

Responding Bodies and Partial Affinities in Human–Animal Worlds

Vinciane Despret

University of Liege, Belgium

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the different manners in which scientists' bodies are actively engaged when interacting with the animals they observe in the field. Bodies are multiple, as are the practices that involve them: sharing the same diet, feeling similar affects, acting the same, inhabiting the same world of perceptions, constructing empathic affinities, etc. Some scientists aim to embody the animals' experiences. Some are willing to empathetically experience situations 'from inside', while others 'undo and redo' their own bodies in order to interact more closely with the animals and to respond to them more cautiously. Still others are faced with the question: what can we do or what are we allowed to do with our bodies when we are with our animals? All of these practices present a very different version of 'embodied empathy', a concept which describes feeling/seeing/thinking bodies that undo and redo each other, reciprocally though not symmetrically, as partial perspectives that attune themselves to each other. Therefore, empathy is not experiencing with one's own body what the other experiences, but rather creating the possibilities of an embodied communication.

Keywords

animals, bodies, embodied communication, empathy, field practices, partial affinities

However important feelings and interpretations may be, they are not alone in making up what life is all about. Day-to-day reality, the life we live, is also a fleshy affair. (Mol, 2002: 27)

Introduction

Field reports rarely mention the ways in which scientists' bodies are actively being involved while they are observing animals. Sometimes – mostly

Corresponding author:

Vinciane Despret, University of Liege, Place du XX Aout 7, Liege, 4000, Belgium.

Email: v.despret@ulg.ac.be

<http://www.sagepub.net/tcs/>

but not exclusively in popular writings – some ethologists may complain about the hardness of the ground, the weather being terribly cold, or too hot, lack of sleep, the day – or worse the night – being exhaustingly long.¹ However, the question about the way the scientist's body is involved – in some way or other – in the interaction with the animals is almost never raised. An unwritten rule obviously reigns in animal sciences: human bodies shouldn't interfere in a properly scientific research process. Compared to this general trend, Konrad Lorenz, the famous Austrian ethologist, appears to be an exception. In his popular writings Lorenz's depictions of his own work with geese and jackdaws involves his body in a process that takes the shape of a transformative experiment: he creates an embodied relation with the animals for whom he becomes a social partner – mother or companion. For example, Tschock the jackdaw that Lorenz hand-raised and who followed him everywhere, tried to feed him with worms, and (though with less success) attempted to teach him to fly. Lorenz swam with the geese, acted like a mother with little goose Martina, called and greeted like them – later on he was even courted by some of them: his body became the very tool of his research. It became a human-body-with-a-goose (or a with-a-jackdaw) (Despret, 2004). These experiences are, however, as I noted above, very rare.

On the one hand, generally, if the scientist's body is evoked, it is never for itself nor is it named as such: when seeking the body, we are offered a surprisingly abstract concept: the 'presence'. This abstract term – most of the time under the guise of the 'presence of the observer' – while referring to the body, actually conceals it. It conceals what the actual and concrete 'presence' is for the animals: the space the so-called observer's body occupies, the body which moves, which walks, bears and diffuses smells, makes noise, follows, and does everything a body may do – including what we don't know our body may do since we are so unaware about what it is capable of, but which animals may nevertheless perceive.² The 'presence' in the descriptions, is . . . 'the presence'. 'The presence' has no skin, it does not sweat, nor does it eat, sleep, dream, fear . . . the 'presence' is the perceived body (there is no presence that could be unperceived in one way or in another) but a body which never acknowledges itself as a body. The 'presence', in other words, is no less than a disembodied body.

All these surely fulfil epistemological (as well as political) imperatives. The fact that the body is rarely mentioned *per se* because science is the cognitive activity *par excellence* is, however, not the sole reason for its absence. Field workers for the most part strive to remain detached, passive in external appearance, unresponsive to overtures. They 'observe' animals; animals merely 'react' to their presence. Not having a body, therefore, is a means to preclude (to prevent or to avoid) the always

possible reciprocity of the encounter – as we shall see, ‘having a body’ discloses and renders perceptible the very existence of this reciprocity: moreover, it *is* the actual condition of its existence.

On the other hand, the term ‘presence’, which obliterates the actual presence of the observer’s body, is understood in terms of a convenient (and non-problematized) split between presence and absence. This happens even when the scientists actually aim at reconsidering the way the animals construe their presence in the field. Critical ethologists Daniel Estep and Suzanne Hetts testified to this in 1992:

In most research, the scientist aspires to have the animal behave toward the investigator as if he or she were a socially insignificant part of the environment. This reduces communication between the two to a minimum. Many field workers and some laboratory investigators go to great lengths to either conceal themselves from their subjects with blinds or use remote sensing devices (binoculars, radiotelemetry devices, etc.) to accomplish this goal. Others spend enormous amounts of time and energy habituating the animal to the presence of the investigator. How well these attempts succeed in *reducing the reactivity* of the animal to the researcher is difficult to assess and is rarely addressed directly. Investigators do not often describe *how their subjects react to them*. (1992: 11, emphasis added)

The statements made by these authors reveal something about how scientists construe their presence in the field. Indeed, beside the first critique directed at those who ‘will to be there without being there’, the second critique that concerns the process of habituation involves a very particular (and largely shared) definition of this process; this definition rests upon the same split, inherited – probably without the authors knowing – from the behaviourist model of reaction: animals react/don’t react to the presence of the observer. These authors certainly invite their colleagues to pay attention to the way animals take their presence into account, but their demand is still embedded, though implicitly, in the regime of distrust of influence – the ideal still being that the animals may follow their routine as if the human observer was not there. One is the observer, the other the observed.

Where may we have a chance to find references to the scientists’ bodies, since they seem to avoid writing about them? How may we hope to seek in the abundant ethological literature the (rare) moments where the body has mattered so much that mentioning it was worthwhile, if not unavoidable? A brief return to Lorenz might give us some cues. What Lorenz aimed at elucidating was ‘meanings’ in, and through, the relationships he sustained with the animals he was studying.

He eventually understood what ‘mother’ is/means for a little goose by letting his own body be caught in that very meaning. He achieves understanding of what ‘companionship’ is/means for a jackdaw through being fed, through playing with it, and through hard (and vain) flying lessons. What Lorenz was seeking, while engaging his own body and transforming it into a body compatible with the role he was ascribed to, was to understand what matters in the animal’s world, i.e. what, from their point of view, bears meaning.

What Does ‘Meaningful’ Mean?

These three past decades, some scientists, mostly primatologists, have radically renewed the methodology of their enquiry and, more specifically, the questions that should, according to them, be addressed to the animals. These new approaches bear a resemblance to the theoretical ground upon which Lorenz designed his practice. They originate mostly in primatology, but other field workers followed the trend with, to mention a few, ravens, babblers, elephants, or even, surprisingly, sheep.³ These scientists aim to find new methods to focus, as some primatologists put it, on those behaviours that are *most meaningful* to the animals themselves. Shirley Strum expressed it clearly when she said that she was trying to see the baboons from a ‘baboon’s perspective’. She asserts that in deciding what behaviours to record she adopted ‘the attitude of an ethnographer confronted with a previously un-described society’. ‘I made a determined effort to forget everything I knew about how baboons are supposed to behave. Instead, I tried to let the baboons themselves “tell” me what was *important*’ (1987: 30, emphasis added). Primatologist Barbara Smuts uses the same vocabulary when she explains that close observation makes it possible to record social interaction ‘in fine detail’, which she says enabled her to see her subjects ‘from a *baboon’s perspective*’ (1985: 27, emphasis added). It’s worth mentioning that these primatologists attracted the harshest critiques (Quiatt, 1997).

