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Strange Animals: Extremely Interspecific Hybridization (and *Anthropopoiesis*) in Plutarch

by
Pietro Li Causi
Università di Palermo
pietrolicausi@virgilio.it

Abstract

Speaking of hybridization between humans and animals, in the ancient world, means referring to dealing with genetic chaos *logoi* of the mythic tradition. But it also means constructing human-animal boundaries in a view which anthropologists call “anthropopoietic”. Whereas Aristotle, in his *De generatione animalium*, had rationalized all the beliefs dealing with extremely interspecific crossbreeding, secularizing also the concept of *teras*, Plutarch seems to go back to a more flexible idea of nature, where prodigious births are again permitted. This does not mean an abjuration of the natural history principles which Greek philosophical tradition has fixed. Simply, these principles are embedded in a larger theological and anthropopoietic framework, which in some ways constructs the animals as a moral ideal and as “manimals”.

Key-Words: Plutarch, *Moralia*, Hybridization, Animals.

1. *Premise*

This paper is a development of a larger research project I have conducted over the past ten years on theories, beliefs and cultural attitudes regarding hybridization and monstrosity in the ancient world. Part of this research has been published in two volumes whose titles are *Sulle tracce del mantichora*

and *Generare in comune*, in which I have dealt respectively with the epidemiology of the beliefs about fantastic animals and genetic theories about cross-breeding¹. What I would like to do here, however, is compare accounts about hybridization between men and animals found in two works of Plutarch, *Bruta animalia ratione uti* and *Septem Sapientium Convivium*, with the positions developed centuries

¹ See LI CAUSI 2003 and LI CAUSI 2008.

before by Aristotle on the same matter. The purpose of this comparison is twofold: I will try to show the changes that occurred in the transition from one author to another with regard to the idea of nature and *teras*, while highlighting the different paths that Aristotle and Plutarch follow in “constructing” the human through the animal. In order to achieve this, I will use the key organizing concept of *anthropopoiesis*, developed by anthropologists Kilani, Calame, and Remotti, which refers to the cultural process of “fabricating humans” by means of individuation (or construction) of boundaries between men and gods and between men and animals².

2. *Constructing Biological Boundaries: Hybridization as Anthropopoietic Tool in Aristotle.*

As I have tried to show elsewhere, though Aristotle allows a certain degree of inter-fertility among the species existing in nature, he explicitly denies the possibility that men and animals can crossbreed³:

Then people say that the child
has the head of a ram or a bull,

and so on with other animals, as that a calf has the head of a child or a sheep that of an ox. All these monsters result from the causes stated above, but they are none of the things they are said to be; there is only some similarity (ἔστι δ' οὐθὲν ὧν λέγουσιν ἀλλ' εὐοικότα μόνον), such as may arise even where there is no defect of growth. Hence often jesters compare someone who is not beautiful to a ‘goat breathing fire’, or again to a ‘ram butting’, and a certain physiognomist reduced all faces to those of two or three animals, and his arguments often prevailed on people. That, however, it is impossible for such a monstrosity to come into existence—I mean one animal in another—is shown by the great difference in the period of gestation between man, sheep, dog, and ox, it being impossible for each to be developed except in its proper time» (GA 769 b 13-25)⁴.

This passage openly debunks such accounts of prodigious births, but also, and more generally, those mythical

² See the collection of studies edited by CALAME & KILANI 1999. More specifically, see RIVERA 1999, pp. 49 ff., who argues that the boundaries between humans and animals are always artificial. Also see REMOTTI 1999, pp. 15 ff. As for the terms “anthroposphere” and “zoosphere”, I have translated the concepts of “antroposfera” and “zoosfera” developed by MARCHESINI 2002, pp. 19 ff.

³ See P. LI CAUSI, *Hybridization as Speciation? The viewpoint of Greek Folk Zoology (and Aristotle) on the Mutation of Species* (in print). Also see PELLEGRIN 1985, p. 108 on Arist. GA 746 a 29 ff.

