

KING KONG'S OWN STORY(1)

by DeWitt Henry

I am here. Not Me. I am lost inside the heave and ache and darkness. Sink back, weak. Strain, but arms held tight, legs, neck, chest, hips. No fight. *The Momma Pet, just out of reach. The enemies at water's edge. The flash, roar, jar. Eyes burn, ears ring, gasping, jangly down my spine and everywhere. Earth surge and roll. I crawl, fall forward, push to get up, pull my knee up, collapse. I lift my head, heart heaving. Momma. Lost. They.*

My here. My now. What am I? Where? Tilting, rising, dropping, floating. I have no roar, just rasping breath. Hot sun, red lids, parched. Surge and lashing storm, lightening. Saltwater in my nose and mouth, choking. Water world. Glare. Infinities of gaze, sky, water, flat horizon. A trail of smoke, clouds. There is some humming, tugging, massive thing at vision's edge as I strain to see. It swims and pulls like a creature, but it is also like a hive, with the twolegs inside it or crawling over the outside. They are in a shell from the big thing. A party of twolegs and the terrible one, who rules the others like a Papa. Sticks like legs in water. I strain against the vines and just then Papa throws his stone. Flash! The crushing grip, release, and choking. Being sinks.

* * *

This dream. We're in my lair, the ledge outside, where I can see as far as everywhere, the rivers, hills, and trees, and far, far off the little creatures' wall and my Kong Gong and the swimming creature that arrived two days ago, resting in the water, off the shore. I've

proven my power. Cracked the biter's jaw and felt him sag. Wrenched free from the spineless slither and whipped his head and writhing limp. I have dandled my vanquished. They all want my prize, my tidbit, Momma Pet. I hold her in my palm, amazed. I've never seen a twolegs like this. She is limp and sleeping again. I'm sitting down with my legs out. I bring her close to study her, her funny skin. Not just the white and hairless, but the shedding skin pink. I tickle her, very gently (2). No reaction.

I want her to trust me. I want her to play, like I always want them to. I want her to jump over my fingers and roll in my palm, climb up my arm, feeling my fur. I want to stretch out on my stomach and pretend to sleep, feel her explore, coming closer, closer, touching my face, my eyelids, my nostrils and lips, enjoying my strangeness, then climbing up my shoulder, wading across my back, and sliding down the other shoulder. Just thinking about it makes my skin twitch.

I tear off some of the loose membrane, her legs bare underneath; it is like scabs or blisters off my hands, sometimes, or peeling from my feet, or like the skins the slither creatures leave behind, and yet so strange. Not animal skin, not leaf or rind. I look again, more closely, and peel more off her shoulder, same thing, what is it? I sniff it against my nose, concentrating, a musky, flowery scent, her scent, dazzling back behind my eyes. I want more. She is so soft to my finger, breathing and alive. But her eyes open, her head rolls, she sees me close-up and whimpers, kicking her legs; then she curls and clenches in my grip. I bring her to my nostrils, that scent, tickling the back of my head, like sap from a broken tree. I tickle her again, little strokes with my finger, and again. She gasps and kicks. Again, my finger rubbing and feeling her warmth, the slippery pink skin. Like fluff, her yellow hair. The pulsing of her little life. I sniff my fingers, deep sniff, ummmmm! Again! Deep back in my mind, like Momma smelled, spicy and ripe. I am about to lick and lip her, curious to taste, when a rock noise startles me, pebble rattle, back in the cavern! (3).

* * *

Of course the troubles came. Her kind had followed, the creature, the one I had sensed all along. I set her down by the wall, stood up and went to see, leaving her behind me. I peered. I listened and smelled. Where was it? I peered down the trail.

Behind me, her squeals! I rushed to rescue. A flapping stabber had her, flapping its wings, lifting off with her in its claws. I lunged and caught one wing, then the other in midair. It dropped her as I broke its wings. I saw her safe, cringing back from us and from the precipice. The creature snapped and stabbed with its bill and beat its broken wings, heaving and thrashing in my grip. I bit its neck, gnashing. I pinned it to the ground with both hands, on its back, and bit its neck again. I roared and it squawked. It stabbed my face. With that, I grabbed the bill, left hand holding the head, right opening the bill. Then with both my feet holding down its body, with both hands I pried the bill, wide, wide, cracking it wide, and suddenly the fight was gone. Claws loosened. I had won! I ripped it with my teeth. I picked up the neck, dandled it. I threw the dead weight off the cliff and watched it fall, twisting, and bouncing off the rocks.

