Jane Goodall (1934 — 2025):

World-renowned animal researcher and warm-hearted friend of chimpanzees

by

Professor Dr. iur. Dr. phil. Franz-Rudolf Herber

(Bischberg/Germany)

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I) Abstract

Jane Morris Goodall (formerly Baroness Jane van Lawick-Goodall) was an English primatologist and anthropologist. There is no doubt: She is regarded as the world's outstanding expert on chimpanzees, having studied the social and family interactions of wild chimpanzees for more than over 60 years. In the year 1960, Jane Goodall made her first research stay in Tanzania and Africa captivated her ever since. Fear was a foreign concept to Jane Goodall. In her life, that attained the almost biblical age of 91, she spent countless periods of time living among chimpanzees in the jungle. These animals were not only subject of her research, she grew so fond of them that she gave them names and doted on them lovingly. In the year 1977, she founded the Jane Goodall Institute to ensure that her vision and her life's work continues to mobilize the collective power of individual action to save the natural world we all do share. The institute is represented all over the world (cfr. e.g. https://janegoodall.global/;https://www.janegoodall.org.uk/;https://janegoodall.de/ etc. pp.).

II) To the Biography of Jane Goodall

If it is true that her parents gave little Jane a stuffed chimpanzee as a toy during her childhood — the standard gift in better homes was presumably a teddy bear —, then

it can be said that a central decision was already made in the subconscious in childhood. It should be noted that during Jane Goodall's youth research in England, as in other countries, was more or less a male domain, and women had to overcome hurdles to be admitted to relevant scientific projects. After finishing school, Jane Goodall first attended a secretarial school and worked later on for a film studio; she did not have the money to go to an university. In 1957, she realized her long-cherished dream of getting to know Africa. At the invitation of a school friend, she travelled to the Kenyan metropolitan city of Mombasa that was and still is the most important port city in East Africa. She found a job at the Nairobi National Museum and came into contact with its director, Louis Leakey (1903 — 1972). Leakey was a British-born Kenyan paleoanthropologist: The large number of hominin fossils he discovered contributed significantly to supporting Charles Darwin's (1809 — 1882) assumption that mankind (the so called homo sapiens) originated in Africa (cfr. Christian Feldmann (2014): Die letzten Rätsel der Bibel. pp. 32 sqq.). In the year 1960, he encouraged Jane Goodall to study the behaviour of wild apes (.i.e. chimpanzees) and he did encourage Dian Fossey (1932 – 1985) to study the behaviour of gorillas (to Dian Fossey cfr. John Fowler (2018). A Forest in the Clouds: My Year Among the Mountain Gorillas in the Remote Enclave of Dian Fossey. Furthermore, he did encourage Birutė Galdikas (1946) to study the behaviour of orangutans (to Birutė Galdikas cfr. Joseph L. Spradley (ed. 2013). Scientists and Science. Great Lives From History. Vol. 2., pp. 339 — 342). Based on these observations of primate behaviour and on the results of their behavioural research, Leakey and the three researchers believed they could draw conclusions about the evolution of behaviour in the course of human tribal history. In the year 1962 Baron Hugo van Lawick (1937 — 2002) was sent to Kenya by the >National Geographic Society< to perform a film project (to him cfr. Dale Peterson (2006): Jane Goodall. The Woman who redefined Man, pp. 299 — 1972); here he did meet Jane Goodall, who was studying the behaviour of chimpanzees. Hugo van Lawick and Jane Goodall married in the year 1964 and son Hugo was born in 1967 in Kenya. The marriage ended in divorce in the year 1974; a foto of the family — all three together — is archived text under this link: https://www.greenmatters.com/environmental-leaders/jane-goodall-son.

If somebody is interested in more biographical details from the exciting and eventful life of Jane Goodall, this letter-textbook is to be recommended: Dale Peterson (ed.). 2001: Beyond Innocence: An Autobiography in Letters, the Later Years New York.