⁴ Engl. tr. by A. PLATT (*De generatione animalium*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1912).

stories which make it possible to think of genetic chaos as the universal norm which governs the world. In that sense, centaurs, minotaurs and, in general, all kinds of monstrous hybrids of man and animal are seen by Aristotle as simply the result of distorted communication processes, i.e., as similarities mistakenly taken literally. Therefore, whereas the philosopher follows the Greek ontological tradition, on the basis of which both humans and animals are part of the wider class of the *zoia*⁵, his biology of reproduction becomes a marker highlighting a boundary between the anthroposphere and zoosphere, now constructed as separate and incommensurable. In other words, in Aristotle the naturalistic explanations of hybridization become a sort of anthropopoeitic device which “invents” the human and creates a sphere of impenetrable self-autonomy that functions – as happens in *EN* and in *Pol.*⁶ – in terms of both ethics and biology.

3. Incontinence of Human and Animal Models

The Aristotelian theories about hybridization, however, are not the on-

ly ones circulating in the ancient world. We must bear in mind, as the text that I’ve quoted seems to show, that the common sense view and lay beliefs about strange beings made it easier to believe in nature’s extreme creativity than its limits⁷. We can glimpse indirect evidence of this trend behind the veil of the Plutarchean *spoudaiogeloion*, in a passage of *Bruta animalia ratione uti*⁸:

But your incontinence is such, that Nature, though she has the law to assist her, is not able to keep it within bounds; insomuch that, like a rapid inundation, those inordinate desires overwhelm Nature with continual violence, trouble, and confusion. For men have copulated with she-goats, sows, and mares; and women have run mad after male beasts. And from such copulations sprang the Minotaurs and Silvans, and, as I am apt to believe, the Sphinxes and Centaurs. It is true that sometimes, constrained by hunger, a dog or a bird has fed upon human flesh; but never yet did any beast attempt to couple with human kind.

⁵ See WOLFF 1997, pp. 157 ff.

⁶ See Aristot. *Pol.* 1253 a 2-4; 27-29; *EN* 1178 b 7-32; 1177 b-26-27; 1145 a 22-32; 1149 b 30-1150 a 8; 1099 b 32 f.; 1141 a 31 – b 2 (for a discussion of these texts, see WOLFF 1997, pp. 169 f.; also see LABARRIÈRE 2005, pp. 11 ff.).

⁷ As for these common sense beliefs and for those ancient theories which admitted the existence of patchwork creatures such as the Centaurs, see LI CAUSI 2008, pp. 121 ff. and 154 ff.

⁸ The mixture of serious and comical elements is a typical rhetorical mainstay of the Cynics. As for the cynic elements in *Bruta animalia ratione uti*, see INDELLI 1995, p. 26.

But men constrain and force the beasts to these and many other unlawful pleasures (θηρία δ' ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα καὶ πρὸς ἄλλα πολλὰ καθ' ἡδονὰς βιάζονται καὶ παρανομοῦσιν) (990 F 3-991 A 8)⁹.

This is Gryllos speaking, a companion of Odysseus transformed by Circe into a pig, who categorically refuses to return to human form. Having experienced the life of a pig, in fact, this strange creature comes to the conclusion that animal life – being closer to nature – is preferable and morally superior to human life¹⁰.

There are several observations possible about this text; however, what I want to highlight is that, in apparent contradiction with what Plutarch himself has written elsewhere (e. g. in *De vitando aere alieno*)¹¹, Gryllos

suggests that men and animals can crossbreed and easily generate composite creatures. What happens is that the Aristotelian *anthropopoiesis* seems to be partially abandoned and modified. Whereas the philosopher of Stagira outlined a clear biological boundary between the anthroposphere and the zoosphere, Plutarch, while carrying out his polemic against the Stoics, seems to crush and muddle this boundary. The Plutarchean *physis*, in fact, is no longer the Aristotelian system of statistically valid rules according to which the reproductive equipment of humans and animals are impermeable to one another, but is rather conceived as the result of a web of moral obligations. As Gryllos seems to suggest, when unnecessary pleasures are sought, Nature can be easily breached¹². In other words, in order to maintain a natural order which

⁹ Engl. tr. by Sir A. J. (in W. W. GOODWIN, *Plutarch's Morals*, v. V, The Colonial Press, Boston 1905). As for an introduction to the treatise, see DE FONTENAY 1992, pp. 20-31; INDELLI 1995, pp. 7 ff.; LONGO 1995, pp. 9 ff.; BECCHI 2000, pp. 217 ff. As for the stories of *eros* between animals and humans, see D. KONSTAN, *Between Appetite and Emotion, or Why Can't Animals Have Eros?* (forthcoming).

