

CHAPTER EIGHT

DIGITAL PAWPRINTS OF THE (NON)HUMAN: WHEN DOGS MEET TECHNOLOGY

*Anything can happen when a dog is your cameraman.*³⁰⁰

At the beginning of Part One, I began my exploration into the human-nonhuman relation and companion species by referring to Jacques Derrida's *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* (1997) as a point of departure into the philosophical question of the animal. My theoretical analysis has now come full circle, as I return to Derrida to start the final section of the study. Recall, in Chapter One I explained that in Derrida's seminal essay on the animal and human-nonhuman relation, the philosopher identifies shifts in the way of thinking about the animal away from anthropocentric thought towards nonhumanism (Derrida 2004[1997]). Moreover, Derrida (2004[1997]) examines what the human-animal relation means for the question of being, wondering who we are when we follow (or look at) animals. In turn, throughout the study I pointed out that human-nonhuman engagement is not limited to human and animal (or human and dog), but also includes engagement with technology, since both the human being and the animal, to a certain extent embody technology. Specifically, in Chapter Seven I showed the extent of the entanglement between technology and companion species, as I unpacked and computed how the human-dog relation manifests and extends into the online realm of social media.

In Chapter Eight I continue exploring how companion species entangle with technology. In this chapter I ask what precisely it means for companion species to entangle with technology. That is to say, as the final layer of my exploration, I wonder what the specific nature of *being-with* companion species is, when entangled with technology. Furthermore, just as Derrida's essay indicated that engagement with animal subjects often refers back to the question of what it means to be human; I explore what engagement with animal beings in a digital

³⁰⁰ Adapted by the author from a *Crittercam* advertisement that reads: "Anything can happen when an animal is your cameraman" as quoted in Haraway (2008:250).

sphere means to human beings in the Digital Age. Thus, returning to my initial introduction of Derrida's (2004[1997]:128) question, "But as *for* me, who am I (following)?" , I ask: *But as for me who am I (following) when I follow dogs online?*

For my enquiry into the nature of *being-with* companion species entangled with technology, I turn to what can best be described as case studies of companion species and technological engagement. In other words, I concentrate on specific examples to come to grips with what it means to be companion species in the Digital Age. Additionally, I also refer to the seminal theorists that have been key throughout this study, including Donna Haraway, Martin Heidegger and Joanna Zylińska, to unpack the role of technology in the human-nonhuman relation. By drawing, once again, on Haraway, Heidegger and Zylińska, I question whether the relation between companion species and technology should be approached critically as a Heideggerian enframing (*Gestell*), or perhaps with the nonhuman sense of the Harawayian cyborg, or even, following Zylińska, with an anti-anthropocentric agency.

8.1 'On the Internet everybody knows you're a dog': companion species and technology

One of the most famous cartoons commenting on the development of the Internet appeared in *The New Yorker Magazine* in 1993. The cartoon, by cartoonist Peter Steiner, shows two dogs (Figure 58). The one dog is seated at a computer and says to the other: "On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog". To most scholars of digital culture this is a familiar cartoon – perhaps one encountered during undergrad learning about the rise of the Internet and the Digital Age in the 1990s – summarising the extent of anonymity online and the divide between life online versus life offline. In other words, Steiner (1993) depicted that, at the time, offline identities were completely hidden in online communities.

More specifically, there was a clear distinction between an online and offline way of being-in-the-world. The cartoon captured the essence of digital encounters in virtual communities, when the online realm was still slowly expanding with the

rise of the Internet. Furthermore, it playfully implied that, owing to anonymity on the Internet, even dogs could go online and act as humans. The cartoon also emphasised that at times humans could behave, in a metaphorical sense, 'like dogs' online, because they were protected by an online anonymity – their physicality and identity were hidden behind a computer screen.³⁰¹



Figure 58: Peter Steiner, *On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog*, cartoon featured in *The New Yorker Magazine* 1993. (Roberts 2015).

"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."

In recent times, new versions of the cartoon have appeared, showing how the digital realm has grown and infiltrated aspects of our lives. In the latest versions of the famous cartoon, cartoonists (Kinsley 2006; Lockley 2011; Hafeez 2015; Bramhall 2017) depict different variants of dogs at computers, who realise that society has now come full circle, because in contemporary times "on the Internet everybody knows you're a dog" (Figures 59-62). These versions of Steiner's cartoon portray the development of what it means to be human in the Digital Age. They highlight how human beings are now datafied (Lupton 2016) and always on(line) (Turkle 2008), how private and public lives online are blurred (Lee 2009), as well as how identities are freely accessible on digital platforms (Elwell 2013). In this way, the cartoons show that a technological interface no longer masks our identities and that the digital world has, to a certain extent, become a realm of self-expression in addition to self-concealment.³⁰²

³⁰¹ The notion of perpetuating online anonymity is perhaps best depicted in the documentary film and series *Catfish* (Schulman & Joost 2010), which interestingly also uses an amalgamation of animal species (cat/fish) to refer to assuming an online persona to deceive others.

³⁰² Although we can also propose a counterargument that much of the online world remains falsified in contemporary society. Cf. Lobinger and Brantner (2015); Renaningtyas et al. (2014).



"Remember when, on the Internet, nobody knew who you were?"

Figure 59: Kaamran Hafeez, cartoon reimagining Steiner's original, featured in *The New Yorker Magazine*, 23 February 2015. (Kaamranhafeez.com 2019).



Figure 60: Bill Bramhall, cartoon featured in *New York Daily*, 3 April 2017. (New York Daily News 2019).

Now, on Web 2.0...



"...everybody knows you're a dog."

--Michael Kinsley, *Slate.com*, 11/27/06

Figure 61: Michael Kinsley, cartoon featured on *Slate.com*, 27 November 2006. (Slate.com 2006).

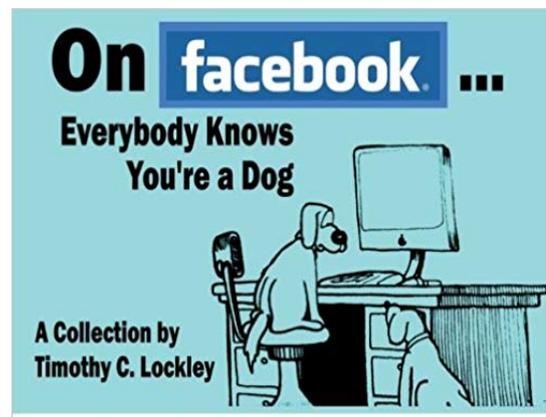


Figure 62: Timothy C. Lockley, *On Facebook ... Everybody Knows You're a Dog* cover illustration. (Lockley 2011).

In the context of the research study thus far, the cartoons stand out to me, in particular, since they directly play at the progression of the animal being in relation to technology. Even if meant playfully, the cartoons picture the prominence of *dogs* online and *dogs* on social media platforms, arguing that *dogs* developed from anonymous metaphors on the Internet to being possible notorious and identifiable digital entities. Following this line of thought, we could then go back to Steiner's original cartoon, speculating whether it can also be interpreted as a type of prediction of how dogs (or animals) become entangled with technology, since the line between the digital realm and the non-digital world has become increasingly blurry. Hence, both the original cartoon and its subsequent parodies highlight the extent to which companion species not

only concern the human-dog relation, but also include the human-dog relation interacting with technology.

As previously stated throughout the study (and at the risk of reiterating what has already been said) it is by now apparent that the human-dog relation in its complexity is not limited to interaction between the human and dog. Instead it involves engagement and entwining with other nonhuman entities, including technology. I have shown throughout the study how technology plays a crucial role as a methodology to understand the animal subject (Lorimer 2010a:237) and that any enquiry into the human-nonhuman connection includes the nonhuman agency of technology (Haraway 2008:9-10), owing to the enframing essence of technology in the Digital Age (Heidegger 1977[1962]:7-8). That is to say, both the human and animal way of being-in-the-world is also an embodied technological way of being. Thus, my understanding of human *being-with* dog always-already includes the technological world, or as Haraway (2008:12) estimates: companion species “inifold organic and technological flesh”.

Generally speaking, digital and media scholars consider the relation between the human and nonhuman, by focussing on the human emerging via, and in relation to, technology progressing over different periods of time (Zylinska 2009:xii). However, little attention is paid to the animal emerging via, and in relation to technology – even if there is clear evidence of such a progression as indicated by the extended versions of Steiner’s cartoon. More so, as the discussion of *dogstagram*s showed in Chapter Seven, the human and animal as companion species also come into being and relation via technology, or alongside technology, in the Digital Age. Addressing the gap in the literature, I follow the digital pawprints left by dogs in virtual space, exploring different case studies of how technology remakes and mediates the animal and companion species relations. In this way, in addition to following Derrida by thinking through what happens to the human when engaging with technologically entwined companion species, I also rethink Haraway’s (2008:3) driving question in *When Species Meet*, “Whom and what do I touch when I touch my dog?”, by wondering: *Who and what do I touch when I touch my robot dog?*

8.2 Case study one: from cyborg to *cydog*

Prior to *becoming with* companion species, most scholars are introduced to Donna Haraway through her significant – yet controversial – text, *Manifesto for cyborgs: science, technology and socialist feminism in the 1980s* (1985), in which she establishes her notion of the cyborg. Haraway describes the *Cyborg Manifesto* as an “effort to build an ironic political myth”. Following a feminist, socialist and materialist pursuit, she notably uses “serious play” as a strategy to deconstruct ideologically constructed ‘truths’. To do so, Haraway (2006[1985]:117) implements the post-gendered hybrid figure of the cyborg: “[A] cybernetic organism, a hybrid machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction”. The term cyborg is a compound of ‘cybernetic’ and ‘organism’ first introduced by scientists Manfred E. Clynes and Nathan S. Kline in *Cyborgs and Space* (1960). Clynes and Kline used the term to describe a laboratory rat with an osmotic pump placed under its skin. Notably, first used to describe an *animal-technology* hybrid, Clynes and Kline’s cyborg referred to an unconscious system that fuses animal and technology, while promoting survival function. In other words, the laboratory rat was unknowing of its cyborgian nature. Thereafter, in the 1980s, Haraway (1985) elaborates on Clynes and Kline’s cyborg to picture a consciously aware fusion of the human and nonhuman, specifically the human, animal and machine.³⁰³

Haraway’s cyborg is a liminal creature of both reality and science fiction that is simultaneously machine and organism. The hybrid cyborg reimagines couplings to overcome dualistic thought and experiences, as well as allows us to rethink past present-day boundaries and differences.³⁰⁴ As a crossbreed between human and nonhuman, the cyborg speaks to the contemporary social and corporeal state, where technology has come to infiltrate (or perhaps enframe) our understanding of what it means to be human. With the image of the cyborg

³⁰³ In *The Cyborg Manifesto*, Haraway (1985[2006]) uses the nonhuman to refer to everything outside of the (western) human. She specifically refers to animals and technologies, such as biotechnologies and communication technologies. Although Haraway (1985[2006]) mentions both animal and machine as the nonhuman, the cyborg is more frequently used to refer a human-technology hybrid than an animal-human fusion.

³⁰⁴ In *When Species Meet*, Haraway (2008:12) argues that her cyborg figure is the so-called ‘fourth wound’ against human exceptionalism, following three others described by Freud, namely the Copernican wound, the Darwinian wound and the Freudian wound.

Haraway (2006[1985]:120) emphasises the increasing, so-called ‘liveliness’, of technology where machines and humans become embodied by one another. Thus, technology embodies us and, similarly, we embody technology. Haraway (2006[1985]:118) proclaims us all cyborg, arguing that the boundaries of our identity and being have become blurred. As cyborgs, human and nonhuman ontologies are no longer fixed concepts and, accordingly, binary constructs such as nature and culture, natural and artificial, physical and nonphysical, woman and man, as well as mind and body, become fluid in a cyborgian world (Haraway (2006[1985]:130). In praxis, the cyborg frees the human from western, capitalist dualisms and we become “floating signifiers” (Haraway (2006[1985]:121) – not situated within a specific category but filled with meaning and interpretation that is never static. Haraway ((2006[1985]:122) explains: “a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory stand points”.

Situated in between identities, the cyborg is also a state of becoming, since it is never fixed and always interchanging between human and nonhuman. Haraway (2006[1985]:140) argues that “[i]t is not clear who makes and who is made in the relation between human and machine” and as a result humans and nonhumans are always becoming, always moving and growing towards and with one another. The embodiment of the nonhuman (or technology) therefore never ceases to evolve; it is a state of becoming: flowing into or repeatedly exchanging with one another (Haraway 2006[1985]:126). Thus, Haraway already started to study the idea of becoming or *becoming with* in her cyborg theory.³⁰⁵ For her the cyborg is constantly in flux and relating between the human and nonhuman, establishing the idea of becoming.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁵ Weinstein (2004:187) also notes Haraway’s endorsement of identity as becoming already present in *The Cyborg Manifesto* and maintains that the cyborg is a “necessarily fluid multiplicity”, much like her later companion species who also *become with* one another in multiplicities. Owing to the similarity of becomings in both cyborg theory and companion species, some theorists (Lupton 2016) argue that we should perhaps also think of our relation to technology as a companion species relation.

³⁰⁶ The cyborg’s notion of becoming correlates with Heidegger’s (2000[1935]:210) notion of becoming (*Werden*) as a part of the question of being, unpacked in Chapter Four. Heidegger

Throughout her theory of cyborgs Haraway (2006[1985]:120) makes it clear that within the cyborg “the transcendent authorisation of interpretation is lost”. For Haraway (2006[1985]:121), the embodiment of technologies takes place not in cyberspace, but within the very flesh, mess and reality of the world. The cyborg is not just a theoretical idea used to think through human and technological relations. Like companion species, it is an actual fleshy amalgamation between body and machine, where we can no longer determine where the human ends and the nonhuman begins. In other words, for Haraway, the cyborg exists specifically in the immediate and immanent world: “We’re talking about whole new forms of subjectivity here. We’re talking seriously mutated worlds that never existed on this planet before. And it’s not just ideas. It’s new flesh” (Haraway in Kunzru 1997:4).

Consequently, Haraway’s fleshy cyborg becomes an important figure in technoscience, fuelling influential movements such as posthumanism and cyberfeminism – a movement binding women, machinery and new technology (Kunzru 1997:3).³⁰⁷ However, Haraway’s cyborg theory is also controversial and we must take heed when interpreting and implementing Haraway’s theory, since several criticisms and questions surround the cyborg (and cyberfeminism) and its political agenda. For instance, Haraway insists that cyborgs are fluid and becoming and therefore do not have a specific subject. Yet, she also urges cyborgs to embody responsibility (Haraway 2006[1985]:146) – something that becomes questionable if there is no subject to take on this responsibility.³⁰⁸ In similar fashion, Haraway ironically creates a figure that projects the anthropocentric ideal of technological domination over the natural realm (as technology and human become one), while also arguing against such a western

argues that becoming is not yet a state of being, just like Haraway’s cyborg is in a state of flux, becoming towards meaning.

³⁰⁷ Notably, as cyberfeminists apply the notion of the cyborg, discussions focus predominantly on the relation between women and new technologies, often overlooking nonhuman animal embodiment.

³⁰⁸ Marsden (1996:14, emphasis in original) highlights the contradiction: “If we do not choose to be cyborgs *can* we choose our responsibilities for machines? Are we still in control?” In addition Du Preez (2009:128) also explains the cyborg’s difficulty: “[D]oes the concept of domination still hold any meaning in an age of reigning informatics, where it is not clear who is made and who is the maker in the relation between humans and machines?”

human exceptionalism.³⁰⁹ Haraway's (2006[1985]:118) conceptualisation of a utopian world "without gender" by means of a cyborg that transgresses gender boundaries, is also met with the critique of an utopian, dream-like ideal that cannot manifest within the specific fleshy, immanent world in which Haraway places the cyborg (Du Preez 2009:130). Moreover, theorists, such as Jardine (1987), Du Preez (2009) and Wajcman (1991) show that the cyborg can in fact be assigned a definitive gender, embodying gender differences and contesting Haraway's refusal of a gendered cyborg. Finally, Haraway also places the cyborg in opposition to the transcendental, in a secular realm, reinforcing a traditional dualistic thought between heaven and earth or the transcendent and secular world (Graham 1999:428).³¹⁰ If this critical reception of the cyborg is seriously considered, Haraway's cyborg theory should be approached with care, taking its intricacies and contradictions into account.

Post *Cyborg Manifesto*, Haraway continued her feminist discussions on biology and technology by questioning patriarchy, gender, race, animals, nature and technoscience in *Primate Visions: Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (1989), *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991) and *Modest_Witness @Second_Millennium. Femal(e)Man©Meets_ OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience* (1997).³¹¹ In these early works, similar to *The Cyborg Manifesto*, Haraway interrogates human-nonhuman relations, specifically humans and new technologies, as well as their relations to existing societal constructs. However, as we have seen in Haraway's recent work, the biologist narrows the focus of her microscope to explore specific relations between humans and nonhuman animals, more so than machines or technologies.

In *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2003) as well as *When Species Meet* (2008), Haraway extends her cyborg figure to the figure of companion species to explore

³⁰⁹ See Marsden (1996:9), who argues that the fusion of human and machine in the cyborg figure will most likely threaten readers as it is understood as the mastery of technology over nature.

³¹⁰ Graham explains that Haraway's cyborg, as well as cyberfeminism, occurs in opposition to goddess feminism, which allocates and empowers the women within the realm of the divine and the natural. In agreement, Haraway (2006[1985]:147) notes at the end of her manifesto that she "would rather be a cyborg than a goddess".

³¹¹ For a more detailed discussion of each text refer to the literature review in Chapter One.

the nature of human-nonhuman relations: “I have come to see cyborgs as junior siblings in the much bigger, queer family of companion species” (Haraway 2003:11). Haraway’s labelling of cyborgs as ‘junior’ to companion species, may refer to the fact that historically human-animal relations predate technological hybrids. However, as posthuman theorist Katherine Hayles (2006:160) points out, if measured we might find that the impact of technology on our world-making is greater than that of companion species. Furthermore, technology plays an enabling role in the current companion species relation between humans and animals (Hayles 2006:160). Therefore a simple hierarchical sibling structure between cyborgs and companion species is often difficult to accept and not necessarily sufficient. As Weinstein (2004:188) notes, readers familiar with the cyborg might be confused as to whether or not Haraway still believes that all humans are cyborgs, or if she now considers cyborgs to be figures amongst many others that fall under the umbrella of companion species. We are left contemplating whether companion species are not also cyborgs, embodying and entwining with technology. What about those animals, like Clynes and Kline’s lab rat, which (consciously or unconsciously) *become with* technology?

Haraway does not necessarily specifically address this confusion, although she does highlight that companion species and cyborgs overlap in many ways:

[T]he cyborg and companion species are hardly polar opposites. Cyborgs and companion species each bring together the human and non-human, the organic and technological, carbon and silicon, freedom and structure, history and myth, the rich and the poor, the state and the subject, diversity and depletion, modernity and postmodernity, and nature and culture in unexpected ways. (Haraway 2003:4).

Therefore, for Haraway, both cyborgs and companion species are figures that cross boundaries and dualities, highlighting how the human and nonhuman infiltrate one another in our sociocultural practices. According to Haraway, both cyborg and companion species highlight a human-nonhuman becoming – never having a stable identity or being (much like Heidegger’s becoming or *Werden*), but always growing and shaping with the other. Owing to the partiality of both cyborg and companion species identity (as outlined by Haraway) it is also

difficult and even contradictory to Haraway's premise of blurred boundaries and identities, to try and rank these two concepts. I would rather suggest conceiving of the two figures by applying Haraway's own terms: thinking of cyborgs and companion species in composite relation, becoming and shaping one another.

Nevertheless, Haraway (2003:4) herself, oddly enough, does not invoke a multiplicity relation and insists on configuring cyborgs into a junior position in relation to companion species, arguing that the cyborg is no longer as meaningful in contemporary society.³¹² In *Unfinished Work: From Cyborg to Cognisphere*, Hayles (2006:159) suggests that the current Digital Age – with its vast growth in technologies compared to the 1980s – is just too networked for Haraway's initial discussion of the cyborg, which could explain why Haraway turns to species relations. Especially since “humans, animals and intelligent machines are more tightly bound together than ever” (Hayles 2006:162). Hayles (2006:160) notes that evidently “the individual person – or for that matter, the individual cyborg – is no longer the appropriate unit of analysis, if indeed it ever was”.

Following Hayles and Haraway, it is clear that both theorists believe that cyborgs do not encompass all the various aspects needed to critically enquire what it means to exist in contemporary digital culture. In other words, Haraway argues that her definition of the cyborg (particularly the human-machine hybrid) limits our current interpretation of human-nonhuman relations in contemporary society, and may not allow her to explain the current evolution of world-making to the full extent. Thus she now finds refuge in the other nonhuman figure or metaphor frequently mentioned in the cyborg relation: the animal. The animal as companion species allows her to address human-nonhuman relations in a different manner, (ironically and conveniently) free of existing (human-machine) cyborgian contradictions and critiques.³¹³

³¹² Although Haraway moves away from cyborg theory, other scholars still regard it as significant in contemporary society. Moreover, “[t]he issues have morphed in significant ways, but the ethical drive and social commitment that galvanized readers then [1985] were never more necessary. With the hindsight of 20 years later, the wonder is not that the article appears dated but rather that it remains remarkably prescient in many of its concerns” (Hayles 2006:159).

