

Animals in Translation:
Using the Mysteries of Autism to Decode Animal Behaviour.
By Temple Grandin and Catherine Johnson.
Bloomsbury 2005.

By all accounts Temple Grandin is a phenomenon: an autistic child who grew into one of America's foremost advisers on the welfare of farm animals, and an expert on animal behaviour.

How this came about, and how she has utilised the insights gained from her own autism is revealed in *Animals in Translation*, a fascinating study of her work and her life.

Grandin's principal thesis, which she expresses in a wholly convincing way and which is supported by extensive experiential data, is that human beings can only truly understand animal behaviour and responses if they consciously try and see what an animal sees and think as an animal thinks. She explains how autistic people think in visual images, seeing the detail of objects where non-autistics see the whole thing. She avers that autistics and animals visualize the world in a very similar way and that great insight may be gained from the studies that have been carried out into autism.

Temple Grandin has produced - with the support of her co-author Catherine Johnson, herself the mother of autistic children - a book with immense appeal.

Her writings on animals, her own study of animal behaviour and those of others and her description of aspects of autism are stimulating and engaging. At the very least, *Animals in Translation* ensures that you will not think about animals quite the same, and may well consider more carefully your own behaviour when inter-acting with them.

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