My interpretation of the role of the body leads me to presume a connection between Lorenz’s seeking the animal’s perspective (i.e. ‘what bears meanings from their point of view’) on the one hand and his use of his own body on the other. If this insight is correct, then, I might anticipate finding some references to the body (beyond simple ‘presence’) in the work of the scientists who actually raise the same questions and seek the same evidence – the question of meanings and its corollary, the question of perspective. This insight is well founded, as we shall see, but it is only partially sound. If these theoretical interests and the practical involvement of scientists may sometimes be linked, this link appears much more complicated than a simple cause–effect relation.

On the one hand, ‘seeing the world from an animal’s perspective’ does not necessarily imply the scientist’s body being explicitly and actively involved – apart from its usual involvement in the field work routine – walking, running, moving, standing still, looking, taking notes. On the other hand, scientists may engage their body for other motives than perceiving what the animals observe, sense, feel or live: we will see this later.

One may indeed construct a perspective without involving the body. The perspective may be drawn (perhaps only partially) solely from a mental process, as the naturalist and theorist of the *Umwelt* theory, Jakob Von Uexküll, did. According to the *Umwelt* theory, animals only perceive things that have a meaning for them; things that have no meaning are not perceived. Moreover, the animal construes meanings in acting – a thing taking the meaning of the action that it renders possible – and this very thing therefore exists for this animal. According to the *Umwelt* theory, a scientist may make an inventory of what makes the animals act and react, whether he/she reacts or not, and how: he may therefore infer what the animals perceive and what the perceived things mean for them. Von Uexküll, we should emphasize, did not so much aim to adopt the animal perspective; rather, while collecting ‘meanings’ he wanted to rebuild the world as each animal perceives it, to populate this world with all the things that exist for a given animal and to seek for which meaning all these things take for it. The paradigmatic example associated with his name is the tick, whose world is composed of only a few phenomena: the smell of the butyric acid, the heat of the mammal’s body, the tasting of a warm liquid (the blood of the victim) and the feeling of the fur.

Now, it seems that although the word ‘meaning’ is common to both the propositions of Von Uexküll and the primatologists, there is a slight difference, a difference that has consequences: the latter use it in the syntagm ‘most meaningful’. ‘Meaning’ and ‘most meaningful’ do not have the same meaning, and it is not merely a quantitative problem; the term ‘perspective’, because of that ‘most’, has a different sense. With the query of what can be ‘most meaningful’, the scientist aims not just to understand what something merely *means* for another being, but also how something *matters* for it.

Searching for what ‘matters’ no longer involves just producing a cold and disaffected inventory, untied to the observer’s feelings. The searcher is no longer pursuing a semiological query: as a result, understanding another being’s perspective requires the researcher to take into account the fact that some things are *more* meaningful than others; it requires the observer to give them some worth, some affective values.

It is worthwhile taking a look at how the concept of perspective has gained the sense of ‘adopting the point of view of another being’ in

history, and the mental habits this history has promoted. As Lorraine Daston writes:

The language of perspective carries with it weighty assumptions about what it means to understand other minds. Within the model of a world divided up into the objective and the subjective, and armed with the method of sympathetic projection, understanding another mind could only mean seeing with another's eyes (or smelling with another's nose or hearing with another's sonar, depending on the species) – 'put yourself in his place', as Lloyd Morgan titled one of his chapters. . . . Here, I can only hint at the several intellectual and cultural shifts that created the perspectival mode: the habit of interior observation cultivated by certain forms of piety; the increasingly refined language of individual subjectivity developed in the 18th- and 19th-century novel; the equation drawn between sensory experience and self by sensationalist psychology; political and economic individualism; the cult of sympathy, which expanded to embrace first children, then animals, and finally denizens of other times and places. . . . [The perspective] is not simply another form of subjectivity; it is the apotheosis of subjectivity as the essence of mind. (2005: 53)

Reading these lines, one may infer why the primatologists' will to adopt their animals' perspectives – to find out what was the most meaningful for them – attracted critiques from other scientists. The term 'perspective' implies sympathy and, moreover, an inappropriate form of subjectivity. The critics have objected to this in two ways. On the one hand, adopting the animal's 'perspective' involves a dangerous flirtation with anthropomorphism – is one putting himself in the animal's shoes or, on the contrary, does one actually put the animal in human shoes? On the other hand, the 'perspective' actually imperils the necessary distance – perhaps we should say 'sanitary cordon' – between the one who observes and the one under observation. The assumed split between Science (capital 'S'; Latour, 2001)⁴ and non-science is drawn along the lines of these old dualisms: the imaginative versus the factual; the subjective versus the objective; the autobiographical versus the scientific account; the emotional versus the neutral – and as we shall see, the body versus the mind. The attempt to reconstruct together both what is 'most meaningful' for the animals and the 'perspective' of the animals is controversial and always under suspicion of being unscientific.⁵

In other words, the search for what is 'most meaningful' for the animals doubles the charge against the scientists who claim to be searching for it. The 'perspective' in that case appears to be what I would call an 'affected perspective' – contrarily to the 'semiological perspective'

Von Uexküll promoted. In choosing the term ‘affected perspective’ I aim to emphasize how the scientist risks being touched/affected by what matters for the animal he/she observes.⁶

These ‘affected perspectives’ will be the focus of my survey. I aim to look for risky practices – sometimes finding them simply by following the accusatorial fingers of the critiques directed at them: ‘anthropomorphism is unscientific’, ‘anecdotes do not constitute legitimate data’,⁷ ‘attributing beliefs to non-humans is impossible’ – or is nothing more than a romantic fantasy. I will mainly focus on the scientists who seem to change the questions usually addressed to animals and to search for ‘meanings’ and things that matter and ‘matter most’. This focus upon ‘affected perspectives’ will, I hope, reveal the scientists’ bodies in their practices. It will allow us to raise questions whenever scientists mention their bodies about why they do so, how they ‘use’ them, and what ‘having a body’ means, in each of the cases we will encounter.

Thanks to – among others – Donna Haraway, we have learned that bodies are ‘made’ by scientific practices. And we also know that bodies are made, or even ‘enacted’ ‘multiples’, as Annemarie Mol revealed in her survey of medical practices. I, for my part, wish to take the other side of the question, though not merely the reverse side: how are bodies both subjects and objects of this making, how are they both ‘making’ and ‘made’, undoing and redoing themselves, through very different scientific practices with animals? In a word, my question will become: how are bodies ‘growing’ multiples in diverse practices – and its corollary: how do each of these practices, and the animals they are addressing, ‘enact’ each of these bodies?

