

Lost Kingdom

Animal Death in the Anthropocene

Edited by

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Series on Climate Change and Society



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Introduction

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University of California Santa Barbara

Wake up in Moloch! Light streaming out of the sky!
—Alan Ginsburg, *Howl*

What does it mean to *inhabit history* as crime, as the space of the annihilation
of the Other?
—Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of
Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*

Think we must. We must think. That means, simply, we *must* change the story;
the story *must* change.
—Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*

Once upon a time, animals illuminated the human imaginary in dazzling theatricality, their likenesses undulating with the flicker of fire on the cave walls at Chauvet in southern France—rhinoceros, ibex, lions, horses, mammoths, panthers, and aurochs spring to life from exquisitely drawn charcoal and red ochre outlines. Their effect is to awaken as if by shock, the spectral power of an animality that is indistinguishable from divinity. The animals depicted at Chauvet were wild, primordially free—the majority were predators and not hunted for food, so instrumentalist theories of artistic figuration have been largely dismissed.¹ The refinement, delicacy, and beauty of the images evoke religious respect for powers, both kindred and autonomous, a dance of horned, hooved, thundering bodies in the interior depths of the Earth. Chauvet's animals were painted in two phases, in the 35th and in the 29th millennia; cave bears inhabited the cave in the intervening millennia, before going extinct in the Last Glacial Maximum, 24,000 years ago. Reaching further into hominid depths, we find the earliest discovered cave paintings on the Iberian Peninsula, from approximately 64,000 years ago, 20,000 years before *Homo sapiens*

¹ Jean Clottes, "Chauvet Cave (ca. 30,000 B.C.)" in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/chav/hd_chav.htm.

migrated to Europe. The abstract designs and animal figures are from the hands of Neanderthal, whose extinction—the subject of lively debate—loosely coincides with the arrival of humans in Europe 40,000 years ago. The material traces of other hominins evoke (for non-specialists at least) an almost fictional, fairytale-like temporality, as does the proto-cinematic illusion of movement in Chauvet's breathtaking animal tableaux. Once upon a time...

Fifteen millennia later (circa 17,500 BCE), Lascaux's painted walls summon, with comparable grandeur, those beings who were on their way to domestication—mainly horses and aurochs (ancestor of the buffalo), which finally “went extinct” in the sixteenth century.² The aurochs were followed by a cascading litany of other creatures hunted to oblivion in the modern era, drummed out their habitats, starved of their food, poisoned by toxins, and, in this moment, caught up in the accelerating feedback loops of anthropogenic global heating that will far outpace most animals' abilities to adapt.³ Now, as we enter the Sixth Mass Extinction,⁴ temporality and animality begin to collapse into one another, disordering time and kingdom to the point of madness. From the vantage of present catastrophe, deep time opens its chasms into the Earth's past and future, while a dizzying foreshortening of temporal regimes is bound up with the unraveling of the biosphere before our eyes—what David Ferrier deems the “temporal torsions of the Anthropocene.”⁵ As Cary Wolfe writes of this strange temporal collapse, “[W]hat we call ‘human’ is nothing other than the spectacular conflagration, the wanton burning, of time itself: not *our* time, because time is not *for* the human, but other times forcibly *made* our time, millions and millions

² For a discussion of recent scholarship on the complexities of domestication, in which interspecies relationships are viewed less through a lens of domination than of mutual domestication in hybrid biosemiotic (signifying beyond human language) communities, see Introduction to *Thinking About Animals in the Age of the Anthropocene*, ed. Morten Tønnessen, Kristin Armstrong-Oma, and Silver Rattasepp (London: Lexington Books, 2016), viii-xv.

³ Jellyfish, at least, will be fine. Cf. Sean Fleming, “Jellyfish Are Taking Over the World—And Climate Change Could Be to Blame,” World Economic Forum, January 8, 2019, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/01/how-an-explosion-of-jellyfish-is-wreaking-havoc/>.

⁴ William J. Ripple et. al. “World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice,” *Bioscience* 67 (12) (2017): 1026–1028. Led by eight authors and signed by 15,364 scientists from 184 countries, the statement asserts that, among other things, “[W]e have unleashed a mass extinction event, the sixth in roughly 540 million years, wherein many current life forms could be annihilated or at least committed to extinction by the end of this century.”

