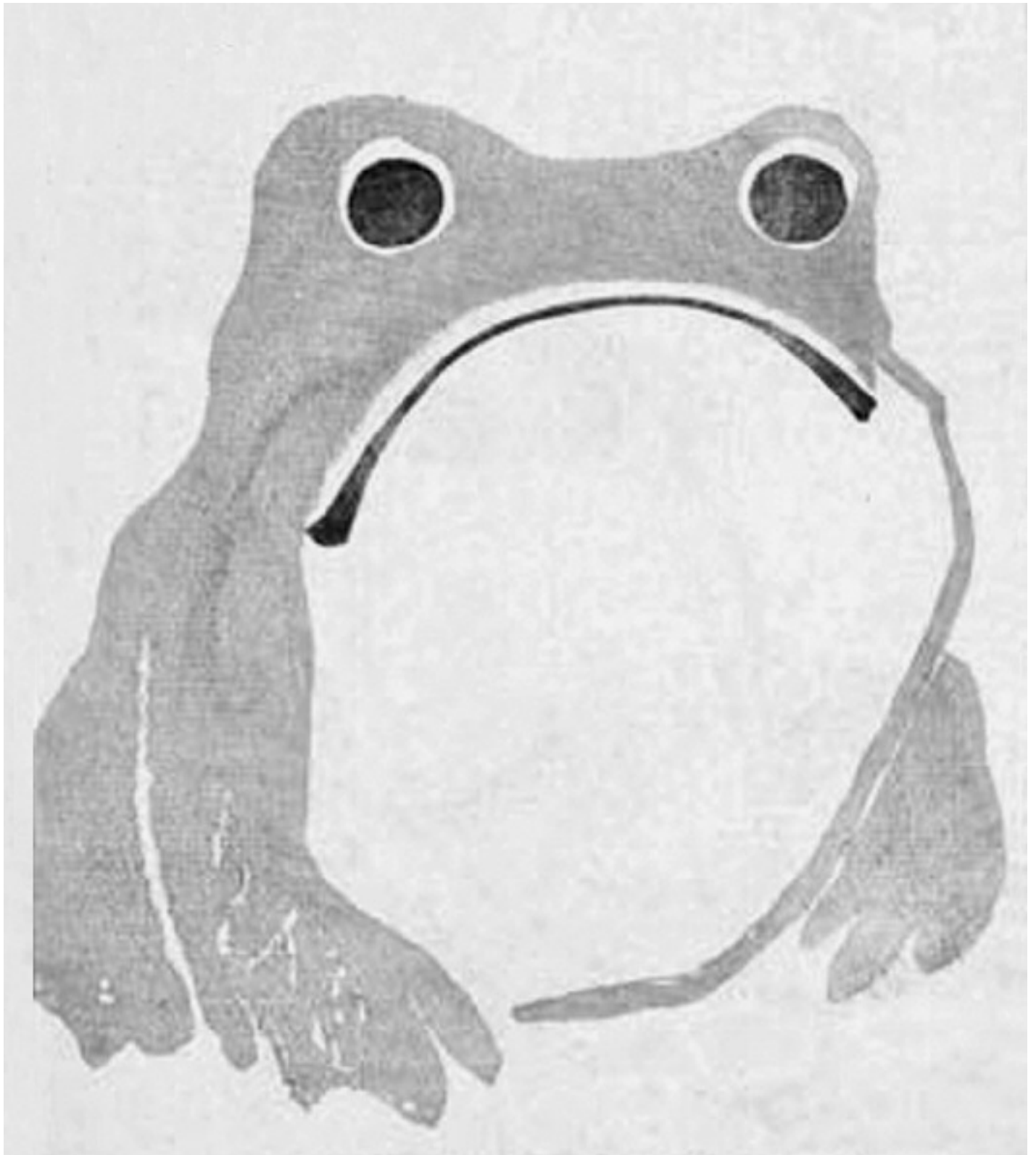
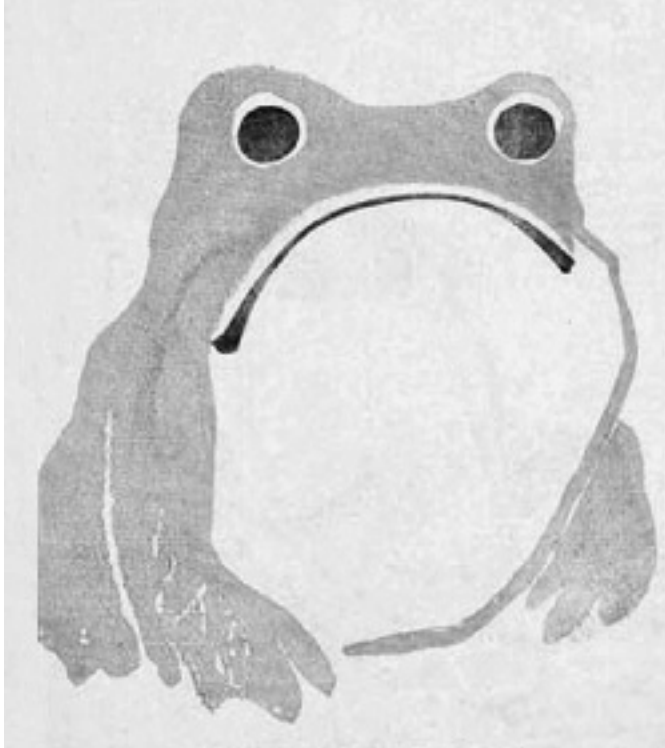


ZEN GONGI

Volume 17, Numéro 1





*Quelqu'un a demandé à Nansen :
« Que deviendrez-vous après votre mort ? »
Nansen répondit : « Un buffle d'eau. »*

Je ne suis pas un être humain.

Zen Gong

On animals / Sur les animaux

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Direction

Monique Dumont

Comité de rédaction

Louis Bricault, Monique Dumont

Collaborateurs pour ce numéro

Hanna Back, Fred Bloom, Roger Brouillette, Monique Dumont, Robert Godin, Patricia Ivan, Pierre Lanoix, Albert Low, Anita Low, Katrin Miclette, Marie-Bernarde Pérès, Jacqueline Vischer, Sarah Webb, Bruce Wilson.

Mise en page

Jacques Lespérance

Distribution

Janine Lévesque

Le Zen Gong est une publication du Centre Zen de Montréal

Directeur du Centre : Albert Low

Adresse : 824, rue Parc Stanley, H2C 1A2

Téléphone : (514) 388-4518

Site Web : zenmontreal.ca

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À NOTER : LE ZEN GONG NE PREND PLUS D'ABONNEMENTS.

Feelings in animals

Albert Low

(This is a chapter extracted from the book of Albert: *Dynamic Life, A worldview for the 21st Century.*)

Animals not only love, but have desire to be loved.
(Darwin)

As well as claiming erroneously that animals lack awareness, some biologists claim that human beings are superior to animals – that we have feelings but they do not. Descartes was the first to spell out this myth, and it has been seized upon by scientists ever since. In 1991, Donald Griffin, a former Harvard Professor of Zoology wrote, “Scientists who study animal behavior have had little to say about the feelings or thoughts of the animals that interest them so keenly.” This reluctance stems from an unwillingness to acknowledge the Subjective as a valid worldview, the same unwillingness that prevents scientists from accepting awareness as an essential ingredient in all life. Francis Crick said that getting grants to study consciousness in humans is difficult. With our present world view, how much more difficult would it be to get funding to research the love life of pigeons, or altruism among bats!

Feelings as well as perception and thinking is a mode of awareness. If we feel an emotion, although that emotion is accompanied by physical changes, we do not feel the physical changes, we feel — that is to say we are aware-as — *feelings*. For more than half the last century behaviorism was the principle scientific theory of human nature, and extreme behaviorists denied feelings, not only to animals, but to humans as well. A science dedicated to an Objective view of the world will find the Subjective experiences of love and altruism difficult to cope with. Awareness is elusive but so are the feelings dependent upon it and, therefore, many scientists prefer to ignore them altogether. Being unable to measure feelings in an Objective way, they find it impossible to gain the same certainty that measuring the physical correlates of feelings gives. Because of this lack of Objective certainty, they find it difficult to talk about feelings in a consistent way.

Most of the information that is available about feelings in animals is anecdotal and, although this is acceptable in the medical sciences (the anecdotes are then called case studies), most scientists, except those studying animals in the field, reject them as a reliable source on which to base scientific theories about animal behavior.

Other, more banal, explanations are possible for this reluctance to accredit Subjectivity to animals. Many of us find it difficult to accept that animals have feelings, that they feel pleasure and pain, embarrassment and shame, that they love, are capable of empathy and altruism, and then eat them. We are not surprised to find many Buddhists, who recognize our full kinship with animals, are vegetarians, nor that Westerners, who know of the love and fidelity of dogs towards their owners, are repelled by the idea of Koreans eating dogs. Moreover, scientists in laboratories perform experiments on animals, and some of these experiments inflict indignity and even torture on the animals. The scientists’ conscience is eased considerably by maintaining the myth that animals are simply unfeeling machines.

Another reason yet for our not wanting to acknowledge that animals experience the full range of feelings is that much of the research on animals is conducted to improve, for example, the output of eggs, or to make the meat from animals more abundant and edible. Efficiency is a prime requirement and not so long ago an article in the newspaper boasted about a genetically engineered chicken that had no feathers, cutting off seconds from the time required to turn it from a living being into chicken cutlets. We have derived from chickens the expression, “pecking order,” to describe status, and self-esteem hierarchies among humans. Yet we must ignore the chickens’ keen sense of hierarchy and of self-esteem if we are going to crowd them into impossible proximity in order to maximize the output of eggs.

Such crowding often reduces chickens to

being neurotic and even psychotic wrecks. In case the scientist feels it too much to say that chickens can become neurotic, let me quote Darwin who tells us, "The common domestic cock clucks to the hen, and the hen to her chickens, when a dainty morsel is found. The hen, when she has laid an egg, repeats the same note very often, and concludes with the sixth above, which she holds for a longer time and thus she expresses her joy." He tells us in the same paragraph, "With birds, the voice serves to express various emotions, such as distress, fear, anger, triumph, or mere happiness."

Crick tells the old joke that divides philosophers into two classes: those who own dogs and those who do not. Those who do assert that dogs have souls; those who don't assert that they do not. As in many jokes, this may have some truth. Dealing with animals and their emotions in the abstract is quite different from dealing with them in the concrete. If you have a cat or dog as a pet, then you will have no difficulty believing that it has a full range of emotions. Any animal lover will have a fund of stories to tell about the way their pets respond to various situations. Please indulge me while I tell you just one.

Feelings of frustration and embarrassment in animals

My family owned a dog, a cross between a Collie and a Labrador, that we called Sam. Normally, I would go to and from work by car. One day the car broke down and as I was near home, I decided to walk the rest of the way. As I started up the driveway of the house, Sam, who did not have very good eyesight, came out of the house barking aggressively until he was close enough to recognize me. He stopped in his tracks puzzled and embarrassed. After a moments hesitation he ran back to the house. Then he returned again barking this time in obvious pleasure.

Harvard professor Marc Hauser in his book, *Animal Minds*, put into words what many biologists would think of my idea that Sam was puzzled and embarrassed. He said, "Some authors think animals experience moral emotions, feelings such as guilt, shame, and embarrassment." He says that he does not, nor does he think that animals experience empathy. His reason for saying this is that he believes that animals do not have self-awareness, "a sense of self...relies on a richly textured set of beliefs and desires."

Hauser's aim seems to be to show the superiority of humans over animals, because he says later that humans have moral emotions, and that we place a value on them and consider them in the context of right and wrong. He concludes, "Research on animals must therefore establish that animals have moral emotions and view these emotions in a context of right and wrong."

Several assumptions are implicit in this. The first is that self-awareness is an all-or-nothing affair, and has not evolved through stages. He uses the mirror test as the way we can determine whether an animal has self-awareness, but this test can only determine self-awareness in highly evolved organisms.

Another assumption that he makes is that the so-called moral emotions must be reflected upon in the context of right and wrong. Yet, what he calls our moral emotions, the feeling of shame, embarrassment and guilt, have their origins in the basic ambiguity upstream of the conscious mind, that is to say upstream of the mind that can reflect on right and wrong. In fact, one reason that we value consciousness is that it buffers us against these feelings. Animals do not have the kind of consciousness that we have, but that does not prevent them from having moral emotions.

De Waal says he is "not attracted at all to

cheap projections onto animals, of the sort that people indulge in who see cats as having shame (a very complex emotion), horses taking pride in their performance, or gorillas as contemplating the afterlife.” Medawar would agree with this, admonishing as he does in his book, *Pluto’s Republic*, that the behaviorist has brought to mind that a great difference exists between saying a dog whines and the dog is sad, “And heaven help the psychologist who forgets this.” As long as we interpret the admonition as telling us not to confuse the Subjective viewpoint with the Objective, it offers no difficulty; but the behaviorist would go further and say either that the dog cannot be sad, or that we cannot ever know for sure that he is sad.

