2. Wolf Affects

Affective wolf bodies

> At birth, wolf pup behaviour is little more than a simple series of reflexes (e.g. seeking warmth, cuddling, sucking, excreting in response to mother's licking, crying when injured, whimpering when cold, hungry or isolated).[1]

> Wolves are born, after a gestation period of 61–63 days, in a den dug by the mother: about four to seven pups per litter. At birth they are blind and deaf. They can move slowly by crawling. The belly is exposed and the head swings back and forth. If they touch something warm with their head, they move in that direction. This is how they find the mother and the teats to drink from, and when the mother is away, this is how the pups find each other. For the benefit of heat regulation, they lie huddled together in a small pile, their heads hidden in the tangle as much as possible. When the mother returns to the den, the pile comes to life. Presumably the pups notice this by movement, by the shaking of the earth, because they do not react to loud and sudden noises until much later, around the age of fourteen days.[2]

Wolves—like all animals, human and non-human—are born into their environment as open and vulnerable organisms. Rather than seeing them as simple bodies endowed with a simple series of reflexes to external stimuli (as in the first quote above), I consider them as sentient, sensitive bodies, receptive and responsive to their environment (as indicated in the second quote). At the earliest stage of development, they *are* their bodies; their intentions *are* bodily

1 Packard, Jane M.: Wolf behaviour: reproductive, social and intelligent, in: D. Mech/L. Boitani (eds.), Wolves, pp. 35–65, here p. 47.

2 Zimen, Erik: Wölfe (= Was ist was, Band 104), Nuremberg: Tessloff 2010, p. 21, translated by TG.

intentions. They learn about the world, their mother, their brothers and sisters, the den, the milk with and through their sentient bodies. Over the next few weeks, these bodies become more and more sentient as more senses open up to the world.

This 'being-towards-the-world'[3], the open and outwardly directed bodily existence of wolves, ensures that they are actively exploring and learning creatures from the very beginning. In the words of the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy:

> The living are above all excited, called upon to respond to an outside. As a result, the living being is always already responding to this call, always already excited, affected by an outside. Indeed, it is being affected by an outside that brings anything to life, whether we are talking about a plant or a human animal.[4]

Unfortunately, there has been and continues to be a strong tendency in wolf biology and ecology to over-emphasise reflexes, instincts and (genetically determined and ecologically adapted) behavioural mechanisms, thus turning wolves into passive creatures, unable to escape a behaviourally impoverished world predetermined by their species body. Classical ethology, in particular, often reproduces behaviourist models of stimulus-response causality that usually fail to understand the complexity of human and non-human animal behaviour.

This becomes clearer when we look at the methods of classical wolf ethological research. A typical ethological research design would involve observing and recording behaviour in an experimental setting. The observed behaviour would then be matched to behavioural categories defined in an ethogram. This coding of behaviour is then used for statistical analysis, which quantifies behaviour to identify reliable patterns of behaviour. Since the goal of such research designs is to quantify behaviour, and thus less attention is paid to the qualities of the

3 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice: Phenomenology of Perception, London: Routledge 2004; In German editions of Merlau-Ponty's works, the phenomenological phrase 'being-in-the-world' is usually translated as 'Zur-Welt-Sein', whereby the directionality of the word Zur indicates that being is always already directed and engaged with the world. This is a particular apt description of how affective bodies operate; see also Despret, Vinciane: 'Responding Bodies and Partial Affinities in Human-Animal Worlds', in: Theory, Culture and Society 30.7/8 (2013), pp. 51–76, https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276413496852.

4 Nancy, Jean-Luc: Corpus II: Writings on sexuality, New York: Fordham University Press 2013, p. 94.

details of behaviour, the subtleties of the affective dynamics of an encounter are difficult to capture in such a framework.

Another problem with this classical ethological wolf research is the role intelligence plays in it. Indeed, much of the behavioural research on wolves attempts to determine the extent of the animals' intelligence (e.g. in comparison to dogs or in hunting behaviour). In explaining intelligence, wolf researchers use approaches from the social sciences that seem congruent with those of the natural sciences. David Mech and Rolf Peterson, for example, allude to the rational choice theory that dominates quantitative economics:

> While elements of learning, tradition, and actual preference may be involved in apparent prey species preferences, the most likely explanation for these patterns involves a combination of capture efficiency and profitability relative to risk, which boils down to prey vulnerability.[5]

In this view, the question is how wolves can calculate the cost-benefit ratio of different hunting strategies—a question posed by the framework of evolutionary theory, which states that any behaviour should be efficient to ensure the survival of the animal (species). Alternatively, cognitivist perspectives from psychology are often used to explain intelligence by using machine or computer metaphors, such as when Mech, Douglas Smith, and Daniel MacNulty metaphorically describe wolves as "programmed to kill and eat whenever they can",[6] or when they seek to explain wolf hunting strategies by comparing them to robot experiments.

But wolves are not a variant of *homo economicus*, nor are they computers or robots. Describing and trying to understand wolves in this way may be coherent within the framework of evolutionary theory, but it misses the empirical reality. In Mech, Smith, and McNulty's latest book, *Wolves on the Hunt*, the researchers have painstakingly compiled decades of combined observations of wolf behaviour, showing in hundreds of examples how varied and creative wolf hunting behaviour is. Nevertheless, they apologise for not having more examples available to show the behavioural patterns in the apparent chaos of individual differences through regular statistical analysis. One wonders if it is im-

5 Mech, David/Peterson, R.: Wolf-prey relations, in: D. Mech/L. Boitani (eds.), Wolves, pp. 131–157, here p. 140.

6 Mech, David/Smith, Douglas W./MacNulty, Daniel R.: Wolves on the Hunt, Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press 2015, p. 162.

possible that wolves could develop 'traditions' or even 'wolf cultures' that are not programmed into the DNA of the species.[7] The problem with their analyses, I argue, is that—in their zeal to reconcile empirical reality with theory—they overemphasise the role of the mind and intelligence, which makes wolves primarily thinking, rather than affective, bodily creatures.

