
Books Forum Introduction

Animal sciences at sea and in the zoo

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When my predecessor Javier Lezaun organized a first Books Forum on the burgeoning field of animal studies in 2008, the reviewed works reflected a widespread interest in the relationship between humans and animals. As we are revisiting the still growing body of social scientific literature on other species we are also returning to the question of anthropomorphism, this time in the context of pet psychiatry and veterinary psychopharmacology. In her review, Miriam Ticktin situates the subject matter of Laurel Braitman's *Animal Madness* in a broader transition from the disciplinary separation of human and veterinary medicine to integrated approaches spanning from infectious diseases to mental health. Defending this trend in the psychiatric domain against accusations of falsely humanizing animals, Braitman argues that the real challenge is to 'anthropomorphize well' – a largely moral plea, as Ticktin sees it, which she would embrace if it didn't lead back into the kind of sentimentalizing stories about animals that had been at the root of 'bad' anthropomorphism to begin with.

But the social studies of animal sciences discussed in this Books Forum not only shed light on this transformation of Euro-American ontology, but also highlight sites of knowledge production in the life sciences other than the laboratory and the clinic. Amanda Rees reads Graham Burnett's magisterial history of cetology, *The Sounding of the Whale*, as an in-depth account of a field science entangled in twentieth-century geopolitics. She is particularly impressed by its analysis of committee room science, which examines scientific-political practices also employed in the current controversy over climate change. However, the book's focus on research related to the over-exploitation of marine mammals led Burnett to turn a blind eye to equally important fieldwork on cetacean sociality, criticizes Rees.

In addition to the field and the committee room, zoological gardens are a third site of bioscientific research explored in this issue. In his review of Irus Braverman's *Zooland* and Carrie Friese's *Cloning Wild Life*, Etienne Benson describes a shift of focus in the recent literature on zoos, which reflects a shift in the function of zoos themselves. Whereas previous publications looked at zoos as visual displays simultaneously representing a natural and a social order, these new studies have begun to examine the management and reproduction of zoo animals behind the scenes. Braverman's study of how zoo administrators govern populations of often endangered species and Friese's investigation of the contested cloning of zoo animals both show how techniques of pastoral power are expanding beyond the human.

The book reviews assembled in this forum make a convincing case that the social studies of the life sciences have much to gain from glimpsing into developments beyond the anthropocentric projects usually at the center of our attention.

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