Darwin, as we have seen, either lacked Medawar’s scruples or disregarded them constantly. In *The Descent of Man*, he quotes a Dr. Buller who reported, “A male king lory was killed; and the female fretted and moped, refused her food, and died of a broken heart.” Darwin has told us above, “With birds the voice serves to express various emotions, such as distress, fear, anger, triumph, or mere happiness.” But he continues and says, “It is apparently sometimes used to excite terror, as in the case of the hissing noise made by some nestling-birds.” Audubon relates that a night-heron, which he kept tame, used to hide itself when a cat approached, and then “suddenly start up uttering one of the most frightful cries, apparently enjoying the cat’s alarm and flight.”

He tells us,

The difference in mind between man and the higher animals, great as it is, certainly is one of degree and not of kind. We have seen that the senses and intuitions, the various emotions and faculties, such as love, memory, attention, curiosity, imitation, reason and so on, of which man boasts, may be found in an incipient, or even sometimes in a well developed condition, in lower animals.

In the account of Sam’s behavior the words that would give neo-Darwinians some difficulty were italicized. Most of them would agree that I could say Sam barked aggressively. We are all familiar with the tone, the hair standing up, the tail somewhat stiff, and the purposefulness of the stride. Nor do we have difficulty recognizing pleasure: the tail wagging, the higher pitched bark, the bounding gait. But, when I say this, I am simply reporting behavior. Did Sam *feel* anything? What about Sam being puzzled and embarrassed? Is that not projecting too much?

I do not think so. Both puzzlement and embarrassment are ways of responding to ambiguity. He was puzzled because he was faced with a stranger (his first impressions) and a friend (his second impression) and for a time they were present simultaneously. Embarrassment has a similar structure based on ambiguity: you behave in one way, but the circumstances call for another way to behave. Sam’s puzzlement and embarrassment both came from two incompatible frames of reference; both were experienced simultaneously, and Sam did not have to place a value on them and consider them in the context of right and wrong to feel puzzled or embarrassed. I believe that Sam’s running back to the house and coming out barking with pleasure was a creative solution to what otherwise was, for him, an impossible dilemma. The creativity that Sam displayed includes awareness and this implies feeling.

On anthropomorphism

But still, some scientists might ask, did he *feel* anything? Nicholas Humphrey, a psychologist well known for his theories of the evolution of consciousness, posed the question that many biologists have posed. Why do primates, the gorillas, for example, have such a large brain? He asks, “What use could the gorillas be putting those large brains to?” The question was a real one because gorillas are very intelligent and yet the difficulties of practi-

cal life of the gorilla seem minimal. It seems that gorillas had more brainpower than they would ever need. Humphrey then said the following.

I tried to put myself in the gorillas' place, and to imagine what – if anything – might really tax their minds. As I did so, I find myself thinking equally about myself.” He then goes on to say that this own life was in somewhat of a mess, “My head ... was full of unresolved problems concerning my own social relationships.... Suddenly, I saw animals with new eyes. I realized that for them too, their problems were probably primarily social ones.

He suggested that earliest humans had large brains not because of the difficulties of sustaining life so much as the problems of sustaining social relations. These problems demand creative solutions of the kind that Sam created.

I italicized Humphries saying, “I tried to put myself in the gorillas place” (that is “I adopted the Subjective viewpoint”) because this is the kind of behavior that scientists, in accordance with the prevailing worldview, have generally been trained to avoid. Even so, this is how I decide whether you are angry with me over something that I have done. Why should I not do the same with Sam? Sam’s behavior varies considerably during a day. When he is hungry, when he wants to go out, when he is afraid, when something pleasant is given him and so on. When he wants to go out and the door is locked, he scratches at the door, he whines and looks at me, he barks. He shows all the signs of frustration.

I know the *feeling* of frustration that accompanies wanting to do something and not being able to do it. Why should I deny that Sam has this feeling? If I saw you acting in a frustrated way in front of a door why should I not say that you felt frustrated, even though I have no way of verifying that you do feel this, other than by asking you? For all the misgivings that de Waal expressed above, he agrees that if we want to know what goes on in the heads of animals we must employ all available weapons in this endeavor, including extrapolations from human behavior. “Consequently anthropomorphism is not only inevitable, it is a powerful tool.” Yet, not only anthropomorphism is inevitable, accepting Subjectivity as being as valid as Objectivity is inevitable too.

Peacekeeping among Primates.

Franz de Waal has specialized in the study of social problems among primates, and has written

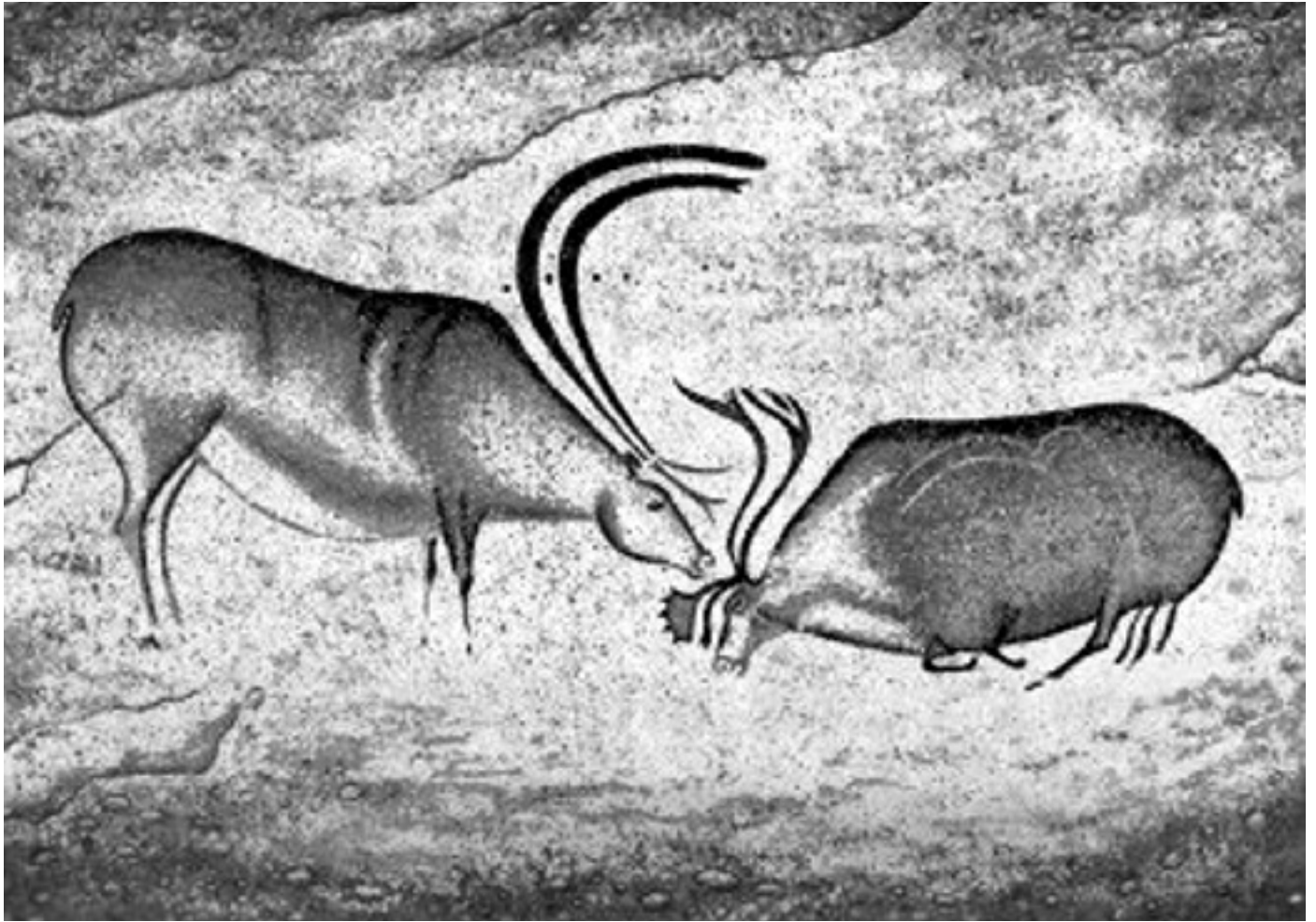
several popular books on the subject. In one of his most striking books, *Peacekeeping among Primates*, he shows that the tooth and claw view of nature certainly does not explain the social activity of primates. While a constant jockeying for power and status goes on among them, some of which can become very vicious, nevertheless, as de Waal points out, “Success is not just a matter of wiping out the opposition. In the wild, male chimpanzees depend on one another for hunting and for territorial defense: compromise and reconciliation are as much part of political skills as fighting ability.”

But why compromise, why negotiate? One answer de Waal gives is that belonging to a group is safer and more efficient. In other words, we belong to a group in order to increase our chances of survival. Another reason is that membership of a group may be necessary for reproduction. In a group we will find a sexual partner more easily. But does not an animal belong to a group because *it likes to be in a group*, that it *likes* some of the members of the group more than others, that it *feels afraid* of some members and *antagonistic* towards others; that in short, social relations are important simply at a feeling level? Sam would follow us wherever we went. He would sleep alongside us. He wanted to be near us. He liked us. In case anyone feels that I am going too far by saying this, Darwin says not only that animals can love their owners, but they also want to be loved by them.

The feeling of self-esteem, an expression of the need to be unique, is also important, and underlies the constant struggles for status in the primate community. Self-esteem is a social phenomenon, a product of what others feel about us as well as what we feel about ourselves. Many neuroses and deviant ways of behaving come from an intrinsic sense of uniqueness that is denied by the environment. But the need to belong, for survival, sexual and social reasons, is equally important. Lack of the support and nourishment that comes from others in a peer group can also lead to neurotic and deviant behavior. These two needs — to belong and to be unique — are often mutually exclusive and in conflict, and this is another ambiguity that must be resolved creatively.

Aesthetic feelings in animals.

All this talk about the feelings of animals, that they create solutions, that Sam liked being with me, may well make mechanists shudder. That animals have aesthetic feelings would seem to them to be the last straw. Yet Darwin, in his book the



Descent of Man says,

On the whole, birds appear to be the most aesthetic of all animals, excepting of course man, and they have nearly the same taste for the beautiful as we have. This is shown by our enjoyment of the singing of birds, and by our women, both civilized and savage, decking their heads with borrowed plumes, and using gems which are hardly more brilliantly colored than the naked skin and wattles of certain birds.

De Waal says, “Biologists feel that animals are not strangers to aesthetic expression.” He cites the bowerbird as an example of a bird having aesthetic feelings: “The male keeps flying in new ornaments, shifting everything around with a critical eye, fussing over the arrangements, moving back to look at the whole from a distant angle—like a human painter with his painting—and then continuing the rearrangement.”

Pigeons have been taught to detect the difference between composers, including Schoenberg and Bach and between painters such as Monet and Picasso. One group was taught to peck at Monet’s

paintings, and another at Picasso’s. Then they were shown paintings, by the same artists, but which they had not seen before. A pigeon trained to peck at Picasso’s *Girls in Avignon* and *Nude Woman with a Comb* would also peck at Picasso’s *Woman Looking at the Glass* and *Natura Morta Spagnola*. Birds trained on Monet would be able to recognize his paintings. In order to see whether it was just the colors that prompted the pigeons in their election, the experimenter, Watanabe, showed black and white versions of the paintings with blurred lines, and the birds could still distinguish between them.

Furthermore, when the same birds were given paintings by other artists of the same period to peck at, the Monet-trained birds pecked at other impressionists, such as Renoir, while the Picasso-trained birds chose other cubists, such as Braque. The pigeons demonstrated they could discriminate, not only individual styles, but entire schools of paintings. Watanabe thinks the pigeons make complex visual distinctions in the same way as humans, using multiple cues all at once. “The fact is, they distinguish painters better than many a visitor to the Louvre.”

You might protest that the birds did not appreciate the art, they simply have a highly developed perception of pattern. Does any evidence exist that more than this is involved? Perhaps not among birds, but de Waal, referring to some research by a British zoologist, Desmond Morris, said that apes show “a sense of aesthetic order and balance” in their works. In a passage about Morris’s interactions with a chimpanzee named, Congo, de Wall writes,

Morris would place a mark off center, say to the left, and give the paper to Congo. Congo would tend to balance the composition by painting on the right side of the paper. He was not simply attracted to the empty space there, because the closer Morris placed his mark to the center of the page, the closer to the center on the other side Congo painted; and the farther to the left Morris put the mark, the farther to the right Congo worked, to keep the painting balanced.

Some early observers felt that the humans and not the apes determined whether the product is a work of art. But de Waal points out that the apes want to complete a painting. He says that coming between an ape and his or her work can be dangerous! Many stories are told of apes vehemently objecting to interruptions before they have finished their paintings. He gives the example of a chimpanzee called Bella, housed at the Amsterdam Zoo.

She would paint quite contentedly but with great concentration until one day she lost her temper. The keeper, with dire consequences, had wanted to remove her materials in the midst of artistic activity. Congo, the chimpanzee with whom Morris worked, became very annoyed if someone tried to remove a painting that he was still working on. Congo also resisted being urged to continue a painting once he had put down his brush, indicating that he was done. One day, Morris managed to take away a painting of an incomplete fan shape. When Congo got it back a while later, he simply continued where he had left off, carefully finishing the pattern.

