

Rogue Species

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If you are a human - and I will assume you are if you are reading this - then please know that I am also a member of the species and am profoundly embarrassed to be so.

In my travels around the world these days, people often ask me if I think Donald Trump is qualified to be the president of the United States. No, I say every time, I don't think he is even qualified to be called a human being. When I say, 'be called a human being,' I don't mean that he is not a member of the human species. Sadly, we must admit that he is technically, biologically-speaking a member of the human family, and he proudly exhibits the very worst traits of our species. What I mean is that he doesn't qualify to be called a human being in the higher sense of Ubuntu, or "people-ness," or "human(e)-ness": "Umntu nguntu ngabantu"; "Motho ke motho ka batho". (If you don't know what these proverbs mean, please consult my BFF, Google). But when all is said and done, if Trump is the worst of us, he is still one of us and we have to accept, sooner rather than later, that we're a wicked, horrible, murderous, barbarous, selfish, short-sighted, arrogant, cruel species in general. Sometimes we can treat each other very well, in the spirit of Ubuntu, but in general, we commit genocide on each other and many other species of plant and animal life.

We are so egotistical that even as we kill this earth, our only home, with our disastrous disrespect of the environment and ecosystem, we continue to insist that WE ARE THE KINGS OF THIS WORLD, eternally superior to all other creatures...

Sad, sad stats:

"The extent of forests, which once covered a large part of the planet, is one good measure of ecosystem survival. Overall, at least half of the world's forests have disappeared at the hand of humankind -- three quarters of these in the past 300 years and the majority within the past century" (AAAS [Atlas](#) of Population and Environment).

For a list of 100 animals recently made extinct by, guess who - us! - click [here](#).

If you like science and are debating what to eat today, [read](#) "Crying elephants and giggling rats – animals have feelings, too."

I have always wondered what makes us so certain that we're worthier than all else on this planet. Maybe this is the reason I became a vegetarian when I turned 9, a move considered beyond mad by many of my friends and relatives in southern

Africa - Is there another geographical region that reveres consuming meat more than southern Africa? (Yet, despite my 'mental' decision and many nay-sayers, I grew up to be big and strong and healthy.) Or was my decision the result of reading Charlotte's Web, the delightful classic by E.B. White, which made me empathize so much with the novel's cast of characters - an adorable piglet, an erudite spider, a crotchety rat - that I said, 'Enough, I don't want to participate in this killing anymore.'

But was that one childhood decision really doing enough? I am still a member of this rogue species destroying the earth and all its species. I try not to buy leather but I sure rack up a lot of frequent flyer miles. My carbon footprint must be bigger than a giant's! I wish I could tell you that I planned to become a vegan in the new year but that would be a flat out lie, I love dairy! Maybe I have planted some trees and I am ardent about recycling but I can't even live without wifi for ten minutes without having a panic attack so...What can I do in 2018 on behalf of all the earth's species and the earth itself?

Please let me know before the Chinese New Year on 16 February, 2018...

P.S. Many of these themes are explored in the [film, **Beatriz at Dinner**](#), excellent acting, razor-sharp screenplay...

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