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Edited by Wendy A. Wiseman, Burak Kesgin

Lost Kingdom

Animal Death in the Anthropocene

SERIES IN CLIMATE CHANGE AND SOCIETY

Summary

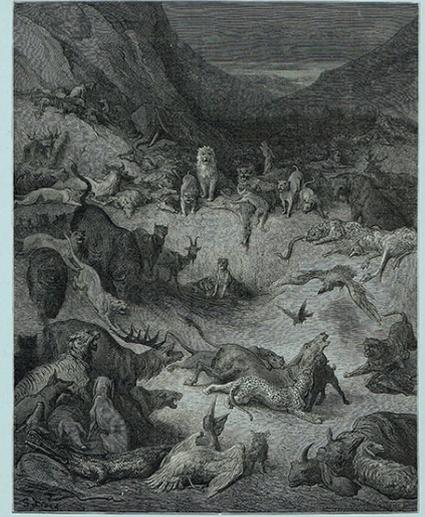
The authors in 'Lost Kingdom' grapple with both the catastrophe of mass animal extinction, in which the panoply of earthly life is in the accelerating process of disappearing, and with the mass death of industrial animal agriculture. Both forms of anthropogenic violence against animals cast the Anthropocene as an era of criminality and loss driven by boundless human exceptionalism, forcing a reckoning with and an urgent reimagining of human-animal relations. Without the sleights of hand that would lump "humanity" into a singular *Anthropos* of the Anthropocene, the authors recognize the differential nature of human impacts on animal life and the biosphere as a whole, while affirming the complexity of animal worlds and their profound imbrications in human cultures, societies, and industries. Confronting the reality of the Sixth Mass Extinction and mass animal death requires forms of narrativity that draw on traditional genres and disciplines, while signaling a radical break with modern temporalities and norms. Chapters in this volume reflect this challenge, while embodying the interdisciplinary nature of inquiry into non-human animality at the edge of the abyss—historiography, cultural anthropology, post-colonial studies, literary criticism, critical animal studies, ethics, religious studies, Anthropocene studies, and extinction studies entwine to illuminate what is arguably the greatest crisis, for all creatures, in the past 65 million years.

About the editors

Wendy A. Wiseman is a lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of California Santa Barbara. She writes and presents on climate justice, ecocide law and kincentric relationality, the Anthropocene, and the Sixth Mass Extinction and lives in Istanbul.

Burak Kesgin is Assistant Professor and Chair in the Department of Sociology at Istanbul Beykent University. He teaches and publishes in the areas of social movements, environmental sociology, political economy, and inequality. He is co-editor of 'Traces of the Anthropocene' (2022, in Turkish).

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LOST KINGDOM

Animal Death in the Anthropocene

Edited by
Wendy A. Wiseman and Burak Kesgin

I am incredibly excited about the imminent publication of "Lost Kingdom: Animal Death in the Anthropocene." The editors Wendy A. Wiseman and Burak Kesgin have gathered together an international collective of leading scholars to address the various registers of ongoing massification of death whose roots lie tangled underneath the ground we now walk. It goes without saying that the topic of our current death-driven metaphysics and practices should be both at the center of academic and public concern. This volume succeeds in situating itself within a pressing conversation, but it does so in a wildly original way, reimagining what is at stake as we blithely exterminate life around us and within us. Taken together, the original and wide-ranging essays and array of topics broached in "Lost Kingdom" are a bracing call for us to acknowledge our complicity in the making of this hell-hole of modernity. This is a crime scene. A burning building. A time-bomb. What on earth will it take to wake us up to a situation of our own making? How might we reimagine the defining mark of the human not as rationality or control or even dominion but rather indeterminacy, imagination, friendship, empathy, flourishing, love . . . ? In that respect, the book is a deft reframing of the current conversation revolving around the Anthropocene, animal extinction, philosophy, and ethics. For it argues that the human-generated crises must be addressed from a perspective that decenters the human from the cosmos or even, perhaps, the ecology of political debate. In attempting to harness the "spectral power of animality that is indistinguishable from divinity," the editors make a bold and successful wager that the language of (negative) theology is the last, best hope to gain interpretive leverage on a dreadful situation. "Lost Kingdom" is the best book, to my knowledge, that puts Anthropocene studies and questions concerning animality in conversation with theological currents of Continental Philosophy—from Nietzsche and Freud to Derrida and Haraway. This rich tapestry voices, both poetic and urgent, a compelling indictment of the theological roots of our increasingly organized proclivities for extraction and extermination. I very much appreciated this clarion call to recognize the theological registers of colonialism, capitalism, and algorithmic abstraction. For the killing fields of modernity have long been places of perverse religious worship.

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