

JANE GOODALL

British primatologist and ethnologist

Jane Goodall is best known for her groundbreaking work observing chimpanzee behavior in the wild. She has made significant contributions to the study of animal behavior, as well as to causes related to conservation and animal welfare.

Born: April 3, 1934

Area(s) of significance: Science and technology;
social issues

EARLY LIFE

Valerie Jane Morris-Goodall was born on April 3, 1934, in London, England. As a child, she showed an interest in the animals on her grandparents' farm, and her favorite books (*The Jungle Book*, *Dr. Doolittle*, and the *Tarzan* stories) featured animals as main characters. By the time she was ten years old, she was already dreaming of Africa, a dream that her mother encouraged.

Goodall's parents divorced when she was twelve years old. As a single mother of two daughters, Vane Morris-Goodall could not afford to send Jane to college, and instead she suggested that Jane attend secretarial school. Vane thought that secretarial skills would enable her daughter to take a job anywhere in the world. After graduating, Jane worked as a waitress, a secretary, and a production assistant for a film company, but the dream of Africa was never far from her mind. When a school friend invited her to visit her family's farm in Kenya, the twenty-three-year-old Goodall eagerly accepted.

Shortly after arriving in Nairobi in 1957, Goodall took a secretarial job and soon set up an appointment to meet internationally renowned paleontologist and anthropologist Dr. Louis Leakey. Goodall asked Leakey about his studies and encounters with animals, and by the end of the meeting, Dr. Leakey hired Goodall as his personal secretary. He invited her to join him and his wife, Mary, on a fossil dig at Olduvai Gorge in Tanganyika (now Tanzania).

Upon returning to Kenya, Goodall took a job at a Nairobi museum, but Dr. Leakey was convinced she would be the perfect observer for a group of chimpanzees near Lake Tanganyika. He was planning in-depth field studies of each of the great apes

(chimpanzees, orangutans, and gorillas), and he felt that women researchers would be more observant and less threatening than men to the animals they were watching. Leakey even considered Goodall's lack of formal training to be an asset, as it would not interfere with her observations. She agreed to participate and she became, along with Biruté Galdikas who studied orangutans and Dian Fossey who studied mountain gorillas, part of the female contingency of primatologists, an area that is one of the few scientific fields with as many women scientists as men.

As Goodall set out for Gombe National Park in Tanganyika in 1960, it was the beginning of the longest field research study of an animal group in history.

LIFE'S WORK

Tanganyikan and British authorities were not as enthusiastic about Goodall's arrangement as Leakey had been. They believed a single European woman in the bush would be in great danger, and they refused to allow her to enter Gombe National Park alone. Goodall's mother agreed to join her daughter, and Goodall began her study in the summer of 1960.

Initially, the chimpanzees were wary of her presence and would scatter whenever she got too close. She spent her first three months at Gombe allowing the chimpanzees to become accustomed to her, often watching them through binoculars from a distance. Over time, she gave many of them names: David Greybeard, Passion, Fifi, Flo, and Goliath.

In October 1960, Goodall witnessed something that would challenge the accepted ideas about chimpanzees. Through binoculars, she observed a chimpanzee she had named David Greybeard pluck a long blade of grass from the ground and stick it into a termite mound. After he left, she ventured to the mound herself; after sticking a blade of grass in the hole she discovered that it was covered with termites, common food for chimpanzees. She had just learned that chimpanzees could use tools and that they modified tools to suit their needs, which were things completely unknown to Western science. Shortly after witnessing David Greybeard use the blade of grass as a termite scoop, Goodall watched another chimpanzee strip the leaves off of a branch and use it in a similar manner.

Due to Goodall's lack of formal scientific training, she approached her subjects in a nonscientific manner.