⁵ David Farrier, *Anthropocene Poetics: Deep Time, Sacrifice Zones, and Extinction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 19.

of slow inhuman years released in a geological blink of an eye...⁶ Such usurpation of “other times,” of the metabolic array of living beings that buzz and creep in tangled rhythms, is also a flattening of mystery, a silencing of voices, an erasure of form—the Anthropocene as an atrocity against time.

Were *Homo neanderthalensis* (extinct 30,000 years ago), *Homo denisova* (extinct 40,000 years ago) and *Homo floresiensis* (extinct 50,000 years ago) caught up in this “human” incineration of time? Does evocation of such ancient losses illuminate or obscure the contemporary event of Anthropocene extinction, which far surpasses in scope all previous extinction events of the past 65 million years? How do we avoid the conceptual and moral morass of painting anthropogenic extinctions as somehow “natural,” “inevitable,” or even “progressive,” as a periodic contraction that hides mysterious stores of (techno-scientific) fecundity in apparent catastrophe? Such gross obfuscations must be rejected out of hand, and the unprecedented nature and scope of the violence and, indeed, *criminality*, of current and impending mass animal (and of course vegetal) death must be brought to the fore, but without elision of those species who may have fallen prey to human excesses before the “Great Acceleration.” It is for this purpose that we have gathered these chapters under the title *Lost Kingdom*. We recognize that this title itself can obscure the actual culpability of a vast swath of “humanity” (though *not* the undifferentiated species-being of *Anthropos*), as if the animal kingdom was inadvertently being “lost” and not *killed*. There was and is nothing inevitable or necessary in this violence, save the exigencies of capitalism and its transformation of “nature” writ large into a commodity, what Marx described, in John Bellamy Foster’s term, as a “metabolic rift.”⁷ We recognize, too, the danger of reifying the domination of “*Anthropos*” as an undifferentiated force in utilizing the term “Anthropocene” to designate this epoch of accelerated upheaval and unprecedented loss, and sympathize with the post-colonial and neo-Marxist critiques of Anna Tsing, Donna Haraway, Andreas Malm, Eileen Crist, Jason Moore, and Zoe Todd (an author in this volume) among so many others. Indeed, the human lives uprooted, impoverished, humiliated, and rendered as invisible throughout the Anthropocene, loosely coterminous with both imperialist/extractivist

⁶ Cary Wolfe, “Foreword,” *Extinction Studies: Stories of Time, Death, and Generations*, ed. Deborah Bird Rose, Thom van Dooren, and Matthew Churlew. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), xiii.

⁷ Cf. David Bellamy Foster, “Marx’s Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology,” *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 105, No. 2 (September 1999), *passim*.

modernity and the hyper-modernity of the “Great Acceleration” in the 1950s,⁸ cast in stark relief the differential and *political* quality of “Anthropos.” From the perspective of multifoliate, multispecies life, however, “Homogenocene,” the name proposed by ecologist Gordon Orians, strikes us as particularly felicitous, alongside the usual suspects of “Capitalocene,” “Plantationocene,” or “Plasticene.” But of all the proposed substitutions for the troubled term “Anthropocene,” it is “Necrocene”—the Age of Death—that, in our view, best captures the precipitous collapse of life and lifeways, as well as the inflamed resistance to its hardening inevitability, to which authors in this volume give testimony.⁹ Like Haraway and Tsing, we accept that the term Anthropocene is unavoidable despite its gross sleights of hand,¹⁰ and, further, affirm the term as designating an *abomination*. The Anthropocene, for us, signals primarily the ruination of the lifeworlds of animals, forests, prairies, and even glaciers—the entangled networks of coevolving and cooperative integration of Earthly life—the living “kingdom” *and* its conditions for thriving.

Linnaeus’ taxonomic category of the kingdom *Animalia*, into which he plunged “man” with resolute assurance in his *Systema Naturae* (1735), heads his classificatory ranking of Earthly life, which has, up to the present, provided scientific means to categorize and name living forms based on biological affinities. While current taxonomy retains the kingdom of *Animalia*, Linnaeus’ three kingdoms have been superseded by “domains,” “empires,” or “superkingdoms,” and the number of kingdoms expanded to six, seven, or eight

⁸ Cf. Will Steffen et al., “The Trajectory of the Anthropocene: The Great Acceleration,” *The Anthropocene Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January 26, 2015): 81–98 passim, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053019614564785>.

