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On Some Issues of Human-Animal Studies: An Introduction

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Animals are "in" – since prehistoric times when humans (or their ancient ancestors) were hunting animals, and when they fabricated the Paleolithic dog[1] as well as the Paleolithic cat.[2] In less general terms, animals are "in" since they received names and were listed,[3] observed, mummified, turned into totems, and, later on, dissected, tortured under laboratory conditions, trained as experimental subjects or "purified" as model organisms. And they are massively "in" again, but now from overtly legal and moral points of view, at least since the last two decades of the twentieth century.[4] This is to say that modern members of the species *Homo sapiens* have always been connected to animals of the most various kinds – from the human flea (*Pulex irritans*) and the cat flea (*Ctenocephalides felis*) to marine mammals, such as dolphins and whales, from horses to parrots, from scallops to worms, and so on.

The array of mental attitudes towards animals, and the patterns of behavior relating to animals are fantastically marked by variety – and are most likely much more varied than the number of animal species that humans relate to either mentally or materially. No wonder representations of animals – in scholarly treatises, belles-lettres of every genre, scientific texts, memoirs, correspondence, diaries, and cookbooks (to mention only one sort of "guidance" texts among others)[5] – fill hundreds of shelves; no wonder either that the meta-texts that deal with these texts fill approximately as many, and perhaps even more, shelves.

The articles collected in the topical section of the present issue address an utterly small number of aspects of human-animal studies. They do it, however, in an unusually innovating manner.

[1] On the still unsettled origin of domesticated dogs, see e.g. Morey 2014.
[2] On the not yet settled origin of the Paleolithic cat, see e.g. Driscoll, Menotti-Raymond, Roca, Hupe, Johnson et al. 2007.
[3] On the case of Mesopotamian naming and listing animals, cf. Wapnish 1985. For an early Arab case see Ben Saad, Katouzian-Fafadi, and Provencal 2013.
[4] Animals are so much "in" that a handbook on human-animal studies was esteemed to be a selling print product; cf. Martin and Mattugh 2014.
[5] For more details on meat consumption in the eighteenth-century French army as well as in bourgeois society – an aspect that ought not to be forgotten in human-animal studies –, see Roche 1997, 239–267.

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Stéphane Schmitt's subtle case study draws the readers' attention to the contributions on animal themes read before, and subsequently published in large part by, the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris up to the time of its closure during the French Revolution. To my knowledge, the entirety of these contributions have never before been analyzed and classified according to the then socially recognized research programs or paradigms.

The essays by Lydia Marinelli and Andreas Mayer and by Alison Winter approach their thematic focus from within the history of the psychoanalytic movement. Rather than revolving exclusively around humans and their (animal) dreams, (animal) angst, and/or (animal) fetishisms, as historians of psychoanalysis would have it, however, the authors of the two articles outline new epistemological leads that reach into neighboring research fields such as the history and theory of behaviorism, the study of animal mind(s), and the material and/or symbolic place of animals in past and present cultures.

Etienne Benson's contribution addresses the topic of naming animals – a topic that is, if ever, merely on rare occasions, discussed in human-animal studies. Nonetheless the topic raises far-reaching problems relating to reference and denotation, rigid descriptions and rigid denominators, the difference(s) existing between natural and social kinds, as well as the sometime embarrassing issue of calling animal species by their no longer recognized scientific names.

Before further contextualizing below the articles just touched upon, I should make some remarks on the atypical essay by Marinelli and Mayer.

The essay on animals in psychoanalysis documents one of the last research projects of historian Lydia Marinelli (1965–2008) who died while the article published in the present issue was under way. This text is based on a paper delivered in cooperation with Andreas Mayer at the conference *Animal Subjects under Observation* held at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin (July 11–13, 2008). The present version incorporates further developments on which both authors have worked during Marinelli's research leave in Berlin, a few weeks before she took her life in Vienna.

