

frans de waal the age of empathy

****Exploring Frans de Waal's The Age of Empathy: Understanding Compassion in the Animal Kingdom and Beyond****

frans de waal the age of empathy is a groundbreaking work that challenges the long-held belief that empathy and compassion are uniquely human traits. In his insightful book, primatologist Frans de Waal explores the evolutionary roots of empathy by examining behaviors in animals, particularly primates, that reveal a deep capacity for emotional connection and cooperation. This fascinating perspective not only broadens our understanding of animal behavior but also casts new light on human social interactions, morality, and the foundations of society.

Who is Frans de Waal?

Before diving into the key ideas of **The Age of Empathy**, it's helpful to know a bit about Frans de Waal himself. De Waal is a renowned Dutch-American primatologist and ethologist whose research has focused extensively on the behavior and social intelligence of primates such as chimpanzees and bonobos. His work has been pivotal in demonstrating that many traits we consider exclusively human, such as empathy, fairness, and cooperation, have evolutionary counterparts in the animal kingdom.

De Waal's engaging writing style combined with rigorous scientific observation has made his books popular among both scientists and general readers, helping to bridge the gap between complex behavioral science and everyday understanding.

The Age of Empathy: Core Concepts

At the heart of Frans de Waal's **The Age of Empathy** is the argument that empathy is not a human invention but a biological adaptation that has been critical for the survival of social animals. The book meticulously documents examples of empathetic behavior in animals, challenging the assumption that humans are the only creatures capable of compassion and moral reasoning.

Empathy as an Evolutionary Advantage

De Waal explains that empathy evolved because it serves a practical purpose in social species. Animals that could understand and respond to the feelings of others were more likely to form cooperative groups, share resources, and defend each other from threats. This emotional connection enhances group

cohesion and ultimately improves the chances of survival for individuals within the group.

For example, chimpanzees have been observed consoling distressed companions, sharing food, and even intervening to stop conflicts. These actions are not random but demonstrate an understanding of others' emotional states, which is the essence of empathy.

From Primates to Humans: Continuity in Compassion

One of the most compelling aspects of **The Age of Empathy** is how it draws a direct line between animal behavior and human morality. De Waal argues that the roots of human ethical behavior can be traced back to the empathetic tendencies seen in our closest relatives. This means that qualities like fairness, altruism, and justice are not solely cultural constructs but have biological underpinnings.

This viewpoint encourages us to reconsider how we view human nature. Instead of seeing ourselves as isolated beings driven mostly by self-interest, **The Age of Empathy** suggests that compassion and cooperation have been vital forces shaping human evolution.

Empathy in the Animal Kingdom: Surprising Examples

Frans de Waal's research presents numerous fascinating instances where animals demonstrate empathy. These examples serve as powerful evidence against the idea that empathy is uniquely human.

Chimpanzee Consolation and Conflict Resolution

In several studies, chimpanzees were seen comforting others who were upset or distressed. This might involve gentle touching, grooming, or simply remaining close to the individual in need. Such behaviors help reduce stress and repair social bonds, which is crucial for maintaining harmony within the group.

Moreover, chimpanzees often intervene in conflicts by separating fighting individuals or calming tensions, showcasing a sophisticated understanding of social dynamics and a desire to maintain peace.

Bonobos and Their Cooperative Nature

Bonobos, close relatives of chimpanzees, are often highlighted for their peaceful and cooperative social structures. Unlike the more aggressive chimpanzees, bonobos use empathy and sexual behavior as mechanisms for conflict resolution and social bonding.

De Waal's observations reveal that bonobos frequently share food, care for injured group members, and demonstrate empathy that influences their social interactions. These behaviors highlight how empathy can foster a more harmonious community.

Other Species: Elephants, Dolphins, and Beyond

While *The Age of Empathy* primarily focuses on primates, empathy is evident in other animal species as well. Elephants, for example, have been documented mourning their dead, helping injured herd members, and showing concern for others' well-being. Dolphins are known for their cooperative hunting strategies and rescuing injured peers.

