'The Beast Within': Race, Humanity, and Animality

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Centre for Cultural Research Pre-Print Journal Articles – Kay Anderson (2000): 'The Beast Within': Race, Humanity and Animality.

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Abstract
Recent years have seen efforts to critique the dichotomy of 'nature' and 'society' in Western thought, and to demonstrate their coconstruction under specific material conditions. As yet, however, little work has uncovered the discourses of animality that lie buried within a social field whose ontological status until recently has been securely 'human'. In this paper, I show how Western concepts of animality have circulated across the nature border and into a politics of social relations. Concepts of savagery and vulgarity can, in particular, be found within racialised representational systems with whose historicity, I will be suggesting, we can make fresh critical engagements. In much recent work on colonial power formations, 'othering' practices have been implicitly conceived within a psychoanalytic frame – one in which the white self's 'interior beasts' are anxiously displaced onto an externalised other. Whilst not refuting the efficacy of repression I wish to historicise the workings of a peculiar western model of the Human self, 'split' into physical 'animal' and cultural 'human'. This is done both through an extended theoretical account, followed by a microstudy of geographies of savagery and civility in Sydney, Australia.

> "Human nature is what we were put here to rise above."
> Katherine Hepburn (The African Queen)

Recent years have seen a rise in interest in the ways in which animals are conceptualised in Western societies. Against a backdrop of Cartesian legacies, which have not only shaped our intellectual attitudes toward animality but also justified a range of institutionalised exploitations, mainstream scholarly publications are pondering issues such as animal consciousness, animal societies, animal politics, comparative animal ontologies, and speciesism (for example, see the journal *Society and Animals*; Adams and Donovan, 1995; Arluke and Sanders, 1996; Gates, 1996; Ham and Senior, 1997; Manning and Serpell, 1994). The conceptual boundaries which segregate humanity and animality are being disturbed and the way cleared for us to unthink the cultural categories, both popular and scientific, which map our understanding of the animate environment of which human and nonhuman animals are a part.

In human geography, the 'animal turn' has recently been registered in contributions not only to the substantive study of human experiences of animals, but also to retheorisation of spaces including 'the urban' (for example, see the special issue of *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* volume 13, issue 6; Anderson, 1995; Proctor and Pincetl, 1996; Wolch and Emel, 1998). In this paper I attempt to enlarge the conceptual scope of the so-called animal turn in geography. My focus will be less, however, on the ways humans have interrelated with the diverse beings they classify as 'animal'. I will not be concerned, for example, with those webs of meaning in which the likes of serpents and felines are represented, and which reveal so much about human cultures (see Baker, 1993; Willis, 1994). Rather, my interest centres on

human self-definition through exploring the *idea* of animality in Western cultural process.

A most persistent theme within Western thought has been the concern with what makes us human, an impulse that has seen elaborate efforts to specify how we are different from animals and also machines (Haraway, 1992). Whilst it is universally recognised that humans and animals do manifestly differ, not all cultures have worked with a simple or strict classification of human versus nonhuman (Ingold, 1994). The species divide is not solely a behavioural or biologically determined distinction, but a cultural and historically changing attribution (Noske, 1989; Ritvo, 1991). And yet in Judeo-Christian traditions – and despite Darwin's influential claims for continuity between the human and animal worlds – humanity has persistently been seen *not* as a species of animality, but rather as a condition operating on a fundamentally different (and higher) plane of existence to that of 'mere animals'.

The *felt* sense that 'human' designates a different order of being is plainly evident in popular circles. Hardly a month goes by without a judge or journalist proclaiming that someone 'lives like an animal' or, worse, has become one through their behaviour. Drinking alcohol, it is said, releases 'the animal' in people, especially men. But so too have scholarly traditions (such as philosophical humanism) carried forward the idealising tendency to conceive of humanity by way of essential contrast to animality (Glendinning, 1996; Ham, 1997). Whereas zoologists and biologists have been pursuing the specificity of the *kind* of animal that humans are, the point of departure for the humanities and social sciences has been that which makes humans categorically different from animals. In geography we have created the nature-society divide and made sure that no nonhuman animal crosses it. The ontological status of the 'social' has been securely 'human', and only recently have the boundary-making efforts underpinning it been critically undercut (Bingham, 1996; Braun and Castree, 1998; Thrift, 1996; Whatmore and Thorns, 1998).

In order to underline further the claim that animal geographies belong both logically and literally within a reconstituted *human* geography (Philo, 1995) I wish to explore the implications of discourses of animality for the 'identity politics' that have recently absorbed sociocultural and other geographers. In particular I am interested in the discursive production of social groups identified for their base drives, proximity to 'nature', infantility, eroticism, and absence of civilised manners. Human beings 'in the raw' – supposedly motivated in their conduct by naked impulse rather than rational deliberation – have included those variously savage peoples, the mentally disordered, some women, and the so-called dangerous classes who in different ways have been deemed either beyond, or potentially improved by, the cultivation of self-government.

So too have such groups been variously identified with the discursive spaces of 'wild' nature (as distinct from that proud monument of 'civilisation' known as the city or, alternatively, those counterpoint spaces like 'ghettoes' within the city's 'dark side'). Animality has been a crucial reference point for constructing sociospatial difference and hierarchy in Western cultures. Its meanings have circulated across the nature border and into a politics of sociospatial relations. Specifically, animality has informed rhetorics of race, class, and gender, and other identity constructs with whose histories and geographies, I will be suggesting, we can productively make further

critical engagements. Given the scope of a paper, however, I will be restricting my focus to the nexus of race/culture/nature, undertaking analytical bridgework across the processes that construct social race and nature.

I begin with a critical review of recent efforts to conceive of 'the racialised bestial' by using tools of psychoanalysis. I examine the emphasis in such work on the human psyche's drive to repress fears and desires surrounding bodily ('animal') impulses such as sex and violence, and to elide such 'impure' impulses with racialised others. The paper then adopts its own explanatory direction by historicising ideas of animal difference in that diffuse space that came to bear the label of 'Europe'. Among key classical philosophers, the idea arose of an *essential* humanity complete with a priori notions of what human beings (and animals) were like. In time, and without precise articulation, the Christian ideal of transcending the so-called 'bestial' *within* human character began to cohere. This ideal took as its narrative underpinning the model of a divided Human self, 'split' between a (despised) 'animal' nature and a (moral) 'human' culture.

The implications of notions of vulgar animality for self-other distinctions in relation to the modern race idea are then examined. I will argue that the sources of the anxious displacements of racialised otherness in Western colonial cultures lie less in the frozen chambers of the white unconscious – and *not only* within the by now much studied logics of race-power formations. They can also be found within another modality of power – one that can be tracked from microarchaeologies of the (white) self and into wider fields of sociospatial relations. This is the edifice of animality discourses around which the 'human' has long been configured. Finally I briefly work through themes of animality and the conflicted self in relation to tensions over the Aboriginal savage seeking to establish a housing estate in the sacred spaces of metropolitan Sydney, Australia, during the 1970s.

