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Pheasant capitalism:

Auditing South Dakota's state bird

ABSTRACT
The Chinese ring-necked pheasant was named South Dakota's state bird in 1943. Today this "immigrant that made good" remains important to South Dakotans who believe that having their state's symbol to hunt is both part of the good life and indicative that "culture" and "nature" remain in balance. Given ever-more-intensive monocropping, however, the pheasant is in trouble. With its habitat disappearing and its numbers significantly declining, many worry about a pending "ecological rift." In an effort to recover pheasant numbers without offending agricultural interests, the state's governor held a "summit" that produced various "win-win" proposals, among them, ways to make the propagation of nature in the form of pheasant habitat profitable. In this social history of the pheasant in South Dakota, we use historical-materialist and phenomenological perspectives to explore efforts to harmonize culture and nature through pheasant capitalism. [*South Dakota, ecological rift, farming, hunting, pheasants, capitalism, alterities*]

Pheasants, farmers, and hunters are linked in the agricultural landscape of South Dakota. So much is currently asked of this landscape that some South Dakotans have begun to reflect on the costs and consequences of ever-more-intensive farming practices. They wonder if intensification has already exacerbated to the point of crisis what environmental sociologist John Bellamy Foster (2002) refers to as the "ecological" (or "metabolic") rift, such that the demands of capitalist production seriously deplete what the environment can deliver (see too Foster et al. 2010). Yet many other South Dakotans believe a serious rift between capitalist production and the environment—what they understand as culture and nature—can be forestalled if not averted. In this context, people look to the pheasant, the state bird and a prime game bird, for evidence that culture and nature remain in reasonable harmony. If the pheasant can continue to flourish in South Dakota, then environmental degradation has not, they think, gone too far.

In probing this heartland perception of crisis as manageable, we find useful two critical perspectives on the concepts of culture and nature through which this possible rift is popularly understood. A generally held, indeed, hegemonic, assumption under capitalism is that culture is separate from nature and should appropriately be dominant over it. Both of the critical perspectives we examine seek to challenge the hegemony of this dualism: One does so to gain a more complete understanding of the development and course of the potential or actual crisis at hand, the other, to keep open significant alternatives to this crisis.

The social theorist and historical materialist Jason Moore exemplifies the first position. He rejects the dualism between culture and nature (society and the environment, in his terms).[1] This dualism, he contends, inhibits us from appropriately understanding global capitalism in a nonessentialized, dialectical, and historically processual manner. Explicitly building on and challenging Foster's work on the ecological rift, Moore insists that "capitalism … does not *have* an ecological regime; it *is* an ecological regime" (Keefer 2011:42). Rejecting the "world view that puts nature in one box, society in another," he sees "capitalism as world-ecology" (Keefer 2011:42; see too Moore 2011). His is not an attempt to

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document the effect of global processes on the environment (characteristic of much writing about "the anthropocene"). Rather, he seeks to understand globalization past and present in terms of socioecological projects. For instance, in an interview provocatively entitled "Wall Street Is a Way of Organizing Nature," Moore describes farms, markets, financial centers, industrial settings, and empires as constituting comparable projects: all linked as capitalist ways of organizing and producing nature. He argues that the "production of nature has been as much about the factories, stock exchanges, shopping centers, slums, and suburban sprawl as it has been about soil exhaustion and species extinction" (Keefer 2011:42). Rather than an ecological rift, Moore (e.g., 2014) sees an ecological shift as one capitalist project emerges from another.

In fact, many South Dakotans we know come from families that experienced farms blowing away and species diminishing, if not disappearing. And certainly today they depend for their livelihoods on making sense of the global, often volatile, prices of the corn and soybeans they produce and the agricultural inputs they utilize to do so. They would, therefore, find Moore of interest when he writes, with Nebraska rather than South Dakota in mind, "Corn farmers now compete not against other farmers so much as they do against Goldman Sachs, Exxon-Mobil, and Microsoft, but above all against Goldman Sachs" (2010:253). This said, there is local concern that the ecological shifts agribusiness entails are having unfortunate and unprecedented effects on the landscape and its bellwether denizen.

The anthropologist and phenomenologist Ghassan Hage exemplifies the second critical perspective. He too rejects the dualism between culture and nature though for reasons different than Moore's. Taking something of an "ontological turn" (along one of its many explanatory byways),[2] he thinks the dualism inhibits our consideration of potentially significant "alterities." He argues that the Western perspective that gives culture dominance over nature results in global resource depletion and an aversion toward radical forms of understanding that might destabilize our destructive way of being in the world (see too Escobar 2008). Indeed, he points out that "anthropological works, capturing the plurality of [life]ways … have become important resources for a radical ecology in search for alternative forms of human-nature relations" (Hage 2012:295).[3] However, and of particular interest to us, Hage also stresses that, even in dominant modes of Western thought, one can find "minor" realities that bespeak alterity, realities "that are continuously present, even if they are overshadowed by more dominant ones" (2012:301).

Many South Dakotans we know do recognize and value the minor realities that coexist with and inflect the dominant ones of production and control. As Hage notes, everything humans relate to in nature is "always simultaneously *for* us (domestication), *with* us (gift exchange) and *in* us (mutuality) even if we are less conscious of our enmeshment in the last two of these forms of relationality" (2014:2, emphasis added).

As we show in this article, Moore's materialist perspective and Hage's phenomenological perspective usefully converge to link structure and experience. This linkage enables us to understand how, in South Dakota's ever-more-intensified ecological regime, the salient and simultaneous enmeshments mentioned above have played out such that the state of the state bird has mattered and will continue to matter.

Pheasant expansion

In 1941, Russell Rice published *Fifty Million Pheasants: The Story of Game Birds in South Dakota,* this at a time when the U.S. Midwest was barely emerging from the traumas of the Dustbowl and the agricultural depressions of the 1920s and 1930s. Participating in the South Dakota Writer's Project (a subsidiary of the Works Projects Administration) while receiving support from the South Dakota Department of Game and Fish (SDDGF), Rice provides a sober stocktaking of the effects of European settlement on what he considered to be a largely wild Dakota landscape.

