

*A critical reading of companion species on Instagram: 'being-with' and  
'becoming with' dogs as (non)human others*

by

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## ABSTRACT AND KEY TERMS

Based on Donna Haraway's concept of dogs as companion species, this study aims to critically examine the phenomenon of companion species as it manifests on social media by exploring the notion of humans *being-with* and *becoming with* dogs as their nonhuman others. Working through Haraway's companion species and the nonhuman turn, I consider the relation between Haraway's (2008) *becoming with* and German philosopher Martin Heidegger's (1927) idea of *being (Dasein)* and *being-with (Mitsein)* others. By reading Haraway *with* Heidegger, I argue that nonhumanism is not a rupture from the human condition, but rather an expansion of what it means to be human with others in contemporary society. I show that although nonhumanism typically rejects Heidegger's perceived anthropocentric approach to animals, Haraway's nonhumanist *becoming with* shares and shows similarity to Heidegger's being-with-others. Throughout my exploration of the phenomena of companion species, I maintain the position that in the midst of the nonhuman turn, we remain all too human by *being-with* nonhuman others, specifically in terms of human-dog companionship.

In contemporary society the pivotal relationship of companion species notably manifests on social media when humans capture and share their relations with their dogs on various platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. In an added layer to the study, I argue that online images of the human-dog relation reflect and mediate the nature of *being-with* and *becoming with* nonhuman others. Through a digital and theoretical exploration of online companion species, I show how these images reflect the significance of human qualities within nonhuman relations, as well as what it means to be human with our nonhuman others in the Digital Age.

**Key terms:** companion species; nonhumanism; Martin Heidegger; Donna Haraway; Dogs of Instagram; Digital Humanities; being-with; becoming with

## PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

**Student number: 10317083**

I hereby declare that *A critical reading of companion species on Instagram: 'being-with' and 'becoming with' dogs as (non)human others* is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Karli Brittz

4 February 2020

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*In 2012 independent photographer, Hannah Stonehouse, took the following photograph (Figure 1) of her friend John Unger and his dog Schoep in Lake Superior, North America. Schoep, 19 years old in the image, suffered from arthritis and, as a result, Unger would occasionally take his dog into the lake for remedial purposes. On this particular day Unger asked his friend to take some pictures of him and his dog. While she was taking the photos, the dog fell asleep on Unger in the water (captured in Figure 1). Stonehouse shared the image on Facebook and within 24 hours the photo had gone viral. It was viewed more than two million times on the social network and was shared more than 100 000 times (Wolf 2012). The image of a man and his dog touched people from all over the world and sparked conversation and empathy in the virtual environment. In fact, the image had such a profound effect on social media, that three years later, when Stonehouse's husband died in an accident on Lake Superior, thousands of people took to social media to comfort her. Most of them offered condolences by sharing photos of their dogs on her Facebook page. Hudson (in Guthrey 2013) explains: "We all have a bond and a common denominator, and that's loving our animals. That's what is interesting about this group. They rely on their animals for solace, for love, to make them feel not alone ...". What's even more interesting is that these people not only choose to show their affection through their pets, but also by sharing images of these pets on social media.*



Figure 1: Viral image of John Unger and his dog Schoep asleep on his chest in Lake Superior. Photograph by Hannah Stonehouse. (Wolf 2012).

*Hannah, John and Schoep's story about the capturing and sharing of images of pets, specifically dogs, on social media is not a unique occurrence. In contemporary society millions of people share images of their dogs on various online platforms, to such an extent that online images of dogs have become a global phenomenon, much like the selfie. On Instagram specifically, images of dogs have been labelled dogstagrams (#dogstagram) and form part of a virtual community referred to as Dogs of Instagram (#dogsofinstagram). To date over 69 million dogstagrams have been shared on Instagram, confirming that these images are a popular occurrence.*

*When I read Stonehouse's viral photo story, scroll through the millions of dogstagrams on Instagram and post about my own dogs on social media, I cannot help but wonder what these images mean in contemporary society? Why specifically images of dogs and why now? How do these images fit in with the theoretical turn towards nonhumanism? And, if part of nonhumanism, do these images represent nonhuman supporter Donna Haraway's notion of becoming with our companion species, or are they simply another form of anthropocentric self-representation? What do dogstagrams reflect and reveal about being human with other species in the Digital Age and the current environmental context?*

### **1.1 The research problem**

Based on theorist Donna Haraway's concept of dogs as companion species, this study aims to critically examine the phenomenon of companion species as it manifests on social media by exploring the notion of humans *being-with* and *becoming with* dogs as their nonhuman others. Through her formulation of companion species, Haraway (2003) contends that human-dog relations are the ultimate manifestation of the implosion between nature and culture (or natureculture), resulting in a crucial connection between man and dog – or then humans and nonhumans – that needs to be unpacked and understood, especially within the current context of the Anthropocene.

Haraway's companion species highlights (and perhaps prompts) an important argument prominent in current Anthropocene research regarding species relations and environmental studies: a consideration for multispecies,



nonhuman and interspecies relations, where humans and nonhumans are constantly *becoming with* one another in significant otherness. This so-called turn towards ‘nonhumanism’ occurs in response to the age-old western human exceptionalism argument, where human beings are seen as the most important entities in the world.<sup>1</sup> Human exceptionalism explorations typically focus on the notion that theorisation of the nonhuman other cannot escape anthropomorphism and the mastery of the ever-present human being.

Working through Haraway’s companion species and the nonhuman turn, I consider the relation between Haraway’s (2008) *becoming with* and German philosopher Martin Heidegger’s (1927) idea of *being (Dasein)* and *being-with (Mitsein)* others. By reading Haraway *with* Heidegger, I argue that nonhumanism is not a rupture from the human condition, but rather an expansion of what it means to be human with others in contemporary society. I show that although nonhumanism typically rejects Heidegger’s perceived anthropocentric approach to animals, Haraway’s nonhumanist *becoming with* shares and shows similarity to Heidegger’s being-with-others. By engaging with both Heidegger and Haraway the study not only opens up a space to consider Heidegger’s theory in relation to nonhumanism, but also emphasises the continuing importance of the human within *nonhumanism*. Nonhumanists join the likes of cyberfeminists, posthumanists and biocentrists (amongst others) in the battle against dualistic categories pertaining to human exceptionalism, such as nature versus culture. Although nonhumanism is concerned with overcoming dualistic thought, it is argued that nonhumanism also continues to engage with human qualities and characteristics, such as love, goodness and prosperity. In other words, throughout my exploration of the phenomena of companion species, I maintain the position that in the midst of the nonhuman turn, we remain all too human by *being-with* nonhuman others, specifically in terms of human-dog companionship.

The Anthropocenic divide between human exceptionalism and nonhumanism, as well as the prevalence of the human within nonhumanism, are evident in human-

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<sup>1</sup> I choose to focus on the notion of nonhumanism as it relates to discussions in the discourse of multispecies relations in the Anthropocene and Digital Age. I discuss my choice for the term nonhumanism and how it can be distinguished from posthumanism further in Chapter Three.

dog relations. In contemporary society this pivotal relationship notably manifests on social media when humans capture and share their relations with their dogs on various platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. In an added layer to the study, I argue that online images of the human-dog relation reflect and mediate the nature of *being-with* and *becoming with* nonhuman others. Through a digital and theoretical exploration of online companion species, I argue that these images reflect the significance of human qualities within nonhuman relations, as well as what it means to be human with our nonhuman others in the Digital Age. Moreover, by thinking through and digitally analysing social media images of human-dog relations the study provides a platform for a critical reading of the phenomenon of companion species in a digital world, reflecting on Haraway's motion to re-signify companion species in contemporary society. Finally, by critically examining companion species online, as well as theoretically and digitally exploring the notion of *being-with* and *becoming with* dogs on social media, this study adds to an environmental conversation, learning about and from the ways of existing with our dogs.

The theme of *being-with* and *becoming with* companion species is approached through various layers featured throughout the study, including: (1) a theoretical examination of nonhumanism in relation to human exceptionalism, as well as the philosophies of Haraway in relation to those of Heidegger; (2) vignettes narrating my own relations with my dogs Fudge and Cody; (3) applications of various visual examples in relation to theoretical perspectives; (4) a digital analysis of companion species on Instagram; and (5) a theoretical exploration of companion species in the digital realm. By placing these layers in constant dialogue with one another the study provides a predominantly hermeneutic reading of companion species in contemporary society and a critical reading of the nonhuman turn.

## **1.2 Introduction to the study**

### ***1.2.1 Background, context and understanding***

To contextualise and commence a critical reading of companion species on social media some critical concepts require unpacking and delimitation. What follows

is a brief introduction to the theoretical background, context and understanding of the study. The so-called ‘ABCs’ of the research situates the exploration within the context of the Anthropocene; defines important concepts such as *being-with*, *becoming with*, human exceptionalism, nonhumanism, and multispecies relations; and explains what is meant by companion species and *dogstagram*s respectively.

○ **A is for Anthropocene**

With the constant prevalence of news stories concerning global warming in the media, there is no doubt that planet earth is facing immense environmental crises. To make matters worse the period to address some of these major anxieties and environmental challenges is tapering (Palsson et al. 2013:3). From a scholarly perspective, multiple geologists, environmentalists, anthropologists and philosophers – amongst others – have all attempted to theorise the global environmental crisis from a wide variety of perspectives.<sup>2</sup> The attempts have resulted in deliberations regarding nature, culture and interactions with other species, as well as an overall critical engagement with the Anthropocene.

First defined by Nobel Prize winner Paul Crutzen and biologist Eugene Stoermer in an IGBP Newsletter in 2000, the term ‘Anthropocene’ is allocated “to the present, in many ways human-dominated, geological epoch, supplementing the Holocene – the warm period of the past 10-12 millennia” (Crutzen 2002:23). The Anthropocene refers to the most recent epoch where human activity has come to change and influence the environment to such an extent that it has altered natural phenomenon, including climate, the biosphere and ecosystems (Crutzen 2002:23). For example, human activity has resulted in extinction of species, polluted oceans altering the oceanic ecosystem and a change in the amalgamation of the atmosphere (Hamilton 2014:1; Braje & Erlandson 2013:116). It is important to note that the Anthropocene is not just “defined by the broadening impact of humans on the environment, but by active human

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<sup>2</sup> Artists have also had a significant influence in the exploration of the Anthropocene, both in the form of creative outputs and in their contribution to scholarly projects (Van Dooren et al. 2016:9).

interference in the processes that govern the geological evolution of the planet” (Hamilton 2014:3). That is to say, human forces have not just produced secondary consequences through their actions but have actively infiltrated and interfered with the environment first-hand.

Although the term ‘Anthropocene’ is currently only applied informally, since it has not been officially acknowledged by the International Union of Geological Sciences, it is still widely used, accepted and discussed. In fact, the use and unpacking of the Anthropocene as a successor to the previous Holocene extends far beyond the scientific and geological community, with several cultural theorists, in particular Donna Haraway and Bruno Latour, also discussing the so-called new epoch’s significance and implications (Waters 2016:137). Following Haraway and Latour, an increasing amount of literature exists that tries to “articulate what the new human condition in the Anthropocene might be in ethical, historical, and philosophical terms” (Zalasiewicz et al. in Palsson et al. 2013:7). This study, rooted in digital and media culture, contributes to this existing dialogue by firstly, examining the phenomenon of being human and the nature of human-nonhuman relations within the context of the Anthropocene and, secondly, looking critically at key theories and concepts emerging from the circumstances of an environment changed by human actions. Thus, this exploration is critically interested in what constitutes the new condition that accompanies the Anthropocene society (Palsson et al. 2013:11), especially in terms of its nonhuman agencies and their visual representations on Instagram.

If the Anthropocene signifies the earth turning into “a mere echo chamber in which the human being will be the only source and telos of agency” (Szerszynski 2017:253), does this instinctively imply that nonhuman agencies will disappear or become irrelevant within this new epoch? Is the Anthropocene an era characterised by the narcissistic centring of man above any other form of being? Who or what should we turn to in order to overcome this environmental crisis? The existing theory surrounding the Anthropocene follows a common divide in response to these questions. On the one hand a strong argument for a human exceptionalism approach to environmentalism exists. On the other hand, in

response to the critique against human-centredness, several theorists argue for a nonhuman turn. Although these two categories are not always clear-cut, they both present different ways of thinking through the nature of being in the Anthropocene and in contemporary society.

**Human exceptionalism** (also referred to as anthropocentrism, human-centredness and human supremacy)<sup>3</sup> is understood as the belief or “lived worldview” (Crist 2017:62) that human beings are more significant than and explicitly different from nature, animals and other species. Often categorised as a key part of modernity and western culture, human exceptionalism argues that human beings are superior to nonhuman others, owing to their dissimilarities, such as the ability to reason rationally (Plumwood 2007). Stemming from the Age of Enlightenment, human-centredness is often critiqued for exploiting other species and causing destruction to the planet by exerting human domination and power (Plumwood 2007).

Despite the mass postmodern movement towards the belief in scientific evidence of human evolution and current critique against human supremacy, anthropocentrism is still a widely accepted point of view. Environmentalists, such as Dave Foreman (1991), Christopher Manes (1990) and Val Plumwood (2007), show how the underlying thought of human domination runs throughout environmental philosophy, based on seminal anthropocentric essays such as John Passmore’s *Man’s Responsibility for Nature* (1974). Similar to Passmore, human-centred theorists, such as Norton (1984), Hayward (1997) and Smith (2010) defend anthropocentrism and consider the value of the human being over nonhuman others. Notably, such theoretical arguments maintain (contrary to popular belief) that a human-centred approach can have positive affects within the context of the Anthropocene, especially in terms of the ethical treatment of other species, since anthropocentrism evokes a sense of responsibility towards human and nonhuman others. For instance, Smith (2010:243-244, emphasis in original) argues: “Because we *are* unquestionably a unique species—the only

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<sup>3</sup> I use the terms human exceptionalism, human-centred, anthropocentric and human supremacy interchangeably throughout the study.

species capable of even contemplating ethical issues and assuming responsibilities—we uniquely are capable of apprehending the difference between right and wrong, good and evil, proper and improper conduct towards animals. Or to put it more succinctly if being human isn't what requires us to treat animals humanely, what in the world does?" In addition, the validity of human exceptionalism is often highlighted by the philosophical thought that humans categorically cannot know the experience of an animal or nonhuman fully (Shapiro 2003:67).<sup>4</sup>

In constant conversation with a human exceptionalism approach to species relations is the reasoning for an equal intertwining of human and nonhuman entities, which is expressed in the theoretical exploration of a so-called nonhuman turn, posthumanism and interspecies or multispecies relations. Cultural theorists discussing these notions, such as Haraway (2015a; 2016) and Latour (2014), suggest that even though the Anthropocene is considered to be an era of environmental change rooted in human agency, it does not mean that this human agency should automatically imply a human-centred approach to life on earth. Conversely, these theorists maintain that a key characteristic of the new environmental epoch is also the possibility of escaping the human condition by imploding humans and nonhumans into multispecies relations (Szerszynski 2017:254). Within the human-nonhuman amalgamation categories, subject-object relations and dualistic thinking no longer exist, but rather entangle with one another. By conjugating the human and nonhuman, nonhumanism argues that it breaks away from the human (and its associated agency) and empowers the nonhuman by giving it agency that could result in taking nonhumans more seriously (Hird & Roberts 2011:115). This is typically referred to as the **nonhuman turn** or a possible nonhumanist approach.<sup>5</sup>

Considering these various theoretical approaches within the context of environmentalism and the Anthropocene, it is evident that there are two key

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<sup>4</sup> Precisely what is meant by anthropocentrism and its various components is explored further in Chapter Two.

<sup>5</sup> In Chapter Three I discuss nonhumanism extensively in relation to human exceptionalism, while critically considering the place of the human within the nonhuman turn.

*tails* of thought on species relations: anthropocentrism and nonhumanism.<sup>6</sup> It is at the intersection of these two perspectives that online images of the significant human-dog relation, which forms the focal point of this study, occurs. Therefore, the human-dog relation and its images on social media can be interpreted, explored and understood from a variety of perspectives. From an anthropocentric perspective, the human stands superior over the dog in a human-animal relation. In other words, the human is placed at the centre of the relation and his social construction and experience is related to the dog. Human exceptionalism most likely argues that it is impossible to relate how the dog experiences the world and therefore the human is of central consideration in the relationship. In turn, a nonhumanist point of view would probably show that neither the human nor the dog, as a species, should be privileged over the other. They are equal entities, with equally valuable experiences of the world that can be expressed. The nonhumanist maintains that humans and dogs occur in a multispecies relation, entangled in a human-nonhuman relation.<sup>7</sup>

Another interesting dimension is added to these perspectives with the addition of the (nonhuman) technology of social media.<sup>8</sup> Does the use of social media to mediate the human-dog relation allow humans to extend their projected experiences onto that of their dogs? Comparatively, do these images show humans living in entanglement with dog species? Moreover, does the technology of social media as a nonhuman agency also become part of the multispecies entanglement, resulting in a human-animal-technology assemblage? Finally, how do these images mediate an environmental consciousness in the context of the

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<sup>6</sup> Throughout this text I playfully use terms such as ‘tail’ instead of ‘tale’ to add to the tone of the research and provide some enjoyment for the reader. I use Italics to emphasise the play on these words throughout.

<sup>7</sup> Notably this brief summary of anthropocentrism and nonhumanism is an oversimplification of the concepts. This brief description serves only as a background to contextualise the study. The two perspectives are unpacked in detail throughout the study.

<sup>8</sup> Another increasingly popular point of view that, similar to multispecies studies and nonhumanism, seems to act as a mediator between the human and the nonhuman, is the notion of being “more-than-human”. The more-than-human is a phenomenological category which “positions humans as *within*, as *of*, something bigger than is generally apparent” and allows us to encompass the experience of being in relation to technologies, animals and artefacts (Affifi 2016:161). More-than-human experiences comprise of both human and nonhuman experiences where humans entwine with other things.

Anthropocene? These questions are addressed throughout this exploration by referring to the ideas of *being-with* and *becoming with* respectively.

○ **B is for *being-with* and *becoming with***

A particular way of understanding the experience of being (and accordingly also relations to others) is philosopher Martin Heidegger's phenomenological notion of "Being" in his seminal text *Being and Time* (1927). For Heidegger, human beings have a unique distinctiveness that sets them apart from other nonhuman entities. Part of their distinctiveness lies in the ability to be interested in their own entity of being – we are able to engage with what it means to be human and consider the essence of being. Heidegger conceptualises the notion of being as *Dasein*. For Heidegger (1962[1927]), *Dasein* refers to both the human being, as well as the kind of being or existence that humans have. In other words, through the analysis of *Dasein*, Heidegger attempts to make sense of human existence or the experience of being human. He argues that the only possible way to grasp the human condition is to examine how humans interpret themselves in everyday life (Philipse 1999:440). Thus, he explains the world and its phenomenon from the primary experience of the human being.

Central to *Dasein* is the notion of a joint existence. Heidegger (1962[1927]:155) argues that the individual is never alone and has to share the world, as well as the experience of being-in-the-world, with others. This shared existence is referred to as *Mitsein* or *being-with* (Heidegger 1962[1927]:155).<sup>9</sup> *Mitsein* dismisses an individual consciousness existing without the material world, since "we cannot understand who we are and what we do in daily life except in terms of our relations to others" (Philipse 1999:448). Thus, in order to understand the nature of being, we need to consider the nature of our being-with-others who are also in the world – how we relate to others and other things. *Being-with* implies that human beings stand in constant relation to others and we come to define ourselves through these relations so that "the existence of the Other is part of my

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<sup>9</sup> I place '*becoming with*' and '*being-with*' in italics throughout the study when referring to the notions specifically outlined by Heidegger and Haraway, to indicate it as an entire concept.



understanding of everything in the world” (Russow 1980:132). Through the conceptualisation of *Mitsein*, Heidegger argues for a co-constitution of the world.

Notably, Heidegger does not explicitly state who and what he exactly considers to be the other, he only explains: “By ‘Others’ we do not mean everyone else but me – those others against whom the ‘I’ stands out. They are rather those from whom, for the most part, one does not distinguish oneself – those among whom one is too” (Heidegger 1962[1927]). The notion of being-with-others therefore makes it clear that we share the world with other *entities*, who are capable of perceiving the world themselves (Russow 1980:135), yet it is not clear whether or not these are human or nonhuman others. Owing to (1) Heidegger’s primary concern in *Being and Time* with the forms of being specifically relating to being human; and (2) his later teachings of the animal as poor in the world as well as significantly different from human beings (1938); Heidegger’s *Mitsein* should arguably be read in terms of *being-with* other *humans*. However, recently theorists (Buchanan [2012], James [2009], Bailey [2012] and Andersson [2017]) have suggested that the notion of *Mitsein* should be expanded to consider *being-with* other humans *and nonhumans* – reformulating Heideggerian thought from a human-animal studies point of view. Furthermore, the relation between humans and animals has often been described in terms of Heidegger’s *being-with*, arguing that humans share the world with animal subjects that have a being of their own (Bailey 2012). Accordingly, I argue that, in Heideggerian terms, humans exist as *Mitsein* with animals, in the sense that humans come to define and share their world with reference to animal others. From a Heideggerian human-animal perspective, the human-dog relation can be interpreted as humans *being-with* dogs or **humans *being-with* companion species**.<sup>10</sup>

In terms of multispecies relations, seminal cultural theorist Donna Haraway employs the notion of *becoming with* to explain the entwined relation between humans and nonhumans (including animals). For Haraway (2008:4) humans are

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<sup>10</sup> Here I provide brief and simplified view of Heideggerian thought in relation to the study. I expand on Heidegger’s philosophy and the idea of being-with-others in Chapter Four. In Chapter Four I also provide an in-depth argument for re-interpreting *Dasein* and *Mitsein* from a human-animal perspective.

always in the process of becoming and we become beings in coalition with nonhuman others, who entwine with our being. Therefore to “be one is always to *become with many*” (Haraway 2008:4). Jordan (2011:266) suggests that it is helpful to understand and use this notion of *becoming with* to better unpack Haraway’s multiplex notions of interspecies relations. *Becoming with* is “a practice of becoming worldly, of making a world with and out of the elements in and around being” (Jordan 2011:266). Haraway (2008) uses the idea of *becoming with* others to describe the interactions between all living entities, not just humans, in all times and places, to create a space in which to live and exist. For Haraway (2008), nonhumans and humans are *becoming with* one another: an “infolding” towards one another to make up the knot of being in the world (Jordan 2011:266). Thus, for Haraway, humans and nonhumans are entangled in complex relations that are constantly in the process of *becoming with* one another. These species do not just exist alongside one another, but are constantly developing and functioning *with* and possibly, towards one another.

Haraway adapts her *becoming with* from Belgian philosopher Vinciane Despret’s reconfiguration of animal encounters. Despret (2004) articulates a new condition of understanding and studying subjects through the process of *becoming with*. She suggests that in the process of researching animal subjects, animals *become with* humans and humans *become with* animals – instead of the commonly suggested ‘humans becoming animals’ or ‘animals becoming human’ (anthropomorphism). Despret (2004:131) refers to this as “a new articulation of ‘with-ness’”. As a result, for nonhumanists or multispecies studies (following Haraway’s theory), the human-dog relation can be seen as **human and dog *becoming with one another*** and existing as entwined entities, which forms the basis of companion species theory.<sup>11</sup>

Jordan (2011:255) positions Haraway’s *becoming with* in direct opposition to Martin Heidegger’s idea of *being-with* (*Mitsein*). He argues that Heidegger’s *being-with* implies difference between subjects and the possibility of detachment, while *becoming with* connotes boundless connection and

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<sup>11</sup> The notion of *becoming with* companion species is fleshed out in Chapter Five.

engagement amongst entities (Jordan 2011:255). Similarly, Mudde (2018:67) maintains that a key difference between Heidegger's *being-with* and Haraway's *becoming with* is the manner in which *becoming with* decentres the human "but it does not remove, or perhaps forget, its particularity so much as it troubles the boundaries of the human as ontological category". Although I acknowledge such readings of Haraway and Heidegger's concepts as oppositional to one another, I contend that by placing Heidegger and Haraway in contrast to one another, Mudde and Jordan point to an important conversation between Heidegger's theory of being and Haraway's multispecies studies, which is often omitted or ignored.

It is surprising to find that Haraway (2003; 2008) herself does not explicitly refer to Heidegger in her discussions on companion species. Additionally, Heidegger's relationship to nonhumanist or multispecies theory has been largely omitted. Haraway (2008:221) briefly mentions the Heideggerian idea of "the open" to "ask a fundamental ontological question, one that puts human and dog together ... Here we are, and so what are we to become?"<sup>12</sup> However, she (perhaps intentionally) does not make the connection between *becoming with* and *Mitsein*. In fact, in a footnote Haraway (2008:334) thinks of Heidegger as "no help at all", because she argues that Heidegger's formulation of *Dasein* is too far removed from feminist thought. Despite rejecting Heidegger, I find that one cannot read Haraway's companion species from an objective scholarly perspective without at least being reminded of Heideggerian philosophy. Simply looking at the syntax of *being-with* and *becoming with*, points to an evident starting point of a relation between the two concepts. Thus, I argue that it would be erroneous to read Haraway without consulting Heidegger, or at least keeping the Heideggerian idea of being-with-others in mind. Throughout this study, I start to fill this gap by showing the relation between Heidegger and Haraway's thought, as well as rethinking Haraway's companion species with Heidegger. By engaging with Heidegger's philosophy of being and related critique of anthropocentrism, I show that Heidegger's writing not only influences

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<sup>12</sup> Even in this specific instance Haraway (2008:367) mentions in a footnote that her idea of "the open" differs significantly from Heidegger's "open" or clearing.

nonhumanism, but also has much to contribute to anthropocentrism, nonhumanism and environmentalism.

Additionally, the notion of humans *being-with* dogs as well as the process of humans and dogs *becoming with* one another can aid in interpreting and unpacking the relation between humans and their dogs on social media. Consequently, I apply both the notion of *being-with* in relation to *becoming with* in my exploration of the human-dog relation on social media. These notions are not necessarily posed in opposition to one another, but rather serve as a well-rooted point of theoretical reference to grapple with companion species online.

○ **C is for companion species**

Thus far I have contextualised a critical reading of the phenomenon of companion species as it manifests on social media by considering the notion of humans *being-with* or *becoming with* dogs as their nonhuman others. But what exactly are companion species? What follows is an unpacking of the concept with the aim of pinpointing *what* exactly is explored throughout the study.

Throughout her work on companion species Donna Haraway considers what being alive in the time of the Anthropocene *entails*. In other words, she explores “what does it mean to live and die in a time of extinctions ... [o]r exterminations?” (Haraway 2010:54). Furthermore, she contemplates how humans and nonhumans can thrive within this context - how to surpass the problems that the Anthropocene presents. That is to say, she not only thinks through the ontology of being or living within the Anthropocene, but also considers the ethics of living better under these current circumstances (Haraway 2010:54). To accomplish this task, she turns to the notion of kinship or significant otherness, arguing that we should explore and learn from relations with our environmental companions to build a flourishing world.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> In her earlier considerations of interaction between different entities, Haraway commented on the postmodern fusion of man and machine in terms of beings becoming cyborgs. She argued that these cyborgs held the potential to renegotiate political and social conflicts in society (Haraway 2006[1985]:291). However, in her recent writings (2003; 2008) she prefers the term companion species, asserting that entities live together in “significant otherness” (Haraway 2008:165). In other words, where Haraway once considered technological devices such as wheelchairs,

In *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People and Significant Otherness* (2003) and its extension, *When Species Meet* (2008), Haraway introduces her notion of companion species, which she uses to describe the kinship of different species, who are joined together as significant others. She argues that this relationship represents the current implosion of nature and culture (natureculture), as well as the lack of distinction between humans, technology and animals (human-nonhuman). Haraway (2003:16) explains that companion species are complex, co-constitutional, impure and history specific. This makes it a significant concept to consider with various aspects and applications.

The definition of companion species also becomes evident in the combination of *companion* and *species*. To have a companion means to be accompanied by something or someone, with a sense of reciprocation (Haraway 2008:17). In turn, Haraway (2008:17) attaches species to the Latin word *respecere*, arguing that it implies a joint sense of respect and registering of each other. She also uses species in terms of its historical, broader meaning, which “gestures to particular ways of life and to any relevant gathering of kin” (Van Dooren et al. 2016:5). Species do not merely refer to complex categories of beings, but also denotes different methods of regarding other entities. In this manner, companion species is not identified as a means of classification or taxonomical grouping (Van Dooren et al. 2016:5), but rather a way of regarding one another (Jordan 2011:266). Jordan (2011:268) maintains that Haraway’s concept of companion species must be used as a “divination or thinking tool ... to pry open how we make our worlds in concert with other beings, especially those whose species may not seem obviously to be the same as our own species”. My exploration therefore values companion species in all its complexity and critically considers its use as a ‘thinking tool’ to understand the binding of human and nonhuman

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automobiles and computers as extensions that make humans cyborgs, she now considers these to be entities that man lives with in a joint existence. They too are man’s significant others (Haraway 2008:165). Thus, she encourages us to abandon our inner cyborgs and, in exchange, embrace our companion species (Grassie 2011). As a result, companion species (and their significant otherness) is used to investigate critical concepts including politics, technology, biology, history and relationships throughout Haraway’s writings. I discuss the relation between cyborgs and companion species in particular further on in the study.

others. That is to say, interpreting *being-with* and *becoming with* in the world, in turn, interprets companionship.

Haraway (2003:12) finds that implicit in the syntax of companion species is the idea that companion species exist as a plural – species cannot be singular. Equally, the etymology of the term ‘companion’ (*com* – together with and *panis* – bread) stresses the required *two-getherness* of entities. As a result, companion species are about a relating, a partnership, which cannot exist without components associating with one another. There has to be (at least) two partners in a relationship to be considered companion species. Moreover, Haraway (2003:18) argues that these two companion species are tied to specificity and the actual fleshy acts of relating, i.e. the ‘on-the-ground’ empirical interactions between beings.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, Haraway focusses her work on such a partnership of companion species by exploring the particular relation between two specific species: humans and dogs. For Haraway, the specific relationship between human beings and dogs is the ultimate manifestation of companion species. She takes the “‘dog-human’ relationships seriously” and explores how “our shared histories with dogs might inform a more mutual and therefore ethical basis for relationships between all kinds of entities” (Cassidy 2003:324). Following Haraway, we can therefore add to the definition of companion species arguing that it is best exemplified by the companionship of *humans and dogs*, which manifests in contemporary society.

It is important to note, however, that although Haraway uses the idea of human-dog relations to think through issues in the Anthropocene, she maintains that dogs are the critical point of her argument and not other species. She explains: “[D]ogs are not an alibi for other themes” (2003:5) and highlights that her main

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<sup>14</sup> The notion of dealing with companion relations phenomenologically is important to Haraway. She explains that through specific narratives and stories about companion encounters, she deals with the messy, the dirty and the action of a specific community (humans and their dogs). For Haraway (in Van Dooren et al. 2016:15), this is the best manner to explore these relations, since the “point is to make a difference in the world, to cast our lot for some ways of life [death, being and becoming] and not others. To do that, one must be in the action, be finite and dirty, not transcendent and clean”. Haraway (2003:18; 20) aims “to stay close to the action” and “get dirty” with the dogs, by focussing on the actual happenings within the distinct human-dog relation – the smallest and most direct possible unit of meaning.

interest is in these specific animals. In an interview with Wolfgang Shirmacher (in Cassidy 2003, emphasis added), Haraway makes this notion clear:

*WS:* ... we don't want to know who the dogs are, we just want to know who we are.

*DH:* Who is this we?

*WS:* We, you and me.

*DH:* I want to know about the dogs.

*WS:* Not really.

*DH:* Honest, really true.

*WS:* You do the same thing that Heidegger once advised: If you want to know about humanity look away from humanity.

*DH:* That's all well and good **but I also want to know about the dogs.**

Haraway wants to know about dogs, in other words she wants to know about the act of humans living with dogs, the actual connection between these specific beings, how the relation manifests, why it occurs and how human-dog relations become immersed in various scales of time, body and space of the Anthropocene. She concentrates on the distinct physical presence and meaning of dogs. For Haraway, dogs are not used as an allegory for other aspects of being human; they are what matters and what manifests.

- **D is for *dogstagram***

Lastly, Haraway's *Companion Species Manifesto* is never-ending and always evolving as the human-dog relation is always in progress (Haraway 2003:3). Accordingly, I contribute to and further this significant, ongoing discussion, by also exploring the specific, continuing human-dog relation with technology. Furthering Haraway's above-mentioned notion of companion species, I introduce another layer to this intricate relation: the technology of social media. Since technology is embedded within most aspects of being, it is also increasingly involved in mediating, representing and playing a role within human-dog companionship. More specifically, the technology of social media images depicting human-dog relations add another *coat* to the companionship of humans and their dogs, as well as to the meaning of companion species within contemporary society, which Haraway has opened up by blurring the boundaries between humans, animals and technology. Van Dooren et al. (2016:10) explain

that species relations extend beyond personal encounters into the online realm of viral videos, YouTube and social media, which share a constant stream of virtual companion species encounters.<sup>15</sup> Inevitably, “emergent work in the field of multispecies studies is responding to these twenty-first century media with projects that deploy critter cams or orbit around Facebook fan pages and Meetup groups” (Van Dooren et al. 2016:10). My critical reading then also responds to technological platforms by particularly venturing into the world of social media images labelled as *dogstagram*s. A brief account of these images follows.

On social media, specifically Instagram - a popular platform that focusses on the capturing and sharing of images and videos (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati 2014:595) – people tend to share content of a large variety. Hu, Manikonda and Kambhampati (2014:596) identify eight prominent categories of images shared by users: friends, food, gadgets, captions, pets, activities, selfies and fashion. As a result, photos of pets are a prominent feature of content shared on social media platforms and in virtual communities. A large amount of these pet images contains dogs. In fact, one out of every five pictures shared by dog owners includes their dog, while 11% of dog owners have created an account dedicated to or for their dog (Irishdogs 2017). In general, dog owners share an image or refer to their dogs on social media six times per week (Spector 2017).

With such a large amount of dog pictures generating and circulating online, specific hashtags on Instagram (#dogstagram and #dogsofinstagram) are used to identify these images. Therefore, when a user shares an image of a dog on the

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<sup>15</sup> The human-dog relation also stretches into other realms of visual culture, which depict the connection between man and his so-called ‘best-friend’ in various forms. Films, including Disney’s *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* (1961), *Beethoven* (Levant 1992), *Marley and Me* (Frankel 2008), *Hachi: A Dog’s Tale* (Hallström 2009) and *A Dog’s Purpose* (Hallström 2017), show the loving and emotional journey of life with dogs and reveal that this relation is often complex. Similarly, throughout the various periods of art history, artists illustrate the convergence of human beings and their companion species or use dogs to think through complex notions of being human. An infinite number of artworks exist with dogs, or human beings and their dogs, as the main subjects. For example, Gauguin’s *Still Life with Three Puppies* (1888), *The Dog* (Francisco Goya 1820), Balla’s *Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash* (1912), or Jeff Koons’s *Balloon Dog* (2013) and *Puppy* (1992) – to name just a few. Similarly, subject to the broader shift of modernism to postmodernism, companion species have also been the focus of several photography studies, such as William Wegman’s *Weimaraners* series. I mention such visual examples throughout the study in dialogue with theoretical concepts.



platform, they usually add these hashtags (amongst others) to identify their image as a photo of a dog. The amount of these images shared to date has grown to such an extent that a virtual (imagined) community has formed known as *Dogs of Instagram* and these images are commonly called *dogstagram*.<sup>16</sup> In other words, in the same way that the selfie is a worldwide phenomenon, so too is the *dogstagram*. A *dogstagram* can therefore be defined as a digital photograph, typically taken by a camera phone, with a dog as its key subject matter, which is then shared to a social media platform, such as Instagram (Figure 2).

The *dogstagram* has become so influential in contemporary society that a new social media platform *BarkFeed* has been established, dedicated solely to dog pictures (Risman 2015). In addition, several dogs on Instagram are used as so-called ‘animal influencers’ to promote various pet-related products, forming part of a growing section of the advertising sector (Ungerleider 2016) and a billion-dollar industry (Igneri 2016:67). Developers of *BarkFeed* argue, in a typical anthropocentric manner, that *dogstagram*s and photos with dog subject matter make people happy and make them feel better. Additionally, as seen in the *tail* of the Stonehouse photograph, these photos seem to form communities and connections across borders and species, which in turn relates to the notion of multispecies. Sonnekus (2017) explains that the dog community on Instagram forms supportive ties. Thus, these images play an important role in society (Risman 2015) as well as in the visualisation of *being-with* and *becoming with* companion species in the Digital Age.

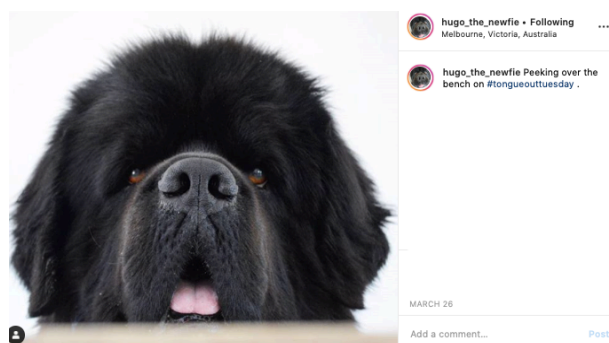


Figure 2: A typical *dogstagram* post from the Instagram account @hugo\_the\_newfie, showing that a *dogstagram* is an image where a dog is a key subject, 26 March 2019. Screenshot by the author.

<sup>16</sup> The *Dogs of Instagram* community is a global community, capturing human-dog relations from all over the world and all walks of life. Admittedly, the dataset used throughout this study represents mostly Westernised images subject to a specific socio-economic status, correlating and limited to Instagram’s core users. The study does not delve deeper into the different representations of human-dog relations across the world, since the key focus reflects on Western philosophies of being as the manifest on Instagram.

### ***1.2.2 Need for the study***

Based on the discussion outlining the background, context and understanding of the study it becomes clear that a critical look at companion species is, firstly, essential to the current discussion of the Anthropocene and the environmental crises. Theory considering the Anthropocene holds the possibility of transformation so that “beings are liberated not merely to serve each other in fraternal and sororal love, but also to find their own strange new destinies and meanings” (Szerszynski 2016:296). Critically considering companion species results in a better understanding of being human with nonhumans, which contributes to picturing and embodying different futures for the planet and its species. The need for an analysis of companion species, is similar to Haraway’s need to explore human-dog relations: to nurture kinship in order to build a planet of sanctuary, multiplicity and growth. By critically considering Haraway’s notions the study enhances this conversation on kinship and prosperity to move forward from the current ‘diagnosis’ of the Anthropocene.

Palsson et al. (2013:4) argue that there is still a chance to alter or reverse some of the fundamental causes of environmental crises. In addition, they argue that the responsibility to take on such an opportunity lies not only with the sciences, but also with the humanities, social sciences and anthropologists (Palsson et al. 2013:4). There is an increasing need for fresh and innovative research from a humanities point of view on environmentalism, especially since the Anthropocene is mostly a result of human activity. A study of companion species therefore addresses the above-mentioned need within the field of humanities (and digital humanities) adding to the “change in perspective and action in terms of human awareness of and responsibility to a vulnerable earth” (Palsson et al. 2013:4). Furthermore, a discussion on companion species enables necessary conversation regarding conservation in contemporary society and aids in communicating about the environment in the context of the Anthropocene (Lorimer 2010b:42).

Seminal visual culture theorist, Nicholas Mirzoeff (2014:213), explains that owing to the fact that earth is still within the early developmental stages of the

Anthropocene, humans cannot simply *see* the epoch across various dimensions of time. To put it simply, the Anthropocene cannot be drawn out in a basic analog or timeline to show its development as, for instance, the Holocene or Ice Age can. As a result, Mirzoeff (2014:213) suggests that the Anthropocene has to be *visualised*, which implies an intricate mix of agency, classification and aesthetics. By detecting traces of the Anthropocene in visual practices, such as art history, Mirzoeff reveals that the Anthropocene is built into our everyday senses and perceptions. Our everyday practices, information, ideas and images of the visual embody and visualise the Anthropocene to such an extent that we do not contest its manifestations (Mirzoeff 2014:226). Notably, Mirzoeff (2014) also argues for a ‘countervisuality’ that opposes the taken for granted visualisations of the Anthropocene. Following this line of thought, it can be argued that images of companion species online, as visual culture, also visualises aspects of the Anthropocene. Hence, the realm of visual culture – more specifically the visual culture of images of dogs on social media – is closely related to the Anthropocene, not only in its portrayal of companion species or environmental matters, but also through its medium of visibility. Prompted by Mirzoeff, it is evident that the unconscious visualisation of the Anthropocene requires scrutiny and reimagining, which is a call I respond to by critically examining online images of companion species within this new epoch.

Secondly, a study specifically regarding dogs is also increasingly significant. Dogs are important. More specifically, dogs are important as companions to human beings and have never been as impactful than in contemporary society. Canine ownership has reached an all-time high, with dogs being the most popular pet worldwide (Walden 2017). Moreover, pet owners think of their dogs as members of their family and treat them as such. For example, 45% of owners say they have bought their pets birthday presents, 31% of owners admit to cooking especially for their pets (Shannon-Missal 2015) and 27% of American owners have had professional photographs taken of their pets (Walden 2017). These statistics reveal an important and intricate relationship between human beings and their companion species. Owing to the fact that dogs, in particular, feature so

prominently in society it is vital to explore their impact on our understanding of the world, as well as how they matter to the community in which we live.

By analysing online images of companion species, the study, thirdly, addresses an important dialogue of the importance and place of social media in the Digital Age. Social media networks (platforms and posted content) are an important part of life in the twenty-first century and have changed the manner in which society functions in several ways, including how we communicate and socialise (Miller, Costa, Haynes, Sinanan & Nicolescu 2016:x). It is a part of society that constantly generates agency, social structures, social critiques, new technologies and communities. As a result, social media now forms part of our everyday being and practices (boyd 2015:2; Couldry & van Dijck 2015:1). It is therefore a remarkable medium producing meaning at an immense speed in society, which has become important to analyse in terms of its function and significance (boyd 2015:2). By examining the workings of a social media platform (Instagram), as well as the meaning of the content of this platform (what do people post, why do people post and what are the consequences of these posts), the research contributes to the crucial and increasing discourse of social media and online communities (Miller et al. 2016:1). Moreover, it also addresses the limited, and perhaps more crucially, conversation of social media and environmentalism. Colliding the (often opposing) worlds of technological social media and the natural environment could also show flourishing possibilities for the current human condition, while simultaneously highlighting potential dangers of such a compound.

Additionally, as a global phenomenon, these images – as well as the human-dog relation – are significant areas of study in a global context. However, the examination is also relevant and necessary in a South African society. South Africa falls under the top 20 dog populations in the world (Walden 2017), demonstrating that dogs (amongst other pets) form a critical part of South African society. Several South African dog owners form part of the *Dogs of Instagram* community and have thousands of followers (Sonnekus 2017). As a result, the study is applicable both locally and internationally.

Finally, the analysis also proves to be integral to the developing field of digital humanities - the junction between digital technology and humanities disciplines (Drucker 2014:9). The study contributes to the discourse by: (1) developing a digital project; (2) generating digitally born research; and (3) critically discussing and evaluating the practice of digital humanities. Borgman (2009:2) maintains that this “is a pivotal moment for the digital humanities ... [m]uch is at stake in the community’s ability to argue for the value of digital humanities scholarship and to assemble the necessary resources for the field to move from ‘emergent’ to ‘established’”. The study aids in and contributes to this development and is therefore central to this revealing scholarship. Furthermore, digital humanities play an important role and have a great responsibility in the new Anthropocene. Nowviskie (2015) explains that digital humanities has a responsibility in conserving, memorising and preserving the environment through the means of the digital. In turn, digital humanities can develop a practice of repair and resilience that is critical in the Anthropocene, giving a voice to those with ideas in overcoming the environmental problems (Nowviskie 2015:1; 12). In doing so, perhaps the study also reveals and expands on the role that digital humanities play in addressing current environmental problems.

To summarise, my critical reading of companion species online is significant in contemporary society, because it simultaneously considers: environmental and anthropocentric issues; the specific role of dogs (an ever-growing, popular and impactful kinship) globally and locally; the capacity of social media in contemporary society and environmentalism; and the field of digital humanities, its functionality and its contribution to conservation.

### ***1.2.3 Scope of the study***

The study consists of concurrent components, or what I like to call layers, that overlap and develop in constant dialogue with one another. Firstly, the study contains a theoretical and critical reading of Haraway’s companion species in terms of humans *being-with* dogs and humans and dogs *becoming with* one another. Notably, the study is not a collation between Heidegger and Haraway or human exceptionalism and nonhumanism (i.e. Heidegger versus Haraway and

anthropocentrism versus multispecies studies). Rather it is a critical examination of Haraway's notion of companion species aided by Heideggerian philosophy within the context of the divide between anthropocentrism and nonhumanist theories. Therefore, the study rethinks *being-with* and *becoming with* companion species, instead of pre-empting the two notions on opposite ends of a spectrum.

It must be clearly stated that I am critical of the philosophical attempt of nonhumanism to evade human behaviour, traits and way of being. By reading Haraway's nonhumanist text and phenomenon of companion species in relation to Heideggerian philosophy, I show that the nonhuman does not evade the human. Rather the humanist traits infiltrate nonhuman theory, just as Heidegger's *being-with* seeps into Haraway's *becoming with*. Despite this contention, I do not align myself uncritically with an anthropocentric point of view. Although I argue for the place of the human in multispecies relations, this does not mean that I believe the human is a supreme species over others. Rather I attempt to engage with the human-animal relation to figure both the role of the human and the dog in companion species relations, cognisant of their differences and various modes of being, including how they manifest in the digital realm. In doing so, I align with new media and communications theorist Joanna Zylińska's (2012) approach to bioethics, which urges us to embrace certain multispecies principles and relations, while still taking the human seriously.<sup>17</sup>

I also do not wish to categorise Heideggerian philosophy within a specific school of thought or employ a critical outlook on Heidegger's thought. As one of the most influential and critiqued modern philosophers, Heidegger's philosophy of being is complex and often interpreted differently by scholars across the world. For instance, some, such as Oliver (2008) and Derrida (1989), consider his philosophies anthropocentric, while others, like Dreyfus (1991) and Davis (2010) interpret Heideggerian theory as a break from human supremacy. Much debate also exists surrounding the metaphysics, transcendent and humanist nature of Heideggerian thought. As a digital and media culture scholar, it is

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<sup>17</sup> For more on Zylińska's bioethical framework, refer to my discussion on the theoretical and methodological approach of the study further on in this introduction.

beyond my scope to attempt to discuss or engage in such critical Heideggerian philosophical thought. Instead I draw on my own hermeneutical reading of Heidegger, informed by other primary theorists, for example Jacques Derrida and Luce Irigaray, to specifically focus on Heidegger's *being-with* (*Mitsein*) in relation to Haraway's *becoming with* as well as Heidegger's formulation of animals.

Following this comparative analysis, I consider another layer of companion species, the phenomenon of the *dogstagram* as a representation of humans *being-with* and *becoming with* dogs in contemporary society. *Dogstagram*s are theoretically examined in terms of their depictions of *being-with*, *becoming with*, nonhumanism and anthropocentrism. In an additional layer, I also digitally analyse and visualise *dogstagram*s in the study's accompanying digital humanities project, entitled *Insta-dog*. Drawing on this digital component, the theoretical section of the study also reflects on the field of digital humanities and establishes the investigation's place within the discipline, drawing connections between the notion of companion species, environmentalism, a technologically driven society and digital computing technologies.

The digital humanities project, *Insta-dog*, attempts to make sense of the large number of *dogstagram*s shared on Instagram through the means of social computing and software studies. This digital project explores selected visual images of dogs found on social media by showcasing them in various digital visualisations. For the purpose of the study the selected images are images labelled (through hashtags) as #dogstagram or #dogsofinstagram, downloaded during a specific time period. The project examines the photographs as a large-scale dataset, instead of focussing on a singular image, to identify patterns, trends and commonalities in a set of images. It results in various data visualisations, sorted based on the images' metadata and algorithms. These patterns organise the *dogstagram*s based on identified properties in combination with a theoretical discussion relating to companion species. Thus, the visualisations group together images depicting humans *being-with* dogs. By visualising these images in this manner, they can be examined at multiple spatial

and temporal scales and present a broader, advanced picture of the phenomena in comparison to a first-hand content analysis (for instance). In doing so, I engage with the various ways in which the human-dog companionship is captured around the world (for example, which properties are prominent, which communities are formed and so on) and how the content of these images represent the notion of companion species. Additionally, the online project also provides viewers with the opportunity to participate and engage with the project in an interactive manner.

In the written component of the study I also include a layer of vignettes throughout, recounting my own experience with my dogs as companion species. My own horizon and lived experience with my companion species foreground the study as well as my interest in the human-dog relation and play a role in my understanding of the concerned theory. I acknowledge that I am a ‘dog-lover’ and the proud kin of two dogs, whose lives as companion species are often shared on social media. I make use of my perspective and experiences of living with and posting about dogs to articulate my thesis. English literature scholar, Karla Armbuster (2018:6-7) tells us that our dog stories are important and matter because “dogs can tell us a great deal about ourselves”. I therefore present and also think through my own experiences with dogs or my own “dog stories” as part of the study to expand my philosophical exploration of the human in nonhumanism into a more colloquial realm. In this manner, I hope to add another dimension to the “many forms of multi-species communication” (Arbuster 2018:8). In my approach to these anecdotal *tails* I follow Donna Haraway, who uses a similar approach in her *Companion Species Manifesto* (2003) and *When Species Meet* (2008).

The theoretical, digital and colloquial components accompany each other in a written thesis as well as digital format, and the two components should preferably be interpreted together as a unit. Ultimately, the study aims to be a true manifestation of hybridity or, if you will, a form of companion species, with the digital, the theory and the author’s lived experiences bound together in significant otherness.



#### **1.2.4 Aims of the study**

The main aims and sub-aims of the study arise based on the above exposition. Briefly summarised, my key aims are:

1. To critically consider the notion of companion species, specifically the human-dog relation, within contemporary society and the current age of the Anthropocene.
  - 1.1 To discuss the place of companion species within the Anthropocenic divide of human supremacy versus nonhumanism.
  - 1.2 To consider Heidegger's notion of *being-with* in terms of Haraway's *becoming with* in relation to companion species.
  - 1.3 To show the importance and prevalence of the human within nonhumanism.
  - 1.4 To take into account a variety of perspectives in contemporary society concerning companion species.
2. To study images of companion species (specifically human-dog relations) on social media using digital analysis and data visualisations (as unpacked above).
  - 2.1 To theoretically analyse how these images signify, mediate and relate to companion species.
  - 2.2 To further the discussion on companion species, contributing to the larger discourse of environmentalism.
  - 2.3 To contribute to the emerging field of digital humanities by generating born-digital research and an interactive online platform to study *dogstagram*s on Instagram.
  - 2.4 To consider the possibilities of the field of digital humanities or digital culture and environmentalism by reflecting on the study's digital project.

#### **1.2.5 Research methodology and theoretical approach**

In order to achieve the above mentioned aims, the study applies multiple methodologies. The thesis component of the study follows a theoretical research methodology, which serves as the premise of the entire exploration. The research is qualitative, while the discussion is exploratory and speculative, as

there are no assumptions made about obtaining a conclusive answer. The thesis contains a literature study, integrated with visual and hermeneutic phenomenological interpretations, which provides a basis for further conclusions.

To conduct this study I rely on a hermeneutic phenomenology as my key research methodology, following Heidegger's formulation of the hermeneutic dimension of phenomenology.<sup>18</sup> In its most extensive form, phenomenology is a qualitative method that aims to understand lived experiences. It is concerned "with meaning and the way in which meaning arises in experience" (Kafle 2011:182). In turn, Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology is focussed on the lived experience and meaning derived from it, from a specific subject's horizon or point of view. Thus it emphasises subjective experiences of particular individuals or groups (Kafle 2011:186). Hermeneutical phenomenology, in line with Heidegger, argues that it is not possible to interpret a text or work devoid of judgements as any interpretation stems from a particular point of departure (McConnell-Henry, Chapman & Francis 2009:3). Using hermeneutic phenomenology as a vehicle of examination, the critical reading of companion species online attempts to understand the lived experiences of humans and dogs and how meaning is derived from these experiences. Rooted in hermeneutic phenomenology the study also traces these lived experiences as they are mediated through social media and explores various cultural contexts and theoretical viewpoints of these experiences. Correspondingly, the actual visual phenomenon of *dogstagram*s is also described and interpreted to discover the hermeneutical meaning of the online images.

Based on Heidegger's formulation of the methodology, conducting the research concerning companion species is also a lived experience for the researcher "as they attune themselves towards the ontological nature of phenomenon while

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<sup>18</sup> Considering Heidegger's philosophy as a methodological framework is sometimes met with apprehension, owing to the political controversies surrounding his relation to fascism (McConnell-Henry et al. 2009:5). Although I acknowledge this argument against Heidegger, the study's use of hermeneutical phenomenology has no interest in these debates and chooses to focus only on the thoughts of the methodology of relevance to the research, separate from Heidegger's alleged personal beliefs.

learning to ‘see’ pre-reflective, taken-for-granted, and essential understandings through the lens of their always already pre-understandings and prejudices” (van Manen in Kafle 2011:188). As mentioned, to reflect this critical part of the methodology, I include my own experiences as personal, anecdotal *tails* or vignettes within the study (although not as a predominant line of thought) along with anecdotal experiences of other human-dog relations, resulting in a “hybrid text to provide justice to the life world stories of the research” (Kafle 2011:190). Such a hybrid and conversing study is characteristically hermeneutic phenomenological.

Another key characteristic of hermeneutical phenomenology is its focus on understanding texts, to create a substantial reading of a phenomenon (Kafle 2011:190). The study of *being-with* and *becoming with* companion species considers theoretical understandings of human exceptionalism and nonhumanist accounts of the human-dog relation. By critically engaging with and comparing these texts the research reflects thoroughly on the notion of companion species from various horizons (Kafle 2011:192). By fusing the interpretation of these texts, the lived experiences of the human-dog relations on social media, the lived experiences of companion species, as well as the author’s own personal experience with dogs, I provide a significant, new and layered perspective on companion species.

As a result, the study refers to the six guidelines of hermeneutic phenomenology (identified by Kafle [2011], based on Heidegger’s outline) as a method of analysis. These guidelines include: “commitment to an abiding concern, orientated stance towards the question, investigating the experience as it is lived, describing the phenomenon through writing and rewriting, and consideration of parts and whole” (Kafle 2011:191). Critically analysing the phenomenon of *dogstagram*s from various points of departure allows us to generate new research, which encompasses the Heideggerian *fore-having*, *fore-sight* and *fore-conception* of understanding a phenomenon. Heidegger (1962[1927]) argues that in this manner we can attain a grasp on the meaning of our existence, or in this case the significance of the human-dog relation.

In turn, the digital component of this study is situated within the field of digital humanities and follows a digital methodology. Owing to the key aspect of digital humanities – investigating, analysing and presenting research in digital form – it can be considered as a conventional methodological viewpoint (Kirschenbaum 2010:2). Digital humanities mediates information and research through the means of digital technology (Berry 2011b:1) and can also be described as “the digital ‘folding’ of reality, whereby one is able to approach culture in a radically new way” (Berry 2011b:1). Situating the study within digital humanities means creating tools to produce, curate and engage with knowledge that is ‘born digital’ and exists in a digital context, as well as employing mixed approaches (i.e. incorporating theory and visual culture to support the project) and innovative publishing platforms that deviate from print traditions (Presner 2010:6).

According to Caplan (2016:4) this approach and new method of research within the field of humanities is a clear example of digital humanities, which requires methodological ingenuity. In other words, in order to generate digitally born results I develop an innovative digital or computational methodology that results in a formal analysis of the selected images. Manovich (in Hochman & Manovich 2013) argues that this is “the key question of digital humanities – how to combine ‘distant reading’ of patterns with ‘close-reading’ of particular artefacts – by proposing a multi-scale reading”. The digital project, *Insta-dog*, develops such a methodology by considering patterns in the visualisations of *dogstagram*s (distant reading) as well as identifying and unpacking the specific theoretical notions of *being-with* and *becoming with* within the images (close reading).<sup>19</sup> In turn the study also critically reflects on this process and methodology, in order to comment on the emerging field of digital humanities.

The digital element of the study thus follows a digital humanities methodology by using computational image analytic methods, as well as custom-made software tools for big data visualisation. Based on techniques and software

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<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, this aspect of close and distant reading of digital humanities relates to the notion of hermeneutical phenomenology that considers both parts and the whole of a phenomenon (Kafle 2011:191). In this way the integration of these methodologies throughout the study relate and interact with one another.

employed by new media analyst Lev Manovich in the creation of *Selfiecity* (Caplan 2016:4), the project involves: (1) creating and extracting a dataset of *dogstagram*s from Instagram based on random selection; (2) running this dataset through recognition and analytic software, which provide algorithmically calculated estimates of commonalities in *dogstagram*s (for example, position of dog, close-up images and content in photographs); (3) extracting metadata from the images in the dataset based in the social media platform regarding time, place and other formal elements; (4) visualising this metadata and data using big data visualisation computational tools. Based on these visualisations and results deductions or interpretations can then be made.

*Selfiecity* has also been subject to some criticism, which can be improved upon. Some of this critique includes: an inability to come to conclusive results, based on a lack of specific research questions (Caplan 2016:5); a patriarchal team conducting the research (Losh 2014); the use of strong binary terms (Losh 2014); a lack of acknowledgement of human error within the analysis of big data sets (Losh 2014); reducing individual experiences to data sets (Losh 2014); and presenting seductive image plots as self-explanatory (Caplan 2016:6). In order to attempt to overcome these problems, *Insta-dog* asks specific research questions (stemming from a thorough theoretical exploration); uses fluid properties of identification that are not dualistic; reflects on the process of big data analysis, acknowledges and represents its possibility of error; provides clear explanations both in the digital project and through the theoretical exploration of each visualisation; and reduces the emphasis on presenting captivating images, by focussing on accurate visualisations. Furthermore, my digital exploration differs from *Selfiecity* in its size of images visualised, owing to the limited resources available and time constraints of this academic endeavour. It also varies from *Selfiecity* by not employing human analysis to identify demographic data of various sources (which could lead to bias [Sokol 2014]), since information relating to age and gender is not of relevance to the study. Finally, *Insta-dog* also digitises the context and theoretical background of the exploration, to provide a

clearer picture of the entire project and create a type of archive, which is not necessarily explicitly present in *Selfiecity*.<sup>20</sup>

My exploration also follows a specific approach to both the digital and theoretical components of the study. In literature concerning human and nonhuman relations, authors often are compelled to choose between taking an ontological or ethical approach to their research. However, since both these theoretical approaches are naturally implied throughout the study, I propose to conduct the exploration by aligning my argument to take the human seriously in nonhumanism with seminal theorist Joanna Zylińska's bioethical approach. Zylińska (2012:206), in her critical consideration of companion species and kinship, proposes an "alternative bioethics" which is an "ethics of life" based on the relation between humans, nonhumans and technology in contemporary society. Zylińska's bioethics argues for a theoretical approach that incorporates the ideas of interspecies relations, thoughts on *becoming with* animals, as well as the human processes of language, philosophy and culture (Zylińska 2012:221). Bioethics challenges the traditional ways of thinking about species relations, while simultaneously highlighting the differences and values of various life forms (Zylińska 2012:221).

For Zylińska (2012:221), studies on relations in contemporary society should consider that "the question that is posed to us is not only 'What does my pet want?' or even the Cartesian 'But as for me, whom am I?' but also, perhaps first of all, 'And what if a bacteria responded?'" She argues for an approach that studies the ontological interconnection of lifeworlds, but does not deny that there are essential categories of differences between species and ethical responsibilities that need to be taken into consideration. Based on Zylińska's bioethics, this study critically engages with Haraway's companion species by considering the human within a nonhuman perspective, in an attempt to respond to the other's presence and demand (Zylińska 2012:220). In this fashion, I, as a human researcher, respond to the world of companion species critically, acknowledging that I

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<sup>20</sup> For more information on the digital project refer to Chapter Seven, where I discuss the particularities of the project in relation to the theory of companion species.

cannot withdraw from my own human way of being. Consequently the study follows a conjoined human and nonhuman agency and theoretical approach, in alignment with Zylynska's bioethics.

### **1.3. Literature review**

Considering the specific literature written on images of companion species online, it still remains a limited field, with a considerable amount of space for further examination. A review of sources and references regarding this examination follows. In addition, this literature review shows that the literature concerning companion species, human exceptionalism, multispecies, social media, digital humanities and environmentalism also typically occur as a knot, overlapping in themes and approaches. As a result, the literature reviewed overlaps and coincides, with certain sources being applicable in various contexts.

#### ***1.3.1 Haraway's literature***

Since my exploration is based in the theoretical concept of companion species proposed by seminal scholar Donna Haraway, it is worthwhile to start with a brief review of her key texts relevant to this study, clearly establishing the applicability of her work. Haraway most prominently writes from a feminist perspective along with a strong background in biology, combining both the realms of science and sociality throughout her body of literature. In her work she places emphasis on philosophy, biology, history and politics. In 1985 Haraway published her significant *Cyborg Manifesto* in which she introduces the notion of the cyborg – a hybrid figure that combines human and nonhuman, or human and machine that allows us to think past boundaries. In *Primate Visions: Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (1989), Haraway furthers her feminist discussions on biology and technology by questioning patriarchy and heterosexuality within the science and history of primates. In this critique Haraway addresses the animal in the relation between nonhuman and humans. Lately, Haraway has exchanged the cyborg figure for the figure of companion species in her pivotal text, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People and Significant Otherness* (2003) and its extended version *When Species Meet* (2008). Both these sources, as previously mentioned, provide a critical discussion on

Haraway's notion of companion species and the complex human-dog relation in a technoscientific society. From a biological, historical, as well as philosophical point of view, Haraway (2008:3) discusses two main questions "(1) Whom and what do I touch when I touch my dog? And (2) How is 'becoming with' a practice of becoming wordly?" and contends that respect, curiosity and knowledge are bound to human-nonhuman relations. Together these two sources are the starting point and theoretical basis of this study since they discuss both the notion of companion species and *becoming with*. Most recently, Haraway has also considered the Anthropocene and kinship. In *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2016) she reconfigures the relations of earthly inhabitants and calls for the conceptualisation of the Chthulucene. All of the above-mentioned sources act as points of departure for this exploration and become the primary sources on which theoretical discussions are based.

When considering Haraway's literature it is then also helpful to turn to theorists who have considered and evaluated her work (especially that of companion species) as secondary sources. For example, Grassie (2011) unpacks companion species in relation to communion species, in *Eating well together: Donna Haraway's companion species manifesto*. Other sources that reflect on the manifesto include, Lehman (2003), Heinrich (2009) and Cassidy (2003). In particular, Vint (2008) provides a helpful overview of Haraway's work in terms of the range of figures and concepts identified. Jordan (2011), Ginn (2013) and Lorimer (2010b; 2012) also consider companion species extensively in order to apply the concept to their own work regarding surfing, gardening and elephants respectively. Zylinska (2012), in turn, discusses Haraway's companion species in relation to bioethics and assesses the successes and failures of the concept of addressing better living with the human and nonhuman. Often, Haraway's texts are critiqued for not showing a clear methodology (Hamner 2003), referring to vague concepts such as love and using non-transparent language (Zylinska 2012), edging around ethical concepts (Lorimer 2010b; Zylinska 2012) and only referring to domesticated animals (Lorimer 2010b; Srinivasan 2013). However, most of the mentioned critics simultaneously express that Haraway's theories (companion species) are powerful, affecting and important. Additionally, in



*When Species Meet: staying with the trouble* (2010), Haraway herself addresses these critical readings, defending her work, for instance by showing that compound concepts are necessary within the age of the Anthropocene to overcome boundaries. She also notably underlines that such conversing and critique about companion species are vital and there is always more room for further discussion, arguing that we have “hardly begun [*sic*] to name the work, play, narrative, and analysis we need in the contact zones of worldly companion species” (Haraway 2010:55). It is then precisely this work-play-narrative-analysis conversation that this study proposes to continue.

### ***1.3.2 Other literature concerning companion species***

In addition to Haraway’s literature (primary and secondary sources) other theorists and philosophers have also contributed to this line of reasoning. Owing to the philosophical thoughts in Haraway’s manifesto, it is important to consider several seminal theorists that have also contemplated the phenomenon of companion species and/or the human-dog relation in their own work.

In *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* Jacques Derrida (1997) expresses his thoughts on the motif of the animal, including animal suffering, the idea of animality and the deconstruction of the opposition between man and animal. In turn, Deleuze and Guattari consider the idea of humans “becoming-animal” in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980), in which they describe a movement where humans and animals are no longer independent entities, but carriers of non-identity – the ultimate form of freedom (Bruns 2007:703). Deleuze and Guattari provide important discussions, however Haraway (2008:30) and Laurie (2015:142), amongst others, critique Deleuze and Guattari for a lack of consideration for domestic animals in their deliberations. Additionally, authors (such as Elden 2006, Calarco 2008 and Aho 2007) have also highlighted the reoccurrence of the subject of animals throughout Martin Heidegger’s work. Across Heidegger’s work, including *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1938) and *Being and Time* (1927), he considers the animal as poor in the world, without space and history, arguing that humans are different to nonhuman animals, since animals lack key aspects

of being human. Naturally, then, Heidegger's animals have also received criticism of various kinds and differ from Haraway's companion species. Most prominently Derrida (in Nancy 1991), argues: "[T]he Heideggerian discourse on the animal is violent and awkward, at times contradictory". Similarly, in *Foucault and Animals* (2016), Chrulew and Wadiwel reflect on the relevance of animals in the works of Michel Foucault, including his comments on animal experimentation, training, zoological gardens, pet keeping, agriculture and consumption. Notably, although significant to the notion of companion species, these philosophical works do not consider the specific relation between man and dog to the same extent that Haraway does.

Contributing to the philosophical discussion of multispecies relations some literature discusses the various philosophical trails of thought regarding Haraway's companion species, comparing and contrasting theories and acting as secondary sources to the primary texts. For example, in *The philosophical roots of Donna Haraway's cyborg imagery: Descartes and Heidegger through, Latour, Derrida, and Agamben* (2014a), Gavin Rae highlights the possible key philosophical roots of Haraway's thinking (i.e. following Derrida, Latour and Agamben, while emanating Heideggerian and Cartesian dualism) in order to provide a better understanding of her work. In turn, in *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida* (2008), Matthew Calarco challenges an anthropocentric philosophical tradition towards the human animal relation, arguing that humans and nonhumans are part of an "ontological whole". Through an examination of the ethics and evolution of major thinkers including, Heidegger (in terms of a responsibility towards life), Levinas (who questions nature and ethics) and Derrida (who establishes non-anthropocentric ethics), Calarco calls for a new manner of thinking about living with animals.

In relation to posthumanism, feminism and companion species in contemporary society the following sources also reflect on animal relations. Cary Wolfe theorises the animal in relation to humanism and posthumanism and explains that the animal should be taken seriously, both in theory and practice in the twenty-first century, in *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse, the*

*Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (2003). Additionally, in *Thinking Animals* (2012), Kari Weil explores confrontations between humans and animals and the ethical, political and personal implications of these confrontations. She continues Haraway's thoughts on a borderless human-nonhuman relation, by disrupting the notion of species-specific distinctions and arguing for the acceptance of human and animal entanglement. Although Weil and Wolfe both refer to the dog throughout their research, they do not focus as intensely on the subject of the canine as Haraway does.

Some studies consider other animals through the perspective of companion species and interspecies relations. Franklin Ginn, in *Sticky lives: slugs, detachment and more-than-human ethics in the garden* (2013), provides "an everyday ethic that can accommodate more-than-human difference" by considering the British domestic garden aligned with the geographies of companion species. Jamie Lorimer (2010c), who has contributed a number of outputs regarding companion species, also considers the possibility of elephants as companions by studying Asian elephant conservation in Sri Lanka. In similar fashion, Tim Jordan (2011) examines the notion of companion species in relation to technology, questioning whether a technology such as the surfboard can be considered a companion species in the act of learning to surf.

Importantly, other theorists consider the human-animal encounter from a humanist point of view. Raimond Gaita's *The Philosopher's Dog* (2004) uses Wittgenstein's philosophies to understand animals from a humanist point of view. Gaita makes a strong argument that animals are unlike human beings and that "we should be kind to animals, but it is wrong to accord them any significant moral status" (Plumwood 2007). Churchill (2006) also considers animal encounters from a humanist viewpoint and suggests a "second-person perspective" that involves empathetic seeing to describe these relations that still emphasises humanism.

Thus, a great variety of interdisciplinary literature concerning companion species exists. The literature ranges from Haraway's texts and discussions

thereof, philosophical traces, humanist, posthumanist and feminist conversations to animals outside of the human-dog relation.

### ***1.3.3 Literature concerning the human-dog relation***

As explained, my exploration focusses specifically on human-dog relations. This section reviews literature concerning this relation, relevant to the study.

*A Dog's History of America* (Derr 2004) traces the kinship of dogs throughout the history of America considering their origin and role in historical events. Derr reveals aspects of the American society through his argument, however his authorship is from a non-academic background and gives a pervasive account that lacks critical consideration (Coleman 2005:484). Nevertheless, Derr opens up conversations regarding the dog's role in society (although limited to Americans) and questions the notion of human dominance over the canine. Anderson's (2004) *Creatures of Empire* also considers domestic animals in a historic context, briefly mentioning dogs. In *Tamed: Ten Species That Changed Our World* (2017), Alice Roberts considers the history of the domestication of different species and how these relations have come to influence society. Roberts commences (2017:8-46) with a genetic exploration of dogs, demonstrating how they have evolved from wolves to a less-dangerous companion species. Such historical traces are helpful in contextualising the human-dog relation, especially owing to Haraway's emphasis on history and science.

Apart from Haraway's two seminal texts, a number of other sources considering the human-dog relation explicitly, specifically in terms of companion species, exists. *With Dogs at the Edge of Life* (Dayan 2016) considers what it means to think outside of humanism, by using the human-dog relation as a way of thinking through political hierarchies and the human-nonhuman relation (Greenwald 2016:4). Dayan's offers a more human-centred approach compared to Haraway's companion species, since she uses the human-dog relation to consider human aspects, whereas Haraway emphasises that for her the actual being of dogs are more important. *The biopolitics of animal being and welfare: dog control and care in the UK and India* (Srinivasan 2013) considers the discourse of companion

species in terms of the human-dog relation by studying the care of dogs in India. Srinivasan (2013:109) addresses a limitation of Haraway's work on human-dog relations – only considering owned dogs – by looking at dogs “that are not loved or wanted by human beings”. Additionally, *Furry families: making a human-dog family through home* (Power 2008) studies the practices which result in more-than-human families, where dogs are considered as part of a family, or then as companion species.

In other literature formulated on the notion of human-dog relations two central themes can be identified: anthropomorphism and psychological well-being. For example, focussing on anthropomorphism, *Anthropomorphism and anthropomorphic selection – beyond the “cute response”* (Serpell 2002), explores the projection of human emotions onto animals, including dogs. Sources relating to anthropomorphism are often helpful with regards to human exceptionalism and its relation to *being-with* and *becoming with* and will therefore be read in this regard. In terms of psychological reasoning, Trigg, Thompson, Smith and Bennett (2016) discuss how the relation between the constructed identities of animals and their owners are psychologically linked, especially in the face of high-risk situations. In this case the authors specifically refer to dogs, amongst others. In, *People and companion animals: it takes two to tango* (2016), Amiot, Bastian and Martens also focus on the psychological mechanisms involved in the social relationships of human-animal relations (specifically referring to pets, such as dogs). Several other sources considering the psychological impact of human-dog relations exists. However, this study stems from a digital culture and anthropological realm and does not consider the school of psychology. For this reason, psychological sources will be considered as tertiary, while extensive research into this body of literature goes beyond the scope of this exploration.

#### ***1.3.4 Literature concerning Heidegger's being-with and Haraway's becoming with***

The notion of *being-with* is best explored by referring to its primary source of conceptualisation, Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927). Theorists that aid in the specific reading of Heidegger's concept of *Mitsein* include Philipse (1999),

McMullin (2009), Russow (1980) and Zuckerman (2015). Heidegger's notion of being-with-others has also been discussed in terms of other seminal theorists, for example Dungey (2001) relates being-with-others to Derrida to consider primordial politics, while Bauer (2001) discusses Heidegger and Hegel in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and establishes Heidegger's *being-with* as important to feminist studies. In turn Duyndam (2015), examines the relation between Girard's mimesis and Heidegger's *Mitsein*, while Poleshchuk (2010) discusses the notion of the other in terms of Heidegger and Levinas. Both *Heidegger's fundamental ontology and the problem of animal life* (Hayes 2007) and *Heidegger's Later Thinking of Animality: The End of World Poverty* (Mitchell 2011) are valuable sources in view of Heidegger's thought surrounding animals. Furthermore, sources such as Bailey's *Animal Dasein* (2012) and McMullin's *Fleshing out Heidegger's "Mitsein"* (2013) extends Heidegger's notion of being-with-others. Both Bailey and McMullin, alongside Buchanan (2012), Pryor (2012), Coeckelbergh (2012) and James (2009), consider the potential of the animal as a possible other in Heidegger's being-with-others. They look at human-animal relations using the notion of *Mitsein* and are consequently of great relevance to this study.

Literature concerning the notion of *becoming with* relates back to Haraway's seminal sources, since Haraway uses the concept to discuss companion species. Therefore, sources considering Haraway's companion species also often address the notion of *becoming with*. Specifically, Jordan (2011) highlights the importance of the idea of *becoming with* in relation to Heidegger's *being-with* and sparks further thought on the relation between these two ideas. Haraway's *becoming with* stems from Despret's *The Body We Care For: Figures of Anthropozoo-genesis* (2004), which, as a result, also serves as a primary source in the analysis of *becoming with*. Despret considers the relation between researcher and animal subject by examining lived examples and concludes that researcher and animal shape one another.

Another significant source in terms of *being-with* and *becoming with* is Glen Mazis's *Humans, Animals, Machines: Blurring Boundaries* (2008). In this

monograph, Mazi “aims to challenge and correct the mainstream dualistic, Cartesian epistemic theories” (Weinstein 2008). In doing so, Mazi harnesses both theories from Heidegger and Haraway to highlight various ways of blurring boundaries between humans, animals and machines. Although admittedly anti-humanist, this source does show that both Haraway and Heidegger’s theories can be drawn upon to understand the relation between humans, animals and machine and is therefore significant. Mazi creates a space in the literature for a critical consideration of the relation between humans, nonhumans and technology, by drawing on both the human and nonhuman.

### ***1.3.5 Literature concerning the Anthropocene in terms of human exceptionalism and nonhumanism***

A large amount of literature concerning the Anthropocene epoch exists, produced by a variety of sources including the public press, media and scientific community (Braje & Erlandson 2013:116). The archeological community also often provides significant information regarding the specific geological elements of change in the environment contributing and motivating the idea of an Anthropocene (Waters 2016; Braje & Erlandson 2013). In turn, other sources, such as Steffen, Crutzen and McNeill (2007), provide a historical and conceptual overview of the concept. Even though these sources are helpful in developing an overview of what constitutes the Anthropocene, this study mainly focusses on literature exploring the Anthropocene from a theoretical, social and humanities point of view. Palsson et al. (2013:3, emphasis added) “formulate the need for an innovative research agenda based on a careful consideration of the changing *human* condition as linked to global environmental change” with emphasis on research from the humanities and social sciences.

Seminal cultural authors considering the Anthropocene from a multispecies viewpoint include Haraway, Bruno Latour and Bronislaw Szerszynski. Latour unpacks and explores what it means to live in the time of the Anthropocene, where the environment is a main character. In *Agency at the Time of the Anthropocene* (2014), *Telling friends from foes at the time of the Anthropocene* (2013), *Fifty shades of green* (2015) and *Anthropology at the time of the*

*Anthropocene: a personal view of what is to be studied* (2017), he considers politics, agency, anthropology and religion in relation to the new epoch. As previously mentioned, Haraway (2015a) also considers the Anthropocene in terms of companion relations and formulates her own Chthulucene in *Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin*. Evident in the titles, *Praise Be to You, Earth-Beings* (2016) and *Gods of the Anthropocene: Geo-Spiritual Formations in the Earth's New Epoch* (2017), Szerszynski considers the Anthropocene from a religious and spiritual perspective, contributing substantially to the ontological discussion of the Anthropocene. Other significant sources considering the Anthropocene from a similar point of view include, *Can humans survive the Anthropocene?* (Hamilton 2014) and *Listening to Birds in the Anthropocene: The Anxious Semiotics of Sound in a Human-Dominated World* (Whitehouse 2015). Skillington (2015) helpfully provides an overview of literature critically considering modern social life that contributes to ecological destruction. Skillington also mentions sources, like Urry (2011), Barry and Woods (2013) and Beck (2006) that critique the human condition for the denial of the Anthropocene. Finally, Grusin studies the Anthropocene through a feminist and queer lens in *Anthropocene Feminism* (2017) and suggests the concept of 'anthropocene feminism' to counter the masculine approach that often dominates explorations of the Anthropocene.