Race, Repression, and the 'Internal Enemy'

Perhaps the most useful insight of the constructivist perspectives on race that were inspired by Foucault and Gramsci was to move race and racism 'outside' the arena of nature and the biological, and 'inside' a *social* field of agency and contestation. In so doing, it became possible to conceive of race as a set of discursive and material inclusions or exclusions linked to the rise to power of certain 'historical blocs'. A crop of useful work historicising the representational practices of diverse European empires in their encounter with 'New World' societies has been among the many exciting offshoots of this insight.

One question can, and arguably should, however, be pressed further in this now well accepted line of argumentation concerning racialisation as a set of representational practices. Notwithstanding the enormous variability across time and space in the forms of racialised thought and practice, both individual and institutional, conceptual and instrumental, there is as yet more to interrogate in relation to the following issue: *why* have the markers of racial difference inspired such a profound arousal of sentiment and imaginative energy on the part of oppressor (and subjugated) groups? Why has peculiarly racialised difference attracted such a weight of discursive baggage in the European cultural process?

To suggest that the answer lies in the potential of race for securing the white self's cultural hegemony has obviously taken us a long way, with more directions still to be pursued. There can be no disputing the compelling evidence in America, Canada, Australia, and elsewhere that the race idea, authorised in different ways by governments, has been a source of cultural integrity, political leverage, and economic gain for those imperial and white settler groups armed with the power of definition. And yet, this line of argumentation – in its emphasis on strategic outcomes for the oppressor – only takes us so far. The rational instrumentality in the claim that racism entails a will to social power has obscured attention to additional explanatory sites. Not least it has overwritten microarchaeologies of self, the dynamics within which may be useful in accounting for the *character* of the thought and practice that came to be called 'racial'.

In turning to theorisations of the self in contemporary social theory, one encounters diverse strands of psychoanalysis. Notable in geography is Sibley's (1995) *Geographies of Exclusion*. In this work Sibley explores the sociocultural and inherently geographical rituals that develop around the need of individuals for purification, and the anxiety generated by what he calls 'defilement'. The links of these impulses to specifically racial tensions are recently made plain when Sibley (1998, page 119) states, after Kristeva (1982), that: "... racialised minorities ... enter the psyche as objects which cause unease and discomfort ... .These feelings are projected onto others who are defined as abject. ...While we try to remove the abject, it is always there. Anxieties about abject difference will not go away." Crucial to the habit of distancing from others is the concept of abjection, by which is meant 'that which disturbs identity, system, and order'; that which does not, in Wilton's (1998, page 180) words in the same journal issue, "respect borders, positions, rules".

Among the most influential attempts to theorise the 'dark' forces within the human character was Freud (1961) whose repressive hypothesis was outlined in *Civilisation and its Discontents*. In that work, Freud argued that the truth of human sexual desire was to be found in the primal instinct hidden within us, an instinct that for want of outlets for expression is sublimated in fantasy or pathologised in violence. Instinct and culture were opposed by Freud, or at least the latter was interpreted in the light of the former by use of such concepts as 'substitute formation' for all nonsexual patterns (Midgely, 1984). Psychoanalytic theorisations of the human self have carried forward the depiction of individuals at war with subliminal desires and fears. For example, Jungian analyses have made lively contributions to understandings of the conflicted self, further to Jung's utterance in 1931 that "every civilised being, however high his conscious development, is still an archaic man at the deeper level of his psyche" (cited in Greenslade, 1994, page 67).

The conflicted individual has been secreted into the collective imagination of the oppressor in recent theorisations of power relations under colonialism. When a dominant group's sense of order undergoes stress, as it did in the encounter of European empires with the 'New World', the powerful externalise the loss of control that is threatened to the purity and integrity of self-identity or body. Anxieties are projected onto abject (racialised) sites of unreason with whom their own repressed 'internal enemy' is elided. McClintock (1995) and Brantlinger (1986), for example, have interpreted colonial relations as sublimated expressions of sexualised anxieties and desires in the West. They explore how blackness in imperialising contexts of the

19th and 20th centuries was encoded with notions of the bestial, the incestuous, and that which was filthy, sinful, or evil.

Freud relied on naturalised categories of difference as the basis for identifying the abject. But as many geographers working with strands of psychoanalysis, and others such as Stoler (1995), acknowledge, Freud's premise of pregiven difference is not necessary and can be productively complicated. What becomes defined as 'abject' is culturally specific, they argue, and can only be understood as the product of the internalisation of broader sociohistorical forces such as racism. And bodies, too, are not self-evidently 'different' but become so through a process of sociocultural inscription. In such ways the dynamics of the self are linked more fully to the social in treatments of race and colonialism within a psychoanalytic frame.

Foucault's genealogy of the desiring subject also unsettled the fixity of sexual impulse that was Freud's point of departure. In the *History of Sexuality* Foucault (1981) tried to show how concerns about human instinct were translated into discourses surrounding the body during the mid-19th century; moreover how the cultivation of the body became a preoccupation inseparably bound up with bourgeois class aspirations. And yet, as Stoler argues in her stimulating book *Race and the Education of Desire* (1995, page 169), Freud is not absent from Foucault, nor from many of the colonial historiographies Foucault has inspired. Notable for Stoler is the work of Said (1978) where the notion of projection – of the Orient as theWest's 'shadow self' – is an implicit (untheorised) part of his argument. A debt to Freud, or at least to psychologically inspired treatments of motivation, is also apparent in those historiographies of colonialism that emphasise the role of fantasy and anxiety in the ambivalent worlds of European colonials [for example, see Bhabha's foreword to the reprint of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967)].

Despite the useful efforts inspired by psychoanalysis to theorise racialised abjection, the mechanism of repression – whether essentialised within a universalised human psyche outside of time, or sociologically conceived – would seem inadequate to the task of explaining the character of abject sites. Nor does the focus on repression advance very far the prospects of attitudinal and social change with regard to racialised outsiders. To address these issues I prefer to augment the tools of psychoanalysis with those of geohistoriogeography and ask: what discourses were, and are, productive of peculiarly racialised distinctions? On which interiorised conflicts, ideological materials, and political contexts did reductive thinking about racialised humans draw?