³¹³ As my exploration of Haraway's *becoming with* companion species reveals, her new notion, although crucial to understanding human-nonhuman relations, is not free of its own complexities

Even if Haraway's recent turn towards companion species has dethroned and attempted to move away from the cyborg figure theoretically, I argue that the cyborg figure (or at least the machine hybrid premise behind the cyborg) remains relevant in the discussion of companion species. Seeing that Haraway (2008:10) emphasises that technology forms a key part of the human-dog relation and companion species relations in general, how the human and animal fuse with technology prior to their meeting or *being-with* each other in a contact zone remains relevant in such a relation. Especially on the grounds that companion species bring their historicity of technological embodiment with them to the meeting between human and nonhuman. In other words, if Haraway (2008:133) is curious about "the emergence of an ethics of cross-species flourishing, compassion and responsible action is at stake in technosavvy dog cultures", then it is required to also unpack precisely what dogs that are embedded in technoculture entail.

Haraway does lean into the technological entwinement of dogs in contemporary society when discussing companion species, albeit to a limited extent or to the purpose of discussing a larger idea, such as ethical treatment of animals or animal agency. For example, in a chapter entitled *Cloning Mutts, Saving Tigers*, she explores examples of dogs entwined with technology, referring to instances such as cloning, genetic breeding and the pursuit of techno-scientific research. However, she does so in order to question the ethical aspects behind these acts, investigating techno-animal hybrids under the larger question of living responsibly with others (Haraway 2008:133-157). In another chapter, entitled *Crittercam*, Haraway (2008:249-263) explores the human-animal-technological compound in terms of companion species, not cyborgs, by looking at the phenomenon of photograph apparatuses and how such technologies can give animals an agency to make meaning in the human-animal relation.³¹⁴

and contradictions. More specifically, *becoming with* companion species arguably does not necessarily assimilate the human and animal subjects and leaves room for transcendence and definitive identities – possibly moving even further away from Haraway's original cyborg figure.

³¹⁴ I explore the idea of crittercams further on in this chapter with reference to Zylinska's (2017) notion of nonhuman photography.

What is interesting is that Haraway's curiosity regarding the human-dog-technology compound, in the above-mentioned discussions, does not propel her on an investigation of the technological animal, or hybrid dog figure. In fact, parallel to the typical pattern of the animal question pointing towards the question of the human, in my view Haraway mostly returns to the human's role in companion species and technology compounds. For example, at the end of *Crittercam* Haraway (2008:263, emphasis added) argues that human-technology-animal fusions lead us to the insight "that makes us know that situated *human beings* have epistemological-ethical obligations to animals".

Perhaps Haraway's limited investigation of the techno-animal hybrid stems from her reasoning that the human-animal subjects are entangled beings. That is to say, an exploration of the one's technoculture also implies an exploration of the other's technological embodiment. Or said differently, technology entwines with companion species as an entirety. Moreover, if Haraway were to focus on the dog's relation to technology, her companion species study would probably steer back in the direction of the cyborg and its associated complexities mentioned above. Regardless of Haraway's motivations behind largely avoiding a discussion of machine-dog hybrids, I suggest it might be helpful to return to such an enquiry. As unpacked in Part One of the study, on my reading, companion species are entities of their own, who engage with others while remaining irreducible beings, *being-with* one another. Accordingly, from my perspective, the animal being remains a separate entity that is either, in a Heideggerian sense, enframed by technology or, in a cyborgian sense, comes to embody technology in its own manner – worthy of attention.

Upon closer inspection there is clear evidence of what Haraway (2008:249) would call technologies "infolded" into the animal flesh, specifically in terms of the dog's corporeal body. In typical cyborg fashion, the figure of the techno-hybrid dog is rooted in and mapped out in science-fiction and fantasy (Haraway 2006[1985]:118). A list of contemporary sci-fi dogs includes: (1) C.H.O.M.P.S, robotic dogs created as part of a home protection system in the 1979 film by the

same name (Barbera 1979), who could see through walls, outsmart crooks and had super hearing; (2) Lockjaw, a Bulldog who has teleportation powers and powerful jaws, as well as Cosmo (Figure 63) a telepathic spacedog, both featured in *Marvel Comics*; (3) Maximillion, the bionic dog with superhuman powers in the television series *The Bionic Woman* (1976-1978); (4) K9 (Figure 64) the iconic robotic dogs in the series *Doctor Who* (Newman, Webber and Wilson 1963-1989); as well as (5) Dogmeat (Figure 65) a German Shepard with combatting skills in the computer game *Fallout 4* (Howard et al. 1997-2018).³¹⁵ All of these dogs are “creatures simultaneously animal and machine, who populate worlds ambiguously natural and crafted” (Haraway 2006[1985]:117).



Figure 63: Illustration of Cosmo the Spacedog. (Marvel Database 2016).



Figure 64: K9 the robot canine in the series *Doctor Who* (Newman, Webber and Wilson 1963-1989). (The Doctor Who Site 2019).

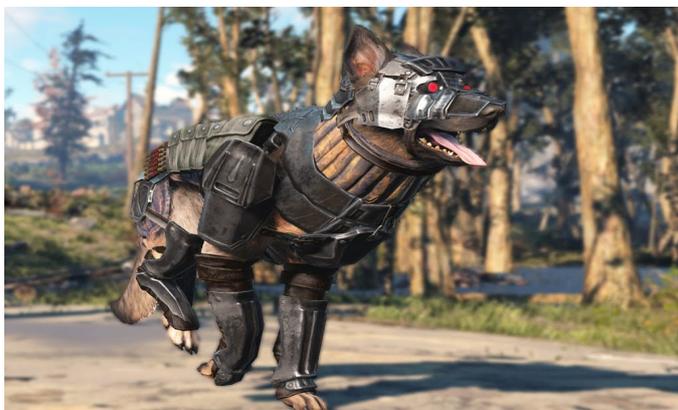


Figure 65: Dogmeat the armoured German Shepard with combatting skills in the computer game *Fallout 4* (Howard et al. 1997-2018). Screenshot by the author.

³¹⁵ Interestingly, animals are becoming prominent figures in the gaming industry. For example, a recent update to the popular game *Fortnite* allows players to pet dogs (Webster 2019), while a developing PC game *Peace Island* allows users take on the role of a cat, imagining the world from the cat’s “purspective” (Moore 2019).

Eminently, contemporary society in the Digital Age is also littered with technological dog fusions. Several household dogs are microchipped with an electronic tracker and number, becoming dogs with everlasting technology infolded right under their skins. Other dogs are assisted by technological prosthetics (Figure 66), relying on their technological mutations for movement and everyday doings. In turn, dog collars can also be fitted with electronic devices, such as fitness trackers (for example *Whistle 3* and *FitBark*) and lightweight collar cameras (for example *Collarcam*). Furthermore, it seems the fictional figures of bionic dogs extend into the tangible world as robot dogs (Figure 67), multiply rapidly, and become accessible to the general public (Sparrow 2002:3). Additionally, transhumanism pursues enhancing animals' cognitive abilities with technology in pursuit of the so-called "post-dog" (Hauskeller 2017:25), while the space race of the 1950s saw dogs sent into space as 'astronauts' (Figure 68).³¹⁶



Figure 66: Naki'o, known as the world's first bionic dog, a mixed breed dog is the first dog fitted with four prosthetic limbs, made possible the US company *Orthopets*. (Singh 2014).

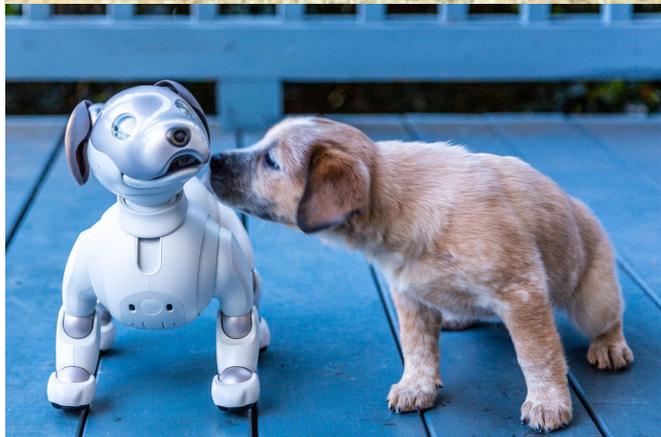


Figure 67: Sony's robot dog or autonomous companion dog, Aibo, meets a real puppy. Photograph by Geoffrey Fowler. (Fowler 2018).

³¹⁶ Spacedogs are a prominent phenomenon in society. In 1951 the Soviet Union launched two dogs, Tsygan and Dezik into space, they were the first living organisms to return from a spaceflight. In 1957, Laika the dog became the first animal launched into orbit aboard Sputnik 2, thereafter around 10 more dogs were sent into space. Cosmos the spacedog in the *Marvel Comics* is based on these attempts to send dogs into space.



Figure 68: Kozyavka, a Russian spacedog, peers through the bubble helmet of a pressure suit. (Dubbs 2003:39).

Additionally, dogs also seem to respond to technology in their environments or *Umwelts*. Dogs often respond to television and computer screens and interact with other dogs and humans through technological screens, including smartphones, computers, and pet monitor applications. That is to say, technologies form a part of the dog's immediate environment (or *Welt*) and mediates its behaviour and relations with other entities.³¹⁷

Perhaps the best example of the extent to which boundaries have become blurred between dogs and technology is indicated by the presence of the dog on the Internet or in the digital realm. As indicated in Chapter Seven, dogs have become prominent digital entities in the virtual world of social media and Web 2.0. In these instances dogs are embodied in a technological realm and become hybrid creatures in their own right. A set of technological vocabulary for the digital versions of dogs have even emerged, demonstrating the significant reality of the technology-dog coupling. Popular press articles explain that a dog on the Internet is typically referred to as a “doggo”, while a fluffy dog is referred to as a “floof”. In turn, on the Internet a dog does not bark, but “borks”. On social media ‘doggos’ also appear to have their own digital language with their own vocabulary that includes words such as “heckin” and “hooman” (Valdez 2018).³¹⁸

³¹⁷ Interestingly, the dog's response to technology is famously already depicted in Francis Barraud's painting, *His Master's Voice*, in 1898. In this artwork a Terrier curiously looks into a phonograph, supposedly questioning where the sound of 'his master's voice' is coming from. According to Rosenblum (1988:67) Barraud “invented a brilliantly seamless continuity between the most venerable traditions of canine fidelity and a brand new world of twentieth-century technology and publicity”. As I discuss throughout this chapter, this tension remains prominent in the relation between the dog, the human and technology in contemporary society.

³¹⁸ See the videos on *Insta-dog* helpfully explaining the extensive language that surrounds ‘doggos’ in the online realm. In 2018 Merriam-Webster announced that ‘doggo’ was one of the dictionary's “words we're watching” to add to its corpus that includes other digital words, such as ‘troll’ and ‘hashtag’ (Valdez 2018).

In this manner, the digital dog on Instagram reworks and transgresses the boundary between dog and machine, resulting in a hybrid figure that develops its own identifiers, carries its own meaning and allows for human interpretation – resembling the cyborg (Haraway 2006[1985]:120).

From these brief case studies, it can be deduced that the dog's fusion and technological embodiment is clearly similar to Haraway's cyborg figure. The parallels are endless ranging from hybrid dogs in fictitious examples presented in the contact zone of science fiction, through to real-life dogs embodying technology or who become encoded cyborg figures submerged in a virtual environment. Perhaps the similarities are not surprising, since Haraway's (2006[1985]:122) cyborg, parallel to companion species, includes a "joint kinship with animals". Yet, arguing that dogs are also cyborgs is difficult, firstly, because Haraway distances her discussion of dogs as companion species from the hybrid cyborg figure. Secondly, the cyborg as a fluid entity with "leaky" distinctions between animal, machine *and human* (2006[1985]:120) stands in direct contrast to my reading of dogs and humans as distinct beings *being-with* each other. Therefore, I propose thinking of the infolding or coupling of dog and technology as a 'cydog' – a hybrid figure that only and specifically refers to the breached boundaries between technology and dogs in the Digital Age.

My suggested *cydog* alludes back to Clynes and Kline's (1960) original use of the term 'cyborg', which refers to an animal-technology hybrid. When Clynes and Kline (1960) first introduced the term in an article *Cyborgs and Space* in the journal *Astronautics* they explained it as follows: "For the exogenously extended organizational complex functioning as an integrated homeostatic system unconsciously, we propose the term 'Cyborg'". Taking my cue from the original meaning of the word, I reason that a suggested *cydog* is a dog amplified by technology in complex manners that results in a constant way of living with machine, albeit unconsciously. That is to say, the *cydog* does not need to show signs of awareness of its hybridity, nor does it have to be aware of it (if such an awareness can be determined). The mere existence of the dog enveloped by technology is sufficient to qualify it as a *cydog*, no matter speculation of how the

dog understands its hybridity or the extent to which the human instigates the fusion between dog and machine, because it forms part of the dog's inherent way of being-in-the-world.

Following Haraway's extension of Clynes and Kline's cyborg, *cydogs* are also "floating signifiers" (Haraway 2006[1985]:121) that are not impartial or innocent figures (both in real life, virtual environment or as sci-fi creatures), but transmit meaning and require interpretation. Like cyborgs, *cydogs* are (digital) "storytellers exploring what it means to be embodied in high-tech worlds" that can help us to understand and add new meaning to our current world (Haraway 2006[1985]:140). The *cydog* as storyteller is clearly displayed in the phenomenon of the *dogstagram* unpacked in Chapter Seven, where I discussed the digital versions of dogs on Instagram as digital stories of companion species, which add an additional layer of meaning to the interpretation and interaction with the dog in contemporary society. As signifiers, *cydogs* acquire a sense of agency to construct, rework and signify meaning. Thus, the fusion between dogs and technology gives dogs a sense of agency and reaffirms them as entities with active influence on their environment, including their human companions.

To support my formulation of the *cydog* figure I turn to media studies theorist Akira Lippit. In his book *Electric Animal* (2000), Lippit examines the development of the animal as a figure of modernity and technology. For Lippit (2000:165) the animal becomes intertwined with its antithesis, technology, "serving as its vehicle and substance".³¹⁹ Moreover, animals appear "to merge with the new technological bodies replacing them. The idioms and histories of numerous technological innovations from the steam engine to quantum mechanics bear the traces of an incorporated animality" (Lippit 2000:187). That is to say, technologies become "virtual shelters" for animals (Lippit 2000:187). Thus, according to Lippit (2000:197) the "traditional opposition between nature

³¹⁹ Lippit (2000:183) formulates technology and animals here as antithesis, based on the notion that what is natural (nonhuman made) and what is unnatural (human-made, such as technology) are dualistic or oppositional. Furthermore, the natural animal is dying out, because of man-made industrial development, in this way the two entities are also, at times, considered antagonists. According to Lippit (2000:183), however, the animal overcomes this possible displacement by technology by merging with it.

and artifice, *phusis* and *technē*, animal and technology” have converged and accumulated into an electric, semiotic animal – or then, in the case of the canine and *technē*, a possible *cydog*.

Specifically, Lippit (2000:177) contends that the merger between animal and technology, since the latter half of the nineteenth century, prominently manifests in film and photography. For Lippit (2000:183), photography aligns animal and machine: “animal and technology – are united without, however, producing sublation”. In turn, cinema can be seen as the culmination of the animal and the rise of technology that captures and expresses the being of the animal (Lippit 2000:185; 197). According to Lippit (2000:177; 185) photography is therefore a “place of being” for animals, while cinema “is a new way to transport information from one locale to another; from one forum to another; one body to another; one consciousness to another”. In other words, digital photographs and videos of dogs on social network platforms, such as *dogstagram*s, are virtual places of being for the dog that expresses information or carries meaning from dog to technology and technology to human. Therefore, the dog on social media, the dog in film and the dog in photography are also *cydog* figures, merged with, and carrying meaning through, technology.

Interestingly, in a somewhat posthuman sense, Lippit (2000:192) adds that the animal-technology hybrid also gives the animal an opportunity to ‘stay alive’ (so to speak) beyond its corporeal reality: “they are destined to remain ‘live,’ like electrical wires, along the transferential tracks. Unable to die, they move constantly from one body to another, one system to another”.³²⁰ Similarly, we can argue that the *cydog* could lead towards what Hauskeller (2017:25) calls the “post-dog”, where the dog remains a being beyond its physicality. An ‘always-online’ or enduring *cydog* clearly already manifests in the case of dog cloning,³²¹

³²⁰ In Chapter Three I explained that posthumanism includes a pursuit beyond being human (Hayles 1993). In other words, a pursuit to ‘remain alive’ in a digital realm falls under the broader spectrum of posthumanism.

³²¹ As Haraway (2008) notes dog cloning is a real practice in contemporary society with a handful of commercial companies and institutions committed to bringing cloning to ordinary pet owners. One of the most famous cases of dog cloning is singer and filmmaker Barbara Streisand, who cloned two of her dogs.

dog prosthesis and datafied *dogstagram*s that leave traces of permanent dog data, or then digital pawprints, in the online realm.

Following Lippit (2000), I therefore argue that the culmination of technology – including the digital, the electric and the medium of photography and film – and the dog as animal, results in an entity and a being-in-the-world that transfers meaning and alters the physical constraints of the dog. Consequently, I summarise the technological *encryption* of the canine as a *cydog* figure similar to Haraway’s cyborg, yet exclusively referring to a machine-dog hybrid being.

8.3 Case study two: spacedogs

Thus far I have presented the idea of the *cydog* and the infolding between technology and animal in a particularly nonhumanist manner, where both technology and dog are nonhuman actors merging with one another in a network of relations. However, what is omitted from the above discussions is the role of the human actor in the formation of the *cydog*. As I have frequently shown throughout the study, any enquiry into the animal (and thus also the technological animal) is fundamentally human or directs back to the human being in some way. In similar fashion, from the above discussion and examples, it is evident that the *cydog*, although a separate being from the human, is often a result of a human action or can also be framed as an anthropocentric creation. For instance, cloning a dog is an overtly human endeavour either in pursuit of scientific development, or driven by a human attempt to not suffer the loss of a pet. It is therefore crucial to also consider the human’s role in animal-machine hybrid case studies. In this instance I consider the human not as a cyborgian coupling with the animal hybrid, nor as a companion species *being-with* a *cydog*, but as a distinct entity, enframing the initial conception of a *cydog* figure.

In *The Cyborg Manifesto*, Haraway (2006[1985]:142) maintains that humans did not originally choose to become cyborg.³²² Moreover, she argues that in cyborg

³²² In the text Haraway (2006[1985]:142) states: “We did not originally choose to be cyborgs”. On my reading Haraway’s “we” refers to humans, since she continues to say that “we” have an awareness of our cyborgian nature, a consciousness that Clynnes and Kline (1960) establish is not necessarily the case in the original animal cyborg figure.

relations it is no longer clear if human or machine is in power in the hybrid figure (Haraway 2006[1985]:144). Although whether or not humans chose to intertwine with technology remains a debatable point, Haraway's focus on the relation between human and machine in terms of power and initial creation does not necessarily translate to the animal and the figure of the *cydog*. I maintain that unlike Haraway's cyborg figure, we can see the *cydog* as a direct result of an initial human choice, human drive and human need.

For example, by thinking through the process of sending dogs into space, it becomes clear that merging dogs and technology can be an inherently anthropocentric pursuit. On 3 November 1957 a dog named Laika was launched into earth's orbit in Sputnik 2. Laika was one of Russia's numerous attempts to launch a dog into space, including several attempts that resulted in fatalities (Kemp 2007:541). The so-called 'spacedogs' or 'cosmodogs' were typically selected based on a specific, human criteria: "weighing no more than 15 pounds, measuring no more than 14 inches in length, robust, *photogenic* and with a calm temperament" (Turkina 2014, emphasis added). Evident in the photos and visual culture surrounding the launch of Laika into space in the press (Figures 69-70), the spacedog (or then *cydog*) seems to echo the posthuman figure of the astronaut: strapped into technology and looking out over earth from the space shuttle window, Laika becomes fully dependent on technology to survive. Describing the state of Laika in the space shuttle, author Chris Dubbs (2003:51) says: "All of the wires, machines, glowing lights, and strips of paper gave the oddest impression – that Laika was actually a part of this great machine, rather than just a passenger".



Figure 69: Photograph of Laika, fitted into a capsule before being launched into space, November 1957. (Dubbs 2003:51).



Figure 70: An effigy of Laika the spacedog, who died five hours into her 1957 space flight. (Batchelor 2017).

Laika's launch, and astronaut embodiment, was clearly not her own doing. Selected from a group of trained stray dogs that fit the Russian space programme's criteria, Laika had no choice (and arguably no awareness) in fusing with technology and boarding the one-way space flight sent to orbit earth (Kemp 2007:541).³²³ Moreover, the Russian space programme used the dog as an experiment to help gain insight on the possibility of human space travel. Additionally, using an animal aided the space agency: "Space agencies rely on the public's interest in people and animals to sustain engagement with their programmes ... striking images of astronauts and space animals have strongly contributed to the visual output of the agencies" (Kemp 2007:541).³²⁴ That is to say, Laika's merge with technology to become a space animal and a *cydog* (and ultimately her likely death) was motivated and dominated by human beings and their pursuit towards development and power.³²⁵ In this sense, *cydogs* can be framed as an anthropocentric construct, where the human overpowers (or enframes) the animal with technology as a means to a human-driven end. For this reason, *cydogs* can also be critically considered in terms of the ethical implications for the animal being.³²⁶

Parallel to Lippit's (2000:192) argument that the animal-machine hybrid immortalises the animal, arguably spacedogs are also 'kept alive' and memorialised through technology. Kemp (2007) argues that Laika "has achieved a kind of immortality" since she never returned back to earth and her body continued to orbit inside the space capsule. Similarly, Turkina (2014) explains that cosmodogs are immortalised by becoming visual icons around the globe

³²³ Some observers argue that Laika's behaviour indicated that she was not comfortable with being submitted to the mercy of space technology: "As the metal hood of the capsule was lowered into place, Laika strained at her harness and barked in protest" (Dubbs 2003:50).

