Sociology, Sociality and Animals: Beyond the social/natural divide

Alexandra Briana Kimbo

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Department of Sociology

University of Essex

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Abstract

This thesis constitutes an attempt to make the case for “animalising” sociology, and to tackle ensuing theoretical and methodological challenges. It is suggested that impoverished understandings of the social – as divorced from the natural – are at the heart of various shortcomings in the discipline. Focussing on sociality, the aim is to develop a conceptualisation that does not reproduce “the bifurcation of nature”. While incorporating autoethnographic methods and drawing on my own experience with my adopted canine companion, Harald, this thesis is nonetheless to be seen as a theoretical piece of work.

The thesis argues for an enlarged version of sociality that transgresses species-bound factors, is not dependent on consciousness, and instead centres notions of experience and feeling. Drawing on Alfred North Whitehead’s philosophy of organism, this thesis proposes an approach to sociality understood as “feeling-for”, to avoid privileging limited modes of human experience, and to build a more inclusive sociological vocabulary. The framework developed suggests the following elements of sociality: mutual possibilities, togetherness and betweenness, attentive resonance, affinity, enjoyment, and mutual recognition.

Table of Contents

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Introduction

0.1 Establishing the problem

The underlying concern of this thesis is an attempt to "include" other animals in sociology. What I mean by "include", can perhaps be demonstrated by what I would envision as a future "animal(ised) sociology": a sociology that does not just have a subfield that looks at other animals (for example, sociological animal studies in its current form), but one where they are considered throughout. Introductory textbooks for example would not just have one chapter on human-animal relations (although that would be a great start), but instead would consider nonhumans just as much as humans throughout every topic. Thus, a chapter on the sociology of work would be incomplete if it does not discuss the possibility of animals as workers. However, an animal(ised) sociology entails various other considerations, which will be explicitly addressed in chapter one and throughout this thesis.

One of the arguments that constitutes the basis for "including" animals, and will be put forward here, is that if sociology takes "the social" or "society" as its subject matter, then it cannot afford to neglect human-nonhuman relations (unless, perhaps, it purposefully rethinks sociology as the study of exclusively human societies, which however, entails clarifying what these exactly are[1]). Due to a focus on what are assumed to be purely human relations, sociological approaches have produced skewed understandings of foundational concepts. Thus, the question becomes how to arrive at a more complete picture of "society". One way of doing this, is to take a step back from the fraught notion of society, and focus on "the social", or better, those

[1] Michael Halewood for example suggests: 'Sociological theory, as an account of "human life", might well look at human societies, but will have to reformulate what it considers these to be (2014: 158).'

("social") relations that are necessary for any concept of society in the first place.

Sociality beyond the human

A focus on the concept of "sociality", allows for discussion of various related problems that arise when sociology is confronted with "the animal", and thus also with its own (real or imagined) boundaries, limitations and underlying assumptions. One of these problems is that sociology as a discipline has drawn a rather hard line between "human" and "animal" when it comes to its subject matter. This in itself is not necessarily an issue. What is problematic however, is the shaky ground upon which this distinction is constructed and the way it is defended (if at all). This becomes clear when examining common definitions of sociology as the study of "society" or "the social", as it is often assumed that these concepts refer to human society and social life alone. Apart from problems surrounding poor scholarship - in terms of misrepresenting or overlooking new research on the lives of animals, particularly exciting work from the field of cognitive ethology – there is also the issue of reliance on modes of thought that reinstate rigid dichotomies. In short,

> One of the problems then, is that it is often assumed that the concepts of society, sociality and the social are already understood, or posited as self- explanatory (Halewood, 2014: 1).

Thus, questions of "the social" are interlinked with questions of "society", and "sociality", as well as tied up with debates over the subject matter, foundations, and future of sociology (and social theory) itself.

The first problem at hand then, is that if sociology aims to study "society" or "the social", it cannot continue to overlook or exclude nonhuman animals from serious consideration, given that these key concepts themselves are often constructed in an anthropocentric manner, and previous disagreements over their definitions are often

glossed over. In this way, sociology may have painted a false, or at least an incomplete picture of society, sociality and social life. Put differently, of primary concern here is that whatever society or sociality and "social life" is, animals are not seen as able to participate. Some scholars for example highlight one of the reasons often cited is that they are at the mercy of their instincts, as opposed to humans 'who are social actors who learn social norms and cultural conventions (Blattner, Coulter, and Kymlicka 2019: 5).' This summarizes some recurring themes when it comes to definitions of sociality and sociability – concepts such as agency (or social actors"), culture, norms, and language, are held up as distinctively human capacities. It also needs to be emphasised that definitions of concepts such as sociality – which for example exclude nonhuman animals on the basis of language or subjectivity – rarely, if ever, include all humans. Further, conceptions of sociality as divorced from "nature" and applied to humans alone, are problematically Western-centric. What is usually missing from such accounts, is any consideration of various more inclusive indigenous cosmologies which for example tend to centre meaningful relationships among humans and nonhumans. If indigenous knowledge is considered, it is written off as "not-really-real" beliefs.

Despite sufficient evidence that humans and other animals indeed often navigate complex (social) lives and are capable of relationships beyond their own species, why then has so little attention been paid to human-animal relationships when discussing concepts of sociality (and/or sociability)? Analysing the problem from this angle, it appears rather odd that sociology has mostly prioritized human relations, since we only need to look around us to see that relations (social and otherwise) with nonhuman animals exist and matter (of course this has already been a reality for many non-Western or indigenous worldviews). Limiting the discussion here to the United

Kingdom, for example, the average person must experience some form of relation to other animals, at some point in their lives. According to the PDSA PAW Report (2019), around 50% of the population now live with a “companion animal”, and even those that do not, most likely interact with dead animals or corpses (“meat”), or other “animal products” on a daily basis. Reliance on outdated notions of culture and language probably play a part in this neglect of interspecies or cross-species relations, but the problem seems to run deeper than this.

I would argue that not taking other animals seriously in sociology, not only means that we may have gravely misunderstood the nature of society, but also produces impoverished understandings of work, family, capitalism, colonialism, modernity, and other purportedly sociological concerns**.** This also means questions surrounding the limitations and political implications of the possibility for other animals to be seen as workers, family members, patients, parents, consumers, victims, and so on, ought to be considered. If “we” are able to view our nonhuman others as such, or at least as subjects or persons, it may open up possibilities for “interspecies solidarity” (see for example Kendra Coulter, 2016 on animals as workers). In this way, arriving at ways to better account for and understand human-nonhuman relations in sociology, may also equip sociologists with the tools to suggest ways of “living well” that includes all animals.

What is at stake goes beyond theoretical arguments for including them in the discipline – what “we” have to gain is important. Importantly, however, I suggest sociology will need to allow for the “animal” side of such “public issues” to carry “equal” weight - or, at the very least, re-evaluate the grounds upon which nonhuman animals are made out to matter less. This means sociology will for example need to tackle some

problems with anthropocentrism, human exceptionalism and legacies of the cartesian worldview, to adequately foster the consideration of nonhuman concerns.

To summarize, I am framing the problems as a matter of accounting for the multitude of relations (including “human-animal” relations), as well as the rich and diverse experiences of nonhumans living in our “communities”.

02. Thesis contribution and aims

The discipline of sociology has much to gain from broadening its scope, so as to be able to include other animals. For sociology to be able to rise to the challenge of accounting for the importance of nonhuman animals, many issues need to be dealt with. Based on a thorough literature review, I have found it helpful to categorize the main problems (posed by “the animal challenge”) that led to the focus of this thesis as follows: on the one hand a “re-evaluation of disciplinary assumptions” (including: clarification of subject matter; challenging the human-animal distinction; rejection of anthropocentrism) is needed. On the other hand, it is also necessary to rethink existing theoretical and methodological foundations, while exploring the creation of novel approaches. Ultimately, what is needed, are new social ontologies that can account for the diversity of experience in the world.

Since the exclusion of other animals within sociology rests on anthropocentric assumptions such as the human-animal distinction, it appears that a challenge is needed to the way “we” think about the nonhuman. Thus, while the aim is to avoid “theory for the sake of theory”, I am aiming for “engaged theory”, as has been advocated by CAS scholars (see Taylor and Twine, 2014). In any case, it needs to be remembered that theory is always related to practice – as Nik Taylor (2011a: 16) has succinctly stated: ‘the ways in which we think about, and know, animals directs how

we treat them.' Similarly, Brianne Donaldson argues for the importance of engaging with metaphysics for "planetary liberation" and states that

> The aim of liberation is not only to free bodies from coercive systems and situations, but to free our concepts so that we more readily acknowledge and expect the invaluable creative contributions that all bodies make to our real worlds (2015: 102).

Furthermore, Arnold Arluke (2002), for example, highlights the limited theoretical contribution sociology has made to the study of human-animal relationships and points to the benefits of theoretical, as opposed to topically organised, sociological research. Similarly, Bob Carter and Nickie Charles (2018[2016]) suggest that for sociology adequately respond to what they term "the animal challenge", a redefinition of the social, as well as of what it means to be human is necessary, along with rethinking key concepts – especially subjectivity, agency, and reflexivity. Such conceptual work is particularly urgent, given that:

> […] the conceptual vocabulary of the social sciences is configured around assumptions about the human. When sociologists use this vocabulary, they exclude animals and the non-human more generally (Carter and Charles, 2018[2016]: 10).

Thus, this thesis aims to contribute to the development of a non-anthropocentric conceptual vocabulary, focusing on the notion of "sociality".

While autoethnographic material will be included (primarily in the form of diary entries and anecdotal evidence, drawing on my own experience and engagement with my adopted canine "companion", Harald), it is not designed to be an "empirical" thesis – it is very much intended to be a theoretical piece of work, that attempts to make processes of thinking with (and for) animals in sociology, and beyond, more visible. The problematic will be approached in terms of its specificity to sociology, but this project is inherently inter-,trans-, and multidisciplinary.

The imperative here is not to find one specific answer or approach, but instead to seek out ways of “thinking differently” and new avenues of addressing theoretical and conceptual questions. Although conceptual clarification might be sought, this is secondary to the above. In this way, instead of attempting to “close” debates through suggesting final “solutions”, the aim is rather to open up space for (multiple) novel approaches. This is also one of the many reasons why philosopher Alfred North Whitehead’s thought is so pertinent, as it does not set out to provide prescriptive answers. Instead, it is provocative and offers tools that lend themselves to carving out new ways of thinking. A further aim is to investigate the relevance of the concept of sociality – in terms of its potential as a ‘tool for change’ (Meijer, 2019: 9) – with the view of seeking out ways for sociology as a discipline to account for human-nonhuman relations in a more balanced manner.

The thesis argues for the creation of novel non-anthropocentric approaches that are suited to interspecies contexts and the conceptualisation of experience, and do not focus on narrow forms of experience such as consciousness, or purely human experience however defined. To this end, the position taken in this thesis suggests an approach to understanding interspecies sociality that is grounded in a Whiteheadian panexperientialist process ontology. Importantly, the approach is also sensitive to the specific concerns, problems and debates within sociology, but nonetheless necessarily transgresses disciplinary boundaries. Thus, in the context of aiming for the creation of new philosophies of the social (Halewood, 2014), and new social ontologies, the approach to sociality as “feeling-for” developed throughout this thesis, should be seen as an open-ended sketch in-process. Importantly, it is to be seen as one possible approach, among others.

Further questions, aims and concerns

Since theoretical and methodological foundations in sociology need to be re-evaluated in light of "the animal challenge", this thesis will engage with an existing key concept (the social/sociality). The focus, however, is on "looking ahead" through forging alternative approaches to the concerns at hand with the help of Whitehead's thought[2]. The initial research question was phrased as follows: How can sociology as a distinctly anthropocentric discipline include non-human animals in its theories and methodologies, given its conceptual history?

To reiterate, for the purposes of this thesis, the following challenges are highlighted: rethinking disciplinary assumptions – including debates surrounding the definition and subject matter of sociology (as the study of societies or "the social"), as well as the human-animal distinction; and theoretical (and conceptual) challenges (particularly those surrounding how to attend to the experiences of both human and nonhuman animals). Exploring these challenges further then resulted in focusing on two key concepts that speak to both groups of concerns: society (in light of discussions over multispecies societies) and sociality (in light of discussions over interspecies/multispecies sociality or more-than-human sociality).

Establishing the focus on the concept of sociality, led to more specific questions: What does "sociality" mean, and what could it mean in relation to nonhuman animals and "our" interactions and relations with them? If human relations tend to be seen as

[2] While indigenous knowledge would be one of the – to my mind – most important sources of guidance on how to grapple with "the nonhuman" in sociology, I do not have any ties to indigenous communities and will abstain from drawing on such relational cosmologies. Instead, I will endeavour to highlight and challenge western-centrism in the discipline where possible.

instructive for traditional sociological definitions of sociality, how does our understanding of the concept change when we consider both human and nonhuman relations on “equal” terms, or consider such relations as meaningful in their own right? What are the (political) implications of viewing sociality as inherent in all entities as Whitehead does (inspired by Halewood, 2014: 101)? A related question here is: If we were for example to assume a panexperientialist universe, what would an animal(ised) sociology look like? How would our methodologies in particular change? What are the implications for how the subject matter in sociology is defined? Which new forms and elements of sociality could be uncovered? How could the concept of sociality be used as a basis to develop new sociological models of “social” interaction? How is sociality shaped in different interspecies contexts (and what are the important associated factors or processes)? Does it make sense to speak of forms of “interspecies sociality”?

Further underlying key questions are related to the following: How to think (theorise/conceptualise) with (and for) other animals, as opposed to about them, as has for example been suggested by Taylor (2014: 39-41)? How to take into account what matters for nonhuman animals? How do we ensure that we are “asking the right questions” (Despret, 2016) when trying to make sense of encounters with nonhuman animals, and when exploring questions of nonhuman experience? How do we approach human-animal encounters with a mind-set oriented toward experiencing and feeling, as opposed to describing and analysing? A related question here is: How do we take into consideration that certain experiences or encounters are not easily understood and expressed through language and scientific or propositional analysis?

At the heart of most questions are concerns over how to avoid privileging conscious

experience or limited modes of human experience more generally, or how to best attend to different modes of experiences when theorising and conceptualising (for example, sensuous/non-sensuous, conscious/non-conscious, various forms of perception, informational/non-informational). Such concerns contributed to deciding to devise a framework for approaching sociality that centres Whiteheadian understandings of experience and feeling.

Locating the field(s)

The thesis contributes primarily to sociology and sociological theory, but also draws on and contributes to Whiteheadian process thought, critical animal studies, and social theory. As such, this thesis will also engage with debates central to recent shifts such as “the nonhuman turn”, and to a certain degree, “the ontological turn” (Holbraad and Pederson, 2017). and “the speculative turn” (Bryant, Srnicek, and Harman, 2011). The nonhuman turn encompasses a diverse set of approaches and perspectives. Scholars that can be seen as contributing to these “turns” often draw on Whitehead’s thought. Such approaches share: a concern for the nonhuman to some degree, a rejection of human exceptionalism and a resistance to linguistic or representational approaches, as well as a challenge to the authority of “the male subject” (Grusin, 2015: x, xi). What is further shared, is a commitment to challenging dichotomies. Importantly, this primarily involves problematizing the “privileging of the human” (xi). Finally, the nonhuman turn encompasses approaches that resist social constructionism and its tendency to reduce the world to “social” or “cultural” constructions (xi).

Approaches such as actor-network theory are for example very helpful for tracing

actors and associations, but to my mind, leave a gap in approaches and methods to talking about experience. Phenomenological approaches would seem more suitable, but tend to privilege consciousness and human experience, thus reinstating or maintaining binary thinking.

An alternative approach offering a corrective would be Jane Bennett's vital materialism, which sets out to take to take the "vibrancy" of the nonhuman or the "vitality" of matter seriously. However, while Bennett does not center the human subject, I would like to ask what we might be missing through a focus on actants, agency and assemblages? When discussing her methodology, Bennett explains that she was guided by questions surrounding what methods could be adequate for 'the task of speaking a word for vibrant matter (2010: xiii)'. I may be misinterpreting Bennett's question here, however, to my mind it seems that it may be at least of equal importance to ask how we could "listen" or "let vibrant matter speak", as opposed to "speaking for" it. The latter is a question I think is worth exploring and is relevant to this project of paying attention to the *experiences* of humans and nonhumans.

This Is why I suggest an approach to interspecies sociality that is through and through grounded in a Whiteheadian process ontology, with an emphasis on a specific conceptualisation of feeling, to allow for better highlighting of experience, without relying on a cartesian metaphysic.

Clarification of terminology

A clarification of terminology, is, perhaps useful here. I have for the time being settled on "interspecies" when talking about sociality, however, a note on other terms appears needed.

Ultimately, sociality is to my mind just sociality, no matter whom one is referring to, as, adopting a process ontology, there is no split between humans, sociality, culture, and/or society on one side, and nature, animals, and/or materiality on the other. There is thus also no need to "interspecies" to sociality, as all sociality is always already inter- or multispecies sociality. However, given that prominent conceptions of sociality in sociology still assume a human subject, due to working within a cartesian worldview, there may also be something to gained in including the prefix 'inter' given the suggested approach focusses on "betweenness" and "the middle". This is why I have decided to settle on the term interspecies sociality, as it emphasises what is shared *between* two or more (note on sociality always involves more than one).

Eben Kirksey et al for example use the term multispecies (in the context of multispecies ethnography) whereby the emphasis is on "multi" for multiple species. Similarly, Anna Tsing (2013: 27) uses the term 'more-than-human sociality', as it includes both the human and nonhuman. In this research, however I am zoning in on two - although of course both Harald and I are shaped by a multitude of other organisms. I thus prefer interspecies to "multispecies sociality".

Nonetheless, I retain some concerns in using "species", as it may encourage uncritical usage of the term, and might to some not be clearly enough referring to *all* beings, not just humans, animals, or plants. In some way then, trans-species or more-than-human would be preferable. All in all, this indicates there are many debates to be had. So, while I am provisionally settling on interspecies sociality for the purposes of this thesis, this is to be left open in anticipation of future revisions.

0.3 On Method

The experimental methodology constructed here – to enable the development of an approach to sociality in an interspecies context – can be understood as a mixture of critical thought, reflection and autoethnography. The approach to interspecies sociality as "feeling-for" developed in this thesis further relies on a Whiteheadian process ontology, which presupposes a panexperientialist worldview, thus presenting an urgently needed alternative to the dominant Western worldview derived from cartesian thought.

Autoethnographic elements are included, primarily because I would suggest that it may be useful to first experiment with how *oneself* could best approach encounters with the nonhuman. This seems important since traditional research methods training in sociology is focussed on how to approach the study of other humans but leaves one relatively unprepared for encounters between humans and nonhumans.

Thus, I am aiming to sketch a framework for approaching sociality, that is grounded in a Whiteheadian process ontology, and can be developed further in the future – particularly coupled with explorative autoethnographic multispecies or interspecies studies, so as to allow an emphasis on reflexivity. This is necessary to foster approaches that critically question the human standpoint, and associated privileges, while avoiding prioritizing human subjectivity, consciousness, or a narrow view of experience.

Given that I am utilising elements of autoethnography in an interspecies context, I am also indebted to the field of "multispecies ethnography", which has become popular in human-animal studies circles, but remains at the margins in sociology. Kirksey and Stefan Helmreich (2010) define multispecies ethnography as an approach focussing

'on how a multitude of organisms' livelihoods shape and are shaped by political, economic, and cultural forces (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010: 545).' See also Kirksey, Schuetze, and Helmreich (2014) on multispecies ethnography as a new mode of interdisciplinary inquiry, and the significance of the *Multispecies Salon* art exhibition to the formation of the field. It seems, however, that a lot of these contributions and interventions come from scholars working within and beyond anthropology, and geography, as opposed to sociology – with exceptions. I would like to see multispecies or interspecies inquiries to become the "norm" in sociology, as opposed to remaining on the fringes – particularly when it comes to teaching as well as research.

0.4 Outline of chapters

The first three chapters will serve as a springboard for the discussions in following chapters and will assist in setting up the problem of "sociality" regarding sociology and other animals. Chapter four focusses on outlining the foundation for the proposed framework, and the following chapters each examine sociality from different angles and will further develop suggested elements of sociality.

It is hoped that the lines of questioning and analyses throughout each chapter will be of "Whiteheadian" character. Importantly, as has been pointed out by Halewood (for example, 2014), Whitehead's ideas are not to be simply applied to sociological problems. Instead, Whitehead offers us different ways of approaching and thinking about particular problems in sociology and social theory.

Chapter One

The first chapter constitutes a literature review and introduction to the treatment of nonhuman animals in sociology. The first sections provide an overview of why and

how the discipline has excluded other animals, while the following sections offer suggestions of what needs to change, as well as a discussion of existing approaches to building non-anthropocentric sociologies. The final sections introduce the problematic – unique to sociology – surrounding the relationship between disciplinary foundations and assumptions, sociality, and the treatment of other animals.

Chapter Two

While methodical considerations will be addressed throughout the thesis, chapter two can be seen as constituting a "methodology" chapter. As such, it will introduce my relationship with my canine companion Harald and offer a critical discussion of autoethnography in an inter- and multispecies context.

Chapter Three

The third chapter aims to set up some of the overarching problems surrounding sociality, which will then be built upon in the following chapters. To start with, the chapter analyses problems with existing conceptualisations of sociality. The key concern of whether it makes sense to speak of human sociality as separate from animal sociality, and the concept of interspecies sociality will also be discussed. Another theme that will be introduced in order to speak to this issue, is thinking of togetherness in terms of "with-ness" and "betweenness", which is related to the view adopted here: that whatever sociality is, it seems to involve more than one – in the sense that it only ever applies to some form of relations with something beyond (or within) oneself – importantly, however, this include nonhuman others.

Chapter Four

Chapter Four introduces Whitehead, and his philosophy of organism, which constitutes the foundation for the proposed framework. After analysing concerns related to the theorisation of human and nonhuman experience, Whiteheadian conceptions of sociality, experience and feeling will be drawn out. This is done with the aim to set up the proposed approach to sociality as "feeling-for". This includes defining suggested key elements of sociality. A specific conception of feeling is argued to be crucial to each and enables us to avoid difficulties surrounding definitions of sociality (which are addressed in previous chapters).

Chapter Five

Chapter five includes a clarification of issues surrounding the definition of sociality as it relates to sociability. Difficulties surrounding definitions of sociability will also be evaluated, as they pertain to the treatment of nonhuman animals in social thought. After the above has been addressed, the remaining sections will attempt to approach the topic from a different angle, to avoid some of the difficulties surrounding the conceptualisation of sociability. The question will be re-framed as one of living together in proximity, and two additional elements of sociality will be introduced.

Chapter Six

The main justification for this chapter is the aim to avoid limiting definitions of sociality/sociability to cooperative or peaceful encounters. The chapter will suggest resistance – drawing on Donna Haraway and Vinciane Despret, understood as dialogue or (open) responding – as one way of approaching "being-with", and making limitations of togetherness visible.

Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven is dedicated to the exploration of togetherness and betweenness with the view of the issue of addressing the challenge of establishing to what degree one can talk of shared experience. In order to do this, ideas by Haraway, Despret, and Joanna Latimer are drawn upon. Key issues covered in this chapter pertain to questions of mutual transformation, and partial connection, in order to seek out a more nuanced view of connection and becoming-with, in the context of developing an approach to sociality that is not built upon fixed species boundaries.

Chapter Eight

The key issue of seeking out alternative ways of thinking about sociality – while still avoiding talking in terms that presume a boundary between species – will be taken up here and can be seen as a "conclusion" to the thesis. The key theme this will be applied to is play. It will be argued that the importance and meaning of play is at times presented as self-evident, and an alternative framing will be proposed. It will be suggested that play could be approached as an element of an enlarged version of sociality. In line with the framework developed throughout the thesis, a focus on in-betweenness or "what happens in the middle" of an encounter will be suggested, thus moving beyond species-bound factors, and emphasising process and the adverbial qualities of experience. Building upon previous chapters, the problems and possibilities of play will then be presented as at once also speaking to the problems and possibilities of "shared experience" – and thus sociality. This chapter also draws on ideas by Gilles Deleuze, Colin Jerolmack, Brian Massumi, and Eva Schaper. The chapter will further offer a conclusion on the importance and potential of the concept

of sociality, for the study of human and nonhuman relations in sociology.

Chapter One: An introduction to animals and sociology

1.1 The "exclusion" of nonhuman animals from sociology

Setting the scene

> If scholars reflect upon why nonhuman animals may or may not be incorporated into sociological enquiries then perhaps 'silent assumptions [about animals and human-animal relations] rooted in the ideological or cultural background of the society (Ichheiser, 1949: 1)' to which they belong may come to the fore which would otherwise go unexamined (cited in Wilkie, 2015a: 324).

This research will follow other Human-Animal Studies (HAS) and Critical Animal Studies (CAS) scholars in arguing for the "inclusion" of nonhuman animals in sociology (see for example Carter and Charles, 2016; Cudworth, 2015; Peggs, 2013; Taylor, 2013; Todd and Hynes, 2017). While such arguments seem to have emerged recently, it is important to note that the exclusion of other animals from the discipline was indeed challenged in the past. Attempts to explicitly contest the exclusion of nonhuman animals came for example from sociologists such as Clifton Bryant (1979), Ted Benton (1993) (see Peggs, 2012: 2), and Hilary Tovey (2003). Sociologists contributing "foundational" scholarship in sociological animal studies such as Keith Tester (1991) and Adrian Franklin (1999) also made valuable contributions but did not necessarily contest anthropocentrism in the discipline.

More recently, challenges to anthropocentrism in sociology predominantly originate from postmodernist (see Taylor, 2011b; 2013: 11), as well as new materialist (see Carter and Charles, [2016] 2018: 87), and posthumanist approaches (2011: 2-3).[3]

[3] On new materialisms, see for example Karen Barad (2007), and as it pertains to sociology, see for example Fox and Alldred (2016). Vital materialism is for example also often labelled as a "new materialism", however Jane Bennett herself prefers to resist the latter term (Bennett, 2015: 237n10; see also 2010). For examples of post-humanist scholarship beyond sociology, see Rosi Braidotti's (2019) *Posthuman Knowledge* or Cary Wolfe's (2010) *What is posthumanism?*

At this point, it is worth highlighting that while there have been attempts to challenge the "exclusion" of nonhuman animals, most sociological literature that does consider animals tends to be overwhelmingly anthropocentric (see for example Taylor and Sutton, 2018: 471). Of course, arguing for the "serious" "inclusion" of nonhuman animals in sociology poses various challenges. Before proceeding to deal with specific problems associated with including other animals in the discipline, it is worth outlining some of the factors that may have led to sociology's peculiar relationship to the topic. This section offers one way of categorising main factors involved. Further, the focus remains on those most tied up with the specificity of sociology. The key issues to be discussed are provisionally summarized as "anthropocentric paradigms".

Anthropocentric paradigms

Nik Taylor (2013: 8) for example suggests that the invisibility of other animals in social thought is tied up with anthropocentric paradigms underlying the dominant (Western) worldview. For her, the problem is comparable to the tendency to "write-out" women, as highlighted in feminist thought:

> Animals get lost—just as Latour and Woolgar (1979) pointed out that what 'really' happened in the laboratory was 'written away' in the production of texts and so on that constitute knowledge, that constitute the thing as it is. In the same way animals are lost through the various transcription devices used to 'make sense' of them within humanist and anthropocentrically ordered disciplines (Taylor, 2014: 40).

It is primarily in this sense that animals are "excluded" or "written-out" from sociology – not necessarily always because they are in fact absent. Moreover, the neglect of nonhuman animals may or may not be deliberate (see for example Wilkie, 2015a: 324).

Discourse and processes of purification

One way of thinking about why – and how – other animals are excluded or written-out, is the through the reliance upon creation of abstract "pure categories" ("human" in opposition to "animal"), through "processes of purification" (Latour, 1993; see for example also Michael, 2004 for an examination of Latourian "purification" applied to "roadkill"). This can be viewed as a result of a particular hierarchical mode of thought or – as Taylor (2014: 41) puts it – 'an intellectual legacy' which prioritizes and upholds "the human" as a superior category, whose dominance over "the animal" is justified. Taylor describes how this process of purification is "naturalised" as well as "labour intensive":

> It is naturalised in that 'we' humans often do it without thought or conscious effort, and because its existence is taken for granted, as the 'Truth.' By contradiction it is also labour intensive in that the boundaries between human and nonhuman have to be continually maintained, policed, and mended if necessary (2014: 41).

In this way, processes of purification, and the construction and maintenance of "pure categories" are very much tied up with questions of power, albeit with power as understood by Michel Foucault:

> […] whereby the power lies in the discourse. In this particular case the discourse is that of animality v humanity where, for example, humanity stands for all that is good—culture, reason, intelligence, language—and animality stands for all that is to be avoided if one wants to be a good human being—irrationality, bestiality, impulse and so on (Taylor, 2014: 41).

Taylor (41) further highlights that this discourse is seldom challenged, and accepted at face-value, as it is deeply entrenched in Western thought. It is thus important to highlight that these pure categories are by no means pre-existing truths, nor are they "natural" or necessary. She points out that this is where the importance of paying attention to the role of academic knowledge in maintaining hierarchies lies (41-2).

Disciplinary arrogance

Another example of “how” and “why” animals are excluded from sociology can be found in Janet Alger and Steven Alger’s (2003) work. Their study of introductory textbooks for sociology revealed how texts often solidify anthropocentric disciplinary assumptions (such as human-animal or nature-culture dichotomies), for example through a dismissal of new insights regarding animal behaviour. The study demonstrates numerous omissions and misconceptions surrounding nonhuman animals (Alger and Alger, 2003; see also Irvine, 2007). Three particularly problematic tendencies found can be categorised as ‘poor scholarship’, ‘poor citation of evidence’, and ‘disparagement and denial of animal’s capacities’ (cited in Irvine, 2007: 12-3). Leslie Irvine (2007: 13) draws on this study in order to argue that ‘The failure to look for and recognize the evidence not only signifies entrenched anthropocentrism, it also hints at disciplinary arrogance.’

As Irvine (2007: 12-3) highlights, this “disciplinary arrogance” is likely related to the challenge that a fluid human-animal boundary poses to the deep-seated belief in human uniqueness (and is thus also linked to the Cartesian worldview). She argues that if we were to grant other animals certain capacities, their moral interests would have to be acknowledged. In this way, ‘The increasing knowledge about the emotional and cognitive capacities of animals threatens the way sociologists have defined the social world (see Arluke 2003; Kruse 2003, cited in Irvine, 2007: 15).’ Similarly, Taylor suggests that other animals have been excluded from sociology as doing otherwise has politically challenging implications, ‘But epistemologically, it is also a frightening prospect for surely it would denote the ‘death of the social’ (2014: 43).’

Taylor (2014: 44) suggests additional factors that may underlie the exclusion of

animals from sociology, which tie into the issue surrounding a belief in human uniqueness: the history of the discipline with its emergence during “modernity”, as well as its perceived subject matter, which is often viewed as tied to the category of the “social” as restricted to humans. Similarly, Bob Carter and Nickie Charles (2018[2016]: 82) point out historical factors, such as ‘the basis of the discipline in humanism, and the conditions of emergence of sociology in industrial capitalist societies’, as well as the relationship between sociology and biology as playing a role in the exclusion of animals from the discipline.

Thus, all things considered, the exclusion of nonhuman animals may also be related to the challenge human-animal continuity poses to ‘sociology’s view that humans are sufficiently unique to merit their own field of study (Irvine, 2007: 15).’ The peculiar relationship between “the social” (and sociality), sociology as a discipline, and nonhuman animals, is a key concern of this thesis, and will be taken up again throughout later sections and chapters.

Oppression, guilty conscience, and ambiguities

Many scholars suggest for some assume that taking other animals seriously somehow diminishes the notion of oppression[4] (Arluke, 2003: 29-30; Arluke, 2002 cited in Hobson-West, 2007: 24; Irvine, 2007: 15; 2008: 1965; Peggs, 2016: 243-4). Somewhat conversely, it has also been suggested that for others, studying the oppression of nonhuman animals may provoke feelings of guilt (Irvine, 2007: 15). Excluding other animals may in some cases also help justify their oppression, as has been pointed out by David Nibert (2003: 20-1, cited in Peggs, 2013: 603). Mike

[4] Difficulties surrounding the concept of oppression as it relates to notions of advocacy and emancipation will be taken up in the section om “animal sociologies”.