Classical biographies are:

— Meg Greene (2005): Jane Goodall. A Biography.

— Dale Peterson (2006): Jane Goodall. The Woman who redefined Man.

III) To the scientific work of Jane Goodall

Jane Goodall had not previously studied and therefore did not have a bachelor's degree; this had the consequence that she was excluded from an university carreer. But in recognition of her outstanding behavioral observations, she was granted a highly unusual exemption to enroll at the University of Cambridge in the year 1961 (at the age of 27): She studied ethology and received her doctorate in the year 1966; the subject-matter of her thesis, was the behaviour of free-living chimpanzees. Her precise doctor thesis has the title >Behaviour of free-living chimpanzees<; her mentor was Robert Aubrey Hinde (1923 — 2016), to whom she expressed her deep gratitude – again - decades after completing her doctorate and honoured him after his death (cfr. >Remembering My Mentor: Robert Hinde. Jane Goodall's Good for All News<, available at: http://news.janegoodall.org/2017/01/20/remembering-my-mentor-robert-hinde/). In the year 1965, Jane Goodall made her first television appearance with wild chimpanzees: This first film was produced by the >National Geographic Society<; her husband Hugo van Lawick had been the camera operator. This former footage was reused in 2017 for the documentary >Jane Goodall<, that was directed by Brett Morgen (1968); the multi-award-winning film was released in theaters in 2018. Very much of what we know about chimpanzees is thanks to Jane Goodall's work. For example, she confirmed observations made by Wolfgang Köhler (1887 — 1967) in the 1910s on captive chimpanzees: Chimpanzees are capable of using tools: On the one hand, they break off branches and use them to fish termites out of the holes in their nests; on the other hand, they use stones as hammers and as anvils to crack open nutshells. Jane Goodall also discovered that chimpanzees eat meat and even hunt other species of monkeys collectively, as well as attacking other chimpanzee groups in groups. Her

research was supported by the Leakey Foundation, among others; Leakey has not only earned himself a place in primate research through his scientific work, but his life's work lives on in his foundation (cfr. https://leakeyfoundation.org/). In the year 1975, Jane Goodall married Derek Bryceson (1922 — 1980), who was a member of Tanzania's parliament and the director of that country's national parks; thus he could help promoting scientific work and advancing animal welfare. Bryceson died of cancer already in the year 1980; to him cfr. Jordana Comiter (2025): Jane Goodall's 2 Husbands: All About Her Relationships with Photographer Baron Hugo van Lawick and Derek Bryceson, in: People, published October 1, 2025; retrieved October 17, 2025. Jane Goodall published very important books; among these there are also genuine bestsellers:

— 2005: >Harvest for Hope: A Guide to Mindful Eating<.

— 2000: >40 Years at Gombe<.

— 2000: >Africa In My Blood<.

— 1986: >The Chimpanzees of Gombe: Patterns of Behavior<; this book was published in Japanese language and Russian language and attained the >R.R. Hawkins Award for the Outstanding Technical, Scientific or Medical book of 1986<; furthermore, it gained the >Wildlife Society (USA) Award for Outstanding Publication in Wildlife Ecology and Management<.

— 1990: >Through a Window: 30 Years Observing the Gombe Chimpanzees<. This book was translated into more than 15 languages. The 1991 Penguin edition UK is listed among the Nine Notable Books (Nonfiction) for 1991.

— 1971: >In the Shadow of Man<. this book was published in 48 languages; cfr. Under IV.

— 1969: >My Friends the Wild Chimpanzees<.

IV) To Jane Goodall`s most famous Book: >In the Shadow of Man (1971)<

In the book >In the Shadow of Man< Jane Goodall tells the story of a scientific adventure in the Gombe Stream Reserve in Africa about the lives of chimpanzees.