³²⁴ Here Laika's role in the space race reminds of the use of dogs on Instagram to convey a message of loyalty, safety and family. Laika, like some *dogstagram*s, could also have been used to mask the violence and danger associated with space travel.

³²⁵ The so-called 'space race', or the age-old endeavour to conquer space, is often described as a pursuit of power. In particular the space race is described as a "patriarchal race to colonize" (Bianco 2018).

³²⁶ Laika's launch into orbit was shared on a television screen, she appears alert but a few hours into orbit, she overheated and died. The choice to send the dog towards a foreseeable death is questioned in terms of animal cruelty by many including Dubbs (2003), Turkina (2014) and Gaard (2013). After Laika's launch several animal-welfare groups also protested to express their outrage and sorrow (Gaard 2013:121). As a result, Laika has become a symbol for questioning the ethics to use animals in research.

reproduced in popular culture. Kemp (2007) also notes that the statue erected in Moscow in memory of Laika features the dog's turned head and a piece of her space harness, indicating that Laika became a permanent *cydog* and more specifically a technological object in an (in)human(e) experiment.

In a similar manner, Michael Hauskeller (2017:36) argues that the notion of a 'post-dog' is primarily a human-centred action that eliminates the distinct being of the dog that is free to do as it please. Hauskeller (2017:36) argues that the notion of the post-dog is *posthuman* and *transhuman* driven and takes away the dog's "freedom to live [it]'s life as the kind of creature that [it] is, without the pressure or need to change and become something else". Comparatively, Robert Sparrow (2002:12) argues that robot dogs as companions eliminates the animals "independent loci of experience and consciousness [that] allows them to surprise us, to provoke wonder in us, and to teach us new truths about the world". In other words, Sparrow (2002:12) sees robot dogs as an assimilation of the human that does not capture the unique being of the animal. Instead of harnessing the dog as an animal with a different mode of being-in-the-world than the human and elaborating on an irreducible human-dog companionship, robot dogs anthropomorphises the animal (Sparrow 2002:14). Furthermore, Sparrow (2002:16) demonstrates that robot dogs are beneficial for humans and can offer significant advantages as companions to people in need – in other words the creation of such a technological dog is solely valuable for the human being.

Lastly, the computation of the *cydog* into a photograph, social media image or video can also be seen as an anthropocentric doing. Best indicated in the self-representative and anthropomorphic *dogstagram*s discussed in Chapter Seven, it is clear that in some instances capturing or enframing the dog in a photograph or posting the animal online is a human act, driven purely by human motivations (such as earnings made by so-called 'Instafamous' dog owners on Instagram). In *Why Look at Animals?* John Berger (1977:19) maintains that pictures of animals uses animals "*en masse* to 'people' situations" and also leads to the disappearance of the individual, unique animal being (Berger 1977:26). For Berger (1977:26) animal imagery is a way of enclosing animals in human

confinement. The technological instruments ranging from the Kodak Brownie camera to the smartphone used to fuse and encode an animal into a digital format and image is typically controlled by a human and is therefore mostly coupled with human agency. Therefore, at times, the *cydog* becomes a way for the human to capture the animal in a one-sided, anthropocentric framed view (Creed & Reesink 2015).

Unpacking the possible anthropocentric narrative to identify the human agency at work in the fusion between dog and machine highlights the importance of identifying a *cydog* figure, separate of the human-animal-machine hybrid. Moving away from seeing the dog's hybridity as part of a blended knot of actors that include technology, humans and dogs, we are now able to see how human agency plays a role in the dog's infolding towards technology, which at times can lead to ethically questionable treatment of animals. Thus, separating the human-machine bind from the dog-machine bind proves valuable to unmask anthropocentric pursuits often disguised as nonhuman and posthuman cyborg embodiment, such as in the case of cosmodogs, which does not account for the separate being of human and dog in the world.

8.4 Case study three: nonhuman photography

As an alternate vantage point, there are certain examples of *cydog* entanglements that, in contrast to an anthropocentric narrative, focus on the nonhuman agency at play in the *cydog* figure. Dogs connected to smartcameras, like the *The GoPro Fetch* dog harness and *Nature's Recipe Collarcam*, posits the notion that some aspects of *cydogs* are, to some extent, nonhuman or encourage nonhuman agency. Zooming into the nonhuman drive of the *cydog* figure opens up an anti-anthropocentric way of understanding the technological infolding of dogs in the Digital Age, in addition to the already discussed human-anchored idea of enframing dog's and technology.

Technologies such as *The GoPro Fetch* (Figure 71) and *Nature's Recipe Collarcam* entangle dogs with a device that, once attached to their physical bodies, allows them to film, photograph and post pictures to social media networks without

human interference.³²⁷ That is to say, *after* human assistance or incentive to attach the device to a dog, the dog-camera hybrid produces images that are not captured by humans and represent the world from a nonhuman perspective.³²⁸ Haraway (2008:251) refers to such devices as crittercams that remove the human agent from the anthropocentric canon of photography. Additionally, crittercams reveal the way of being of the nonhuman animal without human interference or anthropomorphism: “Through the camera’s eye glued, literally, to the body of the other, we are promised the full sensory experience of the critters themselves, without the curse of having to remain human” (Haraway 2008:252). Thus, according to Haraway (2008:257) crittercams give the human access to the world of the animal and portrays the nonhuman’s point of view.



Figure 71: Dog fitted with *The GoPro Fetch* dog harness. (Dutton 2014).

In another crittercam *cydog* example, dogs sometimes come into contact with smartphone devices or cameras and ‘accidentally’ take pictures of themselves, resulting in so-called ‘accidental dog selfies’ (Figure 72) or ‘accidental front cam’ images (Figure 73), often shared on social media.³²⁹ In these instances, the human is no longer the sole agent behind the *cydog* entwinement of dog and apparatus. As a result, the dog gains agency and, in turn, highlights that *cydogs* can possibly shift the attention away from the human as the focal point, towards the nonhuman being.

³²⁷ *Nature’s Recipe Collarcam* is a lightweight device attached to a dog’s collar that “allows pets to take and share their own inane day to day activities in digital photo form” (Stampler 2013). The camera randomly takes photos throughout the day and then occasionally shares some of the photos to a linked Instagram account or social media platform. All of these actions are encoded and based on an automatically functioning algorithm, separate from human input.

³²⁸ In other words, just as digital humanities produce ‘digitally born’ research, so too nonhuman photographic devices produce ‘nonhuman born’ photographs.

³²⁹ For more examples, use the caption search button on the imageplots visualisation page on the *Insta-dog* project to search for #dogselfie or #accidentalfrofrontcam.



Figure 72: An 'accidental selfie' supposedly taken by a puppy playing with a smartphone (@dog.buddyz), 26 June 2019, Screenshot by the author.

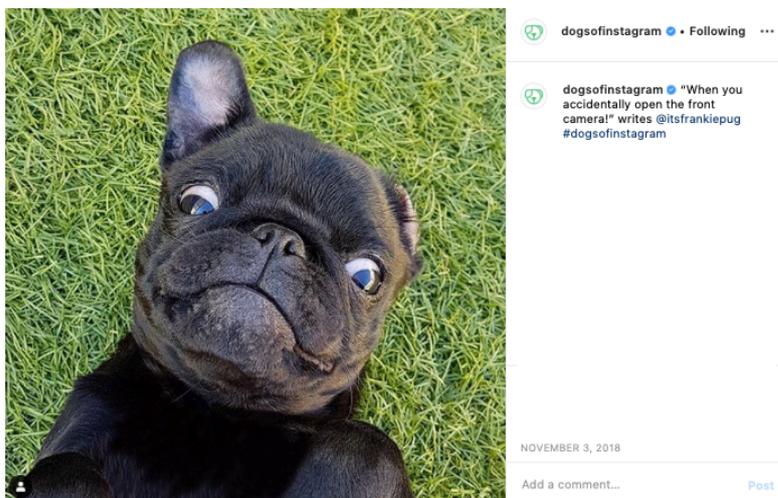


Figure 73: An 'accidental front cam' photo supposedly taken by a dog with a smartphone (@dogsofinstagram), 3 November 2018. Screenshot by the author.

To further study the nonhuman agency at work in these case studies of technological dogs, that are notably photography and social network driven, I turn to Joanna Zylinska's (2017) notion of "nonhuman photography".³³⁰ Put forward in the book *Nonhuman Photography*, Zylinska (2017:3) explores the idea of nonhuman photography rooted in the philosophical ideas surrounding the nonhuman turn as well as posthuman theory. Notably, Zylinska (2017:3) places nonhuman photography not as an opposition to human-centric photographic practices in a typical 'human versus machine' narrative, but rather configures it as an *expansion* of technological practices that the human is not part of (Zylinska 2017:5). In other words, Zylinska (2017:4-5) remains mindful of the human

³³⁰ Zylinska's (2012) bioethical approach to human-nonhuman entanglements informed and aided my understanding of companion species throughout Part One of the study. Here I focus on an additional concept, nonhuman photography, explored by Zylinska in an endeavour that builds on her bioethical point of view.

input in photography, but also wishes to sketch a multi-perspective that includes the active role of the nonhuman in photographic practices.

Similarly, by exploring the nonhuman aspect and agency carried out in *cydog* entwinements, I suggest an understanding of techno-dog hybrids that builds on the typical anthropocentric association of such creatures. At the same time, I challenge such human-centric associations by acknowledging the *cydog's* possible influence and agency in the nonhuman world. Since the particular *cydog* figures that emphasise a nonhuman aspect are also photography based and exemplify Zylinska's (2017:5) description of nonhuman photography, I turn to her concept to show how *cydog* photography emphasises the being of the nonhuman. In other words, I suggest a link between the dog-camera hybrid taking photos and the notion of nonhuman photography.

Zylinska (2017:5, emphasis in original) writes that nonhuman photography encapsulates three overlapping concepts:

- (1) the rather frequently encountered yet often uncanny-looking photographs that are not *of* the human (depopulated expansive landscapes say);
- (2) photographs that are not *by* the human (contemporary high-tech images produced by traffic control cameras, microphotography, and Google Street View, but also outcomes of deep-time 'impressioning' processes, such as fossils);
- (3) photographs that are not *for* the human (from QR codes and other algorithmic modes of machine communication that rely on photographic technology through to perhaps still rather cryptic-sounding photography 'after the human').

Apparatuses such as camera fitting dog harnesses and dog collar cameras, as well as those photographs 'accidentally' taken by dogs, would then fall under the second concept, since the outcome of the apparatus is photos taken by nonhumans and also shared to social media networks by a nonhuman algorithm, i.e. not by the human but by technology-dog infoldings. Interestingly, we could also argue that *dogstagram*s that are not of humans and only present a nonhuman world, for example certain outlandish 'action and adventure

*dogstagram*s' identified in Chapter Seven (Figures 42-45), fit into the first of Zylinska's categories, because they are not *of* the human nor of the human-dog relation, rather they tend to focus solely on the nonhuman dog.

For Zylinska (2017:13) nonhuman vision is where "the very act of seeing something, and its subsequent temporary fixing into an image, are performed by a nonhuman agent, even if their addressee is determinedly human". In doing so, nonhuman photographic devices secured to a dog's body, allows the dog's point of view to be shared, while also removing the human's privileged perspective: "It is about inviting the view of another to one's spectrum of visibility, to the point of radically disrupting this spectrum" (Zylinska 2017:15). To illustrate, Zylinska in particular refers to artist Jana Sterbak's video, *Waiting for High Water* (2005) in which:

[S]omewhat menacing images, shaky in their execution and sporting slanted horizons as well as unusual camera angles, were captured by three video cameras placed on the head of Sterbak's Jack Russell terrier, Stanley. The footage presents a unique view of the city of Venice on the brink of flooding. The low-rise *embodied canine perspective* deprives the human observer of the solid grounding offered by binocular human vision. (Zylinska 2017:15-16, emphasis added).

Correspondingly, videos shared of dogs wearing *The GoPro Fetch* allows viewers to experience occasions via the dog's viewpoint and on the dog's four-legged level (Figure 74).³³¹ The footage from such devices also remove a sense of human handling, as we see the embodied device shake, shift and slant along with the movement of the dog. In other words, the *cydog* produces images that open up the dog's view of the world, which is not specifically human (Zylinska 2017:17). Furthermore, devices such as the *Collarcam* then share such a point of view independently of the human on a digital social media platform – which is also computed by nonhuman algorithms and formulas. In particular, Zylinska (2017:17) argues that such a nonhuman perspective or way of seeing emulates

³³¹ For example, see the following video of a Labrador left at home with a GoPro fetch attached: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5o2TdhN0xA>

possible different ways of seeing made possible by technology, as indicated by Haraway (1988:583) in an essay entitled *Situated Knowledges*:

The 'eyes' made available in modern technological sciences shatter any idea of passive vision; these prosthetic devices show us that all eyes, including our own organic ones, are active perceptual systems, building on translations and specific ways of seeing, that is, ways of life.



Figure 74: An example image captured by *The GoPro Fetch* fastened to a dog, showing a 'dog's-eye view'. (Dutton 2014).

Likewise, 'accidental dog selfies' also suggests a sense of nonhuman agency. If selfies are a gesture in self-representation that extends the self and negotiates the relation between the subject and the object, where the photographer is both the curator and the curated (Senft & Baym 2015:1589); then we can also contend that 'accidental dog selfies' can equally suggest a sense of agency of the nonhuman dog taking a photo of itself (albeit not necessarily deliberately). Therefore, such an image dispatches a possible sense of agency to the dog, where the dog is no longer the object in a photo but also the subject, creator and possible sharer of the image. Moreover, 'dog selfies' typically show the dog looking into the camera, as a subject, straight at the (human) viewer (Figure 75). Like Derrida's cat (1997), it presents the dog's gaze, to which the human can recognise and respond.



Figure 75: A 'dog selfie' where the dog gazes directly into the camera and at the viewer (@barked), 15 June 2019. Screenshot by the author.

Thus, *cydog* figures that create nonhuman photography and nonhuman viewpoints bring forward another perspective “from which to understand ourselves and what we humans have called ‘the world,’ in all its nonhuman entanglements” (Zylinska 2017:8). Zylinska (2017:8) declares that such models of nonhuman photography therefore “opens up a passageway to being-with”, inasmuch as they present a nonhuman way of being-in-the-world, separate from the human (Zylinska 2017:30). As a result, nonhuman imagery taken by a *cydog* figure presents a new perspective of being-in-the-world unique to the dog, highlighting the different beings of humans and animals. More importantly, opening up a space for the human to encounter the nonhuman point of view promotes a sense of *being-with* one another, where humans acknowledge and come to know the animal’s gaze.

To a certain extent nonhuman photography can be viewed as a methodology to map and examine the point of view of animals. In this way, it closely resembles Jamie Lorimer’s (2010a:237) suggestion of using moving image methodologies for grasping the more-than-human and non-representational dimensions of life, which I have discussed in Chapter Three as a nonhuman methodology. Lorimer (2010a:237) explains that “moving image methodologies” can witness and engage with nonhuman life, while prompting a sense of human curiosity for the nonhuman way of being. That is to say, these *cydogs* of photography translate and document a possible dog way of being that encourages a different way of

looking at animals and acknowledging the perspective or being of dogs. Therefore, *cydogs* become an intertwining of dog and technological apparatus or “the technical and the discursive” (Zylinska 2017:75) to produce a nonhuman vision and make visible the possible, often-invisible inner being of the animal to its human companions.

8.5 Case study four: technology as aid

Reflecting on the various ways in which dogs embody technology and cyberspace, a last interpretation of the *cydog* comes to light. In some instances, technology becomes a possible aid to the dog, to exist and relate to their humans in the Digital Age. In relation, *cydogs* also help humans to exist with and relate to their dogs. Therefore, technology can also be seen as a mediator, messenger and intercessor between human and dog, as well as the dog and its being-in-the-world.

For instance, the *Fitbark* fitness tracker for dogs, a small device that attaches to a dog’s collar and monitors its activity levels, quality of sleep, distance travelled, calories burned, and overall health and behaviour – essentially a smart watch for dogs – aids humans to interpret and understand their dog’s behaviour better. It promotes healthy living for human and dog and translates the dog’s bodily functions so that the human can detect early signs of discomfort or disease (FitBark 2019). In other words, the data tracker acts as a means of transposing, a messenger or translator (much like nonhuman photography) between human and dog, so that the human can learn to care for its dog better. That is to say, the *FitBark* is a way of *being-with* dogs that, to use Haraway’s (2008:3) phrasing, teaches us to become “worldly” and “nurturing” to live *better* together.³³² Thus, as a *cydog* feature, the *FitBark* is beneficial for both human and dog and provides human insight into the world of the dog.

³³² Interestingly, the description of the *FitBark* device on the *FitBark* website follows Haraway’s philosophical understanding of companion species as *becoming with* – where human and dog are entwined – describing the device as follows: “At FitBark, we think of dog and human health as one” (FitBark 2019). That is to say, similar to Haraway, they do not distinguish between dog and human as different entities – perhaps because the device provides deeper human insight into the dog’s being.

To a certain extent, the *FitBark* reminds of *The Dog Project* by neuroscientist Gregory Berns, discussed in Chapter Three. In *The Dog Project*, Berns (2017) uses the technology of an MRI machine to translate and compare neural imaging in a dog's brain, to gain a better understanding of the experience of dogs. Thus, Berns's MRI machine can also be interpreted as an aid to translating the dog's experience of being-in-the-world for human reading and transposing, with the nonhuman goal of not only *looking at* the animal but also *listening to* the animal.

In similar fashion, *cydog* products such as dog monitor cameras (markedly another form of nonhuman photography following the principle of CCTV footage), allow humans to 'check in' with their dogs and observe their nonhuman world. Furthermore, they allow humans to respond to their dogs when they are in need or not physically able to interact with them. Much like a two-way video call, monitors act as an interface of connection and response between human and dog via technology.³³³ For example, some monitors allow humans to talk to their dogs through a screen on the monitor, while others can also dispense treats and water. The means of technology emphasises Heidegger's (1977[1962]:5) argument that "technology is a way of revealing"; in the nonhuman world, technology aids in revealing the being of the dog, importantly evoking responsibility and care from its human companion.

Interpreting the *cydog* figure in this way drifts away from the dominant view of technology as an anthropocentric ideology solely pursuing progress (Davis 2015:xix), towards a more posthuman understanding of technology as means to shape our world, and thus shape our companion species relations. Furthermore, it touches on another reading of postmodern technology as akin to a transcending journey in the Digital Age. Hughes, Bostrom and Agar (2007:4)

³³³ Notably, dogs can see and process information presented on a digital device, although what they see differs to what humans see. Research shows that dogs prefer watching other dogs on screens and respond to the sound (Hirskyj-Douglas 2016). How dogs watch digital devices also differs to human interaction with screens: "Instead of sitting still, dogs will often approach the screen to get a closer look, and walk repeatedly between their owner and the television. They are essentially fidgety, interactive viewers" (Hirskyj-Douglas 2016). Responding to studies of how dogs watch screens, a television channel, DogTV, exists designed specifically for dogs, screening short storylines prioritising the colours dogs see (blue and yellow) on the screen (Hirskyj-Douglas 2016).

explain that in a postmodern digital world, humans pursue transcendence through technology, while theorist Erik Davis (2015:14) argues that machines become “magical images that tap the hidden current of the cosmos”. In other words, technologies are often closely associated to a spiritual realm and transcendent pursuit. Specifically, Davis (2015:78) refers to the similarities between Gnostic religion and contemporary technoculture, since technology can be seen as an aid to escape and abandon the human body. Following such a spiritual perspective of technology, it can be argued that the technologically embodied dog points towards the possible transcendental realm and perhaps an otherworldly layer of understanding of companion species relations.³³⁴

Just as certain theorists (Berger [1977], Irigaray [2004] and Kohn [2013]) understand dogs to be possible otherworldly messenger towards transcendence (as unpacked in the Addendum of the study), so too can we frame the *cydog* as an aid towards transcendence. The *cydog's* possible otherworldliness is therefore twofold: as a dog it can be interpreted as an animal messenger, while its technological embodiment manifests a sense of aid and a posthuman (or then ‘post-dog’) pursuit towards transcendence, attempting to overcome the language barrier and bodily limitations between human and dog.

A particularly new technological development that illustrates how technology can act as an aid to companion species is a recent facial recognition software developed by Megvii, which can identify one dog from another using noseprints. According to Winder (2019), “the company has developed the software on the basis that dogs have unique nose prints ... the new Magvii software just requires a smartphone camera to take a series of images of the nose from different angles that are then analysed by the software to determine the critical identification markers”. In other words, much like the API software used to identify content in *dogstagram*s in my digital humanities project *Insta-dog*, Magvii’s AI learns to recognise the individual being of dogs, creating digital footprints – or then noseprints – for our companion species. The datafied prints of our *cydogs* can

³³⁴ For a further discussion of an otherworldly understanding of companion species, as well as the notions of Gnosticism, technology and spiritual aids, refer to the Addendum of the study,

then be used to trace dogs via CCTV footage, keep them safe and return them to the owners if lost. Moreover, the app can be used to monitor human-dog behaviour, “cracking down on what is referred to as uncivilized dog keeping” (Winder 2019). That is to say, the digital noseprints of dogs can also act as a messenger and tracker to keep them safe from anthropocentric, unethical pursuits and treatment.