Michael's work hints at another factor that may be at play here – the 'profound symbolic ambiguity of animal (and thus human) identities (Michael, 2001: 216 cited in Hobson- West, 2007: 27).' The problem may then also be a question of (scientific) 'boundary- work' (Hobson-West, 2007: 29-35; Irvine, 2008: 1956-7).

Paternalism and linguicentrism

Scholars may also avoid Human-Animal Studies (HAS), as they fear being criticized for supposedly "speaking for" animals, and thus being challenged on the grounds of paternalism (Munro, 2005, cited in Hobson-West, 2007: 24). Pru Hobson-West argues that this may in part be an expression of sociology's linguicentrism, which is in turn said to be part of George Herbert Mead's influence on the discipline (Sanders, 2003 and Konecki, 2005 cited in Hobson-West, 2007: 24). Similarly, many scholars attribute the roots of the human-animal distinction within sociology to Mead, as has also been pointed out by some (see for example, Wilkie and McKinnon, 2013)[5].

Disciplinary boundaries and professionalisation

Wilkie (2015a: 325) highlights the role played by the professionalization and compartmentalization of academic disciplines which reinforces dichotomies, such nature-culture, and in this way entrenches disciplinary assumptions further. This

[5] However, as I have tried to argue in my MA Thesis (2018), this is an oversimplification of the problem. Wilkie and McKinnon (2013) for example highlight that most work "blaming" Mead relies on *Mind, Self, and Society*, which was published posthumously, and for the most part is based upon lecture notes. Moreover, much work was mis-represented by Herbert Blumer. Following Wilkie and McKinnon's (2013) suggestion, my analyses focussed on a selection of articles Mead actually intended for publication. This resulted in arguing that Mead was less clear on the relationship between language and selfhood (to my mind, language was not mentioned as an absolute criteria), and attributing the human-animal distinction in sociology to his work is perhaps unjustified.

division of academic disciplines can also be said to reflect 'the way we mentally carve up the world in our minds, as well as the way we experientially construct our professional identities as scholars (Zerubavel 1995: 1093, cited in Wilkie, 2015a: 325).'[6] Eviatar Zerubavel (1995: 1095) for example highlights how this plays out in the context of the peer-review system, which allows for a dismissal of research that is seen as outside of disciplinary boundaries (cited in Wilkie, 2015a: 325-6). Similarly, Richie Nimmo (2011: 64) points to the impact of the modernist compartmentalization of knowledge on both an ontological and epistemological level.

Professional credibility and "impure scholarship"

A related barrier to the inclusion of animals in sociological work could be expressed as concerns over "professional credibility". Scholars that work within HAS, regardless of their academic discipline, may risk their work being seen as "deviant" or "impure". Hence scholars may avoid these topics, as they risk harming their professional reputation (Wilkie, 2015: 3, cited in Cudworth, 2016: 244). This may in part be the case because HAS scholarship is often not accepted as 'properly sociological' (Carter and Charles, 2018[2016]: 81-2), and as Wilkie (2015a: 213) has pointed out: 'mixed-species subject matter [...] deviates from the human-centric focus of normative social research (cited in Carter and Charles, 2018[2016]: 81-2).'

Wilkie further suggests that HAS scholars can be viewed as carrying out "dirty work", which 'involves contacting „polluting" substances; engaging in unpleasant tasks; and

[6] This notion of "mentally carving up the world in our minds", is noteworthy, and may be trying to express something similar to Whitehead (1953[1925]: 197) in *Science and the Modern World*. In the relevant passage of the book, he talks about the dangers of"professionalism", and in particular suggests that "professionalised knowledge" is liable to generating 'minds in a groove'.

dealing with disvalued people, beings, or other objects (Sanders, 2010: 105; cited in Wilkie, 2015b: 9).' In this way, scholars studying "tainted" or impure topics, are in turn themselves viewed as impure, amounting to 'stigma-through-association' (9). This for example applies to scholars researching the work of animal experimenters, and to CAS Scholars who promote activism within academia. For Wilkie (2015b), "critical labour" also constitutes a form of "dirty work". To my mind, this also seems to indicate problems surrounding "advocacy-oriented" sociology, which will be taken up again in a later section. In short,

> HAS "disturb[s] the comfortable certitudes of life by asking questions no one can remember asking and those with vested interests resent even being asked" (Bauman and May, 2001: 10). By breaching anthropocentric norms, animal scholars, nonhuman animals, and animal related issues are all "matter out of place" in the social sciences (Wilkie, 2015b: 21).

Thus, scholars interested in human-animal studies may also be concerned about their "professional credibility", due to the resistance they face from colleagues internal (or external) to the discipline. This in turn seems to indicate a problem surrounding the "policing" of subject matter in sociology.

This policing of disciplinary boundaries and/or subject matter is further complicated by what Wilkie (2015b: 5) refers to as the 'scholarly pecking order'. This hierarchy exists due to the tendency for the natural sciences to be seen as more scientific, and thus more valuable than the social sciences. However, a hierarchical order also exists within faculties and disciplines. For example, quantitative research and large-scale studies are often preferred to qualitative scholarship and small-scale studies within the social sciences (Wilkie, 2015b). For Wilkie (2015b), this celebration of "scientific" research can be understood as the drive to preserve "(academically) pure" scholarship, whereas for example research deemed to be merely dealing with beliefs, attitudes and behaviour is viewed as "(academically) impure" work.

Academic competition

Arnold Arluke (2003) argues that the exclusion of nonhuman animals in sociology is primarily due to problems internal as opposed to external to the discipline. He proposes that (internal) resistance from colleagues may be due to three factors. The first is that those specialising in other "acceptable" topics may see HAS as a threat to their chances of obtaining funding and other resources. The second is linked to the previous factor and relates to the threat HAS may pose to the ability of established sub-fields of sociology to compete for disciplinary visibility. The final factor Arluke (2003) refers to is that the study of nonhuman animals may somehow be seen as diminishing and devaluing the concept of oppression, as mentioned above. In any case, Arluke (2003: 30) argues that if any of these potential reasons contribute to the discomfort surrounding nonhuman animals, then 'this reveals more about the political and psychological insecurities of these area-study advocates than it does about ethnozoology[7] and what it offers sociology.' Moreover, he argues that popular explanations such as those singling out the discipline's 'androcentric bias' or 'institutional conservatism' are insufficient and suggests that the problem is more complex and nuanced than this (Arluke, 2003: 29). While I am unsure whether the problem is purely an internal one, I do agree that the barriers faced by human-animal scholarship are by no means straightforward.

<u>The bifurcation of nature</u>

What could be seen as another key factor in the exclusion of animals from sociology (and beyond) – if not the most important one, as it lies of the heart of this thesis and

[7] Anthrozoology, ethnozoology, animal studies and HAS are often used interchangeably.

brings together the issues discussed above – is “the bifurcation of nature”. This has in a way been hinted at by Nik Taylor and Tania Signal (2008), who discuss the exclusion of animals in terms of the human-animal distinction, which they in turn link to the Cartesian worldview or the “post-Cartesian legacy” (as well as to underlying utilitarian and or anthropocentric assumptions), which retains problematic binaries such as object-subject and social-natural. Similarly, Jerolmack (2008) cites what Latour termed “the modern constitution” with its social-natural and natural-cultural binaries as one of the main reasons for the exclusion of nonhuman animals.

Crucially, however, this does not fully exhaust the remit of the concept of the bifurcation of nature, as coined by philosopher Alfred North Whitehead (1920), as Cartesian dualism is merely one aspect of this (Debaise, 2017). This particular concept, and Whitehead’s thought more generally, will be taken up again in the next chapter. For the present discussion it will suffice to say that with this term Whitehead is referring to the process of “bifurcating” nature into two separate realms of reality: “really real” entities that can be studied by science and a separate realm that is also “real”, but only insofar as it is a product of the (human) mind. Thus, nature has been divided into the nature that (generates awareness) on the one hand, and the nature that is perceived (by human subjects) on the other (Whitehead, 1920: 30-1; cited in Halewood, 2013 [2011]: 8). It should be noted that the various dichotomies such as nature-culture, human-animal, are very much interrelated, but nonetheless have their own distinct histories and ways of operating. While constituting abstractions, it is crucial to inquire how they manage to persist given the consequences.

Opportunities for sociology

Despite all its shortcomings, I am confident that “animalising” sociology in some way

is still possible. Taylor (2014: 44) for example argues that to adequately address other animals in social thought, it is imperative to leave pure categories behind. Importantly, this would enable access to 'new areas—emotions, kinship, family, materialities, environments— that have to be addressed in different ways to even be 'seen' (Taylor, 2014: 44).' Apart from opening up new viewpoints and areas of study, sociology for example also has the potential to facilitate societal acceptance of nonhuman animals as subjects with complex lives and experiences (Nibert, 2003: 21; Tovey, 2003: 196), as well as acceptance of the possibility of meaningful relations beyond species lines (Tovey, 2003: 210).

Some scholars have also highlighted helpful tools sociologists have at their disposal, such as understanding human-(nonhuman)animal relations through concepts of hierarchy, domination, exploitation and oppression (Cudworth, 2016: 253; Nibert, 2003; Peggs, 2013: 602; Tovey, 2003: 213) – while tending to specific social/historical contexts (Cudworth, 2016: 253). Sociology is then also particularly well placed to identify and examine those institutions and practices that enable exploitation, and to contest their normalisation (see Cudworth, 2016). In this way, considering all animals does not necessarily prevent distinctly sociological analyses, as some seem to fear.

Taking all animals seriously also presents the opportunity for the emergence of new social ontologies (Carter and Charles, 2016[2018]: 86), and the development of an overall more inclusive sociology that can cultivate respect for diversity and difference (Nibert, 2003: 21). This is important for the continued relevance of sociology in challenging societal conditions (Nibert, 2003: 5), particularly in "the age of the anthropocene" (Carter and Charles, 2016[2018]: 80).

Michael Halewood (2014: 109) has for example also argued that it is worth exploring

further what sociological “classics” such as Max Weber and Émile Durkheim could for example contribute to questions of “animal sociality” within Animal Studies. Furthermore, more attention needs to be paid to the possibility that early sociologists often had more nuanced views on “the social”:

> What is important at this stage is that these elements of their arguments have not just been neglected or forgotten but have been written out of the conceptual history of social theory (Halewood, 2014: 209).

Salla Tuomivvaara (2019) also suggests more work needs to be done in analysing how the human-animal distinction plays out in the classical sociological theory. Similarly, Tovey (2003: 213) suggests that if sociology wants to include other animals, it may be useful to return to the “classical tradition”. It should be noted that Jeremy Ross (2017) for example made the first attempt to explicitly focus on investigating the anthropocentrism in Durkheim’s work and calls for more research on sociological classics to uncover anthropocentric aspects, as well as to reveal potentially unnoticed possibilities for the inclusion of other animals.

Despite the shortcomings and difficulties listed throughout this section, there seem to be just as many opportunities for sociological thought to make valuable contributions to the study of human and nonhuman lives. This will however likely depend on certain conditions and entail various challenges. These will be the focus of the next section.

1.2 How to include nonhuman animals in sociology?

As previously mentioned, arguing for the “serious” “inclusion” of nonhuman animals in sociology is bound to stir up a host of problems. Building upon the last section, below various challenges will be outlined, which at the same time constitute some of the concerns at the heart of this thesis.

Re-evaluating disciplinary assumptions

Clarifying the subject matter of sociology

Firstly, the inclusion of nonhuman animals in sociology for example inevitably entails a clarification of its object of inquiry. This, in turn, will involve re-engaging in debates over what and who sociology is for, as well as what sociologists do, and how they do it. This is particularly important, as there has always been a debate over what constitutes the "appropriate" subject matter of sociology and sociological theory Despite this uncertainty, it is often assumed that sociology deals with human societies. For example, introductory sociology textbooks tend to offer definitions of sociology that make human society the sole subject matter of the discipline (Peggs, 2012: 1-6). Moreover, sociology textbooks also tend to reproduce misconceptions surrounding issues such as language, culture and sentiency in regard to nonhuman animals (Alger and Alger, 2003). This has also been indicated in the previous section. Similarly, it needs to be remembered that what constitutes the "social" and "societies" has never been uncontested – this will be discussed at length at the end of this chapter (see Halewood, 2014). This is important if one makes either concept central to sociological inquiry, as it is often done. Related to this, it is also important to reconsider what is means to be "human" – or, 'how humans have been made human' (Halewood, 2014: 141). Debates over the "human" in turn also link into debates over the concept of "species" and classification (and taxonomy) more generally.

Challenging the human-animal distinction

A related issue that needs to be examined, is the human-animal distinction. This may be one of the most important disciplinary assumptions to challenge, given that traditional sociology appears to have been founded upon the assumption that

"humans" and "animals" are two categories that can be clearly distinguished from each other (Carter and Charles, 2011: 2). The human-animal distinction is also closely linked to various other problematic binary categories, such as social-natural and nature-culture or nature-society. Related to this are of course various other issues, such as how humans have been defined in opposition to other animals (for a thorough discussion on the role of "boundaries", see for example Hobson-West, 2007). This issue for example in turn also raises crucial questions surrounding animalization and dehumanization (see for example Twine, 2010).

Taking "the animal challenge" to sociology seriously

A starting point to exploring the above-mentioned concerns would be to revisit the various (sometimes competing) definitions and understandings of the appropriate subject matter for sociology. It would also be helpful to revisit the historical context of the beginnings of sociology as a discipline, and its peculiar relationship with biology. The dynamics between these two disciplines are crucial, as it has been argued that sociology's assumption of a distinction between humans and animals is closely related to its efforts to distinguish itself from the natural sciences, and biology in particular (Carter and Charles, 2011: 2). Similarly, Nimmo (2011: 64) suggests that the human-animal and nature-culture binaries are linked to the divide between the social and natural sciences. Moreover, I would argue that the implications of a more fluid human-animal boundary have not been taken seriously enough by "mainstream" sociology. This is a concern that has also been raised by Samantha Hurn (2012: 125), albeit in relation to the "inclusion" of other animals in her own discipline, anthropology. Carter and Charles (2011: 2) for example argue that the "inclusion" of other animals in sociology poses a serious challenge to the separation of sociology from biology. The

tensions of this particular relationship have indeed been explored (see for example Fuller, 2011), but it seems that more work could be done in drawing out the implications of such challenges.

Re-engaging in debates over sociology's subject matter also involves examining how the character of certain problems may have changed – for example, in light of "the nonhuman turn", "the ontological turn", and emerging fields such as "multispecies ethnography" and HAS more generally. In other words, since sociology emerged in order to deal with specific problems and a very specific historical context (the "emergence" of Western modernity), it may be worth revisiting how various concerns may have changed, and what the implications thereof are. I would further argue that sociology needs to address its Western centrism just as much as its anthropocentrism and humanism, as these are intimately related.

Re-thinking theoretical and methodological foundations

As stated earlier on, I would argue that sociology can and should "include" nonhuman animals. In addition to the above-mentioned considerations, sociology will need re-think its concepts, theories and methodologies. The concepts and theories that are employed in mainstream sociology are often anthropocentric and Western-centric and tend to focus on very limited elements of "human" experience. The same applies to various methodologies.[8] Taylor (2013: 9; 2014: 44) for example suggests that a revision of ontological and epistemological foundations and assumptions is needed. Thus, if sociology wants to "include" nonhuman animals in its scope of inquiry, it will

[8] For comprehensive recent scholarship outlining non-anthropocentric social science concepts and methods, see for example Hamilton and Taylor's (2017) Ethnography After Humanism and Gullion's (2018) Diffractive Ethnography.

need to pay more attention to their experience(s), in addition to different modes of human experience. Importantly, what is needed are non-anthropocentric theoretical and methodological foundations (see for example Nimmo, 2011: 16; Taylor, 2011b: 204).

Crucially, as Vikki Bell (2017: 192) has highlighted (writing in the context of speculative research, and drawing primarily on Isabel Stengers' cosmopolitics), taking the experience(s) of nonhuman animals seriously, does not equate to 'attempting to think from the place of the other'. What needs to be avoided is offering solutions for improvement and/or change, 'while [at the same time] setting a requirement that others become like us (imagined in that new version) (Bell, 2017: 193).' Bell highlights another crucial point in this regard:

> "Our" questions can still be asked, but with an attentiveness now to how they may curtail, sometimes brutally, the possibilities for other modes of appearance and for their renderings of the problem (2017: 195).

For sociology this means that one needs to pay attention to how certain lines of questioning, certain methodologies, theories, and concepts may result in hindering the visibility of nonhuman experiences, concerns, and lives.

I would argue this ought to also entail a renewed interest in metaphysics and commitment to reflexivity, given that "science" and what is able to be "discovered" or which questions are asked in the first place, are ultimately framed by the dominant paradigm. As Whitehead stated in a 1927 lecture, 'If you don't go into metaphysics, you assume an uncritical metaphysics (HL2, 375. 92; cited in Petek 2022: 58).' This also applies beyond philosophy. See for example Brianne Donaldson (2015) on metaphysics as is it relates to animal liberation, and Bjørn Ekeberg (2019) as it relates to scientific inquiry.

Specific conceptual limitations may also exist. Lisa Johnson (2012) for example demonstrates how certain discourse impedes conceptualisations. Thus, from the view of nonhuman animals as property for example, though animals may have something to say, we may not be able to understand it, due to "blindness" to other ways of knowing. Importantly it is not a case of speaking the same language, but one of what Johnson (2012: 107) has termed 'conceptual blindness', referring to 'a concept that may require excavation to discover or to recognize its ongoing presence alongside the dominant discourse.' It is in this sense that other animals are often not "heard":

> From this "not being heard" position a person might giggle at the complaints of the chained, lone dog on an isolated land. Or, a shivering hound might be observed, and the observer might discover that their commitment to their senses, viz. that "seeing is believing" is relative. In such a case seeing is not believing, because the shiverer happens to be a dog and, after all, it is common knowledge that dogs are animals and animals do not need protection from the cold. Or, a person might not heed the low growl emanating from a canine companion upon meeting a stranger – someone new – who may be discovered later was mistakenly regarded as harmless. This blindness is indeed a dulling of sensory perception – we may disregard our sight, our hearing, and maybe even a "sixth sense" that alerts us that something isn't right – but it is also a deadening of reason. We scold the dog for barking at the stranger on the porch who is there to make a delivery. Yet, when another on the porch jangling burglars' tools puts them to successful use, we scold the dog for not providing warning. What must the whole of these words say, from a rational perspective (Johnson, 2012: 108)?

This touches on a very real and widespread problem when it comes to other animals. I would argue it seems that we keep searching for human-animal comparisons, and as soon as it is established that "yes, animals can do this too", the search continues for the next characteristic that sets humans apart (or not). As has been demonstrated throughout this chapter, it is not just a case of lack of evidence for grounds to consider nonhuman interests but is much more complex than this. Related to this problematic Johnson further suggests:

> How many stories about animals in which animals have been understood as having something to say and have been authenticated to do just that would

> need to be put forward before human beings conceptually understood that they might have something to say? We may consider these stories as disunities, discontinuities, resistances, mistakes, madness – in short, Foucaultian errors to our present way of knowing. For, to understand these stories as something other surely disrupts our sense of reality. To take them at face value requires a conceptual careening. Conceptual balance requires understanding things in a manner consistent with the rules that form the space of our thoughts. To recognize that an animal has something to say is a recognition that human beings understand that animals have something to say. For human beings to have that understanding, conditions must exist that allow that understanding to take shape (2012: 115).

Thus, another task in view of an "animal sociology", would be to inquire into what these conditions might be. What an animal sociology might entail beyond the issues discussed above will be the focus of the next section.

The questions outlined in this section, such as those concerning taking nonhuman experience seriously, as well as the role of metaphysics, will be picked up again and discussed in more detail throughout subsequent chapters.

1.3 Thinking ahead: animal sociologies

This section constitutes a review of select existing work that address some of the concerns outlined in the previous sections and will conclude with a suggestion to rethink "society" and "the social" as one way of approaching the challenges that lie ahead (for any project of constructing an "animal sociology" that is non-anthropocentric).

I only included those sociologists that either explicitly suggest the need for an "animal sociology", or those that work within CAS or are taking a critical approach in some sense "for" (human and nonhuman) animals. Thus, I excluded those sociologists who are working within HAS or are merely studying other animals, as well as those that take a critical approach but do not seem to suggest an alternative frame (although

those bodies of work of course also contribute valuable insights). In line with this, I will for example not be discussing Ted Benton's or Clifton Bryant's arguments here, whose work constituted the earliest challenges to the exclusion of nonhuman animals from sociology (Peggs, 2012: 2; 37-8). I also excluded Richard York and Stefano Longo's (2017), as well as Rohan Todd and Maria Hynes' (2017) approaches to sociological animal studies.[9] Consequently, I have decided to focus on outlining the more explicit arguments for an "animal sociology" (that is non-anthropocentric and politicized) that have been put forward by sociologists Hilary Tovey (2003), Bob Carter and Nickie Charles (2016[2018]), Bob Nibert (2003), Kay Peggs (2013), Erika Cudworth (2016), and Nik Taylor and Zoei Sutton (2018).

Hilary Tovey's (2003) "new societal paradigm (NSP)"

Sociologist Tovey (2003) for example does not call for an "animal sociology" per se, but instead wishes to see nonhuman animals included in addition to humans (as subjects) in a sociology of the environment. The most part of her argument focuses on understandings of society and social relationships. With an emphasis on conceptualisations "society" in particular, she is trying to shift the focus (of most environmental sociology and sociologies of nature) away from discussions over rethinking "nature". Building on the concept of the NEP, Tovey (2003: 210) argues for constructing the NSP as a way of emphasising both 'the constitution of society, as well as the presence of nature as constraints on human societal development'.

[9] York and Longo (2017) suggest a fusion of methodologies from ethnography and ethology, and refer to their approach as "political ethology". Their main argument is that sociology ought to take realist-materialist approaches to animal studies. Similarly, Todd and Hynes (2017) also emphasise the materiality of "the animal", and suggest an approach grounded in a Deleuzian transcendental empiricism.

Apart from issues surrounding the nature-society dichotomy, Tovey (2003: 203) also points to the debate over realism vs social constructionism in environmental sociology as one of the most relevant. She argues that this debate has greatly contributed to the prioritization of theorizing "nature" over any reconceptualization of "society". Furthermore, she suggests that this at the same time constitutes evidence that the "human exemptionalist paradigm" (HEP) is still dominant in sociology. Instead of realist approaches that emphasise ontological claims about nature, or social constructionist approaches that reject such claims, she argues for a need to encourage realist approaches that focus on ontological claims about "society". According to Tovey (2003: 204), realist approaches are most likely to succeed in 'making animals 'visible' to sociology'. She suggests that this may be the case as environmental problems are seen as primarily "human" problems, as opposed to "animal" problems, particularly by social constructionists. Realists on the other hand, 'understand environmental problems as problems for nature, hence for humans (Tovey, 2003: 205).' She is however also careful to highlight that realist conceptions of nature can either solidify the nature/society divide, or aim towards "transcending" it. This being said, she also states that

> The issue is not whether particular theorists adopt a 'realist' or a 'social constructionist' approach to nature but rather how adequate or interesting are the different theorisations of society they offer us (Tovey, 2003: 208).

Tovey (2003) also makes an important argument for focussing on including (domestic) animals in conceptions of "society", regardless of whether they are granted self-consciousness, agency or reflexivity. Although I would argue that these concepts also ought to be rethought (consciousness, cognition, thought and agency in particular). In this way, we can avoid debates over whether other animals possess capacities relating to the concept of "humanity", as these are not necessary to argue for the inclusion of

nonhuman animals in society. This is especially so, since even some humans do not always meet the criteria of “humanity”.

Finally, Tovey (2003: 196) also problematizes the tendency to ‘recognise animals only in the form of populations or generic types, without individual character, knowledge, subjectivity or experience.’

Bob Carter and Nickie Charles (2016[2018]) and “the animal challenge to sociology”

Carter and Charles (2016[2018) are clear that they take the position of viewing sociology as able to “include” nonhuman animals, but it can only do so if its foundational key concepts are reformulated. They argue that ‘social relations are structured and that animals are incorporated into them on the basis of difference and inequality (92).’ They also highlight that these relations tend to be characterised by “domination” and “exploitation”. In this way, they focus on arguing for viewing other animals as part of society and ‘as involuntarily embedded in social relationships... (79)’, and thus also as “social actors” and “social agents”. This in turn requires reconceptualising “the human”, as well as “agency”, “subjectivity”, “reflexivity”, and “the social”. Further, it is crucial for sociology to reject its speciesist and anthropocentric foundations. Importantly, Carter and Charles highlight that:

> Our point here goes beyond the empirical claim made earlier that animals do not figure in sociological accounts of the social world. Rather, it is our contention that much of the *conceptual vocabulary* of the social sciences is configured around assumptions about the human (2016[2018]: 87; emphasis added).

This is what leads them to put forward the argument that the conceptual vocabulary employed in social theory, is not only “heteronormative” and characterised by a “white normativity”, but is also “anthroponormative” – these different forms of normativity are further to be seen as interrelated.

It should be noted that Carter and Charles (2016[2018]) do not only call for rethinking sociological key concepts such as those mentioned above, but for a reconceptualization of "society" itself. This is where they are influenced by Tovey's (2003) work, and also pick up on the nature-society problematic, as they argue that sociology should consider how human-(nonhuman)animal relations might be understood as part of society, as opposed to rethinking conceptualisations of nature (Carter and Charles 2016[2018]: 79).

In order to provide a justification for their arguments, Carter and Charles (2016[2018]: 79; 83) suggest that we cannot accurately develop conceptions of society – or the "social world" – if sociology excludes nonhuman animals. As examples of how "society" may have been misunderstood, they refer to how the importance of nonhuman animals has been overlooked in sociological accounts of processes of industrialisation, capitalism and the division of labour, as well as of the "colonial project" (Isenberg, 2000; Anderson, 2004; Swart, 2010, cited in Carter and Charles, 2016[2018]: 83). Thus, they argue that:

> Regarding animals as 'occupants of social positions' makes it easier to see that societies would not have taken the form that they do, had it not been for human connections with other animals. It could therefore be argued that the failure to take animals into account leads to a misapprehension of what societies are and how they are constituted (Carter and Charles, 2016[2018]: 85).

Additionally, Carter and Charles (2016[2018]: 80) argue that 'continuing to direct the sociological gaze only at humans significantly limits the sociological imagination and is in danger of rendering it irrelevant in the age of the Anthropocene.' They further emphasise the view that 'it is with and through animals that we become what we are (Porcher, 2014) and, we might add, that societies become possible (Shipman, 2011) (cited in Carter and Charles, 2016[2018]: 79-80).' The heart of their distinctive

argument and vision of an animal sociology can be summed up as:

> This, then, is more than a call for sociologists to take a greater interest in studying animals. Nor is this animal advocacy. It is rather, in ways analogous to the arguments advanced by feminist and post-colonial scholars about women and the subaltern, that taking seriously human-animal relations entails a revision of sociological vocabulary and understanding (Carter and Charles, 2016[2018]: 78).

David Nibert's (2003) "sociology for all humans and other animals"

Nibert (2003) primarily seems to be concerned with advocating for the inclusion of nonhuman animals in the study of "oppressed groups" as well as in understandings of "society". More widely, he is calling for a broader definition of sociology, so as to include nonhuman animals. His main aim is to highlight the interrelatedness of domination and oppression of humans and nonhumans. He primarily takes an historical materialist approach to human-animal relations, that seems to prioritize material and economic factors at play in the interlinked oppression of human and nonhuman animals.

Nibert (2003: 21) emphasises that human-animal relations ought to be studied in sociology, but (should this be possible) also the latter apart from the former. On including animals in conceptions of society, he further specifies that "animal societies" can of course also be analysed but argues that including them in the wider definition of "society" is crucial. One of his arguments to include all nonhuman animals in "society" is based on:

> The tremendous power that humans, particularly the elite, exert over the other inhabitants of the earth and the *social positions* assigned to groups of other animals — "livestock," "game," "zoo animal," "lab animal" and so forth […] (Nibert, 2003: 21; emphasis added).

Thus, Nibert argues that a more inclusive conception of sociology and society is necessary, if we wish to analyse

> […] how social arrangements create oppressive conditions for both humans and other animals and to increase the possibility for the discipline to have substantive impact on deteriorating societal and global conditions (2003: 5).

Further, he emphasises the systemic character of oppressive practices involving groups of humans and nonhuman animals, as well as the limitations of biological reductionism (11). He also argues that it is important to view "speciesism" as an ideology, as opposed to a prejudice or discrimination. This step needs to be taken to avoid obscuring what he refers to as 'the social structural causes of oppression of other animals (8).'

Nibert (2003: 22) also highlights the relevancy of the question of "sociology for whom?", which he answers with 'sociology for all humans and other animals.' He points to the role of academic knowledge in maintaining the status quo:

> Members of the discipline, who like most other humans in society partake in the privileges derived from entangled oppressions — such as eating and drinking substances derived from the bodies of "others," wearing their skin and hair, and enjoying the entertainment value their exploitation provides — can do so only by accepting the self-interested realities crafted by powerful agribusiness, pharmaceutical and other industries that rely on public acquiescence in oppressive social arrangements. Privilege is not easy to give up. Silence, denial and substantial intellectual acrobatics are necessary for oppression of all forms to continue (Nibert, 2003: 20-1).

Thus, he calls on sociologists to address "our" privilege as "humans", and then to start building a sociology that is "more inclusive". He suggests that any such endeavour could for example start with the following:

> For example, instead of emphasizing the purported "lowliness" of other animals, as is frequently done in introductory textbooks, the discipline must present other animals in the spirit of embracing diversity and developing respect for difference (Nibert, 2003: 21).

Necessarily, sociology then for example also needs to view nonhuman animals 'as subjects who have personalities, wills, desires and social relations and who are capable of experiencing both pleasure and suffering (21).'

Kay Peggs' (2013) "Sociology for nonhuman animals"

Peggs (2013: 602) argues that sociology should include other animals but admits that the question over whether it can also advocate for them is rather tricky, and more controversial than the former. One part of her argument is that if sociology wants to investigate "societies", then it needs to recognize that 'Our lives are infused with non-human animals and we are embedded in multifaceted life worlds (602).' She further argues that this is particularly important, given that human-animal relations are characterised by "oppression" and "exploitation". However, she is also careful to highlight that such relations vary across cultural and historical contexts.

Peggs (2013: 600) highlights that CAS is akin to AS a multi and trans-disciplinary field, but the crucial difference between the two is that sociological perspectives working within CAS aim to practice a sociology "for" nonhuman animals. Crucially for her, attending to human-animal relations in this manner ought to entail (explicit) advocacy for other animals, to challenge ontological divisions, hierarchies, and frameworks that contribute to the oppression of nonhuman animals (601). She also picks up on the problematic surrounding the acceptability of advocacy-oriented sociology in the critical tradition, and the continuing marginalization of advocacy for nonhuman animals (601-2). She argues that to challenge this marginalization and dismissal of the oppression of nonhuman animals, it is necessary to draw on perspectives that centre the (feminist) concept of intersectionality and are thus able to attend to the associated differences and complexities (601).

Similarly to Nibert (2003), Peggs (2013: 602) also emphasises the need for sociologists to recognise the privileged position they occupy as "humans" as opposed to nonhumans, and thus may be 'upholding rather than questioning hierarchies of

oppressions.' This then is raises problems surrounding discussions over the "objectivity" of the researcher. Following Rapoport, she takes the position that sociologists who refuse to "take sides" or claim "detached objectivity", nonetheless have an (internalised) value orientation, and may thus actually be committing themselves to upholding a status quo:

> Our values inform our lives, our notions of what is sociology and our ideas about how sociology should be done. A critical approach to sociology encourages reflection upon our own standpoints; standpoints that belie the possibility of objectivity and in which the standpoint of human remains the most unchallenged of all (Peggs, 2013: 603).