But Momma Pet was gone! The cavern? Off the cliff? I searched over the other edge. Did she fall? There, I saw the male, with her hanging from his shoulders, dangling far down on a vine, almost halfway down, the cliffs and river beneath them. The vine was thin, but strong. I reached and started hauling them up, hand over hand. They couldn't trick me. I would rip the warrior to bits. Carefully, as fast as I could, I drew them up, almost to the rim, but before I could catch them, the Momma Pet fell off, the male let go, and they both were falling. I shook my fist, watching for that terrible long moment, powerless. NO! NO! They missed the rocks, just. They splashed into the river.

First he came up. Then her. She was alive! I saw them swimming and the river taking them. I couldn't jump to follow, because the water wasn't deep enough to break my fall. I beat my chest with both fists, and bellowed my rage: I'll get you! She's mine! No stealing from Kong! Mine! I knew they would spill over the falls, the place I love to sit on hot days, with the water sluicing and frothing. They'd come out downriver and swim to shore. If a meat-eater didn't catch them, they would flee for the gate. I rushed back down, and out my usual trail, roaring as I lumbered. I had their scent, fresh, and they weren't far ahead. I reached the wall. They were inside the hive, I knew. I heard the yipping and cries. I smelled them.

According to our ancient wisdom, we never attacked the hive. When I was little, I had been curious about the opening, where the Gong was, and where the two-legs would sneak in and out. Sometimes I had pushed on the gate, playing, and my Momma had pulled me away. If other creatures challenged the gate, chasing one of the two-legs' hunting parties, my Momma or Poppa would fight the creature off, perhaps in exchange for the treats the little creatures left us. Not just the little females, but the piles of melons too, bananas. We had our pact. The little creatures' form and nature were closer to ours than any other creature's. But never had the little creatures followed me like these strange skinned warriors had. Never had they stolen back a treat, or invaded my lair.

And never had a tiny creature so summoned and beguiled me as Momma Pet, her softness, her hair, her skin smoother than even the tenderest parts of my body, her heady smell, her squeals and whimper sounds.

I charged and beat my fists on the wooden parts. Then I leaned on the parts, pushing, pushing, feeling the give. They had broken the pact, all their kind. They were in league. With all my strength, pushing. It was giving. Then I pounded on the parts again, then

pushed again, all my weight, legs braced, arms braced, one leg, the other, both legs. I felt a stink, sharp in my side. Pushed, the give, the giving, the splintering, cracking, and parts opening wide. I beat my chest and bellowed (4).

So there was their colony. Their world, their mates, their families. They scuttled in all directions. I smashed the closest nests with my fists. Warriors threatened me with stings, one in my neck. I snapped the sticks. I tore up a tree and swatted the leader from his perch. I grabbed him up and bit him to death. More stings. I caught a twolegs in my fist, bit and gnashed him. I crushed another with my foot. Then over the tops of nests, I saw the strange skins. HER! They ran for the beach and I chased after. I caught them at the water. Momma Pet, the Thief, the other strange-skins.

* * *

I am weak. I only breathe and roll my eyes or close them. Too weak to care. They make their noises and I fear the light. They climb on me, pour water in my mouth. I swallow. My hunger burns. Back and forth they come, climbing and standing on my chest, tossing in melons, tree greens, familiar tastes, desultory chews. I salivate, swallow, so little. Sunrise, sunset. Greatening moon. The swarm of stars and water lights. Heat, the wet, cold. I dirty myself, but waves wash me. Tiny birds circle and swoop and when they land, I twitch them off, or don't. Can't lift my head. Can't raise arm or hand or knee. There is no other life.

* * *

The terrible one, his piping voice and hard, bright eyes, the strange skins' Papa. He wants me to know. Wants me to see him. He stands on my chest, hands on his hips, rising and falling with my breaths, as we both rise, roll, and tilt on the waves. The food is his. The others lift for him and push, they pour. He wants me to live, like

I am his pet. He wants me to obey and serve, to use my life for him (5).