These examples suggest that empathy is widespread in the animal kingdom, especially among species with complex social structures.

Why Understanding Empathy Matters in Today's World

The insights from Frans de Waal's *The Age of Empathy* are not just academic; they have profound implications for how we understand human behavior and address social challenges.

Reframing Human Nature: Compassion as Default

In a society often portrayed as competitive and self-interested, de Waal's work offers a refreshing reminder that empathy and cooperation are deeply embedded in our biology. Recognizing this can help shift cultural narratives away from cynicism toward a more hopeful view of human potential.

Empathy in Leadership and Education

Leaders and educators who appreciate the biological basis of empathy can foster environments that encourage cooperation, understanding, and mutual respect. Teaching empathy from a young age aligns with our natural tendencies and can promote healthier social interactions and communities.

Animal Welfare and Conservation

Understanding that animals experience empathy and complex emotions supports efforts to improve animal welfare and conservation practices. It promotes a more ethical approach to how humans interact with other species, recognizing their capacity for emotional richness.

How to Cultivate Empathy in Daily Life

Inspired by the lessons from **The Age of Empathy**, there are practical ways to nurture empathy both personally and socially.

- **Practice Active Listening:** Give full attention to others when they speak, which helps you understand their feelings and perspectives.
- **Engage with Nature:** Observing animals and their social behaviors can deepen your appreciation of empathy beyond humans.
- **Encourage Perspective-Taking:** Try to imagine yourself in another's situation to better grasp their emotions.
- **Model Compassionate Behavior:** Small acts of kindness and understanding can inspire others and create a ripple effect.
- **Educate Yourself:** Reading works like Frans de Waal's **The Age of Empathy** broadens your knowledge about the evolutionary roots of compassion.

By incorporating empathy into daily interactions, we honor the evolutionary legacy that Frans de Waal highlights and contribute to a more compassionate society.

Final Thoughts on Frans de Waal the Age of Empathy

Frans de Waal's **The Age of Empathy** invites us to rethink the boundaries between humans and animals, emphasizing that empathy is a shared trait with deep evolutionary roots. This perspective enriches our understanding of social behavior, morality, and the forces that unite living beings.

By exploring empathy as a biological and social phenomenon, de Waal challenges us to recognize the compassionate potential within ourselves and

the natural world. This recognition not only advances scientific knowledge but also nurtures a more empathetic and connected human experience.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the central theme of Frans de Waal's book 'The Age of Empathy'?

'The Age of Empathy' explores the biological roots of human kindness, arguing that empathy and cooperation are innate traits that have evolved in humans and other animals for social survival.

How does Frans de Waal support his argument about empathy in 'The Age of Empathy'?

De Waal uses extensive observations of primates and other animals, demonstrating behaviors like cooperation, altruism, and consolation to show that empathy is not uniquely human but has evolutionary origins.

What role do primates play in 'The Age of Empathy'?

Primates serve as key examples in the book, illustrating complex social behaviors such as empathy, fairness, and reconciliation, which support the idea that these traits are deeply rooted in evolutionary history.

How does 'The Age of Empathy' challenge traditional views of human nature?

The book challenges the notion that humans are primarily selfish and competitive by highlighting the natural tendency towards empathy and cooperation found in both humans and other animals.

What implications does 'The Age of Empathy' have for understanding human society?

'The Age of Empathy' suggests that fostering empathy and cooperation can lead to healthier, more cooperative societies, and that these qualities are fundamental to human social organization.

Can 'The Age of Empathy' influence modern approaches to education and parenting?

Yes, the book's insights encourage nurturing empathy and pro-social behaviors in children, promoting emotional intelligence and social harmony from an early age.