Erika Cudworth's (2016) "critical sociology of species" (see also Cudworth, 2011)

Cudworth (2016: 253) terms her approach to an animal sociology, a "critical sociology of species", and firstly argues that such an approach to human-animal relations can aid efforts to understand "species" in terms of the concepts of domination, exploitation, and oppression.[10] Further, she emphasises the importance of attending to differences (including those differences in human practices and social/historical contexts)[11]. Secondly, it needs to be a critical approach that is grounded in the view that oppression of human and nonhuman animals is interrelated. Thirdly, she demands that this approach ought to be "engaged sociology", 'a call to action which grounds its attempts to theorise, document and explain the world in the context of political struggles to change it (253).' Cudworth (253) further laments that sociology has tended

[10] She views species as 'constituted by and through "human" hierarchies – ideas of animality and of "nature" are vitally entangled in the constitution of "race", gender, class and other "human" differences with which critical sociologies have well-established concern (Cudworth, 2016: 243).'

[11] The intersection of inequality and difference means that human populations, communities and individuals are differently placed in responding to choices of how they interact with the multiplicity of non-human species of "animal" (Cudworth, 2016: 253).'

to limit its engagement with human-animal relations and human-animal studies to topics related to home, food and rurality. Thus, one of her demands of sociology is that it should broaden its remit, to also contribute more research on topics such as work and labour, as well as globalisation. Crucially, she argues that 'the scope of social theory must be more-than-human (253).'

Twine (2010: 8), following Burowoy, proposes the possibility of viewing sociological animal studies as "critical sociology", but argues it is not enough to merely include other animals as subjects and objects of the discipline (see Cudworth, 2016). Drawing on this, Cudworth (2016: 243) suggests that (following Mills) "critical sociology" ought to be take a position "for" something. Importantly, she also problematizes notions of liberation, emancipation and rights, (as well as well-being) as these are inevitably tinged by their roots in European Enlightenment humanism (and the associated tendency toward political and cultural universalism, as well as a history of imperialism and colonialism) (249). She also specifies that even concepts of "embodiment", "vulnerability", and "care" can be problematic (243). As an alternative strategy, she suggests involving notions of "living well" with other humans and nonhumans (249).

The main part of a "critical sociology of species" is centred around Cudworth's (2016: 249) concept of "anthroparchy", which views human-animal relations as primarily categorised by particular 'sets of relations of power and domination, which are consequential of normative practice.' An important part of her argument in this regard is that experiences among nonhuman animals are most likely varied, depending on how they are exploited by humans (253). For example, she suggests that the experiences of oppression might differ among "farmed animals" and those viewed as "working animals". Similarly, she points out that those considered "pets" are often likely

to have different experiences to farmed animals but is also careful to highlight that these are also subject to oppressive and exploitative practices (such as exploitation in breeding, as well as cruelty and neglect). She expands on this further and states

> I do think, though many in CAS might disagree, for example, that companion species relations, for example, between some humans and dogs are a glimpse of what can and might be, and a small opening into a world of potentially fruitful species cohabitations. Positive engagement with difference exists despite a social reality of dogs as "pets", commodified and objectified as property; and notwithstanding the clear links between the keeping of non-human animals as companions in the home, and profit for animal agribusiness through the consumption of "pet food" (Cudworth, 2016: 253).

Nik Taylor and Zoei Sutton's (2018) "emancipatory animal sociology"

Taylor and Sutton term their vision of an animal sociology an "emancipatory animal sociology" (EAS), which they define as

> [...] an approach grounded in a social justice and emancipatory praxis that explicitly and critically engages with the material conditions of animals' lives, taking into account the experiences and knowledge of activists and others working directly with animals and, where possible, centres the animals themselves (2018: 467).

As the basis for this, they take the problem that 'animal entanglements with humans are often structurally and/or materially oppressive and almost always deadly (Taylor and Twine, 2014, cited in Taylor and Sutton, 2018: 480).' Furthermore, they stress that nothing short of challenging this oppression will suffice. This is why they maintain that the distinction between "acknowledging" and "challenging" oppression is crucial. This distinction loosely corresponds to the distinction between a sociology "of" and "for" other animals, whereby an EAS should be aligned with the latter. Given the oppressive relationship between humans and other animals, an EAS also calls for re-engagement with questions of sociology "for whom" or "for what". This is then similar to arguments made by Cudworth (2011; 2016) and Twine (2011) as mentioned in the previous sub-section.

Taylor and Sutton (2018: 468; 477) further highlight that sociological animal studies have to date made important contributions, but also argue that most sociological work in this area tends to be "anthropocentric" and "depoliticised" – with exceptions, such as work by scholars Cudworth and Peggs. They want to sketch out an EAS that avoids this and makes advocacy for nonhuman animals central to their project (468).[12] They argue 'that sociology can not only offer an emancipatory lens through which to challenge the social positioning of animals, but also that it should (480).' Thus, an EAS aims to centre critical approaches, focusing on interrogating relations of power that enable oppression and exploitation.

Regarding objectivity in research, Taylor and Sutton take the position that

> [...] all research is political, in that it either challenges or perpetuates normative relations, in this case, oppressive relations with nonhuman animals, thus researchers must carefully consider the positioning of their endeavours (2018: 468).

Thus, akin to Nibert (2003) and Cudworth (2011; 2016) they attend to questions surrounding the role of academic knowledge and call for an advocacy-oriented sociology (as opposed to an "academic sociology" in Becker's and Gouldner's terms), that encourages making the positionality and underlying values of the researcher explicit. This is crucial, as they argue that supposedly value-neutral approaches in sociological animal studies end up contributing to the maintenance of the oppression of nonhuman animals (Taylor and Sutton, 2018: 478). Importantly, Taylor and Sutton also highlight the following:

> And, while we recognise that this opens scholars to charges of bias, and relatedly of 'poor research', we point detractors to Becker's observation that

[12] They clarify that they understand advocacy here 'in a broad sense, in terms of making animal lives better by identifying, challenging and ultimately preventing human(ab)uses of other animals, while recognising that this is a necessarily simplistic definition and not unproblematic (Taylor and Sutton, 2018: 468).'

> scholars are most likely to be accused of bias 'when the research gives credence, in any serious way, to the perspective of the subordinate group in some hierarchical relationship (1967: 240)' (cited in Taylor and Sutton, 2018: 481).

To be able to productively respond to such accusations of bias, they suggest that one of the first tasks of an EAS will be to explore how to do so.

"Animalising" sociology

Setting aside questions over whether sociology can and should include other animals (which is for me a clear yes), one "theme" running throughout these accounts of approaches to "animalising" sociology appears to be "advocacy-oriented" and critical sociology, as well as the possibility of advocating for other animals. Further concerns tied up with advocacy-oriented and critical sociology are questions over the role of academic knowledge, and positionality and values of the researcher. I agree with those who argue that critical sociology ought to take a position for something, and that it is not enough for sociology to describe human-animal relations. Instead, sociology ought to try to change conditions/practices for the better. Sociology 'for' other animals (Cudworth, 2016; Nibert, 2003; Peggs, 2013; 2014; Taylor and Sutton, 2018) demands the exploitation of nonhuman animals is not merely acknowledged, but also challenged (Taylor and Sutton, 2018). It is in this sense that a critical, engaged or advocacy-oriented sociology is required – though one that problematises notions of liberation, emancipation, and rights, and instead focusses on "living-well" as suggested by Cudworth (2016: 249) and acknowledged by Taylor and Sutton (2018: 468).

Another issue, is why and how nonhuman animals should be included in sociology. One line of argument seems to revolve around including nonhuman animals in

"society". One way of better including animals in sociology then, is by favouring a shift from reconceptualising nature to rethinking society, as suggested by Carter and Charles (2016[2018]) and Tovey (2003). It has been argued that without considering human-animal relations, conceptualisations of "society" and "social life" are incomplete (Carter and Charles, 2016[2018]; Cudworth, 2016; Peggs, 2013). Nonhuman animals can for example be seen as part of society due to often being involuntarily tied up in social relationships (Carter and Charles, 2016[2018]), or hierarchies (Cudworth, 2011; Nibert, 2003; Taylor and Sutton, 2018) which are predominately characterised by oppression (Nibert, 2003; Peggs, 2013; Taylor and Sutton, 2018), domination (Carter and Charles, 2016[2018]) and exploitation (Carter and Charles, 2016[2018]; Peggs, 2013). In this way, inclusion in society is not dependent upon limited understandings of concepts such as reflexivity (Tovey, 2003).

Importantly, sociology ought to include nonhuman animals in a wider range of topics (Cudworth, 2016), but also needs to go beyond this – other animals should not just feature as subject matter, but it is additionally necessary to revise sociological understanding, as well as theories, frameworks, and concepts (Taylor and Sutton, 2018; Carter and Charles, 2016[2018]; Twine, 2010; Cudworth, 2016).

1.4 Rethinking "society" and "sociality"

I would suggest that wo concepts are particularly helpful in approaching and framing the concerns in the previous sections, that of "society" and "sociality" – as will hopefully become clearer throughout this section.

Including nonhuman animals in society

In the previous section it has been demonstrated that conceptualisations of the social and society are at the heart of questions over how to include animals in sociology. Moreover, the previous sections have demonstrated that a variety of approaches to the question are possible. My own line of argument is similar to those outlined above and proposes that if nonhuman animals are part of society, and/or our everyday lives and the human-animal distinction is not as clear as at first assumed, then surely sociology (with its aims and structures) should also reflect this. In this way sociology should not just incorporate other animals in its object of study, but its very foundations must be re-thought, so as to "serve" both human and nonhuman animals.[13] Moreover, I would suggest that sociological understanding of modernity, capitalism and various other key areas are incomplete if nonhuman animals are not considered. Some scholarship for example demonstrates that other animals were central to the industrial revolution (see for example Greene, 2009) and to colonial practices (see for example Anderson, 2006).

Overall, it seems more work is needed in exploring how exactly conceptualizations of "multispecies societies" or "mixed-species communities" of human and nonhuman animals could look like. However, reviewing arguments related to animalising sociology in the previous section also highlighted how often "the social" is invoked as a "prefix" – for example: social positions; social actors; social agents; social world;

[13] This for example means that I would like to avoid the tendency to solely focus on what humans could gain from exploring issues surrounding nonhuman animals (Taylor, 2013). This is also why my research is more aligned with the field of CAS, and not with HAS or Animal Studies (AS). Erika Cudworth for example argues that a dialogue between CAS and sociology would be incredibly beneficial for both fields of study. Sociology can draw on CAS in order to challenge the dismissal of nonhuman animals within the discipline, and CAS can benefit from sociological tools to investigate power-relations and structures of domination (cited in Taylor and Twine, 2014).

social relationships. Thus, not only are conceptualisations of “society” important, but also notions of “the social” and “sociality”. Ultimately, I think how best to include animals in society is perhaps best left open. Thus, the approach taken here is to focus on those relations that make any conceptualisation of society possible in the first place.

This section will introduce “the problem of social” as it relates to sociology and other animals, before introducing the concept of sociality. This is done with the view of setting up the next chapter, which will further introduce the importance of centring notions of experience and feeling when conceptualising sociality, in order to address the concerns discussed throughout this chapter.

The social and its problems

Defining sociology as the study of human societies often relied upon a notion of the social that excluded the nonhuman. However, if one traces the emergence of the social, it becomes clear that it was initially defined more ambiguously (see Halewood, 2014; see also Carter and Charles, 2018[2016]). It is not a straightforward concept, as for example Marx had a very different understanding of the social than Durkheim did (Halewood, 2014: 1). In his book, Halewood (2014) further demonstrates that neither Durkheim, Marx or Weber had a single clear definition of “society”, and only Weber provided a clear definition of “sociality”. One of the problems then, is that the concepts of society, sociality and the social are “taken for granted”, or nuanced understandings thereof glossed over (2014:1). What is often lost in such accounts, is that even the “sociological classics” had either very different conceptualisations, or unclear definitions (if any at all). Thus, we need to pay attention to the intricacies of debates over “the social” (and beyond) and avoid subsuming contradictory elements under catch all phrases that often become meaningless. Overall, sociologists ought to pay

more attention to how we use notions of the "social", and "society", and 'should take care when critiquing or rejecting either term (Halewood, 2014: 111).'

Halewood (2014: 1) further suggests that "the social" was only taken seriously on its own terms when some – such as Jean Baudrillard – proclaimed "the end of the social". While for example Bruno Latour's (2007) reworking of the concept in *Reassembling the Social* has been central to these debates, I would like to adopt Halewood's (2014: 11) view that it was never quite clear what constitutes the social or society in the first place. Related to this, Halewood (2014: 111) argues that the 20th century debate over "the end of the social" can be more aptly considered as characterizing 'the death of the problem of the social.' Thus, questions of "the social" are interlinked with questions of "society", and "sociality", as well as tied up with debates over the subject matter, foundations, and future of sociology (and social theory) itself. One of the main concerns at hand then, is that the discipline is often taken to be 'the study of all things social', while dismissing the difficulty of providing a clear definition of "the social", which leads to circular arguments in this regard (2014: 112). Halewood (2014: 112) argues that clarity in this respect is needed and suggests that 'the death of the problem of the social' can be traced back to Talcott Parsons[14]. He goes on to state that

> This is perhaps why discussions of the concept are so urgent today. They signal an uncertainty as to the very foundations and possibility of social theory, sociology and social research (Halewood, 2014: 1).

A further issue is the separation of the social from the natural and the material, which

[14] Halewood (2014: 111) further argues that Parsons had a great impact on sociological vocabulary, as there is a tendency by sociologists to 'invoke the concepts of norms, values and social structure' in definitions of the discipline. Furthermore, Parson's took the concept of the social for granted, and assumed that "sociality" only applied to human animals.

is tied to sociology's initial aim to differentiate itself from the natural sciences, and biology in particular (Carter and Charles, 2011: 2). Thus, as has been discussed earlier on, the notion of the social is not only intimately linked to what is seen as the appropriate subject matter of sociology, but also to the exclusion of nonhuman animals. However, this does not mean that "classical" sociology unanimously rejected the idea that animals should be included.

Salla Tuomivaara (2019) for example suggests that early ("classical") sociology likely had a much more nuanced view on the place of nonhuman animals in sociology. Olin Myers similarly argues that Weber for example seemed to indicate that other animals could well be seen as appropriate subject matter for sociology (2003: 46; cited in Peggs, 2012: 2). As mentioned earlier on, Halewood (2014) has also demonstrated how early conceptualisations of "the social" and "society" were less fixed than is often assumed. Considering this, it appears urgent to re-visit our notion of the social, as has also been suggested by HAS, actor-network theory (ANT) and science-technology studies (STS) scholars, as well as the new materialists and other posthumanist approaches. As will be discussed later, I am also in agreement with Halewood's (2014) call for sociology to attend to "the problem of the social" and to construct new philosophies of the social. The focus of this thesis, however, will be on the concept of "sociality".

From the social to sociality

During the late 20th, early 21st century, (human) sociality became a central concept in the social sciences. Now, it is 'a cornerstone of ontological understandings of human cognition, society, and culture, and of 'what is human in humans' (see Stengers, 2005: 995) (Solomon, 2013: 162).' However, related to "the problem of the

social". the concept of sociality remains marked by "definitional haziness" and 'the full implications of what sociality actually is, and how the concept might most profitably be used, are often left obscure (Long and Moore, 2012: 41).' This "definitional haziness" can also be seen as a positive, due to less conceptual baggage. In this way, notions of sociality are linked to the main concerns at hand – namely opportunities for sociology as well as the relationship between the human-animal distinction, what constitutes "human" or "humanity" and what constitutes "society".

Given that this thesis will focus on "sociality" in the context of "the animal challenge to sociology", one of the most pertinent problems here is that:

> For most of the twentieth century, sociologists seem to assume and insist that whatever sociality is, it is a production of humans, groups of humans or systems of humans. Animals were rarely, if ever, considered (Halewood, 2014: 109).

Similarly, Nickie Charles (2014: 716; 727) highlights that it is rather odd that even the more obvious form of human-animal sociality that can occur during "companion animal" interactions or "pet-keeping" are often hidden from sociology, and the discipline views societies as solely human. Thus, the primary concern is that sociality is viewed as limited to humans, as well as limited understandings of "animal" sociality (Willet and Suchak, 2018: 370). Cynthia Willet and Malini Suchak (2018: 370) argue these limitations are related to the prevalence of positivism – inherited from the Cartesian legacy – and human exceptionalism. A key issue here is that mechanistic or Cartesian-positivist models of sociality tend to be problematic, as these rely on 'often limited notions of what counts as evidence and prejudicial assumptions about the value of abstract reasoning and representational thought for sociality (376).' This in turn solidifies '"prejudicial barriers" against the often complicated and poorly understood social dynamics of humans and animals (see Pribac, 2016) (370).'

A further issue that has been pointed out by Halewood (2014: 109), is that the resistance to allowing for sociality among nonhuman animals can partly be attributed to the fear of losing what is supposedly special or unique about “the social”. This has also been taken up by Taylor (2014: 43) who highlights that a fluid social-natural boundary poses an epistemological threat to sociology as a discipline (as discussed in a section earlier on in this chapter). This (anthropocentric) view of human sociality as divorced from the “naturally natural” is not only important to “the animal question”, but also matters as this dichotomy ‘has characterized the epistemological and ontological stanchions of sociology and social theory ever since (Halewood, 2014: 109).’ This also returns us to the link between “the animal challenge” and the problems of what constitutes sociology, societies and the social (and sociality).

Moving forward

Throughout this chapter it has been demonstrated that the place of nonhuman animals in sociology is a complicated affair. However, despite all the difficulties that have been identified, it has also been established that sociology nonetheless has the resources to make necessary changes, and to address the challenges that arise. This chapter has also established the interrelation of “the animal question” with “the problem of the social” and disciplinary foundations and boundaries in sociology. While the focus has been on providing justification for attending to sociality (in pursuit of an animal sociology), and establishing the need for new social ontologies, the next chapter will focus in-depth on methodological concerns.

Chapter Two: The promise of autoethnography for interspecies solidarity

2.1 Introducing Harald

> Dogs are captive in the yoke of care and cruelty that defines our status as humans. They are property and persons, both *res nullius*, or no one's thing, and valuable possession. Our contradictions, inconsistency, and greed continue to make large groups of persons, whether human or nonhuman, expendable. And nowhere is that indignity as clear as in our relationships with dogs. Nowhere do we experience so fully the alternating closeness and disregard of those who master – those whose rituals undergird and sustain the soft, closeted lives of the privileged. It is with the dogs that I begin. They are the things of great attachment that can be cast off. Their relentless passion and full heart compel a new understanding of spirit and a new appreciation of flesh (Dayan, 2016: 16; emphasis in original).

While the previous chapter covered the relevant background literature, key concerns, and introduced the importance of "sociality", the present chapter, as well as those to follow, will take a different form. The process of theorising also involved drawing on my own direct experience in relation to, with, and for my canine companion, Harald. Later chapters will primarily utilise anecdotes, to further explore and develop proposed elements of sociality. However, the present chapter has a slightly different focus than the rest, as it constitutes an introduction to the relationship between Harald and me.

Particularly the first section is skewed towards Harald's history or biography, given that he has been, is, and will be a constant feature in my thought and writing process. It is an undertaking that I do not take lightly, as there are various ethical concerns and challenges relating to the practice of thinking and writing about nonhuman others. Given that I am explicitly drawing on my own experience, but also centring Harald, the methods employed include elements of autoethnography, as well "animal biography", and multispecies autoethnography, which will be discussed further in the section on methods.

It should be noted that the process of writing was not much different to prior work with non-ethnographic methods, as thinking always happens in relation to something or someone else. In this case, thinking through the concerns at hand, or theorising, happened in relation to Harald. Before I met him, I would however also think through problems by relating them back to other nonhumans from my experience and keeping diary entries. In this sense, my thought process is merely made more explicit by the added element of purposefully recording events in a journal (or aiming to record them more consistently). In this way, despite incorporating autoethnographic methods, the thesis as whole is intended as a theoretical piece of work. Nevertheless, the thesis not only hopes to make a theoretical, but also a methodological contribution, (and the chapter at hand is a good illustration of the importance of taking care when selecting methods in multispecies research and beyond).

The first sections of this chapter constitute an overview of how we came into each other's lives, and our first days of living together. The final section will pertain to methodological interventions in a multispecies context. Before proceeding any further, however, I would briefly like to turn to questions of positionality.

Positionality

In the spirit of self-reflexivity, it is necessary to make my positionality explicit: as a human animal, but also a vegan, and a black woman (although I am sometimes read as racially ambiguous due to "mixed" heritage – my father was Austrian, and my mother is a black American woman). There are however further "positions" (and associated privileges or disadvantages) that could be assigned to me, such as: being raised in a "middle class" (decidedly academic) environment (but experiencing downward mobility in some sense), or as someone who is content with my assigned

gender, and read as “cis”, as well as identifying as pan(or bi-)sexual (but who “passes” as “straight”, depending on the situation). Furthermore, due to my ongoing mental health difficulties and ADHD, I could be viewed as “disabled”, and “neurodiverse” (although these are for the most part invisible, and I have become very skilled at “masking” symptoms). In any case, my position as a human (although a vegan human, and an at times marginalised one) appears the most pertinent to this thesis and will be acknowledged throughout. However, I should note that in terms of experience – despite different positions mattering more or less at different times and in different situations – and in terms of the intense emotional reactions elicited from myself in response to categorisation, blackness is felt most. It might be of interest how all individual positions intersect, and how they in turn are modified, and modify Harald being read in terms of his “animality” (or dog-ness? and as “pet” depending on the cultural background of the categorising human), but I insist particular care ought to be taken when reading blackness alongside animality.[15]

In relation to my engagement with Harald, what further for example matters is that I have spent all my life engaging with nonhuman animals just as much as humans. I was told one of my mother’s cats used to climb into the crib with me as a baby, and I formed close, lasting bonds with various nonhumans – in particular with “felines” Posh and Amber, Kitty, Joey, and Snowball, and “equines” Mr. T, Gina, Phantom, and Viking – whom I deeply loved, despite exploitative[16] relationships, and for years

[15] Bénédicte Boisseron’s (2018) “Afro-*Dog”* constitutes the to my mind most compelling example of a nuanced view on opportunities for solidarity among animal and black studies, whilst remaining sensitive to both animal and black suffering (without exploiting one to help the other).

[16] Despite being an avid equestrian in the past and having competed successfully in dressage and jumping tournaments, I have come to realise the exploitative dynamics and am against any “sport” involving nonhuman animals without their consent, in the

spent most of my free time with (and I to this day still think, and dream about, and have without a doubt had a profound impact on my own world, and how I do things – particularly how I interact with nonhuman animals); then there are countless other multispecies friends and acquaintances or even fleeting encounters that contributed to how I view the world today.

I should also note, I was lucky in terms of not facing resistance from family for my views on seeing nonhuman animals as persons, and eventually deciding not to eat them. My mother and sister were for example vegetarian before I was, and both love nonhuman animals just as much if not more, and we were also told to never kill spiders or other beings and were not encouraged to harass any nonhuman animals.

There are a whole host of other aspects self-reflexivity to consider, when thinking about which processes or events might frame, or have some bearing on the position I am writing and engaging with Harald from – and many of these are likely nonconscious. Thus, the considerations here only constitute a start, and should not be viewed as complete.

It would also be helpful to think about Harald's background, and what he may have experienced, which in turn impacts on how he engages with me. I would also be interested in considering whether part of us "getting along" and understanding "where

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sense that we have no right to breed and exploit any animals for fun or monetary purposes. Although there may be exceptions warranted – there are for example schools of thought that involve techniques where horses have the chance to say "no" to letting you on their back. I have myself "trained" two young horses and this involved lots of convincing them to become accustomed to carrying weight until acceptance was offered (although consent was not given freely) – but humans sitting on horses is in no way necessary, natural or normal as some would construe. Overall, anything that involves captivity or interventions without consent ought not be necessary.

the other is coming from" or showing concern for each other is related to past events that provoked similar feelings in us.

Coming into each other's worlds

Our "relationship" started out rather involuntarily on Harald's part. We had only met once before Harald was brought home to me. I had been keeping an eye on his online adoption advert by a dog rescue shelter for quite some time, and as I felt I could offer him a better situation, after much deliberation and planning, I eventually enquired to meet him. There is of course much more to be said about my motivations, and the factors that enabled this particular situation to arise, but more detailed considerations will be left aside for now.

What initially drew me to Harald was how sad he looked in his online adoption photos (on the shelter website), and I felt that we were likely to "get along". I was also able to find out a little of his background story from the humans associated with the shelter. On his adoption page he was described as very nervous but a "gentle giant", with an emphasis on needing time to trust. His mother was found wandering the Spanish countryside while pregnant and was taken[17] to a shelter, where she gave birth to Harald and his siblings (a sister and two brothers). I was told they spent their first months together at the shelter, of which there is also some photo evidence, and I was able to connect with some of the adopters who "rehomed" his siblings (we are hoping

[17] I am unsure if she went with the shelter associates voluntarily. However, to my best knowledge the shelter focusses on those dogs in need of help due to being too ill and homeless or at risk of harm or death. There are also plenty of stories of abandoned dogs willingly jumping into the arms or vehicle of helpers, shelter workers, or potential rescuers. As a rule, however, I think it is fair to assume that if given the chance to decide, some nonhuman animals would seek out human help and companionship more, and some less than they are currently forced to tolerate or endure.

to give them the chance to reunite on a “play date” if they so wish).

At four months old when allowed to travel, Harald and his family were brought over from Spain[18] with a van to the partner shelter in the United Kingdom to find homes. His mother and siblings found homes much quicker, and I was told Harald was adopted with his sister once but was returned as he was too nervous. I was also able to track down a photo from this event on the shelter’s Facebook group page for adopters.

In any case, as far as Harald’s previous experience with the wider world goes, I do know that he was still not comfortable with walking on a harness by the time I met him at eight months old (and had never been on a walk before). I was however able to observe him play when let out in the paddock at the end of my visit, where he played chase with a little black dog. I was told they were best friends, and the other dog was due to be adopted by one of the shelter workers, who said they would have taken Harald in as well, but already lived with a few rescues and did not have enough remaining space for a big dog.

The meeting

Prior to meeting Harald, in order to express my interest, I was required to fill out a form which assessed my suitability for adoption by including various questions on my work and family situation, as well as asking for photo evidence of my garden space (which

[18] The popularity of importing rescue dogs from Spain, Romania (and sometimes other countries, such as Cyprus, with perceived weak animal welfare laws, and high stray dog populations) to the UK is a relatively new phenomenon. Much more could be said, but this warrants a project on its own. However, for the (to my knowledge) earliest comprehensive study, see Norman, Stavisky, and Westgarth (2020).

was followed by a home visit at a later date) and a signed statement from my landlord that dogs were allowed to reside at my address. Once this had all been checked, I was able to arrange a meeting.

Upon my arrival, one of Harald's "carers" answered my initial questions and asked some of their own. They then guided me to his kennel to introduce me to him. Most dogs had a kennel space to themselves, with a heating lamp, bowls, a bed, plenty of towels and blankets, as well as a separate sleeping space within the kennel (in Harald's case a little "doghouse", and an additional bed next to it within his kennel space). There was also a radio playing music. Once we opened Harald's kennel and he spotted me, he remained squished into the farthest corner of his doghouse. The carer then introduced me by telling him that I was 'a nice lady' interested in giving him a home and invited me to take a seat on the ground near his house entrance. When asked, I said I was happy to just sit with him, and they left us be. I proceeded to sit quietly, and offered treats I brought for him. The next thirty minutes consisted of us sitting in silence before Harald eventually accepted my food offer, and slowly started inching closer to me. It may not seem like much happened in that time, as both of us were still and quiet, but there was a constant exchange of, at the very least, curiosity or interest. By the time the carer returned, I had decided there was no way I could leave Harald at the shelter.

I did accept the invitation to view all the other "suitable" dogs in need of a home. The only criteria I had – apart from a general personality match – was that I would not be able to adopt anyone in need of ongoing medical treatment with bills not covered by insurance, and I also noted that I lacked the "tools" and resources to adopt anyone with severe nervous "aggression" (whereby severe anxiety or nervousness as in

Harald's case was not an issue). Space, time, and finances where however also primary concerns. While I could not help but feel grief for all the others in need of a home[19] – especially those who had been waiting for years – I had nonetheless already formed an attachment to Harald (or the idea of us living together). However, while I did think we would probably get along, I could not be sure whether Harald would even like it with me. Given my concerns (mainly surrounding whether Harald would be "better off" with someone who had plenty of land for him to run around – even though he was "returned" from precisely such a place – but also concerns that Harald might simply not like me as much), and the lack of adoption applications for Harald, the shelter agreed for me to foster him "with view to adopt", so that we could have an "extended trial period". Within one week of my visit, I received a call saying he would be dropped off at my house within the next few days.

Living together

Arrival day however was not necessarily a "happy day" – definitely not for Harald at the time. I suspect he was loaded into the transport van against his will and had not consented to a new life with a relative stranger in a strange place. Knowing he was nervous and probably overwhelmed by the situation, I had to work to suppress feelings of worry and sadness, as I wanted to be calm when Harald arrived. When he arrived in the van, he was drooling excessively and appeared so stressed he did not seem present at all. As he was in "freeze mode" the shelter associate dropping him off and myself had to carry him inside. When we set him down inside the house he still seemed

[19] I should note that not all dogs looked equally uncomfortable – although I do not condone confinement as a solution. One of the greyhounds for example was rather relaxed, which may be related to the fact that they are likely to have been in kennels their entire life. But then Harald was for example also born into a kennel environment, and was still clearly not coping with his surroundings very well.

in shock. We showed him his new bed, but as soon as we opened the back door he bolted outside and frantically ran along the garden fence in search of an escape. It was clear he really did not like his new situation, which is completely understandable since he was once again forcibly removed from his captive "home", loaded into a van, and transported to a new captive place with a person he met briefly once before. Once the shelter associate left, I sat near the sofa, and after cautiously exploring the living room, eventually Harald started inching closer to me, and finally walked past me close enough to brush my shoulder. Eventually, he sat right beside me and started making careful eye contact[20]. By the end of the day, he seemed to accept some reassuring pats on the side.

Following Harald's arrival, it took us both some time to adjust to the new living situation and to "get to know" each other. Over the next few months, I was still certain that I would love for Harald to stay with me for the rest of his life, and that he did not seem to hate living with me so far. At around the three-month mark, I decided that Harald and I would indeed be able to "get along" well enough to go through with the adoption.

2.2 Barriers to living together (well)

The adoption contract

It should be noted that Harald came to live with me on certain conditions placed upon us from others. In the first instance, my suitability was assessed prior to adoption, and part of the process involved me signing a piece of paper and agreeing to the following (legally binding and subject to the agreement of adoption): if not already, must be neutered (forcibly castrated); must not be used for 'breeding', or 'any unlawful

[20] See appendix, photograph 1.

purpose'; should he no longer be able to stay with me, he must be returned to the shelter he was adopted from– his microchip also has "dual registration"; if the shelter for any reason believes he is 'not being properly cared for', they 'reserve the right to reclaim the dog and bring it back to the rescue'. Further terms and conditions not mentioned here referred to adoption fee, and pre-existing/ongoing conditions, as well as a disclaimer regarding the shelter not being held responsible for issues that 'become apparent in other environments.'

In Harald's case, he was neutered and microchipped prior to my involvement but presumably without his consent. To my mind no matter the consequences, confinement and harmful procedures ought not to be an option without consent – there must be alternative ways of solving the problems[21]. It also does not make sense to forcibly "breed" some nonhuman animals and depriving others, like Harald, of sexual experiences and the option to "procreate" if they so wish. The condition that he must be "returned" to the shelter, should I not be able to care for him anymore, is also ethically complicated.

Legal constraints and further concerns

Problematic legal constraints pertaining to human-dog relationships in the UK I would like to note are:

- the legal status of dogs as "property" and not "persons" (in the case of theft, or divorce disputes (see for example Harris, 2018);

[21] Spay and neuter policies are popular in some countries, such as England, and are often made out to be the best solution to managing stray populations. On the problematic of this way of thinking and other animals essentially paying the price for decisions made by some humans, see for example Alexandra Horowitz (2019).

