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.

Karli Brittz

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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.[1] 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 non*humanism*. 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-

[1] 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 *dogstagrams* 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.[2] 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

[2] 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)[3] 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

[3] 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).[4]

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.[5]

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

[4] Precisely what is meant by anthropocentrism and its various components is explored further in Chapter Two.
[5] 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.[6] 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.[7]

Another interesting dimension is added to these perspectives with the addition of the (nonhuman) technology of social media.[8] 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

[6] 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.
[7] 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.
[8] 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).[9] *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

[9] 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 conceptulisation 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**.[10]

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

[10] 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.[11]

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

[11] 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?"[12] 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

[12] 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 en*tails*. 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.[13]

[13] 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 devises 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

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.[14] 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

[14] 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.[15] 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 *dogstagrams*. 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

[15] 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 know as *Dogs of Instagram* and these images are commonly called *dogstagrams*.[16] 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 *dogstagrams* 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.

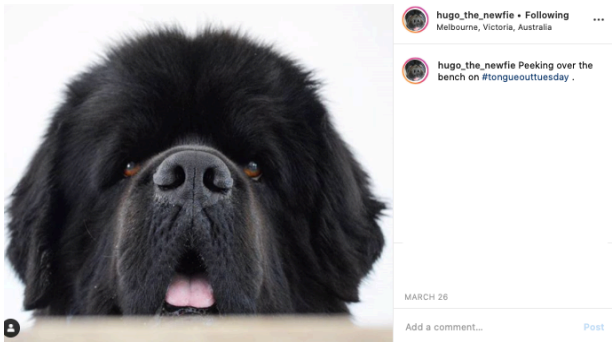

Figure 2: A typical *dogstagram* post from the Instagram account @hugo_the_newfie, showing that a *dogstagram* is an image where a dog is a key subject, 26 March 2019. Screenshot by the author.

[16] 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 visuality. 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 Zylinska's (2012) approach to bioethics, which urges us to embrace certain multispecies principles and relations, while still taking the human seriously.[17]

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

[17] For more on Zylinska'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. *Dogstagrams* 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 *dogstagrams* 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 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 *dogstagrams* 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 *dogstagrams* 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" (Armbuster 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 *dogstagrams* 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.[18] 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 *dogstagrams* 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

[18] 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 *dogstagrams* 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 *dogstagrams* (distant reading) as well as identifying and unpacking the specific theoretical notions of *being-with* and *becoming with* within the images (close reading).[19] 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

[19] 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 *dogstagrams* from Instagram based on random selection; (2) running this dataset through recognition and analytic software, which provide algorithmically calculated estimates of commonalities in *dogstagrams* (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.*[20]

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 Zylinska's bioethical approach. Zylinska (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. Zylinska'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 (Zylinska 2012:221). Bioethics challenges the traditional ways of thinking about species relations, while simultaneously highlighting the differences and values of various life forms (Zylinska 2012:221).

For Zylinska (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 Zylinska'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 (Zylinska 2012:220). In this fashion, I, as a human researcher, respond to the world of companion species critically, acknowledging that I

[20] 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 Zylinska'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), Heinricy (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 to 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 Anthropo-zoo-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.[21]

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

[21] 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 *dogstagrams* 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 *dogstagrams*.

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 Zylinska. Zylinska'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* (Zylinska 2009) and *The Ethics of Cultural Studies* (Zylinska 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 Zylinska'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?* (Kirscehnbaum 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* (Nowviskie 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. Nowviskie'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.[22]

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.

[22] 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 *dogstagrams*. 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.[23]

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.[24] 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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[23] James Thurber (in Merritt 2018:140).

[24] 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 Cérisy-la-Salle in 1997. Papers for the entire conference are published under the title, *L'animal autobiographique: autour de Jacques Derrida* (Paris: Galilée; 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 Zylinska, 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 en*tails*, 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). [25] Despite its various

[25] 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.[26] 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 – likes 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.

