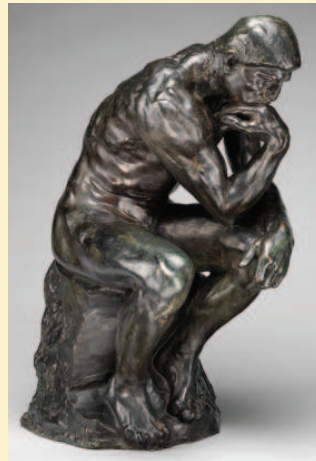
These pictures were accompanied with at least one ballad of several stanzas. From the catalogue: (the wild man) *“dismisses the grand castles, which loom behind him, as contrary to natural law, and rejects excesses of any sort... In a lush natural setting with a fresh spring before his cave, the wild man enjoys health and satisfaction of his needs.”* (École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris)



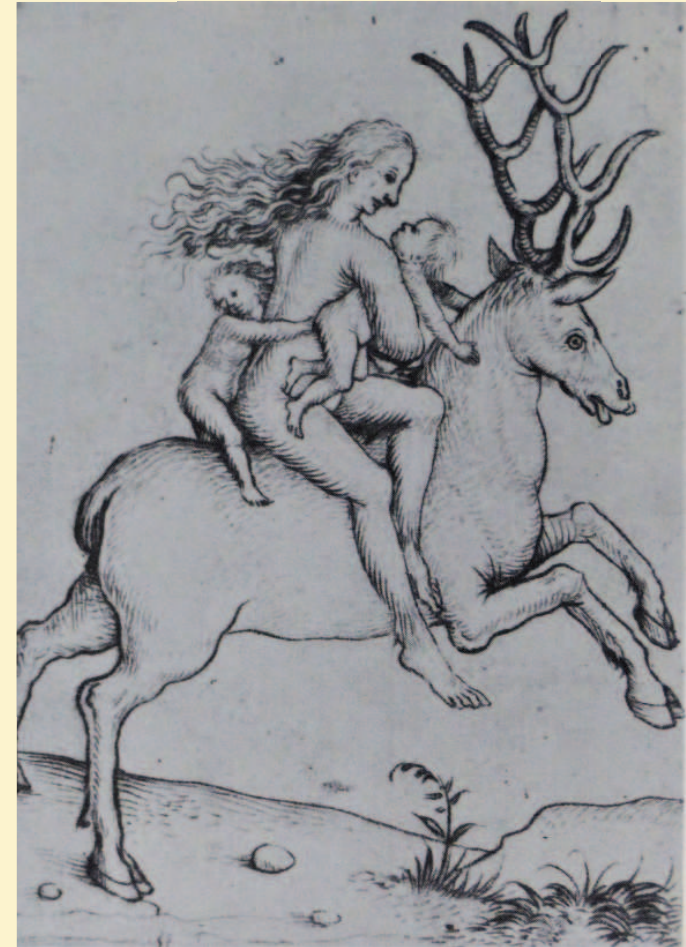
A similar image, ca 1500.
(Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris)



“Wild man.” Carved fragment, possibly from a choir stall. Late 14th C. Germany. (Schnutgen-Museum, Cologne) Presenter: I would title this carving, ***“Anticipating Rodin’s, ‘The Thinker.’”***



“Wild woman and children on stag.” Engraving, ca 1465. Germany. (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)





***“The wild man dance of Charles VI.”* Manuscript illumination from the Grands chroniques de France. Later 15th century. (The British Library, London)**



“Carnival figure.”
Manuscript illumination from a Schembart (“bearded mask”) book. Germany, 16th C. (The Bodleian Library, Oxford)

**Wild couple jousting
(note unicorn).
Engraving. Germany
(region of Lake
Constance), ca 1450.
(The British Museum,
London)**





“Two wild men and two pairs of lovers.” Roundel with the arms of Assmannshausen. Stained glass. Germany, ca 1470-80. (Historisches Museum, Frankfurt am Main).