- laws on dog walking – must wear a collar with a tag when in public (with exceptions for “working dogs”), even if a harness is worn (see The Control of Dogs Order, 1992);

- dogs must remain on the lead on “designated roads”, and any spaces where a local public protection order says so (see for example: Road Traffic Act 1988; Highway Code, 2022; The Countryside Code, 2022; Dogs Protection of Livestock Act, 1953);

- laws on not being allowed to move freely[22] – must be confined to private property, or must be accompanied by a human (see for example Environmental Protection Act 1990);

- behaviour-policing laws which are particularly problematic, as for example it does not matter if a dog is actually “out of control” or showing “aggression”, the way the law is worded, it primarily matters whether the accuser felt “unsafe” – crucially, penalties for perceived bad canine behaviour can worst case result in the dog being killed or in legal terms “destroyed” (see The Control of Dogs Order, 1992; the Dangerous Dogs Act, 1991);

[22] In various other countries and communities, dogs are indeed permitted to live on the street. In the UK (although in the past different), “stray” dogs without a human must be united with their “owner” or reported to a dog warden (see the Environmental Protection Act, 1990). If dogs are not able to be reunited with a human, they are taken to a “pound”, and if they are not claimed or taken in by a shelter, they are killed (see for example DogWatch UK, 2023). There is often a misperception that since there are no “strays” on the streets in the UK, there is no homeless dog problem. However, regardless of whether there are dogs in need of homes, or not, humans do not have the right to forcibly breed or “encourage” breeding any animal (and especially not for the purpose of enjoyment or monetary gain, where the “offspring” are forcibly removed from the parents and placed into a different place of captivity.

- similarly, “breed specific legislation[23]” (BSL) usually stipulates that it does not matter which breed the dog is according to DNA, but instead it primarily matters how the dog is perceived by humans in terms of its visibly bodily characteristics (see the Dangerous Dogs Act, 1991).

There is much more to be said, but this aspect would warrant a project of its own. In any case, I wrestle with feelings of anger, and frustration whenever I attach Harald to a lead, or think about his confinement to the house, and his legal dependency upon myself.

Complicity

Of course, there are a myriad of other problematic constraints placed upon Harald through his imposed dependency – in this way my constraints are his constraints (financial, legal, mental/physical health, and time constraints, as well as “social categories” positions assigned to me and in turn impacting him). Not to say I am not part of the problem – quite the contrary. My own complicity shows in denying Harald’s requests to go outside if I cannot accompany him, subjecting him to medical “care” and invasive procedures, confining him to a lead if not permitted off-lead, and generally obeying oppressive laws. These considerations underline the need to be particularly careful when engaging in any form of “multispecies” research, as will be elaborated upon in the final section on methods.

<u>On “coming to care”</u>

It further seems worth exploring whether it could be helpful as viewing the process of

[23] See for example Claire Molloy (2011) on problems related to BSL in the UK.

adopting Harald, and particularly visiting the shelter (and perhaps even, critically thinking and writing about our relationship), could be seen as 'coming to care' (Lockwood, 2018). Importantly, as Alex Lockwood argues, "coming to care":

> is also coming to a specific place, such as outside a slaughterhouse or to a famed animal sanctuary, to explicitly show care, it changes our capacities for action, a fact clearly relevant for those working in animal advocacy (2018: 114).

In the context of witnessing nonhuman animals on their way to slaughter, Lockwood (2018: 113) highlights the importance of 'close bodily encounter' in order to foster an understanding of 'the lived materiality of their bodies':

> If we see our bodies on a continuum with other species and entangled, we should find it harder to exploit them. [...] As Latimer puts it, 'we body forth our relations and substantiate our identities' when we actively place our bodies in 'brain–body–world entanglements' with others (78). Behavioral change, then – in how we as a species relate to other species – comes not through 'coming to know' the other but through what Probyn has called a 'coming to care' (291)' (Lockwood, 2018: 113).

It also seems important to highlight the difficulty I have in reconciling how I love and care for Harald dearly, but still subject him to conditions I find fundamentally "wrong". For example, while we may well feel warmly to each other often, I am ultimately still holding him captive.

2.3 Multispecies methodologies

<u>On engaged theorising and writing "for" Harald (and other animals)</u>

In my case writing, or (engaged) theorising takes place not just with, but for Harald. This is further to be understood in a similar sense to Yunker (2018: 3), who wants to draw attention to 'not only the process but the responsibility of writing about animals.' In this way, I understand engaged theory as another way beyond the "animals are good to think with" trope. One of the principles of CAS is aiming for "engaged theory"

as opposed to “theory for theory’s sake” (see Best, 2009). Engaged theory is to be understood as ‘‘theory intended to support social change directly or indirectly (Garry, 2008: 99)’ (cited in Taylor and Twine, 2014: 7).’ I agree with Taylor and Twine’s (2014) view, that engaged theory ought not be conflated with advocating for avoiding complex theory. Instead engaged theory has the following task:

> In the CAS context, theory must be relevant to understanding and changing the material condition of animals, and to historicising the still normative concepts that have been largely successful in shielding human-animal relations from critical scrutiny (Taylor and Twine, 2014: 7).

My aims for this thesis existed before meeting Harald (and were influenced by all the real and “imagined” human and nonhuman animals I have met and/or read or heard about), particularly in terms of the thesis always being very much about what a sociology could do for other animals, as well trying not to prioritise human experience (or to bifurcate nature). However, once Harald arrived, my thinking automatically switched to him (prior to meeting Harald, I would take notes while engaging or thinking about other nonhuman animals and other beings). Thus, the decision was made to take notes on my engagement with Harald. Crucially, observation and note taking were exclusively restricted to situations I did not modify in any way for the purposes of this research.

In the beginning, notes were rather scattered, and mostly restricted to things I wanted to personally document (milestones and the like), or when something eventful or out of the ordinary happened, as well as thoughts about our relationship – what he asks and expects from me, and vice versa. For the most part however, notes focused on our daily walks together. As my thinking evolved, so did the things I took note of – in the beginning I started out with the very broad aim to think about and observe how Harald and I connect with each other and the world, as well as what fosters and what

hinders living together well, and how all these events might relate to sociality. Towards the end, thoughts, notes, and observations became more focussed.

When thinking and writing about Harald I for example made sure to consider what he asks of me, as well as what my obligations to him are and what matters to him. He also happened to be in my presence for the most part of thesis and was even able to accompany me to some supervisory meetings (as long as they took place outdoors, in order to accommodate him). However, particularly towards the end, he often complained about me being glued to my laptop screen and not paying him quite as much attention.

In the sense of utilising anecdotes, diary entries, and narratives, some auto-ethnographic elements are included, but mainly in attempt to make theorising more explicit. Thus, this thesis does not constitute an autoethnography, but a theoretical piece of work. However, in an attempt to tell his story – my story of him/our story? – in the first section of this chapter, (so as to acknowledge his role in my work and to highlight him as an individual with his own stories, experiences, and dreams), I proceeded as follows: Apart from notes/anecdotes from my own engagement with him, and photography/videography, I was able to use the internet and his dog rescue website, as well as Facebook groups, and to have conversations with shelter workers to find out more about him. In this sense elements of animal biography[24] have also been incorporated.

[24] See Krebber and Roscher (2018), as well as Baratay (2022) on the history of animal biographies, key concerns related to the topic, how it relates to the study of "the individual", as well as numerous examples. On animal autobiography, and the history of speaking for animals in literature and music (DeMello, 2013: 1-14). On animals as authors, see Babb, 2013: 79-86. Johnson (2018) and Lombard (2018) on writing animals in fiction.

On anecdotal evidence

As stated earlier on, methods involved utilising diary notes based on my engagement with Harald, as well as anecdotes in order to construct narratives, construct arguments or to feed into the process of analysing, interpreting and theorising in other ways. In the absence of "formal evidence", anecdotal evidence is in some cases possibly the best source that can be found and constitutes information that can enhance understanding (Enkin and Jadad, 1998: 965; cited in Browning, 2017: 3). Similarly, Bekoff and Pierce (2009: 36-43) point out that while anecdotes constitute a different type of evidence, stories or narratives nonetheless have their benefits. However, an element of rigour distinguishes casual observational stories from the method of observation called "narrative ethology", which is central to the study of animal behaviour:

> A narrative (from the Latin narrere, "to recount," related to gnarus, "knowing") is a story, or construction of observed reality, which through its telling gives an event meaning. Narrative is an act of interpretation. Seasoned ethologists often find that numbers and graphs don't do justice to the nuances and beauty of animal behavior. Instead, they often find themselves telling stories from the field to make a point or raise a question. Stories can stimulate thought, activate the imagination of scientists, lead to new questions, represent anomalies, and challenge conventions of thought (Bekoff and Peirce, 2009: 37).

Given the process of reflecting critically on the relationship between myself and Harald, and aiming for rigorous analysis of various material, the method employed could in fact be seen as similar to "narrative ethology". However, methods employed could also be understood in the context of autoethnography, as will be explained below.

Autoethnography in multi- and interspecies contexts

Despite this research not amounting to an autoethnography per se, some of the

methods involved in helping me think (drawing on anecdotal evidence, narratives and diary entries, as well as processes of interpretation and analysis while attending to positionality and self-reflexivity) could be seen as autoethnographic elements. Thus, this section will discuss a range of benefits and challenges related to autoethnographic research.

Autoethnography can be viewed as a fusion of autobiographic and ethnographic methods and is thus well suited to examine one's own experience, as well as underlying assumptions in relation to self, others, and the wider social, cultural, and historical contexts in which one is embedded (Adams, Ellis, and Jones, 2017; Chang, 2008; Poulos, 2021). As Alex Lockwood highlights in a multispecies context:

> Biographical and autoethnographic accounts can tell us much about our relations with other beings, and are useful for studying the ways we articulate how we come to know and care for nonhuman animals. These accounts often capture the embodied nature of people's experiences in encountering others, and can be explored for ways of understanding the role played by the body and its affects in advocating for change in our relationships with nonhuman animal species (2018: 105).

Nathan Poirier (2020: 1) for example suggests that (auto)biographical writing or "first-person storytelling" lends itself to attending to relations in themselves. He further highlights how such methods can enhance capacity for reflexivity, which is aligned with the principles of CAS research. This is primarily due to the method lending itself to reflect one's own positionality while thinking about and analysing past experiences (Poirier, 2020). Self-reflexive knowledge in critical research is important 'to try to guard against, for example, the re-emergence or perpetuation of oppressive theories and practices within both animal advocacy and CAS (Taylor and Twine, 2014: 6).' Along these lines, Lockwood (2018) for example suggests that autoethnographic (and autobiographical) reflexivity is crucial to efforts of centring other animals in social

inquiry.

For Kathryn Gillespie (2022), though not a guaranteed “solution”, (critical) multispecies autoethnography has the potential to constitute a corrective to problems with anthropocentrism (prioritising the human side, as well as glossing over exploitation and violence, and generally poor ethical consideration in relation to nonhumans) in multispecies ethnographies. She points out that while multispecies ethnography for example often draws on elements such as personal reflection, ‘autoethnography as its own multispecies methodology has been left undeveloped (2022: 2099).’ Gillespie also points to the applicability and possible transformative potential of autoethnography

> […] for multispecies kin, friends, neighbors, colleagues, or strangers who may pass by, sparking new ways of thinking and acting on a more localized and personal level with those who might never intentionally reflect on these kinds of relationships (2022: 2101).

Similarly, Poirier (2020: 1) also points to the transformative potential of biographical methods in ‘incurring empathy and compassion towards the nonhuman others CAS scholar-activists work alongside.’

Further benefits are related to the dissemination of research, as autoethnographic research is often more accessible to various academic and non-academic audiences (Adams, Ellis, and Jones, 2017). An additional advantage of drawing on autoethnographic or autobiographic methods is that ‘personal experiences are much less likely to be misrepresented than inferring or interpreting others’ feelings (Poirier 2020: 1).’ A focus on personal experience also enables one to provide “insider knowledge”, which

> […] does not suggest that an autoethnographer can articulate more truthful or more accurate knowledge as compared to outsiders, but rather that as authors we can tell our stories in novel ways when compared to how others may be able

> to tell them (Adams, Ellis, and Jones, 2017: 3).

Importantly, conducting research drawing on autoethnographic elements also allows for evocative writing and lends itself to incorporating an extended version of "thick description" (Poulos, 2021). Put differently, it allows for 'what we see, hear, think, and feel to become part of the "field" (Adams, Ellis, and Jones, 2017: 4).' This is particularly important in multispecies (and human) contexts, which returns us to the need for attending to notions of experience and feeling.

Autoethnography however also has the potential to compound existing problems. This is why, for Gillespie (2022: 2102-8) an "anti-anthropocentrism" appears preferable over efforts to "decentre the human", and non-anthropocentrism is also not sufficient as it seems to express neutrality or a non-issue and allows for evading self-reflexivity in some respects. Care needs to be taken to closely interrogate one's own positionality and to seek out all the ways in which we might be contributing to the exploitation and marginalisation of other animals. As Gillespie writes:

> Perhaps the most important dimensions of autoethnography are not here in an academic journal, but out there, in the world, being lived, felt, imagined, and reimagined. As multispecies autoethnographers we write our stories through living them, through attending to how we (as a web of a multispecies beings) shape and are shaped by broader social, economic, and political positions, and how we are present for each other and for the things that would have to change for nonhuman others to flourish. It is not, then, humans who are the sole ethnographers in multispecies autoethnography, but a multispecies cast of ethnographers writing – through living, struggling, loving, and caring – our shared worlds and futures (2022: 2108).

While I have tried to carefully consider every step, particularly as it pertains to Harald, as well as to scrutinise my role in contributing to the exploitation, and marginalisation of other animals, there are likely still blind spots I might not be considering.

Further challenges to attend to when conducting autoethnographic research are, for example, Heewon Chang's (2008) five "pitfalls" of autoethnography: overreliance on

personal experience divorced from others, privileging narration over analysis, overreliance on personal memory, a disregard for ethics when including others in narratives, and inappropriate categorisation as autoethnography. In an attempt to address these, I have focussed on a process-relational view, with emphasis on critical analyses, interpretation and attention to thesis aims and objectives Further, I have where possible relied on data sources such as photography, in addition to notes and existing theory, so as to not exclusively rely on personal memory. Ethical considerations in relation to confidentiality included the omission of identifying features of those human and nonhuman animals mentioned in this research. Harald, however, constitutes and exception to this. This decision was made, after weighing the benefits of naming him as an individual, against potential harms of making his identity known. The final element regarding the need to separate autoethnography from autobiography, memoir and other methods points to another important issue (Chang, 2008). However, as stated earlier on, this thesis is not to be seen as a pure "autoethnography", but as a primarily theoretical piece of work – albeit one that includes critical thought, reflection and elements of autoethnographic methods in an interspecies context.

Towards multi- and interspecies methods in sociology

Joanna Lilley for example asks the question of whether we should and/or can write[25] about other animals:

> Do we have the ability, let alone the right, to presume what any creature is thinking or feeling? I believe that, yes, we do have the ability and we do have the

[25] Beyond work on writing for/about animals already mentioned, various animal studies scholarship within political theory and animal rights have made important advances on issues of representation when it comes to nonhuman animals in the legal sphere, and beyond. See for example: Donaldson and Kymlica (2011), and Alasdair Cochrane (2018; 2019). See also Eva Meijer (2019).

> right to presume, conjecture, speculate, imagine, and explore what an animal might be experiencing. After all, we are animals too (2018: 12-13).

I would agree with her, although sociologists in particular ought to tread carefully, and ensure methods of observation, recording, analysing and interpretating, are up to the task (and do not bifurcate nature). I would also agree with Marybeth Holleman (2018), who makes the case for the importance of direct experience when considering other animals. In any case, as Lilley argues:

> We must choose every word we use to describe an animal or convey an animal presence consciously, thoughtfully, deliberately. We must be able to explain each choice if we are called upon to do so. I mean, here, the words we select and what they create: vocabulary, dictation, image, scene (2018: 15).

Lilley (2018: 18) also highlights how she writes from a place of feeling, which is very much the case with my own writing (and thinking). Similarly, Wessel (2018: 82) points out the need for 'delving deeper' and to 'move closer', as what matters is 'the soul' (of human and nonhuman beings). Rudy for example suggests a posthuman animism, and argues:

> We may not always understand the meanings of other creatures correctly, but in grasping toward a spiritual practice that begins with them, we commence the project of dismantling human exceptionalism (2013: 158).

To my mind, approaches and methods informed by a Whiteheadian panexperientialist process ontology could provide a promising foundation for such a "spiritual practice".

Furthermore, methods of an interdisciplinary nature appear beneficial for study of humans and nonhumans alike. Innovative, careful and critical multispecies methods are needed to tend to all aspects of experience in sociology, or else sociologists risk limited understandings of societal processes. Methods such as those adopted here – interspecies autoethnographic elements, and elements of animal biography – show

immense potential for the critical study of human-nonhuman relations, but there are plenty of other tools and techniques sociologists can make use of[26]. I would for example suggest making use of methods involving poetry (with a view of language co-constructed with and through nonhuman others), art-based and creative research methods, as well as ethological methods.

[26] For recent innovative multispecies methods, see for example: Buller (2015) on methods for more-than-human "animal geographies", Mc Loughlin (2023) on sonic methodologies, and see Jenkins, Ritchie, and Quinn (2021) on utilising "vignettes" as part of a diffractive posthumanist multispecies methodology. Furthermore, Lilley (2018), and Hunter Liguore (2018) suggest questions to ask when observing and writing about other animals, and techniques of what I would call "becoming attentive" in some form.

Chapter Three: Theoretical orientation – Sociality

3.1 Introduction

> Whitehead is clearly not denying that there are instances of communication, communication of thought, inter-subjectivity, consciousness. He is simply insisting that such concepts, such abstractions, cannot be indiscriminately used to explain all phenomena. And this applies to the concept of the social as well. It is not that there are never any social explanations; Latour (2005) has probably over-stated his case here. However, we cannot take the social for granted as either the subject matter or the ground of social theory, or as a form of explanation. What Whitehead demands is that when we are developing a social or cultural explanation, we assume nothing, and pay attention to the manner and mode of our abstraction […] (Halewood, 2008: 12).

This chapter constitutes a theoretical orientation, and as such, includes an introduction to sociality, an overview of issues related to the conceptualization of sociality, and introduces some terminology, and core themes of the chapters to follow.

In *Rethinking the Social*, Michael Halewood (2014: 1) argues that "the social" can be used 'as a conceptual device which enables the texts of different writers to be subjected to a similar form of analysis.' This approach enables 'direct comparison between these writers in their struggles to describe society and the kind of relations in which humans find themselves embroiled (1-2).' It also enables one to take a different perspective on the work in question and allows for a detailed analysis of how writers may have 'developed, reoriented and struggled with notions of sociality and society (2).'

The aim of this thesis is slightly different, as the focus is on how the concept of sociality relates to "what sociology can do" when it comes to nonhuman animals. It is in this context that Halewood's call for new philosophies of the social is taken up, and (in chapter four) a Whiteheadian approach to sociality will be suggested. In sociological theory and "sociological animal studies" (understood as sociologists producing animal

studies scholarship), the concept of “the social” appears to be deployed more often than “sociality”, and both concepts seem to remain relatively under-problematized. As has been discussed in chapter one, it appears that it may be worth focussing on the related notion of sociality. The underlying assumption here is that debates over “the problem of the social” ought to continue. Hence this thesis aims to focus on the concept of sociality, with the ulterior aim of contributing to the clarification of, and debates surrounding “the social”.

The view adopted here, is that not “seriously” considering interspecies relations in sociology means that ensuing definitions of sociality are limited. Halewood for example argues that while social theory (and sociology) has occupied itself with shifting relations among humans,

> […] it has misconstrued the status of that which comprises such sociality as it prioritized human forms of relations as explanatory of all other forms of sociality. In this respect there is an irreducible emphasis on the social as a solely human affair (2014: 81).

Thus, one of the key concerns for the tasks at hand, is the (mis-) conception of sociality as something exclusively human. While sociality remains a relatively undertheorized and “fuzzy” concept, it is nonetheless often assumed to be purely human, as previously discussed. This misconception for example means that a (fundamental) difference in kind was imposed on nonhuman relations and led to deepening the division between social theory and science, as well as the nature-society and natural-social dichotomies (Halewood, 2014).

Further (related) issues worth mentioning are that it has become difficult for social theory to ‘talk about material things’ and it has also ‘rendered the relation between such sociality and the individual and subjects which populate it, problematic (Halewood, 2014: 84).’ Related to this, it is important to consider that ‘the

associations between humans which are assumed to be indicative of the specific concerns, objects and subjects of sociology were a limited and limiting abstraction (Halewood, 2014: 81)' – as this has bearing on how the subject matter of sociology is defined and enables the exclusion of nonhuman animals from serious consideration. This misconception of what constitutes sociality and the social, is also what led many to proclaim, "the end of the social", as mentioned in chapter one. Importantly, such discussions 'are based upon an assumption of the death of that which was only ever a partial element of the wider field of sociality (Halewood, 2014: 81).'

Focussing on the possibilities that this predicament offers, I would like to point to John Hartigan's (2018) statement, that 'this is an opportune moment to suggest a more fundamental reorientation of projects theorizing sociality.' It is however first necessary to address some conceptual challenges surrounding sociality. The next section is geared toward clarifying questions surrounding interspecies relations in sociology, as well as the term "interspecies sociality".

3.2 Sociality and interspecies relations

As has been established in chapter one, problems with existing sociological conceptualisations of "society", "the social", and "sociality" are related to the discipline's treatment of nonhuman animals and interspecies relations. To illustrate this further, it is helpful to turn to a point made by Annabelle Sabloff (2001) in *Reordering the Natural World*. Writing about ethnographies in anthropology that examine interspecies relations, she points out that most analyses do not examine such relations as in and of themselves important. Thus, countless recorded examples of

“interspecies sociality” are dismissed as only of “symbolic” importance:

> It is evident that acute and sympathetic observation does not fail ethnographers in their descriptions of human-animal interactions, particularly in non-Western societies. Yet, at the same time, there appears to be a singular failure to perceive as profound and mysterious the interspecies acts observed and recorded so faithfully. Ethnographers appear to readily accept without further curiosity that 'primitive' peoples would have such intimate and apparently satisfying relationships as a matter of course, as part of some animistic worldview. It would seem that, at least until quite recently, Western ethnographers have had difficulty in conceiving that some true significance, for Westerners as well as for other peoples, might attach to the prosaic social aspects of the human-animal relation itself (Sabloff, 2001: 37).

I would suggest the above applies just as well to much of sociology, where certain experiences and relations are written about, but not granted any “real” reality. This is also an indication of how the discipline’s tendency towards anthropocentrism might be tied up with its Western centrism. What might also be at play, is a disregard for processes and relations themselves – particularly when “the other-than-human” is involved, but also when it comes to examining what are assumed to be purely human relations. This point will be picked up again in a later section. Sabloff further singles out the lack of appropriate language and of what she helpfully terms “animal imagination” (in Western thought) as a crucial problem:

> With significant language missing from Western culture for expressing the sense of intimate sociality between humans and other animals…and without that sense of animal imagination suggested by reports of totemic observance in many other cultures, anthropology has been unable, on the whole, to do justice to the totemic sensibility and biophilic experience in human lives. More often, as we saw, Western anthropologists have sought in the records of these relations between humans and other animals some other, less direct, more abstract, more materialist, or more symbolic message than the natives themselves have attributed to them; above all, some message pertaining solely or primarily to the human group (2001: 159).

It is then particularly important to focus on inclusive, (human and nonhuman) world-affirming approaches that are able to foster “animal imaginations”, and do not reproduce "the bifurcation of nature”.

It appears that the side-lining, or unsatisfactory treatment of interspecies relationships has also rather surprisingly occurred in fields such as ethology. Guy Scotton has for example argued that:

> […] spatial and legal segregation of farmed animals is buttressed by a profound cultural denigration of interspecies sociality, the companion-animal paradigm notwithstanding. To illustrate just one strand of this culture of human supremacy, the neglect of animal friendships even in the study of animal behaviour is perhaps unsurprising, but nonetheless striking: only in 2011 did ethologist Anne Dagg write the first book-length treatment of animal friendships (2017: 98).

Similarly, within biology, Hari Sridhar and Vishwesha Guttal (2018: 1) remark that dominant views of sociality are to the most part based on single-species observations, and neglect heterospecific[27] sociality (among multiple species). They suggest a reason for this can be found in the tendency to assume both types of sociality to be fundamentally different categories in the sense that they are seen as requiring different mechanisms, despite evidence that contradicts this.

Conceptual challenges and possibilities

Any project of rethinking sociality, ought to pay attention to certain challenges. Some of the most important concerns to bear in mind are Olga Solomon's (2013) three conceptual limitations when it comes to theorising sociality: limiting the concept to language; limiting the concept to mentality; and limiting the concept to humans. All these problems are related, and perhaps for the most part stem from viewing the world in binary terms. Thus – with view of an "animal sociology" – what needs to be avoided in the future, is first and foremost any conception of sociality predicated on "bifurcating" nature. What also needs to be avoided are limited conceptions of

[27] Heterospecific sociality is defined as 'spatial and/or temporal clumping of organisms as a result of one- or two-way social attraction between organisms (Sridhar and Guttal, 2018: 2).'

“evidence” as well as an overreliance on notions of abstract reasoning and representational thought (Willet and Suchak, 2018). Additionally, approaches to sociality are necessary that go beyond a focus on cooperative behaviour, and that are also able to account for interspecies and intraspecies differences. I would further suggest the need for approaches that allow for inclusive notions of experience and are oriented toward feeling as opposed to solely describing and analysing.

While in sociology most understandings of sociality (and “the social) remain anthropocentric, certain approaches and fields such as posthumanism, new materialism, actor-network theory, science and technology studies, animal studies, and multispecies ethnography, have indeed called for rethinking the concept in “more-than-human” terms. Such approaches usually centre on notions of “process” and “relations”. Here, the focus is on sociality as a description of processes shaping both human and nonhuman relations to the world, and each other (see for example Dalziell, 2017 on the sociality of slime mould; Fowler, 2018 on biosociality; Kirksey, 2020 on chemosociality; Palsson and Swanson, 2016 on geosociality; and Tsing, 2013 on more-than-human-sociality).

My own approach, which will be developed throughout later sections and chapters, can be seen as complementing efforts such as those mentioned above. Further, I would argue that definitions of what sociality is (and can be) need more clarification. However, I would at the same time also suggested that it is not necessary or desirable to seek out fixed definitions of sociality. Instead, theoretical, conceptual, and methodological “attentiveness” is required. Furthermore, the coneptualisation of sociality as “feeling-for” to be developed, goes beyond those approaches that

inspired it, through an emphasis on experience and feeling.

3.3 From sociality to interspecies sociality?

Taking the previous discussions into account, one of the issues warranting further attention is the focus on the uniqueness of the human, and in this case of human sociality. It seems once it has become more widely accepted that animals have a specific capacity that was thought only to have applied to humans, attention immediately shifts to a new search for the next capacity that is exclusively granted to humans. In this sense there seems to be a constant drive to the search for the specificity or uniqueness of humans, as mentioned in chapter one. Perhaps theories of human sociality have their place, but it seems questionable to make this the starting point of inquiry, especially if it is not clear whether "human sociality" exists as separate from "dog" sociality for example. In response to arguments such as Nicholas Long and Henrietta Moore's (2012) that it is desirable or even possible to theorize the specificity of "human sociality" apart from "animal" or "nonhuman sociality" – on both counts I would argue no, it is not. To my mind, this way of thinking is not at all helpful – perhaps humans do things in specific and sometimes unique ways, but so does every other animal.

Efforts to establish the supposed uniqueness of human sociality are further misguided, because definitions of sociality are quite hazy, and I am unsure whether one can even talk about human sociality as such. It for example does not make sense to speak of human sociality vs "animal" sociality. We "humans" are still animals, so any project of theorizing human sociality, would amount to theorizing a form of animal sociality. Similarly, humans do not exist apart from others, and our bodies contain "nonhuman" organisms. Further, existing definitions tend to be limited in terms of not applying to all

humans; and attempts to theorize human sociality tend to be limited in various other ways.

What is important here is not to assume a significant gap between humans on the one hand, and all other animals on the other. What perhaps matters more during human-animal interactions is not so much the gap between humans and other animals, but the gap between humans and specific species (viewed non-hierarchically), although this is itself still based on arbitrarily drawn species lines and assigned capacities. Thus, the possibility ought to be considered that not even the gaps between individual species may matter so much. However, there may of course be significant intra-species differences that do matter, and so on. One could also start with the fact that there are already "interspecies relationships" – and assuming sociality is a prerequisite to their formation or a description thereof, we can assume that there is in fact something like interspecies sociality? Perhaps, all sociality is "interspecies" sociality?

3.4 Starting in "the middle of things"

Georg Simmel on sociology and relations

Given the need to focus on processes themselves, it is worth briefly turning to Simmel's contribution to sociology and sociability, as well as his importance to the emergence of relational approaches. It is also noteworthy that the potential contribution Simmel could make to Animal Studies is underexplored (as opposed to Karl Marx for example), although there have been exceptions.[28] Further, Simmel was concerned with what could be seen as the object or subject matter of sociology and

[28] See for example Tora Holmberg's (2017[2015]) *Urban Animals: Crowding in Zoocities*.

suggested that the discipline cannot claim a particular object as its own, but instead its specificity lies in it providing “a new way of looking at things”. He provides a through discussion of this in the first chapter of *Soziologie* (1908: 10). This matters, as one of the main challenges surrounding the “inclusion” of animals in sociology, is related to how the subject matter of the discipline is defined. This view of sociology as a new way of looking at things also sits nicely alongside Simmel’s distinctive conception of social relations. It seems that Simmel offers us a way of thinking about a sociology that includes all animals – if we see it as sociology’s task to study relations (as Simmel suggests).

Michael Halewood (2014: 4) suggests that while Simmel’s work has not been as influential in social theory and sociology as the work of Marx, Émile Durkheim or Max Weber, it is ‘possible to derive, from Simmel, a novel theoretical approach to “the social”’. This is partly because he offers a ‘challenge to certain preconceptions of the social, such as those of the place of the individual and society, as well as the importance of process, connections and relations (Halewood, 2014: 137).’ What is particularly of interest, is Simmel’s notion of “Vergesellschaftung”, which he coined in 1894 (Pankoke 1984, 1019, 20; cited in Halewood, 2014: 103). With this notion Simmel aimed ‘to express the movements through which humans become “social” (Halewood, 2014: 103).’ One of the important aspects of this term, is that he was trying to emphasise notions of process and movement (Halewood, 2014: 103; 135). This is in line with his demand of sociology to ‘prioritize connections, relations, dyads and triads (Halewood, 2014: 135)’, as opposed to abstract concepts of the individual or society as self-contained entities. Hence, what is here important is an emphasis on process, and what Halewood (2014) refers to as the “adverbial” quality of experiences.

Socialization, sociation or societalization?

Another interesting, and related issue arises partly from difficulties surrounding the translation of Simmel's notion of "Vergesellschaftung". The term has to date been translated as "socialization", as well as "societalization". However, the term that is currently frequently used is "sociation" (Wolff, 1950; cited in Halewood, 2014: 64; 135). Retaining a distinction between the terms "social" (sozial) and "societal" (gesellschaftlich), Halewood (2014: 64) prefers translating "Vergesellschaftung" with the term "societalization". He further argues that using the term "sociation" is problematic, as it for example 'runs the risk of erasing the difference between the social and the societal; the distinction between "*sozial*" and "*gesellschaftlich*" (136; emphasis in original).'

Of interest is also the definition of "Gesellschaft" (society) offered by Simmel:

> […] dass sie da existiert, wo mehrere individuen in Wechselwirkung treten. Diese Wechselwirkung ensteht immer aus bestimmten Trieben heraus oder um bestimmter Zwecke willen (1908: 12).

In this paragraph[29] Simmel designates the interactions (Wechselwirkung[en]) - between individuals as the space where society plays out. It is further important that for him the prior individuals come together in a unity (through interaction), and that this coming together is also a "becoming-society" (12). Instructive to his conception of interaction is also an analogy he makes later on, in which he compares the 'Wechselwirkung' of organs that form a unity, with the unity of a state (12).

For now, further important aspects of Simmel's conception of sociality (and the social, and society), are that he does not view society as something that exists independently, or as the foundation for sociality (Halewood, 2014: 4). Thus, Simmel challenges the

[29] Translation mine (made possible due to fluency/bilingual proficiency in German).

conception of society as 'the generator of the social rather than seeing the social ("Vergesellschaftung") as the vehicle by which societies take on an apparently concrete form (Halewood, 2014: 136).' Another contribution Simmel's work makes, is to pose a challenge to sociology's tendency to disregard the different forms of sociality. A final aspect of importance is that Simmel argues for a corrective to sociology's focus on a monolithic conception of "society", at the expense of attending to the crucial role of "groups" (Halewood, 2014).