Eating Like a Wolf

SOURIS A LA CRÈME

Skin and gut the mice, but do not remove the heads; wash then place in a pot with enough alcohol to cover the carcasses. Allow to marinate for about two hours. Cut belly pork into small cubes and fry slowly until most of the fat has been rendered. Now remove the carcasses from the alcohol and roll them in a mixture of salt, pepper and flour; then place in a frying pan and sauté for about five minutes (being careful not to allow the pan to get too hot, or the delicate meat will dry out and become tough and stringy). Now add a cup of alcohol and six or eight cloves. Cover the pan and allow to simmer slowly for fifteen minutes. The cream sauce can be made according to any standard recipe. (Mowat, 1981 [1963]: 77)

This rather odd meal was part of an experiment – a scientific experiment on a human body. The body belonged to a biologist, Farley Mowat, who, at the end of the 1940s, was sent to conduct research on wild wolves in the Arctic. The experiment was about the wolves. Its first part proved to be inconclusive; after one week on a mouse diet the scientist began to develop a craving for fat. Could a diet comprised only of mice be possible anyway? The solution was to follow what the wolves do: the little rodents store most of their fat in the abdominal cavity. Wolves eat the whole mouse. By doing this, except for the skin of course (we are human aren't we?), the fat craving would eventually be considerably eased. At first glance, one might think that the author is trying to do an experiment to discover what it is *to be* a wolf, or what it 'feels like' to be a wolf – which is a recurrent theme in popular books or in autobiographical how-I-did-it accounts in ethological literature (and sometimes anthropological reports).⁸

There is a contrast in these approaches. On the one hand, Mark Bekoff, among others, asserts in writing that he 'can feel what animals are feeling... My feelings actually know what's going on inside the animal, and this emotional empathy seems to be innate'. As a cognitive ethologist, he suggests that this possibility of sharing feelings involves 'mirror neurons' (Bekoff, 2007: 128). Even if it was the case that this is what Mowat aimed to do, we should notice that he goes further: he is trying an experiment to embody *literally* – or to incorporate – what the animals may feel.

On the other hand, although Temple Grandin's work (Grandin and Johnson, 2005) reveals some similarities, there is a contrast. Grandin became a notorious expert in designing factory plants for humane slaughter systems and she is frequently hired to check meatpacking plants where there are problems. She argues that in most cases problems are due to unnoticed tiny details that frighten the animals, which in turn resist or balk. Grandin sees these details we do not see, because she sees like animals. Grandin's case is different from Mark Bekoff's form of empathic posture (what I would have called, at first glance, romantic empathy – I will return to this point later); she does not pretend she feels like animals. She says *she thinks the way animals think*. She *sees* like animals, therefore she may tell people why their animals are doing the things they do. A little plastic water bottle lying harmlessly, a shiny reflection, a yellow jacket hanging on a fence, all those turn out to be, in their world, wrong details; a fan's blades slowly rotating creates flicker, a shadow on the ground becomes a deep cliff, a dark spot turns out to be a bottomless pit. For the animals, as well as for Grandin, the world is a swirling mass of tiny details.

Of course, one could think that the contrast I am trying to draw here – between Grandin 'perceiving' and Bekoff 'feeling' – rests on the old contrast between feeling and thinking, all the more so since visual perception

is usually considered as a kind of disembodied thinking, or, as Donna Haraway puts it, a (rather perverse) way to ‘distance the knowing subject from everybody and everything’ (1991: 129). This is, however, not what I intend. In fact, Grandin’s body is completely involved – it actively creates the perspective that allows her to ‘see’. Grandin explains that one couldn’t hope to understand animals ‘unless you put yourself in their place – *literally* in their place. You have to go where the animal goes, and do what the animal does’ in order to see what it sees and understand what scares it (2005: 31). Grandin embodies another being’s experience: ‘putting oneself in another’s shoes’ is not a metaphor, it has to be taken literally, she insists. Still, this is not enough. You also have to see the world differently. You have to see in details, like animals do. Because, according to Grandin, animals are *visual thinkers*. And so is she.

Temple Grandin is autistic: according to her, that is why she sees the world in details like animals do and why she thus may ‘*translate* animal talk into English’ (2005: 7, emphasis added). ‘Animals are like autistic savants’, she writes. In fact, she adds, ‘I’d go so far as to say that animals might actually *be* autistic savants’ (emphasis in original). Animals have special talents that normal people don’t – some of them have special forms of genius that normal people don’t, the same way that some autistic savants have special forms of genius. Their bodies give them a totally different world in which things affect them in radically different ways. ‘We’re seeing, hearing, and feeling all the things no one else can’ (2005: 67).

Since she is autistic, most of the feelings we know are strange to Grandin – when considering ‘normal people’s experiences’ she feels, as she once said to Oliver Sacks, like an anthropologist on Mars. This is also how she justifies her choice to work with animals: what she was missing in social understanding she could make up for by understanding animals.

All that means that her empathy actually is a strange empathy, an apparent oxymoron: it is empathy without pathos. Without pathos, indeed: reading Grandin is a strange experience, it could be like reading a report by *Star Trek*’s Mr Spock (or like meeting the strange inhabitants of an alien world in the sci-fi novel *Foreigners*).⁹

Partial Affinities

In contrast with the previous figure (that of ‘romantic empathy’), Temple Grandin illustrates what I would construe here as a process of the ‘construction of empathic affinities’ in which bodies are literally involved. Of course, the term ‘construction’ does not seem totally accurate for her, since she links her capacities to an innate handicap/gift. However, I would suggest that this link is a short-cut to something more complicated.¹⁰ Similarities between her own experience and animals’ experience,

I would suggest, are not given, they are actively constructed. Grandin relies upon *a part* of her own being to which animals give new powers and meanings (a part of her, and not her ‘particularity’, as she would claim), and she links it to *a part* of other beings, to whom she also gives new powers and significations,¹¹ therefore creating a space where these two parts may be entangled and exchange/create reciprocal meanings. Yes, she transforms her handicap into a gift, which empowers her, as much as she actively transforms mindless animals into meaningful geniuses, which also gives them new powers; but this is not the whole story. She ends up not being the same. Likewise, animals are invited to other modes of being, other relationships, and new ways to inhabit the human world and to force human beings to address them differently. She creates, for herself and for the animals, new identities, and she does this by disclosing unexpected affinities. This is definitively not empathy by identification – the tourism of the soul, as Wendy Rose puts it (Haraway, 1991: 113). The identities upon which identification could ground itself do not pre-exist; the identity is created by the previous construction of affinities. Identity is the outcome, the achievement.

The twist my reading imposes on Grandin¹² – I translate her ‘so-called innate gift’ into a cautious construction upon this very gift – shows that the contrast I made with Mark Bekoff ought to be revised here too. For the way Grandin herself understands the possibility to ‘see like an animal’ is no less romantic than Bekoff construing his sharing the feelings of other animals, if we maintain a naïve reading.¹³ Of course, Bekoff is probably right in arguing that neuron mirrors play a role in his ability to feel ‘what’s going on inside the animal’. However, Bekoff is a keen scientist: he has been working with animals (and loving them) for numerous years. He writes, for example, ‘there are no substitutes for careful and rigorous observational and experimental studies of animal cognition and detailed analyses of subtle behavior patterns that often go unnoticed’ (Bekoff and Allen, 1997: 332). In the same vein, he quotes (and agrees with) Gordon Burghardt when the latter advocates ‘use of a critical anthropomorphism in which various sources of information are used including: natural history, our perceptions, intuitions, feelings, careful behavioral descriptions, identifying with the animal, optimization models, previous studies and so forth in order to generate ideas that may prove useful in gaining understanding and the ability to predict outcomes of planned (experimental) and unplanned interventions’ (Bekoff and Allen, 1997: 332). Bekoff, as a cognitive ethologist, mostly studied play in dogs and canines, and he lives with one of them, Jethro, who became his favourite subject of observation.¹⁴ Of course Bekoff may claim that he is able to feel what’s going on inside his animals, but he couldn’t achieve this if it were not for all these years of careful observations, of work, and of sharing life – probably the ‘most meaningful’ life. It has nothing to do with a romantic unmediated gift; it has to do with

years of hard work – and love. Empathy may be innate – or not – but it ought nevertheless to be cultivated, nurtured, educated. Romanticism is no more than the belief that ‘feeling for another’ belongs to some sort of naïve state of nature. This romanticism is definitely not found in either Grandin’s or Bekoff’s story.