Wild people could be viewed, almost cupid-like, as enablers of human love!

Catalogue: *“In the four scenes of this roundel young lovers and wild men are drawn together in a relationship of friendly comradery. The standing wild man at the left returns the wave of the reclining youth at the top. The erotic disports of the youthful couples seem to engage the moral support of the wild folk.”* This would be another reason for the Church to disapprove of the wild man even if it had moved away from its earlier position of the wild man as a depraved and condemned creature in the sight of God.

Note the inclusion of the wild hare in the grasp of the wild woman. Both the wild man and the wild woman hold clubs, or cudgels, objects of frequent presence in Medieval wild man images.



"Wild woman with a unicorn." Fragment of a tapestry (wool on linen warp with silk & gold thread). Alsace, Germany. ca 1500. (Historisches Museum, Basel)



"Queen of Animals." Engraving on small playing card. Region of Lake Constance, Germany, ca 1461. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC)

For some observers, there is an “elephant in the room.” It is the appearance of unicorns with wild people and unicorns in other settings in medieval art. If luminous white unicorns appear frequently in medieval art, why don’t we suggest they were real if we are going to suggest that wild people who occupied similar spaces were real? {If we’re going to assert that medieval artists located wild people in their works because they were really there, what about the fact that they also put unicorns in their works, and sometimes within the same “frame?”} **How can we reasonably contend that medieval wild men and their mates and families were real if we deny the same to unicorns? After all, our thesis is that art imitates life.**

It is not only the hairy (or not-so-hairy) giants (or wild people of lesser stature) who capture our imagination in stories, but unicorns and dragons, too. In fact, the latter have had quite a nice cinematic run in recent decades.

But of course unicorns did live! They (*Elasmotherium sibiricum*) did walk the earth. But that was 29,000 years ago in Siberia, and they apparently were more suited to hauling heavy mammoth carcasses across the steppes than carrying princesses on their backs.

{I don’t believe medieval artists had Siberian fossils to draw or sculpt from in their studios, but they still liked to portray unicorns - even if they existed only in their imaginations.}

Professor David Floyd of Charleston Southern University, who is also fascinated by the medieval wild man, suggested to me that *“art can be a composite of real and imagined beings, much like Egyptian art, which offers all kinds of strange hybrids and creatures next to their everyday cultural objects like boats or the sun.”* He continues: *“... what we find is a mish-mosh of creatures, some real, some not, but all of whom serve symbolic functions in artistic mediums.”*



Illustration from the internet. Heinrich Harder, National Geographic Kids

We may consider wild people in medieval times as real, but not unicorns and dragons, in part because only the hairy giants have been reported in recent times, and still are. Unicorns haven't, and aren't. Only the hairy giants have in modern times been studied critically, even scientifically. Unicorns haven't.

{Eyewitness reports, film - especially the Patterson-Gimlin film - footprints, vocal recordings, and hair and scat samples are all subject to critical scientific and technical analysis. Voluminous numbers of sightings of the sasquatch (aka Bigfoot) by a remarkably wide range of credible people both indigenous and immigrant in North America over the last 200 years are part of the modern record. Considerable footprint evidence has accumulated where hoaxing has been carefully ruled out. The fact is that we simply do not have parallel reports, sightings, and other evidence of unicorns - or dragons. Who has casts of the hoofprints of unicorns and the clawed paws of dragons? Of course, how would we distinguish unicorn hooves from the hooves of horses and ponies? Horns of narwhals are about as close to unicorn evidence as we have, but unfortunately narwhals live in the sea.}

The presence of unicorns in art had profound meaning in medieval times, such as representing feminine virginity and the innocence of Christ, and you can still purchase unicorn art today. But their presence in art did not stem from physical reality. {Of course it may be argued that many legendary creatures had some kind of factual and physical origin, but not necessarily in the same form as artistically presented.}

One can only study evidence if evidence is present, and there is plenty of it for hairy bipedal giants. There is none of which I am aware for unicorns and dragons.