⁹ Cf. Justin McBrien, “Accumulating Extinction: Planetary Catastrophism in the Necrocene,” in *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, ed. Jason W Moore (Oakland: PM Press, 2016). McBrien writes that capitalism is “the extinguishing of cultures and languages, ... the extermination of peoples, ... the extinction of the earth in the depletion fossil fuels, ... ocean acidification and eutrophication, deforestation and desertification, melting ice sheets and rising sea levels; the great Pacific garbage patch and nuclear waste entombment; McDonalds and Monsanto,” 116–117. We do not, however, agree with McBrien’s critique of environmental catastrophism, the “thousand Cassandras ringing the death knell of ‘civilization,’” reminding him that Cassandra was never wrong, only repudiated. Cf. also John P. Clark, *Between Earth and Empire: From the Necrocene to the Beloved Community* (Oakland: PM Press, 2019); Clark explains, “‘Necrocene’ goes one step beyond ‘Capitalocene’ and names the era based on what the Earth itself is now undergoing, as the result of the normal everyday operations of capital, in addition to those of the other major dialectically interacting elements of the system of domination,” xxvi.

¹⁰ Cf. Gregg Mitman, “Reflections on the Plantationocene: A Conversation with Donna Haraway and Anna Tsing,” *Edge Effects*, June 18, 2019. <https://edgeeffects.net/haraway-tsing-plantationocene/>.

(up to seventeen), with predominant emphasis on evolutionary cross-lineages and differentiation between microorganisms.¹¹ Despite the adaptability of Linnaean taxonomy to a more complex and empirical understanding of phylogenetics, the utility of binomial classification (genus, species) is marred by its exclusions and contortions of the incalculable profusion and dynamic interdependencies of animal (and vegetal/fungal/bacteriological) life. There is a danger that strict speciation fails to come to grips with the wholesale *unraveling* of integrated terrestrial and marine life. As Audra Mitchell writes in her critique of “species” and “biodiversity” as universalizing categories that subject the biosphere to regimes of “economic services” and “resource management,” “these abstract concepts may impose severe normative restrictions on what is considered to be integral to life, survival and their attendant processes.”¹² That said, we, the editors, are encouraged by the all-too-belated affirmation by IPBES, among other scientific bodies tracking biospheric collapse, of the necessity of including Indigenous knowledge—and *sovereignty*—as integral to mitigating catastrophic biodiversity loss as Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers have been insisting for decades.¹³ The “lost kingdom” of *Animalia* is also the loss of kinship, of languages and lifeways that depend on relations (and obligations) that comprise the living matrix; translation and collaboration have become possible, if not yet the norm, through the quite recent process of decolonizing the sciences.¹⁴

¹¹ Cf. Stefan Luketa, “New views on the megaclassification of life,” *Protistology* 7, 4 (2012): 218–221, https://www.zin.ru/journals/protistology/num7_4/luketa_protistology_7-4.pdf.

¹² Cf. Audra Mitchell, “Beyond Biodiversity and Species: Problematizing Extinction,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 33, no. 5 (2016): 34.

¹³ To take just a few examples, see Gregory Cajete, *Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education* (Durango, CO: Kivaki Press, 1994); Melissa K. Nelson and D. Shilling, eds., *Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Learning from Indigenous Practices for Environmental Sustainability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Enrique Salmón, “Kincentric Ecology: Indigenous Perceptions of the Human-Nature Relationship,” *Ecological Applications*, Vol. 10, No. 5 (2000): 1327–1332; Audra Mitchell, “Revitalizing Laws, (Re)Making Treaties, Dismantling Violence: Indigenous Resurgence against ‘the Sixth Mass Extinction,’” *Social & Cultural Geography* 21, no. 7 (2020): 909–24; Fikret Berkes, *Sacred Ecology*, Fourth Edition (New York: Routledge, 2017). See also the monumental five-volume series *Kinship: Belonging in a World of Relations*, edited by Gavin van Horn, Robin Wall Kimmerer, and John Hausdoerffer (Libertyville, IL: Humans and Nature Press, 2021).