Returning to Grandin, I would suggest that she transforms what she considers as a marginal essence into a partial perspective that creates – and is created by the possibility of – what Haraway calls ‘just-barely-affinities’ or ‘just-barely-connections’ (1991: 113). ‘The knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched imperfectly, and *therefore* able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another. Here is the promise of objectivity: a scientific knower seeks the subject position not of identity but of objectivity: that is, partial connection’ (1991: 193).¹⁵

Grandin creates *partial connections* at the margins of two embodied experiences; she re-constructs these margins, she *queers* the experience of being autistic and of being animals in a ‘normal human world’ in a way that both relies upon and renders possible these connections. This would give us a less problematic version of embodied empathy: feeling/seeing/thinking bodies undo and redo each other, reciprocally though not symmetrically, as partial perspectives that attune themselves to each other.

Experimental Bodies

Back now to Mowat and his wolves, about whom I was drawing the contrast: Mowat, as I proposed, uses his body (eating a wolf’s diet) as an experimental tool. The aim, however, is neither to feel like a wolf nor to create/construct partially connected affinities, as in my reconstruction of Grandin’s work. Mowat’s device sounds like Grandin’s embodied experience, in the sense that it is an experiment in which one uses one’s own body to meet the needs of another. However, Mowat’s device in fact pertains to a more modest embodiment.

At this point, I first have to explain why he submitted his own body to the mouse diet. Why was it so important to experiment with what wolves eat?

In the late 1940s, wolves were hardly known by scientists and actually did not arouse much interest. However, they were the subjects of hot political controversies. Most of the complaints came from fishing and game clubs – with their allies, the manufacturers of brands of ammunition – who affirmed that wolves were killing all the deer. More and more hunters were coming back from more and more hunts with fewer and fewer deer. Some people, however, suspected that there were fewer deer because the hunters had increased to the point where they outnumbered the deer. The Canadian Department of Mines and Resources decided to

launch a scientific investigation and sent Mowat to investigate the wolves.

After some months observing the animals,¹⁶ Mowat discovered that when the caribous migrate for the hot season the wolves eat mice. Nobody, Mowat (rightly) thought, would ever believe that this mythical character, these wild, powerful carnivores and savage killers as they were believed to be, could *survive* on a diet of mice only – and, he confesses, the idea even seemed ridiculous to him at first. Even if he collected some empirical proof in the feces, these empirical proofs would support only the idea that, sometimes, some wolves eat some mice, not the hypothesis that they survive on them for a good part of the year. Mowat, therefore, used his own body as a means of generating scientific proof, and turned it into an apparatus for validity.

It is not empathy, nor a mere romantic dream of being a wolf – look again at the recipe: wolves do not add cream and alcohol in their diet, because they do not, like urban Canadian scientists, lose appetite for bland meat due to boredom. It is a technical device. The body is the witness. It will be the experimental group and the control group: for a length of time, it will be given only mice and, for an equal length of time, canned meat and fresh fish. At the end of each period, Mowat would run a series of physiological tests and compare the two sets of results. While not absolutely conclusive as far as wolves are concerned, as Mowat concedes, if he finds evidence that his metabolic functions remained unimpaired under a mouse regimen, it might indicate that wolves too could survive on the same diet.

Here again, I would suggest that this embodied experiment builds affinities, partial affinities. But these affinities are not created with the aim of feeling, knowing or seeing like a wolf. It is an experiment that leads to something rather unusual: feeling or being like a wolf is to be taken *in a radically non-psychological sense*. Experiencing (or sharing) the inner life of a wolf receives here an unusual meaning (and rather odd, for us, contemporary western psychological subjects): it means experiencing *in the gut*. This is the beginning of a *companion* story, *cum panis*, the ones with whom we share food (Haraway, 2008: 17). The same food, even if not at the same table in this case, and for an experimental aim.

To embody the way other beings solve their survival problems not only answers the question ‘what (or how) would it be like if I were in your place?’, it may also set up solutions for another one: ‘what would you do if you were in my place?’ This question is raised, for example, when scientists deal with the contradiction between the necessities of fieldwork and the limits of their own endurance. Most ethologists and primatologists are faced with this problem, though they hardly mention it in their reports: what can we do or are we allowed to do with our body when we are with our animals? I encountered, in my readings, two motives for these worries. The first one takes the form of the ‘what can

we do?’ questions and they mostly raise the same problem: scientists are often anxious (especially in the beginning of the fieldwork) about missing something when constrained by biological necessities. The other motive, much rarer, takes the form of cautious politeness: the scientist’s body shouldn’t disturb the animals under observation. We will come to that point later.

In laboratories, the problem of ‘what can we do with our bodies’ needs’ is, unfortunately for the animals, quickly solved. Most often animals are simply submitted to human biological constraints. As pharmacologist Michael Chance pointed out, research with rats, for example, is carried out during daytime hours, which is the most convenient time for researchers, though, as it happens, it is the middle of the night for the rats: submitting a rat to an experiment is like kicking it out of bed and asking it to go through some fairly active procedure (Kirk, 2008). In better cases, the laboratory at least takes care to apply reverse lighting procedures. However, in both cases, the animal is the one who adapts (or tries to).

In the field, things are much more complicated, notably with the sleeping issue. Wolves are, in this respect, particularly problematic for human scientists. During the day, Mowat remarked, he observed that the female and the pups in the group were active, while the hunters (two males) rested in short naps of 10 minutes duration. During the night the males embarked on their own activities. For fear of missing something vital, Mowat prevented himself from sleeping. After a few days, he reached the limits of his endurance. The solution came from the animals: the human observer had to learn to nap like a wolf. The first trial was not a success: Mowat failed to wake up until several hours had passed. ‘The fault was mine, for I had failed to imitate *all* the actions of a dozing wolf, and, as I eventually discovered, the business of curling up to start with, and spinning about after each nap, was vital to success’ (Mowat, 1981: 60).¹⁷

When Bodies Interfere

In the chapter called ‘The Watcher Watched’, Mowat relates an anecdote that could sound familiar to Derrida’s readers. He was at the beginning of his field research, in the middle of nowhere. Since his arrival, several weeks earlier, he had encountered the wolves only twice, both times by pure chance. The second time he saw them, however, they were entering a cave – probably their den, Mowat guesses. However, the next day when he returned to the site no wolves seemed to actually inhabit this cave. The scientist was totally discouraged; the prospect of getting within visual range of a wolf except by the luckiest of accidents, as he says, turns out to be in the same range of possibilities as finding a diamond mine.

The esker remained deserted. . . . By 2:00 PM I had given up hope. There seemed no further point in concealment, so I got stiffly to my

feet and prepared to relieve myself. Now, it is a remarkable fact that a man, though he may be alone in a small boat in mid-ocean, or isolated in the midst of the trackless forest, finds that the very process of unbuttoning causes him to become peculiarly sensitive to the possibility that he may be under observation. At this critical junction none but the most self-assured of men... can refrain from casting a surreptitious glance around to reassure himself that he really is alone. To say that I was chagrined to discover I was *not* alone would be an understatement; for sitting directly behind me, and not twenty yards away, were the missing wolves. (Mowat, 1981: 48)

The human psyche is truly an amazing thing, Mowat remarks; under almost any other circumstances, he would have been panic-stricken. Instead of which, outraged, he turned his back on the watching wolves and hurriedly did up his buttons. And ‘when decency, if not my dignity, had been restored, I rounded on these wolves with a virulence which surprised even me: “Shoo!”, I screamed at them. “What the hell do think you’re at...you...you peeping Toms! Go away for heaven’s sake!”’ On the same evening, Mowat tries to analyse what really happened to him. The problem, he confesses, was that he was facing the question of *who* is watching *whom*. ‘I felt that I, because of my specific superiority as a member of *Homo sapiens*, together with my intensive technical training, was entitled to pride of place’. He laconically concludes: ‘I was the one who was under observation’.