Correspondingly, several theorists also consider the current Anthropocene in terms of human centrism and humanism. An essential source to the discussion of humanism in contemporary society is Rémi Brague's *The Legitimacy of the Human* (2017) that seeks a "new, truly humanistic, culture" to overcome current problems. Brague's theories are helpful in the interrogation of humanism and also provides insightful historical context for the continuation of humanist thought. In addition, Hayward (1997) and Norton (1984) both argue that anthropocentrism does not necessarily connote negativity and environmental destruction. Norton proposes a "weak anthropocentrism" that allows for a fitting basis for environmental ethics and also proposes that no matter the point of view (humanist or nonhumanist) the same environmentally responsible behaviours will still occur. McShane (2007) however contests this hypothesis in



*Anthropocentrism vs Nonanthropocentrism: Why Should We Care?*, which also provides a helpful unpacking and critique of human exceptionalism. In addition, Ferencz-Flatz (2017) uses Husserl's "humanization" and "animalization" to reflect on contemporary animal ethics. Furthermore, *Struggling with Human Exceptionalism: The Rise, Decline and Revitalization of Environmental Sociology* (Dunlap and Catton 1994) explores the relation between environmental crises and the anthropocentric paradigm, especially within the field of sociology. In *More-than-humanizing the Anthropocene* (2016), Affifi also gives a valuable critique on the nonhuman turn and argues for an emphasis on the more-than-human in order to maintain the uniqueness of being human. In the same manner Dwyer (2007) critiques Haraway by suggesting that humans feel a non-reciprocal emotional attachment towards our animals.

These sources aid in the critical discussion of human supremacy and nonhumanism in the Anthropocene and accordingly companion species. A particular useful source that draws together both arguments from anthropocentric and posthuman perspectives is *Speciesism, Identity Politics, and Ecocriticism: A Conversation with Humanists and Posthumanists* (Cole, Landry, Boeher, Nash, Fudge, Markley & Wolfe 2011). The e-conversation presents different theorists' positions on the subject and summarises the outlook of both perspectives in terms of species relations.

### ***1.3.6 Literature concerning the Anthropocene, companion species and visual culture***

In his essay *Visualizing the Anthropocene* (2014), Mirzoeff considers how the Anthropocene has been visualised throughout art history by major industrial powers and how a countervisuality could possibly be created. Carruth and Marzec's *Environmental Visualization in the Anthropocene: Technologies, Aesthetics, Ethics* (2014) offers "a new genealogy of contemporary visual culture that centers at once on environmental risk and environmental justice" (Carruth & Marzec 2014:210) by presenting a range of essays that consider the visualisations, technologies and media that depict the environment.

*Art and Animals* (Aloi 2012) provides a detailed description of the representation and relevance of nonhuman life in the history of contemporary art. Aloi also “exemplifies the great potential for art to inform as well as to be informed by human-animal studies” (McHugh 2015:474) and therefore becomes a critical source in the study of companion species in visual culture. Since *Art and Animals* only considers contemporary art, other sources considering animals throughout the history of art and culture are also useful, such as Morse and Danahay (2007), Morphy (2014), Kalof (2017) as well as Simmons and Armstrong (2007). Additionally, *Animal: A Beastly Compendium* (Sueur-Hermel & Mathis 2017) presents artworks depicting animals from prints and photography collections from France.

Concerning the depiction of animals not only in art history, but also in the broader field of visual culture, Baker’s *Picturing the Beast: Animals, Identity, and Representation* (1993) and more recently Malamud’s *An Introduction to Animals and Visual Culture* (2012), discuss the animal in the context of art, film, photography, television, fashion, commerce and living spectacles. Comparably, *Seeing animals, speaking of nature: visual culture and the question of the animal* (Ito 2008) considers images of animals in visual culture, but also argues how this discourse could contribute to environmental studies.

Several other authors focus on the use of animals within specific forms of visual culture. For instance, Bousé (2003) concentrates on wildlife films; Kalof and Fitzgerald (2003) comment on animal images in hunting magazines; and Wilson (1992) discusses animals on television. Notably, Haraway has also discussed the animal in visual institutions. In her earlier research on the world of modern science and nature *Primate Visions: Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (1989) she comments on taxidermy in the museum space in a chapter entitled *Teddy bear patriarchy: taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936*, in which the visual gaze upon the animal becomes a prominent theme. Additionally, Desmond’s *A summons to the consuming animal* (2010) considers how Heidegger’s construction of animals and human-animal relations are employed in marketing strategies and critiques this idea by

comparing it to Derrida's *The Animal that Therefore I am (More to Follow)* (1997).

Lastly, some texts not only focus on a specific aspect of visual culture, but also highlight the dog (and not just the animal in general). *Dogs and Domesticity: Reading the Dog in Victorian British Visual Culture* (Robson 2017) maps the dog's association with social and moral values in Victorian British art and culture, while *Of dogs and hot dogs: distractions in early cinema* (Tang 2016) looks at the role of dogs in films as more than just attractions. Additionally, *From Woofs to Words – Dog Characters and Human Speech in Contemporary Science Fiction* (Ylönen 2017) explores the depiction of dogs as companion species and ideas surrounding the human-dog relation in contemporary science fiction novels. From a South African point of view, Halliday (2016) looks at the human-animal relation in the work of two contemporary South African photographers (Pieter Hugo and Daniel Naudé). In Hugo's work *The Hyena and Other Men*, Halliday identifies the conceptualisation of Haraway's companion species. However, a comprehensive and critical discussion of dogs in the broader discourse of visual culture and contemporary society, especially including a South African point of view, is still needed and would contribute to the existing literature on this subject.<sup>21</sup>

### **1.3.7 Literature concerning companion species and social media**

Research concerning companion species on social media remains limited. Currently, only a few academic studies exist in this regard. Wu, Yuan, You and Luo (2016) use images on social media to examine the effects of pets (including dogs) on psychological well-being and happiness. In *Sick bunnies and pocket dumps: "Not-selfies" and the genre of self-representation*, Tiidenberg and Whelan (2017) considers self-representation on social media by examining other objects depicted in visual images, including animals. To a certain extent (although only briefly) their study also considers some aspects of animals on social media. A few

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<sup>21</sup> Although beyond the scope of the study, some key sources engaging with research done about dogs from a human-animal perspective in South Africa include Wendy Woodward's *The Animal Gaze*, Van Sittert and Swart's *Canis Africanis* as well as Ortiz-Robles *Literature and Animal Studies*.

short articles exist that simply acknowledge the increasing popularity of *dogstagram*s online. For example, Igneri (2016:67) comments on the phenomena of dogs that become famous on Instagram and Sonnekus (2017) notes the same trend internationally and in a South African context. Some non-academic sources, such as *Why social media is ruining our dogs?* (Lazhur 2017) and *Dogs of influence: the popularity of social media pets* (Polyn 2017) do critically engage with the phenomenon, however these discussions lack theoretical support and are often from a personal point of view.

Referring to the specific technology of social media and Instagram, a considerable amount of studies exist that unpack and analyse the platform as well as its affects on society. For example, boyd's *Social Media: A Phenomenon to be Analyzed* (2015) emphasises the need to understand the phenomenon of social networks. Couldry and van Dijck (2015) question the meaning of the 'social' in social media, considering how social media has become embedded in everyday practices. In a similar manner, Van Dijk (2012) examines connection and multiple dimensions of social media platforms. In addition, Baym (2015) questions the political and economic influence behind social media platforms. Miller et al. (2016) also consider the reciprocal relation between social media and society by considering how social media changes the world, but also how the world changes social media. They also provide a helpful description of what constitutes social media. Similarly, Fuchs (2014) examines social media from a critical perspective, considering social media and participatory culture, big data and communication power, respectively. He applies his examination to various case studies and considers future applications of social media. Finally, Manovich's *New Media* (2001) also gives useful discussions on social media in terms of cultural analysis. These sources are helpful in providing a background to the study of companion species images on social media and Instagram.

### ***1.3.8 Literature concerning methodology and theoretical approach***

This study derives from literature examining the methodologies of phenomenological hermeneutics and theoretical approach of bioethics. In *Interpreting visual culture: explorations in the hermeneutics of the visual*,

Heywood and Sandywell (1999) give a clear understanding of visual culture in terms of phenomenological hermeneutics and the lived experience of the visual. They provide a structural layout of how a phenomenological hermeneutic understanding is gained based on key theorists such as Heidegger. This serves as a constructive guideline for the interpretation of visual images. In turn *Hermeneutic phenomenological research method simplified* (Kafle 2011), *Unpacking Heideggerian Phenomenology* (McConnell-Henry et al. 2009) and *Interpretive Hermeneutic Phenomenology: Clarifying Understanding* (Holroyd 2007) provide a clear understanding of Heidegger's phenomenological hermeneutics and are helpful in using the methodology in the critical reading of companion species. Willis (2001; 2004) as well as Webmoor and Witmore's (2008) discussions on phenomenology are also employed as secondary sources. Finally, James (2009) outlines the methodology of phenomenology in terms of animal experience and Heidegger's notion of *Mitsein* and is therefore perfectly applicable to outline how to analyse *being-with* companion species. Similarly, another useful source in relation to phenomenology is *Phenomenology of Digital-Being* (Kim 2001), which considers the Heideggerian notions of *Dasein* and *Mitsein* in relation to the digital realm. Applying these sources' guidelines on (visual) phenomenological hermeneutic interpretation allows this exploration to verbalise the experience of sharing and looking at *dogstagram*s.

As described, a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology often requires life writing or the retelling of personal lived experiences in relation to the phenomenon being explored. Providing more clarity on this notion, specifically in relation to the human-nonhuman relation and posthumanism, Huff and Haefner (2012:153) "foreground issues crucial to life writing scholarship and posthuman scholarship: agency, subjectivity, performance, truth value, and the ideological underpinnings and ethics of rhetorical effect". Huff and Haefner's delineation of life writing refers specifically to Haraway and *When Species Meet* and is used as primary source to apply such a writing style in parts of the proposed study.

The notion of companion species is theoretically explored in terms of bioethics, following seminal theorist Joanna Zylińska. Zylińska's *Bioethics* (2012) provides a clear framework of bioethics and how these approaches interact, with specific reference to the environment, Anthropocene and companion species. *Bioethics in the Age of New Media* (Zylińska 2009) and *The Ethics of Cultural Studies* (Zylińska 2005) elaborate extensively on a bioethical approach and are also used as primary sources. Furthermore, Calder (2008) makes a strong argument to unite ontology and ethics in theoretical focus, which relates to Zylińska's argument and theory. Karen Barad's seminal *Posthuman Performative: Toward and Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter* (2003) and *Meeting the Universe Halfway* (2007) also provide helpful understandings of ontology and ethics in a posthuman context. Barad (2007:817) delves into the kinetic boundaries of humans and nonhumans, nature and culture and the social and scientific, arguing that these are ontological units subject to "intra-action", adding to specific properties as well as the ontological approach within this exploration.

### ***1.3.9 Literature concerning digital humanities***

Sources considering digital humanities – its origins, limitations and prospects – include: *The computational turn: thinking about the digital humanities* (Berry 2011b); *The state of the digital humanities: A report and a critique* (Liu 2011); *What is digital humanities and what's it doing in English departments?* (Kirschebaum 2010); *Digital humanities 2.0: a report on knowledge* (Presner 2010); *Getting started in digital humanities* (Spiro 2011); and *A companion to digital humanities* (Schreibman, Siemens & Unsworth 2004). These sources are used as a primary source for the digital component of the study and examination thereof. They are helpful in constructing a digital humanities project, but also in assessing the project's affectivity and place within the field of digital culture and digital scholarship. In turn, these sources reveal the current shortcomings of digital humanities, such as a lack of interpretation skills and a loss of human qualities through the means of technology, which this study can then address and attempt to overcome.

Owing to the use of *Selfiecity* as a point of departure for this exploration's digital visualisations, key sources (as well as the actual online project) discussing the project, such as Tifentale (2014), Hochman (2014), Losh (2014) and Bruno, Bertamini and Protti (2015), act as guidelines to creating a similar project. In turn, Manovich's *The Language of New Media* (2001) presents a coherent and meticulous discussion of new media, including social media, digital culture and visual culture, which aids in both the digital as well as theoretical sections of this exploration. In turn, Caplan (2016) critically examines *Selfiecity* in terms of its shortcomings, identifying the project's ignorance of individual positions in society as well as its emphasis on digital methods in lieu of content and theory as potential difficulties. This exploration intends to take Caplan's views into consideration and overcome these problems by adding an extensive theoretical aspect as part of the exploration and digital component, which also reveals separate human-dog relations and their place within the whole of the social media network.

Finally, it is also worth mentioning literature that examines the notion of digital humanities and environmentalism or the Anthropocene. *Digital Humanities in the Anthropocene* (Nowvieskie 2015) presents an optimistic point of view on the role of digital humanities in addressing environmental concerns, questioning if digital scholarship can develop practical ethics of repair, emphasise the humane and preserve lost artefacts. Nowvieskie's thought-provoking ideas are extended and emphasised in Neimanis, Åsberg and Hedrén (2015); Losh, Wernimont, Wexler and Wu (2016); as well as Svensson (2016), who all highlight an important relation between digital humanities and the Anthropocene. These authors highlight how digital scholarship can support environmentalism, arguing that this study's digital component can also be meaningful in terms of environmental concerns - not only in its subject matter but also through its digital outcomes and inclusion of digital mediums. Such sources add another dimension to the theoretical exploration of this exploration's place within the field of digital humanities.



Based on this review it is clear that there is a shortcoming of an exploration of companion species, specifically dogs, on social media. I aim to address this gap in the discourse. Moreover, the literature reveals that there is a meaningful space in the interdisciplinary fields of visual culture, environmentalism and digital scholarship, for a critical reading of Haraway's notion of companion species in relation to Heidegger's philosophy and how it manifests on social media.<sup>22</sup>

#### **1.4. Outline of chapters**

Chapter One has presented the introduction as an overview and background to the study and has outlined the main aims of the research. The eight chapters that follow are divided into two sections, with Chapters Two to Six forming Part One and Chapters Seven to Nine forming Part Two. Part One critically explores companion species relations in terms of various theoretical and philosophical viewpoints, including anthropocentrism, nonhumanism and the philosophies of Donna Haraway and Martin Heidegger. Part Two builds on my reading of companion species in Part One, extending the exploration further into a virtual sphere, questioning what companion species look like and mean in the Digital Age of social networks and technological developments.

Additionally, this study is presented in layers, exploring the phenomenon of the human-dog relation. The first layer of my critical reading of companion species is set out in Chapters Two and Three. In this layer I question how humans *look at* the animal. To do so, I examine the shift from anthropocentrism towards nonhumanism, guided by Jacques Derrida. Each perspective is unpacked by referring to key theorists and ideas, such as anthropomorphism and domestication, in relation to the human-dog question. Throughout this layer, I also critically examine the place of the human in nonhuman thought and argue that the human way of being remains a key part of nonhuman reasoning.

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<sup>22</sup> I should make it clear that in this literature review I have by no means attempted to include all the sources relating to the history of the human-animal relation, human exceptionalism, nonhumanism or the Anthropocene. For the literature review, I have tried to summarise sources relating to my main concerns with Haraway, Heidegger and companion species – more specifically the human-dog relation, social media and visual culture. Admittedly, some relevant literature has escaped my attention. However, I hope that the reader is open to engage with my arguments and consulted sources as I try to flesh out and layer the knowledge concerning companion species and nonhumanism in the Digital Age.



The second layer of the research, set forth in Chapters Four, Five and Six, critically asks what the human-nonhuman relation and human-dog relation, discussed in layer one, *looks like*. These chapters delve deeper into the specific nature of the understanding of the human *being-with* animal. Here, I turn to Martin Heidegger's philosophy of being, as well as Donna Haraway's nonhuman theory of companion species. By putting Heidegger in conversation with Haraway, my main aim is to show that Haraway's companion species can also be read as a valuation of the importance of the non-anthropocentric human being in companionship with an animal being.

The final layer of exploring companion species, presented in Chapters Seven and Eight as well as the accompanying digital humanities project, *Insta-dog*, questions how the human-dog relation entangles with technology. In this layer I *look around* the human-dog relation, towards its extensions in a technological realm. I specifically focus on the digital encounter of companion species on Instagram, computing and interpreting the phenomenon of *dogstagram*s. Furthermore, in Chapter Eight, I consider techno-dog infoldings in the Digital Age and how they add to our understanding of companion species relations. Finally, the layers of the study build on one another, while overlapping in part, to inform a critical reading of living with companion species in the Digital Age.

**PART ONE:  
EVERYBODY AND THEIR DOG**

## CHAPTER TWO

### LOOKING AT THE (NON)HUMAN: EXPLORING ANTHROPOCENTRISM

*The dog has seldom pulled man up to his level of sagacity,  
but man has frequently dragged the dog down to his.*<sup>23</sup>

In *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* (2004[1997]), postmodern philosopher Jacques Derrida considers the human-animal relation by reflecting on an encounter with his own cat, during which he found himself to be ashamed to be caught completely naked in front of the feline.<sup>24</sup> Derrida teases out this meeting with his cat to reassess the so-called ‘animal question’ (Wood 2004:129) in the twenty-first century. In his reflections Derrida (2004[1997]:119, emphasis in original) notes:

It is all too evident that in the course of the last two centuries [these] traditional forms of treatment of the animal have been turned upside down by the joint developments of zoological, ethological, biological, and genetic *forms of knowledge* and the always inseparable *techniques* of intervention with respect to their object, the transformation of the actual object, its milieu, its world, namely the living animal.

Derrida (2004[1997]:119) identifies the anthropocentric change in the understanding of and relation to animals, which is different to, as well as critical of, so-called ‘traditional’ ways of thinking about animals. In turn, in his essay, Derrida also argues for a shift away from anthropocentric thought, towards a new way of looking at the animal in terms of postmodern thought. In doing so, he firstly, opens up the question of how we as human beings relate to animals and,

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<sup>23</sup> James Thurber (in Merritt 2018:140).

<sup>24</sup> Derrida’s *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* is the first of many lectures presented by the philosopher at a conference on the “autobiographical animal”, at C erisy-la-Salle in 1997. Papers for the entire conference are published under the title, *L’animal autobiographique: autour de Jacques Derrida* (Paris: Galil e; 1999). The lectures closely look at (amongst others) readings of philosophical texts on “the animal” from Aristotle, Descartes, and Kant to Heidegger, Levinas, and Lacan. Derrida’s lectures and text are therefore central to discussions on the animal and is widely interpreted as one of the seminal texts of human-animal relations. For a full reading of Derrida and the animal see Cary Wolfe’s (2003:44-97) discussion in *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory*, as well as David Wood’s (2004:129-144) *Thinking With Cats*. I reflect on the difference between Derrida’s cat and Haraway’s dog further on in the chapter.

secondly, returns to the question of what it means to exist as a being, especially when meeting other species (Wood 2004:130).

In the first layer of my exploration of companion species, set out in Chapters Two and Three, I want to untangle what Derrida (2004[1997]:119) identifies as “traditional forms of treatment of the animal” and the “transformation” of the treatment of the living animal, as well as his own framing of the human-nonhuman relation. I undergo this examination, introduced by Derrida, by coming to terms with the current shift in Anthropocenic worldviews from human exceptionalism (Chapter Two) to nonhumanism (Chapter Three). Following Derrida, I therefore also consider how we relate to animals – specifically dogs – and what the different ways of relating to animals mean for the question of the human being. In this chapter, I start off chronologically, by unpacking the traditional form of western anthropocentrism; thereafter, I follow Derrida’s understanding of animal relations to critically consider a human-centred way of thinking. In Chapter Three, based on Derrida’s critique, I then probe into nonhumanist theory and animal relations. Lastly – with the help of theorists Joanna Zylińska, Erica Fudge as well as Derrida – I synthesise my findings by attempting to look for the place of the human (and the dog) in the overturned human-animal relation.

Across the following two chapters, by examining the move away from anthropocentrism towards nonhumanism and what this shift *entails*, guided by Derrida, I search for the role of the human and human values in contemporary nonhuman thought. I argue that the human way of being and its associated values still exist and remain important in a nonhuman world. Moreover, I engage with both perspectives to show how some human-centred reasoning and ideas, for example anthropomorphism and domestication, continues on and skilfully mutates into nonhumanism as well as companion species relations.

## **2.1 If dogs could talk: introducing the animal question**

*By way of opening this chapter, I introduce the reader to my two dogs, who form a key part of our household and informs, prompts and (sometimes even) contests*

*much of my research: Fudge and Cody (Figure 3). Fudge is a ten-year-old, slightly overweight, chocolate Labrador and the head boy of the family. He likes to follow rules, impress others with his skills and demands his fair share of attention – and food – from his three human housemates (myself, my mom and my dad). On the other side of the spectrum we have the troublemaker, Cody, a giant five-year-old Rhodesian Ridgeback. Cody is always full of tricks and extremely playful, he likes to tease, taunt and (on occasion) terrorise others. What Cody lacks in skill he makes up for in size and personality.*

*Together Fudge and Cody form an incredibly important part of our family life. They infiltrate almost everything we do and every component of our beings, from our daily schedules and eating habits to our friendships and living relations. We are in constant dialogue with them as our bodies, mental and physical patterns intertwine and exchange ideas and thoughts with theirs. Thus, the humans and dogs in the Brittz household are living in a state of significant otherness. There is no doubt in my mind that my parents and I experience love towards Fudge and Cody. Whether they feel the same becomes a bit more difficult to say, but I like to entertain the idea that their actions – such as their wagging tails when someone arrives home, their constant interest in what we are doing, their fondness of human cuddles and their contentment to be around their humans – could be ‘tell-tail’ signs of some sense of “love” for us, their human companions.*



Figure 3: Fudge the chocolate Labrador (right) and Cody the Rhodesian Ridgeback (left), 2019. Photographs by the author.

*I have often wondered what would happen if Fudge and Cody started speaking in a human language, expressing their thoughts by means of human speech, words and compositional sentences. Based on intelligence, I think Fudge would be more likely to talk first; he would then have to teach Cody to speak, just as he has had to teach him several other behaviours. I would probably have thousands of questions for them, but the scholar in me would be most interested in what the dogs really think and understand about us humans. Yet, when I imagine this scenario, I also immediately start thinking about everything that could go wrong. For instance, Fudge could have an Australian accent based on his descendants or Cody could run up to strangers and tell them our entire family history. Moreover, I wonder how the ability to speak a human language would change our relations. Would we still be able to live in what I perceive as human-nonhuman significant otherness? Or does the key to our companionship perhaps lie in our ability to communicate without human words – transferring ideas without linguistics? However, if Fudge and Cody cannot communicate their nonhuman experiences of living with us humans in explicit human words, how can we accurately define, theorise and think about our species relations, without projecting our human thoughts onto the animals? Can we simply rely on the perceived subjective communication (in the broadest sense of the term) described by the human in the human-dog relation? How do I explain our nonhuman-human relation in terms that non-dog-owners and non-dog-lovers can understand? What does such a difficult-to-outline companionship say about being human and nonhuman in our current world?*

The above-imagined scenario of my dogs possessing the skill to not only speak but also understand our spoken human language reminds of the well-known philosophical reasoning presented by twentieth century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953:223): “If a lion could talk, we would not understand him”. Wittgenstein’s comment has been interpreted as anything from a comment on the human conception and construction of the lion – or animal in general – to a purely observed interpretation of the communicating capacities between humans and nonhumans (Levvis 1992:156).<sup>25</sup> Despite its various

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<sup>25</sup> I do not delve deeper into Wittgenstein’s philosophy and reasoning here. For a detailed discussion on Wittgenstein’s nonhuman philosophy see Gary Levvis’s *Why we would not*

interpretations, with his analogy, Wittgenstein evidently questions the relation between humans and nonhumans, questioning whether or not humans and nonhumans share a common understanding. By determining that even if lions could talk (as humans do), humans would not be able to understand them, Wittgenstein (1953:223) remarks that there is an essential difference between animal minds and human minds. Understood differently, we can also argue that if a lion could talk – as humans do – we probably would understand it, but it would not be a lion anymore, its mind would be interpreted as that of a human (Budiansky 1998). In other words, Wittgenstein questions whether humans and nonhumans (specifically animals) understand and experience the world differently, because they are inherently different.

*Thus, with Wittgenstein in mind, I wonder if Fudge and Cody could speak English, would I understand them? Would I look at them on an equal playing field, as humans? Or would I still look at them as essentially different nonhumans? How would I then orientate my way of being towards my talking dogs?*

Notably, throughout Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), he considers a variety of ways of looking at and understanding the difference between the animal and the human. For example, concerning dogs he says: "A dog believes his master is at the door. But can he also believe his master will come the day after tomorrow?" (Wittgenstein 1953:174); suggesting that animals possess some similarities to human understanding, but not all, such as an orientation towards the future that brings hope or despair (Levvis 1992:157). Further on, Wittgenstein (1953) also suggests "we may even understand animals *better than* we understand other humans" (Levvis 1992:157, emphasis in original), because to some humans "[w]e could not possibly make ourselves understood ... [n]ot even as we can to a dog" (Wittgenstein 1953:390).

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*understand a talking lion* (1992). Levvis (1992:161) argues that "[o]n Wittgenstein's view, the mental life of animals emerges as ineffable. They resist analysis. Perhaps, in the end, it is to this ineffability that we must turn if we are to address the moral issues before us". Although I only briefly mention Wittgenstein here to introduce the question of the animal and human language, Levvis's analysis of Wittgenstein's thought on animal language and morality supports and shows that human-animal relations can be interpreted in a variety of ways and is therefore often hard to pinpoint.

With the various ideas on human-nonhuman relations, Wittgenstein (1953) ultimately engages with what is commonly known as ‘the animal question’, which I have also identified in the introduction to this chapter with reference to Derrida’s cat encounter. Concisely defined, the animal question is shorthand for all the complex discussions, understandings and uses concerning animals, as well as what these understandings imply for the human-nonhuman relation. In particular, the animal question is concerned with the possibility of the animal to possess its own sense of self, subjective experiences and way of being.<sup>26</sup> Kelly Oliver (2009:25, emphasis added) helpfully summarises the animal question:

[w]ith the exception of a few continental philosophers, most philosophers discussing animals today still do so in terms of animal suffering or animal intelligence, which in turn lead to discussions of animal rights or animal welfare. *Most of these discussions revolve around the ways in which animals are – or are not – like us and therefore should – or should not – be treated like us.*

Since humans and nonhumans are undeniably different biologically and cannot easily relate to each other with common human language, *how* humans look at or relate to the nonhuman other (as well as how humans *should* look at and ethically treat the nonhuman other) is often debatable or rendered contrarily. As seen with my brief introduction to Wittgenstein’s animal discursions, there exist a variety of contexts and ways of interpreting the animal question and, consequently, the human-nonhuman relation. Like Wittgenstein – as well as my own musings on my relation with Fudge and Cody – suggests we can think of nonhuman others in several different ways. In turn, Oliver (as seen in the quotation above) highlights that the discussions on the animal question mostly tend to stress two opposite views of thinking about nonhumans: nonhumans are autonomous (like humans) or animals are not autonomous (unlike humans). These two opposing views are (as I will show) intrinsically linked to two opposing worldviews: anthropocentrism and nonhumanism.

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<sup>26</sup> Subjectivity, a way of being and the self are all philosophical ways of describing the quality of existing in a mind or as a being, rather than just as a bare living organism in the external world. In other words, it refers to a perceiving and awareness of your own being, which also implies consciousness, agency and personhood, to various extents. Although these concepts are defined differently by various philosophical sources, I refer to this apparent definition throughout the study. In Chapters Four, Five and Six, I explore specifically what philosophers Martin Heidegger and Donna Haraway understand with what is meant by the experience of being.



Jacques Derrida (2004[1997]:114) formulates the question of how we think about animals as: how humans and nonhumans *look at*, or *see* each other – that is playing on the philosophical look of the other.<sup>27</sup> Theorists Herman Rapaport (2003), Gerald Bruns (2008:405) and David Wood (2004:132) suggest that Derrida’s explanation of the look, or gaze, of his cat is a “parody” of Jean-Paul Sartre’s story of the look. Sartre’s inquiry into the look of the other in *Being and Nothingness* (1956[1943]) infamously employs the look of another person to examine his own understanding of himself. For Sartre, we find self-consciousness or subjectivity by looking at another person and coming to terms with the fact that this person also looks at us from the perspective of his or her own subjective world.<sup>28</sup> In this way, we come to differentiate between objects and subjects and “the debasement of being a mere thing” (Bruns 2008:405). In other words, by engaging in the look of the other, Sartre finds his inner sense of self. According to Sartre, a person becomes a self or a being by looking at and, simultaneously, being looked at by another person. Derrida (2004[1997]), in turn, furthers Sartre’s look of the other, into the realm of the animal, questioning whether subjectivity and the self also arises upon the gaze of the *animal* other. Employing the phenomenological look, Derrida (2004[1997]:113) writes: “I often ask myself, just to see, who I am [*qui je suis*]*—and who I am (following) at the moment [et qui je suis au moment] when, caught naked, in silence, by the gaze of an animal”.*

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<sup>27</sup> Preceding Derrida, for example, psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1981[1973]), also formulates the so-called ‘look of the other’. Briefly defined, the look of the other refers to the formation of subjectivity in relation to the gaze of another person. For Lacan (1981[1973]), similar to Jean-Paul Sartre, the gaze of another person is key to the forming of identity. Lacan argues that the first time we encounter ourselves in a mirror; we form our ego and become aware of our inner world or being. Similarly, preceding both Sartre and Lacan, Emmanuel Levinas (1969) also argued that in order to experience the other, a person has to be recognised (or seen) by the other. In *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, Martin Jay (1994) traces the role of vision and looking in philosophy from Plato through to Freud, Lacan and Sartre. Jay’s study provides a comprehensive summary of the idea of vision and looking in philosophy. In *Thinking With Cats* (2004), Wood also thoroughly unpacks the phenomenology of the look as seen in the work of Sartre, Lacan, Levinas, in relation to Derrida’s look of the animal. Based on this relation Wood (2004:132) determines Derrida’s cat scene as “far from innocent”, as Derrida attempts to track and further the footsteps of other philosophers.

<sup>28</sup> For Sartre, finding subjectivity is a struggle with the other who possesses the subjective ability to look (back) at me. Thus, I see the other looking at me, yet this other cannot see me as I see myself. In this way, Kelly Oliver (2001:56) describes Sartre’s ‘look’ as hostile and alienating, one that forms a gap between the subject and object. In other words, Sartre’s look, although acknowledging subjectivity, creates a divide between the self and the other.

By thinking about the animal gaze, Derrida also brings into question the subjectivity of the nonhuman. If Derrida's cat could, like Sartre's other, look back at the philosopher, Derrida implies that his cat and nonhumans alike could have their own subjective reasoning.<sup>29</sup> That is to say, Derrida's animal and human are alike, since they both have a unique way of being. Overcoming the divide between humans and nonhumans is then one of Derrida's main hypotheses, questioning the relation between the human and the animal as such. However, Derrida's inquiry becomes difficult when he has to account for the animal's subjective experience, since the above-mentioned language barrier between the animal and the human does not allow us to understand the animal fully: "The animal that I am (following), does it speak? That is an intact question, virginal, new, still to come, a completely naked question. ..." (Derrida 2004[1997]:125). Accordingly, Derrida does not completely abandon the distinction between human and animal. He maintains that both human and animal experience the world as subjects, yet, because he cannot know how to speak for the animal, he hesitates to speak of the human and animal as synonymous.<sup>30</sup>

Environmental philosopher Simon P. James calls the engagement with the animal question "the problem of animal minds" (2009:33), referring to the sceptical concern of whether any "nonhuman animals have minds" that accounts for "how we relate to others, both human and nonhuman" (James 2009:34).<sup>31</sup> James (2009:34) helpfully explains, corresponding to Derrida and Wittgenstein, that the relation between humans and nonhumans is always in flux or debate, since it is impossible to access the animal mind or being fully – as we do our own. That is

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<sup>29</sup> Derrida's look of the animal and Sartre's look of the other are similar here, in that they both present a subjective person being looked at and a subjective other with the ability to look. However, Sartre's look is alienating and creates a clear division between two beings, while Derrida's look aims to bring together an animal being and human being.

<sup>30</sup> Derrida (2004[1997]) does not thoroughly delve into this specific question of how to speak for the animal, nor does he provide us with a way to access the animal mind in his text. He introduces the question, but then turns his thoughts elsewhere. Critics, such as Haraway (2008:20) and Calarco (2008), dispraise Derrida for stopping or hesitating here and not looking into methods of understanding the animal further. I discuss this matter and critique later in this chapter, as well as in Chapter Three.

<sup>31</sup> James (2009:34) uses the term 'mind' "to say that there is something it is like to be that being (even if it is impossible to know *what* it would be like to be that being)" (James 2009:34). In other words, mind, in this context refers to a way of being, an awareness of the self or subjective experience of the world.

to say, according to James, I can speculate on and experiment with methods to know how Fudge and Cody experience the world, but my understanding remains limited.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, how we formulate the relation between humans and nonhumans is related to each person's hypothesis on what extent we *believe* nonhumans to have a similar being and mind as ours, despite the bridge between fully (empirically) knowing the mind of the other.

Based on the above reasoning regarding the human belief of the animal's being, I argue that the animal (or then nonhuman) question is fundamentally a *human* question. It is not the animal inquiring into the human experience of the world, but the human thinking through the animal experience of the world and the resulting relation between itself and the animal. In fact, I argue that, unless we possess an otherworldly '*Doctor Doolittle*-like' quality that allows us to read and communicate with animal minds, the former remains impossible to completely formulate in current time. As a result, it is necessary to keep in mind that all of these enquiries of the nonhuman stem, first and foremost, from a human horizon. It is, as Joanna Zylińska (2012:212) states, the human "philosophizing about the [animal] other" and not vice versa. Moreover, the question of whether or not the animal can or cannot philosophise about the human remains unanswered (Zylińska 2012:212) and, as a result, is irrelevant to the human enquiry of the animal. In other words, the question of the animal's subjective experience continues to be a fundamentally human endeavour.

Comparably, Derrida (2004[1997]:128) notes that rethinking the question of the animal – "what is it? What does it mean? Who is it? To what does that 'it' correspond?" – opens up a bigger conversation of "who am I?" (as human). In other words, by enquiring into the animal world, Derrida returns to the question of what it means to be human in relation and response to nonhuman others. Wood (2004:129) explains this as "the intimate connection between our thinking about animals, and our self-understanding". Therefore, when considering the animal question, the nonhuman is never isolated from human thinking. Hence,

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<sup>32</sup> Examples of such methods, particularly used by nonhuman theorists, are discussed further on in Chapter Three.

thinking about the nonhuman usually results in thinking about the human. I return to the role of the human in the animal question throughout this chapter as well as in Chapter Three.

As I pointed out earlier, Derrida's seminal text introduces the question of the animal. All the more so, Derrida questions the animal in the distinctive context of the worldview of human exceptionalism, while encouraging a shift towards a multiplicity or nonhumanism perspective of the world. Therefore, on his encounter with his cat, the philosophical question of the animal or nonhuman – prompted by the gaze of the animal – forms the essence of his broader philosophical debate between the paradigms of anthropocentrism and nonhumanism. Put differently, we can also say that the anthropocentric and nonhumanist beliefs centre on the question of the animal. Simon Coghlan (2014:88) usefully frames the various human ways of thinking about animals as “conceptual terrain”. He argues that philosophical agendas, such as human exceptionalism or nonhumanism, typically embrace certain conceptual grounds intended to verify their stance on animal minds (Coghlan 2014:86).<sup>33</sup> Therefore we conceptualise nonhumans, as well as the human-nonhuman relation, based on our beliefs (or thinking) regarding animal abilities in comparison to human abilities. Our animal concepts or view of the animal question in turn leads to how we treat animals. Thus, once again, the anthropocentric and nonhumanist beliefs centre on our *conceptualisation* of the nonhuman being.

Coghlan (2014:86-87) further illustrates conceptual terrain by referring to Herman Melville's popular whaling adventure novel *Moby Dick* (1851).<sup>34</sup> He explains that the characters in *Moby Dick* represent two different conceptual terrains around the question of animals (Coghlan 2014:88). Sailors Flask and Starbuck, who disregard whales and other nonhumans as intelligent or moral,

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<sup>33</sup> Coghlan (2014) uses the conceptualisation of animal minds to dive deeper into the specificities of nonhuman morality. Ultimately Coghlan (2014) questions whether animals, if capable of moral behaviour, can also be held responsible for their actions. I refer to this discussion later in the study.

<sup>34</sup> *Moby Dick* (1851), also known as *The Whale*, is a novel by American writer Herman Melville. The story is an account of a sailor, Ishmael's experience on a whaling ship named *Pequod*. Ishmael narrates the captain's (Ahab) obsessive search to kill a white sperm whale, Moby Dick, who on the ship's previous excursion bit off his leg.

represent the first terrain, while the second, represented by Ahab, engage with nonhuman animals and whales as intelligent beings capable of moral behaviour (Coghlan 2014:88). In mapping the different philosophical conceptualisations of animal behaviour, prompted by those found in *Moby Dick*, Coghlan, like Oliver, highlights that the manner in which we answer the animal question is often antagonistic, with viewpoints or concepts opposing and challenging one another. As introduced above, this antithesis is also evident in Derrida's (2004[1997]:120) conceptualisation of the animal question as he explains that there are opposing views "of the philosophical problematic of the animal". Derrida (2004[1997]:120) furthers these opposing thoughts by arguing that they stem from different historical times and contexts, developing along with society. In turn, following Coghlan's (2014:90) formulation of these viewpoints as "conceptual", these perspectives are all arguably possible and attention should be paid to various philosophical discourses to address the question of the animal and nonhuman.

Emulating Coghlan and following Derrida's interrogation of animal thinking, I examine the two key perspectives, or conceptualisations of the nonhuman mind and being throughout philosophy, namely anthropocentrism and nonhumanism. Keeping with the theme of companion species, I specifically study these conceptualisations in the terrain of the human-dog relation. Markedly, my unpacking of nonhumanism and anthropocentrism is not a historical endeavour. Instead, I focus on providing an understanding and contextualisation of the two perspectives, to demonstrate a shift in reasoning regarding the animal question (highlighted by Derrida), as well as show how some human-centred thought overlaps with nonhuman inquiry. Thus, my aim is not to provide a detailed, historical overview of anthropocentrism and nonhumanism, but to develop a theoretical discussion targeted at explaining the different perspectives or conceptualisations of the animal question within the two paradigms. Ultimately, my discussion aims to look at the role of the human (and dog) within the two endeavours.

## 2.2 Human > dog: understanding anthropocentrism

Preceding Derrida, in 1977, critical theorist John Berger explored *looking at* animals and the animal gaze. In his seminal essay *Why Look at Animals?* Berger (1977:4-5), like Derrida, recognises the gaze of the animal and its effect on the human subject:

The eyes of an animal when they consider a man are attentive and wary. The same animal may well look at other species in the same way. He does not reserve a special look for man. But by no other species except man will the animal's look be recognised as familiar. Other animals are held by the look. Man becomes aware of himself returning the look.<sup>35</sup>

After establishing the animal gaze, Berger, in *Why Look at Animals?* (1977), traces the unique relation between man and animal and the notable changes the relation (or look) has undergone. He argues that before the nineteenth century animals were “with man at the centre of his world” (Berger 1977:3). Animals served as messengers, promises and nonhumans on which humans were depended.<sup>36</sup> Thus, they held a certain power, similar to human power, but also varying in the sense that the animal solely belonged to their own, different world (Berger 1977:5). For Berger (1977:4; 6) the animal was both “like and unlike” man and therefore man and animal lived parallel lives, in species companionship. Both species had their own ways of life, never confused with each other, yet they exchanged and interacted in equality.

Berger (1977:6) reaffirms that the animal's lack of human language is what characterised the animal's distinction from man: the animal's “lack of common language, its silence, guarantees its distance, its distinctiveness, its exclusion, from and of man”. Yet, Berger (1977:6) makes it clear that in these earlier times, this distinction was not a negative characteristic of the animal. In fact, the

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<sup>35</sup> In contrast to Derrida's look of the animal, Berger (1977) ultimately argues that in an anthropocentric society the animal has lost its ability to 'look at' the human. It is only the human that looks at the animal: by turning the animal into the “spectacle” (1977:15) of the pet, the animal in the zoo, as well as the animal in film, all, according to Berger (1977:19) imprisons the animal and removes its power to look back at the human. I refer to Berger's seminal text, *Why Look at Animals?* (1997) throughout this chapter as well as Chapter Three.

<sup>36</sup> Refer to the Addendum of this study for further thought on the idea of the animal as messenger, promise and otherworldly being.

animal's lack of human language was often framed as a *human* deficit, where it was man who lacked the ability to speak to animals, not vice versa.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, Berger (1977:11) also notes that, until the nineteenth century, thinking of animals in terms of human qualities *and* humans in terms of animal metaphors was common practice and simply “an expression of their proximity”. It did not denote any form of mastery and was even used to describe animals in scientific studies (Berger 1977:10; 11).<sup>38</sup> Thus, using human language in relation to animal minds was not attached to a particular philosophical conceptualisation or perspective. In addition, thinking of the animal as both like and unlike humans, simultaneously, was the norm: “Animals came from over the horizon. They belonged *there* and *here*. Likewise they were mortal and immortal ... [t]hey were subjected *and* worshipped, bred *and* sacrificed” (Berger 1977:6-7, emphasis in original).<sup>39</sup>

However, Berger (1977:11) notes during the nineteenth century a “theoretical break” occurred in how humans looked at the animal. This new understanding of the animal occurred against the background of the First Industrial Revolution (1760-1840) and the major human turn towards technology, resulting in a new, modern and urbanised society. Like Berger, Derrida (2004[1997]:119) argues that in the wake of an industrialised society the treatment of the animal had also been overturned and industrialised in the nineteenth century. Derrida (2004[1997]:119) characterises the industrialised animal as in service to the well-being of man, while Berger (1997:12-15) affirms that the animal had been turned into a machine, a tool and an invention by and for, mankind.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Interestingly, in earlier times the ability to communicate with animals was seen as a special or exceptional trait. For example, in the Greek myth of poet and musician Orpheus, Orpheus is said to be able to talk to and charm animals. In contemporary visual culture this trait is also often depicted especially in films and series, such as the *Dr. Doolittle* film franchise (1998-2006) and *The Wild Thornberrys* (1998-2004) animation series.

<sup>38</sup> Berger (1977:6-7, emphasis in original) specifically mentions the example of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), which thinks of animals “as an *intercession* between man and its origin”.

<sup>39</sup> In this way, animals were formulated as liminal and ‘in-between’ beings, occupying various positions that are transitional and ambiguous. Most prominently, they acted as a bridge between the dualistic categories of nature and culture, interacting with both realms (Armbruster 2018:8; Berger 1977:15).

<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, Berger (1977:28) concludes that the “look between animal and man ... has been extinguished” as a result of human supremacy. With this statement, Berger (1977) refers to the fact that he believes human domination has changed the animal to such an extent that the animal

The consequence of the theoretical break and so-called ‘new’ way of thinking about the animal after the Industrial Revolution was the worldview of anthropocentrism, which remains a contemporary “lived” perspective (Crist 2017:62) – also known as human supremacy, human exceptionalism, speciesism, human-centredness or humanocentrism.<sup>41</sup> As a prominent worldview, in its simplest form, anthropocentrism manifests the belief that human beings are inherently superior to any other beings, including animals and other nonhumans. Accordingly, anthropocentrism places humans as the most important on the planet and argues that anything else on earth simply exists for the advancement of the human race. Theorists Weitzenfeld and Joy (2014:4) define anthropocentrism as “a belief system of an ideology of human supremacy that advocates privileging humans ... an ideology function[ing] to maintain the centrality and priority of human existence through marginalizing and subordinating nonhuman perspectives, interests and beings”. Therefore, in its favouring of human beings, anthropocentrism also subsides the importance of nonhumans.

### ***2.2.1 The philosophical roots of anthropocentrism***

Both Berger (1977) and Derrida (2004[1997]) note that anthropocentrism became the predominant worldview during the nineteenth century – especially with reference to understanding animals. However, a human-centred perspective can be traced back to, and is rooted in, the Renaissance and eighteenth century Age of Enlightenment.<sup>42</sup> One of the eighteenth century Enlightenment’s key philosophies came from French scientist and western

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no longer exists as a free being. Even though I follow Berger’s line of thinking in terms of changes occurring in the human-animal relation, I contend (aligned with Derrida) that the animal gaze still exists and becomes increasingly important in contemporary society, especially in relation to the nonhuman movement.

<sup>41</sup> As previously mentioned, I use these terms interchangeably throughout the study. Cf. Weitzenfeld and Joy (2014) who distinguish minor differences between each term.

<sup>42</sup> The eighteenth century Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Reason, occurred in response to the seventeenth century scientific Rationalism. The Enlightenment focussed on reason as the primary sources of knowledge, individuality, as well as scientific exploration and application. Coinciding with the Enlightenment, western colonialism, whereby various European nations explored and set out to conquer large areas of the world, also reached its peak during the eighteenth century. That is to say the colonialist notion of overpowering and mastering others and land translates into the notion of overpowering other beings.



philosopher, René Descartes (1596-1650).<sup>43</sup> Descartes's philosophy of the 'thinking person' in his *Meditations* (1641) is the pinnacle point of dualistic thought, in which he proposes that the mind or soul and the corporeal body are two completely distinct substances, but capable of interaction. Descartes's (1641) view of the distinct mind and body is expressed in his well-known phrase: "I think, therefore I am" (*Cogito, ergo sum*). Furthermore, he constructs the mind (*res cogitans*) as immaterial, intelligent and spiritual, while the corporeal body (*res extensa*) is seen as a simple mechanism. Thus, for Descartes (1984[1641]:78), the mind (I) is disembodied:

[O]n the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of body, in so far as this is simply and extended, non-thinking thing. And accordingly, it is certain that I am really distinct from my body, and can exist without it.

Berger (1977:11) argues that Descartes's dualistic framing of the mind and body also resulted in the reduction of the animal to a simple object: "In dividing the absolutely body from soul [mind], he [Descartes] bequeathed the body to the laws of physics and mechanics, and, since animals were soulless [mindless], the animal was reduced to the model of the machine". Derrida (2004[1997]:121) also notes that Descartes's thinking made room for thinking of the animal in terms of human "power" and "capability".<sup>44</sup> As a consequence of Descartes's influence, one of the key aspects of anthropocentrism is its dualistic thinking. Firstly, anthropocentrism divides human and nonhuman or human and animal and, secondly, it ranks this division by determining humans as more valuable than nonhumans. Besides the mind-body (Cartesian) dualism and human-nonhuman dualism, anthropocentrism also conceptually divides and opposes other categories of existence, such as nature and culture, man and woman, good and evil, civilisation and savageness, rational and irrational, light and dark, as well as organic and inorganic (amongst others). In this way, human exceptionalism relates to a (modernist) manner of thinking that emphasises and

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<sup>43</sup> Erica Fudge (2013:182) maintains that Descartes is "the poster boy for current representations of humanist ideas".

<sup>44</sup> Derrida (2004[1997]:127) also lists the philosophies of Aristotle, Kant, Heidegger, Levinas and Lacan, to contribute to anthropocentric thought. For my purposes here, I do not focus on all of these philosophies: I only briefly discuss Descartes in relation to human exceptionalism and I elaborate more on Heideggerian philosophy in Chapter Four.

establishes boundaries between nature, class, race, gender and particularly human and nonhuman phenomena (Weil 2012:xviii).

In addition to the influence of Cartesian dualism on anthropocentrism, human supremacy can be traced even further back to modern humanist thought. Similar to anthropocentric thought, humanism is an age-old stance that focusses predominantly on the human experience of the world. As a result, humanism places humans at the core of all meaning, worth, epistemology, understanding and actions (Weitzenfeld & Joy 2014:4). Human-animal scholar, Kenneth Shapiro (2003:75) describes humanism as “a way of life centered on human interest and which takes the human as the ‘measure of all things’”. Hence, if companion species is concerned with taking dogs seriously, humanism, in turn, takes human beings seriously. Some theorists, such as Joanna Zylińska, equate humanism and human exceptionalism, owing to their joint history and similarities.<sup>45</sup> Zylińska (2009:17; 36) describes humanism as a belief that “underpins most of moral and political philosophy” based on the cognitive supposition that “the human can be distinguished from other forms of life by the intrinsic ‘truth’ and teleology of his or her being which is to be revealed to him or her, and which he or she can uniquely grasp”. Thus, Zylińska’s humanism – like anthropocentrism – assumes humans have exclusive characteristics that set them apart from others.

In their discussion on anthropocentrism, speciesism and carnism, Weitzenfeld and Joy (2014:3) also show how contemporary human supremacy stems from and overlaps with humanism. They argue that humanism and anthropocentrism reciprocally strengthen each other in establishing human hierarchy and reinforcing binaries (such as the human-animal boundary). For instance, as stated previously, anthropocentrism “is a belief system of an ideology of human supremacy that advocates privileging humans ... an ideology function[ing] to maintain the centrality and priority of human existence through marginalising and subordinating nonhuman perspectives, interests and beings” (Weitzenfeld & Joy 2014:4). Based on this definition it is clear that anthropocentrism maintains

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<sup>45</sup> Similarly, theorists Erica Fudge (2007), Kelly Oliver (2008) and, on occasion, Donna Haraway (2008) often equates humanism and human supremacy.

a fundamental human-centred nature, therefore it could not have come into existence without the impact of humanism nor can it be completely separated from it (Weitzenfeld & Joy 2014:5).

French historian Rémi Brague (2017:4-11) identifies four stages of the development of humanism throughout history, namely difference, superiority, conquest and exclusion.<sup>46</sup> I briefly trace Brague's helpful historical development of humanism here, to provide a clearer understanding of the relation between humanism and what I understand to be its descendent, anthropocentrism.<sup>47</sup>

Brague (2017:5), akin to Berger, explains that, to begin with, humans were predominantly only identified as different to nonhuman others, omitting superior judgment. For instance, Brague (2017:5) argues that in most so-called 'primitive' societies, the nature of the human being was contemplated and identified as having qualities unlike other living and non-living things, but this did not determine man as better valued than others. However, Brague (2017:5-6) argues (and here he differs from Berger) that this general manner of thinking through human and nonhuman differences was already contested by man's superiority in early Ancient Greek philosophy. For example, in *Politics* (350BCE), Greek philosopher, Aristotle, identifies man as different to, and therefore master over, animals. Aristotle (*Politics*, 1.2-5, 1252a) determines that in "a difference as that between soul and body, or between men and animals ... the lower sort are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master". He also states: "tame animals have a better nature

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<sup>46</sup> I acknowledge that the history presented here is specifically rooted in western culture. For the most part, theorists (such as Weitzenfeld and Joy [2014], Zylinska [2005], as well as Ricard [2016]) argue that humanism is most prevalent in western thought and therefore the background presented aligns with western humanism as it relates to the study as a whole. However, notably, humanism is not exclusively limited to the West; several other cultures – including indigenous cultures – also favour humans in various degrees (Weitzenfeld & Joy 2014:4). Moreover, humanism can also be seen as a broader notion, which can be applied to various societies. For example, Pietersen (2005:54) shows how western humanism and African humanism overlap and complement each other. Both perspectives, for instance, emphasise human values such as friendship, neighbourliness, helpfulness, self-assertiveness and self-transcendence. As a result, throughout the study, humanism is discussed with reference to human nature and society as a whole.

<sup>47</sup> It is not my intention to provide a complete historical overview of humanism (or as mentioned anthropocentrism), I refer to Brague's four phases here since it helpfully provides an overview and highlights the relation between humanism and human exceptionalism.

than wild, and all tame animals are better off when they are ruled by man; for then they are preserved” (*Politics*, 1.2-5, 1252a). Thus, man’s superiority over nature has been a persistent question and challenging thought throughout philosophy. Perhaps it is for this reason that Zylinska (2009) maintains that humanism underpins most philosophical reasoning.

Notably, in ancient reasoning, though man’s superiority to other species assigned the human to be *better than* other species, man was still not framed as *the very best* being. Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, VI.7, 1141a34-1141b1) for instance, also maintains that although man is the best among living beings, there are more divine things than man, referring to celestial bodies and divine powers. Brague (2017:7) explains that a similar thought on superiority simmers through in Judeo-Christian theology.<sup>48</sup> Judeo-Christian theology places man as master over nature, instructed to take care of all nonhuman living beings, while man serves under a divine God.<sup>49</sup> Accordingly, human superiority “is of Greek origin as much as biblical; it ran through the patristic and medieval periods before finding a thematic formulation in [the] fifteenth-century” (Brague 2017:7).

Subsequently, influenced by Cartesian philosophy (discussed above), at the start of the seventeenth century, man is theorised as a being that dominates others and applies his own constraints on them. Brague (2017:8, emphasis added) shows that such a superiority is not something that is simply given to man, but something he must conquer or actively overpower: “[m]an realizes his

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<sup>48</sup> Judeo-Christian refers to the groups of Judaism and Christianity, owing to the parallel and shared views and values of the two religions. Judeo-Christian forms a significant part of western culture and includes religious denominations such as the Catholic Church, Protestantism, Jewish Orthodoxies and Reformations.

<sup>49</sup> For instance, in the Biblical narrative of the creation, God “made the wild animals, the tame animals, and all the small crawling animals to produce more of their own kind. God saw that this was good. Then God said, ‘Let us make human beings in our image and likeness. And let them rule over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, over the tame animals, over all the earth, and over all the small crawling animals on the earth’” (Genesis 1:25-26). Berger (1977) also mentions the Judeo-Christian tradition’s flood narrative of Noah’s Ark. In this narrative God spares Noah, his family and, importantly, the various animal species on earth. For Berger (1977:19) Noah’s Ark represents the “first ordered assembly of animals and man”. In this narrative various animals came to man and he took care of them: “They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark” (Genesis 7:14-15).

superiority by *becoming* the master of nature”. Finally, Brague (2017:10) explains that man’s conquest for superiority leads to the so-called ‘fourth stage’ of humanism, ensuing industrialisation and colonialism: an “exclusive humanism”, where man is considered to master nature and effortlessly be the higher being, while no other is permitted to be ‘higher’ than man – not even a divine entity. Thus, in establishing himself as *the best* being, humanism removed itself from the theological traces of Judeo-Christian ethics, as well as the possibility of divine, supernatural beings, in exchange for the pursuit of human progress and reason (Weitzenfeld & Joy 2014:5). I reason that Brague’s final stage of humanism is what we now commonly also refer to as human exceptionalism.

Accordingly, humanist thought has evolved from acknowledging human difference in relation to other species, to naming this difference superior and thereafter using this difference to conquer and finally exclude all others. Although different phases of humanist thought can be traced, in contemporary society these phases all occur as a fusion of meaning (Brague 2017:11) in the contemporary belief of human supremacy. Thus, humanism is not a constant or ahistorical, it is constantly re-shaped in relation to society (Campbell et al. 2010:88-89) and forms the base of what we understand today as human-centredness. Hence, I understand humanism as a precursor to, and existing in fusion with, the more contemporary (Anthropocenic) worldview of anthropocentrism.

For my purposes here, I prefer to use the more contemporary terms – i.e. human supremacy, anthropocentrism etc. – that correlate with my study. I acknowledge that humanism influenced human supremacy and that both perspectives entangle with one another. At the same time, I consider the overpowering of divinity identified in Brague’s ‘last phase of humanism’ a key difference between anthropocentrism and humanism. I therefore prefer not to use the terms interchangeably. Based on the history of humanism briefly traced here, I argue that the term ‘humanism’ contains connotations to metaphysics, as well as beliefs of a spiritual nature. In contrast, human supremacy is notably a secular

point of view, since it argues that no entity exists beyond or higher than man. Thus, to avoid confusion, I do not equate the two terms.

What Brague fails to mention in his short history of humanism, is that besides humanists' need to master nature, humanism also signifies human qualities, values and behaviours. Owing to its preoccupation with all things human as well as its roots in Ancient Greek philosophy and Judeo-Christian traditions, humanism is also commonly associated with the high regard of the moral sphere and responsibility of human existence (Pietersen 2005:54). As a perspective it therefore highlights human behaviours and values such as courage, goodness, kindness, forgiveness, respect, reconciliation, friendship, love, neighbourliness and helpfulness. These aspects of humanism also merge into contemporary anthropocentrism, since similar qualities and virtuous human principles still manifest in anthropocentric thought. Thus, although no longer occupied with the spiritual realm, anthropocentrism still manifests in the humanist desire for benign human nature.

In summary, I situate anthropocentrism in Ancient Greek philosophy and Judeo-Christian theology. However, I contend that it gained momentum as a philosophy in eighteenth century Enlightenment, particularly influenced by Cartesian dualism. In the nineteenth century, anthropocentrism became the overarching worldview, maintaining human mastery and value over all nonhuman things. Accordingly, I contend that contemporary anthropocentrism is based on the following three premises: (1) humanity is the measure of all things and the most superior species; (2) all human and nonhuman things are conceptually divided into dualistic, opposed aspects; and (3) human morals and virtuous behaviour are central to existence.

At the risk of repeating what has already been stated previously, it is then based on these three premises and philosophical roots that human exceptionalism engages in the animal question. As Derrida (2004[1997]) and Berger (1977) note, an anthropocentric worldview establishes the nonhuman as mindless and inferior to the human being. Moreover, through this inferiority,

anthropocentrism implies that animals do not have (human) language, morality or being. Since animals do not show signs of a capacity to reason and experience being alive as humans do, human-centredness argues that the animal is deprived and powerless in relation to the human way of being.<sup>50</sup>

Further on in his discussion on the shift towards an anthropocentric look at animals, Berger (1977:11; 14) explores how human exceptionalism has resulted in two key concerns in the treatment of animals: anthropomorphism and domestication. Subsequently, these are two important aspects to explore in relation to the human exceptionalism treatment of animals. In what follows, I explain what these two notions mean in the context of anthropocentrism, by specifically referring to the human-dog relation.<sup>51</sup>

### **2.2.2 Anthropomorphism**

*Whenever we run low on dog food for Fudge and Cody, the dogs are allowed to go on an adventure to the pet store to do some ‘shopping’ – as my dad likes to call it. They hop in the back of the car, enjoy a drive through town, jump out at the store to greet everyone (humans and nonhumans) and cause a fair amount of chaos while we buy their favourite food. After a substantial effort to pull the two away from browsing through the toy and bone isles, we get them back in the car and head home, usually with a new toy (Cody) and bone (Fudge) in tow. During our monthly shopping trips, we truly do picture our two dogs as humans taking part in their own form of our human activity. Taking Fudge and Cody to the pet store to do shopping affirms them as our pets; we fit them into the mould of our family unit*

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<sup>50</sup> Within the realm of literature, some of the most famous *tails* of dogs are commonly understood to express an anthropocentric point of view. For example, James Percy FitzPatrick’s *Jock of the Bushveld* (1907) or Disney’s *Old Yeller* (1957) “reinforce prevailing assumptions regarding the superiority of the human species and the rightness of the human battle to dominate nature, while also affirming the notion that domesticated animals exist to serve the interests of human beings rather than to pursue their own” (Armbruster 2018:8). In the South African biographical adventures of *Jock of the Bushveld*, for instance, the dog (Jock) is inferior to the human and animals are hunted, dominated and, although loved, positioned as enslaved and indebted to man (Gray 1987). Similarly, Dodie Smith’s *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* (1956) and its Disney film adaptation, focus on the dog’s drive to return to their human masters. It features a villain who also hunts dogs for their fur. Throughout the film the dogs mimic their human counterparts, while the main theme of the film remains the human pursuit of family (Baker 2017:345).

<sup>51</sup> Anthropomorphism and domestication are also discussed, based on their definitions set out here, when considering the multispecies critique against human exceptionalism and my understanding of the nonhuman paradigm in Chapter Three.

*and coach them into participating in our material processes. The chaos our dogs leave behind in the pet store, however, makes me question to what extent they are also experiencing the activity as we do. I wonder if we are projecting our material processes onto the dogs. More importantly, do Fudge and Cody mind or are they happy to role-play in exchange for their reward? Is this a form of mastering our dogs? Or have Fudge and Cody managed to successfully master us to get their new toy and bone?*

Anthropomorphism refers to the human tendency to give real, as well as imagined behaviour of nonhuman animals, humanlike characteristics, motivations, intentions, or emotions (Epley, Waytz and Cacioppo 2007:864).<sup>52</sup> The shopping experience I describe above correlates with anthropomorphic behaviour, since I imagine Fudge and Cody's behaviour to be human and I picture their real behaviour to have human characteristics. Psychologists Epley, Waytz and Cacioppo (2007:864) describe this anthropomorphism as "seeing human". In keeping with Berger (1977) and Derrida's (2004[1997]) theme of *looking* at the animal, I find this description of anthropomorphism apt: when looking at animals, humans tend to 'see' humans instead of animals.

To be clear, anthropomorphism is not a permanent worldview, but is described as a behavioural "tendency" (Epley et al 2007:864). In other words, I understand it as a recurring action, behaviour or description, stemming from human exceptionalism. Notably, anthropomorphism should not be confused with an animistic belief. Animism is the belief that *non-living* entities are living and conscious (not human per se), while anthropomorphism is an ascribing of human qualities to *nonhuman* beings (Kallery & Psillos 2004:291).<sup>53</sup> Animism

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<sup>52</sup> Anthropomorphism is commonly known as the opposite of zoomorphism, which is the assigning of animal attributes to humans, for example saying somebody is 'as sick as a dog'.

<sup>53</sup> Anthropologist Nurit Bird-David (1999:67) explains that animism is one of the earliest concepts of anthropology, developed by E.B Tylor in *Primitive Culture* (1871). Animism has been described as a basic notion where non-living bodies are ascribed with an intangible being (commonly by anthropologists), as well as a religious belief system (commonly by Encyclopaedias) (Bird-David 1999:67). In contemporary practice animism is employed in scholarly disciplines, especially religious studies and developmental psychology (Bird-David 1999:67). Perhaps the most famous use of animism is psychologist Jean Piaget's (1936) theory of cognitive development. Within his theory, Piaget (1936) includes a stage of child development where children believe objects are living and conscious. During this stage, children also then tend



can often result in anthropomorphism, as human characteristics are ascribed to the material environment (Bower 1999:361) (including nonhumans, such as technology), however it remains a unique monistic worldview, separate from dualistic or anthropocentric perspectives.<sup>54</sup>

In turn, the tendency to anthropomorphise a nonhuman has been assimilated to human supremacy, since it involves enforcing human traits onto animals – arguably mastering the animal and the nonhuman once again (Fox 1995:133). Berger (1977:11), for instance, argues that anthropocentrism and Cartesian dualism encourages man to dominate nature and one way of doing so, is to “reduce” the animal to being human, or fit the animal into the mould of the human. In this way, we also lose sight of the animal’s individuality and take away its distinctiveness, subjectivity or agency. Berger (1977:11) contends that in contemporary society, what was known as the animal has been anthropomorphised to such an extent that we no longer know animals – they “have gradually disappeared”. For Berger, they have simply become human projections: the dog is known as ‘man’s best friend’ or ‘a person’s child’.<sup>55</sup>

Modernist artist Cassius Coolidge’s *Dogs Playing Poker* (1894-1903) series of 16 oil paintings is an ideal example of the literal anthropomorphism of dogs (and animals or nonhumans in general). Commissioned to advertise cigars, the paintings feature various anthropomorphic dogs in human situations, doing human things (Figures 4-5). Perhaps a tongue-in-cheek commentary on the

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to anthropomorphise nonhuman beings, as well as objects, by assigning them human reasoning, emotions, characteristics and desires.

<sup>54</sup> Animism stands in explicit contrast to human supremacy. Animal-welfare scholar, Michael Fox (1995:133) explains that animism is a way of being, which involves “literally getting us outside of our ego-centred, anthropocentric consciousness”. Animism differs from human supremacy in that it believes in a higher order of beings and spirits, involves a detachment from human qualities and emotions (such as fear, greed and arrogance), as well as an ultimate balance between man and nature (Fox 1995:133-134). For this reason, Fox (1995:133) also emphasises that animism should not be confused with anthropomorphism.

<sup>55</sup> Even though I recognise Berger’s observation regarding anthropomorphism in contemporary society, I argue that post-Berger the animal-human divide still remains. As we have seen, in 1997, Derrida recognised his cat as a unique being and (when not anthropomorphising the animal) man still tends to insist on a difference between itself and the nonhuman. Moreover, a counterargument can be made that Berger’s contention that animals have immersed into human beings, as a result of anthropocentric thought, closely resembles what nonhuman theorists posit: an entwining between human and nonhuman, where both beings become one.

twentieth century working and upper class, or a satirical portrayal of patriarchy and sexism, the paintings play on the tension between whether we live in “a dog’s world” or “a man’s world” (Mcmanus 2005). Reproduced several times in popular culture these human-like dogs (or perhaps dog-like humans) have become a well-known commentary on society, human supremacy, as well as the anthropomorphism of the human-dog relation.



Figure 4: Cassius Marcellus Coolidge,  
*Poker Game*, 1894.  
Oil on canvas.  
(Fox & Fox 2017).



Figure 5: Cassius Marcellus Coolidge,  
*A Friend in Need*, 1903.  
Oil on canvas.  
(Fox & Fox 2017).

The theoretical efforts to closely associate anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism (as I described thus far) is however a rather slippery pursuit, because human supremacy, in turn, can also theoretically contest anthropomorphism. Anthropocentrism does not believe that animals can be equated or show similarity to humans whatsoever, on the grounds that humans are different and superior to nonhumans. Therefore, anthropocentrism can also “refuse to apply terms to animals that make reference to mental states like anger, fear, suffering, affection, joy or other emotions similar to ours” (Ricard 2016:131). In this manner, human exceptionalism maintains the human as different from and more evolved than nonhumans. This rejection of anthropomorphism is what primatologist Franz de Waal refers to as “anthropodenial”, which is “the *a priori* rejection of shared characteristics between humans and animal ... [a] willful blindness to the human-like characteristics of animals or the animal-like characteristics of ourselves” (de

Waal as quoted in Weil 2012:58). Anthropodenial therefore *enhances* the distinction between human and animal.

Thus, anthropomorphism acts as a kind of double-edged sword for anthropocentric thought: as a theory it simultaneously applies and denies the possibility to give the animal human traits. Similarly, de Waal (1997:53) notes that it is incredibly difficult to simultaneously avoid anthropomorphism and anthropodenial. Thus, what anthropomorphism implies for the human-dog relation is a somewhat ambiguous human-centred relation, where the dog is denied human experiences, but also concurrently only understood in terms of these same experiences. I tend to lean more to the notion that anthropodenial correlates with human exceptionalism, because it denies the animal any sort of agency or reasoning quality. Concerning the question of animal minds, I would argue that anthropomorphism, to a certain extent, gives nonhumans agency – albeit *human* agency, but a form of mental reasoning nonetheless – thus resembling multispecies theories to some measure.<sup>56</sup> Although I recognise how anthropomorphism can confine an animal's being to that of the human,<sup>57</sup> it does not necessarily instill the human as more valuable than the animal, rather it just equates humans and nonhumans. Thus, I contend that, on the grounds of anthropomorphism's ambiguity, it can easily morph into nonhuman thought, which I describe further in Chapter Three.

Additionally, I reason that the debate regarding anthropomorphism speaks to the broader question of whether or not we understand nonhumans to have subjectivity and moral reasoning. If we argue that anthropomorphism is pure human projection, are we also denying nonhumans any possibility of experiencing the world as humans do? More importantly, if we cannot think about animals by using human terms, how are we supposed to think about them

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<sup>56</sup> I define multispecies studies in the following chapter on nonhumanism. In short, multispecies studies argue that the boundaries between distinct species, especially those of humans and nonhumans no longer exist. They argue for a human-nonhuman entwined understanding of beings, where the human is tangled up with other species.

<sup>57</sup> Here, once again, the notion of thinking of the animal's individual being is fundamentally human. It is the human who is concerned with the question of the animal's individuality, not necessarily the animal.

and relate to them? Especially, as I have already mentioned, since thinking about animals cannot be separated from human thought. I explore these questions further throughout this study.

### **2.2.3 Domestication**

Moving into the specific territory of the dog as nonhuman, I argue that domestication becomes a key aspect of the human-nonhuman, or human-dog, relation. Domestication is typically understood as the process of taming animals to turn them into a possession or entity obedient to the human way of life (Weil 2012:55). Derived from the Latin *domus*, meaning to belong or live in a household, domestication has been used to describe animals living with humans since the fifteenth century (Bulliet in Weil 2012:56). Domestication is also closely associated with anthropocentrism, because of its coercive formula. Critics of human supremacy often condemn domestication for enslaving animals, stripping them of their individuality and exploiting them. Philosophers Nietzsche (1888), Deleuze and Guattari (1980) and Rousseau (2002), for instance all argue against domestication of animals, because, for them, the anthropocentric process has turned the animal into an inauthentic pet, who in the service of man has lost its authenticity of being a wild animal (Weil 2012:56).<sup>58</sup>

Accordingly, we can say that all pets are a direct result of domestication. Berger (1977:14, emphasis in original) explains: “The practice of keeping animals regardless of their usefulness, the keeping, exactly, of *pets* ... is a modern innovation, and, on the social scale on which it exists today, is unique”. Yet, domestication is more than just a “keeping” of an animal, it is a process of keeping through which the animal’s being is altered, to such an extent that pets

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<sup>58</sup> In *Twilight of the Idols with the Antichrist and Ecce Homo* (1888) Nietzsche argues that domestication of animals was driven by the fear of punishment, solely used to extend human civilisation. Nietzsche (2007[1888]:38) states that domesticated animals “are weakened, they are made less harmful, they become sickly beasts through the depressive emotion of fear, through pain, through injuries, through hunger”. In turn Deleuze and Guattari (1988[1980]:257) distinguish between three kinds of animals in *A Thousand Plateaus*. One of these kinds they refer to as “Oedipal animals” who are “individuated animals, family pets ... each with its own petty history, ‘my’ cat, ‘my’ dog”. For Deleuze and Guattari (1988[1980]:257) these Oedipal pets are just psychoanalytic reflections of their human owners and should not even be considered as animals. Correspondingly, Rousseau (2002:21L.449) maintains: “By becoming domesticated, they [animals] lose half [their] advantages; and it seems as if all our care to feed and treat them well serves only to deprave them”. I refer to Deleuze and Guattari’s Oedipal pets further on.

become “creatures of their owner’s way of life” (Berger 1977:15).<sup>59</sup> Accordingly, domestication, like anthropomorphism, can be posited to remove the (possible) autonomy of the nonhuman, or, said differently, change the entire existence of the animal. In *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets* (1985), psychologist Yi-Fu Tuan deals with the process of domestication to create pets. Tuan (1985:176) expresses his concern towards the domesticated pet, arguing that no matter how domestication comes about, the human keeps the pet as a narcissistic pursuit to the detriment of the animal: “whether we use plants and animals for economic or playful and aesthetic ends, we *use* them; we do not attend to them for their own good, except in fables”.<sup>60</sup>

In particular, domestication does not apply to all nonhumans. For example, Jacob Metcalf (2008) shows how human encounters with grizzly bears do not account for domestication, explaining that grizzly bears cannot easily be classified as, or tamed to be, a ‘domesticated pet’. In the same way, whales (as shown in the example of *Moby Dick* at the start of this chapter), no matter how we understand them, cannot readily be tamed.<sup>61</sup> However, with specific reference to dogs, domestication is a crucial part of the human-dog relation. In fact, within the human-dog relation it is commonly accepted that the dog, as the pet we know in

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<sup>59</sup> Interestingly, film franchise *The Secret Life of Pets* (2016-2019) emulates the prominence of pet keeping in contemporary society. The animated film follows the lives and adventures of domesticated pets living in New York City. The franchise aims to represent the individual way of life that pets go about, even without their owners (Grobar 2016). In fact, to emphasise the lives of the pets the owner’s faces are almost never seen. Although filled with anthropomorphisms (for instance in *The Secret Life of Pets 2* [2019] Max the terrier has to work through human-like anxiety issues) the film shines the spotlight on the scale of pet keeping, and to what extent a pet’s being relies on its owner.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Kari Weil’s (2012:53) chapter *Is a pet an animal?* as well as Erica Fudge’s comprehensive book *Animal* (2002) for a detailed unpacking of the so-called ‘de-animalisation’ of the pet alluded to here. As I identify (with reference to Tuan, Weil, as well as Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari and Rousseau) a great philosophical debate exists surrounding the ‘animal status’ of the pet or domesticated animal. Following the theme of the study of companion species (as posited by Haraway), where the dog is seen as domesticated pet animal living with human (Haraway 2003), the study evidently understands the pet as an animal – perhaps an animal with a different identity than a wild animal, but an animal nonetheless.

<sup>61</sup> Although there is evidence of domesticated or trained bears and whales (see Burgess [1968] and Nelson et al. [2016]), these animals are usually held captive in water parks, like *San Diego Sea World* or held in captivity by, for instance, circuses or zoos. In other words, these instances are not a result of so-called ‘unforced’ domestication. Recently documentary films have also exposed institutions that hold animals in captivity, where domestication goes beyond what is considered ethical treatment of animals. These documentaries include *Blackfish* (Cowperthwaite 2013), *The Cove* (Psihoyos 2009) and *Food, Inc* (Kenner 2010).

contemporary society, is a fundamentally domesticated animal. In other words, dogs as pets exist within the realm of domestication.<sup>62</sup> Biologists, dog breeders and champion dog sled racers, Raymond and Lorna Coppinger (2016) point out that even though 75% of the world's dogs live outside of human households,<sup>63</sup> they nevertheless always exist in immediate domestic relation with humans, because "humans provide dogs' ecological niche, and they cannot exist without us" (Coppinger & Coppinger in Armbruster 2018:6). Hence, according to Coppinger and Coppinger (2016), no matter how the human-dog relation is understood, the dog is a domesticated animal.

In *Tamed: Ten Species That Changed Our World* (2017), Alice Roberts traces the particular domestication of the dog back to its wolf descendants. Roberts (2017:12) argues that dogs are species that have been long-standing human domesticated counterparts. In effect, domestic dogs can be traced back to the European grey wolf around 9000 generations ago. Through the domestication of the grey wolf over centuries, humans have intervened to create new dog breeds and pets. Summarising the domestication process, Roberts (2017:46) explains: "[T]hat terrier, that spaniel, that retriever that you know so well... it's a wolf at heart. But a much friendlier one – even more tail-wagging, hand-licking, and altogether less dangerous – than its wild cousins". Therefore, I argue that we cannot consider the human-dog relation without thinking in terms of domestication, because the very existence of the dog as a human companion or pet is a direct result of human domestication.

Despite the fact that domestication, as established thus far, is easily framed as the result of enslaving or dominating human behaviour, in recent times the understanding around domestication has not been as straightforward. Veering away from theorists, like Nietzsche, Rosseau and Tuan, who are critical of

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<sup>62</sup> There are however dog species, such as African wild dogs, that exist outside of domestication. The survival of this dog species is dependent on hunting and a carnivorous diet and they typically do not interact with human beings.

<sup>63</sup> Coppinger and Coppinger (2016) explain that human individuals only 'loosely' own some dogs; others exist freely often known as 'village dogs'; while some range on the outskirts of human settlements. Here Coppinger and Coppinger (2016) do not refer to dog species outside of domestication, such as wild dogs and wolves.

domestication, current theoretical activity surrounding domestication examines it as a kind, mutually beneficial process and reciprocal relation. As Tuan (in Weil 2012:55) already noted, domestication is a process that involves a combination of both human dominance *and* affection. Thus, for a human to ‘turn’ a dog into a pet (so to speak) *entails* prevalence and, at the same time, care, affection, as well as endearment. In other words, true to human exceptionalism, domestication involves human control, as well as human qualities, such as empathy, love and play (Weil 2012:55).

In response to those that estimate domestication (or pet keeping) to be unnatural, cruel and artificial,<sup>64</sup> Rebecca Cassidy (2007:12) argues that domestication is an ongoing process that could be coercive, reciprocal, calculated or coincidental. More exactly, domestication does not necessarily connote cruel treatment of nonhumans.<sup>65</sup> Even though domestication implies one species dominating the other, it can also result in a mutually beneficial relationship for both species – a type of symbiotic relation. Thus, domestication could also be a process in which animals have engaged in purposefully, for their own survival and benefit.<sup>66</sup> For instance, like Roberts, Coppinger and Coppinger (in

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<sup>64</sup> For example, historian Keith Thomas (1983), argues that man exploits domesticated animals. In turn, animal ethics professor James Serpell (1986) observes that domestication treats the animal as significantly inferior, while Belyaev (1978:301) frames domestication as one of man’s “greatest biological experiments”. More recently, researcher Natalie Purcell (2011) investigates cruelty and suffering by means of domestication in livestock production. Similarly, Berger (1977:15) critiques pet keeping and domestication for destroying the “parallelism” of the animal’s separate life. Interestingly, once again, Berger’s critique is questioning anthropocentrism for something that we will later see nonhumanism to be in favour of: entangling human and nonhuman lives. Thus, the blurry line of domestication ensues, since a typical human-centred activity now comes to show similarities to multispecies relations.

<sup>65</sup> Cruel treatment of animals, including physical force or violent behaviour, does not correlate with domestication, as defined here. Additionally, such behaviour is often assimilated with human supremacy, since it involves human force over nonhumans. This assumption is also most likely based on the common misconception that anthropocentrism reasons that animals cannot feel pain or suffer. However, Derrida (2004[1997]:121) notes that nonhuman suffering is not an anthropocentric issue, since nobody, not even Descartes, can deny the “suffering, fear or panic, the terror or fright that humans witness in certain animals”. In other words, cruelty towards nonhumans cannot solely be assigned to human supremacy. Based on Derrida’s discussion, I consider cruelty towards nonhumans an overall question of human morality. However, I tread with caution to engage in such a controversial, heavy-loaded subject here. Although I strongly advocate against treatment of animals that results in suffering or pain, I do not discern an extensive discussion thereof in the theoretical and scholarly engagement of this chapter. I only briefly delve into animal suffering, sacrifice and rights in subsequent chapters.