Dr. Jane Goodall, Tournament of Roses Grand Marshal, 2012 (via Wikimedia Commons)

Whereas traditional study protocol would have a scientist assigning the chimpanzees numbers, Goodall gave them names. She viewed the chimpanzees in human terms and attributed human characteristics and emotions to them. She noted that individual chimpanzees had different personalities and that chimpanzees had a humanlike social structure with nurturing mothers, playful children, and family bonds.

Goodall's findings about violent and aggressive tendencies in chimpanzees, including cannibalism and territorial wars, were judged more harshly than her discovery of other humanlike qualities in chimpanzees. Because humans and primates share 99 percent of the same DNA, some scientists urged Goodall to suppress her information, fearing it would justify war and violence in humans as genetically predetermined.

The unorthodox findings that Goodall reported from Gombe were controversial in the scientific community, but the National Geographic Society found them interesting enough to fund her studies when Goodall's initially funding ran out after six months. National Geographic sent photographer Hugo van Lawick to chronicle Goodall's work; van Lawick and Goodall married in 1964. The couple had a son, Hugo Eric Louis, but they divorced in 1974. Goodall later married Derek Bryceson, the head of Tanzania's national parks, in 1975; Bryceson died of cancer only five years later.

When Goodall's research findings were scrutinized by the scientific community as being unprofessional and unreliable, Leakey arranged for her to obtain a PhD in ethology, the study of animal behavior, at Cambridge University in England. The school accepted her field study and experience in lieu of undergraduate degrees, and though Goodall met repeated opposition from her dissertation committee for what they considered her "nonobjective" style, she received her degree in 1965.

In the decades since Goodall began her studies in Gombe, she has gained not only respect and legitimacy within the scientific community, but iconic stature. Primatologists, anthropologists, and graduate students in ethology conduct field studies at the camp in Gombe. In 1975, however, Zairian rebels (in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) invaded the camp and kidnapped four students. They were later released unharmed, but the event almost caused the camp to permanently shut down.

Goodall has dedicated her life to the study of chimpanzees, and she now spends less time in the field and more time on the lecture circuit. In 1977, she founded the Jane Goodall Institute, headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland, with the aim of providing continual funding for chimpanzee field research. The mission statement of the Institute is to educate and empower individuals to make a difference through conservation and environmentalism, thus creating a better environment for all living creatures. This is especially vital to the wild chimpanzee population, whose numbers have dropped from 2 million in 1900 to less than 300,000 in 2012. It is believed that the decline is a result of poachers selling chimpanzees to zoos, hunters selling meat to African markets, and environmental problems such as pollution, the clear-cutting of forests, and global warming destroying chimpanzee habitats.

Among the programs sponsored by the Jane Goodall Institute is Roots & Shoots, which encourages young people to make positive changes and improve life for animals, humans, and the environment. Members complete hands-on projects in their communities ranging from planting trees, picking up garbage at local parks, and supporting local animal shelters. There are more than 3,000 Roots & Shoots groups in fifty countries around the globe.

Another Goodall Institute program is TACARE (pronounced "take care"), which targets rural African

villages and promotes education. It is TACARE's aim to improve health and education, encourage smart agriculture, and engender respect for the environment.

SIGNIFICANCE

Goodall has received more than twenty-three honorary degrees from international universities and has received nearly 100 awards or special recognitions by organizations such as the National Geographic Society and Disney's Animal Kingdom. She has been the subject of numerous movies and research films, including programs for the BBC, PBS, and National Geographic. Goodall is the author of several groundbreaking books, many of which have been translated into other languages. Among them are *My Friends the Wild Chimpanzees* (1967), *In the Shadow of Man* (1971), *The Chimpanzees of Gombe: Patterns of Behavior* (1986), and the children's books *My Life with the Chimpanzees* (1988) and *The Chimpanzee Family Book* (1989). In 2014, she published *Seeds of Hope*.

After many years without a public appearance, Goodall agreed to appear at the Ninth World Wilderness Congress in Mexico in November 2009. The event included lectures and workshops on environmental conservation efforts worldwide.

