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Animal Minds, Skepticism, and the Affective Stance

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RESUMEN

Las descripciones externas cuya aproximación a los animales se lleva a cabo por medio de mecanismos externos en lugar de estados mentales, han ganado una posición preeminente. Sin embargo, de acuerdo con el objetivismo fuerte, la atención necesita colocarse sobre las presunciones que subyacen a las creencias dadas. Cuando esto se aplica al tema de la mente animal se pone de manifiesto que las descripciones internas, más bien que las externas, son quizás las que ofrecerían una opción más fructífera. Esta afirmación viene apoyada por la crítica wittgensteiniana del escepticismo que busca evitar la "deflación" y plantea una "postura afectiva". Con todo, para evitar el relativismo y el conservadurismo, las descripciones internas y la postura afectiva necesitan hacer hincapié en las ramificaciones epistemológicas que están detrás de las creencias concernientes a la mente animal y hacer del animal el punto de referencia central de la investigación.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *mente animal, escepticismo, etología, ética animal.*

ABSTRACT

External descriptions, which approach animals via external mechanisms rather than internal mental states, have gained a prominent position. However, according to strong objectivism, attention needs to be placed on the presumptions that lay behind given beliefs. When applied to the topic of animal minds, it reveals that perhaps internal rather than external descriptions would offer a fruitful option. This claim is supported by the Wittgensteinian criticism of skepticism, which seeks to avoid "deflection" and brings forward an "affective stance". Still, in order to avoid relativism and conservatism, internal descriptions and the affective stance need to place emphasis on the epistemological ramifications behind beliefs concerning animal minds, and centralise the animal as the reference point of inquiry.

KEYWORDS: *Animal Minds, Skepticism, Ethology, Animal Ethics.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Animal minds have not been a popular topic in Western philosophy. However, recently two fields of enquiry have given the impetus for a more enthusiastic approach. Firstly, the moral value of non-human animals has started to gain more attention in the form of “animal ethics” [see Singer (1975); Regan (1983); DeGrazia (1996)]. Secondly (and more importantly), cognitive ethology has brought forward empirical and theoretical research that suggests that animal minds are far more complex and rich than previously thought [see Wise (2002)].

However, animal minds are still often approached via skepticism. Even cognitive ethology tends to repeat this skepticism in its insistence on absolute proof and verification.[1] The paper at hand investigates this “skeptical stance” and the criticism presented against it. The main question is: “Should we doubt the existence of animal minds?”.[2]

II. STRONG OBJECTIVISM

One of the central premises of the skeptical stance is that our conceptions of animal minds are muddled by cultural influences. Particularly the accusation of “anthropomorphism” is common, as the claim often is that the attribution of minds to non-human animals is based on the fallacious reading of animals as “little humans” [see Kennedy (1992); Carruthers (1992)]. To use Daniel Dennett’s terminology, we adopt “an intentional stance” in relation to animals, and wrongly attribute human-like qualities to them [Dennett (1998); see also Brittan (1999)]. The presence of cultural influence gives the grounds for doubt and the demand for verification.

The premise can be defended to a certain extent. As Eileen Crist has argued, characterisations of animal minds are always affected by conceptual frameworks, including cultural influences [Crist (1999)]. An objective understanding of animal minds is impossible to achieve, and this opens the door for obvious cultural bias (thus, “pets” may be more readily seen to have minds, whereas “production animals” may be quickly defined as purely instinctual beings). However, the inability to gain an objective perspective concerns all human knowledge. As is commonly argued, complete neutrality, i.e. the view from nowhere, remains an ideal. Therefore, it is problematic to pin point precisely animal minds as the topic, of which one cannot talk objectively, and particularly problematic to assert that due to this, any reference to animal minds is akin to anthropomorphism. Since all human knowledge is affected by conceptual frameworks, the fruitful thing is to ask what does this mean from the viewpoint of understanding, not to merely complain that understandings of animal minds are relative and as such somehow dubious. Given that there, perhaps, is no access to a view from nowhere, how can and should one formulate understandings concerning animal minds?

