



*What it means to be*  
**HUMAN**  
*Joanna Bourke*







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# WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN

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Reflections from 1791 to the Present

JOANNA BOURKE

COUNTERPOINT  
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# Table of Contents

[FEAR: A CULTURAL HISTORY RAPE](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Preface](#)

[CHAPTER ONE - Introduction 'Are Women Animals?'](#)

[Why Explore 'The Human'?](#)

[The Möbius Strip](#)

['The Cat Metamorphosed into a Woman'](#)

## [PART 1. SPEAKING - Primates and Language](#)

[CHAPTER TWO - Red Peter](#)

[CHAPTER THREE - Talking Animals](#)

[Only Humans Truly 'Speak'](#)

[Speechless Humans](#)

[Is Sign Language a Language?](#)

[Teaching Sign Language to Apes](#)

[Conclusion to Part 1. Can an Ape Say 'Hallo!'?](#)

## [PART 2. FEELING - The Politics of Pain](#)

[CHAPTER FOUR - An Earnest Englishwoman](#)

[CHAPTER FIVE - Sentience and Welfare](#)

[The Pain of Animals](#)

[The Great Chain of Feeling](#)

[Cruelty to Animals](#)

[Cruelty to People](#)

[CHAPTER SIX - Humanitarianism and the Limits of Sympathy](#)

[Women are Animals](#)

[Protest](#)

[Limited Economy of Sympathy](#)

[Children are Animals](#)

[What Will We Lose If We Win?](#)

[Conclusion to Part 2: 'Should We "Become-Animal"?'](#)



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## PART 3. RECOGNIZING - The Legal Construction of Humanity

CHAPTER SEVEN - Mr Heathcliff

CHAPTER EIGHT - Human Rights

Are Women 'Persons'?

Can Slaves be 'Persons'?

The Rhetoric of 'Rights' and Torture

What's Wrong With Rights?

CHAPTER NINE - Animal Rights and 'Speciesism'

Are Animals Persons, Like Slaves?

Are Animals Persons, Like Women?

Current Debates: Should Animals Have Rights?

Opposition to Animal Rights: Pragmatism and the Law

Opposition to Animal Rights: Philosophical Concerns

Animals and the 'Holocaust'

Legitimizing Violence

Conclusion to Part 3: Being Human, Becoming Animal

## PART 4. SEEING - Ethics and the Face

CHAPTER TEN - Bobby the Dog

CHAPTER ELEVEN - Physiognomic Arts

Johann Kaspar Lavater

Sir Charles Bell

Ethics and the Physiognomic Sciences

The Popularity of Physiognomy

CHAPTER TWELVE - Darwinian Revolutions

Darwin and Evolution

Opposition to Darwinian Evolution

Darwinian Faces

CHAPTER THIRTEEN - Surgical Sciences

Cosmetic Surgery and Physiognomics

Excising 'Race'

Does the Dog Truly Have a Face?

Conclusion to Part 4: Does a Dog Have a Face? Does a Human?

## PART 5. EATING - Carnivorous Consumption

[CHAPTER FOURTEEN - 'The Black Demons of Hayti'](#)

[CHAPTER FIFTEEN - Eating Animals](#)

---

[The Consumption of Meat](#)

[Hierarchies of Ingestion](#)

[Contagion](#)

[Ingestion](#)

[CHAPTER SIXTEEN - Eating People](#)

[Comparative Gastronomy](#)

[Cannibalism and 'Race'](#)

[Consuming the Bodies of Slaves](#)

[Bringing the Cannibal Home](#)

[Conclusion to Part 5: What Does it Mean to Eat Flesh?](#)

## [PART 6. CREATING - Xenografts and Metamorphosis](#)

[CHAPTER SEVENTEEN - Stephanie and Goobers](#)

[CHAPTER EIGHTEEN - Rejuvenation](#)

[Rejuvenation and Xenografts](#)

[Critics](#)

[CHAPTER NINETEEN - Transplantation and Species Boundaries](#)

