UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

This is a repository copy of *Postscript, Posthuman: Werner Herzog's "Crocodile" at the End of the World*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/136481/

Version: Accepted Version

Book Section:
O'Key, D orcid.org/0000-0002-2833-4999 (2018) Postscript, Posthuman: Werner Herzog's "Crocodile" at the End of the World. In: Animal Biography: Re-framing Animal Lives. Palgrave Studies in Animals and Literature . Palgrave Macmillan , Basingstoke . ISBN 9783319982878

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98288-5_10

© The Author(s) 2018. This is an author accepted version of a chapter published in Krebber A., Roscher M. (eds) Animal Biography. Palgrave Studies in Animals and Literature. Uploaded in accordance with the publisher's self-archiving policy.

Reuse
Items deposited in White Rose Research Online are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved unless indicated otherwise. They may be downloaded and/or printed for private study, or other acts as permitted by national copyright laws. The publisher or other rights holders may allow further reproduction and re-use of the full text version. This is indicated by the licence information on the White Rose Research Online record for the item.

Takedown
If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.

White Rose university consortium
Universities of Leeds, Sheffield & York

eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/

Animal Biography

Re-framing Animal Lives

Editors:

André Krebber
Department of History
University of Kassel
Kassel, Germany

Mieke Roscher
Department of History
University of Kassel
Kassel, Germany

Table of Contents

About the Editors and Contributors

Matthew Chrulew is a research fellow in the Centre for Culture and Technology at Curtin University. He is the editor, with Dinesh Wadiwel, of Foucault and Animals (Brill, forthcoming), with Deborah Bird Rose and Thom van Dooren, of Extinction Studies (Columbia, forthcoming), and, with Brett Buchanan and Jeffrey Bussolini, of three special issues of Angelaki on philosophical ethology.

Margo DeMello, PhD is an adjunct faculty member in the Anthrozoology Masters Program at Canisius College, the program director for Human-Animal Studies at the Animals & Society Institute, and has written widely in the area of human-animal studies.

Hilda Kean is a cultural and public historian. Her many books include Animal Rights. Political and Social Change in Britain since 1800 (2000). Her latest book, The Great Cat and Dog Massacre, will be published by University of Chicago Press in 2017. She is currently editing (with Philip Howell) The Routledge Handbook for Animal Human History.

André Krebber is a lecturer in the history of human-animal relations at Kassel University. He teaches in the areas of human-animal studies and the history and philosophy of science. Currently, he finishes his first monograph on the animal as object of knowledge in enlightenment. His new project explores natural beauty as a non-instrumental category of cognition in nineteenth century philosophy and science.

Markus Krzoska studied history and political science at Mainz University. He obtained his doctorate at Berlin Free University in 2001 and did his habilitation at Giessen in 2012 and is currently a lecturer in history at Justus-Liebig-University Giessen & University Siegen, Germany.

Susan McHugh is Professor of English at the University of New England, USA, and the author of Animal Stories: Narrating across Species Lines (2011) and Dog (2004). She co-edited The Routledge Handbook of Human-Animal Studies (2014) and Literary Animals Look (2013), as well as a special issue of Antennae: The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture.

Frederike Middelhoff is a literary scholar with a special interest in the history and poetics of knowledge. She is currently finishing her PhD thesis Literary Autozoographies – Narrating Animal Life from a First-Person Perspective in German Literature (1760-1921) at the University of Würzburg, Germany.

Dominic O'Key is a doctoral researcher and teaching assistant at the University of Leeds. His research explores the concept of the creaturely in contemporary literature and critical theory.

Mieke Roscher is assistant professor for the history of human-animal relations at the University of Kassel. Her academic interests centre on colonial and gender history as well as animal historiography. Her current project is on writing the history of animals in the Third Reich.

Mira Shah, comparatist and cultural studies scholar by training, is currently working on a PhD thesis on "Ape and Affect. The Rhetoric of Primatology" at the University of Bern, Switzerland.

Aaron Skabelund is Associate Professor in the Department of History at Brigham Young University, USA, and the author of Dogs of Empire: Canines, Japan, and the Making of the Modern Imperial World (Cornell UP, 2011) and *"Dogs at War: Military Dogs in Film" in* Cinematic Canines: Dogs and their Work in the Fiction Film (Rutgers UP, 2014).

Kim Stallwood is a vegan animal rights advocate who is an independent author, consultant,

and scholar. He co-founded the Animals and Society Institute in 2005 and was the volunteer Executive Director of Minding Animals International (2011-2017). He is author of Growl: Life lessons, hard truths, and bold strategies from an animal advocate (2014).

Radhika Subramaniam is a curator, editor and writer interested in urban crises and surprises, particularly crowds, cultures of catastrophe and human-animal relationships. She is Assistant Professor of Visual Culture at Parsons School of Design/The New School where until 2017, she was Director/Chief Curator of the Sheila C. Johnson Design Center.

Daniel Wolf studied philosophy and sociology, holds a master's degree in the History and Theory of Art and is currently working on his dissertation about the relevance of pictures for animal-human-relations at the University of Kassel.

List of Figures

10. Postscript, Posthuman: Werner Herzog's "Crocodile" at the End of the World

Dominic O'Key

Abstract

Is it possible to imagine an animal biography in a posthuman world? This strange question, I think, haunts the final five minutes of Werner Herzog's 3D documentary Cave of Forgotten Dreams (2010). Here, in a tantalising postscript, Herzog narrates a fabulated speculative fiction in which a horde of mutated reptiles break free of their cages, make their way towards the Ardèche Gorge, and gaze upon the Chauvet cave's extant figurative paintings.