Who is watching *whom*: we are reminded here, all the more so as the watcher seems to take the watched as being at fault, of Derrida’s narrative in *The Animal that Therefore I Am*. Derrida, in that story, says that he realized that his cat, his small female cat, was actually *looking back* at him one morning in his bathroom. Derrida all the more felt that he was in the presence of someone who was seeing him *naked*. However, if Derrida, as Haraway writes, ‘comes to the edge of respect’, in paying attention to the fact that the animal looks back and responds, his worries about his shame of being naked in front of his cat seems to lack something I found in Mowat: humour. Derrida doesn’t laugh at his own worries – neither does he scream ‘peeping Tom!’

It would be unfair not to consider Derrida’s own concern, as philosopher. ‘It is generally thought, though none of the philosophers I am about to examine actually mentions it, that the property unique to animals, that in the last instance distinguishes them from man, is their being naked without knowing it’ (Derrida, 2008: 5). Of course, we may regret, with Haraway, that Derrida knew ‘there is no nudity among animals, that the worry was his’ (Haraway, 2008: 20). The shame of being naked is not about the cat, it is only about himself. And Jenny Diski is probably

right when she suggests, based on her own experience, that the cat ‘seems to be looking at him with a purpose. Let me out . . . Looking, waiting in order to get the door opened’, like cats usually do – because, as she points out, ‘every cat in the world hates having a door shut behind them as they enter a room’ (2011: 63). Obviously, this hypothesis did not cross the mind of the philosopher, and I agree again with Haraway’s point that Derrida failed ‘a simple obligation of companion species; he did not become curious about what the cat might actually be doing, feeling, thinking, or perhaps making available to him in looking back at him that morning’ (2008: 21). And yet for sure, we may have the impression that the naked body is a pretext, a pre-text for more philosophy; a kind of blank screen, all the more so since reciprocal gazes do not lead Derrida to share sensualities – or to write about them – nor to discuss the choreography of the morning greeting ceremony. But let us not forget that Derrida is driven by a very different kind of ethos than a field scientist; he is talking to his colleagues, the very people who are seeking grandiose differences; or, in a milder (but probably just as toxic) version, the ones who would talk about ‘the figures of the cat’ – ‘the allegory for all the cats on the earth, the felines that traverse our myths and religions, literature and fables’. He does not want to talk about ‘an animal’, a generality: he wants to talk about ‘his cat’. Nor does he seek the grandiose differences philosophers are so fond of – let us underscore that the uniqueness, contrary to the old tiring trend in philosophy, is the uniqueness of animals. Derrida proposes instead to work upon ‘this’ concrete difference, a difference that *happens to him*, on this morning in his bathroom, ‘being naked’, and his surprise, on the one hand, at meeting the gaze of a concrete living hairy animal, on the other at feeling the shame of being seen naked.

Politeness

The issue of nudity does not seem to be a major preoccupation for the scientists – some of them studying swimming animals in the wild confess, in private, that they mostly work naked. However, the incident Farley Mowat describes is echoed in the practices of some scientists. The primatologist Shirley Strum mentions it in passing when she describes her daily routine with the baboons she observes. However, the question she raises has practical, vital, and I would add ethical consequences, for her and for the baboons she works with. She recalls that in the beginning of her field studies with baboons in Kenya, she used to go a long way to hide behind her bus when she couldn’t help but relieve herself (Strum, 1987). But the risk of missing something was worrying her more and more; she decided after a while that she could try to urinate while staying among the baboons. She cautiously undressed, looking around. They were, she says, astonished by the noise. They never saw her eat, drink

or sleep. Nothing made them believe that she could be *a baboon*. They knew human beings, but they had never been so close to one and probably they believed that humans didn't have this kind of physical need. Next time, she concluded, they would not even react.

The story Strum tells us is linked to the second question I noted (though only rarely) in ethological and primatological literature, the polite question: 'what am I allowed to do with my body when I am with the animals?' What Strum shows is that the question about not disturbing the baboons with her body ends in another story: her body made her enter into relationships with the animals in a new mode – their surprise testifies to that – as a living person *like them*. She creates with them an embodied proximity, some embodied affinities. Looking and looking back on this occasion occurs not only in the gaze of those who meet and learn to know each other: it also flows in urine, in noise, in surprise. Maybe this time we might say that the empathy was on the side of the baboons.

Using one's body to make the animal respond (even if in Strum's case it was in an unexpected way) renders visible a change in some practices, if I compare these to the way that behaviourists construe their practices. The animal does not react; he/she responds.

Farley Mowat describes a situation that is apparently very similar. However, contrary to Strum, for whom the problem was whether or not her urinating body would 'interfere', Mowat actually did use this natural function to actively and deliberately interfere. Whereas Strum worried about the response of the baboons, Mowat was actually concerned with the wolves' *unresponsiveness*. In other words, Mowat used his body to make the animals respond.

Returning to the story he tells, Mowat had eventually found the wolves' den. He decided to pitch his tent near to it in order to observe them, day and night. The wolves completely ignored him. This was, he writes, at first disconcerting; further, it became problematic. As he explains, 'it was true that I wanted to be inconspicuous, but I felt uncomfortable at being so totally ignored' (Mowat, 1981: 54). Actually, wolves were regularly passing by the tent and never evinced the slightest interest in him.

Being ignored to such an extent became more and more intolerable for Mowat as time passed. By this time, he had discovered that wolves were not, as universally believed at that time, nomadic roamers; they have territories, they have, as he qualifies them, strong feelings of property rights and they ritually and regularly mark their boundaries. Therefore, Mowat planned to use this knowledge to make them *at least* recognize his existence. One night, after the wolves had gone off to hunt, he staked out 'a property claim of his own', surrounding his tent and including one of the wolves' regular paths. This took most of the night and required, as he meticulously explains, frequent returns to the tent to consume quantities

of tea. He retired to the tent just before the first wolf appeared. As usual, the animal ignored the tent and its human owner, until he passed by a marked bush: 'his attitude of fatigue vanished and was replaced by a look of bewilderment. . . . After a minute of complete indecision he backed away a few yards and sat down. And then, finally, he looked directly at the tent and at me. It was a long, thoughtful, considering sort of look' (1981: 56).

At this moment, Mowat became very worried: hadn't he transgressed a wolf law of major importance and shouldn't he pay for it? The wolf kept looking at him. In an effort to break the impasse, the human turned his back on the wolf, 'to indicate, as clearly as possible, that I found his continued scrutiny impolite, if not actually offensive'. Then the wolf slowly began a systematic tour of the area and carefully placed his own mark on each of the ones the human had marked. From then, Mowat concludes, the human's enclave existence had been ratified by the wolf, and each of them, wolves and human, regularly passed one after each other, to freshen up some boundary marks, each one on his own side of the border.

Of course, chances to find this kind of extravagant description in real scientific literature are rare. Reasons are obvious – but I wouldn't be surprised to find at least some in informal conversations. In fact, it is not only the conventions of writing that render this unlikely; it is the very codes of practice.