Rice's first chapter, the "Slaughter of Native Game," vividly recounts what was, in effect, the extension of capitalism as an ecological regime into the frontier. Railroad stockholders, land speculators, homesteaders, and market hunters all benefited by the appropriation of what Karl Marx has called nature's "free gifts to capital" (1967:745). "Uncounted millions of native birds and animals … [which had] swarmed over the hills and prairies of the territory that became Dakota" were killed (Rice 1941:1). Among them were buffalo, deer, elk, antelope, ducks, geese, prairie chickens, grouse, and quail, all of which "combined to make the Great Plains region a game paradise extending over millions of years" (1941:1). Unlike the Sioux, resident in the region for generations and depicted by Rice as "instinctive conservationists [who] cooperated rather than interfered with Nature" (1941:2), Europeans virtually exterminated most game species between 1865 and 1900. The fate of the buffalo—killed as it was for sport, profit, and policy—was no different from that of most other wildlife. In Rice's outline, the latter half of the 19th century was a "ruthless period of expansion" (1941:1): one linking the destruction of wildlife with the subjugation and displacement of Native Americans and the transformation of prairie into cultivated fields and pasture for market production. (We should note that, by 1900, there were reportedly 52,622 farms throughout South Dakota, most small production units averaging 362 acres and based on a family organization of labor [Olson 2006:43].) Rice, thus, sees this expansion as wiping the slate relatively clean to allow for the remaking of human and natural environments.

Part of this remaking—a revivification, according to Rice—involved an exotic import. Through the introduction and propagation of the Chinese ring-necked pheasant, a new beginning was possible.[4] Here Rice becomes upbeat. He ends his account of the decades of wanton slaughter by affirming SDDGF's enlightened mission. "The story of the pheasant in South Dakota shows what can be done under a program of effective game laws and planned conservation" (Rice 1941:9). The success of this program is obvious to Rice. From the initial few introduced in the state in the early 20th century, over 50 million pheasants have been produced. In addition to affirming the efficacy of conservation practices for these game birds, the increase in numbers also shows that the state has proven a good home to them. It turned out that pheasants, which are nonmigratory, could do well year-round on the grassy, brushy, marshy margins of the South Dakota agricultural fields of the time. There they found the habitat they needed: a variety of insects and seeds as well as postharvest waste corn and a sufficiency of nesting sites and winter cover. Plus, as homebodies with localized ranges of just a few miles, they rewarded farmers, their families, and their guests with valued hunting opportunities.

The first open hunting season on pheasants was in 1919, when, according to an article on the South Dakota Historical Society website, "History of Pheasants in South Dakota: The Immigrant That Thrived in South Dakota," some "200 of the pheasant population of 100,000 made the transition from the landscape to the dinner table" (2013:1). Pheasant numbers continued to grow exponentially along with the social and economic importance of hunting, for the state's residents and visitors alike. Pheasants attracted wealthy and prominent hunters, who arrived by automobile, private railroad car, and plane. Rice recounts that, on November 4, 1940, *Life* magazine described pheasant hunting in South Dakota with pictures and captions conveying "a paradise for pheasant hunters" (1941:23).

In this accounting, place, people, and pheasant can be seen as "made" for each other: For Moore, this conjunction constitutes a socioecological project, for Rice, serendipity. Indeed, Rice strikes a lighthearted note in his book title by evoking a "phrase popular at the time, 'Fifty Million Frenchmen Can't Be Wrong'" (Reese 1993:35). Derived apparently from a 1927 song of the same name about the charming allure of French dandies and damsels, the message, extending to all (birds and people) in this newly formed relationship, would seem to be "Try it, you'll really like it."

And people did try and like it, such that the pheasant came to exert "an amazing influence on the social and economic life of a large part of South Dakota. Pheasant hunting has become an institution, almost as much a part of fall as corn husking or Thanksgiving. It is a period of family reunions and feasting, of vacations, visiting, and celebrations" (Rice 1941:19). Clearly, this bird had come to figure in engagements of production–control, exchange, and mutuality—becoming "for," "with," and "in" South Dakotans. This is to say, the socioecological project came to combine Hage's major and minor themes of relationality.

By 1943, the significance of the pheasant to South Dakotans was so generally recognized that State Representative Paul Kretschmar nominated it to be the state bird. In his speech, he gave several reasons:

> The pheasant of South Dakota has blood of the four common varieties [specified as common, Chinese, Mongolian, and Japanese] and may be likened to the people of the State—a good mixture.
>
> The pheasant is a hardy and vigorous bird. It has shown that it can carry through droughts, cold and storms and is able to weather the hardships as the people of this state have demonstrated the last ten years.
>
> The pheasant is a beautiful bird, striking in this drab color scheme of ours, and it is a great favorite with upland game hunters.
>
> The pheasant is not a migratory bird but is a permanent resident ranging throughout the state. The kind of a qualification that we pride in the people of the State of South Dakota. South Dakota is recognized as the outstanding state of its habitat.
>
> The pheasant is an excellent table delicacy; a fine sporting bird; it is a source of substantial income to the State of South Dakota; the bird that has popularized the State of South Dakota. [*South Dakota Conservation Digest* 1943:16]

Given these virtues, Kretschmar concluded, "To reward a bird of fine table delicacy, sporting blood, vigorous and hardy, found throughout the state, responsible for a substantial part of our state income, and one that has given us national recognition, it is my recommendation that the Ring Neck Pheasant be officially named as the bird of our state" (*South Dakota Conservation Digest* 1943:16). Kretschmar's language evoked a relationality verging on the totemic. He recognized the lives of pheasants and of South Dakotans as parallel and intertwined, as comprising a socioecology with affective as well as economic dimensions: Both birds and people were immigrants whose melding of various ancestral lines enabled adaptation to a sometimes unforgiving climate; both were survivors of (capitalism's) hard times, including the Dustbowl and the Depression; both were committed to their place of residence. Moreover, the pheasant sustained and nourished those it represented and brought them distinction in ways literal and metaphoric.

Together, Rice and Kretschmar provided a pheasant-centric lens through which many South Dakotans fil-

tered their views of past, present, and future. Rice's 1941 stocktaking established that, given appropriate and entirely reasonable practices of conservation, the valued and valuable pheasant could thrive in South Dakota. Kretschmar's 1943 argument went slightly further; it proposed that, given remarkable sociosymbolic resonances, the pheasant should represent South Dakotans more generally. In effect, these two advocates asserted that the once-exotic and now-settled-in people and bird had become the "good immigrants."[5]

In stark contrast to the past "slaughter of native game" (a past now seemingly understood as a negative alterity), the present relationship between these immigrants is depicted as feasibly sustainable. As we further elaborate below, the flourishing of pheasants has become an important measure for South Dakotans of right practices of living with the land and with each other. Pheasants and these practices are thus periodically invoked as central to the identity of South Dakotans: as essential to their heritage—as a multidimensional point of reference for that which should not be lost.