¹⁴ Cf. IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services), *The IPBES regional assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services for the Americas*, ed. J. Rice et. al., Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, 2018; IPBES, *Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services*, ed. E. S. Brondizio, J. Settele, S. Diaz, and H. T. Ngo, IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3831673>; Pamela McElwee, et. al.,

A lost kingdom, too, evokes the theological collapse of transcendence, the foreclosure of a realm beyond the earthly that would seem to animate and offer grounding and direction, *telos*, to the wayward confusion of quotidian life. But such nostalgia, after the “death of God,” has lost its sting, its power to stir the modernist lamentations that echoed through the previous century. No, it is not that other kingdom, “death’s dream kingdom” of T. S. Eliot’s “The Hollow Men,” whose slippage into the *nihil* makes us shudder with dread, but the staggeringly rapid loss of the flesh-and-blood (whether cold or warm), vertebrate and invertebrate, marine and terrestrial Kingdom of animal life. And, as with the murder of God, though with far more blood, “we” have done it ourselves through ocean damage, air pollution, deforestation, land and water contamination,¹⁵ as well as through habitat expropriation, hunting, and anthropogenic global heating.¹⁶ With Jacques Derrida, our breath is taken away by the genocidal violence against this Kingdom, *Animalia*, which includes the massification of death (between 168-200 billion animals annually) in the animal-industrial complex. Regarding the wild kingdom, in the documentary *David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet*, in halting, anguished testimony, Attenborough states, “The world is not as wild as it was... well, we’ve destroyed it, not just ruined it. We have completely... we’ve destroyed that world, that non-human world has gone. Human beings have overrun the world.”¹⁷ Tens of millions of years of evolutionary labor, in a “geological blink of an eye,” are being unraveled at a pace that truly defies imagination, endangering the very possibility of complex life in the near future.¹⁸ Most basically and pointedly, the “lost kingdom” is an

“Working with Indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) in large-scale ecological assessments: Reviewing the experience of the IPBES Global Assessment,” *Journal of Applied Ecology*, Vol. 57 (2020): 1666–1676, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.13705>; Douglas Nakashima, I. Krupnik, and J. Rubis, *Indigenous knowledge for climate change assessment and adaptation*. UNESCO Digital Library, 2018, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265504?posInSet=1&queryId=4cfd60f1-decd-40b8-bf8c-c24194eb62e4>.

¹⁵ Cf. Polly Higgins, *Eradicating Ecocide: Laws and Governance to Prevent the Destruction of Our Planet* (London: Shephard-Walwyn Ltd., 2010) for a detailed accounting of the ecological harms that would be criminalized in the proposed law against Ecocide at the International Criminal Court (in 2010 and again in June 2021), an addition to the standing four “crimes against peace,” marking a preliminary step, at the international level, in decentering the anthropocentric locus of “justice.”

¹⁶ IPBES, Global assessment report, 2019.

¹⁷ Jonnie Hughes, dir., *David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet*, Netflix, 2020, <https://www.netflix.com/tr-en/title/80216393>.

¹⁸ Cf. Geraldo Ceballos, Paul Ehrlich, and Peter Raven, “Vertebrates on the brink as indicators of biological annihilation and the sixth mass extinction,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, 117.24 (2020): 13596–13602, <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.1922686117>.

accusation against “Anthropos”—of theft, wanton destruction, and genocide/theriocide in his (suicidal) war against the more-than-human world. The Anthropocene, then, is no seal of supremacy, but an indictment of a complex set of practices, values, institutions, and ideologies that are, seemingly inexorably, leading to the most staggering contraction of life on Earth, *possibly* since the Cambrian Explosion over 500 million years ago. The animal death of the subtitle is *mass* animal death, though we affirm the singularity of every sentient death, which includes both the cosmic, numinous horror of our current “biological annihilation,”¹⁹ involving the billions of individuals of one million species,²⁰ and the quotidian violence of the animal-industrial complex.