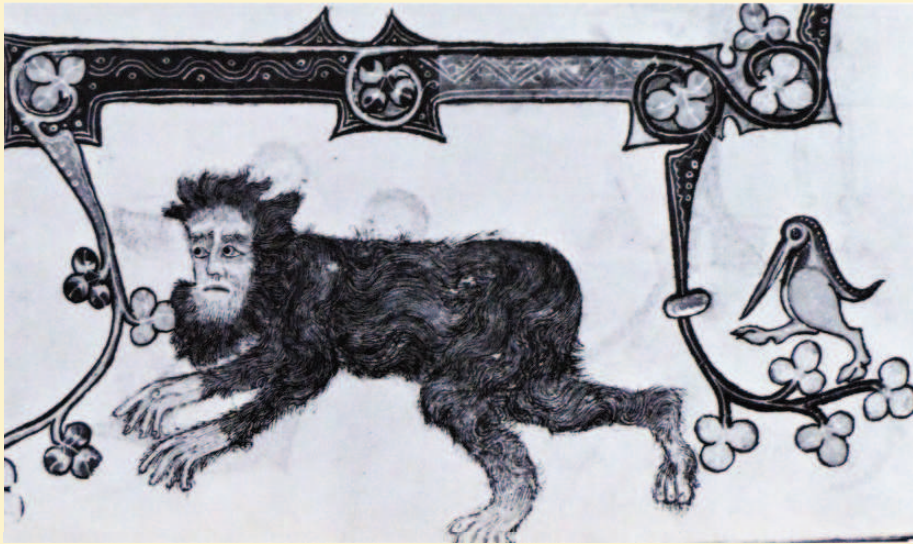
{Along with now abundant visual reports of giant, hairy, human-like bipeds in North America, as well as considerable footprint and other evidence of the same, expeditions and research efforts in eastern Europe, Asia, and Australia (cf. the leshy, the yeren, and the yowie, to name just a few) are also remarkable and deserving of serious study. Such studies have been conducted by a number of individuals, particularly in Russia. Even if this "old world" evidence does not appear as comprehensive in physical, anatomical, behavioral, and other detail as it is in the United States and Canada, it is considerable and there is absolutely no doubt that intercontinental research has greatly contributed to our study of purported and reported bipedal hominoids who appear to be different from *homo sapiens*, but no less real.}

Art imitated life when it came to the wild man, but not when it came to the unicorn. {I have nothing against unicorns. I'd love it if they were real, too. Maybe not so much the dragons.}



The Unicorn in Captivity (From *The Unicorn Tapestries*), one of seven different hangings. South Netherlandish, 1495 - 1505. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art - The Cloisters. New York City)

The Met museum catalogue says this in the Foreword, *“The exhibition... offers... one of the most delightful and fascinating inventions of the medieval imagination - the hairy, primitive, woodland creature who at first embodied all that medieval man hoped he was not, then, as the old order declined, became the object of his envy.”* This quote summarizes the evolution of thinking about the wild man. Although references to wild men date back to BCE dates, initial Medieval Age presentation of the wild man, ca 12th century, was revolting, debased, and even evil. By the 15th century, however, the wild man, might qualify as a good next-door neighbor preferable to some next door neighbors we have in the 21st century.



Wild man. “Detail of manuscript illumination from the Luttrell Psalter.” Ca 1335-40. (The British Library, London)



*“Wild folk family.”
Engraving by
Master b x g,
also known as
Monogrammist B
G (1446 - 1490).
(Albertina,
Vienna)*

The church likely kept a careful eye on the “wild man.” His personification of both evil and good, demonic and innocent, was likely in the background of awareness. *“The first major Christian writer to discuss the monstrous races [there were other figures in art and story that were portrayed as larger than life, the monsters] was Augustine, whose views were adopted by most later authors. Isidore of Seville, in his Etymologiae [an encyclopedia of etymology, a.d. 560 - 636], ... traced the hierarchy of the divine order from the Holy Trinity down to the lowest creatures, with the monstrous races between man and the animal kingdom.”*