Pheasant consolidation

The heritage Rice and Kretschmar helped create has been perpetuated, indeed, elaborated. For instance, concentrating largely on South Dakota from the 1940s through the mid-1960s, the historian James Marten (1999) conveys pheasant-focused memories to a relatively contemporary audience. Drawing on historical accounts and interviews, he evokes a golden age of pheasant hunting, this despite the increasing intensification of agriculture with farm consolidation. (In 1940, there were 72,454 farms with an average size of 545 acres; in 1969, there were 45,726 farms with an average size of 997 acres [Olson 2006:43].) Intensification was likewise encouraged by extension services and other state and federal agencies that promoted efficient, scientific agricultural practices. Among these were monocropping and the conversion of grassy, brushy, and marshy margins into cropland. Yet most farms remained moderately diversified and untidy. This was a time, at least in retrospect, when there was room for pheasants and the social relations surrounding them. There were clouds on the horizon, but at this period, the socioecological project was pheasant friendly—and the pheasant numbers signaled that things were okay.

Most of the stories Marten relates from this period are about pheasant-focused relationality—of exchange and mutuality. For example, when troops passed through South Dakota during World War II, hunters' wives expressed gratitude by treating them to the signature specialty of homemade pheasant sandwiches. When, during 1962 and 1963, baseball stars Bob Feller and Hank Aaron hunted pheasants, they also gave "batting tips to the young patients at the Redfield State hospital and School" (Marten 1999:98).

In addition, when South Dakotans lodged, fed, and guided more-affluent out-of-state hunters, longer-term relationships were often established. These hunters provided their hosts with welcome income and a stimulating break from routine. Although some locals remembered hunters who "'were arrogant and liked to flaunt their wealth and importance'" (Marten 1999:106), frequently relationships were meaningful and sometimes multigenerational. Here, from one of Marten's interviews:

> Verdon I. Lamb recalled that a core group of five or six hunters from Marshfield, Wisconsin, began hunting near Willow Lake in the 1930s. At first they stayed with his aunt and uncle. Later they moved to his parents' farm, and still later they stayed with Lamb's sister. Finally in the 1970s and 1980s, the group stayed with Lamb and his wife. In return, the Lambs journeyed to Wisconsin several times and hunters and hosts alike reunited outside of hunting season for vacations, weddings and funerals. [1999:100]

Marten describes how this sociability became increasingly difficult to maintain after the 1960s, largely as a result of continued intensification of agricultural practices. "Improved farm machinery, drainage of wetlands, and increased herbicide use meant less prime nesting sanctuaries along weed-choked fence rows and in sloughs … [Concomitantly] beyond the dwindling numbers of birds, there seemed to be a noticeable decline in the good relations between [out-of-state] hunters and South Dakotans" (Marten 1999:109).

It was not until the perfect capitalist storm of the early 1980s that pheasant numbers temporarily rebounded. Farm overproduction, commodity price collapse, debt overextension, killer interest rates—all triggered by an embargo on exports to the Soviet Union following its invasion of Afghanistan—precipitated a farm crisis. To help farmers cope, the 1985 Farm Bill created the Federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) which paid farmers to take land out of production for periods of 10–15 years and convert it into pheasant-friendly grassland. Once the crisis was past, renewed agricultural intensification spurred by high commodity prices made the CRP less popular. According to the advocacy group Pheasants Forever, the number of South Dakotan acres enrolled in CRP declined between 2007 and 2014 from 1.56 to 1.17 million, a loss of some six hundred square miles of grassland habitat. Correspondingly, to anticipate, pheasant numbers dropped appreciably. (In 2014, they were 41 percent lower than the average over the preceding ten years [Hauk 2014]). As we explore below, that good times for pheasants had become bad times for farmers (and vice versa) continues to vex South Dakotans. This

concern has prompted an ongoing search for ways to ensure that pheasants continue to matter.

Pheasant nostalgia enshrined

In 2012, the South Dakota Historical Society published a children's book providing a remarkably concentrated disquisition on the pheasant as the focus of South Dakotan heritage. *The Mystery of the Pheasants* (Meierhenry and Volk 2012) ignores all history except the good bits as well as contemporary realities about continuing agricultural intensification. (By 2012, the number of South Dakotan farms had further decreased to 31,898, with an average acreage increasing to 1,352 [Keololand.com 2014].) The book was designed to attract youngsters to hunting when fewer seemed interested—in fact, when fewer seemed interested in any outdoor activity, a symptom of what the journalist Richard Louv calls their "nature-deficit disorder" (2008:99–112). It tells the story of twins, Hannah and Max, in their first venture as actual gun-carrying pheasant hunters on their grandparents' farm.[6] (In the book's illustrations, the twins appear to be about ten, the minimal age for a "mentored" hunt in South Dakota.)

Filled with warm drawings of pheasants, dogs, family, and festive food, the book is redolent of kith, kin, and camaraderie:

> As they got close to the farm, they could see [that] the yard was filling up with more cars. Cousins, aunts, uncles, friends, and an assortment of dogs greeted one another.
>
> The twins love the annual pheasant hunt, the opening weekend would be filled with great traditions, good food, and the telling of stories from previous hunts. [Meierhenry and Volk 2012:18]

The book conveys many of the historical events Marten relates. For instance, Grandma and Great Aunt Cheryl remember themselves as teenagers handing pheasant sandwiches to grateful soldiers. Moreover, it stresses that hunting entails not just great experiences but serious responsibilities. Though the twins have already taken hunter education, Grandpa reviews hunting basics: those of conservation, including why just cocks are killed; those of hunter safety, including why hunters wear conspicuous orange. Accordingly, Max knows to hold his fire when a hen pheasant takes flight and that, seeing his uncle's orange cap, he does not have a clear shot. Hunting also requires the development of skill; when his chance to fire does come, Max misses his target. His implied coming-of-age as a hunter with his first kill must wait until the following day. And, families being families, his disappointment seems moderately compounded by the hunting success of his sister (who proclaims, "Girls rule!" [Meierhenry and Volk 2012:25]). Because of that success, she is given the "honor" of recounting over the evening's feast "what pheasants have meant to the family," a story "she had heard her aunts and uncles tell … before": "During the 1930s, pheasants helped keep our family alive. They provided food when the crops failed. Every October, we return to the farm to hunt with our cousins and friends and we gave thanks for the pheasants that bring us together" (Meierhenry and Volk 2012:29).

The mystery of the pheasants, thus, seems to lie in what they have wrought—in their transformative and sustaining effects on South Dakotan life. Grandpa sums up: Not only does this once-exotic import "really thrive in South Dakota" but in addition, "we have made it a part of our lives … It brings us together each fall. People have been coming from all over the United States to hunt in South Dakota since the 1930s and 1940s. It's a tradition" (Meierhenry and Volk 2012:33).

As is appropriate in solidifying a tradition, the book establishes the setting, through text and illustration, as neither antiquated nor entirely contemporary. Consistent with Grandpa's description of the farm as "little," the farmhouse is pictured as pleasantly old-fashioned, the barn and other outbuildings as well used and modest, and the vehicles of the guests as serviceable. Aside from the all-terrain vehicle Grandpa uses to scout the next day's hunt, the depiction could have been from 40 years ago. The story presents timeless verity: a world of reference in which everything comes into proper balance with the pheasant as grand articulator.