The noseprint recognising AI software brings together: (1) the notion of uploading the dog to virtual space (as a *cydog*); (2) analysing the digital dog by means of software computation (as I have also done with the *Insta-dog* project examining *Dogs of Instagram*); (3) nonhuman photography tracing the data prints via CCTV footage; (4) using technology as a mediator to aid dogs and, finally; (5) to hold humans accountable for the ethical treatment of their canines. Not to mention, the software is also based on the idea that each dog (and its digital doppelganger) has a unique identity and nose print, emphasising the dog’s irreducible way of being. Thus, our *cydog* companions are complex entities that also speak to the different layers of understanding companion species, ultimately guiding us towards an understanding of *being-with* our dogs as their own beings-in-the-technological-world.

8.6 Conclusion

Briefly examining case studies of the dog-technology amalgamation shows how, in a contemporary society, where ‘on the Internet everybody knows you’re a dog’, such infoldings result in an extension of the dog being into a type of *cydog* being. That is to say, when I touch my dog, I also touch a *cydog*. This *cydog* embodies all the layers of understanding of companion species, from the human-centred anthropomorphism and domestication of dogs to evoking a sense of anti-anthropocentric agency. In other words, touching a *cydog* is also a way of *being-with* companion species.

Exploring examples of *cydog* figures also allows us to identify human-centred pursuits often masked as posthuman or nonhuman relations, as well as to showcase and enhance the dog’s separate nonhuman point of view, albeit for

human understanding. *Cydog* entangles can also give dogs more agency and a nonhuman ‘voice’, while acting as an aid and mediator between dogs and humans. Thus, when we follow *cydogs* online we follow, to a certain extent, a dog’s nonhuman point of view and, accordingly, follow a way of *being-with* companion species. More importantly, the *cydog* showcases that in the drive towards posthumanism and cyberspace, humans want to take their dogs as companion species – in all their complex layers of anthropomorphism, nonhumanism, care, play, touch, love and responsibility – with them, transferring their co-presence of being-with-others into the playground of the digital sphere.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

*She has met her dog.*³³⁵

To paraphrase Haraway's (2008:301) concluding line of *When Species Meet*, this study has met dogs. This meeting has ranged from introducing the virtual community of dogs at the beginning of this study through Hannah Stonehouse's story, to Heidegger's dogs in their *Umwelt*, Haraway's dogs in our worldly mud, the *Dogs of Instagram* in cyberspace and, finally, my own encounter with *cydogs*. Throughout the study's meetings with dogs, I have positioned the human-nonhuman encounter as a fundamentally human endeavour that often points back to the question of what it means to be human. In other words, by meeting dogs, we have also met the self. In doing so, the human's place in companion species relations has been reconfigured as I transgressed the rupture between anthropocentrism and nonhumanism, renegotiating nonhumanism and the human-dog relation as an expansion of what it means to be human in contemporary society with animals and technology.

From the human being's meeting with dogs and technology ensues companion species relations, where human, dog and *technē* live together as significant others. Companion species has, however, proven itself to be a more complex meeting that cannot simply be programmed as the ideal manifestation of flourishing species relations. Thinking through *becoming with* companion species, as brought forward by Donna Haraway (2003; 2008), this study has engaged critically with companion species and enquired about the human agency at play in techno-human-dog relations. Companion species relations do not necessarily indicate that the meeting between human and dog entwines human and nonhuman animal into a new multispecies mode of being. In fact, read in relation to Martin Heidegger's (1927) notion of being (*Dasein*) – since the animal question is fundamentally an encounter with the self – the meeting can be sniffed out as being-with-others (*Mitsein*), where both human and dog are their

³³⁵ Donna Haraway (2008:301).

own, irreducible beings, sharing and accessing each other's world, without synthesising as one.

By reading Haraway's *becoming with* companion species with Heidegger's *being-with*, I have shown that the human is not on the verge of extinction, but continues to turn up in multispecies studies that paradoxically focus on human qualities, such as love, goodness, prosperity, play and history, cleverly disguised under the broader idea of nonhumanism. That is to say, we remain all too human by *being-with* nonhuman others, specifically with reference to human-dog companionship. Therefore, it would be more precise to say that companion species is not an anthropocentric or nonhuman relation, but a constant *being-with* encounter, which we can only interpret from a human horizon, recognising and learning about human concepts such as play, history and love, that meet the unique being of the dog. Ironically, even the blossoming multispecies movement away from the human still has to sprout from a human way of being.

Positioning companion species as a human *being-with* dog meeting has by no means attempted to subject the nonhuman and dog to a domineering, alpha human. In fact, by thinking through being-with-others, I have attempted to act as a kind of 'guard-dog' advocating for both the importance of the human being, as well as the animal being. *Being-with* dogs has defended the agency and irreducible being of the animal, not only against anthropocentric pursuits and human maltreatment, but also against a multispecies diminishing and blended being, where unique identity is lost. In turn, *being-with* dogs has also shed light on the importance of the human's irreducible being and agency to care for, respond to and learn from the animal being.

Companion species as a Heideggerian *being-with* meeting, has filtered through to various contact zones, including the digital space of social media networks. Thinking of dogs beyond the kennel and the mud, the study has also revealed that companion species, in all their complex layers of meaning, extend into the realm of cyberspace, where we find dogs on Instagram and technologically embodied *cydogs* in our *technē* enframed society. Perhaps showing that even the

posthuman technological realm cannot escape social-political aspects, *dogstagram*s represent the human-dog encounter in all its complexities, from human-centred engagement to nonhuman agency and companionship. Computing *dogstagram*s through a close and distant digital analysis reveals, however, that companion species online also feed and add to the human-dog relation as active agents forming virtual and real communities, stimulating affective responses and ultimately acting as a way of *being-with* dogs. As a result, *cydog* encounters also give the nonhuman being (technology and animal) a sense of agency and hounds the human agency in companion species relations, when human, dog and technology meet.

Therefore, there exists no flourishing human-dog amalgamations – despite Donna Haraway’s best efforts to disguise our companion species as such a way of being. Instead, companion species are complex and made up of a human way of being-with-others, where human beings come together with nonhumans in contact zones to play, touch, share history, respond, care, love, compute and post, while remaining aware of their own human way of being-in-the-world and the irreducible way of being of the animal. On my reading, such a companion species relation unleashes a better meeting and living together for both human and nonhuman. In the future, when considering environmental ethics, we should keep in mind that only by being-with-others, both the animal and human remain impossible to remove.

9.1 Limitations of the study

Throughout the course of the study, I have predominantly limited my research to the specific approaches and philosophies of Donna Haraway, Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida and Luce Irigaray’s respective arguments surrounding the human-animal and human-dog relation. For the most part, I have tried to present various viewpoints on the animal question, yet several other perspectives and important philosophical arguments regarding the human-animal dyad exist outside of this thesis’s framework, which would perhaps result in a different interpretation of companion species. By prioritising readings of *being-with* and

becoming with companion species, the study remains somewhat limited to these specific theoretical underpinnings.

A further limitation of this study concerns the brief mention of the natural environment (including ecosystems and plants in relation to animals) in relation to companion species. Focussing on the human-dog relation and the specific class of dogs as pets in contemporary society limited the investigation somewhat outside of the natural realm. Particularly, the work of James Stinson (2016) regarding the Wilderness 2.0, Haraway's work on making kin in the Anthropocene (2016), as well as Michael Marder and Luce Irigaray's *Through Vegetable Being* (2016) may also prove a viable avenue for future research. Perhaps these contributions could aid in looking beyond dogs as companion species towards other environmental factors. While I am fully aware of their contributions to the discussion of nonhumanism, it was simply impossible to pay substantial attention to their avenue of work in this already extensive study.

Perhaps a final restriction of my research is that by focussing mainly on companion species as dogs, the study bounds the research to my subjective view of dogs as kin and companions. While this position allows me to pursue fruitful arguments concerning human-nonhuman relations, it, to a certain extent, excludes a quintessential objective investigation that, for example, also pursues cases where humans do not think of dogs as kin. Although I tried to acknowledge an awareness of such relations throughout the study, it remains subjective and limited to my own hermeneutic horizon of meaningful relations with dogs.

9.2 Suggestions for further research

Based on the research conducted in this study, many complementary studies can be carried out, whether in terms of digital and media culture, the discourse of philosophy, or the question of the animal being. Following the identified limitations, a study encompassing further philosophical approaches on animal being, such as Emmanuel Levinas's (1990) *The Name of a Dog, or Natural Rights* or Michel Foucault's *Animality and Insanity* (1961), can be brought into conversation with Heidegger, Haraway and my reading of companion species.

Similarly, a critical investigation comparing older philosophical notions, such as that of Plato and Aristotle, with nonhumanist pursuits could also garner interesting results and other ways of looking at the human-nonhuman being and relation.

The digital humanities methodology of this study, in particular the computing of networked images on Instagram, could also be built into an application to investigate other digital phenomena. Researchers can follow the computing guidelines set out in the 'Insta-docs' documentation, available on the *Insta-dog* platform, to set up similar visualisations and compute any digital image on social networks via an image analysis software, which can be interpreted through a close-analysis following any theoretical approach. For example, Instagram images accompanied by the #metoo hashtag can be scraped and uploaded to the application, processed and visualised to gain further information on the movement.

In turn, the particular visualisations of *dogstagrams* using the *Insta-dog* dataset can be explored with a variety of research questions regarding dogs in mind. In other words, the digital platform can act as an already-existing dataset of *dogstagrams* for further investigation of the phenomenon of companion species on Instagram. For example, searching through the images with reference to gender tags ('man' or 'woman'), studies can explore the relation between men and women who post *dogstagrams* with their dogs, perhaps commenting on another growing phenomenon on Instagram that pairs gender with animals (such as the popular 'dudes with dogs' or 'sexy cats'). Another interesting exploration of the *Insta-dog* dataset could be to approach the visualisations with research questions concerning dog breeds, which could relate to and produce helpful results for veterinary practices. Additionally, with reference to visual culture, *dogstagrams* featuring art and museums can be studied, as the phenomenon of 'dogs in art' also grows increasingly popular, raising questions such as how does *being-with* companion species change the way we interpret and experience art? These would be immensely interesting directions to pursue

in future research, especially as the number of *dogstagram*s are constantly growing.

9.3 When species part

The human-dog encounter I have yet to mention in my conclusion to the study is the reader's meeting with my own dogs, Fudge and Cody. Although only a small part of the exploration of companion species relations, Fudge and Cody act as my own worldly examples and research dogs, who help me to think through complex philosophical notions and often allow me to make theoretical concepts accessible in everyday doings. Perhaps because I introduced the reader to them at the start of the very first layer to my critical reading of companion species, or because they have patiently exchanged themselves as lapdogs for my laptop during the course of my research, at the close of this study I want to return briefly to my relation with Fudge and Cody.

As I have shown throughout, Fudge and Cody have been subjected to anthropomorphisms and domestication, acted as companions and irreducible beings, guided me to question my own way of being, and been my guardians in uncertain times. They have truly embodied all the layers of companion species relations disclosed in my reading of companion species. As a result, they have also made it to the online realm and the virtual community of Dogs of Instagram. At the start of my investigation I ventured into wondering, what if Fudge and Cody could talk as humans do? But as I proceeded my reading of companion species, I will admit that I realised I do not want them to talk, for our somewhat anthropomorphic, being-with relation works exactly because we are different beings. That is the magic of companion species relations: human being and dog being – Karli and Fudge and Cody – playing in the complex, sometimes messy, infoldings of the Digital Age.

As I conclude this study, another question however haunts my thinking: what if species part? If my reading of companion species has shown the misguided thoughts of human-animal entwinement on which nonhuman studies are based, it also means that the irreducible being of human and dog can separate or be pulled

apart. And although there are several theories of where dogs go when they leave the earth, I am left, once again, back to the question of what it means to be human as I wonder what happens to me when Karli and Fudge and Cody part. It is at this unimaginable abyss where I stop and realise: we need the playground of being-with companion species. Whether on Instagram or in the mud, being-with companion species allow us to responsibly, lovingly and playfully negotiate our human way of being. Perhaps this is why our dogs feature so prominently in our posthuman pursuits towards technology: because not being-with dogs is the true collapse of being.

Now Fudge brings me his ball and Cody takes my slipper, leaving us with one final remaining question: is it time to play?

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ADDENDUM
BEYOND THE (NON)HUMAN:
EXPLORING SPIRITED COMPANION SPECIES

*In the beginning, God created man,
But seeing him so feeble, He gave him the dog.³³⁶*

Throughout this study the relation between the human and nonhuman was examined, mainly emphasising the various ways of looking at and ways of *being-with* the dog as a companion species. In the first layer of the study (Chapters Two and Three) the shift from an anthropocentric understanding to a nonhuman perspective of the human-dog relation was explored, with the purpose of establishing the importance of the human, as well as the irreducible difference between human and dog in a companion species relation. In the second layer of the study (Chapters Four, Five and Six) the specific way of human *being-with* dog was presented by reading Donna Haraway's idea of *becoming with* companion species in relation to Martin Heidegger's philosophy of being. Based on this fusion of philosophies, it was deduced that human and dog exist with each other as two entities that remain distinct beings in their intertwining.

Throughout the layers of my exploration, I often briefly noted that certain aspects of the human-dog and human-nonhuman relation show a glimmer of a spiritual, celestial, soulful and transcendent understanding. For instance, in the case of trans-species relations or telling of and picturing mythical animal *tails*. In turn, I also indicated that at times there are exceptions to the overarching decoding of animal behaviour, because animals are their own beings. Here I refer to occasions where, for example, the empathy expressed by animals goes beyond human comprehension and responsive behaviour, such as in the case of therapy or service dog. The aim of this additional Addendum of the study is to sniff out the trail of the sacred and transcendent or, said differently, the possible otherworldliness of animals. In other words, I investigate the possibility of an additional layer of understanding of the companion species relation as spiritual or transcending – beyond Heidegger's *Umwelt* and Haraway's 'worldly mud'.

³³⁶ Alphonse Toussenel in Merritt (2018:7).

The possibility of animals as beings from the spiritual realm, representing a sense of the sacred, or transcending the known human world, is common notions in contemporary society. As we have seen in Chapter Two, John Berger (1977:6-9) explains that beyond human exceptionalism, animals are thought of as mysterious creatures that belong both to the human world and another immortal realm.³³⁷ That is to say they were subjected to the spiritual practices of both worship and sacrifice (Berger 1977:7). In particular, the spiritual sense of the animal is expressed in the human-dog relation. In *On God and Dogs: A Christian Theology of Compassion for Animals*, theologian Stephen Webb (1997) highlights the longstanding perspective that the specific bond between human and dog is often imagined in the realm of deities and that some people think their relations with dogs give human life a spiritual purpose. Armbruster (2018:7) and Webb (1997:77) note that the so-called “creation myths” or idea of dogs as deities are often expressed in popular culture, especially in cartoons. For example, Figures A-C present the presumable belief that dogs are closely related to the spiritual world and hold a soulful purpose in human life. A faithful understanding that is ironically even more so emphasised by the inverse of the word ‘dog’ that is ‘god’.



"So you're little Bobbie; well, Rex here has been going on and on about you for the last 50 years."

Figure A: Dog cartoon by *New Yorker* artist Charles Barsotti (Barsotti 2007).

³³⁷Berger's understanding of the animal as between worlds, or liminal, is echoed in Heidegger's understanding of the animal as well as Haraway's ambiguous companion species, which I indicate later on in this Addendum. Moreover, the animal as between, reminds of Julia Kristeva's description of the human-animal relation as "abject" in her famous essay *Powers of Horror: An Essay of Abjection* (1982), since the animal is *of* the human world, but also *opposed* to it; something we recognise, but also cannot completely place (Kristeva 1982:2).



Figure B: *Welcome to heaven* by Paul Beckman (Beckheadcomics 2018).



Figure C: Dog as god cartoons by Dan Piraro (BizarroComics 2016; 2017).

In other words, thinking of the human-dog relation in a spiritual sense is not something that is just hinted at; rather it is a noteworthy belief in contemporary society. My intention in this Addendum is to briefly bring the conversation regarding the possible otherworldly qualities of companion species into the proverbial light, by exploring various theoretical estimations of so-called spirited animals. However, I do not aim to debate the feasibility of such a belief, rather I aim to simply present an overview of a way of thinking of animal beings other than nonhumanism and anthropocentrism. In doing so, I also do not wish to place the spiritual aspects of companion species in opposition to the perspectives and way of being unpacked in the study. Instead I discuss the sense

of the spiritual as an additional layer to the study of companion species, introducing its possibilities, key theories and traces in the thinking of *being-with* irreducible companion species. Moreover, I show that even when companion species are thought of as otherworldly, the human and dog remain separate beings and the spirituality of the animal remains pertinent to the human subject, supporting my main argument made throughout. For these reasons, I only briefly delve into some of the ideas regarding the spiritual aspect of the human-dog relation to deepen my reading of companion species. Thus, my discussion of the key ideas surrounding the sacred sense in human-animal engagement is necessarily concise.

Since the overview of the animal in a sacred sense is only an additional layer in my exploration of companion species, I briefly give an explanation of this particular belief regarding spirited animals, by specifically focussing on theorists and ideas already encountered throughout the study, including Luce Irigaray, John Berger, Eduardo Kohn's trans-species relations as well as Haraway and Heidegger's philosophy of *being-with* and *becoming with*. The overview firstly identifies the transcendental aspects in Haraway's theory of companion species and Heidegger's notion of being-in-the-world, guided by Irigaray. Thereafter, my investigation turns to those theorists who particularly explore animals as otherworldly or between worlds, including Irigaray and Eduardo Kohn. Finally, I examine examples of soulful human-dog encounters in the popular Netflix documentary series *Dogs* (Berg & Zipper 2018) and on Instagram, to illustrate a different way of thinking about companion species. Throughout this Addendum I also probe into the possibilities of a spiritual perspective on human-animal relations. Can an otherworldly belief regarding companion species advocate for an ethics of compassion, freedom, friendship and transformation in human-nonhuman relations?³³⁸

³³⁸ As we have seen, how humans treat animals has been brought up in several discussions of animal being, since most animal theorists not only consider the animal question, but also what the question of the animal being means for the human behaviour towards animal, as well as how species can live well together. For example, Haraway (2008) questioned what it means to live with companion species, but also how this relation can make us more worldly – in other words living better (ethically) together. I have briefly touched on this subject although the ethical treatment of animals, at times, lies beyond the scope of my study. I choose to elaborate on the

1. The otherworldly defined

Before delving into the realm of spirited animal relations it is perhaps warranted, for the sake of clarity, to shortly define what I mean by terms such as 'otherworldly', 'transcendent', 'spiritual', 'celestial', 'soulful' and 'sacred'. Although these terms differ in part, they are interchangeable in that they all convey the notion of being outside of or extending beyond the human world, including the physical or material world, the corporeal human body or the human mind. Therefore, by using these terms, I imply a general thinking of the human-animal relation extending beyond immanence and the fleshy, material touch of companion species, into a distant realm.

Thinking of anything beyond the physical world is often closely associated to the spiritual, which refers to matters of the soul or an inner, non-material presence of being that does not stem from the material world, as well as religious beliefs.³³⁹ In this way, the spiritual is often considered to be divine, sacred or holy, owing to common religious beliefs in a god or all-encompassing Supreme Being connected to the realm beyond the human. Referring back to the history of humanism in Chapter Two, as explained by Rémi Brague (2017:7), before nineteenth century anthropocentrism it was common belief that there existed a world beyond what was known by man. This world, because of its mysteries, was sometimes estimated as superior to man, since it remained unattainable to man and associated with God. The cosmos beyond human physicality includes, amongst others, deities and celestial bodies, as well as divine entities that can travel between the ephemeral, material realm and the endless, sacred realm, such as the soul and angels.

Brague (2017:8) maintains that the humanist belief developed into human exceptionalism as humans later estimated themselves to be the most important

ethical matter more in this particular Addendum, since the theoretical discussions drawn on here point to the fact that a spiritual understanding of companion species often leads to the compassionate treatment of animals.

³³⁹ Religious beliefs encompass a wide variety of beliefs in the existence of a mythological, supernatural or spiritual existence, for instance Gnosticism, Animism, Judeo-Christianity and Buddhism. Humans practice these religious beliefs throughout the world, following the various outlines of their chosen religious path.

entities in existence, eliminating – so to speak – any otherworldly beings and sacred realms. Yet, a belief in a spiritual cosmos remains pertinent in contemporary society. In a scientific and technologically enhanced society a discussion of a spiritual nature is often met with scepticism and disbelief, as empirical evidence cannot be found for such an immaterial principle (Casey 2013:32). However, in contemporary society people are continuously interested in spirituality, religion and otherworldly phenomena, such as the soul (Casey 2013:32). Therefore, thinking about an otherworldly existence remains a relevant and meaningful aspect that impacts our way of thinking about being and relations.³⁴⁰ More specifically, as we will see in this Addendum, spirituality plays a role in how we approach human-nonhuman relations.

