

# Accepted Manuscript

Animal Arms

Sophia Häfner, PhD, Postdoctoral fellow

PII: S1286-4579(17)30156-9

DOI: [10.1016/j.micinf.2017.09.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.micinf.2017.09.012)

Reference: MICINF 4511

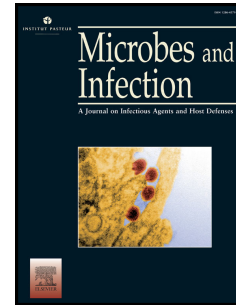
To appear in: *Microbes and Infection*

Received Date: 21 September 2017

Accepted Date: 26 September 2017

Please cite this article as: S. Häfner, Animal Arms, *Microbes and Infection* (2017), doi: 10.1016/j.micinf.2017.09.012.

This is a PDF file of an unedited manuscript that has been accepted for publication. As a service to our customers we are providing this early version of the manuscript. The manuscript will undergo copyediting, typesetting, and review of the resulting proof before it is published in its final form. Please note that during the production process errors may be discovered which could affect the content, and all legal disclaimers that apply to the journal pertain.



## Animal Arms \*

*With movements so swift they seemed simultaneous, Atticus's hand yanked a ball-tipped lever as he brought the gun to his shoulder. The rifle cracked. Tim Johnson leaped, flopped over and crumpled on the sidewalk in a brown-an-white heap. He didn't know what hit him.*

The emblematic "mad dog" scene from Harper Lee's novel *To Kill A Mockingbird*, where the pacific protagonist has to reluctantly revive his sniper skills in order to eliminate a rabid dog, is symbolically loaded. These few lines condense most of the story's complex themes - the inevitable death of an innocent, the rampant madness of racism and the painful transition from the straightforward logic of childhood to the perplexing rules of reality with a radical shift of the notion of pride: *I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand.*

This represents certainly a rather subjective association with rabies, a severe zoonotic infection caused by a lyssavirus (RABV) and transmitted to humans through the bites and scratches of a large variety of mammals. *Microbes and Infection* harbors this time twin papers by overlapping teams exploring the differences in virulence of RABV strains from different animal hosts, mainly South African dogs and mongoose (an animal maybe best known to the large public in form of Riki-Tiki-Tavi in the other part of the *Jungle Book*) [1,2]. Wonhyo Seo and colleagues conclude from one of the studies that the canid rabies virus is more neurovirulent in a mouse model than the mongoose virus and that pathogenicity correlates with variations in the PDZ Binding Motif (PBM) of G-protein carboxyl-terminus [1].

On my side of things however, eventually primed by the memories of *To Kill A Mockingbird* and a previous highlight dealing with the unexpected dimension of biological warfare through History [3,4], the somewhat macabre question crossed my mind if mankind has already considered using infected animals against enemies, or more broadly, generated *weaponized animals*.

Similar to the internet culture-born *Rule 34*<sup>\*\*</sup>, one could state "no matter how depraved the idea is, if it can be of any use, humans will try to use it against each other".

Usually, a good place to start looking for gruesome action-packed stories is the Old Testament, and animal cruelty is no exception to the rule. The Book of Judges relates in remarkable details how a disgruntled Samson tied burning torches to the tails of 300 foxes and released them to set fire to the fields and groves of the Philistines (who in turn burnt Samson's wife and father in law). Along the same lines and on the more historical side, the Ancient Greeks have also quite a reputation for inventive warfare to live up to. Aside from wooden horses, they created the concept of "war pigs" way before Black Sabbath. In the 3rd century BC, the inhabitants of the besieged city of Megara got rid of the assailants by buttering pigs in pitch, ignite them and chase them towards the enemy camp, where they set the tents on fire and terrified the enemy's elephants (who in turn trampled everything in their surroundings to death) [5]. Incendiary animals became rather fashionable and the reports range from camels over birds to monkeys as combustibles and from Antiquity to the mid-19th century. But

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/8749109>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/8749109>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)