

Preface

In various respects anthropology has developed along paths leading into isolation. It no longer should hesitate to stake clear claims for all of primatology, now that the comforting old gap between the morphology of man and ape has practically disappeared with the latest fossil finds and that comparative psychology threatens our last and feeble definition of separation by which a science of man is supposed to begin only with creatures who can use *and* make implements.

ADOLPH H. SCHULTZ (1955, p. 56)

Introductory courses . . . are never introductions. They are always surveys, [in which] . . . nothing is allowed to be truly troublesome.

JONATHAN Z. SMITH (1990, p. 62)

Apes are increasingly part of popular culture in the Westernized world, Japan and other nations exposed to globalizing mass media, even as they and their habitats are rapidly vanishing from Earth. Although we have learned much about apes and ourselves since the millennium of Western exploration and expansion, many puzzles remain unresolved, and new ones undoubtedly are yet to be encountered, particularly regarding our evolutionary histories and common versus unique perceptual, cognitive, and behavioral traits.

Are we, along with bonobos, chimpanzees, gibbons, gorillas, and orangutans, apes? If so, is there any merit to a claim that we are the greatest apes? Are bonobos, chimpanzees, gibbons, gorillas, and orangutans sufficiently humanoid to merit any, many, or fully equal human rights? Are apes so special that

they deserve privileged status among the organisms on Earth, particularly in relation to the goals of conservationists and the depredations of hunters, medical researchers, and other consumers? These are troublesome issues indeed, for which it would be hubristic to pretend to have definitive answers (Tuttle 2006a, b).

Nonetheless, questions of human evolution and our place among organisms are excellent challenges to one's ability to think critically and to assist students who wish to learn how to think critically instead of merely being titillated and told what to think. Accordingly, I hope, via this exploration of findings and ideas on the evolutionary biology and behavior of apes and humans, to provide a substantial factual base on topics for which there are actual data and to challenge interpretations of them and of other ideas for which there is little or no tangible evidence. My chief goal is to provoke thought and discussion in classes and among other readers who might want to explore aspects of the human career and condition and how knowledge of living apes and other animals might infuse insight into the exercise. I care much less to persuade others of my particular views, some of which have not been mainstream.

The volume is arranged in five parts, with the understanding that instructors and other readers might use it to inform specific topics. Nonetheless, I would hope that, regardless of specialty, readers will initially turn to Chapters 1, 2, and 13. One reviewer reasonably requested that I highlight what I believe to be the major contributions to primatology over the past fifty years, but I leave this to you, the readers, especially when you encounter inflated claims of specialists in the several subfields of primate evolutionary biology and human evolution in particular, and pundits who rely on their narratives.

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