[Critics of Whole-Organ Xenotransplants](#)

[Twenty-First-Century Chimeras](#)

[Conclusion to Part 6 'Have We Created a Chimera?'](#)

[CHAPTER TWENTY - Concluding Words: Negative Zoéology](#)

[Notes](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Index](#)

[Copyright Page](#)

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Also by Joanna Bourke

# FEAR: A CULTURAL HISTORY RAPE



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## Preface

Intellectual inspiration and friendship are entangled. I am grateful to friends and colleagues for telling me stories about what it means to be human. Alas, because these discussions often took place late at night in restaurants, tavernas and bars, the precise details of their tales were often forgotten by morning. But I was always left with a sense that their insights had been both mischievous and outraged. I imagine that distorted versions of their stories are retold here.

Let me list just a few of these delightful storytellers: Efi Avdela, Alexandros Bakalaki, Rika Benveniste, Rosi Braidotti, Nicholas Brown, Ana Carden-Coyne, Phædra Douzina-Balalaki, Nikos Douzinas, Richard Evans, David Feldman, Vanessa Harding, Kostas Hatzikyriakos, Louise Hide, Yanna Kandilorou, Aglaia Komninos, Maria Komninos, Christos Lyrintzis, Carmen Mangion, Akis Papataxiarchis, Annik Paterneau, Dorothy Porter, Samis Taboh, Anna Tsigonias, Nikos Tsigonia and Slavoj Žižek. Anthropologist Alexandra Bakalaki, historian Ana Carden-Coyne, Chandak Sengoopta and Neil Penlington, lawyer and political philosopher Costas Douzinas and cardiothoracic surgeon Tom Treasure generously provided acute critiques of chapters, many of which required months of labour to restore to a fit state.

I have also been dependent upon the labours of other people. Particular thanks go to Zoe Dinga, without whom my life would be unbearably more complicated. With calm professionalism, Alan Forth, David Murray and Mansour Shabbak dealt with emergencies related to computer malfunctions and visual meltdowns. A writer needs an editor and Lennie Goodings is simply the best. I am immensely grateful for her support for the project and perceptive feedback. Zoe Gullea shouldered the burden of editing and coordinating editorial production, while Linda Silverman tackled the frustrating task of seeking out the images. The cover design is the inspired creation of Nina Tara. My agent Andrew Wylie and his team, especially James Pullen and Sarah Chalfant, have been of immeasurable help throughout the process. The Wellcome Trust's financial support and the advice of the team in the History of Medicine and Medical Humanities section of the Trust helped this research to be carried out.

Institutionally, I have also been blessed. The Department of History at Birkbeck University of London, deserves its reputation as a world-renowned centre for historical research and teaching. The sociability and intellectual generosity of my colleagues has fostered my work over many years; and my students have consistently forced me to think anew about received wisdom. Finally, though thanks go to my supportive, extended families in New Zealand, Australia, Switzerland and Greece. In particular, my parents have helped my understanding in innumerable ways.

But nothing happens without Costas. His intellectual acumen is breathtaking, his solidarity with the *sans papiers* and the *aganaktismenoi* (the 'indignant')

inspiring; and the ease with which he nurtures me, fulfilling. This is why this book is dedicated to him.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction 'Are Women Animals?'

In April 1872, a woman known only as 'An Earnest Englishwoman' published a letter entitled 'Are Women Animals?' In it, she attacked the fact that certain people were treated as lesser humans. Indeed, she fumed, they might even be treated as inferior to animals. Her full argument will be developed in Chapter Four, but this extract gives a taste of the force of her rhetoric.

