Plato had defined Man as an animal, biped and featherless, and was applauded. Diogenes plucked a fowl and brought it into the lecture-room with the words, “Here is Plato’s Man.” In consequence of which there was added to the definition, “having broad nails.”

Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*

In Kafka’s short story “A Report to an Academy,” a chimpanzee named Rotpeter, who has been educated to the level of an average European, finds himself in something of a dilemma:

Honoured members of the Academy! You have done me the honour of inviting me to give your Academy an account of the life I formerly led as an ape [äffisches Vorleben]. I regret that I cannot comply with your request to the extent you desire.

Rotpeter explains that although only five years have passed “since I was an ape [Affentum],” and that he can recount something of his capture, his incarceration, and the training and personal exertion that lead to his becoming human, of his time in the forests of the Gold Coast he can say nothing. The door through which he passed has now closed, and the strong wind that blew after him from his past is today no more than a gentle puff that plays about his heels. Rotpeter tells the honored members of the Academy that “your life as apes, gentlemen, insofar as something of that kind lies behind you, cannot be farther removed from you than mine is from me” and that “what I felt then as an ape I can represent now only in human terms.” Rotpeter is now a human before he is an ape.
Rotpeter, like the members of the Academy he is addressing, classifies himself as a human being. The modes of existence peculiar to apes are now unreachable, left far behind in the distant past of an inaccessible ancestry. Rotpeter affirms Bataille’s suggestion that “nothing, as a matter of fact, is more closed to us than this animal life from which we are descended.” It is the precarious nature of the classification of human beings, along with the question of temporal preeminence on which it so often depends, that I would like to consider in this chapter. Clearly demarcated categories have always been a problem for the taxonomist, of course. Plato is by no means alone in having had to revise a definition following an impertinent intervention, and Darwin himself complained of the difficulties he experienced, the “undefined & unanswerable” questions with which he tussled, whilst at systematic work. No one has highlighted the problematic character of the questions that haunted Darwin and his fellow systematists quite so concisely, or with such flare, however, as Borges.

Borges’s well-known essay “John Wilkins’ Analytical Language,” first published in 1942, describes several attempts to construct a universal language—that is, a language in which each word defines itself. Such a language would, as Borges put it, speculate on “the words, definitions, etymologies, and synonymies of God’s secret dictionary.” Borges mentions the system proposed in 1850 by one C. L. A. Letellier, in which “a means animal; ab, mammalian; abo, carnivorous; aboj, feline; aboje, cat; abi, herbivorous; abiv, equine,” and so on. He recounts a similar example from Wilkins’s own “undoubtedly ingenious” system: although the English word salmon tells us nothing, “zana, the corresponding word, defines (for the person versed in the forty categories and the classes of those categories) a scaly river fish with reddish flesh.” Borges is alarmed by some of Wilkins’s categories and divisions, however: the whale becomes, for instance, “a viviparous, oblong fish.” The “ambiguities, redundancies, and deficiencies” of Wilkins’s system recall, he suggests, a certain Chinese encyclopedia:

In its distant pages it is written that animals are divided into (a) those that belong to the emperor; (b) embalmed ones; (c) those that are trained; (d) suckling pigs; (e) mermaids; (f) fabulous ones; (g) stray dogs; (h) those that are included in this classification; (i) those that tremble as if they were mad; (j) innumerable ones; (k) those drawn with a very fine camel’s-hair brush; (l) etcetera; (m) those that have just broken the flower vase; (n) those that at a distance resemble flies.