Particularly transcendence forms a prominent part of contemporary society. In religion, transcendence is the aspect of a Supreme Being's power that is entirely independent of the physical world. In other words, transcendence is those aspects of religion that occur beyond all materiality, often contrasted with immanence. In philosophy, the connotation of transcendence stems from the Latin words *trans* and *scandare* – literally meaning to climb beyond. Thus philosophically, transcendence means surpassing ordinary, or human, limitations or being in a state of being that excels material or mortal experience. As a result, transcendence can be of different sorts, such as ego transcendence (going beyond the limitations of the ego), self-transcendence (excelling the confined self and the other) and spiritual transcendence (exceeding beyond space and time).

The further connotations and history of the spiritual realm, transcendence and otherworldly worlds, forms part of a much larger and extensive conversation.

³⁴⁰ In his article *Does a biologist need a soul?* William Carroll (2015), contests a denial of the transcending realm and the consequential existence of the soul, arguing that “the world in which we live cannot simply be described as a great spectrum of matter” (Carroll 2015:18). For Carroll (2015:22) the rejection of the transcendent is a “naïve” perception, which implies the rejection of distinguishing characteristics of living entities, in other words a rejection of life. Owing to the correlation between Carroll addressing biologists and Haraway, a biologist who denies an otherworldly realm, Carroll's essay prompts me to wonder whether or not Haraway's companion species relations *need a soul?* Or put differently, *do companion species need an added transcendent understanding?* I explore this question further in this Addendum.

For my purposes here, I employ the terms at large, referring to any state of being beyond the human world and its limitations as transcendent and otherworldly. In turn, I also associate such states with a spiritual sentiment if it is closely related to a holy experience, religious beliefs or a sacred encounter with a Supreme Being, spirit, soul or celestial entity. Therefore, my pursuit of the human-animal relation in terms of otherworldly worlds, transcendence and spirituality wonders beyond the flesh, imagining these relations surpassing the corporeal human and nonhuman.

2. Transcendent traces in *being-with* companion species

In Chapter Three I argued that Haraway's companion species *becoming with* one another can be read as a Heideggerian *being-with* one another, where human and animal (or human and dog) connect and share their world in part while continuing to exist as distinct beings. In my reading of Haraway with Heidegger it is evident that certain aspects of companion species relations, for instance love and play, cannot always be pinned down to the physical world. More exactly, at times companion species interactions as estimated by Haraway, as well as when applying Heideggerian philosophy to Haraway's notion of *becoming with*, reach into the realm of the transcendent and spiritual. Although Haraway (2008:3) would perhaps disagree, since she is adamant that she is "a creature of the mud, not the sky", I reason otherwise, arguing that there is clear evidence throughout her work that reaches beyond the mud in which companion species play. Moreover, following Dahlstrom (2005), Mitchell (2011), Carman (2013), Moran (2014) and Andersson (2017), Heidegger's philosophy of being can also be read as transcendental, resulting in the *being-with* of companion species also surpassing material limitations. In what follows, I trace the trail of transcendence in both Haraway's phenomenon of companion species as well as Heidegger's philosophy of being to show that *being-with* companion species not only makes up the physical world, but also extends into an otherworldly realm.

2.1 Towards transcendence in Heidegger's philosophy of being

Transcendence in Heidegger's philosophy of being is a widely debated point of controversy. Agreed upon by some scholars and contested by others, Heidegger's

work as transcendent is a binary topic of understanding.³⁴¹ I do not intend to venture into the controversial question of Heidegger's theory as transcendence nor analyse in detail Heidegger's theory in terms of transcendence.³⁴² For my purposes here, I merely outline the possibility of transcendence in Heidegger's philosophy of being that I have already discussed, to show that my estimated understanding of companion species rooted in Heideggerian thought (as *Mitsein*) can perhaps extend beyond the material world. Since my goal is only to suggest a possible additional layer of meaning – attained in an otherworldly realm – to my discussion of companion species, I briefly outline some transcendental aspects of Heidegger's theory, as indicated by the theorists mentioned above.³⁴³

Dahlstrom (2005:32) suggests that in *Being and Time*, Heidegger's question of being is fundamentally transcendental. At the outset Heidegger (1962[1927]:62, emphasis in original) establishes that being is transcendental in its very nature:

Being, as the basic theme of philosophy, is no class or genus or entities; yet it pertains to every entity. Its 'universality' is to be sought higher up. Being and the structure of Being lie beyond every entity and every possible character which an entity may possess. *Being is the transcendence pure and simple.* And the transcendence of Dasein's Being is distinctive in that it implies the possibility and the necessity of the most radical *individuation*. Every disclosure of Being as the *transcendence is transcendental knowledge. Phenomenological truth (the disclosedness of Being) is veritas transcendentalis.*

³⁴¹ See for example Dahlstrom (2005), Carman (2013), Denker (2013), as well as Wrathall and Murphey (2013) for an understanding of Heidegger's philosophy in terms of transcendence and opposing contradictory reasoning.

³⁴² Heidegger's possible transcendence is highly contested, because in his later work *Beiträge zur Philosophie* (1936), the philosopher himself deserts and contests his own use of transcendence, while advocating for post-transcendental thought (Dahlstrom 2005:29). Additionally, Heidegger's so-called transcendentalism is problematic, because it forms part of the contention between transcendentalists and phenomenologists, as well as the possibility of transcendental phenomenology (Dahlstrom 2005:30).

³⁴³ Although Heidegger's possible transcendence and relation to the sacred would usefully expand the argument I am making here, this is not the place to do so. My reason for shortly presenting some of the transcendental readings of his work is only to give support to my contention that the earlier idea of companion species *being-with* each other is closely associated with an otherworldly sphere, which, in turn, adds an additional layer of meaning to companionship with animals as well as the human-dog relation. Thus, my discussion of a few of Heidegger's transcendental ideas here is necessarily concise.

In other words, Heidegger's estimation that *Dasein* is a being that makes sense of its own being extends beyond the thinking human mind (as formulated by Descartes) often restricted by physical limitations (Carman 2013:86). For Heidegger, the meaning of being is located beyond the content of science and empirical knowledge of evidence. Instead the meaning of being surpasses evidence and materiality by finding its location in the transcendent realm of understanding (Carman 2013:86). Thus, recall that *Dasein* is translated as 'being-there', in other words extending beyond here (Heidegger 1962[1927]:27). Dahlstrom (2005:34) explains that by establishing *Dasein* as 'there' Heidegger "invokes the modern notion of transcendental ... as a descriptor of a kind of a priori knowledge". In this way, *Dasein* also experiences a sense of freedom, one of the key traits of its being: *Dasein* is free in the sense that it is not contained by its physicality or thoughts (Engelland 2018:736).

Nevertheless, *Dasein* is a being-in-the-world, an entity interacting with real-world phenomena and entities, while aware of its own existence. For this reason, Heidegger (1962[1927]:33) stresses that *Dasein* is both *here* and *there*. In relation to transcendence we can now read this description of *Dasein* as an entity both limited to a specific corporeal horizon and transcending this horizon through its awareness of its possibilities of being. In this way, Heidegger's *Dasein* exists between the material world and the transcendent sphere. Dahlstrom (2005:34) further elaborates that it is "the very essence of being-here to transcend (range over and characterize) itself and the world, others, and any other entities and modes of being that it encounters within the world". That is to say, *Dasein* stands with one foot in the world and another in a realm of meaning beyond it (Dahlstrom 2005:36).

Moreover, being-in-the-world also expresses a certain experience of the sacred, since it refers to a unifying world, where transcending depends on particularities of being (Ruspoli 2010). Dreyfus (in Ruspoli 2010) explains: "Being-in-the-world is a unifying phenomenon, when people are at their best and most absorbed in

doing a skilful thing, they lose themselves into their absorption ... and [so] we can re-experience what people called the sacred”.³⁴⁴

As part of the way of being of *Dasein*, *Mitsein* or being-with-others is also inherently related to the realm of transcendence (Russow 1980:127). By grounding the nature of being in its relations with others, *Dasein* reaches out of its own being towards the understanding of others (Heidegger 1962[1927]:153). Read transcendently, *being-with* is therefore an acknowledgement of another’s transcendental nature and a surpassing of one’s own self towards such an acknowledgement. Being-with-others is therefore self-transcending (Moran 2014:497). Accordingly my assimilation of *becoming with* companion species to Heidegger’s philosophy of being, being-in-the-world and being-with-others, can also be read as a relation relating to a transcending realm, where existing with animals implies relating to the physical realm as well as reaching beyond its limits towards others and otherworldly sentiments, such as (as we have seen previously) loving ties.

Furthermore, Heidegger’s animal being can also be read as between worlds. As I indicated in Chapter Four, Heidegger (1995[1938]:185) argues that the animal has world and also exists within its own world, inaccessible to the human being. In other words, the animal can be interpreted as a being between worlds, surpassing human capabilities. Consequently, Heidegger’s animal can be thought of as an otherworldly figure traversing between part of the human world and its own world. Stemming from a similar transcendent reading of Heidegger’s animal being, Andersson (2017:76) suggests that Heidegger’s animals “need to be understood as a third kind of being, as much strangers to human openness as to the captivation of animals”. Andersson (2017:76; 78) continues by proposing that these animals be understood in terms of “otherworldly worlds”, implying that they are “temporally transcendent, self-conscious, and intentional. In turn,

³⁴⁴ For an extensive discussion on the sacred in Heidegger’s philosophy refer to Schalow’s *Heidegger and the Quest for the Sacred* (2001) in which he shows how Heidegger’s own thinking can be interpreted as a struggle to come to terms with religious questions.

such characteristics have transcendental consequences for our understanding of these animals in terms of subjects in and for a world”.

Indeed, Heidegger’s thinking of animality often prompts us to consider animals with reference to transcendence. In particular, I refer to two instances in his philosophy where Heidegger evokes a transcending animal, following theorists Chad Engelland (2018), John Lechte (2017) and Andrew Mitchell (2011). Firstly, Heidegger, in his discussion of animals in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1995[1938]:313; 318) discusses the difference between the Latin terms *anima* and *animus*, “only to conclude that both terms subordinate the human to the animal” (Engelland 2018:751). Engelland (2018:751) argues that Heidegger’s reference to *anima* and *animus* in relation to the animal world, suggests that we should extend our understanding of animals to accommodate extraordinary (or otherworldly) possibilities. Lechte (2017:658) elaborates on Engelland’s suggestion, noting the relation between Heidegger’s reference to *anima* and the otherworldly:

The term ‘animal’ originates from the Latin, *animalis*, meaning ‘having breath,’ from *anima* ‘breath’ or ‘air’ (*Oxford English Dictionary*). It is no doubt possible to interpret *anima* as the breath of life in a physical, biological sense, but it is also often translated as *soul* or *spirit*. While the Latin, *spiritus*, also means *spirit* and the Greek, *pneuma*, also means *breath*, the terms all derive from the same Proto-Indo-European root, **ane-* (to breathe, blow). Hence the irony of the Latin translation of Aristotle’s Greek title (Περὶ Ψυχῆς—*P_e_r_i_P_s_u_c_h_ē_s*, literally “On the Psyche”) as *De Anima*, or, ‘On the Soul,’ for it means that ‘animal’ evokes breath as life as spirit—as transcendence—at least as much as it evokes biological or purely bodily existence, even if the latter has been, since the nineteenth century, the usual way of characterising animality.

Thus, when Heidegger relates the term ‘animal’ back to its Latin roots, he simultaneously presents the animal’s physical world as well as its possible soulful existence. In this way, the animal is also closely related to the spiritual realm: “it is both spiritual in the sense of the soul *and* physical. We could let the

term ‘animal’ evoke this double movement instead of it being reduced to purely biological traits” (Lechte 2017:659).

Secondly, Mitchell (2011) maintains that in Heidegger’s later work *Language in the Poem* in *On the Way to Language* (1953), the philosopher provides a similar transcendental and somewhat spiritual reading of the animal. In this specific essay Heidegger refers to a poem by German author George Trakl on wandering, where “the wandering soul finds itself on the way somewhere” (Mitchell 2011:75). In his essay, Heidegger (in Mitchell 2011:75) argues that, like in Trakl’s poem, the soul (or being) wanders and enters a “spiritual twilight of blueness”.³⁴⁵ In this blue twilight the wanderer meets a deer. Heidegger (in Mitchell 2011:76) estimates:

In sight of the blue and at the same time brought to selfrestraint [Ansichhalten], the animal’s face is transfixed and transforms into the countenance of the deer [Antlitz des Wilds] ... In being transfixed, the face of the animal comes together. Its appearance gathers itself, composing itself, in order to look towards the holy.

Mitchell (2011:76-77) explains that in this essay Heidegger formulates a different understanding of animality than in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1938). On Mitchell’s reading, Heidegger places the animal in the space of grace, where it is no longer contained by the physicality of its being. Instead the animal is situated in the between, able to transform: “Heidegger’s new understanding of the animal is on the basis of its exposure to blueness, i.e. in terms of the between ... The animal, like the wanderer, belongs to the between. It exists beyond itself and this means it requires that beyond to be what it is” (Mitchell 2011:77; 81). In this particular unpacking of the animal we can argue that Heidegger evokes a sense of transcendence and spirituality not only in terms of the being of the wandering *Dasein*, but also in terms of the animals that *Dasein* encounters.

³⁴⁵ For Heidegger the blue twilight is a spiritual otherworldly, between place, where the soul wanders underway neither here nor there (Mitchell 2011:75). In other words, it is a metaphorical and soulful way of explaining the transcendence of *Dasein* as both here and there in search of the meaning of its being.

But what does the possible transcendence of Heidegger's animal being mean for our exploration of companion species? Heidegger's seeming transcendence and inkling towards the sacred, impels a consideration of the human *being-with* dog as irreducible beings of the world, to extend beyond Heidegger's *Umwelt* and Haraway's mud. By edging the human-nonhuman relation towards the transcendent we may be able to explain the relations of companion species often described as lovable and compassionate. In other words, it prompts us to question what a human being and animal being that transcends their physical parameters could potentially mean for the human-animal relation. Could it for example, following *Dasein's* transcending free way of being, imply a transcending freedom for the so-called captive animal? I continue delving into this question and these possibilities in what follows throughout this Addendum.

2.2 Transcendent love and play in Haraway's companion species

Throughout her body of scholarly texts, Donna Haraway often makes it clear that she does not wish to probe into the realm of the transcendent or spiritual world. For example, as mentioned, in *When Species Meet* Haraway (2008:3) argues that she is "a creature of the mud not the sky". Similarly, at the end of her *Cyborg Manifesto* she claims that she "would rather be a cyborg than a goddess" (Haraway 2006[1985]:147). Her refusal to look into an otherworldly sphere seems fitting since she stresses that she is a biologist at core, who finds inspiration in the immanent body: "I am a biologist who has always found edification in the amazing abilities of slime to hold things in touch and to lubricate passages for living beings and their parts" (Haraway 2008:3). Thus, for Haraway the biological world triumphs all. In stressing her loyalty to the physical realm, Haraway creates a dualistic boundary between the spiritual and the earthly (Graham 1999:419). In that manner, Haraway's boundary between the sacred and secular is quite ironic, since it re-enforces a common modernist dichotomy – the exact dichotomies that Haraway wishes to overcome in her postmodern thought (Haraway 2006[1985]:147; 2003:6; 2008:10).

Parallel to Haraway's biological roots in the mud of the earth, she simultaneously informs her readers (on various occasions) that her background stems from the sky, seeing that she grew up in a Catholic household. Haraway (2008:18) states: "Raised a Roman Catholic, I grew up knowing that the Real Presence was present under both 'species,' the visible form of the bread and the wine" and in *The Companion Species Manifesto* she tells us that her "soul [is] indelibly marked by a Catholic formation" (Haraway 2003:15). That is to say, Haraway herself admits that she cannot remove or forget the religious or spiritual world from her experiences and historicity. Even though she prefers to find meaning in the biological, Haraway's bond with the spiritual appears throughout her work, specifically in her notion of companion species.

In particular, in Haraway's definition of 'companion' and 'species' we find that she draws from a sacred realm to help unpack her understanding of the human-dog relation. Haraway (2008:17) maintains that her use of 'companion' "comes from the Latin *cum panis*", which means "with bread". In other words, Haraway directly associates the idea of species keeping each other company with the religious notion of 'breaking bread together'.³⁴⁶ Thus Haraway's notion of human and dog coming together as companions, could also infer that they come together in a spiritual sense, sharing in a soulful connection. In turn, Haraway (2003:15) in her definition of species says that she "hear[s] in species the doctrine of the Real Presence under both species, bread and wine, the transubstantiated signs of the flesh".³⁴⁷ That is to say, according to Haraway, when species meet she sees within their fleshy encounters the spiritual presence of a Supreme Being. In *When Species Meet*, she further explains that a transcending interpretation of species is necessary since "[s]ecular semiotics never nourished as well or caused as much indigestion" (Haraway 2008:18). Perhaps here Haraway is signaling

³⁴⁶ The expression 'breaking bread together' has Biblical origins. Jesus, when eating with His disciples, would break the bread and pass out pieces to be shared amongst each other. They were said to be sharing in each other's lives. During the Last Supper, Jesus broke the bread and said that it represents his body. In Christian tradition, bread is a symbol of the body of Christ and a communion of spiritual sustenance and a holy life.

³⁴⁷ In Christianity 'transubstantiation' means to convert into the body and blood of Christ - in other words to change the form or substance of something into something different.

that she herself cannot make sense of companion species relations without reaching for an understanding beyond the secular.

The possible essential religious and spiritual foundations of companion species continues to spread throughout both *The Companion Species Manifesto* and *When Species Meet*, perhaps hinting that Haraway's (2008:192) estimation of 'dog as her co-pilot' is not just ironically drawn from the slogan 'God as my co-pilot' as she originally indicates, but also purposefully highlights the close relation between companion species and the spiritual.³⁴⁸ For example, when describing the connection formed between herself and her dog, Cayenne, during agility training, Haraway (2008:228, emphasis added) says: "The price of the intensifying bond between us was, well, a bond. I still notice this; it still feels like a loss as well as an achievement of *large spiritual and physical joy* for both Cayenne and me". Additionally, she also describes how both she and Cayenne "were glued to each other's souls" (Haraway 2008:230), indicating that they were entwining in a transcendent realm, beyond their physicality.

Nonetheless, Haraway remains faithful to her earthly, material point of reference by simultaneously antagonising the possible spirituality of companion species: "Full of the promise of articulations that diverse beings might eventually make, the cosmos is the opposite of a place of transcendent peace" (Haraway 2008:83); "Human beings (and other organisms) need the fleshly practice of reason, need reasons, need technique, but, unless they are delusional, and many are, what people (and other organisms) do not have (except in a very special sense in mathematical and logical proof) is transcendent sufficient reasons" (Haraway 2008:224).

Regardless of Haraway's denial of the transcendent, as well as the countless paradoxical spiritual references throughout her theory of companion species, I argue that Haraway reaches into the realm of transcendence more so by hinging her understanding of companion species on interactions of *play* and *love*.

³⁴⁸ In Chapter Three I explained that Haraway refers to the dog as her co-pilot, to explain the close relation between human and dog interactions.

Following the discussion of the various aspects of *becoming with* companion species in Chapter Five, play (also associated with joy) as well as love form a key part of Haraway's human-dog relations. As outlined previously, Haraway's play consists of more than just a recreational activity. For her the entire process of dogs and humans *becoming with* one another – of paying attention, responding and adding to their worlds within various contact zones – constitutes play (Haraway 2008:374). Additionally, Haraway (2003:34) establishes that the relation of interspecies significant otherness is a manifestation of love.

The phenomenon of play is, as established, a specific way of being that can often result in joyful connection between human and dog. In addition, play is also sometimes framed as a transcendent experience. For instance, in *Homo Ludens* Dutch historian Johan Huizinga (1949:1, emphasis added) argues that during play:

[T]here is something 'at play' which *transcends* the immediate needs of life and imparts meaning to the action. All play means something. If we call the active principle that makes up the essence of play, 'instinct', we explain nothing; if we call it 'mind' or 'will' we say too much. However we may regard it, the very fact that play has meaning implies *a non-materialistic quality* in the nature of the thing itself.

Huizinga (1949:1) continues to explain that humans, such as psychologists and physiologists, try to define play by assigning it a certain place in the human's development. That is to say, they give it a function, for example hypothesising that play serves as an emotional outlet or as a learning instrument (Huizinga 1949:2-3). However, Huizinga argues that these functions are not the true nature of playing. He maintains that the essence of play is the sense of fun, joy and absorption, which "extends beyond the sphere of human life" (Huizinga 1949:3). Thus, following Huizinga, by acknowledging and referring to the phenomena of play, we also acknowledge something beyond matter that surpasses physical boundaries. In turn, because both humans and animals play, both beings transcend the material world:

The very existence of play continually confirms the supra-logical nature of the human situation. Animals

play, so they must be more than merely mechanical things. We play and know that we play, so we must be more than merely rational beings, for play is irrational (Huizinga 1949:3-4).