A French painter, Lucien Tassarolo, liked to paint alongside a female chimpanzee, Kunda, on a single canvas and both of them would sign it when finished. Tassarolo signed his signature; Kunda used a handprint. Kunda impressed Tassarolo with her precision and harmonious choice of colors. The ape did not always appreciate his additions to their work. Although sometimes she might react enthusiastically, at other times she rubbed Tassarolo’s contributions out and “waited to continue painting until he had come up with something else.”

De Waal sums up by saying, “The evidence, then, is that painting apes have a sense of both balance and completeness, enjoy the visual effect of what they do, and create regularities and patterns, but are not out to produce a lasting product.”

Sexual attraction

What about the sexual attraction? Do feelings influence an animal when selecting a sexual partner? Darwin was inclined to believe they do and that females find some males more attractive than others. He was convinced that “the pairing of birds is not left to chance.” The beauty of the male plays a large part, and the females almost invariably prefer “the most vigorous, defiant, and mettlesome male.”

The biologist, Geoffrey Miller, tells us, “Females of several species have been found to prefer males who display larger song repertoires, with greater diversity and novelty. Such neophilic mate choice may account for the creativity of male blackbirds, nightingales, sedgewarblers, mockingbirds, parrots, and mynahs.”

What does it mean to “like” something?

A peahen selects a peacock because she likes his tail; a female bird selects the song of the male because she likes his song. What does it mean to *like* something? To explain this will require something of a detour. During the journey, not only will the simple question, “What does it mean that ‘she likes the song?’” be answered, but the groundwork will be laid for other, equally important ideas, which will come in the next chapter.

Miller in his book, *The Mating Mind*, talks of “protean activity” and said that it depends on the capacity to “generate rapidly, unpredictable and highly variable alternatives.” Creativity is brought into play by the conflicting frames of reference that protean activity generates, for example by rushing in one direction and turning back and rushing in another quite different one.

We must remember that Miller told us, “Females of several species have been found to prefer males, with greater diversity and novelty.” The songbird, which displays larger song repertoires, engages in protean activity in its song by producing variations in the usual pattern that underlies its song. These variations attract the female. They require increased creativity both to produce and to appreciate. The increase in creativity requires a cor-

responding increase in the intensity of intention and attention. An increase is necessary because the intensity of intention and attention depends upon the degree and amount of variation it has to cope with. The increase in intensity of intention, in turn, heightens the sense, the *feeling*, of *me*. The birds, both singing male and listening female, *feel more alive*, they experience pleasure, they like singing and they like the song.

Anyone who has created in any way, knows what I mean by *feeling more alive*. The appreciation of another's creativity is also a creative act, and gives a similar, although more attenuated, pleasure. The feeling that she is more intense, more alive, more present, more *me*, underlies the statement, "She likes the song," just as it would underlie the

statement, "He likes to sing."

We can understand so much of life's activity when we recognize that we feel a more intense sense of being, of being more alive, more *me*, when we focus on an ambiguous field and transcend it to a greater order. The joy and pleasure that come from prolonged periods of contemplation, the love that some have for competition — playing chess, tennis, soccer — that others have for scientific research, for doing mathematics, even for reading mystery novels, all attest to this increase in the sense of *me*, of being more alive, that is generated by creativity; the intention, the invocation of dynamic unity to transcend an ambiguous field to greater harmony, is enhanced. This is the meaning behind the simple statement, "she likes his song."



Tous les êtres sont Bouddha

Roger Brouillette

Au début du chant du Zazen de Hakuin Zenji, on chante, "Depuis toujours tous les êtres sont Bouddha". Pour la majorité des gens, les êtres sont évidemment des êtres humains. Mais non, tous les êtres, c'est tous les êtres. Comment est-ce possible qu'un oiseau, une fourmi, un chien, un poisson soit Bouddha? Je peux possiblement comprendre que je suis ce Bouddha. Après tout, ça me gonfle. Oui, mon chat, je peux toujours penser que c'est le Bouddha. Mais un rat, une coquerelle, c'est le Bouddha?

Jef a été pour moi un grand ami. Il avait un tempérament très égal, doux et sociable. C'était aussi un athlète intéressant qui pouvait courir et sauter sans problème. Il adorait faire la chasse à courre. Si la meute commençait à hurler, il partait avec elle à toute vitesse et pouvait sauter tous les obstacles en forêt. Irish Hunter, il avait l'esprit qu'il fallait pour faire ces parcours, même, il adorait ça. Un jour, il s'est tordu un boyau et il a du être opéré. À Saint-Hyacinthe, à l'hôpital vétérinaire, on lui a enlevé 3 mètres de son intestin. Quelques jours après l'opération, on m'a téléphoné pour me dire qu'il ne survivrait peut-être pas, alors je suis allé le voir. Il était totalement déprimé, la tête basse, aucun intérêt pour manger ou même boire. La vie semblait presque l'avoir abandonné. J'ai demandé au vétérinaire si je pouvais le sortir à l'extérieur dans le stationnement. Peut être que sentir l'air et voir le soleil l'aideraient. Le vétérinaire a accepté car pour lui, Jef était à ses dernières heures, alors qu'avait-il à perdre?

On est sorti. Il me suivait, lentement, la tête très basse et on a fait le tour deux fois. Il semblait aller de mal en pis et je me suis dit qu'il fallait rentrer. Mais je sentais que dans la situation où il était, il ne vivrait plus longtemps. Je trouvais cela très difficile à accepter pour mon ami Jef. Son nom venait de la chanson de Jacques Brel où il chante comment il prend soin de son copain Jef et qu'il n'est pas tout seul. Alors j'ai décidé de le sortir du stationnement et d'aller vers les champs qui étaient de

l'autre côté d'un mur. Il avançait difficilement. On est sorti et alors, il a levé la tête, car il a vu les champs et le boisé au loin. Il a tourné la tête d'un côté et de l'autre puis tout son corps s'est relevé et je voyais dans ses yeux la curiosité et la joie. On est resté là un petit bout de temps et je sentais qu'il était intéressé à aller dans ce champ. Il a même tiré sur la laisse pour la première fois. On est retourné à l'hôpital. Il avançait la tête haute et avec plaisir, il a enfin bu de l'eau et mangé un peu de foin. Il s'est ensuite bien remis de son problème et on a continué à faire des parcours ensemble. Cependant, on ne faisait plus la chasse car j'avais entendu un des rappels de la cérémonie d'ouverture de sesshin qui demandait de respecter tous les êtres et cela me touchait vraiment.

Qui est Jef? Qui est l'Autre? L'Autre c'est soi-même. Quand Jef a vu la vie autour de lui, je l'ai vue en même temps. La joie qu'il avait, je l'avais. Évidemment, Jef avait son expression de la vie et moi la mienne. C'est comme ça avec l'Autre, on a chacun son expression de la vie. Cependant, on est un, même si on ne le voit pas. Pour monter à cheval d'ailleurs, il faut être un tout comme il faut l'être avec l'Autre.

Après Jef, j'ai eu une amie, Patty. Elle était une jument absolument douce. Pur-sang, elle était très nerveuse, elle avait peur de tout ce qui était différent. Ce qu'elle adorait le plus était qu'on aille dans son box la caresser. Elle se penchait alors la tête sur mon épaule et caressait à sa façon. Elle pouvait le faire sans arrêt car ça lui donnait un sentiment de sécurité dont elle avait sans cesse besoin.

Tous les êtres innombrables, je fais vœu de libérer. C'est absolument merveilleux de faire ce vœu et de réaliser que la pratique que nous faisons, nous la faisons pour tous les êtres. Comment est-ce possible?



Le regard

Robert Godin

Tout au long de ma vie, comme la plupart des humains, j'ai eu de nombreux contacts avec les animaux, avec le règne animal en général. Certains de ces animaux ont été pour moi comme des membres de ma famille, d'autres ont fait l'objet de rencontres accidentelles, furtives.

Il y a quelques années, un de mes collègues et ami a été nommé juge à la Cour du Québec et affecté à la Chambre criminelle et pénale. Avant sa nomination, il s'était fait une très bonne réputation comme professeur de droit en matière pénale, comme écrivain, comme conseil, comme spécialiste. Il vivait essentiellement dans le monde académique. Lors de la réception qui a suivi son assermentation, il m'a confié que ce qu'il trouvait le plus difficile en assumant sa nouvelle fonction c'était de soutenir les regards des prévenus qui comparaissaient devant lui, des personnes sur qui il avait le pouvoir d'accorder la liberté ou de décréter l'incarcération. Ces regards, ces yeux, ces fenêtres mystérieuses sur l'intérieur d'êtres qui souffraient profondément, quelles qu'aient été les circonstances particulières qui les avaient amenées devant le tribunal, le bouleversaient profondément.

Le contact le plus intime et le plus fort que j'ai avec les animaux passe par le regard, par les yeux qui se rencontrent. L'animal ne parle pas avec des mots, mais il s'exprime par ses yeux qui sont souvent très expressifs. Quel est ce langage sans mots, parfois d'une grande tendresse, ce lien pourtant réel qui s'établit indéniablement par le regard ? Qu'il s'agisse de mon chien avec qui j'ai une relation directe et riche ou d'une mésange qui se pose délicatement tout près de moi quand je remplis la mangeoire ou du loup qui passe d'un pas rapide et

anxieux à quelques mètres de moi sur la plage déserte de Shuttleworth Bight, sur la côte nord de l'Île de Vancouver, une communication s'établit entre nous, sans aucun doute.

Mais une communication entre quoi et quoi ? Quelle est cette continuité de vie qui existe entre nous et que nous partageons, l'animal et moi, par l'entremise de regards qui se rencontrent ? Elle n'est pourtant pas individualisée ni personnifiée, elle est universelle, silencieuse, dans le prolongement de la vie et de la mort qui se fondent l'une dans l'autre. Ce n'est pas « moi » et « lui » (ou « elle »). Pour un bref moment, nous partageons le même monde comme une vision fugitive d'une autre réalité qui n'appartient à personne et qui en même temps, appartient à tout être.

Dans un milieu naturel comme celui que j'ai visité l'été dernier sur l'Île de Vancouver, cette même continuité s'établit entre moi et la forêt, la mer, le vent, les nuages, et tous leurs habitants, engagés dans le processus continu de vie et de mort, sans brisure, dans un courant perpétuel, dont je fais moi-même partie.

Les regards que je partage avec mon chien, avec un chat rencontré par hasard ou avec un chevreuil aux aguets qui broute tout près de chez moi à la campagne, sont autant de moments précieux qui attestent de la possibilité d'accéder à ce monde sans limites, à cette unité de toutes choses.



Au delà des yeux du chien

Pierre Lanoix

Le sujet de ma réflexion est venu de façon presque tragique mais contrairement aux tragédies de Racine la mienne se termine bien pour moi, pour Charlie et Clara. Les deux derniers sont d'adorables Teckels, l'un à poil court, l'autre à poil rêche. En croisant les passants, ils arrachent un sourire aux mines les plus patibulaires. Voilà trente cinq ans que je flatte le Teckel, en général en duos.

Donc la semaine dernière je note que Charlie, 12 ans, a du mal à marcher. Je le prends dans mes bras pour l'amener au jardin afin qu'il humecte les pensées de la plate-bande. Aussitôt déposé délicatement sur ses courtes pattes, il tombe sur le flanc, impuissant, n'ayant plus que les yeux pour appeler à la rescousse. Ayant eu au fil des ans des Teckels aux dos fragiles, je le crois aussitôt à l'article de la mort. Vite chez le vétérinaire qui diagnostique un abcès important sous les molaires (les déversements ayant provoqué un empoisonnement passager) et qui me monte un joli devis de dentisterie dans les quatre chiffres. L'alternative, MU, plus de chien !

Le hasard fait que je travaille à contrat avec le Laboratoire fédéral d'évaluation clinique des médicaments vétérinaires, un groupe de chercheurs vétérinaires en pharmacologie animale. On réfléchissait, eux intelligemment et moi en silence, à l'importance que l'on donne aux animaux de compagnie. On comprend l'importance d'une vache en bonne santé ; elle nous donne le lait, le fromage et le veau. Mais le Teckel que l'on veut soigner à coup de gros billets, grâce à la recherche du laboratoire fédéral qui investit des millions dans l'approbation des médicaments que Charlie absorbera, dans une période où on ne sait comment financer nos soins de

santé, à quoi sert-il ?

Ne craignez rien, je n'offre pas de réponse. Je ne fais qu'observer le chien qui m'observe. Car c'est ce que le chien fait le mieux. Il observe par ce qu'il voit, ce qu'il entend, ce qu'il sent et perçoit de façon extrasensorielle – le chien annonce l'arrivée du maître avant même qu'il ne l'ait entendu, senti ou vu. De fait, le chien est hyper vigilant. Il connaît le monde par ce qu'il en perçoit et ayant décodé nos moindre habitudes il sait avant que l'on ne l'article, ce que nous ferons.