One way to approach this issue is to analyse precisely what types of conceptual frameworks are at play behind different understandings. That is, the frameworks that affect us are brought to the fore and explored. This approach follows Sandra Harding's "strong objectivism". According to Harding, standard (or "weak") objectivism pretends to be free from any social influences, but in doing so is, paradoxically, not realistic about the manner in which knowledge is formed: "What [weak] objectivism cannot conceptualize is… that nature as-the-object-of-human-knowledge never comes to us 'naked'; it comes only as already constituted in social thought" [Harding (1991), p. 147]. Strong objectivism, on the other hand, considers the conceptual frameworks that affect knowledge: "We can think of strong objectivity as extending the notion of scientific research to include systematic examination of… background beliefs" [Ibid, p. 149]. In the present context, this means analysing the assumptions and frameworks that lead one to make assertions concerning animal minds.

Crist uses Peter Winch's division into *internal* and *external* descriptions of phenomena in her effort to perform such an analysis (Bernard Rollin has made a similar differentiation between "ordinary common sense" and "common sense of science" [Rollin (2003), p. 70]). The internal descriptions emphasise subjective experiences, whereas the external descriptions underline mechanical explanations. Hence, the former explains intentional-seeming behaviour through the experiences and cognitive states of the animal, and the latter through matters such as mechanical instinct, behaviourism, and brain physiology. These descriptions have a strong impact on understandings of animals, for they lay down the conceptual frameworks that go on to govern whether or not animals are seen to have minds. Thus, Rollin points out that: "Scientific common sense's agnosticism about such locutions [concerning animal minds] therefore in essence removes questions of animal welfare from the realm of legitimate empirical investigation" – animal experiences do not exist in scientific definitions [Rollin (2003), p. 70]. To put it simply, the descriptions determine whether or not animals are seen to be beings that have minds: within the external descriptions, minds do not exist (at least in any but purely behaviourist/neurophysiological sense), and within internal descriptions, they do. The approach to animal minds sets the grounds for the beliefs concerning those minds. This means that, when discussing whether animals have minds, one needs to pay careful attention to the type of description one is supporting.

As Crist points out, external descriptions are often favoured. Hence, the oft-vilified anthropomorphism is, actually, in the minority as a framework that determines our understanding of animal minds. What emerges as a crucial question is why do we have to prove the existence of animal minds, rather than their non-existence? There are several reasons, which suggest that perhaps the burden of proof should not lie on internalism, but rather externalism. Firstly, it is important to note that the denial of animal minds can be equally culturally constructed as anthropomorphism. That is, it too is affected by conceptual frameworks – denial of minds is not a neutral matter. Thus, Crist has termed the external descriptions of animals "mechanomorphism" [Crist (1999)]. It can be argued that mechanomorphism often intertwines with practical considerations, and particularly the instrumental use of non-human animals: it may be based on a practical desire to depict animals in a given way, rather than informed knowledge concerning animals. As historians have maintained [see Thomas (1983)], the Western society has tended to conceptualise animals via use-value, and external descriptions accommodate this value. To put it simplistically, pigs cannot have minds, because we eat pigs.

Secondly, the external descriptions go against folk understandings to a degree that requires explanation. Bernard Rollin has maintained that: "…as Hume points out, few things are more repugnant to ordinary common sense than skepticism about animals' mind" [Rollin (2003), p. 68], and there is much truth to the claim. Quite simply, internal descriptions seem to have more explanatory power: "…we could not interpret animal behaviour in ordinary life without imputing such notions as pain, fear, anger, and affection to animals" [Ibid, p. 70]. The fact that our everyday experiences with non-human animals suggest that animals are more than mechanical beings can be argued to shift the burden of proof on externalism. Thirdly, research may support internalism. As suggested above, cognitive ethology has presented strong evidence regarding animal minds, and many within this field argue that animals ought to be viewed via the internal approach [see for instance Bekoff (2002); Rogers (1997), pp. 181-195; Dawkins (1998)].[3] Studies, which recognise differences in species constitution (such as sensory capacities), which take into account that the same functions can be maintained by different structures (thus, there may be differences in brain physiologies)[4], and which acknowledge the viewpoint of the animals (often in their own environments), have shed new light onto the minds of non-human animals and suggest that internalism ought, perhaps, be favoured [see also Allen & Bekoff (1997)]. The argument from analogy (although by no means logically conclusive) adds to the case for internalism: given the evolutionary, physiological, and behavioural similarities between humans and other animals, it would seem more likely than unlikely that at least some animals have minds.

