

SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY

DIGGING THE DOG: ANTHROPOLOGY AND ARCHEOLOGY
IN HUMAN-CANINE RELATIONSHIPS
AND ENCOUNTERS WITH THE SACRED

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BY

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To every person who has been *saved* by a dog

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Illustrations

Illustrations

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Abstract

Despite the many medical, economical, and intellectual advances that technological proliferation has introduced into modern life, people perceive themselves as feeling acutely alienated from the sacred sphere. This study explores encounters with the sacred that people may experience in their relationships with dogs. Using anthropology and archaeology as a dual disciplinary system, dog artifacts are selectively surveyed, and using key questions regarding humanity and the technological, encounters with the sacred are placed into a more systematic framework, suggesting that they are not random, but rather part of a greater human pattern. The dog is explored both as a device, and as a bridge to the natural world. Five Positive Pathways are presented, rethinking the traditional hierarchy and acting as bridges along the human-canine divide. Canine companions are evaluated as focal things and as part of focal practices that have the capacity to center and engage the human individual with the richness of life. The dog is examined as connecting to the good life, and as a plausible alternative model of God in McFague's scheme, which challenges the traditional Western view of God. Finally, ancient and contemporary cultural artifacts are identified and explored as providing openings for encounters with the sacred over time, and the human-canine relationship is viewed through the eight critical lenses of Spyker's matrix, revealing new frontiers between technology and spirituality.

Introduction

Is not God in the height of Heaven?

—Job 22:12

In his introduction to his book *Broca's Brain*, astronomer Carl Sagan writes,

We live in an extraordinary age. These are times of stunning changes in social organization, economic well-being, moral and ethical precepts, philosophical and religious perspectives, and human self-knowledge, as well as in our understanding of that vast universe in which we are imbedded like a grain of sand in a cosmic ocean.¹

Sagan's book, published in 1974, celebrates the joy of discovery and the pursuit of human knowledge. In his lifetime, Sagan was witness to many great technological advancements that characterize the modern age, among which was the Apollo 11 Moon landing. Sagan describes the Apollo Moon landing as “an astonishing technological achievement”² in which “we humans had once again entered the realm of myth and legend.”³ Yet, he asserts that the greater purpose of the event was ideological. He explains, “Apollo conveyed a confidence, energy and breadth of vision that did capture the imagination of the world... It inspired an optimism about technology, an enthusiasm for the future. If we could go to the Moon, what else was now possible?”⁴ Before his death in 1996, Carl Sagan would see more glimmering in the realm of technological possibility.

¹ Carl Sagan, *Broca's Brain* (New York: Random House, 1974), xi.

² Carl Sagan, “The Gift of Apollo (Draft Essay),” *Library of Congress*, 1, May 9, 1989, accessed September 11, 2018, <https://cdn.loc.gov/service/mss/mss85590/037/037.pdf>.

³ Carl Sagan, “The Gift of Apollo,” 2.

⁴ Carl Sagan, “The Gift of Apollo,” 7.

In the early 1980's, for example, IBM and Macintosh introduced computer technology, which began the information revolution. In this same decade, the introduction of the portable Walkman moved the experience of music from the public to the private as millions of different songs simultaneously played for audiences of one. In the span of this single decade, Sagan also witnessed the introduction of cable television, camcorders, video cassette recorders, answering machines and the first cellular phones. It is also likely that Sagan, passing at the young age of 62 in 1996, surfed the World Wide Web after it went public in the early 1990's. If he was alive today, Sagan would find that in many ways, technological advancement has made the world a better place. Goldin and Kutarna explain that the advent of the internet is at the center of a scheme that also includes other technological advancements and events that have created a modern world in which "With a few tragic exceptions, a child born anywhere today can expect to grow up healthier, wealthier and smarter than at any other time in history."⁵ If Sagan were alive today he would also find that in the 22 years since his passing, technological advancement has made the planet a considerably smaller place. The World Wide Web has created a Global Village that allows people from all over the world to connect with ease. Social media has created virtual communities in the Global Village. The internet makes information available on every topic at any time of the day at the touch of a button. Video capacity transports images of places and things over space and time; the only boundary between the matter being viewed and the viewer is the screen of the device showing the image. A person also experiences a smaller world because their understanding has become increasingly personal and individual. Where a person once had to go to the library or a bookstore to get a book to read, now a book can be downloaded and read

⁵ Ian Goldin and Chris Kutarna, "We're living in an age of Possibility," *The Guardian*, May 15, 2016, accessed September 11, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/may/15/future-progress-renaissance-internet-europe>. Referencing the book by Ian Goldin and Chris Kutarna, *Age of Discovery* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016).

on a personal device. Going to a crowded movie theater to see a movie on a Saturday night has been supplanted by using an internet connection to rent and then to stream a movie to watch on a television, computer or smartphone. Similarly, events can occur on-line asynchronously, allowing a person to sit alone in her living room while attending the virtual world party. If Sagan were alive today, he would discover the capacities of cable television, camcorders, video cassette recorders, answering machines and so much more are available all together in one place if he had a smartphone. Today, Sagan could hold a limitless world in the palm of his hand.

In 1969, the Apollo 11 mission was not only a tremendous technological achievement, but it was also a profound experience that represents a point of bifurcation in human history. Aside from the successful travel to and from space, and walking on the surface of the Moon, the astronauts also had the experience of seeing the Earth from the outside and sharing many images of the Earth with the folks back home. In his video production, *The Global Brain*, revolutionary futurist Peter Russell describes what happened when the planet was seen from space:

One of the astronauts who walked on the moon, described his view of the Earth as an experience of instant global consciousness. He said “When you are up there you're no longer an American citizen, or a Russian citizen, suddenly all those boundaries disappear, you're a planetary citizen.” Similar experiences happened to the other astronauts. They saw Earth to be a very beautiful, magical-looking planet, and came back deeply changed from that experience...Moreover, they became increasingly aware that all was not well back on earth, and they came back wanting to help in some way or another...The pictures they returned with also had a deep effect on many of us back on Earth...⁶

In his book *The Global Brain*, Russell explains that at the time this important image appealed to people who had a developing concern about humanity's relationship with the planet and its environment. He writes, “This picture has become a spiritual symbol for our times. It stands for the growing awareness that we and the planet are all part of a single system, that we can no

⁶ Peter Russell, “The Global Brain Video” *Peter Russell*, December 1, 2008, accessed September 11, 2018, <https://www.peterrussell.com/TV/vidcall/GB.php>.

longer divorce ourselves from the whole.⁷” To be sure, this image of the Earth and the idea of the interconnectedness of life contributed to the environmental movement that gained momentum during the 1960s: a tumultuous decade of social, political and intellectual counterculture. But more than that, upon seeing this image, people began to think differently about themselves in relation with and caring about the living planet. This shift in thinking has had lasting implications about the way people continue to contemplate and to understand relationships with the natural world.

One such connection of concern that people have with the natural world occurs through their relationships with the domesticated dog. Although the long history of the association goes unnoticed in everyday life, *Homo sapiens* and *Canis familiaris* have shared a special association that began in pre-history.⁸ From its prehistoric role as companion in the hunt for survival, to a modern-day prescription for alleviating loneliness in a world that continues to become increasingly isolated, the domestic dog has faithfully remained at the side of humanity throughout the ages. *Canis familiaris* is believed to be a descendent of the wolf that was adopted and engineered by humans over time into hundreds of recognizably different breeds, each created for a specific purpose.⁹ The dog is unique in that it has its paws in two worlds. On the one hand, it is an animal that connects people to the natural world, yet the domestic dog is also a technology, and the list of ways in which people have used dogs throughout history is both diverse and extensive. What’s more, like other technologies, over time humankind has used the dog as tool, re-engineered the tool to perform different functions, replaced the old tool with new

⁷ Peter Russell, *The Global Brain Awakens* (California: Global Brain, Inc.,1995), 43.

⁸ Leon Whitney, *Dog Psychology* (New York: Howell Book House, 1971), 32.

⁹ Elizabeth Schuler, ed., *Guide to Dogs* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1980), 10-34.

technologies, and then discovered new applications for the old tool. To be sure, there are occasions in history when the dog has proven to be quite versatile, and timely relationships with *Canis familiaris* have greatly affected the human experience.

The Problem

Throughout the past century, technological advancement has greatly benefitted human existence in many ways. Yet, in spite of the many medical, economical, and intellectual advances, people perceive themselves as feeling acutely alienated from the sacred sphere. This may be due, in part, to the decline of organized religion in America. But more likely, these feelings of disconnection are a consequence of the ever-increasing rapid proliferation of technology which has caused people to become further removed from a spiritual union with the natural world. Whatever the cause, people sense that they live unfulfilling materialistic existences as slaves to the responsibilities of daily life, never experiencing anything that brings them bliss. Campbell calls this culture the spiritual wasteland, where "People are fulfilling purposes that are not properly theirs, but have been put upon them as inescapable laws."¹⁰ Twerski calls it "Spiritual Deficiency Syndrome," the state of chronic discontent.¹¹ Pieper explains the connection between materialism, the modern cultural obsession with work and the spiritual desert as a problem of being bound to the working-process to such an extent that the spiritual space within shrinks and as a result "meaningful action that is not work is no longer possible or even imaginable."¹² Additionally, Daly points to the scientific revolution as the jumping off point of the severing of humanity from nature whereby "nature is simply for human

¹⁰ Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 99.

¹¹ Abraham Twerski, *Happiness and the Human Spirit* (Vermont: Jewish Lights, 2007), 11.

¹² Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture* (Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 1998), 43.

use and exploitation."¹³ Capra notes: "When science had made it more and more difficult to believe in such a god, the divine disappeared completely from the scientific world view, leaving behind the spiritual vacuum that has become characteristic of the mainstream of our culture."¹⁴ Buber laments that this objectification imminently results in the loss of the holy 'thou' and the religious potential for healing.¹⁵ Some philosophers have suggested that one way back to the peaceable kingdom is through a reconnection with the natural world.¹⁶

The domestic dog provides this connection to the natural world. The relationship between *Homo sapiens* and *Canis familiaris* has co-evolved throughout the ages, and in modern times the animal continues to have an important role in the lives of humans. Where in prehistory the dog was once used as a partner on the hunt for survival,¹⁷ the domestic dog has moved from the backyard into the family abode and now finds itself being called upon to fill the role of companion, confidante and friend to people suffering from the modern predicament. In this role, the canine is a creature comfort that provides a fanfare of well-documented physical, psychological and social benefits. However, the literature shows a scholarly gap in the spiritual dimension, as at present the experience of the sacred only appears to exist as a fragmented set of dog remains and material culture. Evidence that the human-canine bond facilitates encounters with the sacred can be seen historically in different forms and across cultures. As is already the

¹³ Gabriel Daly, "Foundations in Systematics for Ecological Theology," in *Preserving the Creation*, ed. Kevin W. Irwin & Edmund Pellegrino (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1994), 41.

¹⁴ Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982), 66.

¹⁵ Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 62.

¹⁶ Albert Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 3.

¹⁷ Schuler, *Guide to Dogs*, 11.

case in the physical, psychological, and social dimensions of the bond, one may have cause to wonder if these various artifacts regarding spirituality can be selectively surveyed and, using key questions regarding humanity and the technological, placed into a more systematic framework, suggesting that they are not random, but rather part of a greater human pattern.

Definitions

Before moving on to the review of the literature, a few working definitions will be put forth regarding important concepts for the purposes of this investigation. The first concept is “technology” as it includes *Canis familiaris*. The second concept is “culture” as it relates to the human-canine relationship. The third concept that will be defined is the “sacred.”

Technology

When the average person thinks about the domestic dog, the idea that the humankind’s best friend is a technology is not likely a concept that immediately comes to a person’s mind. The dog is not the same type of technology as a computer or a car, however *Canis familiaris* is a technology. Carl Mitcham writes "To be human is to be technological,"¹⁸ and he defines technology in a general sense as “...the making and using of artifacts.”¹⁹ Upon deeper examination, he explains that technology manifests in four modes, namely as: (1) *object*: "all humanly fabricated material artifacts whose function depends on a specific materiality as such,"²⁰ (2) *knowledge*: "true beliefs concerning the making and using of artifacts [that can] be justified by appeal to skills, maxims, laws, rules, or theories,"²¹ (3) *activity*: "that pivotal event in

¹⁸ Carl Mitcham, *Thinking Through Technology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 159.

¹⁹ Mitcham, *Technology*, 95.

²⁰ Mitcham, *Technology*, 161.

²¹ Mitcham, *Technology*, 194.

which knowledge and volition unite to bring artifacts into existence or to use them; it is likewise the occasion for artifacts themselves to influence the mind and will,"²² and (4) *volition*: knowing how to use technology²³ and understanding its consequences.²⁴ Not only does this definition take a humanities approach, but also this four-pronged approach is both comprehensive and fitting as it applies to the technological understanding of *Canis familiaris*.

Mitcham's definition bridges the engineering and humanities approaches to understanding technology. For Mitcham, technology includes the machine that can take the form as something that is as simple as a human-held and operated tool, such as a hammer, or something that can operate independently such as a solar cell. More importantly, he describes the domestication of the earth, as artifact.²⁵ Mitcham refers to artifacts that turn nature into technology as "new natural artifacts,"²⁶ which "...may not fit in with the larger unities of nature,"²⁷ and thus bring about "...the need for ongoing external maintenance or care."²⁸ To be sure, *Canis familiaris* falls within the scope of Mitcham's definition. The domestic dog possesses an "intrinsically weak unity of form"²⁹ which necessitates that dogs rely upon humans for daily care, and to be sure the pure breeds simply would not exist without human guidance. In fact, the

²² Mitcham, *Technology*, 209.

²³ Mitcham, *Technology*, 250.

²⁴ Mitcham, *Technology*, 256.

²⁵ Mitcham, *Technology*, 175.

²⁶ Mitcham, *Technology*, 174.

²⁷ Mitcham, *Technology*, 174.

²⁸ Mitcham, *Technology*, 174.

²⁹ Mitcham, *Technology*, 174.

difficulties associated with natural breeding and whelping for smaller dogs arguably makes their existence largely a human endeavor.

Mitcham also reconciles the split between science and technology in a holistic fashion as he includes bodies of knowledge such as scientific theories, social rules, and craft practices in his definition. He also draws in the artistic ideas of the "cultivating and constructing" into technology as activity, which includes: servile arts, liberal arts, useful arts, and fine arts.³⁰ These aspects of knowledge and activity in his definition are particularly helpful as a scholarly basis for explaining why the various methods of dog rearing, breeding, raising, training, and socializing, etcetera may be understood as being technological in nature.

Finally, Mitcham's describes the volition aspect of the definition as "...the will that brings knowledge to bear on the physical world to design products, processes and systems. This technological will, through its manifestations, influences the shape of culture and prolongs itself at the same time."³¹ This aspect of the definition brings philosophy into the picture as he reminds the user of technology that there is an element of "choice"³² and a responsibility of "moral reflection."³³ Mitcham refers to Martin Heidegger's notion of being-in-the-world, "care" and addresses Heidegger's "Question Concerning Technology."³⁴ In his writing, Mitcham explains *Ge-stell* in terms of a modern reality whereby "Ultimately is it not just human desires turned into

³⁰ Mitcham, *Technology*, 212.

³¹ Seattle Pacific University, "Carl Mitcham: Philosophizing About Technology: Why Should be Bother?" *Ethix.org*, June 1, 2001, accessed August 2, 2018, <https://ethix.org/2001/06/01/philosophizing-about-technology-why-should-we-bother>.

³² Mitcham, *Technology*, 260.

³³ Mitcham, *Technology*, 260.

³⁴ Mitcham, *Technology*, 255-257.

motivations that give rise to modern technology. There is consent to a movement, a historical movement, that is transhuman.”³⁵ This aligns with Borgmann’s idea of the pattern of technology that shapes modern life.³⁶ Mitcham discusses Heidegger's idea of gaining a free relationship with technology and asserts that this is a vital part of "volition" in approaching the ethical dimension of technology; he explains, "...releasement or detachment from technology transforms a consent to become an active or dominating will into a consent to receptivity, or a receptive will. The will to will is transformed into a will not to will.”³⁷ When relating to *Canis familiaris*, the volition can be the will to will, or one that establishes the dog as device. Conversely, when relating to *Canis familiaris*, the volition can be a will not to will; this is the will that is receptive in the technological setting.

Culture

Geertz defines culture as "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.”³⁸ When looking for a definition of “culture” that offers consideration for the interspecies human-canine relationship, this definition is fitting in that it infers that culture is a shared experience among individuals, and the use of the word “symbolic” suggests that culture is about patterns of understanding. This definition is also good because Geertz’s choice of the word “life” seems to be inclusive of nature, rather than making a distinction between culture and nature. This idea aligns with Donna Haraway’s *Cyborg Manifesto*, where she writes about the

³⁵ Mitcham, *Technology*, 257.

³⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 3.

³⁷ Mitcham, *Technology*, 258.

³⁸ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89.

marriage of nature and technology when she describes, "...we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs."³⁹ She asserts the reworking of nature and culture in modernity, whereby the lines between them have been breached and they become united in what she calls naturecultures, or "...relationships for forming wholes from parts."⁴⁰ However, because Geertz's definition specifies the word "man," it is limited in the modern sense because this word suggests that culture is wholly human endeavor. Balter reports, "Until fairly recently, many scientists thought that only humans had culture, but that idea is now being crushed by avalanche of recent research with animals,"⁴¹ referencing studies with monkeys and whales. Thus, culture is a concept that also applies to non-human animals, and for this definition to truly extend consideration to the interspecies human-canine relationship at hand, Geertz's concept would need to substitute a word such as "individuals" for his choice of the word "man." The modified definition of Geertz's culture would appear as such: *"...a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which ...[individuals]... communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."*⁴²

The Sacred

One of the reasons why scholarship may be lacking regarding concerns of the sacred and the human-canine relationship may well reside within the ambiguous nature of what constitutes

³⁹ Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1991), 150.

⁴⁰ Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*, 151.

⁴¹ Michael Balter, "Strongest Evidence of Animal Culture Seen in Monkeys and Whales," *Science*, April 25, 2013, accessed August 23, 2018, <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2013/04/strongest-evidence-animal-culture-seen-monkeys-and-whales>.

⁴² Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89.

the sacred. Ask twenty people to define sacred and chances are good there will be twenty different answers. Spyker defines the sacred as “matters of ultimate concern.”⁴³ In *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life*, Borgmann draws heavily upon Mircea Eliade’s definition which explains that the sacred and profane are two modes of being in the world, and the sacred is something that is opposite of the profane.⁴⁴ For Eliade, the sacred is something that is beyond words that manifests and then reveals *itself*. Eliade explains,

To designate the *act of manifestation* of the sacred, we have proposed the term *hierophany*... that *something sacred shows itself to us*. ...It could be said that the history of religions—from the most primitive to the most highly developed – is constituted by a great number of hierophanies, by manifestations of sacred realities. From the most elementary hierophany – e.g. manifestation of the sacred in some ordinary object, a stone or a tree – to the supreme hierophany (which for a Christian, is the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ) ...⁴⁵

Although the sacred is most often associated with religion, it is found outside of this context, and Borgmann would likely agree that the manifestation of the sacred in an “ordinary object” is a very important inclusion in Eliade’s definition, and it is also important for this investigation. Unlike Eliade, who asserts the discontinuity of the two terms sacred and profane, Borgmann contends the two are complementary and asserts, “The holy sanctifies the profane.”⁴⁶ Additionally, Rudolph Otto adds dimension to the experiencing of the sacred when he describes it as *mysterium tremendum* – a sense of awe, fascination or dread,⁴⁷ that is “...absolutely and intensely positive.”⁴⁸ This is also important, because although the sacred may be difficult to define

⁴³ Stephen Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality* (Vermont: Skylight Paths, 2007), 5.

⁴⁴ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* translated by Willard Trask (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1959), 10.

⁴⁵ Eliade, *Sacred and Profane*, 11.

⁴⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 284-285.

⁴⁷ Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* trans. John Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), 13-24.

with any degree of precision whereby it is a mysterious reality that is beyond words, once a person has experienced the sacred, they know what it is. For the purposes of the investigation that follows, the sacred should be understood as an amalgamation of these definitions: *matters of ultimate concern as they manifest and reveal themselves in the religious and the ordinary, inspiring feelings of awe.*

Review of the Literature

In her *Companion Species Manifesto* cultural theorist Donna Haraway explains that she “...consider[s] dog writing to be a branch of feminist theory, or the other way around.”⁴⁹ She asserts this because she believes “...feminist inquiry is about understanding how things work, who is in the action, what might be possible, and how worldly actors might somehow be accountable to and love each other less violently.”⁵⁰ Following Foucault, Haraway focuses on relationships of discourse and power,⁵¹ with “discourse producing its objects”⁵² of attention. For her, the companion species are biosocial animals have emerged as the result of a very particular historical relationship. In her approach, Haraway is also interested in blurring the lines between binary categories in the system of categorization, since they alienate those who do not fit neatly into these compartments. Her method creates new possibilities for being inside the system. She describes the *Homo sapiens – Canis familiaris* story as one of co-evolution, co-habitation and

⁴⁸ Otto, *Idea of the Holy*, 13.

⁴⁹ Donna Haraway *Companion Species Manifesto* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003), 3.

⁵⁰ Haraway, *Companion Species*, 7.

⁵¹ Donna Haraway, *Simians Cyborgs and Women* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 155.

⁵² Nicholas Gane, “When We Have Never Been Human, What is to be Done? *Theory, Culture and Society* 23, no. 7-8 (December 1, 2006): 144.

cross-species sociality, and most notably the relationship in modernity is one where the cyborg meets the companion species:

Cyborgs and companion species bring together the human and non-human, the organic and technological, carbon and silicon, freedom and structure, history and myth, the rich and the poor, the state and the subject, diversity and depletion, modernity and postmodernity, and nature and culture in unexpected ways.⁵³

For Haraway, the cyborg, the companion species, and their relationship are *all* continually in process and constantly emerging. Haraway's work is important in this investigation in a few ways. Not only is Haraway among the great thinkers who have made important contributions to thinking in terms of interconnection when looking at relationships, but also Haraway's scholarship about dogs contributes to this investigation, particularly, through her personal experiences with dogs, and her anthropological ideas of co-evolution as well as the blurring of inter-species boundaries.

The philosopher Michel Foucault believed that history is not a recording of the truth of the past, but rather a revealing of the truth of the present. For him, history offers examples to both help people live better lives and to deal with urgent issues in the present. Foucault contends that any given period reveals:

...several pasts, several forms of connexion, several hierarchies of importance, several networks of determination, several teleologies, for one and the same science, as its present undergoes change: thus historical descriptions are necessarily ordered by the present state of knowledge, they increase with every transformation and never cease, in turn, to break with themselves.⁵⁴

By examining discourses of knowledge through an archaeological investigation, Foucault could identify the emergence of a period's "episteme," or the underlying and unspoken assumption of

⁵³ Haraway, *Companion Species*, 4.

⁵⁴ Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 5.

what is right, and analyze its function as a paradigm for the sciences of nature and human life. The philosopher Michele Foucault is important, in part, to the methodological approach to this investigation.

A review of the literature regarding the sacred and human-canine relationships appears to suggest that the widespread phenomenon of encountering the sacred via the human-canine relationship, evident across cultures and through history in different forms, can be systematically analyzed within selective surveys and under more general frameworks. An overview of the spiritual relationship between *Homo sapiens* and *Canis familiaris* within a religious and cultural context from antiquity to modernity provides a selective survey for the present study. For as far back in history that there exists evidence of a relationship between humans and canines, so, too, is there a suggestion that humans viewed their canine companions in a spiritual context. Neolithic humans in prehistory who, according to Mery, "expressed their spiritual life through drawing and magic,"⁵⁵ included renderings of dogs in their cave paintings.⁵⁶ The Egyptians brought their dogs along with them on their journeys to the afterlife.⁵⁷ According to Schoen, the Greeks were the first who made "a clear and precise distinction between humankind and all other living creatures on earth."⁵⁸ The Romans employed canines at their holy temples as both guardians and Cynotherapists, the name given to dogs that diagnosed and relieved human suffering with their curative lick.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Fernand Mery, *The Life, History and Magic of the Dog* (New York: Madison Square Press, 1968), 26.

⁵⁶ Mery, *Life, History, Magic*, 15.

⁵⁷ Mary Elizabeth Thurston, *The Lost History of the Canine Race* (Missouri: Andrews and McMeel, 1996), 31.

⁵⁸ Allen Schoen, *Kindred Spirits* (New York: Broadway Books, 2001), 18.

⁵⁹ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 50-59.

The introduction of Christianity and rise of an institutionalized Catholic Church had a tremendous impact on the dog in history. On the one hand, servants of God such as priests and monks were responsible for creating new breeds of dogs.⁶⁰ On the other hand, Judeo-Christian teachings supported the rife view of humankind's fundamental superiority over other living beings.⁶¹ Similarly, the Renaissance period also demonstrates a period of dilemma and dichotomy for the canine. Descartes' machine theory of animals⁶² sharply contrasts with the fact that in this golden age of breeding some canids were elevated to the status of human aristocrats.⁶³ The industrialization of Europe that eventually gave rise to "Animal Rights"⁶⁴ and the American mythos that fostered its own iconic image also provide historical evidence that the spiritual aspect of the human-canine relationship has evolved over time and within the context of culture.

Borgmann's concept of the focal activity in the philosophical tradition provides framework for the present investigation. Albert Borgmann, in his book *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life*, explains how technology is not a problem of, but rather is the principle condition of modern life.⁶⁵ In his book, he introduces his theory of the "device paradigm" and explains that modern people view technology exclusively as a device or set of devices that deliver a series of commodities and serve as a means to an end.⁶⁶ He asserts that as

⁶⁰ Schuler, *Dogs*, 16.

⁶¹ Leslie Irvine, *If You Tame Me* (Philadelphia: The Temple Press, 2004), 37.

⁶² René Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode* (1637), 22, accessed August 30, 2018, <http://lyc-sevres.ac-versailles.fr/eee.13-14.docs/descartes.discours.texte.integral.pdf>.

⁶³ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 77.

⁶⁴ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 134.

⁶⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 3.

⁶⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 54.

the central driving force of culture, technology not only is shaped by but also shapes human life with promises that paradoxically alienate people from the realness of human experience.⁶⁷

Borgmann asserts that devices are the paradigm that eclipses the plurality of the senses and threatens to obliterate what he identifies as certain focal things and practices.⁶⁸

Focal things and practices are a major theme of Borgmann's inquiry. He explains that focal activities are practices that powerfully center a person's attention on the richness of life.⁶⁹ He explains that a particular thing or an activity becomes focal when there is a gathering and disclosure of what Heidegger calls "the fourfold, the interplay of the crucial dimensions of earth and sky, mortals and divinities."⁷⁰ Borgmann also explains that focal activities are healing, simply because they restore "...us to the depth of the world and to the wholeness of our being."⁷¹

McFague's concept of the model of God from the theological perspective also provides a framework for the current investigation. Sally McFague, in her book *Models of God* expresses the need to create a new metaphor by which to understand the transcendent.⁷² She explains that the prevailing Christian models of god as king, lord and father are outdated for the modern era.⁷³ What's more, she suggests that these paternalistic metaphors for God can be idolatrous and blames this patriarchal model for contributing to the current state of godlessness and

⁶⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 56.