Cambria Lovelady

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AL GORE

Politician, environmentalist, and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize

Gore, both as politician and activist, underscored the need for public concern, discussion, and debate on issues of technology, consumption, and the environment. In 2007 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work on global warming. In 2000, he received a majority of the popular vote for president of the United States but was not permitted to take office after the U.S. Supreme Court decided against a further recounting of damaged ballots in Florida.

Born: March 31, 1948

Area(s) of significance: Government and politics

EARLY LIFE

Al Gore was born and raised in Washington, D.C., where his father was serving as a representative from Tennessee's Fourth Congressional District. When the younger Gore was only four years old, his father was elected to the Senate. While Gore spent many summers on the family farm near Carthage, Tennessee, he lived and attended private schools in Washington.

Gore graduated from Harvard University with a degree in government in 1969 and entered the US Army, intending to serve in Vietnam despite his opposition to the war. While he had comparatively safer duty as a reporter for a military newspaper, simply being in Vietnam was dangerous. Gore was one of the very few sons of Washington politicians to serve in the war zone. After Vietnam, he attended Vanderbilt University and took graduate courses in religion. Not satisfied with this area of study, he switched to the Vanderbilt law school. He also worked as a reporter for the Nashville *Tennessean* while pursuing his graduate education.

LIFE'S WORK

At age twenty-eight, Gore quit law school to run for the congressional seat his father had once held. As a border-state Democrat, Gore represented his district's moderately conservative views but sought to establish progressive credentials by developing expertise in arms control and the protection of the environment. He served four terms in the House until Tennessee's senior senator, Republican Howard Baker, retired in 1984. Gore then won his seat in the Senate. He broadened his policy credentials by developing expertise in modern technology,

and psychological ramifications of that liberation, and by his loving relationship with Estaven, an exile from both of the opposing societies on Gethen. *The Left Hand of Darkness* won both the Nebula Award of the Science Fiction Writers of America and the Hugo Award of the WorldScience Fiction Convention. In 2017, *The Left Hand of Darkness* was reprinted in a prestigious Library of America edition.

Charles and Ursula K. Le Guin, who have three grown children—Elizabeth, Caroline, and Theodore—live in a roomy old frame house on the banks of the Willamette River in Portland. The author is a tall, slender woman with dark hair, large dark eyes, a warm manner, and, as Harlan Ellison has noted, an “elegance and style” inherited from her mother. Outside of reading, her chief recreations are listening to music, especially Beethoven and Schubert, and visiting art museums or perusing art books. Her favorite artist is Joseph Mallord William Turner, the English landscape painter.

Ursula K. Le Guin has taught writing workshops at Portland State University and the University of Washington, among other universities. Asked about her politics, she has said, “If people must call names, I cheerfully accept Lenin’s anathema as suitable: I am a petty-bourgeois anarchist, and an internal emigre. O.K.?” “In philosophy and religion, she has described herself as “an inconsistent Taoist and a consistent unChristian.”

In 2014, Le Guin was honored with a lifetime achievement award by the the National Book Foundation. Her acceptance speech was the highlight of the event, and a video of the speech circulated widely on social media. In it, Le Guin spoke forcefully on the role of artists in society and on resisting the commercial impulses of the publishing industry.

In addition to her fiction, Le Guin has published ten volumes of poetry and nine volumes of nonfiction, mostly collections of essays. Her most recent essay collection, *Words Are My Matter: Writings About Life and Books, 2000–2016*, won a 2017 Hugo Award.

SIGNIFICANCE

Her tales of the marvelous are quests into imagined worlds in both outer space and “the Inner Lands.” Combining the lyricism, symbolism, and allusiveness of a poet with the anthropologist’s concern for concrete cultural detail, she describes in much of her major work alternative societies where the hero’s encounter with “the Other,” the alien, culminates in a Taoist “touching of opposites.” Mrs. Le Guin established her reputation

with the novels in her so-called Hainish cycle, especially the classic *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), and with those in her Earthsea series, beginning with *The Wizard of Earthsea* (1968) and ending with *The Other Wind* (2001). The Hainish novels are science fiction stories about future contacts between culturally diverse humanoid settlements in our galaxy, while the Earthsea novels are straight fantasy, about the life and adventures of a wizard in the invented Earthsea Archipelago.