The time-burning event of the Anthropocene forces us to wonder what remnants of the biosphere will be left by the end of this century. The year 2100 is, almost tactfully, the limit of nearly all graphs depicting various predictions of global heating; if we allow computer models to push past this artificial limit by one hundred, two hundred years, we are confronted by scenarios in which all but the most simplified, archaic life forms simply cannot survive.²¹ The specter of “runaway greenhouse effect,” of which Venus serves as an exemplar, lies at the far extremity of Anthropocenic outcomes, but, given the unknowns of methane release under the pressure of anthropogenic heating, this ultimate doomsday scenario cannot be ruled out.²² The “Shared Socio-economic Pathways,” or SSPs, of the 6th and latest IPCC report (2021) model what coming generations have in store, but as with most climatic studies, those generations are not inclusive of orcas, tree frogs, or phytoplankton, but focus almost exclusively on Earth’s habitability for humans. As the failure to “draw down” compounds existential threats to human lives and livelihoods, we fear that the ruthless destruction of animal worlds will continue to receive little more than a cursory nod of regret (aside from IPBES, UN Biodiversity Conference, and WWF reports, with specialized readership). Indeed, animal death is largely ignored in reportage of the climate-induced catastrophes that occur with ever-increasing force and ubiquity.²³

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ According to UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), “Human activity has significantly altered three-quarters of the Earth’s land and two-thirds of its marine environment, pushing 1 million species towards extinction.” <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/stories/un-recognizes-effort-restore-south-americas-atlantic-forest-special-award>.

²¹ Cf. Dana Nuccitelli, “Climate Urgency: We’ve locked in more global warming than people realize,” *The Guardian*, 15 May, 2016.

²² Cf. Colin Goldblatt et al., “Low Simulated Radiation Limit for Runaway Greenhouse Climates,” *Nature Geoscience*, vol 6 (August 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1038/ngeo1892>.

²³ Cf. “Climate Change Is Harming the Planet Faster Than We Can Adapt, U.N. Warns,”

The anticipation of unmourned “sacrifice” of wild animals, of which mammals in native habitat now comprise a mere 4% of mammals on earth, with humans and domesticated/farmed animals comprising the remaining 96%, finds correspondence in refusal to witness the mass animal death of the animal-industrial complex. The approximately 200 billion land and aquatic animal deaths per year in industrial slaughterhouses and fisheries (55 billion in the United States alone²⁴), not to mention in laboratories and military tests,²⁵ perpetrated under conditions so egregious that animal suffering is “invisibilized” by law, disclose speciesism at its most lethal and impenitent. As Jacques Derrida writes,

No one can deny seriously any more, or for very long, that men do all they can in order to dissimulate this cruelty [towards animals], or to hide it from themselves; in order to organize on a global scale the forgetting or misunderstanding of this violence, which some would compare to the worst cases of genocide (there are also animal genocides: the number of species endangered because of man takes one's breath away). One should neither abuse the figure of genocide nor too quickly consider it explained away.²⁶

While chapters in this volume generally treat these phenomena separately—the blighting of wildlife on Earth and the mass murder of commodified animals—we affirm their insolubility, as well as their entanglement with the

New York Times, February 28, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/28/climate/climate-change-ipcc-report.html>. As Paola Cavalieri writes, “Virtually every trivial human interest (except perhaps that in gratuitous cruelty) takes precedence over the vital interests of members of other species, who are harmed or killed even for matters of taste, entertainment, or curiosity. Finally, a substantive element: even in case animals are granted a (minimal) interest in welfare, the interest in living, which is the real key to full moral patiency, is confined to human beings,” *The Animal Question*, 30-31. Exceptions are when those losses are truly astronomical, as in the wildfires Australia in 2019, in which at least one billion animals perished, and the Pacific Northwest “heat dome” that killed an estimated two billion sea creatures in the Salish Sea in 2021; otherwise, in nearly all reports not focused specifically on animals, only human lives are at issue.

²⁴ “2023 U.S. Annual Kill Clock,” Animal Clock, accessed November 30, 2022, <https://animalclock.org/>. The “kill clock” for chickens, turkeys, cattle, pigs, sheep, ducks, fish, and shellfish is updated every second.

²⁵ Cf. Katy Taylor and Laura Rego Alvarez, “An Estimate of the Number of Animals Used for Scientific Purposes in 2015,” *Alternatives to Laboratory Animals*, Vol. 47, Issues 5-6 (2019):196-213, doi:10.1177/0261192919899853.