⁶⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 157.

⁶⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 200.

⁷⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 198.

⁷¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 206.

⁷² Sally McFague, *Models of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 69-87.

⁷³ McFague, *Models of God*, 3.

meaninglessness that not only plague Western contemporary life but also ultimately threaten to destroy humanity and the earth.⁷⁴

McFague proposes that the key to survival rests in the requirement of humankind to think differently about its place in the cosmos, and she attempts to remythologize the relationship between God and the world by experimenting with models of God as mother, lover and friend.⁷⁵ Through her work, McFague ultimately paves the way for changes in consciousness, and leads her to the conclusion that "God has many names."⁷⁶

The examination of the depiction of the dog in mythology also provides a selective survey for the present study. Joseph Campbell in his book *The Power of Myth* explains, "Myths are the clues to the spiritual potentialities of the human life."⁷⁷ Furthermore, these sacred stories function to illuminate, explain, or provide a comprehensive explanation of the world and the people to whom it belongs.⁷⁸ These mystical and cosmological purposes of myth serve to connect the sacred with the profanity of everyday life.⁷⁹

The myths of humankind's ancient past are richly infused with canine characters and stories about dogs. Many people may be familiar with Anubis the mummification god from Egyptian mythology and Cerberus the three-headed monster from Greek mythology. In his book *The Life History and Magic of the Dog*, Fernand Mery attributes the primordial beginnings of the

⁷⁴ McFague, *Models of God*, 14-21.

⁷⁵ McFague, *Models of God*, 91-174.

⁷⁶ McFague, *Models of God*, 132.

⁷⁷ Campbell, *Power of Myth*, 5.

⁷⁸ Campbell, *Power of Myth*, 4-6.

⁷⁹ Campbell, *Power of Myth*, 4-35.

dog to the frailty of humankind. He includes this quote from Toussenel: "In the beginning, God created Man, but seeing him so feeble, He gave him a dog."⁸⁰

In *The Mythology of Dogs*, the Hausmans explain that many myths of prehistory, as well as those that remain prevalent among indigenous peoples today, portray the dog as one that is "delegated by God to lend a helping hand to humankind"⁸¹ and they catalog general myths that apply to sixty-seven individual dog breeds.⁸² John Mtibi in "A Live Dog Does Not Refuse A Bone" explains that animals, including dogs, aid in creating a general awareness of the invisible world in traditional African religion and religiosity.⁸³

Stephen Spyker's matrix of spirituality in the new millennium provides a framework for the present study. Spyker, author of *Technology and Spirituality* asserts that technology and spirituality have a relationship, and he believes "they do 'mix' in ways that are worthy of consideration and study."⁸⁴ He examines the interconnection between technology and spirituality through his eight-point matrix.⁸⁵ He explains that the matrix represents the meeting points of complex and interrelated human and scientific phenomena.⁸⁶ As such, the matrix is intended to

⁸⁰ Alphonse Toussenel, *L'esprit des bêtes* (France: J. Hetzel, 1868), 15.

⁸¹ Gerald & Loretta Hausman, *The Mythology of Dogs* (New York: St. Martins, 1997), 5.

⁸² Hausman, *The Mythology of Dogs*.

⁸³ John Mtibi, "A Live Dog Does Not Refuse a Bone: The Role of Animals in the Spirituality of African Religion and Religiosity," (paper presented at International Conference of African Spirituality, Nairobi, Kenya, May 23-25 2007), 1.

⁸⁴ Stephen Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality* (Vermont: Skylight Paths, 2007), 5.

⁸⁵ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*.

⁸⁶ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 10-11.

be a tool or framework for both examining important principles and initiating meaningful discussion about the topic at hand.⁸⁷

Methodology

The present study is analytical, descriptive and evaluative in nature. More specific to the present study, attempts are made to explore, describe, explain and understand the relationship between the human-canine bond and encounters with the sacred. The investigation approaches the subject matter by interpreting and synthesizing two disciplines: anthropology and archaeology. Eric Wolf defines anthropology as

...less a subject matter than a bond between subject matters. It is part history, part literature; in part natural science, part social science; it strives to study men both from within and without; it represents both a manner of looking at man and a vision of man--the most scientific of the humanities, the most humanist of sciences.⁸⁸

The *Society for American Archeology* defines archeology as "...the study of the ancient and recent human past through material remains."⁸⁹ This investigation uses these two fields of study in two primary ways. First, as a dual disciplinary system that uses animal "remains" and material culture to understand and explain the co-development of humans and canines from prehistory into modernity. Secondly, following Foucault's example of digging through sedimented layers of discourse in the history of ideas to recover artifacts of ways of thinking that characterize certain eras, this investigation produces an archeology of knowledge using key questions regarding a.) humanity and the technological and b.) the how and why they have bonded; attempting to rethink

⁸⁷ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 10.

⁸⁸ Eric Wolf, *Anthropology* (Michigan: University of Michigan, 1964), 88.

⁸⁹ Society for American Archeology, "What is Archaeology?" *Society for American Archaeology*, accessed September 12, 2018, <http://www.saa.org/Default.aspx?TabId=1346>.

the traditional binary and hierarchical categories defining humans versus animals, belief versus reason, and dominion versus stewardship.

The present study utilizes a purposive sampling procedure. More specifically, particular thinkers, theories, literature and remains were chosen for analysis to enhance in-depth understanding yet to impose limitations. A broad overview was first conducted regarding the human-canine relationship, and then a general overview was carried out in each area of interest and specific authors of strong relevance to this investigation were identified. The sample was then purposively narrowed in accordance with the criteria for analysis.

The sample is analyzed and critiqued using the various manners and key questions regarding humanity and the technological per the following organizational scheme:

Chapter 1: This chapter provides information about the dog as a device by correlating historical evidence concerning the human canine relationship with various philosophical perspectives concerning technology. This alternating between historical reality and philosophy is done as a reverse chronology that begins by examining the contemporary theories of influential philosophers and then digs back to the actual historical origins and context, including the history of ideas, of humankind's relationship with *Canis familiaris*. The following key questions will be addressed:

RQ1: Can the dog be characterized as a being viewed as a device that resulted from the inescapable pattern of technology that began during the Enlightenment and gained momentum during the Industrial Revolution in Europe?

RQ2: Can the dog be interpreted as a device through the mindsets of standardization, disposability and domination that align with key features of Borgmann's device paradigm?

*RQ3: Can it be shown that the view of *Canis familiaris* as a device is rooted in European tradition, and that this tradition of viewing the dog as such was carried on by the Colonists settling in America, ultimately becoming part of an emerging American ideology?*

RQ4: What factors popularized the dog/dog ownership in America?

RQ5: At what point did the dog become decontextualized and available as a commodity, how does this manifest and what effect has this had on the presence of the dog?

RQ6: What lasting effects does Descartes' machine theory have on views of dogs in modernity? Conversely, what systems of thought have/may salvage the dog from Decartes' machine theory?

Chapter 2: This chapter provides information about the human-canine relationship and connections to nature by correlating historical evidence with various intellectual perspectives concerning relationships with the natural world. This examination is done as a chronology that follows the historical development and context of the interspecies relationship while correlating the history of ideas, theological, moral, technological, scientific and philosophical perspectives of influential thinkers, from antiquity into modernity. The following key questions will be asked:

RQ7: Can it be shown that dogs and humans co-evolved as the human-canine divide developed beginning in pre-history? More specifically, do dogs in culture mirror the societies in which they existed as humans attempted to understand their relationship with the natural world in Prehistory; and as societies developed for the Egyptians, Ancient Greeks, Ancient Romans; as well as for people in the Christian Era to the Middle Ages?

RQ8: Following Foucault's idea that every epoch contains several pasts and historical descriptions are necessarily ordered by the present state of knowledge, can it be shown that the same jumping off point that disconnected people from dogs, thus shaping them into a device, also caused people re-think their relationships with nature, thus making stronger connections between people and dogs.

RQ9: Can a model of positive pathways be created which organizes, outlines and illustrates ways of rethinking the traditional hierarchy, thus bridging the divide between people and dogs in the modern technological scheme?

RQ10: How does the humane movement reorient a person?

RQ11: What factors may influence people's familial connection with dogs?

RQ12: What potential benefits does anthropomorphizing a dog offer a person?

RQ13: Why and how can taming be understood as a continuous process

RQ14: Is Buber's idea of "opening up" by looking in to the eyes of an animal something that breeders experience with neonatal puppies?

RQ15: In what ways does the dog provide an intermediary to nature both inside and outside the home? How might these interactions expand a person's experience of the natural world?

Chapter 3: This chapter provides information that examine the human-canine relationship through the lens of Borgmann's philosophy. Through applied philosophy, the discussion initially analyzes *Canis familiaris* as a focal thing within Borgmann's philosophical framework and then considers the inclusion of dogs in focal practices within Borgmann's scheme by interpreting sociological, ethnographical and phenomenological perspectives of dog-keeping cultures that range from the simple dog owner to more serious dog professionals. The following key questions will be asked:

RQ16: Can the dog be shown to be a focal thing that within Borgmann's scheme? Does the dog reflect the key ideas in Borgmann's model of a.) being a constant, b.) being inconspicuous and humble, yet flourishing at the fray of human concerns, and c.) having the capacity to gather and disclose the fourfold?

RQ17: What are the ways that the dog is a constant?

RQ18: What are the ways that the dog is inconspicuous and humble? Is the dog's humble character a function of human design?

RQ19: In what ways is the dog visible at the fray of human concerns?

RQ20: Where/how does the dog demonstrate the interplay between earth and sky for a person?

RQ21: Where/how does the dog draw the mortal into the crucial interplay of the fourfold for a person?

RQ22: Where/how does the dog draw the divine into the crucial interplay of the fourfold for a person?

RQ23: What is an example of an interaction with a dog that has the capacity to gather and reveal the interplay of the fourfold for a person?

RQ24: When included in a focal practice, how does the dog reorient a person's life?

RQ25: How does the act of caring for a dog in the everyday constitute a focal practice? Is commitment/act of caring for the dog alone enough? Can a person toggle back and forth between the distraction and the focal?

RQ26: How does walking a dog constitute a focal practice that creates a central wholeness? Is there something unique that a dog offers, when compared to inanimate focal things?

RQ27: How does hobby breeding constitute a focal practice?

RQ28: How/where does the commitment to dog sports constitute a focal practice?

RQ29: How does the working therapy dog constitute a focal practice?

Chapter 4: This chapter provides information that examines connecting to the good life and to God through relationships with dogs through applied philosophy, ethics and theology. Influential thinkers and guiding models are identified, then relationships with dogs and dog culture are tested within in the framework of the models. The following key questions will be asked:

RQ30: As a focal concern, can the dog generate wealth and lead a person to experience the good life?

RQ31: In what way(s) might a person develop excellence by having a dog?

RQ32: Is complex ability development regarding a dog limited or, rather an on-going activity?

RQ33: Do people who participate in dog-centered activities acquire excellence beyond everyday faculties?

RQ34: What kinds of relationships with dogs would Aristotle describe as contributing to the good life?

RQ35: How can a relationship with a dog answer Borgmann's question regarding if it is possible for a device to shift to a focal thing?

RQ36: Can a person impose limits on technology through their commitment to the dog as a focal concern, in accordance with Borgmann's three directions?

RQ37: Through their commitment to the dog as a focal concern, how does a person create a clearing?

RQ38: Through their commitment to the dog as a focal concern, how does a person simplify their context?

RQ39: Through their commitment to the dog as a focal concern, how does a person extend their sphere of engagement?

RQ40: As a focal thing, how can the dog inform about each of the traditional notions of excellence that Borgmann articulates as world citizenship, gallantry, charity and family?

*RQ41: In testing *Canis familiaris* in McFague's models of God as challenging the traditional Western view of God, does the dog offer a plausible alternative model of God?*

RQ42: How does the dog model God's unconditional love? What is the argument against Stockholm Syndrome?

RQ43: How does the dog model God's non-judgmental acceptance?

RQ44: How does the dog model God's companionship?

RQ45: How does the dog model God's universality?

Chapter 5: This chapter explores how people connect to the sacred through experiences with *Canis familiaris* in modernity by examining ancient and cultural artifacts. This is done by sifting through the body of canine culture artifacts from ancient and contemporary contexts to identify those that function by providing openings to the sacred sphere, and then interpret or evaluate significant artifacts for their purpose of connecting a person to the sacred sphere when called upon via the human-canine relationship in modernity. The following key questions will be asked:

RQ46: Can ancient myths about dogs be selectively surveyed and organized for their significance in the following scheme: a.) dogs and gods, b.) canine as cultural hero, c.) celestial canines, d.) hellhounds and death, e.) characteristics/explanatory myths?

RQ47: What might have been the significance of ancient myths concerning dogs and gods? Do these myths have significance in modernity?

RQ48: What was/is the significance of ancient myths concerning the dog as cultural hero?

RQ49: What was/is the significance of ancient myths concerning celestial canines?

RQ50: What was/is the significance of ancient myths concerning hellhounds and death?

RQ51: What was/is the significance of ancient myths concerning characteristics of dogs?

RQ52: Is there evidence that culture has an impact on the shaping of dog myths?

RQ53: How are myths about dogs kept “alive” in modernity?

RQ54: What evidence is there of modern myths concerning dogs perpetuating the myths about dogs from antiquity?

RQ55: What is the relationship between the contemporary interpretation of the Grail legend and the dog in modernity?

RQ56: Can the human-canine relationship be explored through the eight critical lenses of Spyker’s matrix to reveal new frontiers between technology and spirituality?

RQ57: What might a person discover by evaluating their relationships with dogs through Spyker’s lens of “Boundary”?

RQ58: What might a person discover by evaluating their relationships with dogs through Spyker’s lens of “Simplicity”?

RQ59: How does Spyker’s example of The Amish present a problem for evaluating the dog through the lens of “Simplicity”?

RQ60: What might a person discover by evaluating their relationships with dogs through Spyker’s lens of “Transparency”?

RQ61: What might a person discover by evaluating their relationships with dogs through Spyker’s lens of “Community”?

RQ62: What might a person discover by evaluating their relationships with dogs through Spyker’s lens of “Identity”?

RQ63: What might a person discover by evaluating their relationships with dogs through Spyker’s lens of “Velocity”?

RQ64: What might a person discover by evaluating their relationships with dogs through Spyker’s lens of “Connectivity”?

RQ65: What might a person discover by evaluating their relationships with dogs through Spyker's lens of "Liberty"?

RQ66: What is the value of Spyker's matrix for the individual using it to evaluate spirituality and their relationships with dogs?

Chapter 1

The Dog as Device in the *Homo Sapiens – Canis Familiaris* Relationship

The world exists through the understanding of dogs.

—Friedrich Nietzsche

Introduction

The idea that human beings view and treat the canine, a living being, as a device within the *Homo sapiens-Canis familiaris* relationship can be considered a predicament of modernity. In fact, theorists have suggested that the unique relationship between dog and human in antiquity was originally one of cooperation, which yielded mutual benefit, and they have even suggested that this relationship facilitated co-evolution. Early species of dogs evolved from wolves and these animals had amazing scenting and predatory capabilities.¹ Heightened sensory capacities made dogs ideal partners for humans in the hunt for food. Coren writes,

Some evolutionary theorists have suggested that the survival of our ancestors had to do with the fact that our cooperative partnership with dogs made us more efficient hunters than Neanderthals. With the dog's more acute sensory systems, finding game was easier.²

In exchange for help with procuring food, early humans offered dogs safety and protection in what often were harsh environmental circumstances.³ Together, their relationship offered companionship for alleviating loneliness throughout long days and they provided warmth to one

¹ Elizabeth Schuler, *Guide to Dogs* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1980), 10-11.

² Stanley Coren, *How to Speak Dog* (New York: The Free Press, 2000), 18.
By some "evolutionary theorists" Coren is referring to J.M. Allman, *Evolving Brains* (New York: Freeman, 1999), 204-207.

³ Schuler, *Guide to Dogs*, 12.

another during cold nights.⁴ This snapshot of the early human-canine relationship is one that could best be described as an inter-species friendship. If an onlooker were to fast-forward in history to the time around the 1980's in the United States, that onlooker would see a vastly different picture of the human-canine relationship. That onlooker would see hundreds of thousands of dogs being abandoned and destroyed in shelters.⁵ They would see dogs in experimental laboratories being shot, burned and dismembered for "scientific" advancement.⁶ They would see puppies being displayed for sale on shelves in pet stores, arranged by breed, much like cans of soup are arranged by flavor at the grocery store, for consumers to purchase according to their likes and dislikes. They would see owners using electronic shock collars,⁷ prong collars⁸ or attempting to dominate their non-compliant dogs with brutal and violent physical maneuvers that were popular at the time called "alpha rolls."⁹ They would see owners

⁴ Mary Elizabeth Thurston, *The Lost History of the Canine Race* (Missouri: Andrews and McMeel, 1996), 10.

⁵ Mark Derr, *A Dog's History of America* (New York: North Point Press, 2004), 313.

⁶ American Anti-Vivisection Society, "Dogs," *American Anti-Vivisection Society*, accessed April 26, 2018, <http://aavs.org/animals-science/animals-used/dogs/>.

⁷ Sara Logan Wilson, "8 Things You Need to Know Before Buying a Shock Collar," *The Canine Journal*, October 6, 2017, accessed May 3, 2018, <https://www.caninejournal.com/shock-collar-for-dogs/>.

Shock collars are a type of electronic dog collar used for training purposes. These collars were considered to be great aids to owners for correcting problem behavior. Technological improvements concerning the ability to select multiple levels of intensity from the transmitter led to the universal acceptance of this as a training tool. New generations of electronic dog collars continue to be introduced to the market.

⁸ Hans Tossutti, *Companion Dog Training: A Practical Manual on Systematic Obedience* (New York: Orange Judd Publishing, 1942). Hans Tossutti wrote his book *Companion Dog Training* where he advocates for the prong collar when he writes the following about prong collars - "a well-thought-out, cruelty-preventing device which at the same time assists in systematic training," but felt that the choke collar, "though quite innocuous in appearance, is an instrument of torture in the hands of the beginner because of its unlimited choke."

⁹ Monks of New Skete, *How to be Your Dog's Best Friend* (New York: Monks of New Skete, 1978), 46-48. The alpha roll was first popularized by the 1978 book, however, in the 2002 second edition of the book, the monks recanted and strongly discouraged the technique: "In the original edition of this book, we recommended a technique we termed 'the alpha-wolf rollover'... We no longer recommend this technique and strongly discourage its use to our clients.... The conditions in which it might be used effectively are simply too risky and demanding for the average dog owner; there are other ways of dealing with problem behavior that are much safer and, in the long run, just as effective."

leaving their dogs home alone day after day, confined within the four walls of a house or worse, a wire crate, with nothing to do but be expected to patiently wait for their owner's return. What the onlooker would truly see is a painful image of the contemporary human-canine relationship whereby the dog has been so extremely objectified by people that it is viewed as a device that is available for human consumption. The drastic change whereby the dog went from being a compeer to humans to an object for consumption did not happen in an instant. Rather, the metamorphosis of the human-canine relationship happened over time, and this change occurred in tandem with the unfolding key events in modern human history.

This chapter will provide information about the dog as a device by correlating historical evidence concerning the human canine relationship with various philosophical perspectives concerning technology. This alternating between historical reality and philosophy will be done as a reverse chronology that will begin by examining the contemporary theories of influential philosophers and then digging back to the actual historical origins and context, including the history of ideas, of humankind's relationship with *Canis familiaris*.

More specifically, the information that follows will examine how contemporary *Homo sapiens* came to view *Canis familiaris* as a device by examining the philosophical underpinnings of two influential thinkers, namely Albert Borgmann and René Descartes. First, Borgmann's concept of the device paradigm will be presented. According to this contemporary philosopher, the rise and rule of technology began to emerge when technology became the primary influence that shaped humankind's understanding of contemporary life. Borgmann explains that this inescapable pattern of technology began during the Enlightenment and gained momentum during the Industrial Revolution in Europe and America whereby people began to view the world

through the pattern of the device.¹⁰ It is during this key point in history when the dog begins to become viewed as a device by people. Evidence will be presented that suggests that during this time, significant factors such as the mindset of standardization, disposability and domination on the part of humans in the developing human-canine relationship align with key features of Borgmann's device paradigm. Importantly, it will also be suggested that this view of *Canis familiaris* as a device was rooted in the European tradition, carried on by the Colonists that settled in America, and ultimately became an integral part of an emerging American ideology.

Additionally, Descartes' influence will be discussed as a philosophy that shaped humanity's view of the dog as a device. To be sure, Descartes' dualistic philosophy set the stage for the viewpoint of reductionism and the resulting means-end split that shaped the modern human understanding of the world. However, it will be suggested that the tenets of Descartes' machine view of animals, which were readily adopted by the scientific community, have had a lasting effect on humanity's objectified view of dogs. The impact of Descartes's view will be illustrated in the examples of the continued use of dogs in scientific research into modernity as well as in the evolution of dog training methods. Additionally, the critical responses to Descartes' philosophy by thinkers such as Voltaire and Capra, as well as a group of Cambridge scientists, who ironically were created by the Cartesian tradition, will be addressed; these philosophers critique the Cartesian view that asserts that only humans possess the capacity for language, consciousness, and the ability to feel pain.

Borgmann's Rise and Rule of Technology

Albert Borgmann is one of the most influential contemporary philosophers in the area of the theology of technology. His concern for the consequences of technology on the modern

¹⁰ Albert Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Modern Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 35-36.

human experience of the sacred caused him to examine the relationship between people, technology and the orientation of the progressive life. In his major philosophical work “Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life,” Borgmann asserts that technology is not the problem of, but rather the pattern or paradigm of modern life.¹¹ He asserts that “The Enlightenment was the original liberation movement of our time,”¹² and suggests that the proliferation of new machinery and rapidly advancing methods of production introduced during the Industrial Revolution ushered in the new technological order.¹³ He sees technology as the primary driving force in modernity and explains that technology is something that continuously shapes human experience, while it is simultaneously being shaped by human desire.¹⁴ In this manner, Borgmann sides with Hedegarian thought that “Humans are not helpless victims, but more like partners in the issue of their destiny.”¹⁵ Regarding the modern paradigm of technology, Borgmann contends that this mutual and simultaneous shaping is fundamentally rooted within technology’s promise to bring pleasure, comfort and leisure to the human experience. He explains:

The splendor of the promise of technology appears bright to this very day when we remember how recently misery and deprivation have been shaping human life, especially in the newly settled West of this country.¹⁶

In his view, technology has since replaced misery and deprivation as the shaper of the modern life.

¹¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 3.

¹² Borgmann, *Technology*, 35.

¹³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 36.

¹⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 36-40.

¹⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 40.

¹⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 36.

Borgmann also asserts that the rule of the technological pattern must be understood as involving more than mere tools designed to ease the burden of work.¹⁷ He explains that the contemporary paradigm consists of the inexorable and virtually unnoticed integration of both technological items, providing the example of the television,¹⁸ and technological procedures, providing the example of commercial wine making,¹⁹ into the everydayness of modern life. For Borgmann, getting up to turn on the television or uncorking a bottle of store bought wine are examples of everyday commodities that disclose a starkly different reality to human beings in a drastically different manner than that which was disclosed in the pre-technological era. Furthermore, he suggests that this unquestioning and pervasive inconspicuous inclusion of technology into the modern daily human circumstance may be tantamount to a gestalt in human history as he contends, “The rise and rule of this pattern I consider the most consequential event of the modern period.”²⁰

At the time of his writing about modern technology in 1984, Borgmann’s discourse introduced the new idea of the device paradigm.²¹ He explains that the character of the modern technological culture is best seen in the commodity of the device.²² By this he means that a device is something that is decontextualized and available for consumption.²³ In other words, these items have become ends in themselves and serve no purpose other than as objects for consumption. For example, the living room radio that once served as a means for gathering the

¹⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 41.

¹⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 43.

¹⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 49.

²⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 3.

²¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 40-48.

²² Borgmann, *Technology*, 42.

²³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 54.

family together for listening to a Sunday afternoon radio show, has today transformed into a person's possessing the latest and greatest in iPod nano technology. Borgmann would explain that there are various features of the iPod that render it a device within his concept of the paradigm. First, its inner workings are hidden from the user, thus rendering it a mystery and something that is not easily repairable if it happens to break.²⁴ In terms of commodity, the iPod is mass-produced and affordable for the majority of the masses, so if it does happen to fail, it may be mindlessly tossed into the rubbish heap and then easily replaced with a new iPod. What's more, this modern day musical machine is as small as a book of matches and it is designed to harbor the unique musical tastes expressly ordered, purchased and downloaded by the individual owner. Snug fitting ear buds provide the gateway into this private realm for the listener and they can be worn anywhere - even on a noisy crowded subway - because they conveniently silence the world outside of the wearer. But even more important is the idea that an iPod may be viewed by someone as a piece of technology that must be "had" in a particular color or design simply because the neighbor "has" one. In this decontextualization of technology into a mere device that is purely the subject of consumption, Borgmann contends that the realness of human experience has been lost.²⁵ Where technology was once intended to unburden the person from the toil of work, technology has now transitioned to a mere commodity, which Borgmann asserts "... is available when it is at our disposal without burdening us in any way."²⁶ The ironic twist and paradox, Borgmann explains, is that this same technology that once held the promise of bringing pleasure, comfort and leisure to the human experience has now become a mere product

²⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 47.

²⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 62.

²⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 77.

that disengages people from the real experiences of the world, ultimately leaving them feeling bored, empty and unfulfilled.²⁷

Because technology is engrained in the modern experience, Borgmann rightfully views it as a permanent characteristic of modern life and explains that technology is a force that must be accepted.²⁸

Moving Toward the Dog as Device During the Period of the Rise and Rule of Technology

Borgmann explains that the rise and rule of technology began with the Enlightenment and gained momentum during the Industrial Revolutions in both Europe and America.²⁹ He asserts that not only did humanity's push to dominate the natural world grow exponentially during this time,³⁰ but also the rise of the machines set the stage for the viewpoint of reductionism and the resulting means-end split that invaded everything.³¹ For Borgmann, this was a turning point in human history and a time that he denotes as the jumping off point for the pattern of technology that dominates modern life.³² During this rise and rule of technology, there were noticeable changes that began to occur in the relationship between people and dogs that seem to align with Borgmann's discussion of the features of the device paradigm. During this key point in history, there is evidence that the dog begins to become viewed as device by people as it becomes standardized, disposable and dominated.

²⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 56.

²⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 194.

²⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 35-37.

³⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 36.

³¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 36-39.

³² Borgmann, *Technology*, 35.