Sociality and with-ness

As suggested in earlier sections, there is an urgent need for approaching questions of sociality beyond species lines, as well as to abandon approaches based on anthropocentric (and Western-centric) assumptions usually focussing on linguistic capacities and the like. Furthermore, I would argue that inquiries into sociality ought to be based on the most "inclusive" philosophical underpinnings. To think this through, it may be fruitful to start off with viewing sociality as something that always involves a "with" in some way. To think about sociality in inclusive terms, it is thus helpful – to my mind at least – to shift focus from species (and away from subjects and objects) towards what happens "in the middle" or "between" things when two bodies encounter each other, interact and connect (and hold together or not). As Oli Pyyhtinen summarizes:

> [...] instead of starting from individuals and their actions or from society and its structures, one must start from the between, from withness, in the middle of things, and trace associations (2016: 11).

Starting with the idea that sociality relates to a process that happens between and with the other, it thus also does not make much sense to talk about human vs dog sociality for example. However, I do not think it is as simple as replacing this with

"human-dog sociality".

Hybridity, being-with and being-alongside

Whatever sociality is, it seems to involve more than one – in the sense that it only ever applies to some form of relations with something beyond oneself. This is where perhaps the idea of "being-with" in its various iterations may help. As Joanna Latimer (2013: 90) writes: 'Attention to being-with (as distinct from being-there) brings back into play how human existence is always about being in relation.' She further highlights a relevant quote in this regard:

> […] Pyyhtinen (2009: 110) helps remind us in his discussion of Simmel: 'From the perspective of being-with, to study the social is to explore the conditions and forms of being-with others' (cited in Latimer, 2013: 91).

Importantly however, this being-with should also include nonhuman others.

While the notion of being-with has its merits, Latimer's (2013) critique of Donna Haraway's conception thereof makes some interesting suggestions. Instead of being-with, Latimer suggests thinking about "being-alongside". Building on Marilyn Strathern's work, Latimer explains "being-alongside", as the process of 'attaching and detaching to different others, partially connecting and partially disconnecting, that produces a form of dwelling amidst different kinds (81).' With this, she presents forms of being- with/alongside each other, reimagined as partial connection-disconnection as an alternative to Haraway's focus on hybridity. As summed up by Latimer:

> In questioning Haraway's emphasis on a dyadic and totalizing, if intermittent, connectivity, I emphasize instead the possibilities of 'being alongside' in order to examine how thinking with the animal can help us to re-imagine sociality in terms of partial connection (Strathern, 1991), rather than division, comparison or even hybridity (2013: 80).

Particulars surrounding forms of connection and togetherness will be examined more

closely in later sections and chapters. What will be taken from the above discussions for now, is thinking in terms of with-ness, and betweenness, in line with centering processes and relations. This, combined with the aim of "living-well" with other animals as suggested in chapter one, constitutes a "ground frame" from which questions of sociality are approached here.

The next chapter will include an introduction to Whitehead and his panexperiential philosophy of organism, as well as an outline of various concerns relating to the notion of (human and nonhuman) experience, before introducing "feeling" into the discussion. The final sections and conclusion aim to set out some key elements of a suggested novel approach to sociality as "feeling-for", which is to be developed throughout subsequent chapters, and is rooted in a Whiteheadian process ontology in order to meet some of the theoretical/conceptual and methodological challenges discussed throughout the thesis.

Chapter Four: In search of a Whiteheadian process ontology

4.1 Introducing Alfred North Whitehead

> According to Alfred North Whitehead, "the basis of experience is emotional" (1933[1967]: 176). […] For Whitehead, the questions of how we feel, and what we feel, are more fundamental than the epistemological and hermeneutical questions that are the focus of most philosophy and criticism […] (Shaviro, 2012[2009]: 46).

It is hoped that this chapter demonstrates that Whitehead's panexperientialist philosophy provides a suitable process ontology to provide the grounding for the novel approach to sociality to be developed throughout the chapters to follow.

One of the core aims of this thesis is to take seriously the problem of avoiding prioritising human experience – particularly when considering concepts such as sociality and agency, but also when considering sociological concerns more widely. It seems that Whitehead's "philosophy of organism" constitutes a fitting initial theoretical framework with which to approach the questions I am concerned with. This has various reasons – for example, the philosophy of organism provides much-needed non- anthropocentric foundations from which to approach questions of the nonhuman. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, non-anthropocentric approaches grounded in a cartesian worldview need to be avoided at all costs.

Crucially, Whitehead offers a manner of thinking about and describing the world that allows for genuine interrelatedness and process, but at the same time incorporates facticity and individuality (Halewood, 2005). Moreover, the notion of experience is central to Whitehead's philosophy, and for him constitutes the very foundation of existence. Additionally, he is careful to take *all* modes of experience into consideration, which makes his thought the ideal basis from which to explore challenges associated with questions of experience.

Just as Whitehead (1967 [1933]: 226) suggested that philosophical systems must take all modes of experience into account, I would argue that sociology should not dismiss certain experiences as less important or less "real", although the disciplinary requirements may differ. This means that sociological theories, concepts, and methodologies should consider non-conscious, non-sensuous experience and experience during altered states (for example meditative experiences, or experiences under the influence of psychoactive substances). A similar claim is made by Brianne Donaldson (2015: 52), who suggests that philosophy tends to side-line nonhuman experience, or anything beyond human experience(s) more generally. She argues that while this has its benefits, what is lost is 'the possibility that we can feel and perceive more widely than we currently do (52).' She also points to a key problem related to understanding nonhuman (and human) experience. Citing Brian Henning, she draws attention to the argument that while "we" necessarily start from our own position or particular experience, this does not mean that this constitutes a definite limit (52).

Whitehead's thought is further characterized by a "taking-nothing-for-granted-ness", which appears to be very much needed when thinking about concepts such as "sociality", or when trying to challenge disciplinary assumptions. In sum, his philosophy of organism is especially relevant, as it – apart from providing the impetus to engage in assumption criticism – offers theories that are non-anthropocentric, allows for every event to consist of both "physical" and "mental" components, as well as incorporates a specific understanding of internal relations, as opposed to viewing the relations of individuals as purely external (Cobb, 2004). Steven Shaviro (2014) specifically highlights the importance of questioning the pervasive anthropocentrism given our impending ecological catastrophe and shows how Whitehead's philosophy is central to this undertaking, as it is oriented towards overcoming the bifurcation of nature

inherent in modern thought. Didier Debaise et. Al. (2015: 168) offer a useful definition of this term as the division of nature into two parts: ‘on one side an “objective” nature, blind to our values, indifferent to our projects; and on the other a nature which is the very stuff of our dreams, values and projects.’

Prior to outlining a Whiteheadian conception of sociality, it is now necessary to turn to the notion of experience in depth. This will form the basis for introducing his understanding of “feeling” and how this might be utilised to sketch a novel approach to sociality, that is rooted in a Whiteheadian panexperiential process ontology.

4.2 Questions of experience

Prioritizing “human” experience

As stated earlier on, a key aim for Whitehead was to challenge the bifurcation of nature, and the associated tendency to prioritize one side of reality, namely human experience as expressed in consciousness and the mind (Halewood, 2013[2011]: 25). Given that no factors can be taken for granted, consciousness and the mind for example are important, but ‘are not that which subtends experience or human existence but are factors within existence which themselves need to be explained (25).’ Whitehead does not want to start analyses with consciousness, as conscious experience is only one mode of experience, and is not something experienced continuously. Thus, an issue Whitehead draws attention to is

> […] that philosophers have often been too quick to latch on to the alleged clarity that conscious experience appears to offer and to treat it as the core of experience when it is really only one element within a whole host of experiences (26).

The tendency to prioritize certain aspects of (“human”) experience can also be seen

in attempts to elevate notions such as rationality and agency to being defining and constant features of exclusively human existence. Whitehead would challenge this and instead state that such features are only intermittent aspects of experience . Thus, a key problem is that

> Theory has tended to treat reason, consciousness and agency [relate to sociality too] as nouns, as objects, as if they exist substantially within the world and possession of them enables us to arise and be defined as humans (26).

However, the contrary should be the case – it is not characteristics that exist as objects and can be possessed that should be given primacy. Instead, processes themselves should be prioritized.

The centrality of experience

Instead of making subjects and objects key to existence, Whitehead is able to avoid the bifurcation of nature by making experience foundational. Thus, subjects are indeed in a way important, but not subjects as such – it is the experience of subjects that is crucial:

> Experience will serve as Whitehead's ontological cornerstone. He sums up his approach in the following maxim: 'apart from the experiences of subjects there is nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness' (Whitehead, 1978[1929]: 167; cited in Halewood 2013[2011]: 27).

Importantly, Whitehead views conscious experience as just one mode of experience, and he does not prioritize perceptual, human experience. Moreover, he does not assign a hierarchy to the various modes of experience. In this way he avoids the tendency of some realists to dismiss certain experiences as "less real" from the start, and avoids the problematic tendency of phenomenology[30] to equate experience with consciousness:

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[30] For an example of the problematic/anthropocentric aspects of phenomenology, see for example Halewood (2008: 11).

> This is not to make a phenomenologist of Whitehead (as that term is usually conceived); experience, for Whitehead, neither relies upon nor solely refers to consciousness or the lived conditions of humanity. To limit such experiences to humans at the outset is an unjustified, limiting step as well as an invalid theoretical assumption (Halewood, 2013 [2011]: 27).

Whitehead's prioritizing of experience enables for the internal and external relatedness of entities, and thus allows him to challenge the Newtonian view of discrete objects (Halewood, 2013[2011]: 28). Among other elements, what enables Whitehead to do this, are his notions of "actual entities" and "superjects". What I would like to highlight is:

> The point to be made, at present, is that Whitehead wants to shift the emphasis from the notion of objects and subjects to that of experience; experiences are what make up the eventful character of existence. That is to say, the world is not made up of inert objects but of those events of experience which we undergo (Halewood, 2013 [2011]: 30).

Thus, in the spirit of centring "events of experience", instead of for example making "thought" central, the process of "thinking" should be made primary. Moreover, it needs to be considered that "thinking" for example always happens in a certain manner, under certain circumstances. Thus, Halewood (2013[2011]: 26-7) states that such events of experiences 'have a quality to them which is best described adverbially**.'** This adverbial character of these processes is crucial, and 'The manner and quality of such experiences as integral to all experience (and hence to all existence) is a major element of Whitehead's thought (27).' Thus, for Whitehead, neither objects or notions such as consciousness are central to an understanding of reality – this is where the importance of "experience" comes in.

Beyond identity and difference? A proto-ontological field of indistinction

A central debate raised by questions surrounding nonhuman experience, is concerned with identity and difference-based approaches. Matthew Calarco (2015) for example

argues that both approaches are inadequate. The former needs to be challenged due to its tendency to aim for an “extension” of supposedly human capacities or traits to other animals. And difference-based approaches that try to increase differences are also insufficient. Calarco (2015) himself proposes the notion of “indistinction” instead. Primarily drawing on Gilles Deleuze and Val Plumwood, he argues that his approach enables us to foreground ‘deeply relational terms that permit new groupings and differences to emerge, such that “the human” is no longer the center or chief point of reference (56).’ Calarco argues that his concept of “indistinction” enables us to move beyond approaches based on identity or difference, but highlights that

> […] prior to restarting the ontological project anew to address these limits-that is, prior to determining where and how to carve this different "world" at its joints- it is essential not to vacate too quickly the proto-ontological plane in which these limits are encountered (2011: 58).

For Calarco (2011), this proto-ontological plane enables us to be more attentive to the various dynamics involved in upholding the dominant order. Moreover, exploring concerns surrounding the nonhuman from this standpoint demonstrates the urgent need for alternative, non-anthropocentric ontologies, and analyses. Similarly, Donaldson highlights the potential of considering a proto-ontological plane of relations to unsettle the human-animal distinction, as well as the institutions built upon it, while also taking care

> […] not to construct a new ontological project but to reflect on variable modes of experience and encounter-the proto-ontological plane (where we see the limits of existing ethical structures and ontological ordering mechanisms) (2014: 11).

As Derek Ryan (2015: 15) argues in *Animal Theory*:

> The dual task for animal theorists today is to destabilise the philosophical models of the past at the same time as forging alternative modes of thought. […] new theoretical approaches to animals do not depend on a clean break with all western philosophical discourses but on reassessment of their epistemological, ontological and ethical claims.

Donaldson (2014: 52) further states that both Whitehead and Karen Barad, as well as Butler to a lesser degree, suggested that

> […] our existence – and the way we think about it – presupposes an impersonal, nonphilosophical, proto-ontological plane of relations from which actual occasions and even quanta, territorialize themselves and our common world (2014: 52).

Along these lines, it is also important to note, as Halewood has pointed out in relation to applications of Whitehead's thought:

> However, it must be strongly stated that Whitehead's philosophy of becoming and process does not signal some conceptual or methodological free-for-all. Rather, and as is always the case in social theory, the ontological character of its subject matter requires refinements in our epistemology and our methods of inquiry. Novel methods must respond to and not exceed these new ontological requirements. They must still bear witness to the character of the processes they investigate and the social environment from which they proceed (Halewood, 2008: 8-9).

Inner experience: Steven Shaviro on Whitehead and panexperientialism (panpsychism[31])

When trying to explore questions of nonhuman (and human) experience, and particularly "inner experience", further challenges need to be considered. One question that is often raised concerns how it is possible to infer experiences of others. Of relevance here is Thomas Nagel's (2016[1974]) work on "what it is like" (to be another – in this case nonhuman – being). Importantly, as Shaviro (2015) points out, Nagel argues that it is not merely a case of wondering what being another may feel like in our human experience, but instead it is necessary to ask what it might feel like for the other. In this way, the problem of how we can access the inner experience of others is shifted to the problem of being itself. This shift from epistemological to ontological questions is crucial. What may be required when considering nonhuman

[31] Shaviro himself prefers the term panpsychism, however I have decided to use panexperientialism, in order to highlight the importance of experience.

experiences, is that

> We need to accept both that the bat does have experiences and that these experiences are radically different from ours, and may have their own richness and complexity in ways that we will never be able to understand (Shaviro, 2015: 26).

Importantly however, it is not just our understanding of nonhuman inner experiences that is limited, but also that of other humans, or even one's own inner experience. Shaviro (2015) also points out that the question of "knowing" is misplaced and tends to cause confusion. It is not actually necessary to know that oneself or another can have experiences to have them. Thus, in this view, the problem of "access" to human or nonhuman experience is not an epistemological one. Sam Coleman builds on this issue and tries to shift this epistemological requirement to an ontological principle: '"absolute what-it-is-likeness" does not just apply to living things in particular; rather, it must lie "at the heart of ontology" (Shaviro, 2015: 35).' Hence, care needs to be taken to not reduce ontological questions to epistemological ones. A starting point is to accept that relations between entities are not dependent on their knowledge of one another.

When exploring questions of inner experience, it is also important not to base our inferences on supposedly uniquely human capacities such as language (Shaviro, 2015). Further, it also needs to be avoided to infer inner experience based on observable behaviour more generally, as the former cannot be reduced to the latter. This for example means that

> It is not a question, therefore, of actually getting a rock or a neutrino to speak; but rather one of recognizing that mentality, or inner experience, is not contingent on the ability to speak in the first place (Shaviro, 2015: 22).

Similarly, Shaviro (30) argues that it is not helpful to 'discuss subjective experience in terms of qualia, precise sensations, and the like' This is mainly because most of

our experience is not clearly discernible, but instead is indistinct and characterized by a certain ‘vagueness’ (30-1). That most experience is not constant, as well as related concerns have also been discussed in an earlier section.

A further key problem associated with understanding inner experience is that

> The very phenomenon of being able to have experiences – the phenomenon that alone makes objective, third-person knowledge possible in the first place – cannot itself be accounted for in science’s objective, third-person terms (Shaviro, 2015: 34).

The issue here is that (physical) science, can demonstrate what entities such as atoms looks like to others, through focussing on its extrinsic and relational qualities. What science cannot do however, is express what other entities are in themselves and for themselves. This double bind is usually solved through implementing a philosophical dualism, emergentism or eliminativism. An alternative route, as for example taken by Galen Strawson, would be to posit an ontological principle that posits that mentality or inner experience is always already an element of all in existence (34). In this way, Shaviro argues that panexperientialism can overcome this tension, and ‘is the necessary consequence of respecting the self-evidence of phenomenal experience, without trying either to hypostasize it or to extirpate it (34).’ Importantly, pexperientialism does not depend on (human) “access” to the inner experience of others, and this applies to both humans and nonhumans. Panexperientialism, then, is able to move beyond ‘the correlation of thinking and being’ (40).

Shaviro (2015: 22) also points out that the emphasis panexperientialism places on distributing mentality among all entities, expresses that both humans and nonhumans exist – and have value – for themselves and in themselves. This is a fundamental principle of Whitehead’s (1968[1938]: 109-11) philosophy of organism – all entities have value for themselves, for others, and for the whole. Interestingly, Shaviro (2015:

23) argues that this intrinsic value[32] of all entities is in fact an indication of their sentience. This makes sense if this self-valuation is viewed as 'a matter of feeling, and responding (23).' Thus, for Shaviro (41), 'Experience, or mentality, or spectral interiority is always a matter of what Whitehead calls "feeling" before it is a matter of cognition.' It is then not the case (as often assumed) that sentience[33] is dependent on "life", but instead sentience must exist prior to any articulations of "life". This also hints at the relationship between feeling and experience from a Whiteheadian perspective. Why this matters for conceptualisations of sociality will hopefully become clearer throughout the following section.

4.3 A Whiteheadian conception of sociality

It appears urgent to articulate ways of being-with (human and nonhuman) others that do not rely on supposedly human capacities such as consciousness, but instead allow us to foreground various modes of experience. As will be seen below, one could just as much talk in terms of feeling instead of experience as being central to Whitehead's philosophy. Feeling is in turn central to any conception of sociality in his work.

For Whitehead (1978[1929]) the concept of sociality is on no account limited to human existence and instead applies to all entities (cited in Halewood, 2013[2011]: 88, 9;

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[32] Viewing all entities as having intrinsic value also poses a challenge to the fact-value distinction, since values are themselves seen as facts (Shaviro, 2015: 23-4).

[33] Donaldson (2015: 48) cautions that drawing exclusory lines ought not to take place from the start and offers a constructive critique of Dombrowski (as he draws on Whitehead, but ties moral consideration to sentiency, which is in turn dependent on the existence of a central nervous system). I would agree that this is problematic. Furthermore, the development of critical plant studies is relevant here – Monica Gagliano (2017; 2018) for example suggests that something like consciousness need not depend on a central nervous system and demonstrates the complexity of the experiences of plants.

102). Importantly – 'indeed the very existence of human society presupposes a prior expression of nonhuman sociality (Halewood, 2013[2011]: 102)'. Further, for Whitehead, sociality is necessarily always already inherent in any account of materiality (Whitehead, 1978[1929]: 203; cited in Halewood, 2013[2011]: 88) – and does not exclude notions of individuality. This understanding of sociality in Whitehead's thought has for example also influenced Bruno Latour's "sociology of associations" (Latour, 2005 in Halewood, 2013[2011]: 88-9). Both Whitehead's notion of sociality, as well as common definitions within human-animal studies, seem to agree that it describes a process (or many) involving the relation between (human or nonhuman) individuals and their environments. However, for the task at hand, Halewood's reading of Whitehead's conception of the term is more elaborate and might prove more useful in accounting for nonhuman ways of being and doing.

While Whitehead does not offer a definition of sociality or "the social" as such, it may be useful to start with unpacking the following analysis offered by Halewood:

> At its core, Whitehead's notion of the social and of sociality is an attempt to describe how that which comes to exist does so by combining elements which were not previously combined. Sociality is the process of incorporating elements of the environment into an individual, thereby changing both the environment and the individual (2013[2011]: 88).

In this way, sociality is related to the process of the coming to be of existence, which involves specific interactions between an individual and its environment, whereby both become something else. Apart from the notion of transformation, the above quote also highlights the notion of novelty and its relevance to the processes mentioned above.

The following paragraph introduces further elements to consider:

> Every actual entity is in its nature essentially social; and this in two ways. First, the outlines of its own character are determined by the data which its environment provides for its process of feeling. Secondly, these data are not extrinsic to the entity; they constitute that display of the universe which is

> inherent in the entity (Whitehead, 1978[1929], 203; cited in Halewood, 2013[2011]: 88).

Akin to the previous quote, the above highlights the interrelatedness, interdependence, and interconnectedness of entities, as well as the relationship between an individual and its environment, and the fact that sociality is widely distributed throughout existence – 'it is a necessary element of the materiality of anything which exists (Halewood, 2013[2011]: 88).' However, further elements are introduced: the notion of character, a notion of feeling, and mutual immanence.

Sociality, experience and feeling

Before going any further, it needs to be clarified what exactly is meant by feeling:

> The term "feeling" would seem to invoke a whole host of humanly subjectivist notions; emotions, irrationality and so on. In one sense this is exactly what Whitehead is attempting to do. He is trying to shock us out of our scientistic, materialist complacency by insisting on the quality of experience which inhabits all experiences (Halewood, 2013[2011]: 31).

For Whitehead, feelings in their most basic form can also be understood as perceptive, in the sense that they belong to acts of perception – and not reliant upon consciousness**:** 'a simple feeling is the most primitive type of an act of perception, devoid of consciousness' (Whitehead, 1978[1929]: 236; cited in Halewood, 2013: 31).' Key to not basing this on consciousness or any supposedly exclusively human capacities, is his view of feelings[34] as related to a novel understanding of perception, that does not rely upon representation. This in turn avoids a split between subject-object upon which representation would rely (Halewood, 2013[2011]). This is where the earlier discussion of Whitehead's conception of perception as well as subjectivity

[34] Whitehead's theory of feelings is more complex than can be accounted for here and is tied to his use of the term "prehension". For him, prehensions are understood as 'the feeling of another entity (Halewood, 2013: 31).'

is particularly relevant:

> For Whitehead, subjects do not perceive objects. Rather, subjects (superjects) are formed through prehensions, or through "perceptions" which are really perceptive feelings (Halewood, 2013[2011]: 32).

In any case, this constitutes a much-needed reminder that not feeling or other concepts such as meaning are not capacities possessed by humans – who thenupposedly project these things onto the world – but instead, things like feelings exist in the world. However, Whitehead is clear that feelings are not something external:

> Feelings are not inert data, waiting "out there" to be felt. These feelings make up the concrescence of each entity, in its act of experience: 'Feelings are "vectors"; for they feel what is *there* and transform it into what is *here*' (PR, 87; emphasis in original). It is in this most literal sense that 'life is robbery' (PR, 105). So, Whitehead argues that 'there is a flow of feeling' (PR, 237) (Whitehead, 1978[1929]; cited in Halewood, 2013[2011]: 31).

In this way, processes of feeling are key to becoming(-with) and more generally to the coming to be of existence. This makes sense when considered in the context of Whitehead's doctrine of mutual immanence.

While part of his metaphysical scheme, Whitehead's (1968[1938]) "principle of ontological interconnectedness" or "doctrine of mutual immanence" may help draw out some important points from the above quote. Firstly, Whitehead's philosophy of organism places emphasis on the interrelatedness and interdependency of everything in the world, as interconnectedness is at the heart of the process of life. As Whitehead (1968[1938]: 157) writes in Modes of Thought, all types of occurrences in existence 'influence each other, require each other, and lead on to each other.' To account for this, a doctrine of mutual immanence is necessary, which describes how any occasion of experience is part of the world as experienced (and vice-versa). Put differently, 'we are in the world and the world is in us (165).'

Furthermore, this interconnectedness of all entities allows for the process of integrating the many into a whole – which highlights how "the one" and "the many" are always intertwined. This process is one of appropriation – which Whitehead describes with the term "prehension" – and constitutes an aspect of "the doctrine of creative advance". Crucially, this process of appropriation – through which "the many become one" – is one that takes place between an individual and its environment, and involves the former integrating elements of the latter, whereby both are transformed (see Halewood, 2013[2011]: 88).

Feeling, likeness, and contrast

In order to further explore what sociality might mean beyond human experience, it may be helpful to turn to Whitehead's notions of likeness, contrast, and feeling(s) in more detail.

For Whitehead, societies are formed by individuals that share a 'common character' and are 'alike' in this sense (Whitehead 1978[1929]: 89; cited in Halewood, 2014: 153): 'The likeness of character once again brings the notion of quality to the fore, with regard to the existence of a society. Sociality is likeness.' In this way, Halewood (2014: 153) suggests that Whitehead's notion of sociality foregrounds 'the notion of "likeness"', by which he is referring to 'likeness of character'. What is emphasised here again, is the adverbial aspect – the "how". When discussing Whitehead's thoughts on 'What is social about social order', Halewood further explains that it (the social) is about how or in which manner or mode (actual) entities

> […] manage to *mutually prehend* or grasp each other, thereby establishing a consistency which enables them to be, to endure, and to be recognized as a coherent individual (152; emphasis added).

Thus, Halewood (2014) further emphasises that thinking about the how foregrounds the notion of “the adverbial” (as opposed to the static noun). To my mind, it may be helpful to explore whether a possible definition of sociality could thus be framed as describing processes of how entities come to be and become-with each other and their environment. In this way, sociality could be viewed as related to the manner in which entities are able to feel (prehend or grasp) each other which in turn enables them to hold together or “endure” as societies or individuals.

Thinking in Whiteheadian terms of likeness of character however also requires a discussion of the importance of “contrast”:

> A hot stone and a cold stone are not different because there is some secret core of an implacable stone lying in wait to sometimes take on the quality of being hot, sometimes that of being cold, whilst somehow, mysteriously, remaining the same underneath. Instead, the mutual feeling of hotness by the component parts make up what we call “this hot stone”. Such a hot stone is a society, according to Whitehead. The individuality of this society arises from the contrast between its mutual feelings of hotness and the mutual feeling of coldness by the component parts of another society, which we might call “this cold stone”. To put it another way, one stone feels itself hotly and the other feels itself coldly. This shared feeling makes each stone what it is. A society (Halewood, 2014: 154).

Thinking about where sociality might lie in this example – individual components are able to endure as a society due to the mutuality of feeling(s). This in turn is reliant upon the existence of individuals that do not share these.

4.4 Introducing interspecies sociality as “feeling-for”

Given that myself and my adopted canine companion, Harald, manage to live together and establish a relationship of some form, “sociality” however defined – at this point to be left open – would likely appear to enter the picture somehow. Thus, the remaining chapters suggest one way of approaching sociality, through drawing on my relationship with Harald and our interactions with the wider world. Concerns related to this way of “doing sociology”, will be examined carefully in the next chapter.

Following observations of Harald's interactions with myself and others – and others with us – and viewed from the perspective of sociality as relating to being or becoming-with (or alongside) in some form, certain elements emerge in conversation with Whitehead's thought. To return to the discussion in the previous section, I suggest it may be helpful to frame a possible approach to sociality in terms of describing the process of "feeling-for" each other. However, following Whitehead's thought, this process goes beyond just feeling in a traditional sense, as it for example also includes notions of novelty and transformation, since the process of shared feeling involves novel (re-)combinations of elements (the coming to be of things), whereby one entity enters a process of integrating parts of its "environment". Thus – It appears useful to add on feeling-for (shared/mutual) possibilities.

A question that emerges and will be left open at this point, is whether sociality is in fact closer to the "drive" behind togetherness, as opposed to forms of being-with per se. It is then also a question of how beings come together and endure or persist (and how others do not) – what might conditions of togetherness be? In this way, "mutual feelings" of character or intensity (see Halewood, 2014: 133-4) might play a role in how beings feel-for each other, to the exclusion of others.

There is plenty more to be said on how and to what degree togetherness is established, and when we are talking about connection in some form or something else. The question of how bonds or relationships are formed (and in turn how societies hold together) is a complicated one, but in any case, should not exclude non-human animals. Instead, they should be considered as an actor of equal importance. This is also why a Whiteheadian rendering of sociality as "feeling-for" (mutual possibilities) appears to be sufficiently inclusive – it works just as well in a variety of contexts:

"feeling-for" self, other, humans, nonhuman animals and other beings, but also feeling for music, poetry, or language. In this way it is possible to talk about sociality as distributed widely throughout existence – the sociality of humans, but also planets, organs, genes, and so on.

Before proceeding any further, it is first necessary to outline some of the elements I have selected as a frame through which to understand sociality as "feeling-for:

Mutual possibilities

By feeling-for (shared/mutual) possibilities, I imagine a shared feeling for what individuals could become-with each other – but going beyond this, insofar as it is also a feeling-for what we could create with other. With this first element of mutual possibilities I am thus tentatively bringing together a notion of possibilities, with (mutual) feeling, novelty, and transformation, as well as proposing and creating – both in the sense of producing something or bringing into existence, but also in the sense of relating to Whitehead's (1978[1929]) notion of concrescence and the process of becoming (or coming-to-be of existence).

Togetherness and betweenness

There is also the case of mutual feeling of a certain quality and forming some sort of togetherness. A bodily society can for example be seen as a definite individual, despite all the different parts not necessarily being of the same order or having the same function – but still they are able to experience the same quality, and togetherness, which contrasts with other forms of togetherness. And this holding together is more a coming to be on each occasion anew – thus, better still a feeling (for) each other. Importantly, this mutual feeling is not limited to traditional understandings of subject-object. If sociality then is related to mutual feeling, it does not make sense to say

human sociality is unique or important to be theorised apart from nonhuman sociality for example. Instead, feeling encourages talking terms of process, and betweenness, or what happens “in the middle of things”.

According to this, Harald as a canine for example does not possess a different sociality than me, but instead it is something that comes to be between, with and through us and others (human and nonhuman). We may engage in different styles of play, different ways of communicating and showing affection – but despite all these differences, there is still the possibility for something to be shared. Adapting a Whiteheadian panexperientialism, all bodies have this potential for feeling and experiencing irrespective of consciousness and cognition, though it may be expressed differently. Thinking in this way, there are no grounds for negating the possibility and importance of interspecies relations, socialities, and societies – at least not a priori.

Attentive resonance

If all bodies are “composed” of experiences and feelings, perhaps the ability to build and maintain some sort of connection (including the desire to do in the first place) is related to the way in which individuals manage to attend to each other (related to pre-cognitive understanding) and develop some sort of mutual feeling (for each other) – in the sense of learning about each other, but also going beyond this. The strength of a particular relationship among individuals could then also be expressed in terms of how well flows of feelings resonate with each other – thus establishing some sort of mutuality or shared feeling which fosters togetherness of some form. With this term I am also trying to bring attention to felt qualities that include a wide range of experiences (beyond conscious, rational, or otherwise limited conceptions).

Affinity, enjoyment, and mutual recognition

The next chapter will also introduce two further elements: affinity and enjoyment. Chapter eight will introduce the - for the time being - final element of sociality as feeling-for: mutual recognition. Together, these elements constitute one way of approaching sociality as feeling-for. These will however be further developed and refined over the following chapters.

Chapter Five: Interspecies sociality as "feeling-for" and living together in "close proximity"

5.1 Introduction

> To be able to imagine particular worlds – worlds that we want to bring into being – we need to actively and continuously create those concepts that fit with the unfolding perspectives that embody and inhabit those worlds (Westerlaken, 2021: 525).

One question that has only briefly been addressed, is that of the relationship between sociality and sociability (as well as sociation/societalization which will however be left aside for now). It seems that both concepts have a peculiar relationship with the study of "interspecies" relations in (much of) sociology. If sociability is broadly understood as the capacity to be social, and being social has something to do with interacting and connecting with others, then why have the numerous complicated (successful and unsuccessful) and meaningful – if problematic – relations with nonhuman beings not featured more centrally in sociology?

As has been discussed in chapter three, interspecies relations have also received insufficient attention in fields such as anthropology (Sabloff, 2001), and ethology (Scotton, 2017). Focussing on the specificity of sociology however, the primary concern for the time being, is the common oversight that humans alone have the ability to partake in the "social" realm. This is often done through positing intersubjectivity as necessary for sociability or invoking notions of "civility" as well as "norms" and "values" or "culture", and simultaneously excluding nonhuman animals from this possibility. Thus, a shift from thinking in terms of sociality vs sociability, to "living in close proximity" will be suggested.