“The divine order, from wild men, to knights, to angels.”
Stained glass roundel with the arms of Glarus, Switzerland, ca 1500. (Schweizerisches Landesmuseum, Zurich)



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“Augustine’s claim that the wild men were created within the divine order was generally accepted throughout the medieval period.” 15th century “Strasbourg theologian Geiler von Kayserberg, in one of a collection of sermons published under the title Die Emeis (The Ant) categorized five types of wild men: the solitarii, or the penitent saints; the sacchani, satyrs who lived in the desert wilderness and were seen by both Saints Anthony and Paul; the hispani, a particular type of demented folk; the piginini or pygmies; and finally the diaboli, satyrlike creatures identified with the mythic wild men, called devils.” “(von Kayserberg) dispels the superstitious and fearful notions associated with them. On the other hand, he notes that some wild men are consummately evil and must be construed as the work, if not the incarnation, of the devil. (He) thus underscores the fundamental dualism of the wild man.” Some illustrators of the Reformation, shortly after von Kayserberg, found the imagery of the wild man useful. A wild man embellishes this engraving, which depicts the pope as Satan in the guise of a wild man, with devil’s tail and ears no less!

It is no secret that serious researchers of the sasquatch discuss and debate various reports of harmless, even benevolent sasquatch on the one hand, and dangerous sasquatch on the other. How interesting is it, therefore, that medieval reports of wild men described a similar dualism?



The pope as [Satan/devil] wild man. Engraving by Melchior Lorsch, with text of Martin Luther. Germany, after 1545. (Staatliche Museen, Berlin)



Luther with seven heads. Title-page to a pamphlet, *Septiceps Lutherus*, written by Johann Cochleus. Woodcut attributed to Hans Brosamer, 1529, Leipzig. (photos on this page come from online sources)



The Reformers did not have a monopoly on inflammatory cartoon descriptions of their opponents. When Martin Luther was excommunicated, he was described in the papal bull as a “*wild boar in the pope’s vineyard*,” and you can bet Roman artists salivated over that description. However, in 1529, a cover or title page was designed for a pamphlet portraying Luther with seven heads, all no doubt intended to be interpreted satirically. From left to right, Luther as (academic) doctor, monk, Turk, preacher, fanatic, Visitator (likened to setting himself up as a new pope), and WILD MAN! - a “German wild man with a club.” The wild man thus became a graphic tool for propaganda.

We have argued that, with the wild man, art imitated life - that various artists and craftsmen were not portraying a purely mythological figure, but a real one that lived in Britain, Europe, western Asia, and all the way to the Orient. Even though artists certainly embellished and perhaps invented certain ideas and activities, they were describing real hominoids who were usually of large size and almost always quite hairy. Obviously the artists did not need to have seen a wild man to portray him any more than artists today need to see a sasquatch to portray it.

The attitude of the Church not only toward the “life style” and “behavior” of the wild man, but toward his redeemability (the possibility of salvation) seems to me to be evidence of the wild man’s reality. I am suggesting that the Church would not have debated whether or not wild people could be redeemed if they did not think they existed, or if they existed only in imagination and art. To my knowledge the Church did not debate whether unicorns, dragons, or other monsters could be redeemed; they only debated whether these wild folks could be “saved” or not. {I have quipped that when it came to baptizing the wild man, sprinkling as opposed to immersion would have been preferred.}

This would not have needed to be a constant or heated debate, as the Church was much more involved in debating theological arguments on the subjects of justification, sanctification, the nature of the Church, and other primary doctrines.

Met catalogue: “While Augustine’s claim that the wild men were created within the divine order was generally accepted throughout the medieval period, questions concerning the wild man’s redeemability persisted. Heinrich von Hesler, who asserts the existence of wild men in his day, confesses, ‘Whether they shall be saved or whether they shall be lost and fare with the devil, that will have to be left to God’s mercy.’” (Die Apokalypse, a 13th century presentation of The Apocalypse of St. John, usually referred to as the Book of Revelation.)