Indeed, the setting and sentiment conveyed remind us of the frankly nostalgic and highly popular paintings of South Dakota artist Terry Redlin. In 2012, we visited the Terry Redlin Art Center in Redlin's hometown of Watertown, having heard it lauded by locals as a major tourist destination in the southeastern part of the state. The impressive center was designed by the artist's son to house his father's original oil paintings (some one hundred fifty of them). Prints of most are available at the center's gift store and online, and we often saw them in South Dakotan homes. (One householder, perhaps unsure of our reaction, confessed that his son thinks Redlin paintings are crap, though he himself likes them a lot.)

While we do not know whether, as a reviewer put it, Redlin is "without question the most popular artist in the country today," certainly many appreciate his evocation of the heartland:

> Terry Redlin captures the fleeting moments, the beauty we've all observed in the Midwest at the beginning or end of a day, when the hills, woodlands, lakes, prairies and wildlife are at their poetic best. Looking at his lyrical paintings, you can imagine waves gently lapping at the shores of a lake, the honking of geese as they fly in a great "V" across the sky, the sunset a particular apricot color, the snow as it sifts from pine branches,

> or the silvery moon on a crisp night. His work is the equivalent of "comfort food"—in this case, comfort art—and it imbues us with a sense of well-being. [Jordan 1999]

Most of the paintings displayed at the center were created between 1978 and 1985 yet are based on Redlin's recollections of his youth during the 1950s and 1960s. None portrays the Dustbowl of the 1930s or the farm foreclosures of the early 1980s; neither ecological catastrophe nor economic collapse intrudes.[7] None, even those featuring antique equipment, conveys the physical drudgery—the noise, the heat, the dust—of farm life before the advent of enclosed, air-conditioned, large-capacity machines. Rather, the themes are uniformly romantic. As the explanatory texts on the center's website make clear, the paintings provide an affirmation of hard-working families deriving satisfaction from rural and small-town life. Depicting a time when people made efforts to know their neighbors and to appreciate nature, warm kitchens await in this world of sufficient food and abundant wildlife. This is a world in which the humans hunt and fish in apparent harmony with their surroundings. While guns and fishing poles are often evident and the scenes of waterfowl, upland birds, and fish-filled lakes evoke a sportsman's gaze, the killing—the harvesting—takes place off-stage. As the center's website puts it, the pictures are "serene, heartwarming." This quality is due to their subject matter and to their "romantic realism," in which remarkable detail is suffused with both direct and reflected light.[8] The resulting glow of pleasant reflection creates a halcyon aura of a good and simpler life.

This is a glow, we think, that brings from the shadows the "minor realities" that bespeak alterity. The following text from the center's website accompanies the 1983 painting *Evening Surprise* (see Figure 1): "In this dramatic painting, ownership of the corn field is briefly contested between man and the ring-neck pheasants. The farmer means no harm, and on this fall evening wishes only to use the land on a temporary basis. He will soon willingly relinquish the territory to the wildlife and, as payment for the disturbance, offer the harvest leftovers."[9]

Virtually all South Dakotans know that the state bird will, by the third Saturday in October, be hunted as the state's prime game bird.[10] However, this moment is one of harmony in which pheasants and farmers are linked by domestication (for us), yet also in gift exchange (with us) and in mutuality (in us). And all of these forms of relationality are presented as compatibly linking culture and nature within the imagined practices of a particular and traditional socioecology. (We might mention here that David Nomsen, director of the South Dakota Regional Office of Pheasants Forever, described prints of *Evening Surprise* as rare and, when auctioned at fundraisers, bringing his organization more money than any other print [personal communication, November 4, 2014].)

Fred among the pheasants

The "History of Pheasants in South Dakota" observes that South Dakota is the one state that "extensively promotes the killing and eating of an official symbol." Nevertheless, it emphasizes significant hunting relationalities in terms already familiar to us:

> The opening weekend of the hunting season is filled with good food, good dogs and good tales of previous hunts. It's the story of how enduring friendships are built upon common interests, and how the tradition of hunting still serves as an important rite of passage into adulthood. It's passing down from one generation to the next the essential values of good sportsmanship: respect for nature and sharing abundance. [Thus] the immigrant bird has made good in a big way. [South Dakota Historical Society 2013:1]

These terms evoke the multiple relationalities of production–control, exchange, and mutuality that can come with pheasant hunting. Additionally, for those who have hunted pheasants, they reference what Hage describes as the "multiplicity of realities … [inhering in the] multiplicity of the potentialities of the human body … [that is, its] affective, postural, libidinal, and physical potentiality" (2012:299–300). As Fred Errington can personally attest, hunting pheasants is, in fact, an activity that engages myriad and memorable dimensions.[11]

Although Fred had hunted with his father during the 1950s, it was not until a 2014 trip to Brookings, South Dakota, that he again found himself with a gun in the field. Fortunately, he was accompanied by people (and dogs) who knew what they were doing. Twice he was invited out with a male friend on leased land; once, with two male friends, on the 160 acres retained by one of them from his family's former farm; and once, with a group of 12 hunters, on 640 acres purchased by two brothers for the propagation of pheasants and as the context of gatherings, including opening-day-of-hunting-season reunions, for family and friends.

To be sure, what was for Fred an array of somewhat discrete physical experiences was for practiced hunters a more fluent and fluid embodiment of the gestalt of hunting. Nevertheless, he found that the hunters could easily talk about the parts that constituted the whole.

This is what happened in the hunts: There was dressing in the uniform of bright orange vests and caps, along with well-worn brush-resistant trousers and boots. There was venturing out on a (normally) crisp, late-fall day. There was the appraisal of the wind's directionality and intensity and a corresponding effort to figure out where

Figure 1. *Evening Surprise,* a 1983 painting by Terry Redlin depicting the peaceful coexistence of farmers and pheasants, displayed in the Redlin Art Center, Watertown, South Dakota, included with permission of Julia Ranum, Executive Director, Redlin Art Center.

the pheasants might be hiding. There were hours of tramping through tall grass, cattails, and other heavy vegetation. In the small group, there was an informal and intimate organization. In the large group, there was division into two platoons, one composed of the "walkers," who moved down the field 15–20 yards apart, and the other, of the "blockers," stationed at the end of the field to flush any pheasants that had elected to run rather than fly from the approaching dogs and hunters. In both types of hunts, there was attention to the dogs as they coursed back and forth, seemingly tireless, responding to calls to keep them from venturing too far afield and flushing pheasants prematurely. There was alertness that a pheasant might flush at any time, sometimes unexpectedly and sometimes following a signal from a dog. When a pheasant did take flight, there was the shouted identification of hen versus rooster. If the latter, and if within range and affording a clear shot, there was a split second to shoot: to slip the safety off the shotgun, track the bird with the proper lead, and fire. There was watching the bird fall, fly away unscathed, or (upsettingly) sustain injury yet disappear into the distance. There was, with the excited assistance of the dogs, retrieving the bird and, if still living, wringing its neck. There was stuffing the pheasant's warm body into a back pocket in the shooter's hunting vest where its weight was felt as the hunt continued. There were photographs taken of members of the large group lined up behind the pheasants they had collectively shot. There was often shared food and always shared hunting stories, shared kidding, and shared conversation. There was, too, given the guns, shared trust. And, for many, there was the shared sense of being good at a valued, outdoor, largely male-focused activity, one that their fathers may have been good at (see Figure 2).