As the excerpt quoted earlier from Daniel Estep and Suzanne Hets showed, scientists working with animals make considerable effort not to be seen by them. If they practise habituation, they are advised not to enter into relation with them, to be as neutral as possible, to be, as Haraway phrases it, 'like a rock, to be unavailable, so that eventually the [animals] would go on about their business in nature as if data-collecting humankind were not present. . . . Good scientists are those who, learning to be invisible themselves, could see the scene of nature close up, as if through a peep-hole' (Haraway, 2008: 24–6).

Observers keep distance: distance, of course, cannot be measured in feet and inches; it is a cognitive and relational perspective. Duane Quiatt describes the two situations mentioned by Estep and Hets in terms of 'standpoint'. From the first standpoint, 'the observer can be said to look in and perhaps slightly down on his subjects, as an extraterrestrial agent, God on His creation, the experimental primatologist on his created habitat'. From the second standpoint, 'the observer can be said to look out from a reserved or isolated position inside the arena of behavior, not necessarily from a constructed blind or a Land Rover but, in any event, from an unexamined state of cultural confinement and in that sense still at a point of some remove from the subject animals' social environment' (Quiatt, 1997: 225–6).

Both Shirley Strum and Barbara Smuts began their fieldwork with baboons according to the second model Quiatt describes. Simply put, they were 'inside' and at the same time 'outside'. Smuts recalls that progress in habituation was painfully slow: not only did the baboons not seem to be impressed by her efforts to render her body invisible or make it look like a rock, but they frequently looked at her. And the more she ignored their looks, the less satisfied they seemed. Ignoring social cues, she learned, is far from neutral social behaviour. 'I imagine the baboons as seeing somebody off-category, not something', Haraway (2008: 24) comments on her work, 'and asking if that being were or were not educable to the standard of a polite guest'.

Smuts therefore had to learn to be polite, in the ethical, political, and epistemological senses of the word. She learned to respond, to acknowledge, to look back, perhaps to greet, as she says. And, as she tells us, her own being was transformed: 'I... in the process of gaining their trust, changed almost everything about me, including the way I walked and sat, the way I held my body and the way I used my eyes and voice. I was learning a whole new way of being in the world – the way of baboons... and I was gradually learning to send such signals back to them' (Smuts, in Haraway, 2008: 24). She explains that, having learned the way baboons express their emotions, motivations or intentions, she could respond to them in ways she picked up from them and be understood.

Shirley Strum's field reports echo with Smuts' narrative. At the time of her arrival in Kenya, her predecessor in the field recommended that she should stay in the Land Rover. Baboons, he told her, were fighting incessantly; she was advised to keep her distance. After a while she realized that the baboons actually did not fight constantly; she decided to approach. Once out of the Land Rover, she observed the way Ray, an immigrant male, made his own approach to enter the troop. And she imitated him. She moved, like he did, 'gradually... closer, and finally, on foot, into the troop itself' where, she says, 'pink-nosed and squinting, I became the intrepid baboon watcher, going wherever the troop went... observing, taking notes, thinking'. However, as Smuts did in the beginning, she tried to preserve her role 'as a nonentity... tolerated but unobtrusive'. And like Smuts, but for other reasons, she eventually realized that preserving her role as a nonentity proved difficult. One day Ray, positioning himself between Strum and two resident males, solicited her support in agonistic interaction with them. Strum refused to cooperate, and she did it in the way the baboons taught her: she turned her back. 'Ray won his struggle alone', she writes, 'but I shall never forget how honoured I felt by the compliment he paid me' (1987: 37).

This incident, it turns out, marked a turn in Strum's life with the baboons. 'There was nothing different about the day', she reflects. 'I was different.' Just how different becomes evident when she tells us

that she has taken to tasting the foods that the baboons eat – she jokes about it being a convention of primatological fieldwork, but isn't it also, here again, a *companion* story, *cum panis*, the ones with whom we share the food? And now, 'Munching, writing, crunching, gazing, I realized suddenly that I was looking at the Kekopey landscape in an entirely different way as a baboon, eyeing what was next on the daily menu' (Strum, 1987: 56).¹⁸

Conclusions

Talking about how the body is involved in the encounter emphasizes that the embodied practicalities of knowing are part of the story. It is to insist upon the fact that if we are to understand how scientists may talk about their animals and how they make them known, and if we are to elucidate how these animals gain new identities through the very practices, we would be better served if we told stories about these embodied encounters. As Annemarie Mol calls it: a praxiographic enquiry into reality (2002: 32).

Bodies enact rather than perform (as Mol also suggests), and considering them as enacting blurs the clear-cut divide between knowing subject and known object: scientists and animals are fleshy creatures which are enacted and enacting through their embodied choreography. This is not only an epistemological issue, it is a political one and an ontological one. Scientists' work, through observing their animals, collecting all the events that make the stuff of their life, meeting these animals, and ultimately writing about them and inscribing them into theories that explain why they do what they do, makes their animals more real. In attending to a praxiographic account of their work, and moreover through paying attention to the way they embody their work, I hope, for my part, that my own account has made these scientists more real, without diminishing or obscuring the reality of the animals that actively participate in the research process.

Empathy is a word that is very often recruited in these kinds of stories, especially when bodies are involved. It bears resonances with troublesome romantic meanings, magic or folk knowledge. Nevertheless, I choose to keep it, but only as a tool, in order to give it other meanings, to complicate the situations where this word may be evoked. Empathy becomes multiple, as are bodies, as are encounters, as are animals who are the living actors of these encounters.¹⁹

Embodied empathy, as we have seen through all the stories that have been told, shifts its meanings from one situation to the other. And it gains different meanings, and different outcomes, according to different stakes of the practices. On the one hand, empathy might be defined – rather unusually, I concede – as the process by which one delegates to one's body a question, or a problem, that matters and that involves other

beings' bodies. Bodies are articulating, and become articulated, in the asking and in its responses.

To urinate in front of an animal may create what Anna Tsing (2005) calls frictions. As scientists who care know all too well, these frictions can end in fruitful situations or may definitively compromise the encounter. They take risks. And they care. It matters for them that it matters for their animals. What Mowat has partially done, in acting like a wolf while marking a territory in order to be seen, may be linked to Smuts' and Strum's process of questioning how to act in a polite manner in a baboon's world. They actively take into account the animals' intention toward them, and they construct the possibility of engaging both the animals and themselves, through an embodied communication, into a 'responsible' relation. They become responsible through this relation, 'responsible' in the sense Haraway suggests we give to the word: the one to whom it is possible to respond, the one who constructs him/herself in order to be available to a response. Empathy, in this case, is not feeling what the other feels, it is rather making the body available for the response of another being. It is to make ourselves and them *corresponding*, in all the senses my Oxford dictionary gives: 'have a close similarity, match or agree almost exactly ['almost' being here the most important term]; be analogous in form, character, or function; communicate by exchanging letters [but we may imagine that we can actually correspond through the choreographic language of our bodies]; from Medieval Latin "*cor*" (together) "*respondere*" (respond).' That is undoubtedly what the mirror neurons allow Mark Bekoff to do: create a relationship that will make beings of different species becoming corresponding, not to, but *with* each other.²⁰

On the other hand, and we here get closer to the usual definition of empathy, contrary to Grandin, Smuts and Strum don't assume thinking or seeing like a baboon; they are *acting* like baboons, *corresponding* with them, which in turn transforms each of the primatologists. The empathy is not the same. For their purpose is not alike either.