However, this account relies partly on evidence: internal descriptions are favoured "because of x, y or z". One argument is that placing emphasis on evidence repeats skepticism, which again is inherently doubtful of animal minds. According to skepticism, we must presume that animals do not have minds, unless the existence of their minds is offered absolute proof. Although there are notable exceptions [see Clark & Linzey (1990)], skepticism has thrived in, not only science[5], but also philosophy. Particularly the claimed lack of rationality and propositional language has led many to assume that animals do not have minds (the most notable example is, of course, Descartes). Today, it is mental capacities such as consciousness, self-awareness, conceptuality, and intentionality, the claimed lack of which is argued to mean that animals do not have minds in the real sense of the term [Carruthers (1992); Cohen (2001); Scruton (1996)]. Also many postmodern and continental philosophers have opted for skepticism. Levinas and Lyotard claimed that animals lack subjectivity due to their lack of language [Wolfe (2003)], and Heidegger argued that animals (whom remain "poor in the world") are divided from humans by "an abyss" [Calarco (2008)]. Skepticism is so well-rooted that even philosophers, who argue for animal dignity and criticise skepticism, may rather inadvertently repeat it. For instance, Raimond Gaita argues that: "Nothing crossed her [a dog's] mind. That, I suspect, is part of what it means to be an animal" [Gaita (2002), p. 34].

Skepticism supports external descriptions of animals, and thus supporting internal descriptions on the basis of evidence (a prerequisite of skepticism) may be a doomed effort. But can skepticism be resisted?

III. DEFLECTION AND THE AFFECTIVE STANCE

Jamieson criticises the "inferential view", according to which "all knowledge claims about animal minds are based on probabilistic inferences to hidden mental states from observations of behavior" [Jamieson (2002), p. 57]. He argues that such a view is inevitably skeptical about animal minds, for it requires evidence of something that is impossible to fully prove. There is always a theoretical possibility (no matter how slight) that the behaviour in question can be explained via terminology that does not imply a mind. Even the most creative or complex behaviour can, in theory, be explained by references to complex mechanisms – even when the existence of such mechanisms is highly improbable or questionable. Gaita has described the situation as following: "Her [an animal's] howling provides evidence that she was in terrible pain. But it provides evidence only because there is no room for serious doubt whether she is a sensate creature. Should someone doubt that, then her howling and the howling of a million dogs could not convince him." [Gaita (2002), p. 61.] Therefore, the inferential view (or, more broadly, externalism and skepticism) set too high a criterion for understanding animal minds: the type of proof that it asks for cannot be achieved.[6]

Jamieson maintains that we should adopt an "affective stance" (akin to internalism) towards other animals, which means approaching them as experiencing, cognitive beings. He borrows Wittgenstein's idea that when "we see emotion", we do not "see facial contortions and make inferences from them", but rather approach others as emotive beings, and read their expressions via the presupposition of emotion [Jamieson (2002), p. 59]. Similarly, Gaita quotes Wittgenstein: "My attitude toward him is an attitude towards a soul: I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul" [Ibid, p. 58]. The same framework should be adopted in relation to animal minds: animals are to be viewed as beings with minds.[7] Jamieson refers to "perception" in this context, and argues that minds are somewhat directly perceived rather than empirically inferred. Here, what matters is the perspective of our perception: minds may only surface when approached as minds. Rollin makes a similar point: "…common sense *perceives* mental states in others in exactly the way that it perceives physical states or objects" [Rollin 1989]. Therefore, approaching animals affectively (or internally), via the framework of a mind, will enable one to perceive animal minds.