Additional Resources

Frans de Waal *The Age of Empathy: Exploring the Evolutionary Roots of Compassion*

frans de waal the age of empathy stands as a seminal work that challenges conventional views about human nature by delving into the evolutionary origins of empathy and morality. In this influential book, renowned primatologist Frans de Waal presents compelling evidence that empathy is not an exclusively human trait but rather a deeply ingrained biological characteristic shared with other social animals, particularly primates. Through meticulous observation and scientific analysis, de Waal redefines empathy as a fundamental aspect of social living, shedding light on how compassion and cooperation have evolved over millions of years.

Understanding Empathy Through an Evolutionary Lens

At the heart of Frans de Waal *the age of empathy* is the proposition that empathy is an adaptive trait shaped by natural selection. Contrary to the traditional notion that humans are inherently selfish and competitive, de Waal argues that compassion and cooperation are equally intrinsic to our species. Drawing on decades of research on chimpanzees, bonobos, and other primates, he illustrates how these animals display behaviors indicative of empathy, such as consolation, reconciliation, and altruistic acts.

By framing empathy as a biological and evolutionary phenomenon, de Waal bridges the gap between psychology, biology, and anthropology. He emphasizes that empathy is not a simple, singular emotion but a complex set of cognitive and emotional capacities that enable individuals to perceive and respond to the feelings of others. This perspective encourages a reevaluation of human ethics and morality, highlighting their roots in evolutionary biology rather than solely cultural constructs.

The Role of Primates in Demonstrating Empathy

One of the most compelling aspects of Frans de Waal *the age of empathy* is the extensive use of primate studies to demonstrate the presence of empathy in non-human species. De Waal meticulously documents instances where chimpanzees and bonobos engage in behaviors that suggest an understanding of others' emotions. For example, chimpanzees have been observed consoling distressed companions, a behavior that parallels human empathy.

The book also examines how these primates navigate social hierarchies through reconciliation and conflict resolution, underscoring the importance of empathetic behavior in maintaining group cohesion. Such findings challenge

the anthropocentric view that empathy and morality are exclusively human domains and suggest that these traits have deep evolutionary roots shared among social mammals.

Key Themes in Frans de Waal the Age of Empathy

Several central themes emerge throughout the book, each contributing to a nuanced understanding of empathy and its significance.

Empathy as a Foundation for Morality

De Waal posits that empathy serves as the biological foundation for morality. By enabling individuals to feel and respond to the distress of others, empathy fosters prosocial behaviors that are essential for group survival. This challenges philosophical arguments that morality is purely a social contract or a product of cultural imposition. Instead, Frans de Waal the age of empathy situates morality within an evolutionary framework, suggesting that ethical behaviors have been naturally selected because they enhance cooperation and social harmony.

The Spectrum of Empathy

Another important discussion in the book centers around the spectrum of empathy, which ranges from emotional contagion—where an individual automatically mirrors another's feelings—to more complex forms of cognitive empathy, involving perspective-taking and understanding others' mental states. De Waal's research shows that even species considered less cognitively advanced exhibit basic empathetic responses, highlighting empathy's evolutionary continuity.

Implications for Human Society

Frans de Waal the age of empathy also explores the implications of empathy research for contemporary human society. In a world often characterized by division and conflict, the book argues for the recognition and cultivation of empathy as a means to foster social cohesion. De Waal suggests that understanding our biological predisposition for empathy could inform policies and educational approaches aimed at reducing aggression and promoting cooperation.

Scientific Contributions and Critiques

Frans de Waal the age of empathy has been lauded for its interdisciplinary approach, combining ethology, psychology, and evolutionary biology to present a comprehensive view of empathy. The book's empirical basis—rooted in extensive fieldwork and controlled experiments—adds credibility to its claims. De Waal's observations have helped shift scientific paradigms regarding animal cognition and emotion, contributing to the growing recognition of animals as sentient beings capable of complex social emotions.

However, some critics argue that anthropomorphizing animal behavior risks overstating the presence of empathy in non-human species. While de Waal acknowledges these concerns, he maintains that the behaviors observed are consistent with empathetic responses rather than mere conditioned reactions. The debate underscores the ongoing challenges in interpreting animal behavior and the need for rigorous, nuanced research.