Few with whom we spoke would be happy to relinquish these annual experiences. Indeed, Lester Flake, writing primarily about pheasant hunting in his memoir, *Finding Paradise in South Dakota,* considers these experiences among the most important in his life:

> Let me warn you! If you are an upland game hunter be careful about going to South Dakota, don't move there, don't make friends there, and especially, don't hunt there—it is too much fun, too addicting, too hard

Figure 2. "Fred among the Pheasants," a photograph taken by Daniel Schaal on November 6, 2014, of Frederick Errington holding the pheasant he shot while hunting on private land with Schaal and Spencer Vaa near Bridgewater, South Dakota.

> to leave. You will always want just one last hunt, one last chance to work your hunting dog, one last bird at close range. Of course I am being facetious about staying away from South Dakota. South Dakota can truly be a wonderland for upland game hunters. I know, I have hunted South Dakota for 41 years and loved every minute. [2014:3]

Among Flake's hunting friends were those who took Fred out. It was clear that they found pleasure not only in hunting but also in passing on the pleasure to Fred. They worked to ensure that his reintroduction to hunting was enjoyable and successful, in part so that he would appreciate hunting intellectually and viscerally. Comparably, parents—usually, fathers—tried hard to convey to their kids why hunting was important to them. And we frequently heard stories from hunting friends about their children's—usually, sons'—first pheasant kill. This kill, moreover, was often memorialized in trophy photos displayed in frames labeled "John's (or Joe's, etc.) first bird." In sum, for many South Dakotans living within an ecological regime of highly capitalized agricultural production, the gestalt that is pheasant hunting continues to matter, and in many dimensions. Although undeniably reflecting "minor realities," pheasant hunting—as tradition and as embodied multidimensional experience—does bespeak alterities, ones that may go so far as to evoke "alternative forms of human-nature relations" (Hage 2012:295). Every effort is, thus, made to keep these alterities viable, if only in the shadows.

Pheasant contention

If the South Dakota Historical Society is right that "the immigrant bird has made good in a big way," recent population surveys make clear, as suggested earlier, that South Dakotans may no longer be doing well by it. The pheasant population is closely monitored—in effect, audited before and after hunting season. To be sure, the number of

pheasants actually shot by hunters is of obvious interest. Of even greater interest is the number of pheasants available for hunters to shoot. Each year between July 25 and August 15, trained observers drive a hundred or so 30-mile routes on the annual "brood count." According to former pheasant counter Spencer Vaa, an optimal occasion for this stock-taking is a sunny morning following a heavy dew; this is the time when pheasant adults and chicks appear on back-country roads, warming up and drying out (personal communication, July 23, 2012). The numbers observed do not directly reflect pheasant populations; nevertheless, they do provide the basis of annual comparison and appraisal. The final figures are recorded as "pheasants per mile" (PPM).

Numbers were dire in 2013—64 percent lower than the previous year's survey—leading to much concern. Some worried about the loss of an important hunting heritage. Thus, nature writer John Pollmann evoked the multigenerational significance of pheasant hunting to many South Dakotans. He described cutting his teeth

> as a pheasant hunter during the heydays of the 1990s and the early 2000s, but I remember well tagging along with my dad during the early 1980s pre-Conservation Reserve Program when walking all day and seeing only a pheasant or two (or none at all) was not uncommon. . . . [While driving with his own small son during 2013, Pollmann] gave strict instructions to be on the look-out for pheasants along the road. He didn't see any (I didn't either), so after a number of quiet miles, I told him that the pheasants might already be in bed. Pheasants, he yelled. Wake up. Come back. [Pollmann 2013:3]

Others worried about the economic consequences of losing a hunting industry that generates approximately $223 million dollars for the state each year. Most of this revenue, significantly, comes from nonresident hunters who spend money for licenses, car rentals, lodging, meals, sporting equipment, and, in some cases, access to often up-scale commercial hunting properties that provide guides, dogs, and pheasants (wild and pen raised).

Virtually everyone ascribed low pheasant numbers to habitat loss. It was no secret that industrial agricultural practices—the same reason for the decline in pheasant numbers during the 1960s—were again intensifying. Improved agricultural inputs and new varieties of genetically modified corn and soybeans have greatly increased yields since the 1990s. Moreover, in recent years, commodity prices for these two crops, spurred, in part, by ethanol mandates and increasing exports to Asia, reached all-time highs. Seeking to maximize production and profit (all the while claiming to "feed the world"), farmers in huge machines plied enormous fields. In these boom times, land prices rose, with prime South Dakota farmland selling in 2014 for $13,500 an acre. Correspondingly, grassland was increasingly converted to the uniformity of row crops (see Johnston 2013; Wright and Wimberley 2013). As grassland expert Michael Wimberley told us, the loss of pasture "seems inexorable. It is a slow, insidious process; everyone around here recognizes it. For example, I was fishing at Lake Sinai and I noticed a hayfield, an old pasture; the next time I was there it was plowed. This is the kind of experience everybody has had" (personal communication, June 14, 2014).

Corresponding to these practices of intensification was an aesthetic. Many farmers appreciated the "clean" of the weed free and the regimented over the "dirty" of the dispersed and the loosely organized. One stated forthrightly, "Thinking like a farmer, and I do think like a farmer, I would plant as much as possible. I'd get rid of the shelterbelts, clean up the fencerows, and drain the wet spots." Another, experimenting with restoring part of his farm to prairie, related the merciless chafing by his neighbors about his fields looking like hell. When we ourselves spoke to a farmer friend about the wildflowers emerging during the prairie restoration of our former family farm (described in Gewertz and Errington 2015), he shook his head, saying our weeds were doing just fine. And for those who did appreciate "weeds," economic pressures were hard to ignore. For example, while auctioning an inherited farm, a woman confessed to us privately that she wanted to entail for conservation purposes some forty acres, still in rough pasture, where she had enjoyed wandering as a girl. Yet, given current land and commodity prices, she would be crazy not to sell everything for as much as she could get. After all, she concluded, with farming you need to make it when you can. Thus, consistent with this regime of capital-intensive agriculture, all wildness was threatened unless it could be made to pay. This included the wildness Marten described as the "prime [pheasant] nesting sanctuaries along weed-choked fence rows and in sloughs" (1999:109).