Much of Ursula K. Le Guin’s work is realistic or quasi-realistic. In her “metaphors for the human condition” she shows us ourselves and our world at a distance, through the eyes of protagonists who are outsiders. Transcending the limitations of culture and xenophobia, their vision is capable of facing an open universe. That capacity, in her view, is an aesthetic and moral imperative.

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SPIKE LEE

Film director

Lee is one of the premier filmmakers of the twentieth century. His films and documentaries often depict historical or literary subject matter and raise difficult questions of race, class, gender, color, and nationality. They routinely spark heated debates about black identity, aesthetics, urban life, and politics.

Born: March 20, 1957

Area(s) of significance: Film: directing

EARLY LIFE

Spike Lee was born Shelton Jackson Lee in Atlanta, Georgia, and raised in Brooklyn, New York. Lee attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, a historically

black college. He returned to New York after graduation to attend film school at New York University.

LIFE'S WORK

Although Lee made several films as a student, including *Last Hustle in Brooklyn* (1977), *The Answer* (1980), and *Sara* (1981), he began his professional career with an hour-long film, *Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads*, in 1983. After his attempts to make a film about the experiences of a bike messenger failed, Lee was forced to regroup. His next film, *She's Gotta Have It* (1986), a commentary on sexual politics, garnered critical acclaim and earned Lee the coveted New Film Award at that year's Cannes Film Festival. Lee's career blossomed thereafter. His success ignited a feverish work ethic that saw him direct one film each year throughout the 1990s, trailblazing what became known as the New Black Cinema movement.

In 1989, Lee's *Do the Right Thing*, which he also starred in, sought to capture African American and Italian American ethnic competition and conflict in urban space. The film's depiction of social angst, gentrification, and police brutality attracted an array of criticism and interpretations that spoke to the racial divide fictionalized on screen, and the work established Lee as a world-class director. Although controversial at the time of its release, it was a critical success, receiving Academy Award nominations for best original screenplay and best supporting actor, and performed well at the box office. It would go on to be considered among the best films of all time.

Other definitive films by Lee include *Jungle Fever* (1991), which examined the politics of interracial dating; *Malcolm X* (1992), an epic portrayal of the slain African American leader; *Bamboozled* (2000), Lee's critique of the television and film industry's treatment of African Americans; and *She Hate Me* (2004), a comedy critical of the pharmaceutical industry.

During this period, Lee partnered with HBO to produce several made-for-television documentaries. In 1997, he directed *Four Little Girls* (1997), a documentary on the legacy of the 1963 bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, that killed four African American girls. His documentary on the life of football great, actor, and community activist Jim Brown appeared in 2002, and *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts*, Lee's meditation on the aftermath of 2005's Hurricane Katrina, appeared in 2006.

Although Lee's films are directed at mainstream audiences, his oeuvre developed along a continuum of artistry dedicated to African American life and culture. In the



Spike Lee, 70th Annual Peabody Awards Luncheon, 2011. (via Wikimedia Commons)

2000s, he began to produce work that dealt less explicitly with race in American society. Such films as *25th Hour* (2002) and *Inside Man* (2006) allowed Lee to engage such issues as the lingering politics of the Holocaust and American life after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. These productions showed Lee's ability to juggle the film industry's commercial imperatives with his desire to produce work of social relevance.