The affective stance eliminates skepticism, as doubt over whether the animal *really* has a mind becomes meaningless. Gordon Brittan uses the illuminating example of reading a text: "The text is not a 'report' on the author's mind whose accuracy, in the nature of the case, can never be verified. In the same way, when we properly interpret some animal's behavior, locating it in a present environment and past history, there is little room for asking, yes, but does this *really* signify a mind? The behavior itself, contextually understood, answers the question." [Brittan (1999), p. 68-69.] This approach validates Dennett's intentional stance. That stance is no longer a negative feature, but rather a necessity for perception.

As hinted above, this view partly rests on Wittgensteinian philosophy. Gaita maintains that Wittgenstein presented an argument against the type of skepticism that is evident in the inferential view and externalism. The search for evidence overlooks the significance of conceptual frameworks and "meaning" as sources of understanding. Instead of asking for piles of evidence, we must look at what is meaningful, what makes sense, how do we relate to animals. There need not be evidence, what suffices is that we cannot doubt certain things (such as the minds of others). Gaita argues that: "Perhaps, as Ludwig Wittgenstein suggested, we should cease to look for a further justification while at the same time refusing to concede that this is intellectual dereliction" [Gaita (2002), p. 50]; "Almost all philosophical and scientific work about animals is based on the assumption that Wittgenstein threw into doubt – that we are justified in attributing various 'states of consciousness' to animals only to the degree that we have evidence for them" [Ibid, p. 52]; "Our certainty is without evidence – *completely* without evidence - and is none the worse for that" [Ibid, p. 62]. Accusations of anthropomorphism are possible only if we believe the skeptic's view that evidence ought to be provided prior to making claims of animal minds – that is, they are misplaced in this context. Gaita goes on to argue: "That is the deepest reason why it is not anthropomorphic to say that Gypsy [a dog] intends this, or that she believes or hopes that" [Ibid, p. 60].

Gaita uses Peter Winch's term "primitive reactions", which are "a condition rather than a consequence of ascribing states of consciousness to others" [Gaita (2002), p. 59]. Thus, again folk understandings and everyday interactions with non-human animals are important. Interaction does not only reveal animal minds, but the concept of "a mind" is *based on* interaction: relations to other animals (as well as other humans) build our conceptions of what it is to have a mind. Hence, it does not make sense to ask whether animals truly have minds, for they *lend us the whole concept*. Gaita maintains that: "Out of...interactions... between us and animals, there developed...our *very concepts* of thought, feeling, intention, belief, doubt, and so on" [Ibid, p. 61]. This means that the concept of a mind remains unfulfilled if not applied also to animals: "If the word 'consciousness' means anything then I have no doubt that Gypsy is a conscious being" [Ibid, p. 62].

Therefore, Jamieson and Gaita assert that the whole demand for absolute proof and certainty ought to be forsaken, together with the skeptical framework. They are based on a mistaken understanding of the reality. Following Wittgenstein, language forms the limits of our world, and thus there can never be objective certainty and full proof – rather, we need to find what is meaningful within that language, what types of understandings make sense. Here, the idea that animals have minds comes to the forefront: when the dog howls we instantly know she is in pain without having to rely on scientific arguments that would prove to us the existence of her pain. (It has to be emphasised that the dog's howl is not a lingual proposition that tells us her state – rather our language has evolved in relation to the pains, joys and other experiences of our fellow beings, and as such offers us a platform via which to recognise a dog in pain even when the dog offers us no propositional report on her state, and when there is no scientist to tell us whether we should deduce that the dog, indeed, does feel pain.)

Cora Diamond has offered a carefully structured view of the Wittgensteinian approach. She argues that skepticism is a form of "deflection": sophisticated academic frameworks may blind us to the very beings and minds that they seek to analyse. Particularly because-arguments ("y is true because x") lead us astray: they seek ideals of objective, perfect knowledge that cannot be achieved, and thus blind us of the "difficulty of reality", which refers to our incapacity to fully explain or grasp matters such as other minds via language. The best we can do is to become "exposed" to other beings, which refers to a state where "The other can present me with no mark or feature on the basis of which I can settle my attitude" (here Diamond quotes Stanley Cavell – [Diamond (2008), p. 71]). Exposure leaves us in a situation, where we come face to face with the animal, where knowledge of the minds of animals can change at any moment, and where there is no proof or certainty. Hence, because of its inability to understand the limits of language, skepticism drags us further away from animal minds: it rests on the idea of complete and full explanations, and therefore cannot do justice to that, which cannot be completely and fully explained.