¹⁰ See *Bruta animalium ratione uti* 989 B-F (the animals follow only natural pleasures), or even 987 C (when the beasts fight, they do not use any trick or tool).

¹¹ In *De vitando aere alieno* 830 D 11-14 Cleanthes pronounces these words: «For if we were content with the necessities of life, the race of money-lenders would be as non-existent as that of Centaurs and Gorgons». Engl. tr. by N. FOWLER (Plutarch, *Moralia*, v. X, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, London). As for Plutarch's contradictions, see NEWMYER 2006, p. 7; BECCHI 1993, pp. 59 ff.; BECCHI 2000, pp. 216 ff. (who consider these contradictions as apparent, whereas DE FONTENAY 1992, p. 37 explains them in terms of *multicéplité*).

¹² In *Bruta animalia ratione uti* 989 E-F, Gryllos distinguishes three different classes of pleasures: 1) necessary natural pleasures, 2) unnecessary natural pleasures, 3) artificial pleasures (see NEWMYER 2006, p. 74). For the Epicurean influences on this classification, see SANTESE 1994, p. 158 n. 91.

seems to be unstable and precarious, it is necessary for all living creatures to comply with a universal moral duty.

It is extremely difficult to understand Plutarch's real position in the debate on the centaurs and on the theories of hybridization, and we cannot exclude the possibility that there was no position at all¹³. In fact, not only should the text I've quoted be considered in a literary context, but its tone should also be seen as openly provocative.

One thing, however, is certain: behind the veil of fiction, the idea that Plutarch wants to convey here and elsewhere is that there is a threshold, rather than clear biological boundaries between anthroposphere and zoosphere, and that the differences between men and

animals are of degree rather than of quality¹⁴. Animals, in other words, are incorporated into the sphere of humanity, and have somehow become, because of their *simplicitas* and proximity to the *status naturae*, the ideal model to be observed by every human. The paradox that follows, therefore, lies in the fact that Gryllos, with a subtle derisory strategy, has changed the Stoic motto *sequi naturam* into *sequi animalia*¹⁵.

4. *The Return of the Semiotics of Teras*

The idea of an extreme inter-fertility among the species is also found in *Septem Sapientium Convivium* 149 C ff. Here, Periander, the tyrant of Corinth, who is giving a banquet for the seven wise men, sends a servant for Diocles

¹³ NEWMYER 2006, p. 8 recognizes that «Plutarch's animal treatises can be explained [...] from the circumstance that he can, after all, lay little claim to being a naturalist in the manner of Aristotle and Theophrastus».

¹⁴ See BECCHI 2000, pp. 207 f.; NEWMYER 2006, pp. 33 f. Anyway, the Plutarchean idea of difference between anthroposphere and zoosphere lies in the way animals and humans use *logos*, rather than in the biological idea of impermeability of species: it is true that even in Plutarch, as in Aristotle (see *HA* 588 a 29-31), *logos* – in its highest form – is typical only of humans. However, it is also true that Plutarch in *De sollertia animalium* (*passim*) attributes to the so-called *aloga* forms of reason which cannot simply be seen, in Aristotelian terms, as *analogia* of *logos* (see, e. g., *De sollertia animalium* 961 E-F). Moreover, as David Konstan has pointed out, in an email he sent me months ago, «even the desire to be an animal rather than a human can be construed as marking a boundary». I simply argue here that we can deal with a biological threshold, rather than a boundary.

¹⁵ See NEWMYER 2006, p. 74. DE FONTENAY 1992, p. 29 highlights the anthropogenetic role of Gryllos, «puisque Plutarque est tout près d'impliquer cet animal dans la scène où s'invente ce qui constitue le propre de l'homme». As SANTESE 1994, p. 161 has pointed out, the idea of the superiority of animals (which is an *unicum* in the entire Plutarchean *corpus*) is a rhetorical tool which the author use in order to create a moral paradigm that has to be alternative to the Stoic ones (also see BECCHI 2000, pp. 219 ff.).

(the narrating voice of the dialogue) and Thales, for he needs to consult them about a strange incident that occurred in his land, and he wants to know whether it has a particular significance or if it is a *teras*, i. e., a prodigy (149 C 3 f.)¹⁶. After being conducted to a garden not far from the banquet hall, Diocles and Thales were shown by a young, handsome cowherd a strange creature a mare had given birth to:

Its upper parts as far as the neck and arms were of human form, and the sound of its crying was just like that of newly born infants, but the rest of its body was that of a horse» (149 C 14 – 150 D 3)¹⁷.

