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MISDIRECTED MONARCH MATING BEHAVIOR
(DANAIDAE: *DANAUS PLEXIPPUS*) OR *NOBLESSE OBLIGE*?

T. E. Pliske (1975, *Ann. Entomol. Soc. Amer.* 68:143-151) has described the aggressiveness of the male *Danaus plexippus* (Linn.) as it employs its "take-down" maneuver to drive the female to the ground during its courtship routine. J. W. Tilden (1979 ('81), *J. Res. Lepid.* 18:2) has depicted the male's sometimes faulty discrimination resulting in male attempting to mate with male. That this indiscriminate activity can become even more misdirected is evidenced by the following observation.

In April 1982, while photographing butterflies nectaring at a *Pittosporum* tree on Ossabaw Island, Chatham County, Georgia, I noted two *D. plexippus*, the first a worn and decrepit female and the other a fairly fresh and active male, neither of which showed any interest in the other.

As I watched, the cruising male suddenly stooped like a falcon, struck a nectaring *Vanessa virginiensis* (Drury), sex undetermined, from its blossom, and pinned it to the pavement below (Fig. 1). In the brief moment available for photographing the event, I did not observe any actual attempt to copulate. The *virginiensis* then struggled free, and both butterflies flew off.

One should perhaps resist the temptation to anthropomorphize regarding the monarch and the painted lady.

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FIG. 1. *V. virginiensis*, grasped by the legs of a male *D. plexippus* and pinned to the ground.