A distinctive kind of disorder manifests here within the heart of the encyclopedic system. In his discussion of Borges’s text, Foucault distinguishes the confusion of the merely incongruous from the true turmoil of the heteroclite. The former is apparent in the unusual juxtaposition of creatures listed by Eusthenes when he declares, “I am no longer hungry. . . . Until the morrow, safe from my
saliva all the following shall be: Aspics, Acalephs, Acanthocephalates, Amoebocytes, Ammonites, Axolotls, Amblystomas, Aphislions, Anacondas, Ascarids, Amphisbaenas, Angleworms, Amphipods, Anaerobes, Annelids, Anthozoans.” Ordinarily these creatures would certainly not be found together, but that they might meet on the site of Eusthenes’ saliva, as they do in his list, is at least a theoretical possibility. The disorder of Borges’s “Heavenly Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge” is another matter. Here the “fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension, without law or geometry, of the heteroclite.” Each of the categories belongs to a different system. There is not even the possibility of a common locus where the creatures could convene, and yet the continuity of the alphabetical sequence obliterates the distances between the categories. The disorder here is the internal incoherence of the paradox.

Heteroclite systems are, Borges suspects, inevitable. Universal languages, and indeed all attempts at classification, do not and cannot hold because “there is no universe in the organic, unifying sense of that ambitious word.” In short, “there is no classification of the universe that is not arbitrary and speculative.” But, Borges asserts, the impossibility of constructing a perfect taxonomy, of reproducing God’s secret dictionary, should by no means discourage us from the attempt. Systems and orders will always be provisional, but that, in itself, is no reason to abandon them. Taxonomy, that branch of biological science concerned with the task of classifying species and other taxa, learned long ago to hypothesize rather than to hypostatize. I will return to this noble endeavor in a moment, but first we must exchange Borges’s heteroclite disordering for a little incongruity.

In a rich, inspiring essay titled “Gaps in the Mind,” Richard Dawkins works hard to knock down the door that Rotpeter believes to have shut fast behind him. Dawkins describes what he calls “the discontinuous mind,” an outlook characterized by the desire to impose inappropriately rigid distinctions on real world continua. Noticing that speciation allegedly occurs by means of infinitesimal, gradual variation, the sophistic lawyer will attempt to argue that, since a member of one species could never give birth to a member of another, Darwin’s theory of evolution must surely be at fault. A gap is created where none exists. Dawkins points out that it is convenient for our naming rituals that intermediate species have usually become extinct, but he invokes the case of ring species to demonstrate that this need not be the case. The example he provides is that of the herring gull and the lesser black-backed gull, two quite distinct species which are easy to tell apart and do not interbreed. If you follow the population of herring gulls westward from the United Kingdom, however, to North America, then Alaska, Siberia, across Russia, and back into Europe, the gulls gradually begin to look more and more like lesser black-backed gulls, until, as you reach Britain once more, they are lesser black-backed gulls. The gulls comprise a ring species, in which neighboring groups can and do interbreed, all the way around.
the world, but whose “ends” constitute two distinct species. “Footling debates” which seek to establish sharp divisions where none exist entirely miss the point, and import, of Darwin’s discovery.

“The word ‘apes,’” Dawkins goes on, “usually means chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans, gibbons and siamangs. We admit that we are like apes, but we seldom realise that we are apes.” In fact, humans are African apes and are more closely related to chimpanzees and gorillas than either of those two species are to orangutans. Dawkins proposes a thought experiment to demonstrate that there is no great divide, no impassable doorway, separating human from ape. He suggests that the reader imagine themselves standing on the shore of the Indian Ocean in southern Somalia, facing north. “In your left hand you hold the right hand of your mother. In turn she holds the hand of her mother, your grandmother. Your grandmother holds her mother’s hand, and so on.” Following this “human chain,” we will have hardly started across the width of our home continent before we reach our common ancestor with the chimpanzee. If this “arch-ancestress” then turns east, and takes in her left hand her other daughter, from whom chimpanzees are descended, a parallel chain can be followed all the way back to the coast. The reader will now stand face to face with their modern chimpanzee cousin, to whom they are joined by an unbroken sequence of linked hands. Like a kind of diachronic ring species, there are no gaps in this chain of beings.