Comparisons with Other Works on Empathy

When compared with other prominent studies on empathy and social behavior—such as those by psychologists Martin Hoffman and Simon Baron-Cohen—de Waal's work is distinctive for its evolutionary and ethological emphasis. While psychological theories often focus on developmental and neurocognitive mechanisms, Frans de Waal the age of empathy situates empathy within the broader context of animal evolution, making a persuasive case for its biological origins.

Practical Insights and Applications

Beyond theoretical insights, Frans de Waal the age of empathy offers practical implications for various fields:

- **Education:** Integrating empathy training in educational curricula can nurture compassion and reduce bullying.
- **Animal Welfare:** Recognizing empathetic capacities in animals supports more ethical treatment and conservation efforts.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Understanding empathy's role in social cohesion can improve diplomatic and community conflict mediation.
- **Healthcare:** Empathy enhances patient care and therapeutic relationships across medical disciplines.

These applications highlight the transformative potential of empathy as both a scientific concept and a social value.

Challenges in Cultivating Empathy

Despite its benefits, empathy cultivation faces obstacles such as cultural differences, social biases, and neurological disorders that impair empathetic ability. Frans de Waal the age of empathy acknowledges these complexities and advocates for a balanced approach that recognizes both biological predispositions and environmental influences in shaping empathetic behavior.

Through this lens, empathy is neither an automatic trait nor solely a learned skill but a dynamic interplay of nature and nurture.

As the dialogue on empathy continues to evolve, Frans de Waal the age of empathy remains an essential reference for understanding the biological underpinnings of compassion and the potential for empathy to bridge divides in an increasingly fragmented world.

[Frans De Waal The Age Of Empathy](#)

frans de waal the age of empathy: The Age of Empathy Frans de Waal, 2010-09-07 In this thought-provoking book, the acclaimed author of *Our Inner Ape* examines how empathy comes naturally to a great variety of animals, including humans. Are we our brothers' keepers? Do we have an instinct for compassion? Or are we, as is often assumed, only on earth to serve our own survival and interests? By studying social behaviors in animals, such as bonding, the herd instinct, the forming of trusting alliances, expressions of consolation, and conflict resolution, Frans de Waal demonstrates that animals—and humans—are preprogrammed to reach out. He has found that chimpanzees care for mates that are wounded by leopards, elephants offer reassuring rumbles to youngsters in distress, and dolphins support sick companions near the water's surface to prevent them from drowning. From day one humans have innate sensitivities to faces, bodies, and voices; we've been designed to feel for one another. De Waal's theory runs counter to the assumption that humans are inherently selfish, which can be seen in the fields of politics, law, and finance. But he cites the public's outrage at the U.S. government's lack of empathy in the wake of Hurricane Katrina as a significant shift in perspective—one that helped Barack Obama become elected and ushered in what perhaps could become an Age of Empathy. Through a better understanding of empathy's survival value in evolution, de Waal suggests, we can work together toward a more just society based on a more generous and accurate view of human nature. Written in layman's prose with a wealth of anecdotes, wry humor, and incisive intelligence, *The Age of Empathy* is essential reading for our embattled times. An important and timely message about the biological roots of human kindness.—Desmond Morris, author of *The Naked Ape*

frans de waal the age of empathy: The Age of Empathy Dr Frans de Waal, 2014-05-09 Primatologist Frans de Waal examines how empathy comes naturally to a great variety of animals, including humans.