“Despite the arguments of Saint Augustine and many of his followers to the contrary, popular belief held that the wild man was hopelessly damned. Except for particular classes of wildness, such as that of the eremitic saints [referring to monks who lived as hermits], this conviction even received dogmatic reinforcement from such theologians as Geiler von Kayserberg.”



Website images of exact reproduction (facsimile) of original book, written in German, by Heinrich von Hesler. Zierys Facsimiles, 2013, limited to 198 copies. Price: \$2,832 U. S.



Richard Bernheimer, in his 1952 book, Wild Men in the Middle Ages (Harvard), argues that the wild man was purely mythological, and was an invention that served to display the worst and best qualities of humans. He argued, *“the wild man’s mode of existence had to be construed as that of a creature not unlike man himself. What, then, was his status? Was he a human being, as his anatomy suggested? Or ”was he to be classified as an animal, as seemed fitting when one considered his coat of hair and his bestial behavior pattern?”* Bernheimer continued, *“We find, therefore, that medieval authors and artists, incapable of thinking in any but rigid categories and without reliable intellectual guidance in matters pertaining to the wild man, contradicted each other freely in defining him.”*

Hence we see the various portrayals of the wild man - from lustful and undisciplined - to normalized and almost civilized. But wait, is this not also a good description of *homo sapiens* throughout the ages? Many a regular human being would like to live in the woods, and some do. Many spend their time in the wilderness and forest. We come home from the woods with leaves and botanical debris on our clothing and bodies, sometimes looking like wild people!

Bernheimer again: *“The wild man holds thus a curiously ambiguous and ill-defined position in God’s creation, being neither quite man enough to command universal agreement as to his human identity, nor animal enough to be unanimously classified as such. It was only natural that writers and artists should have vied with each other to give to the wild man”* [the traits of each]. Today the debate is joined: is the sasquatch human or animal, homo or (advanced) ape?



(One of a) “pair of ewers [pitchers with hinged lids] with wild man heraldic finials.” Silver, silver gilt, and painted enamel. Germany, ca 1500. (Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC).

This ewer, the whole of which has a wild man defending against a dragon, is believed to have belonged to the Order of the Knights of the Hospital of Saint Mary of the Teutons in Jerusalem. These knights were entrusted with the duty of aiding Christians going on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and also establishing hospitals.



Low Knave of Animals from the Small Playing Cards. Engraving by Master ES.. Germany, ca 1461. (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

Many wild man depictions have him wielding a cudgel, or club. Robert Jones, in his 2010 volume, Bloodied Banners: Martial Display on the Medieval Battlefield (Boydell Press), says, *"In the literature of the time the cudgel is the weapon of the wild-man or the inhuman creatures such as giants and demons. It has been argued by a number of historians, however, that these bacula [you may check out the meaning of this word at home] ... are clearly not maces.., but rough cut cudgels."*

John Friedman and Kristen Figg, in their 2000 volume, Trade, Travel, and Exploration in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia (Routledge), say, (wild people) were *reputedly skilled hunters, and their legendary strength and dominance over the flora and fauna of the natural world were represented in images of the Wild People wielding natural weaponry, such as a huge club or an uprooted tree, riding stags rather than the horse of a medieval knight, or holding fabulous beasts such as griffins and unicorns in a posture of submission."*

Note that the wildman in this image is also holding a mace (spiked weapon).