This unmistakably Herzogian conclusion, rife with the director's infamous "fabrication and imagination and stylisation" (see 'The Minnesota Declaration' (1999)), has in equal measure confused and excited critics thus far. What I locate in this cinematic coda, though, is a peculiar posthuman sensibility, a sensibility which figures a single nonhuman animal – a small albino alligator – as an eternal survivor, a lifeform that will easily outlive the human epoch.

This paper will articulate two things: first, how Herzog's imagined future biography of the animal is in fact way off the mark. That is, the alligator's "true" biography is even stranger than Herzog's fiction. Second, I want to argue that such a creature, although living beyond the anthropocene, is necessarily marked with the inscription of humanity. As such, this "radioactive" reptilian bears witness to the catastrophic pharmacology of Stieglerian technics, a process of epiphylogenesis that always leaps ahead of itself: although the animal survives long into the future, its body is irrevocably inscribed with the trace of human presence. Herzog's postscript thus shows a posthuman future that is decidedly not post-script.

How do we imagine an animal biography in a posthuman world? How might it be possible to recover animal selfhood not from the archives of the past but from those of the future? Can we remember what is yet to happen? These are just some of the questions that are suggested by the postscript to Werner Herzog's 3D documentary Cave of Forgotten Dreams (2010), where the German director narrates a fabulated and speculative fiction in which supposedly mutated reptiles break free of their cages, make their way towards the Chauvet cave in southeast France, and gaze upon prehistoric cave paintings. Since the film's release, Herzog's postscript has largely been met with bafflement by film writers both academic and otherwise. These writers have taken the film's postscript to be little more than a characteristically "Herzogian" afterthought – that is, a throwaway moment of what Eric Ames calls the director's signature mix of "encounter and artifice"[1] – and subsequently describe the closing scene as at best "humorous and capricious"[2] and at worst "irrelevant."[3] In this chapter,

[1] Ames, Ferocious Reality, 2.
[2] Lord, "Only Connect," 130.
[3] Rayns, "Cave of Forgotten Dreams," 52.

though, I will argue that *Cave of Forgotten Dreams's* postscript is vitally important: important on its own terms, important for thinking about Herzog's documentary as a whole, important for reconsidering the director's much-debated documentary filmmaking style, and, most crucially, important for thinking about the central organizing theme of this volume, animal biographies. This is because the postscript, as I see it, constructs its own peculiar form of animal biography. Peculiar because Herzog seems not so much interested in recovering the real-life story of a particular reptilian which exists in the contemporary "now." Rather, Herzog uses his postscript to construct a "quasi-science-fictional scenario,"[4] a speculative biography of a fictional radioactive crocodile which exists in a future time after the human. One of my tasks in this chapter will be to explicate the significance of this fictionalized and future-derived animal biography.

In this chapter I will articulate two readings – two antinomies, two biographies – that pertain to Herzog's fabulated representation of nonhuman life: first, I will momentarily step "outside" of the film itself and argue that one way of reading Herzog's imagined animal biography would involve attending to its ironic inaccuracy. That is, the filmed alligator's "true" biography outside of the documentary's speculative world is, on closer inspection, somewhat stranger than Herzog's fiction. Second, I will then return to the film itself, to the internal logic of Herzog's posthumanist fiction, and I will describe how Herzog's imagined "crocodile," although imagined as outliving the human species, is necessarily marked with the inscription of humanity's prior presence. As such, I will conclude that Herzog's "radioactive" reptilian bears witness to what I will call – following Georges Bataille, Jacques Derrida, and Bernard Stiegler – the catastrophic pharmacology of a technics that necessarily leaps ahead of itself. Although the nonhuman animal survives long into the future, its body – and even the posthuman world in which it exists – is irrevocably written or inscribed with the trace of humanity's technical activities. Herzog's animal biography therefore figures a single albino alligator as a metonym for humanity's ongoing inscription onto the world. My argument will thus center on the claim that *Cave of Forgotten Dreams's* postscript reveals how a posthuman future is not necessarily post-script. Humanity's script is written into the future, even onto the body of future albino alligators.

Before arriving at Herzog's speculations on crocodilian selfhood, though, I will first give a brief outline of Cave of Forgotten Dreams itself and argue for its preoccupation with the concept of the human. This will allow us to see how crucial it is that Herzog's postscript at once leaves humanity behind and then discovers its lingering presence within the imagined posthuman future.

Impossible Archaeologies: Cave of Forgotten Dreams and The Human

Cave of Forgotten Dreams is a 3D documentary that focuses on the history and science research conducted at the Chauvet cave in southeast France. The cave, home to a veritable archive of over four hundred Upper Paleolithic paintings, was discovered in 1994 before being promptly sealed off from the public. Radio carbon dating approximates that the cave's collections of paintings, hand-prints and nonhuman animal bones date back to around 30,000 BP. The Chauvet cave is therefore said to be unique in that it houses the oldest known volume

[4] Johnson, "Science," 930.

of extant figurative art.[5] Afforded restricted but nevertheless unprecedented access to the cave and its team of multidisciplinary researchers, Werner Herzog casts his eye across the cave's topography and, in turn, rearticulates several of the wider thematics of his filmography. One such thematic preoccupation is the question of the human itself: from early films such as Aguirre, the Wrath of God (1972) to later documentaries like Into the Abyss (2011), Herzog's work unfolds contesting ontologies, forever probing humanity's conceptual limits within and against the natural world. This is one of the key reasons why Gilles Deleuze wrote in Cinema 1 (1983) that Herzog "is a metaphysician. He is the most metaphysical of cinema directors."[6] What Deleuze points towards is the fact that Herzog's films dramatize humanity as having an uneasy and unstable foothold on the earth. As Herzog himself puts it in an early essay, echoing Martin Heidegger's fundamental question of metaphysics, "Why Being rather than Nothing?"[7] For Herzog, the human is always in question.