Periander and Diocles believe that the strange creature could be a *miasma* (149 C 9), an omen of discords to come (149 D 10 f.), which needs to be expiated with a rite of purification. But Thales has a different opinion and reassures the tyrant of Corinth with these words:

Whatever Diocles bids you do you will carry out at your

own convenience, but my recommendation to you is that you should not employ such young men as keepers of horses, or else that you should provide wives for them (149 E 5-8)¹⁸.

Thales' irreverent comment is clearly a rationalization of the *teras*. What the wise man is suggesting, in contradiction to the traditional rules of Greek theodicy, is that the monstrosities are not *semeia* produced by the gods in order to inform humans of a fatal deviation of the cosmos, but that every prodigious birth can be explained on the basis of a knowledge of the laws of nature. Such laws of nature are, however, very different from those identified by Aristotle. In the fictional world of the Plutarchean dialogue, the rule of extreme inter-fertility which governs the nature of living beings seems to have something in common with the pangenetic theories developed by the Presocratics: once the seminal fluids, produced by the entire body of two heterogeneous beings, are mixed with one another, it is possible to give

¹⁶ See *Septem Sapientium Convivium* 149 C 4-9: «Just then a servant made his way to us and said “Periander bids you, and Thales too, to take your friend here with you and inspect something which has just now been brought to him, to determine whether its birth is of no import whatever, or whether it is a sign and portent; at any rate, he himself seemed to be greatly agitated, feeling that it was a pollution and blot upon his solemn festival”». Engl. tr. by F. C. BABBITT (*Plutarch's Moralia*, v. II, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, London 1956). As for an introduction to the treatise, see Lo Cascio 1997.

¹⁷ Engl. tr. by F. C. BABBITT (*Plutarch's Moralia*, v. II, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, London 1956).

¹⁸ Engl. tr. by F. C. BABBITT (*Plutarch's Moralia*, v. II, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, London 1956).

birth to creatures – such as the Centaurs and the Silvans – which are the result of an assemblage of limbs¹⁹.

Once again, behind the veil of literary fiction, it is possible to glimpse the idea of an extreme biological contiguity (and permeability) between the anthroposphere and the zoosphere. At any rate, compared to the passage of *Bruta animalia ratione uti*, this episode of *Septem Sapientium Convivium* reveals something more. As Ferdinando Lo Cascio has indeed pointed out, the story of Periander does not end when the narration of Diocles arrives at its conclusion. What readers of the dialogue will have known is that a tragic fate awaits the family of the tyrant of Corinth: «Periander will kill his wife Melissa, [...] his youngest son Lycophon will be killed by the Corcyrians [...]; the tyrant then will

lose all his children [...] and will leave the throne to his nephew Psammeticus who, in turn, will be killed after reigning for three years»²⁰.

This could imply that, on one level, Thales wants his friends to understand that monstrosity can be explained on the basis of the knowledge of the laws of nature; but on a deeper level, Plutarch seems to suggest that natural history, alone, is insufficient. As many scholars have indeed pointed out in the past (and as it is possible to see, e. g., even in *Per.* 6, 1-5)²¹, in Plutarch's world there is a system of dual causality at work: while on one hand, natural explanations of strange events are admitted, on the other, the religious meanings which might be based on the personal re-elaboration of Platonism or even on the author's own way of life, are recovered²². Thus the symbolic-religious semiotics of the

¹⁹ In LI CAUSI 2008, pp. 146 f. I suggest that the idea of creatures created from an assemblage of limbs (proposed for the very first time by Empedocles B 59 and 61 DK for monsters from the distant past of the universe) can be linked to the pangenetic theories. For Aristotle's debunking of these theories, see GRIMAUDDO 2003, pp. 3 ff.

²⁰ I have translated into English from LO CASCIO 1997, 205. The story of the dynasty of Periander is in Hdt. 3, 50-53. As for the characterization of the tyrant in the Plutarchean dialogue, see LO CASCIO 1997, pp. 52 ff.