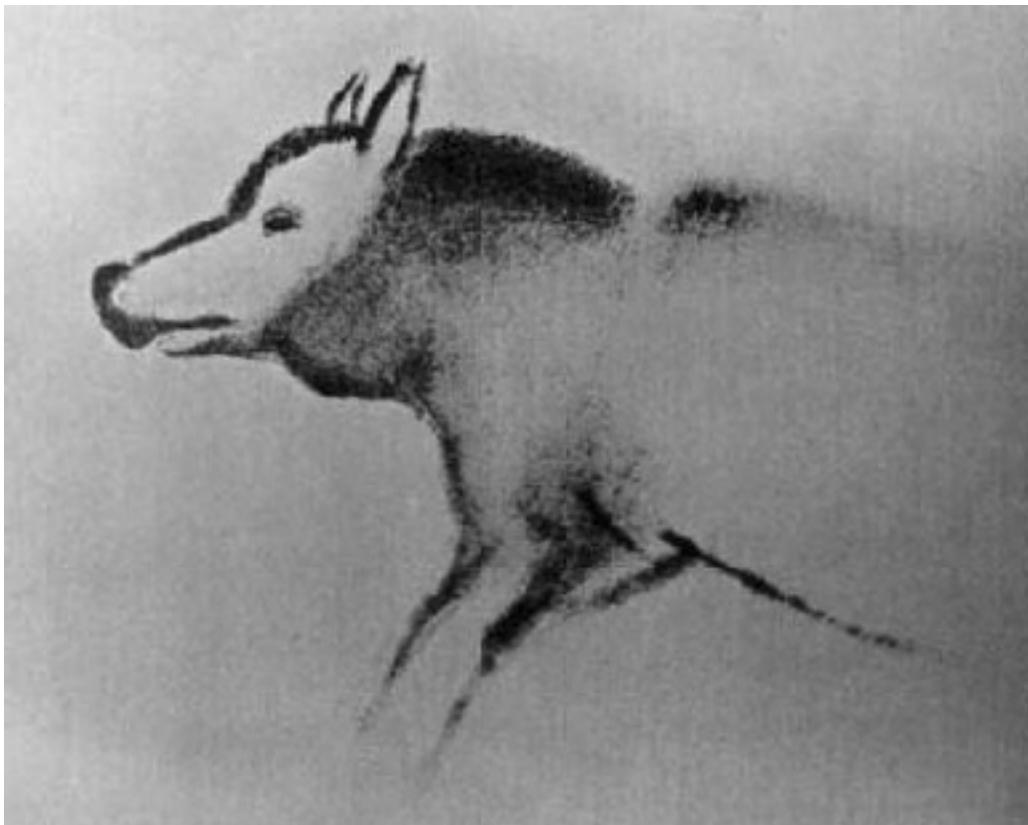
Cette hyper vigilance est en quelque sorte une présence à ce qui l'entoure pour assurer à la fois la sécurité et l'heure de la bouffe. Et nous nous attachons, enfin, moi je m'attache à cette vigilance que nous pouvons traduire en affection. Mais la puissance de ce regard est telle qu'il nous bouleverse à l'occasion. Une fois tombé sur le côté dans le jardin, Charlie me regarde en véritable détresse. Il demande, il implore, a-t-il peur ? Il n'y a pas de doute que le chien a des émotions. Il veut jouer, il adore se faire gratter les oreilles, il déteste le voisin qui parle trop fort. Mais qu'en savons-nous lorsque lovés l'un contre l'autre, couchés sous un coussin, Charlie et Clara me fixent des yeux ?

Un livre intitulé 'Inside of a Dog' (Alexandra Horowitz – Docteur ès Sciences cognitives) suggérait que nous aurions avantage à connaître le chien par son vocabulaire, c'est-à-dire ses habiletés, expériences et communications. Par exemple, au lieu de promener le chien au bout de la laisse et lui donner l'occasion de lire sa presse sur les bornes fontaines, allons au parc, sans laisse pour qu'il soit libre de se laisser mener par son odorat. La marche, plus sinieuse, vous l'imaginez, est

moins monotone! C'est, je pense, le seul moment où les chiens ne cherchent pas le contact visuel avec moi si ce n'est que pour s'assurer que je suis dans leur sillage. Est-ce le maître qui fait marcher le chien ou l'inverse ? Koan des temps modernes.

Mais j'en reviens aux yeux, aux regards qui font que nous sommes interpellés sans nécessairement qu'il y ait un message. Simplement une pré-

sence dynamique. Et je pense que c'est cela, précisément, qui fait que l'on se donne cette grâce de tenir chez soi une perruche, deux chiens ou un chat. Et c'est ce qui fait que Charlie s'est fait extraire plusieurs dents et qu'il a retrouvé sa dégainé des beaux jours de printemps.



Other Minds

Sarah Webb

Near Lenadore, Idaho, Meadow Lake Campground

Meadow Lake Campground is near the summit of a pass in Idaho on the way down to Wyoming. The gravel road goes up steeply from the highway into an alpine landscape, conifers and rocks and air that seems blue and brilliant. The campground sits beside a small lake, with drowned tree trunks angling into the center from the boulders on the shore. I wind my way through the rocks and roots at the edge of the water. A fat chipmunk runs along a rock, checking me out. He stops and makes a sound like a squeaky toy, flicking his tail. His dark eye glistens as he looks at me. I draw his picture and that of a smaller chipmunk, who pauses with his paw lifted.



I like this place. It feels quiet in the fading light, though most of the sites are occupied and people are leaning against their cars talking to each other. Once I've filled out my registration, I head up to a trail the host told me about, only a mile

long, but looping up the mountainside above the camp.

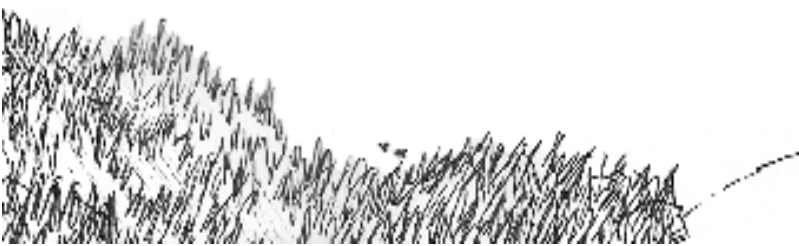
The path is shadowy and cool. I circle a giant trunk the wind has felled. Bark has fallen away in places to show the gnarled swirl of the wood. I make my way on through low bushes, look up into trees that I know are conifers but that I can't name. A staccato call sounds to my right, a harsh skritch like a radio signal turned between stations and blasting. I turn toward it, then hear the sound behind me. To the left, to the right, up the hillside. I am surrounded by an inexplicable blitz of sound. I make out a bird on a branch down the slope, another swoops between trees. Are they the source of the noise? They seem so small.



As I continue walking, the raucous calls accompany me for a few minutes, then squawk into the distance. It's dark when I make it back into camp, and I busy myself with supper and conversation with a couple who used to camp in a VW bus like mine. The noise is filed away, a mystery.

Crystal Creek Campground, east of Kelly, Wyoming

I think of the squawking again, a state away, as I camp east of the Grand Tetons. The campground is a spacious place, widely scattered campsites along the Gros Ventre River. I set up under larches, a few steps from the river through sweet-smelling sage. After I check out the water, I head up the road to a sign that says access to wilderness. I climb to the top of a grassy hill, the first of a series of rolling forms. This is about as deep as I will get into any wilderness with my bad knees, at least up this sharp grade. I sit looking at the hillside and the bare slopes coming down to the river from the north. The sun is setting behind the hills. Two birds flutter between the trees, silhouetted against the light. A sound comes on the wind, a screeing, squawling.



The next day, I drive into Grand Tetons National Park. I take the Taggart Lake trail, and stroll along in the shadows. Hikers have clustered near the bridge and are peering and pointing into the undergrowth. "It's a moose," whispers a man as I approach. A mother and calf are foraging, the mother stripping aspen leaves off lower branches, the calf rustling the saplings. I go on up the trail eventually, but it soon heads up so steeply it is grueling, and after a mile, I turn back. Near the bridge on the way down, again there are hikers, and a woman points to a dark shape moving between trees. We are excited and smiling. I encounter the animal again not long after, clearly visible now, just off the trail in undergrowth that comes to his knees, a huge moose. I stare at him, wanting to go over to him, but remember the signs warning not to get close to the animals. The desire is strong, though, and I know the people who arrive and stand watching feel it too.



Driving back to the campground, I stop in an animal jam. In places like Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons, a swarm of cars pulled to the side, or stopped without even pulling off, tells you that some animal is near, a coyote or bear, or an elk who has waded into sight among the reeds. This time it is a herd of buffalo crossing the road. Calves rock down into the ditch and up onto the tarmac. The adults are shaggy in patches with dusty brown fur. Little brown birds are riding their backs.

The animal jam and the excited hikers watching the moose hint at something. A lot of people--maybe most?--are drawn by animals. We want to see them, get close to them. We bird watch, we jam on our brakes in the middle of the road because someone in the car says, wolves! I'm not sure what is going on there, but I think it is some recognition of our kinship, our unity as beings who are aware. It's easier to recognize that unity with a fox than with an earthworm for most people. Beings who are not us and yet who are us. We want to go forward with that unity, see closer, touch. That's why there are petting zoos perhaps. And pets. It's a pain when animals flee us, though understandable. We want to close that gap into real interaction, into love. With pets we can do that. With wild animals almost never, but I think that's what may draw us.

Before I leave the camp on the Gros Ventre, I return to the hillside. I see another trail circling the mountain and take that. It ambles along, mostly level, and I can go a long way on it. Birds are flying by, black and white like magpies--or is it gray and white? They swoop low, buzzing me. Am I near some nest? I stop to look at them, and they begin to squawl. It is the same mix of static and squawk I heard up in Idaho. One whizzes by so close I duck my head.

Two take to the sky, swooping in close trajectory. I stop to jot a poem about them, calling them magpies. (Later I revise it to nutcracker, a different corvid). They swoop and tumble. I'm not sure if one is pursuing the other or if they are showing off their stunt flying skills.



A ragged band of nutcrackers,
crying and tumbling over the river

Above the road they burst out
hollering alarm
or good morning

On the steep hill
they blink between larches
A pair flies high
I crane to see where they swoop and bank

One swerves to lead the other on
over the top of the firs
then in an instant plunges into the branches.

The other hovers,
squawls on to the cliffs.

The trail takes me on to a hawk, half-hidden beside a young fir. I stop to draw him. The squawk-birds come close to watch and comment. Some fly past, others settle in the branches. I straighten to look at them, and they flap up and away.



Later I see a picture of the birds in a photo book called *Bird Brains* that I got in the national parks store. They are indeed gray and white, and they are not magpies but Clark's nutcrackers, as mischievous as crows and ravens and blue jays, who are corvid bandit-birds, just like them.

Ravens take on predators, have been known to actually sneak up and pull the tails of eagles. I've seen crows mobbing hawks back in Oklahoma. Not surprising these nutcrackers were putting on such a show. I had thought the pair doing the Blue Angel synchronized flying were courting, but now, remembering how they scouted me and dove close and squawk-skreeked, I think they were trying to torment me as a predator (it could have been about the hawk but some of those swoops came awfully close). I don't mind a bit. We had a relationship, cheeky little buggers.

So, the Clark's nutcracker--an unmistakable mind there, not an automaton of stimulus-response but a lightning-quick flash flying by, giving a braack of insult.



SESSHIN by Bozo

Jacqueline Vischer

I am monarch of, and chief guardian for, the house and garden of the Montreal Zen Centre. They depend on me to keep watch on all happenings, to chase down neighbourhood riff-raff, and to generally terrorize any creature that might dare to venture on to or into our property. Let it be said that I am good at my job. However every once in a while, fairly regularly it might be said, I allow large numbers of human visitors to move in and inhabit my territory for a finite period of time. In fact I quite like all the company, as long as they do not stay too long. It happens like this.

I know the visits are coming because there is more activity in and around the house. There is a sort of cleanup, which I try to discourage because mattresses get put down on all my floors, and then they close the doors to the rooms. This deprives me of some of my best sleeping places, but they go ahead and do it anyway. Then people start to arrive, first just a few, then a veritable stream, all carrying bags full of various items that they own. These they distribute around the house, most particularly in the rooms with the mattresses. I get to wander around and sniff at these, finding some evidence of foreign creatures that I would not let into my place – cats and dogs of some kind – but mostly the stuff smells of humans and is not interesting.

What is interesting is being able to curl up on some of the mattresses once the beds are made. Some people lay out lovely soft warm feather blankets, just made for cats, if I may say so. I occupy them as soon as and often as I can. But the people are watchful, and the doors are often closed. I am good at finding slightly open doors, though I do say

so myself, but they are hard to come by. If people come in and find me on their bed, some of them are too timid to get me off, but others, unfortunately, are not, and they fling me somewhat unceremoniously outside the door. Which is then closed. Such are the trials of a cat's life

While they are here, the humans spend a lot of time in our other, smaller house on the property. On sunny days the upstairs door over there is often open, and I enjoy climbing the outside stairs and surprising them all by walking into the room they are sitting in. However, I have learned over the years that they do not pay much attention to me – in fact, sometimes they do not even bother to pick me up to throw me out, and I have to walk downstairs and out of the front door by myself! So I do this less often than I used to do. However sometimes I hit 'pay dirt' – so to speak – when I go in and find them all lying about on the floor. This only happens in the afternoons, and not for long, so I have to be quick to catch them. Of course, this is ideal because they are then down at my level and I can wander freely among them flicking their knees and noses with my long, agile and extremely furry tail.