In *"Testimony by Major-General Mikhail Topilsky,"* reprinted in Dimitri Bayanov's book, In the Footsteps of the Russian Snowman (Moscow, 1996), the general reports on a 1925 military operation in the Western Pamirs when his unit was pursuing *"a gang of anti-Soviet guerrillas."* During negotiations of surrender, the guerrillas had sought refuge in a cave under a glacier when *"some hairy, man-like creatures, howling inarticulately, appeared... There were several of them, and they had staves ("stuffs," with emphasis mine) in their hands... One of the guerrillas was clubbed to death by the creatures."* The creature and some of the guerrillas were then killed in an avalanche. After removal of ice and snow, the former was examined by the general and the medical doctor on the mission. The latter said, *"At first glance I thought the body was that of an ape: it was covered all over with hair... it was clear that it was not a human being."*

The occasional report of a sasquatch carrying (but not as a weapon) the limb of a tree is recorded, and many reports of trees and bushes being uprooted and broken are found in the research literature. {A colleague of mine in northern (not Upper) Michigan reported to me that one of his parishioners related to him that, when he (the parishioner) began using a chainsaw on the edge of a wood adjacent to a field, something he could not see that was deeper in the woods became *"pi__d off."* When the farmer turned off his chainsaw and eventually went into the woods to investigate, there was a fresh trail of uprooted small trees, shrubs, and broken branches.}

Frequently reported are branch-breaking and rock-throwing to warn intruders to remove themselves.

In many depictions, wild people have specific parts of their bodies devoid of hair, usually the face (previously noted), elbows, knees, feet, palms of hands, and breasts. Page one of the Met exhibition catalogue says this: *"In physical appearance he [the wild man] differed from man mainly in his thick coat of hair, which left only his face, hands, feet -- and, with wild women, breasts -- bare (but sometimes wild men, too). Elbows, and knees were often exposed, as though hair could not grow on these areas of flex and wear."* "... leafy foliage" was also often present.

On the previous page we mentioned Gen'l Topilksy's report on the use of a "stave" during a deadly encounter in 1925. In his report he also says this, *"In general the hair was very thick, ... There was most hair on the hips. The knees were completely devoid of hair and has callous growths on them. The whole foot including the sole was quite hairless..."* (Extensive detail on the hair of the creature appears in this report.)

As to the sasquatch, aside from its size, perhaps the most abundant information we have in now countless reports describes its hair, including where it appears on the body and where it does not, and its length and color.

{While it is not within the scope of this presentation to do much more than mention the subject, report of these hirsute details on the North American sasquatch is one more connection between them and the artistic representations of medieval wild people in Medieval European art.}

"Wild man." Pen-and-ink illustration from *"Ballade d'une home sauvage."* ("Ballad of a wild home") France, ca 1500. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)



**Whoa!
Where did you
come from?**



**Poster, (Jolly) Green Giant, Minnesota Valley Canning
Company, Le Sueur, MN.**

No discussion of the wild man would be complete without mentioning the ubiquitous “green man.”

“Superficially the Green Man would appear to be pagan, perhaps a fertility figure or a nature spirit, similar to the woodwose (the wild man of the woods), and yet he frequently appears, carved in wood or stone, in churches, chapels, abbeys, and cathedrals, where examples can be found dating through to the 20th century.” (Wikipedia)

{One of the earliest examples of the green man dates back to ca 400 AD, at St. Abre, in St. Hilaire-le-grand. Prof. David Floyd, in a presentation which included the “green man,” offers that this creature is an “Ancient figure,” a “Forest entity”, and an “Emissary of the natural world.”}

Wikipedia identifies three types of green men according to the appearance of the head:

“the Foliate Head: completely covered in green leaves

the Disgorging Head: spews vegetation from its mouth

the Bloodsucker Head: sprouts vegetation from all facial orifices (e.g. tear ducts, nostrils and mouth.”



Ceramic reproduction of a green man head in York Minster cathedral, York, England.

A study of the green man in art and architecture would easily be as extensive as his cousin or twin, the wild man. Both are of the woods, but the green man is always adorned with foliage. In contrast to the wild man, the green man is more narrowly identified with rebirth in nature, such as the spring equinox and the verdancy of the wild, and man's symbiotic relationship with the natural world.

Of the hundreds or thousands of appearances of the green man, primarily in Christian church sanctuaries, how interesting it is to find him also decorating an Iraqi historic site, the Shrine of Hatra. From Wikipedia:

{“Hatra was an ancient city in the Ninawa Governorate of present-day Iraq” ... “290 km (180 mi) northwest of Baghdad...”