In what follows I argue that the fears and fantasies surrounding racialised otherness can be brought into more self-conscious communication than is possible within the Freudian frame. The 'beast within' may well represent the denied bit of ourselves, the bit of 'human nature' we fear we cannot control. But if we understand the repressed anxieties or desires surrounding uninhibited behaviour culturally – within a lineage of European discourses about animality and organised discursively within representation – alternative possibilities are opened up. Not least our interior beasts can be 'contacted' historically, rather than hived off to the collective or individual unconscious. I thus propose an agenda of critiquing the debt within racialised rhetorics, of discourses of beastly animality. Both discourses need to be problematised within the boundary-making efforts of historically specific power blocs. In the case of

European culture process, the contrasts that became layered upon the human-animal distinction during the course of 'nature's' material transformation – contrasts between learning and instinct, agency and stasis, mind and body, civility and savagery – were crucial foundational resources. By working across, rather than from within, the parameters of a nature-society divide, then, I subject racialisation processes to fresh avenues of critique and challenge.

Domesticating Animal and Human Nature: 'Improvement' as a Narrative Triumph

It is to the ancient philosophers, in particular Aristotle, that we owe a debt for some of our cherished ideas of human versus animal nature. To characterise the ideas of any age is fraught with problems of overgeneralisation, no less for the ancients writing over a time span from Hesiod in the 8th century BC to the early Christian theologies of Augustine in the 4th century AD. There are also problems of oversimplification, given the vast and possibly unbridgeable differences that exist in time and space concerning human-animal thought. Regardless, my aim is not to chart a comprehensive genealogy of Western concepts about 'the cultural' and 'the natural' – as if ideas evolve in the form of unbroken strings of beads. Rather it is to distil from select moments (and secondary sources) a tool kit for further disrupting the animal-human divide. That this manoeuvre furnishes new terrain for enlarging our understanding of the sources of *racial* distinction and tension is my primary objective. Indeed the thought of remote Greek scholars (reviewed below) – although influential in that it prepared the ground for normative associations among culture, learning, and 'improvement' – was less 'foundational' in itself. It is no accident, for example, that the tradition of Greek thought was made to stand as 'classical' in the 18th and 19th centuries when the modern race idea was being put to imperial service (Eze, 1997).

There exists a degree of consensus among classics scholars that from Aristotle there developed a habit of seeing animals not as they are, but as crucial sites of contrast to human identity (Sorabji, 1993). The Greeks, and in particular those philosophers called the Stoics, were among the first scholars to theorise ideas of human identity. They argued that the possession of a rational soul was the primary characteristic that distinguished people from the animal kingdom. For example, Aristotle (384 - 322 BC), in seeking to define the soul, claimed that the soul's powers are not possessed by all living things equally (Balme, 1991). Animals possessed the powers of nutrition, sensation, and movement, he claimed, but only humans possessed the powers of thought (*nous*), reason (*logos*), and belief (*doxa*) (*De Anima* 414 A29 - B20, cited in Blundell, 1986, page 74).

In broad terms, the Stoic narrative logic regarding human ^ animal difference can be characterised as follows: whereas humans could control their biological endowments through thought, animals were locked in the tyranny of instinct, unable to realise their potential. Evidence for this claim was, among other things, the art of cultivating plants and animals through which people had 'improved' the brute forms of existence (that is, brought them closer to the interests of humanity). "If nature makes nothing in vain", Aristotle stated, "we must infer that animals have been created in order to supply humans with food, clothing and labour" (Politics 1256 B15-B26, cited in Blundell, 1986, page 75). But rather than query the processes (of selective breeding) by which animals had come to supply food, warmth, and service systematically to humans,

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Aristotle rationalised them away as part of what the Greeks called 'natural law'. The servicing role of the animal – rather than itself being a subject of enquiry (see Anderson, 1997) – was taken as prima facie evidence of the categorical difference and inferiority of animals, as well as of the singular capacity of humans to actualise themselves.

It is in Aristotle's teleological accounts of the divine reason he saw as inherent in the world that one sees how he arrived at the premise of human uniqueness. The concept of telos was crucial to the universalising idea of Human – as a singular a priori category distinct not only from Animal, but also from embodied and differentiated individuals. It was not just a matter of the human monopoly of reason. Animal bodily service and flesh had launched humanity on a course of *agency* – a trajectory of history no less. The Human [known as Man (sic)] had transcended the primal struggle for survival. Man was not only pitted in conceptual opposition to Animal then; He was also *temporally* removed, having *ascended* from an anterior condition occupied by other life-forms. This capacity for transcendence found its ultimate glory in city-states (Aristotle's *polis*) where wild nature was either kept out or 'brought in' on human terms, and 'civil society' found its supreme manifestation (Owens, 1991). By contrast, animals were stuck. Lacking agency, they occupied that space of stasis that was somehow left *behind*, after universal Man had detached himself.

A further sense of the perceived triumph of this detachment can be found in the shadowy classical idea that Man, in rendering beasts into service for human purposes, was overcoming the brute force *within himself*. The logical corollary of man's cultivation of nature was the cultivation of himself (Ingold, 1994, page 6). He became free, released from the bodily strictures of his own 'nature'. The concept of the 'interior beast' does not itself appear to have been explicitly used in antiquity, but two of its logical antecedents feature strongly. First, there existed the notion of the intellect as the ruling element of the (subordinated) bodily passions and, second, the Animal was conceived as the site of ungovernable instinct. To be Animal for the ancients was to be brutal, lustful, violent, or at best, infantile (Clark, 1982). So if the cultivation of animals marked steps toward Man's self-realisation in the external world, so did the *education* of desire, the regulation of ferocity, and the more general rational control over the instinctual impulses of the body, secure the Human's sense of moral identity and superiority from other beings. Henceforth, a dualistic conception of Human as 'split' – into physical animal and cultural human – entered philosophical thought and vocabulary.

In summary, a language of difference became expressed by the Stoics in terms of a temporal metaphor of Human (as the site of intellect and cultivation) versus Animal (as the locus of bestial instinct). Five concluding observations can be made about this distinction. First, the language exaggerated animal from human difference so that there developed a habit of drawing crisp lines between human and nonhuman at the expense of acknowledging *species-specific diversity* among human and nonhuman animals. Second, it sharpened an uncomplicated model of animality as a bodily condition of stasis (as opposed to humanity's condition of agency). Third, the language crystallised a universalist (but in practice, Eurocentric) model of human *development* as an ascent out of savagery. Fourth, it conceived of that part of the Human which was *not* Animal as the capacity for learning to 'cultivate' both oneself

and other life-forms. Fifth, it privileged a limiting conflation of humanity with rationality.