Jane Goodall narrates the story discussing how over the course of several years she had to gain the chimps trust as they had to gain hers. She is not only an outstanding natural scientist who knows her craft inside out, she is also an outstanding author – we know that there are outstanding natural scientists, but they are not able to present their research findings in an exciting way for a broad audience. She writes in admirable language that allows interested readers to read through the book very quickly. She succeeds in building genuine suspense at the most striking points of her research project, that is soon resolved. She knows how to give the animals she observes and with whom she can make contact a distinctive individual character. She succeeds in creating a stage, as it were, on which the lives of these animals unfold. In literary studies, there is a theory that the beginning of a book says a lot about the entire publication. When we look at how Jane Goodall begins hers, we cannot help but notice that it starts with a bang (Mariner Book, 2010, p. 1 (beginnings)):

„Since dawn I had climbed up and down the steep mountain slopes and pushed my way through the dense valley forests. Again and again I had stopped to listen, or to gaze through binoculars at the sourrounding countryside. Yet I had neither heard nor seen a single chimpanzee and now it was already five o'clock. In two hours darkness would fall over the rugged terrain of the Gombe Stream Chimpanzee Reserve. I settled down at my favorite vantage point, the Peak, hoping that at least I might see a chimpanzee make his nest for the night before I had to stop work for the day. I was watching a troop of monkeys in the forested valley below when suddenly I heard the screaming of a young chimpanzee. Quickly I scanned the trees with my binoculars, but the sound had died away before I could locate the exact place, and it took several minutes of searching before I saw four chimpanzees. The slight squabble was over and they were all feeding peacefully on some yellow plumlike fruits".

What wonderful leitmotifs are here to be seen:

— The jungle is an adventure in itself.

— Evening falls.

— Night will soon fall.

— Screams.

— Suddenly, chimpanzees do appear in a group.

— The scientific work can begin.

Throughout the story Jane Goodall discusses the lives of the chimpanzees giving them names and making them true characters of the described actions in the jungle. Towards the end of the story the reader is able to develop his own opinion about each of the described personalities of the chimpanzees. The narration does have these characters and very often the narration changes into a kind of drama that is playing before the reader‘s eyes:

(1) Jane Goodall: The researcher and later author.

(2) Hugo van Lawick: Goodall's (first) husband and a respected wildlife photographer, he documented her research through stunning photography.

(3) Louis Leakey: The renowned paleoanthropologist who supported Goodall's early research, emphasizing the relevance of primate studies.

(4) A chimpanzee named David Greybeard: This was the first chimpanzee that did accept Jane Goodall, playing a crucial role in her research and understanding.

(5) A chimpanzee named Goliath: A dominant male chimpanzee named, he stands for a severe social hierarchy and power struggles wihtin the chimpanzee community.

(6) A chimpanzee named Figan: A notable chimpanzee, who displays rather very complex behavior and holds relationships within the group.

(7) A chimpanzee named Flo: A matriarchal figure among the chimpanzees; this animal was showing strong maternal instincts and deep emotions. Flo (approximately 1929 — 1972) was one of the favorite chimpanzees and contributed a wealth of scientific knowledge during his long life. Flo was a motherly chimpanzee, she was a high-ranking female with a bulbous nose and ragged ears: Figan, Faben, Freud, Fifi, and Flint were her children. Among other results, the Jane Goodall Institute has published these highly interesting scientific findings on Flo on its website (https://web.archive.org/web/20090129072309/http://janegoodall.org/chimp_central/chimpanzees/f_family/flo.asp): „Flo's high rank and social assertiveness influenced her offspring as they developed. Her son, Figan, with the support of his brother Faben,

became top-ranking male for six years (1973 — 1979). Daughter Fifi went on to become top-ranking female herself".