<sup>66</sup> Notably, Nietzsche (1888), Tuan (1985), Rousseau (2002), as well as Coppinger and Coppinger (2001) suggest that domestication, as it is applied to animals, is also applied to humans. Humans

Armbruster 2018:6) suggest “given current estimates that dogs evolved from wolves 20,000–40,000 years ago, they have surely influenced the evolution of humans as a species in turn”. Therefore, the Coppingers suggest that the animals humans have (supposedly) mastered also reciprocally domesticate their human others.<sup>67</sup> In similar fashion, farmer and author Stephen Budiansky, in *The Covenant of the Wild* (1992), shows how domestication has proved to be a successful evolutionary strategy, benefitting humans *and nonhumans* alike.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, zoologist Edward O. Price (1984) explains that domestication is a biological process of adaptation that results in a changing of species responses to one another. Indeed, this reciprocal definition of the term extends into the commonly used, contemporary and more biological definition, where “[d]omestication is defined in terms of a coevolutionary mutualism between domesticator and domesticate and is distinguished from related but ultimately different processes of management” (Zeder 2015:3191). Following Coppinger and Coppinger, Price, as well as Budiansky, domestication can therefore be understood to be conceited or enslaving but evolutionary, natural and beneficial.

What the various theoretical engagements with domestication demonstrate is that domestication becomes equivocal as a purely anthropocentric process. Domestication is not necessarily an overpowering of animal being, it can also be a mutually beneficial symbiosis between human and nonhuman. In this way domestication, to a certain extent, actually counters anthropocentric thought, by giving the animal a sense of agency (to willingly commit to this human relation). Therefore, the anthropocentric notion of domestication, like anthropomorphism, is ambivalent in its treatment of the animal subject. Despite the best human-centred efforts to maintain a human point of view and deny animals of subjectivity, how we commonly understand and live with animals in

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domesticate one another, further confusing the idea that domestication is a specifically human process solely used to control nonhumans.

<sup>67</sup> In addition, in *Dogs: A New Understanding of Canine Origin, Behaviour, and Evolution* (2001), Coppinger and Coppinger scientifically show that dogs domesticated themselves to evolve their species. They also show that humans have adapted to dog behaviour, being reciprocally domesticated by their dogs.

<sup>68</sup> In particular, Budiansky (1992) also refers to ‘animal husbandry’, which is a branch of agriculture concerned with cultivating animals and plants in a caring manner. That is to say, farming and domesticating animals in a cautious and amiable way.



contemporary society (for example, through anthropomorphism or domestication) tends simultaneously to uphold and poke holes in the anthropocentric paradigm. In the following section I examine this ambiguity, as well as critical responses to human exceptionalism, to deepen my exploration on the question of the human-animal relation.

### **2.3 (Re)turning to Derrida: bursting the anthropocentric bubble**

In postmodern society and the Anthropocene epoch, anthropocentrism is widely accused of being *dogmatic* for laying down the principle that the human controls nature as undeniably true. Furthermore, anthropocentrism is also largely blamed for current ecological crises, based on its principles that allow the human to overrule nonhumans, which results in technological innovation destroying natural phenomena, as well as its close relation to the concept of the Anthropocene.<sup>69</sup> Additionally, as stated, anthropocentrism is also accused of speciesism and triggering cruel or unethical treatment of animals. Such a critical reception and accusation, developed by theorists like Matthieu Ricard (2016) and Derrick Jensen (2016), is also supported by the fight for animal rights over human rights and the overall ‘Animal Liberation Movement’,<sup>70</sup> which argues against speciesism and for compassionate treatment of nonhumans as well as so-called ‘animal-friendly’ human behaviour such as veganism and vegetarianism (Ricard 2016:33-35).<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Cf. LeCain (2015) and Chernilo (2017). LeCain (2015:3-4) argues that the term ‘Anthropocene’ “is unapologetically anthropocentric”. He maintains that the concept of the Anthropocene affirms that “[h]umans were indeed powerful enough to cause such global ecological shifts”, furthermore it encourages a “modernist faith in the human ability to fix the resulting problems”. Chernilo (2017:44) also argues that the current ecological crises on planet earth are a result of dominated human progress, which has come to define the Anthropocene.

<sup>70</sup> The question of animal rights is however also a fundamentally anthropocentric notion. In *The Rights of Things* W.J.T Mitchell (in Wolfe 2003:ix, emphasis in original) explains that the “very notion of ‘animal rights’, to being with, seems impossible insofar as it is modelled on human rights, because the very idea of *human* rights is predicated on the difference between humans and animals”. In turn, estimating animal rights in contemporary society implies the *humane* treatment of animals and, following the prominence of the nonhuman perspective, acknowledging the animal’s agency. In this way the animal’s rights, like the human’s rights, become a significantly controversial subject. Wolfe (2003:78) notes that Derrida, in his transformation to our relation to animals, also appealed to the compassionate treatment of animals, or animal rights, however problematic the term may be. In Chapter Seven, I explore the rights of the animal further in reference to their presence on social media platforms.

<sup>71</sup> As I have mentioned in the discussion on domestication, I too agree that any violent or cruel behaviour towards nonhumans is immoral. However, I do not solely assign blame for this human

Conversely, in an effort to subvert the idea that anthropocentrism promotes animal cruelty, some theorists try to develop an alternative theory that justifies human supremacy over animals. Subsequently, the argument is made that human supremacy can also counter animal cruelty, since its humanist and religious roots argues that by mastering nature, man has the responsibility to also take care of nature and nonhumans (Hayward 1997).<sup>72</sup> For example, Tim Hayward (1997) contends that the ethical accusations towards anthropocentrism are often a “misunderstood problem”, as human exceptionalism does not necessarily imply the maltreatment of animals. Hayward (1997:61) argues that “the mistaken rejection of anthropocentrism misrepresents the fact that harm to nonhumans, as well as harm to some groups of humans, are caused not by humanity in general but by specific humans with their own vested interests”. As a result, Hayward (1997:61) suggests that the discussion of the ethical treatment of animals “would be better conducted without reference to the equivocal notion of anthropocentrism”.

Motivated by Hayward’s discussion, once again, it is not my intention to measure the ethicality of anthropocentrism here, nor do I wish to try and mend the opposing views on human supremacy. I recognise the two sides of the anthropocentric debate concerning animal treatment, yet for my purposes here, I am mostly concerned with the *way of being* of humans and nonhumans. As a result, I now turn towards Derrida’s (1997) philosophical critique of anthropocentrism, which focusses on the nature of being – specifically the question of the animal mind and being, in contrast to the ethical critique of human supremacy.<sup>73</sup>

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behaviour to human exceptionalism. I argue that, in actuality, the culpability of animal cruelty and unethical behaviour should be understood more broadly than a specific worldview.

<sup>72</sup> As described in this chapter, the Judeo-Christian influence on anthropocentrism maintains that man has a moral obligation or responsibility to look after its (subordinate) animals. Some ancient philosophers, such as Aristotle, also maintain that because of his authority, man has to take care of animals. For a comprehensive listing of human exceptionalism texts supporting this standpoint, refer to Ricard’s (2016:11-25) *The Justification of Animal Exploitation: The Religions of the Book and Western Philosophy in A Plea for the Animals*.

<sup>73</sup> I have also shown throughout this chapter that the beliefs regarding the question of the nature of the animal directly impacts or underlies the treatment of animals and so, if a judgement on animal ethics or treatment wants to be made, it is more valuable to start at the being of the animal as a point of enquiry in any case.

Although Derrida (2004[1997]:119) also tells us that superior behaviour towards nonhumans stems from the dualistic categories of anthropocentrism and urges for compassion towards animals, his main concern in *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* is not to implicate human exceptionalism, but rather to question an anthropocentric way of thinking about the being of the animal, in order to reconsider how humans *understand* the animal. Thus, Derrida is primarily concerned with the nature of the human-nonhuman relation and what this relation implies for the existence of the human being (Wood 2004:130). Accordingly, Derrida's critique of anthropocentrism, although mainly concerned with the look of the animal, remains focussed on the human – or what the animal looks at.<sup>74</sup>

I have discussed Derrida's animal philosophy, stemming from his naked encounter with his cat, previously in this chapter to explore animal subjectivity. Furthering the discussion here, I focus on the fact that – upon this encounter – Derrida (2004[1997]:113) admits to struggling to overcome his embarrassment. The philosopher, caught in the look of his nonhuman companion, felt ashamed. It is this shame that prompts Derrida (2004[1997]:115, emphasis in original) to wonder:

Before the cat that looks at me naked, would I be ashamed *like* an animal that no longer has the sense of nudity? Or on the contrary, *like* a man who retains the sense of his nudity? Who am I therefore? Who is it that I am (following)? Whom should this be asked of if not of the other? And perhaps the cat itself?<sup>75</sup>

With this Derrida opens up to the idea that perhaps the nature of being human is also defined by the nature of being of other nonhumans and that the conversation of what makes us human starts with a confrontation with

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<sup>74</sup> Akin to my reading of Derrida, Hayward (1997) divides the critique against anthropocentrism into ethical critique (which he opposes) and ontological critique. Hayward's (1997:49) "ontological critique" would correlate with how I describe Derrida's critique here: directly related to being and the nature of existence, instead of concern with concepts of right or wrong behaviour.

<sup>75</sup> Notably, here Derrida points out that there is a difference between human nudity and animal nudity. The animal does not seem to show a sense of awareness of its own perceived nudity, while the shame, vulnerability and awareness of human nudity stems from self-awareness, the notion of sin and Biblical associations. This does pose the question: did Derrida's cat contemplate Derrida's *nude* body?

nonhumans. Derrida (2004[1997]:116) also reasons that if he felt shame in front of his cat, as he would have in front of another human, it is possible that the human not only looks at the nonhuman, but that the nonhuman (his cat) also looks back, and sees the human. To put it more precisely, Derrida considers the possibility that his cat has a being and mind of its own and should therefore be treated as a subject, instead of an object. Read in relation to anthropocentrism, the philosopher is therefore critical of anthropocentric, opposing categories of “man” and “animal”, which he argues appropriates the animal into the category of an unknowable “Other” (Derrida 2004[1997]:123).

As Derrida comes to realise the impact of the animal on his self-understanding, he becomes critical of anthropocentrism’s notion to appropriate the nonhuman; to treat the nonhuman as without agency and abysmal in relation to human reasoning (Wood 2004[1997]:132). His doubt is already evident in the title of his lectures on the animal. The title of Derrida’s enquiry *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* (originally in French: ‘*L’Animal que donc je suis [à suivre]*’) is an apparent play on Descartes (1641) definition of the human mind: ‘I think, therefore I am’ (in French: ‘*je pense, donc je suis*’). Derrida’s play on Descartes’s dualism highlights his uncertainty of human exceptionalism, evident throughout his text. Furthermore, already within the title, Derrida indicates that he now understands being human to be in constant relation to, following encounters with, nonhuman others.

In an attempt to overcome human exceptionalism’s dualistic categories, Derrida (2004[1997]:124) reconceptualises the concepts of “the Animal” and “Man”. He argues that ‘Animal’ is a category assigned by humans, specifically by means of human language, to separate and identify themselves from others. These binary categories occur within the unique realm of human language and, since animals do not access them as humans do, they also become hegemonic instruments (Derrida 2004[1997]:125). He explains:

Men would be first and foremost those living creatures who have given themselves the word that enables them to speak of the animal with a single voice and to designate it as the single being that remains without a

response, without a word with which to respond.  
(Derrida 2004[1997]:125).

In other words, Derrida argues that human concepts withhold the animal of any chance to even show their own subjective way of being. In the above quotation it also seems that Derrida places emphasis on the response of the animal as indication of its being. Can the animal respond without human language? Here again, Derrida probes at the possibility of animal subjectivity, however he does not delve deeper into this nonhuman world. He opens up a potential animal subject but does not go any further. Thus, he tells the reader that there is possibility for nonhuman being, but it is up to the reader to decide what this would look like.

The only answer Derrida does give the reader is a concept to overcome the anthropocentric dualistic manner of thinking. Derrida (2004[1997]:125) recommends speaking of “*animot*” (a French compound of the word animal and word). With this term he suggests merging three elements into one plurality. In this way, the human, animals and language become one concept. By taking away the human exceptionalism categories, and picturing humans and nonhumans as one concept, Derrida (2004[1997]:126) hopes to highlight that animals always-already can respond: “It brings together *two times two* alliances, as unexpected as they are irrefutable.” In spite of Derrida’s multiplicity efforts, he again returns to the “I” within his fusion of human and animal, questioning what an animal response would mean to him as human being. Consequently, again, Derrida returns to the human even in his human-nonhuman combination.

Therefore, what Derrida does in this seminal text is unlock an overcoming of the anthropocentric human-nonhuman divide, by defining the human in constant relation to the nonhuman other. The nonhuman’s gaze is acknowledged and *sees* the human, or, as Derrida (2004[1997]:382) puts it, the human is “*seen seen* by the animal”. As such, he argues that the animal plays a vital role in the

conceptualisation of the human self.<sup>76</sup> In turn, Derrida's reasoning also opens the possibility for giving the animal subjective agency and the possibility of an animal mind (because the animal is able to look at and impact the human), which starts to fracture the privilege of man over animal. Echoing Derrida's idea that the animal's autonomy challenges human supremacy, literature theorist, Karla Armbruster (2018:8), argues that it is when dogs respond and behave in ways that we do not expect "when they disobey, destroy, run wild, or otherwise confront us with their autonomy – that they hold the most potential to lead us out of our limited anthropocentric modes of experiencing the world".

### **2.3.1 What if Derrida had a dog?**

Armbruster's reference to dogs helps us to return for a moment to the main theme of this study, the human-dog relation. Taking my cue from animal studies theorist Erica Fudge, in this section I briefly consider the validity of Derrida's cat in assimilation to dogs. In *The Dog, the Home and the Human, and the Ancestry of Derrida's Cat* (2007), Erica Fudge contends that the fact that Derrida chose to theorise specifically about his *cat* as a nonhuman is a crucial part to understanding his theory. Despite the obvious fact that Jacques Derrida (2004[1997]:115) lived with his "little cat", Fudge explains that Derrida's choice of cat (instead of, for argument's sake, a dog) forms a key part of his philosophical argument.

Fudge (2007:37-38) argues that dogs, most likely owing to their rich history of domestication, have come to represent, both in literature and philosophy, a key part of the idea of the home and the human. To support this, Fudge (2007:43) mentions that the dog has become an icon of anthropocentrism and domestication – even in Renaissance imagery, the philosopher is often pictured with a dog at his feet (Figure 6).<sup>77</sup> In other words, for Fudge (2007:42), dogs have come to represent the ideal picture of what I understand as human

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<sup>76</sup> I return to this argument in Chapter Four when considering Heidegger's definition of the human way of being.

<sup>77</sup> Images of dogs depicting anthropocentric relations, as well as nonhuman relations, are further discussed in Chapter Seven. Additionally, Fudge's description reminds of the title of the philosophical novel by Raimond Gaita (2004), *The Philosopher's Dog*, which muses about the love between human and dog, without delving into an imagined sense of the dog's lifeworld.

supremacy: “dog ownership is what we might term a truly humanist pursuit in that it reiterates the natural and absolute difference between animal and human that persists in humanist thought”.<sup>78</sup> Conversely, cats (commonly occurring in opposition to dogs) are widely thought of (or ironically anthropomorphised) as mysterious, independent and aloof – not entirely knowable to the human mind. As Fudge (2007:38) explains, cats are placed on nature’s side of dualistic thought, while dogs are considered to be part of culture. Therefore, Derrida’s specific reference to a cat also challenges the typical human exceptionalism idea of domestication and the image of the philosopher with his dog at his feet (Fudge 2007:46). In this way he uproots the characteristic association, belief and guise of anthropocentrism.<sup>79</sup>

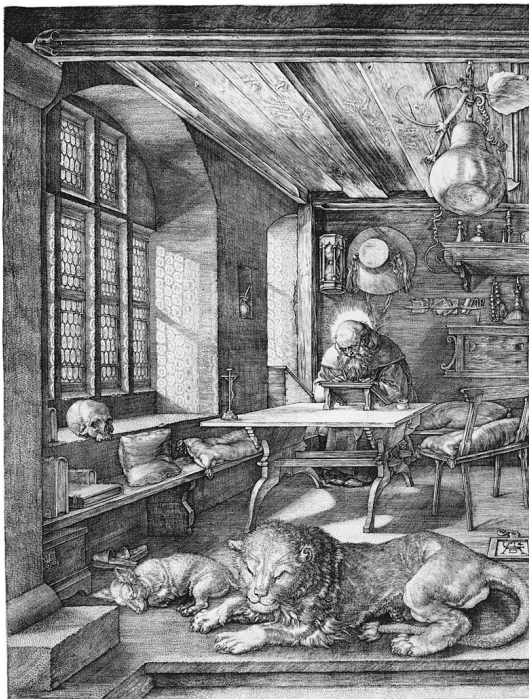


Figure 6: One of the famous visual examples of the dog depicted sleeping at the philosopher’s feet (Fudge 2007:53).

Albrecht Dürer, *Saint Jerome in His Study*, 1514. Engraving on paper, 24,7cm x 18,8cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. (Victoria and Albert Museum 2017).

<sup>78</sup> What Fudge estimates here as humanism relates to what this study refers to as human supremacy, including its humanist roots.

<sup>79</sup> Interestingly, Fudge (2007:45-46) also argues that Derrida’s choice of location (his bathroom) and his actual nakedness also counters human exceptionalism and typical anthropocentric philosophy, because it captures the human in a vulnerable position, which reminds us of our mortality and human condition. In comparison, anthropocentric philosophy typically aims to empower the human, moreover usually the male figure. Fudge (2007:47; 48) summarises: “But why this shameful behaviour? Why invite us – over and over again – to imagine his naked body? It is an attempt, I think, to undermine the arrogance he finds in the figure of the philosopher and much philosophy ... Instead, we are asked to imagine – repeatedly imagine – the scene of aging, naked philosopher being challenged by his cat in his bathroom *every morning*. This is not domesticated bliss; this is a constant reminder of our physicality, our mortality. But if the cat is a reminder of human mortality Derrida’s tale ultimately offers no such sense of an ending: instead its end returns us, it seems, to its beginning”.

However, Fudge (2007:48) does not stop at emphasising the importance of Derrida's cat. She continues to wonder, with the important role the cat plays in Derrida's theory, whether or not the dog can be assimilated into his thought on nonhumans. More precisely, can we replace Derrida's cat with a dog? Would the philosopher still recognise the gaze of the animal and the shame of being human, if his cat were a dog? Would a dog still allow Derrida to contest human exceptionalism? Turning to the dog in literature, specifically *Lassie Come-Home* (Knight 1940), Fudge (2007:48-51) shows how, despite their domestication, dogs (like Derrida's cat) can also highlight human fragility, the possibility of human objectification and the importance of the dog in human understanding.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, Fudge (2007:51) reasons that human self-understanding is also often conceptualised by the look of the dog, since "without a dog at one's feet how can one know one is human?" Fudge's argument is convincing and articulates that in the question of what makes us human, looking to not only our cats, *but also our dogs* can aid in the questions of both human and animal being. More specifically, although the domestication of dogs facilitates the ideas of anthropocentrism, they can, in turn, disrupt these same ideas. Bridging the anthropocentric gap between the human and nonhuman perhaps not only starts with Derrida's cat, but also the philosopher's dog: "if we are seeking to find who Derrida is ... we could do worse than turn to Lassie" (Fudge 2007:51).<sup>81</sup>

As I understand Fudge's reading of Derrida, Fudge also highlights the role of the human in the suggested plurality between human and nonhuman, specifically dogs. Through her rendering of Derrida and *Lassie*, Fudge still returns to the

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<sup>80</sup> In an attempt to break down the human-centred "myth of the dog", Fudge (2007:48) reinterprets *Lassie Come-Home*. The novel tells the story of the beloved dog Lassie, who is sold by his owner, Joe Carraclough, owing to financial pressure during the Great Depression. Lassie escapes from his new residence and goes on a lengthy journey to find his owner. Most commonly, Lassie is interpreted as a *tail* of a dog's faithfulness to its human owner; however Fudge (2007:48) shows that the humans in the novel are presented as fragile and vulnerable (because of the Great Depression). Moreover, Fudge (2007:51) maintains that Lassie is not objectified as a possession, but rather an animal with agency that gives new meaning to his human owner. As a result, "*Lassie Come-Home*, in fact, is not a humanist text after all. It does represent the human of humanism but only in order to argue that in a system in which humans can become objects this representation is needed to veil that objectification and to offer an alternative conception that gives meaning to the (not-so) human" (Fudge 2007:51).

<sup>81</sup> I further elaborate on the possibility of Derrida's dog and Fudge's interpretation of Derrida's text in Chapter Five, where I consider Haraway's understanding of Derrida's cat encounter.



human, albeit a non-superior human, but the human and the vulnerability of the human condition, nonetheless. Fudge (2007:37) explains: “Indeed, the stories told about dogs, we might argue, are never really about dogs at all, they are always about humans”.<sup>82</sup> Supporting Fudge, literature theorist, Karla Armbruster (2018:7) maintains “Because of our ancient, intimate relationship, dogs can tell us a great deal about ourselves ... dogs – both real and textual – tap into all of our complex feelings”.

*To further imagine whether or not Derrida’s cat can also be a dog, I turn to my own experiences with my dogs, Fudge and Cody. Fudge and Cody like to take their daily morning nap in the sun on my parents’ bed. This also means that my mom has to get dressed in front of the dogs every morning. She, however, cannot do so unless she is sure they are fast asleep, since she is scared, they might see something they are not supposed to. I understand where she is coming from – I have been caught in a ‘Derrida-like’ instance with Fudge, because he has the habit of bashing open any closed door. Half ashamed, half confused, I did not know how to respond to what appeared to be a similarly confused and ashamed Labrador staring back at me. With what seemed to be a mutual decision we both turned around and ran in opposite directions. Although Fudge looked like he had forgotten the instance almost immediately, greeting me with a wagging tail once I was fully clothed, I somehow felt very self-aware for the rest of the day, as if I had been exposed in some way. In other words, both my mom and I experience similar moments as Derrida with his cat, with our dogs. More importantly, somehow my au naturel encounter with Fudge turned my awareness back to myself. In hindsight, I cannot help but wonder if it did the same for Fudge? Did he become more aware of his own bare doggy being, or (perhaps even more awkwardly) mine?*

It is quite evident that Derrida’s *The Animal That Therefore I Am* fractures anthropocentric thought and calls on its human readers to rethink nonhuman and human relations, the animal question and, importantly, themselves. In the

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<sup>82</sup> Fudge’s statement here echoes the referral to other anthropocentric literature about dogs, such as *Jock of the Bushveld* and *The One Hundred and One Dalmatians*, mentioned elsewhere in this chapter.

following chapter I turn to those theorists who take Derrida's call seriously, practicing nonhumanism in contrast to human exceptionalism.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

Guided by Derrida's *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)*, this chapter examined how humans *look at* animals, as part of my examination considering the broader shift from anthropocentric to nonhuman thought. In this chapter, I unpacked the question of the animal being as an age-old and predominantly human endeavour. Thereafter, I explored the notion of anthropocentrism, including its philosophical roots in the Enlightenment and modern humanist thought. Consequently, anthropocentrism is understood as a perspective that views humanity as the measure of all things, divides all human and nonhuman things into dualistic categories, as well as understands human behaviour as central to existence. In other words, from an anthropocentric point of view, the human mostly looks at (or perhaps down at) the animal. My look into anthropocentrism also considered how concepts such as domestication and anthropomorphism simultaneously embody and contradict anthropocentrism. Accordingly, I examined how Derrida's thoughts on the animal attempt to 'burst the anthropocentric bubble' and rethink its discrepancies, by arguing that the animal also *looks back* at the human. At this point, I turn to theory that considers this look of the animal in order to overcome human-centred reasoning.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LOOKING FOR THE (NON)HUMAN: EXPLORING NONHUMANISM

*Those who teach the most about humanity,  
aren't always human.<sup>83</sup>*

In Chapter Two I contextualised the question of the animal being, with specific reference to human exceptionalism by broadly unpacking what is meant by an anthropocentric view of animal being and identifying the importance of the human in the human-animal relation. Drawing on the work of Jacques Derrida and Erica Fudge, I also indicated a shift in the thinking of the animal being, identifying that – in contrast to anthropocentric reason – perhaps the nonhuman also has a sense of agency and individual experience in the world.

Chapter Three continues my contextualisation of the human-dog and human-nonhuman relation in the first layer of my reading of companion species, by particularly focussing on the theoretical turn away from anthropocentrism towards nonhumanism. In what follows, I investigate and unpack the nonhuman turn. More importantly, building on my discussion in Chapter Two, I continue my search for the role of the human in the question of the animal being, especially in the nonhuman world. I now *look for* the human in nonhumanism and consider how nonhuman methodologies, as well as typical anthropocentric concepts – such as anthropomorphism and domestication – translate into this new worldview.

#### **3.1 Nonhuman ≥ human: understanding nonhumanism**

In Chapter Two I unpacked Erica Fudge's (2007) enquiry into the significance of the dog in relation to Derrida's (1997) philosophical question of the animal's individual gaze. Fudge and Derrida's engagement allows us to recognise how nonhuman-human relations (even commonly anthropomorphic or domestic relations, such as those between human and cat or human and dog) can (theoretically) also decompose human supremacy and rethink the way of being

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<sup>83</sup> Donald L Hicks (2015:145) – first seen by the author in a caption for a dog image on Instagram.

between humans and nonhumans. Although Derrida does not extensively unpack what constitutes such a way of being – he only returns the nonhuman back to the question of the human – the philosopher nevertheless opens a possibility (as Fudge also shows) to reconfigure the human-nonhuman relation. Thus, Derrida’s cat teaches the anthropocentric world about a possible animal understanding and way of being, or at the very least a possible human-animal relation where both human and animal have agency and affect. In an effort to decentre the human (as well as the human philosopher) Derrida disrupts the canon of anthropocentrism, allowing for the possibility of a co-constitutive way of existing with nonhumans. Theorist Nick Bingham (2005:488) argues that Derrida opens up a possibility of “a certain quality of being open to and with [nonhuman] others”, which might even look like a possible friendship, despite the obvious language barrier.

Taking a cue from Derrida’s (1997) critique of human exceptionalism, a broader theoretical focus on nonhumans in the arts, humanities and social sciences, seemingly intensifies in the twenty-first century, alongside the extensive turn away from modernity to postmodernity. This new wave of thought is typically referred to as the “nonhuman turn” (Grusin 2015) or a nonhumanist approach. In direct opposition to anthropocentrism, nonhuman theorists argue that all entities, human and nonhuman alike, have agency and should be treated as subjects in the world.<sup>84</sup> Nonhumanists maintain that with the coming of a new environmental epoch, there is also the possibility to overcome anthropocentrism by interweaving human and nonhuman agencies (Szerszynski 2017:254). Within the human-nonhuman amalgamation, dualistic categories and subject-object relations no longer exist, but rather entangle with one another. Thus, through the human-nonhuman entanglement, the nonhuman decentres the human as the so-called ‘measure of all things’ and unsettles human supremacy.

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<sup>84</sup> Webmoor and Witmore (2008:66) note that other key philosophers and practitioners in favour of nonhumanism, as it is stipulated here, include Geoffrey Bowker, Michel Callon, John Law and Isabelle Stengers. For more theorists regarding nonhumanism and multispecies relations, besides these and the ones referred to in this chapter, see the literature review in Chapter One.

Nonhumanism came to prominence in the twenty-first century through the accumulation of various twentieth century intellectual thought systems, including (amongst others) Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory, affect theory,<sup>85</sup> Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory,<sup>86</sup> new media theory,<sup>87</sup> new materialism,<sup>88</sup> system theory,<sup>89</sup> as well as non-representational theory.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Affect theory posits that affects – immediate embodied intensities experienced during encounters – are key to our understanding of information and culture (Massumi 1995). Elaborated on by philosophers such as Brian Massumi (1995), Eric Shouse (2005), Deleuze and Guattari (1980) as well as Spinoza (1985), Patricia Clough (2008:2) defines the affective turn as “a shift in thought in critical theory through an exploration of the complex interrelations of discursive practises, the human body, social and cultural forces, and individually-experienced by historically situated emotions and affects”. Since affect theory examines affective reactions to both human and nonhuman encounters, the embodied experiences form a critical part of nonhumanism. In terms of Haraway's companion species, Joanna Latimer (2016:2) points out that affect theory forms part of the *becoming with* of species as “the becomings that humans in affective relations with nonhuman others make”.

<sup>86</sup> Deleuze and Guattari's (1988[1980]:5) assemblage theory refers to all things existing in multiplicity, where heterogeneous entities become together in an explosion of unity. I explore their theory further in relation to Haraway's companion species and *becoming with* in Chapter Five.

<sup>87</sup> Mainly influenced by theorist Lev Manovich, new media theory critically engages with cultural objects enabled by all forms of computing. Manovich (2002) explains that new media “are the cultural objects which use digital computer technology for distribution and exhibition”. Thus, new media deals with nonhuman digital objects and the software behind those objects. I examine new media theory further in my discussion of companion species on social media.

<sup>88</sup> New materialism represents a range of theoretical perspectives that focus on matter and immanence in opposition to transcendental humanist thought (Monforte 2018:380). New materialist Karen Barad (2007:151) explains that the perspective refers “to phenomena in their ongoing materialisation” arguing that matter (or phenomena in their material form) cannot be separated from meaning in society. Haraway's companion species and cyborg theory has been categorised as new materialist (Monforte 2018:386) as she highlights the “material-semiotic” trait of things, such as humans, dogs and technology. According to Monforte (2018:386) “Haraway (2004) argued that all existence is a complex combination of the material dimension and semiotic forces; the former creates and gives form to the latter, and vice versa”. I examine Haraway's material-semiotic aspect of companionship further in Chapter Five.

<sup>89</sup> Systems theory examines phenomena in their complex systems and networks to understand how complex combinations interact and impact one another. It considers how things relate, connect or link and whether they are static or dynamic, or passive and active (Rocchi 2000:7). Systems of relating and interacting become prominent in Haraway's companion species (2008), extending into the realm of system theory. Haraway (in Gane 2006:136) explains that as a biologist she is “extremely interested in the way the organism is an object of knowledge as a system of the production and partition of energy, or as a system of division of labour with executive functions”. Yet Haraway (in Gane 2006:139-140) also maintains that she is “nonetheless deeply resistant to systems theories of all kinds” since it bounds phenomena to one network and does not consider things in their complexity (i.e. in relation to other networks). She argues that “[a] whole lot is going on that is never named by any systems theory” (Haraway in Gane 2006:151).

<sup>90</sup> Non-representational theory, coined by Nigel Thrift (2008), is a response to the human-centred obsession with representation. Thrift (2008:2, emphasis in original) describes non-representational theory as “*the geography of what happens*” and is interested in thinking through the flow and movement of life. It is a perspective that places humans on equal footing with nonhumans, since humans and nonhumans become part of a wider network of things (Thrift 2008:17). Non-representational theory closely resonates with Latour's ANT, multispecies relations and, accordingly, Haraway's companion species.

Therefore, nonhumanism covers a lot of diverse terrains that often overlap and differ in their consideration of the nonhuman condition. What these theories have in common though is taking Derrida's thought a step further, in an attempt to understand the particular existence and way of life where both humans and nonhumans have agency. In other words, they not only speculate over the possibility of animal subjectivity, but also study what exactly constitutes human-nonhuman subjectivity, how to measure and talk about this entangled relation and how the world can ethically respond to such a new way of enlaced human-nonhuman being. Here, I briefly outline two important nonhuman theorists, Bruno Latour and Michel Serres, as examples of nonhumanism.<sup>91</sup>

Commonly thought of as one of the seminal and pioneering philosophers of nonhumanism, anthropologist Bruno Latour (1987; 1993) argues that the modernist (great) divide between the nonhuman and human in the social and natural world needs reconstruction to consider the importance of "discussions about the meaningful behaviour of nonhumans" (Latour 1993:23). In his pursuit of the nonhuman, Latour (2005) establishes Actor-Network Theory (ANT) to discuss the role of nonhumans in society. ANT describes nonhumans and humans as actors, occurring in a network of relations, shaping and reshaping one another when together (Latour 2005:65).<sup>92</sup> Like Derrida, Latour (1993:97) refers to the divide between the human and nonhuman as one of the "Great Divides" characterised by the language construction of an "Us" and "Them".<sup>93</sup> Latour (2005) attempts to overcome this divide by narrowing existence down to only that which exists between human and nonhuman actors. In other words, the relations (networks) between humans and nonhumans are what explain phenomena. In this way, Latour (2005) reasons that objects, ideas, processes and nonhumans are equally important to humans. Moreover, what Latour's emphasis

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<sup>91</sup> I very briefly refer to Latour and Serres here, simply as examples of nonhumanism. For more on Serres and nonhumanism refer to Snyder (2013) and Sörlin (2011). For an in-depth discussion on Latour's relation to nonhumanism see Sayes (2014) and Barron (2003).

<sup>92</sup> Some of Latour's seminal nonhuman-human sources describing these actor network relations include: *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993), *Science in Action* (1987), *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy* (Latour & Weibel 2005), *Waiting for Gaia* (2011), *Telling Friends from Foes in the Time of the Anthropocene* (2013), *Agency at the Time of the Anthropocene* (2014) and *On actor-network theory: A few clarifications* (1996).

<sup>93</sup> Latour (1993:97) also pinpoints the divide between the West and the rest of the world as the *other* "Great Divide".

on human-nonhuman networks implies is that nonhumans have the capacity, or individual ability, to participate as humans do. They are therefore active agents in the network of being.

Another seminal nonhuman theorist and philosopher worth mentioning as an example of nonhumanism is Michel Serres, who examines the relation between human and nonhuman nature on earth.<sup>94</sup> In *The Natural Contract* (1995) Serres (1995:36) establishes that nature “behaves as a subject”. Looking at planet earth and nature as subjects, Serres (1995:37) argues: “Objects themselves are legal subjects and no longer mere material for appropriation, even collective appropriation”. Finally, Serres estimates that the human and the nonhuman planet earth are *becoming* together, as a result, humans have an increased responsibility towards planet earth (and vice versa):

We’ve been living contractually with the Earth for only a little while. As if we were *becoming* its sun or its satellite, as if it were *becoming* our satellite or our sun. We draw each other, we hold each other tight. In arm wrestling, with an umbilical cord, in the sexual bond? All that and more. The cords that tie us together form, in all, a third kind of world: they are nutritive, material, scientific and technological, informational, aesthetic, religious. *Equipotent to the Earth, we have become its biplanet, and it is likewise becoming our biplanet, both bound by an entire planet of relations.* (Serres 1995:110, emphasis added).

Owing to the wide spectrum of perspectives that encapsulate nonhumanism, it is often difficult to briefly define the perspective. I find it troublesome to come up with a simple definition for nonhumanism from, for example, both Latour and Serres’s work. For my purposes here, I turn to Donna Haraway, whose concept (companion species) is the main concern on which the study centres. Haraway, in her attempt to overcome dualistic reasoning through nonhuman hybrids and the entangled *becoming with* of human and nonhuman species, also represents nonhumanism.<sup>95</sup> In *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2003) she places both

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<sup>94</sup> Some of Serres’s key texts on nonhuman relations include *The Parasite* (1982), *Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time* (Serres & Latour 1995) and *The Natural Contract* (1995).

<sup>95</sup> The subject of how Haraway’s nonhuman-hybrid figure of the cyborg morphs into her notion of companion species, and both concepts’ relation to nonhumanism is discussed in Chapter Eight.

cyborgs and companion species under the nonhumanism umbrella, as well as in opposition to human-centred categories: “cyborgs and companion species each bring together the human and non-human ... neither a cyborg nor a companion animal pleases the pure of heart who long for better protected species boundaries and sterilization of category deviants” (Haraway 2003:4). Hence, Haraway’s species meet within the broader spectrum of nonhumanist thought.

Following a nonhuman frame of reference, Haraway employs the notion of *becoming with* to explain the entwined relation between humans and nonhumans. For Haraway (2008:4) humans are always in the process of *becoming* and we come into being in coalition *with* nonhuman others, who entwine with our being. Therefore to “be one is always to *become with* many” (Haraway 2008:4). Haraway (2008:4) explains that as humans develop, they are made up of millions of different micro-species that come to exist within our biological organism. In a similar fashion, the species we encounter on a larger scale, such as dogs or cats, are entangled with us as human beings. This entanglement is biological as, for example, we inadvertently interchange saliva, cells or other fleshy components with the species with which we interact. In doing so, our relations with nonhumans “is chemically etched in the DNA of every cell” (Haraway 2003:8; 2008:4).<sup>96</sup> Concurrently, our entanglements also occur on an affective or immaterial level that carries psychological significance. Haraway (2008:4, emphasis added) explains: “[D]iverse bodies *and meanings* coshape [*sic*] one another” and therefore humans and nonhumans exist as “material-semiotic nodes or knots”.<sup>97</sup> In their clustering, humans and nonhumans are “always meaning-making figures” carrying connotation (Haraway 2008:5). Hence, Haraway’s *becoming with* describes the interactions

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<sup>96</sup> Haraway does not define or unpack her use of the term ‘flesh’ throughout *When Species Meet*. I therefore take her usage of the term as only referring to bodily substances, rooted in her self-described background of Catholicism (Haraway 2003:15; 2008) and the Catholic notion of flesh (body) versus spirit. In contemporary philosophy, phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s notion regarding flesh in *The Primacy of Perception* (1964) can also be discussed in relation to Haraway’s ‘fleshy’ companionships.

<sup>97</sup> Haraway’s use of “material-semiotic” is derived from Latour’s ANT. It refers to the simultaneous mapping of relations between things (material), as well as concepts that give meaning to things (semiotic). For example, in the relation between human and dog, their bodies combine on a physical level, while their subjectivities (or concepts of being) combine by influencing each other.



between different species that result in a meaningful “infecting” towards one another, where both species are knotted in their total capacity of being in the world (Jordan 2011:266). Both human and nonhuman’s being is therefore constantly in the process of interlacing with the other on a corporeal as well as a signifying level. Thus, through the notion of *becoming with*, Haraway presents the idea that humans and nonhumans are constantly entangled in complex relations, forming a unity of being. Species do not just exist alongside one another but are instead continuously developing and functioning towards one another.<sup>98</sup>

Notably, Haraway’s (2008:9) nonhumanism also frequently draws on Latour’s work. For instance, she expands on the Great Divide to theorise the principal division of “Man” and “Others”, as well as the “Great Divide between animals (lapdogs) and machines (laptops) in the early twenty-first century” (Haraway 2008:10). Additionally, following Latour’s terminology, Haraway (2003:7) often refers to both humans and nonhumans as “worldly actors” and “material-semiotic” knots, which forms the basis of Latour’s theory. For instance, in terms of companion species, Haraway (2003:3, emphasis added) argues: “[T]he practices and *actors* in dogworlds, humans and nonhumans alike, ought to be central concerns of technoscience studies”.

Interestingly, stemming from different philosophical traditions, genres and subject matter, Haraway and Serres are not typically considered in relation to one another. Although both nonhumanist theorists are linked to and influenced by Latour, Haraway does not explicitly refer to Serres or their similarities and relationality (Snyder 2013). However, upon closer inspection, bound by their emphasis on the nonhuman, it is clear that Serres shows great similarity to Haraway in his emphasis on nonhuman and human *becoming together* in relations. However, where Haraway focusses on relations between species and individual beings, such as dogs, Serres emphasises *becoming* on a larger scale in terms of planet earth. Sörlin (2011) notes: “If Serres follows the expansion of the

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<sup>98</sup> I extensively discuss Haraway’s idea of *becoming with* in Chapter Five, after which it becomes a critical part of the study.

boundaries of mankind outwards, towards the planetary, then Donna Haraway follows the same movement inwards, towards genetic codes and the behaviour and interaction of individuals”.<sup>99</sup>

In her discussion on companion species, Haraway (2008:92) configures nonhumanism as an invitation to “speculate, imagine, feel, build something better”. In other words, it is a movement that “opens up” (Haraway 2008:92) Derrida’s question of possible animal agency, and (re)thinks the world as *becoming with* nonhuman subjects. Thus, Haraway provides us with a thread to link various nonhuman hypotheses to nonhumanism as a whole. Following her thread, I understand nonhumanism to be an accumulation of all attempts to ‘answer Derrida’s call’ and consider what a non-anthropocentric world might *look* like, how humans might *look at* equal nonhuman others, as well as be *looked at* in return by a nonhuman gaze. Additionally, nonhumanism also implies: (1) an overcoming of dualistic reasoning, blending common binary ideas into new multiplicities and; (2) in doing so, decentring the human or completely removing its value.

Although nonhumanism theoretically formulates both human *and* nonhuman as subjects, it can be argued that, in its attempts to do so, humans are undermined by this point of view – a reverse anthropocentrism, so to speak, where nonhumans overpower humans. This so-called “dehumanisation” or “animalisation” (Srinivasan 2015:289) occurs by denying human characteristics such as love, embarrassment or rationality, and simply referring to them with reference to their nonhuman counterparts (Fincher, Kteily and Bruneau 2018:115).<sup>100</sup> In short, human experience is conceptualised into typically

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<sup>99</sup> In addition, both Haraway (2008) and Serres (1995) come to the conclusion that human-nonhuman becoming together increases responsibility for humans towards the nonhuman, which is considered further on in the study.

<sup>100</sup> Researcher John Lechte (2017) argues that recent nonhumanist theorists (Lechte specifically refers to the likes of Matthew Calarco) assimilate human and nonhuman life, which often results in applying the idea that life is simply a battle to survive or ‘survival of the fittest’ – usually associated with animals – to human life. Lechte (2017:655) explains that the problem with multispecies relations is “that, for many, the most felicitous way to unite animal and human is at the biological level, hence the prevalence of biological language in discussions of the human-animal relation”. In doing so, Lechte (2017:655) argues that critical characteristics of being human are eliminated or reduces the human (as well as the animal) to nothing other than ‘bare

associated nonhuman experiences, for example biological processes, to downsize or overthrow the human. Therefore, anything considered to be uniquely human becomes generalised, stripped down to its basics and potentially universal to all entities (including animals and technology). In this sense, a nonhuman paradigm should also be approached with caution, because it is capable of tipping the theoretical scale of human-nonhuman relations in favour of the nonhuman, to the detriment of the human being.

The animalisation of humans is a concept that runs parallel to the anthropocentric anthropomorphism of animals.<sup>101</sup> In short, animalisation refers to describing humans or human experiences in terms of the animal world.<sup>102</sup> When endowing the human with animal attributes, or representing the human as an animal, it is usually described in terms of the animal's basic and observable, habits, drives, needs and instincts. In this sense, animalisation is often associated with brutalisation, bestiality and sensualisation (Boggs 2010:100). Animalisation is typically referred to in terms of human oppression, thinking of different genders or races in terms of subordinate animal traits to enforce a so-called 'inferiority' (Deckha 2012:527). However, in the context of nonhumanism, animalisation is thought of as a potential consequence of equivocating nonhuman and human beings. For example, if the animal's lifeworld is understood by a particular party only in terms of instinctive behaviour and nonhumanism assimilates this instinctive way of existing with the human's lifeworld, the human is reduced to basic bodily drives (Lechte 2017:655). That is

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life'. As a result, the counter act of 'animalisation' is detrimental to the human being as well as the animal as it strips all life of a sense of purpose.

<sup>101</sup> Zoomorphism and animalisation are commonly used interchangeably as both present the human endowed with animal traits. Animalisation, however, usually has a more negative connotation (to bestiality for example), whereas zoomorphism typically refers to humans as animals in myths, literature and other narratives.

<sup>102</sup> Animalisation can also be linked to Edmund Husserl's philosophy of a "humanized" and an "animalized" world, which runs parallel to one another. In a late 1930s manuscript, Husserl (in Ferencz-Flatz 2017:226) states: "The world is a humanized and animalized world ... It is a world of culture. The objects of this world present themselves in the concrete experience of the lifeworld as weapons, as houses, as purposeful objects of all kinds, as footprints in the grass ... But it is the same with animals. By seeing 'animal traces' we can 'intuit' that animals were present and what sort of animals they were". For Husserl pets were an example of how the animal world is assimilated into the human world, but his conceptualisation of both worlds allows us to think through the possibility of the human becoming assimilated into the world of the animal (Ferencz-Flatz 2017:226). Therefore, Husserl's theory, in terms of nonhumanism, could be a point of enquiry for future research.

to say, by *becoming with* nonhumans, the human is at risk of being subverted and dehumanised.<sup>103</sup>

The risk of losing the human's place in the world has created a great incertitude surrounding the human. According to Dominique Janicaud in *On the Human Condition (Thinking in Action)* (2005:1):

There is now an unprecedented uncertainty about human identity. The uneasiness (that is putting it mildly) is due to a widespread subversion. This subversion relates first to knowledge of the origins of man and his point of attachment to the chain of beings: neither his genetic code, nor the use of tools, nor a certain language, nor social codes differentiate him in an absolute manner ... But the most serious subversion is of a psychological order: man is beginning to doubt his ability to fulfil his own destiny. In view of what he has done to himself and his environment, can he retain confidence in his own abilities to make judgements and assume responsibility?

Thinking about “overcoming” (Janicaud 2005:2) the anthropocentric human condition has therefore placed the human being in a state of crisis. Passmore (1975:195) states that nonhumans have been given freedom and power, *but*, in turn, humans have also lost their agency and are only left to question their way of being. Thus, in the dominating shift towards the nonhuman, we are left wondering: what is left of the human? As Zylinska (2012:203) duly articulates: “How can the human speak in the shadow of the post-humanist critique?”. I delve further into this critical question of the human in nonhumanism at the end of this chapter.

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<sup>103</sup> Scholar Oscar Horta (2016), posits that in order to reduce the inequality between humans and nonhumans an “egalitarian” approach to nonhuman animals should be taken. Egalitarianism proposes that in order to reduce inequality, the worse off should be favoured and the better off should be hampered. Consequently, in Horta’s (2016:109) hypothesis the nonhuman is privileged, but the human loses some of its privileges and abilities to create balance between the two entities. Horta’s animal egalitarianism acts as another apt example of how favouring the nonhuman can result in ‘downsizing’ what it means to be human.

### **3.1.1 Nonhumanism and posthumanism**

During the late twentieth century the so-called “crisis of traditional humanism and the consequent decentering of ‘the human’” (Salzani 2017:97) was also characterised by another philosophical and academic shift, namely posthumanism, interrogated by seminal scholars such as Katherine Hayles (1999), Cary Wolfe (2003) and (previously) Donna Haraway (1985). Posthumanism, simply defined, studies the human-nonhuman relation to overcome the constraints of the so-called ‘human-condition’ with technologies (Pedersen 2010:242). Additionally, the posthuman can also be studied as a specific phenomenon that manifests from blending the organic and inorganic or the material and virtual worlds, for example human-machine hybridity (Pedersen 2010:242). In *How we became posthuman: virtual bodies in Cybernetics, literature, and informatics*, Hayles (1999) definitively argues that human beings have become posthuman, as there no longer exists “essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism, robot teleology and human goals” (Hayles 1999:3). The blurring of technology and human beings results in a posthumanity, where humans are “seamlessly articulated with the intelligent machines” (Hayles 1993:3).

The posthuman relation to nonhumanism and the ‘animal turn’ (Weil 2012) is often a contested matter. Wolfe (2010:xxii) frames “‘the animal question’ [as] part of the larger question of posthumanism”. As Rosi Braidotti (2013:67) similarly explains, by decentering the human, posthumanism opens up room for other species, animal and nonhumans to become part of critical discussions. Reciprocally, posthuman theory has also been significantly influenced by nonhumanism. For instance, Carlo Salzani (2017:99) suggests that animal studies and nonhuman philosophy (such as Haraway’s companion species) “enabled posthumanism to probe the boundaries of the human and of its ‘construction’, but they have also (partially) reoriented it towards questions of immanence, affects, embodiment, etc.” Accordingly, posthumanism is both a phenomenon of analysis as well as a philosophical position that, more recently, has (arguably) turned towards studying the nonhuman, the more-than human

and multispecies relations, to interrogate the human condition as well as overcome its limitations. In other words, it is evident that nonhumanism and posthumanism not only exist parallel to each other in the Humanities and Social Sciences, but they also entwine and mutually impact one another. Salzani (2017:99) argues “posthumanist theory and Animal Studies is one of reciprocal influence that led, in a sense, to the ‘coming of age’ of both schools of thought”. Based on the above discussion and in agreement with Salzani, I argue that along the same lines, nonhumanist theory and posthumanist theory stand in a reciprocal relation to one another. As a result, when discussing nonhumanist theory, posthuman thought as well as critique cannot be overlooked and should, to a certain degree, be kept in mind.

Even though there exists evidence of an exchanging relation between nonhumanism and posthumanism, Haraway (in Gane 2006:140) shifts away from posthumanism, arguing that posthumanism has become “too easily appropriated” and associated with immateriality. She argues that some posthumanists tend to focus too much on a utopian technological ideal, which can be “misleading” (Haraway in Gane 2006:140). As a result, in *When Species Meet*, Haraway (2008:19) states: “I am not a posthumanist; I am who I become with companion species, who and which make a mess out of categories in the making of kin and kind” and prefers the term nonhumanist. In short, Haraway prefers companion species and nonhumanism, since, for her, it remains truer to the materiality and current worldly meanings being made, in contrast to the sometimes future-orientated, disembodied posthumanist thought. However, as shown, nonhumanism and posthumanism can also be reciprocal, hence it remains relevant to consider the posthuman in relation to companion species.

At times posthumanism is placed under the microscope for signifying the so-called ‘end’ of the human. Markedly, theorists, such as Wolfe (2010:xvi) and Hayles (1993), argue that posthuman thought cannot be completely separated from the human condition, configuring the posthuman as an extension of the

human.<sup>104</sup> Hayles (1993:134), for example, states that the relation between the human and the posthuman is “a relation of overlapping”. Based on nonhumanism’s similarity and close proximity to posthumanism, could it be argued that nonhumanism follows (or will soon follow) a similar trend? In other words, if theorists suggest that the human remains prevalent in the posthuman, can we not take this understanding as a hint on how to look at nonhumanism? Can the choice to root humans in nonhumanism, like posthumanism, not bring us closer to the human condition? Should an interrogation of the nonhuman not remain entwined with the human condition, coming to grips with human-nonhuman relations and not moving beyond them? Do we not, even in nonhumanism, still refer back to Derrida’s question of who “I” am (human identity) in relation to others?

### ***3.1.2 The ‘subspecies’ of nonhumanism***

Besides the relation between nonhumanism and posthumanism, three additional important approaches or phenomena that form part of the nonhuman turn, include: (1) a more-than-human approach; (2) multispecies studies or multispecies relations; and (3) trans-species relations. The three approaches are worth considering in depth since they compose the foundations of Haraway’s companion species discussions. Commonly, these three approaches are equated and used interchangeably, since they all favour the nonhuman or conjugate the human and nonhuman in some way. They form part of the larger nonhumanist movement towards, what Haraway (2008b:xxiv) refers to as “queering” and “re-worlding” of human-nonhuman categories, i.e. rethinking common dichotomies and subject-object relations.<sup>105</sup> Accordingly, the more-than-human, multispecies (or interspecies) and trans-species relations correspond and overlap in part. Nonetheless, it is helpful to examine each orientation to contextualise the notion of companion species and the idea of *becoming with*.

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<sup>104</sup> For further readings of the posthuman as an extension of the human or the remaining relevance of the human in posthuman theory see Christensen (2014), Zylinska (2012), Colebrook (2014) and Braidotti (2006).

<sup>105</sup> In *Companion Species, Mis-recognition, and Queer Worlding*, Haraway (2008b:xxiv) explains that queering is the act of “undoing ‘normal’ categories”, such as the human/nonhuman brackets in order to “re-world” or construct a new and different understanding of the world. For Haraway (2008b:xxvi), in relation to nonhumanism and companion species “[q]ueer re-worlding depends on reorienting the human and its posts to the never-finished meal of companion species”.

Influenced by actor-network theory and Sarah Whatmore's *Hybrid Geographies* (2002) – which explores hybrid relations between nature and culture, human and nonhuman and the social and material in different spaces – the idea of being more-than-human (or a more-than-human geography) has become a new manner of breaking down the boundaries between humans and nonhumans or subjects and objects (Panelli 2009:80).<sup>106</sup> More-than-human geographies are intersections of human and nonhuman agency and present a sense of “humans as enmeshed with rather than outside non-human nature” (Head & Muir in Panelli 2009:82). The term acknowledges that humans are always part of, located within, or entangled into an existence that is larger than the generally apparent human life (Affifi 2016:161) – in short, the nonhuman realm. In their more-than-human capacity, humans exist in hybridity with other forms of nonhumans, including animals and technology (Affifi 2016:168). Affifi (2016:159) explains that more-than-humanism can be interpreted as a phenomenological experience where “humans can experience forms of more-than-humanness everywhere, from the human body itself to the most seemingly detached realms of consciousness, of thought and of technology”.

Hence, the more-than-human sphere deals with the interconnected becoming of life, focussing on processes or locations of entanglements, “diversely conceptuali[s]ed in notions of: *becoming, cosmopolitics, extension, friendship, hybridity, resilience, rupture and subversion*” (Panelli 2009:82, emphasis in original). Haraway engages with most, if not all, of these processes and by interrogating human-nonhuman relations she explores how humans interact with the more-than-human world (Greenhough 2012:286). In other words, the notion of *becoming with* and Haraway's theories considering companion species and significant otherness (which are discussed Chapter Five) exemplifies a theoretical engagement with the more-than-human sphere.

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<sup>106</sup> Actor Network Theory (ANT) is commonly attributed to Michel Callon, Bruno Latour and John Law, who were the first to use the term. As discussed, ANT is an approach and tool “to better reveal the complexities of our sociotechnical world” (Cressman 2009:2). It studies phenomena (both human and nonhuman) in contemporary society as actors functioning in a constantly shifting network of relations. In ANT nothing else exists outside of actors and their network.



Notably, the more-than-human perspective constantly refers back to the human and the overall prominence of the human experiences in the exploration of more-than-human geographies. Even though the more-than-human acknowledges agency to both humans and nonhumans (resulting in its categorisation as part of the nonhuman turn) it does so by focussing on the *human* engagement and *human* hybridity within these entities, rather than restructuring an entirely new mode of being in the world. That is to say, in some ways it remains a human-centred perspective. This is highlighted by Affifi's (2016) warning against more-than-humanism as a phenomenological exploration of nonhuman experiences measured exclusively by human observations. This contingency in the more-than-human perspective can perhaps suggest why certain theorists (for instance, Kirksey & Helmreich [2010], Latimer & Miele [2013] and Van Dooren et al. [2016]) prefer to consider nonhuman relations under the broader taxonomy of multispecies or interspecies studies. Along these lines, I argue that more-than-humanism emphasises how nonhuman thought is attached to human experiences.

Resembling more-than-humanism, multispecies studies (also known as interspecies studies) give nonhuman others agency. To achieve this, multispecies studies, akin to the nonhuman turn, focus on the interconnection, both physical and mental, between humans and nonhumans. Thus, the perspective examines how humans and nonhumans occur in entangled relations and cannot be isolated from one another (Van Dooren et al. 2016:4). Multispecies studies focus on a multitude of layers and lively agents knotted in various relations to bring each other into being. The scope of study for multispecies scholars *entails*, and also surpasses, "dynamics of predator and prey, parasite and host, researcher and researched, symbiotic partner, or indifferent neighbour" (Van Dooren et al. 2016:3). By considering the multiplicity of the entanglements between humans and nonhumans, multispecies studies attempt to understand the shared significance, concern and influences that are created by entanglements both affectively and in the flesh (Van Dooren et al. 2016:4).

Notably, Kirksey & Helmreich (2010:546) consider multispecies studies the study of “[b]ecomings”, because it examines how species *becoming with* one another changes objects into new kinds of engagements and non-hierarchical subjects. Thus, multispecies studies examine “becomings” as “new kinds of relations emerging from non-hierarchical alliances, symbiotic attachments and the mingling of creative agents” (Kirksey & Helmreich 201:546). Similarly, Van Dooren et al. (2016:2) believe that “multispecies relationality tuned to the temporal and semiotic registers makes evident a lively world in which being is always becoming, becoming is always becoming-with”. Haraway’s (2008) guiding question concerning the notion of *becoming with* in *When Species Meet* is then a clear manifestation of multispecies studies. At the start of *When Species Meet* Haraway (2008:3) asks: “How is ‘becoming with’ a practice of becoming worldly?” With this question she enquires into the signification of humans and nonhumans *becoming* in the world, entwined in new relations *with* one another.<sup>107</sup> Therefore, Haraway studies the emergent world through interspecies or multispecies relations, specifically those between humans and their companion species (dogs).

In comparison to the more-than-human, multispecies studies does not focus on the human experience in relation to the nonhuman but pays attention to *all other entities* as they occur in their knotted existence *with* humans (Van Dooren et al. 2016:6). In other words, the focal point is not just on how humans experience entanglements and become more-than-human, but how humans *and nonhumans* encounter each other to shape an entirely new understanding of being. Moreover, a multispecies approach can aid in reconceptualising existing binary categories of analysis, such as nature and culture, to reflect the being of all entities (Kirksey & Helmreich 2010:562).<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Haraway’s idea of becoming worldly relates to the Heideggerian notion of worlding and world. I elaborate on this relation later in the study.

<sup>108</sup> Similar to multispecies studies, Jamie Lorimer (2012:594) discusses a ‘multinatural’ approach, a term he (alongside Bingham & Hinchliffe 2008) borrows from Latour to describe “both the multiple trajectories along which any ecology might evolve and the various ways in which they can be sensed, valued and contested”. Like multispecies environments, ‘multinatural’ worlds are characterised by both living and non-living entities co-existing in relation to one another.

Finally, a specific type of “becoming” of multispecies relations that is becoming (in its own right) increasingly important is trans-species relations.<sup>109</sup> Ethnographer Eduardo Kohn (2007:7) argues that trans-species is a way of becoming, whereby species boundaries become blurred as bodily tendencies and characteristics are shared amongst different species. Trans-species refers to those that identify cognitively and/or physically with another species instead of, or alongside, that of their own. More precisely, trans-species do not just acknowledge the multispecies entanglement between humans and nonhumans, but, in addition to interspecies relations, they also believe that they have become entangled to such an extent that they now attribute their identity to that of a specific nonhuman other – human becomes the nonhuman or vice versa (Panksepp & Northoff 2009:193).

Kohn (2007:8) asserts that the belief in the soul of humans and nonhumans can possibly explain the conceivability of trans-species intersubjectivity.<sup>110</sup> Specifically, Kohn argues that if we estimate that both humans and nonhumans have a soul – an incorporeal essence – these souls can transfer between human and nonhuman bodies. However, the transferrable soul makes the phenomenon a highly contested subject and highlights an important aspect of trans-species: the realm of the spiritual. In this manner, trans-species is an aspect of multispecies studies that argues beyond human embodiment and views the human and the nonhuman as neither embodied nor disembodied, but beyond the realm of earthly experiences (Kohn 2007:17).

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<sup>109</sup> Trans-species should not be confused with the terms ‘transanimal’ or ‘transhuman’. Although the three terms employ the same prefix, here trans-species refer to the exchange of species personhood by means of a spiritual connection, while transhuman and transanimal refer to the commitment to help humans and nonhumans overcome their biological limitations, by means of artificial adjustments. Trans-species are also not related to therianthrope, which is the mythical ability of human beings to morph into animals by ‘shapeshifting’ their physical bodies, for example werewolves.

<sup>110</sup> Winner of the 2014 Gregory Bateson Prize, Eduardo Kohn uses his ethnographic practices to rethink anthropological thought. Building on the work of Latour and Haraway, Kohn is a seminal theorist in rethinking all life forms as significant and measuring their signs of selfhood in terms of semiotic levels. The spirituality and importance of the symbolic in Kohn’s work often treads in cautious scholarly territory, however his theories are crucial to symbolic thinking about the nonhuman (Strathern in Kohn 2013). I refer back to his ideas on trans-species relations in the Addendum accompanying the study. For further reading on Kohn’s ideas, refer to his seminal text *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human* (2013).

Simplified examples of trans-species are those humans that infamously suffer from the so-called psychological disorder, 'species dysphoria'. These individuals dedicate their lives to physically transforming their bodies to match their cognitive species.<sup>111</sup> A more complex manifestation of trans-species could be identified in the rituals and stories of the Quicha-speaking Runa village in Ecuador's Upper Amazon. Kohn (2007) explains that the Runa villagers are able to share, interpret and capture experiences of nonhumans, such as their dogs' dreams, by taking on the trans-species viewpoints of their nonhuman selves.<sup>112</sup>

An important similarity that can be identified in the more-than-human, multispecies as well as trans-species approaches, is their emphasis on acting responsibly towards others and establishing a respective manner for humans and nonhumans to share and live together in the world. Accordingly, the core of nonhumanism pays close attention to the notably *humanist* morals of accountability, responsibility and ethics. Greenhough (2012:286) (following Haraway) argues that more-than-humanism is about how, by acting responsibly, humans and nonhumans learn to live together. Correspondingly, Van Dooren et al. (2016:16) explain that ethics is at the centre of multispecies accounts and that "multispecies approaches are grounded in the understanding that careful attention to diverse ways of being and becoming is inseparable from the work of ethics". Therefore, in terms of a nonhuman perspective we can expect to be prompted to question how nonhuman and humans can behave responsibly towards each other, or moreover consider who is favoured when humans and nonhumans become entangled.

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<sup>111</sup> Typical examples include those that identify as part of the "otherkin" or "other-than-human" community. These individuals feel spiritually connected to a specific animal and dedicate their lives to being and becoming animal – both mentally and physically. Some individuals, such as Eva Tiamat Medusa, undergo intense surgery to physically resemble an animal – in Eva's case a dragon. Other famous examples of transformed individuals include 'The Lizardman' (Erik Sprague) and 'Catwoman' (Jocelyn Wildenstein). For more on trans-species see Lupa's *A Field Guide to Otherkin* (2007) as well as Cusack (2016) and Kirby (2010).

<sup>112</sup> The Runa typically inhabit the dreams of nonhuman dogs through close observation and dream interpretation.

### ***3.1.3 Nonhumanism and the question of the animal***

In Chapter Two, I explained that the key understanding regarding the human-nonhuman relation focusses on the problem of the animal or nonhuman mind: humans are incapable of fully understanding nonhumans, owing to the fundamental differences, limited epistemological access and human language communication barrier between species. It is then also this barrier that fuels the central beliefs of anthropocentrism. However, through nonhumanism's attempt to breakdown human exceptionalism, as well as its fusion of the human and nonhuman into holistic multispecies, nonhumanism simultaneously reconfigures the problem of understanding the animal or nonhuman mind.

Nonhuman theorists attempt to overcome the animal problem, by suggesting ways to objectively study and understand the animal mind. Furthermore, owing to the fusion between human and nonhuman, nonhumanism also theoretically supposes that humans have – to a certain extent – the capacity to understand the subjective experience of nonhumans, because of their entanglements. Thus, nonhumanism is not only a *rethinking* of the human-nonhuman divide, but also a *redoing* or a *re-approaching*: developing new ways of understanding the posited animal mind. I briefly explain some of these nonhuman methodologies and theoretical engagements here and question whether these ideas are feasible enough to overcome the human-nonhuman divide.

An extensive amount of literature exists on suggested methodologies to examine and 'speak for' the nonhuman being in the world.<sup>113</sup> In close examination of recent literature dealing with understanding animal minds five main methodologies stand out namely: (1) a phenomenological description of experiencing the world of nonhumans; (2) empathetic encounters (3) expanding on the scientific understanding of the nonhuman mind; (4) developing an understanding of nonhuman language and; (5) using technology to examine nonhuman behaviour. In what follows I unpack these different methodologies.

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<sup>113</sup> The list of possible nonhuman methodologies is extensive and cannot fit here. I have selected the ones I discuss here, because they allow me to consider the human value in a nonhuman paradigm. For other methodologies see Van Dooren et al.'s *Multispecies Studies: Cultivating Arts of Attentiveness* (2016), which considers ways of *how* multispecies studies can be conducted.

Stemming from primatologist Jane Goodall's landmark study on chimpanzees, an argument is made for researchers to enter a personal relationship with their nonhuman subjects, which allows the researcher a perspective into the experience of the nonhuman (Churchill 2006:2). In Goodall's famous book on the Gombe Chimpanzees, *Through a Window: My Thirty Years with the Chimpanzees of Gombe* (1990), the behaviourist provides an ethnographic-like account of her experience of becoming part of the world of the chimpanzees to study their behaviour. In doing so, Goodall pioneered a phenomenological method of understanding animal behaviour. In describing animal behaviour by living with them in their environment – and often adjusting her own human behaviour to that of the nonhuman subject's – Goodall was able to describe how the animal's way of being closely resembles human behaviour: "I have watched chimpanzee children, after the death of their mothers, show behaviour similar to clinical depression in grieving human children – hunched posture, rocking, dull staring eyes, lack of interest in events around them" (Goodall 2007:xiv). In an attempt to avoid anthropomorphising the observed chimpanzees, Goodall (2007:xii) developed an ethological approach to describing her nonhuman counterparts "in a way that would protect me from too much hostile scientific criticism". Goodall describes her observations on animal behaviour in relation to human behaviour and, additionally, places herself within the lived world of her nonhuman counterpart to extend her understanding of what it means to experience the world as a nonhuman. She explains:

For example, I could not say, 'Fifi was happy,' since I could not *prove* this: but I could say: 'Fifi behaved in such a way that, *had she been human*, we would say she was happy' (Goodall 2007:xiii, emphasis in original, second emphasis added).

Many animal behaviourists, such as Marc Bekoff and Barbara Smuts, follow Goodall's approach to describing and entering the world of nonhuman others.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, they "wish to explore ways in which the face-to-face encounter can occasion interchanges in which [they] enter into more intimate contact with others – communicative exchanges in which [they] come to both [them]selves

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<sup>114</sup> Bekoff, Smuts and Goodall's phenomenological approach is also examined in relation to Haraway's theory of *becoming with* in Chapter Five.

and others” (Churchill 2006:2). For example, anthropologist Barbara Smuts (2001:293) describes her observations of baboons and her dog as follows:

I draw on personal experience to explore the kinds of relationships that can develop between human and nonhuman animals ... [t]he baboons treated me as a social being, and to gain their trust I had to learn the troop’s social conventions and behave in accordance with them. This process gave me a feeling of what it means to be a baboon. Over time, I developed a sense of belonging to their community, and my subjective identity seemed to merge with theirs. This experience expanded my sense of the possible in interspecies relations ... [I]n my relationship with my dog, Safi, I describe how Safi and I co-create systems of communication and emotional expression that permit deep ‘intersubjectivity’, despite our very different biological natures. In my relationships with baboons, dogs, and other animals, I have encountered the presence in another of something resembling a human ‘self’.

Most recently, Marc Bekoff (2018) applies such a phenomenological approach to dogs. In his book *Canine Confidential: Why Dogs Do What They Do* (2018), Bekoff immerses himself in the world of canines to describe his interactions with dogs, as well as their observed human-dog and dog-dog behaviour. Specifically, the researcher refers to his personal experience with dogs and entangled encounters in the more-than-human geography of the dog park. Emulating the trope of looking at and seeing the animal, Bekoff (2018:x) explains that watching and looking at dogs allow him to describe their way of being: “dogs are watching dogs, people are watching dogs, dogs are watching people, and people are watching one another as they care for, play with, and try to manage their dogs. I am always amazed and pleased about how much I learn when I just hang out and watch dog-dog, dog-human, and human-human interactions.”

Thus, by entering into an entangled relation with an acknowledged subjective nonhuman, theorists, like Bekoff, Smuts and Goodall, are able to describe their own experience and the observed experience of nonhumans, which they maintain, amounts to a new manner of describing the way of being in the world for both humans and nonhumans. Through these observations, human

researchers and their nonhuman subjects become entwined. By experiencing the world together, the human researcher argues that they are able to communicate with and about the nonhuman, to such an extent that the mind, being and subjectivity of the animal is not only acknowledged but also understood (to a certain extent) – notably in comparison to the human’s subjectivity.

In reviewing the phenomenological approach, Scott Churchill (2006:2) explains that despite their best efforts, such ethnographic-like descriptions are still critiqued for anthropomorphism or assimilating nonhuman experience to the human world, because of the lack of scientific evidence of such experiences. These accounts rely solely on the researcher’s descriptions and own experiences; as a result, it is not always a seemingly objective approach (Churchill 2006:2). Additionally, since this method relies on the researcher entwining and interacting with (or as) animal, it can never speak solely to the animal’s experience and lifeworld.

In my view, since the descriptions are about the human relation to the animal, the nonhuman understanding remains reliant on the account of the human researcher. In other words, I argue that although it opens up an account for the animal mind, it remains an “intersubjective” narrative (as Smuts calls it), which can never be separated from the human experience.<sup>115</sup> However, if we assume a multispecies approach, perhaps this is the very point: there is no need to separate these experiences, since human and nonhuman are entangled. What this multispecies approach therefore presents is the possibility that both nonhuman and human have subjective ‘selves’ or beings, nevertheless these subjectivities and beings are constantly shared. Even though this implies that we are able to understand some of the nonhuman’s mind, it reciprocally implies that what we experience in our own human minds is also always shared with and

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<sup>115</sup> For example, Bekoff (2018:xi) says that he tries “as hard as possible to take the dog’s point of view,” especially when he visits dog parks, as he explains: “[T]hey are called dog parks, not human parks”. However, he also admits that in his approach the dogs are never “free simply to be themselves even when they are off leash ... At the dog park, you learn as much about dog-human relations, and about people, as about dogs as a species” (Bekoff 2018:xii). In other words, whether it is his human observation or the constant involvement of human and dog, the human remains important in Bekoff’s approach to nonhumans.



understood by nonhumans. Thus, these multispecies theorists argue that what I experience as a human way of being is no longer my own, but a possible 'human-nonhuman way of being'.

Following this multispecies argument, a contradiction arises in this phenomenological methodology: the description of nonhuman minds relies on inner human perception, experience, observation and entwinement, yet, at the same time, the human way of being and mind is rendered obsolete without its nonhuman attachment. How do we describe animal minds in terms of human minds, if what altogether encapsulates the human is obliterated? Put differently, practically the methodology is effective, but when theoretically unpacked it becomes trapped in an endless spiral of human-nonhuman thought, where the theoretical approach (multispecies) antagonises the methodology (describe in relation to human thought and behaviour).

Some multispecies theorists, including Lori Gruen (2009) and Kenneth Shapiro (2003) argue that humans can account for the animal mind through empathetic engagement. Gruen (2009:29-30) explains engaged empathy as “a process whereby individuals who are empathizing with the well-being of others first respond to the other’s condition ... and then reflectively imagine themselves in the position of the other, and then make a judgement about how the conditions that the other finds himself in may contribute to her state of mind or impact upon her interests”. Corresponding to phenomenological observation, empathetic engagement thereby involves becoming part of a nonhuman’s world, by imaging oneself in that world both affectively and cognitively, which in turn leads to a response or action. In addition, empathetic engagement also includes paying attention to the broader conditions and factors influencing a nonhuman’s lived world. Gruen (2009:30) maintains that engaged empathy “motivates the empathizer to act ethically”, since it involves “feeling what another person or being is feeling” – thus relating directly to and, once again entwining with, the human’s responsibility towards others.

Animal studies scholar, Kenneth Shapiro (2003) takes empathetic engagement a step further, by describing ways of achieving such a level of empathy with nonhumans, specifically dogs. Shapiro (2003:195) suggests that humans should engage with animal worlds, not only by imaging oneself in the nonhuman's proverbial 'shoes', but also by physically moving through and bodily experiencing space as the animal subject does: "[t]o understand the complex, intimate, and wonderful choreographies of that [nonhuman] world, it is helpful for an investigator to assume a posture of bodily sensitivity to it – to kinaesthetically empathize". He goes on to describe how he engages in a meaningful relation with his dog, Sabaka, by physically experiencing the world as his dog does. For example, Shapiro spends time on Sabaka's favourite couch, describing what Sabaka could possibly see and feel in this space (Shapiro 2003:189). Shapiro (2003:193) also studies Sabaka's postures in different spaces to understand his spatial identity.

As much as such empathetic engagement challenges dualistic reasoning by 'accessing' the nonhuman being, I once again maintain that it relies on a particularly human empathy and human understanding of the nonhuman world. Although empathy is not a trait reserved for humans – several animals show signs of empathetic engagement with other animals and other humans –<sup>116</sup> empathetic engagement, as a methodology, specifically requires the human to engage empathetically with a nonhuman. It does not – and cannot – include how the animal empathises with the human (which in my opinion might be a more valuable approach to overcome the anthropocentric divide), but simply focusses on the human's empathetic understanding of the nonhuman world. In this way, it can still be, to a certain extent, related to anthropomorphism and a sense of

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<sup>116</sup> Primatologist Frans de Waal (2012:874) shows that "[a]nimal empathy is best regarded as a multilayered phenomenon, built around motor mirroring and shared neural representations at basal levels, that develops into more advanced cognitive perspective-taking in large-brained species. As indicated by both observational and experimental studies on our closest relatives, empathy may be the main motivator of prosocial behaviour". In other words, scientific evidence shows that animal biology warrants empathetic behaviour in animals and that "data confirms that empathy is an ancient capacity, probably present in all mammals" (Pierce 2008:1). Some well-known animals known to show signs of empathy include chimpanzees, bonobos, elephants, mice, dogs, cats and wolves (de Waal 2006:874; Pierce 2008). In particular, a recent study led by Emily Sanford, shows that dogs not only feel empathy towards others (humans and nonhumans), but also tend to act on this empathetic feeling (Sanford, Burt and Meyers-Manor 2018).

human-centrism.<sup>117</sup> Likewise, in the case of kinetic empathy, the human physically mimicking the animal's being, cannot escape the human body with its human senses. In other words, the physical human relation to the world remains.

Another line of reasoning countering empathetic engagement is its specificity or lack of generality. For a human to engage empathetically with a nonhuman we assume that this human is capable of showing and experiencing empathy towards others. Yet empathy is not necessarily a universal human (or nonhuman) characteristic. It is my understanding that people experience empathy in different ways and to a different extent, which means that no two accounts of empathetic engagement with nonhumans can be the same. Similarities might occur, but I argue, not enough to convince human exceptionalism of animal minds.

Furthermore, what about people whom neurologically, physically or psychologically are incapable of empathy, such as those with Empathy Deficit Disorder or those suffering from a brain injury/trauma?<sup>118</sup> Do we consider these humans incapable of bridging the dualistic divide between humans and nonhumans? How do we then explain a companion human-nonhuman relation between a non-empathetic human and an animal (for example a service or therapy dog aiding someone with a brain injury) when this human cannot empathetically engage with his companion animal? Consequently, I estimate that empathetic engagement, despite its value to nonhuman engagement and relations, needs more thought as a methodology to specifically understand the animal mind. I suggest that perhaps an expansion into the empathetic experience of the nonhuman, in lieu of human empathy, might prove more useful to understanding the way of nonhuman being.

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<sup>117</sup> For further critique against empathetic engagement refer to Gruen (2009), Darwall (1998), as well as Cuomo and Gruen (1998).

<sup>118</sup> Empathy Deficit Disorder (EDD) refers to a psychological disorder where humans are unable to step outside themselves and empathise with what other people experience, resulting in isolation and disconnection from other humans. Patients suffering from a traumatic brain injury, especially to the frontal lobe, often also show signs of a lack of empathy towards others.

Based on the theoretical contradictions and anthropocentric criticism of a phenomenological approach or empathetic engagement (described above), it is often more theoretically feasible to turn to a scientific methodology to objectively understand the nonhuman. Where the above methodology focusses on inner perception, scientific observation relies on external perception (phenomena observable by the senses) and comparison across species (Churchill 2006:2). Scientists practicing such a methodology to understand the animal mind do not reduce or assimilate human and nonhuman mental states to one another. Rather they focus on measuring “sensory inputs, neurochemical states, and behavioural outputs ... empirically across species” (Altman 2015:43), in order to “advance beyond anthropocentrism, to see the commonalities among humans and animals, and to conceive of animal cognition in its own terms” (Altman 2015:44).