Universalising 'Difference': Human-Animal as a Baseline Distinction

Constructs of human-animal difference appear also to have been a departure point for ancient conceptions of social hierarchy. The discursive gap between the idea of Human, on the one hand, and the manifest reality of embodied people whose subjecthood could be marked in specific ways, on the other hand, typically drew on the contrast with Animal. Aristotle held that 'barbarians' (nature's slaves) stood at the bestial end of the human scale where people lacked mastery over their passions. Unlike animals, such barbarians could *apprehend* reason, so there was no question about their humanity. But unlike their masters, they could not *formulate* reason. It was thus in the ultimate interests of both master and slave for slaves' freedom to be removed and their natural purpose *realised* under slavery, just as the condition of the wild animal was thought to be 'improved' once brought under practices of selection and controlled breeding (Pagden, 1982, page 43).

There were other categories of bestial (brute-like) people for Aristotle. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* he introduced the concept of the subhuman condition to refer to people who were diseased or physically underdeveloped, 'degenerate', senseless or insane people: "They are by nature incapable of reasoning and live a life of pure sensation, like certain tribes on the borders of the civilised world, or like people who are diseased through the onset of illnesses like epilepsy or madness" (*Ethics* 1149 A9-A12, cited in Garnsey, 1996, page 114). Other Greek scholars conceived of such differences less in terms of natural law than cultural evolutionism. For Lucretius and Diodorus, for example, human beings only gradually acquired the status of fully rational beings. For them, the growth of civilisation was a process, a slow progression from a prepolitical state where 'primitive man' lived an 'unordered and bestial life' (Lucretius, cited in Blundell, 1986, page 86). Such ideas were to prove influential to later Western concepts of progress and hierarchy. In the case of women and children, Aristotle did not classify them as 'bestial' but had a clear conception of both as inferior categories of human. The value to the polis of 'educating' both women and children was thus recognised by Aristotle. Just as civilisation was achieved in the course of the ascent of humankind from savagery to civilisation, so it had to be cultivated in the development of children to adults.

Animality Beyond the Ancients

The premise of a unified 'animal' condition fitfully entered Western Latin-speaking Christianity through networks of texts whose logics and contexts need not detain this account. Some moments, however, deserve at least broad attention. For the ancients, history had been constituted by a pattern of 'improvement' of the conditions of life distinctive to humanity (Edelstein, 1967, page xxiii). Christianity assimilated this notion of improvement into a grand vision of human destiny guided by God. Human beings owed their essential humanity, it was argued by writers such as Augustine in the 4th century, to a divine spirit bestowed by God. Premises about human dominion thus became more confident. Not only did a relative complacency about killing animals come to prevail, but an institution evolved to curb 'bestial' impulses within humans (Sorabji, 1993, page 3). The notion of a rational soul, uncontaminated by

carnal passions, was given a religious inflection in diverse strands of Protestantism, and gratification of the senses became dimly viewed (Weber, 1976). Also hardened was the concept of the 'beast within', signifying all the fears and desires surrounding the uneasy *sense* of the Animal within the Human (Midgely, 1979).

Ideas about the integrity of the human species grew more uncertain in medieval times. Ambiguous entities of mermaids, centurions, and other figures of sexual transgression entered medieval myth (Davidson, 1991; Salisbury, 1997). But rather than soften a sense of categorical difference, the confusion tended to see animality further identified with untamed brutishness, and humanity with angels. Fears that the Devil (usually depicted as a dog) was at work in the world even led to the public trial of animals found guilty of damaging humans or crops (Evans, 1987). In 11th-century England, there was confusion among missionaries about who to convert and to what lengths they should go: what about people said to have dog-heads? Were they human or not (Friedman, 1981)? The medieval preoccupation with creatures on the border of humanity foreshadowed later concerns (in, for example, the 16th-century writings of Shakespeare) about those rude forms of 'unaccommodated humanity' in the 'New World' who were thought to lack an overlay of 'learning' on their physical selves (Hamlin, 1995).

In the 1400s and 1500s, bestiality (copulation between human and animal) was deemed the ultimate heresy (Serpell, 1996, page 154). In continental Europe, it met with public trials and executions. And yet, the time period also saw some outspoken critics of the idea of human uniqueness and superior station. Erasmus, Thomas More, and Montaigne, for example, were bitter critics of hunting, an activity that for Erasmus rendered humans 'beasts themselves' (cited in Cockburn, 1996, page 19). But such efforts to align human and animal interests in early modern Europe (see Thomas, 1983) did not unseat the prevailing view that a wise Providence was guiding humans whose duty on earth was to 'improve' the earth through animal husbandry and tillage (Glacken, 1967, page 75).

With the development of the scientific revolution in Europe over the 17th century, humanity was again opposed rigidly to animality (Plumwood, 1993). Earlier invocations to Man's divine status were cast off, but they were replaced with appeals to the equally distancing discourses of science. When, in the 1660s, the French philosopher Descartes explicitly overlaid the dualism of reasonöanimal with the opposition of mind and body – one which privileged the former (as the presumed site of intellect) over the latter (the presumed locus of instinct) – the conceptual ground was further cleared to segregate human from animal (Midgley, 1984). Although both were believed capable of physical sensation Descartes deduced that, because animals lack reasoning capacity, their sensations were 'merely bodily' ones of which they were not 'conscious' (Lloyd, 1984). Lacking 'mind', in the sense of a substance distinct from body, animals were effectively machines.

European enlightenment thinkers retained not only the Greek ideal of reason, but also the function of that attribute to discriminate between the cultured (now called 'civilised') and the barbarian (the 'savage' or 'primitive'). Influential natural historians, such as Carl von Linne¨ (1707-78) and Comte de Buffon (1707-88) embarked upon the classification of all objects of existence according to the ancient 'Great Chain of Being' system (Eze, 1997). Every being, from humans to fauna and

flora had a naturally assigned position and status. As we shall see in the following section of the paper, this wider and older universe of discourse surrounding 'the cultural' and the 'natural' shaped what were constituted as objects of scientific and cultural study during the so-called Enlightenment. Race, for one such object, became a means through which Europeans conceived the relationship between humanity, society, and nature.

The writings of Darwin attempted to deliver a radical blow to the entrenched assumptions about a bounded humanity that have been described thus far. Darwin's arguments in *The Origin of Species* (1968, first published in 1859), not to mention interpretations of them, are more complex than can be reviewed here (see Hawkins, 1997). But, in brief, the significant ones in the context of this paper included a fundamental rejection of the premise of an essential humanity of which all actual human beings – past, present, and future – were embodiments. In biological terms, humanity presented itself not as a pregiven condition, but as a continuous field of variation that had evolved out of apes. Little store could be put in the concept of 'mind' or 'spirit' as defining attributes of humanity, Darwin argued, because both were the products of a material organ (the brain).