As the days go by, I begin to feel the visitors should be paying more attention to me. In fact, I admit I like the company – if I can get it. I like to station myself on the walkway between the two houses, because they walk along it several times a day and are bound to see me, all the more so because they are all looking down towards the ground - and me! I can tell they see me because some of them smile or make little whistling noises. I also like to go into the kitchen, where they are

often found as well, and if they are having a meal I can prowl around making loud meowing noises, just to make sure they know I am enthusiastically participating in the festivities.

I have also found out that they are very willing to let me in and out of the kitchen door, so I make the most of this. As the days go by, I go in and out more and more frequently - sometimes several times within a few minutes - and their patience is infinite! There is always someone there willing to open the door for me and close it behind me. Once I am in the kitchen with the humans, my main trick is to get someone to make eye contact with me. Many of them avoid eye contact - but if I get one to look into my eyes - well then! I can start making my most appealing meowing noises and purring, rubbing against their legs, and so on. Chances are, one of them will eventually lean down and - bingo! - give me a surreptitious caress. I used to jump up onto the kitchen counter to get their attention, but I have been unceremoniously hurled back down onto the ground so many times that I have almost given that up - I say almost, because with only a few peo-

ple in the kitchen it still sometimes works !!!!

As the days go by, I get a sense that the culmination of the entire event that they are there for is approaching. This I wait for with rising excitement. I have to hang around the front door a lot to be sure I am there when it happens. Suddenly one day, with no warning, they all come into the main house at the same time, and there is a lot of activity, cleaning, vacuuming and so on. Then - inexplicably - they all start talking! The bedrooms doors open, their stuff gets packed away into their bags, and I get to go in and out of every room exactly as I like. They make eye contact, they bend down, they pat and stroke me, and it is clear they have finally understood why I am there, how well I have looked after them, how safe I have kept the territory (they will have heard the howling of some poor critters I had to drive off), and how absolutely necessary I am to the smooth operation of their event.

I accept your gratitude, and look I forward to your next visit when I will again play my essential role in making it a success.



Kira

Hanna Back

Since early spring Kira lives with me. After years of hesitation and quite a few trips to the Humane Society I finally picked her as "the" dog I felt I wanted.

Being rather unruly and only over time coaxed into cooperation - at least to some extent - Kira certainly turned out to be a great teacher and companion.

She challenges my patience, sometimes severely, forces me to precision in my behavior and to be consistent and clear in words, more than I am used to.

She is a master of living in the moment! What happened two minutes ago turns easily into history of not much relevance.

Except, shortly after she came to live with me she broke through the ice on the swamp. It took her quite some effort to get out and it scared both of us!

Since then ice is suspicious to her, and I hope this will remain so.

How she loves to run, just run, ears flying, tail high - a bundle of life energy in its purest form! I feel lucky to have her company, her lessons and her energy in my life.



C a r a m e l & C i e

Katrin Miclette

Chaos – violence – fear – and in the midst of it, Caramel. I wake up, my heart is pounding, I am trembling, what a nightmare. My alarm clock shows 10 to 5 in the morning. Before falling asleep, I remind myself to put the collar around his neck again. He is constantly losing it...

Caramel – he was born on an ice cold night in February '96 on our balcony in Montreal. We had built a little shelter for the stray cats who were living in the alley. And there his mother gave birth to her babies, and there I heard his very first tiny “meow.”

Then, on a warm evening in July, he stood in front of the door. This lovely, little red guy, with those beautiful green eyes, asking to come in and – of course – to stay. Well, here he is. Independent, strong, enjoying life. He steals my socks and scarves, which I find in the alley, but I don't mind. He probably tells his friends about his great life.

The next year we leave for the south of France. And there – paradise! Endless fields, where he can hunt rabbits, squirrels, snakes, you name it. We even see him running after the neighbour's dog! He sits on the roof of the barn overlooking this incredible countryside, he hides in the sunflower fields, and sometimes he comes home badly hurt

from his countless fights. He looks for a quiet place to recover, and when he is feeling better, he comes to sleep on my lap.

After ten years we go back to Canada. We, that means Caramel and our other cats, Tiger and Lili, and Guy and me. “Wow,” he might have thought, “crossing the Atlantic twice! There are probably not many of my feline friends who have done that.” We decide to live in the Laurentians. A different life, but wonderful as well. He enjoys the wild, Canadian forest, has a lovely little friend, Masha. Sometimes I see them in the morning coming out of the forest, side by side.

Chaos – violence – fear – and in the midst of it, Caramel...a nightmare. My alarm clock shows 10 to 5 in the morning. Before falling asleep I remind myself to put the collar around his neck again. He is constantly losing it....

I wake up at 8 o'clock and something is wrong. No tiny, little “meow” telling me at seven every morning, “Hey, get up. I am hungry.” I call for him for hours, I look for him for three days all over the forest – he finally must have met somebody stronger than him. I bury his bowl and his collar in front of the stone Buddha, where my cats and I have sat together so many times.

Tiger (for Katrin)

Bruce Wilson

Six weeks ago he was joined by his buddy
Tiger, whom we found dead, run over by a car.

But we still have Lili.

Lovely Lili
beautiful cat
sitting in the sun.
In your eyes
no beginning – no end
no birth – no death
pure knowing – being.
How wonderful,
I wish I were you.



*Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?
- William Blake.*

Tiger, dear Tiger
You precious, lovely beast
The bright light of your being
So filled the house
As you called out with your long, low meow
“I am here! I am here!”
And gazed up at us so clearly
With your large green eyes

What music you sang
As we sat in zazen
The morning sun warming us
And the sound of Tiger
Echoing through the house
Piercing the silence
“I am here! I am here!”

Now your call is silent
As you lay next to the stone Buddha
Asleep forever in eternity
Not alive, not dead
As we sit, the silence is still pierced
By the memory of your light
And the winter cold brings
Echos of Tiger, dear Tiger
You precious, lovely beast





The Death of Leo

Fred Bloom

He came to us as a kitten- yellow, hence Leo- from Fr. MacElwain, our priest and friend, who knew that my wife was in search of a cat. He came with good credentials, part Maine Coon cat, a special and coveted breed, a good cat from the beginning and he slept peacefully inside my sweat shirt for the whole ride home from Fr. MacElwain's. Alice adored him, and in his old age she would pet him in a certain cloying way, as she appealed to him plaintively, "Don't die, Leo. Don't die." He was old by then, but in good health, whereas Alice was also old, but not.... What I heard was "Don't die, Leo... before me."

Leo did outlive her, but on the morning after her death he did not appear for his breakfast, and all that day was nowhere to be found. Convinced that I had forgotten to let him in the night before, and that he had been eaten by a coyote, or a fisher, or a fox, I became frantic and rushed around outside, looking for signs of a struggle, and calling his name. I believed finally that I heard him faintly mewling under the woodshed floor, but I was not about to crawl under there on a wet December morning, though I agonized that he might be wounded and dying- mea culpa. That, alternating with believing that I was only imagining this faint mewling, or that it was only the creaking of the floorboards.

Just as casually as he disappeared, he came trotting in from the back yard late that afternoon, unharmed, and perky. I decided then that he had been hiding from the smell of death. There is such a smell.

We lived on through the winter together, two

sullen widowers. I became finally as annoyed with him as Alice had ever been. After having been left alone all day, he would not let me read in the evening, but we continued to co-exist. Our crisis came later, a result of global warming.

This summer in Maine was unusually dry, but also unnaturally hot, and most of all humid. The result was a nearly total absence of the usual torments of black flies and mosquitos, which were hindered from reproducing by the lack of rain, but instead we had a plethora, indeed a plague, of fleas. By the time I realized that flea season had started a month early, my house was inundated with them. For two weeks I vacuumed daily, I treated Leo with the best and most potent products, and I bound the bottoms of my trousers to prevent the fleas from reaching their goal, which is red blood.

I studied up on them. A flea needs to have a meal of blood before it can reproduce. When it has its meal it will go off and lay twentyeggs. If the humidity is 50%, 15% of the eggs will hatch; if the humidity is 90%, 95% of the eggs will hatch. That was my handicap. Every time a flea succeeded in biting me or Leo 95% of 20 additional fleas reinforced their ranks. The question was, could I vacuum them up faster than they could multiply. It was a contest- John Henry against the steam hammer. By the end of the two weeks, drenched in sweat, my filthy pants crammed into my filthy socks, exhausted and defeated, feeling that I could no longer live in my own house, I looked at Leo, who was better, but by no means free of fleas, and I knew that he had to go.

My heart turned to ice at that moment. I put him in an old cat carrier I found in the attic and set him out on the porch while I finished the vacuuming. He was too old to imagine that I could persuade someone to take him, and to abandon him to the Humane Society would just mean two weeks alone in a cage before he would be euthanized, and so, the only course left was to do it myself. I cleaned up so as to be presentable in public and off we went. I half expected some questions, like, "Has he been sick?," some demand for a reason to kill him, but the receptionist was purely business. No, I didn't want the ashes. I hadn't been able to cope with the ashes I already had. So, \$62 and it was over.

My heart thawed and I felt guilty, though perhaps I felt more guilty for not feeling more guilty. I have friends who would not speak to me because of this. But, for me, I have been mostly at peace with it. Leo knew the vet's, having been there before, and for him, it was just one of those inexplicable ordeals that humans put cats through. I still had six more weeks of regular vacuuming ahead of me before the house would be free of fleas, or at least free enough so that I could get up in the night to go to the bathroom without going back to bed again only to lay awake itching and scratching for the rest of the night. My ordeal ended. But, now I have to look squarely at the thing. I have killed many animals, including cats, mostly when I was working in a lab, but I have never before killed a living being whom I knew personally- with whom I had a history.

Alice was sleeping downstairs on the couch the night that she died. She was too unsteady to climb stairs. She slept intermittently throughout the day, and then would stay up reading, sipping her glass of wine, and smoking her cigarettes late into the night. So, when I was half-awakened by a clunk downstairs, I just thought it was Alice crashing into the door on her way to bed, a not unusual event. But, when I came down the next morning and found her sitting on the couch but having fallen forward onto the coffee table, that clunk took on a whole new meaning.

Though I was in a state of complete hysteria, like any doctor, I checked her pupils and knew the worst. "I should begin resuscitation," I thought. It was a pipe-dream to think that it would have been in time to do any good, but, still, could I just let her die? I imagined Alice on a ventilator, and then recovered but needing 24-hour nursing care. She would curse her life. This, here, was just what she wanted. She knew, as I did, that she was worse. She could barely walk to the car when the day before, Christmas day, we had gone to see Doug, also sick and crippled. Yet, she did not mention it, and did not call the doctor. "Let her go," I heard in my head, and I knew that was the right thing. I did not attempt any "measures."

Just so, I knew I had to let Leo go. Not because he was sick or dying, but just because of what the circumstances happened to be. He had become too much in my life, and there was no other place for him. It was a cold fact. So, now I am made aware of yet another grim but real part of life- the necessity of killing. It is a violation of the precepts. It is a violation of the ten commandments. It is wrong. And yet, it can fall to us.

It is not my right, as a being higher than a cat on the so-called great chain of being, to decide his death. Rather it is a burden, which, beyond having to do it, is to know that I am doing it. Leo often presented us, in the morning on the kitchen floor, with the bloody body of a mouse, or on the front porch, with the body of a mangled bird. He didn't even need to do it. He had good food from a can. But, it was just in him to do it. And, fortunately for him, he was spared having to know that he did it.



Tango

Anita Low

I have been a vegetarian since I was 16 years old, that is to say for 39 years. It was for me a totally natural shift. From one day to the next, not eating meat just made sense to me. During the early years when being a vegetarian was still an exotic phenomenon I found myself often trying to explain and justify my reasons for being a vegetarian. I tried out all kinds of long-winded explanations until one day someone gave me a t-shirt with a quote from George Bernard Shaw silk-screened on it. The quote was simply 'I don't eat my friends'. And now, even though that t-shirt has long since worn out, this is what I tell people when they ask me why I am a vegetarian.

I love animals and have always felt friendly towards them. However, I had an experience recently that brought this sentiment home to me in a real and concrete way. First let me introduce my 'friends'. My daughter, Clara had always wanted a kitten. We had moved around so much in the early years of her life that up until she was around 11 years old this had not been possible. But now we seemed to have established ourselves in a home where we planned to stay. We had even gotten a dog, a huge Bouvier that we named very aptly Grizzly. It was time to get a kitty. So for Clara's 12th birthday we set off to find our Cat. Of course, when we found a litter, we fell in love with not one but two kittens and couldn't make up our minds between them! So, much to the delight of Clara, we brought both of them home. We came up with the names Tango and Jazz. They were two bundles of joy and energy. The whole fami-

ly fell in love with them, even Grizzly. Watching them play and wrestle all over this big, gentle dog was such a sight. Then, finally, they would fall exhausted asleep on him. He would hold still patiently for ages so they wouldn't fall off! The family was complete with our new friends!