The relationship that Jane Goodall established with the chimpanzees was seemingly to be strong. Jane Goodall became very attached to the chimpanzees that she did meet and work with. Throughout Jane Goodall's research she came to many conclusions that related the chimpanzees to humans. It also has been scientifically proven that the brain of a chimpanzee is most closely related to a humans than a gorilla. The studies that Goodall did in the Gombe Stream Reserve got scientists a step closer to how humankind may have evolved. Jane Goodall also witnessed the death of animals among chimpanzees and noticed the effects of such negative events on the group. But what she experienced was, in a sense, a kind of paradise on earth. The question >Is Paradise Lost?< posed by her famous medieval compatriot John Milton (1608 — 1674) in his work of the same name without a question mark is therefore not an issue for her; to him cfr. Nicholas McDowell (2020): Poet of Revolution: The Making of John Milton. Milton's work begins with these powerful verses that are quoted from this internet-source (https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Paradise_Lost_(1674)/Book_I):

„Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat".

Other authors from world literature who do describe animals from the wild fall far short of Jane Goodall's art of representation; only two examples can mentioned cited here: These is the German author Herman Löns (1866 — 1914, to him: Thomas Dupke (1994): Hermann Löns. Mythos und Wirklichkeit) and the American author Jack London (1876 — 1916; to him cfr. Earle Labor (2013): Jack London: An American Life). Herman Löns devalued his own work through his nationalistic and racist ideas. Jack London was much more talented than Löns, but his alcohol consumption weakened his ability to work and he sadly only lived to the age of 40 years; measured by this, he left behind an extensive body of work.

V) Does mankind descend from primates (apes)?

The question who created the earth and the universe will probably never be answered by humans. The same applies to the directly related question of whether there is life after death or whether after death any spiritual existence (in the shape of a soul) is extinguished forever, the latter being nihilism. Since the spread of the Bible and the establishment of Christianity, it has been considered a certainty that (Christian) God is the lord of life and death. Specifically, this means that he created the earth, created humankind, and commanded them to subdue other living creatures. Furthermore, humans must lead a godly life in order to attain eternal life after death. Genesis I, 24 – 31 explains the origin of earth thus:

„(24) And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. (25) God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. (26) Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." (27) So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (28) God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (29) Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. (30) And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it — I give every green plant for food." And it was so. (31) God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the sixth day". (quoted according https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%201&version=NIV).

The cited beginning of the Old Testament describes in its very vivid narrative how the earth was created. The German-Polish polymath Copernicus (1473 — 1543) shook these teachings by developing the heliocentric world view: this was seen as a frontal attack on the Catholic Church, although this was not Copernicus' intention. It is not the earth as God's special creation that forms the center of the universe, but the sun, the source of energy and light (to Copernicus Owen Gingerich (2016): Copernicus. A very short introduction and André Goddu (2010): Copernicus and the Aristotelian Tradition: Education, Reading, and Philosophy in Copernicus's Path to Heliocentrism). It is evident, that Rome could not tolerate this insights as these were

regarded as the sources for existential nihilism is all possible variations (cfr. Fridrich Lebrecht Götz (1733): De nonismo et nihilismo in theologia and David Storey (2011). Nihilism, Nature, and the Collapse of the Cosmos. Cosmos and History, in: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy. Vol. 7 (2): pp. 6 — 25). Whereas Copernicus had good luck, and was not subjected to any significant reprisals from the church, Galileo Galilei (1564 – 1641) came under enormous pressure from the church (to him: Stillman Drake (1990): Galileo. Pioneer Scientist). If the cited Genesis-text is read deliberately a second time, so to speak, one understands that the wild animals were at the beginning of the divine creation process, mankind was created at last. Insofar the Genesis-text is no contradiction to Goodall's theory that humans are descended from chimpanzees (primates). In this way Adam and Eve (cfr. Kurt Flasch (2004): Eva und Adam. Wandlungen eines Mythos and Gillian R. Evans (2006): Belief. A Short History for Today. pp. 17 sqq.) do have an unexpected revival; then follows the heroic Abraham (to him cfr. Thomas Cahill (1998): The Gifts of the Jews). To the further development cfr. Yuval Noah Harari (2011): A Brief History of Humankind.