In his discussion of the device, Borgmann speaks of the uniformity and standardization that occurs when things become commodious through the progress of technology.³³ One example of how *Canis familiaris* becomes standardized during this key period in history was evident in the area of dog breeding. The selective breeding that had been used in antiquity to fashion dogs that were helpful in the hunt and for protection became a skill of art and science that took on a new significance. In modernity, dog breeding was aimed at the rapid creation of a plethora of new breeds that served both novel functions and useful purposes. Author Mary Elizabeth Thurston proclaims the 14th century as the beginning of the golden age of dog breeding when she explains, “The goal was to create one’s own personalized canine variety, unique to a particular family or estate, just like vintage wine.”³⁴ Notably, it was also during this pivotal time that the various breeds that were still in existence from prior periods in history began to take on a more uniform appearance as people became more focused on honing their knowledge and skills in the controlling of canine genetic outcome. Ernst Haeckel remarks, “The perfection which gardeners and farmers have attained in the art of selections now enables them in the space of a few years, arbitrarily to create new animal and vegetable forms.”³⁵ Thurston notes that dog breeders gained notoriety and public favor as “...artists who wielded mastery in the medium of living flesh.”³⁶ By the early 18th century, dog breeding was also influenced by the mass-production mindset that grew prevalent during the Industrial Revolution. Thurston explains, “Just as handcrafted goods were supplanted by mass-produced, machine-made articles, hailed for

³³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 50.

³⁴ Mary Elizabeth Thurston, *The Lost History of the Canine Race* (Missouri: Andrews and McMeel, 1996), 75.

³⁵ Ernst Haeckel, *The History of Creation* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1892), 143.

³⁶ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 100.

their uniformity of size and quality, so too were dogs now targeted for standardization.”³⁷ In other words, through selective breeding the goal of the dog breeder was to fashion a breed to perfection by eliminating even the slightest of unwanted physical characteristics such as eye shape or teeth alignment so that every specimen resembled the other as if they had been mass produced by the factory assembly line.

This idea of uniformity was not just limited to humankind’s making certain that the members of certain breed strongly resembled one another, but it also had to do with developing a breed’s ability to perform a particular job with predictable precision.³⁸ In other words, dogs of a certain breed were not only expected to look alike, but they also were expected to instinctually perform a particular job with a level of aptitude that was consistent among like members of the breed. The American Kennel Club explains, “It was found that traits such as shape, size, temperament and special abilities could be predicted by selective breeding. Thus, generations of the same strain were reasonably uniform with respect to these important qualities. ‘Breeding in line’ became the rule.”³⁹ To be sure, hunting had been on the forefront of canine tasks for centuries, but from the Renaissance forward as commerce and business prospered throughout Europe, the purposes for which breeds were created began to expand.⁴⁰ As expected, highly specialized breeds were fashioned for the various jobs of hunting, but there were many new breeds of dogs introduced for the purposes of fighting, turning spits, pulling carts, guarding

³⁷ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 99.

³⁸ Fernand Mery, *The Life, History and Magic of the Dog* (New York: Madison Square Press, 1968), 55-58.

³⁹ American Kennel Club, *Dogs: The First 125 Years of the American Kennel Club* (New Jersey: Kennel Club Books, 2009), 18.

⁴⁰ Mery, *Life, History, Magic*, 55.

flocks and even for keeping the favored company of ladies.⁴¹ To be sure, the phenomenon of widespread breed specialization, creating dogs to perform countless tasks, had the ability to disburden humanity from the toil of work in the sense of the device that Borgmann describes.

During this time, the establishment of taxonomic classification systems based on canine work abilities not only suggests that the dog was a being viewed as a purposeful device, but it also is indicative of the growing means-ends split in humankind's view of dogs. Author Fernand Mery describes one such 16th century system used to classify dogs used in the hunt:

The charters of the German people (which applied not only to Germaina but also to large parts of the kingdom of France and Spain) already classified them according to their respective work: the *pointer* for flushing big game, the *beater* for rounding it up, the *chaser* for pursuing it, the *castor* for hunting underground, the *netting dog* for game birds, etc.⁴²

It is important to consider that in the centuries that followed, even more specialized breeds of Pointers, Setters, Retrievers, Spaniels and Terriers were created to perform each of these hunting related tasks with reliable skill.⁴³ This focus on a task agenda by canine enthusiasts at the time becomes important in Borgmann's discussion of the disposability of the device. Borgmann suggests that the means-end split that leads to the disengaging view of the device also creates the mindset that the device can be easily discarded.⁴⁴ During the period in history being discussed, there were a number of breeds that became extinct for various reasons. There are instances where breeders abandoned their breeding programs because their dogs failed to perform tasks as the breeder intended, and other examples where extinction occurred because a breed's purpose was supplanted by advancing technology. The Turnspit dog is one example of a breed that was

⁴¹ Mery, *Life, History, Magic*, 54-55.

⁴² Mery, *Life, History, Magic*, 56.

⁴³ Schuler, *Guide to Dogs*.

⁴⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 47.

supplanted by technological advancement. Johannes Caius describes these invaluable kitchen helpers in his book *Of English Dogges*,

Of the Dogge called Turnspete in Latine *Veruuersator*... a certaine dogge in kytchen seruice excellent. For whẽ any meate is to bee roasted they go into a wheele which they turning rounde about with the waight of their bodies. (Of the dog called Turnspit in latin *Versator*... an excellent kitchen service dog. When any meat is to be roasted, they go into a wheel which they turn around with the weight of their bodies).⁴⁵

The job of these dogs was to walk for several hours each day on circular treadmills attached to hearth spits that would turn meat so that the food cooked evenly over an open flame.⁴⁶ This task was not only one of endurance, but one can only imagine that such a job required bravery, to work so closely to a scorching flame, and needed loyalty, so as not to reach out and eat the meat. To be sure, the dogs excelled at this task to such an extent that Caius notes, “...so diligently looke to their businesse... that no drudge nor skullion can doe the feate more cunningly (...they work so diligently.... that no cook or servant could do the work more aptly).”⁴⁷ Unfortunately, the invention of automaton roasting jacks, called clock jacks, ousted the Turnspit dog and subsequently began its decline toward extinction.⁴⁸ At the time of this writing, the list of extinct dogs contains no less than forty known breeds,⁴⁹ but because accurate historical data is absent or lacking in the majority of these cases, it is impossible to determine exactly how many breeds may have begun their decline during the rise and rule of technology characterized in Borgmann’s

⁴⁵ Johannes Caius, *Of English Dogges; the Diversities, the Names, the Natures and the Properties* translated by Abraham Fleming (London: A. Bradley, 1570), 5.35, accessed September 2, 2018, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/27050/27050-h/27050-h.htm#lat_page9b.

⁴⁶ Kitchen Sisters, “Turnspit Dogs: The Rise and Fall of the Vernepator Cur,” *National Public Radio*, May 13, 2014, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=turnspit+dogs&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>.

⁴⁷ Caius, *English Dogges*, 5.35.

⁴⁸ Kitchen Sisters, “Turnspit Dogs.”

⁴⁹ Wikipedia, “List of Extinct Dog Breeds,” *Wikipedia*, accessed March 27, 2013, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_extinct_dog_breeds.

device pattern. Interestingly, at the time of this writing, the American Kennel Club (AKC) recognizes 190⁵⁰ different breeds and the Federation Cynologique International (FCI) recognizes 332⁵¹ breeds. In history, forty extinct breeds may not seem like many, but the extinction of 40 breeds today would be approximately 21% of recognized AKC breeds and 12% of recognized FCI breeds.

Borgmann's discussion of the features of the device also includes an important distinction between the adaptability of nature versus the controllability of nature.⁵² He suggests that this transition from adapting nature into daily life toward controlling nature to serve human needs was not only a key component in the rooting of the device paradigm, but that it also had resulting implications for the device.⁵³ Concerning the human-canine relationship, one way this phenomenon of the transformational shift from a relationship of mastery to one of dominating control during the period of the rise and rule of technology can be seen is in the keeping of dogs. Conceivably, the pre-technological family dog performed a variety of purposes, which may have simultaneously included companion for the children, helper in the hunt and protector of the abode. During this time before widespread breed specialization, humanity's relationship with the dog was one that might be best described as people having mastery of nature whereby they enfolded the dog's natural instincts and integrated these capacities into human daily life. This relationship of natural shaping might be understood as an exercise in adaptation that is similar to George Sturt's discussion of wheelwright's choosing of timber for his craft when he writes,

⁵⁰ American Kennel Club, "Breeds by Year Recognized," *American Kennel Club*, accessed January 6, 2018, <http://www.akc.org/press-center/facts-stats/page-3/>.

⁵¹ Federation Cynologique International, "FCI Breeds Nomenclature," *Federacion Cynologique International*, accessed January 6, 2018, <http://www.fci.be/en/nomenclature/>.

⁵² Borgmann, *Technology*, 44.

⁵³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 40-56.

“Rather it [the timber] would lend its subtle virtues to the man who knew how to humor it: with him, as with an understanding friend, it would co-operate.”⁵⁴ Borgmann describes, “This is a relationship not of domination, but of mastery.”⁵⁵ Sturt further explains

If he [the wheelwright] was really a master of his timber, if he knew what he had already got in stock and also what was likely to be wanted in years to come, he kept a watch always for timber with special curve, suitable for hames, or shaft-braces, or wagon-heads, or hounds, or tailboard rails, or whatever else the tree-shape might suggest.⁵⁶

Similar to the curved timber that was adapted to the needs of the wheelwright, the pre-breed specialized family dog’s behaviors and instincts were adapted to the needs of the people within the abode. With the ushering in of the new paradigm and the push for breeders to control nature by creating breeds for specialized purposes, the role of the dog in the home began to change focus in a rapidly industrializing world. Though it certainly may not have been true for every dog in every household, to a growing extent, the dog was becoming an object to be used since breeders were mass-producing purposeful animals that were available for consumption in the new market. Instead of having a single multi-purpose canine, the modernizing household might now have included a handful of different breeds of dogs intended for distinctly individual purposes such as working in the kitchen, herding flocks, controlling rodents, hauling carts or protecting personal belongings.

Additionally, dogs that were obtained for working purposes in the newly emerging paradigm were generally viewed as property that could be treated as their owners saw fit. Dogs at work were often forced to work long hours, toil in harsh conditions, and were treated cruelly

⁵⁴ George Sturt, *The Wheelwright’s Shop* (UK: Cambridge University, 1974), 45.

⁵⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 44.

⁵⁶ Sturt, *Wheelwright*, 31.

when they did not perform as expected.⁵⁷ Thurston explains, "...one of many street scenes replayed daily [was one] in which animals were flogged, clubbed, burned, stabbed and even sliced with knives when they tired or weakened on the job..."⁵⁸ This abusive treatment of working dogs follows Langdon Winner's rule of Instrumentalism that Borgmann explains, "...allows us to take possession of things and to overpower them."⁵⁹ Borgmann further writes "...we do violence to things and events when we divide them into means and ends."⁶⁰ This abusive treatment of dogs did not go without opposition, however. During the early 1800s, treatises were written about the moral and ethical treatment of dogs in England and on June 18, 1841 dog carts were banned in the UK. In the decision, the Earl of Wicklow wrote: "...dogs should be rescued from the brutal treatment we had long seen inflicted upon them by their inhuman masters."⁶¹ Clearly, there were people who were beginning to recognize that the dog was more than a commodity to be exploited. Nevertheless, the English canine experience influenced America. Thurston explains, "News of the British ban inspired restrictive legislation in the United States."⁶²

The Dog and the Device Paradigm in America

As was evidenced in the historical development of Europe, *Canis familiaris* and the shaping of the device paradigm can also be traced in the historical development of America. The

⁵⁷ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 125-128.

⁵⁸ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 127.

⁵⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 59.

Referencing Langdon Winner, *Autonomous Technology* (Boston:MITPress, 1977), 230-236.

⁶⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 59.

⁶¹ *Dog Carts*, HL Deb 18 June 1841, 58 cc1572-3, accessed March 23, 2019, https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1841/jun/18/dog-carts#S3V0058P0_18410618_HOL_38

⁶² Thurston, *The Lost History*, 134.
Referring to the ASPCA's 1866 New York cart dog licensing and registration legislation.

progression of the device paradigm in America will be outlined in following sub-sections: Early America and Becoming Modern America.

Early America

History indicates that dogs were present on the North American continent and kept by indigenous peoples well before the arrival of European settlers.⁶³ These early canine companions were believed to have walked across the frozen Bering Strait crossing from Siberia to Alaska some 35,000 to 12,000 years ago.⁶⁴ Unfortunately, there is no written account of their early history and speculations surrounding their place among humans are based on bone fragments that scientists have unearthed at archeological dig sites.⁶⁵ Evidence suggests that even from the early days, there was a relationship between dogs and people that may have included the dog as helper on the hunt, sharer in the transporting of goods and provider of the occasional meal.⁶⁶ Prior to the arrival of the settlers in North America, Native Americans kept dogs and developed social bonds with them that aligned with their tribal and spiritual traditions.⁶⁷ The fate of the dog changed, however, when Europeans began to arrive and this is where the story of the dog as it is known in modern America begins. Derr suggests that in contrast to the Native Americans who kept dogs on the wild continent as “companions, fellow travelers and camp guards,”⁶⁸ the arriving British colonists brought dogs with them to serve more useful and

⁶³ Mark Derr, *A Dog's History of America* (New York: North Point Press, 2004), 10.

⁶⁴ Derr, *A Dog's History*, 6.

⁶⁵ Darcy Morey, *Dogs, Domestication and the Development of a Social Bond* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 8.

⁶⁶ Derr, *A Dog's History*, 7. Carles Vila et al., “Multiple and Ancient Origins of the Domestic Dog,” *Science* 276 (June 13, 1997): 1,687-89. Peter Savolainen et al., “Genetic Evidence for East Asian Origin of Domestic Dogs,” *Science* 298 (November 22, 2002): 1,610-13.

⁶⁷ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 146.

⁶⁸ Derr, *A Dog's History*, 12.

pragmatic purposes. He asserts that in Puritan New England, “settlers used dogs to guard their homes and manage their livestock, to kill wolves, to hound Indians.”⁶⁹ The role of the dog as a vital tool for the colonists in their desire to conquer and control the natural world seems glaringly evident when McIntyre explains, “...early Massachusetts laws encouraged residents to keep dogs, such as mastiffs and greyhounds, to use in hunting wolves and authorized town governments to use public funds to purchase and keep wolf-hunting dogs.”⁷⁰ To a great extent, even while getting a fresh start in a new land, the colonists implemented the practices of dog keeping that they already knew and the dog in the device paradigm in America mirrored that of Europe.

Although dogs in early America were used for protecting people, valuables and livestock, it is conceivable that in the challenging and uncertain environment of the New World, dogs were most important in their roles as protectors against dangerous animal and human predators as the colonists tried to make and sustain their lives. Like their European counterparts, American dogs were also used for specialized purposes that helped keep busy American homesteads, farms and plantations running efficiently as communities developed over time.⁷¹ These dedicated working housedogs also suffered the same exploitation and brutality that European dogs endured and treatment of dogs in the New World. One writer remarks that the dog “in moral qualities he often surpasses his master,” and then the anonymous correspondent explains the abuses a dog endures at the hands of its master, “...he [the master] is known to declare and to act upon the principle

⁶⁹ Derr, *A Dog's History*, 61.

⁷⁰ Rick McIntyre, ed., *War Against the Wolf: America's Campaign to Exterminate the Wolf* (MN: Voyager Press, 1997), 29.

⁷¹ Derr, *A Dog's History*, 75.

[dog]...the animal is beaten...”⁷² Another mirroring of the European tradition involved the American social elite’s imitation of the European bourgeois’s deeply rooted practice of keeping only the most well-bred, top-quality and desirable breeds of dogs. To help achieve this end, Americans took their dog breeding just as seriously as it was taken in Europe. American breeders fashioned and standardized their own signature breeds that included varieties of coonhounds, foxhounds, bull terriers, shepherds and spaniels to help assist with the challenges of American life. Derr, illustrates: “Generally, breeders selected small numbers of different types of indigenous dogs – sheepdogs, for example – with the traits they wanted, crossed them to create a dog that matched their physical ideal, and sought to perfect them through intensive inbreeding, use of a favored male or two, and culling.”⁷³ The disposability of the dog that was seen on the European landscape as breed abandonment was also evident as breeds of dogs in America similarly became extinct. The Salish Wool Dog was one such example. The native people in Washington State developed the breed, and these dogs were once prized for their luxurious coats that were sheared in spring and used for blanket making.⁷⁴ Although it could be argued that there were a few confluent circumstances that ultimately contributed to this breed’s extinction, it is suggested that the main factor was that the dog’s main purpose was supplanted by another technology. The Simon Fraser University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology asserts, “Unfortunately, these dogs disappeared with the introduction of readily available yarn, made from sheep and already spun, that was brought by early explorers.”⁷⁵

⁷² Anonymous, “‘Dog,’ from The Boston Tribune,” *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine* 2, no. 2 (1830): 78-79.

⁷³ Derr, *A Dog’s History*, 237.

⁷⁴ John Keast Lord, *The Naturalist in Vancouver Island and British Columbia, Vol. II* (London: R. Bentley, 1866), 215-216, accessed March 22, 2019, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcbooks/items/1.0222158#p228z-5r0f>.

Although America was considered a “New World,” in many ways the relationship that early citizens had with their dogs was old; this was one that was shaped by the ideas of standardization, domination and disposability that had been established in Europe. These prevailing ideas about human relationships with *Canine familiaris* seemed to easily enfold with the American concerns of daily life and emerging social movements as the country rapidly developed and claimed independence.

Becoming the Modern America

For Borgmann, “commodity” is a flexible term that is ultimately about consumers and availability of a thing.⁷⁶ He explains that when subjected to the pattern of the device, even a thing of nature such as a dog can be transformed into a commodity when it becomes severed from its context.⁷⁷ As technology proliferated and America modernized, the dog became increasingly decontextualized as a commodity that was available for consumption. A sharp rise in the popularity of the dog in contemporary America began in confluence with many factors, including the economic prosperity of the roaring 20s, widespread urbanization, and the invention of the automobile. The canine’s role as work animal on the farm and in the household transitioned and the dog became a symbol of status among Americans. Thorstein Veblen asserts,

The commercial value of canine monstrosities, such as the prevailing styles of pet dogs both for men's and women's use, rests on their high cost of production, and their value to their owners lies chiefly in their utility as items of conspicuous consumption. Indirectly, through reflection upon their honorific expensiveness, a social worth is imputed to them; and so, by an easy substitution of words and ideas, they come to be admired and reputed beautiful.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ SFU Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, “Woolly Dogs.” *SFU Museum*, accessed March 27, 2013, <http://www.sfu.museum/time/en/panoramas/beach/woolly-dogs/>.

⁷⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 42.

⁷⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 49.

⁷⁸ Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class* (London: McMillan Company, 1899), chap.

The dog represented glitz and power as an object of social vanity among the wealthy who paid top dollar for a purebred dog that was in vogue at a particular time. According to an article in *The New York Times* on February 10, 1918, there were 1,636 dogs to be shown at the Westminster Kennel Club which was to be held February 20-23. The article asserts “The actual nomination of dog is 150 less than for last year’s Westminster show, but ahead by about the same total of the 1916 show.”⁷⁹ The interest in the event is significant given the fact that this was during the height of World War I. According to an article the following week in *The New York Times*, the dogs expected to attend would range in value from \$100 to \$20,000 for Mary Montrose, an “...incomparable pointer, and the highest-priced dog ever sold,” due to her success in field trials and in conformation shows.⁸⁰ Though during this time period dogs were kept as symbols of power and social vanity, it is also important to note that and more people began to use automobiles for transport instead of horses.⁸¹ Derr suggests that because of this, people’s regard for their dogs continued to intensify, and the canine became “...increasingly the primary connection to the animal world for a growing number of urban Americans...”⁸²

From the 1920s onward, dog ownership increased and there were several factors that set the stage for the modern understanding of dog ownership. Among these factors are the publicity surrounding Presidential dog ownership, the circumstances of the dog during and post-World

⁷⁹ “Show at Garden Has Large Entry,” *The New York Times*, February 10, 1918, accessed September 11, 2018, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1918/02/10/102667412.html?action=click&contentCollection=Archives&module=LedeAsset®ion=ArchiveBody&pgtype=article&pageNumber=34>.

⁸⁰ “Westminster Show to be Gala Event,” *The New York Times*, February 17, 1918, , accessed September 11, 2018, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1918/02/17/102671196.html?pageNumber=29>.

⁸¹ Derr, *A Dog’s History*, 265.

⁸² Derr, *A Dog’s History*, 263.

War II, and the introduction of the television into the living room of nearly every American household. Throughout America's political history, *Canis familiaris* seemed to be a fixture in many Presidential homes. George Washington, for example, was not only a president and general, but he was also a lover of the hunt who used his knowledge and skills in animal husbandry to become a successful dog breeder.⁸³ Coren explains, "Washington's diaries are filled with his accounts of his dog breeding and eventually he created a unique breed of foxhound that he called "Virginia Hounds."⁸⁴ His diary includes a letter to the french general Marie Gabriel Eléonore, Count of Oilliamson, to whom he writes, "Sir: I have just received seven very fine Hounds, for which, the Marqs. de la Fayette informs me, I am indebted to your goodness."⁸⁵ President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Scottish terrier named "Fala" accompanied him everywhere and became a fixture in the public's understanding of the President's political and personal life. On October 15, 1944, John Crider wrote in *The New York Times*, "What is difficult for some folks to understand is that Fala is no longer just a dog; he is a personage."⁸⁶ The keeping of dogs by presidents showed their human side to the public. Additionally, since it was understood that opportunity in America meant that any person could become President, keeping a dog provided a direct connection to the ordinary person and common life. Thus, by becoming an integral part of presidential life in the everyday person's eye, the dog started to become included in the collective psyche of a developing image of the quintessential American life.

⁸³ Derr, *A Dog's History*, 78.

⁸⁴ Stanley Coren, "George Washington: President, General, and Dog Breeder," *The Canine Corner Blog, Psychology Today*, January 2, 2009, accessed March 15, 2014, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/canine-corner/200901/george-washington-president-general-and-dog-breeder>.

⁸⁵ George Washington Papers, Series 2, Letterbooks 1754-1799: Letterbook 12, Feb. 5, 1785 - Feb. 27, 1786, accessed September 2, 2018, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw2.012/?q=hounds&sp=190&st=text>.

⁸⁶ John Crider, "Fala, Never in the Dog House," *The New York Times*, October 15, 1944, accessed September 11, 2018, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1944/10/15/issue.html>.

Another factor that set the stage for the modern canine were the circumstances related to dogs during and post-World War II. To be sure, dog hero stories began at the very inception of the human-canine relationship in antiquity and legends of canine bravery and faithfulness to humanity have been passed down through the ages. Even though dogs were used extensively throughout World War I, the spotlight shone with particular intensity on the dog as an American hero and source of pride during the intense, all-consuming combative climate of World War II.⁸⁷ During this war, there was a widespread deployment of military working dogs to perform a variety of duties that included guard and sentry work, messenger and communication service, search and rescue, combat duty, and Thurston explains that, through fundraisers, performing dogs even “...rallied support for the American War effort.”⁸⁸ The use of canines was so extensive and the need for them so pressing, in fact, that the Dogs for Defense organization recruited dogs by making a national grass-roots radio appeal to Americans to help assist in the war effort by donating their dogs.⁸⁹ An article in *The New York Times* indicates that the Dogs for Defense program had delivered 17,000 dogs to the armed services by January of 1945, and that it “would discontinue procurement on March 1,”⁹⁰ because the military demand for dogs had greatly decreased. Important to note is the idea that the government classified dogs participating in the war effort as equipment, “...thereby making them increasingly exploitable – and disposable.”⁹¹ Thurston further articulates, “Not only did canine soldiers lose their right to

⁸⁷ Derr, *A Dog's History*, 293-305.

⁸⁸ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 185.

⁸⁹ Michael Lemish, *War Dogs* (Washington: Brassley's, 1996), 37.

⁹⁰ “Dogs for Defense to Seek Home for Surplus Animals,” *The New York Times*, January 12, 1945, 9.

⁹¹ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 191.

recognition for wartime services, they also lost their status as living creatures.”⁹²

Dogs were not only a vital and necessary part of the war effort, but they also provided companionship to families broken up by the war. Derr explains, Meanwhile, in America, at the height of the war, dogs increased their numbers and importance as companions.”⁹³ Elrich Davis reported in the January 1944 *American Kennel Club Gazette* that in Washington, D.C., “...the companionship of dogs has become the next thing to a necessity, if not of life, at least of sanity.”⁹⁴

Once the war ended, dog keeping flourished. A booming economy meant that families earned more income and had more money to spend on things other than life’s necessities. Having a disposable income not only enabled more people to have dogs, but it also meant that members of the social elite were no longer the only people who could afford to buy purebred dogs. Thurston explains, “The postwar 1950s brought a new era of prosperity and a resurgence of interest in material goods. Consumer demand for mass-produced purebred dogs reached a peak unseen since the pet boom of the 1860s, and owning the ‘right’ sort of dog again became a statement of personal status.”⁹⁵ What’s more, the invention of bagged dry kibble that was created when canned dog food production ceased during World War II made it more convenient to keep a dog.⁹⁶

The appearance of the television in American living rooms in the 1950s contributed to the popularization of the family dog, and this mass media cemented the dog into the American iconic

⁹² Thurston, *The Lost History*, 191.

⁹³ Derr, *A Dog’s History*, 304.

⁹⁴ Elrich Davis, “Dogtown on the Potomac,” *American Kennel Club Gazette*, January 1944, 10.

⁹⁵ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 222.

⁹⁶ Liz Palika, *The Consumer’s Guide to Dog Food* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 3-4.

image that was to be emulated in the suburbanizing society. Dog television programs such as Rin Tin Tin⁹⁷ and Lassie⁹⁸ transported the dogs directly into the living room for Americans to see and internalize. By this time, the majority of dogs were being kept for no other purpose than as companions, though the act of owning a purebred dog continued to be a symbol of wealth and success during a time when Americans had increased leisure time and more money to spend on luxury goods. Derr suggests, “Having a purebred dog was no less a sign of success than having the right car or the proper address or brand of appliance, and there were easily as many choices.”⁹⁹ Borgmann concurs, “Wealth is enjoyed through the exercise of power or through consumption.”¹⁰⁰ The American Kennel Club tracks purebred dog registrations and interestingly, the year after the war ended, the AKC registered 204,978 dogs¹⁰¹ Incidentally, this was when puppy mills began as alternatives to Midwest farm crops and commercial dog businesses started producing puppies for the masses.¹⁰² In 1950, registrations rose to 251, 812 dogs.¹⁰³ From 1960 to 1970, perhaps significant as the tipping point toward canine decontextualization in contemporary American culture, AKC registrations jumped from 442,875 to 1,056,225.¹⁰⁴ This seems to suggest that dogs were being produced on a grand scale to be made available to a

⁹⁷ Susan Orlean, *Rin Tin Tin: The Life and the Legend* (Maine: Large Print Books, 2012).

⁹⁸ Bootie Cosgrove Mather, “Looking Back on Lassie,” *CBS News*, October 1, 2004, accessed May 5, 2018, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/looking-back-on-lassie/>.

⁹⁹ Derr, *A Dog’s History*, 312.

¹⁰⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 84.

¹⁰¹The American Kennel Club, *Dogs: The First 125 Years of The American Kennel Club* (New York: American Kennel Club, 2009), 225.