### ARE WOMEN ANIMALS? TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—Whether women are the equals of men has been endlessly debated whether they have souls has been a moot point; but can it be too much to ask [for] a definitive acknowledgement that at least they are animals? . . . Many hon. members may object to the proposed Bill enacting that, in statutes respecting the suffrage, 'wherever words occur which import the masculine gender they shall be held to include women;' but could any object to the insertion of a clause in another Act that 'whenever the word "animal" occurs it shall be held to include women?' Suffer me, through your columns to appeal to our 650 [parliamentary] representatives, and ask—Is there not one among you then who will introduce such a motion? There would then be at least an equal interdict on wanton barbarity to cat, dog, or woman . . .  
Yours respectfully,  
AN EARNEST ENGLISHWOMAN

The Earnest Englishwoman was angry because animals had more rights in law than did women. In fact, the status of women was much worse than that of the rest of the animal kingdom. Regulations prohibiting cruelty against dogs, horses and cattle were significantly more punitive than laws against cruelty toward women. The Earnest Englishwoman recognized that the all-male parliamentarians were not prepared to give women the vote. Her heartfelt cry, therefore, was for women to be allowed to 'become-animal' in order to reap the benefits that they were being denied on the grounds that they were not part of 'mankind'.<sup>1</sup>

So who was this Earnest Englishwoman who railed against her sex's exclusion from full humanity? I have been unable to find out. All we know is that the author chose to cloak her anonymity in a character trait (earnest), a nationality (English) and a gender (woman).

The Earnest Englishwoman (or the newspaper's editor) titled her letter

protest 'Are Women Animals?' She was concerned with one group of sentient beings—women—who were not granted the status of being fully human. In my 'historical reflections', the Earnest Englishwoman's 'women' stands in for all sexes and genders. This goes against tradition. In the history of Western philosophy, as well as in common parlance, 'man' and 'mankind' have often been used to mean 'human', albeit only to the extent that women, intergenders and transgender conform to various traits that have been coded 'male'. By using the female gender as indicative of the status of humanity, I am disrupting this assumption. Instead of men being the norm for 'human', women become 'humanity'.

The implications of any investigation into what it means to be human are potentially immense. After all, two of the most distinguished traditions of modern times—theology and humanism—were founded on espousing hierarchies of humanity. According to the great Chain of Being, everything in the universe was ranked from the highest to the lowest—from the Divine to the human, then to the rest of the animal kingdom and finally incorporating inanimate objects. As Alexander Pope exclaimed in his *Essay on Man*,

Vast chain of being! which from God began;  
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,  
Beast, bird, fish, insect, who no eye can see,  
No glass can reach; from infinite to thee;  
From thee to nothing.<sup>2</sup>

This Chain was, however, subject to countless disruptions. Throughout this book theologians and others will be seen to be muddying the seemingly clear borders: some animals were placed above certain humans. The Supreme Creator might have fashioned 'the human' to reign over 'the animal', but powerful men, 'in endless error hurl'd', had elevated certain animals over their own human-sister non-white Europeans and children, to take just three common exclusions. Later in his *Essay on Man*, Pope observed that 'man' found himself poised 'on this isthmus of a middle state', doubting whether he should 'deem himself a God or Beast'. People excluded from the status of being fully 'men' might be forgiven for bitterly concluding that they had been decisively demoted to 'Beast'.

What about humanism? Surely an ideology that was defiantly independent of the God of Natural Theology, choosing instead to celebrate human progress and rationality, was founded on the idea of a shared humanity. Unfortunately not. The humanist insistence on an autonomous, wilful human subject capable of acting independently in the world was based on a very particular type of human. Human civilization had been forged in the image of the male, white, well-off, educated human. Humanism installed only some humans at the centre of the universe, disparaged 'the woman', 'the subaltern' and 'the non-European' even more than 'the animal'. As a result, it is hardly surprising that many of these groups rejected the idea of a universal and straightforward essence of 'the human', substituting something much more contingent, outward-facing and complex. To rephrase Simone de Beauvoir's inspired conclusion about women, one is not born, but made, a human.



Although theological and humanist modes of thought have predominated in the period discussed in this book, it is important not to see the trend as linear. It is too simple to posit a movement from the theological towards the rationalist and scientific. God keeps being resurrected; the glory of human progress always fails to live up to its narcissistic promise. It is equally wrong to posit a shift from the humanist to the post-humanist. Conceptions of the post-human retain elements of liberal humanism at their ideological core. None of these approaches are internally coherent or self-contained.