Out of the yearlong collaboration of Lydia Marinelli with Andreas Mayer grew a co-authored book on the history of Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Marinelli and Mayer 2002/2003) and a co-edited topical issue published in this journal (Marinelli and Mayer 2006).

Marinelli's refreshingly unconventional and innovative approach to the history of psychoanalysis had its source to a great extent in her double qualification as a professionally trained historian and as a curator of the Sigmund Freud Museum at Vienna (see Marinelli 2009; Mayer 2009a and 2009b). In her work she succeeded at bringing hidden or unexpected aspects of psychoanalytic theories and practice to the fore, often by taking anecdotal elements or trivia seriously, thereby arguing for the relevancy of marginal or obscure aspects that had been forgotten in conventional, i.e. dominant, accounts. One can sense the presence of such a thread leading from the

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familiar to the unknown in the text published in the present issue – a thread which runs from the status assigned to animals within the well-known Freudian construction of the Oedipus complex to Imre Hermann's theoretical approach to drives that builds on ethological observations.

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The Ambiguous Status of Animals

Some European countries have more or less recently modified the status of animals by ascribing to them qualities that had never been ascribed to them before. Article 641a of the Swiss civil code stipulates that "1 Animals are not objects. [And] 2 where no special provisions exist for animals, they are subject to the provisions governing objects."[6] This article has brought about a major change. It put specific limits upon the previously granted, nearly unrestrained right of owners to dispose freely of animals as objects according to article 641 of the civil code.[7]

In early 2015, the French Parliament passed a modification of the then valid version of the civil code regarding animals. In the pre-2015 version of the code, the notion of movable property was applied to animals according to article 528, which asserts that "Animals and things that can move from one place to another, whether they move by themselves, or whether they can move only as the result of an extraneous power, are movables by their nature."[8] Thus, when owned, animals *qua* things could be disposed of "in the most absolute manner, provided they are not used in a way prohibited by statutes or regulations." Whatever the statutes and regulations regarding animals may have been before 2015, animals were regarded merely as things. By passing the new article 515–14, the French Parliament re-defined animals as "living beings endowed with sentience."[9] By adding the disposition of sentience to the definition of animals as movable property, i.e. as things, the French legislators turned animals *qua* things (or the other way round) into ontologically ambiguous entities.

[6] *Swiss Civil Code* (English translation), amendment of article 641a of the civil code according to the Federal Act of October 4, 2004; https://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/19070042/index.html (last accessed September 28, 2015).

[7] Article 641 of the *Swiss Civil Code* reads thus: "1 The owner of an object is free to dispose of it as he or she sees fit within the limits of the law. 2 He or she has the right to reclaim it from anyone withholding it from him or her and to protect it against any unwarranted interference."

[8] *French Civil Code*: For the English translation of the *Civil Code* provided by Legifrance, see: http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/Traductions/en-English/Legifrance-translations (last accessed October 7, 2015).

[9] "Les animaux sont des êtres vivants doués de sensibilité" according to the wording of *LOI n° 2015–177 du 16 février 2015 relative à la modernisation et à la simplification du droit et des procédures dans les domaines de la justice et des affaires intérieures*, see http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexteArticle.do;jsessionid=212FC47C9E7F4CD17334233395F838AC.tpdila21v_1?idArticle=JORFARTI000030248589&cidTexte=JORFTEXT000030248562&dateTexte=29990101&categorieLien=id (last accessed September 13, 2015).

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These and similar legislative moves are consequential. Since animals may have a status which differs both from that of persons, on the one hand, as well as from that of mere things (movables), the impact on research politics, research policies, and research opportunities may also have widely applicable effects. Some laboratory research on animals may be permitted in some, but not in all countries. Researchers may be constrained to develop strong arguments for specific interventions on animals in some places, but not everywhere. Scientific research on animals is no longer totally free, hence research managers, heads of research projects, etc., are compelled to face political, social, legal, and cultural challenges. To put it differently, ever since the Universal Declaration of Animals Rights proclaimed by the UNESCO on October 15, 1978,[10] researchers in various fields of the life sciences, scholars, farmers, and other professionals who work more or less closely with animals must no longer take entrenched, traditional notions of animate beings for granted, straightforwardly evident, or self-explanatory. This is to say that (as Stéphane Schmitt's article suggests) the approaches to animal studies have evolved over time due to factors both internal to research constraints, on the one hand, and to factors external to the domain of epistemological considerations.