The aim of this chapter is not to seek a clear distinction between sociality and sociability, or a clear definition of either, but in the first instance rather to assess the

promise and limitations the concepts have. This is attempted in the context of contributing to the overall thesis aims – particularly the aim to contribute to the development of a non-anthropocentric (sociological) vocabulary.

The first section below will discuss some key concerns pertaining to the above, and the remaining sections will discuss individual elements of sociality as feeling-for (those introduced in chapter four, as well as introducing two new elements). This is to be understood in the context of exploring an alternative way of addressing questions of "sociability". However, this will hopefully become clearer throughout the next sections.

5.2 Sociality or "sociability"?

Rachid Amirou (1989: 116) describes the history of sociability in terms of it being firmly rooted in "everyday life", as well as having ties to phenomenology – thus, highlighting its value for micro-sociology and the sociology of everyday life. It appears that the concept of sociability has not received a great deal of treatment in sociology, which some scholars mark out as peculiar (see for example Anderson, 2015: 98-9; Costa, 2013: 246). When sociability is discussed in sociological circles, this is often done in association with Georg Simmel, as he was able to present a unique sociological perspective on the concept (Costa, 2013). Notably, an article he published in 1910 is often referred to when trying to pinpoint the 'first serious examination of sociability (Henricks 2003) (cited in Anderson, 2015: n1).' However, Simmel's work and its relevance for this thesis (as it pertains to thinking in terms of relations and focussing on "the middle of things") has been addressed in chapter three. In any case, defining sociability appears to be a rather tricky matter, as will be seen below.

Delineating and differentiating sociability

One of the concerns I would like to highlight, is that the concepts of sociability and sociality are used interchangeably by some scholars. The distinction between these two terms, these two concepts, matters primarily in terms of the exclusion of animals from the social sphere often appearing tied to the notion of sociability, as will seen below. Often, where sociality is granted to nonhuman animals, sociability is still denied (for example on the basis of a supposed lack of culture, norms, values, "civilized" conduct, and/or lack of supposedly uniquely human capacities such as language). Moreover, both notions have distinct conceptual histories, and associated challenges, so some clarity is needed.

Although intimately related, sociability has been conceptualized as distinct from "mere" association, as the former notion is wider and more inclusive – the main difference being that sociability, 'also includes the dynamics both of "approaches between subjects" and of "dissociation, separation and distance" (Gallino, 1993) (cited in Costa 2013: 248)'. The concept of sociability can also be rather easily distinguished from "socialization", as 'contrary to the external action of the social control proper to socialization, sociability indicates an internal tendency on the part of people (Costa, 2013: 248).' It appears more difficult, however, to distinguish sociability from the concept of sociality.

To facilitate the sociality/sociability discussion, it t is helpful to turn to Sally Anderson's (2015) comprehensive review of how the concept of sociability has been employed across various disciplines. Anderson (98) for example found that one aspect running throughout various work on sociability, is that the concept is 'regularly treated as though all are familiar with and agreed upon its meaning and application.' One of her

key findings, is that both sociability and sociality are often employed to refer to:

> 1) generic human and animal behavior, 2) socializing with non-kin, semi- intimate others (friends, acquaintances, workmates), 3) civil encounters with people beyond one's personal circle and professional network, and 4) gatherings in voluntary associations, societies, circles, lodges and clubs (98- 99).

The first point is rather telling. That sociality and sociability are used to describe both human and nonhuman animal behaviour indicates an assumption that both humans and other animals can be "social" or "sociable" but does not seem to allow for the possibility of animals engaging with humans, or even beyond their respective species. Similarly, throughout points two to four highlighted in Anderson's review, it appears to be implied that "others", "people", and "gatherings" only apply to humans. Hence gatherings of nonhuman animals with other nonhuman animals would for example be relegated to the "natural sciences", and not seen as sociological subject matter. What is further worthy of discussion here, is the idea that opportunities for sociability are often viewed as tied to certain places where other animals may or may not be visible.

Anderson (2015: 98) does note that some scholars also 'insert qualifiers like 'civil', 'enjoyable', 'amiable,' and even 'sociable' to distinguish 'friendly' sociability from more comprehensive sociality.' Thus, there have indeed also been attempts to think sociability as a concept on its own. Often attempts to define sociability, as separate from sociality, also seem to rely on what Anderson (99) identifies as 'intuitive' conceptualizations, such as those given in textbooks and dictionaries.

Sociability and connotations of positivity

Anderson's (2015) review of various sociological and anthropological scholarship on sociability further highlights that positive connotations are another distinguishing feature often invoked. This is to be understood in terms of a belief that certain enjoyable and friendly or "sociable" interaction can positively impact societies or

communities, through supposedly diminishing the importance of structural hierarchies and divisions. Upon closer inspection however, this can prove problematic, as such assumptions tend to obscure actual events. According to Anderson's research, sociability in the field of sociology (as well as anthropology and history),

> […] share[s] the premise that sociability connotes amiable peer exchange distinguishable from less peaceable exchanges of open conflict and war, even though sociable conversation may be argumentative or about violence (Schiffrin 1984, Rapport 1987) and wars may have sociable moments (Anderson 2008; cited in Anderson, 2015: 102).

Furthermore, in sociology the notion of sociability is also often understood in terms of "civil society" or "civil sociality" (Anderson, 2015). The concept of civil society is in turn tied to the notion of "exosociality", which will be discussed below. Related to this, there is one key development that seems to have had a lasting impact on conceptualizations of sociability. Anderson for example highlights:

> Studies of 18th -19th century Europe focus on emerging forms of urban, elite association – salons, intellectual circles, coffee houses, colonial clubs – their development in relation to changing political and economic systems and their role in fashioning new national, intellectual, and civic publics (Kale 2004, Cowan 2005, Cohen 2009, Lilti 2009). Addressing modernizing processes, these studies are pitched toward moral political discourses of civil etiquette, *fraternité*, community and voluntary association (2015: 99; emphasis in original).

In sum then, definitions of sociability are often tied to notions of commonality, conviviality, exchange, and proximity, as well as universality and civility among autonomous individuals. Furthermore, exclusively "extra-domestic", "non-kin-based" settings – meaning outside of work and home are prioritized.

Sociability as exosociality

Notions of exosociality, as related to civil society in Western social theory, are often viewed as a cornerstone of democracy (Anderson, 2015). Further, legacies of modernist socio-political thought led to studies often maintaining the view of sociability

in the spheres of work and home as “involuntary” and less valuable than sociability beyond those spheres, although there are of course exceptions (Anderson, 2015). As “voluntary” sociability is often seen as “real” sociability, as well as important to the smooth functioning of society or communities, much scholarship is still oriented towards locating sociability outside of work and home. Moreover, the focus is often on the benefits of ‘openness and mixing’ (Anderson, 2015: 106).

This may also point to why the more obvious meaningful interspecies bonds among humans and “companion animals” are neglected, as the latter are often relegated to home. Moreover, spaces traditionally seen as venues for sociability, such as bars and coffeehouses, often exclude most nonhuman animals – although in some Western countries perhaps less so now than in the past.

Such an approach seems rather limiting and not conducive to capturing the complexities of what sociability is and can be. Anderson for example argues for the need to forge alternatives to understanding sociability in terms of “civil society”, and suggests,

> […] to explore problems posed by living in close proximity, not just with reference to political stability and moral rectitude, but also with reference to the experiences of individuals wrestling with how to forge desired relations in and across spheres of social exchange (2015: 106).

This seems like a good start for sociological inquiry beyond the human.

From sociability to living together in close proximity

Anderson (2015) argues that all things considered, there has indeed been a concerted effort to develop conceptualizations of sociability that reach a certain “level of specificity”, and that this is at once also evidence of its usefulness. For example,

> We might begin by investigating how and why the tenuous good form of

> graceful, gemütlich, exacting, yet cathartic sociability, undertheorized as it is, effortlessly musters moral appraisal, political unease, and scholarly tracking (104).

In this way, Anderson (105) argues that in comparison to notions of "sociality", "sociability" is built upon 'more specific conceptual ground.' There is much to be said regarding possibilities of (sociological) definitions of sociability, and I would agree that it is a promising concept.

Given the need to find new ways of living well with human and nonhuman beings, I would like to pick up on Anderson's (2015: 106) notion of "living in close proximity", as applied to the question of "social exchange" or how relations are negotiated – as introduced in the previous sub-section. This lens appears sufficiently open and inclusive of various modes of experience. It is in this context that the next sections can be understood as a "critique" of traditional (sociological) understandings of sociability in terms of human norms, values, and problematic notions of "civilized" behavior. The elements of sociality introduced below, could further be seen as an alternative way of approaching questions of "living together" (in close proximity).

5.3 Togetherness, attentiveness and mutual possibilities

Becoming attentive

Given our living situation and Harald's restricted choice in staying with me, we could perhaps have become accustomed to each other, through simply existing alongside each other. "Accustomed" is to be understood in the sense of learning about each other, and the ability to engage with and/or attend and respond to each other. In any case, there do seem to be certain situations or events that are more conducive to what I experience as "connection" or a similar form of togetherness. Some of these will be explored in this section.

"Doing"

Sharing space with each other is indeed a big part of "doing", but also communication – for example through eye contact and with time increasingly touch, voice and words. As we spend more time together, ways of interacting become frequent and varied. For example, it took Harald some time until he enjoyed and initiated touching, and accepted cuddles and hugs (on certain terms). It took him a while to feel comfortable vocalising needs, wants and complaints – the first times were to let me know he is scared or wants to go to the garden, then eventually when he wanted to go outside for a walk or make a more opinionated sounding statement of protest usually when a friend stopped playing with him, or unjustly "told him off". More generally, in one sense, it is through "doing things" that opportunities for connection, or togetherness arise, and capacity to respond evolves.

Main "activities" then are for example walking, which we do on a daily basis and can itself involve further activities. In terms of connecting, doing things actively involved with each other clearly presents plenty of opportunities, but so can partially attending to the other, or merely existing alongside each other. A lot of time is spent just sitting together in silence, sometimes with both of us seemingly more present, other times half asleep or lost in thought.

We also sleep and dream[35] next to each other, as Harald chooses to sleep in the bedroom with me (he always has at least another sofa bed available, and in our last house had another spare bed in the study), which I appreciate as well. I still remember

[35] We are both very vocal and active dreamers (in Harald's case lots of running and smelling judging by his nose (and eyes) twitching and paws moving) – and from Harald's expressions, it seems we both have nightmares (I assume this, since he often yelps and growls while sleeping).

the first time he came upstairs to sleep very vividly. He had never been upstairs at all, and a few weeks in, I woke in the middle of the night to him slowly climbing the stairs and cautiously laying down in the space between bed and wall[36]. I laid a blanket down for him and the next day moved his spare bed to the spot he had chosen. That night was also the night the thought of naming him "Harald" (in memory of my father) popped into my head, which was my way of honouring both. He has also only slept in my bed with me throughout the night a handful of times (it is very snug, even though I bought a larger than needed mattress so everyone could fit) – when I am in another room working (when we used to live with my ex and their dog, we all used to "hang-out" and lounge on the bed together more, but now I usually only spend time there for napping/sleeping, so Harald does not stay on the bed with me for too long. At night, as soon as I start adjusting my bedding and his, or when I turn the light off, or at the latest once I get into bed, Harald moves himself to his own bed.

We also play together – Harald did not engage in any playful activity until he had a solo play session in the garden about a week in (despite my best efforts to entice him), and it took even longer for us to play together – and playful moments are shared daily. However, this activity will be discussed more thoroughly in a later chapter. Other events are for example: I groom him, and he occasionally tries to clean my fingers. Sometimes we eat alongside each other or share the same (vegan) food together. There are of course plenty of less reciprocal activities too, such as me forcing him to take pills, giving him eyedrops, or cleaning up after him.

What matters here most, is togetherness, capacity for response, and generally feeling for the other, can be fostered by "being" and "doing".

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[36] See appendix, photograph 2.

Shared interest

It seems however also possible to isolate more specific elements in relation to being and doing. For example, sometimes Harald will take an interest in observing me “do things” at home (like write or tend to houseplants) and similarly I enjoy watching him do things (like sniff outside or observe the birds). We explore different paths and places – the woods, pubs, cafés, campus, beaches, parks, streams and rivers. Sometimes we both take interest in something happening around us, or in what the other is doing and there is a clear shared interest in something specific – such as a train passing or an unidentified noise. This shared interest is in our case perhaps most clearly indicated through eye contact or gestures (such as “checking-in” and the “boop” which will be discussed later on). Importantly, then – relevant to the present discussion as it pertains to sociality – perhaps, “doing” together matters also in the sense of experiencing and feeling together or alongside each other.

There are of course many other dimensions to this. For example, the relationship I have with Harald, or our connection, goes beyond just ourselves. Just as important are our encounters and interdependency with other beings (human and nonhuman). Particularly when it comes to shared interest or attention to something, the ability to attend and respond to the other is mediated and/or transformed by the presence of external bodies and events.

Mutual possibilities of becoming

Through all these events and experiences, we started getting used to each other’s day to day lives, carved out certain routines and ways of interacting with each other, and got to know what the other likes and dislikes (albeit in a rather asymmetrical way, since as much as I try to give Harald “freedom”, it is more often than not still me who gets

to make the majority of decisions – more on negotiation will be discussed in a later chapter). However, there is much that escapes the limitations of words here, as there is likely more to connecting than likes and dislikes.

There are of course factors that may have made it easier or more difficult for either of us to attend to, and engage with the other, such as how well we can physiologically perceive each other, or how much previous experience we had with canines and humans. However, what to my mind matters most, is to "get to know", or foster feeling-for the individual, as opposed to the "species" or "breed" of dog. This is for example in line with recent studies demonstrating that the breed is not necessarily a good indicator or predictor of the behaviour of individual dogs (see for example Morril et al., 2022). Harald is not just any dog, and I am not just any human. As discussed in chapter four, togetherness does not need to depend on whether bodies or individuals are of the same "order" or "species". Instead, thinking in terms of feeling-for, enables a focus on betweenness and the middle of things.

I suggest that overall, being and doing with, at once enables, and is enabled by, feeling-for (human and nonhuman) others, whereby attentiveness may play a large role. This is in turn also facilitated by elements such as shared interest. This can for example be expressed through feeling-for: knowing what one can ask and expect of the other; having a sense of what the other can do and what one can do together; how one might impact or transform and be impacted or transformed by; how one might make the other feel and what might be felt in turn; how one might feel together; what one might create together. In short, what mutual possibilities might be entertained.

In this way, an element of sociality is shared feeling in terms of feeling-for mutual possibilities (for being, doing, and importantly creating something new – thus highlighting the aspect of novelty. There is however also another part to this understanding of feeling-for mutual possibilities, pertaining to transformation. This will be discussed in more detail in the section below. However, attentiveness (including notions of openness, as well as responding, and attuning to another) constitutes another interrelated element.

Transformation

When considering sociality in terms of living well and togetherness, what might also be worth discussing, are the myriad of ways my life has transformed (through attending to Harald).

In one sense, this transformation is to be understood in simple terms, for example as the impact we have on another. I have changed what I wear (more time spent outdoors in all weather and terrain means a particular choice of clothing and footwear), my overall priority has become keeping Harald “safe”, I now walk every day, and my daily routine has changed (for example, I now avoid leaving the house on short notice if Harald is not invited, as I would need to get his food, water, treats, and toys ready for my absence, as well as make sure he has had a long walk before I leave, which usually also means another shower and fresh change of clothes is required for myself). My finances are severely impacted, and so is my own wellbeing. My choice of living arrangements and even furniture has changed, so as to make things as comfortable as financially possible for Harald. Harald’s dependency on myself is just as much a determining factor in accommodating him as well as possible as is my love for him (and perhaps guilt for remaining complicit in his marginalisation).

My life has also been transformed by Harald in the sense that I now know my neighbours, and lots of people in the village, as he attracts lots of attention. I am now also aware of which houses in the neighbourhood have resident canines – and to a lesser degree felines.

In another sense, my life has also been transformed on a deeper level, as my very existence and the world itself changes. I generally perceive, experience or feel things differently. In terms of sense-perception for example, I look at things differently – as I become more attuned to Harald, and accustomed to how he responds to different events, my concern for him and his wellbeing moves me to attend to those things in an effort to intervene, assist, mediate, respond, or guide if necessary. This for example involves keeping an eye and ear (and perhaps all my senses) out for anything that could startle Harald (such as shadows, or trees, bags, and flags moving in the wind), or anything on the ground that could hurt his paws (there is a tremendous amount of broken glass on the streets in seems).

Transformation on “a deeper level” is also to be understood in yet another sense, as him fundamentally changing my past, present and future. Through becoming aware of and attending to and doing with each other, he has become part of my past experience(s) and thus part of me (although in a process ontology, everything is part of everything – see discussion of the principle of interconnectedness in the previous chapter), and my future (and vice versa). Moreover, what is possible beyond our relationship also changes. In this way, being and doing and attending to another also enables and enabled by (mutual) transformation.

Introducing “enjoyment”

There is also much more to be said about interest in connecting, being, and doing with others. For the time being this could perhaps be understood as a willingness to attend to the other, as opposed to complete disregard. This will be explored further below.

Apart from interest in and curiosity for Harald, and vice versa, this applies just as much to bodies and events beyond our immediate relationship. For example, on walks humans often try to engage with Harald as much as he does, albeit with varying success. Often Harald will run circles around people to try and engage them in play, and sometimes the humans will be interested but do not know how to respond, or other times people try to run with him but then Harald gets too scared. Other times people will really want to connect with Harald – I say connect as opposed to interact because it appears for example simply vocally saying “hi” is not enough. Primarily it seems to be a desire for connecting through touch, resulting in a lot of hands stretched out in Harald’s direction. Harald however has in no circumstances voluntarily accepted touch from people he does not know (brief hand-to-snout-contact is fine if it happens while being offered a treat). It even took months for my partner at the time to be able to pat Harald, and about a year to be able to hug him. Encounters with plants, and rocks and bodies of water however matter just as much.

I suggest here that interest in being, doing and connecting with others can also be expressed as enjoyment, in the sense of delighting in each other’s company (just for the sake of being together or alongside each other[37]. Another element of sociality then,

[37] This is for example also key to how Simmel (1908) understood “sociability”. However, this aspect would require further discussion. See also Irvine on ‘the reciprocal pleasure of sharing each other's company (cited in Tedeschi, 2016: 167).’

is enjoyment, which fosters (and is perhaps fostered by) being with and doing with others, as well as encourages responsiveness and “getting to know” each other.

Introducing “affinity”

Staying with the notion of “living well” together (although not as well as we could, as the relationship is fundamentally inequal), what helps Harald and I “get along” – or connect well – or be interested in – or respond to each other or in this sense (in addition to “doing things together” as discussed above), is perhaps also that we are “alike” in some ways, or that we have certain things “in common” (this also ties in with how I made the decision to adopt Harald to live with me in the first place).

Alike is then to be understood in the sense of affinity here. For example, despite each of us being classified as human vs canine, we are both rather anxious, sensitive, and appreciate a quiet home. We both appear to enjoy “engaging” or interacting with others (human or animal) – and in this sense I suppose we would be labelled as “social/sociable” in a conventionally understood sense. We also have activities we enjoy in common, such as spending time exploring outdoors independent of weather conditions, which for example returns us to the role of shared experience and “doing”. Taking this a little further, I am for example able to spend much more one-on-one time with Harald and can be around him 24/7, without feeling as exhausted as I would from spending time with a talkative human – I am easily overwhelmed by verbal communication. For the same reason, I very much appreciate our walks together, as I (more often than not) just like to walk in silence and observe the scenery. Similarly, I become rather exhausted from spending lots of time with very talkative canines who always want to be “talking” and doing things actively engaged with each other all the time.

In this way affinity can be seen as another element of sociality, which in turn enables, and in is enabled by, being and doing with the other (as well as attending). Another line of thought would be thinking about the experiences and feelings – not just the ones we shared, or evoked in each other, but also those from our past. Furthermore, it is also yet to be established how this may or may not relate to Whitehead's notions of likeness (of character) and contrast (see Halewood, 2014).

5.4 "Feeling-for" as a process of becoming attentive

Earlier on in the previous section it has been established that various elements have the potential to facilitate the process of feeling-for (including attending) to another. This is for example expressed in how or which manner we engage with each other.

Harald and I continuously develop unique ways of communicating and engaging with and responding to each other. For example, in our current living arrangement, my bed is on the floor at the same height as Harald's, with his bed positioned to border mine at a right angle, so that often his head is right next to mine. As of late, Harald seems to have become more responsive to me stirring and as soon as I open my eyes, he seeks eye-contact and positions his body in a certain way, inviting attention and belly rubs or ear scratches. So, I started responding by shifting closer to him and reaching an arm over to do just that. I will then usually roll back over to sleep, and this can be repeated multiple times until I decide to wake up, or until Harald decides to ask me to wake up.

When he started getting was comfortable with me, he used to his paw to wake me up, now he usually just looks at me and whines – however, if he wakes me up because he needs me to open the garden door, he does this by whining from downstairs – and

it is a very specific whine so I recognise what he needs right away and hurry myself downstairs (apart from the colder months, I leave the door open for him all day but close it at night for safety reasons).

I have also grown accustomed to his different whines, barks, and growls, and he has grown accustomed to my various moods. He has learned dozens of words, and changed their meaning, and we have co-constructed various other ways of being and doing together.

In this way, mutual feeling or feeling-for in terms of attending to the other, could also be expressed as attuning to the other. In terms of the strength and/or endurance of feeling-for, or togetherness, this may however also be understood as resonance, as introduced in chapter four.

Re-introducing attentive resonance

Resonance works well on various levels – understood both in the sense of various dictionary meanings, as well as the connotations it evokes. It seems to conjure up images of energy and movement, of feelings and flows, and music and harmony, Importantly, it carries with it notions of possibilities, novelty, and transformation. Thus, one way of thinking about togetherness is in terms of how well flows of feelings resonate, which allows for encompassing other elements of betweenness, and mutual possibilities.

It further works as it allows for attending to the senses, as well non-sensuous experience, or non-conscious experience, such as feeling the past carry over into the future. Resonance is then meant in terms of “chimes” or “goes well” with, or perhaps affinity in a sense. But also, beyond in terms of creating something new through this

resonance — this coming together of parts, beings or bodies is transformative, and generative. Generative in the sense of creative, as related to Whitehead's understanding of concrescence and becoming (see chapter four).

5.5 "Feeling-for", mutual possibilities, and moments of togetherness

As mentioned earlier on, it feels to me that some "shared" moments or events, facilitated togetherness, as well as "closeness" in the sense of intimacy, and getting to know or responding to each other – but perhaps also anticipation for mutual possibilities on a deeper level. Mutual possibilities in terms of how we might become otherwise together, how we might move and be moved by each other, what we can do with and for the other, what we might experience and feel with-through-for the other. The moments I am referring to here are of a slightly different character than those described when discussing "doing things" together in the section above. While all events involve doing things, those discussed below are much more specific. This section then focusses in more detail on the notions of togetherness, and mutuality (shared/mutual feeling), but relates to various elements of sociality.

One specific event I was able to note, was the first time Harald and I spent the night somewhere else together. We were both very excited and upon returning "home", it felt our relationship had been "transformed" in some sense. By this I mean perhaps a shift in tone or atmosphere, in terms of feeling more or differently with and for each other – perhaps due to an openness to each other. Importantly, this shift is felt (between).

Other events however are not easy to pinpoint as such, but instead sometimes only changes in how we engage and attend to each other stand out (without being able

to identify why the changes happened). For example, there are occasions where I notice he accepts or tolerates my expressions of affection longer (after a few months I was able to embrace him, give him kisses, and now – a few years on – I can cuddle up to him in his bed and rest my head on him for a certain length of time). This is likely tied up with concerns discussed in the sections on attentiveness and resonance.

However, the most poignant example to my mind – in terms of togetherness and becoming or constructing a "we" – involves a rather simple gesture or sequence of gestures initiated by Harald: the "boop". The "boop" has so far always occurred – as I perceive it – in the context of Harald and I delighting ourselves in something we experienced, are experiencing, or are about to experience. We will for example be walking back from the shop and I will tell him 'well done/thank you for waiting' which earns me a waggy tail among other expressions, and more often than not his feeling will shift my feeling to something closer to his – which I am inclined to describe in terms of energy, tone or vibration – at which point Harald will suddenly turn around and touch me with his nose, followed by a full body wiggle from him, which in turn elicits a giggle from me. This may or may not involve eye contact, but in any case, this moment seems to be a mutual acknowledgement of togetherness in some way. I should note the intention despite context was not immediately clear the first time Harald "booped" me – we were as described above in both similarly cheerful spirits and attending to each other. However, due to the sudden movement/him seeking contact with his snout, I jumped aside in surprise. After reading the rest of his signals I assumed it was in fact a friendly gesture, which seemed to be confirmed the next time this occurred.

To my mind, these examples are a good illustration of the depth and complexity of

certain experiences or feelings, and the challenge of relaying these through words. This links into Whitehead's remark that certain experiences appear resistant to language and propositional analysis. It might then also be of interest to explore the ways in which this is the case, and how best to approach the issue.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed previously suggested elements of sociality in more detail: mutual possibilities (and related notions of novelty and transformation), and resonance (whereby notions of attentiveness were elaborated upon). Two new elements were also introduced: affinity, and enjoyment. The chapter has further explored the ways in which the various suggested elements and aspects of sociality might relate to each other. The section on "feeling ourselves as 'we'" has further examined specific events that appeared to facilitate togetherness (through mutual feeling).

It has also been suggested that the elements of sociality discussed in this chapter might well constitute an alternative way of approaching questions of sociability (as understood in the context of living in close proximity and building relations with each other), that does not have to exclude nonhuman animals (and other beings). The next chapter builds upon this and will focus on exploring the limitations of togetherness and living alongside each other through notions of attentiveness, and resistance.

Chapter Six: Exploring interspecies sociality through resistance, response, and attentiveness

6.1 Introduction

> Response, of course, grows with the capacity to respond, that is, responsibility. Such a capacity can be shaped only in and for multidirectional relationships, in which always more than one responsive entity is in the process of becoming. That means that human beings are not uniquely obligated to and gifted with responsibility; animals as workers in labs, animals in all their worlds, are response-able in the same sense as people are; that is, responsibility is a relationship crafted in intra-action through which entities, subjects and objects, come into being (Haraway, 2013[2008]: 71).

When considering sociality in a wider sense or perhaps even sociability in a narrower sense, it seems important to look beyond cooperative and peaceful aspects of interactions, encounters and relationships. Particularly when attending to multi-, or interspecies settings, staying open to troublesome encounters has the potential to at the very least yield interesting insight, as has for example been demonstrated by Donna Haraway's (2016) "staying with the trouble", Anna Tsing's (2005) emphasis on "friction", and Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw and Fikile Nxumalo's (2015) work on encounters between raccoons and children (see also Pacini-Ketchabaw, Taylor, and Blaise, 2016).

Thinking of examples of such troublesome encounters in general, and more specifically in human-nonhuman contexts, what first springs to mind are instances of resistance. While perhaps part of any relationship, resistance also plays a large role in how Harald and I interact and relate to each other and the wider world. Thus, this chapter will approach resistance as a way of thinking about forms and conditions of togetherness. It is in this context that the suggested elements of sociality (understood as feeling-for), as outlined in the previous two chapters, will be further developed.

The focus will be placed on mutual possibilities (and notions of novelty and

transformation), and resonance (and notions of attentiveness). In order to do this, the first section of this chapter will address questions surrounding resistance in relation to agency, and then in terms of becoming 'response- able'. The latter utilises Vinciane Despret (2013a) and Haraway's (2013[2008]) work on "becoming-with" (humans and nonhumans), understood as a question of developing the ability to respond to each other.

6.2 Resistance and agency

One concept often associated with discussions over resistance in sociological literature, is "agency" – or more specifically, the question over whether resistance is an indicator of agency. Some animal studies literature has focussed on utilising examples of animal resistance in order to argue that agency is not restricted to humans, and in order to draw attention to those cases where animals have attempted to escape their horrid conditions. Jason Hribal (2010) has for example written extensively on the subject, and argues:

> Every captive animal knows, through learned response and direct experience, which behaviours are rewarded and which ones are punished. These animals understand that there will be consequences for incorrect actions. If they refuse to perform, if they attack a trainer, or if they escape their cage, they know that they will be beaten, have their food rations reduced, and be placed in solidarity confinement. Captive animals know all of this and yet they still carry out such actions—often with a profound sense of determination. This is why these behaviours can be understood as a true form of resistance. These animals, as will be shown throughout the book, are rebelling with knowledge and purpose. They have a conception of freedom and a desire for it. They have agency. Hribal (2021)

In this way, he is asserting that animals can be aware of their conditions and seek to change them.

Bob Carter and Nickie Charles (2013) for example, would agree that animals can challenge their individual conditions, but not resist through collective organisation.

This relates to a further question that often arises – whether animals are capable of not only primary agency, but also corporate agency or "organised" resistance. Carter and Charles draw on case studies involving lab rats and the 'Tamworth Two' (pigs) in order to argue that they are capable of the former, but not the latter:

> […] they cannot organize collectively to resist the relations of power and domination within which they are enmeshed. They can, however, act individually to avoid particular effects of these relations, as in the lab rats or the Tamworth pigs referred to earlier, and there is a sense in which, if an animal (human or non-human) does something that it prefers to do and which runs contrary to the conditions of its primary being, it challenges those conditions (2013: 334-5).

Thinking in terms such as the above ultimately however appears to be rather limited. An extensive critique of this is however not the aim.

A few points do need to be noted regardless. Firstly, collectively organised resistance can be problematic when talking about human animals too – or if not problematic, then at the very least not a great starting point. It might also be that individual resistance is never completely independent, and collective resistance never involves absolute (inter-)dependency. Secondly, resistance may not be recognisable[38] as such (as it may not match what we expect to see), or even be rendered invisible – this applies to both instances of individual and collective resistance. There are examples among groups of nonhuman animals that could be considered as acts of collective resistance, and authors such as Hribal would agree. Finally, given that "animals" are very much able to work together to achieve certain things, why should they not also be capable of working together to resist those very relations that they are aware of – and they are aware of them because they are affected by them, even if they may not

[38] This happens all too often – case in point: the assumption that a lot of interactions are driven by aggressive behaviour, when co-operative, peaceful interactions are often simply less easy to spot (to some humans). See for example Alger and Alger (1999) on this.

know the particulars. Is it not more likely the case that power imbalances are so pronounced that individual or collective resistance becomes impossible or invisible[39] even if desired or attempted?

As others such as Kathryn Gillespie (2016: 125-7) have pointed out, spaces[40] are often set up in ways that pre-empt, render invisible, and/or limit instances of resistance, in addition to allowing for maximum control on behalf of the human involved. Furthermore, breeding conventions mean that even prior to the nonhuman animal's birth, potential traits that are seen as making resistance more unlikely are "selected" for (for example "docility"). For Gillespie, this is to be understood in the context of prioritising maximum profitability, whereby animal resistance poses a threat to the accumulation of capital:

> Because these moments of resistance are seen as threats to the efficient accumulation of capital, they become practical problems to be prevented or mitigated through breeding and spatial or bodily management. It is partly this inability to see acts of nonhuman resistance as an agential rejection of the legal and economic structural conditions that make them first ownable and then commodifiable. And it is their property status, and the ability to profit from their commodification, that obscures human recognition of their resistance as more than isolated incidents of psychosis or bad temperament (2016: 126-7).

There is much more to be said on the accumulation of capital here, but further

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[39] This applies to most contexts of human-animal interactions in the West at least – considering how (perhaps more often than not) nonhuman animals find themselves embroiled in exploitative settings such as agriculture, pet ownership and the wildlife trade.