And yet despite, or perhaps because of, the momentous implications of the paradigm of evolution, certain ideas about the *felt* sense of 'human' stubbornly persisted. First among them was the premise of a constitutionally divided human being, 'split' into 'physical' animal and 'cultural-moral' human. Moreover, neither Darwin nor neo-Darwinism (that from the 1940s combined Darwin's theories with the laws of genetics) unseated the conceptualisation of animality as a stimulus-response condition, a state of being lacking reason, agency, history, communicative status, and cultural life (Ingold, 1994, page 22). In that sense, that part of Human which was *not* Animal continued to sit in privileged (albeit uneasy) relation to a devalued physical province. Post-Darwinists writing at the height of European power over the globe also tended to reinforce age-old cultural evolutionism (for example, see Morgan, 1877; Shaler, 1896). If to be 'human' was to hold the capacity for ascent out of instinct or savagery, then the superiority of some humans over others could be made to stand analogously to the superiority of primitive peoples over apes. In a context of imperial expansion, Darwinism used the claims about universal Man of the ancients to make artful sense of the mounting evidence through the 18th century of human variation.

By way of summary, some qualifiers might usefully be noted here. Cultures stemming from a European tradition have not been alone in drawing associations between animality and base drives. And critiques of the reason-instinct split in the Western conception of Human should not be taken as crediting a 'blank page' reading of human beings as wholly plastic at birth. Rather it is to dispute the ideologically charged terms on which a specific notion of instinct has rested and to seek to register a debt to reductive notions of brutish animality. Finally, there are risks of invoking an oversimplified negative view of the so-called age of enlightenment as the era when rationality stripped humans of all connectedness to the passions (Hulliung, 1994). But reason and emotion have not always been wholly antagonistic in Western theorisations of the Human, and increasingly that distinction is being problematised (Damasio, 1994). Certainly the movement begun in the mid-18th century (in England) advocating a more 'humane' treatment of animals persisted throughout the Enlightenment (Serpell, 1996, page 160). But the categorical and status opposition of

humanity-animality were not in dispute among those condemning cruelty to animals in the 18th century and beyond.

Critical Race Theory and the Divided 'Human' Self

Recently I have turned my attention to the nexus of race/culture/nature in an effort to try to understand the comprehensive history of exclusions and hierarchies of the living world on which the modern taxonomies of race were based (Anderson, 1998). Especially from the late 17th century, and then during the Victorian era when the compulsion for classifying led to a range of taxonomic practices, European societies drew boundaries not only of class, race, and gender, but also of human and nonhuman (Ritvo, 1992). The concept of 'breeds' of nonhuman animal, for example, spilled over into other pseudo-scientific theories involving discretely different human races. My interest here is not, however, in the suggestive interactions between discursive networks of racialised humans and animals (anti-Semitic notions of Jews as dogs, for example). Rather it is to develop the sense in which theWestern model of the divided self furnished a narrative infrastructure for racialised distinctions and statuses.

Earlier in the paper I noted that the conceptual frame through which the archetypal Human was historically defined in the Western culture process carried not only an oppositional (Human versus Animal), but also a hierarchical and temporal logic. In most interpretations of the human-animal ranking, the animal-*like* status of certain categories of human has been conceived pejoratively. One thinks of such still highly serviceable (and deeply gendered) badges of disapprobation in popular discourse as 'silly cow', 'dumb bunny', 'stupid bitch', and the derogatory allusions to people who 'eat like pigs', and are prone to 'making monkeys' of themselves. A 'rat' is no term of endearment. To be the human counterpart of a 'snake', a 'shark', or a 'stick-insect' is no badge of honour. Being tough requires no 'pussyfooting' about or 'chickening out'. To be 'treated like meat' is the ultimate denigration of women (Dunayer, 1995).

Such labels are often harmlessly applied to individuals and typically invoked in jest. They register in the stories we like to tell ourselves about different human characters: asses do stupid things, sharks are merciless corporate monsters, Miss Piggy cannot restrain herself from eating, and so on. Many such characters feature in children's story books, nursery rhymes, and other moral tales. But when laid bare, the premises about an essential animality on which such superficial allusions rely reveal the potential for more significant boundary efforts. Indeed, under specific historical conditions, animality has been a state of being to which whole categories of humans have been *referred back*. Discourses about animality have regularly found their way into institutional life and collective efforts at exclusion, the interrogation of which clarifies at least two things as they relate to European racist formations: first, the role that universalising assumptions about humanity and animality played in justifying peculiarly racist regimes; and second, we stand to gain a more precise understanding of the cultural character of discursive regimes known often too blandly and monolithically as 'racist'.

'Early Man' as 'Savage'

Among the most materially damaging set of associations between animality and select peoples has been that reserved for the indigenous societies of the 'New World'. New

Zealand's Maori, Australia's Aborigine, the Indian of North America, and other indigenous people encountered during the global extension of European empires were made to bear some of the most pernicious of allusions to savagery (Goldie, 1989; Pearce, 1988; Wall, 1997). The savage was – it was so often said – given to the most grotesque category error of all, that of eating other humans. Cannibalism was that defining moment when certain humans (all the while flesh-eaters themselves) became inhuman. In taking human flesh for 'meat', such people were themselves little more than brutes – a view that is still in political service today in such technically postcolonial settings as Australia (see Hansen, 1997).

The meanings of European modernity were often articulated against a supposed bestial primitivism that indigenous people had not *yet* 'overcome'. Australia's Aboriginals, for example, as *the* most savage of all such people, did not have agriculture, settled abodes, clothing, democratic government or city life – the (Eurocentric) hallmarks not only of civilised and modern man (sic) but of his putatively *universal* destiny out of savagery. Indeed Australia's Aborigines were typically taken as living evidence of 'early man' – of man before his maturity from barbarity to freedom. It followed that early man was 'stuck' in so-called nature – his (sic) own nature, as well as that space of uncultivated savagery that (European) man had *long ago* transcended. He thus displayed a vulgar indifference to all but the needs associated with humanity in its most atavistic state. The unbridled drives of the (devalued) body were foremost among such needs, and hence the recurrent association on the part of colonial observers of Aboriginals with sexuality and promiscuity. If, by this time, notions of 'civility' had been refined to take in ideas of breeding, manners, and discipline over the instinctual self (Elias, 1982), then the sensate savage was its ultimate counterpoint.

It has long been noted by race relations scholars that indigenous and other racialised peoples, and especially men, were perceived like beasts by their colonial oppressors (see Fredrickson, 1981; Jacoby, 1994; Jordan, 1968). Much has been written about the racisms that worked with ideas of select people as brutes existing 'close to nature'. There are certainly plenty of critiques of the moral panic in times past and present surrounding putatively 'unnatural' sexual relations between white and nonwhite people. For example, we have heard a lot about the hysteria surrounding lascivious John Chinaman (see Anderson, 1991) and the brutish Negro in the North American colonies (see Brantlinger, 1986). Such critiques have not as yet, however, entertained any conversation across the society-nature border. They have been content to take the dehumanising invocations to 'beasts', and the more general panic of powerful groups about 'interracial' sex, as evidence in themselves of white power or racism.