Nonhuman scientists studying animal behaviour and cognition contend that even though animals cannot necessarily vocalise their internal states in human language, it does not necessarily mean that they do not experience an inner state (similar to what a human experiences). Consequently, it becomes the nonhuman scientist’s goal to study inner nonhuman and animal mental states by means of experimentation, observation, documentation and comparison (Berns 2017:16-17). Like Pavlov’s actual dogs, scientific experimentation typically makes objective inferences from external behaviour and biological manifestations, assessing attention, memory, categorisation, navigation, timing, number, communication, decision-making, and social cognition (Stevens 2010).<sup>119</sup>

Just as in the case of human biological research, with recent developments in neuroscience (such as magnetic resonance imaging) scientists are now able to observe the inner mental patterns of nonhumans, without relying on outward behaviour. Being able to provide visual imagery of, for example, a dog’s brain,

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<sup>119</sup> ‘Pavlov’s dogs’ refers to Russian psychologist, Ivan Pavlov’s famous research experiment on classical conditioning. In his experiment Pavlov used and observed his dogs’ behaviour and bodily response when presented with a stimulus. Interestingly, the behaviour observed in Pavlov’s dogs was then applied to explain *human* conditioning and is a common saying used to indicate habitual *human* behaviour. I play on the idea of Pavlov’s dogs here to refer to dogs being observed in a scientific, measurable experiment.

allows scientists to decode their inner states and lived experiences in relation to visual imagery of other species. Moreover, it eliminates typical empirical research problems such as behavioural interpretation and research bias. In *The Emotional Lives of Animals* (2007), Bekoff takes his phenomenological research a step further, by backing up his descriptions of animal lives with a large amount of scientific research proving the existence of animal emotions.<sup>120</sup>

Similarly, in a major ongoing study entitled *The Dog Project*, neuroscientist Gregory Berns and his team created an MRI machine suitable for various animals (Figure 7), which can provide imagery of nonhuman brains. In his book *What It's Like to Be a Dog* (2017), Berns describes his non-invasive and respectful techniques to scan animal brains, as well as the insights gained from his studies. Through this scientific technique Berns provides us with an objective understanding of dogs' (and other animals') way of being.<sup>121</sup>

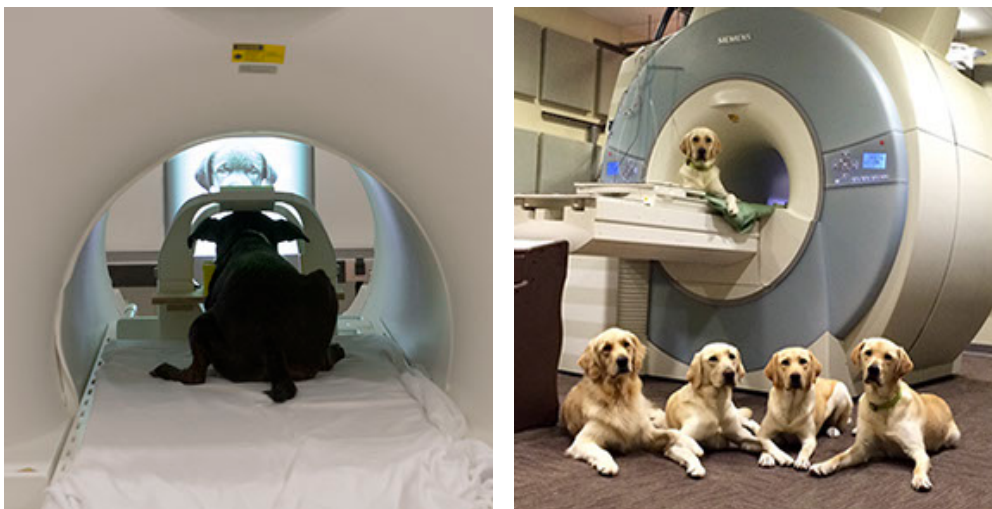


Figure 7: Dogs in Gregory Berns MRI machine, created for the comfort of the animal, 2012. (Berns 2016).

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<sup>120</sup> Interestingly, Bekoff does not apply this approach to a full extent in his later study *Canine Confidential* (2018). Even though he mentions scientific observations, his main thesis concerning dogs, rests on his own phenomenological observations.

<sup>121</sup> *The Dog Project* began in 2012 and involves the training of dogs, by using positive reinforcement, to stay in a custom-made chin rest inside a simulated MRI. The dogs wear ear protection and learn how to be completely at ease during a brain scan. To date over 80 dogs have been trained for an awake-MRI and serve as subjects of various research studies on dog behaviour. Some of these studies include Cook, Spivak and Berns's (2016) *Neurobehavioral evidence for individual differences in canine cognitive control: an awake fMRI study*, as well as Berns, Brooks and Spivak's (2012) *Functional MRI in awake unrestrained dogs*. For more information and publications refer to <http://gregoryberns.com/dog-project.html>. For a video showcasing how the dog MRI scanner works see an excerpt by BBC Earth at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5sXqk4j9jk>.

I refer to Berns findings on the dog throughout the study, however here I want to specifically mention an observation Berns makes with regards to the human-nonhuman relation and animal subjectivity. Berns (2017) concludes that the animals he has studied thus far *all* prove to show a neurological capacity to experience emotions as humans do and even though animals “can’t speak ... when you look at their brains, you realize how similar some of their processes are. You recognize that they are not just things” (Berns in Dreifus 2017). Additionally, with reference to dogs, Berns (2017) also proves that a dog’s response to its human is stronger than its response to other dogs or rewards (for example treats). Finally, dogs also have specific parts of their brains dedicated to processing human faces, which Berns (in Dreifus 2017) explains as follows: “This means that dogs aren’t just learning from being around us that human faces are important – they are born to look at faces”. Hence, dogs are inherently ‘wired’ to exist in relation to human beings, enjoy being in the presence of their human companion and experience mental states similar to human emotions. Therefore, Berns (2017:254-255) findings make a compelling, as well as scientifically viable, argument against anthropocentrism.

Some researchers exchange the idea of *looking at* the animal for the alternative of *listening to* the animal.<sup>122</sup> In an attempt to overcome the language barrier between the human and nonhuman, the study of human-nonhuman language parallels has become another prominent way of studying the animal subject. Snowdon (1990:215) explains that two different approaches to studying nonhuman language occur: “One approach teaches great apes linguistic analogues of human language using signs or arbitrary symbol systems; the other seeks to decode communicative complexity in the natural languages of nonhuman animals”. Thus, studies either show that nonhumans are capable of understanding human language and concepts, or they describe how nonhumans communicate with one another as well as humans.<sup>123</sup> By proving that

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<sup>122</sup> Perhaps this ability to ‘listen’ also relies on the recognition that the nonhuman is able to respond or posit behaviour to listen to.

<sup>123</sup> For a comprehensive history of communication between humans and nonhumans see: Scott-Phillips’s (2014) comparison between human language and primate communication; Liebal, Müller and Pika’s (2005) study specifically describing primate gesture communication; and Anderson’s (2004) *Doctor Doolittle’s Delusion: Animals and the Uniqueness of Human Language*.

nonhumans have language, these nonhuman theorists overcome the anthropocentric notion that the lack of language is what sets the human apart from the nonhuman.<sup>124</sup>

For instance, in *Animal Happiness* (1994) Vicki Hearne claims that dogs have their own language, which they use to negotiate with humans. Hearne (1994:134) explains that this language differs from human language, yet it is nonetheless a form of communication and exchange of thought:

Dogs do talk back, all the time. The (almost entirely forgotten) goal of obedience training is to rectify the tilt in exchange, relationship, language, so as to make answering back, talking back as well as answering, a given, but the language that arises between people and dogs is not fully cultural in the way a language that arises between creatures with the capacity for writing is, in that it cannot so readily be recorded in the memory of the tribe, so each instance of the language is at least a dialect.

Similar to Hearne, Haraway describes the language between humans and dogs in her notion of companion species. Haraway (2008:372-373) argues that there are many different ideas of what constitutes language and maintains that the idea of language should be broadened to what is exchanged between humans and animals. Haraway therefore “sees language as reciprocal between species” (Gordon 2010:458). Notably, Haraway’s companion species language is not a typical speaking to each other communication, where one entity transfers a message to the other, who can then respond. Instead the language between companion species is already enmeshed, they speak together, reciprocally and constantly to one another (Gordon 2010:458). Haraway (2008:16) describes the language between herself and her Australian shepherd: “We have forbidden conversation: we have had oral intercourse; we are bound in telling story on

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<sup>124</sup> Possibly one of the most valid responses to the anthropocentric notion that ‘animals cannot talk’ is the study of those animals that do tend to mimic human speech, such as parrots. Although sometimes just a vocal imitation, extensive studies on bird speech shows that nonhumans share the biological tendency to ‘talk’ as humans do (Bolhuis and Everaert 2013).

story with nothing but facts. We are training each other in acts of communication we barely understand. We are constitutively, companion species”.<sup>125</sup>

Turning to science’s close ally technology, environmental geographer Jamie Lorimer (2010a) suggests another interesting methodology to make sense of animal minds and encounters. In doing so, he uses another nonhuman phenomenon, to examine animal nonhumans. Lorimer (2010a:237) outlines how “moving image methodologies”, such as video technologies, can witness and engage with nonhuman life. Drawing on a Deleuzian understanding of moving images,<sup>126</sup> as well as nonhuman theorists such as Haraway, William Connelly and Brian Massumi, Lorimer (2010a:240-241) explains that moving imagery can evoke and provide understanding about more-than-human geographies.

By means of research on elephants through video and film, Lorimer (2010a:241; 242) shows that moving images critically extend our abilities to understand nonhuman behaviour by: firstly, helping us to “witness bodily practice”; secondly, illustrating “the uncertain processes through which human and nonhuman protagonists ‘learn to be affected’ by the unfolding events”; and thirdly, helping to “deepen analyses of the power relations that run through the ... multi-species, multi-cultural triangles on display”.<sup>127</sup> Lorimer (2010a:251) conceptualises the technology of film and moving images as an agent that generates data to “bear witness to phenomena that often escape talk and text based methods”. Here, technology adds a methodological layer to understanding animal worlds: these technological images have proven to produce and challenge traditional ideas of animal understanding, rethinking nonhuman-human

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<sup>125</sup> I elaborate on Haraway’s human-animal language in Chapter Five.

<sup>126</sup> Broadly speaking, in his work on cinema, philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1983) creates a philosophy of film, which argues that images should be understood as slices of time and space, emphasising different aspects of the world. These slices can be arranged to influence perception and thought. In this way the moving image shapes how we see the world. Lorimer (2010a:241) explains that a critical analysis of film, following Deleuze’s philosophy, will examine the techniques used to put together images, sound and narrative to create a specific affective response. In other words, Lorimer examines moving images of animals to consider their behaviour, as captured by the camera, but also the human affective response they create in order to engage with a human-nonhuman way of being.

<sup>127</sup> Lorimer (2010a:242) refers to examples of analyses of a variety of films showing behaviour of Asian elephants, as well as his own film compilation of footage of western encounters with elephants.



relations. Lorimer (2010a:252) explains: “The key principle remains the same: to employ moving imagery to open thinking spaces for an affective micropolitics of curiosity in which we remain unsure as to what bodies and images might yet become”.

Following the trend of critical nonhuman reasoning, it is most likely that Lorimer’s methodology will be critiqued, arguing that the moving imagery technology is controlled and manipulated by human action and thought, skewing results or observations. On top of that – once again – the moving imagery techniques anthropomorphises and masters nature and animals through human creation (technology).<sup>128</sup> However, what I gather from Lorimer’s argument is that if the posthuman conceptualisation of technology as a nonhuman independent agency is assumed, these moving image methodologies become independent ‘observers’ of both human and animal behaviour. With Lorimer in mind, I further this discussion on the possibilities of technology (including a digital humanities methodology) in the understanding of the nonhuman-human relation in Part Two of this study, by asking what the technology and visual imagery of social media networks mean for human-nonhuman encounters.

### **3.2 Finding the human in nonhumanism**

In my reading of nonhumanism and some of its methodologies (unpacked above), it is evident that nonhumanism aims to give the animal a mind as well as its own way of being. Equally, nonhumanism also attempts to find a way of studying, interpreting and speaking about the animal, free of the human and anthropocentrism. Demonstrated in the search for an objective, nonhuman methodology, I have shown that multispecies studies, in a rather posthuman manner, find companionship in science and technology in their response to the animal or nonhuman question. Furthermore, by entangling the human and

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<sup>128</sup> John Berger (1977:16), for instance, critiques technology devices used to capture images of animals for putting animals under the constant surveillance of humans (as an act of domination). He argues that technological devices, such as cameras, express the human desire to take control and *capture* (referring both to a photo and in terms of control) animals (Berger 1977:16). In comparison, akin to Lorimer, Wilkinson (2013) and Zylinska (2017) argue that moving images captured by nonhumans (such as by a camera strapped to a bird or dog) can counter Berger’s argument and give the power of surveillance back to the animal.

nonhuman, nonhumanism questions the role of the human and, in doing so, often decentres, erases, animalises or dehumanises the human being. For this reason, nonhumanism has placed the human in an ambivalent position, questioning its own state of being.

At the same time – as I have tried to point out throughout this chapter – despite its best efforts to devalue the human being the human remains pertinent in nonhumanism. Additionally, in Chapter Two we have also seen how some human exceptionalism ideas (such as anthropomorphism and domestication) and humanist values (such as loyalty and responsibility) also traverse into nonhumanism. As a result, I wonder how *nonhuman* this theoretical approach actually is? In the final section of this chapter, I synthesise the theoretical endeavours of Chapters Two and Three to find the value of the human in the nonhuman turn, or more specifically in the human-dog relation.

*I can perhaps explain my critical question regarding the human in nonhumanism better by referring to my experience of walking Cody. Cody does not seem to like walking with a human, nor does he seem to like being walked by a human. As a Ridgeback he is supposedly described as ‘strong-willed’, which confidently manifests if you try to take Cody for a walk. Walking your dog can be interpreted as a human exceptionalism pursuit, where the dog is domesticated and dominated by the leash to follow its human. Our family has attempted quite a few times to take our Ridgeback for a walk, since it is expected of us as anthropocentric dog owners. After all, dog behaviourists make it clear that our dogs need exercise. However, no matter how much you pull, tug, scold, dominate or beg, Cody refuses to walk. In fact, almost as punishment for our feeble attempt to domesticate him, Cody prefers to lie down in the middle of the road – where it is impossible to move a 60kg dog. Even ‘dog whisperer’ César Millán’s infamous “tsch” technique leaves little impact on strong-willed Cody.<sup>129</sup> This usually results in some quite upset humans; some swerving cars and an attempt to trick Cody back to the house with treats. The*

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<sup>129</sup> One of the things dog-behaviourist, César Millán – from the television series *The Dog Whisperer* fame – is best known for is a technique where he uses the “tsch” sound while lightly prodding the dog above his front leg. The technique supposedly shows the dog the human’s assertive energy.

*entire ordeal is frankly traumatising to both dog and owner (not to mention neighbours) and therefore, after a few attempts, a mutual family decision was made that Cody will get his much-needed exercise in the garden – not in the street.*

*Cody's walking firstly shows that human domination is not simple and the being of the dog in relation to human actually complicates the practice. What if, like Cody, your dog refuses your domestication? How do we interpret this behaviour in anthropocentric terms? Does Cody not want to walk or is it perhaps a result of him absorbing our 'faulty' energy? A multispecies perspective would probably interpret this behaviour, perhaps more easily, as an opportunity for human and dog to become together, to reach a joint understanding, where the dog is not showing a will of his own, but a shared one with his owner. Yet, in the moments of trying to coerce Cody out of the road, I can confess that I have never felt more human, detached and different from an animal. Like Derrida caught by the gaze of his cat, I am caught by Cody lying in the middle of the road. I become aware that a clear distinction between Cody and myself exists, as we are unable to understand the others' relation to the world. Additionally, in an attempt to understand the dog's behaviour, I anthropomorphise Cody into a stubborn, naughty and deliberate child. I also simultaneously try to exercise a sense of instinctive human control over him trying to establish my own place in the world as pet owner. I find myself in a complicated human-nonhuman puzzle, trying to determine the difference between the human relation to the world and the animal relation to the world. In a very Derridean way of thinking, I end up wondering about myself as a human being in relation to Cody's being.*

Cody's 'walking' (or refusal thereof) allows me to rethink some of the existing critique against Derrida's *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* (1997), mentioned in Chapter Two. Haraway (2008) and Calarco (2008), for instance, argue that Derrida only opens up a space for animal subjectivity, but does not enquire into of what such subjectivity consists. Instead, Haraway (2008:19-22) maintains that Derrida comes right to the point of a multispecies entanglement, but then anthropocentrically turns back to his familiar human environment, asking what animal subjectivity means for the self. Yet, Bruns does

not (2008:404) interpret Derrida's hesitation to examine his cat's response as anthropocentric. Instead, Bruns (2008:404) describes the philosopher's question as a way to emphasise the difference between human and nonhuman: "Derrida does not want to erase the difference but wants to multiply it in order (among other things) to affirm the absolute alterity or singularity of his cat, which cannot be subsumed by any category". Similarly, Zylinska (2012:210) suggests that there is a possibility that Derrida did not enquire further into his cat's response, out of a respect for the animal's singularity. Zylinska (2012:210) explains: "Yet what if Derrida did indeed 'get curious,' but then refused to rechannel this curiosity through his own imagined ideas of desire, love, respect, and companionship?".

Thus, there is a possibility that Derrida does not engage in a multispecies perspective, because in his acknowledgement of the animal being, he does not wish to assimilate human and nonhuman. Accordingly, Zylinska (2012:212) concludes that Derrida's hesitation actually strengthens the practice of studying the animal, or nonhumanism. Following this reading, Derrida understands both the human and nonhuman to be uniquely singular or their own beings. Even though both have a sense of self, Derrida remains aware of the human shortcoming to fully speak for the nonhuman world, therefore (perhaps respectively) he refrains from doing so. Instead in his conclusion Derrida (2004[1997]:128) says: "what is said in the name of the animal when one appeals to the name of the animal, that is what needs to be exposed" – he does not wish to experience the world on behalf of the animal being, only in relation to it (and a respective, equal relation on top of that).

For this reason, Derrida has no choice but to return to his own human self, making it clear that he exists and comes to define himself, as human, in relation to nonhuman. That is to say, for Derrida "*the human world* is unimaginable without animals" (Lechte 2017:661, emphasis added). Derrida (2004[1997]:128) argues that he can only speak for the human (or from the horizon of a human world) in response to animal. Or to paraphrase Derrida's

title, owing to the look of the animal, Derrida therefore encounters his human way of being.

Guided by my experience of trying to walk Cody, I have come to agree with this interpretation of Derrida's (1997) *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. Cody's 'walking' reminds me of Karla Armbruster's (2018:8) statement, mentioned earlier in the study, that it is when dogs respond to humans in the most unexpected ways, with a sense of autonomy, that they challenge anthropocentric ideas. Cody's 'disobedience' does unmistakably challenge my role as superior human and shows Cody's definite singularity. Yet, like Derrida, I have come to realise that I cannot speak for or fully understand my dog. In this way, Cody also simultaneously reminds me of my humanity. In response to Cody's behaviour and act of what I would like to call 'rebellion' against my human authority, I am reminded of my humanity and clear human way of being. I maintain that, with regards to this particular site of human-dog confrontation, that the unique world of the animal affirms the human being.

In this regard, I cannot fully agree with the multispecies perspective that human and nonhuman are enmeshed into one or share a way of being. Within this knot of nonhuman-human being, nonhumanism removes all specificity, markers and horizons from both the animal and the human. Yet, I experience myself to be all-too human (perhaps even *more human*), because of my encounter with Cody. In other words, Cody's way of being and his response to my way of being, highlights my human horizon, human language and human being. In this situation, I can only maintain that I am human in response to my dog's gaze. What's more, as hard as I try, I cannot explain Cody's behaviour or bridge the gap to overcome our differences. As a result, I have to revert to human persuasion and manipulation – and even this does not always show results. Thus, following Derrida, I find the human fully present in the human-nonhuman relation and argue that nonhumanism should not disregard the human being or its associated values. Just as Derrida finds that the nonhuman gaze is necessary to understand what it means to be human, so I argue that the human emerges, requiring understanding as well as a place in nonhumanism.

Referring to Judith Butler's text *Undoing Gender*, Giffney and Hird (2008:2-3) eloquently reason that:

Recognising the trace of the nonhuman in every figuration of the Human also means being cognisant of the exclusive and excluding economy of discourses relating to what it means to be, live, act or occupy the category of the Human. This has real material effects. For every 'livable life' and 'grievable death' ... there are a litany of unmentionable, unassimilable Others melting into the space of the nonhuman.

In the case of human supremacy, it is evident that the human being is in a privileged position over the nonhuman. By its very definition, the *human* in human supremacy, as well as humanism, is the measurement of any and all things. Within nonhumanism then – as a movement positioned opposing anthropocentrism – it would seem logical to estimate that the human is no longer the most important, while the measure of all things becomes the nonhuman. However, based on my reading of nonhumanism and unpacking of the animal question, the human, as Giffney and Hird (2008:2-3) suggest, is not left behind, but re-locates to more-than-human geographies, transferring its human understanding (and sometimes its anthropocentric ideas) into the nonhuman sphere.

For example, throughout Chapter Three, I have shown how the human keeps manifesting in nonhuman and multispecies perspective. Firstly, with regards to the question of animal being, I have shown that the enquiry remains fundamentally human. Although animal being is proven throughout this chapter on several occasions – from philosophical reasoning to scientific experiments examining animal experience of the world – I argue that the very question of the animal mind remains a human endeavour and is, to a certain extent, limited to human understanding. Similarly, from Erica Fudge's (2007) reading of Derrida in relation to the dog in Chapter Two, what becomes apparent is not only the similarity between Derrida's cat and the domesticated dog, but also how dogs (or then nonhumans) remind us of human vulnerability and the human condition. Conceived of in this way, the pursuit for animal subjectivity is, sure enough, a result of a subjective human effort. Additionally, Zylinska (2015:135) proposes:

“There is nothing more humanist than any unexamined singular gesture of trying to ‘move beyond the human’”. In other words, not only does the human always initiate the question of animal being, but so too is the intention behind nonhumanism a fundamentally humanist endeavour.<sup>130</sup>

In turn, through my examination of the commonly framed anthropocentric concepts of anthropomorphism and domestication in Chapter Two, I find that these ideas are ambiguous and can transfer into nonhumanism thought, in particular in terms of the human-dog relation. As I argued previously, domestication can in some ways be understood as a reciprocal relation, showing and arguing for nonhuman agency. For example, in the human-dog relation, multispecies theorists argue that the dog, in turn, domesticates the human as much as the human domesticates the dog.<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, we find that domestication cannot be avoided and shapes certain nonhuman-human relations. For instance, multispecies entanglements that refer specifically to nonhuman pets, like Haraway’s companion species, are rooted in the complex history of human-animal domestication. That is to say, what is constructed as a pet ‘dog’ or ‘cat’ in contemporary society cannot be separated from domestication.

Like domestication, anthropomorphism can also be understood as giving a sense of agency to nonhumans, since nonhumans are ascribed with human capacities, giving them a possible human-like self. In turn, in my discussion of nonhuman or multispecies methodologies, the role of anthropomorphism becomes apparent. Methodologies such as empathetic engagement or a phenomenological look at animal minds rely on shared human descriptions of animal experiences or a comparison to human thought and behaviour. Consequently, animals and other nonhumans are often attributed with specifically human characteristics, personhood and traits. Thus, anthropomorphism is reconsidered and relocated

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<sup>130</sup> I.e. the attempt to escape the human condition and go beyond human exceptionalism (by means of, for example, posthumanism, transhumanism and nonhumanism) comes from none other than humans, who remain aware of their human abilities, mortality and responsibilities.

<sup>131</sup> Equally, the fact that the domestic dog stands in a symbiotic relation with humans, its mutual reciprocation in the act of domestication, also points towards the dog’s nonhuman agency.

in multispecies studies – no longer a characteristic of anthropocentrism, but rather (possibly disguised as) a natural consequence of a shared human-nonhuman way of being.

Additionally, in considering the various ‘subspecies’ and ‘close relatives’ of nonhumanism, namely the more-than-human and posthuman, we find that consistent presence of the human. In *The Human in the Posthuman*, Katherine Hayles (2003:137) argues that the human is seen in the posthuman, theoretically as well as physically: “[w]e [humans] do not leave our history behind but rather, like snails, carry it around with us in the sedimented and enculturated instantiations of our pasts we call our bodies”. I find Hayles’s comparison to the nonhuman snail particularly relevant, prompting us to consider her argument not just in terms of posthumanism, but also in relation to posthumanism’s close ally, nonhumanism. If posthumanism carries the human around in its history, culture and embodiment, does the more-than-human not do the same? If we take into account the prominence of the human found throughout this chapter, I argue that Hayles’s argument rings true for both posthumanism as well as nonhumanism. In the following chapters, I show more specifically *how*, as well as *which* human aspects are carried over into multispecies thought, culture and physicality by referring to Haraway’s nonhuman theory of companion species.

To support this position on the necessity and importance of the human in nonhumanism, I reroute my discussion towards Joanna Zylińska, whose bioethical approach helps me shape my theoretical reasoning throughout this study. In *Bioethics*, Zylińska (2012:203), as mentioned, asks how the human can remain relevant and retain a voice in the shadow of nonhumanist and posthumanist critique. Zylińska (2012:205) explains that, for her, the distinction between species remains essential to life on earth. Through what she calls “bioethics” (Zylińska 2012:220), Zylińska, in short, advocates for nonhuman subjectivity, but also human subjectivity. However, for Zylińska, these two subjectivities are not interchangeable. Zylińska does not argue for a hierarchical structure of species relations, yet she also doesn’t blur the lines between evidently different species. For her, the differences between, for instance human



and dog, are key to how we live together with one another. Zylinska (2012:21, emphasis in original) envisions human-nonhuman relations as follows:

[I]t has the capacity to challenge the hierarchical system of descent through which relations between species and life forms have traditionally been thought. At the same time, focusing on the multiple instances in which this difference manifests itself, always differently, is one way of ensuring that we do not collapse various beings and life forms into a seamless flow of life, and then continue philosophizing about it as if nothing had happened. This non-normative, technics-aware bioethics thus needs to seriously consider the polyvalent relations of co-evolution and co-emergence. *However, it must also carry a visible trace of reflection on the very process of its creation: from the human vantage point of language, philosophy and culture.*

In other words, Zylinska (2012:221), highlights a non-anthropocentric difference between human and nonhumans, arguing that both are beings, whose individual singular beings should be acknowledged, celebrated and distinguished from one another. For her, this is the only way to figure out how to live peacefully with other nonhumans and it proves to be an approach that gives both human and nonhuman a voice. More importantly, because any enquiry into the animal world typically remains a human endeavour, Zylinska's approach also recognises the role of the human in terms of language, philosophy and culture.<sup>132</sup>

Zylinska summarises her argument: “[b]ecause the question that is posed to us is not only ‘What does my pet want?’ or even the Cartesian ‘But as for me, who am I?’ but also, perhaps first of all, ‘And what if a bacteria responded’”. Within the context of my discussion here, we can also rephrase Zylinska's last question as: ‘and what if your dog lies down in the middle of road and refuses to move?’. In other words, Zylinska's approach alerts us to the importance of the human in the

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<sup>132</sup> Zylinska (2012:206) thinks of nonhumanism's simultaneous refusal of the human and use of human constructs as the “humanist blind spot, which is centered around issues of language, culture, affect, and the violence of imposition. Arguably, the majority of what we can call distributed positions on interspecies ethics return (to) the human through the back door, even if the theorist has temporarily descended into the kennel, looked her cat seriously in the eye or his horse in the mouth. That return in itself is not so much of a problem ... provided it is recognized as such, rather than slid or galloped over”.

nonhuman world ('what would the human do?'), arguing that a continuous awareness of a human way of being allows us to recognise and respond to another's actions, respecting our differences.

Perhaps this is why the human keeps filtering through into nonhumanism, demonstrating that it is not collapsible into another species or enmeshed way of being. Our human way of being, philosophy, embodiment, culture and characteristics carries over to nonhumanism and multispecies relations, because the root of searching for the animal subject is fundamentally a human effort. More importantly, what is carried over is essential, because its presence allows us to respond to another species with the view that, as a nonhuman, it is relating to the world in its own particular way. In other words, instead of a complete erasure of the human, nonhumanism can be formulated as a new understanding of being fully human *with* other nonhuman *beings*.

Thus, finding the place of the human in nonhumanism brings us back, full circle, to Derrida's (2004[1997]:128) question stemming from rethinking the animal mind: "But as *for* me, who am I (following)?" In a nonhuman world, who am I and where do I fit in, in relation to the nonhuman animal? Perhaps then Derrida did not 'leave us hanging' as critics suggest. Maybe, in exploration of the possibility of an animal being, animal identity, he too was just 'hanging onto' the human in the nonhuman world.

### **3.3 Conclusion**

Although I have only scratched the surface of the conversion from human exceptionalism to nonhumanism in this chapter, this contextualisation and analysis was nevertheless necessary. By focussing in particular on Derrida's critique of anthropocentrism and his formulation of the animal subject, I have attempted to explore how the animal and nonhuman (as well as, by implication, the human) have been understood historically. Throughout my discussion, specific attention has been paid to the prevalence of the human in nonhumanist thought, showing that regardless of its commitment to implode the human, nonhumanism does not ensure complete singularity between species. In this

way, humanism (not necessarily human exceptionalism) still manifests in nonhuman reasoning. For the purpose of my subsequent arguments, it was necessary to unpack some of the ideas surrounding nonhumanism and human-centredness, as well as highlight the continuous presence of the human in these perspectives, which we rely on to understand the human-dog relation.

In the following chapters, I turn to Martin Heidegger, who remains one of the key philosophers to unpack and access being, as well as multispecies theorist and companion species pioneer, Donna Haraway. By exploring Haraway and Heidegger, I add an additional theoretical layer to this study to make evident some of the arguments already established in this chapter. Addressing the animal question and being human with animals in congruence with Heidegger's questioning of being in *Being and Time* (1927) and Haraway's concern with multispecies in her notion of companion species, I show how, through the specific example of human-dog companionship, we remain all too human in nonhuman relations.<sup>133</sup> Further than this, I examine Haraway's multispecies idea of *becoming with* nonhuman others in relation to Heidegger's notion of *being-with* human others. Ultimately, my contention is that, Haraway's *becoming with* contains several ideas, which are essential to a human way of being and also shows great similarity to Heidegger's idea of *being-with*. Thus, by reading Haraway *with* Heidegger, I hope to provide an in-depth philosophical discussion of what was set up in the first layer of this study (in Chapters Two and Three): what *precisely* does it mean to be human in relation to the nonhuman being?

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<sup>133</sup> Here I paraphrase posthumanist Rosi Braidotti's critical comments on Haraway's cyborgs and companion species entitled *Posthuman, All Too Human* (2006).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ***BEING-WITH THE (NON)HUMAN:***

### **READING HEIDEGGER**

*Animals are in possession of themselves;  
their soul is in possession of their body.*<sup>134</sup>

In the first layer of the study presented over Chapters Two and Three, I contextualised the various ways of looking at the human and nonhuman relation in contemporary society by broadly examining anthropocentrism as well as the theoretical shift to nonhumanism. Throughout Chapters Two and Three, I searched for the importance of the human being amidst the current turn away from human pursuits towards nonhuman entities. I argued that the human remains present and significant in nonhuman thought, showing how animal subjectivity does not necessarily do away with a human way of being. Thus, in the previous chapter, I (following Joanna Zylińska) established that from my point of view human-nonhuman relations consist of a non-anthropocentric human-self living in relation to an animal-self, where human and nonhuman are not collapsible into one another. Furthermore, examining the animal-self from a human perspective, as my reading on Derrida showed, almost always points back to the question of what it means to be human, especially amongst companion species.

Chapters Four, Five and Six, continue the exploration of the human-nonhuman relation by adding another layer of discussion to the human and animal *being-with* one another, or more specifically, the human and dog *being-with* one another. In this layer I ask what exactly it means for human and animal beings to live together or in relation to one another. In other words, I delve deeper into the specific nature of the understanding of the human *being-with* animal, which I have only alluded to in the previous chapters, as I wonder what sort of being this is where human and animal exist with one another. Thus, after *looking at* the human and nonhuman being, I now in turn consider what this specific being *looks like*.

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<sup>134</sup> Georg Wilhelm Hegel (in Merritt 2018).

For my enquiry into the specific being of the human with the nonhuman, I turn to Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) as well as Donna Haraway's (2003; 2008) nonhuman theory of companion species. As the focal point of this study, Haraway's companion species provides us with a theoretical understanding of humans *becoming with* their dogs. In turn, Heidegger famously deepens our knowledge of what it means for something to be (and become). By coupling Heidegger with Haraway I hope to form a better understanding of what it means to be human in relation to nonhuman beings, based on the articulation of the human-nonhuman relation in the previous chapter.

Notably, in line with my discussion in Chapter Three, Haraway's notion of *becoming with* companion species is a multispecies approach, which implodes human and nonhuman beings. Comparably, I argue for an unexchangeable human and animal way of being, existing in constant relation to one another. By putting Heidegger in dialogue with Haraway my main aim is to show that Haraway's companion species, despite its insistence on intersubjectivity, can also be read as a valuation of the importance of a non-anthropocentric human being in companionship with an animal being. That is to say, by reading Haraway with Heidegger I rethink Haraway's companion species and the possibility of humans *being-with* nonhumans, without an imploding of subjects. On the whole, in this layer of the study – set out in Chapters Four, Five and Six – Heidegger and Haraway meet in an attempt to provide an in-depth account of the way of being human with animals.

By revisiting Haraway with Heidegger throughout this layer I aim to show how: (1) Heidegger's understanding of the animal being can promote a non-anthropocentric, ecological responsibility by insisting on a difference between the beings of humans and nonhumans; (2) Heidegger's understanding of being and *being-with* human others can be extended into the realm of nonhuman others; (3) Haraway's companion species stresses the human and makes use of specifically human constructs to understand the nonhuman way of being; (4) consequently, Haraway's multispecies idea of *becoming with* shows similarity to Heidegger's *being*, *being-in-the-world* and *being-with*; (5) rooting Haraway's

*becoming with* in Heidegger's *being-with* prompts a different understanding of the human-dog relation, where both human and dog exist as beings *with* each other without diminishing into another.

My starting point, in this chapter, is a discussion of Heidegger's philosophical development of the notion of being, including his thesis on the animal and nonhuman. In particular I focus on four of Heidegger's seminal texts on being namely, *Being and Time* (1927), *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1938), his later *Letter on 'Humanism'* (1947), as well as the lecture series *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935). Even though I refer to different readings of Heidegger's hypotheses, I mainly associate my reading with recent, more positive interpretations of Heidegger in relation to animal studies, including James (2009), Bailey (2012), Latimer (2013), Schalow (2015), Beinsteiner (2017), Andersson (2017) and Firenze (2017). Thereafter, in Chapter Five, I analyse Haraway's companion species and idea of *becoming with* in *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2003) and its extended version *When Species Meet* (2008). Throughout this analysis of companion species, I demonstrate how Haraway's hybrid human-dog relation is still defined by predominantly human or humanist constructs, such as responsibility and love. In turn, Haraway does not always merge the human and animal into one another, but (at times) highlights their key differences. To remedy this contradiction in Haraway's theory, I then, in Chapter Six, suggest (re)turning Haraway to Heidegger. I show the close proximity between *being-with* and *becoming with* and finally ask, what could interpreting Haraway with Heidegger mean for the understanding of the way of being in a human-dog relation?

#### **4.1 Being with Martin Heidegger**

To make sense of what it means to exist in relation to nonhuman subjects, I want to examine in particular the theories of German philosopher Martin Heidegger, who is most readily associated with being. The question of being was one of the central topics of Heidegger's life work as he set out to understand "what makes it possible for beings to manifest themselves in their being" (Dreyfus 2002:vii; xiv). In his reflection on the human state of being, Heidegger also famously opposed

traditional philosophical thought, rejecting reasoning of philosophers such as Descartes, Husserl and Sartre by insisting on returning to examining things of everyday human life.<sup>135</sup> In doing so Heidegger rejected certain philosophical oppositional dualisms like the immanent versus the transcendent, subjects versus objects and the conscious versus the unconscious (Dreyfus 1991:6). In other words, Heidegger's enquiry into the idea of being could possibly present a treatise outside of some of the traditional philosophical thought typically associated with anthropocentrism (for example Cartesian dualism discussed in Chapter Two).<sup>136</sup>

In addition, Heidegger's philosophy influenced several leading thinkers in the humanities including Jacques Derrida (Dreyfus 1991:9),<sup>137</sup> while recent intellectual activities that enquire into the nonhuman-human relation and the question of the animal frequently cite his ideas (for instance see Foltz 1993; Dombrowski 1994; Wolfe 2003; Calarco 2004; Schalow 2015 & 2017; Lechte 2017; Beinsteiner 2017; Andersson 2017). Philosophical scholar W.S.K Cameron (2004:34) explains that in much of Heidegger's philosophy the environment plays an essential role in establishing the nature of the human being, which could explain the recent turn towards Heidegger in relation to nonhumanism. In turn, Calarco (2004:30) determines that "any effort to work through the question of the animal ... must begin with, and will benefit greatly from, a *thinking* confrontation with Heidegger's analysis of animal life". For these reasons, a Heideggerian approach to the way of being is not only useful, but also necessary,

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<sup>135</sup> For example, in *Letter on 'Humanism'* Heidegger (1998[1947]) contests Sartre's concept of humanism in *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1945) arguing that the essence of humanism is the human being and not existentialism as Sartre suggests. In turn, Heidegger, although a student of Husserl, differs in his approach to the question of being: for Husserl there is a strong correlation between being, phenomena consciousness and subjectivity, while Heidegger in *Being and Time* resists these claims focussing more on a relation to phenomena which reveals a way of being. Moreover, in *Being and Time* and other texts, Heidegger is widely outspoken against Cartesian dualism, resisting the idea that the mind of the human defines all ways of being.

<sup>136</sup> Specifically, in *Letter on 'Humanism'*, Heidegger (1998[1947]) critiques and moves away from anthropocentrism and humanism. Heidegger counters traditional anthropocentric thought, which defines the human in terms of characteristics such as consciousness (Descartes), self-reflection, rationality and personhood (Schalow 2015:64).

<sup>137</sup> In particular, early in his career, Derrida (in Dreyfus 1991:9) mentioned that he doubted he could write anything that had not already been thought of and written by Heidegger. It is only much later in his career that Derrida (1989) goes on to accuse Heidegger's philosophy of anthropocentrism. In addition, other leading thinkers who credit Heidegger for their own philosophical pursuits include, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

within the context of my own argument that examines companion species and what it means to be engaged in a human-nonhuman relation.

Heidegger's theory on being and animal life has been opposed, debated and defended endlessly (Dreyfus 1991:9). The controversies surrounding Heidegger's philosophy stem mainly from the various transitions and phases often found in his philosophical body of work.<sup>138</sup> In his repeated efforts to come to terms with the meaning of human existence, Heidegger for instance, transitions from fundamental ontological enquiries in *Being and Time* to the language of metaphysics in his later work (Crowell 2000:311). Likewise, Heidegger's frequent use of his own philosophical vocabulary and neologisms leaves room for equivocal interpretations (Davis 2010:11). For example, in relation to environmental concerns, Heidegger's philosophy has been interpreted in multidimensional and often contrasting ways (Paul 2017:80). In this regard, it is often tricky to estimate a universal understanding of Heideggerian thought. Said another way, for most existing interpretations of Heidegger's estimation of being a scholarly antithesis exists. To overcome such unsettled intellectual doings, it is helpful to align one's reading of Heidegger with that of specific scholars and particular Heideggerian texts.

In the next section, I mostly draw from four texts by Heidegger, all of which focus on the philosopher's interest in understanding the relation between being and the human being, as well as the relation between being and the nonhuman environment. *Being and Time* (1927) pursues the question of being (and time) addressing what exactly is being, a problem Heidegger inherited from his mentor Edmund Husserl. In the foreword to *Being and Time*, Carman (2008:xv, emphasis in original) explains that in this project Heidegger presents an "understanding of *what* entities are and *that* they are" in which the reader will ask themselves "how we experience and understand ourselves and the world around us, or more

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<sup>138</sup> Heidegger's philosophy has also been placed under much scrutiny after the discovery that Heidegger was closely associated with Nazism (Davis 2010:3). The debates surrounding this matter of his personal life is not considered in this study, since I solely focus on his philosophical work, separate from his political orientations. For further reading on debates surrounding this aspect of the philosopher's life refer to *On Heidegger's Nazism and Philosophy* (Rockmore 1992).



precisely how we experience and understand our *being* and the being of all the things we take *to be*". In this way, Heidegger addresses a fundamental question that had, as the philosopher himself argues, since Plato, long been evaded by other philosophers and leading thinkers. Conversely, philosophers typically inquired into what entities consist of (their properties, characters and features), but not what it means to actually be (Carman 2008:xiv). Thus, with *Being and Time* Heidegger significantly influenced what it means to be human and what it means to think through being human, which surpasses the twentieth century.

*Being and Time* is entwined with the lecture series *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935).<sup>139</sup> In fact, Heidegger (1935) suggests that the two texts should be read together, since *Introduction to Metaphysics* also opens up the question of what it means to be human. For this reason, I also examine *Introduction to Metaphysics* in relation to *Being and Time*. Heidegger's *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1938) marks a break from his earlier work towards the question of language, truth and history. In this project Heidegger also specifically elaborates extensively on the notion of animal behaviour and the environment. Accordingly, the text forms a critical part of this study. Finally, in his later essay *Letter on 'Humanism'* (1947), Heidegger challenges anthropocentrism, while arguing for the preservation of the human proper. Owing to its estimation on being, as well as its concern with the importance of the human, the nonhuman animal and the environment, I also refer to *Letter on 'Humanism'* in the discussion below.

As mentioned, my reading of Heidegger's fundamental texts is guided by secondary readings such as Davis's *Martin Heidegger Key Concepts* (2010), Dreyfus and Wrathall's (2002) *Heidegger Reimagined*, as well as Dreyfus's earlier *Being-in-the-World* (1991). In turn, as listed above, I also refer to theorists who unpack Heidegger's philosophy of being specifically in relation to the question of the animal being and the environment, since such readings relate to the main theme of my analysis. Below I unpack Heidegger's philosophy in relation to the animal question. I start off by explaining Heidegger's fundamental question of

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<sup>139</sup> Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935) is published based on the lecture course held under the same title during the summer semester of 1935 at the University of Freiburg in Breisgau.

being and its associated understandings of being-in-the-world, responsibility and care, as well as *being-with*. Thereafter I explore Heidegger's thesis of the animal being as poor-in-the-world and the relation of Heideggerian thought to environmentalism. Finally, I consider the possibility and implication of the Heideggerian *being-with* animals.

#### 4.2 Heidegger's question of being (*Dasein*)

As I have mentioned, Heidegger's primary philosophical concern is to answer the question of being.<sup>140</sup> However, what precisely is meant by this question is at times hard to define. What does Heidegger mean when he probes into the meaning of being? Heidegger (1962[1927]:2) himself explains that this question is difficult to unpack, since the concept of 'being' is also somewhat unclear: "It is said that 'Being' is the most universal and the emptiest of concepts. As such it resists every attempt at definition. Nor does this most universal and hence indefinable concept require any definition, for everyone uses it constantly and already understands what he means by it". Heidegger (1962[1927]:2) reasons that it is owing to this self-evident nature of the idea of 'being' that philosophers have typically refrained from delving into the concept itself. In particular, Heidegger (1962[1927:2-3]) refers to the efforts of Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle "down to" the more contemporary efforts of Hegel.<sup>141</sup> That is to say, Heidegger feels that in general, western philosophers have traditionally misconstrued the phenomenon of being, by only referring to *what* exists (aspects of being) instead of *how* we exist (what it means to be).

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<sup>140</sup> Heidegger capitalises 'Being' throughout his work. However, in common humanities discourse 'Being' with a capital letter typically refers to an all-encompassing nonhuman form that has a higher power over humans, such as God. To avoid confusion between these two concepts I do not capitalise being, unless quoting Heidegger or directly referring to his own terms, such as *Dasein*.

<sup>141</sup> During a 1924-1925 lecture course Heidegger argues that the original questioning of Plato and Aristotle about the question of being should become the most important philosophical question again. After studying the Greek philosophers Heidegger agrees with their fundamental point of enquiry, yet he argues that their enquiry lacks a particular depth, merely describing characteristics of being (in particular Heidegger refers to Aristotle's *logos*). In turn, in *Being and Time* Heidegger specifically refers to Hegel who, like many philosophers, supposes that being is simple, univocal and unavailable to thought. Heidegger contradicts Hegel (and other similar philosophers) arguing that being is particularly dependent on thought and has specific meaning, especially to the human being (Carman 2013:88-89).

Dreyfus (1991:10) explains Heidegger's question of being as making "sense of our ability to make sense of things". Said in another way, Heidegger attempts to understand how we (as humans) experience and configure our existence in the world. For Heidegger (1962[1927]:26) being is not an entity or something that exists, rather it is what we know of when we think of our being: "it is what we understand in our understanding of being, what we know when we know – however dimly and inarticulately – *what* and *that* entities are" within the doings of everyday life (Carman 2008:xiv, emphasis in original). Thus, Heidegger's main focus is not the relation between phenomena, but rather how it is that the significance of these phenomena and their relations primarily exist (Davis 2010:5). In other words, where we have thus far explored the aspects that make the being of the human different from the nonhuman and their relation to each other (throughout Chapters Two and Three), Heidegger asks a more fundamental question of this relation: what does it mean for human and nonhuman *to be* whatsoever?

To answer the question of being, Heidegger (1962[1927]:27) says "we must make an entity – the inquirer – transparent in his own Being". Therefore, if we wish to understand what it means to exist, we must start with those who consider their existence, those who show awareness of their own being. Heidegger (1962[1927]:27) names such an entity, the being who wonders about their being, "*Dasein*".<sup>142</sup> Heidegger translates *Dasein* as "being-there" and thus describes a reflecting entity that is mindful of their own existence (Heidegger 1962[1927]:27), or as Royle (2018) helpfully describes a "Being that in its Being is concerned about his very Being". Dreyfus (1991:14) explains that the "best way to understand what Heidegger means by *Dasein* is to think of our term 'human being,' which can refer to a way of being that is characteristic of all

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<sup>142</sup> Notably, Heidegger's question of being enquires into human existence. *Dasein* is therefore used here in relation to the human being (Dreyfus 1991:14). However, Zuckerman (2015:494-495) explains that because of Heidegger's ambiguous language there is no scholarly consensus on "whether *Dasein* is a person, a community, a coping skill, an historical epoch, or an 'event' of some *sui generis* sort; nor have we decided whether our existential responsibilities is for our own personal identities, our culture's way of life, our capacity to understand being at all, or something else entirely". For example, analytical philosopher John Haugeland (2013) interprets *Dasein* to not be a person at all, but a mass term. However, in Dreyfus's (1991:14) reading of *Being and Time* he explains that most commonly, Heidegger indicates that *Dasein* has exclusive human distinctions, such as the use of the pronoun 'I'.

people or to a specific person – a human being”.<sup>143</sup> In other words, Heidegger is interested in studying *Dasein*'s way of being: “So when we designate this entity with the term ‘Dasein’ we are expressing not its ‘what’ (as if it were a table, house or tree) but its Being” (Heidegger 1962[1927]:67). In his later work, *Letter on ‘Humanism’*, Heidegger (1998[1947]) also describes *Dasein* as a reciprocal response to being, underlying its elicitation to the idea of being, which allows human beings to exist, respond to and cultivate its own being.

Stapleton (2010:44) explains that in mundane terms *Dasein* would typically hold the same denotative meaning as ‘self’, ‘subjectivity’ or ‘I’. Yet, Heidegger (1962[1927]:27) attentively avoids this simplistic interpretation by stating that *Dasein* is: “[t]his entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being”. For Heidegger the connotation attached to *Dasein* surpasses terms such as ‘ego’, ‘soul’, ‘subjectivity’, ‘person’ and ‘self’ (Stapleton 2010:44). Therefore, Heidegger’s *Dasein* emphasises that his use of ‘being’ here is more in-depth than how we initially utilised the term ‘being’ in Chapter Two.<sup>144</sup> Stapleton (2010:44, emphasis in original) defines it as follows:

For Heidegger, what constitutes the very ‘am’ of the ‘I am’ is that being is an issue for it: is a question and a matter about which it cares. This entity that I am understands this implicitly. More radically, it *is* this understanding, or the place where this understanding of being occurs. Hence ‘Dasein’ means the self *as* the there (*Da*) of being (*Sein*), the place where an understanding of being erupts into being.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger also highlights the core elements of *Dasein*. I briefly mention some of these elements here. Firstly, it is *Dasein* who is the entity trying to make sense of its own being and who always has an awareness of his being (Heidegger 1962[1927]:27). Consequently, “Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence – in terms of a possibility of itself”, in that *Dasein* can take a stand on its own way of being (Heidegger 1962[1927]:33). Additionally, for

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<sup>143</sup> Additionally, Heidegger sometimes refers to ‘a’ *Dasein* indicating interest in an individual human being, while other times he only uses the term *Dasein* to indicate a general human way of being.

<sup>144</sup> In Chapters Two and Three, I used the term ‘being’ in a general sense to indicate subjectivity or a sense of self.

Heidegger, *Dasein's* understanding of its being means that it also has a basic awareness for other modes of being (Heidegger 1962[1927]:34). Finally, Heidegger (1962[1927]:35) explains that his enquiry into *Dasein*, in philosophical terms, is something which *Dasein* itself is continually involved in: “*Dasein* is constantly, in its activities, making sense of itself and everything else. Heidegger, in investigating the question of being, in seeking to understand the understanding of our practices, sees himself as doing thematically what every human being does unawares all the time” (Dreyfus 1991:29).

Furthermore, in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, accompanying *Being and Time*, Heidegger (2000[1935]:100) notes that the relation between being and becoming (*Werden*) forms a significant part of the question of being.<sup>145</sup> For Heidegger (2000[1935]:69) becoming means “coming to Being”. In this way whatever is becoming is not yet in a state of being (Heidegger 2000[1935]:101). Thus, Heidegger (2000[1935]:216) maintains that becoming is a temporary process towards being and that “Being, in contradistinction to becoming, is enduring”. Nevertheless, becoming results in an enduring being and therefore forms a crucial part of the formation of being. In addition, because being is enduring and always-already existing it can also bring about becoming (Heidegger 2000[1935]:210).

#### **4.2.1 *Dasein's* being as being-in-the-world (In-der-Welt-Sein)**

In relation to *Dasein*, Heidegger (1962[1927]:33) also tells us that “to *Dasein*, Being in the world is something that belongs essentially” (Heidegger 1962[1927]:33). The essence of *Dasein* is therefore found in its existence, which it is aware of: it *is* there (it endures). Moreover, *Dasein* also belongs to a particular contextual world; it is possessive in its attachment to the world it exists in, in a specific time and place. That is to say, *Dasein* is also here. By being

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<sup>145</sup> In *Introduction to Metaphysics* Heidegger (2000[1935]) specifically looks at four divisions between ‘being and becoming’, ‘being and thinking’, ‘being and seeming’, as well as ‘being and ought’. Ultimately, Heidegger (2000[1935]) comes to the conclusion that the four divisions associated with being show us that being is not empty: “Being in contradistinction to becoming, is enduring. Being, in contradistinction to seeming, is the enduring prototype, the always identical. Being, in contradistinction to thinking, is what lies at the basis, the present-at-hand. Being in contradistinction to the ought, is what lies at hand in each case as what ought to be and has not yet been actualized, or already been actualized”.

here *and* there *Dasein* considers its own existence within the specificity of the world, but also reflects within itself on its future possibilities of being.

As a result, Heidegger (1962[1927]:34) determines *Dasein* as an entity “being-in-the-world” (*In-der-Welt-Sein*). By being-in-the-world, *Dasein* inhabits a known world; it resides, dwells and belongs within the parameters of the physical world (Hargis 2007:56). Thus, being is a way of engaging or ‘doing’ in the world. Through Heidegger’s placing of being in an immediate and direct world, the meaning of existence becomes closely associated with time. In this way *Dasein* is bound by a contextual and temporal existence, within which it has the ability to determine itself. Hence, *Dasein* is also subjected to a historicity, which it responds to and relates to in the world. Therefore, Heidegger uses being-in-the-world to capture and describe what it means for *Dasein* to exist (Stapleton 2010:44). In describing *Dasein*’s way of being as grounded in a state of being-in-the-world, Heidegger attempts to escape the traditional determining of being as entities with substance, such as the soul or the self, which have come to be understood as a sort-of ‘given’ entity of being merely to be reflected on instead of understood (Stapleton 2010:44).<sup>146</sup>

Heidegger (1962[1927]:78, emphasis in original) asserts that being-in-the-world is a compound expression, because it is a single notion: “‘Being-in-the-world’ indicates in the very way we have coined it, that it stands for a *unitary* phenomenon. This primary datum must be seen as a whole”. Accordingly, when discussing the various dimensions of being-in-the-world, the entirety of the

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<sup>146</sup> Stapleton (2010:45) helpfully uses the analogy of gazing out of a window at a maple tree to understand Heidegger’s enquiry into being and how it differs from concepts such as the self. He explains, “What I see is a tree, its branches and red leaves. What I apprehend, more precisely, are not just the leaves and the colour red, but the leaves *being* red. I do not say, for instance, ‘leaves red’ or ‘leaves *and* red’, but rather, ‘the leaves *are* red ... For Heidegger, there is an understanding of being as substance (the being of leaves) and accident (the being of the redness) that accompanies such simple experiences; that guides and structures them in advance (*a priori*) and makes it possible for what I experience to be what it is” (Stapleton 2010:45, emphasis in original). Further on Stapleton (2010:45, emphasis in original) extends this analogy: “While gazing across the garden at the red leaves of the maple, I am at the same time aware that *I am seeing* this ... Heidegger claims that all too often the understanding of being that frees objects within the world for their being gets reflected back on the being of the experiencing itself. The ‘I’ gets taken as a substance, although perhaps of some special sort (ego, mind, *res cogitans*, soul), and the ‘seeing’ as an activity of this I-thing”.

phenomenon should be kept in mind. Heidegger continues discussing *Dasein's* being-in-the-world, by unpacking and identifying such various dimensions in relation to one another and the whole of being-in-the-world.

Heidegger (1962[1927]:78-79) maintains that being-in-the-world is threefold: there is firstly “in-the-world”, secondly “being-in [*In-sien*]” and, thirdly, the “who” or entity that is being-in-the-world. The world is that in which and towards what *Dasein's* being acts in its existence. Notably, this world, for Heidegger (1962[1927]:94), is not a general world understood as the sum total of all objects and relation, but rather the world that belongs specifically to *Dasein*. It describes “what we mean, for example, when talking about the world of an artist, of a person inhabiting a religious world, or of meeting someone who opened up the world of her family to me” (Stapleton 2010:48). As Heidegger (1962[1927]:93) relates, it is “not those entities which *Dasein* essentially is not and which can be encountered within-the-world, but rather as that ‘*wherein*’ a factual *Dasein* as such can be said to ‘live’”. It is then being in *this specific* world that allows *Dasein* to experience the world in a certain manner, forming a key part of its existence. Being is therefore always “being *as* understood in a certain manner” (Stapleton 2010:51) based on the world within which *Dasein* finds himself in and to which he has access.

In turn, Heidegger unpacks what is meant by ‘being-in’. For him the term indicates more than just the present-at-hand “kind of Being which an entity has when it is ‘in’ another one, as the water is ‘in’ the glass, or the garment is ‘in’ the cupboard” (Heidegger 1962[1927]:79). Rather it connotes a sense of dwelling or residing alongside the world that is familiar to *Dasein* (Heidegger 1962[1927]:80). In other words, instead of thinking of the engagement of *Dasein* with the world in a spatial, practical sense, Heidegger employs a further theoretical approach to describing how *Dasein's* being (or our being’s understanding of being) is absorbed into the world. In this sense being-in (the world) is a state of mind, where the mind grabs hold of the physical world:<sup>147</sup> “I

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<sup>147</sup> That is to say, for Heidegger, mind or being is an embodied experience, where mind and body function together, in contrast to Descartes’s thinking mind separated from the body.

understand myself *as* being-in a familial or a communal world, but it is my (Dasein's) self-understanding" (Stapelton 2010:53).

Lastly, being-in-the-world also depends on a 'who' that exists in their world, or then "the question of who Dasein is" (Heidegger 1962[1927]:150). For Heidegger (1962[1927]:68, emphasis in original) *Dasein* has a unique kind of being that belongs to it exclusively: "Dasein has *in each case mineness (Jemeinigkeit)*, one must always use a personal pronoun when one addresses it: 'I am', 'you are'". In other words, the so-called 'mineness' of *Dasein*, results in a particular, intimate 'who' (or being experienced as 'I') concerned with its own existence. In this way the being of being human consists of its own particular existence, which belongs to the world.

Heidegger (1962[1927]:68, emphasis in original) further argues that belonging to the world determines *Dasein's* authenticity:

As modes of Being, *authenticity* and *inauthenticity* ... are both grounded in the fact that any Dasein whatsoever is characterised by mineness. But the inauthenticity of Dasein does not signify any 'less' Being or any 'lower' degree of Being. Rather it is the case that even in its fullest concretion Dasein can be characterized by inauthenticity – when busy, when excited, when interested, when ready for enjoyment.

To be authentic denotes being something of your own. *Dasein* holds the potential to be authentic (*eigentlich*), by asking, searching and (notably) *becoming* its own being, because being, in turn, is its own to begin with. Authenticity, for Heidegger (1962[1927]:167), is achieved by becoming aware of one's being and choosing to follow your own potentials and competencies (Sherman 2009:4). In this way, "Dasein authentically understands itself and is able to act in the world accordingly" (Sherman 2009:4). Conversely, if *Dasein* does not engage with its possibilities and reclaim itself in everyday activities it is inauthentic (*uneigentlich*) (Sherman 2009:4). Yet, owing to its being-in-the-world, *Dasein's* fundamental belonging to the world does not disappear (Stapleton 2010:54). That is to say, no matter how I choose to express my being (authentic or inauthentic) it remains my own existence. Additionally, as the above quote



indicates, Heidegger (1962[1927]:68) believes that *Dasein* can transfer between states of authenticity and inauthenticity.<sup>148</sup>

To summarise, Heidegger's *Dasein* as being-in-the-world captures the existence of a unique kind of being, who belongs to, has access to and dwells within a particular lifeworld. Within this world, the belonging being can express its existence authentically or inauthentically. Finally, Heidegger (1962[1927]:167) tells us: "If *Dasein* discovers the world in its own way [*eigens*] and brings it close, if it discloses to itself its own authentic Being, then this discovery of the 'world' and this disclosure of *Dasein* are always accomplished as a clearing-away of concealments and obscurities, as a breaking up of the disguises with which *Dasein* bars its own way". Thus, if we understand *Dasein* as characteristically being-in-the-world, we come closer to making sense of the nature of being or what it means to exist.<sup>149</sup>

*Dasein*'s ability to understand the possibilities of its own being-in-the-world is referred to as its "disclosedness" (Heidegger 1962[1927]:167; 384). This understanding (*Verstehen*) of being occurs in a specific state-of-mind (*Befindlichkeit*) and in a present state of falling (*Verfallen*). Heidegger (1962[1927]:220, emphasis in original) explains that the term "does not express any negative evaluation but is used to signify that *Dasein* is proximally and for the most part *alongside* the 'world' of its concern".

Additionally, *Dasein* does not fall from somewhere else, but falls from the world that it already exists in – "it has fallen into the *world*, which itself belongs to its Being" (Heidegger 1962[1927]:220, emphasis in original). Falling is tranquilizing and alienating to *Dasein*. This falling of *Dasein* is an inauthentic everyday way of being made up of the relation between idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity

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<sup>148</sup> Heidegger also identifies an undifferentiated state, which can be shaped into authenticity or; inauthenticity. This state is somewhat more complex and read as ambiguous throughout *Being and Time*.

<sup>149</sup> In addition to being-in-the-world, Heidegger (1962[1927]:276-277) also estimates *Dasein* as being-towards-death. In being-towards-death *Dasein* is always aware of its finitude or possible death. For my purposes here, I do not focus on this aspect of being, however it should be noted that Heidegger estimates the end of being-in-the-world as death.

(Heidegger 1962[1927]:219). Heidegger (1962[1927]:223) states that when being-in-the-world in a falling mode, *Dasein* is alienated and tranquilized and, consequently, gets “entangled” (*Verfängt*) in itself. In my understanding this entanglement differs from a multispecies entanglement, since here *Dasein* does not entangle with others, but rather with itself.<sup>150</sup> Being is therefore, for Heidegger, self-entangling. Moreover, contrary to multispecies’ authentic entanglement, Heidegger (1962[1927]:223) maintains that self-entanglement is a plunge towards the inauthenticity of everydayness and thus not an authentic way of being, because it loses sight of its being-in-the-world. Thereupon, *Dasein*’s relation to the self can become characteristically entangled.

#### **4.2.2 *Dasein*’s being as care (*Sorge*)**

In *Being and Time* Heidegger (1962[1927]:237) argues that care (*Sorge*) plays an essential part in the being of *Dasein*. For Heidegger (1962[1927]:237) this care is a state of being, in other words he uses it in a “purely ontologico-existential manner” – that is to say care is not a practical action, but an intuitive understanding that is intrinsic to the very being of existence. The caring state of being is always present in *Dasein*, not just when *Dasein* occurs in relation to a particular activity, being or thing (Heidegger 1962[1927]:238). Scott (2010:60, emphasis in original) explains that in Heideggerian terms care “means the *inevitability* of concern, uncertainty, insecurity, projecting ahead and maintaining all aspects of our human engagements, as well as the desirability of responsibility and dedication”.

Therefore Heidegger (1962[1927]:84) contends that *Dasein* relates to the world with concern, or then care. There is a constant care in the understanding of the being of *Dasein* and its being-in-the-world (Heidegger 1962[1927]:163). Existence is also a kind of being that exercises concern and care *for others*, through what Heidegger calls “solicitude” (*Fürsorge*), which literally translates as ‘caring-for’. Being-in-the-world thus also implies caring-for others (Bauer 2001:136).

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<sup>150</sup> In Chapter Three I explained that multispecies studies argue that humans and nonhumans occur in entangled relation with one another, where species exist knotted together in their being and flesh.

In turn, caring for is closely associated with response and therefore also responsibility (Bauer 2001:136). For Heidegger (1962[1927]:83) care is shown by the following examples: “having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining ...” Thus, the being of *Dasein* is seen or “made visible” (Heidegger 1962[1927]:84) as care, response and taking responsibility within our being. Theorist Andreas Beinsteiner (2017:42) describes Heidegger’s formulation of human beings as “places of responsibility” – emphasising *Dasein*’s ability to respond responsibly to other beings. Moreover, Heidegger’s care implies a response or “responsible responsiveness” to others (Christensen 2014:30). Through responsible response (caring) Heidegger then further argues that *Dasein* can posit an authentic way of being-in-the-world. That is to say, *Dasein* upholds an authentic way of being only if it cares for and acts responsibly towards other entities (notably all entities, not just other beings) (Dombrowski 1994:27).

#### **4.2.3 *Dasein*’s being as being-with (Mitsein)**

But who exactly are these others that we care for? In *Being and Time* Heidegger (1962[1927]:153) points out that in addition to *Dasein* finding itself as being-in-the-world, it also seems to always be in constant relation to other *Dasein(s)*. Consequently, *Dasein* exists as *being-with* or being-with-others (*Mitsein*). By being-with-others our understanding of being is “co-determined” (Heidegger 1962[1927]:153); we measure, compare and come to define our own being in terms of being-with-others. Moreover, we are able to identify and engage with these others as *Dasein(s)* – beings with their own sense of being (Wrathall and Murphy 2013:12). Notably, Heidegger (1962[1927]:154) tells us that these others are not all those entities that exist outside of ourselves. Instead he explains that “[b]y ‘Others’ we do not mean everyone else but me ... They are rather those from whom, for the most part, one does *not* distinguish oneself – those among who one is too” (Heidegger 1962[1927]:154, emphasis in original). In other words, these others share a (perceived) similar being to ours in that we can identify them as other *Dasein(s)*.

Importantly, *Dasein* still encounters other entities from the parameters of its own world. Although a shared existence, *Dasein* remains the central point of its own being. *Dasein* pursues a self-understanding, but always in relation to others or “they-self”. If *Dasein*’s being-with-others prompts it to forgo its individual subjectivity, then Heidegger argues that *Mitsein* results in an inauthentic *Dasein* (Duyndam 2015:58).<sup>151</sup> Nevertheless *Dasein* shares the world by being-with-others. *Being-with* is therefore a key aspect to the whole account of being (Russow 1980:127).

Furthermore, Heidegger (1962[1927]:156-157) explains that *Dasein* can be with others even when they are not currently present: “[e]ven *Dasein*’s Being-alone is Being-with in the world”. That is to say, we constantly come to define and make sense of being, in relation to or with others. Note, however, that *being-with* forms part of *Dasein* – the being of our being – and not the human being per se. *Mitsein* implies that beings encounter or respond to others and come to define their existence based on these encounters with these others, yet they do not become inseparable beings. They exist *with* each other, not in a possessive sense but instead alongside or accompanying each other.<sup>152</sup>

Owing to *Dasein*’s temporality, *Mitsein* is also a temporal encounter. *Being-with* means that *Dasein* is responsive to other *Dasein* in their worldly and timely specificity (McMullin 2009:205). As mentioned, Heidegger (1962[1927]:159) also uses the notion of *Mitsein* to question the authenticity and inauthenticity of *Dasein*. In addition to being inauthentic when defining being solely in terms of others, a failure to recognise being in relation to others is also considered to result in inauthentic being. Conversely, a person who acknowledges and

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<sup>151</sup> Interestingly, René Girard draws a parallel between Heidegger’s *Mitsein* and his mimetic theory. Mimesis argues that a human’s desires are driven by others’ desires, therefore both *Mitsein* and mimesis is grounded in a thinking stemming from “they” or the other (Duyndam 2015:60). Even though I recognise the connection between Heidegger and Girard, I am cautious of this comparison, since, on my reading, Girard’s mimesis emphasises mimicry or imitation of others, while Heidegger’s *Mitsein* is a being together without assimilating into the other focussing on authenticity.

<sup>152</sup> Interestingly, the term ‘with’ can also connote responsibility, for example we say: ‘leave it with me’. In this way our being-with-others also indicates that we act responsibly towards them.

contemplates his being as his own, as being-in-the-world *and* as being-with-others is considered to be authentic (McMullin 2009:206).

According to Heidegger (1962[1927]:162), being-with-others allows us to act empathetically towards them. Our *being-with* other beings, who share similar beings to ours, allows us “understanding [of] the ‘psychical life of Others’” (Heidegger 1962[1927]:161). As a result, *being-with* one another occurs understandingly, which Heidegger (1962[1927]:162) “happily designate[s] as ‘empathy’”. Here Heidegger’s idea of being as care directly correlates to *being-with* empathetically. Since my being consists of care, my recognition of other beings and empathetic understanding of their being, naturally connotes a caring engagement (Agosta 2011:50). It is important to note though, that for Heidegger (1962[1927]:162) the empathetic engagement with others is not a fundamental way of being, rather it is a derivative or consequence of being-with-others: “‘Empathy’ does not first constitute Being-with; only on the basis of Being-with does ‘empathy’ become possible”. Hence, empathy does not come to define our understanding of being, but rather occurs as a direct result of that understanding as care and being-with-others.

Following Heidegger’s brief mention of empathy in *Being and Time*, the philosopher later extends his thoughts on shared understanding between beings in his lecture series *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1938). Rather than referring to the term ‘empathy’, Heidegger (1995[1938]:66-67) introduces the idea of moods or attunements that are shared between beings (Dreyfus 2013:147).<sup>153</sup> Attunements are feelings, which are shown by our way of being. For Heidegger, these attunements are not beings or entities themselves nor are they an experience. Rather attunements are “the way of our being there with one another” (Heidegger 1995[1938]:66) – a way of showing our being in a particular manner. Moreover, Heidegger (1995[1938]:67) tells us that moods

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<sup>153</sup> Notably Dreyfus (2013:146) argues that Heidegger’s attunements are an “undermining of the Cartesian subject”. By discussing the idea of losing the self, Heidegger rejects Descartes’s fundamental idea of a “self-sufficient Subject” (Dreyfus 2013:146), which we encountered in Chapter Two.

determine our being-with-others, affects how we show our own being *to* others, as well as how we experience another's being:

A human being who – as we say – is in good humour brings a lively atmosphere with them. Do they, in so doing, bring about an emotional experience which is then transmitted to others, in the manner in which infectious germs wander back and forth from one organism to another? We do indeed say that attunement of mood is infectious. Or another human being is with us, someone who through their manner of being makes everything depressing and puts a damper on everything; nobody steps out of their shell. What does this tell us? Attunements are *not side-effects*, but are something which in advance determine our being with one another (Heidegger 1995[1938]:66-67).

Accordingly, *Mitsein* encompasses a sharing of moods as a particular way of being between beings. Dreyfus (2013:151) fittingly refers to this shared understanding as an “absorption” of being-with-others. For Heidegger, our shared moods and attunements is not a projection of our minds or a type of filter through which we see the world, rather it is a way of inhabiting the world differently and letting our entire being line up in a particular way, according to what we attune to. In other words, in Heideggerian terms, beings can absorb the way of being of others, in order to understand the other's thinking about the world and, as a result, care for them.<sup>154</sup>

### 4.3 Heidegger and the question of nonhuman being

Even though Heidegger is well known for his formulation of what it means to exist, his philosophical enquiry into being relates mostly to the *human* being (as I have indicated). In the few cases where Heidegger has enquired into the being of the nonhuman and question of the animal, his philosophies have triggered a series of noteworthy debates and controversies (Beinsteiner 2017:41). The controversial reception of Heidegger's nonhuman philosophy most likely stems

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<sup>154</sup> Dreyfus (2013:148) notes that, inspired by Heidegger, philosopher Merleau-Ponty furthers Heidegger's idea of shared attunements. Interestingly, Dreyfus (2013:149) himself also extends Heidegger's discussion by showing how scientific evidence of mirror neurons (neurons that mimic actions performed by other individuals) “enable one to give a physiological account of the phenomenon of mutual absorption, that is, cases where one finds one-self directly doing what one sees being done” – as similarly discussed in relation to empathy by multispecies studies.

from the variety of contrasting interpretations of his texts. Much like the question of the animal itself, contextualised in Chapter Two, Heidegger's theory surrounding the animal being is often read as anthropocentric or, inversely, it is considered as anti-anthropocentric and a positive ethical foundation for animal philosophy (Beinsteiner 2017:41).<sup>155</sup>

Perhaps the most well-known critique of Heidegger's animal philosophy is that of Jacques Derrida in *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question* (1989) and, as set out in Chapters Two and Three, *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* (1997). Although Derrida acknowledges Heidegger's influence on his own philosophical work, he contends Heidegger's estimation of the animal being. Derrida (1991[1989]:49) does not specifically accuse Heidegger of anthropocentrism, asserting that Heidegger's analysis "respects a difference of structure while avoiding anthropocentrism". However, it is precisely the lay out of this structure of difference, which Derrida finds problematic. Derrida (1991[1989]:49) argues that the manner in which Heidegger establishes a difference between human and animal creates an even larger abyss between human and animal and reinstalls the idea of an order of being.<sup>156</sup> Based on Derrida's famous critique, several readings of Heidegger's animal philosophy, for example Calarco (2004; 2008), Agamben (2004) and Oliver (2008), follow such a critical interpretation.

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<sup>155</sup> For example, animal activist Matthew Calarco (2004; 2008) places Heidegger in an anthropocentric category. Calarco (2004:18) argues, "Heidegger's thought represents simply another instance (albeit a highly sophisticated one) of the dogmatic anthropocentrism that has characterised much of the Western philosophical tradition". Similarly, theorist Goirgio Agamben (2004) critiques and understands Heideggerian philosophy as "part of the anthropological machine of humanism" (Beinsteiner 2017:48). In turn, theorist Kelly Oliver (2008:103) critiques Heidegger for continuously implying a captivated animal that is "the negative of humanity". Typical theoretical explorations categorising Heidegger as anthropocentric, follow the well-known critique of Jacques Derrida against Heidegger's formulation of the animal being. Comparably, other theorists and scholars maintain that the likes of Calarco, Agamben and Oliver misread Heidegger. They return to Heidegger's animal philosophy to show how his thought can be positive towards the treatment of animals and can be rendered as an anti-anthropocentric worldview. Such positive readings include Llewyn (1991), Dastur (1995), Schalow (2006) and Beinsteiner (2017). For instance, Beinsteiner states: "[T]he critique of Heidegger's position concerning the human-animal relation might actually be counter-productive with regard to the concerns articulated in this critique itself, which frequently is morally charged".

<sup>156</sup> I briefly further explore and refer specifically to Derrida's critique later on in this chapter. For an extensive reading of Heidegger in relation to Derrida refer to Desmond (2010) and Dungey (2001), who helpfully reconstruct the two theorists in relation to one another.

For my purposes here, I do not attempt to settle the debate regarding Heidegger's ethical viewpoint or dismiss Derrida's reading of Heidegger. Instead, I borrow from existing readings of Heidegger's work on animals to set-up an overview of his philosophy of the animal that can be put into dialogue with Haraway's notion of *becoming with* companion species. For the most part, following my contextualisation of the animal question in Chapters Two and Three, I consider and present an anti-anthropocentric reading of Heidegger's animal philosophy that does not dismiss his readings in terms of understanding animal and nonhuman beings. I do so, because in my reading of Haraway with Heidegger, I argue that Heidegger's philosophies can be helpful in coming to terms with what it means to exist in relation to animals and other nonhuman beings.

#### ***4.3.1 Heidegger's thesis: the animal as poor in the world***

One of the main texts in which Heidegger analyses the being of the animal is *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1938). Notably, Heidegger's analysis of the animal in this specific text is ultimately geared towards clarifying the *human* world. Heidegger's examination of the animal world for the human world highlights the argument made in the previous chapters: the animal question is a fundamentally human enquiry and typically refers back to understanding the human who is asking the question. Nonetheless, Heidegger provides us with a thesis of the state of being of the animal. In this thesis, Heidegger (1995[1938]:185) famously estimates: “[1.] the stone (material object) is *worldless* [*weltlos*]; [2.] the animal is *poor in the world* [*weltarm*]; [3.] man is *world-forming* [*weltbindend*]”.

Evidently, at the centre of Heidegger's thesis is the notion of the world or *Welt*. That is to say, how Heidegger defines each being revolves around its relation to the world, while this relation also separates the entities into distinct realms of being. Therefore, “the mode of being of the human as world-forming is both irreducible to the animal's poor-in-world mode of being (representing biological life) and to the worldlessness of the stone (representing inert matter)” (Firenze 2017:135). Yet, the specific ‘world’ Heidegger refers to here, as we have come to see in our discussion of the Heideggerian being-in-the-world, is a particular



world known to *Dasein* and thus the *human* way of being and the *human's* access to other beings. Heidegger's measure of world is accordingly the human world, within which *Dasein* dwells in and is familiar. This formulation makes sense if we keep in mind that at length Heidegger is considering the nature of the human being in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, hence he compares the animal's being to the human way of being. Said in another way, in his threefold thesis of the world, Heidegger speaks from a human horizon.

Heidegger's human horizon is important, because it impacts our interpretation of his thesis. Read in isolation, we can easily understand Heidegger's estimation of the three modes of being as hierarchical, arguing that man is more powerful in the world, while the animal is of lesser value (poorer) than man and objects are worthless. However, if Heidegger's horizon is kept in mind, we come to realise that he is not stacking entities in relation to value. In contrast, Heidegger is only explaining how different entities relate to, or partake in, his specific *human* world or then a human way of being – for this is the only world he can speak of with certainty.<sup>157</sup> Theorist Antonino Firenze (2017:136) also points us towards the fact that Heidegger does not intend for his threefold understanding of being to be interpreted as hierarchical. In fact, Firenze explains that Heidegger (1995[1938]:192) estimates it would be a “fundamental error” to understand that “man is the being who unites within himself all the levels of beings”.

Following this line of thought, we can rather assert that Heidegger shows how human, animal and physical objects, with regards to their own existence, access the (human) world differently. In other words, as in being-in-the-world, here the world refers to that which the being has access to. Heidegger estimates that human beings form their own world, or as Figal (2010:37) explains: “[w]hat

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<sup>157</sup> In *Being and Time* Heidegger (1962[1927]:75) refers to his approach as “private Interpretation” arguing that life “in its own right, is a kind of Being; but essentially it is accessible only in *Dasein*”. Heidegger further emphasises our inability to speak on behalf of animal being in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1988[1927]:191): “On closer consideration we see that, speaking cautiously, since we ourselves are not mere animals, we basically do not have an understanding of the ‘world’ of the animals. But since we nevertheless live as existents – which itself is a special problem – the possibility is available to us, by going back from what is given to us as existents, to make out reductively what could be given to an animal”. In other words, Heidegger argues that the only manner to understand the animal being is to, notably, *reduce* or compare it to the human way of being, since this is what we know.

comes to appear in the course of the ‘projection’ of the world is not only discovered, but is produced”. That is to say, not only do *Daseins* exhibit their own world, but they also generate, create and add to the world through their being. In comparison, Heidegger then estimates that the animal is poor in the (human) world, since it cannot approach the same way of being as the human *Dasein*. Heidegger (1995[1938]:193) explains:

The animal is poor in the world, it somehow possesses less. But less of what? Less in respect of what is accessible to it, of whatever as an animal it can deal with, of whatever it can be affected by as an animal, of whatever it can relate to as a living being. Less as against more, namely as against the richness of all those relationships that human *Dasein* has at its disposal.

In other words, Heidegger’s use of the word ‘less’ indicates that the animal experiences a smaller amount of the human *Welt* – that is the world as humans experience or access it together. For Heidegger, the animal therefore does not access, create and partake in the human world in the same way that the human does. An observation which, as Heidegger (1995[1938]:194) himself notes, is quite “evident” and one that echoes what I have also discussed extensively: the human and animal both experience the world differently as distinct living beings. But is Heidegger’s lesser and world-forming distinction a question of hierarchy, as so many theorists, including Derrida, have suggested? Heidegger (1995[1938]:194, emphasis added) continues his thesis and discourages an anthropocentric interpretation of his thinking:

Yet even a little reflection soon renders it questionable whether in fact poverty is necessarily and intrinsically of lesser significance with respect to richness. *The reverse might well be true*. In any case this comparison between man and animal, characterized in terms of world-formation and poverty in world respectively, *allows no evaluative ranking or assessment with completeness or incompleteness in each case with respect to the accessibility of beings*, as soon as we compare the discriminatory capacity of the falcon’s eye with that of the human eye or the canine sense of smell with our own, for example. However ready we are to rank man as a higher being with respect to the animal, *such an assessment is deeply questionable*, especially

when we consider that man can sink lower than any animal.