Around 1900, it was, indeed, permissible in Europe and elsewhere to skin dogs alive for whatever reason without legal consequences, as is still done today in China and Vietnam thousands of times each year for fur manufacture and/or cooking.[11] In 1975, physiologists would have faced indictment if they had skinned a dog (or any other animal) alive for research or other purposes. And today, European researchers will never be allowed to skin dogs alive in a lab or in their own private premises.

It should also be noted that these changes of attitude towards animals did not occur abruptly. Witness a passage in Émile Zola's novel *La joie de vivre*, where the author narrates the mortal sufferings of a fourteen year old dog considered to be like "a member of the family" (Zola 1884, 281). A veterinarian is called for, who, when seeing the dog, mocks those who called him instead of hastily and cold-bloodedly killing the animal. The next day or so, the family doctor passes by and offers to examine the dog and to give some advice on how to decently treat the dying animal (ibid.).[12]

[10] For further information on declarations, treatises, and laws on animal rights, see: http://www.stray-afp.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Laws-and-declarations1.pdf (last accessed September 7, 2015).

[11] Cf. the document issued by the Belgian senate on March 22, 2006, which mentions, among other animals skinned alive (cats, rabbits, seals) the case of skinning dogs alive in China. The number of dogs skinned alive since 2007 has increased in a significant way (*Document législatif n° 3–1630/1*: http://www.senate.be/www/?MIval=/publications/viewPub.html&COLL=S&LEG=3&NR=1630&VOLGNR=1&LANG=fr (last accessed November 2, 2015).

[12] On the social history e.g. of cats, see Bobis 2000; of horses, see Roche 2008, 2011, and 2015, as well as Raulff 2015; of dogs, especially in Jewish traditions, see Ackerman-Lieberman and Zalashik 2013. For further details on the history of domesticated animals in general during the last two centuries, see Baldin 2014.

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Naming as Epistemic Domestication

Giving names to animals – the subject matter of Etienne Benson's essay – and, more generally speaking, naming animals, may be considered as a sort of epistemic, or, depending on circumstances, at least as a minimally sophisticated, symbolico-semantic domestication of animate beings. Giving names and naming depends evidently upon socially accepted, more or less complex rules with changing normative content. When children invent, or look for a name for their pet cat, they may do as they like. This course of action differs radically from the formal rules dictated e.g. by the international commission on zoological nomenclature.[13]

Zoologists or ethologists working in the field may give common names to the animals they follow day in day out. But some professional sub-groups of zoologists or ethologists have adopted various rules for naming animals. Thus, wolf watchers resort to numbers for the unambiguous denotation of individual animals; primatologists, in contrast, more often than not call their subjects by first names.

Naming animals is part and parcel of human-animal relations, no matter whether we consider name-giving in early twenty-first-century urban environments or in places that are of particular interest to ethnographers and social anthropologists who pay attention to the complexities of animal nomenclature (see e.g. Brent 1997).

In order to illustrate the role of animal names, I refer with due conciseness to a case from early nineteenth-century French natural history.

René Primevère Lesson published a comprehensive monograph on hummingbirds, most likely in 1830 or 1831, which contained several pages on hummingbird names. According to Lesson (n.d., 4) Linné had first identified hummingbirds with *Trochilus*, a taxon already mentioned by Herodotus. Later on, the same Linné identified hummingbirds with the protonym *Charadrius aegyptius* as described by his student Frederik Hasselsquist. Strangely, *C. aegyptius*, was renamed again by Linné, who now suggested that it be henceforth called *Pluvianus aegyptius* (which today is the scientific name for the crocodile-bird or Egyptian cowser or Egyptian plower).