[26] 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.[27] 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.[28] 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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[27] 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.

[28] 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.[29] 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.[30]

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).[31] 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

[29] 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.
[30] 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.
[31] 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.[32] 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 Zylinska (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 (Zylinska 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,

[32] 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).[33] 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).[34] 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,

[33] 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.

[34] *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.[35]

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.[36] 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

[35] 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.

[36] 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.[37] 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).[38] 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).[39]

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.[40]

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[37] 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.

[38] 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".

[39] 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).

[40] 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.[41] 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.[42] 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.

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

[42] 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).[43] 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".[44] 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

[43] Erica Fudge (2013:182) maintains that Descartes is "the poster boy for current representations of humanist ideas".
[44] 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 Zylinska, equate humanism and human exceptionalism, owing to their joint history and similarities.[45] Zylinska (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, Zylinska'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

[45] 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.[46] 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.[47]

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

[46] 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.

[47] 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.[48] 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.[49] 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

[48] 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.

[49] 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.[50]

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.[51]

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

[50] 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).

[51] 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).[52] 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).[53] Animism

[52] 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'.
[53] 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.[54]

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'.[55]

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.

[54] 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.

[55] 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.[56] Although I recognise how anthropomorphism can confine an animal's being to that of the human,[57] 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

[56] 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.
[57] 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).[58]

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

[58] 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 Gauttari (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).[59] 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".[60]

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.[61] 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

[59] 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.

[60] 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 Rosseau) 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.

[61] 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.[62] 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,[63] 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

[62] 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.
[63] 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) en*tails* 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,[64] 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.[65] 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.[66] For instance, like Roberts, Coppinger and Coppinger (in

[64] 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.

[65] 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.

[66] Notably, Nietzche (1888), Tuan (1985), Rosseau (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.[67] 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.[68] 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.

[67] 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.

[68] 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 *dog*matic 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.[69] 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',[70] 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).[71]

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[69] 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.

[70] 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.

[71] 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).[72] 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.[73]

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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.

[72] 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.*

[73] 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.[74]

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?[75]

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

[74] 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.

[75] 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.[76] 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).[77] In other words, for Fudge (2007:42), dogs have come to represent the ideal picture of what I understand as human

[76] I return to this argument in Chapter Four when considering Heidegger's definition of the human way of being.
[77] 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".[78] 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.[79]

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).

[78] What Fudge estimates here as humanism relates to what this study refers to as human supremacy, including its humanist roots.

[79] 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.[80] 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).[81]

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

[80] 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).

[81] 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".[82] 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

[82] 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.[83]

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

[83] 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.[84] 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.

[84] 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,[85] Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory,[86] new media theory, [87] new materialism,[88] system theory,[89] as well as non-representational theory.[90]

[85] 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".

[86] 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.

[87] 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.

[88] New materialism represents a range of theoretical perspectives that focus on matter and immanence in opposition to transcendental humanist thought (Monoforte 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.

[89] 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).

[90] 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.[91]

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).[92] 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".[93] 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

[91] 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).
[92] 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).
[93] 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.[94] 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.[95] In *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2003) she places both

[94] 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).
[95] 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).[96] 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".[97] In their clustering, humans and nonhumans are "always meaning-making figures" carrying connotation (Haraway 2008:5). Hence, Haraway's *becoming with* describes the interactions

[96] 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.

[97] 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 "infolding" 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.[98]

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

[98] 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".[99]

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).[100] In short, human experience is conceptualised into typically

[99] 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.

[100] 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.[101] In short, animalisation refers to describing humans or human experiences in terms of the animal world.[102] 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.

[101] 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.

[102] 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 life-world 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.[103]

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.

[103] 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 decentring 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.[104] 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 posthumansim, 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.[105] 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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[104] 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).

[105] 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).[106] 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.