Thus, on my reading, Heidegger does not wish to use his thesis to rank the completeness or entirety of all beings on earth. On the contrary, Heidegger intends to articulate a distinction between human and animal, where the two beings are complete beings, experiencing their own world, in their own irreducible manner.

Heidegger (1995[1938]:195) further explains that with his use of the word “poverty” he aims to indicate that the animal does not access the world in the same way as human *Dasein* does, but this does not mean that the animal is deprived or lacks a sense of being. Finally, Heidegger (1995[1938]:195) asserts that he cannot describe the animal’s way of being like he does the human’s (as world-forming), because he cannot speak for the animal or access its being fully. As indicated in the quote above, he finds the methodological reduction of the animal world to the human world problematic. For Heidegger, speaking of the animal holds the methodological risk of understanding the animal in a way specific to human beings. In other words, parallel to my discussion on the formulation of the animal in Chapter Two, Heidegger highlights the danger and complexities of anthropomorphism in the process of describing the animal’s way of life.<sup>158</sup> For this reason the animal is ‘poor’ in the human world, perhaps only because it is deprived of being fully understood or accessed by the human way of being. However, Heidegger (1995[1938]:195) once again emphasises that “in the expressions ‘poverty in the world’ and ‘world-formation’ the term ‘world’ itself

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<sup>158</sup> Notably, Heidegger does not use the specific term ‘anthropomorphism’, however he does use the term “hominization” (Heidegger in Beinsteiner 2017:49) which we could interpret as synonymous to the contemporary use of anthropomorphism. Additionally, his discussions on methodologically understanding the animal’s own being closely resembles current critique regarding anthropomorphic descriptions (as I laid out in Chapters Two and Three). Both Heidegger and theorists, such as Zylinska (2012), critiquing anthropomorphism do not wish to describe the animal in human terms, because they believe the animal is unique. Beinsteiner (2017:48) provides an analysis of *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* to describe Heidegger’s methodological reasoning’s close association to the critique against anthropomorphism. In quoting Heidegger, Beinsteiner (2017:48) notes that the philosopher emphasises “that the ways animals relate to other beings are ‘infinitely difficult for us to grasp and require a high degree of cautious methodological foresight on our part’ (Heidegger)”. Furthermore, Beinsteiner (2017:49) reads Heidegger’s (in Beinsteiner 2017:49) warning against the “hasty assimilation” of the animal to what the human is as a “purely methodological sense to reflect the danger of anthropomorphizing”.

cannot express quantity, sum total, or degree with respect to the accessibility of beings". It is, in other words, only a qualitative distinction, highlighting the difficulties of describing the animal world from a human viewpoint.

Consequently, if we summarise Heidegger's thesis of the 'poor' animal as an estimation that both animal and human are distinct, complete beings who experience the world in irreducible ways and, as a result, the animal world remains only somewhat accessible to the human way of being; then we can, ironically, draw similarities between Heidegger's animal being and Derrida's question of the animal being (discussed in Chapters Two and Three).<sup>159</sup> Both Heidegger and Derrida establish that animals have a complete, responsive being of their own. Furthermore, corresponding to my earlier reading of Derrida's *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)*, Heidegger also hesitates to access and assimilate the animal and human being, acknowledging the irreducible subjective experience outside of human experience.

Finally, both Derrida and Heidegger return the question of the animal being to the being of the human: Derrida does so by asking what his cat's gaze means for his own being, while Heidegger compares the animal way of being to what it means to exist as *Dasein*. In highlighting these similarities between Heidegger and Derrida, we are prompted to also return to and question Derrida's critical reading of Heidegger as anthropocentric. Perhaps the so-called 'abyss' Derrida (1991[1989]:49; 2004[1997]:124) evokes in his critique on Heidegger specifically, is not such a negative, anthropocentric gap, but an opening indicating the kind of accessibility and irreducibility of the animal and human being. An opening, which Derrida, as I understand, in *The Animal That Therefore I Am* also identifies and hesitates to cross over.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> I maintain that the similarities between Derrida and Heidegger's animal philosophy is ironic, because Derrida critiques Heidegger's philosophy yet, on my reading, both philosophers come to similar conclusions regarding the irreducibility and inaccessibility of the animal being.

<sup>160</sup> For a complete unpacking of Derrida's analysis of the question of the animal see my reading of *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* throughout Chapters Two and Three.

Extending thought on what type of accessibility exists between the animal and human being, Heidegger also helpfully compares both the animal way of being in the human world as well as the human way of forming its world, to the non-living object's manner of relating to the human world. Heidegger (1995[1938]:196) argues that, in comparison to human and animal, the stone is "worldless" in that it "has no world". However, Heidegger makes it clear that the way in which the stone and animal lack (human) world differs significantly. For Heidegger, the animal's being, although different to that of the human, is still able to interact with the world around it. In this way, for Heidegger (1995[1938]:198) the animal being accesses world in some ways and shows awareness of its own environment: "the animal has an environmental world of its own within which it moves". The non-living object or stone, in contrast, does not show any sign of such an interaction or awareness of its surroundings and being, since it does not have any form of life. Thus, Heidegger (1995[1938]:199) comes to the conclusion, that in comparison to the stone, the animal has being and world, albeit a world of its own:

Even if the animal has access to beings in a different way from ourselves and within more narrowly circumscribed limits, it is still not entirely deprived of world. The animal has world. Thus absolute deprivation of world does not belong to the animal after all.

More precisely, Bejinariu (2018:240) summarises the animal's access to beings as follows: "More like the human and less like the stone, the animal has a certain kind of access to beings: since it always has a certain relation with beings, the world is not totally closed for the animal, but neither is it open in its full [human] meaning".

Once again, Heidegger's threefold thesis proves to not rank beings in order of importance. Instead it seems the philosopher purposefully uses his categorical analysis only to highlight the animal's being and its irreducibility to the human way of being. Heidegger (1995[1938]:199) refers to this as an "intricate entanglement", where the animal simultaneously has world (in terms of its own environment) and does not have world (in terms of not completely accessing the

human world). It is only after Heidegger establishes this twofold signification of animal being that he can delve into the “essence of the animal and its animality” as well as the human way of being in relation to this animal being. As a result, Heidegger makes it clear that his discussion of the animal being stems from a human horizon, from which he can only examine the animal being in terms of observing what it relates to and how it engages with the human world. For Heidegger (1995[1938]:200):

[I]ts [the animal’s] specific manner of being is defined by the fact that it has access of some kind. The question which now concerns us more precisely is this: What does the animal relate to, and what sort of relationship does it have to whatever it seeks as nourishment, seizes as prey, or attacks as hostile.

#### ***4.3.2 Accessing the animal being through the ‘as if’ structure***

From the specific outlook described above, Heidegger then further elaborates on what he understands as the specific way of being of the animal. Before doing so, Heidegger considers the methodological validity of explaining the animal being from a human horizon and how exactly the animal world can be accessed, albeit to a certain extent. Heidegger (1995[1938]:202) explains that to understand the animal way of being, one has to transpose oneself into another being. By this Heidegger (1995[1938]:202, emphasis in original) means to go along with another being *as* that being, discovering what and how it is by “directly learning how it is with this being, discovering what it is like to be this being *with* which we are going along *in this way*”. Notably, Heidegger emphasises that this transposition is not an actual, ‘transspecies-like’ vacation of the self to occupy the space of the animal being.<sup>161</sup> Rather it is “one that *merely transpires in thought ... an ‘as if’, one in which we merely act as if we were the other being*” (Heidegger 1995[1938]:202, emphasis in original). Heidegger’s suggested transposing is also commonly referred to as the ‘as if’ structure, since human attempts to think *as if* they were animal (Beinsteiner 2017:41).

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<sup>161</sup> In Chapter Three I describe trans-species relations as a specific type of multispecies relation, where different species share bodily and cognitive abilities.

By imagining the other being's viewpoint, Heidegger also notes that the self cannot be forgotten. Once more, understanding the animal being through transposition is a going-along "with the other being while remaining *other* with respect to it" (Heidegger 1995[1938]:203, emphasis in original). Furthermore, Heidegger (1995[1938]:208) asserts that humans cannot transpose themselves into non-living objects, because they do not show any factual signs of life or accessibility. In turn, Heidegger estimates that the question of transposing into another human's way of being is void, for, as we discovered in the discussion of *Dasein*, being human already implies being-with-others (*Mitsein*), which, in turn, already implies an attunement towards others. In other words, being or going along with other humans, always-already forms a natural part of being human.

Finally, it is only the transposition of the human being into the animal way of being that Heidegger (1995[1938]:204) deems possible, yet limited. Heidegger contends that as humans, we are always aware of being alongside animals. Thus, thinking through the being of the animal forms part of the entirety of *Dasein*: "In our existence as a whole we comport ourselves toward animals ... in such a way that we are already aware of being transposed in a certain sense" (Heidegger 1995[1938]:210). Heidegger (1995[1938]:201, emphasis in original) uses the example of the domestic dog to think through our transposing of animal being:

We keep domestic pets in the house with us, they 'live' *with us*. But we do not live with them if living means: being in an animal kind of way. Yet we *are* with them nonetheless. But this being-with is not an *existing-with*, because a dog does not exist but merely lives. Through this being with animals we enable them to move within our world. We say that the dog is lying underneath the table or is running up the stairs or so on. Yet when we consider the dog itself – does it comport itself toward the table as table, toward the stairs as stairs? ... Nonetheless, it is with us! A going along with ... a transposedness, and yet not.

Hence, for Heidegger, the animal being is one of human transposedness, in which we exist with our animals, transposing (or even intertwining) them into our human world, however remaining conscious of the fact that they do not

experience the world in the same manner that we do.<sup>162</sup> More specifically, even if we transpose ourselves into the animal's experience we remain conscious of the fact that methodologically this is a human interpretation. In other words, it is a way for the human to make sense of the animal world.

Additionally, Heidegger suggests that animals cannot transpose into the human way of being, they cannot contemplate things *as such* (Westling 2012:41).<sup>163</sup> That is to say, the animal is part of our being, but also removed from our being. Our existing with animals differ from the *being-with* of human *Dasein(s)* who share the human world fully.<sup>164</sup> Here again, Heidegger's estimation that the animal (dog) does not exist but merely "lives" and the human exists rather than lives, does not deem the animal of less value than the human. More exactly, Heidegger maintains that the way of being of the human (existence) differs to that of the animal to highlight that "the transposition of man's experience into that of the animal cannot be considered as a methodologically valid way to access the understanding of the animal's animality" (Firenze 2017:138). For Heidegger then the question regarding the being of the animal revolves around how the animal relates to other beings, despite its lack of transposedness – or then our inability to access its transposedness (Andersson 2017:61).

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<sup>162</sup> Heidegger's notion of transposing reminds of the phenomenological methodology applied to address the question of the animal mind, outlined in Chapter Three. For instance, as discussed Jane Goodall attempts to think *as if* animal and imagines herself in the gorilla world to understand and study the animal. Goodall's attempts, as well as that of Bekoff and Smuts, show great similarity to Heidegger's idea of transposing into the animal world. In review of such phenomenological methodologies we are reminded that such accounts still extend from a human horizon, just as Heidegger notes in relation to transposing.

<sup>163</sup> On my reading, Heidegger's estimation that animals cannot transpose into the human being has to be understood in context with his estimation that humans cannot fully access the animal being (even when transposing). Thus, because Heidegger claims that humans cannot truly know whether the animal can think as the human, he does not wish to assume so. Rather he refers to what he can know of the animal through observation of its behaviour.

<sup>164</sup> Dombrowski (1994:28) helpfully accumulates Heidegger's theses to explain the human's 'transposedness' and the animal's reciprocity in the following manner: "Animals are not worldbuilding (*weltbildend*) beings, but they do encircle themselves (*Sichumringen*) with stimuli in ways that make inadequate any behavioristic analysis of them. Their openness to entities nonetheless is not to entities *as* entities, and this is apparently because of their failure to possess language. Rather, their openness is merely for the purpose of the release of drives. Both behaviorism and the theory of evolution treat animals in abstraction from this partial openness, hence Heidegger holds that animals demand of us a specific mode of "transposedness" (*Versetztsein*)".



### 4.3.3 *The animal's world as Umwelt*

Subsequently, in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* Heidegger rephrases the animal world as the animal environment or “*Umwelt*” (in comparison to the human *Welt*).<sup>165</sup> After establishing how the animal world differs from the human world, Heidegger (1995[1938]:261) reverts to expressing the animal’s related existence differently, in terms of an environment or *Umwelt* instead of the world, which Heidegger deems to humans.

Following Heidegger’s thinking of the animal being, the question of the essence of the animal now relies on how the animal relates to its own environment and other beings within this environment, without accessing the world as human beings do. While Heidegger estimates that human existence is defined by human beings thinking of beings as being as such, he argues that the essence of animal life, in contrast to transposition, relies on relating in terms of behaviour (*Benahmen*) in its environment (Heidegger 1995[1938]:236). For Heidegger this behaviour consists of instincts and drives that are triggered by beings in the animal’s environment to which the animal responds. Hence, for the animal other beings are activators (so to speak) – or what Heidegger (1995[1938]:254) calls “disinhibitors” – that evoke responsive behaviour (Andersson 2017:61).

Behaviour based on drives places the animal in relation to other things and beings within the specific context of the animal’s environment (note, not the human world). In this way, for Heidegger (1995[1938]:247), the animal is taken up by things [*hingenommen*] or captivated by things [*benommen*]. Animal captivation “characterizes the specific manner of being in which the animal relates itself to something else even while the possibility is withheld from it” and “because of this driven directedness the animal finds itself suspended, as it were, between itself and the environment, even though neither the one nor the other is experienced as [human] being” (Heidegger 1995[1938]:247; 248). Accordingly,

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<sup>165</sup> Heidegger (1995[1938]:261) borrows the term ‘*Umwelt*’ from biologist Jacob von Uexküll (1926). Von Uexküll uses the term to describe everything the animal can perceive and can do. It is everything the animal relates to in its environment and that which it can respond to (Firenze 2017:139).

the animal being is that of suspension, or captivation, in its own environment, and not the human world (Andersson 2017:62).

As a result, Heidegger (1995[1938]:249) describes the animal as encircled by a ring of reciprocal instinctual drives, which places the animal in a constant reciprocal relation with beings and stimuli within its environment.<sup>166</sup> In turn, the animal being is always open to respond to the beings and stimuli within its ring, by way of behaviour and drives. Yet, the animal's openness and response can only be prompted into behaviour, if something (another being or stimuli) affects or touches it – the animal's behaviour is reliant on the relatedness and presence of something within the animal's environment (Heidegger 1995[1938]:255). Again, Heidegger emphasises that this different animal way of life that consists of captivated behaviour, does not represent “something inferior or some kind of lower level in comparison to human *Dasein*. On the contrary, life is a domain which possesses a wealth of openness with which the human world may have nothing to compare”.

In addition to Heidegger's full outline of the nonhuman being mainly pursued in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, he also addresses the animal to a certain extent in his later work. Commenting on his estimation of the animal as poor in the world, Heidegger (in Schalow 2015:66) asserts in a lecture series (1935-36): “It [the animal as poor in the world] must not be inferred from this that animal has no relation to food, light, air, and other animals. We need only recall how animals play”. Markedly, Heidegger here examines the behaviour of the animal when playing and highlights that the animal relates to entities, although we cannot always precisely know what this relation entails. Thus our transposing of the animal into our world, does not mean that the animal does not have a relation with things (or that the human imagines animal relations), instead

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<sup>166</sup> Here, I find the description Heidegger gives to the animal as in a reciprocal relation with other entities quite similar to that which he assigns to *Dasein* as a reciprocal respondent to its own being. The key difference, however, is that *Dasein* responds to its own being, while the animal responds to the stimuli of others in its environment. Although Heidegger does not necessarily deny that the animal can consider his own being reciprocally, he also makes it clear that as humans we cannot access whether or not the animal has a responsiveness to its own being. For this reason, considering its response to others is the closest the philosopher can get to thinking about the essence of the animal.

observing animal behaviour highlights that such a relation does exist as the animal responds (following Heideggerian thought – most likely via drives and instinct) to these things in its own way. Therefore, Heidegger’s description of the animal being, in terms of its own behavioural responses in its environment, differs from the description of the animal through the thinking of the human as animal, which can easily border on anthropomorphism if the human horizon is ignored. Although both methodologies help Heidegger think through the precise being of the animal, the latter describes animal being framed by and entwined with *Dasein*, while the former aims to describe the animal being in its own environment, alongside the human. In short, it is my understanding that Heidegger grounds the animal being in both a human being thinking *as* animal and an animal being in response to its own environment.

#### **4.4 Heidegger’s philosophy of being (and nonbeing) related to environmentalism**

As a result of Heidegger’s break with traditional human exceptionalism, most prominently outlined in his *Letter on ‘Humanism’* (1947), it would appear that the philosopher’s theories could align with scholarly pursuits outside of anthropocentric thought. Heidegger (1998[1947]:252) outright rejects those philosophies and proposed traits typically associated with anthropocentric thought, such as consciousness and Descartes’s mind-body dualism. His rejection, ipso facto rejects the thinking that supports the superiority of humans over all other beings. Thus, “Heidegger would implicitly seem to be aligned with the various movements protecting animal welfare” (Schalow 2015:64). However, even though Heidegger’s rupture from anthropocentrism is useful to thinking that determines the life of the nonhuman as valuable, it does not completely correlate with nonhumanism or multispecies thought either, because, as we have established, Heidegger does not wish to assimilate human and animal life. Instead, Schalow (2015:65) notes that Heideggerian thought, although anti-anthropocentric, does the inverted to nonhumanism: instead of escalating the value of the animal to that of the human, Heidegger takes away the superiority of man by emphasising a specific place for nature and animal on earth. Moreover, Heidegger demeans the human way of being to an attendant or steward of the

being of others as a dweller in the nature or environment of the earth, that belongs and is accessed by all beings (even if this belonging or accessibility looks different to that of the human's).<sup>167</sup>

More specifically, *Dasein's* being-in-the-world implies a dwelling on earth, which Heidegger employs in *Letter on 'Humanism'* as a call for humans to exercise stewardship over the earth and to restore "a sense of rootedness over the earth" (Schalow 2015:65). By always and already existing in relation to its immediate environment – which for Heidegger includes nature and animal beings – *Dasein* has an obligation, embodied within its very way of being, to take care of and look after these beings and its environment. For Heidegger, the being of *Dasein* is therefore intrinsically linked to taking care of and acting (or responding) responsibly towards others. Heidegger (1998[1947]:243) argues: "Where else does 'care' tend but in the direction of bringing the human being back to his essence?" Additionally, he also defines responsibility as "a way of becoming 'answerable', that is, as form of reciprocation or responsiveness to the claim of being" (Heidegger in Schalow 2015:65). Therefore, care and responsibility are an inherent response embedded in the human way of being. In this regard Schalow (2015:66, emphasis in original) argues that Heidegger's formulation of being:

[S]imultaneously grants the openness by which we can exercise care toward *other* creatures and the diversity of nature as such. Our stewardship thereby extends and enhances our capacity for 'caring' in such a way that through encountering and cultivating this otherness we can subordinate our interests in behalf of protecting the interest of animals (and nature) apart from their potential usefulness to us.

In addition, Schalow (2015:66) argues that Heidegger's estimation of *Dasein* as world-forming gives *Dasein* the power to cultivate a shared space on earth where

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<sup>167</sup> Schalow (2015:65) describes Heidegger's theory in relation to nonhumanism as follows: Following Heidegger "we arrive at any appreciation of nature or animals by despoising human beings from their exalted throne (of superiority), rather than by elevating other creatures by ascribing to them 'worth' comparable to our own. Accordingly, any prohibitions against reducing animals to their 'usefulness' depend *not* upon ascribing to them an intrinsic value comparable to persons ... but rather, through the humility of yielding a 'place' (*Ort*) for nature (*phys*) ... to manifest itself, thereby reserving habitats within which our animal counterparts can live and flourish".

nature and animals can exist and flourish. Heidegger, in his later reasoning, also argues that observing animal behaviour and transposing as animals reveals that we have certain characteristics in common with animals. For example, the ability to reproduce and flourish, suffer and display affection, and thereby discover in nature a dependence on earth. Consequently, by sharing these characteristics with animals – although the experience of such traits can differ essentially between human and animal – we are able to open a space for them to share the planet with us (Schalow 2015:66).

Furthermore, as previously stated, some theorists argue that Heidegger's claim that the animal being is irreducible to the human way of being is a positive manner of thinking about the human-animal relation in terms of ecology. For instance, according to Bruce Foltz (1993:89) noting a distinction between animal being and human being promotes a sense of respect in our treatment of animals, because we acknowledge that we cannot reduce or fully understand their beings. Foltz (1993:89) asserts that "[t]o say simply that people are animals is, I believe, of no necessary help to the animals themselves". Instead Foltz (1993:89), reasons that *not* assimilating animals to humans highlights "respect for the mystery that is at play in life". Following Heidegger, we can deduce that *Dasein* in its very being of care and responsibility can respond to animals by thinking *as* animals from a human perspective and observing their behaviour in their environment to attempt to gain a better understanding of their being. It is exactly because *Dasein* knows it cannot access the animal being in its entirety – or as it does its own – that it is mindful of treating the animal with thoughtful attention. In other words, the respect and even affinity between human and animal is a direct result of their differences, not their similarities.

The deductions drawn from Heidegger's specific unpacking of being in relation to environmentalism and the ethical treatment of animals echoes my conclusions in relation to the animal question in Chapter Two, based on the bioethical reasoning of Joanna Zylinska. Following Zylinska (2012) in Chapter Three, I argued for a non-anthropocentric difference between humans and nonhumans, arguing that both human and nonhuman are beings, whose distinctive beings should be

acknowledged, celebrated and distinguished from one another. Moreover, in relation to Zylinska, I reasoned that the human way of being should always be of importance, since it allows us to recognise and respond to other's actions, respecting their differences. After examining the philosophies of being of Heidegger and the secondary readings thereof in relation to the environment, we come to realise that he estimates a similar way of reasoning, albeit through enquiring into the nature of being: (1) Heidegger argues for a non-anthropocentric understanding of being where; (2) the human and animal way of being are irreducible to one another; (3) Heidegger argues that the different beings of animals and humans allows us to interact with animals from a specific human horizon that we cannot detach from while; (4) the human way of being is, according to Heidegger always-already one of care and responsibility ready to exist alongside and share nature with others.<sup>168</sup>

It is worth briefly mentioning that Heidegger's much later ensuing text, *The Question Concerning Technology* (1962), is also often cited in reference to Heidegger's relevance to environmentalism. For example, Dombrowski (1994), Irwin (2015) and Schalow (2015) mention Heidegger's critique of technology in relation to thinking about environmental relations. In *The Question Concerning Technology*, Heidegger (1977[1962]:1) critically reflects on how technology (*technē*) has developed to such an extent that it also reveals itself as a particular way of being. For Heidegger, technology is not simply a tool, or a system, nor a specific experience or occurrence; it is a process whereby life is revealed and unfolded. Therefore, Heidegger's idea of the human being as world-forming is extended to define technology in that it develops the human world. Thus, technology comes into existence through man's actions and creations. However, technology has come into being to such a dangerous extent that we are now able to state that man comes into being through technology. By focussing on the essence of technology, Heidegger (1977[1962]:7-8) argues that technology not

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<sup>168</sup> Importantly, in Chapters Two and Three, I referred to nonhuman beings, i.e. any being outside of the human including the animal, while Heidegger specifically refers only to the animal being. As mentioned, Heidegger does distinguish between the animal and other non-living entities (for example, the stone). Yet, he also does not clarify whether his use of the term 'animal' also refers to, or how it relates to, other living beings (such as plants).

only reveals reality, but does so in a particular manner: as *Bestand* (standing reserve) technology does not oppose man as mere objects, but exists in anticipation to be used in a challenging and expediting way. Reality, in turn, is revealed through technology as *Gestell* (enframing), which is the essence of modern technology (Heidegger 1977[1962]:8). The enframing technology does exactly what the word indicates: it places everything as a standing reserve in a frame – enclosing reality in its entirety. In this manner technology enframes the world, human existence and all beings. Just as technology is integrated into our lives, so are we integrated into technology.

Irwin (2015:61) uses Heidegger's critique against the extent of technology's impact on the human being to show how technology is largely responsible for the ecological crisis associated with the Anthropocene. He maintains that the technological *Gestell* places nature in *Bestand*, only to ensure technological progress and growth (Irwin 2015:61). Irwin (2015:61) then continues to argue that only Heidegger's philosophy of being can provide some sort of outcome from "the danger' of technology subsuming all ways of knowing into the potential resource of consumerism, there remains some possibility for thinking and being that might exceed, or at the very least, generate a readiness for those who come after".<sup>169</sup> Similarly, Schalow (2015:66) suggests that Heidegger's critique of technology should be overlaid with his anti-anthropocentric emphasis on the subjectivity of all beings to show the exploitation of the resources of nature. Much like Foltz's use of Heidegger's animal thesis to promote animal welfare above, Schalow suggests that Heidegger's critique against technology and his theses on being is "[t]he directive of an original ethics to cultivate and safeguard the otherness of nature [which] could also lead to rescuing animal life from the grips of the technological drive towards exploitation" (Schalow 2015:66).<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> In particular Irwin (2015:61-67) shows how Heidegger's discussions of *Dasein*'s historicity, finitude and being-towards-death (which I do not elaborate on in this chapter) helps us to understand change as a cycle of particular ways of being together. In this sense "the technological *Gestell* that enclose the modern horizon of knowledge" can be enframed as a cycle of being.

<sup>170</sup> I elaborate further on Heidegger's critique against technology as well as the relation between technology, human being and animal being in Chapters Seven and Eight, where I consider the phenomenon of companion species on social media.

#### 4.4.1 *The possibility of being-with animals*

In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* Heidegger makes an important observation regarding his own thesis on the animal being (poor in the world): Heidegger (1995[1938]:264) notes that his concept of animality or animal being is incomplete. The philosopher makes it clear that he does not (and cannot) capture the complete being of the animal, partly, as explained, because of his human horizon, but also because the scientific or zoological research observing the animal's cognitive abilities and the being of animal is continuously developing (Andersson 2017:66). According to Heidegger (1995[1938]:265), as research regarding the animal develops, so too can we extend our understanding of the animal being in his environment as well as further support our thinking *as* animals. Heidegger (1995[1938]:188) makes it clear that science and biology is "subject to change and transformation" and as a result if we place philosophical interpretation parallel to biological and scientific enquiry, philosophical thinking will change accordingly. For Heidegger (1995[1938]:192), at the time of writing *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, the existing research in biology, interpreted philosophically, strongly agreed and supported the thesis of the animal as poor in the world.<sup>171</sup>

Following Heidegger's own admission to his somewhat 'incomplete' thesis on the animal, some theorists accept Heidegger's assent as an invitation to flesh out the philosopher's formulation of animality, in light of contemporary research (Andersson 2017:66).<sup>172</sup> As I have shown in Chapter Three, several scientific observations, such as Gregory Berns's *The Dog Project*, start to scientifically prove the possibility and ways of the animal being – both as similar to the human way of being and irreducible to the human being. With reference to such projects and findings, a scholarly attempt is made to elaborate on the Heideggerian animal in current literature. For my purposes here I refer to some of these theoretical

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<sup>171</sup> In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger (1995[1938]:241) mentions some practical or biological examples to illustrate his thesis, such as studies on honeybees. However, his examples are often the subject of critique. For example, Derrida in *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question* (1989) argues that the honeybee example cannot be assimilated to support a theory on animals in general, as Heidegger suggests.

<sup>172</sup> For example, Andersson (2017:67) uses the results of "great ape studies" to show the advance cognition of animals in relation to the Heideggerian animal being.



pursuits, in particular the efforts of Buchanan (2007), James (2009), Bailey (2012) and Andersson (2017), to show how Heidegger's animal being can be expanded. In particular I consider, based on these secondary readings of Heidegger, the potential and affects of a possible *being-with* (*Mitsein*) animals.

Animal rights scholar Christiane Bailey proposes in her paper *Animal Dasein* (2012) that Heidegger's description of *Dasein* closely resembles the being of the animal. Bailey (2012) argues that Heidegger's earlier work, before *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, shows clear signs of the animal being "a being for whom living, being-in-itself, matters" and therefore a "being to which we must attribute, in a formal way, the kind of being which belongs to *Dasein*" (Heidegger in Bailey 2012:6). In short, Bailey (2012) uses examples from Heidegger's work leading up to *Being and Time* to show that Heidegger previously conceived of the animal to have as well as form world, similar to the human *Dasein*. Specifically, Bailey (2012:1) attempts to show how in her reading of Heidegger, the earlier ways of being that Heidegger assigns to *Dasein*, such as perception, disposition, desire, mobility, understanding, circumspection and voice, all manifest in animal life.<sup>173</sup> Finally, Bailey (2012:5) maintains that if we follow this line of thought that she traces in Heidegger's earlier work, *Dasein* is not just a human phenomenon and can also be assigned to animals. Consequently, Bailey (2012:5; 6) presents the idea of an "Animal *Dasein*": "the animal finds itself in the world ... [and] also *how* it finds itself in the world".<sup>174</sup> Thus, for Bailey, the animal shows signs of being aware of its being. Although Bailey does not delve into what exactly constitutes an "Animal *Dasein*", she does suggest that if we acknowledge the possibility of an Animal *Dasein* then animal and human can exist as *being-with* (*Mitsein*) one another.<sup>175</sup> In my understanding, an animal-human

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<sup>173</sup> Bailey's (2012) line of reasoning is clear, however I approach her reading of Heidegger's work with caution, since she does at times refer to Heidegger without clear contextualisation and admittedly only focus on those aspects of Heidegger's *Dasein* that correlates with animal life. In other words, she chooses to ignore places where Heidegger shows how the animal does not correlate with *Dasein* to form the animal being as he estimates in his later work as both 'having and not having' human world.

<sup>174</sup> Following a recent meme shared on Instagram humorously rethinking *Dasein* as 'dogsein', perhaps, in terms of the specific human-dog relation an animal *Dasein* can also amusingly be phrased as *dogsein*.

<sup>175</sup> Specifically, Bailey (2012:5) maintains that the animal's ability to communicate (by means other than human language) highlights its *Mitsein*.

*Mitsein* would then imply animals and humans sharing a common being and understanding of that being, inherently showing empathy towards and an ability to affectively attune to the other's being.

In a similar way, Brett Buchanan (2007) argues that Heidegger's formulation of the animal being changes post *Being and Time*. Buchanan (2007:63) notes that in a series of lectures presented by Heidegger in 1925, he maintained that "we miss the essential thing here if we don't see that the animal has a world. In the same way we [Dasein] too are always in a world in such a way that it is disclosed for us". Buchanan (2007:63) explains that Heidegger later retracts this claim that the animal has world like *Dasein*. However, for Buchanan (2007:63) Heidegger's later formulation of the animal being is ambiguous, especially since the philosopher elaborates on the animal being but not animal time. Buchanan (2007) then continues to show that if *Dasein* is constituted by temporality, the animal follows a similar pattern. By tracing three references to animals in *Being and Time*, Buchanan (2007:75) argues that Heidegger's question of the animal should also be examined in terms of temporality. If this is done we might come to realise that the animal and human are similar in that they are specific temporal beings: "the being of the animal is implicated in some 'kind' of time, that animal life is one of duration and longevity but not of being-towards-death, and finally that animals, unlike other things ready-to-hand, are self-producing". In this way, Buchanan (2007) asserts that animal being and human being can be assimilated in their temporal character.

In his discussion on phenomenology and the so-called "problem of animal minds", James (2009:37) examines whether or not, from a multispecies perspective, Heidegger's account of *Mitsein* can be adapted to include our relations with nonhuman others. Especially since the human-nonhuman relation has evolved to such an extent that humans are in a constant state of living in close relation with their animals, both in proximity and as a way of being (James 2009:38). James (2007:40) continues to explore the possibility of a human-animal *Mitsein* by citing Derrida (1991[1989]:57), Simon Glendinning (1998:72), John Caputo

(1993:127) and Charles S. Brown (2007:94).<sup>176</sup> On James's reading these authors all defend the idea of species being-with-others in that they speculate on the possibility of *being-with* (*Mitsein*) animals. Following this reasoning James (2009:41) concludes that "[t]here is no good reason ... to suppose that *Mitsein* can only encompass human others".

However, James (2009:42) importantly asserts that even if *being-with* animal is possible, the animal mind or complete way of being remains a mystery. In other words, if we are in constant relations of *being-with* animals, are we not also implying that we can come to understand their minds as we attune to the being of other *Dasein*'s? Why then the constant pursuit to unravel the animal mind? As James (2009:42) remarks "however much ink is spilt in an attempt to demonstrate our being-with them [animals], the hypothesis that animals are minded in this sense of the term remains unproven". Thus for James the idea of animal-human *Mitsein* or even an animal *Dasein*, as Bailey suggests, does not solve the problem of coming to understand and unravel what it means to exist as animal, for although *being-with* animals implies we can understand the animal it does not necessarily ring true. In fact, James (2009:45) continues to warn that a multispecies *Mitsein* (and the broader move towards nonhumanism in general) might potentially eliminate important differences between animal and human or reduce important aspects of animal minds to that of the human beings.<sup>177</sup>

Finally, Tommy Andersson (2017) attempts to further the Heideggerian approach to the question of the animal outside of the realm of ontology, by referring to contemporary scientific studies of animals. Andersson (2017:79) draws on

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<sup>176</sup> Specifically, James (2009:40) explains these authors' contributions to the possibility of an animal-human *Mitsein* as follows: "I am not the first to have considered the possibility of a being-with animals. Following a remark from Derrida (1989: 57), Simon Glendinning speculates on an 'original *Mitsein*' between humans and animals (1998: 72). Likewise, John D. Caputo chastises Heidegger for having ignored the possibility of 'a kind of *Mit-sein* ... a way to be 'with' animals' (1993: 127), while Charles S. Brown defends the notion of an interspecies 'being-with-others' (2007: 94). All of these writers suggest that we are 'with' animals, in an existential sense ...".

<sup>177</sup> Here James's argument supports my argument made in previous chapters, once again following Zylinska. In particular James (2009:45) mentions the example of boa constrictors, where studies have shown that these snakes perceive the world by means of three different integrated consciousnesses. James (2009:45) concludes that it is clear that the mind of the snake and the mind of the human "must be conceived as an entirely private arena and one that for we humans must remain radically unknowable".

various studies, including studies examining great apes and orang-utans, to show that contemporary scientific observations disprove Heidegger's formulation of the animal as poor in the world. For example, Andersson (2017:70) mentions that many animals show a sense of self-awareness when observed during a so-called 'mirror test': some animals are able to recognise, understand and show that they see themselves reflected in a mirror. In this way, animals can possibly have access to their own being and, in Heideggerian terms, the animal self is closely related to the human self. However, Andersson (2017:77-78), like James, suggests that scientific studies confirm an animal being of sorts, but not a being that can be assimilated with the human *Dasein*. Andersson (2017:77) proposes that we speak of animals within "otherworldly worlds" (instead of Heidegger's environment or *Umwelt*), to indicate that each being experiences a shared world from a different horizon. In other words, the human world and animal world are not completely inaccessible to each other, but also not reducible to one another.

Based on my understanding of these various extensions of Heidegger's theory of being, we can synthesise that in contemporary times the animal mind can be examined, understood and explained to a further extent than during that which Heidegger wrote his thesis. It is therefore possible to extend and elaborate on his understanding of the animal being. Yet, scientific research shows (as we have also come to understand in Chapter Three) that the animal being overlaps in part with the human *Dasein*, but also differs in part to the human *Dasein*. As a result, Heidegger's estimation of the irreducibility of the human and animal remains valid. Moreover, the possibility of an animal *Dasein* assimilated with the human *Dasein* resembles nonhumanist efforts to equivocate human and animal. Correspondingly, such notions become problematic and raise questions such as: if we can equivocate humans and animals ontologically, why do we not completely understand the animal mind? Or, if animal *Dasein* is similar to human *Dasein*, then animal *Dasein* is also in its very way of being responsible towards others. Hence, should an animal *Dasein* also be held responsible and accountable for its actions?

What do the various ways of extending Heidegger's animal philosophy tell us? Firstly, Heidegger's animal being as separate from human being should not be

ignored, no matter how we try to extend his theory: it should be kept in mind that Heidegger specifically maintains that the animal and human are both subjects with different worldly horizons, while the animal being is open to be shared and accessed by the human to a certain extent and from a specific human horizon. However, with the extension of Heideggerian theory, the accessibility of the animal horizon is now opening up or *becoming* more accessible.

Within the (more) open space of animal being, the possibility of human and animal *being-with* one another can be explored. But what constitutes the possibility of an animal-human *Mitsein*? From my own reading of Heidegger's formulation of both *Dasein* and *Mitsein*, recall that each *Dasein* holds a particular being, mineness or individuality regardless of its relations. In turn, in their being-with-others *Dasein* does not diminish into another being, instead it retains its own sense of being, while sharing and empathetically or affectively understanding another's way of being. Following this reading of Heidegger's *being-with* we can argue for a *being-with* animals, which encapsulates humans always-already existing in relation to animals. We can also simultaneously uphold Heidegger's formulation of not reducing the animal's own being to that of the human way of being, because even in *Mitsein* individual beings remain aware of their own being or horizon – they exist together yet they do not entangle in a multispecies sense. Consequently, on my reading, a human-animal *being-with* does not necessarily have to imply an animal *Dasein*. The animal can still retain its own being and environment. Moreover, an animal *Mitsein* implies that human and animal can possibly attune and share empathy towards one another, a relationship which we have already encountered in Chapter Three, as dogs show evidence of engaging empathetically with their human beings.

Animal theorist Joanna Latimer (2013:95) provides us with a helpful understanding of human *being-with* animal, in Heideggerian terms. In *Being Alongside: Rethinking Relations Amongst Different Kinds* (2013), Latimer explores the idea of humans and animals *being-with* each other. Latimer (2013:95) maintains that human-animal *Mitsein* is feasible, yet it has to be formulated as a particular form of *Mitsein* that does not collapse the two beings into one hybrid

being or relate to each other as *Dasein* to *Dasein*. It remains a Heideggerian *being-with* that also remains true to Heidegger's thesis of the animal, where animal and human are irreducible. Thus, Latimer's *Mitsein* is an accumulation of both Heidegger's philosophy of human being and animal being. Additionally, by *being-with* animals, humans *and animals* are required to completely attend to, care and engage with one another (Latimer 2013:93). They form, what Latimer calls an "alongsideness", which implies a relation that overcomes dualisms. In other words, by suggesting that animals and humans in their very way of being exist together, alongside one another, we overcome the idea of being formulated in binary opposition to one another. Yet the animal and human way of being remain individual and never synthesise to form a complete, new whole.

Consequently, the idea of humans and animals *being-with* one another appears to be a promising estimation of how exactly humans and animals live together non-anthropocentrically. Admittedly such a discussion requires much more philosophical exploration than what I have only briefly outlined here. For my purposes here, I only suggest the possibility of such a relation to establish that there is a close correlation between thinking of our being-with-other humans and thinking of our being-with-other animals. In turn setting up such a similarity allows me to place Heidegger's philosophy of *being-with* (both with humans and animals) in relation to Haraway's philosophy of companion species, which also thinks through a way of existing with animals.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, as a point of departure into the next layer of my exploration the notion of companion species (namely, understanding the nature of the human-nonhuman and human-dog relation), I explored Heidegger's philosophical enquiry into the notion of being. In particular, I unpacked Heidegger's understanding of being, especially in relation to being and care, responsibility and authenticity. I also focussed on Heidegger's notion of being in relation to others, establishing that being is always-already in relation to other beings. Thereafter, I considered how Heidegger's understanding of the animal being can promote a non-anthropocentric, ecological responsibility by insisting on the

irreducible beings of human and nonhumans. Ultimately, I showed that Heidegger's understanding of being and *being-with* can be expanded into the realm of nonhuman others.

Accordingly, I presented that we can possibly understand the relation between the human and nonhuman as a *being-with* animals, where humans and animals attend to, care and engage with one another, but do not implode. Reading Heidegger in this way places the idea of *being-with* nonhumans in relation to Haraway's notion of *becoming with* nonhumans. In the following chapter, I unpack Haraway's companion species and the idea of *becoming with* in further *detail* to eventually read Heidegger in relation to Haraway in Chapter Six.

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
***BECOMING WITH THE (NON)HUMAN:***  
**READING HARAWAY**

*All knowledge, the totality of all questions  
and all answers, is contained in the dog.<sup>178</sup>*

In the preceding chapter, I started to explore the question of what it specifically means for humans to exist with animals and nonhumans, by looking at Martin Heidegger's philosophy of *being-with*. Whilst Heidegger's philosophy of being and its formulation of the animal allows us to think through the specific way of *being-with* the animal, it is necessary to come back to the main theme of this study: the human and dog relation manifesting as companion species. Donna Haraway's (2008) notion of *becoming with* companion species – which I have already briefly outlined in Chapters One and Three of this study – also provides us with an outline of what it means to engage with the being of animals, specifically the dog. That is to say, Haraway, like Heidegger, also provides us with a philosophy of being. However, where Heidegger leads us into a philosophy of being considering the specific, yet different, way of being of animals and humans, Haraway estimates the specific way of being of human-nonhuman, entwined as one inseparable interspecies being. As I described in Chapter Four, Heidegger unpacks the human way of being and the animal way of being. Based on his unpacking, we come to realise that animal and human exist together with each other, engaging with the world and their own way of being together, albeit still as irreducible beings. In turn, Haraway (2003; 2008) sketches what it means to exist in constant hybrid relation with nonhuman others and how these multispecies relations engage with the world around them.

In this chapter, I explore and clarify Haraway's nonhumanist notion of *becoming with* companion species, which she outlines in *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2003) and its extended text *When Species Meet* (2008). Throughout my exploration of anthropocentrism and the turn towards nonhumanism, I have

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<sup>178</sup> Franz Kafka (1971) in Merritt (2018).



already pointed out that, in my view, nonhumanism remains a particularly human endeavour. Hence, in my reading of Haraway I show how, despite Haraway's insistence upon a nonhuman, multispecies reasoning, the idea of *becoming with* companion species remains filled with human constructs and questions. Furthermore, I also indicate where Haraway's idea of *becoming with* shows similarities to Heidegger's philosophy of being human, animal and *Mitsein*. In doing so, I not only untangle Haraway's knot of companion species, but also set up a reading of Haraway *with* Heidegger in Chapter Six – the final section of this layer of the study.

### 5.1 Becoming with Donna Haraway

*On the first pages of Haraway's (2008:3) When Species Meet the reader is met with two questions: "(1) Whom and what do I touch when I touch my dog? and (2) How is 'becoming with' a practice of becoming worldly?". When I encounter these questions, I realise that my own curiosities concerning my furry companions Fudge and Cody, introduced in Chapter Two, echo Haraway's key concerns that guide her study of companion species. Conceivably, following Haraway, my thoughts could be better phrased as: Whom and what do I touch when I touch Cody? How have I become worldly by becoming with Fudge for the past ten years?*

*I imagine some of my favourite interactions with Cody and Fudge:*

- 🐕 Every Tuesday, Fudge fetches the newspaper from the gate and whoever is at home to witness his actions responds by praising him, taking the paper and giving him a treat for his efforts. He then proceeds to protect the paper from Cody for the rest of the day to make sure my dad gets it in a readable condition in the evening.*
- 🐕 During the winter, Cody usually brings a chosen family member his jacket (custom-made to fit a pony, since he is too big for average-sized dog jackets) to keep him warm. Once you have managed to dress him in his pony jacket – which is not the easiest task considering that he is a 60kg dog about as high as the kitchen cupboards and pony jackets do not come with dog instructions – the lucky family member is rewarded with a big dog-kiss and cuddle.*

🐾 *Late afternoons are usually reserved for playtime with Fudge and Cody. Around four, Fudge collects the toys and Cody fetches the humans (usually by means of sleeve pulling and barking). There is tugging, throwing and (some) catching for about 20 minutes (by both humans and dogs), after which Fudge gets tired, takes all the toys and heads for the pool to indicate that playtime is over for the day.*

*Are these activities that determine the Heideggerian 'way of being' of our daily lives, according to Haraway, interactions of becoming with? What precisely does it mean to 'become with' Fudge and Cody? What is implied ontologically when I describe the humans and the dogs within our family unit as companion species?*

If we interpret Haraway's driving questions as sequential to one another, we can argue that the first question describes what happens during the actual event of *when* species meet: what happens when I put on Cody's jacket, take the newspaper from Fudge and play with them every afternoon? More precisely, *what* occurs when human and dog touch and interact or *who* do they become when they interact with the other species? Phrased in Heideggerian terms, Haraway asks how human-dog interaction affects their existence and allows them to make sense of their being-in-the-world.

Following this question, Haraway's second question asks us how this specific interaction allows us, as humans, to live well and get on together with other beings as well as ourselves. Thus, Haraway's initial question introduces us to the idea of *becoming with* nonhuman others and the second, probes into what the meaning of this interaction implies for an ethical existence with others. Notably, the second question, pertaining to ethics and rights, is a particularly human concern.<sup>179</sup> In an interview with Nicholas Gane, Haraway (2006:145) explains her questions more precisely: "When my dog and I touch, where and when are

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<sup>179</sup> As explained in Chapter Three, following Mitchell (in Wolfe 2003) the question of animal rights and the ethical treatment of animals stem from human concern and the relation between human and animal rights. These are all concepts that stem from human constructs and conceptualisation and, as far as we can know, is only advocated for or questioned by human beings. I also briefly refer to the ethical treatment of animals throughout Part Two of this study.

we? Which worldings and which sorts of temporalities and materialities erupt into this touch, and to what and whom is a response required?”. That is to say, when Fudge, Cody and I meet under specific circumstance, what meanings and realities are formed and how do these new behaviours prompt us to respond and reciprocate each other.

Recall that Haraway employs the notion of *becoming with* to explain the entwined relation between humans and nonhumans, from a nonhuman and multispecies perspective. For Haraway (2008:4) humans are always in the process of becoming and we come into being in coalition with nonhuman others, who entwine with our being. Therefore to “be one is always to *become with* many” (Haraway 2008:4). In this way, we can argue that Haraway’s interpretation of *becoming with* differs from Heidegger’s (2000[1935]:69) becoming (*Werden*), since (as explained in Chapter Four) Heidegger argues that becoming is a process that results in being – in other words it occurs and ends, while Haraway sees becoming as a never-ending process, a particular way of being.

As I have previously pointed out Haraway (2008:4) explains that species we encounter on a micro scale (i.e. bacteria) as well as on a larger scale (i.e. dogs) all entwine with the human being and come to exist within our biological organism. This entanglement is biological (Haraway 2003:8; 2008:4) and also occurs in the metaphysical realm of being – it influences and forms part of our understanding of what it means to exist in the world (Haraway 2008:4). Hence, Haraway’s *becoming with* describes the interactions between different species that result in a meaningful “infolding” towards one another, where both species are knotted in their total capacity of being-in-the-world (Jordan 2011:266). Thus, with the notion of *becoming with*, Haraway presents the idea that the very being of humans and nonhumans are constantly entangled in complex relations, to such an extent that their beings are fused together (*becoming with* one another). Species do not just exist alongside or with one another (as Heidegger suggests),

instead, according to Haraway, they are continuously developing and functioning in fusion with one another to form a hybrid way of being.<sup>180</sup>

Consequently, *becoming with* is used to describe what happens when species meet: they come into a new mode of being that is constantly entangled with their human or nonhuman other. Whatmore and Thorne (1998:186) describe the process of *becoming with* companion species as a “relational process” through which subjects are shaped by means of “social bonds, bodily compartments, and life habits that are complicated, but neither originated nor erased”. Accordingly, when I put on Cody’s jacket, take the newspaper from Fudge, or throw the ball to them – or as Haraway would describe it when I *touch* Fudge and Cody – I intertwine with them both physically, socially and habitually and we co-shape one another into different beings. By *becoming with* we do not mimic or become like our companion species, but we form a new multispecies entanglement together (Weinstein 2004:183). According to Haraway, I am a different being (biologically, psychologically and metaphysically) because of these interactions, I am knotted in an ontological relation with my dogs and in doing so I am *becoming with* my nonhuman others.

Haraway chooses to focus on the specific meeting between human and its so-called “domestic” nonhuman other (dogs), however she notes that there is a multitude of intertwined species *becoming with* one another on earth (Haraway 2008:5). It is not only humans and dogs that *become with* one another, but a multitude of other species, no matter their relation – human and nonhuman, human and human, or nonhuman and nonhuman (Proctor 2017:877). Haraway’s orientation towards the infolding of beings means that for her no clear boundaries exist. The lines between the traditional and modern, organic and technological as well as the human and nonhuman are all moulded together (Haraway 2008:8). Her blurred interspecies viewpoint implies, that even though she chooses to examine these “infoldings of the flesh” within figures such as cyborgs and dogs, Haraway (2008:8) does not disregard that other species that

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<sup>180</sup> For this reason, Jordan (2011:266) places Heidegger’s *being-with* in direct opposition to Haraway’s (2008) *becoming with*. However, as I argue throughout this study, I understand these two terms in relation to one another, showing several similarities.

do not include dogs or technologies, are also constantly infolding towards one another.

The second blurred boundary that Haraway mentions, namely the distinction between the organic and the technological, is particularly noteworthy. Haraway (2008:10) argues that all things that modernists typically included as being “Other to Man” in western culture, including “gods, machines, animals, monsters, creepy crawlies, women, servants and slaves, and noncitizens in general”, bring forth a sense of fear and threaten to disrupt all forms of self-entitlement. Perhaps the most unsettling of these is the divide between animals (organic) and machines (technology), which Haraway (2008:10) phrases as the divide between “lapdogs and laptops”. Compared to Heidegger’s (1977[1962]:8) critical argument that technology enframes everything in standing reserve, in her own attempt to counter human exceptionalism, Haraway (2008:10-11) argues that the lapdogs and the laptops all form part of interspecies dependencies – all entwined in nodes of *becoming with*. In other words, technology also holds a sense of agency and *becomes with* human and nonhuman others, playing an important part in the conversation of *becoming with*. Haraway (2008:12) then refers to the dog as her “co-pilot” – not only referring to the *becoming with* of human and animal, but also adding an additional strand of meaning in this knot of being: *becoming with* human, dog and technology.<sup>181</sup>

### **5.1.1 Philosophical underpinnings of Haraway’s becoming with**

As discussed in Chapter Three, Haraway’s exploration of the multispecies knot of being is informed by a variety of philosophical understandings, including posthumanism, nonhumanism, more-than-humanism and multispecies studies. Moreover, when reading *When Species Meet* (2008), it also becomes clear that Haraway draws and builds her theory on various philosophers, including Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Barbara Smuts and Vincent Despret. Eminently, Haraway omits Heidegger from this list. Although in what follows I only examine the philosophies that Haraway herself specifically refers to, I

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<sup>181</sup> Following both Heidegger and Haraway’s formulation of technology, I elaborate on the relation between technology, animal and human in Chapters Seven and Eight.

discuss the direct, irrefutable influence and relation between Heidegger and Haraway in the following chapter.

One of the first philosophical notions that comes to mind when considering *becoming with* is Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's postmodern idea of "becoming animal" in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980),<sup>182</sup> since becoming animal and *becoming with* seem so similar in their syntax. In addition, Deleuze and Guattari's objective with this seminal text, similar to Haraway, is to reconsider the common understanding of what it means to be human, arguing that being is not an unchanging state but a constant flow of *becoming with* others. Resembling Haraway, Deleuze and Guattari (1988[1980]:262) argue that becoming "is not a correspondence between relations. But neither is it a resemblance, an imitation, or, at the limit, an identification" rather it is a real state of existence where "[b]ecoming produces nothing other than itself" and therefore species are constantly existing as becoming beings.

At the start of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari define concepts such as assemblages, multiplicity and becomings, which prove helpful to understand Haraway's notion of *becoming with*. Arguing against dualistic thought, they assert that there are no subject and objects in the world, only "assemblages" of different things (Deleuze & Guattari 1988[1980]:4). According to Deleuze and Guattari (1988[1980]:4-6) an assemblage is a multiplicity, which "has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing in nature" (Deleuze & Guattari 1988[1980]:9). An assemblage is thus a unifying knot of elements that make up existence. Deleuze and Guattari (1988[1980]:5) compare these assemblages to rhizome root structures, which means assemblages are characteristically "rhizomatic": it is an entangled network of relations that can take on various forms or 'grow' in different ways and directions. In turn, Deleuze and Guattari (1988[1980]:11) maintain that assemblages are veritable, because

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<sup>182</sup> Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) is considered to be a seminal postmodern philosophical text, where the philosophers present a network of essays or "plateaus" concerning nonhumans anti-anthropocentrically living in multiplicity.

they are always becoming. The philosophers define becoming as follows, with the help of biologist Rémy Chauvin: “the *aparallel evolution* of two beings that have absolutely nothing to do with each other” (Deleuze & Guattari 1988[1980]:11, emphasis in original). That is to say becoming is “an exploding of two heterogeneous series” in order to signify something completely new (Deleuze & Guattari 1988[1980]:11).

Following Deleuze and Guattari, we can therefore understand that their becoming opposes Heidegger’s *being-with* to a certain extent. Even though both theories argue that two heterogeneous entities come together, Deleuze and Guattari’s entities assemble and *explode* into something new whereas Heidegger’s beings remain separate alongside each other. Following Deleuze and Guattari, Haraway’s *becoming with* also brings together two separate entities, yet for Haraway these two entities *implode* (in contrast to *explode*) into one another to form a hybrid or entangled being, which then exists as a new way of being, or then becoming. In this way Haraway’s implosive *becoming with* is a more intimate, inward, joining engagement, while Deleuze and Guattari’s exploding becoming is a more violent, joint eruption into a new way of sense-making.<sup>183</sup>

In the specific essay or so-called ‘plateau’, *1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible...* Deleuze and Guattari (1988[1980:232) distinguish between three types of animals: the Oedipal animal, the archetype animal and the demonic animal. The ‘Oedipal’ animal refers to animals with which individuals have an emotional relation, such as pets that are considered as members of a human family. The ‘State’ animal refers to animals featured in mythologies and spiritual teachings, usually occupying a powerful position. In turn, the ‘Demonic’ animal occurs as an in between being, between the living and inorganic world (Deleuze & Guattari 1988[1980]:240-241; Beaulieu 2011:77).<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> It is helpful to think of this distinction not only in terms of a physical entity exploding or imploding, but also in relation to the idea of imploding and exploding digital code. In the digital realm the exploding function *breaks up* code into one array, while the implode function returns elements of code into one array.

<sup>184</sup> Although Deleuze and Guattari (1988[1980]:265) divide animals into these three categories, they argue that any animal can be treated in such a way that it falls under any of the three categories. For example, treating a dog as pet places it as an Oedipal animal, treating the same

It is then the demonic animal that refers to “pack or affect animals that form a multiplicity, a becoming, a population, a tale” which has “affects and powers, involutions that grip every animal in a becoming just as powerful as that of human being with the animal” (Deleuze & Guattari 1988[1980]:241). Consequently, the authors employ the third type of ‘demonic’ animal to continue to consider assemblages and non-hierarchical relations, countering traditional modes of thinking that are visible in the other two animals, such as the Oedipal subject and patrilineage thought.

Finally, Deleuze and Guattari (1988[1980]:300) assert that every becoming, every multiplicity still has its own particular uniqueness or specificity, which the authors refer to as “a thisness” or that Heidegger (1962[1927]:68) would refer to as a definitive being or “mineness”. Thus, for Deleuze and Guattari, although entities occur as knotted multiplicities, the multiplicities have an individuality of their own. For this reason, Deleuze and Guattari (1988[1980]:287) describe the becoming of different individual multiplicities, for instance “becoming-animal”, “becoming-woman” or “becoming-vegetable”.<sup>185</sup> In particular, the multiplicity encounter of becoming-animal or becoming-dog is described as follows:

Do not imitate a dog, but make your organism enter into composition with *something else* in such a way that the particles emitted from the aggregate thus composed will be canine as a function of the relation of movement and rest, or of molecular proximity, into which they enter. (Deleuze & Guattari 1988[1980]:302, emphasis in original).

From my admittedly brief and simplified synopsis of Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas regarding multispecies relations and becoming, it appears evident that these

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dog as a mythical character places it as a state animal, while the dog living in a pack of multiplicity is considered to be a demonic animal.

<sup>185</sup> On my reading, when Deleuze and Guattari start to describe becoming in this compound manner, it brings back a certain dualistic reasoning that counters their initial establishing of becoming. When reading these compound becomings we are left to wonder *who* is becoming? Although Deleuze and Guattari directly imply the opposite – it should be read as “a becoming-animal” – the compounds do imply a subject turning into or imitating something else, or a specific organism entering a relation to become another. It thus still easily reads as subject-becoming-animal, which does not relate to a new signification, but rather an assimilation of an already existing entity. Even though I am aware that the authors do not intend their text to be read in this way, I cannot help but wonder whether their formulation remains inadvertently dualistic.



philosophical notions closely relate to Haraway's conceptualisation of *becoming with* and companion species. Williams (2009:52), for example, notes that both Haraway as well as Deleuze and Guattari create a picture of how human subjectivity is shaped by the histories and lineages of the earth. In turn, both sources are critical in understanding and addressing the current global environmental problems related to the Anthropocene (Williams 2009:44). Notably, Weinstein (2004:183) also argues that Haraway's description of the non-imitating fashion of becoming-other in *The Companion Species Manifesto*, is similar to Deleuze and Guattari's (in Weinstein 2004:183) *becoming-animal* that does "not involve imitating a dog, nor an analogy of relations". Interestingly, Despret (2013:37-38) – who Haraway credits for the term *becoming with* – draws on Deleuze and Guattari's notion of assemblages to consider subjectivity, agency and what "makes beings capable of making other beings capable" in *From Secret Agents to Interagency*.<sup>186</sup> Therefore, based on these similarities and their influence on the original notion of *becoming with*, Deleuze and Guattari's theories cannot be ignored and are important to take into consideration when discussing Haraway's companion species.

However, despite the obvious influence and parallels between Haraway and Deleuze and Guattari, Haraway (2008:27) emphasises that she does not wish to relate her ideas to those shared in *A Thousand Plateaus*. For Haraway (2008:27), Deleuze and Guattari present ideas that are seemingly similar to hers and she hoped to see their work as "an ally for the tasks of companion species". Yet she maintains that her *becoming with* cannot align with Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-animal, since Haraway is critical of the fact that becoming-animal does not deal with the important concrete realities of actual animals (Haraway 2008:27). She criticises "the two writers' scorn for all that is mundane and ordinary and the profound absence of curiosity about or respect for and with actual animals, even as innumerable references to diverse animals are invoked to figure the authors' anti-Oedipal and anticapitalist [*sic*] project" (Haraway 2008:27). Haraway (2008:28) explains that, in her view, Deleuze and Guattari configure the idea of multiplicity in animal relations to emphasise qualities of

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<sup>186</sup> I elaborate on Despret's concept and impact on Haraway further on in this chapter.

greatness or the sublime, and in doing so, they seem to not only omit, but also dismiss the everyday, earthly, in-the-flesh interactions of animals, especially those that we encounter everyday such as the household cat or dog, in favour of the exceptional.

Williams (2009:52) neatly summarises this difference between Haraway and Deleuze and Guattari as a theoretical deviation where:

Deleuze and Guattari position themselves as best as they can from the outside ... in a position from which they write poetically of deep-time earth histories ... Haraway, conversely, situates knowledge from the inside, from the human hearth, and speaks about our meeting ... between human and dog, occasionally looking out towards the species that have not shared that history.<sup>187</sup>

Haraway's rejection of Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-animal reveals another important aspect of *becoming with*, which she articulates as "playing in the mud" (Haraway 2008:30). Companion species studies emergent practices, actual happenings within the day-to-day acts of living with others (Haraway 2003:7). As Williams notes above, Haraway considers "vulnerable, on-the-ground" (Haraway 2003:7) and fleshy narratives of human-dog relations. She is not concerned with supreme or extraordinary relations, but rather with the scruffy everyday acts of living, since these are the stories that allow us to know into being and *become with* one another (Haraway 2008:31).

In other words, Haraway *is* interested in my daily four o'clock play sessions with Fudge and Cody. It is these occasions where we – humans and dogs – literally and figuratively play in the mud that allows us to *become with* one another and teach us about our multispecies relations. Therefore *becoming with* is an encounter and an infolding between humans and nonhumans, which occurs

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<sup>187</sup> Interestingly the difference between Haraway and Deleuze and Guattari as noted here, resemble the distinction between Haraway's *becoming with* and Deleuze and Guattari's *becoming* that I noted earlier. Williams argues that Haraway's horizon of interpretation is inward, just as her *becoming with* is an inward implosion. In turn Williams estimates that Deleuze and Guattari speak from an external, outward position, just as their becoming explodes outward into the new.

within the mud of the ordinary multispecies living on earth (Haraway 2008:1).<sup>188</sup> Said differently, Haraway's species are, in a Heideggerian sense, beings-in-the-world or then 'becoming-with-in-the-world' engaging as *becoming with* in the specific parameters of a real, physical world.

Rather than relate companion species to Deleuze and Guattari, Haraway acknowledges the impact of key philosopher Jacques Derrida's *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* (1997) on her formulation of multispecies relations. As I already explored extensively, Derrida's (2004[1997]:126) main objective, like Haraway (as well as Deleuze and Guattari), is to rethink the anthropocentric categories "between the human subject, on the one hand, and the nonsubject that is the animal in general, on the other". Derrida's look at the irreducible, subjective animal being can be traced throughout Haraway's dealings with companion species. Haraway (2008:19-22) explains that she draws on the following aspects of Derrida's thoughts:<sup>189</sup>

- 1) Derrida centres his argument on a real (being-in-the-world) encounter with an everyday companion, his cat, and stresses the fact that his cat is meant as a real physical being and not an allegory.
- 2) In acknowledging that the animal looks back at the human, Derrida gives the animal the agency to respond. That is to say the cat is also a subject.
- 3) Derrida does not attempt to anthropomorphise his cat by speaking and thinking for him or making presumptions of what the cat could possibly be thinking.
- 4) He critiques those that engage with animals solely as mythological or fictional characters or those that refuse to consider that the animal has a point of view.

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<sup>188</sup> Haraway (2008:1; 303) argues that only by studying these ordinary, muddy interactions an *autre-mondialisation* or *alter-globalisation* (informed by Beatriz Preciado's formulation of the term) can be achieved. With these terms Haraway refers to her second point of enquiry – becoming worldly – establishing an untroubled, prosperous and respectful other formulation of the world.

<sup>189</sup> The four key trails of Derrida's thought that Haraway draws on stand in clear contrast to Deleuze and Guattari's becoming animal and helps support Haraway's critique against *A Thousand Plateaus*.

The above-mentioned aspects of Derrida's thoughts fuel Haraway's ideas on companion species. As we have seen Haraway similarly focusses on everyday encounters with nonhuman others, arguing that nonhumans are subjects in the world, and acknowledges that humans cannot 'think' for their companion species (so to speak).<sup>190</sup> In addition, both Derrida and Haraway also counter human exceptionalism in its broadest form.

Despite this immense and evident influence from Derrida, Haraway argues that the philosopher has one shortcoming that sets her thoughts apart from his: "he [Derrida] did not become curious about what the cat might actually be doing, feeling, thinking, or perhaps making available to him in looking back at him that morning" (Haraway 2008:20). According to Haraway, through his conscious effort to refuse to objectify the animal, Derrida did not consider those that study and interact with animals as mutual subjects, who engage with others as "beings who look back and whose look their own intersects" (Haraway 2008:21). That is to say, Haraway joins the likes of theorists such as Matthew Calarco, whose critique of Derrida I mention earlier. Like Haraway, Calarco asserts that Derrida gave his cat a point of view, but he did not consider how to go about finding out what this view could be.<sup>191</sup> However, as I have suggested, perhaps Derrida did not do so to emphasise the autonomy of the animal and show that any attempt to try and understand what the cat thinks is a fundamentally human endeavour – a critical part of his argument. Yet, in doing so, Haraway (2008:20) reasons that Derrida "missed a possible invitation" to discover a world of positive accounts of researchers working, studying and living in response to animals.

Therefore, what Derrida considered to be an impossible and continuously human question – understanding what his cat's gaze might actually consist of – is for Haraway a very possible question that can be answered by examining those that engage with animals and have come to experience the response of the animal. For Haraway (2008:21) there exists various attempts in contemporary society

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<sup>190</sup> See my discussion of Haraway's notion of *becoming with* in Chapter Three and the initial unpacking of companion species in the introduction to this study.

<sup>191</sup> In addition, Csicsery-Ronay (2010:147) also agrees with Haraway's assessment of Derrida's so-called 'missed opportunity' and argues that Haraway takes Derrida's thoughts as a challenge.

that probe into the question of the animal gaze that do not anthropomorphise the animal and is not fuelled by human pursuits. In particular, she maintains that there exist accounts from certain ethologists, animal behavioural scientists, biologists, philosophical reasoning, popular publishing and a whole world of common people, who engage with animals outside of this human exceptionalism, western canon (Haraway 2008:21). For Haraway, these nonhumanist practitioners can help formulate positive knowledge, which might aid in understanding where the gaze of human and nonhuman meet. Specifically, Haraway (2008:21) mentions anthropologists Gregory Bateson and Barbara Smuts, primatologist Jane Goodall and animal behaviourist Marc Bekoff, as specific examples of those that have “met the gaze of living, diverse animals and in response undone and redone themselves and their sciences”.

Since I have already explored Smuts, Goodall and Bekoff’s attempts extensively in Chapter Three, I only briefly recall their work here, following Haraway, to show how their nonhuman phenomenological approach impacts her formulation of *becoming with*. As an example of a theorist who responds to animals, somebody “who did learn to look back, as well as to recognize [*sic*] that she was looked at”, Haraway (2008:23) relates Barbara Smuts studies on baboon behaviour in Kenya.<sup>192</sup> In her first attempts to study baboons, Smuts would take on a position of neutrality, enter the baboons’ territory, keep to herself and observe the baboons as objects. However, she realised that this approach was not working, because the baboons refused to adjust to or become used to her presence. In an effort to speed up the process of habituation, Smuts changed her human behaviour to match that of the baboons’ behaviour. She changed her physical cues to *respond* to cues from the baboons and became a subject that the baboons could communicate with. Smuts (as quoted in Haraway 2008:25, emphasis added) relates how she entered into a receptive relation with the baboons:

By acknowledging a baboon’s presence, I expressed *respect*, and by *responding* in ways I picked up from them, I let the baboons know that my intentions were

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<sup>192</sup> For more on Smuts’s baboon study see Haraway (2008:23-26) and *Encounters with animal minds* (Smuts 2001).

benign and that I assumed they likewise meant me no harm. Once this was clearly established in both directions we could *relax* in each other's company.

One of the key aspects of Smuts' research is not only that she responded to the nonhuman baboon behaviour, but the manner in which she responded. As the emphasis in the quotation above indicates, she responded with respect. For Haraway (2008:23) this is one of the key aspects of the practice of *becoming with*: to respond is to respect. It is only by responding with respect to the nonhuman other that both parties can be reshaped and come into worldly beings. Thus, Haraway's *becoming with* is to tie nonhumans and humans together through earthly encounters of regard and respect (Haraway 2008:19). Exactly what this act of respect *entails* is examined later in this chapter.

Another aspect that I want to emphasise in Smuts' quote is the result of her act of *becoming with* in response and respect. Smuts argues that both baboon and human could relax once a sense of respect was established. That is to say, the exercise of *becoming with* brought about a sense of peace, ease and pleasure. Accordingly, I would argue that *becoming with* is not merely a serious or straining act, but also one that brings enjoyment. In her critique on Derrida, Haraway (2008:22) questions whether or not Derrida would have found a sense of "play" and "joy" if he had responded to his cat's gaze, introducing the possible gleeful nature of companion species.

Following the joy and play included in Haraway's interspecies relations, it is then not surprising that she compares multispecies relations, where human and nonhuman *become with* one another, to the joyful act of dancing. For Haraway (2008:25), humans and nonhumans are joined in a dance of relating.<sup>193</sup> Humans and nonhumans become on-going dancers that are "redone through the patterns they enact" and communicate with one another through the "flow of entangled meaningful bodies in time" (Haraway 2008:25; 26). Even if this dance is not always harmonious – sometimes the partners are mistimed and asynchronous –

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<sup>193</sup> Interestingly, Heidegger's philosophy of being-in-the-world can similarly also be compared to a dance, where the awareness of being goes through the body like a movement: a non-thinking, inherent motion of awareness of being-in-the-world (Ruspoli 2010).

the dance remains in a consistent state of engagement, which means the relation will also constantly be reshaped (Haraway 2008:26). This dance of relation implies that strict human linguistic communication is not necessary to *become with*, since any form of communication creates a continuous loop of response, respect and interspecies relations of *becoming with* (Haraway 2008:26-27). In *The Companion Species Manifesto*, Haraway (2003:62) explains this dance of relation in a more simplified manner:

The task is to become coherent enough in an incoherent world to engage in a joint dance of being that breeds respect and response in the flesh, in the run, on the course. And then to remember how to live like that at every scale, with all the partners.

It is also worth briefly discussing other theorists that Haraway mentions, values and turns to, to support her ideas on multispecies relations and her critique of Derrida's thoughts. Lynn Margulis and her collaborator Dorian Sagan's body of work on bacteria and micro-organisms aids Haraway in the understanding of how species infold towards one another to form complex entities. They introduce ideas such as "[a]ttraction, merger, fusion, incorporation, co-habitation, recombination", which couple together organisms in a giant web of interaction (Margulis and Sagan as quoted in Haraway 2008:31-32).<sup>194</sup> Haraway (2008:32) explains that it is combinations of organisms that "give meaning to the 'becoming with' of companion species in naturecultures".<sup>195</sup> Thus the various ways of species to come together, whether they are fixed or periodic occurrences, are all ways that humans and nonhumans can practice *becoming with* one another.

In addition, Haraway (2008:32) also refers to Scott Gilbert's (2006) notion of "interspecies epigenesis", which suggests that biological interactions with others

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<sup>194</sup> Symbiogenesis refers to biological process of evolution where cells, organisms, genomes and other microbes, fuse and merge into one another, infolding towards each other to create compound beings in a never-ending process (Haraway 2008:31). In other words, bacteria and microbes evolved and sustain all life on earth by *becoming with* (Lorimer & Davies 2010).

<sup>195</sup> Lorimer and Davies (2010:41) explain that Haraway's exploration highlights intersections between Deleuze's biophilosophy and Margulis and Sagan's symbiogenesis, since "she identifies their shared disavowal of the ontological priority of the individual organism ... [and] explores the emphasis they place on the inventive and promiscuous processes of becoming, differentiation and flourishing".

allow organisms to achieve their full potential, as well as Thelma Rowell's uncommon practices of studying animals. Rowell examines animals by treating them as subjects, *becoming with* them and treating them with "worldly politeness". For Haraway, Rowell's approaches highlight the complexity of species relations and additional ways of *being-with* nonhuman others that she wishes to think through in her own work (Haraway 2008:34; 35). By referring to Margulis, Gilbert and Rowell's body of work, it becomes clear that Haraway argues that *becoming with* companion species brings about fused, complex and merged beings, inseparable from one another. Although, as I will show, this definition does not always reflect in her particular unpacking of what constitutes companion species with reference to muddy, being-in-the-world, examples.

The final scholar Haraway briefly mentions throughout *When Species Meet* that I would argue is key to understanding the notion of *becoming with*, is Belgian philosopher and psychologist Vinciane Despret. Haraway (2008:16; 308n19) mentions in a footnote in her introduction to companion species that she adapts the actual term '*becoming with*' from Despret's article *The Body We Care For: Figures of Anthro-zoo-genesis* (2004). In this article Despret (2004:130) introduces a "new way of being human" through the idea of anthro-zoo-genesis. Despret (2004) attempts to theorise how human bodies and nonhuman bodies respond affectively to one another and come to share a common sense of being as they embody each other's interests, minds, habits and even sometimes language. Here Despret's affective response is more extensive than Heidegger's (1995[1938]:66-67) shared attunements between beings. For Despret, being is shared to such an extent that a new being, with new physicality, thought and language comes into existence, whereas Heidegger's shared attunements retains individuality between beings. In other words, Despret notes actual instances where humans and nonhumans exchange aspects of being and come to embody one another to such an extent that they exchange and respond to emotional and affective experiences.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Haraway (2015:5) describes Despret as a researcher who "thinks-with other beings, human and not". In other words, according to Haraway, Despret practices *becoming with* others as a researcher and does not simply describe this relation as an observation.



Parallel to Haraway (and possibly Heidegger), Despret (2004:115) emphasises the reciprocal nature of these human-nonhuman relations, as she argues that these interactions are more than empathetic and zoomorphic encounters, considering that both parties “induce and are induced, affect and are affected ... [b]oth embody each other’s mind”.<sup>197</sup> & <sup>198</sup> For Despret (2004:131), this is a new kind of “with-ness” and “being with” – perhaps directly extending Heidegger’s notion of *being-with* – for humans and nonhumans, where human world and nonhuman world learn to be affected, in body and mind, by one another.

The multispecies similarities between Despret and Haraway are evident and highlight why Haraway chose to reassign the new idea of human *with* nonhuman to her ideas of *becoming with* and companion species. However, by only briefly mentioning Despret, some key aspects of what precisely is meant by the term ‘*becoming with*’ can be overlooked. If this original reference to ‘with-ness’ is also taken into account to untangle what Haraway’s *becoming with* means, we note that embodiment of affects and emotions are critical in such human-nonhuman relations. Despret (2004:114) maintains that for humans and nonhumans to be with one another (in this new manner) requires a bodily exchange of sorts. This co-embodiment does not necessarily occur in a literal, trans-species sense, but through trust and interest from both parties concerning one another, which leads to both bodies being physically and emotionally affected – to such an extent that identities (or beings) are altered (Despret 2004:114).

In a more recent essay, *From Secret Agents to Interagency* (2013), Despret considers the question concerning subject-object agency in human-nonhuman studies. In circular fashion, Despret now adopts and extends Haraway’s theories on companion species. She argues that if the human-nonhuman relation is

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<sup>197</sup> Zoomorphic derives from the Greek *zoön* (animal) and *morphē* (shape or form) and can be defined as giving human nonhuman (animal) characteristics or human taking on animal form (Despret 2004:129). Despret argues that *becoming with* implies more than just an imagining of a human taking on an animal form.

<sup>198</sup> Despret (2004:128) emphasises that what she describes as *becoming with* is not empathy, since empathy only focusses on one subject and only highlights an inhabitation of the other, not the relation between two actors. “Empathy allows us to talk about what it is to be (like) the other, but does not raise the question ‘what it is to be *with* the other’. Empathy is more like ‘filling up oneself’ than taking into account the attunement” (Despret 2004:128).

reframed as assemblages that produce agency together in the world, the idea of agency and subject-object relations gain new meaning and companion species now become “one for another and one with another companion-agents” (Despret 2013:29). In her discussion Despret (2013:33) describes the embodied relation between humans and nonhumans that produce an assembled sense of agency as “two beings liberated from pure reproductive motives, and enjoying together an unprecedented, creative, improvised, and queer ‘becoming together’”. She explains that humans are affected and can affect nonhuman others and vice versa. Moreover, nonhumans and humans are constantly participating and implicated in each other’s lives (Despret 2013:35-36). We can therefore equate Despret’s ‘becoming together’ to Haraway’s *becoming with* and consequently also arguably add that *becoming with* is closely linked to a sense of mutual agency for companion species. In particular, the agency of *becoming with* or becoming together implies that companion species have the capability to compel each other to do things, provoke, motivate as well as request certain things from one another (Despret 2013:40). Thus, by further enquiring into Despret’s original and current use of the term, we can reason that Haraway’s relational dance of *becoming with* is not one of impotency or powerlessness but rather “through encounters, conflicts, collaborations, frictions, affinities – a rapport of forces” (Despret 2013:44).

As I have pointed out in Chapter Three, in my view the attempts of Smuts, Goodall and Bekoff – which Haraway finds instrumental to her exploration of *becoming with* – fall under the broader nonhuman approach of a nonhuman phenomenological entwinement, which amounts to a new way of describing the manner of being in the world for both humans and nonhumans. However, as I have also argued earlier, despite these theorists’ best efforts their research remains reliant on the account of the human researcher and in relation to the human experience within the animal entanglement. In other words, these theorists, whom Haraway cites, can never solely speak to the animal’s experience and lifeworld. For example, Smuts, when behaving as baboon, remained a human attempting to think as baboon, in a similar way to what Heidegger suggests we are able to think *as if* or transpose into animal. Smuts kept her human horizon as

the baboons kept their way of being. This is quite evident in the way both the baboons and Smuts went about their doings as usual, once they were aware of the others being (once again emulating Heidegger).

I find it interesting that Haraway refers to such wavering accounts, in the sense that they do not precisely represent what she establishes in reference to Despret, Gilbert and Margulis. Haraway (2008:23) herself acknowledges that nonhuman projects enquiring into what the animal wants is a “risky project”, because it is so complicated to attempt to understand the animal sans human – or as I have argued it is near impossible since we cannot (yet) escape the human horizon. Nevertheless, Haraway (2008:23) basis her notion of *becoming with* companion species on such human-nonhuman entangled projects, mainly because she, following Despret, reasons that in their *becoming with* human and nonhuman are already one whole, new embodied unit of being and therefore there is no need to distinguish between species experiences. However, we are left wondering why Haraway insists on referring to such accounts where a clear human horizon remains identifiable? In other words, on my reading there is an implicit irreducibility between human and nonhuman, even in Haraway’s work, which cannot be evaded, regardless of Haraway’s insistence that *becoming with* is a joint encounter.