Lesson also asserted that Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire identified the taxon *Trochilus* (deemed by Linné to be a hummingbird) with the bird called *saq-saq* in Arabic. However, according to Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, *saq-saq* (thus spelled by Lesson) was nothing else than Hasselsquist's *C. aegyptius*, and not, as one would assume today, *Vanellus spinosus* (which is the scientific name for spur-wingled lapwing or spur-wingled plower).

This is confusing semantics, indeed. One doesn't know why Linné erred (by today's standards) in characterizing hummingbirds as *Trochilus*, whether Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire misunderstood his Egyptian informers during his stay in Cairo and thus was induced to believe that *C. aegyptius* (taken by Linné to be most likely a hummingbird but also

[13] See http://iczn.org/ (last accessed September 23, 2015). See also Ohl 2015.

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most likely a plower) was nothing else than a *saq-saq* thus called in Arabic, whether *saq-saq* around 1800 was the name used by Arabs in Cairo to denote a single species (*V. spinosus*?) or a genus (let's say, the genus of plowers). To put it differently, we have an abundant supply of names, but we are in want of a clearcut, well-founded reference. And thus we are quite uncertain with what, exactly, we are dealing, except that we are dealing, quite exactly, with a zoological puzzle caused by an overabundance of names.

Animal Mind as Subject Matter of Epistemic Domestication

Ever since pre-historic times, knowledge of the inside of animals' bodies seems to have been a constant aim. Anatomical inspection and dissection, later on vivisection coupled with instrumental invasion, and much more recently imaging techniques, may be mentioned as major, though not unique, ways of getting acquainted with organisms' structure beneath the cutaneous (or some other type of) surface.

Today's collecting data relating to the brain of animals, both to its structure and its specific functions, has become a major research topic. In comparison with earlier methods of investigation (either surgical removal of brain areas or direct stimulation of such areas in vivisection, etc.), neuroimaging methods and neuro-stimulation techniques have brought about an astounding increase in precision. Animal brains may be "activated" by the stimulation of small numbers of neurons, or perhaps even of single neurons. And the representation of the brain's disposition may be visualized by functional magnetic resonance imaging tools.

In search of answers to questions relating to the physiologically relevant processes in mammal brains, many factors ought to be taken into account. Just one among immensely many such factors is the presence of manganese ions as a "trace element essential for normal body function and development throughout the lifespan of mammals" (Massaad and Pautler 2011, 146). But manganese ions happen also to be a most appropriate contrast agent for anatomical and functional imaging methods.

In magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) studies that address the anatomical or structural properties of brains as well as in functional magnetic resonance studies (fMRI) that aim to localize cerebral functions, target organisms are bound to stay totally motionless. Experimental animal subjects such as rodents, which can be easily obtained for tests, however, may be very good subjects in experiments of the Skinnerian type (operant conditioning), but – contrary to dogs (see below) – they cannot be trained so that they stay motionless in running MRI machines. They are therefore either anesthetized or fixed. As anesthetics, urethan and α-chloralose (vastly used in rodent studies) have the advantage of keeping the neurovascular system intact – this is a prerequisite for fMRI studies. However, these anesthetics are also lethal. Experimenting with rodents under such constraints is tantamount to deliberately putting an end to the animal's life – quite the contrary of examining rodents in longitudinal fMRI studies

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(see e.g. Silva, Liu, Hirano, Leoni et al. 2011, 283) or in lived situations of so-called intelligent behavior as displayed by rats and mice in psychological laboratories.

Rodents are cheap animal subjects and easy to keep ready for experimentation. They are thus used again and again. But they do not allow for much advance in animal psychology, contrary to research done with domesticated animals that are trained over long periods of time and are taken care of by numerous persons. Working with dogs in view of improving human acquaintance with "animal minds" is nonetheless time-consuming and expensive.