VI) To the Jane Goodall Institute

Jane Goodall went into the forest to study the remarkable lives of chimpanzees and she came out of the forest to save them. When she discovered that the survival of this species was threatened by habitat destruction and illegal trafficking, she developed a breakthrough approach to species conservation that improves the lives of people, animals and the environment by honoring their connectedness to each other. In 1977, she founded the Jane Goodall Institute to ensure that her vision and life's work continue to mobilize the collective power of individual action to save the natural world we all share. The Jane Goodall Institute (https://janegoodall.org/about/contact/) is a global non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of wildlife and the environment, based in Washington, DC. It was founded in 1977 by Jane Goodall and Genevieve di San Faustino (1919 – 2011; to her: https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/sfgate/name/genevieve-di-san-faustino-obituary?id=8152320). The uttermost project of the Jane Goodall Institute is the better understanding of primates through public education and legal advocacy, to protect their habitats in cooperation with local communities, and to train young people in

these tasks. The Institute pursues a very broad spectrum of important objectives, including, among others, e.g. these:

— Wild primate research.

— Rehabilitation of former captivated primates.

— Care for bee keeping, controlling of apiaries and of honey production.

— Using mobile technologies for the controlling of woods and jungle areas.

Of particular importance is that the Institute is also committed to educating girls. Jane Goodall knew only too well that, to put it bluntly but realistically, girls are considered less valuable than boys on the African continent.

Where there is no entire welfare for humankind, there seldom is animal welfare. Animal welfare is a national issue when you consider how many pets are abandoned because people go on vacation or because people who receive animals as gifts do not know what to do with them. On a global level, there is a thriving black market for exotic animals, which are taken on adventurous journeys in luggage on flights and these animals are offered for exorbitant prices. In the year 2010, Goodall formed a coalition through the >Jane Goodall Institute< with a number of organizations, including the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), and petitioned to have all chimpanzees are endangered, including those in captivity, In 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced that it would accept this recommendation and that all chimpanzees would be classified as endangered. Jane Goodall was a patron of the charity >Population Matters<, which deals with population issues, and was an ambassador for Disneynature since the year 2017. Jane Goodall was a persuasive and as a scientist a highly competent activist for animal welfare: Although she was appointed UN Messenger of Peace, she was inexplicably not awarded the Nobel Prize. This is very unforgiveable, because her research concerns fundamental questions about the origin of life and the behavior of living beings, such as the phenomenon of aggression that can be observed in the animal kingdom, but also occurs constantly among human beings, even at the level of state leaders.

VII) Categorizing Jane Goodall in the world of sciences and to the awards granted to her

Jane Goodall is one of the greatest behavioral scientists of the 20th and 21st centuries. She stands unquestionably in the same scientific league as the very well-known men who have conducted behavioral research (cfr. Robert Sapolsky (2018): Behave. The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst. pp. 269 — 271):

— First and foremost, the legendary English scientist Charles Darwin (1809 — 1882) should be mentioned here; to him cfr. Janet Browne: Charles Darwin. The Power of Place. 2 Vol.

— The Russian researcher Ivan Petrovich Pavlov (1849–1936) received the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1904 for his work on the digestive glands: However, he is even better known for his research on animal behaviour: he studied conditional reflexes and in 1905 developed the theory of conditioned reflexes (to him cfr. Daniel Philip Todes (2014). Ivan Pavlov: A Russian Life in Science); he became immortalized by the so-called Pavlovian dog, named after him.

— The German researcher Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1928 — 2018) belongs into this category as well; to him Christa Sütterlin/Frank K. Salter (ed 2001): Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt: On the person and work; commemorative publication on the occasion of his 70th birthday (= Bibliotheca aurea hominum illustrium, locorum amoenorum, librorum numinosorum. Vol. 19).

The list of awards granted to Jane Goodall is long and impressing:

— 2025: The Presidential Medal of Freedom oft he United States.

— 2021: Templeton Prize.

— 2020: Tang Prize in the category "Sustainable Development".