Anyone who walked up and down this chain might pass members of *Homo erectus*, *Homo ergaster*, perhaps also *Homo habilis* the “handy man,” or even *Australopithecus afarensis*, and other species besides. They would also pass individuals who could not comfortably be classified as belonging to any particular species. These individuals can be considered members of “intermediate species” only to those gazing down the line with the benefit of taxonomic hindsight. This hindsight is necessarily based on historical contingencies such as the matter of which species flourished, which became extinct, and which left the fossil remains on which modern classification depends. The true importance of Darwin’s work was not that he demonstrated the origin of any species, but that he showed just how specious the notion of species can be. But to whatever species these individuals did or did not belong, all were African apes.

Dawkins’ line-up ends with a single individual, a contemporary cousin standing opposite the reader, but there is in fact more than one species of chimpanzee. Chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*) have been known to the Western world since at least the seventeenth century. In 1699, the comparative anatomist Edward Tyson, a distant relative of Darwin’s, published “The Anatomy of a Pygmie,” his account, accompanied by superb anatomical drawings by William Cowper, of his dissection of a juvenile chimpanzee. Tyson’s stated objective was to demonstrate that “the pygmies, the cynocephali, the satyrs, and sphinges of the ancients” were actually apes or monkeys, not men, and that his own subject comprised
the connecting link in the great chain of being between animal and man. He depicted his pygmy standing upright, supported by a walking stick on account of his failing health. It was not until the early twentieth century that a second species of chimpanzee was identified. In 1928, a skull, previously thought to be that of a young chimpanzee, was recognized as belonging to an adult, albeit one with an especially small head. The following year the subspecies *paniscus* was announced, which, a few years later, was reclassified as a new species. The name was simply a diminutive of the genus name, *Pan*, and the “new” species is often called the “pygmy chimpanzee.” In fact, it is only the skull that is smaller, and the build slimmer than the common chimpanzee’s body. The origin of the preferred name for this ape—bonobo—is unknown, and may well have derived from a misspelling on a shipping crate. The common and the pygmy chimpanzee are closely related, and the one has in the past often been confused with the other, but that they constitute separate species is now officially recognized.

It does not matter, for the purposes of Dawkins’s demonstration, whether the *Pan* we face is a *troglodytes* or a *paniscus*: humans are as closely related to the one as the other. There is an alternative conclusion we might draw from his observations, however, regarding the nomenclature of the African ape family. As has often been noted, humans are genetically extremely close to chimpanzees, sharing 98.4 percent of their DNA. The physiologist Jared Diamond has pointed out that willow warblers and chiffchaffs share less than this, at 97.4 percent, and yet are placed together in the same genus, *Phylloscopus*. And the red-eyed and white-eyed vireos, two North American birds, both belong to the genus *Vireo* while sharing only 97.1 percent DNA. In short, were we to apply the same criteria to the great apes as we do to these other species, humans and chimpanzees would be acknowledged as members of the same genus. Diamond’s argument is based on cladistics, the school of taxonomy that depends on the objective criteria of genetic distance between species, rather than traditional or phenetic classification systems which rely on subjective evaluations of the relative importance of anatomical or behavioral traits. Since the genus name *Homo* was proposed first, then, according to the rules of taxonomic nomenclature, it must take priority. Diamond thus argues that “there are not one but three species of genus *Homo* on Earth today: the common chimpanzee, *Homo troglodytes*; the pygmy chimpanzee, *Homo paniscus*; and the third chimpanzee or human chimpanzee, *Homo sapiens*.” The African ape facing us on the coast of the Indian Ocean is a chimpanzee, though she is not a *Pan* at all but a fellow *Homo*.

It was the Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus who devised both the taxonomic ranking method and the binomial system of nomenclature still used today. Characterized by his contemporaries as a second Adam, Linnaeus set himself the task of giving true names to the Earth’s creatures and thereby accurately representing the order of nature. His work constituted an attempt to peek at God’s secret
dictionary. In the Linnaean system, which quickly replaced a bewildering, heteroclitic assortment of competing classificatory methods, each species is designated by two Latinate names, the first generic, the second specific. Linnaeus’s masterwork, his *Systema Naturae*, began with the primates, and indeed with humans (genus *Homo*), whom he divided from the apes (genus *Simia*). More than a century before Darwin, however, Linnaeus found himself wrestling with undefined and unanswerable questions of taxonomy:

I demand of you, and of the whole world, that you show me a generic character—one that is according to generally accepted principles of classification—by which to distinguish between Man and Ape. I myself most assuredly know of none. I wish somebody would indicate one to me. But, if I had called man an ape, or vice versa, I would have fallen under the ban of all ecclesiastics. It may be that as a naturalist I ought to have done so.