¹⁰² Ivy Collier, “The History of Puppy Mills and Why You Should Care,” *Faunalytics*, January 1, 2014, accessed May 5, 2018, <https://faunalytics.org/the-history-of-puppy-mills-and-why-you-should-care/>.

¹⁰³ The American Kennel Club, *Dogs: The First 125 Years*, 225.

¹⁰⁴ The American Kennel Club, *Dogs: The First 125 Years*, 225.

receptive consumer market.

It is plausible to think that 20th Century Americans began to view the dog in a framework of being part of an image produced by a culture to emulate – an object to possess as part of the American ideology that Borgmann explains is stylized in the foreground of technology--¹⁰⁵ that contributed to the objectification of the dog. In the moment that the dog became a commercial product that was overwhelmingly available to the consumer, it is conceivable that it was at this exact point that the dog became a commodity that was tragically severed from its context in Borgmann's scheme. In this framework, the dog is viewed through the lens of the device pattern and reduced to an object for consumption. Derr explains, "Defective and abandoned dogs were just one of a number of manifestations that the perfect suburban, consumer life was a fragile illusion."¹⁰⁶ In fact, prior to the late 1970s the shelter system as it is known today did not exist.¹⁰⁷ Millions of abandoned dogs necessitated the creation of a system that could safely and humanely keep these animals off the streets. Derr notes, "The number of stray and abandoned dogs and cats reached the millions, with estimates of those killed each year in overtaxed shelters reaching 15 to 17 million at their peak in the late 1980s."¹⁰⁸ The desire to quickly to abandon a dog that does not match the image produced by the culture may be seen as fitting into Borgmann's idea of the disposable nature of the commodity.¹⁰⁹ Because a dog disrupts the human household, is deemed unmanageable, or becomes inconvenient, it may join the plethora

¹⁰⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 48-56.

¹⁰⁶ Derr, *A Dog's History*, 313.

¹⁰⁷ Lila Miller, "Animal Sheltering in the United States: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," *DVM-360*, October 1, 2007, accessed May 5, 2018, <http://veterinarymedicine.dvm360.com/animal-sheltering-united-states-yesterday-today-and-tomorrow>.

¹⁰⁸ Derr, *A Dog's History*, 313.

¹⁰⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 47.

of similarly unwanted dogs that owners “disposed” in the shelter system. Additionally, at the peak of the shelter crisis, there seemed to be a general lack of willingness and absence of knowledge within the average layperson regarding how to work through problems with the family dog. People resorted to what seemed to be the easy choice of disposing of their broken dogs rather than committing to the time and effort required for “fixing” them. Although it was not always this way, the mysteries of behavior or health seemed at once to be concealed within the flesh and blood of the body and mind of the canine and this aligns with what Borgmann describes as those hidden inner workings of the device that create “...people’s alleged unwillingness and inability to maintain and repair technological devices.”¹¹⁰ Shelters are not only places for disposal, but they also perpetuate the availability of the commodity as unwanted dogs that remain on display to the public for a set period of time in an attempt to be re-homed. At the shelter, one person’s broken heap of terrier trash may be considered another person’s Heideggerian hound. Heidegger would explain this collection of dogs that are adoptable at a moment’s notice as a “standing-reserve” at humankind’s disposal. Shelter dogs are, as Heidegger explains, “...ordered to stand by, to be immediately on hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering”¹¹¹ by a new potential owner wanting to take them home that day. Additionally, Borgmann further reminds the reader, “The availability of commodities comes to the fore in advertising.”¹¹² With the age of the Internet, the advertisement for dogs available for purchase is widespread, and there are dedicated websites such as Petfinder.com¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 47.

¹¹¹ Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” in *Philosophy of Technology*, ed. Robert Scharff and Val Dusek (Blackwell Publishing: Boston, 2003), 257.

¹¹² Borgmann, *Technology*, 52.

¹¹³ *Petfinder*, accessed May 5, 2018, <https://www.petfinder.com/>.

and NextDayPets.com¹¹⁴ that provide pictures, descriptions and even offers of free shipping for countless dogs and puppies that can be sold to the consumer through a two-dimensional computer screen using electronic payment methods without dog and master ever being introduced before the final, and often non-refundable, transaction is complete.

The darkest hour for the dog in the human-canine relationship may have occurred when the dog reached the point of becoming a decontextualized commodity available for consumption. The dog as device resulted from a paradigm shift that followed along with the rise and rule of technology, whereby the dog was moved further away from its state of nature by human design as it became increasingly standardized, disposable, dominated, and ultimately became a commodity available for human consumption. The dog no longer had a job to perform to ease the toil of human work, nor was it a cherished companion as the tens of thousands of dogs abandoned in the shelter system in the 1980s suggests. Derr further explains yet another important consideration driving the phenomenon of the dog as commodity:

A long tradition of seeing animals as sentient, feelings beings was overwhelmed during the last decades of the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries, when it became more common to view them as stimulus-response machines incapable of feeling pain or thinking.¹¹⁵

Descartes and the Dog as an Object

The machine view of animals began when the first modern philosopher René Descartes described animals as *machina animata* and explained that all animal behavior could be explained in purely mechanistic terms.¹¹⁶ Descartes was writing during a time when Aristotle's conception of the natural hierarchy of living beings was being replaced by a mechanistic view of the natural

¹¹⁴ *Next Day Pets*, accessed May 5, 2018, <https://www.nextdaypets.com/>.

¹¹⁵ Derr, *A Dog's History*, 328.

¹¹⁶ René Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode* (1637), 22, accessed August 30, 2018, <http://lyc-sevres.ac-versailles.fr/eee.13-14.docs/descartes.discours.texte.integral.pdf>.

world.¹¹⁷ Descartes was a seventeenth century rationalist who believed that all truth could be discovered with certainty as long as the right method of inquiry, based upon empiricism, was employed.¹¹⁸ He described a dualistic world whereby there was a clear and separate distinction between the immaterial mind and physical matter of the body.¹¹⁹ According to Descartes' system of thought, known as dualism, the body operated according to mechanical laws unless the mind imposed otherwise.¹²⁰ He also believed that humans were the only creatures that possessed consciousness and a soul; this meant that they were the only truly dualistic beings.¹²¹ Capra further explains, "To Descartes the material universe was a machine and nothing but a machine. There was no purpose, life, or spirituality in matter."¹²² Plants and non-human animals were merely machines or *automata* that operated according to mechanical laws and could be understood by reducing them to mechanical operations and explaining them in mechanistic terms.¹²³ Descartes asserted that animals were indeed organic living creatures, however, because they did not possess consciousness, they were automatons incapable of reasoning and feeling pain.¹²⁴ Descartes explained animal behavior as a response to stimulus in the simplest terms, even describing their sounds as mechanical utterances like those that "...qu'une horloge qui

¹¹⁷ Justin Skirry, "René Descartes (1596-1650)," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed May 5, 2018, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/descarte/>.

¹¹⁸ Skirry, "René Descartes."

¹¹⁹ René Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode*.

¹²⁰ René Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode*, 16.

¹²¹ René Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode*, 20.

¹²² Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), 60.

¹²³ René Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode*, 20.

¹²⁴ Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1994), 46.

n'est composee que de roues et de ressorts (... a clock which consists of wheels and springs)"¹²⁵
makes as time passes. McConnell illustrates,

He [*Descartes*] illustrated this principle by nailing live dogs to barn walls and eviscerating them. While the dogs writhed and screamed, he told the crowd of onlookers that their struggles were merely automatic movements of the body---no more felt by the dog than a clock feels the movements of its hands.¹²⁶

Masson adds, "He [*Descartes*] justified his gruesome vivisections on the grounds that dogs felt nothing."¹²⁷

In Descartes' dualistic perspective, not only were animals considered organic automatons, but their lack of consciousness also meant they were not deserving of compassion.¹²⁸ What's more, since they did not possess feelings or sense pain, animals were incapable of being harmed and exploitation could not be morally wrong.¹²⁹ Unfortunately for the dog, science readily adopted the Cartesian view, which Schoen explains, "...dominated the scientific world for centuries."¹³⁰ To be sure, Descartes' philosophy provided the backdrop that facilitated the widespread materialization of viewing the dog as a device. Borgmann concurs when he writes "Driving nature to submission was finally not the work of individual adventurous pioneers but the extension and application of an approach to reality that was based on

¹²⁵ René Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode*, 21.

¹²⁶ Patricia McConnell, *For The Love of a Dog* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2007), 23.

¹²⁷ Jeffrey Masson, *Dogs Never Lie About Love* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1997), 121.

¹²⁸ "René Descartes", *How to do Animal Rights*, accessed May 5, 2018, <http://www.animalethics.org.uk/descartes.html>.

¹²⁹ Samuel Kaldas, "Descartes Versus Cudworth on the Moral Worth of Animals," *Philosophy Now*, 2015, accessed May 5, 2018, https://philosophynow.org/issues/108/Descartes_versus_Cudworth_On_The_Moral_Worth_of_Animal.

¹³⁰ Allen M. Schoen, *Kindred Spirits* (New York: Broadway Books, 2001), 19.

science...”¹³¹

Although embraced by the scientific community, Descartes’ machine theory of animals has been the subject of critical response by many intellectual thinkers. The first philosopher to respond to Descartes’ conception of animals was the Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire, who, incidentally appeared to think very highly of the dog.¹³² Voltaire countered Descartes’ idea that animals were non-thinking machines by providing compelling evidence that dogs displayed grief, pain and joy.¹³³ In his writing, Voltaire indicates that although animals do not possess the same capacity for language that humans have, animals communicate their emotions using non-phatic behavior. In other words, speaking against Descartes, Voltaire did not believe that speech was necessary to convey feelings.¹³⁴ Voltaire also argued that since the physiology of animals closely resembled humans, they must have the capacity to feel pain.¹³⁵ He comments about the live dissection of a dog:

You discover in it all the same organs of feeling that are in yourself. Answer me, machinist, has nature arranged all the means of feeling in this animal, so that it may not feel? Has it nerves in order to be impassible? Do not suppose this impertinent contradiction in nature.¹³⁶

Additionally, the idea that only humans are capable of emotions is only one way in which Descartes’ system of thought has been criticized as being anthropocentric. Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas and Charles Darwin also suggested that non-human animals were capable of expressing

¹³¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 184.

¹³² Voltaire, “Dog,” *The Philosophical Dictionary*, trans. H.I. Woolf (New York: Knopf, 1924), accessed May 5, 2018, <https://history.hanover.edu/texts/voltaire/volanima.html>.

¹³³ Jeffery Moussaieff Masson, *Dogs Never Lie About Love* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1997), 9.

¹³⁴ Voltaire, “Dog.”

¹³⁵ David Grimm, *Citizen Canine* (New York: Public Affairs, 2014), 52.

¹³⁶ Voltaire, “Dog.”

themselves through a system of communication that is less complex than human language.¹³⁷ In fact, modern day dog enthusiasts continue to argue that dogs *do* indeed possess the ability to communicate by using a language system comprised of body language and sounds. In his book *How to Speak Dog*, Stanley Coren asserts:

To speak to a dog, you must first learn the vocabulary – specifically, what constitutes the “words” in his canine language. You must also learn the “grammar” of the language, namely how to string those words together and combine them so that you can form “sentences” that can be used to send and receive meaningful messages.¹³⁸

Additionally, there is evidence that animals possess a form of consciousness that involves self-awareness whereby they can “...clearly and readily communicate about their internal states...”¹³⁹

In 2012, an international group of scientists collaborated in comparative research and created The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness based upon their findings.¹⁴⁰ According to their collaborative conclusions, non-human animals display intentional behaviors and possess the neuroanatomical, neurochemical and neurophysiological components for consciousness.¹⁴¹ The Cambridge Declaration refutes Descartes’ idea that only humans possess consciousness,

Consequently, the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Non-human animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates.¹⁴²

Ironically, the collaboration by the Cambridge scientists highlights an important criticism of Descartes’ philosophy of rationalism and empiricism. Although the Cartesian philosophy and the

¹³⁷ Stanley Coren, *How to Speak Dog* (New York: The Free Press, 2000), 15.

¹³⁸ Coren, *How to Speak Dog*, xi.

¹³⁹ Philip Low, “Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness.” *Francis Crick Memorial Conference*, July 7, 2012, accessed July 10, 2015, <http://fcmconference.org/img/CambridgeDeclarationOnConsciousness.pdf>.

¹⁴⁰ Low, “Cambridge Declaration.”

¹⁴¹ Low, “Cambridge Declaration.”

¹⁴² Low, “Cambridge Declaration.”

modern tradition have been credited for great advances in science, critics of Descartes continue to focus on the limitations and shortcomings of his profoundly influential philosophical thinking. Opponents of the mechanistic view of life that Descartes depicts believe that this linear way of thinking causes fragmented and exclusionary thinking. For example, Fritjof Capra illustrates,

Carried away by the success of the reductionist method, most notable recently in the field of genetic engineering, they tend to believe that it is the only valid approach, and they have organized biological research accordingly. Students are not encouraged to develop integrative concepts, and research institutions direct their funds almost exclusively toward the solution of problems formulated within the Cartesian framework. Biological phenomena that cannot be explained in reductionist terms are deemed unworthy of scientific investigation.¹⁴³

Instead, Capra advocates a new view of reality whereby the rise of quantum theory in physics reveals a material world that exists as a complex web of relationships.¹⁴⁴ He suggests that linear and reductionist thinking simply cannot capture the dynamic and complex interaction of the components of living beings.¹⁴⁵ Capra asserts that the new paradigm is a systems approach, which recognizes the interrelatedness and interdependence of all things.¹⁴⁶ The collaboration among the Cambridge scientists, which included cognitive neuroscientists, neuropharmacologists, neurophysiologists, neuroanatomists, and computational neuroscientists, demonstrates how examining a phenomenon from a more holistic perspective using the systems paradigm can reveal a new truth.

The Cartesian Influence Continues

To be sure, the reductionistic view of reality that resulted from Descartes' philosophy is what provided the underpinning for the original creation of a system of classification and

¹⁴³ Capra, *Turning Point*, 103.

¹⁴⁴ Capra, *Turning Point*, 81.

¹⁴⁵ Capra, *Turning Point*, 269.

¹⁴⁶ Capra, *Turning Point*, 265-305.

standardization of the breeds as a whole. In this manner, every dog became the sum of its characteristics. By reducing a whole dog into a series of parts that were delineated in a breed standard, dog breeding became scientific as breeders developed a methodology to systematically perfect the various parts that established uniformity within each breed. Strict adherence to established breed standards is a practice that continues among serious dog breeders today and most evaluate their breeding stock according to which has the best parts or breed based upon which part they might want to try to improve.¹⁴⁷ For example, when planning a breeding, a breeder might try to breed for a head that meets breed specifications set forth by the AKC standard, or better temperament in the offspring of a subsequent generation.¹⁴⁸

Additionally, Descartes' perspective of *machina animata* essentially declared that animals were machines. The specific language he chooses *machina animata*, translates to "animated machine," and immediately reframes the dog from a *being* to a *thing*. The idea that animals were things, combined with the fact that Descartes believed that people were superior to all things because only they possessed consciousness, was a perspective that allowed humans to do anything they wanted to the dog. In short, the Cartesian perspective permitted severity in the domination, exploitation and abusive treatment of *Canis familiaris*. Thurston describes, " 'England is the hell for dumb animals', wrote a journalist around 1820."¹⁴⁹ She was describing the conditions of working dogs such as cart haulers and turnspits.¹⁵⁰ After all, if the dog was not capable of feeling pain, as Descartes had set forth just a few short centuries earlier, then it could

¹⁴⁷ Bud Boccone. "Proud to be Purebred: Breed Standards, The Breeder's Blueprint," *AKC*, May 1, 2015, accessed May 6, 2018, <http://www.akc.org/expert-advice/dog-breeding/breeding-tips-best-practices/proud-to-be-purebred-breed-standards-the-breeders-blueprint/>.

¹⁴⁸ Patricia Craige Trotter, *Born To Win* (New Jersey: Kennel Club Books, 2009), 122.

¹⁴⁹ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 127.

¹⁵⁰ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 127.

not be wrong to force the animal to work harder or be more productive by using barbaric or harsh methods. Thurston seems to describe the treatment of dog in a turnspit as being much like putting a brick on the gas pedal of a car to keep it going. "He panted and frequently tried to stop, but was so tied that he had to keep on running or choke."¹⁵¹ In a sense, the dog had become a mere part in a bigger machine, and although organic, it was just as interchangeable as the other parts of the machine. This integration between the dog and the mechanism may be envisioned as a precursor to Donna Haraway's post-modernist description of the Cyborg, "...coupling[s] between organism and machine..."¹⁵² and asserts that this kind of domination is the ultimate reinvention of nature. Borgmann would suggest that this is evidence that demonstrates just how deeply and inexorably the technological pattern has been engrained into modern life.

Descartes' philosophy, which asserts that only conscious beings were deserving of compassion and moral obligation, also becomes an important factor in the use of dogs for scientific research. Although it was not well documented, there is evidence that animals were used for scientific research prior to the 19th century.¹⁵³ By the late 1800s, Louis Pasteur,¹⁵⁴ Charles Darwin¹⁵⁵ and Ivan Pavlov¹⁵⁶ all conducted experiments with animals. Dogs, specifically, became significant in research in the early 1920s when Dr. Frederick Banting used them in experiments that isolated insulin.¹⁵⁷ In 1923, he received the Nobel Prize for his

¹⁵¹ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 134.

¹⁵² Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (Routledge: New York, 1991), 150.

¹⁵³ Mery, *Life, History, Magic*, 215-216.

¹⁵⁴ Mery, *Life, History, Magic*, 216.

¹⁵⁵ Donna Yuri and Spencer Stober, "Darwin on the Treatment of Animals: His Thoughts Then and His Influence Now," *Journal of Arts and Humanities* 2, no. 2 (March 2013), 2.

¹⁵⁶ Daniel Todes, *Ivan Pavlov: A Russian Life in Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

advances in treating diabetes in humans.¹⁵⁸ Dogs became regarded as good subjects for experimental research because not only are the dog's genes 82%¹⁵⁹ homologous with human DNA, but dogs are afflicted with many of the same diseases that humans have,¹⁶⁰ but their domestication also likely makes them easier to handle than many other species of wild animals in laboratory settings. It is important to note that in the U.S., animal testing peaked in 1979 and has shown a significant decline since 1983.¹⁶¹ This decline may be related to the 1975 publishing Peter Singer's book *Animal Liberation*¹⁶² and a revitalization of the anti-testing movement in 1981 by the group People For The Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).¹⁶³ Nevertheless, the American Anti-Vivisection society reports, "In 2012, 72,149 dogs were held in laboratories, with over 25,000 subjected to painful experiments."¹⁶⁴ It is clear that in the scientific scheme, the dog is seen as an object for consumption or a standing reserve when one merely considers the resources that laboratories use for acquiring dogs for research. Many test subjects are obtained from kill shelters or pound seizures, and some are stolen.¹⁶⁵ However, the majority of research

¹⁵⁷ Nobel Prize, "Discovery of Insulin," *Nobel Prize*, 2014, accessed May 6, 2018, <https://www.nobelprize.org/educational/medicine/insulin/discovery-insulin.html>.

¹⁵⁸ Nobel Prize, "Discovery of Insulin."

¹⁵⁹ Joan Pontius, et. al., "Initial Sequence and Comparative Analysis of the Cat Genome," *Genome Research*, 2007, accessed January 5, 2017. <http://genome.cshlp.org/content/17/11/1675.full>.

¹⁶⁰ Marjo K. Hytönen and Hannes Lohi, "Canine Models of Human Rare Disorders," *Rare Diseases*, 4, no. 1, (2016):e1241362, accessed March 21, 2019, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5070630/>.

¹⁶¹ National Anti-Vivisection Society, "Dogs in Research," *National Anti-Vivisection Society*, accessed May 6, 2018, <https://www.navs.org/what-we-do/keep-you-informed/science-corner/animals-used-in-research/dogs-in-research/>.

¹⁶² Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (New York: Harper Collins, 1975).

¹⁶³ ProCon, "Animal Testing," *ProCon*, May 24, 2016, accessed May 6, 2018, <https://animal-testing.procon.org/view.resource.php?resourceID=006512>.

¹⁶⁴ American Anti-Vivisection Society, "Dogs," *American Anti-Vivisection Society*, accessed May 5, 2015, <http://aavs.org/animals-science/animals-used/dogs/>.

dogs are either purchased from laboratory dealers or they are bred right within the laboratories themselves.¹⁶⁶ Dealers and laboratories aim to create uniformity in research samples by creating healthy specimens or by breeding pups to have a particular genetic defect to satisfy research parameters.¹⁶⁷ Unlike with human subjects, these scientists believe there is no requirement for the dogs to give informed consent because in their convenient truth, they are objects. In addition, because they view dogs as stimulus-response machines, there is no need for the scientist to consider the dog's emotional state, simply because these creatures do not have one. The most popular breed used for laboratory purposes in the United States is the Beagle; this is because the breed is docile, making it easy to handle, and small enough so that that many dogs can be housed in a small space with a limited budget.¹⁶⁸ In the Cartesian scheme, even the *doing* of science is reduced to a science. The rub is that *Canis familiaris*, touted as humankind's best friend, is a test subject that historically has been subjected to torture under horrendous, and often unnecessary conditions in laboratory settings by people who continue to view them through the Cartesian lens.¹⁶⁹ Simply put, these dogs are treated as objects for human use, for human benefit and for disposal at human discretion; this perpetuates Borgmann's device paradigm even when unquestioningly observed by the outsider. Author Fernand Mery reminds the reasonable person, "Experimental research is, unfortunately, a necessary evil."¹⁷⁰ Still, he alludes to horrific

¹⁶⁵ American Anti-Vivisection Society, "Dogs."

¹⁶⁶ American Anti-Vivisection Society, "Dogs."

¹⁶⁷ American Anti-Vivisection Society, "Dogs."

¹⁶⁸ American Anti-Vivisection Society, "Dogs."

¹⁶⁹ CBN, "The Shocking Truth About the VA's Cruel Use of Dogs for Medical Research—And You're Paying for It," *CBN News*, February 28, 2018, accessed May 6, 2018, <http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2018/february/the-shocking-truth-about-the-vas-cruel-use-of-dogs-for-medical-research-ndash-and-youre-paying-for-it>.

¹⁷⁰ Mery, *Life, History and Magic*, 219.

suffering that he has seen and fought against, yet stops short of articulating the details by asserting, “Whether it is a question of toxic gases, agonizing deflagrations, or fatal radiation, their place is not in this book.”¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, author Jeffrey Masson makes a vital point when he explains, “In laboratories they [animals] suffer, as anybody who has heard them moan, cry, whimper and even scream knows. Scientists dissimilate about this by insisting that they are merely vocalizing. Descartes lives on.”¹⁷²

Descartes’ assertion that animals were mere stimulus-response machines is also evident in formal dog training. To be sure, throughout early history humans noticed dog instincts and shaped them into behaviors that served to benefit human life. One author explains,

As the centuries rolled by, the dog’s natural prey instinct of chasing has been modified to herd domesticated farm animals under the direction of a person who is calling the Shepherd. Herding breeds have been recorded in Iceland (yes, Iceland!) as far back as the 13th Century. By the 17th Century herding dogs were known throughout Europe, especially in northern France and Britain.¹⁷³

In antiquity, there was no formal, agreed upon method for shaping behavior, and training was mostly based upon trial and error between dog and owner. Formal dog training was introduced in England in the 1700s when informal events and exhibitions that featured clever dogs would be held at county fairs and in taverns.¹⁷⁴ Expectations for dog behavior began to change in 1859 when the Kennel Club held its first dog show, which included a training competition for Sporting dogs.¹⁷⁵ In the U.S., training became of interest in the 1700s when competitions would be held for Pointers, Setters and hounds. These competitions often featured President George

¹⁷¹ Mery, *Life, History and Magic*, 219.

¹⁷² Jeffery Masson, *When Elephants Weep* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1995), 229.

¹⁷³ JaneDogs, “History of Herding Dogs and Mastiffs,” *Jane Dogs*, accessed May 6, 2018, <https://janedogs.com/history-of-sheepdogs-and-mastiffs/>.

¹⁷⁴ The American Kennel Club, *Dogs*, 19.

¹⁷⁵ Schuler, *Dogs*, 19.

Washington's Foxhounds from his Mount Vernon kennel.¹⁷⁶ These early competitions were largely based upon sport training rather than a formal system of obedience training.

The first systematic curriculum of dog training was an operant conditioning system that was based upon reward and punishment. Mary Burch explains, "Most demonstrated an understanding of operant conditioning concepts such as primary and secondary reinforcement, shaping, fading, and chaining some 28 years before the publication of B.F. Skinner's *The Behavior of Organisms*."¹⁷⁷ Early dog trainers, mostly working with police and military dogs, used unorganized systems of reward¹⁷⁸ and punishment¹⁷⁹ for training their dogs. Bill Koehler brought dog training to the general public in the 1950s, and Burch asserts, "By 1960, more than 40,000 dogs were trained in classes instructed by Koehler or his instructors."¹⁸⁰ Koehler's method was a negative reinforcement and punishment system. He introduced the choke collar, and advocated throwing chains at dogs, kneeling dogs in the chest and hitting them with a leather belt to discourage undesirable behavior.¹⁸¹ His methods suggested that dogs needed to be broken of their wild nature in order to be trained. Training using this method seemed forced, harsh and violent, yet other notorious trainers advocated similar systems of their own.¹⁸²

In the 1960s, America's training military dogs in Vietnam began using a different approach to dog training that took on a more positive tone, whereby a system of rewards was

¹⁷⁶ Mary Burch, "The Evolution of Modern-Day Dog Training and Obedience." *Naia*, July 15, 2002, accessed May 6, 2018, <http://www.naiaonline.org/articles/article/the-evolution-of-modern-day-dog-training#sthash.WTSMd1tc.dpuf>.

¹⁷⁷ Burch, "Modern-Day Dog Training."

¹⁷⁸ Derr, *A Dog's History*, 252.

¹⁷⁹ Burch, "Modern-Day Dog Training."

¹⁸⁰ Burch, "Modern-Day Dog Training."

¹⁸¹ Bill Koehler, *The Koehler Method of Dog Training* (New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, 1962).

¹⁸² Burch, "Modern-Day Dog Training."

used to encourage good or desirable behavior.¹⁸³ Although the approach changed, it seems evident that dog training methods continued to be systems based upon the idea that training a dog occurs as a response to a stimulus. This is also seen in the remote shock collar that was originally introduced to train hunting dogs in the 1960s, as well as the very popular and kinder clicker training¹⁸⁴ methods which emerged on the training forefront in the 1980s. Nevertheless, these kinds of simplistic and linear approaches to dog training and behavior seem to closely follow Descartes' suggestion that animals are stimulus-response machines. Coren asserts,

Among scientists and philosophers, you will find some who are convinced that dogs cannot really think or reason. According to them all, all of the behaviors that your dog engages in occur without planning or insight. ...It doesn't think any more than your desktop computer does, Descartes would say, but it can be programmed to do certain things and to respond to changes in the world around it.¹⁸⁵

To be sure, the various approaches to dog training are often the subject of heated debate among experts, but trainers would agree that there is nothing more revealing about how the modern owner believes their dog is a device than when a person attempts to use their training clicker device like a remote control to command their dog to sit. Clicker training expert Melissa Alexander comments, "I'm amazed by the number of people who point the clicker at the dog, click it, and then when nothing happens, complain that clicker training doesn't work."¹⁸⁶

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter presents information that discusses the influences that significantly contributed to shaping people's view of the dog as a device in the contemporary human-canine

¹⁸³ Derr, *A Dog's History*, 343.