For this dilemma, I offer an attempt at description that follows an etho-ethnological approach. This approach is inspired by qualitative, ethnographic, and (new) ethological descriptions of human and non-human behaviour. It takes as its starting point what humans and animals have in common—namely, their corporeality and the corporeal reality that it produces,[8] a lifeworld in which they "live and die together, the one with the other, the one like the other, they coexist, they sympathise, they are con-vival, they co-habit the world that is the same".[9]

In this shared lifeworld, their sentient bodies are oriented towards others and the environment as a potential behavioural setting. The environment attracts, invites, repels and mobilises an affected body to act, and is not simply there (physically), independent of a perceiving subject. Both subject and environment are intertwined in what I have called an affective arrangement. When wolves encounter other animals, they become entangled in such an affective arrangement, and affective forces begin to act upon them, mutually animating their bodies.

Every movement, every look, every sound, every gesture, every change in facial expression or posture alters the dynamics of the arrangement, creating ever new situational meanings that help the participants to intuitively grasp

7 See Lorimer, Haydon: 'Forces of Nature, Forms of Life: Calibrating Ethology and Phenomenology', in: Ben Anderson/Paul Harrison (eds.), Taking-Place: non-representational theories in geography, Farnham: Ashgate 2010, pp. 55–77. Hayden Lorimer finds a similar paradoxical logic here in the work of Konrad Lorenz, who was able to describe affective encounters with animals vividly, but always returns to explaining animal behaviour with simplistic mechanisms of instincts and drives. John Hartigan expresses a similar view, conceding that ethologists have a great deal of descriptive competence, but that their attempts to explain behaviour in terms of evolutionary theory are often problematic. (See Hartigan Jr., John: Shaving the Beasts: Wild Horses and Ritual in Spain, Minneapolis/London: Minnesota University Press 2020).

8 D. Lestel/ L. Brunois/L. Gaunet: Ethno-ethology and etho-ethnology.

9 Derrida, Jacques: The Beast and the Sovereign, Vol. 2, Chicago: Chicago University Press 2011, p. 264.

what the encounter is about. Ideally, each change adds something to transform an (initially) indeterminate and ambiguous situation into something more definite. What has to happen for an encounter to be understood by the participants as a hunting or fighting situation, as a meeting of possible partners or as an opportunity to play? A thick description of encounters must carefully trace the lines of these affective forces and what they are built upon.

Classical, cognitivist-oriented ethological research into wolf intelligence typically looks for evidence of intentional, strategic behaviour. In this approach, intelligent behaviour is exhibited when a wolf can solve a problem by formulating a plan of action (in its mind) and executing it. Behaviour is thus defined as anticipatory intention followed by mind-led, physical execution. An etho-ethnological, affect-based approach, on the other hand, does not try to explain behaviour as always strategic and guided by the mind, but stays close to what happens at the bodily level.[10] Like practice-based social theories, it recognises an embodied motor intentionality (or movement intentionality), an intentionality of the body in routine actions that is not necessarily informed by rational thought and pre-planning. Bodies here have their own *tacit knowledge*, acquired through the habitual experience of affecting and being affected by other bodies, through receptive multisensory attention coupled with responsive movement.

Such a form of etho-ethnological description is more akin to *storytelling* than an observation protocol or an ethogram.[11] Both observation and storytelling should focus on how an indeterminate, ambivalent encounter becomes a tangibly meaningful one. This approach may produce data that is less clear and quantifiable, but it helps us to better understand the nuances and complexities of behaviour and its dynamics by paying more attention to details and the flow of processes. Rather than looking for patterns of behaviour out of context, we are broadening our understanding of wolf behaviour by showing the range and diversity of what is possible and becomes evident in unique events.

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10 Sinha, Anindya/Chowdhury, Anmol/Anchan, Nitesh/Barua, Maan: 'Affective ethnographies of animal lives', in: Hovorka, Alice/McCubbin, Sandra/Van patter, Lauren (eds.). A Research Agenda for Animal Geographies, Cheltenham: Elgar (2021), pp. 129–146, here p. 135.

11 Interestingly, one of the first field studies on wolves is also qualitative-descriptive in this sense: Murie, Adolph: The Wolves of Mount McKinley, Seattle: University of Washington Press 1985. In follow-up studies at the same location, however, observational descriptions are only sparsely incorporated into the text, see Mech, David et al.: The Wolves of Denali, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1998.

As Ingold puts it, "In such a world, we can understand the nature of things only by attending to their relations, or in other words, by telling their stories".[12] The result of such descriptions is what van Dooren and Rose called "lively ethography".[13] It's the prerequisite for seeing wolves not just as typical representatives of a species, but as true individuals. Ultimately, this will help us to understand wolves better and develop more realistic expectations of their behaviour in potentially problematic encounters.[14]

In what follows, I attempt to understand and describe wolves as active and living beings who affect and are affected by others in a shared world of coexistence. In doing so, I try to open up our 'zoological imagination' and counter the double reduction of classical ethology, which reduces animal life to behaviour and behaviour to causal mechanisms.[15] The focus is on stories of encounters between wolves and other species—ravens, wild boars and humans—and the question of what kind of interspecies sociality is revealed in them. The stories are based on my own field observations of free-ranging wolves in Saxony (the Knappenrode/Seenland Pack) as well as on video recordings of an encounter available in the LUPUS Institute archive. To be able to be present when humans and wolves meet is almost impossible and therefore requires the viewing of video footage, provided that the encounter has been recorded by those involved.[16] However, I will point out the problems of such documentation later in the chapter.

12 T. Ingold: Being Alive, p. 160.

13 van Dooren, Thom/Rose, Deborah B.: 'Lively Ethography', in: Environmental Humanities 8.1 (2016), pp. 77–94, https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-3527731.

14 See Van Patter, Lauren: 'Individual animal geographies for the more-than-human city: Storying synanthropy and cynanthropy with urban coyotes', in: EPE: Nature and Space 5 (2022), pp. 2216–2239, https://doi.org/10.1177/25148486211049441.

15 D. Lestel/J. Bussolini/M. Chrulew: The Phenomenology of Animal Life, p. 127.

16 I describe and analyse more human-wolf encounters elsewhere: Gieser, Thorsten: Wolfsbegegnungen – eine Annäherung des Fremden. in: Uzarewicz, Charlotte/Gugutzer, Robert/Uzarewicz, Michael/Latka, Thomas. (eds.) Berühren und berührt werden – Zur Phänomenologie der Nähe (Neue Phänomenologie 35). Baden-Baden: Verlag Karl Alber, pp. 309–332.