Given all of these pressures, it is no wonder that the 2013 statewide PPM of 1.52 turned out to be the lowest since the preconservation (CRP) days of 1978, when the index was 1.38. Certainly, it was dramatically lower than the CRP days of 2007, when the PPM was 7.85. To address these dismal changes, Governor Dennis Daugaard held a "Pheasant Habitat Summit" on December 6, 2013. The invitees—academics, conservationists, those with economic interests in agriculture and tourism, and government officials—were asked to "identify the causes and seek potential solutions" to the problem of pheasant decline (*Brookings Register* 2013).

Pheasants in focus

The summit was held at the Crossroad's Convention Center in Huron, a South Dakotan town known for its excellent pheasant hunting. On a bitterly cold morning, of the 500 who had registered, about four hundred attended. Some

Figure 3. "Huron's Pheasant," a photograph taken by Frederick Errington on July 17, 2012, of "the world's largest pheasant," which welcomes visitors to Huron, South Dakota.

one thousand more watched the live video on the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP) website (SDGFP 2014). (See Figure 3.)

The summit's emcee was SDGFP secretary Jeff Vonk, who began by invoking Aldo Leopold as the "father of modern wildlife management." He then reassured the audience with a quote from Leopold's *Game Management* that "game can be restored by the creative use of the same tools which have heretofore destroyed it—axe, plow, cow, fire, and gun" (1933:vii). This was not to say, Vonk continued, that change should stop. Indeed, South Dakota's farmers must embrace advances in technology, seed genetics, and farm policy to be competitive in state, national, and international markets. It would be wrong to target any particular group or individual as causing the pheasant decline. Instead, the summit was meant to allow thought and discussion about the opportunities to conserve, enhance, and even re-create the habitat necessary for the state bird to thrive.

After his opening remarks, Vonk introduced Governor Daugaard, who conveyed that the summit was meant to establish a shared set of facts so everyone could work together to solve an important problem. Pheasant hunting was one of South Dakota's proudest traditions, and South Dakotans were the envy of pheasant hunters worldwide. It was not surprising, therefore, that the pheasant was the state bird. To maintain this proud tradition—an important part of South Dakotan culture—he had invited experts and stakeholders with different interests to address the problem of pheasant habitat. Although agriculture was South Dakota's most important economic driver, on which many if not all those assembled depended, pheasant hunting was its renowned pastime. (In 2014, agriculture contributed $25.6 billion to the South Dakota economy, whereas, in 2013, pheasants contributed $223 million.[12]) There need be no conflict between the two: A symbiotic relationship was possible once common ground was found. To illustrate, the governor told of having gone hunting the previous weekend with extremely successful farmers who ran a large-scale operation and who also loved pheasants. They did not have a pheasant reserve but had created habitat on their farm to support pheasants. In fact, they could do this because they were so successful.

Both Vonk and Daugaard made clear that the concern was with pheasant habitat—not nature in general. Both

recognized that the landscape would remain thoroughly configured by intensive and highly competitive agricultural production. In this regard, both assumed the inevitability of a capitalist socioecological project. From their perspective, a radically different world was not possible.

These preliminary statements set the tone for the causes identified and the solutions sought. Information was provided in subsequent "keynotes." One, on "the history of the pheasant," accounted for the decline in pheasant numbers much as we have described: as primarily due to loss of pheasant habitat, especially as land had been pulled from CRPs. Correspondingly, and as an additional fact, the audience learned that pheasant populations were high during the 1940s war years because a shortage of farm labor meant reduced areas of intensive cultivation and, hence, expanded areas of pheasant habitat. Two other keynotes, on "South Dakota land use change" and on "conservation policies," confirmed that significant areas of pheasant-friendly grassland were being converted to row crops. Nonetheless, South Dakotan farmers did "feed the world" (with each farmer provisioning, it seems, 150 people), a responsibility ever more challenging as the middle class grows within a generally rising global population. Another keynote, on "hunting and tourism," rehearsed the importance of the tradition of pheasant hunting, including South Dakotans' long history of hospitality toward out-of-state hunters. Some of these hunters had established close relationships with in-state farm families. Others opted for more full-service hunting packages. In each case, these visitors contributed importantly to the South Dakotan economy.

If there was general agreement that the decline in pheasant numbers was troubling and was due to habitat loss attendant on increasingly intensified agriculture, there was also general agreement on what sort of solutions would be viable. First and foremost (as the audience was assured on several occasions), no one would ever tell a farmer how to use his or (in some cases) her land. Rather, farmers must be convinced that fostering pheasants was in their self-interest. Thus, one speaker advocated practices of "sustainable intensification": "farming the best and leaving the rest" might make economic sense given the decreased profitability of planting marginal land. Solutions, in other words, had to be "win-win"—a phrase explicitly used at least four times during the summit.

Another possible win-win was for the community to work together, getting beyond common disputes between nonfarming landowners who liked to hunt and farmers. One source of friction involved nonfarmers who refused to control noxious and easily spreading thistle on their land because it made good pheasant cover while, simultaneously, they criticized farmers for tearing up shelterbelts and converting pasture to row crops. In this case, the win-win, apparently seen as the restoration of harmonious relationships, would come when nonfarmers got on board with the farming agenda. Another win-win was for farmers to work with pheasant-focused conservation organizations, like Pheasants Forever. Farmers could augment the organization's reserves by converting the edges of their fields that abutted them into winter pheasant cover. This would encourage pheasants to disperse from the organization's core reserve area onto private land and become available to those farmers. A third win-win might come from lobbying efforts to include a "tall stubble incentive program" in the Farm Bill (of 2014); this program would provide financial incentives to farmers of small grains to leave stubble in their fields as cover for wintering pheasants.

Once the keynotes were delivered and attendees had all been given the same facts about the cause of the problem, namely, habitat loss, they were assigned to small groups—"break-out sessions"—to come up (over a brown-bag lunch) with possible solutions. During the final event, "findings of the small group discussion," each working group's top two suggestions for addressing habitat loss were related to attendees. The full list was to be posted on the SDGFP's website, including any suggestions mailed in after the summit. (The list, we noted, some nine months later, contained 574 suggestions.) Aside from a few radical solutions that would inconvenience if not thwart farmers in their plans to convert wetlands into agricultural land, the tenor of the suggestions was distinctly farmer friendly. The most popular solutions involved the creation of attractive incentives through changes in the tax structure or through better-funded federal CRP programs, which would encourage farmers to refrain from entirely cleaning up their landscape. Certainly, most of the proposed solutions were win-wins, at least in the sense that none of the groups represented at the summit would be asked to give up more than they gained. And, in his closing remarks, the governor expressed confidence that the summit, and the report of the soon-to-be-appointed "Governor's Pheasant Habitat Work Group," would lead to a win-win result for farmers and hunters.