[40] While Temple Grandin's work on designing slaughterhouses (to make them less scary places for the animals) is perhaps praised more than criticised, some scholars such as Gillespie (2016: 126) point out that these efforts could equally be seen as serving the purpose of maximum efficiency (read profitability) – this in turn also involves pre-empting resistance on behalf of those about to be slaughtered. For an excellent paper on the problematic of Temple Grandin's work, see for example also Muller and McNeill (2021).

considerations will be left aside for the time being[41]. What matters for the moment, is that Hribal, as well as Gillespie seem to leave more room for a richer understanding of resistance than Carter and Charles do – at least for the purposes at hand. While they would perhaps agree that individual animals can challenge their conditions, questions related to underlying processes, such as a potential link between dissatisfaction with current circumstances, the desire for "freedom" (as Hribal put it above), and envisioning alternatives are left open. To my mind such lines of inquiry may allow for imaginative approaches.

6.3 From resistance and response to attentiveness

Thinking togetherness through resistance

For the purposes at hand, a more fruitful way of thinking is suggested by Despret, who argues that becoming an agent is an altogether entirely separate process from that of resistance – hence resistance is not equivalent to reacting (or acting):

> From all these testimonies, I would suggest that an animal resisting indeed appears as the very subject of the action, but it is not the same process as the one by which he/she becomes an agent. "Agenting" (as well as "acting") is a relational verb that connects and articulates narratives (and needs "articulations"), beings of different species, things, and contexts. There is no agency that is not interagency. There is no agency without agencement, a rapport of forces (2013b: 44).

To start with then, resistance could be viewed loosely as going beyond mere "reaction", not necessarily in terms like "defiance", but instead as constituting part of a dialogue. Adapting Despret's terminology, some instances of resistance are for example more aptly understood as an 'open responding':

> Resisting is not reacting, but open responding embedded in a cascade of "faire faire," "making to do," which is open to surprise and which testifies to the active involvement of the beings in (and creating) the agencement. In moments of

[41] For comprehensive critical work on nonhuman animals and capital(ism), see for example: Bob Torres (2007), David Nibert (2002; 2013), and Richard Twine (2012).

> resistance, spheres of vulnerability and spheres of activity overlap and make salient the intimate co-involvement of the creatures that are engaging one another in an ever-new story. They become “companion-agents” through encounters, conflicts, collaborations, frictions, affinities—a rapport of forces (2013b: 44).

Hence, it is always at once also about more than just resistance. Where moments of resistance can be found, one will also find a relationship of some sort – even if a fleeting one – but is bound to create possibilities as much as “frictons”.

I would suggest the important aspect for the task at hand, in terms of conceptualising sociality, is that resistance is one way of thinking about conditions of togetherness and being-with. As Despret draws attention to in this passage, the possibility of a troublesome encounter, frictions or even conflict, can be central to a (“responsible”) relation:

> There is, in fact, a kind of “acting as if ” that leads to a transformation of self, a deliberate artifact that cannot and does not want to pretend toward authenticity or to some kind of romantic fusion that is often evoked in human–animal relations. We are, moreover, quite far removed from this romantic version of a peaceful encounter when Smuts insists on the fact that progress was clearly visible to her when the baboons began to make her realize that conflict was possible when they shot her evil looks. The possibility of conflict and of its negotiation is the very condition of the relation (Despret, 2016: 17).

Crucially, as highlighted elsewhere (Despret, 2013b: 44), resistance is where ‘co-involvement’ may become visible. Resistance often also enables the more unequal aspects of relations to be laid bare and may bring previously invisible cooperation to light – see for example Despret’s (2013b) discussion of Jocelyne Porcher on cows withdrawing their work. Thus, for Despret (2016: 17), becoming-with ultimately means ‘receiving and creating the possibility to inscribe oneself in a relation of exchange and proximity that has nothing to do with identification [empathy].’ This will however be picked up again in the next chapter.

In the context of sociality and feeling-for mutual possibilities, instances of conflict (under which I am tentatively including moments of resistance) then offer opportunities for mutual transformation, in the sense of opening up new possibilities of being, doing and attending to another. In this way, encounters or events seen as “un-cooperative” or “non-peaceful” can be – somewhat counterintuitively – conducive to forms of togetherness and being-with others and need not be a hindrance.

6.4 Resistance, attentiveness and conditions of togetherness

Thinking with Harald on resistance

At the start of Harald and I living together, instances of what I would class as resistance were perhaps particularly frequent. During the first month of Harald’s time with me, he refused to venture outside beyond the garden, for the first few weeks he resisted walking on the lead in the garden, and often also resisted moving between spaces within the house. During one incident, he got scared by me carrying garbage bags through the house (although that was probably just the final straw at the time) and decided to hide around the corner in the garden. He then resisted my verbal attempts to convince him to come back inside the house – I gave up for a while but it was raining heavily and the water was starting to pool where he was sitting, so when it was getting closer to an hour of him being out in the cold (during November), I approached him cautiously and manged to scoop him up and carry him inside.

There was also a period during which Harald suddenly developed a fear of bridges, including those crossed many times before, and refused to cross paths that were paved with similar panelling. This resulted in us having to adapt many of our main walking routes until he conquered his fear again. Harald also managed to refuse entering the veterinary practice for his first check-up as he was too scared. He was

then able to be seen outside for a brief examination. I then changed veterinary practices, for various reasons, and upon our visit at the new place, he protested briefly at the door, but followed me inside reluctantly. However, he then also refused to accompany the vet without me, so despite Covid-19 regulations in the surgery, I was allowed to walk him to examination room. During the next visit, he was allowed to stay in the waiting room to receive his vaccinations (he has all mandatory and suggested vaccinations). He tried to escape the vet approaching him with the vaccine by attempting to crawl underneath my legs and the chairs, but I did not let him.

Harald for example also resists taking his pills (unsuccessfully but nonetheless) – I do not apply force, but I keep my fingers around is snout, so he doesn't spit out the pill - which he still manages to do a few times each try). A further example would be when we had to move house again, and Harald did not take it as well as the previous moves (or he was responding to and mirroring my own feelings). This was made clear to me through various acts of resistance: upon arrival outside the new house, I let him off lead and he bolted, and for the first few weeks he would refuse to go back inside after our walks and so on.

Now, what the above examples of events involving myself and Harald seem to have in common, is that I created situations for him, to which he responded fearfully and withdrew his compliance. Without this, however, I would have remained oblivious to the discomfort I had unintentionally or intentionally exposed to. In this way, I suggest that resistance – as a form of response – constitutes an important element in how Harald and I learn about each other. But going beyond this, underscoring the importance of not conflating resisting with reacting, some of these instances of resistance, involve Harald demanding or asking something of me, and my ability to

respond to him in return.

This is why Haraway proposes an 'affective ecology' underpinned by a 'feminist ethic of "response-ability"', in which notions of affect, curiosity and creativity are seen as suffusing human and nonhuman beings alike (2016: 68; see also 2013[2008]). To draw attention to the affective dimensions of responsibility, Haraway has sketched out a very specific idea of 'response-ability', which highlights – as the name indicates – an ability to respond, and to affect/be affected. Response-ability can be viewed as a 'praxis of care and response **(**2016: 105)' and entails first and foremost acknowledging that we all play a part in creating the conditions for who lives and dies, and how – albeit to different degrees (28-9; 116). As Haraway sums up:

> Hannah Arendt and Virginia Woolf both understood the high stakes of training the mind and imagination to go visiting, to venture off the beaten path to meet unexpected, non-natal kin[42], and to strike up conversations, to pose and respond to interesting questions, to propose together something unanticipated, to take up the unasked-for obligations of having met. This is what I have called cultivating response-ability (2016: 130).

I would now like to highlight a few points made throughout this section, particularly in the context of making conditions of togetherness visible.

Firstly, it is worth considering "(unasked-for) obligations of having met" (and varying degrees of responsibility) in more detail. To my mind, an opportunity presents itself here to arrive at a more inclusive understanding of responsibility that moves away from a preoccupation with rights and traditional conceptions of ethics, toward one that is closer to an aesthetic, and may well include duties and obligations, but centres

[42] I would like to note that Haraway has been criticized on the grounds of veering towards some variant of eco-fascism in her overemphasis on non-natal kin (for a thorough overview see for example Mattheis, 2022). Another criticism of her work I suggest worth considering – despite all its valuable contributions – would be that Haraway is not critical enough when it comes to the use/abuse of nonhuman animals.

attentiveness, feeling – and perhaps mutual recognition (mutual recognition will be suggested as an additional element of sociality in chapter eight).

Secondly, the notion of posing and responding to interesting questions is also key, along with 'proposing together something unanticipated.' But I would also add that this asking questions and responding applies in a further sense: demanding and asking for concern, or to be heard. Akin to the first point, this also moves us more in the direction of understanding responsibility in terms of response-ability and underscores the need to think carefully about "ethics". This is in line with Despret's conception of responsibility as open responding or a dialogue. However, I suggest resistance and response can be seen as aspects of attentiveness. This idea of it being a dialogue and process appears helpful to start with at least.

6.5 Forms of resistance

While it is still open whether certain instances are perhaps better understood as separate from resistance, and for example refusal or avoidance may be more fitting, perhaps resisting always entails more than resistance in the first place.

Resisting through not-responding

While some examples are relatively easy to categorise as akin to negotiation or constituting part of a dialogue of some form, other ways of Harald 'resisting' are less straightforward. Not listening/paying attention or "ignoring" me is for example something that Harald does frequently when I am asking him not to – this is usually in order to approach another dog on the lead. For example, I let Harald off lead and harness as soon as we entered the path to the park, and as soon as I did that, I spotted a human with a dog on the lead. I instinctively told him to stay, and he tried to run, so

I grabbed on to his collar, while he tried to wiggle his way out of my grip. The dog and human passed, and I got a 'thank you' – I assume for attempting to stop Harald running up to them. As they had passed, I let Harald go, and (as I should have expected) he instantly turned around and ran after them – I shouted after him 'no come here', so the human turned around and said 'oh', and Harald may have listed to me but seemed more likely he lost interest himself and ran back to me. In the previous examples, Harald was resisting but still "paying attention" to me, however when he flat out ignores me, our "connection" is revealed to be "conditional". The question remains - is this not-responding still a form of responding? Does it matter? Does this still constitute a form of "dialogue"?

Resisting through "escape"

Harald has also attempted to "escape" a couple of times and this is also perhaps less aptly described as negotiation. The first time when he arrived – as soon as we had carried him into the house and living room, he bolted outside in the garden and scanned the fence for a way to escape. As it took him a month (on Christmas day) to set foot outside with me, and the garden was "secure" there was not much opportunity to escape, although he may have liked to on occasions.

The second time Harald tried to escape, was on our second walk. We went out with a collar instead of a harness (for the first and last time), which slipped over his head as something spooked Harald and he backed out of it. He refused to listen to my requests to come back and was running around seemingly panicked. Luckily, we were walking around the paths leading around a square block of apartment complexes, which was only accessible from one of the sides. This meant I was able to position my body so as to direct him away from the entrance, and ultimately

managed to corner him, and slip his collar and lead back on.

Not too long after this, he ran away as the lead slipped out of my hand as he was chasing after something, but the lead attached was quite heavy and noisy which probably added to him getting scared once he got to the sidewalk and street area. He then ran back from the secluded woody walking area to a side street close to home, where I found him eventually – someone was also there keeping an eye on him from across the street and they then explained he was too scared to be approached.

The only time he returned right away after running off in those beginning stages, was because of an ambulance driving past in audible distance to the off-lead nature reserve/working farm area where we were walking. At the time there was notably not much trust built up – nowadays he still gets scared quite easily, but if off lead, he will run a short distance but has so far always returned right away (but only in cases involving him being frightened by an object/sound/human or dog person – as will be discussed below, he has in at least one instance refused to come back after running away in order to inspect something of interest).

Almost an entire year passed without any more such incidents, until the time Harald ran ahead when I asked him to stay and put on his harness on. He hesitated at the road, but he did not stop (thankfully it is a very quiet cul-de-sac, but cars do sometimes pass through – which was my main worry). A passer-by on the sidewalk across the road on the opposite side of the entrance we had left, looked at me shouting Harald, while Harald was trotting somewhat casually in the other direction, but continued walking. And I continued shouting. After sniffing some house entrances further up the street, he indicated he was going to come back, but then changed his mind. I then half-screamed “ey” at him and wildly gestured back to the path, while hurrying toward

there myself – which worked. He ran after me but did not listen to my “stay” once at the path so I jumped in front of him, and was able to wrap my arms around his neck and bring him to a halt. Nonetheless, I still class this as escaping because he was briefly out of sight and made no attempt to return when asked.

In these examples, Harald has not only resisted in terms of refusing to move or refused to listen, but has actively tried to run away and withdraw from our shared space. Withdrawing from shared space, is to my mind relevant for various reasons. For example, it draws attention to the fact that anyone would voluntarily share space with another is in itself (most of the time) significant.

Recognising resistance

There is also plenty to be said about where Harald’s resistance may go unrecognised in the first place, as well as all the elements involved in enabling it to be “successful” or “unsuccessful”. Thinking about spaces for example – ever since Harald was born, the spaces he has found himself in are skewed in favour of human animals like me. The design of buildings: the kennels in the dog shelter with their kennels behind purposefully built fences and locked gates designed to keep dogs manageable and to keep the management affordable; the houses I have subsequently essentially held Harald captive in – with their doors and locks (and for the most part unsuitably placed windows) favour able-bodied adult humans. Not to forget those invisible or less obvious methods of control – particularly related to the medical policing of bodies. But also, specific inventions designed to offer maximum control of dogs, such as collar, harness and lead in the least restrictive cases, or items like muzzles, and choke collars. Though it is not just dogs – some cows are “managed” through electric cattle prods, horses are ridden with various equipment and contraptions. This is also not

limited to nonhumans – most humans are also privy to this disciplining and management of the body in various forms.

Resistance as disagreement and negotiation

In any case, certain instances of resistance appear to express disagreement with the current situation, or dissatisfaction with current conditions in some way, or (in those cases where Harald was responding during fearful moments – as discussed in the previous section) as an attempt to withdraw from, or directly challenge those conditions. Even if Harald is for example not aware of legislation concerning dogs on leads, and he is thus not able to protest them, the fact that he escapes at the very least indicates that (sometimes) it is of importance to Harald to be able to move freely. Disagreements seem to occur when we want to go in different directions, when forcing non-consensual medical procedures or other unwelcome practices out of "care"/concern for his well-being, or in some cases in order to comply with legal obligations or out of financial necessity.

At times resistance forms a part of how Harald and I "negotiate" or in some way constitutes a dialogue, if not part of an "argument". In some instances, for example, I will call Harald over in the park order to attach his lead and he then runs off to attend to something of interest first. Another scenario that occurs is that Harald tries to engage me in a game of chase, before agreeing to let me attach the lead. At those times when Harald does not seem "ready" to go home, I always try to allow these moments (unless I absolutely must get home urgently). Another example of this would be when Harald and I are walking on the lead and he wants to sniff, then I try to the allow this. If I am in a hurry, and he is taking a lot of time, I ask him to "come on" and sometimes he will respond right away, or I will have to repeat the question a few times.

On very few occasions he will not respond to verbal cues, in which case I supplement with a gentle tug on the lead.

A further example is related to brushing Harald, which is something that can occur daily – particularly during shedding times (which appears to be constantly, and he has a "double" coated fur as well), and can go on for up to an hour, which he (understandably) seems to find rather annoying. When he wants me to stop, he will first switch from lying down to sitting, and I will respond by asking him to please lay back down. Harald will then somewhat reluctantly sit back down. This sequence is often repeated, but happen a few times, but whenever he takes the next 'step' which involves him sitting upright, and pawing me while giving me the side eye, I know it's rather "urgent". Harald only started using his paw once he developed the habit of trying to wake me up, and eventually realised pawing me is very effective in eliciting a response in other contexts too (for example when we are sitting with friends, and he gets bored).

Often, Harald will often stop along the way and refuse to walk any further if we are at a crossing and he wants to take a different path than I do. I will then vocally ask him to continue saying "please let's go this way", then Harald will either continue walking with me, or continue standing his ground either looking in the direction of interest or seeking eye contact. In case of the latter, I either give in and let him go where he likes, or if my "come-on please" still does not work, I tug on the lead a little and repeat those steps until Harald gives in and follows me. Notably it was only a few months ago that Harald stopped mid-walk and refused to go any further for the first time and has now become more frequent. Sometimes his preference on where to walk surprises me – I had for example assumed that given the chance Harald would

choose to walk towards one of the “off lead” areas, but often chooses to stick to the paths along streets.

Even if maybe strictly not classed as resistance, there are many other instances where Harald either vocally or through using his body strength “protests”. Through this I have for example learned that he does not want to stay home alone without me, he does not like waiting outside the shop, he detests not being able to leave through the front door whenever he likes, and he does not like being ignored. Harald daily also demands my general attention, asks that I wake up, requests food (including his post-meal snack should I ever forget), asks to go in the garden or outside the front door, and so on.

In this way, as previously suggested, some of Harald’s moments of resistance enable us to learn more about each other’s preferences or indicate what may be of importance in that particular moment. Resistance as dialogue or attentive (open) responding then not only allows us to gain richer understandings of togetherness, and think through notions of responsibility, but more importantly, for the purposes of this thesis allows us to think about the various ways of feeling-for and becoming with each other.

Crucially, it has been suggested that togetherness is conditional, and it is necessary to consider “non-peaceful” exchange, particularly when living in close proximity. Thus, an attentiveness to response and being responded to, is also an attentiveness to limits of togetherness, as well as more careful ways of becoming with each other. The next chapter builds upon the ideas introduced in this chapter (Haraway, Despret), in order to seek out a more nuanced understanding of being-with, and shared experience.

Chapter Seven: Interspecies sociality as "feeling-for" – Shared experience

7.1 Introduction

> Experience of the world is a part of the world. It always happens in a certain way […]; there is both a direction and a connection in experience […]; such experiences are not fictive or merely subjective, they are utterly real […]. Feelings of the world, by the world, make up the world (Halewood, 2020: 96).

As suggested at the outset, a possible Whiteheadian conception of sociality beyond species-lines as feeling-for (mutual possibilities of becoming with each other), requires discussion and clarification of various elements: mutual possibilities (in turn entailing notions of novelty and transformation); togetherness (and with-ness) and in-betweenness; and resonance (including notions of responsiveness, attunement, and attentiveness). One thread that runs throughout all elements, is the notion of shared experience, which will be the central focus of this chapter, as it returns us full circle to the aim of this thesis to attend to the importance of centring experience and feeling to avoid bifurcating nature, and the implications thereof for understanding sociality and in turn also sociology. This chapter also hopes to contribute to the aim of this thesis to consider how we might live well with human and nonhuman others.

To arrive at a clearer view of what "shared experience" entails, it seems necessary to first establish how togetherness in the sense of with-ness, and betweenness is to be understood. Thus, this chapter will suggest four points to consider: Firstly, being- with is to be understood as relational and to be negotiated anew upon each occasion. Secondly, thinking beyond hybridity is favourable. Thirdly symmetry, reciprocity and equality of perspectives – or lack thereof – need to be considered. Fourthly, I suggest exploring the usefulness of thinking in terms of "shared worlds".

7.2 Shared experience and attentive resonance

One way of approaching shared experience, is to start with seeking out a more nuanced conception of “being-with”. Firstly, sociality does not pre-exist relations and thus togetherness or being-with is always a process of becoming-with. Relevant for our understanding of sociality here, is that it comes to be – we can never know beforehand how our bodies (selves) might respond. In Whiteheadian terms this is to be understood in relation to sociality being placed at the heart of processes of the coming to be of existence itself, and introduces the necessary element of novelty, which is in turn linked to the element of transformation (as related to Whitehead’s notions of concrescence, creativity, and prehensions, which have been discussed in chapter four). A question of what becoming-with might mean, is at once also a question of what happens when bodies encounter each other and consideration is given to mutual possibilities of what, or better, how one might become together, which in turn requires an openness, and responsiveness or attentiveness.

This process of opening oneself up or attuning to each other, in order to develop a feeling-for each other and how one(‘s feelings) might resonate and endure – if at all – may also be comparable to Vinciane Despret’s conception of responsibility. Of importance here is that responsibility does not pre-exist the relation, but is more aptly seen as a process of becoming response-able (as suggested in the previous chapter – see Haraway, 2016), which requires an openness to becoming someone who is available to response. This goes beyond someone merely being open to responding, and one does not necessarily imply the other – they are two different things. In order to illustrate this point, returning to previous examples citing Mowat’s experiences with wolves, and Smuts’ and Strum’s experiences with baboons, Despret writes:

> They actively take into account the animals' intention toward them, and they construct the possibility of engaging both the animals and themselves, through an embodied communication, into a 'responsible' relation. They become responsible through this relation, 'responsible' in the sense Haraway suggests we give to the word: the one to whom it is possible to respond, the one who constructs him/herself in order to be available to a response (2013a: 70).

This picks up on the idea of this process being more aptly described as "acting-*as if*" as opposed to "acting-like" (as introduced in the previous chapter – see Despret, 2016: 17). Crucially, this also goes beyond mere imitation or empathy in terms of feeling what the other feels, and constitutes more of an attuning to each other.

Becoming responsible (response-able in Haraway's terms, as introduced in the previous chapter), or opening oneself up to each other might then be in some way made possible through an immersion in each other's worlds (which will be picked up again in a later section), alongside what I would suggest could also be discussed in terms of "attentiveness" to our own bodies, to other bodies and to how we affect each other and everything between. The type of attentiveness I have in mind, is one that may align well with Whitehead's usage of the notion of "sensitiveness". For him this includes 'apprehension of what lies beyond oneself; that is to say, sensitiveness to all the facts of the case (Whitehead, 1932[1926]: 199).' Crucially, this is not just as an element of sociality relevant, but also as something one could purposefully cultivate and perhaps develop a method(ology) centred upon a particular notion of attentiveness For example, derived from a framework resulting from putting Whitehead's philosophy of organism into dialogue with Elisa Aaltola's (2015) work on both understanding "wilderness experiences" and approaching "nature" with attentiveness (her own conceptualisation is derived from the thought of Simone Weil and Iris Murdoch).

The mode of attentiveness I am trying to draw out may not only be similar to Whitehead's notion of sensitiveness but may also amount to taking what Despret (2013a) elsewhere calls an "affected perspective". For her, an affective perspective highlights 'how the scientist risks being touched/affected by what matters for the animal he/she observes (Despret 2013a: 57).' This attention and openness or attentiveness to encounters is something that for example been highlighted by Deborah Bird Rose as a way of ensuring 'vulnerability to transformative encounter (Wright, 2017: 3).' Drawing on Whitehead's thoughts on prehensions and propositions for example may help us to aim for a mode of attentiveness – oriented toward "openness" – that is able to elucidate this process of entities feeling each other and creating with each other.

This is why making oneself available to response or becoming response-able is for Despret further best understood terms of 'corresponding (with vs to)', which reinforces a departure of traditional understandings of empathy as 'feeling what the other feels' (Despret, 2013a: 70). For her,

> It is to make ourselves and them corresponding, in all the senses my Oxford dictionary gives: 'have a close similarity, match or agree almost exactly ['almost' being here the most important term]; be analogous in form, character, or function; communicate by exchanging letters [but we may imagine that we can actually correspond through the choreographic language of our bodies]; from Medieval Latin "cor" (together) "respondere" (respond).' That is undoubtedly what the mirror neurons allow Mark Bekoff to do: create a relationship that will make beings of different species becoming corresponding, not to, but with each other (Despret, 2013a: 70).

The salience of the difference regarding "acting as if", as opposed to "like" – or processes involved in becoming (responsible) being distinguishable from imitation, as well as from traditional understandings of empathy, and more akin to rendering each other "corresponding to"

can further be illustrated through Despret's discussion of Konrad Lorenz and his birds (geese and jackdaws):

> Lorenz gave his birds the opportunity to behave like humans, as much as his birds gave him the opportunity to behave like a bird. […] Therefore, when Lorenz talks about goose's love as very similar to human love, we are not going to claim that his goose is anthropomorphous, nor that humans are 'goosomorphous'. In some sense, Lorenz, producing a goose body, may be said to be 'goosomorphous'. It is because he could love in a goose's world, because he could produce an affected body (remember the horse's rider performing horse's movements) that he could compare its love to our own (which allows him to suggest that it is precisely in their manner of falling in love that many birds and mammals behave like humans) (Despret, 2004: 130).

This shows nicely how it is not just about "acting like" in the sense of imitation (although both may be a part of the becoming responsible) – in this case it is about acting like a bird but also creating the possibility to act like a human, without seeing the human as universal reference point to all other animals.

This is perhaps also why becoming responsible or response-abiltiy is best understood as becoming corresponding-with, but also as "allowing response" (Despret, 2016: 170). For example, Despret (2016: 169-70) recounts a 2009 National Geographic photo article that sparked discussion over whether some chimpanzees in a sanctuary were observed to be "truly" mourning (in terms of experiencing sadness and grief), or – given "intervention" by the caretakers – whether the chimpanzees were guided, their grief 'solicited' and therefore not 'real', and thus their behaviour written off as a mere reaction (if not imitation) of the humans involved. As Despret demonstrates in her book, and the chapter containing the excerpt here, this way of arguing against capacities of nonhuman animals is rather common. Contra such misguided arguments, she emphasizes:

> The initiative may in fact have provoked the grief, not determined it. The chimpanzees' grief could be "solicited" just like our own grief in the face of death—when we need to learn what it means and it is solicited by those who

> surround us during such a time—which asks us not to forget the link between soliciting and solicitude. And, if one extends William James's proposal for a theory of emotions, one could consider that grief in the face of death might receive, as a possible condition of existence (the fact that consolation exists), solicitude for it. The sanctuary caregivers are therefore very much "responsible" for the grief of the chimpanzees, in the sense that they took responsibility for guiding the chimpanzees' manner of being affected in such a way that they themselves could respond; responsibility is not a cause, it's a way of allowing response (Despret, 2016: 170).

This is a helpful example to illustrate the value of viewing response-ability as one way of "allowing response" as opposed to being responsible in the sense of culpable, which avoids traditional normative ethical connotations (as linked to a conception of rights grounded in liberal humanism). Instead, one can become responsible without being the "cause" (as understood by traditional notions of causation – for an interpretation of a Whiteheadian conception thereof see for example Halewood, 2013[2011]) of the response. In this way it is not even about eliciting, as much as it is enabling or creating the space or conditions for response.

Looking at the present issue in a more general manner, when thinking about nonhuman (and human) animals, it appears the most desirable outcome would be not just trying to act or think "like" the subject in question, but "with". To my mind, thinking/acting with comes first, which includes asking what matters to them and how/why, which has been captured nicely by Despret's (2016) emphasis on "asking the right questions" – hence the discussion of cultivating attentiveness and response-ability. As Despret illustrates below, it is thinking/acting with that comes first, and enables thinking/acting like:

> The 'as if' constructs partial affinities between bodies, it is a creative mode of attunement – which also means that Smuts or Strum do not (and do not aim to) think like a baboon: they think with the baboons. When the baboons gave dirty looks to the former, she had to learn to act with them, to leave room for them to resist her proposition or her presence. Acting with them is not the result but the very condition of acting like them. […] The body, be it Lorenz's or Strum's and Smuts' case, actively creates partial affinities, learns to connect experiences as

> one goes along, and learns to become what it becomes when it acts 'as if' (Despret, 2013a: 71).

The mention of partial affinities here leads us to the next point – togetherness is never absolute.

7.3 Becoming beyond hybridity

The second point I would like to make, is that a notion of togetherness or becoming-with is needed, that does not assume absolute connection. Furthermore, elements of transformation as well as novelty still need to be accounted for. In Despret's (2004) terms, one does not become the other as much as one becomes "the other-with the other". Importantly, however this ought not to result in an amalgamation in the sense of hybridity, but instead in Despret's terms more akin to metamorphoses, or in Joanna Latimer's (2013) terms, being-alongside.

I suggest it is primarily the shared experience that matters. One way of looking at this then, is that opening ourselves up to response is opening ourselves up to sharing our worlds through sharing experiences (as suggested in chapter five). That stream of feelings which is my personal experience can then encounter that stream of feelings which is Harald's personal experience, thus constituting a coming together or reflection of unique perspectives to share something while creating something new.

Feeling-for each other is then not to be understood as becoming exactly each other or even imagining or acting as if, but instead in Despret's (2004: 130-1) terms, I am not becoming a dog, but instead becoming (with or corresponding to) a dog-with-human, and Harald is becoming (with or corresponding to) a human-with-dog. In this way, our individual perspectives interact uniquely as we transform ourselves into something new, as opposed to just affecting each other so that we become a

combination of two elements. This is why Despret calls for moving beyond notions of hybridization and suggests metamorphoses as a term better suited to pick up on the transformative aspect of being(becoming)-with. Moreover, Despret highlights that hybridization encourages thinking in binary terms, whereas 'Metamorphoses are inscribed within myths as well as inventive biological and political fabulations (Despret, 2016: 190).'

Metamorphoses is an excellent term as it draws attention to the fact that once two beings meet and become with each other (in whatever form – an encounter with a bird or a long term relationship with a dog), it can never be about becoming the other; as soon as embroiled in an attentive relation, there is the possibility of becoming something else entirely. Not only does becoming-with have a transformative aspect – as it is a becoming otherwise (or more-than?) in the process, but it also needs to be emphasised that becoming with does not and perhaps cannot involve absolute connection or togetherness.

Latimer (2013) provides a way of thinking about this from another angle. Her proposal to shift from being-with to being-alongside, in order to emphasise partial connections (following Strathern) as opposed to hybridity (following Haraway), is partially centred around her study of the human-horse sculpture Two Amazonian Women by Olivia Musgrave. What is particularly helpful is how – with help of the sculpture – she manages to offer a visual representation of various concurrent (partial) connections among both humans and horses. The discussion highlights how both humans are connected with each other but are also connected to their horses. At the same time the horses are also in partial connection with each other. What I would like to draw out, is how this is potentially also a demonstration of an overlapping space, where

despite human-ways and other animal-ways of being and doing things, connection or togetherness is still possible.

The above example might seem too specific, but this pattern of interaction is easily found elsewhere. Harald and I for example also frequently encounter and interact and connect with various assemblages – on walks we often interact another dog-with-human. Those particular interactions mostly involve me talking to the other human, while also remaining responsive to Harald, as well as the other dog. Similarly, the other human will talk to me as well as interact with Harald, while remaining engaged with their dog. And finally, the other dog will – if they do not interact with Harald and me – at least remain attentive toward us. As well as responsive to their human. Many other encounters follow a similar pattern or structure with levels of interaction and connection or togetherness varying depending on how many are involved and everyone's interest in each other and the situation as a whole.

7.4 Conceptualising shared perspectives

The third and penultimate point to be discussed here, is that seeking out notions of shared experience (in terms of betweenness, with-ness and togetherness) need not imply symmetrical or reciprocal perspectives.

Relativity of perspectives

Perspectives (and thus experiences) according to Alfred North Whitehead are to be taken seriously on their own terms, and as always already complete and not dependent on consciousness or cognition. These are also not to be viewed as subjective (in a traditional sense) or conflated with subjectivism/or outdated (and

anthropocentric) notions of reflexivity and selfhood (Halewood, 2008: 10-12). Under no circumstances are they reducible to human individuals. Instead,

> They are descriptions of the vectorial character of the world – its process. They are witness to the utter relativity which is real and physical and in no way noumenal. However, such relativity does not imply relativism (moral, cultural or cognitive). The relativity of perspectives is a necessary and objective component of existence and genuine knowledge. There is utter relativity (Halewood, 2008: 10).

This is also why talking in terms of feeling enables us to centre experiences as opposed to certain subjects. As discussed at length in chapter four, this means that experience and feeling is key to the coming to be of existence, and thus must be applied to ("individual") perspectives as they pertain to humans, but also canines (and "even" trees, and rocks and planets – which is most radical in western traditions but a much needed shift and favourably more aligned with various more "inclusive" non-western traditions, such as those indigenous cosmologies that could be described as animist).

As Whitehead suggests, starting with 'immediate facts of our psychological experience', necessarily leads to 'an organic conception of nature' (1932[1926]: 92). In reference to our psychological experience, and cognition, Whitehead (1932[1926]: 92) argues that our own psychological field can be described as 'the self-knowledge of our bodily event'. Importantly:

> This self-knowledge discloses a prehensive unification of modal presences of entities beyond itself. I generalise by the use of the principle that this total bodily event is on the same level as all other events, except for an unusual complexity and stability of inherent pattern (Whitehead, 1932[1926]: 92).