¹⁸⁴ Karen Pryor, *Click to Win!* (Massachusetts: Sunshine Books, 2002).

¹⁸⁵ Stanley Coren, *The Pawprints of History* (New York: The Free Press, 2002), 143-44.

¹⁸⁶ Melissa Alexander, "Clicker Trainers Use No Punishment and Other Clicker Training Myths," *Karen Pryor Clicker Training*, November 1, 2006, accessed January 14, 2018, <http://www.clickertraining.com/clicker-trainers-use-no-punishment-and-other-training-myths>.

relationship. Borgmann explains the rise and rule of technology beginning during the Enlightenment and gaining momentum during the Industrial Revolution in Europe and America, whereby people began viewing the world through the pattern of the device. It was during this key point in history when the dog began to be viewed as a device by people. Evidence suggests that the European mindset of standardization, one of the tenets of Borgmann's discussion regarding the device, focused on the organization and creation of individual breeds. This ultimately reduced the dog to a series of parts to be viewed individually and perfected with precision by dog breeders. Abandonment of breeding programs when things went wrong is an example of disposability as it relates to the dog, another feature of the device paradigm presented by Borgmann. Finally, dogs were dominated, still another tenet in Borgmann's scheme, as they were exploited and forced to work long hours, often while being treated cruelly by humans. As the Colonists settled in America, they continued the European approach that they already knew with regard to their relationship with dogs. This European pattern usurped the Native American tradition of relationships with dogs, which was one of helping and sharing. The path to the dog becoming a decontextualized commodity in contemporary culture, the evidence suggests, began around the 1920s. Moving forward from this time, the dog rapidly gained in popularity by becoming an integral part of the emerging American Iconic image that materialized through the influence of presidential dogs, the circumstances related to war and the appearance of dogs on television. It was also explained that the dark side of the dog as a device turned commodity was revealed in the 1980s, as there was a crisis in the number of abandoned dogs in the American shelter system. What's more, the sheer number of dogs that were made available to the greater public through the shelter system during that time alludes to Heidegger's notion of the standing reserve.

Descartes' machine theory of animals, which asserted that dogs were non-feeling stimulus response machines, was also explored as it relates the creation of the device view of dogs. Descartes' specific choice of the language in itself, his choosing *machina animata* or "animated machine" instead of choosing, perhaps, "mechanized animal" immediately frames the dog as being a thing rather than as being a being. His machine view, which was readily adopted by the scientific community, also asserts that dogs could not feel pain. It was suggested that for the people of this time period and beyond, this not only meant that dogs could be exploited, overworked and treated poorly without the need for compassion or moral obligation, but it also meant that these animals were fair game for scientific research. Critics have since provided strong evidence that dogs do feel pain and several other emotions. Descartes assertion that animals do not have the capacity for language was refuted by a number of thinkers including Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, Voltaire, Charles Darwin, and Stanley Coren. Most recently, the Cartesian suggestion that animals do not possess consciousness has recently been refuted by a public statement issued by group of scientists who collaborated in 2012 on the issue in Cambridge, England. Nevertheless, the machine theory of animals is deeply rooted in modern thought and it was suggested that Descartes' influence remains evident in the continued use of dogs in scientific research. After all, it remains convenient for scientists to view the dog as an object for human use. The idea that dogs are stimulus-response machines is a concept that is also seen in contemporary approaches to dog training. Descartes' assertion that the dog is a stimulus-response machine is never more alive in modernity then when a dog owner points a training clicker at a dog and expects it to work like a remote control to command their dog---their personal canine device--- to perform a particular action.

Thus, it appears evident that the general pattern of the dog being viewed as a device by some people in modernity emerges when a selective survey of the history of the human-canine bond is correlated with philosophical perspectives. Borgmann's explanation that the rise and rule of technology caused people to view the world through a mindset that combined standardization, disposability and domination has shaped the view of the dog as a device in modernity. The other significant influence that contributed to this modern understanding of the dog was the inception of Descartes' dualistic philosophy, and more particularly, his machine view of animals. The subversion of nature is a feature of both Borgmann's pattern of technology in modernity and Descartes' mechanized view of the animal. What's more, Borgmann asserts that the technological view "...competes with and threatens to obliterate certain focal things and practices that center and order our lives in a profoundly different way."¹⁸⁷ In other words, the possibility of encountering the sacred through the human-canine relationship is in jeopardy when a person views a dog as a device.

¹⁸⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 1.

Chapter II

Human-Canine Relationships and Connections to Nature

The bond with a true dog is as lasting as the ties of this earth will ever be.

—Konrad Lorenz

Introduction

As the information discussed in the previous chapter, influences in history such as the rise and rule of technology and Descartes' Machine Theory of animals significantly contributed to shaping people's view of the dog as a device in the contemporary human-canine relationship. However, not all people in millennial America have this technological view of *Canis familiaris*. Instead, there are many people who share intimate relationships that involve feelings of kinship with their canine companions. Kuzniar describes this unique relationship that some people share with their dogs, "...[A person's] relation to the dog cannot be restricted to the singular role of guardian, lover, companion, or child but incorporates all of those modalities and shifts among them."¹ If a person were to step back and evaluate the millennial canine in the United States, he or she would likely be perplexed by conflicting concepts. That observer might notice a Pit Bull being corrected by a menacing looking prong collar² yet also see a Pug being kept warm by wearing pajamas³. They might observe one person's dog being left home alone all day in

¹ Alice Kuzniar, *Melancholia's Dog* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 109.

² Robert Cabral, "Prong Collars," *Black Belt Dog Training*, accessed March 29, 2018, https://blackbeltdogtraining.com/wp-content/uploads/prong_collars.pdf.

³ Carol Bryant, "The Truth About Dogs Wearing Clothes" *Fidose of Reality Blog*, August 4, 2014, accessed March 30, 2018, <https://fidoseofreality.com/truth-dogs-wearing-clothes/>.

boredom while another's is lovingly dropped off daily at doggy day care⁴ where it will play with other dogs. That observer might also note the sharp contrast between the thousands of dogs that continue to be "discarded" in the shelter system, and the growing trend of recognizing the rights of dogs by assigning a legal "guardianship" status to people.⁵ The observer might see the dog as an object in one circumstance, and understand it as the subject of human care and concern in another circumstance. Unlike the dogs that are viewed as objects, the dogs that are the subject of human concern are valued as a part of nature. The evolving modern view of *Canis familiaris*, although complex, is the result of a fundamental human realignment with nature. In an interesting twist, the same Cartesian philosophy divided humans from nature also created a pathway back to nature for people.

The information presented in this chapter will discuss the human-canine relationship and connections to nature by correlating historical evidence with various intellectual perspectives concerning relationships with the natural world. This examination will be done as a chronology that follows the historical development and context of the interspecies relationship while correlating the history of ideas, theological, moral, technological, scientific and philosophical perspectives of influential thinkers, from antiquity into modernity. More specifically, the information explore the human-canine bond and connections with nature using a two-pronged approach. First, the development of the human-canine divide, a view of the boundary that eventually existed between humans and dogs, will be explored in a historical overview from pre-history to the middle ages. This exploration will involve a multifaceted exploration of intellectual

⁴ Pat Miller, "Doggy Day Care Can Be a Wonderful Experience: But is it for Every Dog?" *The Whole Dog Journal*, November 2010, accessed March 30, 2018, https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/issues/13_11/features/Doggie-Daycare-For-Canine-Socialization_20127-1.html.

⁵ R. Scott Nolen, "Pet Owners in San Francisco become 'pet guardians'," *American Veterinary Medical Association*, February 15, 2003, accessed April 1, 2018, <https://www.avma.org/News/JAVMANews/Pages/030301d.aspx>.

history and the history of ideas that includes ontological, moral and religious concepts. Not only is this historical overview intended to map the development of the divide, but it also aims to highlight key points in the development of the traditional Western anthropocentric view. The purpose of this first section will be to provide a broad and general overview, which will be helpful to understanding how the human-canine divide was influenced by humanity's understanding of nature, social development, and people's desire to identify their place in the world. This investigation, however, will obviously be limited, as it leaves room for in-depth study, nuances, details, and exceptions that are beyond the scope of this writing. The second part of the two-pronged approach in this chapter will present Five Positive Pathways that overcome the human-canine divide in some way. This is an exploration of the complex emergence of an evolving modern view that, like Borgmann's device paradigm, also began during the scientific revolution. The Five Positive Pathways that will be presented include: concerns for animal welfare, kinship among species, recognition of *Thou*, anthropomorphism as a human reflection, and dogs as an intermediary to nature. These positive pathways include the moral, scientific, spiritual or phenomenological crossing of the divide between people and dogs in some way. Additionally, it will be suggested that the evolving modern view involves creating a more positive connection between dogs and people through the recognition of, or a reorientation with nature.

The Development of the Human-Canine Divide

The human-canine divide is a social construction. This is the boundary that exists between humans and canines that evolved over time as humans established societies and began to question their world. The development of the divide can be mapped through an overview of the human-canine relationship that began in pre-history and continued to progress into the

Middle Ages. This emerging association between people and dogs was often influenced by a human understanding of nature and social progress, as well as by the development of the traditional Western anthropocentric view.

Prehistory

Since the beginning of human history, people have always had a relationship with the natural world. Early humans were one with nature as they fought for the survival of the species on earth. Their ability to make tools began their control of nature and with this came a glimmer of hope for survival in a violent world. As human history progressed, and people established social camps that traveled together, humans remained entrenched in a direct relationship with the natural world in which they lived. It was also during this time in history that the relationship between humans and dogs is believed to have begun. Though the true beginnings of the human-canine bond are still unknown, there exists evidence that within pre-historical hunter-gatherer groups that humans and canines became inextricably connected as partners in the hunt and co-protectors in the harsh natural environment. Whitney explains, “The dog has been man’s companion since long before the beginnings of recorded history; the crudest cave sketches show us that.”⁶ There are a few different hypotheses that attempt to explain the beginnings of the human-canine relationship. A popular hypothesis asserts that while searching for food, dogs wandered into the camps of primitive people.⁷ Lorenz describes the result when some prehistoric dogs scavenge food scraps that were discarded at the outskirts of a camp by an early group of humans “Ein bedeutendes ereignis: die erste futterung eines nutzlichen tieres durch den

⁶ Leon Whitney, *Dog Psychology* (New York: Howell Book House, 1971), 32.

⁷ Konrad Lorenz, *So kam der Mensch auf den Hund* (Vienna: Verlag Dr. G. Borotha-Schoeler, 1950), 7-15.

menschen (A significant event: the first feeding of a useful animal by humans).⁸ Early tribes benefited from having dogs prowling around their camps because they probably warned about danger. This perspective also suggests that the dogs followed these nomadic people from place to place, became tamer with each generation⁹ and eventually helped humans procure food.¹⁰ Another conjecture is that people would bring orphaned pups home with the intention of eating them when large animals were not seasonally available for hunting.¹¹ Caras concurs,

No animal we know of was domesticated by early man unless that animal was already locked into a relationship with man. There had to be a link, and it took the form of hunting. Man hunted many species for meat and pelts—almost everything around him, in fact, and the wolf was on the hit list. If a band of hunters whooping, hollering and brandishing flaming torches and throwing rocks neutralized a pair of adult wolves, they frequently ended up with a litter of cubs to show for their efforts. Without refrigeration they learned soon enough not to kill more cubs than they could eat right away, or the surplus would become rancid and make them ill. Dead and rotting meat could make even a cave dwelling far worse than it had to be. A better idea was to keep the cubs alive in the corner of a cave until they were needed for the pot. (Actually, Paleolithic man and his precursors didn't have pottery. Sad to contemplate, but those first evolving dog fanciers probably roasted wolf cubs the way we do marshmallows).¹²

Caras speculates that the most aggressive of these pups would be eaten first, leaving the most docile to be killed last, if at all.¹³ Others speculate that children adopted wild pups, hoping to keep them as pets.¹⁴ Mery depicts these prehistoric origins as being co-adaptive between people and dogs.

⁸ Lorenz, *Mensch auf den Hund*, 8.

⁹ Stanley Coren, "How Dogs Were Created," *Modern Dog Magazine*, accessed March 30, 2018, <https://moderndogmagazine.com/articles/how-dogs-were-created/12679>.

¹⁰ Lorenz, *Mensch auf den Hund*, 7-15.

¹¹ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 5.

¹² Roger Caras, *Going for the Blue* (New York: Warner Books, 2001), xvi.

¹³ Caras, *Going for the Blue*, xvi.

¹⁴ Lorenz, *Mensch auf den Hund*, 7-15.

It seems then that man never had to fight the dog or subjugate it by force; if he had, we should find in the rock drawings the graphic representation of his battles, defeats and victories. Instead, there was a longstanding, almost daily pattern of co-existence, which was gradually transformed into domestication. Man and dog adopted each other (one might almost say it was a process of mutual domestication) through their association and alliance.¹⁵

Women are commonly regarded as being integral to the early domestication of the dog.¹⁶ The human female qualities of nurture and empathy likely initiated the hand rearing of orphaned pups.¹⁷ Mery also speculates,

A dog bitch dies after giving birth. In the neighboring cave, a woman has just given birth to an infant which only lived a few hours. Obeying the maternal instinct, or conscious only of the painful congestion of her breasts caused by the pressure of the milk, the woman takes the pups and suckles them. (This is known to happen even today in Paraguay and Peru and in some of lost villages of the mountainous regions of Europe).¹⁸

As the pups developed, the ideas that they shared similarities in social structure and “instinctive mental structure” with people are what likely allowed for their easy integration into the human pack.¹⁹ Thurston speaks of the kind affection that women likely bestowed upon pups while rearing them right alongside their children. She explains, “For this reason, prehistoric women might have been primarily responsible for forging the first intimate relationships with canids.”²⁰ Domestication occurred when dogs became reliant upon humans beyond puppy hood and willing “to breed easily in captivity.”²¹ Nevertheless, it is important to recognize the unique relationship, an inter-species friendship perhaps, that existed between early people and dogs. Mery writes,

¹⁵ Mery, *Life History and Magic*, 25.

¹⁶ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 5-7.

¹⁷ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 5.

¹⁸ Mery, *Life History and Magic*, 25.

¹⁹ Elizabeth Schuler ed., *Guide to Dogs* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1980), 11.

²⁰ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 5.

²¹ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 7.

One thing is certain: In order to domesticate any other kind of animal except the dog, man has, always and in all lands, first had to capture him. Reindeer, horses, buffalo, and elephants, all have been overcome and made prisoners. Because of this they have retained an innate dissatisfaction which facilitates their return to the wild. The dog alone has never had to be taken by force...One day the dog crossed the threshold. Man did not chase him out. The treaty of alliance had been signed.²²

Egypt to the Christian era

The information that follows will trace the development of the human-canine divide from Egypt to the Christian era. The sub-sections for this time period will be categorized in the following manner: Egypt (approx. 4240BC-1100BC), The Ancient Greeks (800-500 BC), The Ancient Romans (753 BC to 476 AD), Christian Era and Middle-Ages (476-14th century).

Egypt (approx. 4240BC-1100BC)

As time progressed and the hunter-gatherer groups transitioned into agricultural civilizations, humans expanded their control of nature. The Ancient Egyptians, for example, designed an irrigation system that worked in conjunction with the rise and the fall of the Nile River. Animals were also among those parts of nature that humans subjugated and Egyptians used donkeys as beasts of burden,²³ for example. However, according to pyramid texts, dogs were guardians of the Monarchs and they continued to maintain their special comradeship with the ancient Egyptians.²⁴ Thurston writes, “Dogs were perceived as partners in life, death, and resurrection...”²⁵ Mery further relates, “The dogs of Egypt were hunting dogs, or war dogs, or even temple guards, but they were never subordinates.”²⁶ Dogs are frequently depicted both

²² Mery, *Life History and Magic*, 25.

²³ Wolfram Grajetzki, “Donkeys and Mules,” *Digital Egypt for Universities*, 2000-2003, accessed March 30, 2018, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/foodproduction/donkey.html>.

²⁴ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 31.

²⁵ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 31.

²⁶ Mery, *Life History and Magic*, 33.

alone and alongside people in Egyptian art, often carved, painted and sculpted, throughout the dynasties.²⁷ Dogs were also included in ancient writings and Shanley explains, “That owners cared for their dogs in this life is apparent by the veterinary papyri uncovered from ancient Egypt.”²⁸ To be sure, animals were important in society, and when a dog died, it was embalmed and placed in a sarcophagus in the same tradition as people.²⁹ Thurston writes that dog owners, “...shaved their bodies and heads to express their grief, just as they did on losing human members of the family.”³⁰ This importance also caused citizens to think and debate about the dog’s status and treatment by society. Mery writes that in ancient Egypt “Anyone who killed a dog was punished by death.”³¹ However, Egypt was not a canine utopia, and this eye for an eye punishment contrasts sharply with Egyptian society’s blatant lack of concern for the countless feral dogs that scavenged for survival, suggesting that only dogs that were close to people were worthy of concern. In fact, Thurston suggests that eventually dogs were classified and treated according to their roles in Egyptian society, similar to a human social status.³² This notion of canine position was fueled over time by human social evolution. Thurston explains, “As a culture’s socioeconomic base expands, leading to the creation of sprawling, multifunctional urban centers and stratification of the human populace according to wealth, education, and birthright, canines diversify as well.”³³ For example, elite dogs constituted a privileged minority.

²⁷ Mery, *Life History and Magic*, 31-33.

²⁸ Annie Shanley, “Man’s Best Friend: Dogs in Pharaonic Egypt,” *Wonders and Marvels*, February 14, 2012, accessed January 15, 2017, <http://www.wondersandmarvels.com/2014/06/mans-best-friend-dogs-in-pharaonic-egypt.html>.

²⁹ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 34.

³⁰ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 34.

³¹ Mery, *Life History and Magic*, 33.

³² Thurston, *The Lost History*, 38.

³³ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 38.

³⁴Dogs trained to be hunters were expected to earn their keep,³⁵ whereas Temple dogs promoted greater respect for dogs through their spiritual association.³⁶ Similarly, feral dogs represented an impoverished canine underclass in ancient Egypt.³⁷

The boundaries between humans and canines in prehistory that appeared to grow into a mutually beneficial partnership seemed to grow closer as societies, such as the one in Egypt, formed. Egyptian existence was focused on the afterlife, and concern for dogs of the earthly existence also included an important place in the afterlife for them alongside their owners. Close relationships with dogs eventually became reflected in daily life as canine classification became socially stratified to such an extent that elite dogs constituted the privileged minority whereas feral canines were of no concern to humans.

The Ancient Greeks (800-500 BC)

Although a constant presence in Greek civilization, Kitchell describes representations of the dog in ancient artifacts as generally contradicting.³⁸ However, it can be suggested that as in Egypt, the relationship between the Greeks and their dogs evolved as the Greek civilization developed. Kitchell explains, “The role of the dog changed strongly over time in ancient Greece.”³⁹ Dogs in early Greece might best be described as part wild, part domesticated, and Kitchell emphasizes, “...in early stages of Greek civilization the dog was, at best, liminal, man’s

³⁴ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 38.

³⁵ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 38.

³⁶ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 38.

³⁷ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 38.

³⁸ Kenneth F. Kitchell, “Man’s Best Friend? The Changing Role of the Dog in Greek Society.” *PECUS. Man and animal in antiquity* (Proceedings of the conference at the Swedish Institute, Rome, Italy, September 9-12, 2001): 177-182, accessed January 15, 2017, <http://www.isvroma.it/public/pecus/kitchell.pdf>.

³⁹ Kitchell, “Man’s Best Friend,” 177.

best friend who is but one step from the wolf.”⁴⁰ Scholars observe that depictions of dogs in the works of Homer, a keen observer of animal behavior, reflect this dualistic perspective. Kitchell asserts that in the closing moments of the *Iliad*, “Priam’s brief speech informs us that the dog, at least in this early stage of Greek civilization, is never fully tamed,”⁴¹ yet Mery observes that in the *Odyssey* “Homer moves us with his story of ‘Argus,’ the faithful dog which Ulysses had fed from his hand and which he had loved.”⁴² In mythology, depictions of the fierce and terrible three-headed dog Cerberus as the guardian of the underworld,⁴³ contrasts with Pollux, the protector of the hunt who is portrayed on numerous amphora with his gentle Greyhound.⁴⁴ Similarly, dogs in the streets had to fend for themselves,⁴⁵ whereas dogs of nobility were privileged.⁴⁶

In classical Greece, most dogs in society were kept for functional purposes such as protecting property and procuring game. Yet in spite of this primarily utilitarian perspective, Thurston reports “Some owners grew so emotionally attached to their dogs that they ceased perceiving of the animals as servants or tools, but rather regarded them as colleagues.”⁴⁷

Relationships of contradiction are evident in rituals as well. Thurston explains,

The annual festival of Artemis (goddess of the chase), for instance, was celebrated by sacrificing calves, goats or sheep, after which both dogs and masters partook of the roasted flesh in a great feast. Garlands of flowers were lavished on attending canines, giving rise to

⁴⁰ Kitchell, “Man’s Best Friend,” 178.

⁴¹ Kitchell, “Man’s Best Friend,” 177.

⁴² Mery, *Life History and Magic*, 37.

⁴³ Mery, *Life, History and Magic*, 37.

⁴⁴ Mery, *Life, History and Magic*, 40.

⁴⁵ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 39.

⁴⁶ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 42.

⁴⁷ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 46.

the enduring custom of draping winning racing Greyhounds with ribbons and roses.⁴⁸

This contrasts with the annual Kunophontes, or “massacre of dogs” in which lower-class dogs and feral dogs were sacrificed to appease the gods in summer.⁴⁹ Thurston also describes this ritual,

Hundreds of dogs perished under the knife on sacrificial alters on this bloody holiday, many of them puppies of homeless street curs. Doubly unlucky were black-coated dogs, the preferred sacrificial fodder for purification rituals and special appeals to the gods.⁵⁰

In spite of this paradoxical view of canines in ancient Greece, which suggests the boundaries between dogs and people were complex, there are two other important considerations to note. The first is Kitchell’s notion that by the 5th century B.C. dogs took on greater roles as companions.⁵¹ He writes, “It is only more advanced social groupings, like that of the *polis*, which can afford the luxury of a pet that takes food, protection, and shelter and gives back nothing other than companionship.”⁵² This suggests an evolving relationship, much like that which was observed in Egyptian culture. Second is the importance of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) who not only denied animals’ rationality, but also whose Ladder of Life⁵³ placed humans above all things in nature. Aristotle’s philosophy, according to Irvine, “...provoked a crisis for both the philosophy of mind and for the theories of morality.”⁵⁴ Aristotle’s thought, by formally addressing the differences between

⁴⁸ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 42-43.

⁴⁹ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 43.

⁵⁰ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 44.

⁵¹ Kitchell, “Man’s Best Friend,” 179.

⁵² Kitchell, “Man’s Best Friend,” 179.

⁵³ Aristotle, *History of Animals*, trans. D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson (Australia: University of Adelaide, 2015), bk. IX, accessed August 31, 2018, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/history/index.htm>.

⁵⁴ Leslie Irvine, *If You Tame Me* (Philadelphia: The Temple Press, 2004), 38.

humans and animals as well as by establishing a formal anthropocentric hierarchal scheme, contributed markedly to the human-animal divide. On the one hand, Aristotle proclaimed human superiority over all of nature, which is important in the history of ideas toward the development of the traditional Western view. On the other hand, in his *History of Animals*, Aristotle also documents keen observations about dogs explicit to husbandry. For example, Aristotle identifies specific dog breeds according to their usefulness.⁵⁵ Mery explains, “Towards 350 B.C. Aristotle enumerated the most useful of the known breeds, among them the Epirotic dog, the Laconian and the Molossian...”⁵⁶ In *History of Animals* book 6, Aristotle describes heat cycles of females, breeding with males, whelping and mothering pups, weaning and important developmental attributes of pups, and even comments on the expected lifespan specific to the Laconian breed.⁵⁷ Aristotle further wrote,

The dog of the Laconian breed lives ten years, and the bitch twelve. The bitch of other breeds usually lives for fourteen or fifteen years, but some live to twenty; and for this reason certain critics consider that Homer did well in representing the dog of Ulysses as having died in his twentieth year. With the Laconian hound, owing to the hardships to which the male is put, he is less long-lived than the female; with other breeds the distinction as to longevity is not very apparent, though as a general rule the male is the longer-lived.⁵⁸

From Aristotle’s writings about dogs in *History of Animals*, a few assumptions might be made. First, Aristotle’s attention to breeds according to their usefulness suggests the utilitarian importance of dogs to the Greeks. Second, by documenting material relevant to the breeding

⁵⁵ Aristotle, *History of Animals*, translated by D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson (Australia: University of Adelaide, 2015), bk. VI, accessed August 31, 2018, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/history/index.htm>.

⁵⁶ Mery, *Life History and Magic*, 40.

⁵⁷ Aristotle, *History of Animals*, bk. VI, pt. 20.

⁵⁸ Aristotle, *History of Animals*, bk. VI, pt. 20..

aspect of dogs, either people were interested in the husbandry aspect of domestication, or third, Aristotle's writing may have been setting the scientific stage for near future dog breeders who would achieve true domestication of *Canis familiaris*. Nevertheless, it is clear that Aristotle's recordings represent an attempt at mastery over nature. However, in an anthropocentric paradox of sorts, Aristotle's poignant writing in his *History of Animals* certainly focuses more centrally on the qualities specific to canines than it does on people.

The boundaries between humans and canines in Greek society were complex, paradoxical and may best be described as contradictory. The contradiction is perfectly exemplified in art where depictions of the monstrous Cerberus juxtapose Pollux's gentle Greyhound. Dogs were all important when they were regarded as colleagues and the interspecies boundary all but disappeared. This view contrasts with the concept of dogs being used utilitarian tools that were also useful for sacrifice. Even Aristotle's writings reflected this contradiction where on one hand where he both denied animal rationality and creates clear species boundaries when he places canines below humans on the ladder of life, yet his writing closely examines the qualities dogs.

The Ancient Romans (753 BC to 476 AD)

The Ancient Roman culture, noted for its more naturalistic approach to art, its Republic government and its philosophical affinity for loyalty and obligation, had emotional ties with their dogs. Unlike the Greeks, the Romans viewed their dogs more in human terms even though dogs were used for many purposes, such as guardians, executioners, messengers, and for military purposes. According to Grimm, "...the Romans were the first people to stop viewing the dog merely as a working animal—and to begin viewing it as a pet."⁵⁹ In fact, the Romans began keeping dogs as pets. Mery explains, "It becomes fashionable to have one's own dogs in one's

⁵⁹ David Grimm, *Citizen Canine* (New York: Public Affairs, 2014), 43.

house.”⁶⁰ Roman women, for example, kept tiny white Maltese dogs for comfort and for companionship,⁶¹ which represents a shift in the human-canine divide.