With this ontological concentration in mind, *Cave of Forgotten Dreams's* investigation of humanity's origins becomes apposite for contemplating and indeed grounding the human. Indeed, this is precisely what happens in the final interview of Herzog's film when the director interviews the Chauvet cave's director of research, Jean-Michel Geneste. The questions that Herzog puts to Geneste explicitly center on the question of the human, especially anthropogenesis: "Do you think that the paintings in the Chauvet cave were somehow the beginning of the modern human soul? What constitutes humanness?"[8] Geneste's answers to these questions concretize the specific ways in which Cave of Forgotten Dreams conceives of the human. Here is Geneste's response:

> Humanness is a very good adaptation with the… – in the world. […] The human society needs to adaptate [sic] to the landscape, to the other beings, the animals, to other human groups and to communicate something, to communicate it and to inscribe the memory on very specific and hard things, like walls, like pieces of wood, like bones. This is invention of Cro-Magnon. […] with the invention of the figuration – figuration of animals, of men, of things – it's a way of communication between humans and with the future to evocate [sic] the past, to transmit information that is very better than language, than oral communication. And this invention is still the same in our world today – with this camera, for example.[9]

Interviews are a vital component of Herzog's documentary practice. As Marcus P. Bullock argues, interviews form a "constellation of eccentric encounters"[10] that often unify the thematics of his films. Here, *Cave of Forgotten Dreams's* vision is unified in that Geneste signals the film's development of a specific notion of "humanness." But what is this particular notion? Geneste's ontological delineation sees the human as perpetually adapting to the surrounding environment, a process of hominization in which communication is utilized as a tool for both present and future habituation. That is, language opens up the capacity for the transmission of memory from person to person, and from generation to generation. Humans "adapt" to their environment through their utilization of memory. This communication,

[5] Clottes, Chauvet Cave; cf. Pettitt and Bahn, "Alternative Chronology," 543.
[6] Deleuze and Guatarri, Thousand Plateaus, 186.
[7] Herzog, "Why Being rather," 24.
[8] Cave of Forgotten Dreams.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Bullock, "Lost Son," 237.

Geneste tells us, is most significantly, effectively and even evocatively instrumentalized through the inscription of information onto the surface of the world itself: "to inscribe the memory on very specific and hard things, like walls, like pieces of wood, like bones." Humans are thus envisioned as grounding themselves in their environment through haptics and technics – by which I mean the human's technical faculty and its uses of such a faculty – which discloses a performative physical adaptation or reshaping of the world that creates a shared imaginary to be passed on over time.

Cave of Forgotten Dreams can thus be read in the first instance as a film that pivots on the question of the human as a performer of inscription and speculation. Herzog's documentary engages with the Chauvet cave's parietal art as inscriptions that mark or carve out an ontology for humanity within the world. Concurrently, the film also suggests that humanity's perennial fascination with such artefacts, our very speculations on our origins, similarly constitute a distinctive mode of being. The fact that we paint, for example, and that we also ask why we paint, are both figured as immanent to the composition of humanness. Importantly, this concept of speculation is played out within the documentary's form itself. As an "essay film" that "renegotiates assumptions about documentary objectivity, narrative epistemology, and authorial expressivity,"[11] Cave of Forgotten Dreams foregrounds the unknowability of the Chauvet cave's paintings, emphasizing in turn the open-ended process of speculation as a defining feature of the human life form. By working "methodically unmethodically" and presenting "speculation on specific, culturally pre-formed objects,"[12] Herzog intensifies rather than resolves the "forgotten dreams" of humanity's prehistoric ancestors, and the film never reaches a "definitive resting place in terms of explanation of argument."[13] As Timothy Morton writes, "at every turn [Herzog] announces his failure, thematizes it, makes it into part of the content rather than trying to erase it."[14]

What is more, Herzog's interpretations of prehistoric art and humanness echo and rearticulate an intellectual tradition which, in its attempt to tease out the impossible archaeologies of humanity's "birth", turns to originary figuration as the privileged space of human constitution. Maurice Blanchot, for instance, writes of the Lascaux cave (discovered in France in 1940, some fifty years before the discovery of Chauvet) that the birth of art opens up "a unique abode"[15] for humanity within the world. Elsewhere, Georges Bataille – who I will return to below – understands Lascaux to be the "cradle of humanity" and "the measure of this world".[16] In this sense Herzog is only the most recent in a line of European thinkers and practitioners to reflect on prehistoric aesthetics as direct ontological signifiers. By emphasizing dreams over facts, and by "grow[ing] hazy in the half-light of prehistory,"[17] Herzog's film offers a speculative vision of humanity's inscriptive and speculative faculties.

Speculative Futures, Technical Inscriptions: Bataille, Derrida, Stiegler

[11] Corrigan, Essay Film, 4. See 121–130 for Corrigan's reading of Herzog's "excursive essays."
[12] Adorno, "Essay," 13, 3.
[13] Johnson, "Science," 930.
[14] Morton, "From Modernity," 41.
[15] Blanchot, "Birth of Art," 11.
[16] Bataille, Cradle of Humanity, 145.
[17] Adorno, "Theories," 331.