I had a very typical relationship with the two cats. They looked to me to 'Open the door, already!' Or 'Where is my food, already?' and sometimes, the male cat Tango especially, would jump into my lap for a cuddle. It was an affectionate but, 'We know you are our human slave' kind of relationship.

21 months ago my life was turned upside down and my whole identity was shattered. I was in shock for at least 9 months. The kids had been gone from home for about a year. I was left totally on my own for the first time in 25 years. While in the house, I was usually in a state of deluge with tears pouring out. It was a revelation that there was simply a never-ending supply.

It was at this time that my relationship with Tango took on a new flavor. It was like he knew I was in pain and that he wanted to be there to comfort me. While I poured my fear, pain and puzzlement into zazen, Tango would curl up in the 'v' my legs would form when I sat in the half-lotus. Sometimes as tears poured down my face he would get up on his hind feet and pat me. When I would be too agitated to sit there he would pace with me.

He was always there to greet me as I came in the door. He slept up by my head during the night. When I could not sleep he would lie on my chest and the comforting purring rumbling through my body from his would finally send me off to dreamland.

This relationship lasted right up until he judged me strong enough to go on alone. Since about 6 months he no longer comes and sits with me in the zendo. He has established himself back in his more comfortable spot on a chair with a nice puffy pillow. When he sleeps on the bed it is not right next to my head but rather on the other side of the bed. He has gone back to treating me like 'His Human' ... in

other words 'the food giver' and 'the door opener'.

Cats are definitely more comfortable in this kind of more neutral relationship. Dogs do that lovey-dovey stuff, not cats. Cats like it when they are independent but properly looked after. Tango, however, during what he deemed the height of my crisis, became a true friend, always there to comfort me. He literally, in his way, looked after me.

So now when people ask me why I am a vegetarian, I remember Tango's loving presence and say in a much more heartfelt way: "Because I don't eat my friends."



QUE des oiseaux, dis-tu! D'où te vient cette fatuité de croire que nous valons mieux qu'eux? Parce que nous réfléchissons, que nous avons la parole, parce que nous mangeons avec une fourchette ou peut-être parce que nous nous essuyons le cul après avoir chié? Observe une seule fois dans ta vie un oiseau en train de faire son nid et ose me dire qu'il ne pense pas! Et que crois-tu qu'ils fassent lorsqu'ils sifflent, de la musique? Eh bien non. Ils se parlent! Et en plus, EUX, ils volent, et ça, aucun spécimen de notre espèce est capable d'en faire autant. Alors..... Qu'est-ce qui t'autorise à penser que tu vaux mieux qu'une grue cendrée? (Michel Folco, Même le mal se fait bien)

Qu'est-ce qui t'autorise à penser que tu vaux mieux qu'un chien?

Monique Dumont

Quand ils sont allés chercher le chien, ils étaient déjà un peu ivres. Pas trop, mais juste assez pour ne pas faire de manières. Un chien c'est un chien; pas de chichis. D'ailleurs ils savaient ce qu'ils voulaient. Celui-là dont Richard leur avait parlé. Un beau gros chien noir, un Bouvier bâtard aux poils longs, la queue indemne et les oreilles non taillées. Une marque distinctive, les pattes palmées comme un Terre-Neuve. Il doit aimer l'eau. Parfait pour un chalet. Son propriétaire l'a laissé comme ça un soir, attaché à la rampe de l'escalier de la Société pour la protection des animaux, sans aucune note, rien. La SPA l'a gardé plus longtemps que les autres, car c'était vraiment une belle bête. Dommage de tuer ça. Richard en a parlé à Luc qui a dit pourquoi pas. S'il est en santé. Il remplissait toutes les conditions. C'était un mâle, il était de bonne taille et il devrait aimer jouer dans l'eau. C'est quand même bête de vivre sur le bord d'un lac avec un chien qui ne trempe pas le bout de ses pattes. Un chien c'est fait pour s'ébattre, nager, patauger dans l'eau.

Ils arrivent à la SPA un beau samedi après-midi de juillet sans mouches, le soleil éclatant, la brise fraîche, le coeur content. Sur la plage c'est les vacances, le party, plein de monde en visite. Luc est parti avec Richard qui a vu le chien et un voisin. De toutes façons, si le chien fait pas l'affaire, on pourra toujours le retourner. Arrivent à la SPA, demandent

le chien. C'était pas difficile, il était seul dans sa cage, affalé, l'air morne. Un beau chien dit le gardien. Ne jappe pas. Tranquille, placide. Oui les pattes palmées, regardez. Un Bouvier presque pur. Ce sont des gardiens ces chiens-là. On les redécouvre. Quand ils sont dressés, ils donnent pas leur place. Ça accote un Berger allemand n'importe quand. Même aux douanes on les utilise maintenant pour sniffer la drogue. Un flair exceptionnel. OK! on le prend. Formalités d'usage. On le sort de sa cage. Luc avait apporté le collier de son ex-chien, on lui enfile autour du cou, le flatte un peu, le chien branle légèrement la queue, pas trop. Depuis quelques jours, il ne comprend plus rien. Pourquoi est-il ici, où est son maître? Le gardien ne le sait pas. Il l'a trouvé comme ça un beau matin en arrivant, attaché à la rampe de l'escalier, sans notes ni explications. A-t-il été battu? Sais pas. Mais il est en santé. Six mois probablement, pas de puces, pas agressif. Un beau chien doux.

Mais voilà qu'arrivé à l'auto, il se cabre, il tire sur sa laisse, il veut pas embarquer. Quoi? Veux pas? Tu vas pas commencer à nous niaiser, hein? Un chien c'est un chien. Il n'y a pas de violence, mais en tout cas, pas de manières. On te le plaque à l'arrière du char et il se retrouve plus vite que l'éclair écapoutti sur le plancher, le museau aplati contre ses pattes de devant, l'air de quelqu'un qui veut pas

se faire remarquer. Un peu de sueur sur son poil. Pas vraiment, mais comme une odeur qui aurait la substance de la sueur, une odeur de chien qui a peur. Richard s'est assis derrière avec lui et le flatte. Le chien reste plaqué là. On se demande si c'est un chien qui aurait été battu. Crisse! J'espère que c'est pas un PEUREUX. Et c'est comme ça, étampé sur le plancher, le museau collé au sol, que le chien arrive à destination. Comme dit Richard, peut-être qu'il ne s'est pas remis du traumatisme de son abandon à la SPA. Pour lui, l'auto c'est un voyage vers la mort. Ben voyons, dit Luc, comment peut-il se douter que la SPA tue les chiens après trois jours? C'est juste un chien ça, c'est pas un humain! On le sort de l'auto. Il se cabre. Il faut le tirer.

Toute la visite accourt. Les papas, les mamans et les enfants. Que je te touche, que je te tripote, que je t'empoigne, que je te palpe, te flatte, te tire la queue juste pour voir, oh! le beau chien, ah! mon beau pitou, comment tu t'appelles, comment il s'appelle, il faut lui donner un nom, hein mon chien, viens ici mon pitou, comment on pourrait t'appeler, hein? Un enfant inspiré dit Brutus! Comme une belle grosse bête brute. Brutus! Comme le chien du voisin qui mordait les jarrets des passants. Tellement qu'ils ont été obligés de s'en débarasser. Une belle grosse bête, Brutus. Et tout le

monde de rire et de dire, oui Brutus, ça fait fort. Ça fait costaud, ça va faire peur aux voleurs. Brutus! Et le voilà dûment nommé, cerné par une dizaine de personnes, étourdi de tendresse, étripé d'affection, écrasé d'amour. Un soleil éclatant, un bel après-midi sans mouches.

C'est là que quelqu'un a l'idée de voir si c'est vrai que c'est un bon nageur parce qu'il a les pattes palmées et qu'il devrait aimer ça l'eau. Viens-t'en mon beau gros pitou on va aller se baigner. Le chien suit la bande jusqu'à la lisière du lac mais là il freine net. Pas question d'avancer. Les quatre pattes renfoncées dans le sable humide, il tremble et refuse d'aller plus loin. Shit! Le juron s'est répercuté à l'autre bout de la baie dans l'air sec. Tout le monde fige. Luc sort de son chalet gonflé dur comme une balle de baseball. Si c'te maudit-là veut pas se baigner, il va s'en retourner vite d'où il vient, dit-il entre ses dents. Quand il arrive à côté du chien, les autres se poussent un peu. Il est blanc de rage. Comme ça tu veux pas te baigner mon crisse de peureux! qu'il lui hurle en pleine face en l'empoignant par le collier. Fais-lui pas mal supplie une voix. Luc le traîne de force dans l'eau. Le chien, aveuglé par les éclaboussements, bascule sur le dos. Dans ses yeux, toute la lumière du jour s'engloutit dans un abîme de terreur.



De passage à Turin, Nietzsche s'est indigné contre un cocher en train de frapper son cheval à coup de cravache. Il s'est ensuite jeté au cou de la bête en pleurant. Cet événement a inspiré le commentaire suivant au romancier Milan Kundera: « La vraie bonté de l'homme ne peut se manifester en toute liberté et en toute pureté qu'à l'égard de ceux qui ne représentent aucune force. Le véritable test moral de l'humanité (le plus radical, qui se situe à un niveau tel qu'il échappe à notre regard), ce sont ses relations avec ceux qui sont à sa merci: les animaux. Et c'est ici que s'est produite la plus grande déroute de l'homme, débâcle fondamentale dont toutes les autres découlent. » (L'insoutenable légèreté de l'être).

Dieu les bénit et Dieu leur dit: «Soyez féconds et prolifiques, remplissez la terre et dominez-la. Soumettez les poissons de la mer, les oiseaux du ciel et toute bête qui remue sur la terre»!

(La Genèse)

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« J'ai des cauchemars depuis que j'ai visité l'usine de Spencer Foods en Iowa il y a quinze ans. Des employés portant des casques de football tiraient avec des lanières attachées au museau d'animaux à bout de souffle, maintenus par une chaîne entourant une de leurs pattes arrière. Chaque animal terrifié était forcé, avec une tige électrique, de pénétrer sur une plate-forme avec un plancher glissant à 45 degrés. Les animaux glissaient alors, puis tombaient et les employés les élevaient dans les airs par la patte attachée. Comme je fixais cette abomination, j'ai pensé : Ça ne devrait pas se produire dans une société civilisée. Si l'enfer existe, j'y suis. Je me suis promise d'inventer un système plus éthique pour les animaux.»

(Temple Grandin, Thinking in Picture.)

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Quand Rousseau annonce à son lecteur « l'effroi de ceux qui auront le malheur de vivre après toi », c'est en quelque sorte, notre monde, plus cruel à l'homme peut-être qu'il ne fut jamais, dont il annonce l'avènement. Le monde où nous vivons fait peser sur chacun de nous l'imminence de craintes et de problèmes dont nous nous étions habitués à penser qu'ils ne nous concernaient pas, nous pouvons alors nous demander si le grand responsable, le grand coupable, ça n'est pas cette philosophie humaniste sur laquelle nous nous sommes presque entièrement et exclusivement fondés. L'humanisme constitue l'homme en règne séparé. Et dès lors qu'on accepte de tracer une frontière, on se donne la latitude de déplacer à volonté cette frontière et de réserver le privilège de l'humanité à des portions d'humanité de plus en plus restreintes qui, de leur côté, rejettent dans l'animalité, nous en avons trop d'exemples historiques récents présents à la mémoire, des fractions toujours plus étendues de cette même humanité.

Il me semble-t-il, il n'y a qu'un moyen d'échapper à ce cercle infernal, il n'y a qu'un moyen de se prémunir contre ses dangers, c'est de considérer que **l'homme est d'abord un être vivant et souffrant, avant d'être un être pensant**, et que c'est dans la seule mesure où chacun de nous parviendra à préserver dans son for intérieur le souvenir, et plus que le souvenir, l'expérience vivante de cette identité avec tout ce qui vit et donc tout ce qui souffre, que l'homme pourra être assuré de n'être jamais traité en bête par ses semblables - parce qu'il aura étendu la notion de semblable à tout ce qui vit et qui possède de ce fait un titre imprescriptible à la commisération.

(Claude Lévi-Strauss)

« Les anthropologues sont à l'école de peuples qui eux-mêmes sont des écologistes. Qui ont réussi, au prix de toutes sortes de pratiques que nous jugeons superstitieuses et avec un peu de dédain, à se maintenir en équilibre avec le milieu naturel. Vous savez parmi ces peuples (...), il existe des croyances en un maître des animaux qui veille jalousement sur les procédés de chasse et dont on sait qu'il enverra des châtiments surnaturels à celui ou à ceux qui tueraient plus qu'il n'est strictement nécessaire. Comment, pour cueillir la moindre plante médicinale, il est nécessaire de faire d'abord des offrandes à l'esprit de cette plante. Tout ça oblige à entretenir avec la nature des rapports mesurés.