To some extent, keeping dogs as pets continued to be a luxury for the privileged, because poor people kept geese to guard the home. Nevertheless, unlike in Egyptian and Greek culture, lowly street dogs began to become of interest to people. Thurston notes a growing concern for the treatment of homeless dogs:

At its height, Rome was a veritable melting pot of both domesticated animals and people. As always, there were dogs of “lowly” birth, relegated to life on the streets as undesirables, although a lucky minority probably found favor with sympathetic housewives, street merchants, and shop owners, assigned the task of greeting houseguests or customers, keeping stray dogs at bay, or barking an alarm during the night.⁶²

Like with human family members, Roman citizens grieved when their dogs died.⁶³ They buried their dogs in cemeteries alongside other people and placed a tombstone upon the animal’s grave that often included descriptions of their beloved dog’s human-like qualities. A grieving Italian owner wrote this text on the tombstone of his departed dog “Patricus”:

My eyes were wet with tears, our little dog, when I bore thee (to the grave)... So, Patricus, never again shall thou give me a thousand kisses. Never canst thou be contentedly in my lap. In sadness have I buried thee, and thou deservist. In a resting place of marble, I have put thee for all time by the side of my shade. In thy qualities, sagacious thou wert like a human being. Ah, me! What a loved companion have we lost!⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Mery, *Life History and Magic*, 41.

⁶¹ Bud Boccone, “The Maltese, Toy Dog of Myth and Legend,” *American Kennel Club*, November 4, 2015, accessed March 30, 2018, <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/lifestyle/did-you-know/maltese-toy-dog-myth-legend/>.

⁶² Thurston, *The Lost History*, 48.

⁶³ Grimm. *Citizen Canine*, 43.

⁶⁴ Frank Abbott, *Society and Politics in Ancient Rome* (New York, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1912), 187.

Thurston notes that the Romans “...were touched by the ‘human’ quality of the canine personality, ” and “...writers frequently remarked on the dogs’ desire to be in the company of people at all costs, even if it endangered their lives.”⁶⁵

The Romans also overtly recognized the healing capacity that the Greeks believed dogs could provide to people.⁶⁶ However, unlike the Greeks who sacrificed dogs in prayer for healing, Thurston asserts that Romans believed “...canines should be nurtured rather than killed...”⁶⁷ and they erected healing temples as sanctuaries where ailing people could go to enlist the healing powers of “cynotherapists,” or gentle dogs with healing licks.⁶⁸ Live temple dogs at healing sanctuaries such as the Cult of Asklepios would often be thanked for their service with treats or recognized by the sacred offerings left at the temple altars.⁶⁹ Unlike the act of sacrifice being imposed on the dog by the Greeks, the curative connection between humans and dogs recognized by the Romans was important in that comforting healing licks of the dog provided an intimate relational association, which very likely included an emotional dimension, between the person and *Canis familiaris*.

The boundaries between humans and canines in Roman society seemed to both reflect the culture’s affinity for nature as well as incorporate the philosophical ideas of the Republic. The human canine divide took a new direction as Romans not only viewed canines as pets, but also as they took a compassionate interest in the plight of homeless dogs. What’s more, the Romans recognized the human-like qualities of dogs, which drew them closer. The recognition of the

⁶⁵ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 53.

⁶⁶ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 54-58.

⁶⁷ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 54.

⁶⁸ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 55.

⁶⁹ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 56.

ability of dogs to “heal” humans also suggests that Romans felt that special connection in their close relationships with dogs that lifts the human spirit.

Christian Era and Middle-Ages (476-14th century)

In the early days after the fall of the Roman Empire, packs of ownerless dogs roamed the countryside, surviving by scavenging garbage heaps and by digging up and eating the corpses of plague victims.⁷⁰ This behavior terrorized the imaginations of people, scorning the dog and setting clear boundaries between people and dogs.⁷¹ To be sure, this was a difficult time for people as well, as they struggled with poverty, hunger, death and tremendous uncertainty. Yet, in these apocalyptic surroundings where there was little compassion for animals, Thurston describes the few but fortunate canines who “...continued to live secure lives as companions to people with sufficient political and financial clout to access precious caches of food for animals.”⁷²

The Romans may have been touched by the human qualities of dogs, however, with the spread of Christianity, animals rapidly returned to being a category of nature that was considered both distinct and inferior to human beings. Irvine explains, “The monotheistic religions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity all justify a strong form of anthropocentrism known as ‘dominionism’ or a God given right to rule over nature.”⁷³

Genesis 1:28

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; And have dominion over the fish of the sea, And over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Mery, *Life, History, Magic*, 45.

⁷¹ Mery, *Life, History, Magic*, 45.

⁷² Thurston, *The Lost History*, 68.

⁷³ Irvine, *If You Tame Me*, 37.

⁷⁴ Genesis 1:28 OT.

In the 13th century C.E., St. Thomas Aquinas built upon Aristotle's assertion of rationality by extending the claim that as the only rational beings in earthly existence, only humans were capable of determining their own actions.⁷⁵ He argued that since animals lacked rationality and thus the capacity for self-determination, they needed to be directed as instruments.⁷⁶ He also suggested that all animals were tools that existed for the benefit of human beings.⁷⁷ Additionally, Aquinas maintained that there existed a clear boundary between humans and animals by asserting that since animals did not have souls and humans would not meet them in the afterlife, people could use them as they saw fit. He writes, Dumb animals and plants are devoid of the life of reason whereby to set themselves in motion; they are moved, as it were by another, by a kind of natural impulse, a sign of which is that they are naturally enslaved and accommodated to the uses of others.⁷⁸ To be sure, these ideas underpin the traditional Western thought regarding animals. Webb explains, "Aquinas set the stage for much later Christian thought by arguing that we have no direct duties to animals."⁷⁹

Without a doubt, the church's prejudicial view of animals maintained the division between humans and canines. The Inquisition further divorced people from having any emotional ties with their dogs as inquisitors eradicated anyone and anything that challenged humankind's dominating place in nature. Serpell writes about the Inquisition, "...its main goal

⁷⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Cosimo, 2007), 1460.

⁷⁶ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1460.

⁷⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1460.

⁷⁸ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1460.

⁷⁹ Stephen Webb, *On God and Dogs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 33.

appear to be the eradication of anything that contradicted the biased, hierarchical, Aristotelian/Thomist view of man's place in nature."⁸⁰ Irvine further explains, "Although animals figured in countless aspects of daily life, companionship with them meant a perverting of the anthropocentric hierarchy and accusations of bestiality and witchcraft were common -- and uncontested."⁸¹ Nevertheless, people continued to keep dogs as instruments that augmented everyday life and canines became very valuable to nobility's success on the hunt.⁸² People justified their close association with dogs by citing their usefulness and there is a plethora of evidence that indicates dogs shared many activities while working in close proximity with people. These unique circumstances set them apart from other animals, as Menach explains, "...it [the dog] was dissociated from other animals and invested with a unique place in human society."⁸³ Yet, although there may have been exceptions, Irvine explains that it was unlikely that people felt deep sentiment for their canine counterparts during this time.⁸⁴

The fall of the Roman Empire and the spread of plague created circumstances whereby people's concerns turned inward, focusing on themselves in such a dire situation. Naturally this focus on basic survival needs distanced people from canines. What's more, the packs of wild dogs that foraged on dead bodies, further horrified people and served as a living illustration of how these beastly animals were different from civilized humans. Also, the rise of Christianity, which included the idea of dominionism, placed nature below humans. The beliefs of St. Thomas Aquinas, which declared that animals (1.) lacked rationality, which rendered them incapable of

⁸⁰ James Serpell, *In the Company of Animals* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 155.

⁸¹ Irvine, *If You Tame Me*, 39.

⁸² Thurston, *The Lost History*, 67-75.

⁸³ Sophia Menache, "Dogs: God's Worst Enemies?" *Society & Animals* 5 (1997), 56.

⁸⁴ Irvine, *If You Tame Me*, 46.

self-determination, and (2.) lacked souls, which rendered them instruments for human use, further served to establish a clear line of division between humans and dogs.

Thus, the boundary between people and dogs changed as human history unfolded and people attempted to understand their relationship with the natural world. In prehistory, an interdependent relationship between people and dogs began when humans and dogs became partners in the hunt. Dogs remained close to people as societies formed. In Egypt, people were very concerned for those dogs that were close to them and the Egyptian existence that was focused on the afterlife also included an afterlife for their canine companions. In Greek society, relationships with dogs were complex and paradoxical. Dogs were all or nothing and Aristotle created a division between humans and dogs when he proclaimed the Ladder of Life. The Romans, known for their naturalistic art, had strong emotional ties to their dogs and there is evidence they showed unprecedented compassion to homeless dogs. The fall of the Roman Empire and the spread of plague generally distanced people from dogs, but it was the rise of Christianity, with the idea of dominionism, and the thoughts of Aquinas that contributed to the development of the traditional Western anthropocentric view, which affirmed a clear and lasting boundary between humans and canines.

The Five Positive Pathways

In the previous section, which explored the development of the human-canine divide, it was suggested that a boundary developed between humans and canines that was influenced by factors such as humankind's own understanding of nature and human social development as the interspecies relationship progressed from prehistory into the middle Ages. Additionally, the views of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas that led to the traditional Western anthropocentric view established a clear division between humans and dogs because it focused on the differences

between the species and placed them into clear categories of “us” and “them.” What’s more, this human focused view allowed humans to use animals as instruments, and by denying animal rationality; it subsequently denied an ethical responsibility to all animals, including dogs. In the previous chapter, the dog as a device in the human-canine relationship was examined. It was illustrated that during the rise and rule of technology, that people began to view the dog as a device. It was also suggested that Descartes’ philosophical thinking created a platform for the means-end split that shaped the modern human’s understanding of the world and significantly contributed to both the view of the dog as a commodity as well as the treatment of the canine as an object.

It will now be suggested, in an interesting irony, that Descartes’ scientific inquiry was also a turning point whereby people began to reconnect with nature, which began to bridge the divide between people and dogs. Serpell writes, “The Cartesian vivisectionists had sowed the seeds of their own destruction. All the evidence that they had accumulated on the internal anatomy and physiology of humans merely served to emphasize their similarity to humans.”⁸⁵ Cartesian science used dogs as experimental subjects in an effort to portray animals as machines that were inferior to humans, yet the exploration of animals as machines instead highlighted the similarities between animals and humans. This ultimately served to blur the boundaries between humans and canines as similar, rather than to solidify the differences. More importantly, however, was how the challenge to the traditional Western anthropocentric view over time engaged humans in critical thinking about animals and their relationships with these non-human animals, causing changes in the human canine divide. Bridging the established divide between people and dogs in the modern technological scheme not only creates more positive relationships between a person and a canine, but it also allows that person the chance to rediscover the natural world.

⁸⁵ James Serpell, *In the Company of Animals* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 161.

Rediscovering nature is the first of two methods that Borgmann asserts allows a person to connect with the richness of true experience.⁸⁶ According to him, engaging in the richness of real experience leads to an awareness of the pernicious pattern of technology that exists in a person's life,⁸⁷ which ultimately leads to the reform of technology.⁸⁸ By crossing the human-canine divide and connecting with a dog, a person can develop a profound awareness of nature that exists in themselves, their dogs and the world around them. In having the profound experience of nature, a person may then reorient with real experience in Borgmann's scheme.

Next is a presentation and discussion of Five Positive Pathways that overcome the human-canine divide in some way. This is an exploration of the complex emergence of an evolving modern view that, like Borgmann's device paradigm, also begins during the scientific revolution and progresses over time. The Five Positive Pathways that will be explored include: concerns for animal welfare, kinship among species, recognition of *Thou*, anthropomorphism as a human reflection, and dogs as an intermediary to nature. Each of these positive pathways involves crossing the divide between people and dogs in some way, whether it be moral, scientific, spiritual or phenomenological. In this way, the evolving modern view involves creating connection between dogs and people through the recognition or realignment with nature whereby nature attains a new and positive significance.

Concerns for Animal Welfare

When the philosopher Voltaire challenged Descartes' machine theory of animals, one of the first observations he made concerned the similarities between the arrangement of the organs

⁸⁶ Albert Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 182-196.

⁸⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 182-196.

⁸⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 3.

of Descartes' dissected dog and a human being.⁸⁹ He then argued that since the physiology of animals closely resembles that of a person, the dog must have the capacity to feel pain.⁹⁰ To be sure, with his anatomical and biological observations Voltaire was articulating what many dog owners may have instinctively known: animals were *not* non-thinking machines. Grimm explains the historical impact of Voltaire's proclamation, "Voltaire gave voice to a new sentimentality toward animals that took hold during the eighteenth century."⁹¹ This sentimentality not only spawned further intellectual, philosophical and theological challenges to the anthropocentric perspective, but it also called attention to the cruel manner in which humans generally treated animals at the time. In the mid-eighteenth century, Irvine explains that philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued that humans and animals were equally sentient beings, and as such, he suggested that both humans and animals were equally deserving of respectful treatment.⁹² Incidentally, Rousseau's closest companion was a small brown dog with a curly tail that he called Sultan. Authors Edmonds and Eidinow describe Rousseau's relationship with his dog, "Rousseau's emotions about Sultan were sufficiently intense to amaze onlookers. The onetime dog-owning Hume said, 'His affection for that creature is above all expression or conception.'⁹³ One can only wonder to what extent Rousseau's close relationship with his beloved canine influenced his philosophical thinking about animals.

⁸⁹Voltaire, "Dog," *The Philosophical Dictionary*, trans. H.I.Woolf (New York: Knopf, 1924), accessed May 5, 2018, <https://history.hanover.edu/texts/voltaire/volanima.html>.

⁹⁰ Voltaire, "Dog."

⁹¹ Grimm, *Citizen Canine*, 52.

⁹² Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality* trans. G.D.H. Cole, accessed September 5, 2018, <http://www.aub.edu.lb/fas/cvsp/Documents/DiscourseonInequality.pdf879500092.pdf>, 11.

⁹³ David Edmonds and John Eidinow, *Rousseau's Dog* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007), 3-4.

In 1781, a few decades following Rousseau, the British philosopher Jeremy Bentham became one of the earliest public advocates for animal welfare. He wrote:

A full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as more conversable animal, than an infant of a day, or a week, or even a month, old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they *reason*? nor Can they *talk*? but Can they *suffer*?⁹⁴

Not only does Bentham's writing raise the question of the moral status of animals, but it also makes a direct assessment about the superior thought and language capacities of a horse or a dog compared with those of a four-month old human infant. Additionally, in a new twist, his writing placed horses and dogs above a human child in terms of intellect. What's more, although Bentham's discourse was ultimately aimed at making cruelty to animals a punishable legal offense,⁹⁵ his writing also very likely sparked some critical thought and discussion among the social elite about the comparative similarities between humans and animals, which served to further narrow the human-animal divide. Bentham's discourse was successful because in 1822, with the support of religious authorities, the first animal welfare act was passed.⁹⁶ In 1824, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) was formed,⁹⁷ and in 1855, as noted in the previous chapter, England banned dogcarts.⁹⁸ This is important because it suggests that people were beginning to cross the human canine divide by thinking specifically about the canines around them and how these dogs were being treated.

⁹⁴ Irvine, *If You Tame Me*, 49.

⁹⁵ Grimm, *Citizen Canine*, 52.

⁹⁶ "Act to Prevent the Cruel and Improper Treatment of Cattle 22d July 1822," in *Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*, 3. George IV. 1822 (London, His Majesty's Statute and Law Printers, 1820), 403-5.

⁹⁷ "Our History" *RSPCA*, 2018, accessed September 5, 2018, <https://www.rspca.org.uk/whatwedo/whoweare/history>.

⁹⁸ *Dog Carts*, HL Deb 18 June 1841 vol 58 cc1572-3, accessed March 23, 2019, https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1841/jun/18/dog-carts#S3V0058P0_18410618_HOL_38

Another important point of reference for the dog within the scope of the humane movement occurred in 1860 in Britain when Mary Tealby founded the Battersea Dogs' home.⁹⁹ Essentially Tealby's endeavor was the beginning of a shelter system that took starving and lost dogs off of the street. One author notes, "... the British people started to recognize the relationship between themselves and dogs and cats, with increased concern for animals' lives..."¹⁰⁰ Across the Atlantic Ocean, in America, a similar institution was established in 1869 by Elizabeth Morris and Annie Waln, who sheltered stray dogs and cats around the city of Philadelphia.¹⁰¹ According to an article in the *Animal People News*, Morris and Waln were "...the first animal rescuers to euthanize animals with chloroform, then considered the gentlest method..." they also "...abolish[ed] the then prevalent practices of disposing of impounded animals by clubbing them, drowning them, or selling them for vivisection."¹⁰² These ladies were greatly influential in their teachings and practices about what constituted a humane society. By challenging the prevalent methods of disposing of animals and establishing new standards, their beliefs about human-animal relationships directly impacted the public realm; that is the common person and the common dog.

The humane movement represents an important step in closing the relational gap between humans and canines. By beginning to think about the similarities between the species, people started to develop a better understanding about what it meant to be human as well as how to

⁹⁹ Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, "Our History," *Battersea Dogs and Cats Home*, accessed March 30, 2018, <https://www.battersea.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/our-history>.

¹⁰⁰ World Animal, "Animal Welfare in Context," *World Animal*: 3, accessed August 27, 2015, http://worldanimal.net/documents/3_Movement_History.pdf.

¹⁰¹ "Elizabeth Morris & Annie Waln Introduced Hands-On Humane Work" *Animal People News* XIX, no. 5 (June 2009): 7, accessed March 30, 2018, <http://newspaper.animalpeopleforum.org/2009/06/01/elizabeth-morris-annie-waln-introduced-hands-on-humane-work/>.

¹⁰² "Elizabeth Morris & Annie Waln Introduced Hands-On Humane Work," 7.

“define” dogs. Mitcham explains that the philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset describes “...what it is to be human with the formula ‘Yo soy yo y mi circunstancia’ (I am I plus my circumstances).¹⁰³” Through his words, Ortega is expressing the fact that what it means to be human is not the result of existence alone, but rather it is an active response to the human consciousness coexisting within its circumstances. In short, essential to the notion of “what it means to be human” only occurs within the context of everything else. Each time a person contemplates these circumstances or relationships, they develop a greater awareness within themselves. To be sure, in the process of contemplating the anatomical and biological components that science revealed, people were able to contemplate themselves as well as the dog and develop a deeper understanding of both. Acknowledging that dogs had feelings was one way that people engaged in Borgmann’s idea of reorienting the relationship with reality.¹⁰⁴ This inward experience of reorienting with reality for humans manifested itself outwardly in the establishment of laws, the founding of shelters, and the continued growing concern for kinder treatment of dogs. In turn, these outward manifestations provided standards and models for thought and behavior regarding people’s relationships with canines, which in turn, inspired further contemplation that led to greater awareness and continued reorientation.

Kinship Among Species

The greatest challenge came to anthropocentrism in 1859, when evolutionary biologist Charles Darwin published his book *On the Origin of Species*, which postulated the theory of

¹⁰³ Carl Mitcham, *Thinking Through Technology* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994), 46. Referencing José Ortega y Gasset. “Meditación de la técnica. In *Ensimismamiento y alteracion* (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1939).

¹⁰⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 182.

natural selection.¹⁰⁵ Darwin's approach had a number of far reaching implications. First, the theory of natural selection removed humans from a superior position in the chain of being.

Rachels explains:

For Darwin, there was nothing in the constitution of any organism that propels its development in any particular direction. Nor were there any 'higher' or 'lower' forms of life; nor any 'progress': there were only organisms adapted in different ways to different environments, by a process ignorant of design or intention.¹⁰⁶

Additionally, when Darwin later published *The Descent of Man* in 1871, he emphasized the idea of species kinship, which provided a scientific alternative to the prevailing understandings of relationships between humans and non-human animals.¹⁰⁷ Stanley Coren notes that Darwin "...came to the conclusion that human and animals differ only quantitatively (in the degree to which their mental abilities express themselves) rather than qualitatively (in the actual nature of those mental processes)."¹⁰⁸ Darwin clearly had a true affinity for animals, yet scientists have criticized him for grossly anthropomorphizing animal characteristics. Incidentally, anthropomorphizing animals was a norm during the Victorian era,¹⁰⁹ and according to Webb, "In *The Descent of Man*, he [Darwin] attributes nearly every human characteristic to animals: from altruism to anxiety, animals have it all."¹¹⁰ Of even greater significance to dog enthusiasts

¹⁰⁵ Charles Darwin, *On The Origin of Species* (London: John Murray, 1859), chap. 4, *Project Gutenberg Ebook*, November 23, 2009, accessed March 31, 2018, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1228/1228-h/1228-h.htm>.

¹⁰⁶ James Rachels, *Created from Animals: The Moral Implications of Darwinism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 116.

¹⁰⁷ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1872), accessed August 30, 2018, https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Descent_of_Man_and_Selection_in_Rel.html?id=LYEQAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=kp_read_button#v=onepage&q&f=false

¹⁰⁸ Coren, *How to Speak Dog*, 15.

¹⁰⁹ Simon Cooke, "Harrison Weir, Anthropomorphism, and Moralizing Books for Children and Adults," *The Victorian Web*, April 2013, accessed March 31, 2018, <http://www.victorianweb.org/art/illustration/weir/cooke3.html>.

was the fact that Darwin came from a family of dog lovers¹¹¹ and it seems like fate that the dog loving scientist was assigned to an exploration boat fittingly named the HMS *Beagle*. Grimm writes, “He [Darwin] owned at least thirteen [dogs] throughout his life, including a black-and-white mutt named Spark --a childhood companion he fondly referred to as ‘little black nose’ – and a white terrier, Polly, who slept in a pillowed basket near the fireplace...”¹¹² His writing postulates much about dogs. He writes about the high intelligence of dogs¹¹³ and suggests that their unrivaled fidelity is tantamount to religious devotion.¹¹⁴ When referring to dogs, which he does extensively in his writing, Darwin is criticized for often bordering on too sentimental of a tone,¹¹⁵ which one could argue stems from his great love of dogs. Nevertheless, Darwin’s writings were both important and extremely influential on an entire populace because his ideas reached the masses. Thurston explains, “The works of the naturalist Charles Darwin were widely read and discussed – with weeklies like the *Illustrated London News* posting public lectures on fossils, evolution and newly discovered animals.”¹¹⁶

Irvine explains that Darwin’s emphasis on the kinship between humans and animals “...spawned two interpretations, each with different implications for the treatment of

¹¹⁰ Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 118.

¹¹¹ David Allan Feller, “Heir of the Dog: Canine Influences on Charles Darwin’s Theories of Natural Selection” (Master’s thesis, University of Hawaii, 2005), 16-23.

¹¹² Grimm, *Citizen Canine*, 64.

¹¹³ Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 118.

¹¹⁴ Elizabeth Knoll, “Dogs, Darwinism, and English Sensibility,” in *Anthropomorphism, Anecdotes, and Animals*, editors Robert Mitchell, Nicholas Thompson, H. Lyn Miles (New York: SUNY Press, 1997), 15.

¹¹⁵ Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 118.

¹¹⁶ Thurston, *The Lost History*, 98.

animals.”¹¹⁷ This is not surprising, since it was *how* humans treated animals at that time that was a topic of great concern. People thought about the idea of kinship and this created two primary views regarding the treatment of animals within this scheme. One view asserted that since both humans and animals were a part of nature, then the natural rituals of life and death meant that humans could justifiably kill animals.¹¹⁸ The other view asserted that since both humans and animals were a part of nature, then humans have a responsibility to preserve animals¹¹⁹ since they are “kin.” This second view has been a keystone in the movement to protect nature and animals. This view is the basis for Peter Singer¹²⁰ and Tom Regan’s¹²¹ philosophies that omit differences between humans and non-human animals. In their views, animals are equal, autonomous and in need of protection from human exploitation.¹²² Nevertheless, beyond the obvious questions regarding the concerns for how people treated animals, another important result of Darwin’s scientific emphasis on kinship has to do with the other pathway it provided for humans to ultimately reconnect with nature.

Speciesism focuses on the differences between humans and non-human animals and places humans in a position of dominion. In this view, humans believe non-human animals are possessions to be exploited any way humans see fit by virtue of humankind’s moral and intellectual superiority.¹²³ In contrast, kinship recognizes a familial connection based upon

¹¹⁷ Irvine, *If You Tame Me*, 58.

¹¹⁸ Irvine, *If You Tame Me*, 50.

¹¹⁹ Irvine, *If You Tame Me*, 50.

¹²⁰ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (New York: Harper Collins, 1975).

¹²¹ Tom Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights,” in *In Defense of Animals*, ed. Peter Singer (New Jersey:Blackwell, 1985), 13-26.

¹²² Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 57-62.

¹²³ Katherine Perlo, *Kinship and Killing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 18.

similarities between humans and non-human animals.¹²⁴ While kinship does recognize those differences that exist, this perspective does not place humans in a position of dominion. Jones explains, “Like any good relationship, a positive relationship between human and non-human animals hinges on respect for the other’s being.”¹²⁵ Darwin’s emphasis provided a shift in thinking about the relationship because prior to Darwin’s discourse, the common perspective was the traditional Western anthropocentric view that placed humans above animals by emphasizing the differences between the species. Alternatively, Darwin’s writing highlighted the commonalities and continuous capacities between humans and animals and firmly embedded humans into nature through their inextricable connections with the rest of the natural world. By discussing and contemplating Darwin’s concepts, humans of all social classes could recognize and respect the continuous commonalities among human and non-human animals. By being connected to every living thing, recognizing that vast reality of the world, humans could now experience themselves in the new profound way that Borgmann describes.¹²⁶ What’s more, in thinking about what traits they shared with their non-human animal ‘kin,’ people had the opportunity to expand their understanding not only of animals, but of themselves as well. Darwin clearly recognized this phenomenon. Gibson writes, “Darwin’s emotional bonds with animals informed his scientific enterprise, and he considered his study of expressions and feelings in animals crucial to understanding that other animal species: humans.”¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Lee Spark Jones. “Kinship With Animals – Unlearning Speciesism” (Paper presented at the Worldwork seminar: Alternatives to War: Modeling the World We Dream Of, Newport, Oregon, March 2-9, 2004), *Iapop.com*, accessed March 31, 2018. <http://www.iapop.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/dissertations/jones-kinshipwithanimals.pdf>.

¹²⁵ Lee Spark Jones. “Kinship With Animals – Unlearning Speciesism.”

¹²⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 192.

¹²⁷ James William Gibson, *A Re-enchanted World: The Quest for a New Kinship With Nature* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009), 55.