In fact, Linnaeus had himself complicated this categorization of man and ape. He divided the genus *Homo* into two species, *Homo sapiens* and *Homo troglodytes*. The former, also called *Homo diurnus*, comprised various subspecies or races, including *Homo americanus*, *Homo europaeus*, and even *Homo monstrosus*, a miscellany of oddities including the Patagonian giant, the dwarf of the Alps, the monorchid Hottentot, and others. *Homo troglodytes*, identified as *Homo nocturnus*, was a creature reported by travellers to exist in Africa and Asia, about whom Linnaeus recorded that

[j]t lives within the boundaries of Ethiopia (Pliny), in the caves of Java, Ambiona, Ternate. Body white, walks erect, less than half our size. Hair white frizzled. Eyes orbicular: iris and pupils golden. Vision lateral, nocturnal. Life-span twenty-five years. By day hides; by night it sees, goes out, forages. Speaks in a hiss. Thinks, believes that the earth was made for it, and that sometime it will be master again, if we may believe the travellers.

According to Colin Groves, this golden-eyed anthropoid included “some undoubted orangutans and possibly chimpanzees.” Some of the great apes, at least, counted as *Homo*.

Jared Diamond does not mention Linnaeus’s early primate classification. In suggesting, however, that even today’s cladistically inclined taxonomists are anthropocentric, and that “the lumping of humans and chimps into the same genus will undoubtedly be a bitter pill for them to swallow,” he is surely correct. The impetus to isolate humans within their own genus betrays a heteroclitic humanism that goes beyond mere incongruity. Nevertheless, Diamond continues, “there is no doubt . . . that whenever chimpanzees learn cladistics . . . they will unhesitat-
ingly adopt the new classification."35 That is, we might add, whenever we learn to accept the new system of classification. Despite the speciousness of species, despite the lack of clear gaps in the continuum, despite the fact that we cannot read God’s dictionary, we need not cease the attempt to keep compiling and revising systems of classification. The impossibility of penetrating the divine scheme of the universe should not, Borges asserts, dissuade us from devising our own schemes, even if it is clear that they are provisional.36 The very nature of classifications, like dictionaries, is that they must be supplemented and amended.

Changing the names of species is nothing new. As we saw, *Pan paniscus* has changed name once already, and Groves lists forty-seven different names by which the several subspecies of ape now subsumed under *Pan troglodytes* have been known since the time of Linnaeus.37 The operative principles of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature require that an existing genus name must take priority over any subsequently proposed names. Diamond abides by these rules when he proposes that, although humans should be considered “the third chimpanzee,” the genus name *Homo* should be adopted for the three species: *Homo* dates back to the official starting point for zoological nomenclature, the tenth edition of the *Systema Naturae*, published in 1758, whereas *Pan* was not employed as a genus name until 1816.38 There is a danger here, however, of reduplicating the same anthropocentrism which Linnaeus decried in himself when he imprudently separated man and ape. His very description of the genus *Homo* was in fact the phrase *nosce te ipsum* (“know yourself”).39 Reclassifying chimpanzees as humans suggests once more that humans are in some sense prior to, or preeminent among, the great apes. This is the temporal priority of Rotpeter and Bataille, whereby humanity comes first. Our objective should not be to welcome a few new, privileged members into the charmed circle of human affairs.40 If we wish to avoid this first and foremost anthropocentrism, it is vital that we find a different way to amend our primate nomenclature.41