Figure 2: A wolf cautiously approaches a raven.

Source: Author

Figure 3: The wolf slowly walks towards the raven on the right while the raven on the left watches him. The raven on the right is already spreading its wings restlessly and is about to take off.

Source: Author

Figure 4: The raven (from Figure 3, on the right) has flown to the other end of the sand dune, the wolf slowly following it. In doing so, he comes too close to the other observing raven, which is already in a crouching position—ready to take off.

Source: Author

Figure 5: The wolf seems to be inviting the raven on the right to play.

Source: Author

Encounter I: playful affects

> Animals play just like humans. We need only observe young dogs to see that all the essential features of human play are present in their joyful activity. They invite each other to play by a certain ceremony of posture and gesture. They abide by the rule that one does not bite one's brother's ear, or bite hard. They pretend to be terribly annoyed. And—most importantly—they clearly experience tremendous fun and joy in doing all this.[17]

One late afternoon in September, I am watching a young wolf wander aimlessly across the plain, away from the rest of the pack, as if looking for something to do. Eventually he notices two ravens standing on a sand dune a little further up and goes over to them.

As he slowly climbs the dune, first one and then the other raven flies away, cawing, and both settle down on the next dune. The wolf follows them down the first dune and up the other, and the ravens fly away again, squawking, one of them to the first dune, the other to the slope of the same. The wolf then trots to the edge of the dune he is on, lies down with his paws neatly parallel to the edge, and watches the ravens carefully.

Suddenly he stands up again, wags his tail loosely and runs—with a little jump—down the slope, while the raven, cawing, flies off to join the other one on the next dune, who is watching him. They both caw as the wolf climbs up the slope and when he is almost at the top, the ravens fly off to the other end of the slope.

The wolf now trots slowly towards the raven sitting further away, his tail wagging in a relaxed manner. As he approaches, the raven takes off again, squawking, and the wolf turns to the other raven that has been watching him all along. This raven also takes off squawking when the wolf gets too close and lands a few metres away. The wolf begins to sniff intensely at the spot where the raven was standing a moment ago and bites into a stone or piece of wood that is lying there, his tail still wagging loosely. Then he turns back to the raven and makes a small leap towards it, causing the raven to screech and fly even further away.

The wolf then looks at the two ravens for a moment, trots over to the place where the raven had been standing, sniffs again, bites into some objects lying

17 Huizinga, Johan: Homo Ludens. Vom Ursprung der Kultur im Spiel, Hamburg: Rowohlt 1981, p. 1, translated by TG.

around, and finally drops to the ground. Still keeping an eye on the ravens, he gets up a moment later and slowly trots towards them, tail held high and wagging, while the ravens walk around nervously, watching him, and one of them caws and flies off to the top of the dune.

The wolf turns around and follows the other raven, but it jumps further and catches up with the first raven. The wolf follows them both, but the closer he gets to them, the further they hop away from him, until one finally flies off to the other dune, cawing. The wolf looks after it for a moment, then turns around, sniffs where the raven was standing and goes towards the other raven, which first hops away five times before flying to the outer edge of the dune, squawking.

The wolf turns back to the raven and begins to stretch out, head flat over its paws, rump and tail raised, looking first at one, then at the other raven, who continue to watch him. Then the wolf gets up again and walks slowly towards the raven on the edge, sniffing the ground all the way. As he gets closer, the raven flies away, cawing, and joins the other raven on the other dune. The wolf turns to them, pauses for a moment and looks over …

I introduced this story by calling it a play situation, but that is only partly true, as should be clear by now. The wolf seemed to be in a playful mood, but the ravens were clearly not interested in playing along and seemed rather annoyed by the wolf's attempts to involve them in the play. Were the wolf's movements really indicative of play, or were they attacks? One indication of how the ravens experienced the situation (and that they were aware of the wolf's intentions) might be that they only retreated a little at a time, rather than flying away altogether. So we need to understand the 'shared complexity' of any encounter, "in the sense that the *same* complex situation is complex in *different* ways for the different actors involved".[18]

I have told this first story to introduce the affective dynamics that develop during encounters—a form of "interanimality".[19] As we follow the story, several features reveal how the wolf and the ravens affect and are affected by each other. When the wolf first noticed the ravens (and the ravens in turn noticed the wolf), all three were drawn into a shared situation and affective forces be-

18 D. Lestel/F. Brunois/F. Gaunet: Etho-etnology and ethno-ethology, p. 160.

19 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice: Nature. Course Notes from the College de France, Evanston/Illinois: Northwestern University Press 2003, p. 169.

gan to build a web of tension between them—initially maintained merely by an exchange of glances.[20]

This affective tension then developed along the lines of movement, a play of approaching and distancing, of slow and fast, of continuous and abrupt movements. What is negotiated in this "push and pull of intimacy and distance"[21] is the animals' "personal space", as the anthropologist E. T. Hall called it.[22] As a felt extension of the self into the surrounding space, personal space structures the experience of space in encounters according to the social relationship of the participants. The closer and more intimate the relationship, the closer we allow the other to be to us spatially. The less we like someone, the greater the distance we want to keep between us and them.

The wolf and the ravens were constantly negotiating their personal space in this situation. If personal space denotes *what* is negotiated in these affective encounters, kinaesthesia or "the qualitatively felt kinetic flow"[23] unravels *how* these encounters are negotiated. The phenomenologist of movement, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, distinguishes four qualitative dimensions of movement that help to analyse encounters in a much more nuanced way:

1) Speed or the projectional quality (how fast or slow is the movement and what is the melody of the movement – abrupt, sustained or ballistic)
2) Force or the tensional quality (the felt intensity of the effort of the movement)
3) Range or the areal quality (how constricted or expansive is the body itself and as it moves through space)
4) Direction or the linear quality (the lines of movement through space and of the body as a whole and of body parts)[24]

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20 I would even argue here that the wolf's gaze is crucial in maintaining the tension, since the eyes of this predator are directed forward, whereas ravens—with their eyes on the sides of their heads—cannot stare. Again and again, the ravens react to the wolf's clear line of sight and direction of movement. The ravens' behaviour is less clearly directed.