* * *

No longer Kong, but Child, I dream my power. My enemies seek life. I match their best, their bites, their strangle holds, their tricks. I never lose, have never lost, except as Child, buffeted by Poppa or by Momma Kong, taught lessons to survive. Papa Kong taught me to kill big creatures by wrestling and breaking their jaws. Mama taught me to find good vegetables to eat and good fruits, bit in clusters off the trees. My favorite treat was the little Mama creatures. She taught me to listen for the gong, and then to walk through the trees until we came to the wall of stones, where the tiny creatures swarmed on the tops and there was a table set out with the tiny Mama for us to eat. Momma Kong used to pick up the tiny thing between her fingers and put it wiggling in my mouth.

Otherwise, the twolegs weren't worth eating. They were cunning and worked together, and even though each alone was easy to kill, together they had tricks and could be dangerous. They pricked and stung. They could make fire that scorched and consumed, just like lightning could. They looked like tiny Kongs, and acted like Kongs, except they had no fur. The males tasted bitter. We never disturbed their nests and they never bothered us, except they came out from their wall to hunt smaller creatures, while they themselves were prey. I watched them sometimes, the way they set traps and circled in packs.

We were out looking for fruits, when the mountain exploded and shot fire. They told me to run for the water place, but as they roared, a rain of fire and stones came down and when I turned back, they were broken, all quiet and still. I wept my tears and howled, but then I dragged and carried each of them all the way up the mountain and dropped them in the place of fire.

Gazing in the lake at the other, I blink, he blinks. I turn or nod, he turns or nods. I roar, his mouth gapes, fangs bared. I beat my chest, pounding, his fists thump. But he is only my dream. Not there. When we touch, all is water, ripples, shattered, then regathering. Bending close to lip his mouth, like with Momma. Love. I drink. There is no being held, no heat, belonging. There is no other, only me (6).

I am the last of my kind. The only one.

* * *

She is with them in the tugging hive, inside somewhere, with him, the Thief. They are sheltered by the Papa. I strain to look as if to glimpse her. I strain to hear, strain to smell, any faint trace of her against the briny air until I can't tell if I really do, or if I just imagine what I crave. What does she do or pretend with him as in her truer nature she knows me, but fights the knowing? Why doesn't she come look? Is she safe? What do they do, same sized? He must seem puny to her, bland, deaf and delicate. Do they mate? Do they wrestle and chase? Do they groom each other? Am I fighting nature, jealous of their kind? I have these thoughts. But there is nature beyond nature, likeness beyond kind or size.

* * *

Overhead, beneath the clouds, I see a familiar shape, once, a flapper snapper passing slowly, huge, droning, gleaming. Sometimes others. Sometimes circling, noises, high pitched, low and tearing. I hear the wash of waves. I hear the humming always of the tugging hive.

* * *

We have done this over and over. I am dizzy and weak again. I dream, or dream that I wake, nauseous, hungry, aching. I am on my back and the ribs of hardness poke. My neck is choked by hardness, and there are things I pull against that hold me tight. My throat is too sore to growl. My tongue is thick. The twolegs are swarming around me, the way they do. They have things to help them, like creatures, but not; things that roar and chuff and belch smoke. I am jerked and feel the lifting. Slowly, bit by bit. I struggle, but don't really care. It is all blur, a dream, a happening to me, but without me. I am in their power. They want me to go here, there. They want no struggle. When I do wrong, there is blinding light again, weakness, dizziness and blank. I am rising, weight sinking to my feet. I have to stand.

* * *

Being is before I am. I know Kong was and could be once. Invincible. All powerful. Except for fire, which stuns and kills. Except for making life from life.

* * *

I dream my Momma Pet. She was my child, my mother. We would share. She stirred my caring, and my memories, my longings to be gentle. I could be playful again, not always on guard. I loved protecting her. Partly I knew that my longings could kill. That was a danger. When you loved or played too much you could kill without meaning to. You had to measure touch to just that gentle lightness, all alert, all sensitive. Feeling as you felt to her. So silky, so warm. The pleasure to fingertips. Over and over. Feeling her go clam, relax, the quick but steady breathing, yielding to my touch.