The genus name of the chimpanzee comes from the Greek god of shepherds and their flocks, Pan (Παν).42 Depicted with a human torso but the hindquarters, beard, and horns of a goat, the god was a lustful deity, pursuing nymphs and maenads around Arcadia while accompanied by his lascivious satyrs. Legends have long persisted of the prurient ape, and Linnaeus used the name *Satyrus* for one of the species of his genus *Simia*.43 The name *Pan* is usually taken to have derived from the Indo-European root *pa* (to pasture), but an ancient Homeric hymn to Pan, chanted at religious festivals, suggests an alternative etymology. It tells that the gods gave him the name that they did because, as a rowdy child, full of merry laughter, he delighted them all (from *pantes*, meaning “all”).44 It is most appropriate, then, that this name should apply to *every* one of the species within our chimpanzee genus. But if humans should take the genus name *Pan*, what of their specific name?
In his *Anatomy of a Pygmie*, Tyson wondered whether it might be more appropriate to describe his chimpanzee as “Quadru-manus” rather than “Quadrupes.” Buffon, who was well acquainted with Tyson’s text, and critical of Linnaeus’s inclusion of *troglodytes* within the genus *Homo*, would go on to use the terms “quadrumanous” and “bimanous” of ape and man in his *Nomenclature of the Apes*. It was not until 1795, however, that Johann Friedrich Blumenbach came to employ these two terms in a specifically classificatory sense. In the third edition of his *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind*, Blumenbach suggested that, despite the pioneering work of “the immortal Linnaeus,” his *Systema Naturae* was now more than sixty years old and in need of revision. Accordingly, and despite protesting that “I am very far indeed from that itch for innovation which afflicts so many of the moderns,” he proposed a new taxonomy of his own.

Blumenbach rejected naturalists’ long-established commitment to the continuity or gradation of nature, the chain of being which had still held Tyson captive, and argued instead that there are large gaps between classes and genera of creatures. He proposed ten distinct orders of mammalia, the first of which, the Bimanus, included only the genus *Homo*. He argued that man’s unique, erect stature gives him “that highest prerogative of his external conformation, namely, the freest use of two most perfect hands.” The anthropomorphous animals, the apes, monkeys, and lemurs, however, have on their hind feet a second thumb, not the great toe which is given to man alone. As such they ought not to be considered either bipeds or quadrupeds, but belong in a distinct order of their own, the Quadrumana. Only humans are fully bipedal, a posture made possible precisely by the lack of hands on their hind extremities. It is not, as Heidegger has argued, the hand which distinguishes human beings, but the fact that they have only two of them. With his two new orders, the Bimanus and the Quadrumana, Blumenbach thus definitively separated humans from all the other great apes, a taxonomic distinction that has persisted to the present day. The distinguishing feature of the human chimpanzee is the fact that members of the species do not have four hands, like the majority of the other primates, but a pair. Appropriating Blumenbach’s term, but tempering the rigidity of the divisions he described by recalling Dawkins’s chain of beings joined by their hands, humans might then best be considered *Pan bimanus*.

In considering the question of ape and human from the perspective of cladistics, my proposed revision breaks the taxonomic imperative of temporal preeminence. *Homo* came first according not only to the author of Genesis, but also to that second Adam, Linnaeus. What justification could be offered for this willful itch for innovation? In retaining and, indeed, extending the use of *Homo*, I have suggested, the rules of nomenclature manifest, in this instance, as a form of anthropocentrism. Linnaeus himself acknowledged that, as a good naturalist, he should have done otherwise. This anthropocentrism is a kind of
self-centeredness—a species of narcissism, a species-narcissism. The fact that humans did not evolve from, but continue to be, apes need not, of itself, prevent their being self-centered, of course. Indeed, Derrida has suggested that one will always narcissistically reappropriate the other in one’s own image:

I believe that without a movement of narcissistic reappropriation, the relation to the other would be absolutely destroyed, it would be destroyed in advance. The relation to the other—even if it remains asymmetrical, open, without possible reappropriation—must trace a movement of reappropriation in the image of oneself for love to be possible, for example. Love is narcissistic.52