21 Probyn, Elspeth: Eating the Ocean. Durham: Duke University Press 2016, p. 50.

22 Hall, Edward T.: The Hidden Dimension. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday 1966.

23 Sheets-Johnstone, Maxine: Body and Movement: Basic dynamic principles, in: Schmicking, Daniel/Gallagher, Shaun (eds.) Handbook of Phenomenology and Cognitive Science, Dordrecht: Springer 2010, pp. 217–234, here p. 218.

24 Ibid; see also Sheets-Johnstone, Maxine: The Primacy of Movement, Amsterdam: John Benjamins 2011.

Let us take a closer look at how these qualities play out in the encounter and how they help us to make sense of what is happening. While the wolf wanted to come into playful contact with the ravens (as wolves do when they play with each other), the ravens did not allow the wolf to cross the boundaries of what they probably saw as the wolf's 'striking distance'. They were constantly alert and attentive to any movement and responded (tensional/projectional) either timidly (when the wolf moved slowly and steadily, with little purpose and at some distance (projectional)) or energetically by opening up, spreading their wings (areal and tensional), flying off to the next dune (linear) (when the wolf moved quickly or abruptly, or came too close (projectional)). The affective tension between them rose or fell accordingly.

But the wolf always let the ravens know what he was up to, even when he jumped at them three times. From the beginning and throughout the encounter, he moved mostly slowly and carefully (projectional), not too forced, but relaxed (tensional) and wagging his tail (linear). The wolf's general attitude was also evident in his playful jumps, which were always somewhat half-hearted (tensional), as he quickly realised that the ravens were repulsed by his approach and tried to get out of the immediate situation.

The affective kinaesthetic dynamic described here is more than a series of changes in spatial position or the sequence of clearly defined and causally linked actions and reactions that add up to something like an interaction and that we know from ethological observation protocols. Tim Ingold has pointed out that "[t]he implication of the prefix *inter-*, in 'interaction', is that the interacting parties are closed to one another, as if they could only be connected through some kind of bridging operation".[25] To break behaviour down into individual parts, to classify and code it, would be to lose sight of what makes sense in the dynamics of the encounter.

Instead, the encounter between the wolf and the ravens shows that actions are always in the process of becoming: they are continuous, incomplete, ambivalently merging into one another and thus in ongoing transformation. When the actions of different actors relate to each other, then the 'becoming' of the actions accordingly must be seen as a 'becoming-with'. During the phases of movement, the animals observe each other attentively and adapt themselves continuously, often not even waiting for the complete execution

25 Ingold, Tim: Making. Anthropology, archaeology, art and architecture, London/New York: Routledge 2013, p. 107 (emphasis added).

of a movement. In this "dance of animacy",[26] the actions are not so much intentional, mentally planned in advance and executed as planned, but 'attentional', a lively attentiveness and responsiveness of the sensitive bodies in co-responding movements.[27]

As the wolf approaches, the raven becomes more and more nervous-turning away-taking a few steps-jumping a few times-crouching down-croaking-spreading its wings-flying away – one unfolding movement in response to the unfolding movement of the wolf.

Figure 6: A wild boar positions itself on the left, while another sow is close on the wolf's heels on the right edge of the picture.

Source: Author

26 T. Ingold: Making, pp. 100–102.

27 Ingold, T.: Anthropology and/as education, London: Routledge 2018, pp. 24–27.

Figure 7: The wolf circles back, the sow now very close to him.

Source: Author

Figure 8: The wolf accelerates and breaks away from its pursuer. Two other sows position themselves by the birch trees in the middle where the piglet is hiding.

Source: Author

Figure 9: The wolf has outmanoeuvred the sows and runs towards the birch trees, where the piglet is now hiding unprotected.

Source: Author

Encounter II: dangerous affects

On a late June evening – the sun has already sunk below the horizon and it is getting harder and harder to see anything in the growing darkness – a group of wild boars come out of the woods into a clearing at the edge of a bare plain that stretches out in front of me. Four large shadows and, by the looks of it, one smaller shadow, four sows and at least one piglet are moving through the tall grass in search of food. After a few minutes they disappear, one shadow after another, back into the forest.

Not long after they have gone, a lone wolf comes trotting across the plain. He passes the clearing and pauses, then turns and trots off towards the forest, disappearing into it.

Suddenly a thunderous grunt echoes from the woods and seconds later the wolf comes running out onto the plain – its tail sticking out stiffly – followed by four sows who are chasing it at full gallop. As the wolf runs off, he keeps turning his head back to see where the sows are, then he slows down a little and circles back in a wide arc. Three of the sows have previously stopped their pursuit at different points, as if to keep watch, while the fastest sow continues to chase the wolf. The sow and the wolf are now almost touching as they run in

an arc, but the wolf seems to be a little more agile, a little faster, and manages to keep his distance from the sow who is following him. The wolf looks back at a small stand of birch trees where one of the sows is standing, with the sow still hot on his heels.

He picks up the pace again (the sow standing by the birch trees also turns and gallops towards the wolf for a few metres before stopping), the chasing sow behind him, kicking up clouds of dust that envelop the whole scene. Then, after about 100 metres, the wolf suddenly turns left, the sow right. The wolf quickly turns back towards the stand of birch trees, past another sow moving hesitantly on the spot, and past the sow standing by the trees. He rushes between the trees, grabs something and rushes out into the open, now followed by three sows. But soon the three sows slow down, stop abruptly in their cloud of dust and look over at the wolf.

A lifeless piglet dangles loosely from the wolf's snout, who now also stops to watch the sows. As if on command, they suddenly turn and run back into the forest at full gallop, while the wolf drops the piglet to the ground and continues to look in the direction where the sows have disappeared. A few seconds later, he shakes himself, looks around and grabs the piglet again. With his tail relaxed, he trots across the plain with his prey, disappearing like the sows into the darkness of the night.

Who is hunting whom? The roles in such a hunt are not always clear. On the one hand, it is clear which species is hunting, killing and eating the other. On the other hand, the course of the hunt shows that the division into 'hunter' and 'prey' does not automatically indicate who is stronger, or even who is attacking whom. The interesting thing about the above example is that, strangely enough, it is the wolf that is being chased by the boar for most of the chase, and not the other way around! It is only in the final seconds of the chase that it becomes clear who the real hunter is.