Therefore, skepticism and the demand for verification may render one blind to the minds of animals. There is truth to this claim. Because they rely on technical language, external, skeptical descriptions may simply remain conceptually immune to any notion of animal cognition. Within, for instance, the language of behaviourism, animal cognition does not "fit" and will therefore remain hidden. The claim is particularly fitting in the context of "scienticism", which reduces animal minds to various test variables, be they physical (for instance, stress hormone levels) or behavioral (for instance, tests completed in the laboratory environment). A particular problem with such scientism is that it overlooks an empathetic reading of others (a form of aforementioned "perception"). Martha Nussbaum has argued that, in order to understand mental states of others, an empathetic reading is needed. She claims that even attributing emotions to human beings "involves projection that goes beyond evidence" [Nussbaum (2001), p. 124]. Lists of factual verifications do not do justice to what it means to see another being as a being that has emotions and a mind. Fox and McLean support this emphasis on empathetic perception, and refer to Nussbaum's example of the studies on learned helplessness (conducted by Martin Seligman), wherein dogs were first given rewards if they behaved in a given way, and suddenly were bombarded with electric shocks regardless of what they did (until they became utterly broken beings). According to them, emphasis on nothing but factual knowledge leads us to a situation, where the minds and pain of animals are not recognised. This enables experimenters to cause dogs to "piss and shit themselves, howl and struggle" to no avail, again and again, until they are shivering wrecks, without seeing moral problems but only useful, objective science. Here "perceptions have become shallow and faint; they don't see what is there to be seen because they ignore their emotional and imaginative responses and what these responses should reveal to them" [Fox & McLean (2008), p. 167] – they are taking part in a "de-sensitised reading process" [Ibid, p. 168].

Hence, it can be argued that skepticism is a form of deflection particularly, because it alienates us from a perceptive, empathetic reading of animals. Minds cannot be reduced to proof and evidence – rather, they require a phenomenological approach. Diamond argues that the *meaning* of minds is such that they cannot be translated to the language of science. One could add that this meaning is particularly intrinsic to phenomenal beings, for whom (to borrow Thomas Nagel's terminology) it is like something to exist. We own the concept of a mind, it *is* us, and this enables us to form understandings concerning the minds of others that do not rely on external evidence. This includes the ability to recognise the minds of others, even when one is lacking a thorough definition of "a mind", and a catalogue of evidence. For me, as an experiencing being, it makes little sense to relate to the animal in front of me via the demand for theory and evidence, rather than via empathetic perception.

IV. CRITIQUE

The Wittgensteinian criticism of skepticism brings strong objectivism to its conclusion, as one becomes thoroughly familiar of the factors behinds one's views. However, there are also problems ahead. The most obvious point of criticism is that because-arguments are impossible to avoid. It would seem that one struggles to not refer to some type of proof: surely we cannot just make claims without any interest in evidence? A related argument concerns relativism. If evidence and proof are entirely avoided, does this not lead to whimsical statements that have more to do with fantasy than the reality?

These criticisms have a point. Without any reference to evidence or because-arguments, beliefs concerning the minds of animals may turn out to be nothing but arbitrary constructions. However, to a certain extent the criticisms also miss the point. As claimed, the Wittgensteinian framework suggests that meanings imbedded in language games are all that we have, and that to skeptically ask for external proof is based on philosophical naivety. To abandon proof does not lead to a situation, where anything goes – rather, one is still rooted in meanings and limited by that, which makes sense. However, does this not lay the basis for a very conservative worldview? If a society happens to hold basic, foundational meanings that strongly deny animal minds, are we to follow these meanings? This possibility is exemplified in the cynicism that Diamond targets against because-arguments that defend the moral value of animals on the account that animals have minds. According to her, difference (dualism) between humans and other animals is "a central concept of human life" [Diamond (2004), p. 98]. Because of this centrality, we "form the idea of this difference, create the concept of the difference, knowing perfectly well overwhelmingly obvious similarities" (Ibid.). Evidence and proof are denied all relevance: even if we have almost certain proof that animals have minds, it may not matter.

In order to resist such conservatism, some role needs to be offered for proof and evidence. Here, the animal becomes central. It can be argued that the background beliefs and conceptual frameworks used to describe animal minds often take priority over the animal herself: the looking glass via which the animal is observed takes centre stage, whilst the animal may remain rather secondary. However, the affective stance and perception must begin with the animal. She needs to be the focal point of any inquiry. This would enable one to avoid both relativism and conservatism, as any interpretations and perceptions will not do, but rather understandings concerning animals have to be anchored on the animals themselves. But does the whole project not rely on an idealistic notion of objectivism, within which the animal can be easily, without difficulty, grasped? Here the difference between "reference" and "neutral access" becomes important. Centralising the animal does not imply that the animal is known from a view from nowhere. The claim is only that the animal should be the *reference point* of inquiry. What matters is bringing the animal in all her complexity forward: she (rather than cultural presumptions or human-centered meanings) becomes the priority.

But how does one make the animal a reference point, if one does not know, objectively, what the animal is? The claim here is that centralising the animal is a very concrete enterprise: we are to come face to face with the animal, and encage in interaction with her (thus, take part in concrete "exposure"). As the renowned ethologist Marc Bekoff argues: "There are no substitutes for listening to, and having direct experiences with, other animals" – for him, animals are "a way of knowing" [Bekoff (2000), p. 869]. Intentionality, belief-formation, consciousness, and other mental abilities are hard to detect in their full potential without encaging in interaction with the other being. Hence, the study of animal minds requires *interaction*. As Nussbaum states: "…All such scientific accounts must begin with experience of interaction between humans and animals" [Nussbaum (2001), p. 92]. Therefore, centralising the animal is not about bringing forward a conception of "the real animal", but quite literally, the animal in herself: we are to let the lived experiences of animals affect the types of understandings we have concerning their minds.

A key-element here is the manner in which the animal is related to. Arguably, often animal minds are explored via the epistemological presumption that it is the human whom is the active agent, the knower, whilst the animal remains a passive object of knowledge. However, in order to place emphasis on the animal and interaction, she needs to be related to as an active being that can affect (even if unintentionally) the understandings we construct of her. In practice, cognitive ethology has to some extent followed this formula. However, a more wholesale change in the epistemological framework is needed. Juan Carlos Gómez has argued that ethology concerning primates needs to place emphasis on the animal as a "you" – a being conceptualised in the second person singular [Gómez (2004)]. This approached should be extended to study concerning animal minds in general: the animal should move from a passive object, a third person singular, to a second person singular, a being that those seeking to understand animal minds need to face as a "you". This claim does not presume anthropomorphism: it is not argued that animals should be approached as human persons. Rather, the claim merely is that animals ought to be related to as active agents. The claim assumes that also others than human persons can be active agents, and thus draws a distinction between "human personhood" and "agency". This is a radical epistemological shift, which holds promise for offering the basis for new types of understandings concerning the minds of non-human animals.

Edmund Husserl's phenomenology serves as a fruitful direction. For Husserl, skepticism ignores the type of direct knowledge that we achieve in lived, everyday reality (the "life-world").

Thus, intuition (the simplest example of which is visual perception) reserves an important role. Evidence holds relevance, but gains the form of "evidentness", and is a matter of experience: "If we would touch on the thing itself, then it is required of us, assuming we wanted to grasp the essence of the thing and determine it conceptually, that we not be content with vague locutions and traditional philosophical preconceptions but instead draw from the very source of clear givenness" [Husserl (1990), 34]. Empathy is another important element. It enables one to perceive other beings – not merely as physical bodies – but as fellow subjects. In fact, empathy forms "our primary form of experience of others, as others" [Smith (2007), p. 228]. Intuition and empathy form a joint framework, via which to perceive others. This framework offers us the notion of minds within bodies, i.e. the understanding that the human being in front of me is a cognitive being (rather than a body that may or may not include a mind). Husserl states that: "Now, as to the persons we encounter in society, their bodies are naturally given to us in intuition just like the other objects of our environment, and consequently so are they as persons, unified with the bodies. But we do not find there two things, entwined with one another in an external way; bodies and persons. We find unitary human beings, who have dealings with us" [Husserl (1990), 235].

In the context of animal minds, it can be argued that the animal should be approached via evidentness that relies on empathy: we do not see animal bodies separate from animal minds, and then go on to create skeptical analyses of the latter, but rather the two exist in unity, which is evident, particularly if one encages in concrete experiences of and interaction with animals. As the Husserl scholar David Woodruff Smith states: "I see this dog, immediately and 'intuitively', as a being that is a body animated with experiences of seeing and willing" [Smith (2007), p. 228]. The importance of centralising the animal as the reference point of inquiry finds its basis here, as does the need to approach animals as agents in their own right. We are to come face to face with the animal in the life-world, and base our assertions concerning her on this interactive moment defined by a sense of immediacy. Moreover, in doing so we need to allow for a unitary notion of the animal, which does not relate to the body and the mind as necessarily separate categories, but which rather approaches the animal as a cognitive being, "a somebody" rather than "a thing".

V. CONCLUSION

In the light of Sandra Harding's strong objectivism, one needs to become aware of the presumptions that lead one to hold certain beliefs. In the context of animal minds, particularly externalist presumptions and skepticism have held prominence. However, some have remained severely critical of particularly the skeptical stance. This criticism walks hand in hand with emphasis on matters such as "exposure" and "perception". Still, the criticism faces the charge of conservatism. The centralisation of the animal as the reference point of understandings concerning animal minds offers one way of avoiding this charge.

Dale Jamieson maintains that the idea of a “behaving body” is a “philosophical monster” [Jamieson (2002), p. 57]. The externalist framework, within which animals remain passive entities to be researched via the language of skepticism, does not make sense – it is not meaningful. A body does not behave. A being with a mind behaves, and we see behaviour in a meaningful way only, when we recognise that there is a mind behind it. Thus, in order to gain a grasp of animal minds, animals need to be approached as beings that do, indeed, have minds.

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NOTES

[1] Even ethologists favourable toward animal minds can remain extremely skeptical. For instance, Marian Stamp Dawkins argues that her description of animal emotions is a personal opinion of hers, not “a view that can be grounded in empirical fact”. Moreover, she claims (much in the same vein as behaviorists before her) that: “I carefully put scare quotes around words such as ‘pleasure’ and ‘suffering’ in describing positive and negative emotional states” [Dawkins (2003), p. 98-99].

[2] From hereon, the term “mind” will be used rather broadly to include various cognitive states that are experienced as something by the animal herself. Hence, consciousness in the phenomenal sense is emphasised.

[3] It has to be acknowledged that there are two types of cognitive ethology: *weak* and *strong*. The former accepts mechanistic understandings, and leaves out the affective aspect of cognitive processes [see Bekoff & Jamieson (2002)].

[4] As Mary Midgley has argued, anthropocentrism has led to an over-emphasis on the human brain physiology. However, the emphasis is mistaken, because structures must be separated from functions: “Functions are neither handed over wholesale to grander organs nor fully determined by them” [Midgley (2002), p. 116].

[5] For instance Lynda Birke maintains that the mechanistic description of animals – which conceptualises animals as “best-machines” – has been dominant in Western science and ethology. She lists *reductionism* (for instance into biology) and *statistics* (for instance, into “norms” of the species) as examples of the methods with which internal desciptions are avoided [Birke (1994), p. 87-89].

[6] As Radner and Radner argue, animals have been expected to be “little scientists”, whereas human beings are given “allowances” in their capacities: “When peo-

ple fail to live up to this idea, we say they are all too human. When animals fail, they are said to be machine-like". [Radner & Radner (1989), p. 180.]

[7] Jamieson calls the difference in our approach to humans and animals the "asymmetry view". [Jamieson (2002).]

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