In his book *On God and Dogs*, author Stephen Webb notes, “Darwin is especially attentive to the intelligence of dogs (which he ranks close to that of ‘savages’!). He clearly thinks that his theory, which stresses the commonality of all life forms, justifies the use of anthropomorphic language in reference to dogs.”¹²⁸ As explained earlier, Darwin’s ideas were readily discussed among all classes in the populace, which was a change from earlier times when intellectual discourse was primarily limited to the upper class. Beyond being information that was accessible to all social classes, Darwin’s discourse must have had an even greater impact among people who had dogs because Darwin dedicated a great deal of discussion to dogs and because during this time in history people began keeping dogs inside their homes as pets. As the Industrial revolutions progressed in Europe and in the US, people had more leisure time and disposable income.¹²⁹ One result of having more time and money was an increase in pet keeping.¹³⁰ The invention of the automobile in the US was also historically important for the human-canine relationship, Derr explains, “...the car’s replacement of the horse for transport meant that dogs and cats were increasingly the primary connection to the animal world for a growing number of urban Americans...”¹³¹ As time passed and the dog’s status continued to increase among Americans,¹³² so must have the canine’s ability to provide a unique opportunity for people to further realize their connection with nature and develop an awareness of nature through their bonds with their dog. Interestingly, the kinship connection may have been a natural

¹²⁸ Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 118.

¹²⁹ Thurston, *Lost History*, 237.

¹³⁰ Land of Holistic Pets, “Pet History,” *Land of Holistic Pets*, accessed April 1, 2018, <https://landofholisticpets.co.uk/pet-health-information/pet-history/>.

¹³¹ Derr, *A Dog’s History*, 263.

¹³² Derr, *A Dog’s History*, 267.

occurrence that grew deeper for people who spent any amount of time closely interacting with their dogs. Edward O. Wilson's Biophilia hypothesis proposes that humans experience an "...innately emotional affiliation" with other living things that are "...hereditary and hence part of ultimate human nature."¹³³ This instinctive desire of humans to be connected with animals in their midst – especially those sharing their homes -- may have been a contributing factor to people's continuously deepening relationships with their dogs to the point of being familial. The change in the relationship from one where a person may have regarded the dog as an object to be used, changed when that person grew to feel a familial connection --a kinship -- with their family dog. In turn, these more meaningful relationships with non-human animals intensified people's connection with nature.

Recognition of Thou

The existentialist philosopher Martin Buber (1878-1965) believed that a person's inner and outer experience of the world is the result of how that individual interacts with reality.¹³⁴ For him, a person is constantly engaged in one of two possible modes of interaction with the world: he describes these modes as *I-It* or *I-Thou*.¹³⁵ According to Buber, the *I-It* relationship occurs when a person perceives something as an object, and relates to the other as a "thing." Buber described this objectified perception with as being one-sided because the meaning resides wholly in the observer and there is no connection between the observer and the other that is seen as a thing.¹³⁶ Additionally, relating to the world through this objectified perception is an empty existence for the observer and Buber explains, "The basic word I-It can never be spoken with

¹³³ E.O. Wilson, "Biophilia and the Conservation Ethic" in *Biophilia Hypothesis*, ed. S. Kellert and E.O. Wilson (Washington: Island Press, 1993), 32.

¹³⁴ Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 55-59.

¹³⁵ Buber, *I and Thou*, 53.

¹³⁶ Buber, *I and Thou*, 54-56.

one's whole being."¹³⁷ The other mode of interaction is an *I-Thou* perception, and this occurs when the observer reaches a level of awareness so that the other is perceived as a relational being, or *Thou*.¹³⁸ An *I-Thou* experience is one that is based upon relationship, and the experience is dynamic because there is responsive interaction based upon the awareness of *Thou*.¹³⁹ Through the experience of the *Thou*, a person is able to recognize true "otherness" and engage in the fullness of experience through this connection.¹⁴⁰ In his 1980 book *On Looking*, Berger describes,

The animal scrutinizes him across a narrow abyss of non-comprehension. This is why the man can surprise the animal. Yet the animal – even if domesticated—can also surprise the man. The man too is looking across a similar, but not identical, abyss of non-comprehension. And this is so wherever he looks. He is always looking across ignorance and fear. And so, when he is *being seen* by the animal, he is being seen as his surroundings are being seen by him. His recognition of this is what makes the look of the animal familiar. And yet the animal is distinct, and can never be confused with man. Thus, a power is ascribed to the animal, comparable with human power but never coinciding with it. The animal has secrets which, unlike the secrets of caves, mountains, seas, are specifically addressed to man.¹⁴¹

To be sure, a person's discovery of the *Thou* in a canine companion is a profoundly reorienting force as it spiritually crosses the human-canine divide. Buber also reminds the reader that it is possible to view any living being, including humans, from the "It" perspective.

In fact, he suggests that domestication can only occur by giving up the "I" and saying "Thou."¹⁴² Buber also asserts that the process of "taming" involves openness to the other.¹⁴³

¹³⁷ Buber, *I and Thou*, 54.

¹³⁸ Buber, *I and Thou*, 55-56.

¹³⁹ Buber, *I and Thou*, 57.

¹⁴⁰ Buber, *I and Thou*, 62.

¹⁴¹ John Berger, *About Looking* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 5.

¹⁴² Buber, *I and Thou*, 172.

¹⁴³ Buber, *I and Thou*, 172-173.

People who share their lives with dogs engage in an on-going process of taming. Teaching a puppy the rules of the human house, showing the adult dog how to behave around visitors, expecting the ravenous dog to take the biscuit from a human hand with the softest and gentlest of mouth manners are just some of the many ways that illustrate how “taming” is a continuous process. During these and various other human-canine interactions, humans and dogs exchange glances like those that Buber describes sharing with his cat.¹⁴⁴ In these interactive exchanges with their canine companions, humans have the opportunity to raise their awareness of *Thou* to a higher level. Interacting with a dog also enables *I* to appreciate the uniqueness of that particular animal. Each dog has distinguishable qualities that may be physical, behavioral or intellectual and these are revealed through the interactive relationship with a person. Experiencing the *Thou* means encountering the wildness of nature in the dog’s ferocious sounding play-growl and understanding that the dog is only playing, appreciating how he or she lives in the moment by joyfully rolling in the grass, or knowing which types of food that individual dog may or may not like.

Buber reminds the reader, “Every You in the world is doomed by its nature to become a thing or at least to enter into thinghood again and again.”¹⁴⁵ He illustrates this idea: “The It is the chrysalis, the You the butterfly.”¹⁴⁶ This suggests that engaging in the *Thou* perspective is dynamic and an active process. Borgmann describes the similar phenomenon of being focally connected and having profound experiences within the framework of technology.¹⁴⁷ Buber illustrates *Thou* in connections with animals when he writes about his experience of looking into

¹⁴⁴ Buber, *I and Thou*, 145.

¹⁴⁵ Buber, *I and Thou*, 69.

¹⁴⁶ Buber, *I and Thou*, 69.

¹⁴⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 196-210.

the eyes of an animal and recognizing the profound mystery of otherness.¹⁴⁸ He explains this as an “opening up” when the person and the animal exchange glances.¹⁴⁹ Philosopher Ram Dass describes this as connecting to the “intuitive heart space.”¹⁵⁰ When he looks into the eyes of his cat, he perceives a silent conversation in the cat’s return glance, “Can it be that you mean me? ...Do I concern you? Am I there for you? Am I there? What is it about me? What is that?!”¹⁵¹ Breeders of dogs were asked to respond to the following on social media¹⁵²: *Can you describe the change (if any) that YOU experience when your baby puppies FIRST open their eyes and look back at you?* All of the respondents describe their connection to newborn pups as changing, deepening, when the pups open their eyes and are able to look back at the person holding them. Longtime Lhasa Apso breeder Joyce Johanson most aptly describes what she experiences at that moment when her pups open their eyes around day 14: “Perhaps they seem more ‘real’ to me because they can see me and I can look them in the eye. I always pick them up; look them in the

¹⁴⁸ Buber, *I and Thou*, 144.

¹⁴⁹ Buber, *I and Thou*, 144.

¹⁵⁰ Ram Dass, “Episode 38 -- Swimming With Dolphins,” *Ramdass: LSRF Love Serve Remember Foundation*, April 24, 2013, accessed September 17, 2015, <https://www.ramdass.org/swimming-with-dolphins/>.

¹⁵¹ Buber, *I and Thou*, 145.

¹⁵² The invention of computer technology represents a point of bifurcation in human history that is comparable to great inventions such as Gutenberg’s Printing Press and the automobile. Web-based and mobile based social media technologies such as Face Book, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat have had a transformative effect on the way people communicate. These technologies enable immediate and interactive communication among individuals, communities and organizations. What’s more, the technology lessens the boundaries of space and time that have a limiting effect on human interactions, thus bringing people closer together. The social media, Face Book, that is used to gather data in this aspect of the present investigation enables dog breeders from all over the globe to gather and connect in one place where they may share their knowledge and experience in a manner that is unprecedented in human history. The respondents *quoted* from this single post together represent more than 150 years of breeding knowledge and experience. Public, private and secret groups can be formed that discuss specific topics or include people who share hobbies or interests. The technology has a democratizing effect on information, and the possibilities for gathering data are limitless.

eye, and say, ‘Welcome to the world, little one.’ I know it seems like a weird thing to say since they’ve been in the world already for a couple of weeks.”¹⁵³ Similarly, Dennis Holmes describes,

Then at about thirteen days you pick up one of the puppies and notice they eyes have opened! Suddenly all this clinical and scientific nonsense goes straight out the window and all I then see a gorgeous little person looking at me! I try not to be anthropomorphic, and I also know that although the eyes are open all they can see at this stage are just dim glimmers of light. But emotion takes over and I really feel that these tiny pups are actually looking at me and quite often I actually talk to them. It’s crazy, I know, but these tiny melting eyes have made contact with my heart.¹⁵⁴

A verbal “welcoming” into the world is also a common theme among breeders. Nancy Rice Waggoner explains “I also welcome each puppy to the world when their eyes open.”¹⁵⁵ Betsy Clagett also explains “My first thought, my first utterance, even after all these years, and with each and every puppy is always the same thing: “Oh, HELLO!”¹⁵⁶ Similarly Beth Reed writes,

I become filled with excitement and anticipation when their eyes just begin to open. That first reflection coming from the smallest slits in their otherwise closed eyelids. I always find myself saying to each one on that monumental day, “I see you peeking at me.”...When I’m able to connect with them through eye contact it’s such a meaningful connection that hits me deep in my soul.¹⁵⁷

Heidi Mohn explains, I say ‘hello baby, welcome to the world’ then embracing them, I press each to my heart individually & absorb them into my soul. I literally feel them crawl in. My

¹⁵³ Joyce Johanson, *Facebook* post, September 17, 2015, accessed September 17, 2015, <http://facebook.com/tracielaliberte>.

¹⁵⁴ Dennis Holmes, *Facebook* post, September 17, 2015, accessed September 17, 2015, <http://facebook.com/tracielaliberte>.

¹⁵⁵ Nancy Rice Waggoner, *Facebook* post, September 17, 2015, accessed September 17, 2015, <http://facebook.com/tracielaliberte>.

¹⁵⁶ Betsy Clagett, *Facebook* post, September 17, 2015, accessed September 17, 2015, <http://facebook.com/tracielaliberte>.

¹⁵⁷ Beth Reed, *Facebook* post, September 17, 2015, accessed September 17, 2015, <http://facebook.com/tracielaliberte>.

world changes.”¹⁵⁸ Other breeders also refer to puppy eye opening as the “Who’s in there?” or the “Soul seeing” moment. Susan Platt Schidler also explains, “I love the first open slits when you can tell that there’s somebody home!”¹⁵⁹ A few breeders also described this moment of meeting as inspiring the same level of caring they have for human children. Karon Chanski’s response is one such example, “Welcome to the world, little one! I love you and will do everything for you...really the same thing I said when I saw my own human children for the first time and knew they could see me back...my heart filled.”¹⁶⁰ Interestingly, Karen Cusick, who does intensive care for puppies of all breeds, also describes the profound depth of the change as describes talking to ailing puppies before they open their eyes when she writes,

It may be your destiny to never look at your world as I know it to be, it is ok if you have been on loan for just a very short time, it is ok if you decide not to stay...BUT PLEASE DON’T OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK AT ME AND THEN DIE, for that destroys me more than you will ever know.¹⁶¹

In recognizing the *Thou*, even breeders, many who already experience real and regular connections with nature through dog rearing, become re-engaged and experience the profound fullness in the eloquence of nature in recognizing *Thou* even in very young puppies.

To be sure, people who spend time with their dogs carry on daily silent conversations in glance exchanges with their dogs. They come to know and respect their dogs as individuals through their responsive interactions with them. Katz writes, “Every dog is unique, and so is our

¹⁵⁸ Heidi Mohn, *Facebook* post, September 17, 2015, accessed September 17, 2015, <http://facebook.com/tracielaliberte>.

¹⁵⁹ Sue Platt Schidler, *Facebook* post, September 17, 2015, accessed September 17, 2015, <http://facebook.com/tracielaliberte>.

¹⁶⁰ Karon Chanski, *Facebook* post, September 17, 2015, accessed September 17, 2015, <http://facebook.com/tracielaliberte>.

¹⁶¹ Karen Cusick, *Facebook* post, September 17, 2015, accessed September 17, 2015, <http://facebook.com/tracielaliberte>.

relationship with him or her.”¹⁶² These dynamic connections enable people to sense the completeness of their dogs, and recognizing *Thou* in other brings awe. This profound fullness is that which Borgmann describes when he explains the richness of experience that comes in connecting with nature.

Anthropomorphism as a Human Reflection

Borgmann explains that in modernity, humans suffer from a technologically induced state of human disconnectedness.¹⁶³ In a sense, humans have lost touch with their own wild nature, and what it means to be human has been driven into submission by the overwhelming and unrelenting importance that is placed on technology. Borgmann writes about reconnecting with the richness of true experience by rediscovering the wilderness in the natural world, and he explains that this reorientation with reality begins within the individual.¹⁶⁴

The term “anthropomorphism” is considered a bad word in many circles. Attributing human characteristics to non-human animals is generally considered undesirable because using human terms to describe something that is not human neither recognizes nor respects the uniqueness or otherness of that particular “being” in its own right. Irvine describes the problem, “The term ‘anthropomorphism’ often aims to discredit someone’s claims about animals. It usually implies sentimentality and inaccurate projection...”¹⁶⁵ Masson explains, “To accuse a scientist of anthropomorphism is to make a severe criticism of unreliability.”¹⁶⁶ To be sure, projecting human attributes onto non-human beings undermines arriving at true knowledge

¹⁶² Jon Katz, *Soul of a Dog* (New York: Villard, 2009), 15.

¹⁶³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 101-107.

¹⁶⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 162.

¹⁶⁵ Irvine, *If You Tame Me*, 69.

¹⁶⁶ Masson, *Dogs Never Lie About Love*, 17.

where these attributes are subjective or delusional. Additionally, anthropomorphism is dangerous not only because it fails to draw a line between subject and object, but also because it places the object entity as an extension of the human ego, both of which deny that entity of having its own meaning as something in its own right. Theologians, who first experienced the phenomenon of anthropomorphizing when people applied human traits to God, argued that "...this is not an error but an inescapable limitation whereby we conceive of God as analogous to how we conceive ourselves."¹⁶⁷ In short, there is simply no escaping the human lens for a human because there is no alternative. Humans are constrained by understanding the world through their own experience of being human, through the human worldview, which undeniably places boundaries on real truth. Shapiro writes:

...all understanding is anthropomorphic (from *anthropo*, meaning 'man' and *morphe*, 'form' or 'shape') for it is partly shaped by the human investigator as subject. However, since this is a perspective or "bias" inherent in all experience, it is not an occasional attributional error to which we are particularly prone when we cross species' lines. It is a condition of science which prevents it from reaching certainty and, therefore, from supporting a positivistic philosophy.¹⁶⁸

While in some ways anthropomorphism may hinder humankind's true understanding of the world, it is one of the ways we learn to relate to the environment around us. The world becomes a more stable and safe environment when people understand it in their own terms, which leads to further understanding. For example, Darwin understands the world by drawing parallels between human and non-human animal species through observation. Masson explains

In *The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, Darwin made a systematic study of how animals look when they are afraid. In both humans and animals, he found, some or all of the following may occur: the eyes and mouth open, the eyes roll, the heart

¹⁶⁷ Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 102.

¹⁶⁸ Kenneth Shapiro, "A Phenomenological Approach to the Study of Nonhuman Animals" in *Anthropomorphism, Anecdotes and Animals*, ed. R. Mitchell, N. Thompson, and H. Miles (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 294.

beats rapidly, hairs stand on end, muscles tremble, teeth chatter, and the sphincter loosens.¹⁶⁹

Sasha Matthewman also asserts, “Culturally one of the ways in which children begin to understand themselves as humans is through comparisons and contrasts with animals.”¹⁷⁰ Thus, this anthropomorphic perspective can be said to potentially lead to a greater understanding of the individual self.

People who have dogs constantly anthropomorphize. They ascribe emotions, behaviors and meaning to their dogs using human terms, which may be aimed at gaining a better understanding of their dogs. Some of these efforts may be successful since humans and dogs share many common traits. And while projecting human qualities onto a dog may hinder arriving at the truth about the dog as “other,” anthropomorphizing one’s dog does hold the potential for that person to gain a greater understanding of *himself or herself*. The dog can be said to act as a mirror for human self-reflection; this is that introspective capacity for humans to learn about their true nature. Katz writes, “...dogs seem to act like spigots, opening up hidden parts of ourselves.”¹⁷¹

Relationships with dogs are most often interactive, which provides immediate feedback to both species, and interactions are constant because humans and canines live in such close proximity in contemporary society. For example, a person shows affection for their dog by petting it, and the dog might respond by licking the hand of the human while being petted. In this interactive relationship, the human has the opportunity to see herself being reflected back in the immediate back and forth. In ascribing human terms to their dog, the human must first recognize

¹⁶⁹ Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, *When Elephants Weep* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1995), 49.

¹⁷⁰ Sasha Matthewman, *Teaching Secondary English as if the Planet Matters* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 63.

¹⁷¹ Katz, *Soul of a Dog*, 78.

that term in him or herself. The person pets the dog, recognizes and then identifies a feeling they are having and thinks “I have affection for you.” When the dog licks the person, they ascribe meaning as the dog replying “I have affection for you, too.” This affirms the person’s understanding of their own human feeling of affection and raising awareness within the person of what it means to have feelings of affection as a human being. Conversely, when a dog does something, a person tries to understand the dog’s behavior through the lens of human understanding. A person will try to make sense of the dog by assigning a human quality to that “other animal” quality that the dog has. For example, a person might describe a dog that growls or bites using the human term “angry.” When a person does this, the knowledge of this “other animal” quality in the person is awakened, perhaps for the first time, and that person can see himself or herself in a new way. As a continuous presence, the dog provides a steady opportunity for the individual to reconnect with his or her own human nature and come to see themselves as a part of nature. In this way, as a mirror reflecting the image from the human lens back upon itself, anthropomorphism has the potential to open up the person to himself or herself, enabling the person to see their own true human nature and thus reorient that person from “within the individual” in Borgmann’s scheme. The danger, of course, lies in the potential mistake of the person wrongly thinking that their dog is human because they have completely removed the person-dog divide.

Dog as an Intermediary to Nature

In his assessment of contemporary life, Borgmann asserts that through the device paradigm, technology has become so engrained in modernity that the realness of human experience has been lost.¹⁷² For him, the ironic twist and paradox is that the same technology that

¹⁷² Borgmann, *Technology*, 40-48.

once held the promise of bringing pleasure, comfort and leisure to the human experience has now become a mere product that disengages people from the real experiences of the world, ultimately leaving them feeling bored, empty and unfulfilled.¹⁷³

However, Borgmann does see the opportunity for relief from the technologically induced state of human disconnectedness.¹⁷⁴ Because he believes that the disengagement from real experience is the product of the modern reality that is patterned by technology, Borgmann suggests that humans must challenge the rule of technology by reorienting their relationship with reality.¹⁷⁵ Borgmann agrees with Pirsig's belief that peace and serenity may be found within the context of a technologically patterned reality by looking within.¹⁷⁶ Borgmann explains, "The place to improve the world is in one's own heart and head and hands, and then work outward from there."¹⁷⁷ He does not believe that the reform of technology requires a "flight from technology,"¹⁷⁸ but rather, in the most ideal of circumstances the rule of technology can be recognized or acknowledged and then the framework of technology can aptly support an individual's reorientation.¹⁷⁹ Borgmann believes that this shift from a position of disengagement from the real experiences of the world toward one of engagement can be achieved by connecting with nature.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 35-48.

¹⁷⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 157-169.

¹⁷⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 182.

¹⁷⁶ Robert Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values* (New York: Bantam Books, 1974), 26.

¹⁷⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 162.

¹⁷⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 182.

¹⁷⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 182.

¹⁸⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 182-196.

Borgmann asserts that a person can reconnect with the richness of true experiences by rediscovering the natural world.¹⁸¹ He explains that the domination of nature that was established with the colonization of the American continent in conjunction the influence of the Industrial Revolution set the stage for the modern void.¹⁸² The experience of the natural world, he intimates, is something that has been walled-off from a person's everyday experience by the forces of technology.¹⁸³ The setting aside of protected wilderness spaces is one such example he provides of how technology has created the ultimate ruling subversion of nature and at the same time has transformed the human vision of the natural world.¹⁸⁴ Borgmann further highlights this shift within the human psyche as he explains that people "...see the machine *in* the garden and not the other way around."¹⁸⁵

Borgmann reminds the reader of the richness of experience that comes in connecting with the wildness of nature as he explains, "The wilderness, we saw, engages us in the fullness of our capacities."¹⁸⁶ He does acknowledge that times have changed through the brute force of technology, however, and that it is not a realistic endeavor to expect people to return to a pre-technological experience of nature.¹⁸⁷ Instead, Borgmann asserts the key idea of acknowledging the wilderness and developing a renewed awareness of the natural world amidst the framework of technology. In this manner, he suggests "...the realization that nature in its wildness attains a

¹⁸¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 182-196.

¹⁸² Borgmann, *Technology*, 183-184.

¹⁸³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 191.

¹⁸⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 185-191.

¹⁸⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 189.

¹⁸⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 192.

¹⁸⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 194.

new and positive significance.”¹⁸⁸ Borgmann stresses the importance of the enlightenment that accompanies the recognition of the natural world as another in its own right.¹⁸⁹ Accordingly, he suggests that even in the technological setting, the wilderness may be understood by the person as something that possesses a profound fullness.¹⁹⁰ The result is that in this renewed realization amidst nature, the experience builds upon itself.¹⁹¹ As the person engages the senses in the extent and depth of the wilderness, he or she gains a deeper respect and appreciation for this part of the natural world that Borgmann describes as “profoundly alive and eloquent.”¹⁹² In turn, Borgmann asserts, “In all these experiences of the wilderness we also experience ourselves in a new way.”¹⁹³

Keeping a dog inside the family home means bringing a piece of nature inside the space that is walled off from the natural world. Having meaningful interactions with a dog inside the home means spending time communing with nature in a space that is divided away from the natural world. In this way, the dog brings nature to the individual *inside*. However, more importantly, a family dog also has the capacity to bring the individual *outside* to the natural world and function as an intermediary between a person and the bigger, more consuming surrounding environment. Small opportunities to commune with nature occur every time a person simply opens the door to let their dog outside to the bathroom. Whether it be appreciating the beating heat of the sun, smelling some freshly cut grass, observing a starlit sky, or wistfully

¹⁸⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 182.

¹⁸⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 193.

¹⁹⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 191-192.

¹⁹¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 192.

¹⁹² Borgmann, *Technology*, 192.

¹⁹³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 192.

watching a butterfly land on a flower near the spot where the dog will soon urinate; these are glimpse connections with nature if the person simply pauses to takes notice. Greater opportunities present themselves if a person takes the time to go outside and play fetch with a dog or spends time sitting in the grass, perhaps petting their dog, while taking in the world around them. These activities release a person from the rule of technology and transport them into natural world.

Although Borgmann intimates that the forces of technology have walled-off a person's everyday experience of the natural world,¹⁹⁴ taking a daily walk with a dog provides a person with everyday experiences with nature. When a person is committed to walking their dog, their experience of nature becomes rich and varied as it is influenced by the weather, by the season or by the time of day the dog is walked. Walking along city sidewalks with a dog, far removed from the obvious nature of the countryside, also provide an individual with the opportunity to escape the reign of technology. Seeing yellow harvest moon looming above some tall buildings or trudging through some freshly fallen snow while their dog gleefully reindeers along an urban sidewalk ahead of them, presents a snapshot opportunity for a staunch city person to appreciate the world outside and experience nature in a new way.

Taking short daily walks with one's the dog may lead to more engaging outdoor human-dog activities, such as hiking long trails or walking along the beach. Borgmann suggests that experiences with nature build upon themselves, and these activities represent greater opportunities to re-connect a person with the wilderness because hiking and beach walks are longer in duration and/or more encompassing to the body, mind and senses. What's more, while engaged with nature during an activity that includes one's dog, a person's experience of nature

¹⁹⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 191.

might expand exponentially as they witness their dog joyously chasing seagulls or see their beloved canine curiously using his or her nose along a trail ripe with nature's scent. In his book *When Elephants Weep*, author Jeffrey Masson refers to this as *funktionslust*, a term that he explains "...refers to pleasure taken in what one can do best---the pleasure a cat takes in climbing trees, or monkeys take in swinging from branch to branch."¹⁹⁵ The term refers to those natural abilities or tendencies of an animal that bring it pleasure and enjoyment. For the dog, this could be a myriad of activities that might include simple pleasures of what it means to simply be this animal that we humans refer to as a dog. These abilities might be more specific relating to those qualities that were selected for in breeding a particular breed. A terrier, for example, might find tremendous pleasure in chasing squirrels around the back yard.¹⁹⁶ A guardian breed might delight in barking at a passerby.¹⁹⁷ A Retriever might enjoy proudly carrying around a dirty stick.¹⁹⁸ A person might observe this pleasure that the dog exhibits through the natural ability of simply being a dog, and this may cause the person to feel wonder or to momentarily shift their relationship with reality as they experience joy through their animal. They not only draw a person's attention sharply into the moment at hand, but may also amplify a person's immediate experience of nature as they witness the natural world more profoundly through their dog.

For some people, a dog *is* the sole impetus for engaging in outdoor activities, making it an intermediary to the world outside. To be sure, when lacking suitable human companionship for any number of reasons, having the company of a dog might cause a person to engage in any

¹⁹⁵ Masson, *When Elephants Weep*, 13.

¹⁹⁶ American Kennel Club, "Terrier Group," *American Kennel Club*, accessed March 31, 2018, <http://www.akc.org/dog-breeds/groups/terrier/>.

¹⁹⁷ American Kennel Club, "Working Group," *American Kennel Club*, accessed March 31, 2018, <http://www.akc.org/dog-breeds/groups/working/>.

¹⁹⁸ American Kennel Club, "Sporting Group," *American Kennel Club*, accessed March 31, 2018, <http://www.akc.org/dog-breeds/groups/sporting/>.

number of outdoor activities that they would not otherwise do alone. Because they have a dog as a companion, a person might decide to go camping, hiking or even to visit a local public park. Ronnie Drever describes this as “A canine gateway to the wild” and further asserts, “Simply put, dogs get people outside. In fact, spending time with our canine companions may be the best way to combat nature deficit disorder...”¹⁹⁹

Summary and Conclusions

Thus, the evolution of the human-canine divide, a view of the boundary that eventually existed between humans and dogs, was explored in a historical overview from pre-history to the middle ages. A historical overview, albeit limited in scope, which mapped the establishment of human-canine divide suggested that it was influenced by human relationships with nature, social development, and humanity’s desire to identify its place in the world. The historical overview also highlighted key points in the development of the traditional Western anthropocentric view.