The main question for wolf biologists watching such a scene is whether the course of events is random or follows a plan. If the wolf is to be understood primarily as an instinctive creature, its hunting technique would follow a genetically determined behavioural protocol, like an automatism; if it is driven by uncontrolled instinct, it would show no behavioural pattern at all. If, on the other hand, the wolf is an animal endowed with intelligence and consciousness, its behaviour should reveal a goal-directed strategy: a strategy developed in advance with planning and foresight, and then implemented during the hunt. In broad outline, wolf biologists imagine such a hunting strategy in wolves as fol-

lows: Wolves actively search for prey (search); wolves approach the prey within sight (approach); wolves watch the prey (watch); wolves attack the prey group as a whole (attack-group); wolves select an individual from this group and attack it specifically (attack-individual); wolves capture and kill the animal (capture).[28]

But the example above shows that it is not so easy to identify a pattern of behaviour, or even a strategy. One of the greatest challenges in wolf research is to be able to observe the entire course of a hunt from beginning to end. This was the case in my example. I was able to watch the wolf during the initial search, picking up the scent and running after the boars. I could not see the approach, the observation and the initial attack (if there was one) – I could only hear the loud grunt, which was probably the start to the hunt in the narrower sense.

But even if one has to guess at the missing parts of the sequence of events, it seems clear that the hunt did not seem to proceed 'according to plan', on the basis of a strategy. A constant back and forth, with changes in direction and speed, characterised the events, and the wolf hardly seemed to be 'in control' and directing the events. Or perhaps he was? If a strategy is understood as a planned, anticipated sequence of actions and reactions by hunter and prey leading to the capture of the prey, then it seems unlikely that we are dealing with a strategy here. In any case, I do not see any dynamics here that are characterised by mere chance or that follow simple automatisms.

So how can we understand this hunt if we understand the animals involved as living, sentient beings and the hunt as an affective dynamic? How do wolves and wild boars affect each other in this hunt? First of all, it is surprising that a single wolf would take on a sounder of wild boars. Wild boars are considered to be very capable of defending themselves; they are dangerous and could seriously injure or even kill wolves in a fight. It is therefore not surprising that wolf biologists generally argue that "the central problem for wolves on the hunt is to kill without being killed".[29] So the single wolf in our example is therefore either desperate and hungry or he was very experienced and knew exactly what he was doing. In the following, I would like to explain why I think the latter is more likely the case and how we can understand such wolfish experiential knowledge.

What and how does the wolf know about hunting wild boar? When I speak of experiential knowledge in this context, I mean that it is not a form of rational, fact-based knowledge that is primarily reflected in thought. Rather, it is

28 D. Mech/D. Smith/D. MacNulty: Wolves on the Hunt, pp. 8–9.

29 Ibid, p. 1.

body-based, action-oriented, implicit knowledge that is learned—in the sense of being embodied—through accumulated experience. It is an *affective knowledge, a sense of one's own corporeality and the corporeality of others, a sensitivity to how one affects others or how other bodies affect oneself*. Trained by many encounters, the wolf develops a sense of what his body can do and what a wild boar can do. How strong, how agile, how fast is the boar in relation to the wolf's own body? What weapons does he have, does the boar have? What are the weaknesses, the strengths that can help him to conquer the wild boar? Every time the dynamics of the action suddenly change, the participants have to make decisions and adapt their actions. In the 'heat of the moment', however, there is no time for strategic consideration based on reasoned judgement. Here, the wolf must rely on his well-trained bodily knowledge that has become intuition, on his *skill*[30], which provides him with a *sense of judgement* and allows him to act at lightning speed, picking up on the wild boar's affects and adapting his own *responsiveness* accordingly—always with the overriding goal of seizing the prey.

Rather than a pre-planned strategy, the wolf uses what I would call a *sensitive tactic*. It is less anticipatory than situational, providing only a rough orientation and relying entirely on its own skills for implementation, allowing the wolf to react flexibly to all sorts of circumstances. This tactic is based on the wolf's experience that he may not be the stronger in this situation (certainly not against several boars), but he is the quicker and more agile. How does he know this? There are some documented observations of young wolves encountering an adult boar or red deer. But in these examples, the would-be prey seems rather unimpressed by the wolves' often clumsy attempts at attack. These are 'quasi-hunts', possibly a kind of game for the wolves. There are (mock) attacks and corresponding counter-attacks, a constant balancing, approaching, attacking, evading. In such encounters, young wolves can train their sensitivity and learn how their body responds to the body of the prey. Something similar can be expected when young wolves accompany adult wolves on the hunt.

30 Tim Ingold's understanding of skill can be applied to human and as well as to non-human organisms (as he does throughout his book) when he argues that "Skills are not transmitted from generation to generation but are regrown in each, incorporated into the modus operandi of the developing human organism through training and experience in the performance of particular tasks" (in Tim Ingold: Perception of the Environment, p. 5).

It may be a subjective impression, but the wolf in the above example seemed to me to know exactly what he was doing. He also seemed to be in control of the situation overall, even though he was running from the boars all the time. I suspect he knew a lot about wild boars. This would be consistent with the fact that piglet hunting is quite common in this area. One of the most experienced wolf-watchers there told me that he had seen a sow with piglets on several occasions, and each time she had fewer and fewer piglets. The wolves of the Knappenrode-Seenland Pack may have become specialists in hunting piglets.

So, if the wolf was an experienced boar hunter, what might have been its sensitive tactic? Picking up the scent of the boars, the wolf approached its prey and finally made itself known. His presence affected the boars immensely, who – judging by the grunt – were surprised and shaken. *This is the first step in the tactic of letting your presence affect your prey and observing how they are affected. The wolf knows from experience that his presence does indeed affect potential prey, and the more suitable an animal is for prey in its current situation, the more he affects it, and the more unsettling and disturbing his affective power. Disturbance is therefore at the heart of his hunting tactic.* He will know from previous encounters that he will not be able to get to the piglets if the boar can form a defensive formation around them. The wolf will try to prevent this 'fortress formation' by constantly keeping the boars in motion and giving them new impulses by affecting them with sudden changes in speed or direction. Their affects are supposed to run away with them, so to speak. In the affective dynamics of this back and forth, he will look for a gap in space at the right moment to use his superior speed and agility to push through and grab the piglet. In the end, everything seems to work in the wolf's favour: his successfully applied skills and the successfully unsettled (perhaps still inexperienced) 'protecting' boars, who, instead of re-acting decisively and attacking the wolf, appear to be affectively overwhelmed and do not move.