[106] 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 & Helmereich [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 en*tails*, 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.[107] 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).[108]

[107] Haraway's idea of becoming worldly relates to the Heideggerian notion of worlding and world. I elaborate on this relation later in the study.
[108] 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.[109] 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.[110] 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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[109] 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.

[110] 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.[111] 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.[112]

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.

[111] 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).
[112] 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 re*thinking* of the human-nonhuman divide, but also a re*doing* 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.[113] 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.

[113] 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.[114] 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

[114] 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.[115] 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

[115] 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 –[116] 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

[116] 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.[117] 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?[118] 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.

[117] For further critique against empathetic engagement refer to Gruen (2009), Darwall (1998), as well as Cuomo and Gruen (1998).
[118] 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).[119]

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,

[119] '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.[120]

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.[121]

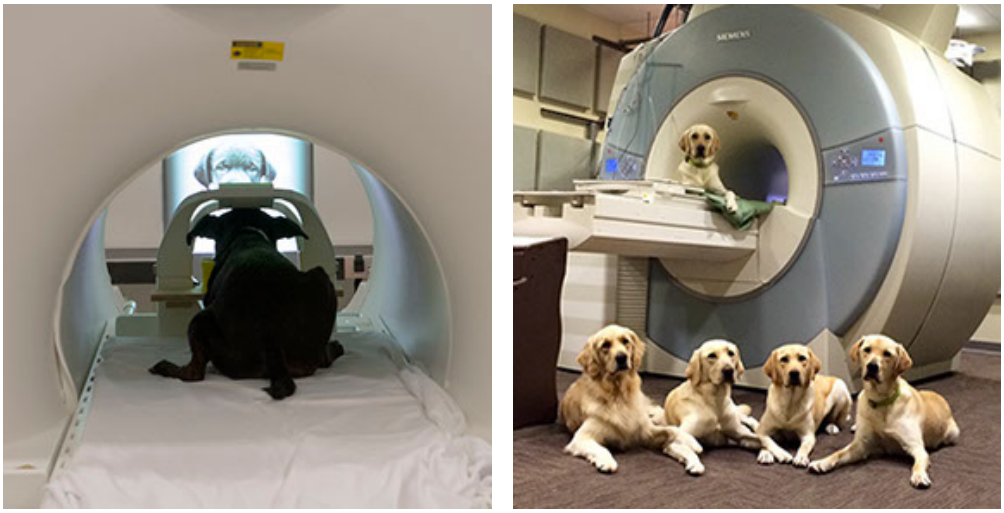

Figure 7: Dogs in Gregory Berns MRI machine, created for the comfort of the animal, 2012. (Berns 2016).

[120] 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.

[121] *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.[122] 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.[123] By proving that

[122] Perhaps this ability to 'listen' also relies on the recognition that the nonhuman is able to respond or posit behaviour to listen to.
[123] 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.[124]

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

[124] 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".[125]

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,[126] 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".[127] 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

[125] I elaborate on Haraway's human-animal language in Chapter Five.
[126] 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.
[127] 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).[128] 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

[128] John Berger (1977:16), for instance, critiques technology devices used to capture images of animas 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 *non*human 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 Millan's infamous "tsch" technique leaves little impact on strong-willed Cody.[129] *This usually results in some quite upset humans; some swerving cars and an attempt to trick Cody back to the house with treats. The*

[129] 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 unmistakeably 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.[130]

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.[131] 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

[130] 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.
[131] 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 Zylinska, whose bioethical approach helps me shape my theoretical reasoning throughout this study. In *Bioethics*, Zylinska (2012:203), as mentioned, asks how the human can remain relevant and retain a voice in the shadow of nonhumanist and posthumanist critique. Zylinska (2012:205) explains that, for her, the distinction between species remains essential to life on earth. Through what she calls "bioethics" (Zylinska 2012:220), Zylinska, in short, advocates for nonhuman subjectivity, but also human subjectivity. However, for Zylinska, these two subjectivities are not interchangeable. Zylinska 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 though 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.[132]

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

[132] 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.[133] 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?

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