The Earnest Englishwoman with whom I started this introduction was writing in 1872. She was preoccupied with the status of women. If she had turned her gaze to the previous century, her critique could equally have been applied to slaves who were loudly insisting that 'We ain' like a dog or a horse'.<sup>4</sup> If she could have seen one hundred years into the future, she might have contributed to debates about the human status of 'sans papiers'-immigrants to the West-or chimeras created by transplanting animal fluids and organs into human bodies, or genetic research using stem cells. This book looks backward by a century from the Earnest Englishwoman's time and forward by more than a century in order to elaborate on her reflections.

This book is also narrowly focused upon Anglo-Americans; that is, two peoples historically responsible for many of debates about what it means to be human. However, understanding these cultures' debates is impossible without exploring the way they imagined cultural and ethnic outsiders. The roles played by subjugated colonies in the creation of 'the West' and the Western 'human' cannot be overestimated. In a book of this length I cannot do justice to the full range of imperial encounters that shaped Anglo-American notions of humanity. Therefore I will be illustrating the role of subjugated outsiders by exploring the role that Saint-Domingue (the French colonial name) or Haiti/Ayiti (the name given upon independence on 1 January 1804) played in Anglo-American cultures.

Why Haiti? My choice is deliberate. Haiti provides the earliest example of a nation whose very existence and identity was framed around notions of universal humanity. The revolution in the French colony of Saint-Domingue started with slave revolts in August 1791 (the date chosen for the start of many historical reflections) and ended just over twelve years later with Haiti's Declaration of Independence. In 1804 Haitians became the first black peoples to wage a successful anti-colonial revolution, the first to liberate slaves, the first to create a black republic. The grand Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, cobbled together by deputies of the National Assembly of France in 1789 and declaring both the 'natural, inalienable and sacred rights of man' and the right of 'resistance to oppression', saw its first trial by fire, sword and rifle on this small island in the Caribbean Sea. It is for these reasons that this book not only explores Anglo-American cultures between 1791 and the present, but also assimilates the history of Haiti as this civilization's 'other'.

# Why Explore 'The Human'?

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It turns out that the concept 'human' is very volatile. In every period of history and every culture, commonsensical constructions of 'the human' and 'the animal' exist, but the distinction is constantly undermined and re-constructed. My point is not simply that there is a porous boundary between the human and the animal (although there certainly is), but that the distinction is both contested and policed with demonic precision. In complex and sometimes contradictory ways, the ideas, values and practices used to justify the sovereignty of a particular understanding of 'the human' over the rest of sentient life are what create society and social life. Perhaps the very concept of 'culture' is an attempt to differentiate ourselves from our 'creatureliness', our fleshly vulnerability. What philosopher Giorgio Agamben has called the 'anthropological machine', or the compulsive inclination to demarcate the territory of the human from that of the non-human, is one of the great driving forces of history.<sup>5</sup> Delimiting those territories not only involves violence, but inspires it.

Most of this book, then, involves untangling varying interpretations that have emerged within human cultures in Britain, America and Haiti between the late eighteenth and early twenty-first centuries. I explore the different ways in which people have sought to declare 'here! and not there! is the place where the human starts and the animal ceases'. It turns out to be a futile (albeit absorbing and captivating) exercise. The creative and exhilarating desire for community and communion, authenticity and certainty, is what creates humanity as understood at any particular moment of time and topology.

To understand the instability of definitions of who is truly human, we need history. Stories and myths enable people in the past (and today) to make sense of a thoroughly bewildering world populated by an unimaginable number and range of sentient beings. In the words of Jacques Derrida, paying attention to the full community of sentient beings 'poses grave definitional and practical threats to the discourse of humanism' which attributes 'authority and autonomy . . . to the man . . . rather than to the woman, and to the woman rather than to the animal'.<sup>6</sup> By looking back into the past we can trace competing ways in which 'the human' and 'the animal' have been imagined.