Figure 10: The two wolves, displaying behaviour that is not shy.

Source: Screenshot, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hV4LVvLqF1I (Accessed: 30.04.2024)

Figure 11: The wolf stands in the middle only a few metres away.

Source: Screenshot, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hV4LVvLqF1I (accessed: 30.04.2024)

Encounter III: playful or dangerous affects?

Near the village of Lohsa, Lusatia. Two hunters in forestry gear, at the edge of the forest, in a field of waist-high herbal vegetation, with brush cutters, a dog waiting in their car.
"That's not normal."
A wolf runs away and hides in the vegetation. The hunter chuckles.
"That's three metres and they're 'shy'. I get it!"
The wolf's head emerges out of the vegetation. He watches the hunter intently for a few seconds and then jumps further back. The other hunter is standing about ten metres away from the first one, his eyes sweeping over the vegetation. There may be more wolves here.
"That's not normal," the other hunter says.
"No, that's not normal," the hunter agrees. He turns around and chuckles again when he sees that the wolf has come back and is now just standing there watching him.
"Look at that! That's about ... eight metres!"
The wolf steps a little bit to the left, looks around, returns, sniffs the ground and stands still, facing the hunter, ears pricked. He steps a little to the right, sniffs the ground, looks at the hunter, suddenly jerks back a little and then looks at the hunter again. His body twitches, as if he wants to run back, but then he slowly takes five steps backwards—still watching the hunter. He looks to the right, suddenly turns to the left and then gallops back a few metres, stops again, first looks at the hunter, then looks around.
"Very shy animals!" the hunter comments as his dog sits in the car barking and whimpering. The hunter begins to laugh as the wolf moves forward again, stopping at the same distance from the hunter as before, facing him directly and watching him carefully.
"He's coming towards us."
"Come here!" the other hunter calls, and coming closer to where the hunter is standing.
"Heel!" the hunter shouts, still laughing. Suddenly the wolf turns around and jumps a few metres away. He is now waiting by a tree and looking around.
"This is not normal!" says the other hunter.
"This is not normal!" agrees the hunter.
"Film it, film it, always film it! Here, LUPUS, LUPUS, LUPUS!!!"[31]

31 He is referring to the LUPUS- Institute for Wolf Research here. Wolf critics in this region often see the biologists from this private research institute as being in league with 'wolf

Then the other hunter turns around and notices a second wolf ten metres behind them.
"There! Over there by the brushcutter ..."
"Hey, my helmet! He's taking my helmet!" the hunter laughs.
"What's going on?"
"He's taking my helmet. Fetch!" he calls jokingly after the wolf, who quickly trots off with his helmet.
"Hey, hello!" the hunter calls after him as the other hunter starts to run after the wolf.
"That is *not* possible."
The wolf quickly lets go of the helmet and runs away, while the other hunter picks up the helmet and returns to the car—where the dog continues to bark.

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'Wolf encounters—what to do
If you are on foot or bicycle in wolf regions, it is rare to encounter a wolf but it is a possibility. Encounters within 100 m generally only occur if wolves have not noticed a person's approach, for example due to wind conditions. When wolves notice people, they generally do not flee in panic, but instead orient themselves for a moment before retreating. Among all of the documented wolf sightings in Lusatia, there have been only very few in which wolves approached people despite already being aware of their presence. Usually this happened in cases involving inexperienced, curious young wolves or when the wolf's interest in dogs or sheep near the person overrode the impulse to flee.
Generally, in any encounter, it is best to behave calmly and maintain distance. If the wolf does not withdraw and the situation makes you feel uneasy, speak loudly or clap your hands to make yourself noticeable. Do not run, as this could trigger chasing behaviour. Should the wolf approach you, which is unusual, stay where you are, stand tall and attempt to intimidate the wolf. In this kind of situation, it is better to take a step towards the animal than to step back.
Like wild boars, wolves are large, powerful wild animals. Show them respect.

cuddlers' and as not properly scientific, although they organise Saxony's wolf monitoring program and are internationally respected researchers.

> Do not attempt to approach or entice a wolf. Allow the wolf space to retreat. Do not feed wolves under any circumstances and do not leave leftover food in the open. The instinctive caution wolves exhibit towards people can be lost if the animals experience positive stimuli associated with humans. This can foster problematic behaviour in wolves and may lead ultimately to injuries to people.'[32]

What happens when wolves and humans meet face to face? What is brought into the encounter? And how does 'one' (human or wolf) behave in such a new kind of encounter, for which there is no precedent, no routine to follow? These encounters are still rare, but they do happen – as evidenced by the hundreds of sighting reports and videos circulating on social media channels. To sort through all these reports and footage, it helps to first distinguish between encounters and sightings. Looking through the officially reported incidents for Saxony over the last five years, it quickly became clear that most of the reports were related to sightings: Someone had seen a wolf, at a distance of 100 metres or more, for a few seconds, and then the wolf was quickly gone (often without acknowledging the human presence in any way).

If we take an encounter literally as a face-to-face meeting, then these sightings do not qualify as such, as they lack the immediacy and intimacy of an encounter and may be a one-sided affair in which no mutual affective exchange takes place. Encounters in the true sense of the word are what the official documents refer to as 'close encounters', i.e. encounters with wolves that come closer than 30 metres. This is considered an important category for wolf management, as these close encounters could indicate 'abnormal' (and therefore potentially dangerous) behaviour on the part of a wolf that may be habituated to human presence and not showing its 'natural' shyness (expressed in distance from humans), which should therefore be investigated and followed up with the necessary action, according to the Wolf Management Plan. All close encounters are therefore treated as exceptional. As such, they are the rarest, but at the same time the most popular encounters, as they provide the ingredients for captivating media stories, in contrast to the more ordinary sightings.