As a result, we can argue that Haraway's use of play to explain companion species relations also *playces* both human and animal in a transcendent sphere, since a key manner of *becoming with* one another includes a way of being that surpasses physical boundaries. Play's ability to go beyond limitations reflects in Haraway's use of the concept, since Haraway (2008:22) uses human playing with dog to show that animal and human can *extend beyond* their physicality towards one another in mutual response. Although Haraway (2008:30) maintains that she is "playing in the mud" with her "messmates" – in other words in a temporal and worldly realm – her very use of the concept situates companion species in tandem between the transcendent and the earthly. Therefore, Haraway's play emulates Gadamer's (2004[1975]:109) transcendental explanation of play as "a process that takes place 'in between.' ... The player experiences the game as a reality that surpasses him".

Furthermore, play is not only transcendent, but also holds a sense of sacredness. Gadamer (2004[1975]:102) argues that play contains its own sacredness in its seriousness, because the players lose themselves completely within the act. Similarly, Huizinga (1949:17) points out that playing is embedded in a sacred order of things and can be a holy expression, similar to rituals.³⁴⁹ Huizinga (1949:19; 21) explains: "In play we may move below the level of the serious, as the child does, but we can also move above it – in the realm of the beautiful and the sacred", seeing that "[t]he player can abandon himself body and soul to the game". As a result, Huizinga (1949:25; 27) asserts that play leads us into a sacred and religious realm.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁹ Huizinga (1949:18) comes to this conclusion following the Platonic identification of play and holiness as well as Romano Guardini's close association between mystery and play. Huizinga (1949:18-19) shows that Plato combined sacred life with play, arguing that life must be lived with God, as play. Similarly, Guardini closely associates worship and play. In this way these two authors "exalts the concept of play to the highest regions of the spirits" (Huizinga 1949:19).

³⁵⁰ In particular Huizinga (1949:27) states that play is "consecrated to the Deity, the highest goal of man's endeavour" and in this way the holiness of play is not lost.

Specifically, Huizinga argues that what occurs between various entities playing with one another is also sacred or mystic. Much like Haraway (2008:25) describes companion species as entwined in a dance of relation, Huizinga (1949:25) describes play between entities as a “magic dance” and a “mystic unity”.³⁵¹ He clarifies that in play two beings correspond beyond substance (Huizinga 1949:25). Thus, if we follow Huizinga’s understanding of play in relation to Haraway’s use thereof, companion species in the act of playing can also possibly extend their dance of relation into a magical, mystical or even holy realm.

Playing with companion species in a transcendent and sacred realm allows us to think of the human-dog or human-animal question from a different perspective. What’s more, such a perspective also incorporates a way of thinking of animals beyond worldly definitions, allowing us to possibly add concepts to the human-animal relation that, as I have shown throughout this study, often prove to be problematic to speak of in a strict material or physical domain.

For instance, approaching play between human and dog as a transcending phenomenon means that play occurs outside of any dualisms or antitheses (Huizinga 1949:9). In turn, play in its abandoning of the self is a free activity and an experience of complete (voluntary) freedom (Huizinga 1949:12). Furthermore, the sacredness of play also implies a sacred virtue of loyalty between players bound in the spirit of playful imaginings (Huizinga 1949:101). In this way, we can think of the human-animal *being-with* one another beyond anthropocentric dualisms, while assigning a sense of joy, freedom and loyalty to such relations without the concern of anthropomorphism, because this relation now occurs outside of both the human and animal horizon, in a somewhat ‘ideal sphere’. For example, thinking of human-dog companionship as a loyal relation in a spiritual sense means it is no longer the human assigning the trait of loyalty to the dog, but both the human and dog engaging in a transcending act that *plays* out as a sacred experience of loyalty.

³⁵¹ Interestingly, dancing can also be understood as exceeding a physical action, entering a state of transcendence and a possible ritual to connect to the soul and the spiritual (Stinson, Blumenfield-Jones and Van Dyke 1990:21; Smallwood 1978).

Another aspect of Haraway's *becoming with* companion species states that human and dog relate to each other with love. As I highlighted previously, Haraway's use of love – although not unconditional love per se – adds an abstract and transcendent realm to her theoretical exploration of companion species, since her use of love is a concept that typically surpasses physicality and emotion, while also closely associating with the divine world.³⁵² Therefore, if Haraway estimates that companion species bond with love, then their entwinement supposedly also surpasses physical interaction, including affective responses and corporeal emotional reactions.³⁵³ Notably, however Haraway (2008:97) insists, “To be in love means to be worldly”, because it is a result of real, earthly interactions. In this way, once again, companion species are terrestrial relations that, simultaneously, result in transcendental connections of love.

To make sense of the paradoxical use of love in companion species I turn to Irigaray's (1985) concept of the *sensible transcendent* or *tangible transcendent*.³⁵⁴ The term ‘sensibly transcendent’ appears, at first, as an oxymoron, joining the contradictory ideas of the sensible (that which is perceptible, visible and material) and the transcendent (that which is otherworldly). For Irigaray (1985:30), the *sensible transcendent* is the meeting point between differences, where an exchange or transformation occurs between binaries, however the

³⁵² In Chapter Three I argued that love is a concept that resists interpretation and is an amalgamation of biology and spirituality. As a result, I suggested that Haraway's companion species' love is not merely emotional or affective love, nor is it unconditional love. Instead Haraway's love resembles Irigaray's *The way of love* (2002) and notion of *loving to* (Irigaray 1996:104) where love indicates a sense of respect that results in a place beyond boundaries and differences, as well as a divine trust. Markedly, in Irigaray's notion of love the divine assumes an important place, because love traverses body and soul (Irigaray 2004:9). In other words, my understanding of Haraway's use of love, in this sense, closely resembles a divine or sacred love.

³⁵³ Interestingly, Kathy Rudy explores how humans love animals and the ethical implications thereof in her book *Loving Animals: Toward a New Animal Advocacy* (2011). Rudy's exploration, however, focusses purely on affective love or love as affect. Haraway's use of love differs from Rudy's, because she often refers to love beyond the realm of bodily responses. Indeed Haraway's (2008:85) is “a love that escapes calculation”.

³⁵⁴ Interestingly, Toye (2012:188-189) suggests that Haraway's cyborg figure and ethics of nonhuman relations should be considered in relation to Irigaray's *sensible transcendent*. Similarly, Graham (1999:149) argues that Haraway's cyborg resembles the *sensible transcendent* in that both notions “refuses the simplistic distinctions between sacred/secular, spiritual/material, divine/human”. In turn, Du Preez (2009:27) asserts that the *sensible transcendent* aids in exploring the differences and embodiment in cyberspace or virtual space. In this sense, I follow Toye, Graham and Du Preez in suggesting a comparison between the *sensible transcendent* and Haraway's companion species love.

binaries are not irreducible to one another, nor can one replace the other. In other words, in similar fashion to my earlier reading of Haraway's companion species in relation to Heidegger's notion of *being-with*, when human and animal meet as *sensible transcendent* an exchange occurs between the two beings, yet they remain exclusive in their uniqueness.³⁵⁵ Thus, human and dog attain a *sensible transcendental*, meeting in concrete reality, remaining true to their separate physical horizons, but also experiencing a sense of something beyond themselves (an exchange or togetherness of sorts with the other).

The meeting of species as a possible *sensible transcendent* opens up a space to interpret the experience of love between human and dog, as estimated by Haraway.³⁵⁶ If human and dog meet in the so-called 'sensible' (Haraway's mud) they interact with one another beyond themselves (*becoming with* and multispecies entwinements) and, accordingly, experience a sense of the transcendent (love), while retaining their different beings (*being-with*). Thus, Irigaray's *sensible transcendent* helps explain the various otherworldly experiences that Haraway refers to in relation to companion species, even though her companion species are earthly bound. The *sensible transcendent* helps us to reconcile Haraway's worldly companions and their otherworldly connections. Furthermore, it emphasises that, even in transcending relations of love, human and animal live in relation but their separate "identity is not swallowed up" (Whitford 1991:142).

Irigaray (1985:30) explains that when a being experiences a *sensible transcendent*: "He would have 'seen' the very spatiality of the visible, the real which precedes all reality, all forms, all truth of particular sensations or constructed idealities. He would have contemplated the 'nature' of the divine ..."

³⁵⁵ Notably, Irigaray (1985) primarily uses the *sensible transcendent* with regards to sexual difference, specifically in her book *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. The application of the concept to the difference between human and animal, might seem odd, however Toye (2012:187) argues that "Irigaray has provided multiple alternatives for thinking about this interval", such as "the angel, wonder, love, and most recently yoga and the breath". In other words, the notion is widely applicable in various situations.

³⁵⁶ My reasoning is largely motivated by Irigaray's later work (for example *The Way of Love* and the idea of *loving to others*) in which she suggests that love occurs in a similar in between interval, which I explored in Chapter Five.

Therefore, accommodating not only a transcending but also a spiritual or divine relation of companion species. Additionally, Irigaray (1985) suggests that the *sensible transcendent* prompts exchange or transformation in the space between species. That is to say, in the meeting point extending beyond the human and the animal, the human and animal can experience an ethics of transformation or a shift in their understanding of the other, which in turn comes into existence within each species unique horizon. In this way, love is not only a *consequence* of the worldly interactions between human and dog, love also *results* in transformed worldly companion species interactions. Hence, a seemingly *sensible transcendental* love frames the meeting of companion species.

Following the seemingly otherworldly traces that Haraway draws on in her notion of companion species, such as love and play, it is evident we may have to incorporate the meaning of the divine and the transcendent, and readmit the thrown out spiritual sphere into our understanding of the human-animal relation. In doing so, we open up a conversation concerning the transformative power of animal relations and set up a possible ethical understanding of human-animal nearness, where difference remains valuable – echoing our unpacking of the way of being of companionship. As Haraway (2008:107) suggests companion species practice a love that results in an ethical relation “that seeks knowledge, nurtures nondogmatic curiosity, and takes action for the well-being of dogs and people”.

3. Spirit animals: otherworldly theories of nonhuman beings

Thus far, I have explained my own reading of spiritual and transcending elements within the notion of companion species, as well as my own reading of Haraway’s companion species in relation to Heidegger’s idea of being-with-others. Thereby I emphasised the possible prominence of an otherworldly realm in companion species relations and, in turn, its implications of approaching animals ethically, since it results in possible transformative, loyal, free and loving treatment of others. In keeping with the theme of otherworldly human-animal relations, I now turn to instances where theorists specifically outline the human-animal and human-nonhuman relation as situated within the realm of the

spiritual, the otherworldly or the so-called ‘in between’. In other words, I briefly explore scholarly work that provides an account of animal life as transcendent, to support and extend my suggestion that another layer of the companion species relation reaches towards an otherworldly terrain. In particular, I concisely unpack two specific accounts of human-animal relations located within the otherworldly, namely Irigaray’s *Animal Compassion* (2004) and Eduardo Kohn’s notion of trans-species relations in *How Forests Think* (2013) and *How Dogs Dream* (2007).³⁵⁷

3.1 Luce Irigaray: animal compassion

So far, I have often referred to French philosopher Luce Irigaray’s philosophy of being and her feminist interrogations of difference and identity, to aid my discussions on navigating the different beings of humans and animals, loving relations and (sensible) transcendent relations. However, just as Heidegger contemplated the being of the human as well as the being of the animal on separate occasions, Irigaray also provides us with a philosophy of the animal being detached from her philosophy of being. In an essay comprising only of a few pages, entitled *Animal Compassion*, Irigaray (2004:195) delves into the question of the animal wondering: “How can we talk about them? How can we talk to them?”. In her account, Irigaray considers animals beyond the human and physical universe through autobiographical stories. Moreover, her (brief) dealing with the animal question raises some positive points for the ethical treatment of animals (Štuva 2013:130). Owing to Irigaray’s transcendent account and her contribution on the treatment of animals, I examine her text below.

In *Animal Compassion*, Irigaray starts off by reiterating what we have discovered through the examination of both Derrida and Heidegger’s understanding of animals. She asserts that the only manner in which she can speak about the animal is by narrating what she observes from a human horizon, while the

³⁵⁷ In Chapters One and Three I also mentioned Serres’s *The Natural Contract* (1995) and Szerszynski’s *Praise Be to You, Earth-Beings* (2016) as texts that understand multispecies relations to include a spiritual realm. For my purposes here, I do not specifically refer to Serres and Szerszynski, since they tend to focus more on multispecies relations in general – not the animal’s possible spiritual being, which is the main focus of this Addendum.

animal being remains inaccessible to her: “I do not inhabit it from the inside – it remains foreign to me. The objective signs that appear do not bring me the key to the meaning for them, the meaning among themselves. Not really, unless I project my human imaginary onto them” (Irigaray 2004:195). In these first few lines, Irigaray (2004:195) also establishes that she does not wish to consider animals from an anthropocentric *or* multispecies point of view, since she does not consider it appropriate to make them “objects of study” *or* to make them “partners of a universe they do not share”. For her the only solution is to narrate the signs of their being that animals have given her, as she has understood them (from her human point of view) (Irigaray 2004:195). In this way, Irigaray narrates and describes her encounters with nonhuman animals, how she observes them and contemplates their meaning in her human life.

Tracing her relations to animals from her childhood, Irigaray (2004:195) firstly relates how her childhood memories are attached to the joy she gained from her companionship with animals. She specifically refers to how she used to *play* with butterflies and rabbits. For Irigaray (2004:195), these interactions were especially spiritual or transcendental:

To contemplate a flowering bush covered with fluttering butterflies moved me to ecstasy, or something close. I later learned that the word *papillon* (‘butterfly’) comes from a Greek word meaning ‘soul’. I would contemplate for hours those souls flying or resting in the empyrean or some terrestrial paradise. Nourishing themselves from the nectar of flowers and giving thanks by beating their wings.

Thus, Irigaray thought of the butterflies as spiritual souls ‘wandering’, ‘resting’ or ‘giving thanks’ (in a religious sense) from a celestial space to the earthly paradise. In turn these spiritual souls also gave her a sense of transcendence or bliss. Similarly, of her childhood companionship with rabbits, Irigaray (2004:196) tells of the perceived sacred peace and happiness they brought her. Additionally, later in her life she also explains that she experienced a mystical sense of comfort and healing from having to look after a rabbit, giving her comfort and energy (Irigaray 2004:196). Along these narratives Irigaray (2004:196) marvels: “Are animals sometimes messengers? Come from where?”

Sent by whom? Or what? By themselves? Or??”, suggesting that perhaps animals have possible otherworldly agendas, acting as a kind of supernatural aid to human life.

For Irigaray (2004:197) the “most mysterious aid” that she has experienced in her animal encounters has come from birds.³⁵⁸ For her:

Birds are our friends. But also our guides, our scouts. Our angels in some respect. They accompany persons who are alone, comfort them, restoring their health and their courage. Birds do more. Birds lead one’s becoming... It is, more than overly logical speech, the pathway to restore but also transubstantiate the body, the flesh. It is not for naught that the bird appears as the spiritual assistant, even the spiritual master, in many a tradition. Most of the birds love us but want us inhabited by a subtle, divine breath (Irigaray 2004:197).

In other words, Irigaray thinks of animals, here specifically birds, as celestial beings or angels, accompanying and aiding in their human journey, showing them how to transcend matters of the body and reach towards the divine. In this sense, Irigaray’s understanding of birds (or animals) reminds of a gnostic spiritual journey. Stemming from ancient religious beliefs, Gnosticism (in short) refers to a search for meaning that is essential to free the self of evil worldly matter, in order to convene with a spiritual realm (Markschies 2001:2).³⁵⁹ In the gnostic soul’s pursuit towards enlightenment it often encounters a mediator,

³⁵⁸ Birds are prominent features throughout Irigaray’s philosophy. For example, in *Between East and West* (1999) and *To be Two* (2001), Irigaray presents birds as angels, mediators between God, man and woman and spiritual assistants who animate breath (Štuva 2013:131). Additionally, birds in contemporary society are often symbolic of a link between Heaven and earth, as well as freedom, owing to their capabilities to fly. Different bird species are also well-known in religious and other settings to bring messages, such as a dove bringing peace or a crow symbolising death.

³⁵⁹ I broadly and very briefly define Gnosticism here to refer to a worldview that denies the material world and endorses the spiritual realm (Hurtado 2005:519). As a philosophical notion, Gnosticism is concerned with who human beings are, where they come from and where they are going in terms of spirituality. The perspective stems from the ancient Gnostics, who, during the first and second centuries, followed various scriptures and writings in order to teach, understand and achieve knowledge, enlightenment and salvation united with a divine god (Hoeller 2012). Gnosticism is however an extensive subject in its own right, which includes lengthy debates, examination of authentic witnesses and research on origins. I do not delve into the gnostic realm any further, since I only briefly use it to support Irigaray’s transcendent understanding of animals. For more on the origins of Gnosticism see Rudolph’s *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism* (1977) and Markschies’s *Gnosis: An Introduction* (2001).

messenger or intercessor to aid its journey towards the divine (Rudolph 1977:109). Thus, Irigaray's birds as messengers and mystical aids can be assimilated to the spiritual gnostic mediator, assisting its human companion to transcend into the divine realm.³⁶⁰

Interestingly, like Derrida and Heidegger's question of the animal, Irigaray's spiritual animal being also points her towards her own humanity or, as we have seen towards her own spiritual journey. Said differently, parallel to Derrida (1997) and Heidegger, considering the animal and the animal's presence highlights and prompts Irigaray to consider her own human way of being. As she indicates in the passage above: "Birds leads ones becoming" (Irigaray 2004:197). Additionally, she also argues that a divine understanding of animals "makes us interrogate ourselves, includes an obscure form of indication for our becoming, an unconscious problem of imitation" (Irigaray 2004:200). In other words, according to Irigaray, animals help humans to achieve a sense of spirituality, while simultaneously prompting us to contemplate what it means to be human by encouraging us to think about ourselves, as well as our possible transcendent nature. Put differently, animals point us towards the *sensible* and the *transcendent*. Not only birds, but also other animals "accompany us in a course towards the accomplishment of our humanity" (Irigaray 2004:201). Thus, for Irigaray, otherworldly animals also allow us to become human (Štuva 2013:131), in the same way that the animal question mostly refers back to what it means to be human.³⁶¹

In particular, Irigaray (2004:200) maintains that what animals teach humans about humanity is "our own way of freedom" – learning to freely exist in our own

³⁶⁰ Notably, Irigaray's concept of animals as a supernatural aid to human life is similar to the postmodern understanding of technology as a transcending assistant in the current Digital Age. Theorists, such as Erik Davis (2015) imagine that in the current Information Age, technologies exist as mystical entities to aid us in our life on earth and journey towards spirituality. Davis (2015) refers to this as *techgnosis*. Thus, Irigaray's animals correspond to Davis's mystical technologies in that they both act as aids to the human (and the journey towards transcendence). I elaborated on the possible transcending capabilities of technology in Chapter Eight.

³⁶¹ In Chapters Two and Four, with reference to Derrida's *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* (1997) and Heidegger's *The Fundamental Concept of Metaphysics* (1938), I argued that the animal question usually returns the question of being back to the human, allowing us to understand our own being in a different manner.

way of being. What we learn from animals is a simple “being-there” (*Da-sein*), where we refrain from necessarily constantly *becoming with* and rather focus on listening, witnessing and feeling (spiritually) (Irigaray 2004:200). Additionally, Irigaray (2004:200) suggests that we can learn from our acceptance of animal assistance, to accept human aid in a similar way and act compassionately and supportive to animals *as well as* other humans. In other words, in a spiritual sense, animal assistants also teach humans, in a Heideggerian sense, to *care* for each other.

Echoing Haraway’s idea of love in companion species, Irigaray (2004:198) suggests that the mystical power of birds also lies in what she sees as their love for humans and their call (or song) for humans to love in return. Consequently, Irigaray (2004:198) argues that a manner to return the spiritual love that the animal shows is to become friends with them. However, Irigaray’s animal friendship is not an earthly companionship, tied together in flesh, as Haraway suggests. Nor is it an anthropocentric-anthropomorphic objectification of animal into a human friend. For Irigaray, (2004:198, emphasis added) animal-human friendship occurs outside of the earthly encounter, in a sacred sense, where human learns to “invite, *at a distance*, the other to come much closer”. In other words, it is a spiritual bond where humans learn about the animal, however they remain distant, detached or (once again) irreducible.³⁶²

With her perceived understanding of animals as spiritual aids and divine loving friends, Irigaray, in the midst of her accounts of animal encounters, disperses how humans should interact with such a divine animal. As mentioned above, she argues that we should be mindful of the separation or distance between human and animal, because of their different, irreducible horizons. In an encounter with

³⁶² Theorist Lisa Guenther also echoes Irigaray’s notion of the compassionate treatment of animals, stemming from a perceived human-animal friendship. In her consideration of the possibility of animal friendship, Guenther (2007) argues that compassion towards others does not come from a mutual responsiveness or responsibility between beings. Instead, Guenther (2007:227) asserts that compassion occurs in a transcendent friendship, where two beings exist as kin, but remain distinct in their intertwining. For Guenther (2007:228) compassion is dependent on difference, which, in turn, defines friendship. As a result, Guenther (2007:234-235) maintains that if animals and humans can transcend physicality and be friends, as a result of their differences, they should also teach each other to behave with compassion.

a butterfly she explains that she did not force the butterfly to sit on her, she simply allowed the butterfly to enter her world and let it stay for as long as it wanted: “*I stayed immobile* the time it wanted to stay there, indeed to walk or flutter on me here and there, and I let it go away when it pleased” (Irigaray 2004:195, emphasis added). In turn, she argues that this particular encounter, where she let the butterfly be its own being in relation to hers “seemed thus to assure me of its friendship” (Irigaray 2004:196). Thus Irigaray suggests a way for us to treat animals includes not forcing them into our world or responding to their being (as Haraway sometimes suggests) – note how Irigaray remains *immobile* – but rather just letting them be and being open to the message they wish to deliver to us if they decide to encounter us. Here, Irigaray’s suggestion aligns with my reading of Heidegger’s argument and Derrida’s thesis: showing animals respect includes showing respect to their subjective being by ‘letting them be’, which opposes Haraway’s argument that respect towards animals lies in reciprocal response and curiously probing into their existence.