Certains peuples ont même cette croyance que le capital de vie qui est à la disposition des êtres forme une masse. Par conséquent, chaque fois qu'on en prend en trop dans une espèce, on doit le payer au dépend de la sienne propre. Tout ça nous montre une façon sensée pour l'homme de vivre et de se conduire et de se considérer non pas comme nous l'avons fait, depuis l'Ancien Testament et le Nouveau et depuis la Renaissance aussi, comme les seigneurs et maîtres de la création, mais comme une partie de cette création que nous devons respecter... »

(Claude Lévi-Strauss)

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La grande majorité des chats a besoin de sortir, de passer du temps à monter aux arbres, exercer ses talents de prédateur, mâchouiller de l'herbe, rencontrer des congénères... Que dire alors de ceux qui restent enfermés toute leur vie entre 4 murs, avec pour occupation une fenêtre où on les voit rêvant de liberté, obèses et malheureux... Et, de la même façon : quid de ces chiens attachés à leur niche, 24h/24, toujours seuls, avec pour se dégourdir les pattes la seule liberté laissée par leur chaîne ? Ou de ceux en chenil, qu'ils y soient seuls ou entassés dans les pires conditions qui soient ?

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True human goodness can manifest itself, in all its purity and liberty, only in regard to those who have no power. The true moral test of humanity (the most radical, situated on a level so profound that it escapes our notice) lies in its relations to those who are at its mercy: the animals. And it is here that exists the fundamental failing of man, so fundamental that all others follow from it.

(Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of being.*)

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If you want to see human evil in all its purity, ingenuity and freedom, you will find it in a shuttlebox. This is an instrument of torture invented by the Harvard psychologists R.Solomon, L.Kamin and L.Wynne. The box consists of two compartments separated by a barrier. The floor of each compartment is an electrified grid. Solomon and his collaborators would put a dog in one compartment and then give it an intense electric shock to its feet. Instinctively, the dog jumps over from one compartment to the other. They would then repeat this procedure again and again – several hundred times in a typical experiment. Each time, however, the jump is more and more difficult for the dog, because the experimenters are gradually making the barrier higher and higher. Eventually the dog cannot make the jump and falls to the electrified grid beneath it – a panting, spasming, screaming wreck. In a variation, the experimenters electrify the floor on both sides of the barrier. No matter where the dog jumps, it is going to be shocked (.....)

If they had been discovered doing this in the privacy of their own homes, Solomon, Kamin and Wynne would have been prosecuted, fined and probably banned from keeping pets for a period of five to ten years. They should have gone to jail. But because they did their work in a Harvard laboratory, they were, instead, rewarded with the dubious trappings of academic success: cushy lifestyle, generous salary, the adoration of their students and the jealousy of their peers.

(Mark Rowlands, *The Philosopher and the Wolf.*)

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Tennis balls are small, round and furry. So too are baby rabbits. Yet those of us of a non-psychopathic persuasion would be horrified at the thought of playing tennis with a baby rabbit. And this is not simply because rabbits don't bounce properly! Most of us are perfectly willing to allow that our treatment of animals raises at least some moral issues. We are quite willing to allow that we have to consider the impact of our actions on animals. Having knocked all the balls over the fence, we can't just pick up the nearest baby rabbit and start serving with that. That would be morally outrageous. We all know this. This, essentially, is why we have laws prohibiting cruelty to animals.

One way of putting this is to say that we view many animals as things that are morally considerable. And to say that we regard something as morally considerable is to say that we regard it as sort of thing that counts morally – the sort of thing that should, morally speaking, be considered when we decide what to do (...)

The crucial difference between rabbits and tennis balls, of course, is that the former are, whereas the latter are not, conscious. Rabbits have an experiential welfare: life can, experientially speaking, go better or worse for a rabbit, but not for a tennis ball. Consciousness seems to play a central role in determining what we let in, and what we exclude from, the moral club (...)

On the other hand, while they may be in the moral club, animals seem to have a peculiarly second-class status (...)

(Mark Rowlands, *Animals like us.*)

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“Is it possible that future generations will regard our present agribusiness and eating practices in much the same way we now view Nero's entertainments or Mengele's experiments? My own initial reaction is that such a comparison is hysterical, extreme – and yet the reason it seems extreme to me appears to be that I believe animals are less morally important than human beings; and when it comes to defending such a belief, even to myself, I have to acknowledge that (a) I have an obvious selfish interest in this belief, since I like to eat certain kinds of animals and want to be able to keep doing it, and (b) I haven't succeeded in working out any sort of personal ethical system in which the belief is truly defensible instead of just selfishly convenient.”

(David Foster Wallace, *Consider The Lobster.*)

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Sharing the Light of Being

Bruce Wilson

*I think I could turn and live with animals, they're so placid and self contain'd,
I stand and look at them long and long.
They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning things,
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago,
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the earth.
- Walt Whitman, Song of Myself*

Long ago, before the age of science, animals were regarded as our companions, our sustenance, and our spiritual guides. They were within us as we were within them. Prehistoric peoples depicted animals in their cave art, their totems, and their myths. Shamans would dress in animal skins and summon their spirits while dancing around the fire. We followed the herds of caribou as they wandered across the tundra; we ventured far out to sea to fish and hunt whale, and we thanked the creatures for giving up their lives so we could live. In many of our ancient traditions, the animals gave birth to us. For example, in the Haida origin myth, the first men were born from a giant clamshell with the help of Raven, the trickster.

During the Renaissance, humans became

separated from themselves and from nature. No longer were we part of the world; instead, the world existed “out there” beyond us. The world became a machine, a vast mechanism devoid of spirit or purpose that we observe from an external vantage point. And we lost our connection with the animals. Descartes, a leading philosopher of that time, thought of animals as merely “automata” – without consciousness or subjectivity. Our furry and feathery companions became reduced to organic robots incapable of feeling pain, pleasure, or anything at all, really. In the 20th Century, the view of animals-as-machines became extended to humans-as-machines, and all the richness, intelligence, and feeling of life, both animal and human, became reduced to a mechanistic, behavioristic process of stimulus and response.

When I worked in a biopsychology research lab, I was required to study animal behavior. Despite strict guidelines to ensure their humane handling and minimization of suffering, it was still disturbing to subject their brains to invasive procedures. Even more disturbing was the view we adopted of them as objects, mere collections of organs and biochemical reactions. The view of animal-as-machine is still prevalent in scientific research, although thankfully there are signs of change. For the past three decades, the Estonian-American neuroscientist Jaak Panksepp has promoted the idea that mammals have feelings just like us; they experience fear, anger, lust, curiosity, joy, and delight in play,

just as we do. Long ridiculed for being “anthropomorphic,” Panksepp’s ideas are now widely accepted and are even informing human psychotherapy. For example, his findings on the importance of unstructured play for optimal emotional development are now being applied to human children.

For someone with no scientific training, it may seem incredible that scientists could be so insensitive to adopt the view that animals are nothing more than organic machines, especially when their inner life seems so obvious to the rest of us. But that is the tragedy of the objective scientific worldview – that which cannot be directly observed must be ignored, downplayed, and discarded. The nadir of this view is found in the philosophy of eliminative materialism wherein our very own subjectivity is considered to be non-existent.

As my spiritual practice deepens, so does my relationship with animals. Long gone is the objective view of them as reflexive “organisms,” drummed into me by my scientific training, a view

which I never really believed from the beginning. Instead, I find myself opening to the creatures around me, even the tiny spider weaving its miniature, perfect web on my windowsill. With Whitman, I stand and look at them long and long. Indeed, as we grow spiritually, we come to see once more what our ancestors saw – the creatures are within us as we are within them.

I see this when I watch the chickadees darting back and forth to the feeder, maneuvering through the branches with unfailing accuracy, their bodies like tiny projectiles. Their joy at finding a seed is unmistakable. I see it in the flocks of geese, honking their way south each fall while flying in unison. I see it in the flying squirrels who visit my deck at night, large black eyes gazing back at me. Mostly, I see this in our cat, Mishka, who wanders up to me as I sit in zazen, gazes up for a moment to see what I am doing, and then softly sits down on the cushion to join me. Two creatures, one within the other, sharing the bright light of being.



Des animaux et des humains

Marie-Bernarde Pérés

Visions diverses

La question de l'animalité et de ses rapports avec les humains a toujours interpellé ces derniers. Elle n'est donc pas le produit de la modernité.

En Orient, on a accepté très tôt l'idée d'unité et de caractère sacré de toute vie (une notion issue du Jânisme, de l'Hindouisme et du Bouddhisme), ainsi que la croyance en la réincarnation de l'âme dans un corps humain ou animal.

Dans l'antiquité, on croyait à des relations mythiques entre les humains et les animaux comme en témoignent les mythologies grecques et égyptiennes avec leurs nombreuses créatures mi-homme, mi-animal.

Les croyances des pythagoriciens en la métempsychose, c'est-à-dire la réincarnation de l'âme après la mort, aussi bien dans le corps d'un humain que dans celui d'un animal leur faisaient considérer comme cannibales tous ceux qui tuaient et mangeaient des animaux.

Ces points de vue ont été repris plus tard par Sénèque, Plotin, Ovide, Diogène. D'autres philosophes expliquaient les différences entre les humains et les animaux par l'absence d'âme et donc de conscience chez ces derniers.

Dans le christianisme l'idée de fraternité avec les animaux, appelés « frères mineurs » a été développée par Antoine de Padoue et François d'Assise mais elle n'a jamais fait l'unanimité au sein de l'Église. La vision de la majorité chrétienne

reposait sur l'idée que seule l'espèce humaine créée par Dieu devait régner sur toutes les autres créatures. Cette vision s'appelait l'« échelle des êtres ».

Puis, avec la publication de la théorie de l'évolution de Darwin en 1859, l'« échelle des êtres » a fait place à l'« arbre de vie », métaphore évolutionniste postulant que toutes les formes de vie doivent être respectées car aucune n'est supérieure ou inférieure à une autre.

Au cours des années 1970, de grands progrès ont été accomplis notamment par la prise en compte du traitement éthique des animaux.

Puis, le livre *Animal Liberation*, du philosophe australien Peter Singer (1990) constitue une étape importante pour le mouvement de libération des animaux. Peter Singer affirme que dès lors que nous nous opposons à la discrimination sexuelle et raciale, nous ne pouvons pas nous déclarer en accord avec la discrimination fondée sur l'appartenance à une espèce (nommée spécisme par Singer). Il soutient également que la capacité de ressentir chez certains animaux est comparable à celle des humains. Cela implique que les animaux ont des « intérêts » et, par conséquent, qu'ils doivent être inclus dans la sphère de l'éthique.

Éthique et responsabilité

Actuellement, des collectifs, des associations, des coopératives de citoyens, des gouvernements appellent à une révision profonde de notre éthique et de nos comportements envers les animaux. Cette éthique animale est l'étude du statut

moral des animaux, c'est-à-dire de la responsabilité des humains à leur égard. Ainsi, des institutions tel le Conseil de l'Europe par exemple, réclame une remise en question du statut des animaux.

Les découvertes faites en écologie moderne, en psychologie animale, en éthologie et sociobiologie ont démontré que certains animaux possèdent une vie mentale et une capacité à communiquer, à utiliser consciemment des outils, à coopérer et à s'entraider.

On a observé par exemple, des éléphants entourant des membres de leur cohorte qui allaient mourir les accompagner jusqu'à leur « cimetière » puis, poursuivre leur route. À leur retour, ils s'arrêtent quelques instants à ce « cimetière » avant de retourner dans leur habitat.

Il existe plusieurs histoires d'animaux, apprivoisés ou sauvages qui ont retrouvé des personnes et même sauvé des vies sans que l'on puisse expliquer ce qui les y a poussés.

Selon plusieurs chercheurs, le pouvoir thérapeutique de la relation animal-humain contribue à augmenter l'estime de soi et à combler une part de nos besoins psychologiques et émotionnels.

Cette relation permet à des jeunes en difficulté souvent privés de contacts humains, de compenser ce manque. S'occuper de l'animal va les aider à reconnaître leurs émotions et à développer leur sens des responsabilités.

Les animaux contribuent également au bien-

être des aînés qui souffrent de dépression et de solitude ainsi qu'aux handicapés.

Question de bon sens

De nos jours, les préoccupations environnementales prédominent et s'inscrivent également dans une démarche éthique. À ce propos, le dernier sommet de l'ONU sur l'environnement a alerté le monde sur l'impact de la consommation de viande (poisson inclus) sur le changement climatique et sur les méfaits de l'élevage.

En effet, l'élevage des animaux pollue et met en danger la faune et la flore : les habitats sont détruits via la déforestation, l'usure des sols et la diminution des infiltrations d'eau ; en témoignent également la pollution via le rejet de nombreuses substances néfastes ; le changement climatique via l'augmentation des gaz à effet de serre ; la surpêche ; la sédimentation dans les régions côtières via le ruissellement des eaux.

Nous sommes donc amenés à faire preuve de bon sens. Pourquoi? Tout simplement, parce que nous compromettons la survie des espèces et la nôtre en polluant le monde lui-même vivant qui l'entoure.