— 2020: Honorary Doctorate from the University of Zurich.

— 2019: Austrian Cross of Honor for Science and Art, First Class.

— 2019: Order of the Rokel, second highest award of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

— 2017: Namesake for the Jane Goodall Elementary School in Berlin-Friedrichshain.

— 2017: Namesake for the asteroid Jane Goodall.

— 2015: My Way Award.

— 2012: Honorary Council Member of the World Future Council.

— 2011: Hamburg Ambassador.

— 2010: Bambi Award in the category Our Earth.

— 2008: Honorary doctorate from the University of Toronto.

— 2007: Honorary doctorate from the University of Liverpool.

— 2006: Honorary doctorate from the Open University of Tanzania.

— 2005: Officer of the Legion of Honour.

— 2004: Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

— 2003: Prince of Asturias Award.

— 2002: United Nations Messenger of Peace.

— 2002: Konrad Lorenz Prize.

— 1997: Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement.

— 1997: Global 500 Award.

— 1994: Honorary doctorate from Utrecht University.

— 1990: Elected to the German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina.

— 1990: Kyoto Prize.

— 1988: Member of the American Philosophical Society.

— 1987: Gregor Mendel Medal from the German Academy of Natural Scientists Leopoldina.

— 1980: Order of the Golden Ark awarded by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands.

— 1972: Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

VIII) To Jane Goodall as a gifted children's book author

Insiders are certainly aware that Jane Goodall was not only a brilliant scientist but also a brilliant children's book author, but this should be emphasized once again in this tribute, especially since she has received very prestigious awards for these works:

— 2004: >Rickie and Henri: A True Story (together with Alan Marks)<.

— 2001: >Chimpanzees I Love: Saving Their World and Ours<.

— 2000: >The Eagle & the Wren (illustrated by Alexander Reichstein)<.

— 1999: >Dr. White (illustrated by Julie Litty)<.

— 1994: >With Love<. This book hat been translated into German, French, Italian, and Japanese.

— 1989: >The Chimpanzee Family<. This book has been translated into more than 15 languages, including Japanese and Swahili. This book has received the UNICEF Award for the best children's book of 1989. In the year 1990 this book has received the Austrian state prize for best children's book.

— 1989: >Jane Goodall's Animal World: Chimps<.

— 1989: >Animal Family Series: Chimpanzee Family, Lion Family, Elephant Family, Zebra Family, Giraffe Family, Baboon Family, Hyena Family and Wildebeest Family<. This book has received the Parenting's Reading-Magic Award for Outstanding Book for Children in the year 1989.

— 1988: >My Life with the Chimpanzees<. This book has been translated into French, Japanese and Chinese.

— 1972: >Grub: The Bush Baby (together with Hugo van Lawick)<.

IX) Summary

In October 2024, Jane Goodall made "A Speech for History" at UNESCO; she delivered and outlined a positive perspective on conservation and the role that everyone can play in preserving the earth as a planet; her opening statement is, in the best sense

of the word, affectionate, open-hearted, clear in diction, and convinced of the correctness of her own scientific position:

"I am absolutely sure that never before in this space has been a proper acknowledgment that we humans are not the only beings on the planet, I want to bring into the space the voice of the chimpanzees, the animal that I've been studying for so many years with my dedicated team. And what I'm going to say simply means: this is me; this is Jane. Because the chimpanzees have different ways of announcing their presence," Dr Goodall, or Dr Jane as she likes to be called, then proceeded to speak in chimpanzee to begin her speech.

Quoted from: https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/dr-jane-goodall-gives-speech-history-unesco.

Jane Goodall passed away on 1st of October 2025, but her work lives on in the scientific institute named after her. Jane Goodall is one of the very exceptional figures in science; she is so to speak a figure of the century. This century-defining figure should encourage all those who feel confident in analyzing the behavior of wild animals and thus making an important contribution to ensuring their survival. Jane Goodall's life should be an inspiration to all girls and women on the African continent.

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