Irigaray (2004:196) is also not oblivious to the fact that at times, it is human nature to assimilate the animal into our human world. For instance, she recalls how she used to *play* with her rabbits: “I sometimes removed them from their universe to dress them in clothes and walk them in a baby carriage, like dolls” (Irigaray 2004:196). In turn, Irigaray (2004:198-199), with specific reference to domestic animals, acknowledges that sometimes animals seek out our homes and enter in a relation with us in our world. In these instances, she argues that we should treat the animals with gentleness or compassion, in such a way that they do not seem to suffer amidst our activity (Irigaray 2004:196). She does not believe in keeping animals against their will, and refrains from causing any harm to them. Instead she argues that we should learn to be hospitable friends to animals when they choose to enter our homes, welcoming them as spiritual messengers and keep from restricting them to leave (Irigaray 2004:198).

Irigaray’s understanding and ethical suggestions make sense, especially if we consider animals as she does in a celestial light. That is to say we treat them as we would holy or divine Beings. Yet, applying Irigaray’s hypothesis and narration

to all animals is a more complex matter. As Irigaray (2004:198) herself admits, she does not experience all animal species as spiritual guardians and at times she still rejects the presence of certain animals in her world. From my point of view, I can easily imagine such hospitable, gentle and spiritual relations with animals such as Irigaray's birds, rabbits and even cats, since these animals seemingly go about their own lives, only entering the human world or home on their own account. *But what about dogs?* Dogs in contemporary society, as we know by now, share their lives with humans in a way that goes beyond chance encounters. In addition, their presence in human life is not necessarily forced, but arguably a deliberate way of being that allows dogs to survive and even experience a sense of reciprocal joy in the presence of humans. Could we perhaps then think of dogs, following an Irigarayan reading of animals as spiritual, as an *ever-present* spirit, a lasting friend, aiding us in our human world?³⁶³

In this way, I suggest that even always-present animals in human lives, such as dogs, should be treated as Irigaray (2004) suggest she treats her spiritual aiding animals: with gentleness, causing no harm or suffering, respecting their subjectivity, welcoming them when they enter our world as friends, as well as acknowledging that we share earth. In other words, Irigaray provides us with a possible ethics of animal treatment, based on a perceived transcendence that requires compassionate interactions.

Moreover, Irigaray also gives us an account for instances where animals do not act as companions or friends.³⁶⁴ Helpfully defending her ethical stance and spiritual understanding of animals, even in relation to obscene animal behaviour, Irigaray argues (2004:198) that on her reading of animals as celestial or transcendent, aggressive or fearful behaviour in animals usually results from

³⁶³ Interestingly, Patton (2010:578) warns us against interpreting animals as spiritual aids, providing an opposing view to the one presented throughout this Addendum: "The danger is that animals, as the messengers and saviours in fables and theory, may be beaten and crucified when their behaviours, even if understood, do not alter human nature".

³⁶⁴ Here, I refer to those exceptions where animals act violently towards humans, for instance, or do not behave in a manner that humans expect or understand, which I have also briefly indicated throughout the study.

their exposure to the material world, human behaviour or the human's misunderstanding of the animal being.³⁶⁵

If so-called domestic animals have become aggressive, it is often by an artificial cultivation of their instincts. As a friend wisely taught me, a satisfied animal does not look for blood. Such a comportment is human. When animals are subjected to people, do they feel constrained to imitate this behaviour? I have noticed something interesting in this regard: the fact that I have become vegetarian ... has made certain animals, dogs, for example, more friendly to me. A silent non-aggression pact exists between us. Having less fear, they attack less. (Irigaray 2004:198).

As a result, Irigaray's summation of the animal as an aid and messenger to human existence descending from a spiritual sphere opens up a space for us to consider animals as irreducible friends who call us towards a divine love, making possible a thinking of animals in terms of freedom, friendship and love, which transcends anthropocentric associations of these notions. Furthermore, it allows us to consider our human treatment towards animals as if we were hosting a divine being, motivating compassionate and graceful human behaviour towards animals. Irigaray's otherworldly animal account also unlocks a possible interpretation of what is often regarded as 'obscene' or 'evil' animal behaviour, where such behaviour is a direct result from the sacred animal's exposure to the human being and its terrestrial world. Finally, Irigaray's divine animal compassion echoes the irreducible differences of a human way of being and nonhuman way of being, while teaching us about being human and *being-with* others. For Irigaray, *being-with* animals, in a transcendent realm means:

Learning to meet the other and to welcome them in their difference, to be reborn thus in a fidelity to ourselves and to this other. Towards this accomplishment we must force ourselves along the way with the aid or friendship of animals, of angels, of gods who agree to accompany us in a course towards the accomplishment of humanity. (Irigaray 2004:201).

³⁶⁵ Notably, Irigaray does not assign irrational animal behaviour to an evil or wicked realm (opposing animal transcendence), but, similar to the gnostic view of the world, argues that animal aggression or fear is a source of human behaviour and the material and artificial world.

3.2 Eduardo Kohn: *trans-species*

In Chapter Two, I pointed out that a specific type of multispecies relation occurs in the case of *trans-species* relations or encounters. As explained, *trans-species* is a suggested way of *becoming* one another where species boundaries become blurred as one species seemingly transfers to another species cognitive or physical experience of the world. For example, human enters the animal's gaze and experiences the world as that animal, or vice versa. Most prominently introduced by ethnographer Eduardo Kohn, *trans-species* is a controversial phenomenon, because its feasibility is so widely contradicted. Indeed, one of the main arguments of my study – that the human access to the animal's way of being is limited – stands in opposition to the idea of *trans-species*. Nevertheless, *trans-species* is a growing point of interrogation with regards to the animal question and human-animal relation and remains significant in any discussion of animal and human relations.³⁶⁶

Haraway (2008:46) states: “*Trans-species* encounter value is about relationships among a motley array of lively beings, in which commerce and consciousness, evolution and bioengineering, and ethics and utilities are all in play”. Therefore, as a seemingly possible phenomenon, *trans-species* brings together humans, nonhumans, technology, ethics and relationships in a prominent manner. In particular Cary Wolfe (in Haraway 2008:372) suggests that multispecies relations are, in a way, “a shared *trans-species* being-in-the-world constituted by complex relations of trust, respect, dependence, and communication”. In other words, if multispecies relations suggest that our being-in-the-world can be likened to a *trans-species* exchange of human and animal being, it is worth interrogating the implications of such an understanding.

In my view, implied by the prefix ‘*trans*’, *trans-species* is fundamentally a *transcendental* phenomenon, because in the very act of *transferring* to another bodily experience, one leaves the restrictions of the self behind in order to experience another's world, or then an otherworldly (or other-than-human)

³⁶⁶ In addition to Kohn's body of work on *trans-species* relations also see, for example, Northoff and Panksepp (2008), Bradshaw and Watkins (2006) as well as Ahuja (2009).

being. Kohn (2013:149) correspondingly maintains that in trans-species encounters (specifically referring to the trans-embodiment of human and dog) “dogs and people come together as part of a single affective field that transcends their boundaries as species”. Thus, if argued that trans-species form a part of multispecies relations, I contend that there is only room to do so if a transcendent layer of understanding is added to our concept of human-animal relations. More exactly, if multispecies theorists such as Haraway and Wolfe include trans-species relations in their understanding of when species meet, then they are once again opening up a space to consider species companionship in a transcendent realm. In what follows, I fleetingly explore what the transcending aspect of trans-species entails in terms of companion species drawing from Kohn’s formulation of the concept in his *How Forests Think* (2013) and *How Dogs Dream* (2007).

In contrast to Irigaray’s animals that descended from a spiritual sphere onto earth, Kohn’s trans-species, transcend themselves within the parameters of the immanent world. For instance, human travels outside of his own body, into the body of the animal. Kohn (2007:18) explains that in a trans-species understanding of human and animals: “Lives are more than bodies, even though they can never fully be disembodied” – being transcends a particular physical horizon but is always attached to some corporeal site. Kohn (2013:90), like Haraway, finds it increasingly important to discuss the relation between human and animal and its associated meaning in the mundane realm, not in what he perceives to be a detached spiritual domain. Hence, he pursues enchanted and mystical occurrences, such as trans-species, in the everyday world and on the basis of concrete examples.

What Kohn’s tracing of enchanting human-animal and human-nonhuman relations within the corporeal world reaffirms is that a transcendent layer of meaning to companion species is possible, even in their earthly doings and fleshy entwinements, in contrast to Haraway’s persistence to understanding the human-dog relation sans transcendence. Throughout Kohn’s scholarly work he explores various so-called ‘magical’ or “enchanted” (Kohn 2013) instances of

human-nonhuman relations in Amazonian ethnography.³⁶⁷ The enchanting examples include instances where the Runa people (indigenous people of South America) occur as trans-species to experience the world as animals in order to survive. For instance, Kohn (2013:107) explains how Runa people learn to see as jaguars by letting their soul exceed their body to avoid being hunted by them. He also explores how Runa people interpret dog dreams literally, for him the dream interpretations are a manner of trans-species communication *between* species (Kohn 2007; 2013). In other words, by means of these examples, Kohn observes transcending experiences within the everyday life of the Amazonian people, reminding us that a mythical, sacred or otherworldly realm not only manifests as intangible notions such as love, but can also manifest in the physical, tactile world. Following Kohn, I wonder whether the importance of human-nonhuman touch in Haraway's notion of companion species can also somehow contain a sense of the enchanted?

In addition, Kohn (2013:18) argues that human and nonhuman can communicate "successfully and safely" with one another through such enchanting encounters and "creative strategies" that transcend traditional western material doings (Kohn 2013:18). In other words, Kohn's enchanting human-animal relations provides us with an understanding of animals, which he maintains allows us to communicate and interact with them without harm. In a somewhat similar way as the Heideggerian (1995[1938]:210) notion of transposing,³⁶⁸ Kohn (2013:222) argues that trans-species is a learning to think as others or with the images of others. According to Kohn (2013:222), if all humans can learn, as the Runa people do, to think as animals, we might be able to "live well" with them

³⁶⁷ Notably, most of Kohn's examples occur in Amazonian ethnography, outside of a western society and, as a result, a western philosophical paradigm. He is therefore able to explore human-nonhuman relations beyond western anthropocentrism and challenges typical western conceptions of human-animal relations (Keck 2013).

³⁶⁸ In Chapter Four I explored Heidegger's (1995[1938]:210) notion of transposing, where he supposes that human can, to a certain extent, learn to think *as if* animal. There is therefore a clear relation between Heidegger's *transposing* and Kohn's *trans-species*, however notably for Heidegger transposing is a process that takes place in the imagination (a thinking or mindful action), where the human remains fully aware of his human horizon. Kohn's trans-species transposing takes place in an enchanting realm (an otherworldly action), where the human becomes animal.

“[a]nd it can help us notice what the kind of life that extends beyond the human and the kind that is all-too-human share in common”.

Furthermore, Kohn (2013:223) argues that learning to see the transcendent in human-animal relations is important to help us in thinking beyond anthropocentric dualities and accepting of animal individuality: “Learning to see the symbolic ... allows us to appreciate that we live in sociocultural worlds – ‘complex wholes’ – that, despite their holism, are also ‘open’ to that which lies beyond them ... we might think about reality as something that extends beyond the two kinds of real that our dualistic metaphysics provides us”. Affirming Kohn’s reasoning, Bruno Latour (2014:305) argues that Kohn, alongside Haraway, provides us with an account of networked relations that help overcome subject-object dualisms and negotiate a sustainable future for living with species.

Although fascinating and supported by the likes of Latour and Haraway, I tread lightly into Kohn’s trans-species relations, because it is such an unascertained phenomenon. Even though Kohn traces trans-species relations in the everyday mud, it is not the worldly mud with which I am familiar. Instead his observations are rooted in a small grouping of Amazonian relations, while I am firmly rooted in the argument made throughout this study: the human and animal cannot completely access each other’s way of being.³⁶⁹ Therefore, Kohn and I (following Heidegger and Haraway) are barking up two different trees (so to speak), hence I am cautious to apply such an enchanted way of being to a general sense of human-animal companion species. Nonetheless, what I find of value in Kohn’s explorations is that he opens up a space to consider the realm of the transcendent not only in terms of the animal question, but also within our everyday doings with animals. Thus Kohn (and trans-species relations) prompts those multispecies theorists who do not consider the human-animal

³⁶⁹ Comparatively, trans-species relations are the epitome of interspecies entwinement. As Kohn (2007:18) explains within trans-species relations: “Dogs really become human (biologically and in historically very specific ways) and the Runa really become puma; the need to survive encounters with feline semiotic selves requires it. Such becomings change what it means to be alive; they change what it means to be human just as much as they change what it means to be a dog or even a predator”.

entwinement beyond earthly matter, such as Haraway, into transcendence. In addition, Kohn, in the same way as Irigaray, argues that if we consider the human-animal relation beyond the human and with a sense of enchantment, we can establish a way of *being-with* animals that is compassionate and safe for both human and animal.

4. Soulful stories of human-dog companionship in Netflix's *Dogs*

Throughout this Addendum I have discussed possible ways of thinking through the human-animal relation in the realm of the spiritual and in terms of transcendence, so as to add an additional layer to the understanding of companion species relation already established in throughout this study. In my showing that both Heidegger and Haraway's philosophy of being – which informs my understanding of the specific ways of humans *being-with* animals – contain traces of the spiritual and the transcendental, as well as my unpacking of the otherworldly theories of animals of Irigaray and Kohn, I have referred to various animals (ranging from dogs and birds to pumas) and the question of the animal in general. Owing to the fact that the specific relation of companion species as human and dog is the main focus of my study, in the next section I momentarily pay closer attention to the particularities of the human-dog relation in the realm of the spiritual.

Drawing from Irigaray and Haraway's emphasis on the importance of so-called 'dog stories' or human accounts of experiences with animals, I interweave the possible otherworldly aspects of human *being-with* dog with actual accounts or narrations of companion species relations. Following Irigaray (2004:195), it is perhaps most purposeful to consider otherworldly aspects of human-dog relations through narrations of their perceived spirituality, especially since the realm of the sacred is intangible and invisible. Thus, by paying attention to otherworldly narratives, hopefully companion species accounts can make the invisible realm of companion species more visible, alongside the other discussions in this Addendum.³⁷⁰

³⁷⁰ Notably these accounts, as with Haraway's stories of companion species, are fundamentally told by humans and transcribed as a human experience of the possible otherworldly dog.

The list of sources and stories of the spiritual impact of dogs in human life is extensive and an attempt to track the entire sacred history of the dog would, no doubt, amount to a task far beyond the scope of what could be achieved here. Therefore, I direct my discussion to the Netflix documentary series *Dogs* (Berg & Zipper 2018). *Dogs* is a six-part docuseries that celebrates the bond between people and their dogs, narrating stories of companion species from around the world, including Syria, Italy and Costa Rica. According to Berg and Zipper (2018, emphasis added) “the show takes viewers on an inspirational journey that explores the remarkable, *perhaps even magical*, qualities that have given the animals [dogs] a special place in most people’s hearts”.

In other words, *Dogs* narrates stories of companion species, but also emphasises the possible magical, transcendental and spiritual qualities in the human-dog relation. The otherworldly aspect of the human-dog relation that underlies the show is perhaps already introduced in the opening theme song of all six episodes. Written by Paul Hicks specifically for the series, the very first lines of the theme song remind of a religious worship song and open a space for the transcendent throughout the series: “Spirit comes to me / Free of world / Love and care for me / Just like your child ...”. Hence, I use the stories told throughout *Dogs* to show the possible aspects of the spiritual and the free in companion species relations.

In the first episode of *Dogs* the viewer meets a young girl, Corrine, who suffers from epilepsy, and her family. The episode follows the family’s journey to apply for and get a service dog, Rory, who can help detect Corrine’s seizures before they occur.³⁷¹ During the episode the viewer also meets several service dogs helping other children with special needs.³⁷² From my perspective, Irigaray’s

³⁷¹ In a recent paper, Catala et al. (2019:1) demonstrate that dogs can recognise an odour in humans, set off moments before an epileptic seizure takes place. In other words, dogs can be trained to alert humans of a possible seizure occurring as they anticipate an attack by recognising the odour (Main 2019).

³⁷² Service dog is a term used to describe any dog trained to help any person who has a disability or impairment to function in contemporary society, including the physically, visually and auditory impaired, as well as those suffering from mental disorders, seizures and even diabetes.

(2004) notion of animals as spiritual aids, or angels, prominently manifests in service dogs. I suggest that what is often seen as an anthropocentric relation – assigning dogs certain ‘jobs’ in the human world, such as guide dogs and therapy dogs – can, following Irigaray’s reading of animals, also possibly be conceived of differently as a spiritual relation, instead of framing such dogs as at the service of, or dominated by, man.³⁷³

Throughout Corinne’s story and the documentary’s depiction of service dogs, I argue that the dogs embody the Irigarayan animal as divine aid, since the specific service dogs are presented as soulful and spiritual, while literally helping children who have difficulties going about their everyday doings. The episode shows the process of applying and waiting for over a year for an assigned service dog. When the family finally finds out that they are getting a dog to help Corinne and meet him virtually (via email, Skype and photos), the moment is celebrated as a miracle or divine aid sent to the family as Corinne runs through the neighbourhood to show her friends her new dog. Jeremy, service dog trainer and director, explains that getting a service dog is a hope for a lot of families to “give them their life back”. He also explains that Rory has a “drive” to detect seizures, indicating that his instincts to help Corinne goes above and beyond his training (Berg & Zipper 2018).

Notably, throughout this episode human and dog are seen playing, both separately and together. The viewer sees how Corinne plays with her friends or plays soccer at school and during the act of play transcends her seizures, finding a sense of normality and freedom. Her dad, Mike, tells us “watching Corinne play soccer, no one would know ... she’s one hundred percent ... that’s her element” (Berg & Zipper 2018). Directly after, the viewer also sees Rory playing with a ball, emphasising the possibilities of how Corinne and Rory can play together, during which they might connect beyond their beings, as well as how playing with Rory might further aid Corinne in temporarily escaping the restrictions of her epilepsy. Towards the end of the documentary Rory and Corinne play

³⁷³ In Chapter Two I showed how dog training and assigning jobs or roles in society to dogs can be understood as anthropocentric, because man uses the animal to his advantage or projects his needs onto the dog.

together outside as he settles into his new home. In the act of playing together both Rory and Corinne seem happy (Rory wags his tail and Corinne laughs), experiencing a joy that surpasses their physicality (Berg & Zipper 2018).

Following what can be interpreted as a transcending joy shared between Corinne and Rory while playing, we see Corinne experiencing a seizure later that night. In a mentally upset state post seizure, Corinne refuses to engage with her family. Rory then appears by her side, licking and touching her. From the imagery it is visible how Rory's presence affects her mental state, as Corinne becomes aware of the dog's being she seems to break out of her upset state.³⁷⁴ She lies down with Rory amongst her family and, in a moving scene, the child and her dog touch and cuddle. The imagery of Rory's paw in Corinne's hand (Figure D) reminds of the cover image of Haraway's *When Species Meet* discussed in Chapter Five.³⁷⁵ Finally, Corinne tells the viewer: "Life with Rory is awesome ... Sometimes I wonder what Rory's thinking and I think he loves me" (Berg & Zipper 2018). In other words, for Corinne, she and Rory share an awe-inspiring or otherworldly bond of love that has changed her life and helped her overcome some of her physical difficulties.³⁷⁶ Put differently, in an Irigarayan sense, Rory aids Corinne (and her family) to transcend and overcome her physical limitations or bodily inabilities, as well as her own being-in-the-world as a person who suffers from epilepsy (Berg & Zipper 2018).



Figure D: Rory and Corinne lie together, hand-in-paw, *The Kid with the Dog, Dogs* (Berg & Zipper 2018). Screenshot by the author.

³⁷⁴ The presence of Rory changing Corinne's state of mind resounds Derrida's encounter with his cat, unpacked in Chapter Two. As Corinne becomes aware of Rory, as a dog, she like Derrida seems to wonder what the dog thinks of her, in doing so in a Derridean sense questions her own state and easily, almost magically, calms down. This is also echoed in a scene, where Corinne has to practice having a seizure with Rory at training school. Here for the first time, prompted by Rory as her service dog, Corinne emotionally becomes aware of herself and what she looks like during a seizure.

³⁷⁵ Perhaps in my otherworldly reading following Irigaray's spiritual animal, Corinne and Rory's hand-to-paw touch retains its precursor's (*The Creation of Adam* [Michelangelo 1508-1512]), sense of the divine.

³⁷⁶ Here I understand Corinne's use of love as described earlier: as a transcending state that extends beyond physicality and affective response.