Yet *Cave of Forgotten Dreams's* speculations about humanness are not only extended backwards to a prehistoric past, but also forwards towards an increasingly apocalyptic posthuman future. In other words, Herzog's film charts a trajectory from humanity's birth to its death. This pessimistic posthumanism has a precedent in previous Herzog films such as Lessons of Darkness (1992), The Wild Blue Yonder (2005), and Encounters at the End of the World (2007), in which images of the present world are re-presented as future catastrophes. Herzog's turning-upside-down of the present is closely related to an understanding of the world as fundamentally uncanny [Unheimlich], a space in which both human and animal life forms are isolated, alienated, and pushed into increasing degrees of insanity.[18] In this chapter, though, I would like to arrive at an understanding of *Cave of Forgotten Dreams's* particular form of pessimistic posthumanism through a reading of Georges Bataille, Jacques Derrida, and Bernard Stiegler. By paying attention to the pharmacology of technics – that is to say, the way in which humanity's technical faculty functions as both a poison and a cure – and the aftershocks of its inscriptive capacities, I will show how Herzog's postscript envisions a speculative apocalyptic future. This posthumanist logic is deployed most concretely in Herzog's postscript and its attendant construction of an animal biography.

In a 1955 lecture on the Lascaux cave – the most famous European site of prehistoric cave paintings before the discovery of Chauvet – Georges Bataille uses a single rhetorical gesture to signal humanity's origin and its end:

> It has become commonplace today to talk about the eventual extinction of human life. The latest atomic experiments made tangible the notion of radiation invading the atmosphere and creating conditions in which life in general could no longer thrive. […] I am simply struck by the fact that light is being shed on our birth at the very moment when the notion of our death appears to us.[19]

Contemporaneous to the unfolding Cold War debates about mutually assured destruction, Bataille's lecture dwells momentarily on the likelihood of the apocalypse, this "prospect of absolute death". "Struck" by the crashing together of temporalities, Bataille's optical metaphors compound our sense of time by finding a disquieting connection between the deep time of prehistory and the imminent danger of catastrophe in the present. Indeed, Bataille warns his audience in the lecture hall that they are "at an exceptional turning point in history."[20] For Bataille, inspired by both Abbé Breuil's archaeological thinking on the cradle of humanity and Alexandre Kojève's philosophical formulation of the end of history, the Lascaux paintings indicate both the advent and the disappearance of humanity. Bataille therefore pictures the cave as a cradle and a coffin.

Bataille returns to such a compelling coupling of the birth and death of the anthropos in a short piece appositively titled 'Unlivable Earth?' Here Bataille speaks of two interrelated dangers: first, the possibility of an immense ecological collapse, and second, nuclear warfare. Taking a panoramic view of these potential catastrophes, Bataille writes that there is "something frightful in human destiny, which undoubtedly was always at the limit of this unlimited nightmare that the most modern weaponry, the nuclear bomb, finally announces."[21]

---

[18] Sheehan, "Against the Image," 118.
[19] Bataille, Cradle of Humanity, 87.
[20] Ibid., 104.
[21] Ibid., 176.

The bomb here is taken to be a performative harbinger of the apocalypse, a radioactive speech act that, through the "announcement" of its presence, becomes the nightmare of humanity's future. To borrow Jacques Derrida's typically suggestive – and here even quite camp – phrasing from his own essay on the threat of nuclear apocalypse, Bataille's bomb is envisaged as being "fabulously textual":[22] it is humanity's last word.

And yet, as Derrida also reminds us, there is a pertinent question to be asked of the nuclear epoch from which Bataille writes: is the bomb, in fact, a new phenomenon, "or is it rather the brutal acceleration of a movement that has always already been at work?"[23] What Derrida has in mind here is the long history of technics itself, that is, the primary commingling between the human and the technical. This idea is best illuminated by turning to the central thesis of Bernard Stiegler's Technics and Time series (1994–present), which begins with the hypothesis that the human becomes human at the very moment it becomes technical.[24] In other words, human life does not begin and then take up technics (tool use, inscription, painting), rather the human co-originates with technics: the who (humanity) and the what (technics) are therefore co-constitutive. What this means is that the human is only human because of its technical faculties, because of its making and creating, because of its inscriptions and speculations. This relation is necessarily an ambivalent one, for humanity's technical life allows for simultaneously positive and negative interventions: on the one hand, technics leads to the creation of tools and technologies which make life easier for Paleolithic and twenty-first-century humans alike, but on the other hand it also leads to the creation of nuclear weaponry. In this sense, technics is described as a pharmakon, an aporetic "gift" which Derrida and Stiegler, following Plato, articulate as being both the remedy and the poison of the who.[25] To understand technics as imbricated with human life is, therefore, to understand why Derrida cautions us that the bomb might not be as radically new as Bataille understands it. For Derrida and Stiegler, the bomb is concomitant not only with the specific technological innovations of weapons production in the twentieth century but also with the deep time of human species-history as such. The bomb's eventual creation is therefore set in motion and – to use Bataille's phrasing – "announced" by the human's fundamental relation to technics.

If not a new phenomenon, then, but one that has always already been at work, then the bomb becomes a metonym for technics as such: the bomb is technics, and the nuclear age, turning our heads towards the future, is to be understood as an absolute and fabulous text of technics. This is because the bomb performs a seemingly paradoxical double-movement of erasure and inscription: the bomb at once annihilates the human species altogether, erasing it from the earth, but it also simultaneously writes the species' former presence onto the landscape. The bomb transforms the earth, inscribing humanity's presence into the earth as an archive of ruins and leftovers. This idea proposes a strange temporality in which humanity's remains would only be readable by a future archaeologist. As we will see below, one of the functions of Herzog's postscript is to imagine what would happen if radioactive crocodiles were to become future archaeologists that investigated the leftovers of the human species.