frans de waal the age of empathy: The Age of Empathy Frans B. M. Waal, Frans de Waal, 2011-09-01 Drawing on a lifetime's experience of studying animals Frans de Waal has come to

realise that animals survive by sharing, evolution has pre-programmed us to care for, and help, others. It seems that the harsh view of mankind offered by Social Darwinism is not a view supported by contemporary science. Social behaviour in animals, the herding instinct, bonding rituals, expressions of consolation, even conflict resolution, demonstrates that animals are designed to feel for each other (humanity's natural condition is also to be group animals). From chimpanzees caring for mates that have been wounded by leopards, elephants reassuring youngsters in distress to dolphins preventing sick companions from drowning the animal kingdom has many examples of altruism. Can studying the role of empathy in evolution among animals help to build a just society based on the more generous elements of human nature?

frans de waal the age of empathy: *The Age of Empathy* Frans de Waal, 2010-09-21 An engrossing, lucid exploration of the origins of human morality that challenges our most basic assumptions, from the world's leading primatologist Is it really human nature to stab one another in the back in our climb up the corporate ladder? Competitive, selfish behaviour is often explained away as instinctive, thanks to evolution and "survival of the fittest," but in fact humans are equally hard-wired for empathy. Using research from the fields of anthropology, psychology, animal behaviour, and neuroscience, de Waal brilliantly argues that humans are group animals — highly cooperative, sensitive to injustice, and mostly peace-loving — just like other primates, elephants, and dolphins. This revelation has profound implications for everything from politics to office culture.

frans de waal the age of empathy: *Our Religious Brains* Rabbi Ralph D. Mecklenberger, 2012-02-15 A Revolution in Human Self-Understanding Is Underway What Does It Mean for Religion and Our Belief in God? The brain and consciousness are themselves awe-inspiring. So learning about them no more undermines religion than learning about how symphonies and paintings are crafted takes away from our appreciation of music and art. Science alone does not provide the ultimate answers or firmly rooted values for which we yearn. But religion alone does not have all the answers either. We are blessed, as moderns, with both. from the Introduction This is a groundbreaking, accessible look at the implications of cognitive science for religion and theology, intended for laypeople. Avoiding neurological jargon and respectful to all faiths, it examines: Current theory on how our brains construct our world in order to guide us safely through life, creating and appreciating meaning as we go. What religious experience is as it plays out in our brains. How modern science challenges historic ideas about free will and undermines the religious concept of the soul as a meta-physical entity separable from the body. What cognitive science reveals about our need for community. Why we should be loyal to one faith if, in fact, all major religious traditions deal effectively with universal human needs.

frans de waal the age of empathy: *Theological Ethics through a Multispecies Lens* Celia E. Deane-Drummond, 2019-11-05 There are two driving questions informing this book. The first is where does our moral life come from? It presupposes that considering morality broadly is inadequate. Instead, different aspects need to be teased apart. It is not sufficient to assume that different virtues are bolted onto a vicious animality, red in tooth and claw. Nature and culture have interlaced histories. By weaving in evolutionary theories and debates on the evolution of compassion, justice and wisdom, it shows a richer account of who we are as moral agents. The second driving question concerns our relationships with animals. Deane-Drummond argues for a complex community-based multispecies approach. Hence, rather than extending rights, a more radical approach is a holistic multispecies framework for moral action. This need not weaken individual responsibility. She intends not to develop a manual of practice, but rather to build towards an alternative philosophically informed approach to theological ethics, including animal ethics. The theological thread weaving through this account is wisdom. Wisdom has many different levels, and in the broadest sense is connected with the flow of life understood in its interconnectedness and sociality. It is profoundly theological and practical. In naming the project the evolution of wisdom Deane-Drummond makes a statement about where wisdom may have come from and its future orientation. But justice, compassion and conscience are not far behind, especially in so far as they are relevant to both individual decision-making and institutions.