I dream her noise, like no other creature's noise. I am ALIVE, she squealed; beyond myself, beyond terror, beyond rapture, I am alive. I am in childbirth. I am in combat. I am absolute. I am pure. I am

out of my skin. All around is me is alive, she sings. The others never sang. They were always dazed and limp, as if they had been readied for me all their lives. They made no noise. They never thrashed.

The things she could do, I dreamed, when the worship urge infused me, when my male parts dazzled and my member stirred. What was breeding like? Like this? She fit in my hand like my organ did itself (7).

* * *

Then. Now. I wake and find myself in earth, cramped in a pit. It's not my earth, I can tell. It is cold, dank, fetid with my stench. The walls are rock and too high to climb. I see sky. I feel light and sun and rain and darkness, stars and moon. Clouds pass. Tiny birds. It is three times my height. I can't get the hardness off my ankles, wrists, waist or neck, and it weighs heavy, cutting into my skin. I lick the blood and fur at my wrists. I see him, the Papa, against the sky. He is looking down at me, his steady, ruthless stare. He will lead me to her. That is my faith. Then comes a searing jolt, making me twitch and fur burn. I feel no desire to move. I feel no desire.

* * *

Her smells, like no other's. The life they told me. Her world was wild and filled with dangers. She came from mountains and big skies; she knew the seasons; knew creatures, many kinds, besides her own. She loved the seasons' change. *I inhale, inhale; I dream her scent songs, thickness and amber in my throat.* Her Momma kept her inside, while her Poppa took her brothers hunting, and she chafed to be treated as her brothers' equal. She was small and delicate for their kind, but hardy, and larger in soul, quicker in mind than they were. She dreamed of lives beyond them; and one day,

after her Poppa died, she left their world. They couldn't stop her; food was scarce; her brothers had taken mates. Her Momma made her promise to be wary, for dangers were everywhere. *I intimate. Her heady succulence. Her muskiness.* She traveled alone to find her Momma's brother in a vast colony of strangers, millions of strangers, who lived in nests that blocked the skies. There were no four-legged or winged predators, only enemies among her own kind. Most were pale like her. Nothing grew from the ground. If her uncle was there, she couldn't find him. She had no shelter, no food. The weak would starve or huddle as she did, begging for scraps. Her mating lure invited males, but she fought them off. She would rather starve than mate without love. Then an older male had discovered her, starving. He had no mating urge. Like her Poppa, he had fed her. He promised her power. He promised her worlds beyond her dreams, beyond anything their kind had ever known; a life of power beyond mating or breeding. *Lime flower. Ash.* Pretending to be small and weak, she would be powerful. Her size was all within. Her natural lure was in her looks, blond, blue-eyed, fair skinned, slight, but also in her prize of self. He would teach her greater lures. She would become the dream of all her kind. She would be worshipped. Promises had rolled and tumbled from his mouth. He saw her future. His energy had swept her up. He would show her unknown worlds; he'd show her ME. She craved the blaze of life's volcano (8).

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Half awake, I let my bowels slip. The twolegs scurry around; they have a thing around me that they take off when I am foul. They spray me with water.

* * *

Something important is happening. They wash me, brush me down. Lots of them, all busy. I am on the scaffold again, lying down, the waist thing holding me, wrist things, ankle things. There is the lifting, swinging. They move me under a shroud. I am chained inside a moving, rumbling, shifting thing. I am groggy again, like from the flashes, but something different this time in my food. Their power clouds me. I am lost.

But now I am upright, standing, held by neck and waist and wrists and feet. I hear unnatural noise, like nothing I have heard before, a twanging, ringing, a rousing rhythm, beating, hums and sighs that lift and fall, twists. It stops. An ocean noise, creature noise, many creatures. The smell of them, many. The wavy wall slowly lifts. I blink: a cavern filled with tiny heads lined up, rows and rows, a sea of heads. A cavern far out, wide, high up, blazing lights. I look at them, the thronging eyes. Am I a gift for these, my arms stretched and bound just as Momma Pet's had been for me? (9). And HER! Momma Pet. Now. Offered to them too. And the twolegs Thief, up here on this bright place, right at my feet. I look down, growl, and try to move.