Hatra was a strongly fortified caravan city and capital of the small Kingdom of Araba, located between the Roman and Parthian/Persian empires. Hatra flourished in the 2nd century, and was destroyed and deserted in the 3rd century. Its impressive ruins were discovered in the 19th century.”}
(photo from Wikimedia Commons)



branches on the **FAMILY TREE**

There is only one species of hominid on the planet today: modern humans, or *Homo sapiens*. But for most of our family's evolutionary history, a variety of early humans inhabited Earth. Between about 3.5 and 1.5 million years ago, at least 11 hominid species lived in Africa. Many of them were members of the genus *Australopithecus*. By the time the entire "australopith" group went extinct about 1.4 million years ago, the earliest members of our genus, *Homo*, had come on the scene. The precise origins of our genus are still unknown.

About eight years ago when visiting the American Museum of Natural History in NYC, I read the orientation statement that you see on this page, which was posted in the Hall of Human Origins exhibition space.

It seems to me that there are at least two premises that prevent "science" from taking very seriously the study of purported living "relict hominoids," "homins," hairy (and often huge) bipedal primates, particularly "Bigfoot," sasquatch, et. al.

One is the scientific position expressed in this posting: "*There is only one species of hominid on the planet today: modern humans...*"

The other premise is not a scientific opinion, but is one just as strong if not stronger in its persuasive simplicity. "It can't exist, therefore it doesn't exist."

The latter opinion is the fixed and closed viewpoint that living bipedal primates or hominoids, other than *homo sapiens*, cannot possibly exist today, and therefore they don't exist at all. Any and all evidence that suggests that we ought to take a closer look is met at the outset with a pre-formed, dismissive, even derogatory conclusion. The case is closed.

Or is it? Today there is not only great interest among many in the general population about this field of study - granted, much of it fueled by tv dramatizations - but especially in the last sixty years a significant number of researchers internationally have pursued and are pursuing the truth of the claim that these creatures indeed exist. Also today, as in the past, indigenous people on several continents around the globe quietly assert that they have lived near these wild giants for a very long time.

I have presented one more angle of evidence to the proposition that there is more than "only one species of hominid" alive today, and that the logic that "It can't exist, therefore it doesn't exist," is not only scientifically and philosophically questionable - even untenable - but historically, artistically, and theologically questionable as well.

{When just a few years ago I acquired, in a Toronto used book store, the 1980 Metropolitan Museum of Art catalogue on the wild man, and then when my wife and I visited the Morgan Library exhibit last year, I knew that I had not only found the wild man in medieval Europe, but in modern Manhattan!}

I am grateful to several people whose knowledge and research I have drawn upon in this presentation.

... To my friend, Christopher Murphy, who invited me to deliver this presentation at the opening of his important and interesting exhibition. Chris has through the years been extraordinarily gracious to me and has shared his knowledge freely, and not only with me but with dozens of sasquatch researchers. To show the books Chris has written and edited would take several pages! His website, [Sasquatch Canada](http://SasquatchCanada.com), is one of the best.

.... To Dimitri Bayanov, one of several important hominologists in Moscow, Russia, beginning with his teacher, Dr. Boris Porshnev. Dimitri has written extensively on the subject of relict hominoids in Russia and Asia. Most of his books are pictured here. His latest book, The Making of Hominology, is hot off David Hancock’s press.

... To Dr. David Floyd of Charleston Southern University, North Charleston, South Carolina, who contributed greatly to my interest in the wild man and who presented on the subject at a sasquatch conference a couple of years ago. David shared his studied opinions with me, particularly on the the interpretations of unicorns, while I was working on this presentation.

... To my fellow presenters, who in so many ways have both informed and inspired my interest through the years

... To the staff of this museum, including Marisa Merkel, who carefully and caringly helped us prepare for this opening day of Chris’ exhibit.

... And to this audience. Thank you for your kind attention and interest.