In this way, Haraway’s theory, like the work of nonhuman phenomenologists, is somewhat contradictory: Haraway entangles the human-nonhuman to enquire into their being together, which she calls *becoming with*, yet she does so to specifically enquire into the specific being of the dog. Haraway (in Cassidy 2003) tells us that, inspired by Derrida’s hesitation and in contrast to his return to the human subject, she “want[s] to know about the dogs” – she specifically states that she wants to understand the specific animal way of being, something she critiques Derrida for not engaging with. But she takes away their individual being by entangling them with humans. That is to say, I cannot help but wonder how a hybrid unit of human-nonhuman signification can also speak for the individual entities in this entanglement, if their individuality ipso facto disappears by *becoming with*?

Additionally, because Haraway takes such a wide variety of philosophies into account, her hybrid notion of companion species is often opposed by her own thought and observations (for example in the case of reference to Derrida and nonhuman phenomenology). Even though Haraway, parallel to Despret, reasons human and dog exist as a new entity of being altogether, I maintain that we can still clearly trace the human way of being and the animal way of being within the relation. On my reading of Haraway's companion species, human and dog remain irreducible, even in their entanglement of *becoming with*. As a result, I am tempted to read *becoming with* companion species as a Heideggerian *being-with* where both human and dog exist together. To support my reasoning, I highlight how Haraway cannot escape the human, showing clear trails of human thought and constructs throughout her exploration of companion species. I then extend my argument by reading Haraway with Heidegger in Chapter Six.

## 5.2 Elements of *becoming with*

Thus far in this chapter I have introduced and unpacked Haraway's notion of *becoming with* companion species. As established, *becoming with* describes existence as a constant process of co-shaping and relating to other species (human and nonhuman). *Becoming with* others is thus a knotted ontology of kinship. Based on this understanding, I identify six (knotted) core elements of *becoming with*, which are important to consider when analysing multispecies or more-than-human relations. The elements include: (1) response/respect; (2) historicity; (3) contact zones; (4) play; (5) flourishing; (6) acts of love and; (7) touch.

As explained, *becoming with* nonhuman others is an entangled phenomenon and therefore these elements overlap and converge in multispecies relations. However, it is helpful to identify and discuss these aspects individually, in order to gain a better understanding of companion species as a whole. The various elements are identified based on the above discussion as well as my own reading of Haraway's *The Companion Species Manifesto* and *When Species Meet*. As a result, to avoid repetitiveness, they are only briefly mentioned and considered below. As I have indicated thus far, I question Haraway's hybrid companion

species arguing that, at times, Haraway does not completely infold human and dog, but rather explores their *being-with* one another as indelible individual beings. Throughout my discussion of the core elements of *becoming with* I therefore also highlight how some of these concepts are fundamentally human components and evoke irreducible differences between beings.

### **5.2.1 Response and respect**

Haraway's consideration of Derrida's cat and Smut's baboon-study highlights the importance of response and respect in companion species who are *becoming* worldly *with* one another. She explains: "Species interdependence is the name of the worlding game on earth, and that game must be one of *response and respect*. That is the play of companion species *learning to pay attention*" (Haraway 2008:19, emphasis added). In a similar way to Heidegger, who argues that inherently beings reciprocally respond (to others and their own being) and care for others, she argues that responding to others and showing respect requires an awareness of one another. By identifying our companion species, getting to know them and being curious about them, we are responding to them and, as a result, *becoming with* them.

To be curious about others is to find them "actively interesting" and anticipate interesting and surprising interactions. This is what enables us to "sense and respond" (Haraway [on Despret] 2015:5). Haraway (2015:6, emphasis in original) explains that "[a]sking questions comes to mean both asking what another finds intriguing and also how learning to engage *that* changes everybody in unforeseeable ways". Thus, to respond implies becoming interested and asking questions. Additionally, like Heidegger and Derrida, Haraway argues that humans should also be mindful that nonhuman others have a response of their own, to which we should pay attention. Yet, unlike Heidegger and Derrida, Haraway argues that humans should aim to understand and expect to answer to the nonhuman being. By responding as well as by acknowledging another's (subjective) response, a *becoming with* relation is established.

According to Haraway (2008:76), to respond to others means, “to recognize [*sic*] copresence in relations of use”. In other words, to respond acknowledges the subjective presence of another in a beneficial relationship. For Haraway there is a difference between react and response. Although there “is no formula for response” it is “not merely to react with a fixed calculus” (Haraway 2008:77). A reaction is instant, unconscious, driven by a moment and does not necessarily consider others (human or nonhuman). In turn, a response is a considered action, which takes into account the co-presence of others, their ontological existence and their own capacity for response. Haraway (2008:77-78) argues that anthropocentric western philosophers (specifically Haraway [2008:77-78] identifies Kant and Levinas) often argue that only humans can respond, while nonhumans, including animals, simply react. It is exactly this human exceptionalism argument Haraway (2008:295) counters by advocating multispecies response. Following Derrida, Haraway (2008:79; 295) argues that we should focus on distinguishing responses from reactions and acknowledge that animals and nonhuman others also respond. In doing so, we are, in turn, responding. *Becoming with* others therefore implies a ring of response, constantly looping back towards acknowledging one another.

The ring of multispecies response reminds of Heidegger’s (1995[1938]:249) encircled animal, which constantly relates to and responds reciprocally with the environmental circuit surrounding it. Notably, however Heidegger’s encircled animal allows us as humans to observe the animal respond (or as Haraway would phrase it, ‘react’) to its environment, sans our human input. In turn, Haraway’s circle of response aims to do the opposite by specifically involving the human in the animal’s response. Although Haraway’s attempt does seem to establish the animal being more equally than Heidegger – whose encircled animal as we have seen is often accused of reducing the animal to instincts and drives – she also brings forth a human horizon to understanding the animal that Heidegger (and Derrida) try to avoid. It is after all the *human* who has to respond to the animal and the *human* who has to attempt to understand the animal being in Haraway’s companion species circle.

Furthermore, for Haraway, the circle of response implies acting responsibly in multispecies relations. The ability to respond to others is responsibility, which she prefers to relate as “response-ability” (Haraway 2008:23). Said differently, by responding you are practicing *becoming with* responsibly. Haraway (2008:23) also considers respect another interchangeable aspect of response, since “[t]o respond was to respect”. She argues that it is this link that Derrida failed to see in his thinking on nonhuman response: “He came right to the edge of respect, of the move to *respecere*, but he was sidetracked ... by his own linked worries about being naked in front of his cat” (Haraway 2008:20). According to Haraway, his lack of concern for *how* his cat responds and his occupation with his own subjectivity highlights a key aspect of Haraway’s idea of response. To respond and respect implies enquiry into *another’s* response, becoming curious about multispecies and their own responses, which in turn, for Haraway, manifests respect. As per Haraway, Derrida responded to his cat by recognising its own way of being, but if he had enquired into the cat’s own response, he would have increased his understanding of nonhuman others and embarked on *becoming with* – the act of respect. Hence, *becoming with* is entangled within a circle of response and respect when species meet:

To hold in regard, to respond, to look back reciprocally, to notice, to pay attention, to have courteous regard for, to esteem ... [t]o knot companion species together in encounter, in regard and respect, is to enter the world of becoming with, where *who and what we are* is precisely what is at stake (Haraway 2008:19).

Haraway’s formulation of respect stands in strong opposition to Heidegger’s (1995[1938]:195) assertion that respect for other entities stem from acknowledging difference. Recalling that for Heidegger, the respect and even affinity between human and animal is a direct result of their differences, not their response and curiosity of each other’s being. In fact, Heidegger (1962[1927]:178) estimates curiosity as a manner of “inauthentic” being, alongside ambiguity and idle talk. In other words, Heidegger argues that we respect beings by keeping our distance (so to speak), recognising their individual beings and our inability to comprehend them fully. Conversely, Haraway maintains that we respect the animal being by becoming directly involved with

its being, infolding into it and entangling with its existence. Phrased in this manner, I question whether Haraway's entanglement is truly respectful or just another way for the human being to enforce itself onto the being of the animal. After all, does the human curiosity into the animal too often not result in the unethical treatment of the animal, only to satisfy and enlarge our own quest for understanding?<sup>199</sup>

### 5.2.2 *Historicity*

Part of responding and *becoming with* companion species also means digging deeper into the enmeshed webs of history of species that become entwined with our own in interspecies relations (Haraway 2008:100). To be entwined in an interspecies relationship connotes inheriting the history of multiple species. A species "historicity" (Haraway 2003:7), "lived history" (Haraway 2008:37), "evolution stories" (Haraway 2003:26) or "inherited histories" (Haraway 2003:7) is increasingly important in companion species relations. Hird (2010:36) notes how Haraway's kinship acknowledges that species have "ontologies-in-themselves" or separate heritages before they encounter one another. It is these heritages and histories, which each subject 'brings to the meeting table' (so to speak) and becomes woven together when species meet.

Haraway (2008:37-38) argues that "looking back" at the histories of our multispecies counterparts allows us to *become with* a nonhuman other, respond to them as well as inherit their histories – their story – as our own. As an example, Haraway introduces the *Tsitsikamma Wolf Sanctuary* in the Eastern Cape, South Africa – a non-profit wildlife organisation providing a refuge for

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<sup>199</sup> Additionally, I wonder whether the animal is reciprocally curious about the human way of being? In this case, I think it is important to note Haraway's specific choice of exploring the human-dog relation as *becoming with* companion species. It is somewhat uncomplicated to argue that the human's curiosity into the dog's existence is reciprocated by the dog, since human and dog live in constant relation to one another and dogs, as I have shown, are naturally and physically inclined towards the human way of life, as a result of domestication. In other words, the human is inherently part of the dog's life. Moreover, several human-dog encounters have indicated how dogs show interest in their human's habits. Thus, in the case of the dog, we do not object to entangling with their lives or to the notion that trying to understand the dog is a sign of respect. However, when thinking of other species, for example elephants, the Heideggerian objective observation of their habits seems unequivocally less intrusive (or more respectful) to try and understand and respect the animals, instead of placing them under stress to attempt to entangle our beings to achieve a shared way of being that does not come naturally to them.



abused and abandoned wolves in South Africa. She provides an evolution story for the wolves and argues, that by becoming aware of and interacting with the story and these companion species, we “live” their histories with them.<sup>200</sup> Haraway (2008:41) explains that inheriting nonhuman histories can be complex, since no evolution story is clear-cut and can be quite a tangled narrative in itself, however the point of delving into such stories is “not to celebrate complexity but to become worldly and to respond”. Becoming familiar with nonhuman (past) narratives allows us to respond and respect nonhuman others and increases awareness of the knots of multiplicity in our interspecies beings. It promotes what Haraway calls (2008:38) “*autres-mondialisations*” – becoming worldly or a composed, flourishing and courteous world.

Focussing specifically on dogs as companion species, Haraway (2008:97) also refers to “breed stories”, the histories and origins of a specific dog breed, its ancestry and relational ties. Dog owners tend to show a particular interest in their dogs’ origin-*tails* (Haraway 2003:26), perhaps inherently driven by their existing companionship. Breed stories include narratives of breed type, breed standard, breed history as well as breed traits and characteristics. In the day-to-day interaction between dog and dog owner, breed histories are also inherited and, more importantly, impact the current relation we have with our companions. Haraway (2008:97) explains: “That’s why I have to tell these stories – to tease out the personal and collective response required now, not centuries ago”. In addition, how our own histories interact with our companions’ histories is also critical. In other words, it is not just nonhuman histories that matter, but also their entanglement with human stories and references. Like Heidegger, Haraway (2006:146) maintains that humans are not ahistorical, or without history and context. For Haraway, they have ‘breed stories’ of their own, as they are results of relations with living *and* non-living entities as well as the

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<sup>200</sup> For more on the specific history of the *Tsitsikamma Wolf Sanctuary* see Haraway (2008:36-37). In the specific case of this wolf sanctuary, Haraway’s arguments do not necessarily ring true. A recent visit to the sanctuary reveals that not much emphasis is placed on the complex history of the wolves in South Africa. In fact, visitors are more intrigued to interact with an actual wolf and very little emphasis is placed on the animal’s history. Additionally, the sanctuary is somewhat run down and does not provide a flourishing environment for the animals. That is to say, based on my experience at the sanctuary the animals seem to be objectified zoo-animals and do not present a moment to share a lived history with a nonhuman, as Haraway argues.

environmental epoch and evolutionary history (Haraway 2006:146). Consequently, breed stories teach humans how to cohabitate with their nonhuman companions and establishes a meaningful and layered interspecies relation (Haraway 2008:98).

In reading Haraway's breed stories I suggest that these specific dog histories are essentially human constructs. Breed stories and dog histories, just like history itself, are not told by dogs, but rather constructed by human thought into human narratives that allow us to make sense of existence. In *A Place for Stories: Nature, History and Narrative*, environmental historian William Cronon (1992:1349) explains that historians "configure the events of the past into causal sequences – stories – that order and simplify those events to give them new meanings". Thus, even though history is based on documented events, *humans* construct these events into narratives. Cronon (1992:1349) argues that, as an historian who focusses mainly on the environment and history of nature, he too cannot avoid constructing history into narratives and stories based on scientific records and biological documentation. Cronon admits that "[i]n doing so, we move well beyond nature into the intensely human realm of value". In other words, history, even the history of animals and the environment, is enframed (*Gestell*) – to borrow a term from Heidegger – by human stories. As we have seen throughout Chapters Two and Three, people tell the very history of the dog (from wolf to household pet) in varying ways. For example, in some instances the dog is framed with agency 'domesticating' itself, while in others the dog's evolution is a direct result of human supremacy.<sup>201</sup>

To my thinking, Haraway emulates that breed histories are human constructs as she labels them breed 'stories' – that is something told by humans themselves.<sup>202</sup> Furthermore, in *When Species Meet*, Haraway dedicates an entire chapter

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<sup>201</sup> For a further explanation of such instances refer to my discussion on domestication in Chapter Two, as well as Alice Robert's *Tamed: Ten Species that Changed Our World* (2017) and Laura Hobgood-Oster's *A Dog's History of the World: Canines and the Domestication of Humans* (2014).

<sup>202</sup> Patton (2010:577) contends that Haraway uses the theme of stories throughout her work on companion species. Indeed, Haraway (2003:17) notes: "Stories are much bigger than ideologies. In that is our hope". Interestingly, Patton (2010:577) also reads Derrida's experience with his cat as a story the philosopher tells to transgress the boundaries of anthropocentrism.

entitled *Cloning mutts, saving tigers* (2008:133-157) to discussing the human manipulation of dogs, including the act of breeding. Here she makes no secret of the fact that breeding is a human, and sometimes anthropocentric, act: “responsible dog breeding is a cottage industry, made up largely of amateur communities and individuals who are not scientific or medical professionals and who breed modest numbers of dogs at considerable cost to themselves over many years and with impressive dedication and passion” (Haraway 2008:139). Thus, Haraway knowingly uses a human construct and human act to explain responsible acts of *becoming with*; her notion of nonhuman companion species paradoxically manifests in fundamentally human behaviour.

Nonetheless, Haraway (2008:105) encourages those bound in kinship to live in response to the histories they encounter of their multispecies others. To *become with* others by engaging with nonhuman others’ histories, stories and origins makes multispecies relations a layered, complex and dense phenomenon. More importantly, it becomes a phenomenon where two different species’ *unique* histories and horizons are equally important. Although these histories are shared and become enmeshed Haraway urges us to untangle the individual history of each being in the knot of companion species, since historicity gives *becoming with* and companion species context, intricacy and depth, forming a crucial aspect of such relations. Thus, on my reading, by insisting on the separate historicity of the species *becoming with* each other, Haraway conserves a certain degree (or layers) of distinctiveness in her knot of companion species. By delving into the histories of our dogs and their owners “Dogland turns out to be built from *layers* of locals and globals” and helps “shape a worldly consciousness” (Haraway 2003:63; 64, emphasis added). Additionally, Haraway’s worldly consciousness and awareness of historicity echoes Heidegger’s awareness of being and temporal cognisance.

### **5.2.3 Contact zones**

In *When Species Meet* Haraway explores the phenomenon of interspecies encounters. However, in her formulation of *becoming with* companion species, she also tells us *where* species meet. The actual location or zone where species

come into contact with each other (both physically and figuratively) forms a particular part of the nodes of those bound in significant otherness. Hinchliffe (2010:34, emphasis in original) explains that companion species also entail aspects of spatiality including matters “as mundane as *where* things happen and as complex as how spaces are made as species meet, and as tricky as trying to think about more than one meeting and more than one companion species”. In reference to the spatial aspect or the geography of kinship, Haraway (2008:4) calls the spaces and places where species meet “contact zones”.<sup>203</sup> Therefore, contact zones are where and when species encounter, entangle and multiply.

Haraway’s use of the term ‘contact zones’ originates in colonial and postcolonial studies. Linguistic theorist, Mary Louise Pratt, coined the term in her seminal text *Imperial Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992). Pratt adapts ‘contact zones’ from ‘contact languages’, which refers to improvised languages that evolve amongst different speaking native groups continuously communicating with one another. She uses the term to describe these colonial cultural encounters. For Pratt (1991:34) contact zones refer to “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other”. Following Pratt, as well as historian Jim Clifford, Haraway (2008:217) describes contact zones in terms of multispecies relations as the meeting point between different species, where notably all species already exist relationally, with history and with context. In particular, contact zones are where species with historicity respond to one another. It is where response-ability happens. Interestingly, Haraway (2008:217) notes that some of the most applicable examples of contact zones are found in science fiction, with a description that reminds of her own cyborg figure: “in which aliens meet up in bars and redo one another molecule by molecule”.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Contact zones can refer to both spaces (being more figurative, broad and abstract with several connotations and attachments) and places (a very specific and identifiable site), following Michel de Certeau’s infamous distinction in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) where “space is practiced place” (1984:117).

<sup>204</sup> Therefore, I interpret becoming (or being) cyborg arguably also as a nonhuman-technology contact zone. I discuss Haraway’s cyborg figure and its relation to companion species further in Chapter Eight.

Haraway (2008:217) mentions that contact zones also have certain characteristics. For example, she notes that assemblages of biological species typically compose best outside of their comfort zones (Haraway 2008:217). As a result, contact zones of *becoming with* are rarely safe, risk-free spaces and often challenge species to move outside of their immediate circumstances. Furthermore, contact zones are not just spaces where species meet, but also (akin to *becoming with*) where species transform: “contact zones are where the action is, and current interactions change interactions to follow ... [c]ontact zones change the subject – all the subjects – in surprising ways” (Haraway 2008:219). These challenging and transforming spaces are, as a result, also increasingly complex and involve multiple geographies and interactions (Hinchliffe 2010:35). Their complexity reminds us that in unpacking and examining species *becoming with* one another a “complex knot of wheres” also needs to be explored (Hinchliffe 2010:35).

Markedly, Haraway finally also compares the response that takes place between dog and human within the contact zone (here specifically during dog training classes) to the Heideggerian idea of “the open” (*Offen*), arguing that this space requests us to consider: “Here we are, and so what are we to become?” (Haraway 2008:221).<sup>205</sup> In describing the lived experience of being human (*Dasein*), Heidegger (1962[1927]:139) explains that we as humans are able to notice a reality, a space or a “there” of being. In other words, according to Heidegger, “we are open to a reality that is open to us” (Russon & Jacobson 2013:345). The ability to identify and become aware of the so-called ‘opening’ prompts us to reflect on what it means to ‘be there’ and what we experience in this space. Or, like I mentioned before, Heidegger (1962[1927]:68) argues that there is “disclosedness” to being in that we are always open to the possibility of being. Additionally in relation to the philosophy of the animal being Heidegger makes it

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<sup>205</sup> Notably, this is the only place throughout her theory of companion species that Haraway refers to Heideggerian thought directly. Additionally, Haraway reconfigures Heidegger’s ‘openness’ (*offen*). According to Metcalf (2008:115), “Heidegger’s clearing is opened by the ultimate emptiness or purposelessness of human existence. However, the open that both she [Haraway] and I [Metcalf] require to articulate human-critter entanglements is created by a rich material-discursive apparatus that demands the fullest attention and a double-edged curiosity, not boredom”.

clear that the ‘as if’ structure of being (which allows humans to think *as* animal) occurs in such an open space: “What is meant here by the ‘as,’ ... is ... the open of a free space hardly surmised and heeded, in which beings come into play as such, namely as the beings they *are*, into the *play of their being*” (Heidegger as quoted in Beinsteiner 2017:50, emphasis in original).<sup>206</sup> In other words, Haraway and Heidegger’s species meet in the same ontological opening.

It is thus this clearing of our awareness of being, that Haraway compares to the space of the contact zone that allows us to articulate companion species. The incorporation of Heidegger’s interpretation, which specifically refers to a *human* awareness or openness to all being, in her nonhumanist point of view is interesting and perhaps highlights the role (or authority) of the human in potential contact zones. This role is also emphasised in Pratt’s (1991:34) original use of the term often occurring “in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today”. Are humans then in control of contact zones? Or are they merely the species asked to answer the ontological questions these zones pose?

Interestingly, Haraway (2008:220-221) acknowledges the authority of the human in certain dog-human contact zones (such as agility training classes): “Agility is a human-designed sport ... I would be a liar to claim that agility is a utopia of equality and spontaneous nature ... The human decides for the dog what the acceptable criteria of performance will be”. However, she maintains that both dog and human respond and meet within these spaces, no matter the power balance: “The human must respond to the authority of the dog’s actual performance” (Haraway 2008:221). Nevertheless, on my reading Haraway once again estimates a very distinctive opening for the human in the contact zone, no matter its entanglement.

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<sup>206</sup> Interestingly, here Heidegger uses the idea of playing, which as we will see, Haraway also emphasises in her exploration of companion species.

### 5.2.4 Play

In *The Companion Species Manifesto*, Haraway (2003:12, emphasis added) explains that the human-dog relationship is filled with various positive and negative acts including “waste, cruelty, indifference, ignorance, and loss ... joy, invention, labor, intelligence and *play*”. Although she mentions play at the end of the list it becomes one of the most integral parts of *becoming with* other species, since companion species are always “in mortal play” (Haraway 2008:19) with one another. 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).

Haraway (2008:232) explains that most dogs inherently know how to play, want to play and usually go to great efforts to find a partner to play with.<sup>207</sup> In turn, (most) humans find various ways to play with their dogs, while others use play as a tool for training practices. She explains that play is an instrument that builds physical, mental and affective connections, teaches players about one another and also provides great amounts of joy (Haraway 2008:232).

However, Haraway emphasises that playing with dogs is not always simple and instinctive for humans. Several humans need to be taught how to play with their furry companions or want to play with dogs as if they were “fantasy children in fur coats or humanoid partners in double tennis” (Haraway 2008:232). Playing with companion species is more complex than projecting typical human-on-human play (a kind of ‘anthropo-play’) behaviour onto pets. It involves interpreting one another and creating a new way of interacting with one another, learning, responding and respecting. Although humans can teach other humans how to play with dogs in this way, Haraway (2008:232) argues that dogs are

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<sup>207</sup> The scholarly enquiry into the act of play emphasises that play extends far beyond human life and that playing is applicable to both human and animal life, as it allows beings to make sense of existence (Huizinga 1949:i). Dutch historian, Huizinga (1949:i) explains that “[p]lay is older than culture, for culture, however inadequately defined, always presupposes human society, and animals have not waited for man to teach them their playing”. Additionally, play is often framed as a transcendent act that surpasses being-in-the-world. I discuss this idea further in the Addendum of this study with reference to Gadamer (1975), Huizinga (1949), Massumi (2014) and Lechte (2017).

probably the best teachers in this regard. During play, it is not human playing with dog or human teaching dog to play like human, but human and dog playing *together*, or even dog leading human in play (Haraway 2008:232). This is the play of companion species that allows them to *become with* one another. Haraway (2008:237) provides an eloquent description of what play means in a multispecies relation, highlighting the act's significance:

Play is the practice that makes us new, that makes us into something that is neither one nor two, that brings us into the open where purposes and functions are given a rest. Strangers in mindful hominid and candid flesh, we play with each other and become significant others to each other.

It is clear that, for Haraway, play is a critical part of what happens in the contact zone of *becoming with*, as it is one of the key fleshy activities that forms significant otherness.<sup>208</sup>

Notably, Haraway (2008:238) distinguishes between games and play. She makes it clear that games are not play. Play is an open process that is not determined by rules, while games are made-up of rules. For Haraway play – and therefore *becoming with* – cannot occur bounded by rules as well as human language. It is not an innocent act (2008:155), but it is a connotative action with semiotic significance. In other words, play is not always verbatim, neither is it pure, as it occurs in the muddy, fleshy contact zones between species. Accordingly, “[p]lay can occur only among those willing to risk letting go of the literal” (Haraway 2008:239). Instead, play consists of being co-present with another, experiencing together without necessarily having a specific goal or purpose in mind.<sup>209</sup> The co-presence of another brings enjoyment and brings with it potential and new meaning, or as Haraway (2008:240) states “[p]lay proposes”. For Haraway, play proposes significant otherness, companionship and *becoming with*.

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<sup>208</sup> Despite Haraway's argument for taking play seriously, some argue that the accent on the playful takes away from the urgency of multispecies relations in the current environmental context and brings a transcendental aspect to her argument. For example, Csicsery-Ronay (2010:143, emphasis added) argues that Haraway's play “downplay[s] the most urgent political problems posed by the human domination of animals by escaping into a *metaphysical* vision and playful anecdote”. I discuss this aspect further in the Addendum accompanying the study.

<sup>209</sup> Here Haraway's definition of play echoes Huizinga (1949) and Gadamer's (1975) sentiments that play is a mode of being in itself.



Similar to Haraway, in *What Animals Teach Us About Politics* (2014), philosopher Brian Massumi aims to “demonstrate that play and creativity are common to human and animals, even in the context of instinctual behaviour” (Lechte 2017:670). Massumi (2014) shows that the politics of play emphasises the fundamental features that are common to all beings – animals and humans alike. According to Massumi (2014:38) play “re-establishes us with our animality”.

What stands out in Massumi’s discussion of play in comparison to Haraway’s multispecies play, is that for Massumi: “In the event of play, animal and human come together without merging into one another” (Lechte 2017:671): “Where the immanent modulation and stylistic deformation overlap – that is to say, in the gesture itself – the arena of combat and that of play enter into a *zone of indiscernibility*, without the difference being erased (Massumi 2014:6, emphasis in original). In other words, although human and animal become tangled together and perhaps equal during play, their differences, or distinctiveness, continuous to be identifiable; their unique being stays intact. Thus if we grasp Haraway’s play of *becoming with* in relation to Massumi’s politics of play, we can possibly interpret the play of companion species as: a process where human and dog engage together in reciprocal response, yet it does not have to be a nonhuman act that implodes both the being of the human and animal to nothing other than aliveness or ‘bare life’ (Lechte 2017:672).

Once more, Haraway uses a notion familiar to the human world and human way of being to explore companion species. Regardless of play’s surpassing and unrestrained nature, it is a process that has shaped human civilisation and remains relevant to several human activities and behaviours in contemporary society. Huizinga (1949:173) asserts that human civilization is “in its earliest phases, played. It does not come from play like a babe detaching itself from the womb: it arises *in* and *as* play, and never leaves it”. In other words, although play cannot be instrumentalised and does not belong fully to humans, it remains a very particular way of making sense of being human. We cannot refer to play outside the human experience thereof, since our being arises as play. In this way Haraway’s *becoming with* through play implies that we are compelled to pay

attention to the human horizon in a nonhuman relation. After all, according to Haraway (2008:232), human and dog are *co-present* when playing, not one fused present being.

### **5.2.5 Flourishing**

Another key aspect of *becoming with* is the idea, or more specifically, the ethics of flourishing. With the idea of multispecies relations and companion species, Haraway is not only interested in species living together, but also in *how* they live together. For Haraway it is crucial that multispecies relations flourish. Following feminist and ethical theorist Chris Cuomo as well as philosopher and companion trainer Vicki Hearne, Haraway (2008:134) argues that interspecies kinship is not merely about a relief of suffering, but about the thriving, prospering and growth of species (together). The outcome, as well as the ethical goal of companionship and *becoming with* is therefore to ensure flourishing or to live well together (Haraway 2008:134). Similar to Heidegger's (1962[1927]:237) *being-with*, *becoming with* nonhuman others implies an ethics of caring for (*Sorge*) the other (Monguilod 2006:255). Throughout the various relations Haraway explores, she consistently questions the flourishing and well-being of species. For her there is no point to companion species if *both* species are not flourishing.

In *The Companion Species Manifesto* Haraway (2003:41, emphasis in original) notes that her key pursuit is "*companion species flourishing*". For her, flourishing stands in strong contrast to the humanist ideal of relief of suffering. Creating flourishing relationships does not simply imply removing painful relations, where humans treat nonhumans harmfully; instead flourishing focusses on companion happiness (Haraway 2003:52). A happiness that is, according to Haraway, specific to and possible for each nonhuman and human kin. Thus Haraway (2003:53) sees (alongside Hearne and Cuomo) "not only the humans, but also the dogs, as being with species-specific capacity for moral understanding and serious achievement".

Although the idea(l) of multispecies flourishing is clear and perhaps even self-evident in relations of significant otherness subject to the broader turn to nonhumanism, it becomes equivocal in its measurement. Haraway (2008:90) herself questions how to measure flourishing amongst nonhumans as she poses this question to her fellow biologists: “How do good zoologists learn to see when animals are not flourishing?”. How can we be sure our dogs are thriving? Tied into the knot of companion species, Haraway refers back to *becoming with*, arguing that caring in a companion species manner, through response-ability, respect and in contact zones, we can learn about our nonhuman counterparts and discover how to prompt flourishing not only for them, but also for ourselves. Even so, the question remains who determines whether or not the dog is flourishing? Echoing the establishment of animal rights – which I previously argued is a fundamental human concept in relation to human rights – the key pursuit of Haraway’s companion species can only be measured and be spoken for by the human.

### ***5.2.6 Acts of love***

With her concept of companion species Haraway establishes that the relation of interspecies significant otherness is a manifestation of love. Her prominent focus on love is somewhat surprising, since love is such a complex and perhaps less concrete term (so to speak) for a biologist to focus on. Nevertheless, Haraway argues that human-dog relations are not only filled with narratives of evolution, training and breeding, but also with *stories* of love.<sup>210</sup> Throughout *When Species Meet*, we are constantly reminded that kinship and *becoming with* responsibly implies respect, trust and love (Monguilod 2006:255).

By introducing love as a crucial element in companion species relations, Haraway enters an abstract zone. Love is a complicated term to define and is understood differently amongst various cultures, societies and disciplines. Studying the phenomenon of love is also often a point of controversy between science and religion, since scientific evidence of love is often hard to examine and

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<sup>210</sup> Haraway reiterates the word ‘stories’ – thus narratives that *humans* tell about their loving relations with companion species.

explain. However, recently theorists, including Stephen Post and Jill Neimark (2006) as well as Jay Oord (2010), have become more inclined to take an interdisciplinary approach (much like interspecies studies) to explore love, by incorporating scientific research and humanities' theories, creating a field of study, which Oord (2010:5) describes as a "love, science, and theology symbiosis". Hence, as the research of love takes on an entangled nature, it echoes in Haraway's knotted notion of *becoming with*.

In my opinion, Haraway's emphasis on love in the relation of significant otherness adds an element of transcendence to the otherwise immanent study of earthly relations. Although her conceptualisation of love differs from a spiritual love, it (alongside flourishing) remains a somewhat illusive concept that stems from religious and so-called 'otherworldly' beliefs.<sup>211</sup> For this reason, I suggest that the notion of *becoming with*, although focussing in the actual 'mud' of things, still relates to non-material or metaphysical interactions. The transcendental therefore comes into *play*, to a certain extent, in kinship.<sup>212</sup> To support my argument I refer to Csicsery-Ronay (2010:153):

Joy and love, Haraway's two most powerful sources of knowledge, are not only emotions; they are for most religions spiritual forces. Despite her frequently stated disdain for religion, Haraway's work increasingly engages spiritual thought and we should not be surprised if the repressed sacred makes a comeback after species meet.

Once again, Haraway's understanding of love in companion species does not correlate to the typical popular understanding of unconditional love. Haraway (2003:34) maintains that love between companion species is "not about unconditional love, but about seeking to inhabit an inter-subjective world that is about meeting the other in all the fleshy detail of mortal relationship". Haraway's love is about commitment and respect, engaging in acts of play, training and

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<sup>211</sup> Haraway's referral to love becomes a point of critique for many, arguing that it is a point of weakness, since it is not a concrete phenomenon (Monguilod 2006:255) and a subjective experience that only those that love dogs might understand (Zylinska 2012:208). In addition, the idea of love is also often labelled as a human phenomenon that is constantly in flux, contradicting Haraway's nonhuman approach (Zylinska 2012:208).

<sup>212</sup> I elaborate on the otherworldly aspect of species kinship in the Addendum of this study.

breeding. It does not indicate affection without limitations. Rather it argues for a response to the *differences* in humans and nonhumans, in order to become coherent through these differences. In this way, *becoming with* is an act of fleshy-love. This love is a result of transforming and re-doing in the contact zone of multispecies relations, of becoming together and co-traveling through the world. It is a bond of trust and *becoming with* between human and nonhuman.

Monguilod (2006:256) explains that Haraway's love implies knowing and acknowledging that the other may never be fully understood, as well as not projecting the self onto the other but rather seeking – with respect – to communicate and connect beyond differences. This love implies acting mindfully, paying attention, constant participation and admitting to not always understanding the other's needs (Haraway 2003:35; 45; 52). Through such a love, respect and trust is established between companion species. Notably, this view of the other, also known as “negative knowledge” originates in theological thought (Monguilod 2006:256) and reminds of the prominent philosophy of love and care of nonhuman philosopher Michel Serres's belief in the power of love. In *The Natural Contract* Serres (1995:50) argues that love has the power to unify species on earth as well as species with the environment: “Love the bond that unites your plot of Earth, the bond that makes kin and stranger resemble each other”. Thus, like Serres, Haraway also optimistically suggests that love has a force to bound species together towards a better future (Monguilod 2006:256).

Additionally, Haraway's use of love reminds of Heidegger's ethics of self-limitation demanded by love (Monguilod 2006:256) and Luce Irigaray's *The Way of Love* (2002). Monguilod (2006:256) asserts that Heidegger and Haraway “both regard ‘self-limitation’ as an ethical practice that love demands. Indeed, in some cases the wellbeing of the other involves ‘doing less’ or ‘doing differently’, rather than ‘doing more’”.<sup>213</sup> In this way, Haraway's formulation of love between companion species challenges her own formulation of responsibility. Here Haraway, more like Heidegger, suggests that love involves doing less, respecting

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<sup>213</sup> Notably, theorist Margaret Toyé (2012) also identifies and develops Haraway's theory in relation to Luce Irigaray's notion of sexual difference in *The Way of Love*, which, in turn, is based on Heidegger's philosophy of being.

differences, whereas previously she asserted that responsibility and respect demands curiosity and probing into the being of the other.

In this sense both Heidegger and Haraway's use of love correlates with Luce Irigaray's *The Way of Love* (2002), which explores a wisdom of love and how to love towards the other, not in spite of but because of differences. Notably, Irigaray (2002:xii) states that *The Way of Love* stems prominently from Heidegger's thought and is in constant conversation with Heidegger's philosophy of being and *being-with*. Irigaray (2002:88) suggests, in conversation with Heidegger, that *being-with* and being-in-the-world requires recognition of differences and individual subjectivities. Thus, for Irigaray both love and respect manifests as a result of differences. In this way, Irigaray (1996:104) suggests that we love *to* the other, where *to* represents a site of non-reduction: "I recognize you signifies that you are different from me, that I cannot identify myself (with) nor master your becoming. I will never be your master. And it's this negative that enables me to go towards you". Haraway's love, in my view, echoes Irigaray and Heidegger and similarly calls for an acknowledgement of differences, of individual subjects when they come together. In other words, here, in the love between companion species, the human being and animal being are equally important.

Reminding of Deleuze and Guattari's (1988[1980]:300) specific ways of becoming (becoming-animal, becoming-woman etc.), Haraway's companion species love also becomes a personal and specific matter. Haraway asserts that the love that emerges between human and nonhuman others pertains only to that specific relation between entities and might differ significantly to the love that is experienced in another species relation. That is to say, the love between human loving cat can differ from the love experienced between human and dog. For this reason, *becoming with* is not a universal love, but one that emerges from human and dog or the self and the specific 'co-existee'. That is to say, there exists a difference between the love that emerges from the entanglements between Fudge and I and Fudge and my mom, for example. Or the love between Haraway and her dog Cayenne might differ from the love experienced between Cody and I.

Nevertheless, most importantly, for Haraway, the love exists, and it exists because we *become with* one another.

With the reference to love, Haraway also introduces the question of whether or not the dog loves the human in return? As I have previously explored, this is a tricky question to answer and, as Haraway (2003:38) herself explains, the love of the dog for the human is usually determined by the human's perception itself – and perhaps also the human's own definition of love. In other words, from our inevitable human horizon, the love of the human-dog relation relies on the perceived human interpretation thereof. Nevertheless, love as such a transcendent and elusive phenomenon is hard to pinpoint as an exclusively human or animal experience. Additionally, as we previously discovered through the neuroscientific studies of Gregory Berns (2017) in *The Dog Project*, dogs show cognitive similarities to the human experience of love and affection. Therefore, love cannot necessarily always be estimated as a solely human experience and the idea that companion species love each other reciprocally could be a very real possibility.

### **5.2.7 Touch**

In multiple discussions, Haraway (2008:263; 36; 37; 202; 105) notes that the actions that occur inside of contact zones revolve around touch. In fact, the idea of touch is prominent throughout *When Species Meet* as it is introduced in the very first driving question behind Haraway's book ("Whom and what do I touch when I touch my dog?"). Even the cover illustrations of the book (Figure 8) shows human and dog, touching paw and hand, in an image that reminds of Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam* (1508-1512) (Figure 9) or its recent technological parodies (Figure 10). Haraway argues that an exchange of touch between companion species allows them to *become with* one another. The action "makes possible" (Haraway 2008:65) the transformation occurring within the contact zone. Touch (both physically and metaphorically – regarding the other) is therefore an exceedingly important aspect of companion species relations and *becoming with* one another.



Figure 8: Cover illustrations of Haraway's *When Species Meet*. (Haraway 2008).

In many ways touch also brings together the various elements of Haraway's kinship, identified thus far: Haraway argues that when companion species touch in contact zones as well as during play, they inherit histories and become entangled, encouraging response, respect, responsibility, love and living well together. As Haraway (2008:36) explains: "Touch, regard, looking back, becoming with – all these make us responsible in unpredictable ways for which worlds take shape. In touch and regard, partners willy nilly are in the miscegenous mud that infuses our bodies with all that brought that contact into being. Touch and regard have consequences".

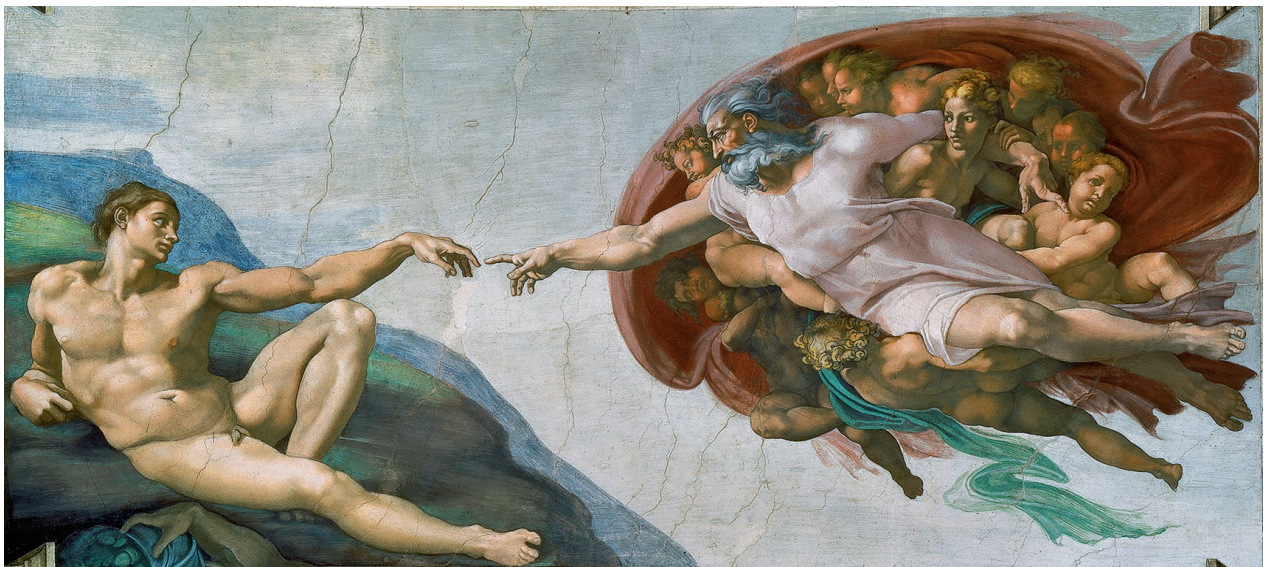


Figure 9: Michelangelo, *The Creation of Adam*, 1508-1512.  
Paint and plaster, 2,8m x 5,7m.  
Sistine Chapel.  
(ItalianRenaissance.org 2015).



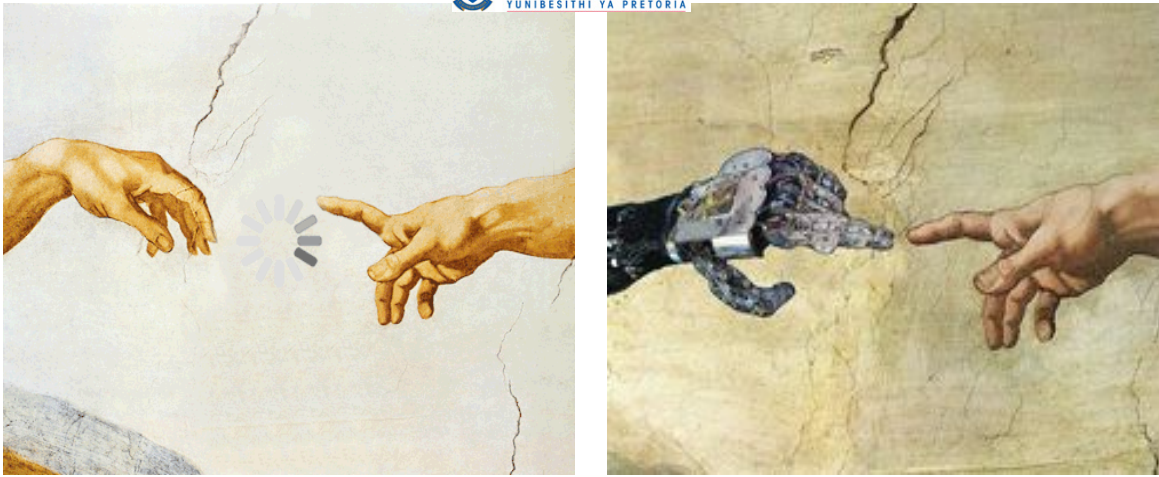


Figure 10: Technological parodies as memes of *The Creation of Adam*. (Caldwell 2015).

*The Creation of Adam* (Michelangelo 1508-1512) is famously known to depict the moment before the finger of God touches Adam. Upon contact it is believed that Adam comes into contact with creation and is shaped, retains life, a soul, love and the divine-human relation (Boyle 1998:2), portraying and highlighting the importance of touch. Yet, the fresco depicts Adam and God's fingers as *nearly* touching or *anticipating* touch (a thought that is interestingly also replicated in its technological parodies). With the slight gap between fingers, Michelangelo arguably expressed the philosophical and religious beliefs of humanism and depicted a tension between the earthly idealism strive towards the sublime transcendent (Boyle 1998:3). In current times Haraway's nonhumanist philosophy is illustrated at the start of *When Species Meet* (2008), in an image of man's hand and dog's paw clearly touching. In comparison to *The Creation of Adam*, Haraway's emphasis on the sense, act and implications of touch – heightened by the fore image – reminds us of the difference between humanism and companion species. In *becoming with*, there is no idealistic strive, yearning or detachment from the nonhuman. Species touch. And through touch they are shaped, they love, and they entangle in companionship. To touch is to *become with*, and in Haraway's worldly human-dog relation touch is inevitable.

Eminently, Heidegger also uses the sensory experience of touch in his animal philosophy. However, unlike Haraway, Heidegger uses touch to express the difference in which different beings access the world. In *The Fundamental Concept of Metaphysics* Heidegger (1995[1938]:196) asserts that the basic experience of touching reveals that the thing we are touching is present and with us in the world, as a particular thing and it also reveals our relation to that thing

(Bejinariu 2018:240).<sup>214</sup> At the same time, Heidegger's touch also then, as we have seen, reveals that beings access the human world differently and that we cannot know the sensation experienced for another being when touched.

Furthermore, Haraway's introduction of touch in the relation of companion species once again resembles Irigaray's philosophy. In *Perhaps Cultivating Touch Can Still Save Us*, Irigaray (2011:139) estimates that touching one another is unifying and simultaneously a way to "discover a living identity of our own". In other words, for Irigaray we come together through touch, but touching also helps us to cultivate our own irreducible identity. In this way, Irigaray's touch differs from Haraway's touch as a manner to join identities into one entangled and always-touching companionship.<sup>215</sup>

In my view Haraway's touching companion species makes sense in its relation to physicality. In Haraway's (2006[1985]:144) *Cyborg Manifesto* she questions: "Why should our bodies end at the skin?" – arguing that technology extends the body as human and machine connect. In similar fashion, when Haraway's companion species physically come into contact, she argues that their bodies become fused together. Yet, in the *Cyborg Manifesto*, Haraway (2006[1985]:117) was able to show the extended cyborg body by means of concrete examples ranging from science fiction to modern medicine.<sup>216</sup> With companion species, the physical manifestation is not as clearly evident in examples.<sup>217</sup> I struggle to think of examples, outside of fiction and trans-species relations, where human and dog physically or biologically touch in such a way that they become one unit. The only instances that come to mind are the act of walking a dog or riding an animal, such as a horse. However, in both these cases we can argue that the act of touch

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<sup>214</sup> With reference to the being of the stone in relation to the human world or *Welt* Heidegger (1995[1938]:197) argues: "It is 'touching' the earth. But what we call 'touching' here is not a form of touching at all in the stronger sense of the word".

<sup>215</sup> Notably here, as well as in the aforementioned discussion on love, Irigaray refers to human-human relations. For my purposes here I assimilate Irigaray's theories into the realm of the nonhuman to stress my understanding of Haraway's companion species. In the accompanying Addendum to the study I delve further into Irigaray's discussion of animal beings.

<sup>216</sup> For instance, Haraway (2006[1985]:143-144) refers to examples such as disabled people assisted by prosthetics, organism attached to communication devices and even examples in popular culture, such as *Blade Runner*.

<sup>217</sup> In contrast, there are several examples depicting the entwinement of technology and dog, as cyborg-like figures. I examine such examples further in Chapter Eight.

is an anthropocentric binding, motivated by the human controlling the animal – a worrisome deduction in relation to Haraway’s anti-anthropocentric theory. As a result, I argue that it is perhaps helpful to configure Haraway’s touching species as a manner of *becoming with*, yet a *becoming with* that, following Heidegger and Irigaray, manifests togetherness and not simply an implosion of being.

### 5.3 Conclusion

Thinking through these elements of *becoming with*, namely response and respect, historicity, contact zones, play, flourishing, love and touch, what is meant by *becoming with* and companion species becomes clearer. Although these aspects can be interrogated individually, they are entangled and occur in relations to one another, therefore they are imbricated and form an assemblage of what it means to co-exist in multispecies relations. Taking the above discussions into account, I (in simplified terms) define *becoming with* as a specific entanglement between two species, who, upon meeting, respond to one another by touching and playing in kinship contact zones. This entanglement allows the companions to share in histories and contexts, and establish a respectful, loving state of being where they live well together.

This chapter also reveals that Haraway’s companion species, despite its insistence on exchanging the human for the nonhuman, cannot escape the human as it often times relies on human interpretations (love, flourishing), human constructs (historicity, respect) and a human way of being-with-others (play). The discussion on Haraway’s companion species also reveals that, regardless of Haraway’s formulation of human and dog as a hybrid being, even by *becoming with* their beings are not always collapsible into one another. In fact, at times Haraway’s companion species seems to highlight the different being of human and animal, instead of assimilating their beings. Finally, I also briefly presented instances where Haraway’s theory correlates with that of Heidegger, such as through the notion of transposing, touch and dance. In the following chapter, I attempt to address these findings in my reading of Haraway, by rooting Haraway’s *becoming with* in Heidegger’s *being-with*. In doing so, I hope to present a different understanding of the human-dog relation, where both human

and dog exist as *being-with* each other in companionship, without imploding into another.

**CHAPTER SIX**  
***BEING AND BECOMING WITH THE (NON)HUMAN:***  
**READING HARAWAY WITH HEIDEGGER**

*The charming relations I have had  
with a long succession of dogs result  
from their happy spontaneity.  
Usually they are quick to discover  
that I cannot see or hear.  
Truly, as companions, friends, equals in  
opportunities of self-expression  
they unfold to me the dignity of creation.<sup>218</sup>*

Building on my reading of Heidegger's philosophy of being in Chapter Four and Haraway's notion of *becoming with* companion species in Chapter Five, I now reroute Haraway's companion species via Heidegger's philosophy of *being-with*. In this chapter, I reiterate how Haraway's *becoming with* companion species defends the importance of the human and human experience in multispecies relations. Consequently, I elaborate on how Haraway's hybrid relation between human and dog does not collapse two beings, but rather highlights the importance of their different identities. Thereafter, I summarise the key similarities between Heidegger's philosophy of being and Haraway's companion species that have come to light throughout Chapters Four and Five. Finally, I place Haraway and Heidegger in conversation with one another to suggest that *becoming with* can be read as a Heideggerian *being-with* (*Mitsein*), in order to constitute a particular way of being human with nonhuman animals, or human with dog, in contemporary society.

In Chapter Three we discovered that in a nonhuman perspective "the human is an endangered species" (Seaman 2007:246), since nonhumanism diminishes human and nonhuman into one another. Similarly, Haraway maintains that her theory of companion species infolds human and nonhuman dog into one another, in true multispecies fashion, to form a hybrid and intermittently connected way of being-in-the-world. However, in Chapter Three, I also indicated how the human can remain significant in nonhuman relations and how the human and

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<sup>218</sup> Helen Keller in Filson (2006).

nonhuman should not be reduced to one another, because their unique beings are precisely what makes kinship between the two entities possible. In this chapter, by investigating the specific existence of animal and human – following the same pattern – I argue that Haraway’s entwined human-dog relation relies predominantly on a human way of being and human interpretation, as well as a companionship dependant on the dissimilarities of species. Guided, once again, by Joanna Latimer’s (2013) and Joanna Zylińska’s (2012) critical reading of Haraway’s companion species, I therefore point to an understanding of companion species that differs, to a certain extent, from a multispecies or nonhuman point of view.

### **6.1 Hinting at the human in Haraway’s companion species**

As I have indicated throughout my discussion of Haraway’s notion of human *becoming with* dog in Chapter Five, the notions Haraway employs to explain her concept of companion species – namely love, joy, respect, flourishing, historicity and play – are human constructs. In other words, Haraway’s fundamental tropes defining *becoming with* companion species either stem from a human horizon or require a human account and interpretation. Zylińska (2012:208) explains that Haraway’s “ethics of companion species – love, respect, happiness, and achievement – have a distinctly human ‘feel’ to them precisely because it is the human who defines the meaning of these values and their appropriateness for all companion species”. Indeed, for Zylińska (2012:208) “[t]here is no escape from the philosophical quandary that even the most committed efforts to give dogs what they want, and not what humans merely want for them, inevitably depend on the human ideas of ‘want,’ ‘satisfaction,’ and ‘gift’”. That is to say, Haraway’s exploration of *becoming with* implicitly emphasises the importance of the human in companion species relations and that, once again, we cannot escape the human horizon even when infolding towards nonhuman others.

As much as Haraway (2008:5) clearly advocates for a multispecies “knotted beings” – where human and nonhuman change their ways of being-in-the-world when they come into contact – on my reading she too shows awareness of the tension created by the abiding human horizon in the question of the animal

being. She sets out at the start of *When Species Meet* “asking who ‘we’ will become when species meet”, implying an altered state of being that she explains is “inherit in the flesh” when “human and nonhuman give way to the infoldings of the flesh that powerful figures such as the cyborgs and dogs I know both signify and enact” (Haraway 2008:5; 7-8). Yet, Haraway, at times, also hints at the human capacity at work (somewhat in disguise) in her understanding of the human-dog relation.

For example, in a chapter entitled *Species of Friendship*, Haraway (2008:181-204) presents a series of posts, notes, letters, and journal entries about companion species encounters that she shares via email with colleagues and friends. These notes are distinctly human accounts of witnessed dog relations shared with Haraway’s human community. No matter how her accounts attempt to manifest hybrid ways of being, they rely heavily on human interpretation and constructs. For example, in her accounts Haraway often anthropomorphises her dogs: “he [Haraway’s dog Roland] was patently happy all day ... he basked in all the attention” (Haraway 2008:184). In addition, she also describes human ideas in relation to dogs, such as celebrating her dog’s birthday (Haraway 2008:186) and graduation (Haraway 2008:187).

Moreover, in a particular note (ironically entitled ‘Enforcer’), Haraway (2008:191-192) relates how her dog obediently listened to her at the beach as she ordered him to “Leave it, Come, Sit!” – preventing a possible dogfight. Other dog walkers on the beach noted Haraway’s obedient dog, however she reveals to her readers that positive reinforcement training with liver cookies was the real secret behind her dog’s obedient behaviour. On my reading, this specific story not only reveals a human interpretation of events (how does she know the dog was listening to her or wanted a cookie? Perhaps he just did not wish to engage in a fight?), but also a trace of what I decipher as anthropocentrism. Of course, Haraway would most likely disagree, however the human mastery over dog is evident in this story, as Haraway trained her dog to obey her commands (even if it is on condition of a liver cookie reward) and describes her mastery over her dog, albeit jokingly.

In addition, here Haraway (2008:191) speaks explicitly of her “fellow dog beach humans”, perhaps signalling that in some situations with her dog, Haraway too remains inherently human – the human narrating the happiness, love, play, history and respect occurring when human and dog meet. As Haraway (2003:3, emphasis added) explains at the outset, her *Companion Species Manifesto* is a “personal document” in which she “offer[s] dog-eaten props and half-trained arguments to reshape some stories [she] care[s] about a great deal, as a scholar and as a *person* in [her] time and place” – stressing her inevitable human horizon.

Latimer (2013:92) is also critical of this human horizon in Haraway’s text:

In joining in, is the dog Cayenne to some extent becoming more human than dog? Is the infolding we witness here a human concern, a translation of the dog into human interests (competition, agility), particularly those of enhancement: not just then a form of relationality that involves becoming-with but rather a ‘becoming better’?

Thus, Latimer is concerned that Haraway may not be articulating a nonhuman perspective after all, and, in turn, might still be following a typical humanist exploration. Latimer’s suggestion prompts us to, momentarily, consider again why Haraway is so specifically interested in dogs, when the human-dog relation is typically thought of as anthropocentric.<sup>219</sup> Maybe, Haraway does so precisely because the human-dog connection cannot be denied, it is what makes up the very existence of the dog. Latimer (2013:91) argues that Haraway uses a figure so closely associated with anthropocentrism to emphasise her overthrowing of the singular, exceptional human being (i.e. Haraway can argue that even in a human exceptionalism figure the human is still entangled with nonhumans): “Through the perspective of companion species, Haraway erodes all the divisions that held together the figure of the human as a discrete, sovereign subject”. However, it is clear that, despite her best intentions, in (un)doing a perceived anthropocentric relation, traces of the humanist associations of the human-dog relation turn up in

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<sup>219</sup> As noted in Chapter Three, Erica Fudge (2007) points out that Derrida’s (1997) specific choice to write about his cat in his philosophy is possibly particularly thought out to emphasise an argument contradicting typical anthropocentric thought. In other words, we have to consider the deliberate choice behind Haraway’s focus on dogs – especially since she herself is adamant on pointing to the importance of the dog species.



Haraway's text as she is forced to consider human interactions from an always-already human point of view.

It is also worth mentioning that Jami Weinstein (2004:190), in review of Haraway's manifesto, shows concerns similar to those expressed by Latimer: "Haraway shows her hand by self-consciously acknowledging the extent to which she uncharacteristically anthropomorphizes her dog's behavior".<sup>220</sup> Strikingly, Weinstein compares Haraway's anthropomorphism to Heidegger's animal being: "Perhaps, ironically, she is invoking the Heideggerian caution that there is in fact no way, even for her, to look upon animal being from the perspective of the animal". Finally, Weinstein (2004:190) suggests that if Haraway and Heidegger were to be read together, one could read Haraway's companion species as an acknowledgement of her situated human horizon (or perhaps even her human *Dasein*?).<sup>221</sup>

## 6.2 Indicating irreducibility in Haraway's companion species

Besides the underlying sense of the human way of being, which appears as a sort-of conscious reminder throughout Haraway's enveloped companion species, Haraway also occasionally suggests that the differences between human and nonhuman being are of key importance to *become with* companion species. In this way it appears as if Haraway, at times, contradicts her own hybrid, interspecies relation. Particularly, there are instances in both *The Companion Species Manifesto* and *When Species Meet*, where Haraway appears to be referring more to a meeting, or then a Heideggerian *being-with*, of two, significantly different beings – human and dog – where both beings remain intact and learn to exist together, not as an entire new fleshy existence but as distinct entities.

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<sup>220</sup> In particular, Weinstein (2004:190) refers to a passage in which Haraway (2003:99-100) describes her female dog interacting with a friend's male dog, where Haraway (2003:99-100) clearly describes the dog from a human viewpoint: "he is INTERESTED"; "here we have pure polymorphous perversity that is so dear to all of us who came of age in the 1960s"; "Sure looks like eros to me"; "what feminists of [her] generation would call a considerate lover".

<sup>221</sup> Strikingly, Weinstein (2004:190) argues that Wittgenstein (previously mentioned in relation to human language) echoes the views of Heidegger and Haraway, "underscoring that the distinction between animal and human forms of life present serious obstacles to communication".

For instance, in *The Companion Species Manifesto* Haraway (2003:63) contends that her stories of human-dog love and training aim “to honor the world in its irreducible, personal detail” and that companion species involves communication “across irreducible differences” (Haraway 2003:49). Moreover, in unravelling the term companion species, Haraway (2003:15; 39) also argues, “Species is about defining difference” and that love between companion species should be to learn to “honor difference”. In other words, at least throughout *The Companion Species Manifesto*, Haraway is adamant that the difference between the human and dog’s way of being remains important.

In *When Species Meet* Haraway continues writing with a tension between hybrid entwinement and honouring difference, since she argues for an overcoming of anthropocentric difference. This tension includes overcoming the difference between that of the human and nonhuman – a knotted *becoming with* of species – and, at the same time, the importance of emphasising distinctions between the human and nonhuman. For instance, Haraway (2008:67; 90) searches for nonhuman discussions “in which specific difference is at least as crucial as continuities and similarities across kinds” and maintains that “multispecies flourishing requires a robust nonanthropomorphic sensibility that is accountable to irreducible difference”. Even when describing agility training, where Haraway (2008:175) insists, “[B]oth players make each other up in the flesh”, she simultaneously argues how “training with a member of another biological species is so interesting, hard, full of *situated difference*, and moving” (Haraway 2008:213, emphasis added). Moreover, she contends, “Training is, or can be, about difference ...” (Haraway 2008:223).

Could Haraway, through these contradictions, be beckoning towards a nonhuman *becoming with* where species meet, but remain irreducible in their differences? It seems likely to infer so, especially when Haraway (2008:240, emphasis added) reminds us that the contact zones of *becoming with* are “[n]ot about reproducing the sacred image of the same, this game is nonmimetic and *full of difference*”. Furthermore she leaves the reader at the end of *When Species Meet* with so-called ‘parting bites’ that exemplifies how, in close proximity to

Heidegger's account of animal and human being, "companion species who cannot and *must not assimilate one another* but who must learn to eat well, or at least well enough that care, respect and *difference* can flourish in the open" (Haraway 2008:287, emphasis added).<sup>222</sup> Yet, we are (curiously) overthrown when Haraway (2008:235) also suggests that *humans* should stop searching for difference among us "and understand that they are in rich and largely uncharted, material-semiotic, flesh-to-flesh, and face-to-face connection with a host of significant others".

As I have outlined in the discussion of Haraway's notion of *becoming with* in Chapter Five, the irreducible human and dog often crop up within the exact aspects that Haraway employs to entwine companion species. For instance, the act of play requires a co-presence of two distinct beings that can respond to each other, while the significance of both beings' unique historicity and context continues within companionship. On my reading, the irreducible human and dog is also present, perhaps more subtly, in other aspects of Haraway's idea of *becoming with*. I argue that Haraway's terminology meant to indicate entwinement often evokes a sense of 'two' or of separate kinds meeting. For example, Haraway (2008) often uses specific terms to describe the entwinement of companion species such as 'a significant otherness'. Yet, embedded within the term 'significant *otherness*' is the idea that difference or an *other* is meaningful and vital in the relation. In other words, when species are significant others, they are really two (other) entities that are significant to each other's separate lives.

Another phrase Haraway (2008:192; 214) often uses to describe human-dog relations is "Dog is my co-pilot". I argue that Haraway's dog as co-pilot also implies a need for two separate beings. In commercial flight, a pilot-co-pilot relation functions, because it involves two people performing *different* duties. Furthermore, to a certain extent, a pilot and co-pilot are hierarchical positions, where the pilot is the first-in-command and holds a higher ranking than the second-in-command co-pilot. Could Haraway's tongue-in-cheek 'dog as co-pilot'

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<sup>222</sup> In particular, Haraway's (2008:285-301) 'parting bites' consist of short examples, where she encounters species companionship, such as her colleague Gary Lease's hunting pursuits, sacramental feasts and animal surrogating.

once again emphasise a sense of human exceptionalism in the companion species relation?<sup>223</sup> Additionally, the very expression of ‘companion species’ suggests that *two* entities are required to *become with* one another: “There cannot be just one companion species; there have to be at least two to make one. It is in the syntax; it is in the flesh” (Haraway 2003:12). Thus, companion species is inherently two beings, even when knotted together as one.

Perhaps we can now read Haraway’s cover image (Figure 8), referred to in Chapter Five, in a different manner. Companion species or *becoming with* occurs when different species meet, touch, play, love, flourish, share histories and respond in contact zones, yet they do not settle into a whole: together they remain, distinct beings. Even in the image where human hand and dog paw touch, we can still clearly identify human and dog, and fathom pulling the two entities apart again. It is a Heideggerian (1995[1938]:199) “intricate entanglement” relation that can be untangled again, because of the difference between the way of being of the human and dog. After all, they do not become one another, but become *with* one another. It is in this ‘withness’ that we find a meaningful difference, different experiences of being and an irreducibility of two kinds that make up kinship between human and nonhuman others.

### 6.3 Reading Haraway *with* Heidegger

Based on the clear human traces and emphasis on irreducible beings in Haraway’s companion species, I root my reading of Haraway’s *becoming with* companion species in the Heideggerian philosophy of being. As mentioned, Haraway, for the most part, disregards Heidegger’s influence on her work,<sup>224</sup> only briefly comparing Heidegger’s notion of “the open” to the contact zones of

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<sup>223</sup> Haraway humorously derives ‘dog as my co-pilot’ from the common car bumper sticker that reads ‘God as my co-pilot’. She explains that the saying is also the slogan to the popular dog magazine *Bark* (Haraway 2008:12). I recognise that Haraway uses the slogan ironically, however her formulation amongst her ambiguous human-dog relation does spark my scepticism. Moreover, perhaps the relation between ‘God as co-pilot’ and the inverse ‘dog as co-pilot’ also has significance and says something about the importance of the dog in contemporary society.

<sup>224</sup> Rae (2014:505) speculates that Haraway’s support for Derrida, Bruno Latour and Giorgio Agamben, leads her to follow their critical readings of Heidegger and overlook the relation between his philosophy and her thinking.

companion species.<sup>225</sup> It is surprising that Haraway overlooks Heidegger's theory, especially considering his close relation to environmentalism and anti-anthropocentric intentions, which we considered previously.<sup>226</sup> In what follows I start to fill this opening by showing that Heidegger's writings not only correlate with Haraway's but also have much to add to multispecies studies, especially regarding being-with-others without assimilating entities. In this regard, I follow theorist Gavin Rae (2014:509) who argues that "making explicit her [Haraway's] assumed, implicit Heideggerian influence will, therefore, allow us to better understand the issues and problems that Haraway's thinking attends to".<sup>227</sup>

In a particular quote, which I have also previously mentioned, we find that Haraway (2008:67) herself searches for a way to discuss nonhuman relations without reducing human to animal: "I am needy for ways to specify these matters in nonhumanist terms in which specific difference is at least as crucial as continuities and similarities across kinds". By joining Heidegger with Haraway, I propose that Heidegger's philosophy of being human and being animal can enhance Haraway in this regard. As my discussion of Heidegger's philosophy in Chapter Four suggests, his seminal texts express an anti-anthropocentric way of being that also defends specific difference. Thus, Heidegger could be a companion or ally in the mud for Haraway to specify the matters of *being* or *becoming with* when species meet.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Haraway (in Rae 2014:507) admits that she feels more comfortable in "the materialities of instrumentation of organisms in laboratories" than in the readings of philosophers, which is why she prefers to engage with concrete biological studies instead of philosophical texts. Ironically, we have also seen that Heidegger suggests his theories on the animal being can be extended only through such scientific enquiries.

<sup>226</sup> Perhaps, Haraway prefers not to engage with Heidegger, because she follows Derrida's critique against Heidegger's animal being (as I have previously mentioned, Haraway recognises Derrida's influence on her work). Yet, given Heidegger's influence on Derrida – pre-critique – I suggest that Heidegger's influence on Derrida, and Derrida's influence on Haraway's companion species, point to a close relationship between Heidegger and *becoming with* companion species.

<sup>227</sup> Notably, Rae (2014; 2014a) most prominently traces the Heideggerian roots of Haraway's cyborg theory, although he briefly also discusses Haraway's theory of companion species, as well as Heidegger's profound influence on posthuman thought.

<sup>228</sup> Additionally, as we have seen, Heidegger also provides us with a helpful understanding of technology, which can aid in putting the theory of companion species in conversation with technological platforms (or contact zones). I extend Heidegger's relation to Haraway's human *becoming with* dog through technology and on social media in Chapter Seven.

On my reading, Haraway reflects a Heideggerian manner of thinking in several ways.<sup>229</sup> As we have seen, both Heidegger and Haraway attempt to overcome the traditional dualistic thinking of western philosophy.<sup>230</sup> Moreover, both philosophers engage with the question of the meaning of what it is to exist, asking what it means to be human or a dog or human-and-dog together. Rae (2014:525) explains:

Haraway is attempting to identify the ‘essence’ or ‘dogginess’ of dogs (i.e., what makes a dog a dog and not, for example, a cat), by thinking this ‘essence’ through the dog–human relation. If this is what Haraway is doing ... it shares a direct connection to Heidegger’s thinking because, as we have seen, his thinking also aims to identify the being of entities, in this case, the being of dogs, which, put more concretely, seeks to answer the question: what is it to say that something is a dog, which, in turn, depends on a prior question: what makes a dog a dog or, put differently, what is the ‘dogginess’ (read being) of dog?

In other words, Haraway’s enquiry into the essence of companion species mirrors Heidegger’s enquiry into the essence of being human and the being of the animal. Notably, Haraway maintains that she enquires into human and animal being together in the *same* world, while Heidegger distinguishes between the being of the human and the animal and their different worlds of existence (*Welt* and *Umwelt*) (Rae 2014:525). Nonetheless, both philosophers seem to establish an ontological exploration into the essence of being.

In turn, as I have shown, even though Haraway considers companion species to be entwined she still refers to their different ways of being, emulating Heidegger to a certain extent. Haraway, like Heidegger, also at times distinguishes between the human world and the dog world, establishing that she (sometimes) believes that human and dog are rooted in different worlds. Haraway often refers to “dogland” (Haraway 2008:59; 95; 107; 125) and “dog worlds” (Haraway

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<sup>229</sup> I have briefly mentioned some of these similarities throughout my discussions in Chapter Five – including the idea of history, temporality and love. I do not elaborate on all the similarities here but refer to those specifically leading into the argument of linking Haraway’s *becoming with* to Heidegger’s *being-with*.

<sup>230</sup> Specifically, both Haraway and Heidegger challenge the binary logic of Descartes’s philosophical legacy (Rae 2014:508).

2008:117; 125; 133) versus “human worlds” (Haraway 2008:56). When she does refer to the meeting of these two worlds, she conjugates them as “dog-human world” (Haraway 2008:128), implying in Heideggerian fashion, that their two worlds come together, but do not necessarily synthesise together.<sup>231</sup> Similarly, Heidegger, as we have discovered previously, also establishes that human and animal can, in part, share world, forming temporal cites resembling human-dog worlds, where human and animal retains its own horizon of being.

In Haraway’s enquiry into the being of the human-dog relation she, in a similar manner to Heidegger, establishes that companion species are in a direct, reciprocal and responsive relation to the world. Recall that both Heidegger’s human being and animal being responds reciprocally to its distinct (human) world or (animal) environment. Similarly, Haraway (2008:19) estimates that human and dog *becoming with* one another means “to respond, to look back reciprocally, to notice, to pay attention”. Thus, in my view, Haraway’s companion species are Heideggerian beings-in-the-world, whose being is determined by the world they associate with and to which they respond. In particular, Haraway (2008:3) stresses that *becoming with* occurs in the mud of the earth, which not only refers to Haraway’s preference for biological relations, but also indicates that companion species are worldly or earthly relations – being-in-the-world.<sup>232</sup>

In this way, parallel to Heidegger, Haraway’s *becoming with* implies living with care, concern and responsibility towards others and the world. Although the two theorists differ in their unpacking of *how* to act responsibly – Haraway suggests becoming curious and intimately involved with others, while Heidegger suggests respecting the boundaries between the different horizons of being – they nevertheless establish similar ways of being-in-the-world, especially with others.

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<sup>231</sup> Throughout Haraway’s body of work she, like Heidegger, is not afraid of forming neologisms or melting words together to emphasise entwinement. For example, Haraway (2003:12) refers to “natureculture” to highlight that she does not distinguish between nature and culture – for her they exist as one. It is surprising then that Haraway does not speak of doghuman world or humandog world, or even identify a new term for them altogether. I wonder whether she does so intentionally, to keep a certain distance (implied by the conjugated dash) between the two distinct worlds of human and dog.

<sup>232</sup> Interestingly, Haraway (2008:24; 327) quotes both Wolfe (2006:13) and Smuts (2001), who in their direct quotations refer to the Heideggerian being-in-the-world. Curiously, she does not expand on this notion.

It is here at this intersection of being-in-the-world with others – which both Haraway and Heidegger configure in their own way – where I put forward that Haraway’s *becoming with* can be understood as a type of Heideggerian *being-with* (*Mitsein*).<sup>233</sup> As I have suggested, Heidegger’s notion of human always-already existing with others can be extended into the realm of the nonhuman to delve further into the animal way of being, which Heidegger only partially addresses. Following Bailey (2012), Brown (2007), Buchanan (2007), Caputo (1993), James (2009), Glendinning (1998) and Latimer (2013), such an extension implies that human and animal exists in constant relation, alongside each other, interacting with each other, yet retaining their own sense of self, being and world. Thus, the animal and human in their very way of existing in the world, exist alongside one another, sharing certain aspects of the world, attending to each other, while remaining irreducible towards one another.

My Heideggerian way of thinking seems to closely correlate with what Haraway (at times) argues constitutes her idea of *becoming with*: where companion species exist together in all their complexity and attend to each other, without synthesising into one another. By understanding Haraway’s *becoming with* in this Heideggerian manner, we are able to surmount her continuous (and somewhat contradictory) hybrid, collapsible human-dog relation, into a particular state of *being-with*, where human and animal no longer exist as anthropocentric singularities, yet they are also irreducible to one another. Because no matter the extent of entanglement of companion species, in their inherent Heideggerian way of being they remain beings meeting in the contact zones *with* each other’s “mineness”, without turning into one another.

Furthermore, reading Haraway and Heidegger together allows us to also overcome James’s (2009) suggested problem referred to earlier in Chapter Four,

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<sup>233</sup> Even if my reading of Heidegger as influential to Haraway’s thinking is rejected, meaning that Heidegger cannot be thought of as a source of Haraway’s theory, I have throughout this layer of study explained how Heidegger’s theory remains increasingly relevant and important to nonhuman as well as environmental philosophy. In turn, the thinkers that Haraway explicitly refers to throughout her work on companion species, such as Derrida, have also been widely influenced by Heidegger. Therefore, an implicit connection between Heidegger and Haraway persists that will eventually bring the two theorists in conversation with each other.



namely that even by being-with-others the animal mind remains a mystery. Seeing that, if Haraway's *becoming with* can be read as a Heideggerian *Mitsein*, then both Haraway (via Despret) and Heidegger's notion of 'attunement' can now assist us in understanding and accessing the animal way of being, from a human point of being. Heidegger (1995[1938]:67) argues that by being-with-others we are able to attune to another's way of being. In other words, beings can understand and affectively experience a partial absorption of another's being, while simultaneously remaining their individual identities. Equally important, Haraway in rooting her discussion via Despret's idea of *becoming with* nonhuman others, also speaks of species entanglement as an attunement to another's way of being. As I have discussed previously, here Despret refers to a complete absorption of being to form a total new entity, however when interpreting Haraway with Heidegger, we can argue that Haraway's attunements are possibly a sharing of existence, without disintegrating the human and animal way of being. Indeed, Haraway (2008:229, emphasis added), while evoking Despret, still refers to "*nonmimetic* attunement of each to each". Thus, it is not a full simulacrum of being, but an attunement where humans and dogs are both reciprocally affected but remain apart (Haraway 2008:229).

To illustrate, in Chapter Three we discovered that it has been biologically proven that dogs can empathise with their owners by responding to particular moods, emotions or states of the human. In turn, researchers, for example Smuts, Goodall and Bekoff, claim that they can experience a sense of the animal's way of being or world, although they are limited to describing this experience in human terms, from their human point of view. In our daily interactions with dogs we are also often inclined to understand a sense of what our dogs are experiencing, although we possibly enframe (*Gestell*) our understanding in a human manner.<sup>234</sup> Following Heidegger's idea of attunement within a Heideggerian understanding of Haraway's companion species, we can then explain such

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<sup>234</sup> In a recent study by Faragó, Takács, Miklósi and P. Pongrácz (2017) shows that humans have learnt to understand, to a certain extent, their dogs. Participants in the study were able to accurately interpret the inner state of their dogs by listening to their vocal expressions (the inner states of the dogs were also predetermined by cognitive and neural comparison with the human brain). Interestingly, the study also shows that women interpret the animal's inner state more accurately than men.

instances as a particular way of human *being-with* dog or dog *being-with* human, which is characterised by being always-already attuned to each other's inner states. In this way, the dog accesses and understands a part of the human world and vice versa, while each being remains unique in their existence. Furthermore, it highlights that no matter the shared understanding between entities, the understanding is first and foremost preceded by the hermeneutic horizon of each being (human and, as far as we can assume, dog).

Overall then, a Heideggerian reading of Haraway's *becoming with* companion species allows us to resolve the specific way of human living together and meeting with animal as *being-with* (*Mitsein*) and being-in-the-world. In particular this human *being-with* dog can be explained in human terms – since this is the horizon we are always-already confined to – as made up of continuous states of disclosedness or care, concern, responsibility, joy, play and love towards one other. The particular way of human *being-with* animal can also most prominently be observed and celebrated in the contact zones where species meet, touch and attune to the irreducible being of the other. In this way, by *being-with* one another companion species promote a sense of ethical flourishing where we preserve a sense of difference and respect, while at the same time we perform partial affinity in kinship. Contrary to what Haraway occasionally states, companion species do not co-shape the world, but co-shape each other's respective worlds. As a result, companion species do not *become* one another or even *become* something new, they *become* 'beings-with-others'.<sup>235</sup>

#### 6.4 Conclusion

In this layer of my exploration of the human-dog relation, spread out over Chapters Four, Five and Six, I have tried to *sniff out* the specific being of the human and the animal, or human and dog, living together with one another – guided by Donna Haraway's theoretical notion of *becoming with* companion species and Martin Heidegger's philosophy of being and animality. By putting Haraway in conversation with Heidegger, I have suggested that Haraway's

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<sup>235</sup> In *The Open*, a preface to the editorial series *Queering the Non/human*, Michael O'Rourke (2008:xxi) also draws on Heideggerian philosophy to deduce openness to a nonhuman world, which he similarly refers to as "a new sense of being-in-the-world, of *beings-in-the-world*".

*becoming with* is a kind of Heideggerian *being-with*, where human and animal exist with each other, sharing in each other's being, while remaining irreducible to one another. In this way, the human and dog, as companion species, are each beings of care, concern, responsibility, joy, play and love, always-already engaging with their own world and from their own way of being. Since their way of being is also *with* each other, human and dog share in each other's world, attuning to the other's being, notably still from their own horizons of being. For this reason, any engagement with the animal world, is always enframed by a human understanding. Ultimately, human *being-with* dog determines a flourishing, environmentally conscious and respectful approach to animals and living on earth. In the following chapter I consider how this notion of *being-with* companion species is represented, visualised and embodied in the digital, virtual and technological realm.