[22] Derrida, "No Apocalypse," 23.
[23] Ibid., 21.
[24] Stiegler, Technics 1, 141.
[25] Derrida, Dissemination, 115.

Owing to this future-oriented temporality, it is crucial to also keep in mind Stiegler's claim, made at the outset of Technics and Time, that "technics evolves more quickly than culture", causing time to consequently "leap outside itself."[26] Simply put, although technics co-originates with the human, Stiegler posits that technics is permanently and necessarily ahead of the human species; humans are always playing catch-up with technics. This is why Stiegler states elsewhere that his project revolves around the intertwined problematics of humanity and temporality. "Even when man is finished," Stiegler writes, "when he belongs to the past, this form of [technical] life may well continue on, becoming ever more complex – and perhaps man is already finished."[27] Stiegler's work therefore prioritizes the problematic of how technics continually inscribes itself onto the world even after the demise of the human species. Put differently, Stiegler argues that a posthuman world is never post-technics, and that a posthuman world is therefore never post-script. Humans remain through their remains, through the technical forces they have put in motion. This idea will become central when I analyse Herzog's postscript.

Before I do begin unpicking this postscript, though, it is crucial to point out that Stiegler, like Bataille, also looks to the Lascaux cave – and hence to prehistoric cave paintings, the explicit concern of Cave of Forgotten Dreams – in order to elucidate his thesis on technics. Stiegler's recourse to Lascaux comes in the third volume of Technics and Time, in which he quotes Bataille's meditations on the cave before then theorizing what he calls the fragile existence of an "immense We."[28] This "We", a species-community formed across deep time, is archived and made readable by technical artefacts such as the Paleolithic art found in the Chauvet cave. But this "marvelous" community is also a fragile one. This is because cave paintings also disclose a "disturbing vastness"[29] that threatens to overwhelm the humans of today. What Stiegler means by this is that, by looking at or reading these paintings, we are simultaneously thrown backwards and forwards. Backwards into the temporal gulf that tentatively unifies prehistory and the present, and forwards into a measureless vastness that necessarily succeeds us into the future. In other words, cave paintings reveal the smallness of the present moment as it is surrounded by deep times which precede and follow it. Such a claim, I think, works to decenter the anthropos and concomitantly anticipate a future without us, without the "immense We". But, as we have seen above, this future may indeed be posthuman but it cannot be post-technics, that is, post-script. Technics lives on after humanity's extinction. The questions I want to ask of such a future, then, are as follows: "who" might replace "man" as the who that continues co-originating with technics? And, in this posthuman world, what remnants of the human are left? As Bataille asks in his Lascaux lectures, "what would a humanity reduced to its material works be?"[30] Such a future is, I think, dramatized by Herzog's postscript.

[INSERT SCREENSHOTS OF POSTSCRIPT HERE]

[26] Stiegler, Technics 1, 15.
[27] Stiegler and Hallward, "Technics of Decision," 158. Stiegler's emphasis.
[28] Stiegler, Technics 3, 110.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Bataille, Cradle of Humanity, 102.

Reading Herzog's Postscript

Cave of Forgotten Dreams has come to a close. The screen is engulfed in darkness. Then, the word "postscript" appears in thin white typography. Herzog opens with a cloudy scene in which two nuclear cooling towers are pictured across the water. As waste heat is exhaled into the atmosphere, the camera pans from left to right, revealing a third cooling tower. Herzog's extra-diegetic narration begins:

> On the Rhône river is one of the largest nuclear power plants in France. The Chauvet Cave is located only 20 miles as the crow flies beyond these hills in the background. A surplus of warm water, which has been used to cool these reactors, is diverted half a mile away to create a tropical biosphere.[31]

Herzog then cuts to the inside of the "tropical biosphere" and continues:

> Warm steam fills enormous greenhouses, and the site is expanding. Crocodiles have been introduced into this brooding jungle, and warmed by water to cool the reactor, man, do they thrive. There are already hundreds of them.[32]

Menacing music reverberates as Herzog directs us through this brooding jungle. There are shadowy trees, the leaves of which brush up against the camera's lens, while steam further veils our vision. Herzog approaches the crocodilians from an elevated walkway and spots a group of reptiles through the grates. Cutting a third and final time, Herzog focuses his camera on a small white crocodilian that rushes up and out of the water, snapping its jaws. Herzog's narrative then reaches its conclusion:

> Not surprisingly, mutant albinos swim and breed in these waters. A thought is born of this surreal environment. Not long ago, just a few ten thousands of years back, there were glaciers here 9,000 feet thick. And now a new climate is steaming and spreading. Fairly soon, these albinos might reach Chauvet cave. Looking at the paintings, what will they make of them?
>
> Nothing is real. Nothing is certain. It is hard to decide whether or not these creatures here are dividing into their own Doppelgängers. And do they really meet, or is it just their own imaginary mirror reflection? Are we today possibly the crocodiles who look back into an abyss of time when we see the paintings of Chauvet cave?[33]

As the music swells and grows more melodic, so too does Herzog's narration: it complicates temporalities by looking to the past ("Not long ago"), the present ("And now"), and the future ("Fairly soon"); it deploys anaphora ("Nothing is real. Nothing is certain.") and erotema ("what will they make of them?"; "is it just their own imaginary mirror reflection?"; and "Are we today […]?"); and, furthermore, its vocabulary and phrasing is vibrant, even if occasionally clunky ("Are we today possibly"). At just over two hundred words, this short monologue is equivocal and satiric, mysterious and profound, even sonorous. It is, simply put, an enigmatic ending to the film.