frans de waal the age of empathy: ,

frans de waal the age of empathy: The Power of the Herd Linda Kohanov, 2015-07-20 Linda Kohanov is beloved for her groundbreaking articulation of “the way of the horse,” an experiential wisdom known to riders for centuries but little studied or adapted to off-horse use. Now Kohanov takes those horse-inspired insights on the nonverbal elements of exceptional communication and leadership into the realms of our workplaces and relationships. Here we explore the benefits of “nonpredatory power” in developing assertiveness, fostering creativity, dealing with conflict, and heightening mind-body awareness. In “A Brief History of Power,” the first part of this far-reaching book, Kohanov profiles cultural innovators who employed extraordinary nonverbal leadership skills to change history, usually on horseback: Winston Churchill, George Washington, Alexander the Great, and Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha), among others. She also draws on the behavior of mature horse herds, as well as the herding cultures of Africa and Mongolia, to debunk theories of dominance hierarchies, challenge ingrained notions of “survival of the fittest,” and demonstrate the power of a consensual leadership in which governing roles are fluid. Kohanov then adapts these lessons into twelve powerful guiding principles we can all incorporate into our work and personal lives. Eloquent and provocative, this is horse sense for everyone who seeks to thrive in the herds we all run in — our communities, careers, families, and friendships.

frans de waal the age of empathy: The Journey Towards Compassionate A.I. Jean-Luc Mommaerts, 2020-03-06 It may take a few more decades, but ‘soon enough,’ A.I. will turn into super-A.I. This is an artificial intelligence which in all areas of what is now seen as ‘human intelligence’ approaches this, then surpasses it. After that, it will keep growing exponentially. In the meantime, at relatively short notice, humanity will encounter a challenging A.I. bi-bottleneck: 1) humans possibly misusing A.I. in a big way, and 2) A.I. spiraling into many directions of which any unfortunate one may be enough for disaster. Will we control A.I. or will A.I. dominate us? Let’s hope this is the wrong question. Because if it’s the right question, and given enough time, there is no shred of a doubt about the answer. Still, of course, we need to give it our best shot not to be dominated by an evil force. We should strive for control. At the same time, transcending the question opens up the domain of Compassion. This gradually makes thinking in terms of ‘control’ and ‘domination’ in human – A.I. interactions obsolete. We will together strive for a better world within an alignment of our values. But what are the real human values? There are cultural and individual differences. Moreover, what seem to be anyone’s values may be a superficial layer above deeper values, which are not necessarily congruent with conscious awareness. So, the human/A.I. value alignment question will be: how to align what? I write in *The Journey about Compassion* as the striving to approach these values in their deeper sense. They can subsequently be realized for each individual in two directions: relief of deep suffering and enhancement of inner growth. Both notions are to be clarified at the individual level. Compassionate A.I. is (the striving towards) an A.I. that can help us to know and to realize ourselves in-depth. The beauty is that this way, human/A.I. value alignment and further development of A.I. can intrinsically go hand in hand. Lisa is a software coaching chat-bot that is being developed specifically with this goal: helping humans and A.I. in Compassionate ways to become healthier, stronger and more effectively Compassionate towards near ones as well as all sentient beings. In this book, ‘super-A.I.’ is the future kind of A.I. that may be able – but not necessarily! – to act Compassionately. We don’t have to wait for that, for Compassionate A.I. to become important. Already, humans can use A.I. more or less Compassionately. From what point is it relevant as a characteristic of the A.I. system itself, regardless of how humans use the A.I.? There is no steep border. Long before super-A.I., the first systems in which it becomes more pertinent, are those in which Compassion is part of the purpose. That is, systems that in communication with users are meant to give an effectively Compassionate experience. To understand where Compassionate A.I. may be heading towards, we need to understand Compassion. This leads us on a journey, starting on the one hand from ‘data’ and on the other hand from drive-to-thrive (life itself). On this journey, we encounter many insights about intelligence, consciousness, drive-to-thrive, non-conscious processing... The end of the journey lies in

full Compassion. Hopefully, this is the future for A.I. as well as humanity.