²¹ In *Per.* 6, 1-5, for the prodigious birth of a unicorn, Plutarch presents as valid both Anaxagoras' naturalistic explanations and the religious interpretations of the diviner Lampon. As for dual causality in Plutarch, see BATTEGAZZORE 1992, p. 21; DESIDERI 1992, pp. 77 ff. (esp. pp. 80 f.); DONINI 1992, 105 pp. ff.; p. 119 n. 33. The system of dual explanation of natural phenomena is to be considered, as DONINI 1992, pp. 193 f. has pointed out, a Plutarchean derivation from the ideas developed by Plato in the *Timaeus*.

²² Plutarch was a priest of the temple of Apollo in Delphi. As for Plutarchean philosophical syncretism, see NEWMYER 2006, p. 8. It is also worth noting that BECCHI 2000, p. 217 (and even BECCHI 1993, pp. 82 f.) highlights some similarities between Plutarch's ideas on animals and the Aristotelian (or Peripatetic) zoopsychology.

teras, which Aristotle had thrown out the door, reenters through the window. In conclusion, although the explanation of Thales is correct in terms of natural history, the omission of the ritual acts suggested by Diocles can only lead Periander's dynasty to its disintegration.

5. *Manimals*

Plutarch, of course, is not a naturalist and, as is typical of all post-Aristotelian zoology, his focus on animals is basically linked to moral philosophy²³. More specifically, what happens is that, in an attempt to build an enlarged and inclusive *anthropopoiesis*, the moralist of Chaeronea, albeit in contexts that are purely fictional, seems to recover arguments, theories and beliefs that some thinkers, such as Aristotle, had sought to dismantle. The Presocratic idea of a biological and ontological contiguity between humans and animals, as well as the ancient theodicy, become the picklock which allows the author to force the Aristotelian system

of explanations and readmit the animals in an area of ethical interchange with humans: not only – as it is argued in *De sollertia animalium* – do animals have rights that must be protected²⁴, but if taken collectively as a class, they become a sort of *speculum hominum*, a moral model that all humans must follow.

Therefore, if hybridization is something to avoid, because it disturbs the moral order of nature, on a deeper level the Plutarchean ethical perspective achieves, *ipso facto*, a strange fusion between men and animals, since many human virtues – such as *sophrosyne*, i. e., continence – are transferred to the *zoia*²⁵. What happens is that the boundaries which separate the anthroposphere from zoosphere become muddled, and, as in visual artist Daniel Lee's works, animals become – so to speak – *Manimals*²⁶.

In this regard, I would say, therefore, that some old categories – such as Boas' *theriophily* or anthropomorphism²⁷ – used to interpret the Plutarchean po-

²³ For Plutarchean animalism, see DE FONTENAY 1992, pp. 13 ff.; DE FONTENAY 1997, pp. 281 ff.; NEWMYER 2006, p. 8 and *passim*. As for post-Aristotelian zoology, see ZUCKER 2005, pp. 239 ff. (but see even LENNOX 2001, pp. 110 ff.).

²⁴ As for *De sollertia animalium*, see NEWMYER 2006, pp. 30 ff., and DE FONTENAY 1992, pp. 48 ff.

²⁵ According to Aristot. *EN* 1118 a 23 f., *sophrosyne* is «le propre de l'homme et non celui de l'animal» (WOLFF 1997, p. 176).

²⁶ Lee's *Manimals* (<http://www.daniellee.com/Manimal.htm>) are photographic portraits of men, or women, "morphed" with the Chinese zodiac animals, such as the boar (see Figure 1), the tiger, the dog, and so on.

²⁷ "Theriophily" is a neologism coined by George Boas to name the widespread *topos* of animal superiority in Western culture and literature (see BOAS 1935, pp. 389 ff.; BOAS 1973, pp. 384 ff.). Boas' positions have been developed further in GILL 1969, pp. 401 ff. and CHAPOUTIER 1990, pp. 261 ff. NEWMYER 2005, p. 12 has recently pointed out that

sitions about zoopsychology, need at least to be reconsidered in the light of what I've tried to highlight in this paper. As the studies of Becchi have already shown, in Plutarch there is not any real intention of affirming the intellectual and moral superiority of animals over humans, since the gap between human intellectual abilities and animal condition is unquestioned²⁸. Simply, whereas human reason – which is always superior – is fallible, animal *logos* is natural, instinctive, and infallible, and yet it remains *logos*, and is never presented simply as an *analogon*²⁹. This means – as Newmyer and Becchi have pointed out – that the differences are only of degree and not of quality, and that animals seem to present an ontological status extremely contiguous to that of humans³⁰.