According to extreme subjectivist principles,

> …though there is a common world of thought associated with our sense-perceptions, there is no common world to think about. What we do think about is a common conceptual world applying indifferently to our individual experiences which are strictly personal to ourselves (Whitehead, 1932[1926]: 92).

Thus, Whitehead (92) understands his approach as based upon an objectivist view, though one 'adapted to the requirement of science and to the concrete experience of mankind.'

A further key aspect as it pertains to the concerns of this thesis, surrounds expressing the "ineffable", and that certain experiences seem particularly resistant to language and propositional analysis:

> This is a doctrine extremely consonant with the vivid expression of personal experience which we find in the nature-poetry of imaginative writers such as Wordsworth or Shelley. The brooding, immediate presences of things are an obsession to Wordsworth. What the theory does do is to edge cognitive mentality away from being the necessary substratum of the unity of experience. That unity is now placed in the unity of an event. Accompanying this unity, there may or there may not be cognition (Whitehead, 1932[1926]: 113).

Such a position does not make our environment, or the things experienced depended on a cognisant subject. Instead,

> This creed is that the actual elements perceived by our senses are in themselves the elements of a common world; and that this world is a complex of things, including indeed our acts of cognition, but transcending them. According to this point of view the things experienced are to be distinguished from our knowledge of them. So far as there is dependence, the things pave the way for the cognition rather than vice versa. But the point is that the actual things experienced enter into a common world which transcends knowledge, though it includes knowledge. […] The objectivist holds that the things experienced and the cognisant subject enter into the common world on equal terms (Whitehead, 1932[1926]: 92).

Importantly, however, "equal" here does not to be understood in the sense of entirely reciprocal or symmetrical. Thus, the section below will discuss 'un-reciprocity' (Halewood, 2008:12).

Un-reciprocity

When considering the possibilities for shared, mutual, or reciprocal perspectives (as for example mis-represented by Schütz's reciprocity of perspectives in

phenomenology), Whitehead's conception of experience ought not to be linked to notions of equality as the basis for understanding (see Halewood, 2008). Instead,

> […] for Whitehead, such equality or commonality as a presupposition of communication or understanding is simply not possible. There is no common plane of symbols, meaning or structures of perception, action or cognition which guarantee an a priori sphere of equal communication (or ideal speech). Each perspective is unique and must be attained (but can be explained) (Halewood, 2008: 12).

This has significant implications for how shared experience is to be understood, or to what extent mutual or shared feeling is possible. Michael Halewood offers a succinct example to illustrate the problem of assuming complete reciprocity, equality or commonality further:

> Schutz believes that we have reciprocal perspectives 'in spite of the difference of our . . . sex, age' and our values, such as our attitude toward hunting and meat-eating. Whitehead disagrees: such factors are essential ingredients in our objective perspectives. Schutz has abstracted to the point where he has missed out crucial elements of his explanation. For example, when a male manager tells a group of female workers threatening to go on strike that he completely understands or shares their point of view, but is constrained in his action, he is wrong. There are levels of un-reciprocity involved in the very constitution of their relative positions and existences. If he shared their perspective he would not be a manager, he would be a worker (and there are clearly other differences involved as well). To claim equality in such a case is to misdescribe the actual (political) situation (Halewood, 2008: 12).

Applied to myself and Harald for example, our perspectives are unique and differ significantly based on our various positions. Nonetheless, there is still the possibility for deep understanding, responsiveness/attentiveness, and something to be shared in some way. As for example introduced in chapter six, one might share attention to each other, or share interest and attention to something beyond one another. One might also share the same conditions, even if not experienced in the same way. I suggest that constructing a shared space of attention, whereby one remains responsive to another, is also noteworthy. A notion of shared enjoyment (see chapter

six) in being alongside each other might also be possible. Ultimately, what is shared is always a matter of feeling.

7.5 Conceptualising shared worlds

The final point I would like to introduce, (related to moving beyond notions of symmetrical perspectives, in addition to hybridity and absolute connection as well as coming to be), relates to false equivalences of shared experience with imitation or empathy. This is to be avoided. Instead, notions of responsiveness or response-ability, alongside openness, attunement, attentiveness and immersion in each other's worlds could perhaps yield more fruitful understandings of shared experience. This at once also brings together the previous points made throughout this chapter.

Returning to Despret's ideas, for her, being/becoming-with can for example also be understood as becoming-responsible (response-able). This moves us from becoming, to becoming response-able, including an element of transformation as we become something else entirely. This can be for example be illustrated with help of Latimer's (2013) being-alongside and Despret's metamorphoses and becoming corresponding to, as suggested in an earlier section. Importantly, feeling-for or attunement and response-ability play out on a deeper level, but it still needs to be explored to what degree or how experience(s)/experiencing is shared. This will be attempted below.

Sticking with Despret's example of love (in relation to Konrad Lorenz and his birds), as it is one way of experiencing, feeling and responding to each other – to open oneself up to the possibility of responding and response or being responded to, also means opening oneself up to the possibility of "shared experiences", such as loving and being loved:

> The experience of loving is first of all a shared experience (which does not infer that it is a symmetrical experience, as long as Lorenz does not expect the goose or the jackdaw to love him the same way he loves them). Even more, the whole experience is a shared experience, an experience of being 'with' (Despret, 2004: 130-31).

In this way, while "species" might matter insofar that the "umwelt" (Uexküll, 2013[1934]) of individuals differs and "the environment" (other individuals) is differently perceived depending on conditions such as how ones senses operate. However, this only means that Harald for example as a canine perhaps has the tendency to respond to certain things in a certain manner (and for which other factors such as past experience matters as well). It is not that experiences such as loving, or grieving are limited to humans or subjects, but instead "loving" is something that exists in the world. Love as an experience or feeling is then never human or canine, but loving is something that comes to be anew in a unique manner, and allows particular bodies, experiences, worlds to be created and articulated.

So, Harald and I may express love differently, and each have unique perspectives, but the possibility of loving exists nonetheless. Thus, regardless of how "different" individuals are from each other, experience can still be shared. If two individual bodies (or centres of experiences and flows of feeling) open themselves up or attune to each other, thus feeling-for mutual possibilities, shared experience is what matters foremost. This is why I suggest a focus on shared worlds. Geometrically imagined this may in one sense look like a Venn diagram of two intersecting circles whereby both signify individuals with different perspectives, but there is a field of overlap, which is how I visualise betweenness or something shared. Immersing oneself in the others world through attentiveness is part of this, but more than this, what connects us are always feelings, or "shared" experiences such as loving (even if not reciprocal or

equal), which is also why feelings are aptly described as vectors (Whitehead) – or perhaps multi-dimensional bridges.

Being(becoming) is always already a shared experience, hence, "being-with(alongside)". In this way, becoming-with(alongside) is experiencing, and thus feeling-for each other. Going beyond this, allowing ourselves to respond and be responded to – or to move and be moved, to change and be changed, touch and be touched – by each other, is allowing our worlds to affect and integrate parts of each other (and our worlds always already contain each other), while creating something new.

7.6 Conclusion

The first point made in this chapter relates to the idea that sociality comes to be, and highlighted the usefulness of thinking in terms of attentiveness. I have further attempted to make the case for a shift from thinking in terms of "hybridity" (Haraway) to "metamorphoses" (Despret), and from "being(becoming)- with", to "being(becoming)-*alongside"* (Latimer). Thus, the second point discussed relates to the idea that togetherness is never absolute. The fourth point concerns the idea that experience can be shared but not equal. The final point ties the previous concerns together and suggests one way of exploring shared experience.

Throughout, it has been suggested that despite human-ways and other animal-ways of being and doing things, togetherness is still possible. This is then related to the argument that it is nonsensical to seek out a definition of human sociality as separate from animal sociality – whereby the impetus to focus on human uniqueness is in turn (more often than not) indicative of a much deeper and pernicious problematic and

perhaps tied to the bifurcation of nature. This then has relevant implications for understandings of sociality but also society and sociology itself. This also returns us to my suggestion to focus on viewing sociality in terms of feeling-for, as this allows us to talk about something shared, and to focus on betweenness (freed from the limits of phenomenology and restrictive debates over intersubjectivity).

In conclusion, when investigating sociality, I suggest the focus could be placed on processes of feeling, sharing space – as well as toward experiencing a shared moment, while creating the next together. In this way emphasis can be placed on how two entities are becoming a “we” and what or how one is creating together. Thus, it may be that what matters is not what is happening on one or the other side of an encounter, but what is happening “in the middle”.

Chapter Eight: Exploring interspecies sociality through play

8.1 Introduction

> I am certain that the world is richer when we allow ourselves to wonder at the nonhuman lives we encounter, to become, like Alice in Wonderland, curiouser and curiouser as we enter into a dialogue with a rabbit, or learn how to play multi-species games with a dog (Wright, 2017: 138).

Considering sociality in terms of what we commonly do together/alongside each other), or how Harald and I interact, as well as more generally how we live together, there are various "activities" or ways of experiencing and engaging with/alongside each other (and the world) that we frequently engage in. As suggested in chapter five and developed throughout chapters six seven, certain experiences can be conducive to (or show the limits of) attentiveness, and thus togetherness. The most easily identifiable (in terms of specific experiences that appear to have a shared character) activities are walking and playing (and perhaps specific instances of communicating or talking – defined as any interactions involving asking each other questions, making demands, or expressing something). This chapter will focus upon the possibilities and limits of thinking about play for a wider conceptualisation of sociality. Importantly, this will involve reconfigurations of the role and status of bodies.

This line of inquiry further lends itself to exploring the argument that sociality, or the way bodies (such as Harald and me) connect (in the sense of togetherness) may be somewhat species bound but to a much greater degree transcends species. Thus, while for example Harald and I may have a different number of legs, and move in different ways, it is nonetheless possible to establish that certain ways of experiencing, for example through play, possible for both of us, and ought to be assumed to exist more widely in the world. This in turn relates to further exploring notions of shared

experience in terms of betweenness, as has been elaborated upon in the previous chapter.

Related to the above, walking, play and language or communication appear to be popular topics in the study of human-nonhuman relations. The aim of these often seem to be to show the similarity of humans and animals, but I would like to come at these topics from a slightly different angle. Thus, in line with the aims of this thesis, while notions of betweenness and shared experience will be explored, this is not done with the intention of demonstrating that “animals are like us”, but instead to look more closely at the limits and possibilities of specific concepts, to open up lines of questioning, and in some small way to contribute to the development of a non-anthropocentric vocabulary for sociology and beyond. Crucially, the aim is to avoid privileging human experience and bifurcating nature.

This chapter will first introduce thinking about bodies and play through drawing on Gilles Deleuze (1988). The next section explores how play might be recognised as such among those involved, before moving on to a more detailed discussion of playfulness, through drawing on Brian Massumi (2014). Before concluding the chapter, the penultimate section will bring together previous concerns and sketch out a Whiteheadian way of thinking about felt qualities of experience. In this way, the current chapter also constitutes a conclusion to this thesis.

8.2 Introducing play

One way of approaching questions of sociality and play is by viewing Harald and I not through a species lens, but instead for example in terms of ‘what a body can do (Deleuze, 1988)’. Drawing on Baruch Spinoza’s Ethics, Deleuze (1988: 123-4)

argues that bodies (and thus also thoughts) should not be defined by their form, organs, or functions, nor as substance or subject. Instead, a body (or thought) is to be defined by its affective capacity – its capacity to be affected or to affect.

Put differently, this could also be thought through in terms of how bodies develop feeling-for each other, particularly with help of notions of attentiveness, resonance, and other suggested elements of sociality. Thinking in this way helps us view the world more in terms of "process" as opposed to fixed and disconnected subjects and objects or more generally in binary terms. This in turn frees up space to focus on "what is actually happening", and more importantly, enables a focus on betweenness. It is precisely through feeling-for that one is able to connect or become with/alongside something beyond oneself, and, in Deleuzian terms, to "slip in":

> In the same way, a musical form will depend on a complex relation between speeds and slownesses of sound particles. It is not just a matter of music but of how to live: it is by speed and slowness that one slips in among things, that one connects with something else. One never commences; one never has a tabula rasa; one slips in, enters in the middle; one takes up or lays down rhythms (Deleuze, 1988: 123).

In this way, a focus on form and functions gives way to defining bodies by relations of motion and rest or speeds and slowness, as these relations are what enable things like form in the first place (123-4).

Applied to Harald ("dog") and myself ("human"), our bodies and interactions are certainly not to be defined by species but could instead be viewed in terms of our capacity to respond to each other. There may be more "human" ways of acting or more "dog" ways of doing things, and there may even be physical differences that tend to depend on "species", but what ultimately matters, is how we "move" and are "moved by" each other. This is one of the threads that run throughout the entirety of this thesis. Given the emphasis on connection and process, such an approach appears to be

a very useful way of approaching questions of (human-, and) animal sociality. For the moment, this chapter will attempt to further develop such ideas by looking at “play”.

8.3 Co-constructing and recognising play

To start with, however, it is worth considering more closely how play is structured and recognised – it is a word employed so frequently in academic and non-academic circles, that it is easy to gloss over the intricacies of understanding play as such.

Routines and locations

One element that stands out among encounters that could be described as playful, is that often play partners develop their own “games” or what could be routines - ‘Humans do not simply teach their dogs how to play; they evolve routines together - ones that work for them (Jerolmack, 2009: 377).’

One such routine that evolved between myself and Harald, developed from our discovery that I cannot really keep up with Harald running, so playing chase never really lasts long. At some point I realised if I stop, Harald will just run towards me, so I started putting my hands out and he started running closer to me, and eventually it became a game of me pretending to try and grab Harald while he passes directly under my arms – akin to a variation of limbo. This game appears even more interesting at certain locations: a spot in the park with tall grass – the tall grass being a key element, or at our old house where the sofa divided the room – leaving only a narrow path to pass between the main sofa and Harald’s sofa against the wall. In the latter example, the added layer of difficulty in trying to catch or escape heightens the intensity of the game which makes it more intriguing and prolongs the encounter.

Another way of looking at play is how certain locations, people, “things” and situations – or a combination thereof – can enhance the experience. Jerolmack for example cites scholars who have discussed how dogs and their humans often designate certain items as ‘play objects’ – where for example an ordinary stick becomes a ‘play stick’ (Sanders 1999: 46, cited in Jerolmack, 2009: 376) – or move themselves into ‘play spaces’ or areas where play tends to take place (Alger, 2003 and Irvine, 2004; cited in Jerolmack: 377).

The same game can then for example become more interesting in terms of felt intensity, depending on the location (understood as a particular assemblage of other bodies making up the environment of the encounter). Open spaces at home, or fun corners, as well as stairs can for example make games of chase much more exciting. “Parks” are particularly interesting, as they seem to make play more likely. This seems worth further discussion – to start with, one could analyse all the elements involved (which may prove difficult if endless combinations are possible), such as: open space, and people to see and things to do; likelihood of relaxed, friendly encounters depending on the circumstances; and so on. This could further be contrasted with the “street” (particularly a busy one), where play is perhaps less likely to occur – although Harald for example does try to initiate play on street walks but is usually constrained by lack of space and my intervention.

Further routines used to involve playing tug, but now it is more wave and grab the “object” of interest. We don’t often play together using objects – when Harald was younger, he was more interested but now I can hardly ever entice him to play with a ball or stuffed animals. In any case, I should note playing tug with Harald was always different to playing tug with someone else, despite seemingly the same elements

involved or routines do not appear to be individualised or unique on first sight. There are also activities trickier to pin down as “play routines”, for example the popular (among human-dog play partners) “find it”, where an object of interest is hidden, which Harald only finds interesting if the object is edible (and something of good taste to him).

I have also observed Harald develop routines with some of his canine friends. For example, with our canine roommate at the time, he played slightly modified games which amounted to block-the-stairs (the stairs being a key element) and “grab-the-leg”, which I have subsequently tried to initiate with Harald – to varying degrees of success. Now, while the same game – grab-the-leg – was for example difficult for me to copy and engage Harald in, as his play partner with whom the routine evolved was at ease on four short legs (making it seemingly fun or enjoyable for Harald to bend down or half-kneel in order to grab their legs, while simultaneously avoiding his own legs being captured), but the movements proved more tricky for myself and odd or out of place to him. Nonetheless, “species-bound” factors don’t prohibit “doing things” with bodies that are not human – in this scenario, the experience of play is enjoyed by both the human and the canine. It is something that happens through, with and between each other.

I would like to highlight that play routines among different bodies may be unique to those involved, and that a specific dynamic is felt. It may be worth exploring this in relation to resonance, and how certain individuals develop specific dynamics unique to them. Turning to play may also be one way of attempting to enable to make these felt qualities more visible.

Initiating play – Introducing “mutual recognition”

It may also be interesting to consider in more detail, how play is initiated. For Goffman and Bateson for example, a key element of play is a move that ‘signals “this is play” (Jerolmack, 2009: 377). Jerolmack (377) for example highlights that this move is something that applies to humans, but also among humans and dogs playing together. Although it would be odd if play signals could not be sent across species, it is indeed interesting that something like this exists – even if it is left open what play actually is. However, I would like to emphasise that the interesting point here is not that this can occur across species, but instead, how two bodies are able to call forth in each other certain ways of acting and responding.

There appear to be certain gestures that invite a certain kind of interaction. For example, sometimes Harald will look at me and immediately try to engage in play by racing directly towards me (in a bouncy non-threating way) or utilises a play signal that appears to be more widely recognized (and is not necessarily specific to us), and which is often called the play “bow” (see for example Bekoff, 1977). Importantly this is something that does not need to involve conscious experience.

When outside in the park, play between just me and Harald usually takes place in brief unpredictable outbursts and mostly initiated by him. These moments for example often unfold following “checking-in” via eye contact, which we do periodically. For example, whenever Harald is somewhere further away, he will regularly check where I am (and vice-versa), and we will maintain eye contact for a few seconds. I usually smile at him in return (at times accompanied by a high-pitched “hi”) which Harald sometimes just acknowledges before going back to what he was doing, but other times he will respond with a play signal or gesture to which I can then in turn respond and so on.

This “checking-in” further involves a seeking each other out, and holding eye contact constitutes a moment of acknowledging the other, which is however felt beyond the gaze. While a play signal such as running away or carrying out a play bow might indeed follow as a possible response, in the first instance, it does not appear to be a play signal, but more a “holding space” or constructing a shared space. Perhaps in the sense of holding space for questions – how are you, where are you, what are you doing, is something happening? I suggest this could be expressed as mutual recognition and constitutes a further element of sociality understood as feeling-for. This however in turn also ties into the elements of togetherness and betweenness, resonance and attentiveness, as well as mutual possibilities.

If attention leads to an awareness of “feeling” each other, which can then lead to connection, a sense of attentiveness may allow us to become more aware of this “exchange” or “feeling each other” on a deeper level, in turn resulting in an “understanding” that is not dependent on communication through language. It is this recognition – which amounts to feeling oneself as part of a whole and yet distinct from it – that may be realisable through a certain mode of attentiveness. Drawing on Whitehead’s thoughts on prehensions and propositions for example may help us to aim for a mode of attentiveness – oriented toward “openness” – that is able to elucidate this process of entities feeling each other and creating with each other. The foundation for this is that perception for Whitehead constitutes the ‘cognition of prehension (1932[1926]: 71)’, and prehension designates the process of appropriation by which the many become one.

8.4 What is playful about play?

Given that it appears some have viewed the concept *as self-evidently* important, this section will revist the problem of play, with the view of broadening it to sociality. In the previous section, it has been established that there appear to be certain gestures that announce the following actions are to be seen as play and which are able to be understood as such across species (at least under certain conditions). Further, there are certain interactions or routines that have a certain form that can be recognized as an encounter of a specific type, even though gestures may vary. This is of course interesting, but still does not explain how playfulness is recognised or understood as such. A different starting point is perhaps needed, to understand more about the specific character of encounters understood as play. To my mind, this is bound up with the fact that certain experiences are felt but not easily described and analysed, particularly when non-conscious or non-sensuous modes of experience are involved.

One could perhaps examine movements or gestures involved more closely, in order to establish how they are different to others and could be seen as playful due to their contrast to non-playful movements. In fact, it is yet to be established what exactly is playful about a play-bow for example.

(Playful)-ness

This is something that could be explored further through Massumi's concept of the 'ludic gesture' (and 'esqueness'), which is informed by Bateson's work:

> It is all in the gap between the bite and the nip, moving and gamboling, executing an action and dramatizing it. What pries open the minimal difference, enabling the mutual inclusion characterizing the logic of play, is once again style. The difference between a fight bite and a play bite is not just the intensity of the act in the quantitative sense: how hard the teeth clamp down. The difference is qualitative. The ludic gesture is performed with a mischievous air, with an impish

> exaggeration or misdirection, or on the more nuanced end of the spectrum, a flourish, or even a certain under-stated grace modestly calling attention to the spirit in which the gesture is proffered. A ludic gesture in a play fight is not content to be the same as its analogue in combat. It is not so much "like" a combat move as it is combatesque: like in combat, but with a little something different, a little something more. With a surplus: an excess of energy or spirit (Massumi, 2014: 9).

Thinking about Harald playfully nipping me, it is indeed hard to describe what makes it different to a play-bite and what exactly qualifies the action as playful. It does however seem certain that Massumi is correct in stating that the difference is qualitative as opposed to quantitative. In Harald's case, it is for example not so much that he mostly merely sets his teeth on my skin without applying pressure, but this "spirit" accompanying it. It is "like" with something more. In a similar vein, Jerolmack (2009: 374) suggests that what various definitions of play have in common, is that '(1) play involves a certain special "attitude" or "spirit" that frames the activity and (2) means take precedence over ends.'

That there is something more to play gestures can also be seen if one considers when and how play fails**.** Play can quickly transform into the opposite if misunderstandings are involved:

> The -esqueness of the combatesque corresponds to the stylistic difference between executing an act and dramatizing it, between fulfilling a function and staging its standing-for. A gesture plays a ludic function to the exact degree to which it does not fulfill its analog function, which the ludic gesture places in suspense in the interests of its own standing-for it. If the expressive value of the standing-for is not pronounced enough, if the difference corresponding to the act's -esqueness is too minimal, if the gap between the arena of play and its analog arena is opened too slight a crack, if in a word the aesthetic yield is negligible, then the play activity can too easily turn into its analogue. Too quickly, the bite denotes what it denotes, and no longer what it would denote. It's war. There may well be blood. The game's surplus-value of life flips over into a deficit, in a transformation- in-place as immediate as that which inaugurated the play. The aesthetic dimension of the gesture retracts into an act of designation ("this is a bite") and into instrumental action ("whether I meant to or not, I am now effectively doing what I'm doing, and no longer what I would do") (Massumi, 2014: 10-11).

This is also something that occurs during my engagement with Harald– it happened more so at the start where we were less familiar with each other, but still does. For example, if I am chasing him around the sofa, it can happen that the way I am chasing him does not translate into “play”, resulting in Harald demonstrating an uncertainty as to whether I am chasing him “seriously” – the experience of playfulness did not carry over? Harald reacts to this by tucking his tail, dropping his head, and freezing or running away. It can then be difficult to resume play. Similarly, when we hurt each other accidentally and make the other aware of this, play ceases (we have developed a way of apologising to each other - Harald is very familiar with the words/tone surrounding an apologetic “sorry it was an accident”, and I have copied his apologetic movements).

What is interesting for the present discussion, is that this way of thinking brings us closer to “what happens in the middle” as opposed to on either side of encounter (in an effort to move away from subject-object, human-animal and other dichotomies). Massumi for example views the process involved in terms of categorical and vitality affects:

> The same affect will figure on either side of the analogical gap opened by the play. Its figuring on both sides bridges the space between. The situation in all its facets will be bathed by that experiential quality, everywhere felt. The play nip says “this is not a bite” (this act does not denote what it would denote). At the same time, it says categorically: “this is nevertheless a situation of fear.” This affective truth is the guarantor of the play partner’s enthusiasm of the body. Without it, the game would lack intensity. The categorical affect in play is the leavening that allows the vitality affect to rise. Without it, the ludic gesture’s force of induction would be negligible. The transformation-in-place that carries the force of the game would fall flat (Massumi, 2014: 26).

However, even though the same feeling is distributed across those involved, it does not mean that it is an equal distribution:

> It is distributed differentially, in the affectation of roles: scarer/scared, hunter/hunted, quarry/pursuer. The situation may well be one of fear on all

> sides, but each participant carries the fear according to a particular angle of differential insertion into the situation (Massumi, 2014: 26-7).

Sometimes I have to ask for play to cease, as I am the one being nipped a little to enthusiastically resulting in a little too much "fear" for my liking – meaning Harald temporarily assumes the position of scarer – whereas it is reversed when Harald is scared. In this way, what he terms as categorical affect is trans-situational and related to power (Massumi, 2014: 27). The other element relates to style, manner, the adverbial – the how (and is defined as a vitality affect), corresponds to 'esqueness' or that which exceeds the sameness (25-6). In this way vitality affect is related to potential (27).

In any case, when Harald looks at me with wide eyes and pulls off his play bow, the feeling the gesture carries is at least just as important as the gesture itself. Similarly, when he then runs toward me, it is often in a bouncy way, but even if he is running straight at me, or play biting me – and I may even feel scared for a moment – there is still something about the whole thing that can be recognised as play. Although familiarity, previous experience and the like may play a role, there is a (felt) difference in Harald playfully trying to bite me and trying to bite me to tell me off that is yet to be explained. Of course, there are various cues – perceivable to me through my senses and recognisable through previous experience – such as Harald's physical posture, but these factors in themselves do not seem to sufficiently account for experiencing playfulness – there seems to be "something more" to the gesture, that is hard to express or isolate. This will be discussed further in the section below.

8.5 Toward a "mode of direct contact with things"?

This section aims to explore play as a subset of the broader notion of sociality. At this

point it seems worth exploring whether this could be expressed in Whiteheadian terms of related to a “mode of direct contact with things”:

> Let us consider the implications of a theory in which sense-perception is a secondary and derivative mode of experience, based on and dependent upon a primary mode of direct contact with things. […] To get an idea of what is meant by this 'mode of direct contact with things', it helps to think, if only for the purposes of illustration, of such intimate though vague experiences as the awareness of a presence in a dark room, the immediate reaction for or against a strange person, the apprehension of the atmosphere of a place as 'enchanted', 'homely', or 'haunted', the drive of sympathy towards persons or realized values in human action, etc. None of these experiences can be coherently explained as derivative from sensation and synthesis upon it. Whitehead maintains that they could fruitfully be regarded as prior to sensory recognition, vaguer in outline, but more inevitable and compelling. The instances of sense-perception are then secondary in the sense of being abstracted from concrete, direct experience in the primary mode. Such abstraction involves omission from what is originally felt, omission for the sake of clarity and manageable simplicity (Schaper, 2014[1961]: 271-2).

It is then important to pay attention to non-sensuous and non-conscious experience, and the limitations of certain language and concepts in expressing what is felt. And even within sensuous experience, one also ought to consider which senses are privileged – such as the visual. There is much lose from narrow conceptions of experience, and much to gain from including different modes of experience (as well as from the inclusion of more diverse perspectives). I would like to draw attention to the following point made by Whitehead (1932[1926]: 199): ‘when you understand all about the sun and all about the atmosphere and all about the rotation of the earth, you may still miss the radiance of the sunset.’

The inadequacies of language and the shortcomings of scientific method are something that run throughout Whitehead’s writings. For example, while Whitehead states that the universe aims toward the production of Beauty, and ultimately truthful Beauty, the type of Truth that he is referring to is ‘a discovery and not a recapitulation (1967 [1933]: 266)’ and ‘a Truth of feeling, and not a Truth of verbalization (1967 [1933]: 267)’. Whitehead further states that ‘the truth of supreme Beauty lies beyond

the dictionary meanings of words (1967 [1933]: 267).' Similarly, he writes that 'language halts behind intuition' and that 'our understanding outruns the ordinary usage of words (1968[1938]): 49).' Further, understanding is bound up with "composition" and Whitehead argues that 'the traditions of linguistic expression are singularly naïve in the handling of modes of composition (1968[1938]): 70).' These statements hint at how Whitehead himself was very aware of the limitations of linguistic expression in order to grasp certain aspects of reality.

I suggest that to adequately tend to encounters with the nonhuman, sociology may for example benefit from a (methodological) shift that is akin to a "return" to the Romantic poets. This may not be as far-fetched as it at first seems, given that the birth of sociology can be viewed as a reaction to the same problems as those of the Romantics – only that the former took the route of "mere scientific analysis", whereas the latter expressed the same concerns through "literary lamentation", as pointed out by Bruce Mazlish (1989). However, this is only one of the many possibilities that exist for traditional western sociology to include more of experience. Thus, it may be useful to experiment with trying to make sense of such encounters through art-based research or creative methods, such as nature-writing, poetry in general, or depicting them through painting – though there is no easy answer and one ought to pay attention to creating art with, as opposed to about nonhumans.

Another way of attending to different modes of experience and communication could be through viewing "external nature" as 'itself a text with its own syntax and signifying potential (Bate, 1998: 65)' or through recognizing what Max Scheler calls 'a universal grammar, valid for all languages of expression (1992: 51)'. Another example would be a form of "multilevel process of communication" (Neves-Graca, 2005), or Gregory

Bateson's (2000[1972]) arguments regarding the meaning always being already inherent in the message. Patrick Murphy (1991: 50) suggests an "ecofeminist dialogics" in order to view other animals as subjects, with dialects that need to be learned by humans (cited in Donovan, 2011: 213). Something similar has also been considered by Sarah Orne Jewett (1881), who entertained the possibility of humans learning the language of nonhumans (see also Donovan, 2011: 213).

Another way of looking at the issue has been provided by Freya Matthews suggestion to encourage a shift from "knowledge" to "encounter" when considering human-nonhuman relations, in order to enable taking wider modes of experience into account (see Wright, 2017). This is akin to Stengers' suggestion of 'collective thinking in the presence of others to produce a common account of the world (cited in Wright, 2017: 78). One could also draw on the aim of holistic science to 'cultivate intuition as much as thinking, sensation and feeling (Harding, 2010[2006]: 34).' Related to this, it could be encouraged to view 'the living qualities of nature' as 'a source of direct reliable knowledge (Harding, 2010[2006]: 20).'

Approaches such as those suggested above, may prove more conducive to incorporating the experience and perspectives of nonhumans, thus enabling a more complete view of the world.

8.6 Concluding

This chapter has attempted to explore some of the challenges and possibilities of thinking about play in relation to sociality. The argument constructed here, is that there are limitations to viewing the importance and meaning of play as self-evident. Alternatively, it has been suggested that play can be viewed as a subset of the

broadened, more inclusive notion of sociality. One way of approaching the problematic of play has further been framed as questions of shared experience, as well as experience that is felt but not easily described. In this way, sociality appears to be a more fruitful concept, and it has been established that moving beyond more simplistic notions of play is necessary.

It is important to reiterate that the aim of this thesis was not to come to some final conclusion with regards to sociality, but instead to open up questions and possibilities. This stance is in wholehearted agreement with Halewood's (2014: 4) position in regard to developing a philosophy of the social, and suggests it is – contra Parsons – not 'possible or desirable to proscribe what should or must be thought with regard to the concept of "the social".' With this, Halewood (139) aimed to provide 'an approach to the social which recognises the importance and difficulties of accounting for sociality within contemporary theory'. I thus share Halewood's (2014) conviction that sociology must continue to treat debates surrounding the social, and related concepts such as sociality and society, as ongoing.

This thesis argues that is that it is not desirable – and perhaps not possible – to theorize the specificity of "human sociality" apart from "animal" or "nonhuman sociality". Instead, it has been suggested to focus on "the middle" of things, and to foreground notions of experience and feeling. Importantly, such capacities are to be seen as widely distributed in the world.

The suggested focus on activities or what bodies can do (as related to attentiveness) is aligned with the process view of the world adopted here, that suggests thinking in terms of experience and events, as opposed to objects and subjects (although there is still the with-ness of the body), thus avoiding the bifurcation of nature.

The approach developed here suggests understanding sociality as feeling-for, whereby the proposed framework centres the following elements: mutual possibilities (chapters four to eight), togetherness and betweenness (chapters four to eight), attentive resonance (chapters four to eight), affinity (chapter five), enjoyment (chapter five), mutual recognition (chapter eight).

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Appendix

Photograph 1 (page 74, footnote 20):

Photograph 2 (page 128, footnote 36**):**