I will illustrate this point by looking at the ways that, historically, the human has been most commonly marked as male. At the start of the nineteenth century, for instance, the author of a pamphlet protesting against cruelty to animals insisted that 'when humanity quits the man, and chastity the woman; they are both so deprived of their best possessions'.<sup>7</sup> The male is defined by his humanity; the woman by her sexuality. If we jump forward to near the end of that century, another leading science writer 'denied that women were even one half of the human race . . . The race were really men': women were simply creatures who "'produced" the human race'.<sup>8</sup> Fast-forward to the late-1960s and zoologist Desmond Morris can be heard claiming that the 'naked ape self-named Homo

sapiens' is 'proud that he has the biggest brain of all the primates, but attempts to conceal the fact that he also has the biggest penis'. His assumption that 'human equals 'male-human' is reinforced when he finally turns to female sexuality. He calls women's orgasms 'pseudo-male'; they are 'borrowed' from men.<sup>9</sup> The baseline for all these science writers is resolutely male. As Catharine MacKinnon put it in her collection of essays entitled *Are Women Human?*, women constantly find themselves confronted by a 'denial of their humanity'. Becoming human, she continues,

is a social, legal, and political process. It requires prohibiting or otherwise deligitimating all acts by which human beings as such are violated, guaranteeing people what they need for a fully human existence, and the officially upholding those standards and delivering on those entitlements. But . . . seeing what subordinated groups are distinctively deprived of, subjected to, and deligitimated by, requires first that they be real to power, that they first be seen as human. . . . The status and treatment of men still tacitly but authoritatively define the human universal. <sup>10</sup>

MacKinnon's title delightfully (although unintentionally) echoes the Earnest Englishwoman's question, 'Are Women Animals?'. However, although we wholeheartedly agree with MacKinnon's protest that women have been (and are) treated as inferior humans, her critique remains situated within the liberal tenets of equality, rights and species. I wish to disrupt the 'Human' of her book's title. I will also be disrupting the term 'Animal'. Indeed, I believe that this is exactly what the Earnest Englishwoman was doing in 1872.

In the 220 years explored in this book, definitions of what it means to be 'human' or 'animal' have generated a raucous amount of excitable babble. It turns out to be extremely difficult to state what differentiates the human. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the designation of different species was based primarily on outward appearance. Thus the father of biological taxonomy, the eighteenth-century biologist Carl Linnæus, divided animals into six classes: Mammalia (meaning 'of the breast'), Aves, Amphibia, Pisces, Insecta, and Vermes.<sup>11</sup> He grouped humans with other animals possessing milk-producing mammae, thus making the category female (males have only dry, vestigial breasts). Then, when Linnæus set out to distinguish humans from the rest of mammals, he invented the term *Homo sapiens* or 'man of wisdom'. In other words, for Linnæus and subsequent taxonomists, what tied humans to the rest of the animal kingdom was feminine, while what distinguished humans from other mammals was masculine.<sup>12</sup> Woman is an animal; man is the exemplary human.

Other conventional distinctions between human and nonhuman animals are applied inconsistently, or are simply wrong. Is intellectual ability the crucial criterion? Or self-consciousness? Or the possession of a soul? Or tool-making? Or private property? Or genetic inheritance? Aristotle prioritized language. This is one of the most common distinctions made, as I explore in the next chapter. For Aristotle, every living being has a *telos*: an appropriate end or goal. To be human was to belong to a polis, for it was only in that context that 'man' could truly

speak. As he put it, 'mere voice is but an indication of pleasure or pain, and therefore found in other animals' while

the power of speech is intended to set forth the expedient and inexpedient and therefore likewise the just and the unjust. And it is a characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, or just and unjust, and the like, and the association of living beings who have this sense makes a family and a state.<sup>13</sup>

Others placed emphasis on the ability to 'apprehend . . . God'. To be religious, observed John Evelyn, 'is more truly the formal distinction between men and beasts, than all the philosophers have furnished to its definition; and, therefore more adequate to his character than either polity, society, [or] risibility'.<sup>14</sup> It turns out that the link between the apprehension of God and the possession of language is closer than those of us born in the twentieth century might have thought.