One way to approach this conclusion is to turn to Herzog's stylistic technique of "fabrication and imagination and stylization," as outlined in the director's manifesto against

[31] Cave of Forgotten Dreams.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

cinéma vérité, "The Minnesota Declaration."[34] The postscript deploys what Herzog would call "ecstatic truth" rather than "mere facts," resulting in a sequence that explicitly plays with factuality, finding its aesthetic force in deliberate fictionality. We can illustrate this point by comparing Herzog's descriptions with the "truth" of those geographies and buildings he describes: the tropical biosphere, for example, is in fact not "half a mile" from the power plant, as Herzog tells us, but is rather twenty miles away; moreover the biosphere itself, depicted here as a "brooding jungle," is in truth a family-orientated tourist attraction.[35] And perhaps most important of all in this fabulation is Herzog's representation of the mutant albino crocodiles themselves: these reptilians are not crocodiles but alligators, and, as I will discuss below, their "mutation" is not a mutation at all – or, at least not in the way Herzog presents it.

The question, then, is what Herzog's willful fabrication achieves? Why fabulate inside the documentary form quite so explicitly? One reason is because Herzog has a longstanding reticence toward cinéma vérité, and has – in contradistinction to the logics of documentary realism and representation – developed a distinctive stylistic project which proposes imaginative affinities that speak to a different sort of truth. As Herzog comments in a recently published collection of interviews: "The line between fiction and documentary doesn't exist for me. My documentaries are often fictions in disguise."[36] It is from this position that Herzog conceives of *Cave of Forgotten Dreams's* postscript as a speculative fiction. Herzog's falsification and misrepresentation are intrinsic to his aesthetic and ethical strategies, and I want to locate the albino alligator as the central figure in this formulation. Indeed I want to argue here that Herzog's postscript utilizes the alligator as both a material and an abstract marker, as what Akira Mizuta Lippit theorizes as an "animetaphor", namely a "metaphor made flesh."[37] Envisioned, therefore, as both transcendental and embodied, the alligator's biography becomes the embodiment of humanity's continual inscription on the world. This is why Herzog's postscript suggests causality between nuclear waste and albinism. Moreover, Herzog even proposes that the radioactive material will one day transform the alligator's genetic code so substantially that this creature might understand the artefacts that adorn the Chauvet cave's walls. One way to read the postscript, then, is to say that it imagines a posthuman world in which technics (which includes both the nuclear waste and the Chauvet cave's artefacts) is absorbed and understood by the irradiated alligator. It creates a biography of a mutated crocodile in the future.

For all of this fascination with the future there is also a question of the relation between the past and the present: "Are we today possibly the crocodiles who look back into an abyss of time when we see the paintings of Chauvet cave?" Here Herzog's attention moves away from the mutated alligator and returns to thinking about the human itself. This critical perspective on the human sits in a conceptual relationship with a similar perspective articulated by Cary Wolfe, whose book What is Posthumanism? (2010) envisions posthumanism as a temporal aporia, both before and after the human. As Wolfe explains:

[34] Herzog, "Minnesota Declaration," ix–x.
[35] For further information see the attraction's website: "La Ferme aux Crocodiles."
[36] Herzog and Cronin, Werner Herzog, 289.
[37] Lippit, Electrical Animal, 165.

> before in the sense that [the posthuman] names the embodiment and embeddedness of the human being in not just its biological but also its technical world [… A]fter in the sense that posthumanism names a historical moment in which the decentering of the human by its imbrication in technical, medical, informatic, and economic networks is increasingly impossible to ignore.[38]

Rather than seeing posthumanism as transcending the human, Wolfe argues that it "requires us to attend to that thing called 'the human' with greater specificity, greater attention to its embodiment."[39] This is not to say that Herzog's postscript offers its own "embodiment" of Wolfe's posthumanism. Rather, it is to point out how Herzog's final question interrogates the human and its imbrication with technical matter. Herzog returns to the human life form with the "greater specificity" and "greater attention to its embodiment" that Wolfe calls for. Herzog imagines the humans of today, in this current nuclear epoch, as understanding as little about prehistoric art as reptiles: the abyss of time is also an abyss of ontological separation. Bringing contemporary humanity into contact with the alligator in an equalizing rhetorical configuration, Herzog's postscript even momentarily disrupts the vast unification of Stiegler's "immense We". Rather than seeing the paintings as communicating a techno-ontological connection between the prehistoric and contemporary who, Herzog's postscript instead suggests that "we" are in fact closer to these radioactive "crocodiles" than we are to our prehistoric ancestors.

Beyond Herzog's fanciful irradiation narrative, though, there is in fact another reading that I want to address. This will see me create my own brief animal biography of the filmed alligator. By moving outside of the postscript's speculative universe we find that this alligator is indeed a more "mutated" nonhuman animal than Herzog's biographical narration immediately suggests. This is to say that, due to the inscription of technics onto the natural world, nonhuman animals are always irrevocably marked. As Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari write, "animals form, develop, and are transformed by contagion," that is, by the contagious forces of humanity's technical life.[40] Herzog's albino alligator is thus always already hybridized and mutated by the contagious speed of technical matter: first, the alligator has been removed from its natural habitat, presumably the swamps of Louisiana, and transferred to the south of France, where it is exhibited;[41] second, albinism occurs more frequently in captive populations than in the wild, hence meaning that the very conditions of the alligator's displacement and rehousing increase the probability of a transformed genetic code. Moreover, the rarity of albino alligators in the wild is predominantly due to their singularity and, therefore, vulnerability: as luminous white bodies they have no natural means of camouflage; they are easier to be preyed upon when young, and, for those that do reach adulthood, they do not have the same chances of completing successful kills because of their high visibility.[42] Captivity and simulation, then, two distinctly human and technical endeavors, are therefore the unnatural irradiating phenomena that transform and mutate these crocodilians' bodies. Humanity's technical life results in alligators being always already

[38] Wolfe, Posthumanism, xv.
[39] Ibid., 120.
[40] Deleuze and Guatarri, Thousand Plateaus, 242. My emphasis.
[41] Wickman, "Herzog´s ´Ecstatic Truth´."
[42] Ibid.