The dominant message of the summit was clear. Dave Nomsen, one of the speakers, put it this way when we interviewed him at his Pheasants Forever office in Brookings: Until recently, pheasants were a "by-product of agricultural production, existing on its margins." Now with increasing agricultural intensity, the only way pheasants are going to survive is through precision farming for conservation. Pheasants can no longer be counted on "as a nice little perk." Now to survive they must be "managed as a commodity" (personal communication, November 4, 2014).

As promised, the governor did create a "Pheasant Habitat Work Group," charged with recommending "practical solutions for maintaining and improving pheasant habitat" (South Dakota Governor's Habitat Work Group 2014:5). The 13 members, representing conservationists, academics, farmers, and government officials, met monthly between

February and August 2014, often joined by invited experts. In accord with promised transparency, the minutes of each meeting were posted on the SDFGP's website. The final report (available on the website) was released on September 9, 2014. Here, from the report's executive summary, is an example of win-win language indicating that no one was really expected to sacrifice much of anything:

> [We] believe that, in general, South Dakota Landowners care about conservation efforts and are actively implementing these on their lands … . We strive to use many of the programs our conservation partners already have in place, but to fund them better, increase education of the public and landowners, and above all, make conservation convenient … .
>
> We … hope more producers can use this report to implement practices that generate long-term financial benefits while increasing short-term revenue and assisting wildlife … .
>
> There are many financial and environmental benefits to "farming the best and conserving the rest." [South Dakota Governor's Habitat Work Group 2014:2]

Appraising pheasants

At about the same time that Rice wrote *Fifty Million Pheasants* and Kretschmar nominated the pheasant to be South Dakota's state bird, Aldo Leopold contemplated the relationship between farming and conservation. In his well-known 1939 essay, "The Farmer as Conservationist," he observed, "The landscape of any farm is the owner's portrait of himself. … Conservation implies self-expression in that landscape, rather than blind compliance with economic dogma. What kinds of self-expression will one day be possible in the landscape of a cornbelt farm? What will conservation look like when transplanted from the convention hall to the fields and woods?" (1991a:263).

Five years later, in "The Outlook for Farm Wildlife," Leopold made more explicit the difficulties of articulating economic self-interest with conservation. Given the "tremendous momentum of industrialization … spread[ing] into farm life" there was an "unresolved contest between two opposing philosophies" of this life:[13]

(1) *The farm is a food factory*, and the criterion of its success is salable products.
(2) *The farm is a place to live*. The criterion of success is a harmonious balance between plants, animals, and people; between the domestic and the wild; between utility and beauty. [Leopold 1991b:326]

At least for Rice and Kretschmar, the tension between these philosophies—between economic self-interest and conservation, between the farm as a food factory and as a place to live—seemed rather effortlessly bridged by the pheasant. A by-product of the only moderately intensified midwestern agriculture of their day, this game bird was understood as nature revived and remade. Beautiful and wild, it seemed to harmonize with, indeed, facilitate, the human activities of hunting and of feasting with family and friends. This was a time, memorialized decades later in Redlin's nostalgic *Evening Surprise,* of a win-win of a certain sort: one in which there was apparent harmony between plants, animals, and people—as pheasants and farmers shared the harvest; when everything in the environment to which humans related seemed to conjoin domestication (for us), gift exchange (with us), and mutuality (in us) (to refer again to Hage 2012). Although making a living on a farm was far from assured, farmers could nonetheless have pheasants and all that pheasants entailed. They could, in this respect, make the farm a place to live, without undermining it as a food factory. Hence, fostering pheasants was a win-win.

However, times have changed and the pheasant is no longer an easy by-product of South Dakota's agriculture. To the extent farmers are doing well, pheasant numbers are threatened. Unless steps are taken, when farmers win, pheasants lose. The governor's pheasant summit was held to determine how to reassimilate the pheasant into a more intensified, more highly rationalized socioecology: how to make pheasants competitive with any other cash crop, especially as they might be grown on agriculturally marginal land (as in "farm the best, save the rest"). This rendition of win-win, premised on further, relentless valuation of nature as a source of economic profit, reveals the truth about Wall Street as a way of organizing nature. It confirms Moore's statement about both farmers and Goldman Sachs bankers as players in the same arena.

It would seem fitting, therefore, that the current CEO of the Nature Conservancy, Mark Tercek, was formerly a "managing director and Partner at Goldman Sachs, where he ultimately led the firm's environmental strategy" (Tercek and Adams 2013:book jacket). As Tercek argues in his book *Nature's Fortune: How Business and Society Thrive by Investing in Nature* (coauthored with nature writer Jonathan Adams), capitalism, with its market mechanisms, can be harnessed to seek a "win-win," although, he grants, that outcome can be "elusive" (2013:99). The goal of such an effort is the creation of public good through the support of nature in a context of enlightened self-interested, private property, and capitalist production. Still, as the science writer Gayathri Vaidyanathan suggests, the aspects of nature valued under this regime are those that can be shown to have practical—measurable—benefits. Rather than valued for its biodiversity, nature is to be valued in a highly selective, often greatly simplified fashion—as commensurate with economic advantage.[14] Peter Kareiva, chief scientist at

the Nature Conservancy, puts it in terms that directly replicate the call for win-wins at the Pheasant Summit: "Only by seeking to jointly maximize conservation and economic objectives is conservation likely to succeed" (Vaidyanathan 2014).

Some of the implications of this formulation of nature according to Wall Street are becoming interestingly apparent for our pheasant-hunting friends in South Dakota. One avid hunter, while driving us through a countryside filled with personal hunting-focused signification, pointed out with some distaste a commercial pheasant hunting preserve. A few minutes later, on the outskirts of a small town, we saw the agricultural corollary: a veritable mountain of corn piled on the ground as the overflow of large storage bins. Our friend made his distaste explicit by stating that the commercial operation released pen-raised birds for its clients. These birds are notoriously naive, lacking all Kretschmar applauded—not really wild enough to be proper pheasants supporting real hunting. (Jokes are sometimes made that they have barely learned to fly.) Hunting them was, as another friend put it, like buying sex in a brothel. (Or, as Flake more sedately states, "The challenge of the hunt is in the craftiness and wildness of the birds—wild hatched birds win that context easily" [2014:168].)[15] (See Figure 4.)

