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PRIMATOLOGY BETWEEN FEELINGS AND SCIENCE: DOES NAMING A MONKEY LEAD TO A BETTER PRIMATOLOGY?

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The aim of this paper is to discuss some aspects of the relationship between feelings and primatological science, and how this relationship can influence this particular scientific practice. The point of view is personal, mainly based on the author's personal experience. Initially, a sentimental reason to study primatology will be discussed, and then the existence of a bond between observer and observed will be presented as a possible by-product of primatology. The following question is whether a sentimental attitude towards primates is detrimental for good science or if, it is leading to a better primatological science. The practice of naming individual monkeys and its consequences will be discussed. Another important aspect is the relationship between the bond forming between the researcher and the study subject in biomedical studies. The use of monkeys in biomedical experimentation is particularly significant, and is discussed in terms of hierarchy of moral status. Finally, it is argued that primatology is not unique in causing a bond between the observer and the observed, at least from the point of view of the observer. However, primatology is unique in a different way because, more than in other cases, it gives the opportunity to reason about many different factors related to "making science with animals". This is most probably due to the phylogenetic closeness primatologists have with their study subjects. Among the different factors involved in making science using animals, the sentimental bond developing between the researcher and the study animal can be very influential.

Keywords: Animal experimentation; Empathy; Individuality; Primate welfare