What we think of as “nonnarcissism” is in general “but the economy of a much more welcoming, hospitable narcissism.” “Narcissism! There is not narcissism and nonnarcissism; there are narcissisms that are more or less comprehensive, generous, open, extended.” 53 There is, we might say, more than one self-image in which the other might be cast, and with which one might fall in love. Man (Homo) might well be erased as a distinct genus, like a crude taxon sketched in the sands of genealogical time, but this does not draw to a close all possible forms of narcissism. It is true that Derrida himself will not, “for a single moment,” take it upon himself to contest the thesis of a rupture or abyss “between those who say ‘we men,’ ‘I, a man,’ and what this man among men who say ‘we,’ what he calls the animal or animals.”54 There will always be gaps in the mind, and such a disregard for difference would simply be “too asinine.” The point, however, is that this is not the only difference, the only abyss or gap or rupture. Derrida has given his attention, he says, not just to difference, but to differences, to heterogeneities and abyssal ruptures. Rotpeter chooses to narrate his history, to recount his particular kind of being, by stressing a single difference, but there are other tales he might have told. To follow Derrida, the autobiographical animal, one final time, we might choose to ask:

Where then are we? Where do we find ourselves? With whom can we still identify in order to affirm our own identity and to tell ourselves our own history? First of all, to whom do we recount it? One would have to construct oneself, one would have to be able to invent oneself without a model and without an assured addressee. This addressee can, of course, only ever be presumed, in all situations of the world. But the schemas of this presumption were in this case so rare, so obscure, and so random that the word “invention” seems hardly exaggerated.55

The seemingly incongruous claim that humans are chimpanzees is made possible not by a listing of names, like Eusthenes’ inventory of edible snakes, but by the construction of an inclusive taxonomic hierarchy. The individual
organisms comprising any given taxon belong, necessarily, to multiple categories. The *Pan bimanus* belong to the genus *Pan*, the family Hominidae, the order Primates, the class Mammalia, the phylum Chordata, and the kingdom Animalia. Derrida suggests that there are “little narcissisms” and “big narcissisms,” and here, in the component classes of our nested taxonomic schema, we can identify multiple differences, heterogeneities and ruptures, and therefore assorted scales of self-image. In addition to these incongruously inclusive narcissisms, however, there are many more asymmetrically heteroclite clusters we might move to appropriate. The individual *Pan bimanus* who was Jorge Luis Borges, for instance, was (1) male; (2) middle-class; (3) married; (4) included in the current classification; (5) etcetera. Mapping genealogical and evolutionary categories will not exhaust what an individual was, is, or might become, and the politics of adjectives and articles requires that the being inclined to see itself as human pay due care and attention to the parts of speech employed in claims to self-identity. Where the substantive tends to define and delimit, the adjective permits a more inclusive multiplicity of relations. One might choose, then, to acknowledge one’s *animal* being rather than to be an *animal*, to see oneself as *mammalian* rather than a *mammal*, to prefer *ein affisches leben* or even *ein Affentum* to “life as an ape,” and perhaps, even, to be *human* rather than a *human being.* The provisional, presumptuous classifications we choose to invent will be, as Foucault, Borges, and Derrida well knew, both incongruous and heteroclite, but no less productive for all that.

I began with Kafka’s tale of an ape, but there is another, more appropriate story with which to end this report to an academy. Pierre Boulle opens his most famous novel with Jinn and Phyllis, “a wealthy leisured couple,” who are holidaying in space “as far as possible from the inhabited stars.” They spend their time sailing their solar-powered spacecraft and taking pleasure in one another’s company. By chance, they intercept an old-fashioned message in a bottle, which, as they read it, becomes the main body of Boulle’s novel. Jinn and Phyllis shake their heads in disbelief as they complete the manuscript, which reports the trials and tribulations of an astronaut, one Ulysse Mérou, who has been stranded on a world populated by rational chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans, a veritable planet of the apes. “A likely story,” says Jinn, which shows only that “there are poets everywhere, in every corner of the cosmos, and practical jokers too.” And so, in the closing words of the novel,