I see the Papa, our keeper, and he is excited and waving. A group of warriors attack. Flashes, more flashes! Are they hurting Momma Pet? Doing to her what they do to me? I roar, twist, and strain against the hard things. For her, my strength returns. I wake inside. More flashes. I break my left wrist free, my right, loosen my ankles, step down to catch them, tear off the hardness from my waist. They run out a door and I batter down the wall to follow, seeing them run among the scurry of others into another door, some cliff hive.

Where did they go? I catch one, the Thief or not, and bite him and throw him down. I rip off part of the hive and throw it on the twolegs running. I look in the hive openings. High above, I hear a scream like Momma Pet's and see her in an opening. I climb. The

openings make easy footholds and handholds. I look in each opening, hoping to smell, hear or see HER. Below me, the twolegs are scurrying, all noise and motion. The wind feels good. I am myself. I know that the cliff is no natural rock. The twolegs swarm inside of it. It is their hive, somehow of their making. Everything in sight, smell, and touch is their hive, the whole world here. She is inside this cliff somewhere, like a niche inside a cavern. Inside a lighted opening, I see her sleeping; and holding on with my left hand and both feet, I reach around through other opening and at last, I have her in my hand again, squirming. I draw her out. She makes her noise, kicking and twisting. But I know at once that this one isn't HER. I hold it dangling, black hair, blue peelings, drab, then drop it. Climb higher. Where is she? This cranny? This? Yes! I peer closer. It is. I know. The same male Thief. Together on a shelf. I look down at the twolegs swarming below me. Lights flare. I don't want smoke and choking. They are danger. Maybe they are after her too! Danger to her! I push my free right hand again through the other opening. Momma Pet comes alive, squeaking; the Thief hits at me with sticks, and I have her, pulling her towards the opening. She is in my hand, held gently as ever, squealing, and I have her out where I smell her. Yes, yes, yes, Momma Pet. My Momma Pet. HER. Mine.

I keep climbing, holding her safely, away from the noise, the howls and glares. What are they doing? What are their tricks? I know never to underestimate them. Like magic, they can fell me; so small, yet in numbers bigger and stronger than I am. They have light inside their hives. From below their lights sweep like sticks over the hives and high into the fog and mist. I must escape. I must protect. I am stealing her back. They will never get her again. She is mine. Perhaps too, she can teach me their secrets (10).

I reach the top of this hive, a broad flat shelf, where I set Momma Pet down, while I look around. The lights are sweeping, prying, searching. The warriors swarm far down on the ground. I see

Momma Pet crawling away, catch her up and look for a way out.
Where? I fondle her. Here, ME, I try to comfort her.

I climb down where they can't see me. Down the cliff-face again. Ravines at the bottom, less noise, less lights, more of the two legs, but not swarming, not warriors. I sense that home is west, through these canyons, through this maze. Like foot-sized creatures, darting and moving, with shining eyes, but not alive, things with twolegs inside crowd the paths and floor of the ravines. Some speed away, others knock into me; I kick, crush, or step around them.

Two legs are alive in everything around me, inside things (**11**).

At the end of one ravine, some snakelike thing rushes past at eye level and it has inside lights and is filled with twolegs; it is gone before I can fight. It makes noises, barks. It speeds away, so holding Momma Pet in my right hand, I tear up its path with my left. Just then far down the path I see a light. Another one attacking! I want to show her. I want to show them. It rushes at me with its light, its eye. I stand up in its path. I pull it to the ground and bash it with my left hand, a good five bashes, punch it, dent it. Is it dead? The lights are out. The two legs are quiet. I roar and beat my chest.

They suck life from themselves, from each other, from all the world around them. They are parasites. They infest things and move them and make them move. Collectively, like some giant creature, they are capable of feats beyond my will or dreams. They know things I do not. They made the ocean swimmer that pulled me. They made and dwelled within the arms that pulled me and lifted me. They made fire and light and pain. They made these stones I climb. These hives. Twolegs are everywhere. This is their mystery. Yet everything in their world is dead, except for them, except for things they drive and control; except somehow for the food they bring, the food they need from some living place.