²⁶ Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 25-26.

racist and sexist legacies of colonialism and the staggering inequalities among humans that also structure Anthropocenic violence. The logics of domination and entitlement that cut across human and more-than-human worlds unravel the webs of interconnection and “distributive agencies” that make Earthly flourishing possible, and they perform this death-work under our very eyes. In *Abundant Earth*, Eileen Crist argues that the *concealed* precarity of nonhuman life serves as the very basis for particular (neoliberal) conceptions of human freedom:

The grating incoherence of securing human freedoms by means of exterminating nonhuman freedoms precisely motivates the silence enveloping the collapse of biological diversity and the imminent mass extinction event in the mainstream culture. This oversight is not incidental: the implosion of life’s richness has to remain obscure in public consciousness, as it is a direct upshot of the freedoms that people (are incited to) value and seek.²⁷

Such deliberate obfuscations, whether through disavowal, censorship, or public indifference, must be broken through in a time of mass extinction and increasing efficiency of mass animal death, beginning with the embodied affirmation of multispecies kinship and an “ethics of care.”²⁸ Richard Powers thus invites us to “our central drama”: “Can love, in its unaccountable weirdness,” he asks, “hope to overcome a culture of individualism built on denying all our millions of kinships and dependencies?”²⁹

In our rejection of human supremacy and domination of the Earth, we, the editors, follow a long line of ecologists and environmentalists of various stripes, ethnographers, practitioners and theorists of Traditional Ecological Knowledges (TEK), ecofeminists, animal rights activists, Critical Animal Studies scholars, post-humanists focused on animality, and ecotheologians, and are thoroughly indebted to their interventions. But here we invoke a rather unlikely ally, Sigmund Freud, who, with characteristic economy, captures the obtuseness of human narcissism in his 1927 essay, “Problems in the Path of Psychoanalysis.” Crediting Darwin with the “biological blow” to human narcissism (alongside the cosmological blow of Copernicus and the

²⁷ Eileen Crist, *Abundant Earth: Toward an Ecological Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019); 6.

²⁸ Cf. Carol Adams and Lori Gruen, “Ecofeminist Footings” in *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth, Second Edition* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 39-42.

²⁹ Richard Powers, “A Little More than Kin,” *Emergence Magazine*, October 14, 2021, <https://emergencemagazine.org/essay/a-little-more-than-kin/>.

psychological blow delivered by Freud himself), Freud highlights the “pretentious” ontological separation of humans from our fellow species by way of “divine descent,” opening a chasm of difference that must be aggressively inculcated with every generation. Without a doubt, anthropocentric secularity has a (monotheistic) religious tail. He writes:

In the course of the development of civilization, man acquired a dominating position over his fellow-creatures in the animal kingdom. Not content with this supremacy, however, he began to place a gulf between his nature and theirs. He denied the possession of reason to them, and to himself he attributed an immortal soul, and made claims to a divine descent which permitted him to break the bond of community between him and the animal kingdom. Curiously enough, this piece of arrogance is still foreign to children, just as it is to primitive and *primaeval* man. It is the result of a later, more pretentious stage of development.... A child can see no difference between his own nature and that of animals.... We all know that little more than half a century ago the researches of Charles Darwin and his collaborators and fore-runners put an end to this presumption on the part of man. Man is not a being different from animals or superior to them; he himself is of animal descent, being more closely related to some species and more distantly to others. The acquisitions he has subsequently made have not succeeded in effacing the evidences, both in his physical structure and in his mental dispositions, of his parity with them.³⁰

The work of ethologists, Frans de Waal among others, corroborates this essential parity and continuity, most intimately, of course, among the family of hominoids, living and extinct; indeed, he writes, “If it hadn’t been for the human ego, taxonomists would long ago have squeezed all hominoids into a single genus.”³¹ We are also aligned with “critical animal geographers,” who

recognize that there is no clear-cut dividing line between reasoning, emotional, agential, and self-aware humans (subjects) on one side and

³⁰ Sigmund Freud, “A Difficulty in the Path of Psychoanalysis,” in *Sigmund Freud: Essays and Papers*. Trans. Joan Riviere (Hachette UK: riverrun editions, 2020), 140-141. In *When Species Meet*, Donna Haraway also summons Freud’s “blows to human narcissism” to attack, with Derrida as her professed guide, the self-deification of Cartesian “man,” who insists on attributing to himself what he denies to “the animal-machine.” Cf. Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 11-12, 306.

³¹ Cf. Frans de Waal, “Who Apes Whom?” *The New York Times*, September 15, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/15/opinion/who-apes-whom.html>.

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