René Descartes made yet another proposition. He insisted that, unlike 'men', animals were mere 'automata' or moving machines, driven by instinct alone. It is

Nature which acts in them according to the disposition of their organs, and one sees that a clock, which is made up of only wheels and springs can count the hours and measure time more exactly than we can with all our art.<sup>15</sup>

His famous statement 'Cogito ergo sum', or 'I think, therefore I am', was an insistence that only humans possess minds. This is the Cartesian dualism separating body from mind. Immanuel Kant, writing at the end of the eighteenth century, also emphasized rationality, stating categorically that the human-being was 'an animal endowed with the capacity of reason (animal rationabile)'. The human was

markedly distinguished from all other living beings by his technical predisposition for manipulating things (mechanically joined with consciousness), by his pragmatic predisposition (to use other human beings skilfully for his purposes), and by the moral predisposition in his being (to treat himself and others according to the principle of freedom under the laws).

In case the magnitude of the distinction was not clear, he reminded readers that 'any one of these three levels can by itself alone already distinguish the human being characteristically as opposed to the other inhabitants of the earth'.<sup>16</sup> In contrast, Sigmund Freud complicated Descartes and Kant's mind/body dualism with his twentieth-century invention of the unconscious. Less well-known is his suggestion that human civilization only emerged once man stood upright. This led to the 'diminution of the olfactory stimuli' and the subsequent development of disgust and sexual repression, which, in turn, led to the founding of the family and so to human civilization.<sup>17</sup>

Whatever definition we choose, it excludes some creatures we want to include in the 'human', and excludes others. As Bertram Lloyd, author of

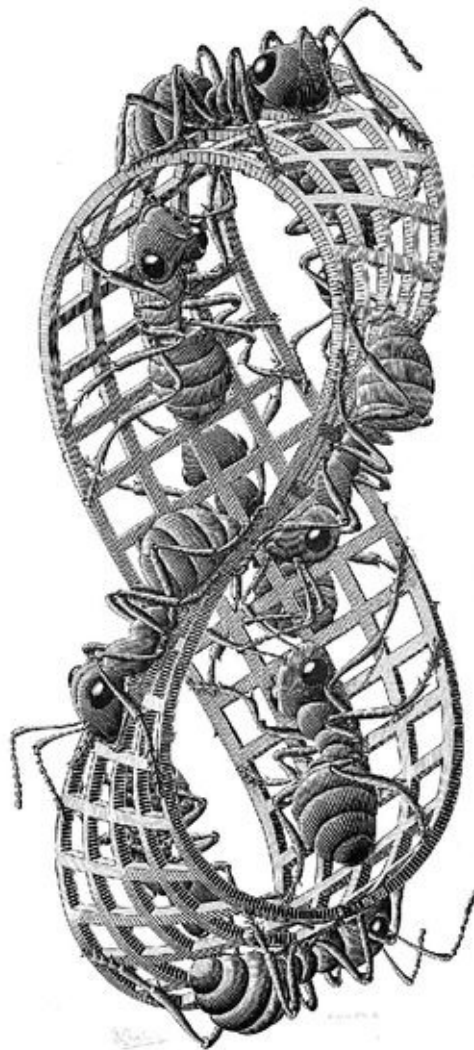
Humanitarianism and Freedom, commented in the early 1930s,

Deny reason to animals, and you must equally deny it to infants; affirm the existence of an immortal soul in your baby or yourself, and you must at least have the grace to allow something of the kind to your dog.<sup>18</sup>

My point is that the list of criteria for defining humanity and animality could go on and on, leading Derrida to conclude that

None of the traits by which the most authorized philosophy or culture has thought it possible to recognize this 'proper of man'—none of them is, in a rigor, the exclusive reserve of what we humans call human. Either because some animals also possess such traits, or because man does not possess it as surely as is claimed.<sup>19</sup>

[Figure 1](#). A Möbius strip, from a 1963 poster of the woodcut by M. C. Escher. 'Which side of the strip are the ants walking on?'  
M. C. Escher's 'Möbius Strip 11' © The M. C. Escher Company-Holland. All rights reserved. [www.mcescher.com](http://www.mcescher.com)



# The Möbius Strip

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It is helpful to think of these ideas with the Möbius<sup>a</sup> strip in mind. This strip depicted in [Figure 1](#).