Never again.

Never will they stun me with their light and strangle me. Never will they starve or poison me. Never will they keep me in the ground or bind me in hardness. Never will they sear and burn me with their tricks. Never will they steal my force.

I climb the nearest cliff, heading west. From that shelf, behind me the lights from other shelves are sweeping, crossing, then suddenly they glare. Nearby, ahead, I see the tallest cliff, towering over all others, up and up. It is like my mountain. The two legs can't follow there. There, there, I can be safe with Mom Pet. From there, maybe I can see my world and find my way back home with Momma Pet.

As I top the next cliff, I smell water. I pull off the top of a curved, small nest, and, yes, dip in my hand for palmful after palmful. I trickle water on Momma Pet too, so she gasps and squirms. Down another ravine, then, I smell fruits, and bash in the front section and claw layers of the hive inside, until I find and scoop them up, coconuts, even. A taste, a mouthful or two; not much.

Dawn breaks as I scale the cliff. Climb and climb and climb, fingers aching and feet cut, Momma Pet limp in my hand. I am higher than any other cliffs already. I climb still higher, higher. Handhold, foothold, niche after niche. The wind. The view is mist and fog, overcast, growing lighter. There is no green. No life anywhere. Just stone and hardness. I see the rivers inland and the ocean stretching out. We are so alone here, Momma Pet and me. I am weak for lack of food and drink, but I climb higher, higher, as if height were escape and return, farther and farther from their sight or touch, farther from their tricks, so distant that they disappeared. This tangible stone, so intimate. Each purchase, foot-hold, hand-hold, precious to me.

How did I get Here?

Where is the way back? Around me, murky vistas flatten to horizon.

But Here is only Here. There is no There, in place, or in time, except in mind. Here, There. Had been. Was. Is. Would be again.

Nothing else is **(12)**.

I close my eyes, feel her heat and heft in my hand. Feel this wall I grasp and perch on.

The world I know, the self I recognize as self cannot be found, only believed; a memory like a dream, or dream like memory.

* * *

I reach the topmost ledge, past niches, to a cone, still reaching higher. Just as I grab the post at its very tip, I hear a tearing noise and see flapper snapper creatures, four of them, small and flying closer, louder. Wind ruffles my fur. I roar in challenge. They circle. I look at Momma Pet in my hand as she wriggles without sound, pleading with me. The creatures climb and circle, ready for attack. I put her safely on the ledge. Then I roar at the creatures. They have two-legs in them. I climb to the very tip of the cone, feet gripping its collar, and beat my chest with both fists and give my battle roar. Then they dive at me. One fist in the air, hanging onto the tip with other, I roar as the first one comes close, spitting, and flies up, climbing away, too fast to catch. Then the second. By the third, I am ready, reaching as I hang on. Almost get it. Then another, almost get that. Their stings, so many, so fast, dazzle my face and neck and chest with pain. I watch them intently as they circle and loop. Then another comes. I catch this one by the wing

and throw it down, so it bursts into flame, falling. I feel sick. Another spitting dazzles my throat. I miss the next and it stings over my heart, left side. I grab for the creature, dazed, and miss. I touch my wound, feel wet. They make another pass, spitting; and as I reach, I almost fall, holding on to the tip. Hurt and dizzy, I wipe my brow. They come again and I slip from the tip to the base of the cone. I reach for Momma Pet. The flapping things were circling off, leaving us. I touch my heart wound and study my fingers. I pick up Momma Pet for a last look. They want me, not you. If I let them sting me, they will spare you. She makes no sound, wide-eyed, struggling in my grip. Silent. I put her down. I fondle her, one, two, three gentle strokes. Don't worry. I am dizzy. A flapper dives at me, stinging my throat so I gag and reel. I slump against the cone and fondle her once more, knowing it is finished. She will be safe. She will live. She will never forget. I pray for and bless her with all my being, my grief (13).

They sting again. I grab my throat with both hands, gasp, off balance. Catch the tip with my right hand, left to my throat, still holding on; then slowly I can't hold on. I let go. Fall as I have never fallen.

* * *

Dream: we are home. Souls same-sized, bodiless, braiding together now like strands of smoke.