**PART TWO:  
EVERYBODY AND THEIR DOG ONLINE**

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### COMPUTING THE (NON)HUMAN: COMPANION SPECIES, SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL HUMANITIES

*Dogs of Instagram say a hundred delightful things  
without actually saying a word...*<sup>236</sup>

In Chapter One I introduced the prominence of companion species online with reference to the viral photograph of John Unger and his dog Schoep shared on social media, as well as the popularity of so-called ‘dogstagram’ (*#dogstagram*) and the community ‘Dogs of Instagram’ (*#dogsofinstagram*) shared on the social media platform, Instagram. Through these examples it becomes apparent that the human-dog relation is represented, visualised and embodied in the digital, virtual or technological realm. The importance of technology in the human-nonhuman relation has also occasionally been detected throughout the theoretical exploration in Part One, where I have noted that beyond nonhuman animals, the human-nonhuman relation includes nonhuman digital entities. Following techno-theorist Don Ihde, Haraway (2008:249) affirms that companion species “are bodies in technologies”, since both the human and the dog are entwined with technology in the Digital Age. In other words, when species meet in contemporary society, human, dog *and technology* encounter one another. This digital aspect of companion species is the particular part of the human-dog relation I aim to explore further in the following two chapters. In doing so, I want to add a further layer of understanding to the already unpacked relation of *being-with* companion species, wondering how precisely this relation manifests in and entwines with the digital realm?

In this chapter I start my reading of how the human-dog relation entangles with technology, by specifically focussing on the digital encounter of companion species on Instagram (as the phenomenon of the *dogstagram*). Analysing the digital image of the *dogstagram* is my point of departure to examine how *being-with* companion species manifests in a virtual or online realm. My analysis of *dogstagram*s includes a brief contextualisation of the phenomenon and its

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<sup>236</sup> Jessie Wender (2019).

relation to visual culture, technology and companion species. I then analyse *dogstagram*s by means of computational methods in the digital humanities project accompanying my research, discussing digital humanities, my application thereof and theoretical findings.<sup>237</sup>

Based on my analysis, in Chapter Six I explore the human-dog-technology relation further, by taking a closer look at what the human-dog relation in the digital realm, as well as on social media platforms, add to my critical reading of companion species, pursued throughout Part One. Moreover, I wonder as a continuation of Derrida's (2004[1997]:128) question "But as *for* me, who am I (following)?" – *But as for me who am I (following) when I follow dogs online?*<sup>238</sup>

### **7.1 The *dogstagram*: picturing and digitising the human-dog relation**

Picturing or visualising the human-animal relation – specifically the human-dog relation – is an age-old phenomenon, most prominently portrayed through art, photography and cinema. Ever since the first prehistoric paintings on cave walls, man has drawn out its relation with and observations of animals (Aloi 2012:xxi). Notably, even in these early paintings we find representations of canines and wolves (Sutton 2017:92).<sup>239</sup> In other words, since primitive times, humans have used the realm of the visual to express and represent their complex relations and existence with animals and, in particular, also their relations with their dogs. As a result, animals (especially dogs) have featured in a variety of ways throughout the canon of art history, photography and other imagery, such as film.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Visit the digital humanities project, *Insta-dog*, at <http://www.instadogproject.com/> – the reader can follow the project on their desktop alongside the theoretical discussion in this chapter.

<sup>238</sup> I develop this question influenced by Eliza Steinbock's Derridean question in *Catties and T-Selfies* (2017:163): "Who are we (following) when we follow Internet cats?"

<sup>239</sup> For example, Elizabeth Sutton (2017:92-93) specifically explores the cave paintings of Horseshoe Canyon, where "dogs are depicted as part of both human and spirit realms". Interestingly, Aloi (2012:xxi) notes a correlation between Derrida's question of the subjective animal and the cave paintings of animals: "If, as Derrida said, 'The animal looks at us, and we are naked before it. Thinking perhaps begins there,' we can add that art begins there too, as naked we painted the animal on a cave wall. There is something to follow..."

<sup>240</sup> It is not my intention to delve into the vast history or scholarly arguments regarding the relation between art, artists, visual culture and animals. I briefly mention the relation here to contextualise and make apparent the *dogstagram* as digital image. However, as a digital and media scholar, I view the *dogstagram* in relation to technology and the digital sphere more so than in relation to art praxis. Consequently, I do not delve further into the endless theoretical

Evidently, the depiction of animals in the visual realm has shifted alongside our alternating understanding of the human-animal relation and animal subject. That is to say, the visual animal has been subjected to the understanding of the animal as liminal and spiritual in primitive times (Berger 1977:18), subsequently becoming an anthropocentric symbol in medieval and classical art (Pastoureau 2017:10) and finally, in postmodern art, the animal becomes an agent actively involved in the visual image: “The postmodern animal is there in the gallery not as a meaning or a symbol but in all its pressing thingness ... it passes itself off as the fact of reality of that which resists both interpretation and mediocrity” (Baker 2000:82).

Echoing the history of the animal and the visual image, the representation of the dog in images has also shifted according to the various viewpoints of the human-dog relation. Said another way: “In all these grand domains of our cultural history, dogs, when experienced and recorded by human beings who are also artists, play essential parts” (Rosenblum 1988:10). As humans we have recorded, mirrored, expressed and solidified our relation to dogs throughout history through images, including art and photography.

For instance, in ancient and medieval times, the dog appears as a global symbol alongside humans in mythological images, signifying a variety of ideas from spirituality, divine Beings and fertility to companionship, safety and sinister powers (Rowland 1974:58-61). In turn, in the eighteenth century the dog appears in paintings as companion to the privileged man and symbol of his class or social status, as, for example, the dog is pictured accompanying monarchs during royal hunts (Figure 11). Additionally, we find that dogs are often depicted as symbols of domestication and the overwhelming anthropocentrism of the human centred Age of Enlightenment (Rosenblum 1988:17;20). Moreover, during this time, in various images the dog is used as an icon to represent human experiences ranging from fidelity to human desolation. We also encounter the dog in art as a loyal servant to its human master (Figures 12-13), signifying

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pursuits regarding art and animals. For in-depth readings of the animal in visual culture refer to Rowland (1974), Clark (1977) Aloï (2012), Baker (2000; 2013), Sutton (2017) and Pastoureau (2017).

man's superiority as well as the dog's supposed devotion and selflessness (Rosenblum 1988:67).<sup>241</sup> Finally, in postmodernism, the dog gains a sense of agency in images and prompts humans to respond to the world from the dog's-eye-view, to such an extent that we even encounter the dog itself as art (Figure 14) (Sutton 2017:84).<sup>242</sup>



Figure 11: Alexandre-François Desportes, *Dog watching over game beside rosebush*, 1725. Oil on canvas, 42,8'' x 52''. The Louvre, Paris. (Rosenblum 1988:12).



Figure 12: Jeanne-Elisabeth Chaudet, *An infant sleeping in a crib under the watch of a courageous dog which has just killed an enormous viper*, 1801. Oil on canvas, 44,88'' x 52,75''. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rochefort-sur-Mer. (Rosenblum 1988:30).

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<sup>241</sup> Such images also remind of the image of the dog at the philosopher's feet, mentioned in Chapter Two, highlighting anthropocentrism.

<sup>242</sup> Here I only mention brief examples of the depiction of dogs throughout history. A full analysis of such images goes beyond the scope of this study. For a comprehensive analysis of the representation of the dog throughout Art History refer to Rosenblum (1988), Hyland and Wilson (2015), as well as Sutton (2017). Additionally, for a comprehensive archive of the canine in art and photography, visit the *Google Arts & Culture* collection accessible in my accompanying digital humanities project and available at <https://artsandculture.google.com/entity/m0bt9lr>.





Figure 13: Briton Rivière,  
*Requiescat*, 1889.  
Oil on canvas, 25'' x 53,75''.  
The Forbes Magazine Collection,  
New York.



Figure 14: Mike Calway-Fage,  
*Progression of Regression*, 2010.  
Taxidermied German Shepherd and  
wolf pet, 73'' x 49'' x 42''.  
(Sutton 2017:76).

Merritt (2018:8) eloquently summarises the extent and history of the depiction of dogs in art:

As the arts elucidate the fine lines and fault lines of our lives, they also inform us of the relationship between man and dog. Drawn in French caves, entombed in Egypt, enshrined in China, dogs have always served art as subject and symbol. Early painters such as Velázquez and Titian included dogs in their paintings. It was not until the nineteenth century, however, that

the great portrait painters began to express man's love for dogs and at the same time to capture their nobility. Hogarth, Gainsborough and Landseer majestically rendered canine presence in the family of man. The tradition, once started, continues. Today, we see the dogs as an important element in the works of our leading artists, from Picasso to Salle, from Monet to Fischl.

Ensuing the dog in art, picturing the dog through the medium of photography is also a vital manner of representing the human-dog relation. Merritt (2018:8-9) explains that the development and popularity of the camera coincide with the change of thinking surrounding the human-dog relation from anthropocentrism to nonhumanism. That is to say, "both *canis familiaris* and *camera obscura* [simultaneously] experienced rapid absorption into the fabric of human life" and, consequently photographs of dogs "speak as much about the history of photography as they do about man's and dog's evolving relationship" (Merritt 2018:8). Currently, taking photos of dogs has become the most prominent manner to capture the human-dog relation. In fact, Merritt (2018:9) notes that, for some, taking photos of dogs is somewhat of an obsessive pursuit – a fixation mirrored in the amount of photos dog owners seem to take from day-to-day. In fact, a 2017 report from Rover.com reveals that 65% of dog owners confess to taking more photos of their dog than their significant other (Varnier 2019).

Following this line of thought, we can explore the depiction of the dog (and other animals) mediated through an endless number of visual examples and mediums. Although it is not my intention to expand on the history of the image of the dog in art and photography further than this brief contextualisation, I argue that what the history of the dog in visual culture emphasises is that humans are inclined to *picture* their experiences and relations with their companion species. Hence, we can learn about the human-dog relation by examining such instances. Furthermore, echoing Derrida's look at his cat in *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* (1997) and Berger's *Why Look At Animals?* (1977), it is clear that humans *look* at animals, especially dogs. Notably, we are now aware that

this look can occur as an actual encounter with the animal, or as a simulated encounter via a visual image.

In the context of both the Anthropocene and the Digital Age – where technology has developed to such an extent that our lives and our environment are embedded in automation and information – it is well known that the realm of the visual has also transformed into the digital (Mirzoeff 2015:18). Visual culture theorist, Nicholas Mirzoeff (2015:18), explains that “[t]he change at hand is not simply one of quantity but of kind. All the ‘images’, whether moving or still, that appear in the new archives are variants of digital information. Technically they are not images at all, but rendered results of computation”. Accordingly, any image (moving or still) or artwork mediated, shared or looked at on a digital platform is a different entity or medium in its own right:

In many cases what we can ‘see’ in the image, we could never see with our own eyes. What we see in the [digital] photograph is a computation, itself created by ‘tiling’ different images that were further processed to generate colour and contrast. *It is a way to see the world enabled by machines.* (Mirzoeff 2015:18, emphasis added).<sup>243</sup>

Parallel to the evolution of the visual image into the digital era, the specific image of the dog seems also to be computed into its own digital version. The human pursuit of looking at, visualising and taking photos of dogs (and animals in general) is amplified on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, which allow us to share (and archive) digital images of our dogs or our human-dog companionship instantaneously. To rephrase Mirzoeff’s above explanation of the digital nature of visual culture in terms of companion species: *the popular digital image of the dog is a way to see the human-dog relation enabled by machines.* This means that images of dogs on social media are an example of a Harawayian contact zone where humans, dogs and technology meet. Notably, in this contact zone the image of the human-dog relation once again reflects the

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<sup>243</sup> In particular, Mirzoeff (2015:18) (following digital scholar Wendy Hui Kyong Chun) argues that whenever an image is presented in a digital format it is not simply relayed or reproduced, but also computed by a machine. Additionally, Mirzoeff (2015:18-19) explains that digital images are also easily manipulated, altered and edited, which adds to the image’s computational format.

changes in our understanding of our companion species: just as in the case of the popularity of the camera coincides with the intensifying companionship between human and dog; so too the extension of the image of the dog into the digital realm coincides with the current estimation (by theorists such as Haraway 2008) that the human-dog relation is entwined with technological developments.<sup>244</sup>

Sharing digital images of dogs prominently manifests on the social media platform Instagram as people use this specific social media network to share digital representations of their dogs. Instagram is a mobile social application that allows “its users to take pictures, apply different manipulation tools (‘filters’) to transform the appearance of an image ... and share it instantly with the user’s friends on the application itself or through other social networking sites such as Facebook, Foursquare, Twitter, etc.” (Hochman & Schwartz 2012:6).<sup>245</sup> Founded in 2010, Instagram has grown to have more than 800 million members and more than 52 million images are published on the platform daily (Caple 2019:428). In order for Instagram users to navigate the platform successfully, they require accessibility to a variety of technologies, including Internet connection and a form of hardware that can capture and compute images, such as smartphones with cameras (Tifentale 2014:3).<sup>246</sup>

As a social media platform, Instagram’s structure and properties appeals to the so-called ‘Kodak culture’ of photography, where taking images of daily life and

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<sup>244</sup> In this chapter I focus predominantly on the human-dog relation entwined with technology in the form of the digital image (the *dogstagram*). I elaborate on other ways in which companion species occur entangled with technology in Chapter Eight.

<sup>245</sup> MacDowall and De Souza (2018:3) argue that compared to Twitter and Facebook, Instagram receives relatively little scholarly attention. They maintain that, like Twitter and Facebook, Instagram is a social media platform that shapes a range of social practices and should therefore be a topic of consideration in social media scholarship. By focussing on the specific platform in my study, I hope to continue to address this gap in recent scholarship.

<sup>246</sup> In other words, Instagram is limited to a specific socioeconomic group. Tifentale (2014:12) explains that for “[a] person to be an active Instagrammer anywhere in the world means to fall within a certain income bracket that supports the purchase of a smartphone and monthly expenses related to the network subscription and service fees”. Additionally, the average Instagram users are young adults, between the ages of 20 and 30 years (Tifentale 2014:12). Therefore, I remain aware that what is revealed from a study of Instagram images is limited to a specific socioeconomic group and is not necessarily representative of a general population. Incidentally, the socioeconomic group of Instagram consumers correlate with the primary class of human-dog relations Haraway (2008:207) admittedly focusses on in her discussions of companion species, that is a “globalized middle-class”. Thus, a discussion of companion species online possibly suits a discussion of Haraway’s notion of companion species.

activities, as well as sharing them, have become an increasingly popular habit (MacDowall & De Souza 2018:7).<sup>247</sup> The platform mimics the traditional habit of using a Polaroid or Kodak Brownie camera to photograph everyday doings and sharing these images with friends (via home movies, albums or slideshows) in its digital architecture. For example, Instagram photos are usually posted as square images similar to Polaroid photos and visually uses vintage-inspired filters to remind of analogue photography and super-8 moving image film (MacDowall & De Souza 2018:8).<sup>248</sup> In the digital sphere, Instagram augments the so-called 'Kodak culture', allowing users to share amateur images of everyday activities instantaneously, interactively and rapidly.<sup>249</sup> As a result, the everyday popularity and somewhat nostalgic pursuit of photographing animals and dogs as part of our everyday doings is then also digitised, since people now instantly take and share pictures of their dogs via Instagram on a regular basis.

A typical Instagram post consists of an image (in the form of a photograph, video, cartoon, diagram and so forth) and a caption (which appears below or beside the image). The caption can contain verbal text – usually describing or referring to the image posted – as well as metadata tagging other users, geo-tagging an image to a specific location and/or hashtag (Caple 2019:429; Tifentale 2014:3). Powell (2015:39) explains that hashtags are used to organise and categorise things on social media. Hashtags allow us to search for and discover particularities: “there are millions of conversations, photos and videos being shared on social media – and searching a hashtag allows us to drill down into specific niche subjects, categories and keywords” (Powell 2015:39).

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<sup>247</sup> In other words, Instagram and other similar photographic practices fall under the larger paradigm shift of photography or the so-called “fifth moment of photography” (Cruz & Meyer 2012:219), which is defined by “complete mobility, ubiquity and connection” (Cruz & Meyer 2012:219) (Tifentale 2014).

<sup>248</sup> Interestingly, Patricia Gill (1997) refers to the manner in which digital technologies refer back to the past as ‘technostalgia’, which re-establishes the human spirit in extremely mechanised doings (MacDowall & De Souza 2018:8). That is to say, in its technical architecture and properties, Instagram deliberately emphasises human qualities and traditions, which could also seep through to the content users post, posing the question: could *dogstagram*s therefore also evoke a sense of nostalgia?

<sup>249</sup> Similar to other social media platforms, Instagram not only allows for a sharing of images and thoughts, but also for reciprocal interaction. Through communicators such as comments, tags and direct messaging users are able to connect with one another via their images, as well as communicate their feelings and emotions by means of software-elements, for example tapping a ‘like’ button (Bucher & Helmond 2018:2).

In particular, on Instagram hashtags are increasingly important, because users have to search for content and contributors using hashtags as keywords. Using this form of tagging has become a mode of interactivity, establishing connections and having fun (Powell 2015:39). The use of hashtags is so significant on Instagram, that images typically associated with a particular hashtag are labelled accordingly and seemingly become part of global culture. For instance, the hashtag *#selfie* that labels images taken of one's self grew in popularity, owing in part to its use on Instagram, to such an extent that 'the selfie' is now a common term used to refer to such images and the act of taking a photo of the self (Mirzoeff 2015:31). Another example includes the hashtag *#MeToo*, originally used to identify social media posts and Instagram images speaking out against sexual harassment, which also became a worldwide trend currently referred to as the global 'Me Too movement'. On Instagram the hashtags *#dogsofinstagram* and *#dogstagram* are slowly following suit, as images of dogs posted on the social application are casually referred to as *dogstagrams* and the community surrounding the digital network of images is referred to as the *Dogs of Instagram*. In other words, these digital images (consisting of the image, its caption and metadata) are a global phenomenon and network, forming an intricate part of contemporary society and social media culture.

Remarkably, the very first image posted on Instagram by Kevin Systrom (co-founder and former CEO of the popular social network) on 16 July 2010, was an image of a puppy looking up at the camera with the caption "test" (Figure 15) (Evans 2018). In the image, the dog's owner, Kevin – whose foot is also seen in the digital photo – presumably holds the camera, taking the picture.<sup>250</sup> The puppy, now a full-grown Golden Retriever, still often features on Kevin's Instagram feed. Following this initial post of Kevin's dog, in contemporary times dogs have become some of the most popular subjects of shared images on the platform. As mentioned in Chapter One, to-date on Instagram over 69 million images have been shared under the hashtag *#dogstagram* and over 157 million

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<sup>250</sup> I speculate on the meaning of this particular image, as well as the reasoning behind the choice of posting about a dog in the first 'test' image for Instagram, at a later stage in this chapter.

images are accompanied by the hashtag *#dogsofinstagram*.<sup>251</sup> Consequently, dogs remain some of the commonly shared subjects that fill Instagram feeds, alongside food, selfies, friends, quotes, activities and fashion (Hu et al. 2014:596).

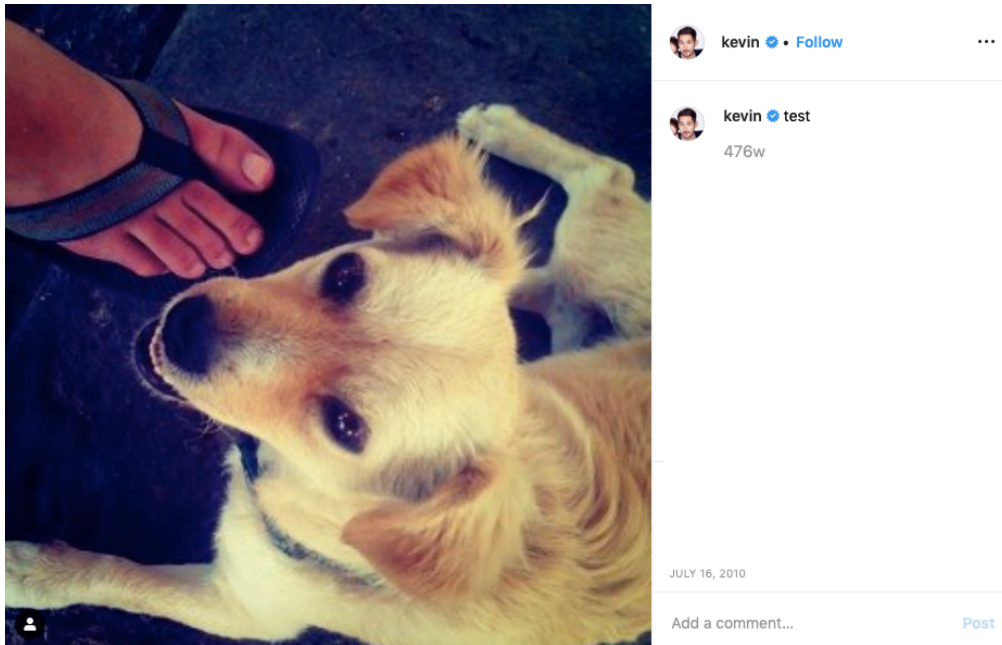


Figure 15: The first image posted on Instagram by Kevin Systrom (@kevin), 16 July 2010. Screenshot by the author.<sup>252</sup>

As mentioned in the introduction to this study, *dogstagram* and the *Dogs of Instagram* have made such an impact in contemporary society that a new social media platform *Barkfeed* has been established, dedicated solely to digital pictures of dogs (Risman 2015). In other words, *Barkfeed* is an Instagram-like feed dedicated solely to images of dogs. Additionally, on Instagram, several canine owners open Instagram accounts dedicated exclusively to their dogs. Posts on these accounts, although run by the human owner, often appear as if shared (and even taken by) the dog. That is to say, followers of such accounts follow the everyday images of the doings of the dog presented as the user, not necessarily the owner. Some of these *Dogs of Instagram* have reached so-called

<sup>251</sup> As some images are shared on Instagram including both hashtags some of the *dogstagram* and *Dogs of Instagram* images naturally overlap.

<sup>252</sup> Comments and likes are blocked out of screenshots of Instagram posts by the author in order to maintain the privacy of private Instagram users. All Instagram posts featured are obtained from public accounts, publicly available online to any site visitor – not necessarily an Instagram user – and are added as figures captured from a specific web address (available in the study’s Sources Consulted) with credit to the account holder, as with any other online source used for academic purposes.

‘Instafame’ (Marwick 2015) becoming microcelebrities and ‘Pet Influencers’, who gain follower attention and subsequently earn commercial profits to showcase and post about specific products, brands or services (Duguay 2018:97). Schonfeld (2016:58) asserts that in such cases “[a] single sponsored Instagram post might earn an owner several thousand dollars”. Similarly, Loudenback (2018) reports that a dog with more than one million followers can earn up to R230 000 per Instagram post.<sup>253</sup> Thus *dogstagram*s and *Dogs of Instagram* are not only noteworthy digital visualisations of companion species, but also a growing global techno-culture.

## 7.2 Why do *dogstagram*s matter?

From the above contextualisation, it is clear that *dogstagram*s and digital images of dogs online in general are immensely popular and form part of contemporary society in various ways. Moreover, rooted in the visualisation of the human-dog relation through visual culture, such as art and photography, we can argue that these digital images are a way of *looking* at or representing the human-dog relation mediated by technology in the Digital Age. Thus, *dogstagram*s capture and compute the everyday doings of companion species. Tifentale (2014:13) argues that Instagram is an archive of the human’s process of becoming in society. Extending this idea, *dogstagram*s on Instagram can therefore act as a type of archive for the human and dog’s process of becoming and *being-with* one another. Consequently, the digital image resonates because it carries with it, intensifies and makes visible the long philosophical history and complex questions surrounding the human-dog relation.

However, recent theoretical pursuits on the digital image, as well as social media platforms, maintains that these technological integrations in society do not only act as amplified archives to accumulate our representations and understandings. Rather, they are also active participants in shaping our relations and interactions. Following W.T.J Mitchell’s (1995) iconic question: “What do pictures want?”, as well as Mirzoeff’s (2015) understanding of an “image-

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<sup>253</sup> The rise of ‘Pet Influencers’ has grown to such an extent that marketing agencies and managing firms now exists solely dedicated to managing pet Instagram accounts (Loudenback 2018).



dominated network society”,<sup>254</sup> Du Preez (2018:17) shows that images “are not only signs of human communication but rather events, encounters and openings for meaning-making”. In turn, Joanna Zylińska (2017:59, emphasis in original) explains that “*photography makes philosophy*, full stop – and also, more importantly, that *photography makes worldhood*, rather than just commenting on it”. In other words, *dogstagrams* do not just signify the human-dog relation, but also produce new meaning when we engage with them as images. Mirzoeff (2015:66; 68) argues that digital images are “digital conversations” that “convey messages, share information and are designed to sustain conversations”.<sup>255</sup> Thus, *dogstagrams* are digital images and conversations, densely packed with information and history and, importantly, also play an active role in shaping how we understand the human-dog relation.<sup>256</sup>

A look back at the first image posted on Instagram (Figure 15) reveals a dog looking at the smart camera (or at his owner holding the device) and, subsequently, also looking at the viewer of the digital image through the Instagram interface. As we look back through our phone screens at the dog, we – like Derrida looking at his cat – meet the gaze of the dog. In doing so, the digital image requires us to consider the dog’s possible being. In turn, the viewer also sees a dog lying at his owner’s feet, reminding of the dog as historical anthropocentric symbol, waiting with loyalty by its owner’s side, looking up in response to his (notably technological) call. Finally, the architecture of Instagram allows human users to interact with this digital version of the dog. We are invited to *touch* the screen (or perhaps the dog) to communicate our appreciation for the post (and perhaps by extension the dog and its owner) and become part of the network of *responding* users who have already done so. Consequently, the digital image resonates because it carries with it, and intensifies, aspects surrounding the human-dog relation, such as the question of

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<sup>254</sup> In *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images*, Mitchell (1995) discloses the ‘pictorial turn’ and indicates the agency of images.

<sup>255</sup> Notably both Du Preez (2018) and Mirzoeff (2015) refer to the example of selfies in reference to the agency of the digital image. I apply their thinking to my analysis of *dogstagrams* as digital images.

<sup>256</sup> In other words, much like companion species themselves, *dogstagrams* include a circle of response, evoking response and responding to Instagram users.

the animal mind, touch and response. Additionally, the *dogstagram* opens up a space to create new meanings and new ways of thinking about dogs.

From this brief reading of the first example of a *Dog of Instagram*, it becomes evident that we should not only be asking how *dogstagrams* reflect companion species, but also questioning what do *dogstagrams* do? Or more specifically, what meaning do they add to our current understanding of human-nonhuman relations? To start to answer these complex questions, I *roll over* into the virtual space of the *Dogs of Instagram* by means of digital humanities methodologies.

### **7.3 *Insta-dog*: computing the computed image**

For the purpose of understanding what it is exactly that *dogstagrams* do, or, said differently, what meaning they convey, I explore the digital terrain of these images and their associated networks by *embarking* on a digital humanities project. More specifically, I employ a variety of digital humanities methodologies accumulated in a digital humanities project to analyse *dogstagrams* and *Dogs of Instagram*. As I outline in the introduction to this study, digital humanities is a mode of scholarship that derives from the digital shift in society and occurs as the intersection between digital technology and humanities disciplines (Drucker 2014:9; Burdick et al. 2012:121). Doing digital humanities ranges from using technology to do research, to “the cultural study of digital technologies, their creative possibilities, and their social impact” (Schreibman et al. 2004:17). My digital humanities project, entitled *Insta-dog*,<sup>257</sup> utilises the full spectrum of digital humanities, using computation to analyse and visualise *dogstagrams*, as well as study *dogstagrams* as digital entities to explore their possibilities and influence on the meaning of the human-dog relation. In doing so, I immerse myself as scholar in the digital representations and extensions of the conversation surrounding companion species online.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> To view *Insta-dog* visit [www.instadogproject.com](http://www.instadogproject.com)

<sup>258</sup> I take my cue from cinema and digital media theorist, Tara McPherson (2009:120), who suggests that the humanity scholar should engage “with the platforms and tools of the digital era” to become a multimodal scholar “imagining what it would be like to immerse yourself in a scholarly argument as you might immerse yourself in a movie or a video game” – or then a social media platform.

My reasons for using digital methodologies to study *dogstagram*s are twofold. Firstly, digital library theorist Bethany Nowviskie (2015:i12) argues that digital humanities can be a helpful approach in addressing the complexities of the Anthropocene. Although the line between using technology to benefit the environment and to destroy the environment is blurry, for Nowviskie (2015:i12), digital humanities should attend to environmental relations to attempt to answer Mirzoeff's (2014) call for "'counter-visibility' to the dominant imagery of the Anthropocene".<sup>259</sup> Thus, in response to Nowviskie's argument and in the framework of the Anthropocene as well as the human-nonhuman relation, my digital humanities project visualises the human-dog relation in a new manner, beyond the current representations in the discourse of visual culture.<sup>260</sup>

Reflecting on digital humanities in relation to environmental relations between the human and nonhuman, I am tempted to rethink digital humanities in relation to the theoretical concepts of Donna Haraway, whose unpacking of the human-nonhuman relation, against the background of the Anthropocene, has formed the basis of my reading of companion species thus far. Even though digital humanities is an insured interdisciplinary field in current academic environments, it is surrounded by contested debates, as theorists struggle to reach a consensus over what precisely constitutes digital humanities. Owing to its interdisciplinary nature, the field has been defined, re-defined, unpacked, re-packed, shaped and reshaped several times in various contexts.<sup>261</sup> I suggest that perhaps Haraway can be helpful in formulating an understanding of digital humanities, since she predominantly focusses on synthesising entities. In other words, perhaps Haraway's theoretical ideas surrounding synthesis can help synthesise the different aspects of digital humanities.

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<sup>259</sup> In Chapter One I outlined Mirzoeff's (2014) argument that the current visibility surrounding the Anthropocene and its associated environmental images require reimagining and scrutiny.

<sup>260</sup> Nowviskie (2015:i12) adds that digital humanities projects have the influence to use software to evoke empathy for the environmental crises. By playing on the affective power of digital images of dogs throughout *Insta-dog*, I hope to also tend to an emotive response, in favour of the environment (or the human-dog relation).

<sup>261</sup> For a full discussion on the various waves of digital humanities and various interpretations thereof, refer to Travis (2015), Liu (2012) Hayles (2011) and Berry (2011a, 2011b).

In Chapter Five I outlined Haraway's (2008:4) concept of "contact zones" as spaces where species encounter, entangle and multiply. For Haraway (2008:217), contact zones are meeting points, outside of our comfort zones, where entities meet with historicity, respond to each other and develop new responsible relations. Following Haraway's notion of contact zones, I suggest we think of digital humanities as a contact zone, where humanities scholarship meets digital technologies. Like Haraway's contact zones, digital humanities represents a new manner of doing research, somewhat out of the comfort zone of the typical humanities scholar. Yet, akin to Haraway's contact zones, when the scholar, humanities discourse and technology meet in the zone of digital humanities, a response occurs, resulting in new networks and (hopefully responsible) insights. Equally, just as the entities that meet in Haraway's contact zones have a historicity, each aspect that meets in a digital humanities project carries with it a background, context and discourse. In the contact zone of digital humanities these contexts cannot be forgotten as they meet, exchange and add to their existing findings.

That is to say, we can think of *Insta-dog* as a contact zone, where the following aspects meet: (1) myself as researcher with the historicity of my research and arguments regarding the human-dog relation, as well as my own history with my dogs, Fudge and Cody; (2) the *dogstagram* bearing with it the canon of the visual history of dogs in art and the human-dog relation, as well as the nature of the digital realm of social media platform Instagram and; (3) manual and automated computing methods that have their own distinct way of interpreting digital properties. From these "transdisciplinary encounters" (Travis 2015:928) new understandings and meanings are derived, exchanged, entangled and multiplied.

My second reason for framing the *dogstagram* in the contact zone of digital humanities, stems from my understanding of the nature of images on social media. As explained above, images online, more specifically on Instagram, are more than just visual representations. They are what Caple (2019:429) calls "a modal ensemble" or, according to Tifentale (2015:2) a "networked camera" that is "a curious hybrid, image-making, image-sharing, and image-viewing device".

Furthermore, as explained, *dogstagram* as a social media post contains a variety of elements, ranging from metadata to captions and altered images belonging to a wide network of information. It is therefore appropriate to investigate such a digital entity using digital methods that account for the *dogstagram* in its entirety, in comparison to, for instance, only a visual or content analysis that only examines the image. That is to say, digital computation matches the digital nature of the computed image. Tifentale (2014:3) explains: “New image-making and image-sharing technologies demand also radically new ways of looking at these images. Big data require ‘big optics,’ borrowing Paul Virilio’s term from the early 1990s”.<sup>262 & 263</sup>

New media theorist Lev Manovich (2001; 2011; 2014),<sup>264</sup> provides helpful guidelines and documentation on how to conduct such a digital humanities project that incorporates a ‘big optics’ approach. Crucially, Manovich (2011:9) maintains that any computer-assisted examinations of massive cultural data sets require a “distant reading” of computed patterns as well as a “close reading” by a human, to make sense of these patterns. Manovich (2011:9) emphasises that “completely automatic analysis of social and cultural data will not produce meaningful results today because computers’ ability to understand the content texts, images, video and other media is still limited”. For Manovich (2011:9-10), the ideal digital humanities project combines “human ability to understand and interpret ... and computers’ ability to analyse massive data sets using algorithms we create”. Hence, Manovich’s ideal application of digital computing methods requires a multi-scale or mixed-methods approach that incorporates a variety of

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<sup>262</sup> In addition, by analysing *dogstagram* digitally, we also find out more about Instagram as an online image-sharing application and social media users in general (Tifentale 2014:1).

<sup>263</sup> Markedly, Tifentale mentions philosopher Paul Virilio’s (1992) notion of “big optics”, which he refers to as the technological endeavours and data growth that allows humans to join and see over great distances. Already in 1992 Virilio predicted that technology would alter our way of seeing the world and, as a result, we would have to adjust how we see, or rely on ‘big optics’ to permit new and “spectacular insights” (Virilio 1992:91). Thus, Tifentale argues using computational methods to understand image-making platforms such as Instagram is a form of using ‘big optics’ to see the ‘bigger picture’ (so to speak).

<sup>264</sup> Manovich is the creator of famous digital humanities projects *Selfiecity* (2014) and *Phototrails* (2013) that adopts Culture Analytics as a technique. Manovich’s Culture Analytics explores large (big data) image sets to detect various patterns (Hochman & Schwartz 2012:6). I draw from Manovich’s available documentation on Cultural Analytic tools in his projects to aid my own digital humanities project.

technologies and, importantly, a human hermeneutical interpretation. I utilise such a multimodal approach to create the digital humanities project, *Insta-dog*.

My mixed method approach includes:<sup>265</sup>

1. An immersion into the digital world of *dogstagram*s by means of a long-term personal learning process, engaging, exploring and experiencing *Dogs of Instagram* in order to gain a particular understanding of the particular phenomenon.
2. Extracting a data set of publicly available *dogstagram*s from Instagram by means of a storage utility and downloader specifically designed to extract and encode public data from the image-sharing platform.
3. Using a pre-trained computer vision API to process a large data set of *dogstagram*s to classify these images into categories and supply analytical information regarding the image, including optical character recognition (OCR), labels and properties.
4. Processing the information supplied from a human horizon, identifying labels significant to the human-dog relation.
5. Visualising the identified labels in various ways using an image processing software and user interface framework in combination with human selection to showcase relevant visualisations and categories of *dogstagram*s.
6. Assembling visualisations, theoretical research, as well as distant and close readings into a complete and impactful platform for viewers to explore.

In what follows, I present the results and findings of the *Insta-dog* platform in conjunction with my own hermeneutical reading of *dogstagram*s. This discussion refers, for the most part, to the multi-scale digital analysis presented in its entirety through the *Insta-dog* digital humanities project. Additionally, I also layer this discussion with my own hermeneutical reading and experience of

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<sup>265</sup> This serves as a brief and fleeting overview of the computing tools and techniques developed and applied in the *Insta-dog* project. For a full discussion refer to detailed documentation available on *Insta-dog* at:  
[https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/79d064\\_4ca03e39d1774d84b44c29be1d2ec629.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/79d064_4ca03e39d1774d84b44c29be1d2ec629.pdf)

particular *dogstagram*s (described in step one), which also encompasses the critical reading of companion species presented in Part One of this study. In doing so, the ensuing discussion is an entangled computed and hermeneutical contact zone of what *dogstagram*s and the *Dogs of Instagram* reveal.<sup>266</sup>

#### **7.4 Findings: different types of *dogstagram*s**

The digital analysis of *dogstagram*s results in various computed tags or labels that provide a preliminary overview, albeit broad, of typical content captured in posts about dogs on Instagram. Thereafter, I process these labels or tags by means of a close (human) reading, where I explore their visualisations, identifying common trends, coherences and patterns that stand out or group together in the assembled plots of *dogstagram*s. Based on these identified patterns, alongside the theoretical reading of companion species and the human-dog relation, I identify seven categories to decipher the digitised dogs on Instagram.<sup>267</sup> These categories include: self-representing *dogstagram*s, anthropomorphic *dogstagram*s, *dogstagram*s as cultural indicators, domestic *dogstagram*s, action and adventure *dogstagram*s, *dogstagram*s of companionship, as well as *dogstagram*s of touch. In what follows, I unpack the identified types of *dogstagram*s.

##### **7.4.1 Self-representing *dogstagram*s**

To say that *dogstagram*s are a means of self-expression, self-representation or self-curation is perhaps stating the obvious, because, in its most basic form, social networking has become a means of expressing and representing ourselves virtually to others (Kreiss 2018:16). While the idea of curating the self through (visual) media did not originate in the Digital Age, scholars assert that social

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<sup>266</sup> Throughout the discussion I refer to various examples to illustrate my findings. To facilitate the reader in fully visualising these findings, I present single examples as figures (close reading) in this written component alongside different imageplot visualisations on *Insta-dog* (visit: <https://www.instadogproject.com/imageplots>). The reader can scroll through each larger visualisation located on *Insta-dog* (distant reading) alongside the specific type of *dogstagram* discussed here. Furthermore, the reader can follow my written argument alongside the broader digital humanities project for a comprehensive accompaniment to this theoretical argument.

<sup>267</sup> Evidently here the digital humanities project and my theoretical exploration of *being-with* companion species accumulates as a true hermeneutical “fusion of horizons” (Gadamer 2004[1975]:305), as the traditional canon of the philosophy of the human, nonhuman, animal and dog meet the realm of the digital and new insights (and questions) arise.

media has intensified, expanded and increased the notion of self-curatorship (Kreiss 2018; Van Dijck 2013; Rettberg 2017; Enli & Thumim 2012). Yet, it seems that the network of the *dogstagram* has proliferated self-curatorship even further, as humans now also use the image of the nonhuman dog to represent and express themselves online.

Tiidenberg and Whelan (2017:141) explore various visual self-representations that are “not-selfies”, where people share, tag and view images of animals online (amongst other things) as a practice of self-expression. They argue that the flow of images on social media that are not of the self, still represent “people’s experienced, relational, human selves” (Tiidenberg & Whelan 2017:151). In other words, “a picture of not-me is a picture of me”, or then in the context of the *dogstagram*: a picture of a dog is a picture of the self (Tiidenberg & Whelan 2017:151). In other words, just as the human enquiry into the animal subject usually reflects back to the human self (Wood 2004:129), so too the digitally curated image of a dog reflects back to the human who posted the image.<sup>268</sup>

For example, in Figures 16 and 17 the account holders use images of their dogs to express their moods after a tough spinning class or long Monday, respectively. Notably, the dogs did not engage in these typically human activities, yet their pictures are used to convey the human account holders’ feelings. Tiidenberg and Whelan (2017:152) argue that such images “are heightened in terms of their communicative function precisely because they are ‘of’ the people that took them or communicate on their behalf, in ways that can be, locally, more profound and direct than self-portraits”. That is to say, Tiidenberg and Whelan speculate that these images communicate and connect to other users more effectively than an image of a tired human after a long Monday or a sweaty person post spinning class may have. In this way we use the image of a dog to talk to others and communicate about ourselves with others (Hamada in Wender 2019).

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<sup>268</sup> Here I refer to my discussion in Chapter Two concerning the close relation between thinking about animals and understanding the human self.





Figure 16: Self-representing *dogstagram* expressing human exhaustion after a spinning class (@bernesbelike), 1 August 2018. Screenshot by the author.



Figure 17: Self-representing *dogstagram* expressing the human sentiment of 'Blue Mondays' (@redtheredcocker), 12 August 2019. Screenshot by the author.

Visit [www.instadogproject.com/imageplots](http://www.instadogproject.com/imageplots) for more examples



Similarly, Mort (2019:93) maintains that people tend to use their dogs in Instagram posts as extensions or even substitutes of themselves, because it is a 'safer' option. Mort (2019:93) explains that a dog in an image seems more authentic than a person, because posting an image of the self on Instagram (for example a selfie) is often associated with boasting, (elevated) self-confidence or vanity. As a result, viewers might respond more favourably to a post of dog than a post of users themselves, which can result in bonding in lieu of envy (Mort 2019:93). In a similar way, Caple (2019:436) maintains that Instagrammers use

images of dogs to distance themselves from serious matters, while still expressing their feelings thereof.<sup>269</sup> Perhaps this explanation could explain why Kevin Systrom chose to picture his dog in the first ever image posted to Instagram. As an initial test, Systrom was treading into uncharted waters and did not know what the reception of the post on the new platform would be. Possibly an image of his dog was a safer option – distancing himself from the image, while still conveying a message about himself in a relatable manner.

According to Mort (2019:92-93), the tendency of Instagrammers to think of dogs as more authentic than humans is rooted in the anthropocentric view that dogs lack a sense of self. That is to say, people anthropocentrically perceive dogs as less self-conscious than humans, hence there is a sense of “unselfconsciousness” in images of dogs posted by humans. In this way, *dogstagrams* that are self-expressive once again mimic the human-centred notion that only humans show signs of self-awareness. Equally important, *dogstagrams* of self-representation also highlight how an encounter with the animal being typically makes us question what it means to be human, as I unpacked in Part One of this study.

Referring to the historicity of the visual representations of dogs, we might look back at Romantic artists such as Phillip Otto Runge, Francisco de Goya and William Turner, who, in similar fashion, used dogs in their paintings as allegories to reflect human situations and experiences. Here dogs “permitted humans to project their most heartfelt emotions into an animal kingdom” (Rosenblum 1988:17). For example, in Goya’s *A Dog* (1820-1823) we see a dark head of a lone, perhaps sinking, dog looking up at a shadowy presence in a hazy landscape (Figure 18). The abandoned, vanishing dog is interpreted as an expression of the loss of human reason and control, where a stray dog “bear[s] the crushing allegorical weight of an annihilated civilization” (Rosenblum 1988:41). Using dogs as a means of human expression is therefore deeply rooted in our history of *being-with* dogs. With *dogstagrams* this manner of self-curatorship is augmented, instant and occurs on a much larger scale.

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<sup>269</sup> Specifically, Caple (2019:436) refers to examples where Instagrammers use *dogstagrams* to express their political allegiances in a ‘softening’ manner.



Figure 18: Francisco de Goya, *A Dog*, 1820-23.  
Mural transferred to canvas, 53,5" x 32".  
The Prado, Madrid.  
(Rosenblum 1988:40).

*Looking back at some of my own Instagram posts, I realise that I have also used images of Fudge and Cody to express my own moods and experiences. For example, I used a photo of Cody hiding behind pillows to vent about a typical 'blue Monday' experience (Figure 19). Similarly, during a particularly tough day of research, I expressed my frustrations via a sleeping Fudge (Figure 20), who I found stretched out over some reading material. Reflecting on why I used these pictures of my dogs, I am reminded that it probably did stem from an unconscious pursuit to make my situation and feelings seem less self-involved. However, at the same time, these images were taken in moments where I experienced exactly the situations they express – Fudge and Cody's actions at the time just seemed to express my feelings so accurately. Finding Fudge asleep on my research was the perfect picture of my desire to do the same. I see myself behind the camera, self-centredly thinking how my dogs are enacting exactly what I am feeling and then using them to express my own feelings to my fellow Instagrammers in a somewhat humorous manner. In this instance, despite my non-anthropocentric understanding of the animal being, the encounter and act of posting about Fudge and Cody was undoubtedly a human reflection back to myself.*

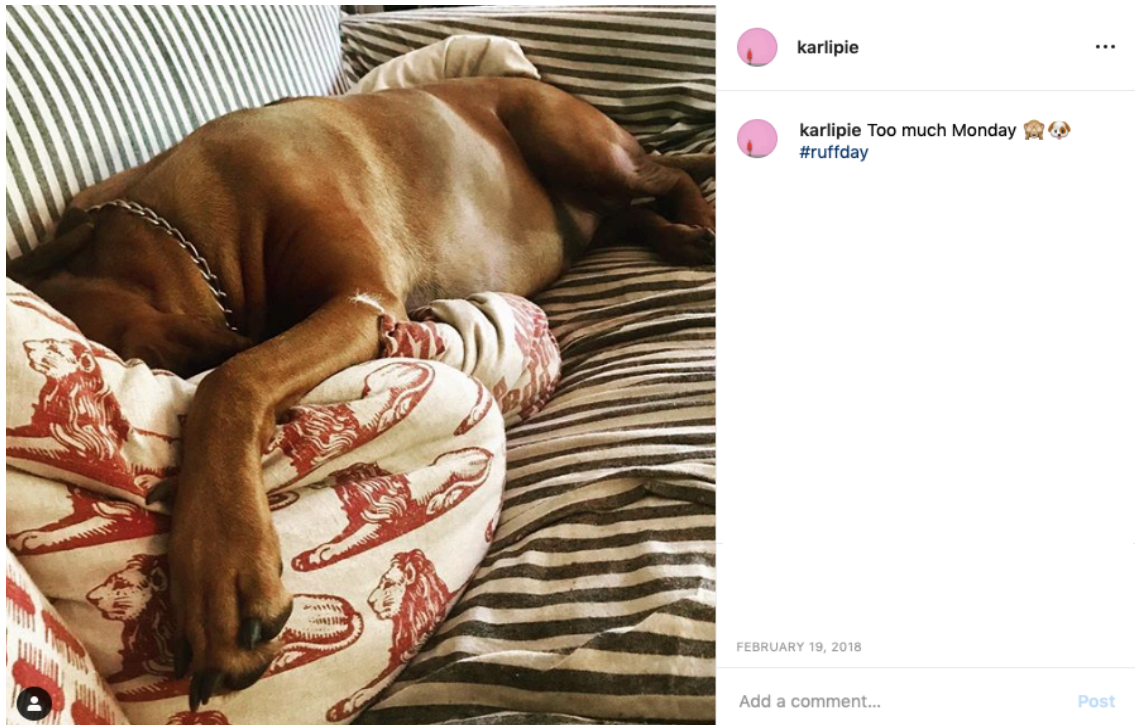


Figure 19: The author's own self-representing *dogstagram* featuring Cody (@karlipie), 19 February 2019. Screenshot by the author.

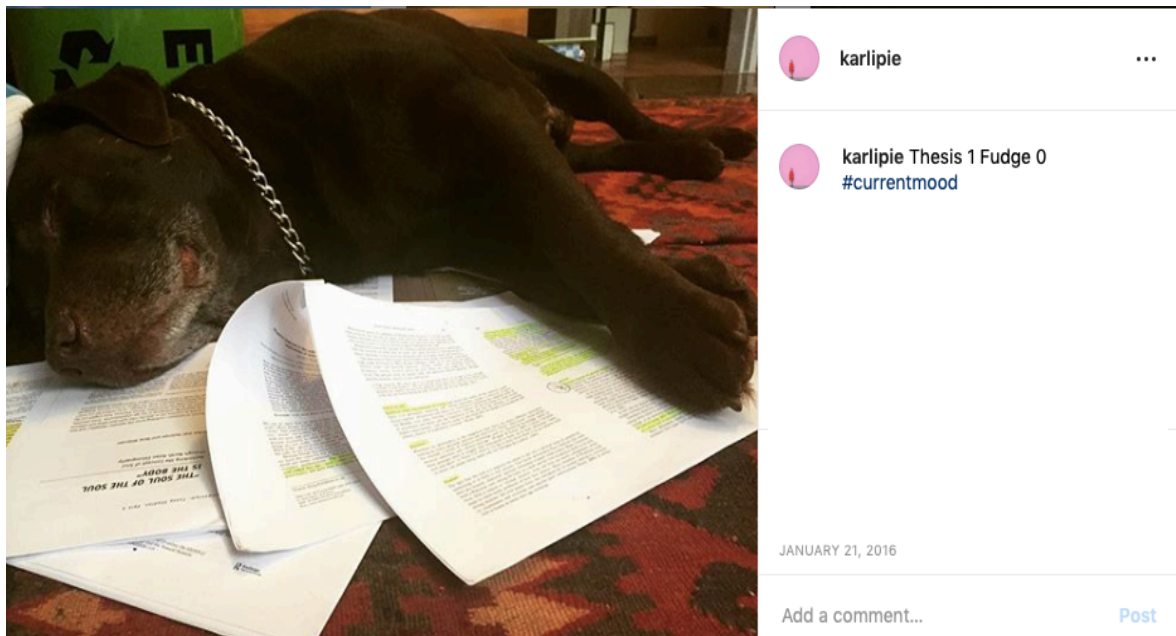


Figure 20: A previous self-representing *dogstagram* by the author featuring Fudge (@karlipie), 21 January 2016. Screenshot by the author.

### 7.4.2 Anthropomorphic dogstagram

The notion of expressing human experiences through images of dogs on social media reaches a peak when *dogstagram* no longer just express human sentiments through images of dogs, but actually modify the dogs in the images to mimic humans. A large amount of *dogstagram* content is labelled as dogs dressed in human clothing or performing human activities, such as doing household chores (Figure 21), shopping, working or even getting married (Figure 22).<sup>270</sup> Based on these posts it is clear that anthropomorphic *dogstagram* are increasingly popular on Instagram.

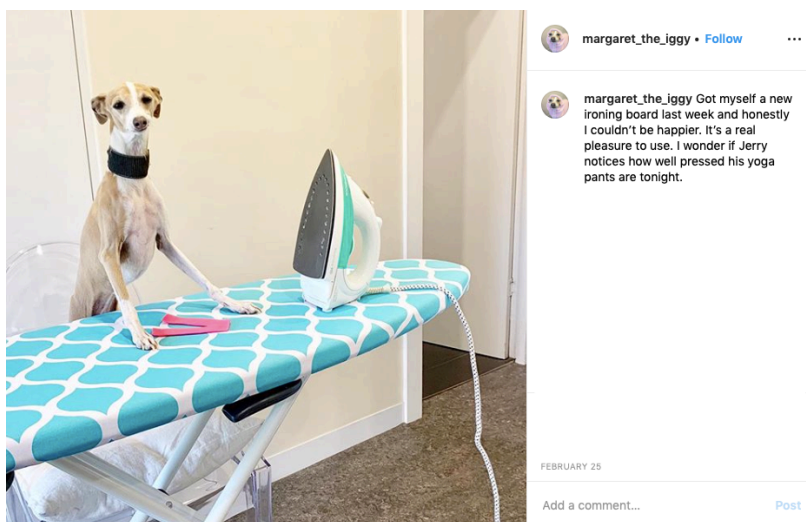


Figure 21: An anthropomorphic *dogstagram* picturing a dog ironing (@margaret\_the\_iggy), 25 February 2019. Screenshot by the author.

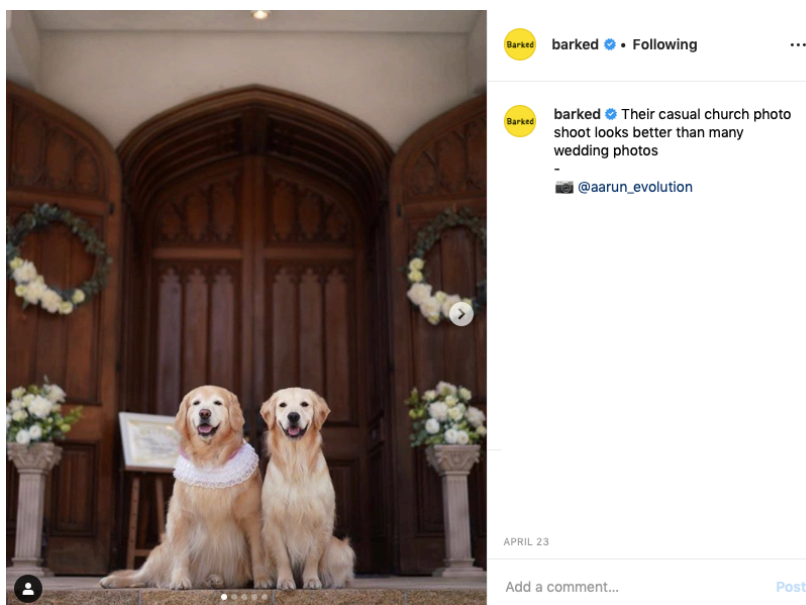


Figure 22: An anthropomorphic *dogstagram* picturing two dogs getting married, photograph by @aarun\_evolution (@barked), 23 April 2019. Screenshot by the author.

<sup>270</sup> The large variety of *dogstagram* depicting dogs getting married resonates with the symbol of the dog in folk rituals as a sign of fertility: "The folk ritual of presenting newlyweds with a dog in a cradle in the nineteenth century nursery rhyme of a young lady who took her 'father's greyhound and laid it in a cradle' illustrate a belief in fertility magic, coupled with the idea that canine power can be transferred to humans" (Rowland 1974:60).

In anthropomorphic *dogstagram*s dogs are humanised, since Instagram account holders project human social practices onto their dogs. These images resemble the humanised animal commonly pictured in popular culture, where the animal becomes a signifier of human beings. Reminding of visual examples discussed in Chapter Two, such as Cassius Coolidge's *Dogs Playing Poker* (1903) (Figures 4-5), anthropomorphic *dogstagram*s also literally present the dog in human form.

Notably, in anthropomorphic *dogstagram*s the dogs are not necessarily always an extension of the human account holder, instead they are anthropomorphised to represent habits of people in general or even societal stereotypes – to such an extent that the image and caption often seem to be presented from the humanised dog's point of view, or, said differently, posted as a human-speaking dog. As a result, at times, like Coolidge's *Dogs Playing Poker*, anthropomorphic *dogstagram*s border on satirical, ironically commenting on and drawing attention to aspects of contemporary human society.

For example, Figure 23 is a *dogstagram* featuring two dogs dressed up to resemble parents. The caption reads: "We're not mad honey, just disappointed in you and the life you have chosen for yourself", mimicking a phrase often associated with parenting. More precisely, the dogs are presented to humorously poke fun at the stereotypical idea that the baby boomer generation (the dog-parents) are often disappointed in their millennial children's different life choices, commonly associated with a confrontation and the phrase 'we're not mad, just disappointed' (Brokaw 1998).



Figure 23: A satirical *dogstagram* commenting on parenting styles (@hugoandursula), 9 March 2019. Screenshot by the author.

Similarly, Figure 24 contains images from a multi-image post presenting various dogs with biographies, resembling and mocking stereotypical figures in contemporary society.

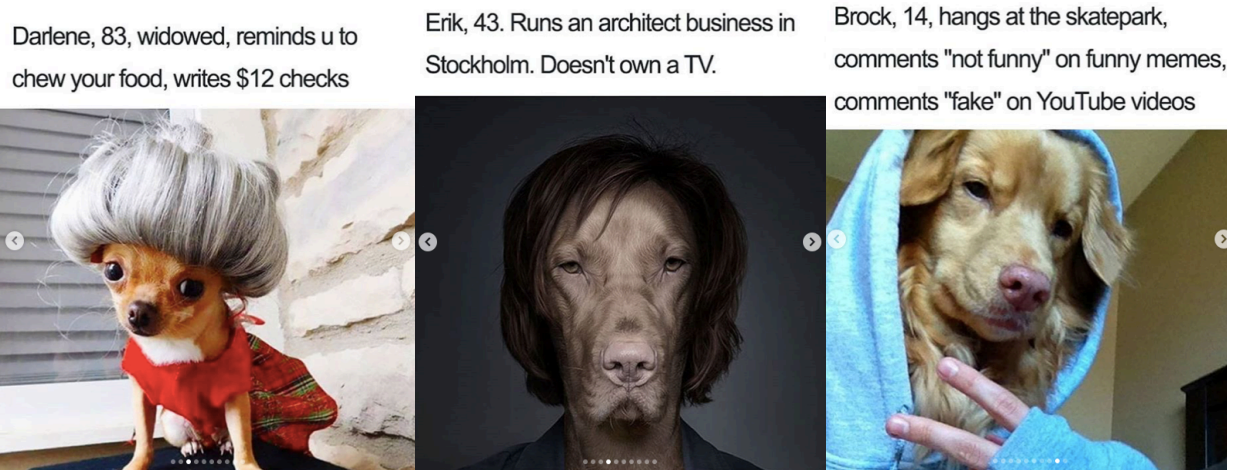


Figure 24: Screenshots of a multi-image *dogstagram* mocking societal stereotypes (@doggocom), 30 June 2019. Screenshot by the author.

Interestingly, upon closer inspection, several anthropomorphic *dogstagram*s pose humanised dogs, dressed up and performing stereotypical images of so-called ‘influencers’ on Instagram (Figures 25-26). In other words, the images ridicule the human culture and society that creates the microcelebrity on Instagram (Duguay 2018:97), ironically using the platform itself to do so. Perhaps the dogs are used to show, in a tongue-in-cheek manner, how absurd some of the content of Instagram pictures and the culture of so-called ‘influencers’ have become.



Figure 25: A satirical *dogstagram* commenting on the culture of influencers (@betches), 13 June 2018. Screenshot by the author.



Figure 26: A satirical *dogstagram* featuring a dog posed as a typical Instagram influencer, originally posted by @wanderlust\_samoyed (@mimi\_instadogs), 9 April 2019. Screenshot by the author.

Some anthropomorphic *dogstagram*s quite literally emphasise the idea of the anthropomorphic dog by presenting a dressed-up and posed dog, alongside a human dressed in a similar way (Figure 27). Often human and dog are also both dressed in stereotypical fashion. In these anthropomorphic *dogstagram*s the dog becomes a mirror image of the human, turning the contemporary myth that dogs resemble their owners into a visuality. In this instance the *dogstagram*s remind of the opening scene of the Disney film *One Hundred and One Dalmatians*, during which the protagonist Dalmatian, Pongo, looks out onto the street in search of a suitable love interest for his human owner Roger Radcliffe. Pongo sees various dog owners walking their dogs on leashes, all mirroring the looks and character traits of their human counterparts. Simply, in this scene, the viewer learns about (and perhaps even identifies with) the character of the human owner walking the dog, while what we learn about the nature of each dog remains a projection of human ideas and traits. We are entertained by the idea of a dog being human-like as well as the figure of the dog embodying human stereotypes and, as a result, become aware of our own human characteristics and thoughts.

Comparably, anthropomorphic *dogstagram*s featuring a human and their mirror-image dog not only serves as a parody of contemporary society, but also points out human characteristics and thoughts to the human follower. On my reading, the images ironically highlight the *differences* between human and dog, albeit



based on their outer appearances and not inner beings. Although the human and dog are dressed the same, they are simultaneously juxtaposed. The viewer is eminently aware that they are separate and markedly different entities – stressed by the awkward (or even goofy) appearance of the dog in human clothes in comparison to its human counterpart.<sup>271</sup> That is to say, a clearly anthropomorphic *dogstagram* attempting to equalise human and dog, paradoxically accentuates the differences between human and dog.



Figure 27: *Dogstagram* featuring a dog and human dressed similarly (@podarroz\_weimaraner), 17 May 2019. Screenshot by the author.

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Anthropomorphism not only reflects in the pictures and captions of *dogstagram*s, but also in the network of *Dogs of Instagram*. Evident in the usernames of these images, several accounts on Instagram are created and dedicated solely for specific dogs. Users then post on such accounts only about their dogs or ‘on behalf of’ their dogs. In other words, the very act of imagining and posting as a dog ‘Instagrammer’ is a manner of projecting the human ability to use social media onto dogs. As mentioned before, some Instagram accounts

<sup>271</sup> The distinctiveness between human and dog in the mirrored anthropomorphic *dogstagram*s is also emphasised by the tags identified by computer vision for these images. Computed in the digital humanities project, the API identifies a clear ‘dog’ and ‘human’ subject in these specific *dogstagram*s.

dedicated specifically to dogs become commercial commodities, since account holders get sponsored to post or advertise products. For example, the account @mollythenewfie regularly advertises products and merchandise for other pet owners. Thus, in these anthropomorphic *dogstagram*s, the dog used to satirise human influencers on Instagram ironically now also becomes the Instagram influencer.

In *When Species Meet*, Haraway (2008:46) comments on the rate at which dogs are commoditised in contemporary society: “We have no shortage of proof that classic rabid commodification is alive and well in consumer-crazy, technoscientifically exuberant dog worlds”. Haraway (2008:47) renders the “capitalist technoculture in the early twenty-first century” as the guilty party for turning the dog into an anthropomorphic product. In particular, Haraway (2008:47-52; 53-55) refers to dogs as consumers in the ever-growing pet food industry, pet insurance and dog medical services, as well as dogs as commodities in dog breeding lines, dog cloning, genetic manipulation services and dogs as workers. After the analysis of the anthropomorphic *dogstagram* it is clear that the dog is also commodified “in flesh and in the sign” (Haraway 2008:47) in the technoculture of social media in contemporary society.

With regard to dogs as commodities, Haraway (2008:62) asserts that although the dog as a product is an anthropocentric pursuit (which, for her, calls for concern), in the companion species relation dogs subjected to commodification can simultaneously add value to the technoculture society.<sup>272</sup> In the event of anthropomorphic *dogstagram*s that turn dogs into commodities, perhaps we can argue that they add value by allowing viewers to recognise vices, beliefs and practices of contemporary human society. In turn, the anthropomorphic *dogstagram*s that humanise dogs are significant, because – paradoxically – they also emphasise the irreducible differences between humans and dogs.

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<sup>272</sup> For instance, Haraway (2008:63) explains that dogs ‘working’ in prisons act as guards, yet they can also add value by acting as therapists and teachers to prisoners.

### 7.4.3 Dogstagrams as cultural indicators

The dog as symbol of (hu)man continues in the digital world of the *Dogs of Instagram*. The analysis of *dogstagrams* reveals that in these digital posts, dogs are also used as cultural indicators or icons: a sign to identify a particular idea, image or event of cultural significance. That is to say, *dogstagrams* not only signify human qualities and experiences, but also associate and fuse with popular events, brands, beliefs or objects. In many ways we can compare these cultural indicating *dogstagrams* to the popular use of dogs in advertising. Mort (2019:92) describes using dogs in advertising as fetish-like behaviour, where the popularity of dogs is associated with a particular kind of status, power and influence. In turn, brands and industries draw on society's fetish with dogs, using dogs in relation to their products to associate their meaning and influential status with their product (Mort 2019:92).

The use of dog as influential symbol seeps through into the realm of *dogstagrams* as we find several dogs inserted into cultural events as well as the latest fashions and crazes. For example, during the worldwide airing of the last season of popular series *Game of Thrones* (Benioff & Weiss 2019), several *dogstagrams* appeared featuring dogs dressed as characters from the series or sitting on the infamous iron throne (Figure 28). Similarly, over Easter and Christmas holidays, *dogstagrams* often feature dogs dressed as the Easter bunny, Santa Clause or reindeer (Figure 29). Several *dogstagrams* also associated dogs with the latest *Avengers: Endgame* (Russo & Russo 2019) film, picturing dogs wearing superhero costumes or chewing on Thor's hammer (Figure 30). Markedly, these images are not sponsored as means of advertising for brands, products or films. Rather, the community of *Dogs of Instagram* respond to cultural events and affiliate dogs with them to point to their significance in society. In other words, *dogstagrams* become indexical of popular culture.

However, *dogstagrams* as cultural indicators are not always popular culture based and can also take a serious tone at times. For example, during the devastating fire outbreak at the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris in April 2019, several users took to Instagram to express their sadness and support during the

incident. The *Dogs of Instagram* followed suit, posting pictures of dogs in front of the cathedral (Figure 31) or in Paris, accompanied by sympathetic captions. In another example, Caple (2019:428) shows how Instagrammers use *dogstagrams* to reflect their dissatisfaction with political strategies and endorse political parties during federal elections.<sup>273</sup> In these instances, the dog is not only affiliated with a societal or political event, but also becomes (as well as reaffirms the dog as) a symbol of comfort, support and loyalty. Therefore, the examples of *dogstagrams* as cultural indicators show how the dog can be entangled with events happening in society, indicating important occurrences in cultures and connoting meaning, such as support and loyalty, in relation to such events. In other words, cultural *dogstagrams* are a human pursuit to show the dog responding to its encircled environment and notably human world.



Figure 28: *Dogstagram* featuring a dog dressed as a Game of Thrones character, original post by @bootsythecorgi (@puppystagram), 20 May 2019. Screenshot by the author.



Figure 29: *Dogstagram* featuring a dog dressed as the Easter Bunny, original post by @maplefloral (@dogsofinstagram), 21 April 2019. Screenshot by the author.

<sup>273</sup> Caple (2019:428) specifically refers to a dataset of Instagram posts studied during the 2016 Australian federal election.



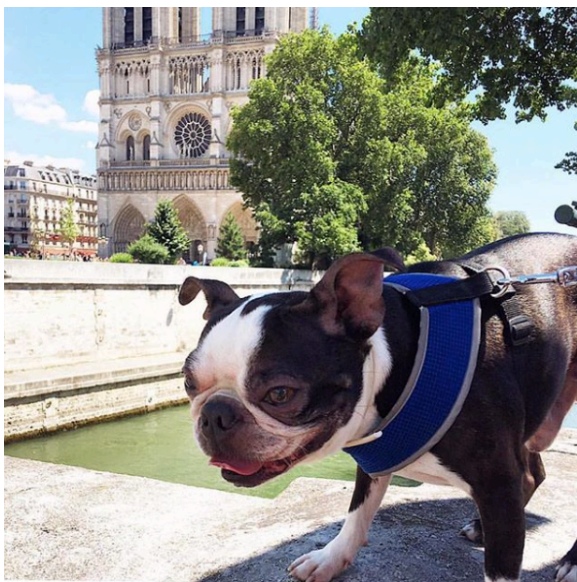
**followtheyellowbrickgirl** • Follow ...  
Marvel Studios

**followtheyellowbrickgirl** Puppy Avengers Assemble! I don't know what the big deal is, these pups managed to get the infinity gauntlet without any problem. #Thanosisadogperson

APRIL 11

Add a comment... Post

Figure 30: *Dogstagram* featuring dogs dressed as *Avengers* characters (@followtheyellowbrickgirl), 11 April 2019. Screenshot by the author.



**gatsby\_boston\_terrier** • Follow ...  
Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris

**gatsby\_boston\_terrier** Omd 🙄. This is so sad 😭. Notre Dame is burning 🔥. Our thoughts are with you 🇫🇷💔. This is such a beautiful cathedral and I was very lucky to see this building 😊

APRIL 16

Add a comment... Post

Figure 31: *Dogstagram* posted in the wake of the Notre-Dame fire, featuring a dog in front of the Cathedral with a sentimental caption (@gatsby\_boston\_terrier), 16 April 2019. Screenshot by the author.

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#### 7.4.4 Domestic dogstagrams

Representing the history of the dog as domesticated animal, several *dogstagrams* also depict the domestication of dogs. Domestic *dogstagrams* show typical processes or activities associated with the training of dogs or dogs obediently living alongside their human owner's way of life. Thus, domestic *dogstagrams* become an ultimate depiction of the human practice of pet keeping, showing domestic customs such as walking dogs (on leash), feeding dogs, dog tricks, dog sleeping habits, dog grooming and dog toys.

Parallel to the theoretical understanding of domestication as a mutually beneficial relationship that could be coercive and reciprocal (Cassidy 2007:12), these images are not depictions of dominating or cruel behaviour, instead they show engaged processes of domestication, such as walking or training dogs for specific activities. For instance, previously mentioned account @mollythenewfie, often showcases the process to train Newfoundlands in water rescue and drafting (Figures 32-33). In these posts the owner explains that water rescue and pulling are beneficial for Newfoundlands, showcasing how their domestic and breed history includes the capacity and instincts for such activities.

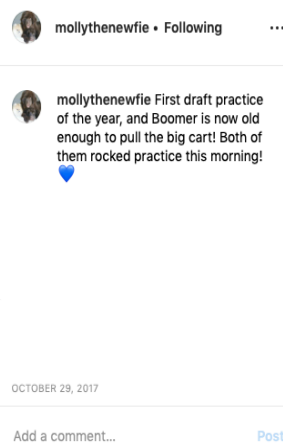


Figure 32: Domestic *dogstagram* of dogs during a drafting practice (@mollythenewfie), 29 October 2017. Screenshot by the author.

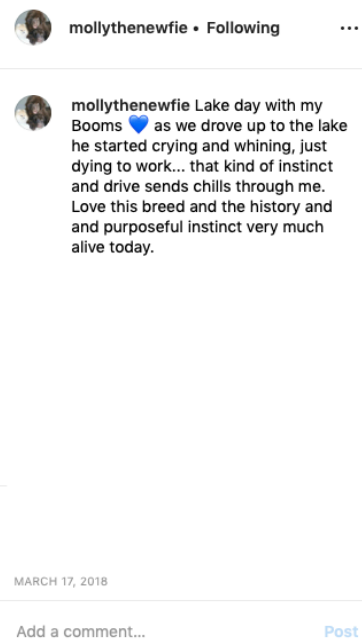
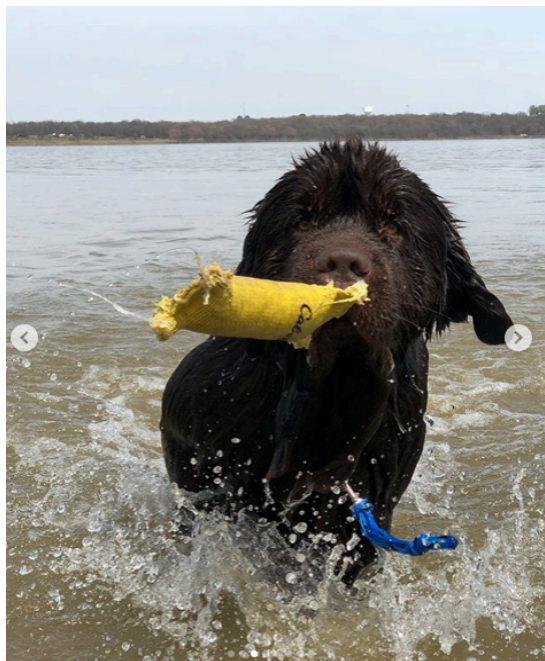


Figure 33: Domestic *dogstagram* of Boomer the Newfoundland during a water rescue practice (@mollythenewfie), 17 March 2018. Screenshot by the author.

In my view, domestic *dogstagrams* remind of popular television series attempting to teach people how to domesticate dogs and train dog behaviour, like National Geographic's *The Dog Whisperer with César Millán* (2004-2012) and CBS's *Lucky Dog* (2013-). The posts about domestication and training dog behaviour can become snapshots or easy-to-follow directions for controlling dog behaviour in a domestic setting, as human owners share their own experiences and directions. Consequently, domestic *dogstagrams* are also anthropocentric; since the posts at times assume to know what dogs want and how to achieve wanted dog behaviour in specific human terms. For instance, in Figure 32 the owner says in the caption to the post that Boomer (the pictured Newfoundland) "started crying and whining just dying to work", however we cannot be sure that this is what the dog was trying to communicate. Perhaps the opposite can also be true: he started crying because he did *not* want to participate in the domesticated behaviour. In this regard, domestic *dogstagrams* also pose a threat to dogs, since viewers and followers of such posts can develop unrealistic expectations for their own dogs – perhaps forcing their dogs to behave in a certain manner or do a certain activity, because 'dogs on Instagram do it'.<sup>274</sup>

In addition to describing domesticated behaviour, domestic *dogstagrams* also depict the dog in a typical homely environment. Dogs pictured on Instagram as a part of a home or household echo how dogs have come to represent the notion of the human idea of home and family in literature and philosophy (Fudge 2007:37-38). The dog as part of the human household is widely represented as a visual theme. Dogs are depicted at the feet of medieval gentlemen, at the table of lavish Victorian banquet's and dogs as pets prominently feature in household portraits, for instance in Diego Velasquez's famous portrait, *Las Meninas* [1656] (Figure 34), a dog is lying on the ground (Clark 1977:50).<sup>275</sup> Similarly, famous family

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<sup>274</sup> Although little evidence exists to support such instances as of yet, as *dogstagrams* grow more and more popular in society, examples might come to light. Mimicking domestic acts depicted in *dogstagrams* perhaps also extend and remind of my own pursuit to take Cody for walks, although he refused to do so (described in Part One of this study). My motivation for walking Cody came from the common domestic notion that dogs 'need to be walked' – perpetuated in the visual realm and also on social media.

<sup>275</sup> In French philosopher Michel Foucault's (1970[1966]:14-15) analysis of the artwork in *The Order of Things: Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, he argues that the painting depicts living things in hierarchy, with the dog placed as loyal guardian to the household of Spanish monarchs.

photographs often feature the so-called “family dog” (Merritt 2018:312) (Figure 35), while contemporary advertisements of household products, home appliances and home décor imagery often include dogs (Mort 2019:92) (Figure 36). Thus, the visualised household dog is often described as an object in the household (Rosenblum 1988:10). Building on this widespread theme of the objectified household dog, the domestic *dogstagram* also places the dog as part of the home or the household, as we see dogs on social media sitting on couches, at tables or in Instagram posts about families (Figure 37).



Figure 34: Diego Velasquez, *Las Meninas* or *The Family of Philip IV*, 1656.  
Oil on canvas, 316cm x 276cm.  
The Prado, Madrid.  
(Museo Nacional del Prado 2012:32).



Figure 35: Cecil Stoughton, *JFK and Family*, 1963. (Merritt 2018:364-365).





Figure 36: Magazine cover of *ELLE DECORATION South Africa* featuring a dog as part of the home or interior decor, March 2017. (Elle Decoration 2017).



Figure 37: Domestic *dogstagram* of home décor featuring a dog (and cat) (@studioseed), 7 September 2019. Screenshot by the author.

In a particular *dogstagram* account picturing the life of Brim the English Bullmastiff (@brimthemastiff), we can clearly see how *dogstagram*s often depict the dog as part of the household. The majority of the content on the @brimthemastiff account features Brim, in the house, sitting on his 'favourite' couch, in family photos, alongside the household cat or chewing on his favourite 'poof' chewable toys (Figure 38). Scrolling through Brim's Instagram account, it becomes evident that Brim is a key member of his household.

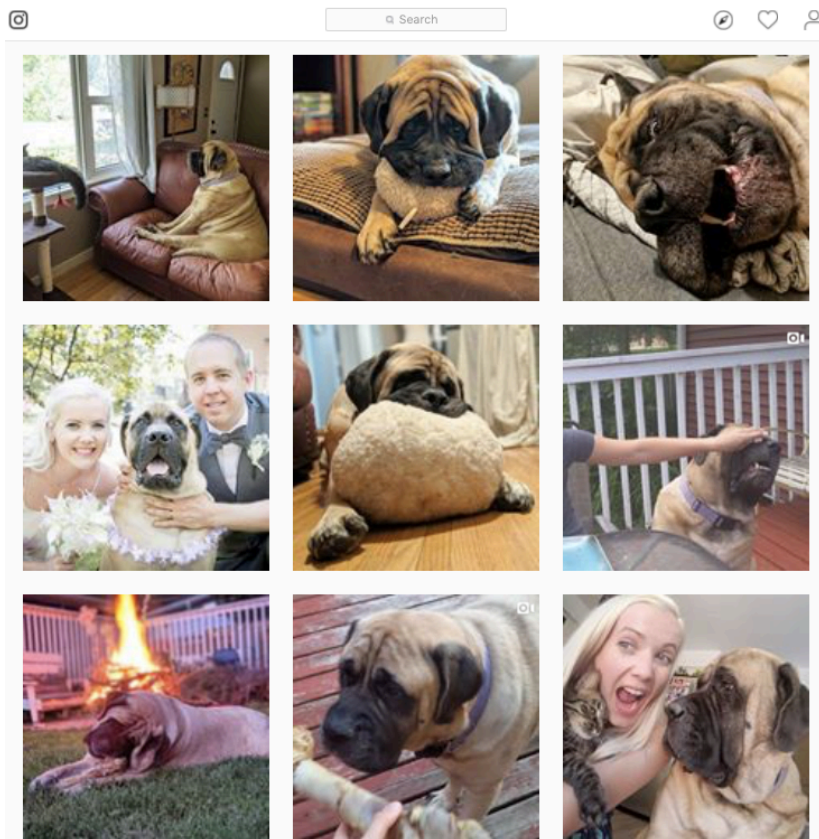


Figure 38: Screenshot of @brimthemastiff profile feed from 27 July to 4 August 2019, showing Brim as part of a family and home. Screenshot by the author.