The Brazilian scholar César Ades succeeded at training a dog – Sofia is her name – to communicate to humans by means of a keyboard displaying arbitrary signs. Unlike signaling some "inner processes" such as hunger or fear to humans, Sofia pointed to this or that arbitrary *sign* in order to have this sign speak for a request she was addressing to someone with whom she was interacting at that point of time (see Pongrácz Rossi and Ades 2008).[14]

Another example of costly research is that of training dogs for extended fMRI studies performed by Gregory Berns and his team. The descriptive outline of a first experiment reads thus:

> Because of their prolonged evolution with humans, many of the canine cognitive skills are thought to represent a selection of traits that make dogs particularly sensitive to human cues. . . . For this reason, we selected a simple discrimination task with two human hand signals for initial study with canine fMRI. Although there is growing evidence that dogs do not need to be conditioned to learn human hand signals, for this first experiment we chose to associate the hand signals with primary rewards to provide a linkage with comparable imaging experiments in both humans and monkeys and to maximize the chance of observing a significant brain response. (Berns, Brooks, and Spivak 2012, 1)[15]

The human-dog closeness, which, according to some recent theorists, may be grounded on co-evolutionary processes involving *Homo sapiens* and *Canis familiaris*, seems to make possible an epistemic approach different from that holding for rodents and other "wild" subjects. The ethologically and (broadly speaking) behavioristically oriented approach doesn't turn domesticated animals into pseudo-human beings, but rather permits one to more easily bridge the human-animal gap which, in innumerable other cases, rather than being recognized as a genuine problem, is radically (or dogmatically) ignored as an epistemologically significant issue.

The essay by Marinelli and Mayer and the one by Winter add a rarely acknowledged aspect to human-animal studies: the psychoanalytic stance toward animals. Moving from the private worlds of (as it seems) genuinely human affects, repressed memories,

[14] Cf. also the narrative in Ades's (2010) autobiographical account.
[15] For an extensive account of the fMRI studies of dogs, see Berns 2013.

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traumata, drives, and wishes[16] to the public world of domesticated animals considered as experimental *and* psychoanalytic subjects permits one to re-describe the human factor in terms of animal behavioral processes. Neuroses and other ailments of patients thus move out of the psychoanalytic inner world into the public arena and thereby imply that *human* mental processes are also processes of *animality in ourselves*. Whatever the intrinsic value of approaches which either put cats, so to speak, on the couch or animal symbols into mental scenarios, the essays reconstructing some phenomena of the psychoanalytic movement nicely complement the dominant trend in the history of psychoanalysis – and they do so by adding the animal touch to the encounters between the analyst's pure soul and the humanly suffering soul of the analysand.

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Studying animals, especially domestic animals, is now more often than not an endeavor which puts to question the animal factors or elements in humans. Maybe being human turns out to being less self-estranged from one's own animality.

No doubt, there are degrees in the recognition of human animality and animal humanness. At one end of the spectrum, one may locate John Gray's position: "The destruction of the natural world is not the result of global capitalism, industrialisation, 'Western civilisation' or any flaw in human institutions. It is the consequence of the evolutionary success of an exceptionally rapacious primate" (Gray 2002, 7). On the other end, one still finds scholars and scientists who emphasize the uniqueness of human rationality, the non-animalistic delicateness of emotions, and the use of language. And somewhere in between one may find Alexandre Kojève, who reflected on the end of history by which humans would return to a state of pure animality – except in Japan, where a totally different form of *human* life (that of affected up-to-dateness) would survive, a form of life impossible among animals (see Kojève 1968, 437). Whatever position one chooses within the spectrum, or whichever position one is motivated to reach as a consequence of looking and studying human-animal relations, the essays on human-animal studies collected for publication in this issue are, in spite of their being modest in number, meant to be food for thought, animal or human, or both.

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[16] I.e. mental processes as encountered by psychoanalysts in the setting – a setting sometimes defined as a kind of extraterritoriality accessible only to the dyad of patient and analyst.

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