THE END

End Notes

(1) (AMONG THE TELLINGS AND RETELLINGS OF MERIAN C. COOPER AND ERNEST B. SCHOEDSACK'S 1933 RKO FILM, *KING KONG*)

(2) "...for in the jungle genre, to touch is to desire, and the drama of touch often stands in for sexual contact" p. 94, *Tracking King Kong*, Cynthia Erb (Wayne State, 1998). Also p. 112.: "The emphasis on touch and scent...defines [Kong] as a primitive figure located in an order which, in stressing touch, sound, and scent, offers an alternative to Western culture's overvaluation of sight as basic to the acquisition of knowledge."

(3) Compare the Screenplay, *King Kong*, pp 76-77 Script City, 1933:

INT. LAIR — FULL SHOT — NIGHT

Now Kong, in the side angle, squats and takes up the girl in his great hand. She tries to run away. He lets her run to the edge of the trail, then catches her and pulls her back, as a cat might play with a mouse. Repeat this action. The second time, he takes her up in his hand and stares at her.

INT. LAIR — SEMI CLOSE UP — NIGHT

Kong stares at the girl with a puzzled, interested expression.

INT. LAIR — SEMI CLOSE UP — NIGHT

The girl in his hand looks back at him, terrified.

INT. LAIR — FULL SHOT — NIGHT

Kong, in side angle, begins to pick her clothes off, as a monkey might pick a rag doll to pieces.

INT. LAIR — MED. SHOT — NIGHT

Ann shrinks and screams as her clothes are pulled off bit by bit.

....

INT. LAIR — FULL SHOT — NIGHT

The girl is almost naked. SIDE ANGLE. Kong is still picking at her when he turns startled.

(4) "In either sphere, we behold the bulwarks of prosperity and security giving way: on Skull Island, the shattered of the bolt on the gate of the village corresponds to the floodgates of the city burst open by the financial tidal wave of 'the crash.'" "A King in New York," by Claude Ollier, reprinted in *The Girl in the Hairy Paw*, Avon, 1976, p.113.

(5) "When we learn that the filmmaker plans to teach Kong fear, we can only recall the screen-test scene, in which Denham had used his camera to teach Ann fear....When all is said and done, it is the hand of Denham that is more menacing than Kong's." Erb, op. cit, p. 113.

(6) "The idea of the 'mirror stage' is an important early component in Lacan's critical reinterpretation of the work of Freud. Drawing on work in physiology and animal psychology, Lacan proposes that human infants pass through a stage in which an external image of the body (reflected in a mirror, or represented to the infant through the mother or primary caregiver) produces a psychic response that gives rise to the mental representation of an 'I.'" (<http://maven.english.hawaii.edu/criticalink/lacan/>)

(7) "Kong...must be about twenty-four feet tall. Further, we can usually count on a six-foot man having a three-inch inert and six-inch erect penis. Assuming the validity of comparative anatomy, we can say therefore that Kong's penis would be twelve inches inert and twenty-four inches, or two feet, erect....It is obvious that Kong must exceed the estimates of comparative anatomy to inspire the universal dread that he does....Kong's penis, therefore, is at least six feet inert and twelve feet erect." See "King Kong: A Meditation," by Kenneth Bernard, reprinted in *The Girl in the Hairy Paw*, eds Ronald Gottesman and Harry Geduld, Avon, 1976, p 126.

In *The Dread of Difference*, edited by Barry Keith Grant, Univ of Texas, 1996; "King Kong: the Beast in the Boudoir—or, 'You can't Marry that girl, you're a gorilla!'" Harry Roy Greenberg finds King Kong to be "the most impressive Hollywood monstrosity to recapitulate the psychosexual issues of human puberty" (p. 341).

(8) See pp.9-11, *King Kong*, Script City, 1933:

DENHAM: Feeling better?

ANN: Yes, thank you. You're very kind.

DENHAM: Don't fool yourself. I'm not bothering with you just out of kindness. (Ann opens her eyes wide, looks half-puzzled, half-afraid). How come you're in this fix?

ANN: Bad luck, I guess. There are lots of girls just like me.

DENHAM: There aren't such a lot who've got your looks.