The second instalment of *Dogs* takes the viewer on an emotional journey with a Syrian refugee, Ayham, who attempts to smuggle his dog Zeus out of Damascus, Syria to Germany, where he lives, with the help of a welfare group. Zeus's story is presented as miraculous and soul-stirring. Kirkland (2018) asserts that in "Episode Two ('Bravo, Zeus'), you realize that you're watching something both truly heartwarming and poignantly revealing". Indeed, emphasised by his divine name,³⁷⁷ Zeus's courageous rescue mission extends beyond both physical and spiritual borders and, as he makes his way back to his owner, the love between human and dog is seemingly *sensible transcendental*.

Throughout the episode Zeus's caretakers (including two of Ayham's friends, their families, the volunteer who flies with Zeus to Germany and the children in Damascus who know him) all tell Zeus that they love him. In one particular scene Ayham is on a video call from Germany with his friend Amer in Syria, who is looking after Zeus. As Ayham speaks to Zeus and tells him that he loves him, Zeus recognises his owner and responds by howling into the camera (Figure E). Additionally, whenever a caretaker has to say goodbye to Zeus they are extremely upset and remind him that they love him (Berg & Zipper 2018).



Figure E: Zeus howling into the camera during a video call, *Bravo Zeus, Dogs* (Berg & Zipper 2018). Screenshot by the author.

It is evident that Zeus's network of companions loves him and that this love is not just relational or corporeal, since even when separated physically they all miss him and, during video calls, tell Zeus that they love him. The love these humans show towards Zeus transcends their worldly boundaries. Finally, when Zeus is reunited with Ayham, Zeus clearly recognises his owner and both human

³⁷⁷ Zeus is famously known as the Greek god of the sky in Ancient Greek religion and myth.

and dog embrace each other in a seemingly loving and playful manner. The magical moment transcends both Zeus and Ayham, as other people in the airport are seen filming their reuniting on their phones. That is to say the documentary shows how the companionship between Zeus and Ayham manifests a transcending love in their sensible, earthly journey back to each other.

A particular theme underlying Zeus's journey in this episode is freedom, which, as I have mentioned, also often appears in the otherworldly understanding of human-animal relations. Zeus's rescue mission is an undertaking to free the dog from Damascus. Moreover, the episode shows the conditions Ayham had to endure to become a refugee in Germany, to be free of the political conditions and war in Syria. In turn, we also see Amer's pursuits to escape from his circumstances in Syria as he, like Zeus, is smuggled over the border towards freedom. In parallel scenes the viewer sees Zeus, finally over the border, playing on the beach in Lebanon and later Amer looking out onto the same ocean after escaping Damascus (Figures F-G). Both experience a sense of freedom, as Zeus is seen running around and Amer, on his turn, sighs of relief. Interestingly, at this particular moment Amer phones Ayham and tells Zeus several times that he loves him (Berg & Zipper 2018). In my view, the sensible transcending love between Amer and Zeus, brings both dog and human a sense of freedom and importantly, encourages Amer to take a chance towards a different, free life outside of Syria.³⁷⁸



Figure F: Zeus playing on the beach in Damascus, *Bravo Zeus, Dogs* (Berg & Zipper 2018). Screenshot by the author.

³⁷⁸ Amer explains that because of Zeus's return to Ayham, he is no longer restricted and can "move around more freely". For this reason, he is able to attempt traveling out of the country easier. Moreover, Zeus's journey showed him that there is a possibility that he can travel over the border safely and inspired him to take the chance as we hear him say to Ayham, "I am next" (Berg & Zipper 2018).

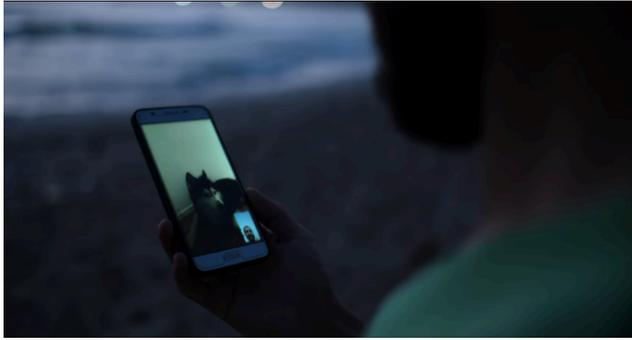


Figure G: Amer on the beach in Damascus phoning Ayham and Zeus, *Bravo Zeus, Dogs* (Berg & Zipper 2018). Screenshot by the author.

In this particular episode I would argue that both human and dog can be seen as otherworldly aids, since the humans help Zeus to reunite with his owner and Zeus aids Amer towards his freedom. However, in one specific scene the humans refer to Zeus as their rescuer. While traveling with Zeus, at the Lebanon-Syria border a patrol officer refused to let Naji and his fellow travellers through. However, another officer showed a liking towards Zeus and let them through on the condition that he could take photos with him. After being allowed to proceed into Lebanon, the travellers stress, “Zeus rescued us” (Berg & Zipper 2018). Zeus was, an Irigarayan aid and messenger on their literal journey.

The third episode in the Netflix documentary, *Ice on the Water*, presents a Labrador named Ice living in San Giovanni, Italy, with his companion Alessandro and his family. Alessandro is a fisherman and his family owns a restaurant; the documentary shows how Ice accompanies them in their day-to-day life. In this episode, Ice, like Zeus and Rory, is presented as an ever-present companion to the family. He helps Alessandro fish (alerting him when fish fall from the net, signalling when there is a catch at night and keeping him safe on the water) and watches over the family. As Alessandro and his daughter both maintain, Ice is always there – a constant presence in their lives (Berg & Zipper 2018).

Ice is also a presence in the small town of San Giovanni, where he roams free on his own, visiting others. In the scenes showing Ice’s adventures through town, the viewer is presented with various religious signs. For instance, Ice greets the town priest outside of church (Figure H), visits a graveyard with Alessandro where we are shown a close up of a statue of the Virgin Mary (Figure I) and the

sound of church bells linger in the background of the entire instalment (Berg & Zipper 2018). In other words, religious and divine symbols underline Ice's story.



Figure I: Religious imagery in *Ice on the Water, Dogs* (Berg & Zipper 2018). Screenshot by the author.



Figure H: Ice greets a priest at a Catholic church in San Giovanni, *Ice on the Water, Dogs* (Berg & Zipper 2018). Screenshot by the author.

The religious imagery surrounding Ice, highlights that he is represented in a divine sense as a spiritual companion to Alessandro. Alessandro tells the viewer that his father passed away prematurely. His father taught him to fish and run the family restaurant and always accompanied him on fishing trips. Since his father died, Alessandro goes fishing with Ice. After Alessandro tells the story of his father, we are introduced to his mother who, echoes the story of her husband's death and says: "Fortunately, Alessandro has Ice, so he's never alone". Thereafter we are shown a scene with Alessandro and Ice on the boat. Playing with Ice, Alessandro says: "Sometimes I feel like my father is still with me", possibly implying that Ice reminds him of the presence of his father, bringing him help and company from a realm beyond theirs.

The communication and bond between Ice and Alessandro mimics the transcending communication that Kohn speaks of in his analysis of human-animal relations. In their everyday doings, Alessandro and Ice communicate with such ease and to the viewer it almost seems as if they relate in an enchanting manner. Ice seems to (almost magically) understand exactly what Alessandro is saying and when something is expected of him. In turn, Alessandro also seems to understand Ice. For instance, while playing he realises Ice wants to tug with his favourite blanket, he knows when Ice is too tired for fishing and he, in an almost hypnotising manner plays with Ice until he falls asleep, telling him to “dream” (Berg & Zipper 2018).³⁷⁹ Their relation and connection is a source of *magic* and *beauty*, as Gonzalez (2018) describes. Alessandro also affirms their bond: “We are a couple by now. We need to always go together” (Berg & Zipper 2018).

In the earlier discussions regarding a possible otherworldly understanding of human-animal relations, I indicated that such an interpretation points towards a compassionate and caring treatment of animals. This mindful *being-with* animal is emphasised throughout Ice and Alessandro’s story. During the episode Alessandro explains that as a fisherman he aims to fish in a sustainable manner and the viewer follows him taking active steps to help the fish population in San Giovanni to flourish. He says that he hopes to treat the fish with “dignity” and that “a good fisherman should know how to take care of his resources without harming others or the lake” (Berg & Zipper 2018). At the same time, Alessandro also clarifies his approach to Ice as his companion. Alessandro and his family “let Ice be”, letting him roam free in the town. Alessandro also makes it clear that he does not force Ice to go fishing with him and some days Ice chooses to stay at home and rest. Alessandro, like Irigaray with her butterflies, lets Ice go to do as he pleases. Ice’s freedom is stressed by the fact that the viewer never sees Ice on

³⁷⁹ In particular Alessandro’s manner of putting Ice to sleep, reminds of Kohn’s analysis of the Runa people’s ability to understand the dreams of dogs. As Alessandro tells Ice to sleep, the viewer is visually enchanted with dream-like images of what Ice could possibly be dreaming about. These images are shot clearly from the dog’s point of view, close to the ground, following his daily habits in a darker light. In doing so, we think we are accessing his dreams – implying that the connection between Alessandro and Ice transcend their physical horizons, since we are able to imagine what Ice dreams about, based on Alessandro’s close relation with his dog.

a leash during the entire episode. In addition, Alessandro also takes care of his dog. We see Alessandro protecting Ice's eyes from the cold, putting on Ice's life jacket and coat when they are out on the water and in the final scene Alessandro explains that he is now building a boat with better shelter for Ice during the cold and hopes that Ice "is going to continue to enjoy being [his] partner" (Berg & Zipper 2018). In other words, we can argue that Ice and Alessandro's relationship is one of trust, care, compassion and freedom, where both human and dog lets the other be their own species and go about their own doings, while caring for and assisting each other. In this way, their companionship is transcending and simultaneously transcends the viewer moving us to consider, as Irigaray (2004:200) phrases, the human-dog relation "as a relational mystery for which above all I wish to give thanks".

Finally, what critics, as well as the show's creators themselves, point out is that the entire *Dogs* series not only teaches us about dogs as companions, but also "becomes a meditation on the humans who care for them and what that might say about each of us" (Kirkland 2018). In other words, the series highlights what I have suggested throughout the study and, once again, indicated in Irigaray's understanding of otherworldly animals in this Addendum: companion species not only help us think through the being of animals, but also teach us about being *human*. Kirkland (2018, emphasis added) argues that *Dogs* "tells a *human* story through a *nonhuman* narrative", asserting that, even in these soulful accounts of dogs, our companion species become messengers about our own human life or, as Irigaray (2004:201) maintains, they accompany us "towards the accomplishment of our humanity". In addition to teaching us about being human, I suggest that what we also learn from *Dogs* is perhaps then the necessity of thinking about nonhuman relations in an otherworldly realm, which results in a transcending and caring love or friendship: "And if you're really paying attention – truly listening to the stories that are being told – some of that unconditional love from Rory and Zeus and Ice may rub off on you, too" (Kirkland 2018).

In the spirit of telling stories about graceful encounters with dogs and dogs as mysterious comforters, I momentarily relate an encounter between myself, Fudge

and Cody here. In doing so, I hope to emphasise the possibility of understanding 'being-with' our dogs in the added layer of transcendence. I have suffered from vivid night mares since I was a little girl, which at times results in night terrors, sleep paralysis or just a general restlessness. For me transcending into a dream-like state has never been easy or said differently, I am just not good at sleeping. When we got Fudge, part of the goal was to teach him to sleep at the foot of my bed to give me a sense of protection at night. However, Fudge the puppy seemed to want to play with my teddies more than he wanted to protect me and after chewing off several noses and ears, as well as showing a clear preference to playing outside in the cool night air, we let him be and he moved in with our other dogs in their 'luxury suite' outside. And I was left to fend off the night creatures alone again.

Several years later, during a particularly cold winter, Fudge and Cody slept inside and I had a night terror, I woke screaming and confused still in a dream state. Without barking or panicking both Cody and Fudge sensed what was happening and rushed to my side, licked me until I was fully awake and then sat tightly next to me until I felt better. To my surprise the presence of the dogs allowed me to recover much better and I even managed to laugh as the giant Ridgeback and head boy Labrador tried to cheer me up and turn me into a cuddle sandwich. Somehow they had transported me out of my dreams and back into reality, all the while turning my fears into a giant playful game. I now think of them as my service dogs, not because they are trained or instinctively know how to help in difficult situations, nor because I think of them as angels saving me (although I do not discard the possibility), but because they are somehow, mystically able to remind me of my humanity, transport me back to being human and transcend me beyond my fears into a state of care and compassion, for which I am eternally grateful.

5. Spiritual Dogstagrams

It is perhaps worth mentioning briefly that the possible understanding of the companion species relation as spiritual or transcending is also portrayed on Instagram. Several captions speak of dogs as 'angels', 'spirits' or 'otherworldly'. Additionally, some Instagram posts feature cartoons, similar to those indicated earlier, that play on the idea of the dogs as celestial being. In turn, we also come

across *dogstagrams* featuring their dogs with a spiritual or transcending message, either in the caption or in the image accompanying the dog. Furthermore, other *dogstagrams* portray dogs with angel halos or wings (Figure J). Such *dogstagrams* that use signs of the celestial realm to depict a sense of spirituality, highlight the longstanding perspective that the bond between human and dog is often believed to be transcending or otherworldly. More specifically, spiritual *dogstagrams* signify the myths surrounding the dog as a magical animal and deity that stem from ancient times (Rowland 1974:58).³⁸⁰

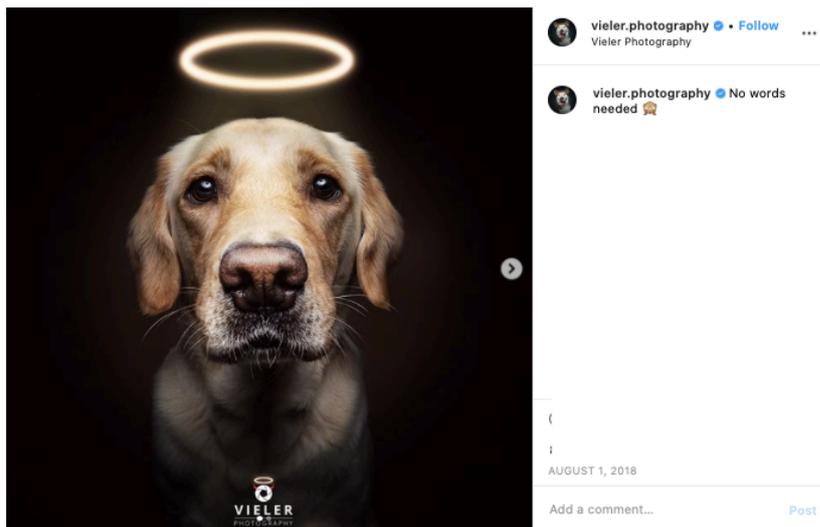


Figure J: Photographer Christian Vieler's Instagram page picturing dogs with halos, 1 August 2018 (@vieler.photography). Screenshot by the author.

A particularly interesting account on Instagram combining spirituality and *dogstagrams* is the account @momosface. The majority of the account captures a dog named Momo looking directly up at the camera with various backgrounds, accompanied by captions that are meant to inspire, motivate or express a sense of transcendence. For example, in a particular post (Figure K) the caption reminds the viewer specifically of a spiritual journey towards a meaningful existence:

You are chaos. A disruptor. One who will distract many and break some things along the way. Every action made, everything you touch, every molecule moved will resonate throughout eternity. The weight you'll move on this journey matters and doesn't. You'll make a difference and yet the accumulated rate of change won't change. You are matter moving matter for a little

³⁸⁰ Additionally, some *dogstagrams* also play on the idea that a dog cone, typically worn by dogs after an operation to prevent them from licking their wounds, is similar to an angelic halo.

while... until your matter returns to the mass of matter that made you. (From @momosface Instagram account, posted on 1 December 2018).

Momo's gaze upwards towards the camera can remind us of an anthropocentric gaze, where the dog looks up towards its owner. However, given the spiritual context of the captions of Momo's *dogstagram*s, the upward gaze can also be interpreted as a look towards the sky, heaven or the otherworldly realm above and beyond the earth, symbolising the belief that the dog is intricately connected to a transcending realm. On my reading, Momo's spiritual *dogstagram*s become digital messengers, combining Irigaray's (2004:196) notion of animal as otherworldly messenger and the gnostic view of technology as messenger, portraying messages of transcendence.³⁸¹

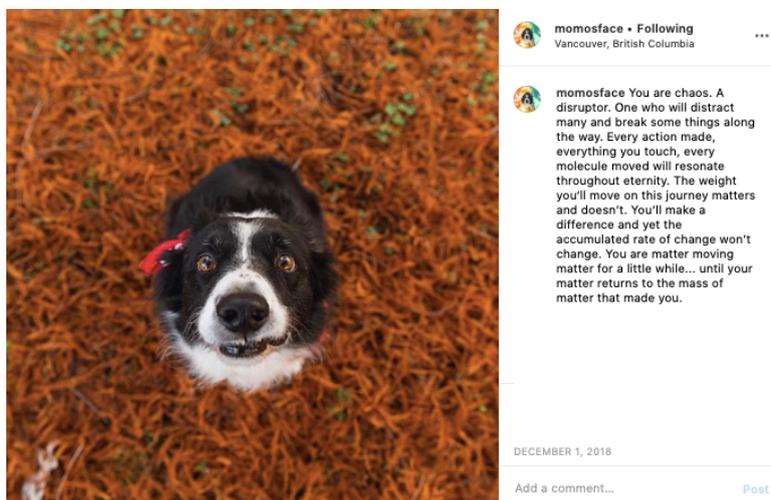


Figure K: *Dogstagram* featuring Momo the dog looking towards the sky, accompanied by a spiritual caption, 1 December 2018 (@momosface). Screenshot by the author.

Visit www.instadogproject.com/imageplots for more examples



6. Conclusion

I have attempted to show that there is a sacred, transcendent or otherworldly layer that comes into play in our understanding of companion species relations. This means that, at times, we tend to think about the human-animal relation and animal beyond our material world and the animal's physical environment, or what Heidegger refers to as *Umwelt* and Haraway calls 'worldly mud'. In this

³⁸¹ Perhaps another interesting digital analysis of *dogstagram*s inspired by such spiritual depictions, could be to decode the colour of the images. Perhaps overwhelmingly blue *dogstagram*s could speak to Heidegger's (1953) placing of the animal in an in-between blue space – a wandered searching for transcendence.

Addendum, I have briefly explored such spiritual possibilities as an additional layer to interpret companion species to our existing understanding of humans *being-with* animals as irreducible beings.

More specifically, I showed how Heidegger's philosophy of being can to a certain extent be interpreted as transcending, because Heidegger situates *Dasein* as a being that is aware of its own being, beyond the limits of the mind and body and empirical knowledge. In turn, I argued that Heidegger's philosophy of animal being also estimates the animal as liminal, or between worlds, and at times Heidegger evokes a sense of soulful existence in relation to the animal's way of being. In other words, my understanding of the animal and human relation as a Heideggerian *being-with*, could also contain such transcending and spiritual connotations. In turn, I also indicated that Haraway's notion of *becoming with* companion species contains paradoxical traces of transcendence, despite her denial thereof. Specifically, I showed how her notions of play and love, that come to define companion species relations, can also be understood as spiritual and transcending notions. In doing so, Haraway's companion species relations seem to also be situated in an in-between realm, since they inhabit both a 'here' and a 'there' – they are from the earth, but they result in transcending connections of love and play. To explain this ambiguity in Haraway's unpacking of the human-dog relation, I suggested that companion species can also be understood as a manifestation of Irigaray's *sensible transcendent* – a meeting point between the material and the otherworldly.

As a result, I also explored theoretical approaches that posit the animal and the human-animal relation as otherworldly, such as Irigaray's account of the animal as spiritual aid and Eduardo Kohn's trans-species relations. Finally, I showed how the various possible otherworldly aspects of the human-animal relation, specifically the human-dog relation, is pictured in the real-life dog stories of Rory, Zeus and Ice in Netflix's docuseries *Dogs* and in the online realm of *Dogs of Instagram*. By briefly sketching some aspects of the possible otherworldly understanding of the human-dog relation, I firstly argued that we may have to accommodate the notion of the spiritual and transcendent in human-nonhuman

relations. By readmitting the spiritual to our worldly understanding of companion species, I suggest that we can speak of concepts such as love, play and friendship more freely, without concern of anthropomorphisms or reducing animals and humans to purely biological states, since we attribute these qualities to a transcending realm. Additionally, the possible spiritual quality of companion species recognises, across the board, a positive treatment of animals that includes compassion, care, protection from harm and friendship – providing a guideline for the ethical treatment of animals that overcomes debates between anthropocentrism and nonhumanism and transcends dualistic reasoning. Finally, I also suggested that otherworldly animal encounters help us talk about human-dog relations that differ from typical animal behavior and relations, such as trans-species relations, aggressive behavior or radically loyal behavior.

My journey through the otherworldly aspects of companion species, also showed that even from a divine perspective, considering the animal being still reflects back to the human way of being, and that the human and dog remain irreducible entities, as I have argued throughout this study. For example, applying Irigaray's notion of the *sensible transcendent* to Haraway's loving companion species emphasises that animal and human cannot be reduced to one another and remain uniquely different beings. In addition, the transcending journeys of *Dogs's* Rory, Zeus and Ice not only narrates their nonhuman stories, but also highlights what it means to be human when living with dogs. Ultimately, I contend that in a circular fashion, the otherworldly stories of humans *being-with* dogs, can suggest further transcending possibilities – such as play, love, care and compassion – to apply to our Heideggerian being-in-the-world and Haraway's becoming worldly.