[Jinn] let out the sail, exposing it to the combined rays of the three suns. Then he began to manipulate the driving levers, using his four nimble hands, while Phyllis, after dismissing a last shred of doubt with an energetic shake of her velvety ears, took out her compact and, in view of their return to port, touched up her dear little chimpanzee muzzle.
Rotpeter appears at first to be an ape, but it soon becomes clear, if his repeated protestations are to be believed, that he is now human. Jinn and Phyllis, on the other hand, we assume to be human, right up until the point at which their quadrumanous limbs and chimpanzee muzzles reveal them to be apes. Rotpeter is still an ape, however, despite his cultured ways. He tells us that “the first thing I learned was to give a handshake; a handshake betokens frankness,” but it is clear from his report that he has not been entirely forthright with his captors, trainers, and audience. From the moment he realized that there was only one way out of his confinement, his assumption of human ways has been an elaborate and effective performance. Is Rotpeter lying about his anthropocentric amnesia? Who can say? But his well-groomed fur and tail betray the fact that he remains an ape. Rotpeter presents his report as a human, but he is in fact a chimpanzee, just as Jinn and Phyllis seem to be human while reading the astonishing account on which they have stumbled, only to turn out to be chimpanzees. And so it is with this report, offered to my presumed addressees, the honored members of the academy. Our lives as apes are not so far removed, and do not lie behind us.

Notes

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3. Note that Kafka’s adjective and adjectival noun—äffisches (“apish”) and Affentum (“ape existence”)—become substantives in translation. I will return to this presently.
11. Foucault, Order of Things, xvi, xvii.
13. In her own discussion of Borges and Foucault, Carol Adams reproduces a heteroclite disorder all the more startling for the fact that it is familiar. The rationale behind the everyday categories by which nonhuman animals are organized is, she demonstrates, “the arbitrary logic of the oppressor”; see Carol J. Adams, Neither Man nor Beast: Feminism and the Defense of Animals (New York: Continuum, 1994), 188–90.
15. Dawkins, “Gaps in the Mind,” 81–82. These birds represent the classic example of a ring species, and have been much discussed. The essential point concerning the mutability of species is in no way compromised by recent research which suggests that the gulls do not, in fact, comprise a ring species; see Dorit Liebers, Peter de Knijff, and Andreas J. Helbig, “The Herring Gull Complex Is Not a Ring Species,” Proceedings of the Royal Society Biological Sciences, Series B 271:1542 (7 May 2004): 893–901. Liebers and colleagues suggest that the gulls may soon become a ring species, as lesser black-backed gulls expand ever westward (899). For an alternative ring species, see the Asian green(-ish) warbler (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*), whose populations circle the Tibetan plateau; Darren E. Irwin, Staffan Bensch, and Trevor D. Price, “Speciation in a Ring,” Nature 409:6818 (18 January 2001): 333–37. On the history and unstable integrity of the ring species concept, see Darren Irwin, Jessica H. Irwin, and Trevor D. Price, “Ring Species as Bridges Between Microevolution and Speciation,” Genetica 112–113 (2001): 223–43.
17. There is considerable debate as to which species of the genus *Homo* were ancestors of modern humans and which were “cousins” who had diverged from the ancestral line. For a lively discussion, see Jonathan Kingdon, Lowly Origin: Where, When, and Why Our Ancestors First Stood Up (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).
19. For an excellent discussion of the subtleties of the concept of species, and the problems of accurately representing descent graphically, see Daniel Dennett, Darwin’s Dangerous Idea (London: Allen Lane, 1995), 85–103 (chapter 4). See also John Dupré’s discussion of the distinction between species considered as units of evolution and species considered as units of classification, which argues for the pragmatic utility of the latter over the former; John Dupré, “In Defence of Classification,” in Humans and Other Animals (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 81–99.
20. Edward Tyson, Orang-Outang, sive Homo Sylvestris: or, The Anatomy of a Pygmie Compared with That of a Monkey, an Ape, and a Man (London: Thomas Bennet and
Daniel Brown, 1699). Nicolaas Tulp’s earlier account of an “Indian satyr,” in 1641, has been taken as a description of a chimpanzee (Huxley) or a bonobo (Reynolds), but now seems most likely to have been an orangutan. See Nicolaas Tulp, Observationes medicae (Amstelredami: Apud Henricum Wetstenium, 1641), 3:56, 271; Thomas Henry Huxley, Evidence as to Man’s Place in Nature (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863), 8; Vernon Reynolds, “On the Identity of the Ape Described by Tulp 1641,” Folia Primatologica 5 (1967): 80–87; H. D. Rijksen and E. Meijaard, Our Vanishing Relative: The Status of Wild Orangutans at the Close of the Twentieth Century (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1999), 421–27.


