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## Review of Hoofbeats and Society: Studies of Human-Horse Interactions

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*Hoofbeats and Society: Studies of Human-Horse Interactions.* By Elizabeth Atwood Lawrence. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985. Illustrations, photographs, references, index. xv + 204 pp. \$29.95.

Taking her 1982 book, *Rodeo: An Anthropologist Looks at the Wild and the Tame*, a step further, cultural anthropologist and practicing veterinarian Elizabeth Atwood Lawrence here concentrates on the universal appeal of the horse. Horses, she states, "can be vivid images in human cognitive processes, and frequently serve as meaningful constructs in ordering social relations between people and the work around them" (p. ix). She explores various facets of the human-horse relationship to discover the special appeal and significance of horses in diverse societies.

Lawrence combined her skills to conduct the fieldwork which forms the basis of three of the chapters, "The Horse in Crow Indian

Culture," "Rodeo Horses," and "Mounted Police." Of these, her examination of the mounted police most skillfully combines her own research and experience with support from published sources, presenting a well-documented study of the interactions between the mounted officer and his horse and "its special role in the maintenance of order and preservation of authority in human society" (p. 119). The officer and his mount, between whom a close bond exists, represent a contrast between nature and civilization, a balance between order and chaos that establishes the basis for the mutual fear and respect of the civilian for the policeman and his horse.

The other chapter of her work, "The White Mustang of the Prairies," features a thorough compilation of the legends of the White Steed and his symbolic attraction to writers, painters, and film makers, from western author J. Frank Dobie to poet e.e. cummings. Lawrence's research makes this chapter a valuable reference for scholars in the humanities interested in the dichotomy of nature and culture as represented by the white horse.

The concluding chapter, "Horses in Human Experience," presents little-known facts about gypsies and their horses, hobbyhorses, carousel horses, and circus horses, and brings forward some provocative ideas on the horse as symbol, especially as symbol of the transition between life and death. Other associations, however, such as Lawrence's symbolic linking of the horse with Christ, both of whom have nails driven into their feet, seem forced. In addition, the separate chapters, as well as the conclusion, examine subjects so disparate that Lawrence cannot completely perform the "drawing together" she promises in her preface. However, her study does underline the significance of the horse, both real and symbolic, in society and "the many and diverse meanings with which it is endowed for various peoples" (p. 198).

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