On the one hand, if Grandin aims to understand what the animals perceive, it is with the aim of finding a solution. She is neither trying to get knowledge – knowing for the sake of knowing – nor trying to get involved in the life of the animals she tries to identify with. She is acting like an animal, and involving her body, to recreate the peculiar world in which this animal lives and suffers. Her involvement does not imply staying and living for months with them, nor forging relationships with them; her main role is to diagnose problems and to seek for a better environment, to improve the quality of life of the animals in the meat-packing industry – which is neither innocent²¹ nor unproblematic, and she tells of her unease thinking that most of her job consists of designing efficient slaughter plants (Grandin and Johnson, 2005: 307). On the other side, Strum and Smuts act like their baboons at the end of a long process, and this means no more than that *they just act as if* all along this process;

they transform themselves in order to create partial connections, upon partial and created affinities.

‘Acting as if’ transforms, as William James nicely puts forward in his theory of emotions. An emotion, according to James, is not what is felt, but what makes us feel.²² Each emotional experience is an experience of ‘making available’, an experience by which both the body and what affects it produce each other – each of the events creates an occasion for the others. In other words, our feelings dispose our bodies, our bodies dispose our feelings. The actors, James says, all know this simple fact: if we want to feel an emotion, we can dispose our body to produce it, and we will feel it. He quotes psychologist Fechner: ‘when I walk behind someone I don’t know, and imitate as accurately as possible his gait and carriage, I get the most curious impression of feeling as the person himself must feel. To go tripping and mincing after the fashion of a young woman puts one, so to speak, in a feminine mood of mind’ (James, 1890: 464).

Empathy is not, in this case, experiencing with one’s own body what the other experiences: it is creating the possibilities of an embodied communication. The ‘as if’ constructs partial affinities between bodies, it is a creative mode of attunement – which also means that Smuts or Strum do not (and do not aim to) think like a baboon: they think *with* the baboons. When the baboons gave dirty looks to the former, she had to learn to *act with* them, to leave room for them to resist her proposition or her presence. Acting *with* them is not the result but the very condition of acting *like* them. I think that it is close to what Smuts has called, in a later article, ‘embodied communication’, comparing it to a dance: embodied communication, like greetings in baboons or between a dog and his/her human partner, all at once expresses the relation, and creates and changes it (Smuts, 2008: 142). In that sense, this embodied communication appears very similar to Lorenz’s practice of ‘becoming-with’ his geese or his jackdaws, what I would call: ‘the miracle of the attunement’ (Despret, 2004).

The body, be it Lorenz’s or Strum’s and Smuts’ case, actively creates partial affinities, learns to connect experiences as one goes along, and learns to become what it becomes when it acts ‘as if’. And this seems to me what Smuts and Strum have achieved; they found that all at once the conditions and the stakes of reliable knowledge are to learn how to ‘think with’. Empathy makes us think with, and with the body.

A last thought, to conclude: this definition I infer from their work has the merit of relieving empathy, and the body, of the question of authenticity and truth, as usually defined. Rather than being unscientific, empathy becomes a scientific tool, a tool that needs to be shaped, forged, refined and embodied, a tool that attunes bodies. It is never given, even if it is a gift. Authenticity is definitively no longer at the source of the event when bodies meet. Moreover, it can’t be, since the beings who meet ‘act as if’ in order to disclose and create connections and

affinities – and I am certain that baboons do their part of the job in that story, from the beginning. Otherwise, what would be the meaning of the fact that greeting rituals, or of the request to intervene in a conflict, express and create the relation? But authenticity is not lost: it testifies to the achievement.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to my colleague John Pearson for revising the last version of the manuscript and for his suggestions. I also wish to thank anonymous referees for their helpful comments, sound critiques, and warm encouragements.

Notes

1. However true this may be, these kind of complaints are a *loi du genre*, whose aim is to claim that you can only suffer these hardships if you really love animals.
2. I could recall here the famous Clever Hans, the German horse that performed extraordinary feats (among others, Hans could solve arithmetical problems to which he gave the answer by knocking with his feet). In order to explain Hans's feats, it was eventually demonstrated that he could read, as cues, micro-muscular movements made unconsciously by the people who were asking him the questions.
3. See Bernd Heinrich (2000) for the ravens, Zahavi and Zahavi (1997) for the babblers, Cynthia Moss (2000) for the elephants, and Thelma Rowell (2000) for the sheep – many others could be mentioned.
4. Bruno Latour inspires much of my work dealing with scientists working with animals. The 'science capital S' refers to the normative epistemology scientists impose theoretically upon their practices; the actual practices – of sciences, plural and without the capital S – being led by other constraints are much more interesting, richer and much more vivid. For an example in the field of ethology and primatology see Latour (2001)
5. Let us remember psychologist Robert Rosenthal's words: the ideal for a scientist should be to neutralize the effects of things that could 'affect the subjects to respond differently than they would if the experimenter were literally an automaton'. These words are not stated randomly, and the reference is meaningful. What, for Rosenthal, does the ideal of an automaton mean? Let us refer to the etymology: the auto-maton is the one who is moved by itself, and only by itself – that is, the one who will not be moved, put in motion by another. He goes further: 'the emotional investment of the professional experimenter would be in collecting the most accurate data possible' (1966: 119, 344).
6. It is worth noting here that Jane Goodall's first scientific paper dealing with her research on the behaviour of chimpanzees was returned by the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* because she named, rather than numbered, the chimpanzees she watched. This journal also wanted her to refer to the chimpanzees using 'it' or 'which' rather than 'he' or 'she'. She refused; the paper was, however, published.

7. See for the recent change about the status of anecdotes Lucy Bates and Richard Byrne (2007).
8. See, for example, Jean Briggs' book *Never in Anger* (1970) about her field studies of Utku Eskimos.
9. In the book, written by Carolyn Janice Cherryh, the people living on that planet do feel emotions, but they are never personal. However, it is hard for the human diplomat to notice it (and to prevent himself from construing their behaviour in emotional-relational terms). These 'other beings' have created a social web made of allegiances and loyalties which organize alliances and conflicts in such a way that it leads the human observer to mistake them for 'our' feelings of friendship, love, envy, hate, etc.
10. Moreover, Grandin probably has, like most people diagnosed with autism, excellent reasons for privileging the innate hypothesis for autism. I am not contesting this hypothesis here.
11. This has equally to be understood in the most concrete and practical sense. Most of the time, Grandin is hired to implement a welfare audit; she checks the meatpacking industry for the way people treat animals. Most often when an animal resists or balks it is because he/she sees, hears or feels something that scares him/her. Usually, in such cases, people use electric prods. Grandin decided that plants couldn't pass her audit if the employees used the electric prod on more than 25 per cent of the animals. This led the farm industry to raise new questions and to address animals differently: when an animal is balking, they have to *think*, to pay attention to tiny details, to translate in a world constructed and perceived by human bodies, the way other bodies perceive; while doing so, they change the meaning of things, the meaning of attitudes, and relationships. In other words, Grandin empowers the animals in the sense that she gives them the power to force human beings to transform their habits and to address them differently.
12. To be honest, I should add that my interpretation raises some problems and is – deliberately – candidly optimistic. In Grandin's work, there is no place for doubt, neither about the way she constructs herself (and the term 'construct' is mine – from her perspective she 'is' herself), nor about the analogy she is creating, nor about the way animals perceive – it works. The 'as *if*' which could remind her that analogies are engaging problematic constructions of created affinities ('I see the world "as *if*" I was an animal') is absent. But I consider that part of my work as a philosopher is about disclosing promises and possibilities in reconstructing narratives with slight shifts that enable us to inherit, as politely *and* fruitfully as possible, from these experiences.
13. I thank an anonymous referee for pointing out this difficulty and encouraging me to go further – that led me to read Bekoff's 'academic' writings, which gave me another view of the problem.
14. Bekoff writes that he is often asked why he concentrates on his companion dog, Jethro, when making general points about social play in canines. The reason, he explains, is that while he has considerably more data on other canines, using Jethro's behaviour as an instance of some of the general characteristics of social play makes discussion of the phenomenon of social play more accessible to those who are not familiar with other canines or individuals belonging to other species in which play has been described.