This logic of commodification continues to unfold. Recently, owners of commercial pheasant hunting preserves approached the SDGFP Commission with a proposition. Rather than restricting hunters on their preserves to a daily bag limit of 20 pheasants, as was currently the case, they petitioned the commission to wave bag limits entirely for these hunters. In exchange, the hunters would pay an extra fee of $120 for a hunting license. This fee would be used for projects promoting pheasant habitat within South Dakota. (Presently, the daily bag limit in contexts in which wild-raised, rather than pen-raised, pheasants are hunted is three birds and the fee for a nonresident license is $125.) According to an article in the *Brookings Register,* the petition was "designed to address two issues. The first was the free market concept of allowing preserve hunters to shoot as many mostly pen-raised birds as they wanted. The second was to try to help the state to find ways to invest in pheasant habitat." The commission thought this proposal had the "potential to be a win-win for you and the state." Nevertheless, it was concerned that public perception would be negative, regarding it as just enabling "killing of something instead of actually hunting." (We might mention that the "distinction between *hunting* and *killing*" is, according to Mark Boglioli [2009:69], important to many hunters as well.) Although the proposal has been withdrawn for the time being, the problem of the loss of pheasant habitat remains. As one commissioner stated, "There's not that many farmers that are going to give up farm acres without being compensated" (Lowrey 2014).

The journalist Ken Curley speaks to the same issues in his editorial in the *Brookings Register* entitled "Farewell to the Pheasant?" After mentioning that he no longer hunts yet still feels the "pull of nature," he sums up the current state of pheasant affairs:

> It's easy to blame those big, bad farmers, but as I've noted before, we'd probably do the same thing if it was our land and we needed to make it as profitable as we could in order to take care of our families. Yes, soybean and corn monocultures are horrible for wildlife habitat, and tiling [draining the wet spots on farms] is not a good thing for the environment, but are you willing to subsidize landowners to stop doing it? [Curley 2013]

Conclusion

Clearly, we have moved from the time when ample numbers of pheasants, occurring as a by-product of agriculture, allowed South Dakotans to think culture and nature could be in reasonable accord: that making a living on a farm and enjoying a farm as a place to live could be readily harmonized. The availability of "fifty million pheasants" meant that South Dakotans could satisfy the dominant reality of the market and enjoy the minor realities contributing to quality of life, especially the pleasurable and satisfying socialities and physicalities linked with hunting. However, this culture–nature accord has been disrupted by recent shifts in agricultural practices, which (as Curley notes and many recognize) have had regrettable ecological consequences, notably, ones reflected in recent pheasant audits. The solution, according to the logic of Wall Street, has been to encourage South Dakotan farmers to produce a simplified form of nature—pheasants and their habitat—that will pay. And, for pheasants to pay, hunting and hunters must pay. Accordingly, to continue embracing significant nonmarket realities (so to speak, to engage in noncommercial sex), hunters must increasingly be willing to shell out. In so doing, hunting's counterpoints to dominant realities—the minor realities—may continue to be pushed further into the shadows: With hunting becoming a simulacrum for sale on preserves, alterity loses all credibility.

Thus, Moore's historical-materialist and Hage's phenomenological perspectives constructively converge. Together, they help explain why the pheasant has become as much a source of contention under late pheasant capitalism as of cohesion—and why it is likely to face a troubled future. Certainly, during the contemporary reshaping of the agricultural landscape—a reshaping akin to the "ruthless period of expansion" (to return to Rice)—the good immigrant can no longer just come along for the ride. In this sense, the state bird still reflects the state of the state.

Figure 4. "A Mountain of Corn," a photograph taken by Frederick Errington on June 18, 2014, of corn exceeding the capacity of local storage elevators near Estelline, South Dakota.

Notes

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1. The view that nature and culture are not dichotomous, but that nature is produced through human activity, is not new. See, for example, Lansing 1971 and Descola and Pálsson 1996.

2. The ontologists tend to reject cultures as "systems of belief (concepts, etc.) that provide different perspectives on a single world" (Paleček and Risjord 2012:3). Rather, they move from the more common assumption of many cultures and one world to the radical perspective of many "worlds"—many "natures." To deny this multinaturalism, they would argue, is an act of epistemological violence wherein "we" have the truth and "others" have cultural assumptions. To explore some of the byways they take in making this argument, see Bessire and Bond 2014. See too Costa and Fausto 2010 for an important review.

3. Hage continues, "The battle cry against global capitalism of those protesting the World Trade Organization in Seattle during 1999 that 'another world is possible'" (2012:295) is closely related to the impetus behind critical anthropological thought—the idea that we can be radically other to what we are.

4. In 1880, the pheasant arrived in Oregon, shipped from Shanghai by the U.S. consul (on his business of empire). Once established, it was introduced into many other states, including South Dakota, with a major purchase and release of birds there in 1914–15.

5. A 2013 article on the South Dakota Historical Society website uses similar language in its subtitle: "The Immigrant That Thrived in South Dakota."

6. In 2012, reviewer Nancy Walker described the book thus: "Its straightforward plot holds no surprises and is absent of all but the mildest tension. Nonetheless, *The Mystery of the Pheasants* will appeal to children eager to share their parents' love of hunting."

7. There is, however, a set of seven paintings in which a family is shown paying "the ultimate price for our freedom" in losing a beloved son in war.

8. This characterization is taken from the center's online biographical sketch of the artist. See Redlin Art Center 2006a.

9. For an alphabetical listing of paintings and associated commentary, see Redlin Art Center 2006b.

10. Another painting listed and described on the website is *Sharing the Bounty,* which depicts a "quiet fall afternoon" when "both pheasants and the white-tailed deer have discovered the faulty make-shift corn crib. They keep a wary eye on one another, but apparently feel any potential trouble is secondary for as long as the corn holds out." Few South Dakotans would not immediately recognize these animals as prime fall-season game species.

11. As Stuart Marks's compelling analysis of rural South Carolina hunting makes apparent, "In hunting humans engage in activities of heavy significance. Their actions and thoughts are meaningful and connected to other things" (1991:7). On hunting experiences, see too Dizard 1999, 2003; Boglioli 2009; Cerulli 2011; and Flake 2014.

12. On agricultural revenue, see South Dakota Corn Utilization Council 2014; on pheasant revenue, see Pollmann 2013.

13. See Gewertz and Errington 2015 for an elaboration of this tension, one seen as between value and values.

14. Evaluations of this perspective appear in Vaidyanathan 2014 and Max 2014.

15. A spoof of such preserve-based hunting was aired on the *Daily Show with Jon Stewart* (2006) after Vice President Dick Cheney shot a friend in the face instead of the pen-raised quail he was aiming at.

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