"post-crocodiles."[43] What I am suggesting, then, is that Herzog's tantalizing postscript opens our eyes to what is underneath it. In other words, underneath Herzog's fabulated scenario is a truth that is just as strange as Herzog's fiction. Namely, that the alligator's biography is already incredibly complex and "mutated," and that the postscript therefore has an intricacy that goes beyond our comprehension. It is incomprehensible to us just how radically the human world has written itself onto – that is, changed, mutated, transformed – the alligator's body.

Surviving Technics: Concluding with The "Crocodile"

Before concluding this chapter, I want to pause over the relationship between crocodiles and humans by way of Dan Wylie's Crocodile (2013). Published as part of Reaktion's Animal series, Crocodile takes a global approach to the biological and cultural history of crocodilians. From the Nile to the Amazon, Wylie surveys human-crocodile interactions through the ages, writing that crocodiles have been perennially "worshipped, appealed to, represented and treasured, albeit almost always with a tinge of fearfulness."[44] The final clause here points us toward what is a recurring motif in Wylie's short book, namely that crocodiles trigger in humans an uncanny fear. "Even in our secular, technologized era," Wylie continues, "crocodiles remain an unsettling reminder of humans' natural vulnerability."[45] This affective reminder is perhaps motivated by two intersecting notions: first, as Wylie succinctly puts it, crocodilians are "one of the Earth's most extraordinary survivors."[46] Current scientific research indicates that crocodilians have existed since the Eocene, some fifty five million years ago; our intellectualizing of these reptiles is therefore intimately bound up in the speculative and imaginative space of prehistory.[47] Secondly, and as a consequence of their permanence, our thinking about crocodiles often orients us back towards our own bodies, our own vulnerable flesh. It is not merely that crocodiles survive, then, but that they are equally capable of ripping us apart.

Wylie's conclusion redeploys this sense of a "tinge of fearfulness." This time, though, it is on a much larger scale. He concludes: "One does not have to accept apocalyptic scenarios of humanity's demise to find it credible that, ultimately, the crocodiles might well outlive us."[48] For Wylie, this particularly human fear is therefore threefold: crocodilians have not only survived for the past fifty five million years; and not only do they have the potential in the present to harm our bodies; but also, and more importantly, crocodilians might well continue to exist long after our departure, well into the earth's posthuman future. It should be evident, then, why Herzog's mutated albino alligator resonates the way it does: the postscript performs Wylie's complex threefold "tinge of fearfulness," with the alligator pictured as a "prehistoric monster" that threatens the order of the film and humanity; as Barnaby Dicker and Nick Lee put it, Herzog's post-crocodile even "aggrandizes and belittles the bold

[43] Lord, "Only Connect," 12.
[44] Wylie, Crocodile, 8.
[45] Ibid., 9.
[46] Ibid., 7.
[47] Buchenan, "Kambara taraina," 473.
[48] Wylie, 198.

achievements made in Chauvet cave."[49] The postscript thus opens up an imagined posthuman time-space that bears witness to technics necessarily leaping ahead of itself. Through the biography of this albino alligator, Herzog's Cave of Forgotten Dreams ends by visualizing the extent to which humanity has, through technics, irrevocably changed the natural world.

Cave of Forgotten Dreams's postscript invites viewers to see a projection of a posthuman planet, of "what the world looks like when we're not there."[50] This is a world in which the nuclear might have destroyed the anthropos; a world in which alligators might no longer be in captivity; a world in which reptilians not only exchange gazes with one another, but are also able to develop an aesthetic faculty that allows them to look at and understand the Chauvet cave's paintings. Herzog's postscript thus takes Bataille's lectures on Lascaux to their logical conclusion, forecasting a world that is indeed reduced to humanity's material remains. Herzog's radioactive alligator therefore imaginatively bears witness to technics as a catastrophic pharmakon that has leapt ahead of itself and eliminated the who. Although Herzog's creature survives long into the future, though, its irradiated body – even the posthuman habitat in which it exists – is inscribed with humanity's trace. The inscription of technics necessarily extends beyond the human, now and forever: it remains, and its remains remain. This idea finds an uncanny articulation in the postscript's fabulated biography: here we are, in the Chauvet cave, alongside an albino alligator that, somehow, can look at the cave paintings and contemplate the entire human species through these inscriptions. Herzog's postscript testifies to the radical exteriorization of technics, depicting a posthuman future that is decidedly not post-script. The human might be long gone but its presence – its archive, its trace, its touch – remains, painted onto the cave and written into the alligator's genetic code. The alligator's biography, should we be able to recover it at all, should we be able to read it, tells us as much about the human as it does about the nonhuman.

Works Cited

Adorno, Theodor W. "The Essay as Form." In Notes to Literature, edited by Rolf Tiedemann, translated by Shierry Weber Nicholsen, 3–23. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

———. "Theories on the Origin of Art: Excursus." In Aesthetic Theory, edited by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor, 325–331. London and New York: Continuum, 2002.

Ames, Eric. Ferocious Reality: Documentary According to Werner Herzog. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Bataille, Georges. The Cradle of Humanity: Prehistoric Art and Culture. Edited and translated by Stuart Kendall and Michelle Kendall. New York: Zone, 2009.