Nor do psychoanalytic tools help us adequately clarify why the white self's anxious repressions are displaced onto peculiarly racialised sites of unreason. What I have been suggesting is that racialised constructions of bestial bodies can more fully be understood within a lineage of discourses at the nature-society border. The referents of such discourses are the constructs of animality/savagery and humanity/civility that I have been arguing owe a debt to Western configurations of, and interior conflicts about, what it is to be Human.

'Early Man' as 'Free'

Not that Western models of animality have been relentlessly or exclusively derogatory. More benign animal references have been, and are at times, invoked. To be 'busy as a bee', as 'meek as a lamb', and as 'wise as an owl' can be compliments, if banal ones, in past and present European vocabulary. It is possible, and usually desirable, to be as 'free as a bird'. To possess 'animal magnetism' can be to exude the appeal of a 'foxy lady'. In the case of the generic Savage, romantic views of the free and eccentric Wild Man living close to nature came alive during the Renaissance (Dudley and Novak, 1972; Togovnick, 1990; White, 1972). Later on, such views were pronounced in the writings of Rousseau (1754; quoted in Mason, 1979) whose critique of humans' self-imposed domestication as an *over*-civilising process to which Europeans had become enslaved was profoundly radical for his day. In late-19th-century England, William Morris was only one of many anticapitalist utopians who envisaged a radical barbarism. "How often", Morris wrote, "it consoles me to think of barbarism once more flooding the world, and real feelings and passions, however rudimentary, taking the place of our wretched hypocrisies" (cited in Greenslade, 1994, page 66).

The Innate has thus sometimes been conceived romantically as a site of freedom from the chains of socialisation, as well as darkly as the locus of uncultured savagery. Nor are the diverse (positive and negative) associations with innateness hermetically sealed. They coexist in the same tension as the segmented parts of the (Western) divided self. The proverbial 'call of the wild' appears to draw its mythic power from precisely the contradictory impulses of freedom and control that reside in that discursive borderland between humanity and animality. In colonial contexts, the mix of pejorative and benign associations surrounding a presumed 'base' condition from which 'humanity' departed meant that notions of depraved and innocent peoples could circulate simultaneously. The 18th-century lexicon regarding the Aborigine of New Holland, for example, regularly drew on conceptions of the noble savage as a pre-modern child of nature. By the 19th century, with the extension of colonial settlement across the Australian land mass, derogatory notions of Aborigines as unevolved beasts came to overtake (without erasing) benign portraits.

To conceive of racialised subjects as constructed out of "a cultural tradition of the threatening 'other' ... from the dark inner recesses of fear" where explanatory recourse is made to "an inherent bestiality lurking in us all somewhere" (Malchow, 1993, page 103) does not advance very far the effort of theorising the sources of racial tension. I have been suggesting that, contrary to psychoanalytic approaches, the (by now familiar) claims of social constructivism of race might be augmented by attention to the anxieties or desires surrounding the idea of a 'split' human self in European cultural process. The dynamics driving such a model must be understood within the context of humans' practical transformation of, and alienation from, the nonhuman world. It follows that efforts among critical race theorists to disengage the 'social' from the 'natural' – for politically strategic reasons that need no restatement here – may have blunted the full potential of their own antiessentialist stance.

Geographies of Savagery and Civility

Notions of bestial animality have been articulated in ways that require their own detailed geohistoriographies. Needless to say, a broadbrush historical geography of ideas, such as I have undertaken so far, is only a starting point from which to map

their foldings through time and space. It is therefore useful to reinforce the material sense in which animality discourses have operated in interaction with certain socio-institutional practices in specific settings, and in time periods more recent than those treated so far in this paper.

In what follows I seek in a most preliminary way to work across the so-called 'social' and 'natural' divide with reference to a space of Aboriginal housing in central Sydney – Australia's 'very own Harlem' according to media accounts. Redfern is a raced space that is devalued and demonised like many American ghettoes. 'Sydney's Shame', 'War Zone', 'Ghetto of Broken Dreams', 'The Street that Whites Fear to Tread' – these and other characterisations contribute to Redfern's notoriety throughout
Australia. But 'race' and racism may not be the only or most useful interpretive grid through which to understand the conflicts that arise as different groups struggle to claim and define this space. Rather than reinscribe the race scripting of Aboriginal Redfern that figures in racist, antiracist, and anticolonial depictions of that space (see Anderson, 1993) it is possible to cast the district's tensions differently. That is, they can be narrated to shed light – less on white power, as if it somehow explains itself – than on racist culture (Goldberg, 1995). In this way, more can be gleaned about the character of those cultural forms and unspoken conceits out of which 'whiteness' has been made in Australian society. The interpretive grid also provides new pathways into the complex significations surrounding 'the city' and city spaces.

Aborigines in Central Sydney

During the 1930s, as the myth of White Australia flourished and rural recession in New South Wales deepened, Aborigines migrated to Sydney in search of job opportunities and fresh beginnings (Parbury, 1986). The movement set in train a flow of migrants who were attracted to the cheap housing, unskilled employment, and transport opportunities afforded by central, working-class neighbourhoods such as Redfern. By the early 1970s there were between 4000 and 9000 Aborigines living in inner Sydney, the majority of whom were 'living in the worst housing conditions', according to a local welfare organisation (South Sydney Community Aid, 1970). Australia's Aborigines – discursively positioned in the open spaces of country – suffered not only the material deprivations of rounds of spatial displacement, but also, we shall see, the stigma of 'unlikely' urban dwellers.

Violating Conventions of Civility: New Perspectives on the 'Ghetto'

The practice of squatting in vacant premises was a popular mode of existence for many inner-Sydney Aborigines during the 1950s and 1960s. This precarious lifestyle brought them into frequent contact not only with land-interested groups, but also with law enforcement agencies including police and the courts. One encounter in Redfern in late 1972 saw police arrest and charge with trespassing some fifteen Aboriginal squatters who had taken refuge in derelict premises awaiting redevelopment in Redfern's Louis Street.

At a nearby presbytery, two non-Aboriginal priests saw an opportunity to politicise the squatters' plight in the context of rising concern, from some liberal quarters of Australian society, about the status of Aboriginals. The convicted Aborigines became

the priests' cause célèbre, and on hearing the guilty verdict at the Redfern courthouse they offered to make available the church's hall for the temporary shelter of the homeless men. An emergency refuge supplying beds, food, and medicine was soon opened at the hall, funded by the proceeds of a bottle collection operation undertaken by the Aborigines themselves.