The close encounter described above is therefore hardly representative or commonplace, but rather unique and exceptional. Nevertheless, an analysis

32 Reinhardt, Ilka et al.: How to deal with bold wolves—Recommendations of the DBBW—(= BfN-Skript 577), Bonn: Bundesamt für Naturschutz 2020, p. 45.

can reveal the underlying affective dynamics that help us to understand human-wolf encounters more precisely and generally. Etymologically, the term 'encounter' describes an ambivalent situation. In the words of Alexandra Böhm and Jessica Ullrich: "The contrary aspects of presence, the accidental and unintentional [...], characterise encounters as well as violence, difference and rejection."[33] Unlike discourses in which wolves only appear as off-screen actors and do not actively participate, in encounters wolves become agents that have the power to disrupt discursive meanings and trigger reconceptualisations of how humans understand themselves and their relationship to 'the wild'.[34] This is possible because, in encounters, animals "speak, and indeed communicate, simply by virtue of their presence and activity, through modes of reference that may be indexical or iconic, if not symbolic".[35] Encounters, therefore, are an appropriate starting point for investigating the role of affect in human-wolf relationships.

By contrasting wolf-human encounters with wolf-raven and wolf-boar encounters, I draw attention to the similarities inherent in these variations of interanimality. Wolf-human encounters thus become another type of (human and non-human) animal encounter. But we must also acknowledge the particularity of each encounter—both in terms of the uniqueness of each encounter in a specific here and now, and in terms of the uniqueness of wolf bodies, raven bodies, wild boar bodies, and human bodies and their respective affective capacities.

Part of the specificity of the human-wolf encounter is, of course, the way in which language is used by the human actors. In the example above, we can distinguish three modes of speech: commentary (between the two hunters), performance (to an imaginary audience of the video) and communication (when trying to make contact with the wolves). First, the hunters continually comment on what is happening, repeatedly seeking each other's confirmation of

33 Böhm, Alexandra/Ullrich, Jessica: 'Introduction—Animal Encounters: Contact, Interaction and Relationality', in: Alexandra Böhm/Jessica Ullrich. (eds.), Animal Encounters. Contact, Interaction and Relationality, Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler 2019, pp. 1–21, here p. 1.

34 Barua, Maan: 'Encounter', in: Environmental Humanities 7 (2016), pp. 265–270, https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-3616479; see Poerting, Julia/Verne, Julia/Krieg, Lisa J.: 'Dangerous Encounters. Posthumanist Approaches in the Technological Renegotiation of Human-Wildlife Coexistence', in: Geographische Zeitschrift 108.3 (2020), pp. 153–175, https://doi.org/10.25162/gz-2020-0006.

35 T. Ingold: Making, p. 20.

what they seem to find so unusual. Often their comments are ambiguously directed at the other hunter, at themselves, or even at the imagined audience of the video. The fact that they imagine an audience for this video at all becomes clear when one of the hunters directly addresses the intended audience, the biologists of the LUPUS Institute. At this point it becomes clear that this is not an 'innocent' encounter between two hunters and two wolves. It quickly develops into a special kind of encounter, namely a performative one, aimed at producing (visual) evidence of 'abnormal' wolf behaviour, which is subsequently circulated on social media, for example to refute the scientific statements of the LUPUS Institute. This agenda influenced the whole dynamic of the encounter. For example, the filming hunter was restricted in his actions during the encounter, as he had to hold his smartphone and continue filming and commenting, while only the non-filming hunter was free to run after the wolf and retrieve the helmet. Videos created through such performative, technology-mediated encounters are therefore more than mere documentation of an event. In terms of the affective dynamic between hunters and wolves, filming and addressing the audience distracts the hunters from an immediate and unmediated interaction with the wolves. Their attention and receptivity to the wolves' movements is repeatedly interrupted and hindered.

What is interesting, however, is that the hunters are obviously trying to make contact and communicate with the wolves – albeit in a less than serious way. And the way they do this is modelled on their knowledge of communicating with dogs. Without the experience and knowledge of how to communicate with wolves, the filming hunter is using typical dog commands ('heel', 'fetch') to get in contact with the wolves. The appearance and behaviour of wolves (not to mention their genetic ancestry) is very similar to that of dogs. As hunters (with a dog in the car), these men are certainly familiar with dogs and their behaviour, and they may interpret the wolves' behaviour as curious and youthful, hence the laughter. It is not surprising, however, that communication efforts similar to those used with dogs do not work with wolves. But in the absence of alternative means of communication, what else could the hunters have done?

In this encounter, we should not overlook the fact that verbal (one-way) communication is based on a more fundamental body-affect dynamic. As in the previous encounters between wolves, boars and ravens, the affective presence is modulated by behaviour, sense of personal space, gesture, movement and sound/language. Kinesthetically, the wolf interacting with the filming hunter is initially nervous but curious, constantly moving back and forth, looking around, then at the hunter, twitching at every gesture, every move-

ment towards him, or at every sound spoken to him. The hunters seem to be less affected by the wolves, but they also respond to them, especially in terms of positioning and maintaining distance. Indeed, the way the hunters move in relation to the wolves is reminiscent of the way hunters and beaters would approach a wild animal (such as a wild boar) on a driven hunt. The very fact that they do not just stand there, but approach the wolves directly and firmly, and do not retreat, shows that they are affecting the wolves more than the wolves are affecting them.

The hunters' confidence may also be related to their expectations and knowledge of wolves as a species and what they consider to be 'normal' behaviour. Their entire conversation during the encounter focuses on one theme: these wolves are not shy, and that is not normal. As mentioned above, shyness is an important distinction between normal and abnormal/dangerous behaviour in the context of wolf management. However, what exactly shyness is remains ambiguous and under-defined. For example, the behaviour of a wolf approaching humans at a distance of less than 30 metres could be interpreted as an abnormal lack of shyness. However, this criterion would not be sufficient to classify the wolf as a problem wolf. The specific details of the encounter would need to be examined. However, when discussing the shyness of wild animals in general (and wolves in particular) in public discourse, the expectation seems to be that the animal should immediately panic, i.e. react clearly and immediately to the presence of humans and flee at high speed. A wolf that cannot decide what to do, that shifts and looks back and forth, that twitches instead of acting clearly, and that jumps away but then turns back to the human – in other words, a wolf that is strongly affected and moved and is carefully trying to find appropriate ways to respond to these affects – is behaving too ambiguously and therefore inappropriately to be considered 'normal'. It is here that we realise that the simplistic stimulus-response theory of behaviour that still dominates our discourse on animal shyness reaches its limits when it comes to the reality of the affective dynamics of encounters.