The Möbius strip is named after the nineteenth-century mathematician August Ferdinand Möbius. As a topological space it is easy to make, but the result is aesthetically and philosophically astounding. Simply take a long, rectangular strip of paper, twist one end by 180 degrees and glue it to the other end. The result? A one-sided surface, with no inside or outside; no beginning or end; no single point of entry or exit; no hierarchical ladder to clamber up or slide down. The Möbius strip is a profoundly useful device, particularly if we want to think outside unhelpful dichotomies such as biology-as-inside/culture-as-outside, animal/human and fe/male. The Möbius strip embodies the roller-coaster ride of life, or zoe. More usefully for us, it deconstructs the human versus animal dilemma. The boundaries of the human and the animal turn out to be as entwined and indistinguishable as the inner and outer sides of a Möbius strip.

It would be wrong to conclude from the spiralling Möbius strip, with its indistinguishable borders, that all life is fundamentally the same. Quite the contrary. In the conclusion, I will elaborate on a central principle that infuses this book: that of 'negative zoélogy'<sup>b</sup> or radical otherness. The concept can be simply stated: face to face with the fundamental fluidity in definitions of human/animal (the twistings and turnings of that Möbius strip), we must move beyond comparisons based on similarities and dissimilarities and inject instability and indeterminacy into our discussions. The advantage of thinking in terms of the Möbius strip is that it encourages a celebration of difference and uniqueness.

This is also not to imply that we can understand the swirling motions of the Möbius strip outside of the material, ideological and historical contexts that brought it into being. There is nothing metaphysical or transcendent about the strip. Its existence depends, after all, on paper, scissors, glue, and the mental and physical labour of mathematicians like August Möbius and readers like you and me. It is a product of human labour, and that labour is political. In other words, agents are involved in determining what the Möbius strip of life actually means.

For me, then, the emotional tone and purported rationales given for tying a knot in that Möbius strip in order to declare 'here! and not there! is the place where the human starts and the animal ceases' is what is fascinating. It is a process infused with human narcissism. Take, for example, the ways physiognomists (that is, those thinkers who strove to develop the science of the human versus animal through an analysis of the contours of their faces) paid homage to the greatness of human faces in comparison to those of other sentient creatures. 'God of perfection!', Johann Kaspar Lavater exclaimed in 1804. 'How supremely, how benevolently hast thou displayed thyself in man!' In case his readers had not quite grasped the full glory of their own humanity, he continued:

Beyond the human body! that fair investiture of all that is more beautiful! -Unit

in variety! Variety in unity! How are they there displayed in their very essence? What elegance, what propriety, what symmetry, through all the forms, all the members! How imperceptible, how infinite, are the gradations that constitute the beautiful whole! . . . The likeness of God!<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, Charles Darwin's musings on humanity's animal inheritance were more reflective. As he put it in *The Descent of Man*,

The difference in mind between man and the higher animals, great as it is, is certainly one of degree and not of kind. We have seen that the senses and intuitions, the various emotions and faculties, such as love, memory, attention, curiosity, imitation, reason, &c., of which man boasts, may be found in an incipient, or even sometimes in a well-developed condition, in the lower animals.<sup>21</sup>

Darwinian arguments may have contributed to the deconstruction of the radical differences imagined between humans and animals, but humanism survived the attack. It did this, in part, by rejecting absolutist narratives of the human (the claim that people are utterly distinct from animals) and embracing relativist ones (the idea of a continuum between the two states, with the fully human at one end and the fully animal at the other).

