

Discussion luminary

[Science](#), [Biology](#)



Even in the 1960s the jungle remained terra incognita, an unknown land with the power to hold the technology of mechanized warfare beyond its periphery. And with good reason, Munro thought. Men just did not belong there. He was not pleased to be back. Elliot, never having been in a rainforest, was fascinated... [skip to next page] Because Elliot had looked forward to his first experience of the equatorial African rain forest, he was surprised at how quickly he felt oppressed--and how soon he entertained thoughts of leaving again.

Yet the tropical rain forests had spawned most new life forms, including man.... As he walked through the forest, Elliot found himself thinking of it as an enormous hot, dark womb, a place new species were nourished in unchanging conditions until they were ready to migrate out to the harsher and more variable temperate zones. --This passage has a couple competing ideas that illuminate the other tensions of Congo. Munro says that humans do not belong in the jungle and despite Elliot's initial enthusiasm his later feeling of "oppression" puts him closer to Munro.

But Elliot also thinks that the rain forest is where life comes from, including humans, a place free from the "technology of mechanized warfare" that destroys life without replacing it. So, if we read this together, humans owe a debt to the universal origin of life but are now cut off from it and feel it as a mysterious enemy. In a way, though, language lets us re-enter or re-connect with this origin of life through Amy and her connection to the world of gorillas and humans. Day 8 Chapter 4: But he know what Munro was saying.

Inevitably, people who raised apes found at a certain point they could no longer keep them. With maturity the animals became too large, too powerful,

too much their own species to be controllable. It was no longer possible to put them in diapers and pretend they were cute humanlike creatures. Their genes coded inevitable differences that ultimately became impossible to overlook. --This passage is interesting because it helps to explain some of the commentary elsewhere in the book about how humans are affecting the world.

Like apes, human civilization has grown up and escaped from the control of nature: we are too large and too powerful for the jungle to resist our bulldozers and chainsaws. This passage also seems to imply that each species has a genetic nature that it cannot resist, so we will probably be helpless to stop ourselves from exhausting our natural resources unless it is also part of our nature to check ourselves. Day 9 Chapter 1:

He also found it off that the information recorded by the video camera had to travel more than twenty thousand miles before returning to the display screen, only a few feet away. It was, he said later, the “ world’s longest spinal cord,” and it produced an odd effect. Even at the speed of light, the transmission required a tenth of a second, and since there was a short processing time in the Houston computer, the images did not appear on the screen instantaneously, but arrived about a half a second late. --Even out of context this passage is an interesting commentary on our every day lives.

Although we know that light and sounds travel at certain speeds we are used to feeling like we are immediately connected to our surroundings; however, the infinitesimal gap between our selves and our world becomes apparent through technology. This is ironic since, as in the passage quoted, technology gives us knowledge of the world we otherwise wouldn’t have. But

the price of knowing more about the world is that we are also farther away from it. Discussion Director In Day 11 Chapter 2 Ross says, “ People worship what they fear... hoping to control it.

” How might this be a commentary on Congo? Congo creates a magical and mythical species of gorilla to terrorize the intrusive Westerners. Although an alternative explanation in the novel explains what is happening in the city of Zinj, Congo represents to us what we fear. However, what we are led to “ worship” is not the violence of the gray gorillas but Amy’s language abilities. The possibility that animals can be equal to humans in mastering language is something we fear and make stories about in the hopes of controlling it.

Day 13 Chapter 1: What does the team’s reaction to the discovery of diamonds say about the difference between humans and animals? Animals are usually thought to respond to training in a relatively mechanistic way, whereas humans are thought to possess free will. The recent defeat of the gray apes agrees with this: they could not resist the broadcast with their own will and had to obey it. However, even though the humans are in danger for their lives they pursue the blue diamonds as if they are worth more than life itself.

How does Crichton’s selection of References make you feel about the truth of the novel? The references show that there are real scientific observations and facts underpinning some of the technical aspects of the novel. On the other hand, it is clearly a novel of fiction that depends on some pretty fantastic departures from the real world for its effect and to make its points about human-animal communication. Ultimately it indicates that even

scientific facts can be bent around a convincing narrative and put to the service of something that is not scientifically verifiable.