Lee continued to direct a mix of documentary and feature films through the late 2000s and into the 2010s. *Miracle at St Anna* (2008) was a fictionalized version of the experiences of African American troops, known as buffalo soldiers, in World War II. Lee profiled basketball star Kobe Bryant in *Kobe Doin' Work* (2009), provided a follow-up to *When the Levees Broke* with *If God Is Willing and da Creek Don't Rise* (2010), and documented the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Michael Jackson album *Bad* with *Bad 25* (2012). Other feature films included the drama *Red Hook Summer* (2012), set in Brooklyn, *Oldboy* (2013), an adaptation of a violent manga, and the vampire film *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* (2014).

Although Lee's work has drawn criticism for being didactic, difficult, or heavy-handed, he has often cast such capable actors as Samuel L. Jackson, Halle Berry, Roger Guenveur Smith, Giancarlo Esposito, Laurence Fishburne, Rosie Perez, and Denzel Washington, many of whom became stars after working with Lee. He also was responsible for introducing longtime actors and activists Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis to a new generation of moviegoers.

Members of Lee's family also have played key supporting roles in his films. His sister Joie appeared in several of Lee's films, and his brother David often served as a unit photographer. His father, jazz musician Bill Lee, was an early contributor to the sound of films such as *School Daze* (1988) and *Mo' Better Blues* (1990). Lee himself has played cameo roles in several of his films as well. Producer Monty Ross and photographer Ernest Dickerson (classmates of Lee at Morehouse and New York University, respectively) have formed the core of Lee's production staff over the years.

Lee's achievements have led critics to label him as both an insider and outsider in Hollywood. Through his production company, 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks, Lee has been able to maintain a rare level of autonomy and control within the existing production and distribution structures of the film industry. Funding his projects has routinely challenged Lee, however, and he has relied on a number of African American celebrity donors.

In addition to his feature films, Lee has directed a number of television commercials for Nike, the Gap, and the US Navy through Spike/DDB, his commercial advertising company. He has also directed several music videos.

SIGNIFICANCE

A student of national and international filmmaking techniques, Lee has made films that bear traces of both French New Wave and postwar Italian Neorealist styles. He also has carried on the legacy of African American filmmakers such as Oscar Micheaux, Melvin Van Peebles, Haile Gerima, Julie Dash, Charles Burnett, and Robert Townsend. Although many of Lee's works are not the "race films" of Micheaux's day, there is a sense of collective representation and signification in Lee's works. His success in a variety of visual media has had a profound impact on younger African American filmmakers, including John Singleton, Allen and Albert Hughes, and Reginald Hudlin.

In 2015 Lee, who despite several nominations had not won an Academy Award, was presented with an honorary Oscar in November.

Christopher M. Tinson

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ANG LEE

Taiwanese-born film director, producer, and screenwriter

Academy Award–winning filmmaker Ang Lee has produced a diverse catalog of work, including comedies, Hollywood monster movies, period romances, historical dramas, and martial-arts epics. Throughout his career, he has been unafraid to tackle controversial topics through a sympathetic, humanistic lens.

Born: October 23, 1954; Chaochou, Pingtung, Taiwan

Birth name: Li An

Area(s) of significance: Film directing

EARLY LIFE

Ang Lee was born Li An on October 23, 1954, in Taiwan. His father, Lee Sheng, was a high school principal and strict disciplinarian. He wanted his son to demonstrate academic prowess and fulfill his filial duties. According to the tradition of Confucian philosophy adhered to by many Chinese people, this meant Lee was expected to honor his parents and ancestors through educational and professional achievements. As a young man, Lee was not a particularly gifted student in school. He initially failed the entrance exams to university. Lee eventually enrolled as a theater and film major at the Taiwan Academy of Arts (now known as the National Taiwan University of Arts) and graduated in 1975.

Lee then moved to the United States at age twenty-three to pursue a bachelor of fine arts degree at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He earned his degree in theater and theater direction in 1980. Hampered by his accent, Lee had focused on directing instead of acting. It was during his time there that he met Jane Lin, another Taiwanese student and microbiology major. The couple married in 1983 and had two sons, Haan and Mason.