22. For a fuller account of the ignominious events surrounding the discovery of paniscus—both Harold Coolidge and Ernst Schwarz claimed credit—see Mary and John Gribbin, Being Human: Putting People in an Evolutionary Perspective (London: Dent, 1993), 4–5; or Frans de Waal and Frans Lanting, Bonobo: The Forgotten Ape (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 5–6.


24. There is a town called Bolobo in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), the only nation in which this endangered species has survived; de Waal and Lanting, Bonobo, 7.

25. The figure of 1.6 percent divergence in human and chimpanzee DNA refers to corresponding synonymous (functionally relatively unimportant) DNA sites. The figure actually rises to 99.4 percent for nonsynonymous (functionally much more important) DNA sites; see Derek E. Wildman et al., “Implications of Natural Selection in Shaping 99.4 Percent Nonsynonymous DNA Identity Between Humans and Chimpanzees: Enlarging Genus Homo,” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 100:12 (10 June 2003): 7181–88. On the caution that must be exercised in drawing conclusions from such figures, see Steven Pinker, The Language Instinct: The New Science of Language and Mind (London: Allen Lane, 1994), 351.


1. Linnaeus’s method of nomenclature, first proposed in 1749, was often accepted even when his classifications were not; see 51–84 (chapter 2).


40. Dawkins says as much in his qualified endorsement of the Great Ape Project; see “Gaps in the Mind,” 87.


42. De Waal and Lanting, *Bonobo*, 6. The common name, “chimpanzee,” is the name for this ape in Angola, south-central Africa.


46. This was the fourteenth volume of Buffon’s colossal *Natural History*; see John C. Greene, *The Death of Adam: Evolution and Its Impact on Western Thought* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1959), 179–82.


48. Ibid., 151–52.

49. Ibid., 171–72. Blumenbach’s dissertation was first published in 1775, when he argued that apes should be considered quadrupeds; see 86–87. He did not propose the order Quadrupumana until the third edition of 1795.
50. Blumenbach discounts “the manati, birds (especially the penguins),” and “the lizard Siren”; ibid., 87.


53. Ibid.


56. On the appeal of a “quantitative, continuously distributed morality,” which we might, if space allowed, ally with an adjectival ethics, see the closing paragraphs of Dawkins, “Gaps in the Mind,” 87; and David Wood, “Thinking with Cats,” in *Animal Philosophy*, ed. Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco (London: Continuum, 2004), 129–44 (esp. 215n42): “Our capacity to appreciate the other’s suffering is not in these cases an anthropocentric projection at all. It is instead a mammalocentric or biocentric projection. It is not as humans that we feel physical pain, but as ‘animate organisms.’”


58. Ibid., 174. The novel was, of course, made into a spectacularly successful and critically acclaimed film, *Planet of the Apes*, starring Charlton Heston, in 1968. The narrative fulfills the dream of Linnaeus’s *Homo troglodytes*, who believed, we will remember, “that the earth was made for it, and that sometime it will be master again.”


60. Rotpeter is, in fact, at pains to point out that his accomplishment was a matter of necessity rather than choice: “I repeat: there was no attraction for me in imitating human beings; I imitated them because I needed a way out, and for no other reason”; Kafka, “Report to an Academy,” 257. On Rotpeter’s wily imitation, see Margot Norris, *Beats of the Modern Imagination: Darwin, Nietzsche, Kafka, Ernst, and Lawrence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 65–72.