Anyway, this does not mean, *ipso facto*, that animals are represented in an anthropomorphic perspective. If it is true that we could hardly speak of theriophilia, i. e., of animal superiority, it seems also evident that it is not possible to speak, *stricto sensu*, of anthropomorphism. Instead of this category, I argue that there

are at least four reasons why we might be able to use, borrowing it from the field of contemporary visual art, the experience-far concept of *manimalization*, in order to explain Plutarch's debunking of boundaries between anthroposphere and zoosphere:

- 1) While anthropomorphism tends to erase the differences and the boundaries between men and animals, *manimalization* muddles these differences and these boundaries.
- 2) While on the one hand anthropomorphism humanizes animals, thus functioning one way, on the other hand, *manimalization* works two ways, i.e., it animalizes humans while, in the same time, humanizes animals. *Manimalization* works, in other terms, as a shape-shifting device.
- 3) Anthropomorphism is basically a cognitive tool, which allows to reduce the unknown (and the "otherness") to the known³¹. *Manimalization*, however, is also an ethical device, creating a sort of mirroring effect between human and animal morals.

«What is left unsaid in Boas' analysis is the extent to which theriophilic thought is ironically anthropocentric in inspiration: animals are viewed as useful to humans as lessons in good conduct». As for the charges of anthropomorphism, see the bibliography cited in NEWMYER 2006, p. 7.

²⁸ See BECCHI 2000, pp. 207 ff.

²⁹ See n. 14.

³⁰ See BECCHI 2000, pp. 207-209; NEWMYER 2006, pp. 33 and 47.

³¹ See MARCHESINI 2002, p. 151.

- 4) Finally, *manimalization* is a “morphing” device, which unifies shapes, identities, and natures of different kind, while anthropomorphism is used just to impose one shape over another, erasing all the real differences.

In particular, the last is never the case in Plutarch’s zoopsychology, whose point of view on animals is never completely anthropomorphic (and anthropocentric). As it happens in the Aesopic fables, where animals are only used as prototypical masks for thinking some peculiar traits of humanity³², the Plutarchean accounts on animals might also act as moral models good to refer to human vices and virtues. However,

unlike the Aesopic fable, this modeling process always takes into account the specific traits of difference between human and animal condition. Simply, these differences stand out on a border which might be thought as a threshold rather than a boundary³³. In other words, Plutarchean animals are yet *good to think about*, but, since they have become moral subjects endowed with forms of reason, they are also *good to think with*, for the very first time in the ancient world³⁴. As a result of this new perspective, the idea of universal permeability – that biology seems to allow (and that Plutarch’s “moral” idea of nature would rather

³² See DASTON & MITMAN 2005, p. 9: «In fables animals are humanized, one might even say hyperhumanized by caricature: the fox is cunning, the lion is brave, the dog is loyal. Whereas the same stories told about humans might lose the moral in a clutter of individuating detail of the sort we are usually keen to know about other people, substituting animals as actors strips the characterizations down to prototypes».

³³ See, e. g., *De sollertia animalium* 962 B-D (esp. 962 D, where Autoboulos implicitly argues that some men might be as stupid as some animals).

³⁴ I borrow the expression “thinking with animals” from DASTON & MITMAN 2005, 1 ss., who have developed an original position on the category of “anthropomorphism”, which presents some contact points with the idea of *manimalization* I am proposing here. In the words of the two authors, «when humans imagine animals, we necessarily reimagine ourselves, so these episodes [the mechanics of thinking with animals in different times and places] reveal a great deal about notions of the humans – the “anthropos” of anthropomorphism. But the “morphos” of anthropomorphism is equally important [...] to track different modes of transformation, of shape-changing across species» (p. 6). The consequence is that there are two axes around which, according to these authors, the zooanthropological research has to be conducted: «the performance of being human by animals and being animal by humans, and the transformative processes that make thinking with animals possible» (p. 6). Unlike Daston and Mitman, who point out that «anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism can just as easily tug in opposite direction» (p. 4), I only argue here that, even though sometimes it is not used to mark axiological differences, i. e., to attest the superiority of one kind over another, anthropomorphism is always associated with a particular form of cognitive and epistemological anthropocentrism.

deny) – is fully in line with an anthropoietic process whereby men and animals have become, at least and for

various aspects, “compatible” and homogeneous, even though they are not entirely equal.



Figure 1: Daniel Lee, *The Year of the Boar*

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