Every encounter with wolves is necessarily ambivalent, ambiguous and improvised. The unexpected and surprising are part of every encounter, as the affective dynamics of the encounter create new impulses that need to be responsively absorbed and translated into action. But we have also seen that encounters do not necessarily take place in a completely disordered way. Participants never (re)act completely unprepared, their bodies are always already routinised in dealing with affects in general, so that even new affects in never-before-experienced encounters with wolves meet with habitual

behaviour and encounter-relevant knowledge (e.g. acquired in dealing with other animal species such as dogs). These forms of prior knowledge can help to correctly assess the wolf's behaviour in some encounters, but can also lead to misjudgments if, for example, you treat a wolf too much like a dog.

Ultimately, all three examples in this chapter show that the course of an encounter depends on an inherent affective dynamic that is primarily given by the corporeality of those involved (sometimes mediated by technology). This corporeality requires constant attention to the affective dynamic and action that is guided and coordinated by attention. Since there are and can be no 'blueprints' for interpreting encounters with wolves, no clear stimulus-response-causality chains by which we can clearly categorise behaviour as, for example, 'harmless play behaviour' or 'threatening aggression', we should begin to study such human-animal encounters in more detail. Rather than prematurely categorising them as a whole, or reducing individual behaviours to ethogram schemes, it seems more useful to acknowledge the inherent ambiguity of any encounter. This creates a space for interpretation that allows for ambiguous behavioural expressions while also tracing the dynamic development over the course of encounters. In this case, I conclude that 'complicating' an encounter in such a way improves our understanding of human-wolf relationships.

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Germany's biggest tabloid, *Bild*, picked up on the above encounter near Lohsa and turned it into a video article. From the three original videos, they edited a two-minute version entitled "Wolves carry off hunter's helmet – Shy? You must be kidding!".[36] The following written comments were added to the footage:

"Shy wolf? You must be kidding!"

"The hunters Sven Puschel and Sven Schulz are stunned"

"Two wolves sneak up to within a few metres of the car, ...

... while the hunters are cutting a hedge."

"The predators show neither shyness nor respect."

36 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hV4LVvLqF1I (accessed: 30.04.2024).

"They even carry off a man's work helmet."

"The wolf only lets go of the helmet when owner Schulz runs towards him."

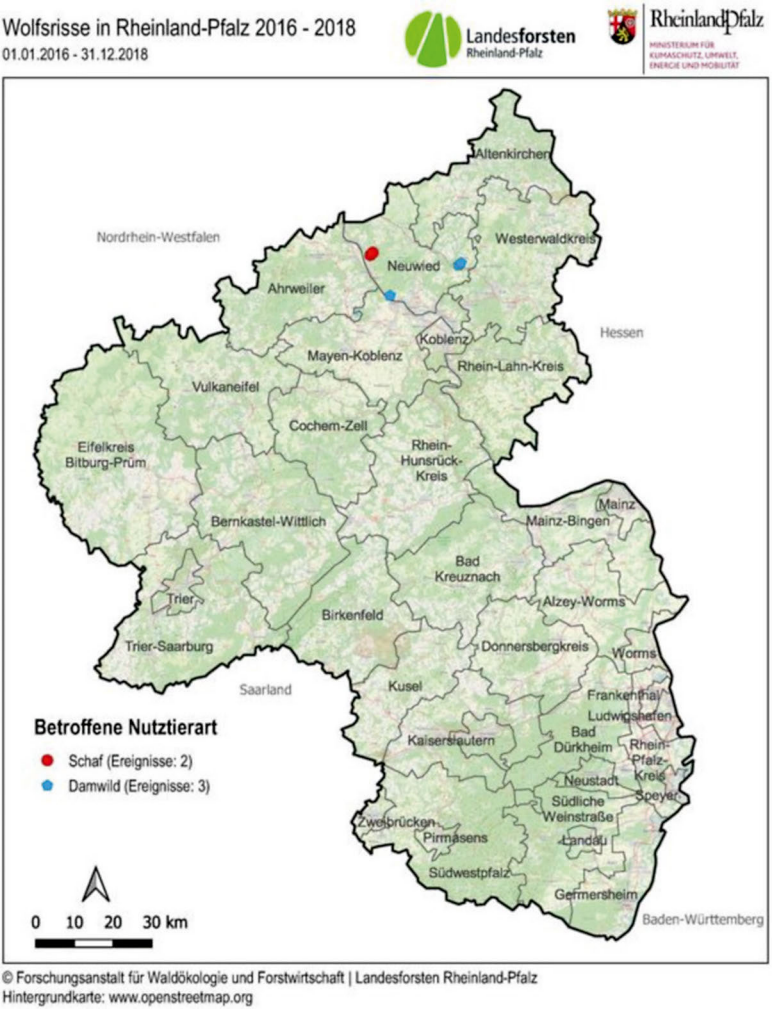
"The hunters retreat into the car for their own safety."

Unlike the original videos, the edited video contained both commentary and an added, slightly eerie spherical background noise. *Bild* framed and narrated the encounter visually and aurally as a threatening and dangerous scenario, despite the occasional laughter of the hunter. They attempted to overwrite the original affective dynamic with another that was congruent with the newspaper's sceptical attitude towards wolves in general.

This "dramaturgy of affect"[37] illustrates how individual, intimate bodily encounters with wolves are recorded, processed, retold, and re-situated within public discursive practices. While the wolves were active agents in an affective multispecies interaction that developed during the encounter, their agency was increasingly replaced by the agency of humans (the filming hunter, the post-processing journalists, the commentators on YouTube) in the subsequent transduction process, whereby the wolves were gradually transformed from living agents into passive symbols and representations that could no longer participate in the now anthropocentric affective dynamics of the media discourse. Their affective traces fade, are superimposed, partially blurred, and become increasingly unrecognisable as the media processing progresses.

37 Kappelhoff, Hermann/Lehmann, Hauke: 'The temporal composition of affects in audiovisual media', in: Antje Kahl (ed.), Analyzing affective societies. Methods and methodologies, London/New York: Routledge 2019, pp. 120–139, here p. 121.

Figure 12: This map of wolf attacks shows the approximate territory of the first Westerwald pack in Feldkirchener Wald/Neuwied.



Source: Research Institute of Forest Ecology and Forestry (FAWF)