Quoique nous en pensions, dans l'univers nous (espèce humaine) ne sommes pas le début et la fin de toutes choses. Nous sommes soumis aux lois de la nature. Nous ne pouvons pas survivre en dehors de la nature. Nous respirons l'oxygène de l'air, entièrement produit par les végétaux, nous mangeons les plantes qui ont capté la lumière du

soleil, que nous-mêmes sommes incapables de synthétiser. Il est donc impératif en cette période critique de comprendre l'irréversibilité de l'interdépendance de toutes les formes du vivant.

Car, il ne s'agit plus de bien vouloir sauver les baleines ou les ours blancs ou la forêt boréale. Non, la survie des humains dépend des baleines, des ours blancs et de la forêt boréale. Nous sommes soumis aux mêmes lois qui sanctionnent la prolifération de toutes les espèces vivantes. Nous n'avons pas le choix.

Trois exemples

Les saumons géniteurs remontent le courant vers leur cours d'eau ou leurs lacs d'origine. Les femelles pondent les œufs et les mâles fécondent ceux-ci. Les saumons meurent après le frai. Les carcasses de saumons qui aboutissent sur les rives fertilisent les forêts et les buissons et le reste de l'écosystème. Si de nombreux saumons adultes sont capturés, il y aura moins de nutriments dans l'eau pour les générations futures de saumon et donc pour le reste de l'écosystème. Or, nous savons que les écosystèmes fournissent aussi l'oxygène que nous respirons ; il s'agit de la ressource naturelle la plus vitale pour tout ce qui vit tant qu'ils sont préservés.

Les abeilles pollinisent de nombreuses plantes, c'est-à-dire qu'elles participent à l'échange de pollen entre deux fleurs différentes. À elle seule, l'abeille pollinise plus de 80% des espèces végétales dans le monde. En cela, elle est donc un partenaire essentiel et précieux dans l'équilibre des écosystèmes et la gestion durable de la biodiversité. De plus,

par ses fonctions, elle est aussi un bon indicateur de la qualité de l'air car son observation permet d'évaluer la pollution atmosphérique. Or, l'abeille est en voie de disparition à cause des insecticides. Les plantes, les humains et les animaux en subiront les conséquences.

Les chauves-souris selon l'ONU, sont l'objet de nombreuses menaces dont la disparition de son habitat due à la déforestation et à l'urbanisation, ainsi que la chasse et la destruction, alimentée par les mauvais préjugés associés à l'espèce. Cependant, contrairement à l'image nuisible qui lui est allouée, la chauve-souris est un maillon essentiel de l'environnement : elle contrôle les populations d'insectes dans les régions agricoles, et participe à l'entretien des forêts et à la pollinisation du pollen et des graines au sein de larges périmètres. Elle apporte donc un gain tant environnemental qu'économique profitable à tous.

Respect de la vie

Qu'il soit victime de l'élevage, de la pollution environnementale, de la corrida, de la maltraitance, de l'abattage rituel, de la surpêche, de l'exploitation à des fins récréatives dans les zoos ou les cirques, ou touristiques (calèche, promenade en charreux) l'animal souffre : c'est un être sensible.

Lorsqu'on accompagne un animal qui va mourir, ou lorsqu'on lui apporte des soins lors de maladies, on constate la présence de souffrance liée au stress, à la peur, à la panique. L'animal dans les abattoirs est conscient de la mort ; on a observé des porcs mourir de crise cardiaque lors de leur trans-

fert. Et que dire de l'abattage rituel ? Les animaux, conscients, ressentent une douleur extrême au moment de l'égorgeage et durant l'ensemble de leur lente agonie.

L'animal tout comme l'humain veut éviter la souffrance et connaître le bien-être. En tant que personne sensible, nous savons que nous ne pouvons pas bâtir du bien-être sur de la souffrance.

Cette souffrance peut-être donc un centre de réflexion, un outil de travail sur nous-mêmes car elle nous montre comment nous vivons nos vies et comment nous pouvons nous sortir de nos comportements névrotiques. Quiconque a été témoin de la souffrance d'un animal sait que la contemplation de cette souffrance l'a fait grandir car elle constitue le chemin de l'ouverture du cœur envers toutes formes de vie.

Le thème de l'animalité et de son impact sur l'avenir des humains a toujours tenu une place importante dans le questionnement de ce dernier. Il appelle à un engagement éthique et écologique.

Mais ce questionnement peut aussi nous mener au centre de la réalité. En effet, les animaux vivent essentiellement dans le présent et la simplicité. C'est pourquoi, observer les animaux et la nature nous relie à nous-mêmes ; cette observation nous fait revenir dans la dimension du monde du silence. En ce sens, on peut dire que les animaux sont des vecteurs de réel. La contemplation de tant de beauté agit comme un effet miroir qui nous ramène à l'ici et maintenant. Ainsi, l'affirmation du monde et de la vie se rejoignent dans l'éthique de l'amour et du respect pour toute vie.



Gassho

Patricia Ivan

Deep bow
From the waist down to the ground.

See the back of my neck
And the curve of my spine
And my hands pressing the floor
At your feet
Not looking up
To see you
Looking at me
In the smile traveling
Down my back

* * *

Listen
Gentle wind
To the sound of your name
Blowing the fluff off
A dandelion plucked ripe

Eppou!

* * *

A kiss
On the saffron robes
Of my golden-faced hibiscus
Makes her glad to die another day for us

* * *

Adaptation to Alienation

The laws of nature
Advance like a great machine
Making quick work of imperfection
In the name of evolution

Though nature is sometimes backwards:
Birds fly into the wind to take off
And salmon swim upstream to spawn
And people remember the past to heal and move on.

Faith
Walks in between,
Neither backward nor forward
And in the name of nothing,

Picking up every fallen fledgling

With a broken wing
To be with each moment rejected
As an aberration.

* * *

It was a good day on the lake
Calm, crystal and clear,
The day the insects
Sprang into full-fledgedness.

* * *

They wiped their sticky wings
Across my palm, smearing the ink
That threatened to sink their flight
Beneath the mirror.

Love is in the veins
And pops its rivers down the arms
Of longing, curled and reaching
For the light that winter's left

I got lost. It was then.
But where did I go
As I watched me separate
Their wings in the cup of my hand?

Filtered through the sheers
Of loneliness washed out
The spring is sweetly timed
To beat the wings of lovers' flocks

They flew away in my eyes
As I stood like a ghost on the shore
Unable to pierce the air with a sound
Anyone would hear

Arriving in formation
Bare as geese returning in the nick
The sunrise catches on her throat
And casts its shadows on the bone

* * *

And I did sink like an old stone
To the sandy bottom of the tarn
As they soared
Above the water

I chose to go
Because I knew my tears
Ran off the roof of my true home.

* * *

* * *

Move forward
With the eyes of the heart
Letting each step ask
Its question
That the ground answers

Unconcealed you listen with your eyes
And so I speak of what is under silken lids

Forging your path where they meet in silence
Let go the ropes of time and space
Releasing choices
No longer bound
By the axes of insecurity

Of scars, revealed where white robes open
Parting only with the first layer of flesh

What does not hide pain's broken-hearted
Lies lying in the chamber red and weeping

Joy and sorrow milk unpure the curdled wine of
love
And bear the strain of many children weaned

* * *

* * *

Can waves hide in the ocean
Or the moon swallow the sun?

So my face can't hide my face
Born from love tugging on the heart
That called me home.

Zazen my friend zazen!
We hold each to the other
Not by strength of faith or will
But by the humble breath that, breathing,
Tightly welds.

Zazen my friend zazen!
By grace you meet me
And with mercy take away
The staff I've always longed to yield
So I could barely stand.

Zazen my friend zazen!
Dark path of the dark
So close in the shadows of silence,
Draw nearer to me still during the day
Until I learn to walk with you as one.

* * *

Faith
Is buoyant
Like a grain of rice
Rising up incessantly
From the rugged waters
Cleansed and polished, tossed
And softened down to the heart-seed
In the diamond glint of whose precious eye
A fingerprint still burns in it like a drop of fire

* * *

The light has risen a flower, and Look!
A single drop of water
Is gratefully shed and is balancing
On the invisible edge of its awakened gaze.
It holds the precious light in its trembling cup,
And breathes hardly contained
In the expansive silence releasing them
Both

* * *

Truth is
Between me and you,
My knowing heart
Not to be written on the paper wings of belief
And crumpled by doubt
Or captured in a frieze of time
And crushed in the moment it holds

Truth is here

Where words, like footprints,
Vanish

* * *

All's well in the tranquil gaze of the arch and nave,
A silk breath flowing like a breeze through open
gates.

We are that rose from nowhere,
The wrath of whose perfection guards its heart like
a thorn,
Whose soul in a mist arises
Earnestly whispering secrets that dissolve in the
sun's eyes.

As the clouds sail by and time goes by,
Go by the way of this garden, unnoticed
Go by its narrow passage between the height of
nacre walls
Perfectly forgotten under the blinking sky.

Go quickly.

* * *

Side by side
We sit, hunger yawning
Like the planks of an old ship sighing in the harbor,
Thoughts unfolding white as sails
Blowing round a naked mast.

And as the dawn splinters,
Morning bells peel the dark away
In silence
One stillness moving hearts
Alighting nowhere.

* * *

I slip through the aperture of my mind's eye
Into the catacombs of a dreamless night
And there I wander the vacant streets
Like a stray cat.

I become the blood in the vessels nourishing illusion,
The breath of thought and bones of feeling
And I am
All that

Until the blurry morning separates my mind like a curtain,
And floats objects in its stream

And I am
Vaguely distinguishing forms through a cataract.

* * *

Was it I
That cast the line
Into the whole
I do not know.
The cold air'd froze my thoughts
In their temple's narrow vice.

Was it not I
On tapered breath
Going down
To meet the hook?
I the silken thread
Sinking deeper into nothing.

If not, then why
Did the ice crack
An endless seam of veins
In my eyes that caught the fish
And broke the face of things
In laughter's blind contractions?



Calendrier 2011

Janvier

Dimanche 9 9h00 Avant-midi de zazen
Vendredi 14-16 Sesshin de deux jours
Dimanche 23 9h00 Avant-midi de zazen
Dimanche 30 9h00 Avant-midi de zazen

Février

Samedi 5 9h00 Atelier Zen
Dimanche 6 8h00 Séance d'une journée
Jeudi 10 19h00 Cours pour débutants
Dimanche 13 9h00 Avant-midi de zazen
Jeudi 17 19h00 Cours pour débutants
Vendredi 18-25 Sesshin de sept jours
Dimanche 27 9h00 Avant-midi de zazen

Mars

Jeudi 3 19h00 Cours pour débutants
Dimanche 6 9h00 Avant-midi de zazen
Jeudi 10-13 Sesshin de trois jours
Jeudi 17 19h00 Cours pour débutants
Dimanche 20 9h00 Avant-midi de zazen
Dimanche 27 9h00 Avant-midi de zazen

Avril

Samedi 2 9h00 Atelier Zen
Dimanche 3 8h00 Séance d'une journée
Jeudi 7-11 Sesshin de quatre jours
Jeudi 14 19h00 Cours pour débutants
Samedi 16 8h00-8h30 Journée de travail
et Assemblée annuelle
Dimanche 17 9h00 Avant-midi de zazen
Jeudi 21 19h00 Cours pour débutants
Dimanche 24 9h00 Avant-midi de zazen
Jeudi 28 19h00 Cours pour débutants

Mai

Dimanche 1 9h00 Avant-midi de zazen
Jeudi 5 19h00 Cours pour débutants
Dimanche 8 9h00 Avant-midi de zazen
Vendredi 13-20 Sesshin de sept jours
Dimanche 22 9h00 Avant-midi de zazen
Dimanche 29 9h00 Avant-midi de zazen

June

Sunday 5 9 AM Morning zazen
Thursday 9-12 Three day sesshin
Sunday 19 9 AM Morning zazen
Sunday 26 9 AM Morning zazen

September

Thursday 1-5 Four day sesshin
Sunday 11 9 AM Morning zazen
Saturday 17 9 AM Zen Workshop
Sunday 18 8 AM One day sitting
Thursday 22 7 PM Beginners' course
Sunday 25 9 PM Morning zazen
Thursday 29 7 PM Beginners' course

October

Sunday 2 9 AM Morning zazen
Thursday 6 7 PM Beginners' course
Friday 7-14 Seven day sesshin
Sunday 16 9 AM Morning zazen
Thursday 20 7 PM Beginners' course
Saturday 22 8-8:30 AM Workday
Sunday 23 9 AM Morning zazen
Sunday 30 9 AM Morning zazen

November

Saturday 5 9 AM Zen Workshop
Sunday 6 8 AM One day sitting
Thursday 10-13 Three day sesshin
Thursday 17 7 PM Beginners' course
Sunday 20 9 AM Morning zazen
Thursday 24 7 PM Beginners' course
Sunday 27 9 AM Morning zazen

December

Thursday 1 7 PM Beginners' course
Friday 2-9 Seven day sesshin
Sunday 11 9 AM Morning zazen
Sunday 18 9 AM Morning zazen
Saturday 31 New Year's Eve Ceremony
(8 PM-midnight)