15. Thanks to an anonymous referee who duly reminded me that the notion of partial connections I quote in Haraway comes from her colleague and friend Marilyn Strathern (to whom Haraway herself gave credit for the notion).
16. There have been many controversies concerning Mowat's actions. He was suspected of having invented a good part of the story. For some, he stayed only four weeks (and not a few months, as he claimed) in the field, for others, the whole story is a fiction; moreover, scientists claim today that wolves never eat mice, etc. I will not try to seek the truth. My interest is raised by the fact that a biologist (which he is) could imagine (or say) that a biologist in the field (the 'I' in that story) could do things in the '40s that were unanimously disallowed and would still be stigmatized even in primatology some decades later.
17. Let us note in passing that Mowat was so enthusiastic about this way of living that he decided to keep the wolf's nap habit after his return to civilization, which renders this return rather more complicated: 'a young lady of whom I was enamored at the time parted company with me. She had rather, she told me vehemently, spend her life with a grasshopper who had rickets than spend one more night in bed with me' (1981: 61).
18. Duane Quiatt criticizes the two primatologists: this new standpoint, he writes, 'of course is fictive; adopting this perspective the observer proceeds "as if" viewing the world through the eyes of a focal animal subject. Methodological invention is employed to break down the barriers of cultural confinement. Ideally, the "new methods" to which both Strum and Smuts refer would move the observer out into the world (or, much the same, into the mind) of the baboon' (1992: 247). The 'as if' used by Quiatt takes a radically different sense from the one I will propose further.
19. '[A]ttending to the multiplicity of reality is also an *act*. It is something that may be done or left undone. It is an intervention. It intervenes in the various available styles for describing practices. Epistemological normativity is prescriptive: it tells how to know properly. The normativity of ethnographic descriptions is of a different kind. It suggests what must be taken into account when it comes to appreciating practices. If reality doesn't precede practices but is a part of them, it cannot itself be the standard by which practices are assessed. . . . [O]ntology is not given in the order of things, but that, instead, *ontologies* are brought into being, sustained, or allowed to wither away in common, day-to-day, sociomaterial practices' (Mol, 2002: 5, emphasis in original).
20. I might suggest that they become 'affine' in the sense anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2004) gives to this word that may be employed to designate brothers-in-law: strangers who become related.
21. See Haraway (2008), who insists upon the need to stop abandoning ourselves to the temptation of innocence.
22. For a discussion of James's theories of the body, see Despret (2004). James's best known theory of emotion, from *The Principles of Psychology*, claims that we believe we cry because we are sad. We should actually say the contrary: we cry, then we are sad; we are sad because we cry. This theory has often been mistaken as strongly materialistic (and problematic: why should we cry, then?). In his *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, James resumes the problem with much more nuanced theories: may we say that we are seduced

because something is seducing, or that something is seducing because we are seduced? We may say both, and both will be true. Because the emotional experience is a particular experience in which the world appears as non-divided yet between a subjective knowing subject and an objective world (James, 1890, 1958).

References

- Bates L and Byrne R (2007) Creative or created: Using anecdotes to investigate animal cognition. *Methods* 42: 12–21.
- Bekoff M (2007) *The Emotional Lives of Animals*. Novato, CA: New World Library.
- Bekoff M and Allen C (1997) Cognitive ethology: Slayers, skeptics, and proponents. In: Mitchell R, Thompson N and Miles H (eds) *Anthropomorphism, Anecdotes, and Animals (SUNY Series in Philosophy and Biology)*. New York: State University of New York Press, 313–335.
- Briggs J (1970) *Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Daston L (2005) Intelligences: Angelic, animal, human. In: Daston L and Mitman G (eds) *Thinking with Animals*. New York: Columbia University Press, 37–58.
- Derrida J (2008) *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, trans. Wills D. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Despret V (2004) The body we care for: Figures of anthropo-zoo-genesis. *Body & Society* 10(2/3): 111–134 (Special Issue on Bodies on Trial; eds Berg M and Akrich M).
- Diski J (2011) *What I Don't Know about Animals*. London: Yale University Press.
- Estep D and Hetts S (1992) Interactions, relationships, and bonds: The conceptual basis for scientist-animal relations. In: Balfour D and Davis H (eds) *The Inevitable Bond: Examining Scientist-Animal Interaction*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 6–26.
- Grandin T and Johnson C (2005) *Animals in Translation*. Orlando: Harvest Books.
- Haraway D (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. London: Free Association Books.
- Haraway D (2008) *When Species Meet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Heinrich B (2000) *Mind of the Raven*. New York: Harper Collins.
- James W (1890) *Principles of Psychology, Vol. II*. New York: Henry Holt.
- James W (1958) *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. New York: Longmans Green.
- Kirk R (2008) A Chance Observation: Ethology and the Recovery of Nature of the Laboratory Animals. Conference given at the seminar Animal Subjects under Observation. Max Planck Institute, Berlin, 10–12 July.
- Latour B (2001) A well articulated primatology: Reflections of a fellow traveler. In: Strum S and Fedigan L (eds) *Primate Encounters: Models of Science, Gender and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 358–382.
- Mol A (2002) *The Body Multiple*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Moss C (2000) *Elephant Memories: Thirteen Years in the Life of an Elephant Family*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mowat F (1981 [1963]) *Never Cry Wolf*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Quiatt D (1997) Silent partners? Observations on some systematic relations among observer perspective, theory, and behavior. In: Mitchell R, Thompson N and Miles H (eds) *Anthropomorphism, Anecdotes, and Animals (SUNY Series in Philosophy and Biology)*. New York: State University of New York Press, 213–220.
- Rosenthal R (1966) *Experimenter Effects in Behavioral Research*. New York: Appleton.
- Rowell T (2000) A few peculiar primates. In: Strum S and Fedigan L (eds) *Primate Encounters: Models of Science, Gender and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 57–71.
- Smuts B (1985) *Sex and Friendship in Baboons*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine.
- Smuts B (2008) Embodied communication in non-human animals. In: Fogel A, King B and Shanker S (eds) *Human Development in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 136–146.
- Strum SC (1987) *Almost Human*. New York: Random House.
- Tsing A (2005) *Frictions: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Viveiros de Castro E (2004) Perspectival anthropology and the method of controlled equivocation. *Tipiti: Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America* 2(1): 3–22.
- Zahavi A and Zahavi A (1997) *The Handicap Principle: A Missing Piece of Darwin's Puzzle*. Oxford: University Press.

Vinciane Despret is a philosopher and a psychologist. She is Maître de conférences at the University of Liège and at the Free University of Brussels. Her doctoral thesis has been published in English: *Our Emotional Makeup: Ethnopsychology and Selfhood* (Other Press, 2004). She was scientific curator of the Exhibition ‘Bêtes et Hommes’, held at the Grande Halle de la Villette, Parc de La Villette, Paris (September 2007–January 2008), and is the author of books and articles inquiring into scientific practices on animals and humans. Her latest book, *Que diraient les animaux si...on leur posait de bonnes questions?*, will be translated into English in 2014–15.