Blanchot, Maurice. "The Birth of Art." In Friendship, translated by Elizabeth Rottenberg, 1–11. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.

Buchanan, Lucas A. "Kambara taraina sp. nov. (Crocodylia, Crocodyloidea), a new Eocene mekosuchine from Queensland, Australia, and a revision of the genus." Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology 29 (2009): 473–486.

Bullock, Marcus P. "Germany's Lost Son, Germany's Dark Dream: Werner Herzog, Ecstasy, and Einfühlung." Discourse 36 (2014): 232–260.

[49] Dicker and Lee, "Image Wants Danger," 49.

[50] Wolfe, Posthumanism, 177.

Cave of Forgotten Dreams. Directed by Werner Herzog. UK: IFC Films, 2010. DVD.
Clottes, Jean. Return to Chauvet Cave: Excavating the Birthplace of Art. London: Thames and Hudson, 2003.
Corrigan, Timothy. The Essay Film: From Montaigne to Marker. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
Deleuze, Gilles. Cinema 1: The Movement-Image. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
———, and Félix Guattari. A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
Derrida, Jacques. Dissemination. Translated by Barbara Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
———. "No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missiles, Seven Missives)." Translated by Catherine Porter and Philip Lewis. Diacritics 14 (1984): 20–31.
Dicker, Barnaby, and Nick Lee. "'But the Image Wants Danger': Georges Bataille, Werner Herzog, and Poetical Response to Paleoart." Time and Mind 5 (2012): 33–51.
La Ferme aux Crocodiles. "La Ferme aux Crocodiles." http://eng.lafermeauxcrocodiles.com. Accessed August 18, 2015.
Herzog, Werner. "The Minnesota Declaration." In Ferocious Reality: Documentary According to Werner Herzog, by Eric Ames, ix–x. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.
———. "Why Being rather than Nothing?" Framework 3 (1975): 24–27.
———, and Paul Cronin. Werner Herzog: A Guide for the Perplexed. London: Faber and Faber, 2014.
Johnson, Christopher. "Science in Three Dimensions: Werner Herzog's Cave of Forgotten Dreams." Modern Language Review 109 (2014): 915–930.
Koepnick, Lutz. "Herzog's Cave: On Cinema's Unclaimed Pasts and Forgotten Futures." The Germanic Review 88 (2013): 271–285.
Lippit, Akira Mizuta. Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
Lord, Catherine. "Only Connect: Ecology Between 'Late' Latour and Werner Herzog's Cave of Forgotten Dreams." Global Discourse 6 (2016): 119–132.
Morton, Timothy. "From Modernity to the Anthropocene: Ecology and Art in the Age of 28 Asymmetry." International Social Science Journal 63 (2012): 39–51.
Pettitt, Paul, and Paul Bahn. "An Alternative Chronology for the Art of Chauvet Cave." Antiquity 89 (2015): 542–553.
Rayns, Tony. "Cave of Forgotten Dreams: Director: Werner Herzog." Sight and Sound, April, 2011.
Sheehan, Paul. "Against the Image: Herzog and the Troubling Politics of the Screen Animal." SubStance 117 (2008): 117–136.
Stiegler, Bernard. Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus. Translated by Richard Beardsworth and George Collins. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
———. Technics and Time, 3: Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise. Translated by Stephen Barker. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011.
———, and Peter Hallward. "Technics of Decision: An Interview." Translated by Sean Gaston. Angelaki 8 (2003): 151–168.
Wickman, Forrest. "Fact-checking Herzog's 'Ecstatic Truth': Are Those Alligators Really Radioactive Mutants?" Slate Magazine, May 13, 2011. http://www.slate.com/blogs/browbeat/2011/05/13/fact_checking_herzog_s_ecstatic_truth_are_those_alligators_really_radioactive_mutants.html. Accessed May 3, 2017.
Wolfe, Cary. What is Posthumanism? Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.
Wylie, Dan. Crocodile. London: Reaktion, 2013.

Figure Captions

Figure 5.1: An undated photograph of Hachikō likely laying on the ground near Shibuya Station. (Used with permission of Hayashi Masaharu.)

Figure 5.2: A photograph of the stuffed Hachikō in the National Science Museum in Ueno Park, Tokyo. Notice the Pochi Club tag hanging from his harness. Hayashi Masaharu, ed. *Hachikō bunken shū* (Tokyo: Hayashi Masaharu, 1991).

Figure 5.3: Hachikō next to his bronze statue near Shibuya Station, perhaps on the day of its dedication, 21 April 1934. On the side of the photograph someone, perhaps Kobayashi Kikuzaburō, the Ueno family's gardener to whom this photo once belonged, has written, "A bashful (?) Hachikō looking up at the statue of himself." Hayashi Masaharu, ed. *Hachikō bunken shū* (Tokyo: Hayashi Masaharu, 1991), 252.

Figure 9.1: The Road to the Planet of the Apes

Figure 9.2: Caesar, Rise of the Planet of the Apes, 00:62:19

Figure 9.3: Motion-capture – Andy Serkis/Caesar at the veterinarian, Rise of the Planet of the Apes, 00:19:42

Figure 9.4: Caesar recognizing his leash, Rise of the Planet of the Apes, 00:24:58

Figure 9.5: Window and Caesar creating the symbol for home/freedom, Rise of the Planet of the Apes, 00:30:30 and 00:41:12

Figure 9.6: Ape history, Dawn of the Planet of the Apes, 00:08:41

Figure 9.7: Koba, Rise of the Planet of the Apes, 00:46:15

Figure 10.1:

Figure 10.2: