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Anthro-
Zoology*

Symposium on

“Cultural & Historical Perspectives on
Human-Animal Interactions”

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International Conference Centre,
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Programme & Abstracts

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR ANTHROZOOLOGY - SYMPOSIUM

Sept. 7th & 8th, 1995, International Conference Centre, Geneva, Switzerland.

Cultural and Historical Perspectives on Human-Animal Interactions

Symposium Programme

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, SEPT. 7th

14:25-14:35 **Welcome & introduction.** Erika Friedmann.

Chair: Anthony Podberscek

14:35-15:00 **Diabolical pets: the role of animals in European witchcraft lore.** James Serpell & Elizabeth Jackson (University of Pennsylvania)

15:00-15:15 TEA/COFFEE BREAK

15:15-15:35 **Changing human-animal relationships in ancient Armenia.** Ninna Manaserian & Louiza Antonian (Armenian National Academy of Sciences, Yerevan)

15:35-15:55 **Intimacy and exploitation: the consequences of animal domestication.** Joanna Swabe (University of Amsterdam)

15:55-16:15 **Historical and cultural development of animal welfare legislation in Germany and the United Kingdom.** Petra Brunner (Ludwig Maximilians University, Munich)

SESSION ENDS

FRIDAY AFTERNOON, SEPT. 8th

Chair: James Serpell

14:40-15:10 **Social death: the transformation of dogs into tools.** Arnold Arluke (Northeastern University)

15:10-15:30 TEA/COFFEE BREAK

15:30-15:55 **Children's positive attitudes toward wildlife and conservation.** Robert Kidd & Aline Kidd (UC, Davis).

15:55-16:20 **Personality characterizations in human-animal interactions.** Samuel Gosling (UC, Berkeley).

16.20-16:45 **Ambiguity, individuality, and trainers' interactions with guide dogs.** Clinton Sanders (University of Connecticut).

16:45-17:10 **Children's drawings and attachments to pets.** Aline Kidd & Robert Kidd (UC, Davis)

17:10-17:35 **The role of hearing dogs in social interactions.** Lynette Hart, R. Lee Zasloff & Anne Marie Benfatto (UC, Davis).

17:35-18:00 GENERAL DISCUSSION

Diabolical pets: the role of animals in European witchcraft lore.

James Serpell & Elizabeth Jackson

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Between roughly 1560 and 1700 it has been estimated that about 1000 people were executed in England for the crime of witchcraft or necromancy. Contemporary records suggest that the possession of so-called animal 'familiar' was an important part of the evidence used to prosecute many of these suspected witches. Also known as imps or spirits, familiars were believed to be incarnations of the Devil or other evil spirits in animal form. Witches supposedly used them to run errands and enact evil deeds, such as bewitching people or cattle, stealing milk or causing it to sour. Many historians have noted the importance of familiars in English witchcraft lore, and their virtual absence from the witchcraft trial records of Continental Europe. However, their role and possible significance has never been properly assessed.

373 separate cases of animal familiars, derived from contemporary pamphlets, and Assize, Quarter Session, and Ecclesiastical Court records, were analysed. By far the majority of these cases derived from eastern England, particularly the counties of Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Hertfordshire and Kent. Some notorious cases also occurred in the southwest of England, and in the northern counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Northumberland. Although many different kinds of animals were involved - and some 17% were unidentified - cats (48 cases), dogs (41 cases), mice/rats (56 cases), wild birds (31 cases) and toads (31 cases) accounted for over half of the total. Farm or livestock animals, apart from poultry, were unusual (less than 1% of the total). Many of these familiars were reported as having 'pet' names, such as "Harrie" the sparrow, "Rutterkin" the cat, "Pygine" the mole, "Tyffin" the lamb and "Elimanzer" the dog.

Companion animals - dogs, cats and pet birds - were the species most frequently identified as familiars, closely followed by commensal species, such as rats, mice and toads, that tended to live in and around people's houses. Although the presence of an animal familiar in a person's home was not sufficient reason on its own to attract accusations of witchcraft, it is clear that either keeping animals for companionship, or displaying a tolerant attitude to commensal species, could be used to reinforce already existing suspicions. Affectionate and tolerant relationships between people and animals were therefore not only less common in sixteenth and seventeenth century England than they are today, they were also considered potentially immoral or even diabolical.

The rarity of familiars in Continental trial records remains somewhat mysterious, although two separate but compatible theories will be proposed to account for this.

Changing Human-Animal Relationships in Ancient Armenia

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To survive means to eat. The most important way to obtain food among ancient peoples was hunting. Before agriculture, the existence of human beings was completely dependent upon hunting and gathering, and was closely connected with the lives of the animals hunted: aurochs, moufflon, elk, etc. Archaeological remains from pre-Neolithic sites can help us to interpret the nature of these early animal-human relationships. The most important stage in the evolution of human-animal relations was the establishment of mutual interdependence between humans and animals based on keeping animals in captivity, and taming and domesticating them. Domestic animals occurring in osteological materials from Neolithic settlements were of benefit to humans, and were the result of their labor. The presence of the remains of badger, weasel and otter from Armenian tombs of III-II millennium BC suggests that these animals were not used as food but rather as sources of medicinal substances which were still used widely in medicine until the late Middle Ages.

Comparison of the qualitative and quantitative composition of faunistic remains from cave sites of the Paleolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age, and from medieval settlements, reveals a pronounced decline in local mammalian fauna. Reduction in the numbers of mammals and the area of their distribution is hard to explain only by natural reasons. The food remains of late Paleolithic peoples are incontrovertible evidence of negative effects of humans on faunistic composition. The number of bones and bone remains of animals show that, in the early Holocene, wild horses, jungle fowl, elk and aurochs had already disappeared from the territory of Armenia. Material from the bone remains of the Bronze Age gives further evidence of the increasing direct and indirect effects of humans. The development of agriculture and cattle-breeding lead to a decrease in the extent and quality of natural biotopes. This was accompanied by further decreases in wild animal populations. According to the material taken from excavations, the number of beavers decreased by the ancient period. The Caucasian red deer was eliminated. In the late Holocene the range and distribution of moufflons, besoar goats, roe deer, otter, marten and hare also decreased substantially.

Intimacy and Exploitation: The Consequences of Domestication

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The evolutionary success of humankind can largely be attributed to its great skill in manipulating the natural environment. The domestication of fire - the first ecological transformation exacted by humankind - resulted in the earliest shift in the balance of power between humans and other animals. From the moment our hominid ancestors began to master this natural substance, the fates of other species - both animal and plant - were to be inextricably linked with human evolution and socio-cultural development. However, it was only upon humankind's instigation of a second ecological transition that our relationship with other creatures was transformed decisively. The domestication of animals precipitated a major cultural revolution for humankind, leading to profound changes in human lifestyle, social structure, food supply and survival chances. In short, domestication spelled the dawn of a new era: agrarianism.

This paper will touch upon some of the implications and unforeseen consequences of humankind's success in mastering the natural environment through domestication. It will be argued that although the mastery of nature has in many respects greatly improved human existence, our increasing control over the natural world has left us, as a species, more and more dependent upon it and, consequently, we have become more vulnerable to it. One of the most devastating and unanticipated consequences of domestication is infectious disease. The intimacy and interdependence of humans and other animals which ensued as a result of domestication created new reservoirs and opportunities for disease-producing microorganisms to which the early domesticators and their successors were highly susceptible. The establishment, growth and advance (or fall) of human civilisations went hand in hand with the advance of infectious disease and the domesticated animals kept to service these burgeoning human societies played an important role in the transmission and proliferation of disease throughout them.

By examining the impact of animal disease on human social life, this paper seeks to add a rather new dimension to the historical and cultural analysis of human-animal interactions. Contagious disease, it seems, has always been a by-product of changes in human-animal relations. In fact, it could be said that the sharing of infection increases with the degree of intimacy that prevails between human and animal. The greater the interdependence and residential proximity of humans and other animals, the greater it appears is the potential for disease to affect human-herd health and economic prosperity. The aim of this paper is to situate the consequences of domestication within a present-day context. The complexity and scale of interdependencies between humans and domesticated animals which exist today are so great that failure to recognise the importance of animal health could be potentially devastating for both the physical and economic health of world populations. In this respect, the drawbacks of and increasing disease *risks* posed by intensive farming practices and the growing intimacy between humans and pets will be discussed.

Historical and Cultural development of animal welfare legislation in Germany and the United Kingdom

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Concern for animal protection was present by the end of the 18th century in the United Kingdom. It was acknowledged that animals could suffer like human beings, and had moral and legal rights to freedom from cruelty. Lord Thomas Erskine of Restormel (1750-1823) and Richard Martin (1754-1834) succeeded in passing through parliament in 1822 the Act to Prevent the Cruel and Improper Treatment of Cattle, the first law to punish cruelty to animals. In 1876, the Cruelty to Animals Act was passed, requiring animal experimenters to have a license and to register the places in which their experiments were performed. In 1911, the first Protection of Animals Act was passed. Since then the parliament of the United Kingdom has passed more than 14 animal protection acts.

In Germany, the first animal protection law (Reichstierschutzgesetz) was passed, creating a separate and independent law to punish cruelty to animals. The law included restrictions against animal suffering and emotional stress like fright. German law succeeded in changing from the "anthropocentric" to the "ethical" animal protection approach. The original version of the animal protection law of 1972 was revised in 1986 and made stricter, especially through regulations concerning animal experiments.

German law tends to be very detailed. For example, the law states that artificial lighting must be at least 80 lux and ammonia concentration can't exceed 20 cubic centimeters per cubic meter in calf housing. In pig housing with slatted floor, the maximum spaces between slats for animals up to 125 kg must be 1.7 cm and for those above 125 kg, 2.2 cm. In contrast, United Kingdom animal welfare laws define a minimum space in relation to the individual size of the animal. Animal length is taken into consideration to determine the minimum space per animal in pig housing, while minimum box width is determined by an animal's height in calf housing. There are no specific values mentioned in the laws of the United Kingdom covering lighting conditions, gas concentrations, stability of temperature and air humidity. Therefore the enforcement of animal welfare laws for those specific environmental conditions is easier in Germany than in the United Kingdom.

Over time, the pattern of the number of newspaper articles and national laws concerning animal welfare in both countries has followed a similar trend. Wording used to describe animal welfare is also similar in both countries. This fact supports the idea that animal welfare legislation reflects an increasing public concern that knows no national boundaries. This public support will be of even more importance in the future and could have a strong influence on animal welfare policy for the whole of Europe.

Social Death: The Transformation of Dogs into Tools

Arnold Arluke

Forty-one first-year medical school students were interviewed regarding their expectations of and experience in their physiology laboratory, where live, anesthetized dogs are injected with drugs and surgically manipulated before being killed. Before going into lab, there was widespread uneasiness among most students regarding the moral implications of their anticipated use of dogs as experimental tools. However, students described the lab in very positive terms after going through it. This change in attitude stems from the ability of students to neutralize the moral dirty work of dog lab. They do so by learning absolutions that permit denial of responsibility and wrongdoing.

CHILDREN'S POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD WILDLIFE AND CONSERVATION
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Children's emotional and cognitive responses toward domestic and wild animals reported in recent studies suggested that their attitudes toward wildlife develop through the same Piagetan developmental stages as their attitudes toward domestic animals and pets. To test this hypothesis, 102 parents and 102 three through 12-yr-old children were interviewed at California's Lindsay Museum in Walnut Creek, where they experienced close-up viewing and controlled touching of both wild and domestic animals. The amounts of time the children spent watching and petting, and the number of times they laughed at, smiled at, talked to and about the animals or made rejecting responses were tallied. The data indicate that the thirty-two 3 through 5-yr-olds' responses to both the wild and domestic living animals and to the regular museum exhibits were typically egocentric and preoperational. The thirty 6 through 8-yr-olds' responses showed beginning elements of the empathetic with perspective-taking and concrete operations stages, and in the forty 9- through 12-yr-olds' responses these stages were fully developed. These results suggested that the presence of these normal developmental stages should be taken into account by educational institutions planning programs which will provide good experiences and develop positive attitudes in most children toward wildlife and conservation efforts.

Personality Categorizations in Human-Animal Interactions

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Throughout the history of human-animal interactions, humans have ascribed personality characteristics to animals. Unimpressed by accusations of anthropomorphism, Hebb (1946) has justified such personality descriptions in terms of their ability to provide “an intelligible and practical guide to behavior” (p. 88). On what basis do people ascribe personality traits to animals? Do these descriptions reflect the actual behavior of animals, the conceptual system of the perceiver, or both, as recent ecological approaches would suggest? One way to address this question is to compare personality descriptions of humans with those of animals. Following Yang and Bond’s (1990) use of etic and emic strategies for assessing cross-cultural differences in theories of personality, we investigated this question using a human-centered (etic) approach in study 1 and a dog-centered (emic) approach in study 2.

Study 1 compared the structure of personality descriptions of humans (N=316; Saucier, 1995) and of dogs (N=283) using an instrument developed to assess the most important dimensions of human personality. Exploratory factor analysis of the dog personality descriptions yielded a structure that strongly resembles the structure of human personality descriptions. Furthermore, correlations between the scales show a similar pattern for both human and dog targets.

In study 2, we generated a set of trait terms based on 500 free descriptions of dogs. In contrast to the traits rated in study 1, these traits are more relevant to the descriptions of actual dog behaviors. These data were clustered into content domains and the resulting clusters were compared to those found in free descriptions of humans (Chaplin & John, 1989). In addition we compared the two sets of descriptions in terms of the frequency and desirability of traits, and familiarity with and liking of the target (i.e., humans or dogs).

Results are discussed in relation to Schweder’s (1982) argument that the structure of personality trait ratings reflects semantic similarity among the trait terms rather than actual differences among the targets. The findings provide insight into the nature of personality categorizations made in human-animal interactions.

Ambiguity, individuality and trainer's interactions with guide dogs

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This discussion focuses on the criteria employed by guide dog trainers to judge the individual characteristics of their canine trainees and which they use to shape interactions with the animals and make decisions about the blind persons with whom they should be placed.

The data are drawn from 12 months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in a guide dog training program in the northeastern United States and semi-structured, in-depth interviews with the six full-time trainers working with the program. The criteria discussed were identified when the field data were systematically coded and examined using analytic induction procedures.

The key evaluative factors identified through the analysis were: physical (size and gait), attentional (distractiveness, sound and motion sensitivity), and individual (willingness, intelligence and independence).

Trainer ambivalence was the emergent issue that provides the focus of the concluding discussion. While trainers routinely employed the perspective that ethnomethodologist D. Lawrence Wieder refers to as "behavioristic operationalism" when speaking of their canine trainees and the training process, this reductionist orientation proved unworkable when they were confronted with the practical requirements of shaping interaction with individual dogs. Effective training required the trainer to evaluate the unique mind and personality of each trainee and shape the training relationship on the basis of this practical definition of the canine-other.

CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS AND ATTACHMENT TO PETS

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Because no large group studies have confirmed previous research which suggested that the distances placed between self-figures and pet- and family member-figures in children's drawings represent the emotional distance between the child and the pet and/or family member depicted, this study asked 5- through 13-yr-old kindergarten through 8th graders to draw a picture of themselves, a family member, and a pet. Of 242 responses, 207 were pet-owners and 35 were non-owners. Although some non-owners indicated a cousin, a grandparent, or a babysitter-figure with their self-figure, all the owners indicated only a parent- or a sibling-figure with their pet- and self-figure. Pet-figures were drawn significantly closer to the self-figure than were family-figures, albeit the younger the child, the greater the distance indicated between the self-figure and pet-figure. Although the older children drew themselves holding and cuddling the pet significantly more often than younger children, the younger children drew themselves with their pets separated by the family-figure significantly more often than did the older children. There were no significant gender differences in distance from self-figure to pet-figure, but cats and dogs were placed significantly closer to self-figures than were pet-fish. Overall, the pet-owners were apparently stimulated by their pets to respond and were clearly emotionally closer to pets than to family members, while the non-owners were emotionally close enough to extended family members to respond by drawing themselves and a family-figure.

THE ROLE OF HEARING DOGS IN SOCIAL INTERACTION

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Hearing dogs are specially trained to alert deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals to certain significant sounds. While the primary purpose of hearing dogs is to perform specific tasks related to a disability, they may also confer on their owners some of the benefits or lifestyle changes that are associated with the typical companionship of a dog.

The current study surveyed 38 hearing dog owners and 15 prospective owners to assess the owners' assessments and prospective owners' expectations of hearing dogs. The owners' primary objectives were that the dog: alert them to sounds, provide a sense of personal security, and alleviate loneliness. The hearing dogs fulfilled the owners' primary expectations of alerting them to sounds. Owners also reported feeling safer in the presence of their dogs than when alone before obtaining the dog. Owners reported being significantly less lonely after receiving a hearing dog. Both owners and prospective owners credited hearing dogs with an ability to enhance social interactions within their families. Most owners also felt that hearing dogs facilitated their relationships within the hearing community and among neighbors. However, prospective owners generally did not anticipate this social benefit with the broader community. Owners also scored lower on a life stress score than prospective owners.

A hearing disability is generally invisible and leads to impaired social responses that lack an explanation to an unfamiliar person lacking the disability. The decision to acquire a hearing dog that wears a defining cape also provides a public statement informing others concerning the hearing disability.