The presbytery's unconventional hostel soon attracted the notice of other Aborigines, and within weeks over fifty had made a home of the hall. The refuge also caught the attention of non-Aboriginal residents, however, some of whom included members of the Council of the City of South Sydney. Vocal among them were two aldermen who set out to break the alliances being forged at the church hall. Council declared the hall a "danger to children and community health" and found a pretext in the lodging house by-law to serve an eviction notice on the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney (Treffery, St Vincent's Church, Redfern, 3 November 1972, in Murphy papers). There were charges of promiscuous behaviour, nudity, and "other lapses of bodily function". The hall was deemed "a violation of privacy, self-respect, accepted living arrangements", and "proper standards of cleanliness and conduct". The church trustees were given seven days to cease residential use of the hall. Council also refused to entertain one of the priest's proposals for housing the Aborigines in its constituency (report of meeting with the mayor and priests on 15 November 1972, in Murphy papers).

Enquiries in the latter part of 1972 by the presbytery intelligence revealed that a single developer had bought a row of terraces in nearby Louis Street with a view to upgrading them for middle-income residential use. The possibility the vacant terraces presented was quickly registered by the squatters and priests. One of the priests, Father Ted Kennedy, saw the potential for an alternative model of housing for people "not fully acquainted with city living" (1991, personal communication). Furthermore, the terraces were located, Kennedy observed, in full view of passing passengers to Sydney's Central Station. In the ferment of the early 1970s the priests anticipated that a "Black commune" (in the priests' words) would send a pointed message to individualistic White Australia. In Kennedy's words, the Aborigine in the city would stand as a reminder of a "propertyless simplicity" from which other cultures had departed to their detriment.

The newly formed Aboriginal Housing Committee (AHC), consisting by this stage exclusively of Aborigines, found a receptive ear in the Sydney branch of the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs. A delegation from Redfern met in December 1972 and there soon followed a written submission from the AHC calling for "extended housing" in Redfern (Bellear et al to Coombs, 17 December 1972, in DAA, 1972-73, R76/89).

Elements in the New South Wales trade union movement also saw fit to support the activists. Like the priests, the unionists drew on ideas within the persistent tradition of thought known as 'noble savagery'. In the Aboriginal squatters, the Builder's Labourer's Federation saw an opportunity to support a "socialist alternative" to the proposed "capitalist development" for Louis Street (cited in Bellear, 1976, page 23). When the union leader threatened to impose a work ban on the redevelopment project, the developer freed two houses for the squatters (Ian Kiernan, 1991, personal communication). However, the Aboriginal president of the squatters' group declared the offerings "uninhabitable". Indeed the self-named "mop and bucket brigade"

showed themselves quite capable of adhering to prevailing health conventions by bringing up to bylaw standard two of the developer's better terraces.

By early 1973, when some 45 Aboriginal members of the clean-up campaign were occupying three of the houses (*Sydney Daily Telegraph* 2 January 1973), the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs encouraged an application for Commonwealth funding for a 'cooperative housing scheme'. This the AHC lodged, as well as recruiting an architect who, like other allies we have seen, saw embodied in the squatters the primal innocence of 'early man'. "It is very natural for Aborigines to share their resources", he claimed in proposing a communal design (cited in transcript of the settlement meeting, 25 March 1973, in Murphy papers). This, despite the diverse origins of Redfern's Aboriginal population (who by the mid-1980s had seen fit to restore the back fences of all properties on the block).

For the Labor aldermen who formed a majority on the South Sydney council, the proposal to house the squatters foreshadowed an unruly "ghetto" which would "encourage Aboriginal people to come into South Sydney which lacks suitable accommodation for these kinds of people" (minutes of meeting, 23 February 1973, in Murphy papers). The council set about obstructing the project. First, it required the developer to "clean up" all the buildings then inhabited by the Aborigines. Second, the application for renovations was approved on the sole condition that each premise provide for "single-family housing". That this was itself an exclusionary strategy is suggested by the revealing adaptation of the architect's design for the Block found in the Redfern Police Station in 1973 (figure 1). Note less a blanket racism here, however, than the specific allusions to indolence, promiscuity, drunkenness, and degeneracy in 'Coonwarra Estate' (an Australian wine) that had white conventions of civility and nuclear familism as their oppositional referent.

The aldermen's effort was not only directed at promoting single-family domesticity in the district. They also rallied the opposition of local non-Aboriginal ratepayers. A field officer of the New South Wales Department of Aboriginal Welfare noted that "... the council has as its images of Aborigines, stereotypes such as drunkenness, immorality, lack of self discipline and community pride. ... [T]he greatest amount of opposition toward the project stems from the aldermen themselves" (Trotman, 1973, file F107). The racist mind-set of the councillors is of less interest in the context of this paper, than, once again, the precise allusions to Aborigines' lack of self-government.

By March 1973 the South Sydney Residents' Protection Movement had formed to fight, in its words, the "festering sore" of "vermin" at Louis Street. A petition to the prime minister attached notions of vulgar savagery to this pathologised city space. Aborigines were undisciplined and unruly, antisocial, dirty, unable to overcome temptations to drink, promiscuous, and generally "unlearned" in appropriate ways of living. The petition concluded: "We the undersigned [226] residents of South Sydney vociferously protest, object and condemn the establishment of the ghetto in Louis and Caroline Streets by the Aborigines who have squatted in these properties. ...We want the Aboriginal ghetto stopped now – for if allowed to continue it will spread like the plague throughout the entire South Sydney area" (Protection Movement to Gough Whitlam, 10 March 1973, in Bryant papers). One group of residents assured Mayor Hartup in April 1973 in words that again highlight the degeneracy allusions within