In contrast to the anthropocentric understanding of domestic *dogstagram*s picturing dogs as household items, some household dogs (like Brim) seem to be depicted as active participants rather than passive objects. For instance, scrolling through several pictures of Brim seated on his couch, we can anthropocentrically argue that Brim is almost literally ‘part of the furniture’ (Top left Figure 38), however owing to the somewhat anthropomorphic captions describing what Brim is doing or ‘speaking on behalf of Brim’, the account presents him with a sense of agency and describes his continuous adventures and actions in the home (Figure 39).<sup>276</sup> For instance, the caption in Figure 39 asks Brim to “chime in on the morning meeting”, including him in day-to-day doings. In this manner, owing to the features of the digital platform and digital nature of *dogstagram*s, the visualisation of the domestic dog in the digital realm simultaneously steps away from anthropocentric, objectified depictions: presenting the dog not only as a family companion to the household, but also as an actor *contributing* to the household.

<sup>276</sup> The notion that the domestication and anthropomorphisms of dogs in *dogstagram*s simultaneously objectifies and gives the animal agency, resonates my understanding of domestication and anthropomorphism in Chapter Two. In my investigation of these two concepts I argued that both terms conjointly exhibit human exceptionalism and animal agency.

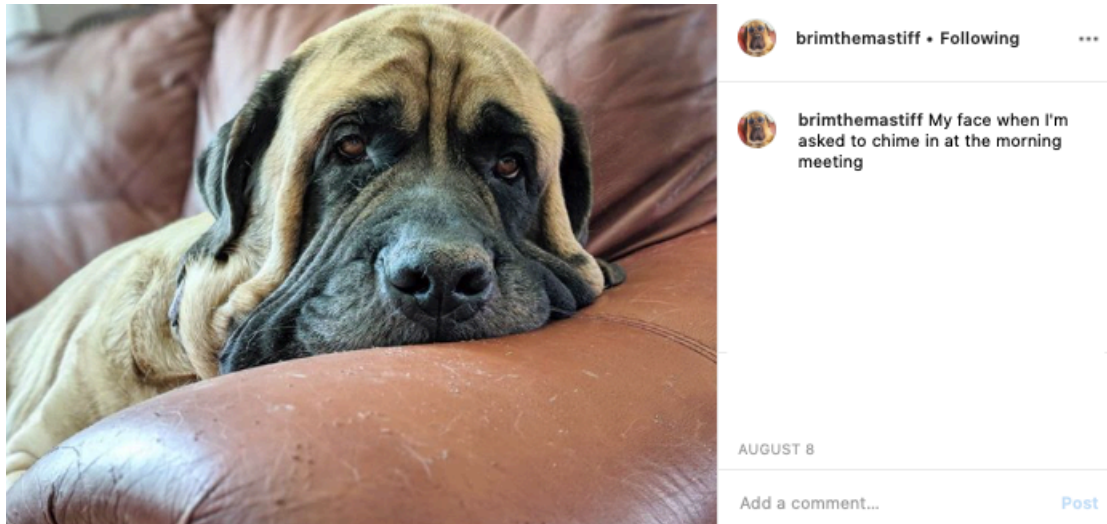


Figure 39: Domestic *dogstagram* presenting Brim the dog with a sense of agency (@brimthemastiff), 8 August 2019. Screenshot by the author.

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#### 7.4.5 Action and adventure dogstagrams

For the most part, the *dogstagrams* identified thus far seem to stem from or embody anthropocentric practices, using the dog as a means of human projection, expression or symbolism, and representing dogs in terms of domestication and anthropomorphisms. Furthermore, the notion that any Instagram post or account involves some form of human agency – since dogs cannot independently post on Instagram – frames the *dogstagram* as a particularly human dominated action. Nevertheless, my analysis of *dogstagrams* reveal that, in some cases, the *Dogs of Instagram* can also connote an anti-anthropocentric perspective and emphasise the being of the dog or the dog's sense of agency.

In contrast to capturing the dog in the human home, several *dogstagrams* capture dogs 'in action' (so to speak) in a natural environment. Pictured against the backdrop of natural landscapes with seemingly no human interference, some *dogstagrams* also attempt to eliminate the human in its imagery and posts.<sup>277</sup> Moreover, it appears as if the dog is on an adventure in a natural setting,

<sup>277</sup> I use the term 'natural environment' here to refer to natural landscapes, including vegetation, natural resources and natural events. In other words, environments filled with nature and void of human culture. Notably, I am not implying that these environments are the dog's natural habitat, only that they place the dog in an environment without human interference. For this reason, I do not entitle these *dogstagrams* 'natural' but 'adventure' *dogstagrams* – they depict the dog exploring an environment outside of the human realm.

discovering its environment. In other words, these *dogstagram*s emphasise dogs as nonhumans on an adventure in a nonhuman environment, rejecting the material world of commerce, cities and human activities.

We can look back at a long line of imagery depicting the dog in a similar manner, attempting to represent “the pure and honest being” of the dog (Rosenblum 1988:78). In a typical nonhumanist manner, these images take on the gaze of the animal as the human immerses itself into nature and the dog’s world (Rosenblum 1988:78).<sup>278</sup> Rosenblum (1988:78) explains that such images often belong to, or show similarities to, the Romantic tradition of depicting people “facing the infinite mysteries and longings evoked by landscape” (Figure 40). However, it is now the dog that faces the nonhuman environment and the human is left to contemplate the landscape from the dog’s perspective (Figure 41). Comparably, *dogstagram*s of dogs adventuring in a natural environment tend to place the dog in an untamed setting, gazing out at its surroundings (Figure 42), allowing the viewer to follow and contemplate its irreducible nonhuman gaze.<sup>279</sup> Mort (2019:90) explains: “We feel at once invited into the picture but also excluded, separate from the world the dog and the man have created between them, unable to go to the special places they can reach”.



Figure 40: Casper D. Friedrich, *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*, 1817. Oil on canvas, 94,8cm x 74,8cm. Kunsthalle Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany. (Hamburger Kunsthalle 2016).

<sup>278</sup> For example, also see Franz Marc’s *Dog Before the World (Hund Vor der Welt)* (1912).

<sup>279</sup> Interestingly, Romantic paintings of people looking out over empty landscapes are also often read as the colonial gaze of discovery and possession, where the human (typically a white male) looks out over the uninhabited landscape with the notion of controlling, owning or using the land. If *dogstagram*s depict the dog on an adventure also looking out over the landscape could they also be implying that the dog looks out over the land with a sense of power and agency? Perhaps implying that the dog also gains a sense of subjective ownership in the world. At the same time these images can also arguably evoke a sense of the human-centred Enlightenment and colonisation, discussed in Chapter Two.



Figure 41: William Turner, *Dawn After the Wreck*, 1841. Watercolour with brush, red chalk, rubbing and retinting on white paper, 36,8cm x 25,1cm. Courtauld Institute Galleries, Sir Stephen Courtauld Collection, London. (Rosenblum 1988:42).



Figure 42: Adventure *dogstagram* of a dog looking out over the landscape (@kai\_the\_snow\_dog), 7 September 2019. Screenshot by the author.

Taking a closer look at adventure *dogstagram*s, we find that some of these images not only capture the dog in a natural environment, but also capture the dog-in-motion or in mid-adventure, depicting its movements and actions while exploring nature (Figures 43-45). In other words, the images take the nonhumanist point of view a step further, removing the sense of a human posed picture. So-called 'action-shots' of dogs are intrinsically linked to visual pursuits attempting to capture the dog's movements and motions in action, as seen in Eadweard Muybridge's chronophotography of a dog walking (1887) (Figure 46),<sup>280</sup> Giacomo Balla's Futurist depiction of a dog on a leash (1912) (Figure 47), as well as contemporary dog photographer Christian Vieler's photographs of dogs catching treats (2013-) (Figure 48). However, action *dogstagram*s can be distinguished from these visual pursuits, in that they depict the dog 'in-action' in

<sup>280</sup> Similarly, see also Ottomar Anschutz photograph of dogs running taken in Lissa, Posen 1997.

a natural setting, without human input, unlike, for instance, Balla's dog walking on a leash alongside a human or Vieler's dogs catching treats thrown by the human photographer.

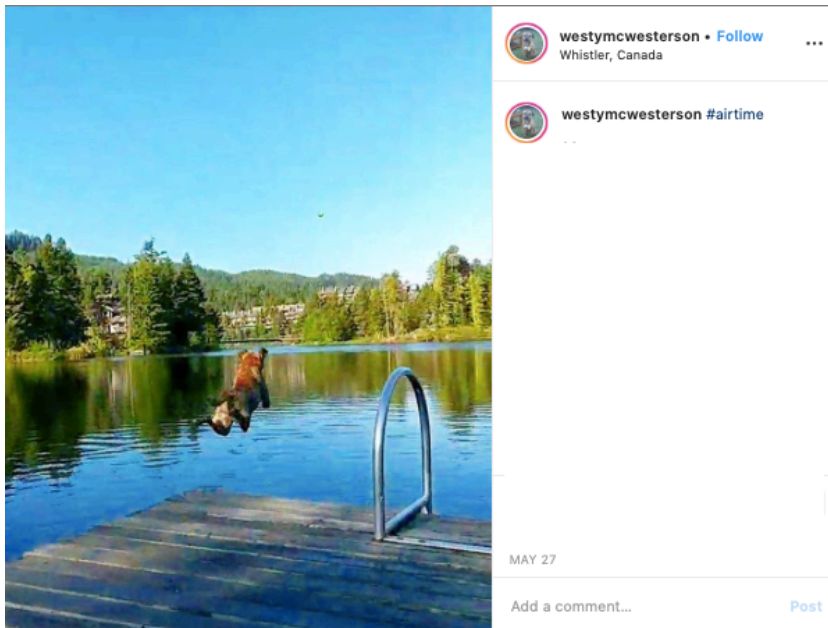


Figure 43: Adventure *dogstagram* of a dog jumping into a lake (@westymcwesterson), 27 May 2019. Screenshot by the author.

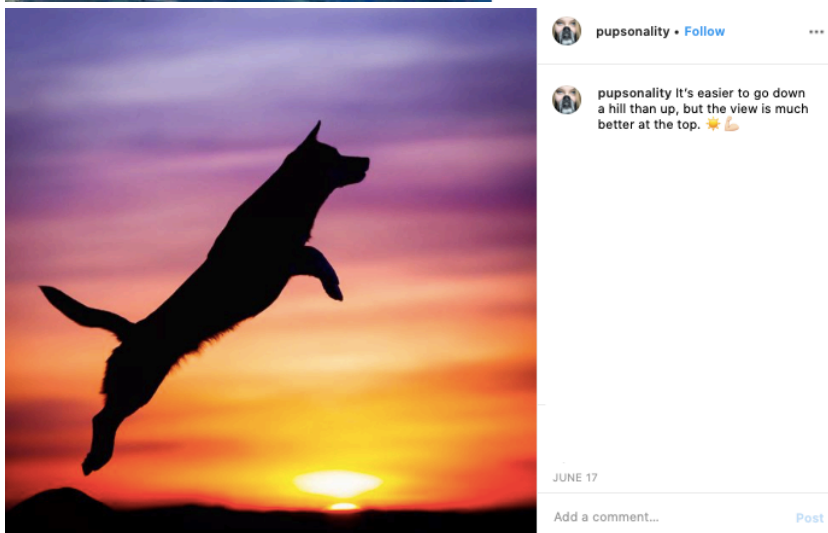


Figure 44: Adventure *dogstagram* of a dog jumping in the air (@pupsonality), 17 June 2019. Screenshot by the author.

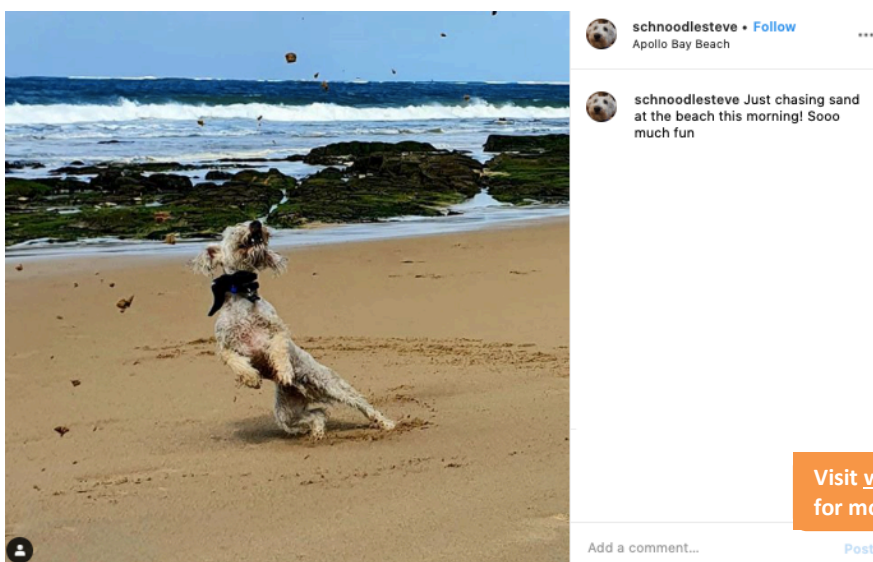


Figure 45: Adventure *dogstagram* of a dog chasing sand (@schnoodlesteve), 7 September 2019. Screenshot by the author.



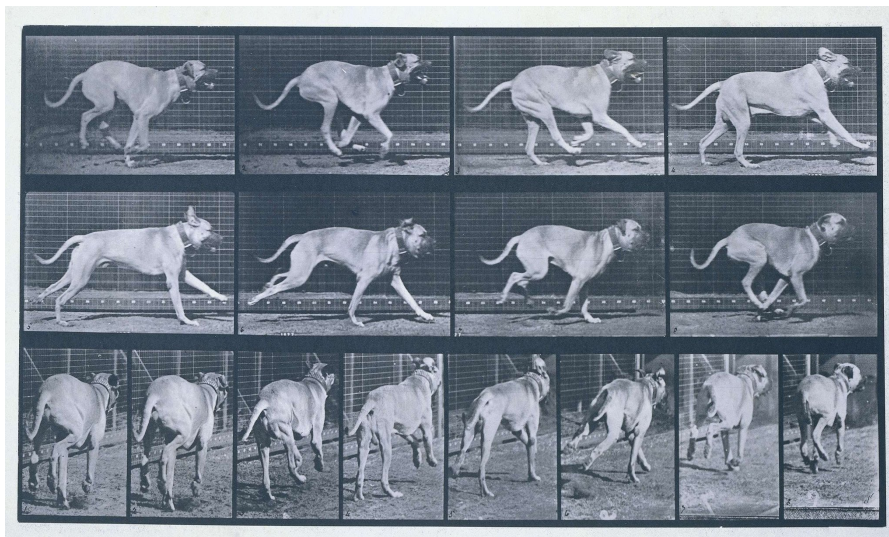


Figure 46: Eadweard Muybridge, *Rennende hond (Dread)*, 1887. Lichtdruk, 484mm x 612mm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands. (Rijksmuseum 2019).



Figure 47: Giacomo Balla, *Leash in Motion*, 1912. Oil on canvas, 35" x 43,25". Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. (Rosenblum 1988:81).

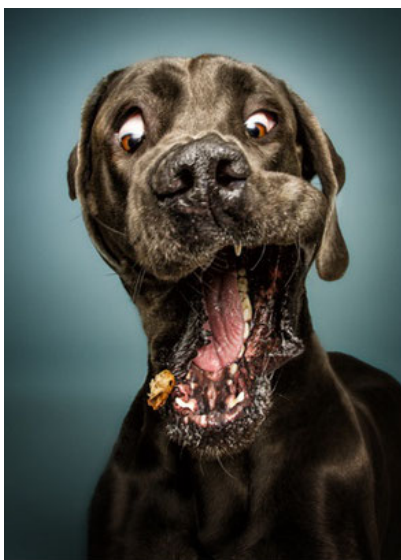


Figure 48: Christian Vieler, *Snapshots of dog catching treats, [sa]*. (Vieler-photography 2019).

Akin to Romantic landscape paintings, perhaps it can be argued that adventure *dogstagram*s evoke a sense of the transcending sublime for the viewer, creating an aesthetic of awe, thrill and danger reaching beyond the self when confronting nature.<sup>281</sup> In *#NeverLeaveTheDogBehind*, theorist Helen Mort (2019) discusses

<sup>281</sup> Here, I refer to the discourse of the sublime originally outlined by philosopher Edmund Burke in *A philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful* (1990[1757]),

the phenomenon of Instagram photos of dogs accompanying their human owners on hikes or adventures, pictured in extreme outdoor environments, typically also accompanied by the hashtag *#neverleavethedogbehind*. In these adventure *dogstagram*s, dogs are captured during extreme outdoor activities, picturing dogs on top of mountains or climbing to seemingly dangerous heights, pursuing the sublime and an unimaginable world alongside its owner (Figure 49). Tromble (2019:7) argues that the billions of animal videos on the Internet is “an echo of a lost sublime – the long aeons when we were primarily companions or competitors to the species that co-evolved with us”. Following Tromble, perhaps adventure *dogstagram*s therefore represent the human’s pursuit (or return) towards a sense of the sublime, albeit this time through the safe distance of the image and gaze of their wandering dog – a nonhuman that might bring them closer to an encounter with the wildness of the nonhuman environment.<sup>282</sup>

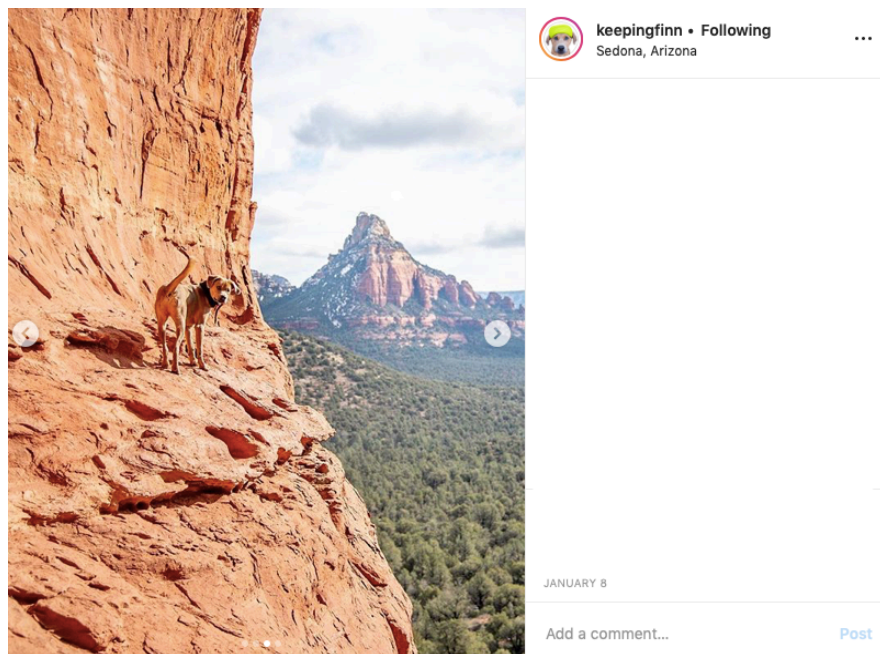


Figure 49: Adventure *dogstagram* of a dog climbing to dangerous heights (@keepingfinn), 8 January 2019. Screenshot by the author.

often identified in Romantic landscapes as an overwhelming experience, causing extreme emotions such as awe, thrill, terror or fear, most commonly encountered in nature. As an aesthetic category, the sublime is an experience that causes confusion or discomfort, collapsing distinctions between what is known and what is unknown or unimaginable. In this eighteenth century outline, the sublime is experienced at a distance, with the subject far from the actual event (Du Preez 2018:746). In contemporary society, the sublime is manifested as the pursuit of extremes where “sublime encounters are also increasingly immersive, requiring the distance between subject and object to shrink to millimetres and nanoseconds” (Du Preez 2018:747).

<sup>282</sup> In turn, as digital images, adventure *dogstagram*s can also reflect a sense of the digital sublime. First identified by Mosco (2005), the digital sublime refers to the possibility of the technological and digital realm to transform everyday life into the quality of greatness that is the sublime. In other words, as digital posts, adventure *dogstagram*s extend a certain sublime beauty to society.



#### 7.4.6 Dogstagrams of companionship

The digital analysis of *dogstagrams* reveals that a large number of images include two different subjects or two different species. Upon closer inspection, it seems some of the two-subject *dogstagrams* comprise of a human and a dog, or a dog and another animal. Reading the photographs' captions, it is evident that *dogstagrams* attempt to capture companionship or friendship between two subjects. In this manner, the *dogstagrams* tell stories of dogs living in kinship with other dogs, species or humans. They become types of “stories that matter” (Haraway 2003:3) in the world we live in, which Haraway (2003:4) argues are key to understanding and examining companion species. That is, *dogstagrams* can be considered as a way of telling stories about species relations and *being-with* companion species. Hence, in some instances, *dogstagrams* form part of what Haraway (2003:17) calls “doggish scribblings”, where the “[l]essons have to be inextricably part of the story” – teaching other Instagrammers about the relation between species or how to be with others.

To illustrate, I refer to a few examples of companionship stories told through *dogstagrams*. A notable *Dogs of Instagram* companionship follows Cricket, a Golden Retriever, and his companion Larry the Tortoise (Figure 50). In their Instagram posts their owner describes their relation and histories. For example, in a video of Cricket meeting Larry for the first time the caption reads:

This is where it all began. We rescued Larry the Tortoise and brought him home to live with us. Frightened and uneasy he would not come near any of us in those first few days... until he met Cricket. Cricket sensed that he hadn't had a good life up until now. So Cricket sat with him all day and looked after him until eventually they became best friends. Cricket would wait patiently until Larry would catch up (as seen in this video. And Larry would follow Cricket everywhere. Today Larry is a different tortoise since meeting his best friend and they are inseparable! (From @fozcook Instagram account, posted on 26 July 2019).

Similar to Cricket and Larry, some *dogstagram*s show dogs interacting with other species as their kin, ranging from ducks (Figure 51) and cats, to cheetahs.<sup>283</sup> In particular, such *dogstagram*s capturing perhaps somewhat unlikely friendships, teach us about co-habiting with others. In most of these stories it is evident that two different, irreducible species exist in relation to each other, sharing in each other's world as well as showing signs of a Heideggerian care (*Sorge*) and a Harawayian play, love and response when engaging with each other.



Figure 50: Friendship *dogstagram* of Cricket and Larry (@fazzcook), 12 June 2019. Screenshot by the author.



Figure 51: Friendship *dogstagram* of a Golden Retriever and a duck, (@puppies.media), 5 June 2019. Screenshot by the author.

Although there are several *dogstagram*s of humans and dogs that, somewhat superficially, express a bond or connection between human and dog (often anthropomorphically referred to in captions as ‘best friends’), others exist that conscientiously attest to and reflect a companionship where human and dog live with one another, recognise each other as a co-presence and co-shape each

<sup>283</sup> Cheetahs are somewhat anxious animals, especially when living in a rescue environment. Often rehabilitation units put them together with dogs to help calm them down. The dogs and cheetahs often develop a close relation, depicted in Instagram posts.

other's world. For example, on the account @wafflenugget, account holder Kate Speer posts about her life with Waffle, her psychiatric service dog. Kate (2019) calls herself a 'digital storyteller' and, as a result, her Instagram posts become stories of her relation with her dog Waffle. Followers witness how Waffle supports Kate, responds to her and aids her in going about her everyday life (Figure 52). We also see how Kate engages with, responds to and cares for Waffle and allows him to explore the environment in his own way. On my reading, the account is a digital story of a companionship where human and dog exist in relation, to such an extent that they become beings-with-others, engaging with the world as separate entities and also *being-with* one another by playing, responding and learning from one another. As Kate (2019) perfectly describes, they are a human-dog team, teaching each other their ways.<sup>284</sup>

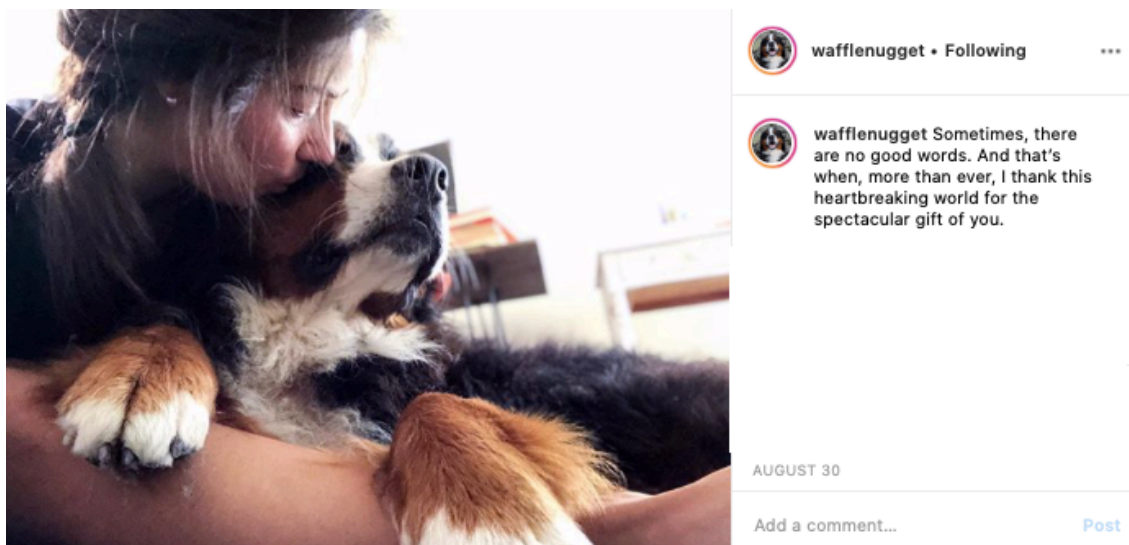


Figure 52: *Dogstagram* of companionship and support between Kate Speer and psychiatric service dog Waffle (@wafflenugget), 30 August 2019. Screenshot by the author.

Visit [www.instadogproject.com/imageplots](http://www.instadogproject.com/imageplots) for more examples



Another example of a digital story of human-dog companionship can be found on the account @keepingfinn. Finn is a rescue dog from Puerto Rico traveling with his owner Henry through the United States. Their Instagram posts resemble adventure *dogstagrams*, as Henry and Finn capture and share images of their hikes and adventures across the country (Figure 49). However, @keepingfinn also demonstrates the bond of companionship that exists between human and

<sup>284</sup> Kate and Waffle's companionship has spread beyond the platform of Instagram as they become advocates for service dogs, mental health, as well as the importance of the human-dog relation. For more on their story visit <http://www.katespeer.com>.

dog. The account follows the relation that developed between Finn and Henry since his adoption. As a result, followers see how Henry and Finn learn from each other. In captions, Henry describes them as ‘a bonded pair’, ‘co-pilots’, ‘co-workers’ and ‘wingmen’ as we see them play together and respond to each other, embodying the human-dog companionship of *being-with* described in Part One of the study. In a particular post (Figure 53), Henry describes his life before he met Finn and how much he has changed since travelling with his dog. The caption of the image reads:

Me now (with Finn) vs me before Finn. The contrast between the two is funny to me. The old Henry looks uncomfortable standing there, picture is poor quality, etc (should we go on? Please no). The new Henry with Finn stands taller, happier, more confident, plus a much higher quality picture. It's a funny comparison and example of how much Finn has changed my life. (From @keepingfinn Instagram account, posted on 14 January 2019).

In this *dogstagram* it is evident that Finn's being has co-shaped Henry's existence, changing how he experiences life (notably for the better). In turn, Henry has co-shaped Finn's life rescuing him from dire circumstances in Puerto Rico. Therefore, *Dogs of Instagram*, like @keepingfinn and @wafflenugget, can also tell digital stories of human and dog *being-with* each other in companionship.<sup>285</sup>

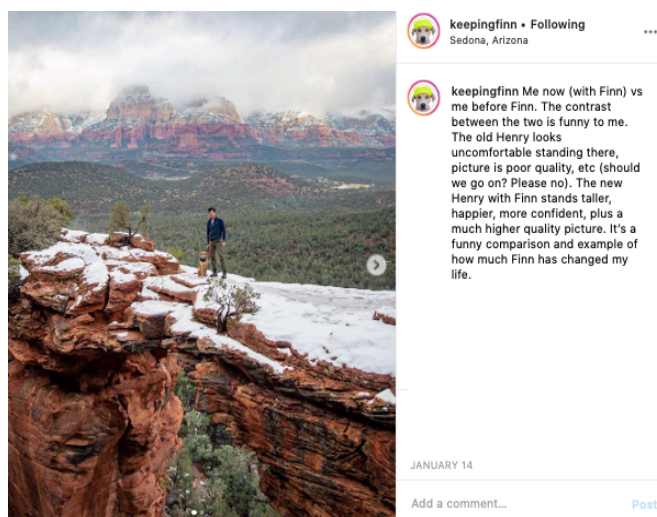


Figure 53: Multi-image *dogstagram* of companionship capturing the difference of life for Henry with and without Finn (@keepingfinn), 14 January 2019. Screenshot by the author.

<sup>285</sup> Another similar account depicting digital stories of companionship is @bonosurfdog, which tells the story of Bono the Labrador and his owner who travel the world and surf together. Notably, both @keepingfinn and @bronosurfdog tell digital stories of *being-with* by means of traveling, which might be an interesting theme to explore in further research.

### 7.4.7 Dogstagram of touch: the 'boop'

As discussed, Haraway (2008:263) argues that touch is a significant aspect of the human-dog relation that occurs in the contact zones of companion species relations. In turn, Heidegger (1995[1938]:196) also uses the sense of touch to identify the different ways in which different beings relate to the world. Notably, the digital analysis of *dogstagram* signals that a specific genre of *dogstagram* also play on the notion of touch. In these *dogstagram* the smartphone becomes a nonhuman contact zone representing touch between human and dog, as well as urging users to 'touch' the dogs pictured in a post by means of double tapping the screen (a feature on Instagram that allows users to 'like' posts).<sup>286</sup>

On the one hand (or paw), certain *dogstagram* capture a specific moment of touch between human and dog. *Dogstagram* of touch portray the moment of engagement between human and dog, in similar fashion to the cover image of Haraway's *When Species Meet* (Figure 8) and its predecessor, Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam* (Figure 9), previously mentioned in Chapter Five. *Dogstagram* showing touch between human and dog often picture the dog's paw touching the human's hand (Figure 54), analogously to the images discussed in Chapter Five. In addition, some *dogstagram* show dogs in the moment of reaching out to 'give paw' or 'high five' (Figure 55), indicating a common act of touch between human and dog as well as creating the sense that the dog in the image is reaching out, beyond the screen, to touch the human viewer.

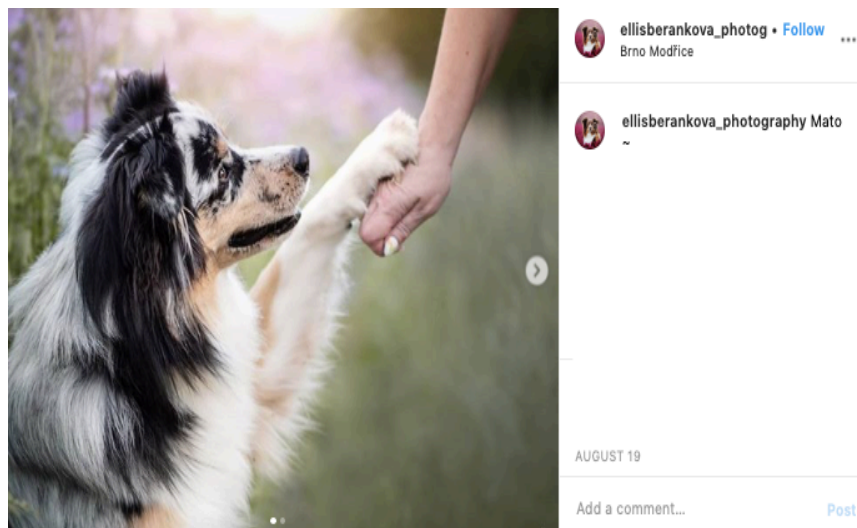


Figure 54: *Dogstagram* of touch featuring a dog touching a human hand (@ellisberankova\_photography), 19 August 2019. Screenshot by the author.

<sup>286</sup> Interestingly, the layout of a webpage or platform is often referred to as a 'skin', reaffirming the sense of haptic communication or kinaesthetic communication through digital devices.



Figure 55: *Dogstagram* of touch where a dog reaches to touch the camera and, by extension, the viewer (@thedogist), 19 July 2019. Screenshot by the author.

The *dogstagrams* capturing the touch between human and dog evoke Haraway's (2008:36) notion that touch creates a sense of response, respect and (be)coming towards each other. In addition, *dogstagrams* of touch can also represent Heidegger's (1995[1938]:196) notion of touch, which aims to show that beings access the world differently and that humans can never fully know the sensation experienced by another being when touched. As a result, *dogstagrams* of touch simultaneously represent humans *being-with* dogs, as well as the distinct beings of human and dog.

A close analysis of a particular example of a *dogstagram* of touch (Figure 56) manifests a direct play on *The Creation of Adam* with the caption "the creation of #boop". Moreover, the specific image also (visually and literally) points toward *dogstagrams* of touch that are becoming increasingly popular on Instagram, referred to as a 'boop' and usually accompanied by the same hashtag. According to the popular press Urban Dictionary (2016), a 'boop' is the act of "affectionately poking someone on the nose, often accompanied by the saying 'Boop!'"'. The slang dictionary also adds that a 'boop' is particularly used to refer to the playful tap of a dog's nose, or when dogs bump each other's noses as a way of greeting or playfulness (Urban Dictionary 2016).

On Instagram, *dogstagrams* mirror 'boops', by posting a close-up picture of a dog's nose (Figure 57) with a caption directing the viewer to 'boop' the dog.

‘Boops’ have grown so popular on Instagram – perhaps owing to the engagement the digital images require – that an entire community, *Boop My Nose*, has developed, inviting owners to submit ‘boop’ images of dogs (and other animals).<sup>287</sup> The idea behind the posts are that a follower double-taps the dog’s nose (as a ‘boop’) and, consequently, likes the picture (Boop My Nose 2019). In other words, ‘boop’ *dogstagram*s are invitations for fellow Instagrammers to ‘touch’ the digital dogs on Instagram, notably in an affectionate or playful manner, while engaging with a post by liking it.



Figure 56: *Dogstagram* of touch captioned as ‘The creation of #boop’ (@hugoandursula), 17 June 2019. Screenshot by the author.

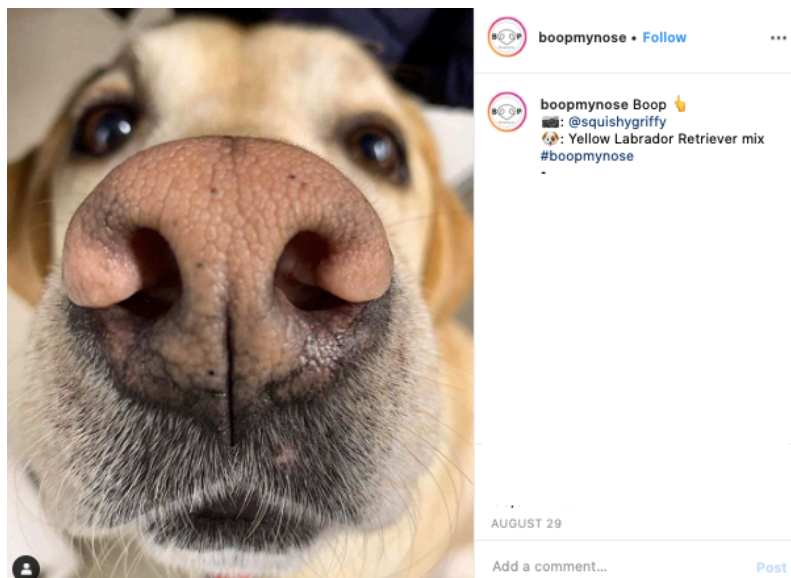


Figure 57: A typical ‘boop’ *dogstagram* inviting the viewer to touch the dog’s nose through the screen (@boopmynose), 29 August 2019. Screenshot by the author.

Visit [www.instadogproject.com/imageplots](http://www.instadogproject.com/imageplots) for more examples



<sup>287</sup> The Instagram platform’s algorithm generates viewership towards posts receiving increased or intense amounts of engagement (via likes and comments) (McNely 2012). Since ‘boop’ images encourage viewers to like the image via touch, they generate a lot of interaction, fuelling the Instagram algorithm to gain even more engagement.

Daniel Palmer (in Hinton & Hjorth 2013: 133) argues that smartphone technology and photography on software applications create an experience of “embodied visual intimacy” between touch and the image. Palmer (in Hinton & Hjorth 2013:133) explains that the smartphone “held in the palm of the hand, reintroduces a visual intimacy to screen culture that is missing from the larger monitor screen”. In other words, touching the dog through the screen is an intimate act that extends the visual software to also include the sensory experience of touch. Therefore, I argue that ‘boop’ *dogstagrams* are manifestations of touching companion species in an online realm. By ‘booping’ a *dogstagram* we are responding and engaging with the digital representation of dogs on Instagram in a playful manner. Said differently, ‘boops’ encourage us to touch dogs, mediated by the technology of the smartphone.

Furthermore, haptic communication mediated by technology (for example through touchscreens and feedback technology) shows potential of establishing a sense of connectedness, communicating simple ideas and reducing stress (Haans & IJsssteijn 2006:149). Although a technological touch – or a double-tap – can hardly imitate the affects of physical or bodily touch, it does have the potential to create its own sense of connection, communication and comfort for the viewer. In this way, the act of ‘booping’ a dog’s nose on Instagram not only represents, but can also result in, a positive and joyful experience that reminds, to a certain extent, of the perceived connection formed when human and dog touch in the flesh.



To summarise, a distant and close analysis of *dogstagrams* on Instagram sorts the digital network of dogs on Instagram into various categories, which show how the different aspects, views and historicity of the human-dog relation (ranging from anthropomorphism to nonhuman companionship) is visualised in the Digital Age and extends into the realm of technology. Although I have discussed the types of *dogstagrams* separately, for the sake of clarity, they exist – much like my unfolding of the human-dog relation in this study – in layers,



overlapping and entangling together, since “images mash together different kinds of cultural materials” (Tromble 2019:6). In turn, it is evident that *dogstagram*s also unfold and build on ideas of the disparate world (or then ‘cultural material’) of dogs in visual culture, routed in a visual history of art, photography, film and many more. I have tried to point out some of the visual roots of *dogstagram*s throughout the discussion, albeit somewhat clumsily since it is not the main focus of my analysis, which I rather approach from a digital culture perspective.

By approaching the *dogstagram* from a digital humanities perspective, what comes to the fore is not necessarily the *Dogs of Instagram*’s traces in art history, but more so the possibilities or affordances of embedding the human-dog relation in the digital realm. In other words, based on the digital analysis of *dogstagram*s, we not only see what *content* the digital images portray about companion species, but also what they *do, facilitate or add* to the understanding of the human-dog relation. In what follows, I briefly unfold some of these affordances of *Dogs on Instagram* further.

### **7.5 Findings: affordances of *dogstagram*s**

In *The Affordances of Social Media Platforms*, theorists Tania Bucher and Anne Helmond (2018:18) frame social media platforms, like Instagram, as an environment, comparable to a terrestrial (or natural) environment with paths, cliffs, barriers, water and so on. Bucher and Helmond (2018:18) argue that just as a natural environment affords various ways of existing relative to animals, so social media platforms “constitute a form of environment too, composed of pathways and features in their own right” that afford ways of existing for human beings (Bucher & Helmond 2018:19). Accordingly, social media platforms become resources (or then affordances) that create meanings and meaningfulness; their features are “endowed with different meanings, feelings, imaginings and expectations” (Bucher & Helmond 2018:2) that result in perceptions, attitudes, expectations and experiences for users.

Bucher and Helmond's explanation of the social media environment is particularly apt in the case of *Dogs on Instagram*, since the human-dog relation is widely dependent on their interaction with the environment in which the human and dog encounter and interact with one another, as we have seen throughout the study. Framing social media as a digital *environment* therefore makes sense in terms of animal studies, since the human-dog relation now interact with and encounter a terrestrial environment *as well as* a digital environment. Said differently, in Heideggerian (1977[1962]:6) terms, the *Welt* of companion species is now also placed in a state of *Bestand* (standing reserve) by the *Gestell* (enframing) of Instagram. In other words, picturing the human-dog relation on Instagram is also an instrument that reveals possibilities and actions for companion species.

Following Bucher and Helmond, I further discuss my digital analysis of *dogstagrams*, by thinking through some of the affordances of *Dogs on Instagram*, namely how *dogstagrams* can be a playground of *being-with* companion species, how *dogstagrams* form and shape communities, as well as how *dogstagrams* can promote affective responses and ethical practices.

### **7.5.1 Dogstagrams as a playground of being-with**

By now, *dogstagrams* of companionship and *dogstagrams* of touch have already indicated that the relation between human and dog – as a relation of *being-with* each other, while remaining irreducible to each other – is also represented on and mediated by Instagram. Alongside representing companion species relations as a way of *being-with*, I suggest that the human action of taking and sharing *dogstagrams* online is also a particular way of *being-with* dogs or then being-in-the-world with dogs.

When dog owners, Instagrammers and photographers are asked *why* they take photos of their dogs and share them online, they often explain that the act of taking the image provides a sense of joy (Vieler in Almond 2018), establishes trust between human and dog (Nordeman in Wender 2019) and is a way of documenting our relations and memories with our dogs, creating a kind of

“visual diary” or archive (Saxon 2018). Instagram photographer Elias Friedman (photographer behind the popular Instagram account @thedogist) argues that taking photos of dogs for Instagram “capture a moment between him and the dog” and relies on a connection between human and dog that other Instagram users can also connect to (TIME 2018).<sup>288</sup>

Friedman’s description of how to take Instagram photos of dogs in a recent video for *TIME Magazine’s* online platform, mirrors a human-dog relation of *being-with*. Friedman (TIME 2018) acknowledges that he and the dog are different beings and he treats the dog as such when taking photos (for example, he emphasises using patience and not forcing the dog to behave in a certain way for the camera). In addition, he plays with the dogs while taking photos and engages in their world by “getting on their level” (TIME 2018). He also asserts that once he and the dog relax around each other, he is able to take the best photos (TIME 2018).<sup>289</sup> In other words, human and dog are encountering one another at ease and with care. In the process of capturing an image, Friedman responds to the dog and the dog responds to him in turn. Moreover, he argues that he approaches dogs with sensitivity, love and care (TIME 2018). Thus, I argue that Friedman’s approach to *dogstagram*s reflect a *being-with* encounter where photographer and dog meet, once again, sharing in each other’s world by playing, showing care and concern, without imploding their beings.

Understanding *dogstagram*s as a way of *being-with* is however not always evident in every Instagrammer’s approach to taking and posting pictures of their dogs.<sup>290</sup> Therefore, it can seem to be a somewhat idealistic reading of *Dogs of Instagram* in general. Perhaps a more feasible understanding can stem from understanding the social media platform that mediates the images, instead of the

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<sup>288</sup> Interestingly, Friedman also says that while taking photos he feels “spiritually aligned” with dogs (National Geographic 2017), relating to the possible otherworldly interpretation of the human-dog relation discussed in the Addendum of the study.

<sup>289</sup> Here Friedman directly echoes Barbara Smuts’s approach to studying baboons discussed in Chapter Five. Notably, Smuts also indicated that both researcher and animal subject relaxed in each other’s presence.

<sup>290</sup> In some cases, people use conditional behaviour, domestication training methods, physical force and even violent treatment to take the desired photos of dogs (Baker 2013:3). I elaborate on this subject in Chapter Eight.

actual act of taking *dogstagrams*. In this regard, social media scholar, Zizi Papacharissi (2018:2), conceptualises social media as a way of playing in contemporary society. Papacharissi (2018:2) argues that like social media,

Play also possesses an infrastructure that reflects, reproduces, and sometimes, albeit not often enough, reinvents geopolitical, sociocultural, and economic hierarchies. Play always has been that way: a wanted distraction that pays off in ways public and private, personal and commercial ... and all types of playgrounds, material and imagined, adult and non-adult that have emerged and are yet to come.

Thereby she eloquently states that: “Technology is the playing ground of the [A]nthropocene” (Papacharissi 2018:2).<sup>291</sup>

In the case of *dogstagrams*, we can therefore apply Papacharissi’s argument and contend: Instagram is the playing ground of companion species. In this way, *dogstagrams* are a way for humans and dogs to *play*, a notable aspect of companion species encounters as indicated by Haraway (2008:240), as well as of *being-with* companion species as set out in the second layer of this study. More specifically, Haraway (2008:240) estimates that play proposes companionship, engagement and co-presence. In turn, I indicated that play between human and dog is a reciprocal process of engagement, or then a process of being-with-others. Accordingly, *dogstagrams* as online play forms part of the process of *being-with* companion species. That means taking and sharing *dogstagrams* results in engagement, co-presence, companionship and reciprocation between humans and dogs.

### **7.5.2 Dogs of Instagram as a virtual and real community**

The above formulation brings forward an additional affordance of *dogstagrams*: if social media platforms are the playground of the Anthropocene, it is also a contact zone of interactions, encounters and, importantly, connections. According to Papacharissi (2018:2), social media as a mode of play “provides the

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<sup>291</sup> Interestingly, Sokol (2014), in a review of Lev Manovich’s big data digital humanities project *Selfiecity*, remarks that such a digital humanities platform is “both an academic and *highly playful* way to engage with a topic”. Suggesting that perhaps play can also be thought of as a significant part of a technological analysis in the humanities.

stage for hybrid modalities of expression and connection, linking the individual, separately or simultaneously, with multiple audiences”. In essence, on social media, communities form and connections are established (Papacharissi 2018:3). Perhaps, stemming from one of the well-known original incentives behind the conceptualisation of social media (to establish connection), technology’s ability to connect people is a key point of analysis in contemporary society as well as scholarly endeavours (Van Dijck 2012:141).<sup>292</sup>

José van Dijck (2012:142) explains that technologies are spaces of connection and communication. Moreover, they are not impartial spaces, but are engineered and constructed to shape connections, link individuals and create communities in society (Van Dijck 2012:142). The inherent architecture and algorithms of social media platforms are therefore geared towards creating an experience of connection and communities (Papacharissi 2018:3). In other words, engaging with and sharing *dogstagram*s on social media is always-already geared towards producing connectivity and community.

Interestingly, in *Copresence as ‘Being With’* (Zhao & Elesh 2008) as well as *A Snapshot of Social Media: Camera Phone Practices* (Hjorth & Hendry 2015), it is suggested that online connectivity establishes a Heideggerian sense of being-with-others that “reinforce[s] shared emotional experience across time and place” (Hjorth & Hendry 2015:12). Referring to Heidegger’s notion of *Mitsein* (*being-with*), Zhao and Elesh (2008:570) argue that social media allows for a co-presence of *being-with* beyond the constraints of physical place, where people can reciprocally relate to one another. Following Zhao and Elesh, as well as Hjorth and Hendry, we can derive that Instagram, as a social media platform, and *Dogs of Instagram*, as a social media network, also establishes a relation of being-with-other humans and dogs.

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<sup>292</sup> See, for example, Kollock and Smith (1999), Wellman (1999), Newman (2006) Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), Van Dijck (2012; 2013), Hinton and Hjorth (2013), as well as Paparachissi (2018), who discuss the notion of communities and connections via virtual communities and social networks. On the other hand, some scholars, for instance Turkle (2011), Nowland et al. (2018) and Hillis et al. (2015) also investigate how social networks can lead to disconnection, detachment and dehumanisation.

By means of a digital analysis of the geolocation metadata of selected *dogstagrams*, I have visualised the landscape or “complex knot of wheres” (Hinchliffe 2010:35) of *Dogs of Instagram* on *Insta-dog*.<sup>293</sup> Mapping *dogstagrams* in such a way, attempts to make visible the tangled contact zones of companion species and shows that these digital images do not just point towards themselves, but also “point directly outside, looking for connections, relations, patterns with other images in a collection” (Hochman 2014:2). The map of *dogstagrams* animates a digital network of dogs on Instagram, indicating pathways, patterns and connections based on the data surrounding each post. Hochman (2014:3) explains that data relations, such as those derived from *dogstagrams* that I visualise on *Insta-dog*, are “imagined data communities that only potentially and relationally exist” but also mirror aspects of corporeal life in time and place. That means, the inherent engineering of *dogstagrams* posted on Instagram (for instance their tags, locations and metadata) already maps out a sense of community and connection among this digital network of images on social media.

In addition to being a data-driven community of images, *dogstagrams* and *Dogs of Instagram* seem to also articulate a community beyond data and metadata. Users regularly posting *dogstagrams* form part of a community of Instagrammers that are grouped together beyond the use of a hashtag. *Dogs of Instagram* not only share a hashtag, but also form connections, show support, engage with one another and care for one another. In other words, they form an online community, as Paparachisi (2018) and Van Dijck (2012) suggest, that are co-present and sharing their world with others: an online community of *Mitsein* (Zhao & Elesh 2008:570).

Mapping the multi-geographies of *dogstagrams* also shows how companion species posting to Instagram form part of a circle of response. As outlined, both Heidegger (1938) and Haraway (2008) picture the animal in a ring of response, in relation to its environment. Similarly, the *Dogs of Instagram* community can also be pictured as a circle of response between companion species on social

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<sup>293</sup> To visit the map animation visit: [www.instadogproject.com/community-grids](http://www.instadogproject.com/community-grids)

media. Yet, as I noted in Chapter Five, it is the *human* who has to respond to the animal and the *human* who has to attempt to understand the animal in Haraway's companion species circle. In other words, the community of *dogstagram*s once again poses the question: who is in control of the contact zones of companion species? In this case, however, it is not only the human who has agency to respond in the contact zone, but also the nonhuman agent of technology that plays a role in connecting the *Dogs of Instagram*.

The online community of *dogstagram*s is directly disclosed on various online platforms that have developed from the community surrounding *dogstagram*s and *Dogs of Instagram*. For example, *Dogsof* is a platform extension of the account @dogsofinstagram that brings together "a community of almost 4 million dog lovers and photographers, capturing and celebrating moments spent with man's (and woman's) best friend" (Dogsof 2017). *Dogsof* shares stories of dogs via *dogstagram*s on Instagram and promotes awareness about dog adoption and welfare, while connecting dog owners across the globe. Similarly, *The Dogist* and *Boop My Nose* platforms, previously mentioned in this chapter, also connect companion species and their owners and establish meaningful connections.<sup>294</sup> The virtual community of *Dogs of Instagram* is, therefore, built on a shared sense of community that involves a ring of responsive communication, interaction, meaningful connections and sustained engagements. Instagrammer, Lorien Wilcocks (in Sonnekus 2017), who runs an Instagram account for her dog Cali, confirms that she has formed "wonderful connections online, since the community of companion species on Instagram is increasingly supportive".

Notably, the community of *Dogs of Instagram* does not only manifest online or in a virtual realm, but also generates offline connections and communities. Several dog communities on Instagram have occasional 'meetups', where owners and dogs meet one another face-to-face (or perhaps nose-to-nose). As a result, *dogstagram*s generate an online sense of community, but also promote actual offline connections and meetings for both humans and dogs (Serafinelli

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<sup>294</sup> View the online communities of *The Dogist*, *Boop My Nose* and *Dogsof* by following the indicated links on *Insta-dog*.

2017:20). For instance, on the Instagram account @mollythenewfie, the owner often shares the positive experiences she and her dogs have had by meeting up with other Newfoundlands on Instagram – specifically emphasising how new friendships have formed and that the dogs enjoyed meeting each other.<sup>295</sup>

For the most part, the above-mentioned discussion reveals that theorists maintain that online communities (and their offline extensions) form as a result of the architecture of social media platforms (Van Dijck 2012), metadata relations (Hochman 2014) as well as an online co-presence (Zhao & Elesh 2008). In particular, Serafinelli (2017:21) asserts that the content of Instagram posts is not important to create social connections and interactions, and that it is simply the act of photography, posting and using the social media platform that drives the connections it creates. At the same time, in the case of *Dogs of Instagram*, I argue that the content of the images – dogs – are significant and perhaps instrumental in creating these communities. Cultural critic Amanda Hess (in Wender 2019) argues that “[d]ogs mediate so many social interactions” and that establishing connections by showing interest in other’s companion species is a widely known phenomenon.<sup>296</sup> That is to say, in the case of communities surrounding *dogstagrams*, the focus on dogs specifically plays an important role, since humans have long relied on their companion species to instigate social response, connection and interaction (Beck 2015). Thus, the fact that *dogstagrams* are predominantly posts *about dogs* plays as an important role as the digital platform itself in establishing relationships and communities.

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<sup>295</sup> Another recent example of how the virtual community of *Dogs of Instagram* extends into face-to-face relations is the immersive pop-up installation *Human’s Best Friend* (see link on *Insta-dog* platform). *Human’s Best Friend* is a shareable experience for humans and dogs in a technicolour environment that is based on taking pictures of and with your dog for social media. It is also a platform that advocates dog adoption and creates awareness around companion species. The installation space brings the community of *Dogs of Instagram* full circle, since it is based on the phenomenon and popularity of *dogstagrams*, extends the phenomenon into an offline realm and encourages social meetings as well as experiences with dogs and other people, and finally results in, once again, taking photos and sharing these experiences on Instagram with others.

<sup>296</sup> Companion species as human connectors or social mediators is a long-studied phenomenon by psychologists, sociologists and veterinary practitioners (Guéguen & Ciccotti 2008; Robins et al. 1991; Hunt et al. 1992). Based on such studies, Beck (2015) notes: “People’s canine companions make for good icebreakers, and can overcome the barriers humans put between themselves and strangers”. The phenomenon is often also depicted in popular culture, for example in the films *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* and *Must Love Dogs* (Goldberg 2015). In turn, a recent smartphone application entitled *Meet My Dog* allows users to connect with other dog owners in their local area, encouraging owners and dogs to establish friendships.



### 7.5.3 Dogs of Instagram as response-ability

Another possible affordance of *dogstagrams* is their ability to generate response. As discussed, Haraway (2008:97) emphasises that response and responsibility (or response-ability) are key aspects of companion species relations. In particular, Haraway (2008:97) contends that it is vital to tell stories of companion species relations in order to evoke a response and create awareness in contemporary society. *Dogstagrams*, in their own right, also foster a sense of response. Specifically, as digital stories of companion species, they create awareness surrounding the ethical treatment of, and notably *human* responsibility towards, dogs.

Cultural theorist Eliza Steinbock (2017:63) reasons that part of the appeal of pictures of animals online is based on the sentimental response it creates in users. Steinbock (2017:63) argues that the sentimental response is the result of “mass culture’s longstanding affair with cute objects colliding with access to contemporary user-generated digital media”. According to Steinbock (2017:64) images with a “cuteness” aesthetic (as is often the case with images of dogs, puppies, cats and kittens) evoke an affective response of sentimentality, joy, delight and endearment. Accordingly, *dogstagrams* have an emotive affect on viewers.

Steinbock’s observations are mirrored in recent studies explaining how looking at images of animals can evoke positive psychological responses. For example, Japanese researcher Hiroshi Nittono (2012) argues that looking at cute pictures, such as pictures of puppies online, improves people’s moods and also increases their productivity “as the result of a narrowed attentional focus induced by the cuteness-triggered positive emotion that is associated with approach motivation and the tendency toward systematic processing”. Additionally, psychologist Stanley Coren (2016) suggests that looking at dogs produces positive emotional changes in people, while researchers at Florida State University show how looking at cute pictures of animals (such as *dogstagrams*) can have a positive affect on relationships with significant others (McNulty et al. 2017:1031). In other words, looking at *dogstagrams* can result in positive emotional responses.

Adding to the mix of the affective responses of *dogstagram*s, Steinbock (2017:63) mentions that the cuteness response also “recursively loops into the banality of violence”. Here Steinbock refers to images that are cute, but also inappropriate with regards to enforcing animals to become a visual spectacle (of, for instance, anthropomorphism) for the sake of a cute response. For example, a recent trend in *dogstagram*s shows dogs sitting with their heads against a wall with captions claiming the dogs are feeling ‘guilty’ about unruly behaviour. Closer inspection reveals that dogs often sit with their heads against walls when they are anxious, scared or have severe neural damage. Such behaviour requires immediate medical intervention (Waglabs 2019). That means that these *dogstagram*s result either from the cruel treatment of dogs or, said differently, allow dogs to suffer for the sake of a social media post. Steinbock (2017:63) argues that the play between violence and cuteness highlights the tension between response and responsibility when looking at images online.<sup>297</sup>

Luckily, *dogstagram*s can also bring awareness of responsible behaviour and the ethical treatment of animals. For example, some of the images of dogs engaging in ‘head pressing’ are often flagged by Instagram and other users as abusive, resulting in an investigation being launched against the account holder. Instagram as a platform has also made changes to the network’s architecture to fight animal abuse, promote animal welfare and discourage harmful behaviour towards animals for the sake of social media. Changes include notifications and information of animal abuse that pop up when searching for, or posting images related to, flagged hashtags (for example #animalselfie or #exoticanimalforsale), censoring and removing posts displaying or supporting harmful behaviour towards animals, as well as allowing users to report posts that do not treat animals fairly (Daly 2017).<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Interestingly, Steinbock (2017:63) also notes that a sentimental response to cuteness can border on violence, since viewers, for instance, feel that they can squeeze the animal to death because it is so cute.

<sup>298</sup> These changes to Instagram’s platform come after several investigations into the growing industry of wildlife tourism that often abuse animals specifically for tourism, which is widely motivated by photo opportunities for social media (Daly 2017).

Furthermore, *dogstagram*s teach people about the ethical treatment of companion species, posting content that informs and educates people on animal welfare and possible harmful behaviour towards animals (Daly 2017). *Dogstagram*s are also, at times, beneficial to rescue dogs and promoting dog adoption, since the reach of dogs in need of care and loving owners is much greater (Schonfeld 2016). In turn, *dogstagram*s also change the way in which dog adoption agencies approach sharing images of dogs available for adoption, playing on the sentimental response images of dogs can create in viewers. The popularity of images of dogs online have resulted in placing more dogs in loving homes and have led to more community engagement, more volunteers and more donations (Chapman 2018). As Chapman (2018) reports: “It’s now more common than ever for someone to discover an adoptable dog via their Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook feeds”, as a result, dogs “have infiltrated not only our shared [I]nternet lexicon, but seemingly, our collective consciousness. We love faving them. And social media is upending the way we rescue them”. Thus, *dogstagram*s can also promote a responsible response to dogs.<sup>299</sup>

After analysing *dogstagram*s via image recognition computation, I suggest – as a brief afterthought – that perhaps Instagram can also combine such techniques to identify and respond to irresponsible *dogstagram*s. More specifically, equivalent to my digital humanities computation of *dogstagram*s, the Instagram platform can also employ an API to sort through online images of dogs. In addition, the API can be engineered to identify visual cues based on behavioural distress signs in dogs – for example lowered ears, pulled in tail, shaking, whining or even ‘head pressing’. The API can therefore automatically flag *dogstagram*s where humans could possibly be causing dogs distress. Following up on the marked posts, Instagram’s ethical committees can launch an investigation to address the issue (as they would, for example, in the case of cyberbullying).

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<sup>299</sup> In this way, perhaps *dogstagram*s can act as a kind of “countervisuality” that Mirzoeff (2014:230) calls for in the context of the Anthropocene (as explained in Chapter One and earlier in this chapter) since the digital images intervene on behalf of animals and aids nonhumans.

## 7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined how the human-dog relation and my reading of *being-with* companion species extends into the online realm of *dogstagrams* and *Dogs of Instagram*. By computing and digitally analysing a data set including thousands of *dogstagrams* on Instagram through the digital humanities project accompanying this study, *Insta-dog*, I have provided both distant and close readings of the variety of digital images representing the human-dog relation on the social media platform, Instagram. The mixed-method approach to analysing the digital stories of companion species on Instagram revealed that various types of *dogstagrams* exist, capturing both an anthropocentric and nonhumanist viewpoint of the human-dog relation and question of the animal being. For example, domestic and anthropomorphic *dogstagrams* are clear anthropocentric pursuits to capture and project human ideas onto the dog. Alternatively, *dogstagrams* of companionship and touch exemplify aspects of an anti-anthropocentric relation of humans *being-with* dogs.

What became clear from this discussion and in the contact zone of the digital humanities project *Insta-dog*, is that the human-dog relation is not only represented or expressed in the online playground of Instagram, but that companion species relations are also *actively practiced* on Instagram. In other words, *dogstagrams* add an additional layer of meaning to companion species in contemporary society and becomes a way of *being-with* dogs. *Dogstagrams* become active (nonhuman) agencies and actors contributing to our companion species relations, especially because they evoke a sense of touch, play, affective response and responsibility between Instagrammers, viewers and dogs.

Computing and hermeneutically interpreting the digital versions of companion species on social media also show the complexities of these digital images and highlight the influence of nonhuman technology on companion species relations. In the following chapter I explore the infolding of nonhuman technology and companion species further by working through various case studies of human-dog relations enframed, in a Heideggerian sense, by technology – including the cyberspace version of the dog in *dogstagrams*.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

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

*Anything can happen when a dog is your cameraman.*<sup>300</sup>

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

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<sup>300</sup> 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.<sup>301</sup>



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.<sup>302</sup>

<sup>301</sup> 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.

<sup>302</sup> 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 “infold 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.<sup>303</sup>

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.<sup>304</sup> 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

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<sup>303</sup> 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.

<sup>304</sup> 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.<sup>305</sup> For her the cyborg is constantly in flux and relating between the human and nonhuman, establishing the idea of becoming.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> 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.

<sup>306</sup> 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).<sup>307</sup> 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.<sup>308</sup> 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

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

<sup>307</sup> 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.

<sup>308</sup> 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.<sup>309</sup> 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).<sup>310</sup> 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).<sup>311</sup> 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

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<sup>309</sup> 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.

<sup>310</sup> 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".

<sup>311</sup> 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.<sup>312</sup> 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.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> 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).

<sup>313</sup> 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.<sup>314</sup>

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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.

<sup>314</sup> 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).<sup>315</sup> 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.

<sup>315</sup> 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).<sup>316</sup>



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).

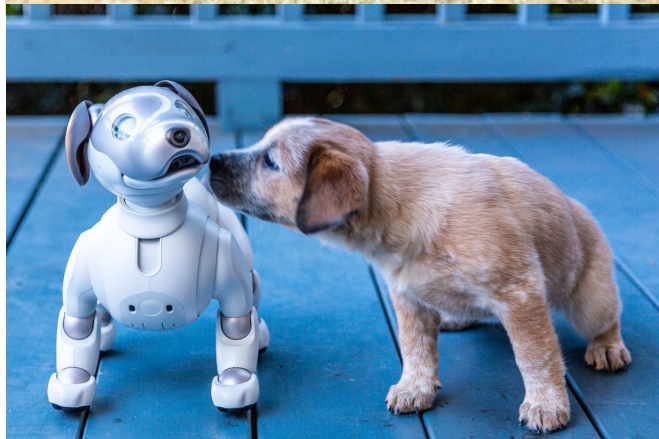


Figure 67: Sony's robot dog or autonomous companion dog, Aibo, meets a real puppy. Photograph by Geoffrey Fowler. (Fowler 2018).

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<sup>316</sup> 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.<sup>317</sup>

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).<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Interestingly, the dog's response to technology is famously already depicted in Francis Barraud's painting, *His Mater'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.

<sup>318</sup> 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".<sup>319</sup> 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

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<sup>319</sup> 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”.<sup>320</sup> 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,<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> 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.

<sup>321</sup> 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.<sup>322</sup> Moreover, she argues that in cyborg

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<sup>322</sup> 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).<sup>323</sup> 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).<sup>324</sup> 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.<sup>325</sup> 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.<sup>326</sup>

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

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<sup>323</sup> 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).

<sup>324</sup> 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.

<sup>325</sup> 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).

<sup>326</sup> 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.<sup>327</sup> 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.<sup>328</sup> 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.<sup>329</sup> 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.

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<sup>327</sup> *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.

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

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

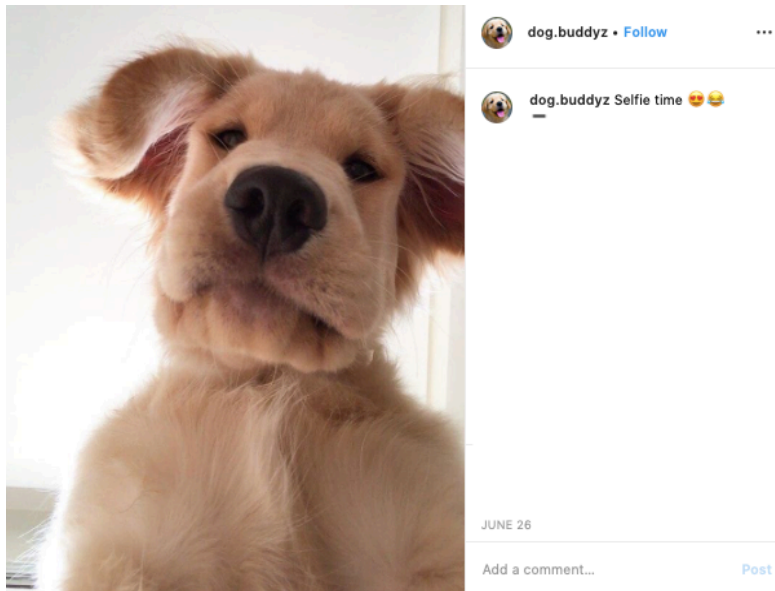


Figure 72: An 'accidental selfie' supposedly taken by a puppy playing with a smartphone (@dog.buddyz), 26 June 2019, Screenshot by the author.

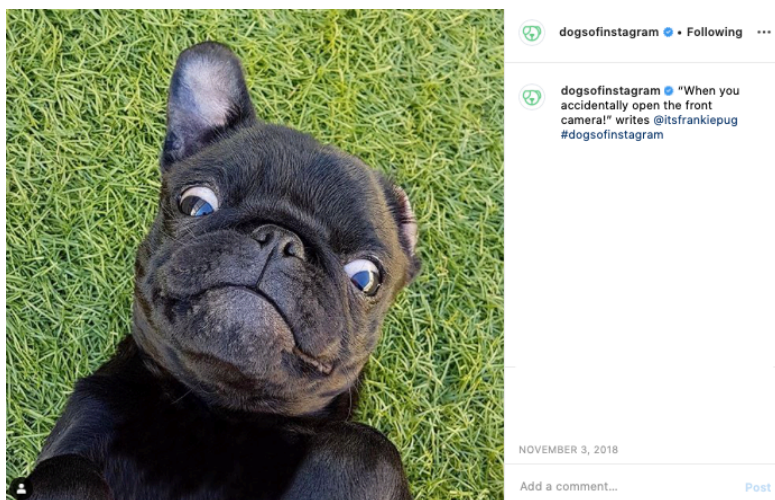


Figure 73: An 'accidental front cam' photo supposedly taken by a dog with a smartphone (@dogsofinstagram), 3 November 2018, Screenshot by the author.

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 Zylinka's (2017) notion of "nonhuman photography".<sup>330</sup> Put forward in the book *Nonhuman Photography*, Zylinka (2017:3) explores the idea of nonhuman photography rooted in the philosophical ideas surrounding the nonhuman turn as well as posthuman theory. Notably, Zylinka (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 (Zylinka 2017:5). In other words, Zylinka (2017:4-5) remains mindful of the human

<sup>330</sup> Zylinka'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 Zylinka 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).<sup>331</sup> 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

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<sup>331</sup> 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.<sup>332</sup> Thus, as a *cydog* feature, the *FitBark* is beneficial for both human and dog and provides human insight into the world of the dog.

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<sup>332</sup> 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.<sup>333</sup> 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)

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<sup>333</sup> 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.<sup>334</sup>

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

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<sup>334</sup> 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.*<sup>335</sup>

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

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<sup>335</sup> 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.<sup>336</sup>*

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'.

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<sup>336</sup> 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.<sup>337</sup> 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’.

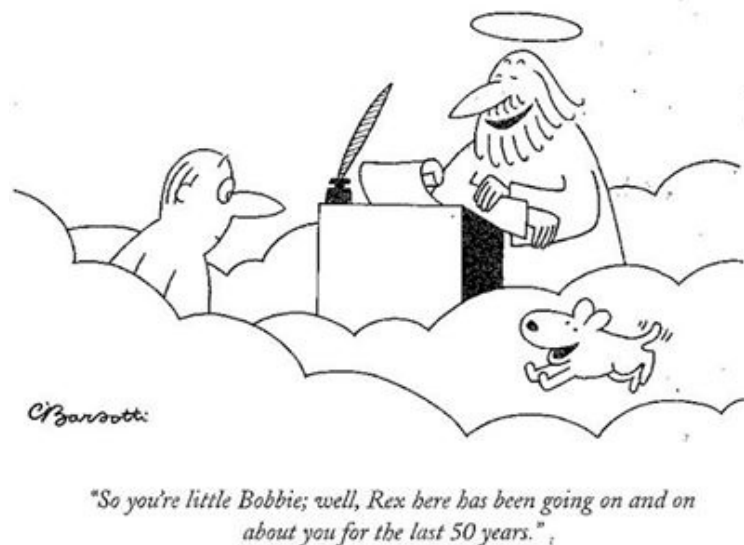


Figure A: Dog cartoon by *New Yorker* artist Charles Barsotti (Barsotti 2007).

<sup>337</sup>Berger’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).

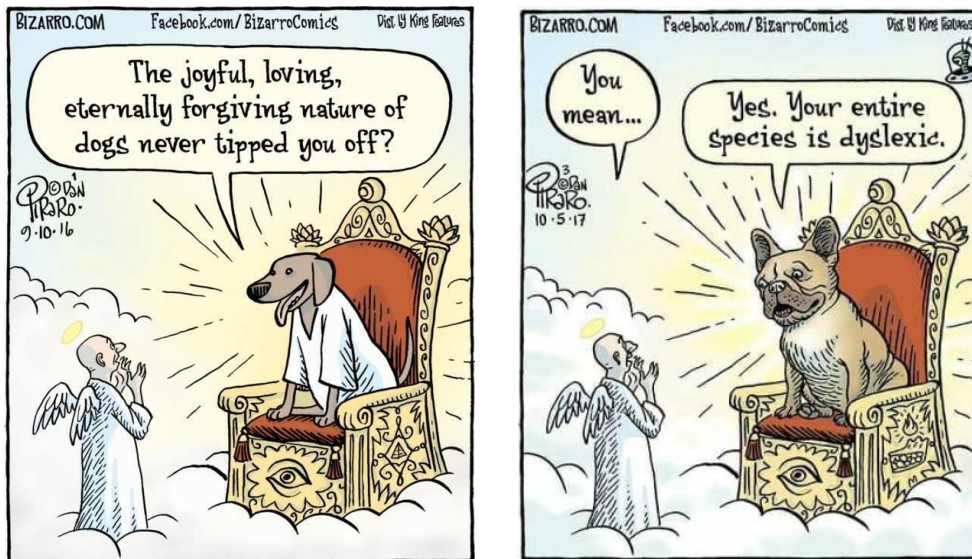


Figure C: Dog as god cartoons by Dan Piraro (BizarroComics 2016; 2017).

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?<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> 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.<sup>339</sup> 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

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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.

<sup>339</sup> 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.<sup>340</sup> 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.

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<sup>340</sup> 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.<sup>341</sup> 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.<sup>342</sup> 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.<sup>343</sup>

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.*

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<sup>341</sup> 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.

<sup>342</sup> 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).

<sup>343</sup> 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”.<sup>344</sup>

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,

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<sup>344</sup> 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”.<sup>345</sup> 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.

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<sup>345</sup> 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'.<sup>346</sup> 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".<sup>347</sup> 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

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<sup>346</sup> 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.

<sup>347</sup> 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.<sup>348</sup> 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*.

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<sup>348</sup> 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.<sup>349</sup> 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.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> 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).

<sup>350</sup> 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”.<sup>351</sup> 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.

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<sup>351</sup> 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.<sup>352</sup> 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.<sup>353</sup> 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*.<sup>354</sup> 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

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<sup>352</sup> 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.

<sup>353</sup> 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”.

<sup>354</sup> 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.<sup>355</sup> 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.<sup>356</sup> 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 ..."

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<sup>355</sup> 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.

<sup>356</sup> 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).<sup>357</sup>

### **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

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<sup>357</sup> 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.<sup>358</sup> 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).<sup>359</sup> In the gnostic soul’s pursuit towards enlightenment it often encounters a mediator,

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<sup>358</sup> 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.

<sup>359</sup> 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.<sup>360</sup>

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.<sup>361</sup>

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

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<sup>360</sup> 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.

<sup>361</sup> 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.<sup>362</sup>

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

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<sup>362</sup> 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?<sup>363</sup>

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.<sup>364</sup> 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

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<sup>363</sup> 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".

<sup>364</sup> 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.<sup>365</sup>

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).

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<sup>365</sup> 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.<sup>366</sup>

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)

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<sup>366</sup> 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.<sup>367</sup> 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,<sup>368</sup> 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

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<sup>367</sup> 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).

<sup>368</sup> 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.<sup>369</sup> 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

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<sup>369</sup> 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.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> 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.<sup>371</sup> During the episode the viewer also meets several service dogs helping other children with special needs.<sup>372</sup> From my perspective, Irigaray’s

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<sup>371</sup> 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).

<sup>372</sup> 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.<sup>373</sup>

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

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<sup>373</sup> 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.<sup>374</sup> 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.<sup>375</sup> 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.<sup>376</sup> 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.

<sup>374</sup> 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.

<sup>375</sup> 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.

<sup>376</sup> 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,<sup>377</sup> 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

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<sup>377</sup> 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.<sup>378</sup>



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

<sup>378</sup> 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).

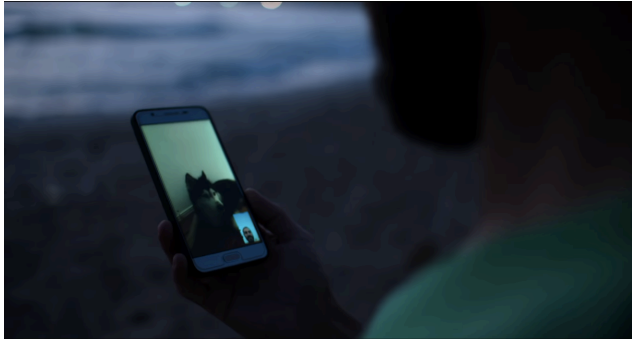


Figure G: Amer on the beach in Damascus phoning Ayham and Zeus, *Bravo Zeus, Dogs* (Berg & Zipper 2018). Screenshot by the author.

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).<sup>379</sup> 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

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<sup>379</sup> 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).<sup>380</sup>

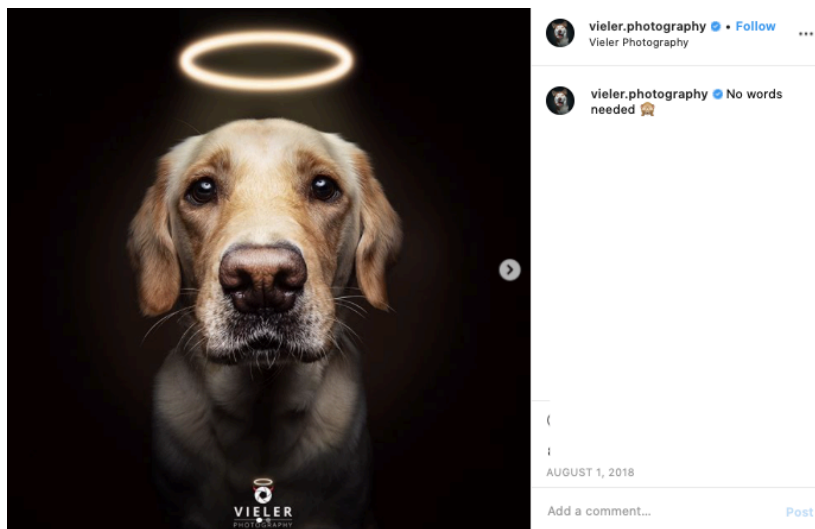


Figure J: Photographer Christian Vieler's Instagram page picturing dogs with halos, 1 August 2018 (@vieler.photography). Screenshot by the author.

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

<sup>380</sup> 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.<sup>381</sup>

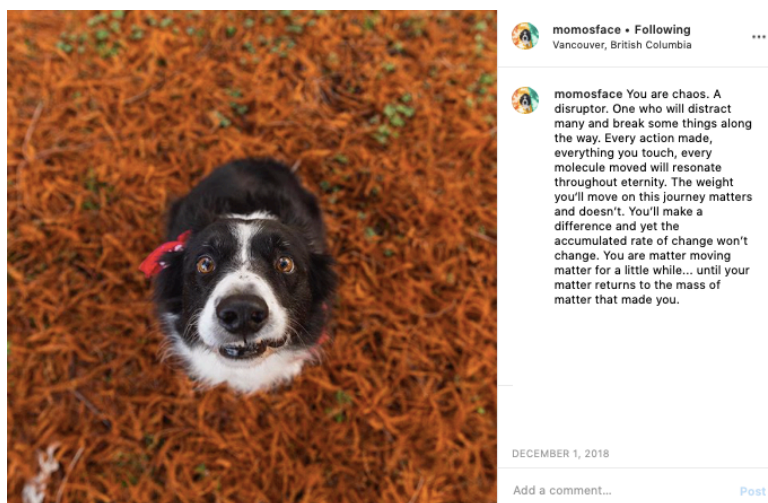


Figure K: *Dogstagram* featuring Momo the dog looking towards the sky, accompanied by a spiritual caption, 1 December 2018 (@momosface). Screenshot by the author.

Visit [www.instadogproject.com/imageplots](http://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

<sup>381</sup> 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.