frans de waal the age of empathy: *Life of Earth* Stanley A. Rice, Ph.D, 2012-10-31 In this portrait of Planet Earth-at just about the mid point of its probable lifespan-a biologist discusses the evolution of the network of life and the crucial role played by humans in determining the future of our world. Unlike most books on earth history, which present the story of life on our planet in terms of one chronological period after another, the author discusses Earth's teeming diversity in terms of pivotal evolutionary developments. Among these he stresses the importance of symbiosis, sex, and altruism as key determinants of the Earth's biodiversity. Symbiosis-when single cells began working together-sparked the sudden appearance of complex animals. Much later symbiotic relationships led to flowering plants that depended on animals for pollination and seed dispersal. With the advent of sexual selection, there developed an astonishing world of complex behavior and a dizzying array of life forms. In humans, sexual selection exerted a great influence on the development of our large brains. Altruism-when species learned to work together-resulted in even greater variety and complexity. In early humans, altruism gave rise to ever-widening social circles and the spread of culture. The author also discusses the role of photosynthesis in establishing and maintaining life on earth; the evidence for ancient natural catastrophes, which caused widespread extinctions; and the importance of religion and the recent use of scientific reasoning in the development and the future of the human species. This eloquent, panoramic perspective is well designed to foster an appreciation for the scope of life on Earth and to encourage wise stewardship of the natural world on which our survival depends.

frans de waal the age of empathy: *The Individual and Utopia* Clint Jones, Cameron Ellis, 2016-03-09 Central to the idea of a perfect society is the idea that communities must be strong and bound together with shared ideologies. However, while this may be true, rarely are the individuals that comprise a community given primacy of place as central to a strong communal theory. This volume moves away from the dominant, current macro-level theorising on the subject of identity and its relationship to and with globalising trends, focusing instead on the individual's relationship with utopia so as to offer new interpretive approaches for engaging with and examining utopian individuality. Interdisciplinary in scope and bringing together work from around the world, *The Individual and Utopia* enquires after the nature of the utopian as citizen, demonstrating the inherent value of making the individual central to utopian theorizing and highlighting the methodologies necessary for examining the utopian individual. The various approaches employed reveal what it is to be an individual yoked by the idea of citizenship and challenge the ways that we have traditionally been taught to think of the individual as citizen. As such, it will appeal to scholars with interests in social theory, philosophy, literature, cultural studies, architecture, and feminist thought, whose work intersects with political thought, utopian theorizing, or the study of humanity or human nature.

frans de waal the age of empathy: *Religion and the Philosophy of Life* Gavin Flood, 2019-02-14 *Religion and the Philosophy of Life* considers how religion as the source of civilization transforms the fundamental bio-sociology of humans through language and the somatic exploration of religious ritual and prayer. Gavin Flood offers an integrative account of the nature of the human, based on what contemporary scientists tell us, especially evolutionary science and social neuroscience, as well as through the history of civilizations. Part one contemplates fundamental questions and assumptions: what the current state of knowledge is concerning life itself; what the philosophical issues are in that understanding; and how we can explain religion as the driving force of civilizations in the context of human development within an evolutionary perspective. It also addresses the question of the emergence of religion and presents a related study of sacrifice as fundamental to religions' views about life and its transformation. Part two offers a reading of religions in three civilizational blocks—India, China, and Europe/the Middle East—particularly as they came to formation in the medieval period. It traces the history of how these civilizations have thematised the idea of life itself. Part three then takes up the idea of a life force in part three and traces the theme of the philosophy of life through to modern times. On the one hand, the book presents a narrative account of life itself through the history of civilizations, and on the other

presents an explanation of that narrative in terms of life.

frans de waal the age of empathy: Be a Perfect Man Andrew J. Romig, 2017-09-26 In *Be a Perfect Man*, Andrew J. Romig argues that Carolingian representations of *caritas* served as a discourse of power, a means by which early medieval writers made claims, both explicit and implicit, about the hierarchies of masculine power that they believed ought to exist within their world.

