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at RNEIS@umich.edu

RACHEL RAFAEL  
NEIS  
*University of Michigan*

## “All That Is in the Settlement”

*Humans, Likeness, and Species in the  
Rabbinic Bestiary*

### ABSTRACT

While biologists argue about the limits and definition of a species, the urge to cluster and distinguish among the plenitude of life-forms that populates the planet remains. Contemporary anxieties about attempts to clone monkeys and to engineer human-porcine chimeras point to concerns about species boundaries, resemblances, and causing suffering to other creatures. The fears about resemblances (and attendant slippery slope concerns) relate to how humans may be implicated. Such concerns about resemblances among kinds, the boundaries between species, and attempts to uphold distinctions, populated ancient zoological and anthropological thought, including that of the rabbis. While the rabbis drew on tselem elohim to theorize human reproduction and uniqueness, this article traces an alternative

### KEYWORDS

*rabbinics, species,  
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zoological vision that integrated humans among other kinds, while explaining resemblances among species with a theory of territorial doubles. This theory of territorial doubles claimed that all creatures—including humans—have versions that exist in the wild and in the sea.

On the twenty-fourth of January 2018, the science journal *Cell* published a study by Zhen Liu et al. that described attempts to clone macaque monkeys. As the authors put it, “As species closer to humans, non-human primates are ideal animal models for studying physiological functions unique to primates and for developing therapeutic treatments of human diseases” (Liu et al. 2018, 881). Out of the total of seventy-seven attempts, only four macaque monkeys were born: two of the four died shortly after delivery. Many of the photos accompanying the publicity and reporting displayed the two remaining monkeys, Zhong Zhong and Hua Hua, scampering in their small enclosure or lolling around with a large Hello Kitty doll or other stuffed toys.

In their article and in interviews the scientists stressed the benefits for research into human diseases, noting,

There is now no barrier for cloning primate species, thus cloning humans is closer to reality . . . However, our research purpose is entirely for producing non-human primate models for human diseases; we absolutely have no intention, and society will not permit, this work to be extended to humans. (“Zhong Zhong and Hua Hua: First Primates Born Using Dolly the Sheep Cloning Method,” *The Guardian*, January 24, 2018)

This dual emphasis on the closeness of monkeys to humans, their potential for being able to “model” human diseases, alongside the concern that scientists might be close to cloning humans, was prevalent in the reporting on this research (e.g., “First Monkey Clones Created in Chinese Laboratory,” *BBC News*, 24 January 2018). Some reports also addressed ethical concerns about the treatment of the monkeys themselves. The researchers addressed this concern, clarifying that they had followed the guidelines for animal research of the US National Institutes of Health (“Animal Ethics: What Will Happen to China’s Famous Cloned Monkeys?” *Newsweek*, February 9, 2018). The idea—and fact—of cloning monkeys was very much processed through their relatedness to humans, whether in scientific, ethical, or lay terms.