race rhetorics: "We fully support you, sir, and the South Sydney council that a human zoo should not be allowed in this area" (Mann to Hartup, in Murphy papers).
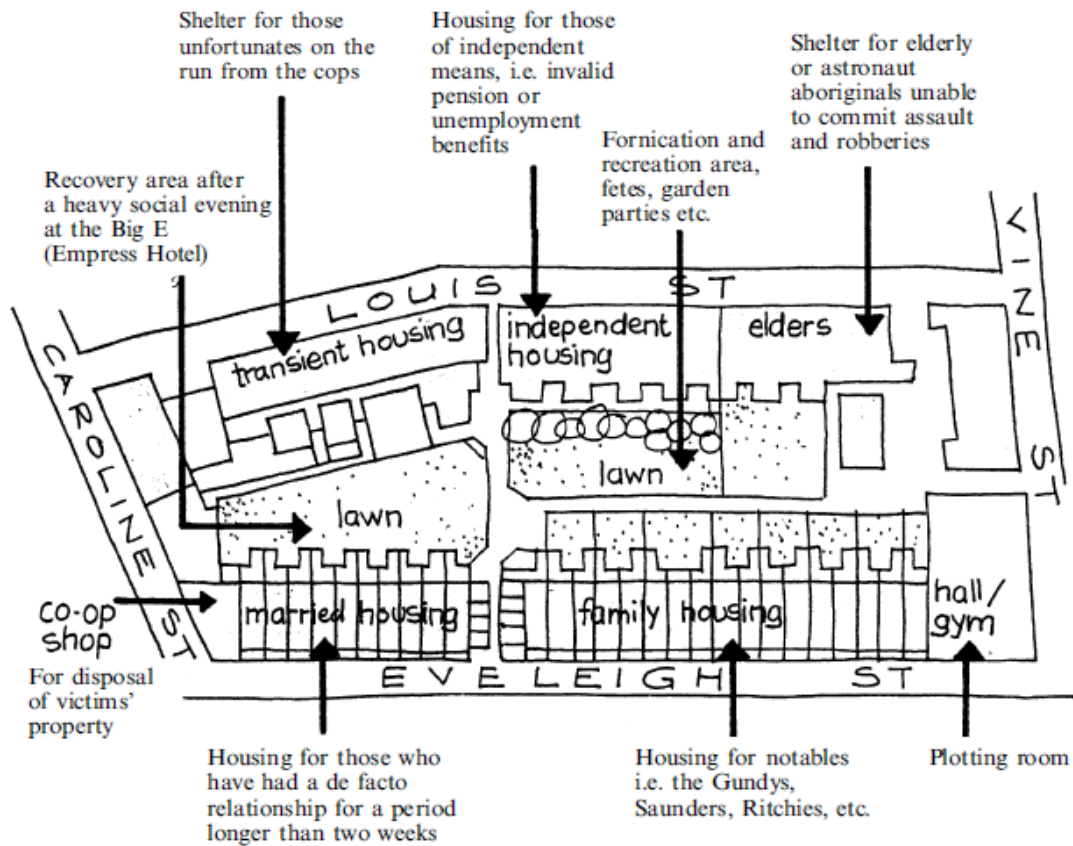
Figure 1. Copy of "seriously defaced map of the Black urban Louis Street Housing Project on display in the Redfern Police Station" (source: Aboriginal Medical Service newsletter number 5, August 1973, page 1).

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When South Sydney councillors learned that the owner of the Louis Street holdings had held negotiations with Commonwealth officials over their sale, council rallied the scenario of a sensate savage on the loose. It recommended that "the situation in the Louis and Caroline Street area be referred to the Commissioner of Police with a recommendation that the area be regularly and frequently patrolled to ensure that the local ratepayers are free from molestation and the impact of other anti-social behaviour" (South Sydney Council, item 17, Health Committee agenda, 4 April 1973). Policy scrutiny of the occupied terraces was intense from late 1972 into 1973, with many violent confrontations and arrests. Following the Commonwealth decision to grant the AHC funds for the purchase of over 40 houses, there were over 400 arrests in the Louis Street area, most being Aborigines on minor charges (O'Grady to Mayor, 7 May 1973, in Murphy papers). Relations with the media grew equally sour with numerous invocations to the 'human zoo' appearing in the press about a district that continues today to sustain intense regulation (Anderson, 1998; Cunneen, 1990).

In this brief account I have sought to situate the tensions surrounding Aborigines in central Sydney in a wider semiotic field than the (by now) familiar frame of 'race' and racism. I have used the attributions of savagery and civility to enlarge the meaning of one set of struggles for access to the proud heartlands of white belonging in Australia. Such a lens enables us to augment the insights of anticolonialism and critical race theory that have already drawn links between the kinds of exclusions operating in South Sydney and white cultural domination. In order to clarify at least some of the norms out of which such racism was constructed, I have targeted the conventions surrounding savagery, civility, privacy, and domesticity that enjoin a long genealogy of distinctions as between 'the cultural' and 'the natural'. The Redfern case also serves to underline a point of more general interest to urban studies. This is to suggest that culture-nature rhetorics exert an efficacy in the racialised topographies of (white) metropolis/suburb and (black) ghetto that would repay more detailed critical attention.

Conclusion

Recent years have seen an interest in human geography in the multiple faces of power – in the power to construct and enforce boundaries, to have them accepted as 'natural', and to give them practical and political meaning. There have also been useful critical interventions in the processes by which the categories of 'culture' and 'nature' have been opposed (see Demeritt, 1994; Gerber, 1997) and turned into crucial stakes of political struggle (see Willems-Braun 1997). As yet, however, little critical attention has been paid to extending the concerns of discourse, power, identity, and embodiment to the human-animal distinction. There have been few efforts to push back an arguably crucial frontier in the making of concepts of social identity, hierarchies of power, and sociospatial arrangements in Western societies.

In this paper I have sought to clear away some of the barriers to such investigations by problematising animality within a genealogy of distinctions about the cultural and the natural. The splitting off of these two realms has been achieved by many representational strategies, not least, as I stated at the outset, by social scientists themselves. It is often said that to draw analogies between relationships in 'nature', on the one hand, and social relations, on the other, is to risk lapsing into the determinism of socio-biology where explanatory recourse for social life is made to inanimate

forces such as 'evolution', 'fitness', and 'species survival'. Such forces are (quite rightly) seen to deny agency and power to humans. But the premise behind such a claim is that humans are not in the grip of their instincts and senses, whereas animals are. Animals are little more than their biology; this is the basis of their animalness.

Inversely, anthropologists have always argued that there are diverse ways of being human; that humanity means different things to different cultures (Ingold, 1992). Yet they too tend to hold tight a defining characteristic of Human, that being the capacity for culture. This is not only a matter of denying the complex existence of other animals. It is more that we continue to conceive of an essence of humanity, and a special one at that, through some categorical distinction from 'mere' animal life (Ingold, 1994). That such understandings have also been smuggled into representational systems that mark out some (racialised) humans from others is one major political implication that has been my concern in this paper.

The narrow conceptualisation of animality is now long since out of date with knowledge of the cultural life of animals, their species-specific cognitive states, and flexible notions of instinct in all animals, including humans (Birke and Hubbard, 1995; Masson and McCarthy, 1996). It has also obstructed attention to identity conflicts that resonate both within human beings and wider fields of sociospatial relations in Western cultural process. That the 'social field' can be seen as having been attained by separating off interiorised and real 'beasts' suggests it may be timely to conceive of it more flexibly. In this paper I have prised open some cracks in that closed field of intelligibility in which (some) humans have contained themselves. We might more freely move across our various states of being, if lines of conversation with our own dark sides are opened out, rather than shut down and secreted away.

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