ANN (laughing it off) Oh, I can get by in good clothes. But when a girl gets too shabby—

DENHAM: No family?

ANN: I'm suppose to have an uncle — somewhere.

DENHAM: Ever do any acting?

ANN: I used to act extra jobs over at Fort Lee sometimes. Once I got a real part. The studio is shut down now.

DENHAM: What's your name?

ANN: Ann Darrow.

DENHAM: Are you one of these city girls who screams at a mouse and faints at a snake?

ANN: (laughing) No, of course not. I'm a country gal — or used to be.

DENHAM: Listen, sister. I've got a job for you. The costumes I've got on board will fit you. (Looks at his watch). The Broadway shops will still be open. I'll get you some clothes for yourself. Come on.

ANN: But — but what it it?

DENHAM: (excited) It's money, and adventure, and fame. It's the thrill of a lifetime. And a long sea-voyage that starts at six in the morning.

ANN: No! Wait, I can't — I don't understand — you must tell me — I do want the job so — I was starving — but I can't —

Denham has been looking at her, puzzled because she hasn't caught his fanatic excitement. He suddenly sees what is troubling her. He calms down and goes back and sits.

DENHAM: Oh, I see. You got me wrong. Nix, sister, nix. This is strictly business. I'm no chaser....I'm square, Ann. And I'll be square with you. No funny business.

ANN: What do I have to do?

DENHAM: (leaning over her chair and looking straight at her) Trust me. And keep your chin up.

Ann looks at him for a moment, then he holds out his hand. She takes it and they shake. FADE OUT.

Also see Erb, op cit, p. 90: "Taken together, Harrison and Rose [real life collaborators with Merian C. Cooper] appear as adventurous New Woman types, who seem rather surprising models for the character of Ann Darrow....the presence of lesbian relationships in Harrison's autobiography ultimately contributes a certain historical force to Rhona Bernstein's provocative argument that Ann Darrow's complicated desires are suited to the terms of lesbian spectatorship." Also p. 86: "Indeed, although, *King Kong* now seems overtly sexist, a closer examination of the curious place of femininity of the 1920s travel film expeditions has the ultimate effect of revealing the character of Ann Darrow more complex than the helpless, self-deprecating virgin she might otherwise seem."

(9) "Ann's first encounter with Kong...is quite similar to the monster's chained performance in the Big Apple. She is tied with arms raised between two long poles. When Kong is similarly trapped on the New York stage...he enacts what Ann cannot: he breaks free

and attacks his audience." See *Attack of the Leading Ladies* by Rhona J. Berenstein, Columbia, 1996, p.189.

(10) See Erb, p.108: "...the film manifests its immersion in the parallel systems of capitalism and evolutionism — both systems based on ruthless processes of selection. According to these beliefs, an abiding faith in a mixture of capitalism and colonialism would enable one to rise above the twin states of poverty and primitivism. In this respect, Denham and Kong have in common a desire to rise out of these "lower" states, and this shared desire explains the way both reach out for Ann, the "golden woman." Also p.139:"King Kong's reach for Fay Wray had been motivated by the woman's promise of evolutionary transformation; loving [Fay] Wray was not just an expression of 'human' desire, but a quest to *become* human."

(11) "The most spectacular prop of all was a huge head, chest, and shoulders of Kong to be used in close-ups. Technicians constructed the frame of wood, wire, cloth and metal and covered with rubber and pruned bearskin. As many as three men could huddle inside and by means of ingeniously designed levers and a compressed air device to operate the mouth, lips, nose, eyes, eyelids, and brows so that they moved in an astonishingly lifelike manner." P. 97, *The Making of King Kong* by Orville Goldner and George E. Turner, Ballentine, 1975.

(12) See John Donne, "The Sun Rising."

(13) See Bernard, op.cit, p. 127: "Not only is her experience terrifying and transcendental (sublime as Burke would have it), but it also is not lost on her. When Kong dies, Fay Wray knows that no other lover in her life will be equal to him. She may not be able to articulate the changes that have placed her beyond merely human experiences, but she has absorbed them, she is alive and (psychologically) whole; she has confronted King Kong and received his blessing among an alien breed."