In more recent years, dramatic scientific and cultural initiatives have continued to require us to question earlier certainties about human identity. Work with primates has shown that they can communicate in sign language, they possess complex communities, and their cognitive abilities are greater than many humans'. Progress in xenotransplantation technologies and stem-cell research have muddled even the most basic human/animal border. Many scientists question the traditional demarcations of species itself. As physiologist Jared Diamond asks in *The Third Chimpanzee*, how did the 2.9 per cent genetic difference between two kinds of vireos (passerine birds) or the 2.2 per cent difference between two gibbons make for a different species, while only 1.6 per cent separates humans from the chimpanzees yet we occupy a different genus?<sup>22</sup> If *Homo sapiens* is genetically so close to the other great apes, why shouldn't these apes be accepted as 'persons' too?<sup>23</sup>

What should we be celebrating: equality or difference? In relation to women, this is a question that has been discussed by every generation of feminists. Expressed crudely, should we be celebrating women's difference from men or should we be emphasizing our common humanity? Conversely, should animals be judged according to the degree to which they resemble 'us', or is that also the wrong criterion? I will be arguing that the concept of negative zoélogy can help us out of the dilemma possessed by these knotty (in the sense implied by the Möbius strip) questions.

In recent years an anti- or even post-humanist rhetoric has emerged. In large part, this is due to the palpable failure of humanism, which is seen to be corrupted ('humans' have been tortured and killed in the name of 'humanitarianism') or obsolete (scientific and cultural shifts have blurred any clear notion of a human).

animal border).

Unfortunately, though, post-humanism has proved much more successful in identifying what is wrong with humanism than with setting out its own coherent position. This is why I believe that history and philosophy need to come into dialogue. The most productive discussions on what it means to be human have emanated from the great philosophers of late modernity. For me, the insights of Jacques Derrida have proved particularly rewarding. More than any other modern philosopher, Derrida devoted his life to 'deconstructing', or intellectually unpicking, the dogmas of traditional philosophy. His philosophical writings have consistently sought to show how supposed dichotomies are actually dependent upon each other, and are extraordinarily fluid. For me, Derrida is the philosopher of the Möbius strip.

For our purposes, it is Derrida's deconstruction of the human/animal dichotomy that is most relevant. Derrida has criticized two ways of responding to 'the animal'-that is, either seeing them simplistically as 'the other' against whom humans are constituted, or turning them into nothing more than anthropomorphized substitutes for humans. His philosophy is a powerful acknowledgement of the moral significance of alterity or 'otherness': the recognition of the way in which radical difference creates what is the self or the same.<sup>24</sup> I follow Derrida in deconstructing the 'human'-that is, in unpicking the various strands that (in specific places and at various times in the past and present) philosophers, scientists, politicians, feminists and 'Jane and John Smith' claim to constitute 'the human'. This also involves critiquing the designation 'animal'. As Derrida reminds us, 'the animal' is nothing more (or less) than a word that men have given themselves the right to give . . . They have given themselves the word in order to corral a large number of living beings within a single concept: "the Animal," they say.'<sup>25</sup> Erasing the awe-inspiring variety of sentient life impoverishes all our lives.

Obviously, there are an 'infinite number of animal societies'.<sup>26</sup> In a single volume like this one, it is impossible to attempt to include more than a tiny number of animal cultures, and it is too clumsy to always put 'the animal' and 'the human' in inverted commas. Perhaps it is simplest to state that the animals of choice in my analysis will be cats, dogs and the great apes, although we will also come face to face with lizards, pigs, mice, sheep, cows, horses and vultures. Unfortunately, only a few of these individuals have names. Equally, the text would be encumbered if I introduced neologisms such as 'humanimal' or made too much use of lumbering terms such as 'human-animal' and 'non-human animal' (although I do use these terms occasionally as a useful reminder). These terms are anthropocentric, prioritizing the 'human', against whom there is a 'non-'. Instead I shall take it as given that the words animal and human are not only highly problematic, shorthand concepts, but also remain indispensable in the task of rethinking the human and the post-human in the twenty-first century.



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