frans de waal the age of empathy: The Crisis of Connection Niobe Way, Alisha Ali, Carol Gilligan, Pedro Noguera, 2020-01-07 A collection of essays that examine the causes of and provide solutions to the widespread alienation and disconnection that beset modern society. Since the beginning of the 21st century, people have become increasingly disconnected from themselves, each other, and the world around them. A “crisis of connection” stemming from growing alienation, social isolation, and fragmentation characterizes modern society. The signs of this crisis of connection are everywhere, from decreasing levels of empathy and trust, to burgeoning cases of suicide, depression and loneliness. The astronomical rise in inequality around the world has contributed to the critical nature of this moment. To delve into the heart of the crisis, leading researchers and practitioners draw from the science of human connection to tell a five-part story about its roots, consequences, and solutions. In doing so, they reveal how we, in modern society, have been captive to a false narrative that takes individualism as a universal truth. The new story now emerging from across the human sciences underscores our social and emotional capacities and needs. The science also reveals the ways in which the privileging of the self over relationships and of individual success over the common good as well as the perpetuation of dehumanizing stereotypes have led to a crisis of connection that is now widespread. Finally, the practitioners in the volume present concrete solutions that show ways we can create a more just and humane world. “This profoundly important book suggests that our innate human determination to bridge differences and live in vulnerable, loving relationships is the antidote to rising fear and anxiety.” —Lyn Mikel Brown, author of *Powered by Girl*

frans de waal the age of empathy: The Nonviolent God J. Denny Weaver, 2013-11-26 This bold new statement on the nonviolence of God challenges long-standing assumptions of divine violence in theology, the violent God pictured in the Old Testament, and the supposed violence of God in Revelation. In *The Nonviolent God* J. Denny Weaver argues that since God is revealed in Jesus, the nonviolence of Jesus most truly reflects the character of God. According to Weaver, the way Christians live -- Christian ethics -- is an ongoing expression of theology. Consequently, he suggests positive images of the reign of God made visible in the narrative of Jesus -- nonviolent practice, forgiveness and restorative justice, issues of racism and sexism, and more -- in order that Christians might live more peacefully.

frans de waal the age of empathy: Friends and Other Strangers Richard B. Miller, 2016-07-05 *Friends and Other Strangers* argues for expanding the field of religious ethics to address the normative dimensions of culture, interpersonal desires, friendships and family, and institutional and political relationships. Richard B. Miller urges religious ethicists to turn to cultural studies to broaden the range of the issues they address and to examine matters of cultural practice and cultural difference in critical and self-reflexive ways. *Friends and Other Strangers* critically discusses the ethics of ethnography; ethnocentrism, relativism, and moral criticism; empathy and the ethics of self-other attunement; indignation, empathy, and solidarity; the meaning of moral responsibility in relation to children and friends; civic virtue, war, and alterity; the normative and psychological dimensions of memory; and religion and democratic public life. Miller challenges distinctions between psyche and culture, self and other, and uses the concepts of intimacy and alterity as dialectical touchstones for examining the normative dimensions of self-other relationships. A wholly contemporary, global, and interdisciplinary work, *Friends and Other Strangers* illuminates aspects of moral life ethicists have otherwise overlooked.

frans de waal the age of empathy: Face Politics Jenny Edkins, 2015-04-10 The face is central to contemporary politics. In Deleuze and Guattari’s work on faciality we find an assertion that the face is a particular politics, and dismantling the face is also a politics. This book explores the politics

of such diverse issues as images and faces in photographs and portraits; expressive faces; psychology and neuroscience; face recognition; face blindness; facial injury, disfigurement and face transplants through questions such as: What it might mean to dismantle the face, and what politics this might entail, in practical terms? What sort of a politics is it? Is it already taking place? Is it a politics that is to be desired, a better politics, a progressive politics? The book opens up a vast field of further research that needs to be taken forward to begin to address the politics of the face more fully, and to elaborate the alternative forms of personhood and politics that dismantling the face opens to view. The book will be agenda-setting for scholars located in the field of international politics in particular but cognate areas as well who want to pursue the implications of face politics for the crucial questions of subjectivity, sovereignty and personhood.

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