Humankind’s understanding of its relationship with dogs began to change with the introduction of Aristotle’s anthropocentric hierarchical scheme in ancient Greece. A boundary between people and dogs developed with the rise of Christianity and affirmed when St. Thomas Aquinas built upon Aristotle and described human beings as the sole animal having the capacity for rationality and self-determination. Aquinas also asserted that animals existed for the benefit of human beings, which allowed people during this time period to justify their continued close associations with dogs.

Ironically, as the Enlightenment initiated the rise and rule of technology and Descartes’ means-end split contributed to creation of the dog as a device, Descartes’ scientific inquiry also

¹⁹⁹ Ronnie Drever, “To Combat Nature Deficit Disorder It’s Time to go to the Dogs,” Talk Blog, *The Nature Conservancy*, June 15, 2015, accessed January 7, 2018, <https://blog.nature.org/conservancy/2015/06/15/combat-nature-deficit-disorder-dogs-outdoors-health-walk-parks/#/undefined>.

highlighted the similarities of humans and animals, which challenged anthropocentrism and ultimately provided a pathway back to nature. Five positive pathways that overcome the human-canine divide in some way contribute to the complex emergence of an evolving modern human-canine relationship. Concerns for animal welfare that were first initiated by Jeremy Bentham instigated thinking and public discourse about the moral status of animals as well as their thought and language capacities. Thinking about the similarities between humans and dogs narrowed the human canine divide and shifted people's relationship with reality as they contemplated the whole of their circumstances. In other words, humans developed a greater awareness of both canines and of themselves through this growing concern for the humane treatment of dogs.

The written works of Charles Darwin stressed the commonality of all life forms and introduced the idea of kinship among all living things. He suggested that humans and animals differed in degree of mental and expressive ability rather than in the actual nature of those mental processes. Through this highlighting of kinship, Darwin firmly embedded humans into nature and inextricably connected people with the rest of the living world, causing people to further realize their connection with nature and develop an awareness of nature through their bonds with their canine companions. E.O. Wilson's biophilia hypothesis describes this innate human desire to connect with animals, which explains a person's instinctive desire to continuously deepen their relationship with their dog, thus intensifying a relationship with nature.

Anthropomorphism, although considered an undesirable concept in scientific circles, acquires a new significance when it holds the capacity to expand a person's awareness of their own humanity by reflecting the image of a person back onto him or herself. The interactions between people and dogs, understood entirely and unavoidably through a human lens, provide a continuous opportunity for a person to affirm their own human nature as they assign meaning to

interactions. Human interactions with a dog also provide the chance for new openings that might expand self-knowledge; this occurs when a person discovers new things about themselves during the anthropomorphic process. Conversely, a person can connect with nature by developing a profound awareness of the dog as other through the recognition of *Thou* in a canine companion. Philosopher Martin Buber describes this as a relational phenomenon that occurs when a person is able to recognize true “otherness.” The recognition of otherness requires openness to the other, which is natural in the taming process. What’s more, the recognition of *Thou* is dynamic and ongoing through the relational exchange with the other. The recognition of *Thou* engages the fullness of experience through the connection, the profoundness of which is illustrated in eloquent examples of breeders encounters with the opening of the eyes of neonatal pups at around 14 days old.

Finally, dogs can act as an intermediary to nature because dogs get people to go outside! Whether to simply let the dog out in the back yard to go to the bathroom, or to take a dog for a walk, each time a person opens the door to the outside world for a dog, that person is presented with an opportunity to connect with nature. Small realizations of nature may lead to greater ones if a person spends time outside doing things with their dog, which aligns with Borgmann’s idea that experience with nature builds upon itself. Additionally, for people who lack suitable human companionship, sharing the company of a dog is the sole reason why they might decide to go camping or hiking. Although Borgmann explains that the experience of the natural world is something that has been walled-off in modernity, sharing a relationship with a dog provides a connection to nature. Not only does the dog, a representative of nature itself, bring nature inside to the human, but a canine companion can also be an initiator for getting a person to move beyond the restrictive walls and into the open space of natural world outside. Thus, nature can

attain a new and positive significance, what Borgmann describes as reorientation, through the proposed Five Positive Pathways whereby the human canine divide is crossed in some way and a person develops a profound awareness of nature that exists within themselves, their dogs and the world around them.

Thus it appears evident that the general pattern of connecting with nature via a relationship with the domestic dog for some people in modernity emerges when the bond is examined through a two-pronged approach which 1.) Traces the development of the human-canine divide and 2.) Presents the Five Positive Pathways that overcome the human-canine divide in some way. The multifaceted exploration of intellectual history and the history of ideas that includes ontological, moral, philosophical and religious concepts in relation with the evolving human-canine relationship reveals both an emergent realignment with nature and a growing awareness of nature for a person. Borgmann describes nature as a sacred space²⁰⁰ amid the disorientation and distraction of technology that encompasses modernity because it “...engages us in the fullness of our capacities.”²⁰¹ In other words, the human-canine relationship presents a person with opportunities to encounter the sacred through the realignment with nature and the growing awareness of nature.

²⁰⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 190.

²⁰¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 192.

Chapter III

The Dog as a Focal Concern in the *Homo Sapiens-Canis Familiaris* Relationship

The real Best In Show dog is the one that is sitting right next to you on the couch.

—David Frei, NBC-TV

Introduction

Borgmann asserts that the first step to ushering in the good life that has been subverted by technology is to develop an awareness of the technological pattern that characterizes contemporary life.¹ He suggests that once a person begins to recognize the debilitating manner in the way they have been taking up with the world, they can then take steps to restrain the paradigm.² Borgmann sees this as the foundation for the reform of technology.³ He explains that engaging in the richness of real experience leads to an awareness of the pernicious pattern of technology in one's life.⁴ The previous chapter examined the first of two methods that Borgmann asserts allow a person to connect with the richness of true experience; this is rediscovering the natural world.⁵ The information presented in Chapter 2 detailed how a person could develop a profound awareness of nature that exists within themselves, their dogs, and the world around them through their relationship with their dog. The second method is through focal concerns.

¹ Albert Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 33-107.

² Borgmann, *Technology*, 157-169.

³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 3.

⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 182-196.

⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 182-196.

Focal concerns reorient people by giving them a glimpse of cosmic wealth. In other words, focal concerns, which involve focal things and focal practices, illuminate how barren modern life is by revealing how rich it could be.⁶ Yet Borgmann also asserts that, although technology disconnects humans from rich real-life experiences, paradoxically it also can reorient the person toward wholeness.⁷ The information presented in this chapter will examine the human-canine relationship through the lens of Borgmann's philosophy. Through applied philosophy, the discussion will initially analyze *Canis familiaris* as a focal thing within Borgmann's philosophical framework and then consider the inclusion of dogs focal practices within Borgmann's scheme by interpreting sociological, ethnographical and phenomenological perspectives of dog-keeping cultures that range from the simple dog owner to more serious dog professionals.

More specifically, the investigation will begin with an overview of Borgmann's concept of focal concerns. According to this philosopher, focal things and focal practices can reorient an individual by combating the rule of technology.⁸ He explains that the focal thing is the constant that focuses experience and the focal practice is the action that orients life.⁹ Borgmann asserts that focal things require a focal practice in order to remain viable and that regular engagement offers a chance at ushering in the good life.¹⁰ Next, *Canis familiaris* will be discussed as a focal concern within Borgmann's model, both as a focal thing and as a part of a focal practice. This part of the discussion will begin by looking at *Canis familiaris* as a focal thing, which, in

⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 199.

⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 200.

⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 155.

⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 196-210.

¹⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 200.

Borgmann's model, involves three concepts, (1.) being a constant,¹¹ (2.) being inconspicuous and humble yet flourishing at the fray of human concerns,¹² and most notably (3.) having the capacity to gather and disclose the fourfold.¹³ To this end, it will be proposed that the dog is a constant not only by virtue of its long history of having a relationship with humans but also by archetypal examples of faithful canine companions as well as the suggestion that modern dogs continue to be a regular presence in the daily lives of people. Additionally, the inconspicuous and humble nature of the dog will be examined. It will be suggested that the generally low-ranking companion animal is rather commonplace in the lives of people even though it is habitually concealed from the public forum. However, in spite of being a modest part of a technologically thriving lifestyle, it will be asserted that the dog continues to flourish at the fray of human concerns. Most notably however, the canine's capacity to gather and disclose the fourfold will be discussed by examining how a dog conjures up each component of the vital interplay between earth, sky, mortals and divinities. A discussion of the commonplace human interaction of petting a dog will provide a simple yet poignant illustration of how *Canine familiaris* has the capacity to summon the fourfold. Finally, the inclusion of *Canis familiaris* as a focal thing in Borgmann's scheme of the focal practice will be discussed. More specifically, the actions or activities that people engage in with dogs as focal things that serve to orient life will be explored. This area of inquiry will suggest a realm of possibility for canine-concerned focal practices, which includes everyday habits such as petting or taking the dog for a daily walk. Key to this area of the discussion will be Borgmann's idea of the need for engagement with focal

¹¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 196-199.

¹² Borgmann, *Technology*, 199.

¹³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 198.

things.¹⁴ This section will also discuss more formalized dog activities such as hobby breeding as a focal practice that engages as a way of life, and dog sports such as dog shows and companion events that involve a commitment to preparation that culminates in competition. Finally, focal practices in working relationships between people and dogs will be explored. Therapy dogs will be examined in greater detail since practices with therapy dogs provide an added dimension to the orienting outcome in Borgmann's scheme, in that the fourfold is summoned by another person's dog. In other words, a human client becomes reoriented through engagement with the therapy dog even in the absence of an initial attachment between the dog and the client.

Borgmann's Concept of Concerns and Practices Involving Focal Things

Aside from the engagement that arises from the experience of the wilderness that was discussed in the previous chapter, Borgmann also suggests that reorientation can be achieved through what he designates as concerns and practices involving focal things. He explains that in keeping with Kepler's etymological definition of focus, the figurative understanding of something focal is that which brings together the disparate parts of the context to clarify something that is central.¹⁵ Borgmann articulates that the figurative focus "...gathers the relations of its context and radiates onto its surroundings and informs them."¹⁶ Thus, Borgmann's working definition of something focal is that which "...gathers and discloses what Heidegger calls the fourfold, the interplay of the crucial dimensions of earth and sky, mortals and

¹⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 207.

¹⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 197.

¹⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 197.

divinities.”¹⁷ He explains that in the technological setting, focal things and practices may be inconspicuous yet they continue to flourish at the fray of human concerns.¹⁸

Borgmann distinguishes between a focal thing, the constant that focuses experience, and a focal practice or activity, which is the action that orients life in the focal manner.¹⁹ In an interesting paradox, he asserts that the very technology that disconnects humans from rich real-life experiences can also be the vehicle for reorienting the person toward wholeness if these things are grasped properly.²⁰ For example, sneakers that in one instance may be a fashion commodity in a teenage wardrobe might otherwise become a vital aspect of a focal practice when one includes them in an activity such as good running where one’s life becomes reoriented. He further asserts that the mere existence of focal things in and of themselves is not enough: focal things require the inclusion of a focal practice in order to remain a viable orientating force.²¹ Said differently, the focal object, when included in the focal practice, serves to reorient the individual within the richness of real living over time. Borgmann uses the examples of running and the culture of the table to illustrate what he means by centering one’s life through engaging in a focal activity. Good running, he explains, is fundamentally different from exercise aimed at promoting good health.²² Good running is a focal activity when it engages the body and mind as the runner feels the blood course through the body.²³ Good running challenges the body

¹⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 198.

¹⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 199.

¹⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 200.

²⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 200.

²¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 207-208.

²² Borgmann, *Technology*, 203.

²³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 203.

and through the activity the runner experiences the restoration of a central wholeness.²⁴

Borgmann articulates, "...effort and joy are one; the split between means and ends, labor and leisure is healed."²⁵ He also uses the example of the culture of the table and the preparation of a great meal as an activity that reconnects people with the cosmic wealth and the wholeness of being.²⁶ Borgmann explains that by preparing a meal from those things brought forth by nature and gathering the scattered family members to the table where they may fully engage socially, there is a connection established between the primal and the divine.²⁷ He distinguishes the culture of the table as being a fundamentally different experience than consuming food grabbed on the go or mindlessly scoffing down a commercially packaged microwavable meal while all the members of the family engage with the television instead of one another.²⁸

It is important to note that for Borgmann, the occasional focal engagement is not enough to combat the rule of technology.²⁹ To be sure, he suggests that being oriented through focal things does momentarily disclose the divine and provides the individual with a brush of healing, but this is an ephemeral state in the stronghold of the technological setting.³⁰ He explains, "Putting this matter more clearly, we must say that without a practice an engaging action or event can momentarily light up our life, but it cannot order and orient it focally."³¹ He does

²⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 205.

²⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 202.

²⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 205.

²⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 204-205.

²⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 204-205.

²⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 207.

³⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 207.

³¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 207.

assure the reader that focal engagement stands in direct opposition to the rule of technology and asserts that in order to fully appreciate the effects of the opposition, a person must have first-hand experience with the pernicious character of technology.³² Borgmann ultimately suggests that commitment and adherence to regularly and equally patterned focal practices is necessary both to combat the force of technology as well as to truly reorient the individual within the technological paradigm of contemporary life.³³

The Dog as a Focal Thing

Borgmann provides many examples, such as a clay jug and a bridge to illustrate what he means by a focal thing. Before beginning a discussion that applies Borgmann's philosophical concepts to the human-canine relationship, it is important to recognize that the human-canine relationship is both interactive and dynamic. Borgmann does not address a relationship of this nature in his discussion, thus the application of this philosophy ultimately expands Borgmann's concept. What's more, because the relationship is one that involves living beings in constant flux, unlike Borgmann's jug that is used to store wine, it is vital to emphasize that *Canis familiaris* in a focal capacity is not a mere object for human exploitation. In the pages that follow, when Borgmann's phrase "focal thing" is used in conjunction with the dog and later when the dog is described as being included in a focal practice, *Canis familiaris* is to be recognized and understood as a multi-dimensional living entity that is part of the dynamic interaction rather than as an object simply for human use.

This next section will provide information that examines *Canis familiaris* as a focal thing in Borgmann's philosophical framework. According to Borgmann, focal things possess several

³² Borgmann, *Technology*, 208.

³³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 208.

common characteristics, namely, being a constant³⁴ that has the capacity to focus experience³⁵, being inconspicuous and humble³⁶ and having the capacity to gather the fourfold.³⁷ The dog as a focal thing will be explored in the following sub-sections: The Dog as a Constant, The Dog as Inconspicuous and Humble, The Dog as Gatherer of the Fourfold.

The Dog as a Constant

In his exposition, Borgmann provides a variety of examples of focal things that are as grand as the Parthenon or a Cathedral and as simple as a home hearth or a clay jug.³⁸ For him, although focal things may exist in a variety of forms, they are constant. By constant he suggests that the focal thing is that which is present or available.³⁹ Borgmann would likely agree that *Canis familiaris* is a constant in human experience. At a very fundamental level, by virtue of a relationship with people that dates back to pre-history,⁴⁰ the dog may be considered a constant in human experience over time. Etymologically, the word “constant” derives directly from the Latin word *constantem* (nominative *constans*) “standing firm, stable, steadfast, faithful.”⁴¹ The dog is described as the most faithful species of animal to humankind on earth, and history is filled with stories of faithful dogs. For example, Homer’s epic 8th Century poem *The Odyssey* tells the tale of Odysseus’ loyal dog Argos who waits 20 years for his owner’s return and then

³⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 196-199.

³⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 197.

³⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 199.

³⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 198.

³⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 198-199.

³⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 196-199.

⁴⁰ Fernand Mery, *The Life, History and Magic of the Dog* (New York: Madison Square Press, 1968), 15.

⁴¹ *Etymology Dictionary Online*, s.v. “Constant,” accessed June 5, 2016, http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=constant&allowed_in_frame=0.

dies upon seeing him again.⁴² Homer writes, “But upon Argos came the fate of black death, even in the hour that he beheld Odysseus again, in the twentieth year.”⁴³ In Britain, a Skye Terrier named Bobby guarded the unmarked grave of his owner from the time of the man’s death in 1858 until the dog himself died in 1872.⁴⁴ Japan has “Hachiko” the Akita who went daily to his deceased owner’s train station from 1925-1935,⁴⁵ and Italy has “Fido” the 1940s street cur that returned to his dead owner’s bus stop for 14 years.⁴⁶ On September 11, 2001, a blind Omar Eduardo Rivera was working on the 71st floor of the World Trade Center when the hijacked planes hit.⁴⁷ The man unleashed his seeing-eye dog “Salty” and gave him the command to “go” in order to give the dog a chance at survival.⁴⁸ Initially, the dog ran right down among the panicked crowd exiting the staircase but fought his way back up the stairs against the swarm to return to his owner. Rivera describes the faithfulness of his dog, “At one point he [Salty] decided ‘no,’ I cannot go without him, so he came back. He was telling me ‘I am with you, nomatter what. I am with you.’”⁴⁹ A co-worker then assisted the man and his dog for the hour

⁴² Homer, *The Odyssey of Homer*, trans. S.H. Butcher and A. Lang (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909), 238-254.

⁴³ Homer, *The Odyssey*, 246.

⁴⁴ Ben Johnson, “Greyfriars Bobby,” *Historic UK*, accessed March 2, 2018, <http://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofScotland/Greyfriars-Bobby/>.

⁴⁵ The Dog Place, “Hachiko - More Than a Legend,” *The Dog Place*, accessed March 2, 2018, <http://www.thedogplace.org/BREEDS/Akita/Hachiko.asp>.

⁴⁶ T0zziFan, “La Storia di Fido, L’Hachiko Italiano,” YouTubeI, January 20, 2010, accessed March 21, 2019.

⁴⁷ *9/11 Where Were You?*, directed by Alison Argo (Argo Films, 2011).

⁴⁹ *9/11 Where Were You?*

that it took them to navigate down the 70 flights to safety.⁵⁰ In 2008, a German Shepherd named “Cash” was discovered to have been sitting vigil over her owner for six weeks after he had killed himself on the prairie of the 200,000 acre Pawnee National Grasslands in Weld County Colorado.⁵¹ The dog was believed to have survived on mice and rabbits and the Greeley Tribune reports, “Investigators also said the dog probably protected her master’s body by keeping coyotes away.”⁵² To be sure, sensational stories of steadfast canines such as these certainly illustrate the faithfulness of the dog, but the canine can also be seen as a constant in terms of being steadfast, steady and present on a more mundane level such as in everyday life.

The ASPCA reports that the 2015-2016 American Pet Products Association survey estimates that there are between 70-80 million dogs owned in the United States.⁵³ They further report, “Approximately 37-47% of all households in the United States have a dog.”⁵⁴ These statistics suggest that more than one-third to nearly half of all American households experience the constant daily presence of a canine. As a social animal with a pack structure that mirrors their human companions, the constant canine tends to want to be around people when they spend time at home. Dogs will meet their people with a greeting when they come home, spend time following people around the house, settle in the room where there are people and even prefer to sleep in close proximity to people. To be sure, it is unusual for the family dog to be out of

⁵⁰ Holt, Ben. *Dog Heroes: True Stories of Canine Courage* (UK: Summersdale, 2009), Ebook, accessed July 26, 2016, <https://books.google.com/books?id=oHdZCgAAQBAJ&pg=PT41&lpg=PT41&dq=dorado+eduardo+rivera&source=bl&ots=VYb81TWVsq&sig=IdGWju6DXkLUYowbPLqmViRKJ7M&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjyJ7gsqTdAhWDY98KHWhXBF4Q6AEwD3oECAAAQ>

⁵¹ Mike Peters, “German Shepherd Guards Her Owner for 6 Weeks After He Dies,” *Greeley Tribune*, August 12, 2008, accessed July 28, 2016, <http://www.greeleytribune.com/article/20080812/NEWS/863952458#>.

⁵² Peters, “German Shepherd.”

⁵³ ASPCA, “Pet Statistics,” *ASPCA*, accessed January 26, 2018, <http://www.asPCA.org/animal-homelessness/shelter-intake-and-surrender/pet-statistics>.

⁵⁴ ASPCA, “Pet Statistics.”

eyesight, and even less likely for it to be out of earshot whenever their people are around. Thus the dog is a constant in that it is always physically present and readily available. Similarly, the commitment to a dog requires that a person have a constant concern for their canine. Dogs need to be fed, watered, and given the opportunity to eliminate on a regular basis. Concern further extends to caring for the health and well-being of a dog, which includes things such as providing proper exercise, veterinary care, regular grooming and many other creature comforts. In caring for a dog, the person experiences the dog as a constant because caring for an animal is a regular and continuous process. It is important to consider, and Borgmann would likely concur, that the dog as a constant alone is not enough to focus experience unless there is an interaction between the person and the dog. Much like the hearth that sits unused, the jug that is closed away in the cabinet, or the wilderness that remains unexperienced, the dog sans human interaction is merely another constant with a capacity that waits for the opening to become an orienting force.

The Dog as Inconspicuous and Humble

In addition to being a constant, Borgmann also explains that focal things, in agreement with Heidegger, are inconspicuous and humble.⁵⁵ Regarding Heidegger, Borgmann further elucidates, "...when we look at his litany of things, we also see that they are scattered and of yesterday: jug and bench, footbridge and plow, tree and pond, brook and hill, heron and deer, horse and bull, mirror and clasp, book and picture, crown and cross."⁵⁶ Zimmerman explains that Heidegger saw the ability of everyday things to "...play the role of opening up the place in which things can encounter each other."⁵⁷ For example, Heidegger explains that something as

⁵⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 199.

⁵⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 199.

⁵⁷ Michael Zimmerman, *Heidegger's Confrontation With Modernity* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990), 239.

mundane as a footbridge “...allows a space into which earth and heaven, divinities and mortals are admitted.”⁵⁸ Zimmerman explains that for Heidegger, whose philosophy focused on down to earth positivism, “...ordinary things (both natural and artifactual) provide the focal point around which the world ‘worlds’.”⁵⁹ *Canis familiaris* can be seen as an example of a natural, yet ordinary thing. As discussed earlier, the dog is a part of the natural world because it is a living being. It may also be considered ordinary because dog’s the relationship with people dates back to prehistory⁶⁰ means that it is not something new on the scene of human experience; the dog is something that has always been among people. The US Census bureau estimated a US population of 323,310,011 people on January 1, 2017.⁶¹ The 2017-2018 American Pet Products Association’s National Pet Owners Survey counted 89.7 million dogs in the United States.⁶² This figures out to be approximately one dog for every 3.6 people. The 2017-2018 American Pet Products Association’s National Pet Owners Survey also reports that 60.2 percent of households have one or more dogs compared with 47.1 percent of households that have one or more cats.⁶³ This means that more households have dogs than cats, and more than half of all American households include a dog. However, even though dogs live in close proximity with people, they are not a significant part of public life. The majority of dogs spend their time in the comfort and

⁵⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 153.

⁵⁹ Zimmerman, *Heidegger’s Confrontation*, 240.

⁶⁰ Mery, *Life, History and Magic*, 15.

⁶¹ Robert Schlesinger, “324 Million and Counting,” *US News*, December 28, 2016, accessed January 26, 2018, <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/thomas-jefferson-street/articles/2016-12-28/the-us-and-global-population-in-2017>.

⁶² American Pet Products Association, “Pet Industry Market Size and Ownership Statistics,” *American Pet Products Association*, accessed September 5, 2018, https://www.americanpetproducts.org/press_industrytrends.asp.

⁶³ American Pet Products Association, “Pet Industry Market Size.”

safety of human homes. If a foreign tourist was to visit New York City, they might be surprised to learn that according to New York City Economic Development Corporation, there are approximately 600,000 dogs that reside in the city.⁶⁴ The foreigner might witness a few hundred dogs moving about the city with their owners throughout the day, however they simply would not see 600,000 dogs because most remain inconspicuous behind closed doors. Additionally, it is also very unlikely that the foreign tourist would experience evidence of 600,000 dogs because strict pooper-scooper laws⁶⁵ and noise ordinances⁶⁶ serve to further conceal this significant canine population.

To be sure, in addition to being everyday and common, the dog may also be considered humble in Heidegger and Borgmann's scheme. First, the domestic dog is generally a creature that behaves humbly when around people. Humans have created it and deliberately maintain it in this way. In order to get along with and be permitted to live along side people, a dog must display a reasonable degree of deference to human authority. People simply do not tolerate extremely menacing dogs or those that display dangerously dominant behavior; these undesirable qualities in dogs often cause them to be humanely destroyed. One way that the dog may be considered humble has to do to the idea that it has been fashioned as such by humans through trait selection. Secondly, dogs generally rank low in human social structures. Even the most highly regarded breed or dog belonging to the most influential person is still a dog. A dog may be important to a particular person, and there may be times when a person prioritizes their beloved canine companion even above themselves. Nevertheless, in the modern daily life, there

⁶⁴ NYCEDE, "New York City's Pet Population," StatsBees Blog, *NYCEDC*, February 14, 2012, accessed August 2, 2016. <http://www.nycedc.com/blog-entry/new-york-city-s-pet-population>.

⁶⁵ New York City, "Dog or Animal Waste Complaint," *New York City*, accessed March 2, 2018, <http://www1.nyc.gov/nyc-resources/service/1535/dog-or-animal-waste-complaint>.

⁶⁶ New York City, "Noise from Dog," *New York City*, accessed March 2, 2018, <http://www1.nyc.gov/nyc-resources/service/1187/noise-from-dog>.

are many human concerns that outrank the dog in terms of importance at any given moment. That is not to say that there aren't occasions when a dog becomes priority, but generally speaking, earning a living, caring for children, maintaining personal safety are most often placed in positions of greater immediate concern. What's more, on any given day, lesser concerns such as doing laundry, watching a favorite TV show, or even perhaps checking one's e-mail may be of greater immediate concern than one's dog. However, this is okay with most dogs. They will happily follow the owner around the house or contentedly remain in a favorite resting place within the abode, humbly awaiting the sound of their Master's voice calling their name. Building on Heidegger, Borgmann also contends that focal things flourish at the margins of public attention.⁶⁷ For as inconspicuous as they are, the attention that canine companions get from the fray is astounding. Dogs have become an important part of the legislative process that has extended well beyond protecting human interests.⁶⁸ Bills are proposed and laws are passed which are geared toward guarding or promoting the well being of dogs. There is also a massive commercial industry specifically geared towards dogs. Specially formulated food, supplements and related products, grooming products and services, boarding and pet sitting services, training products and services, veterinary products and services all have continued to grow. The American Pet Products Association reports that the \$17 billion that people spent in the pet industry in 1994, has increased yearly to an estimated \$69.36 billion in 2017.⁶⁹ Naturally, the greater community becomes interested and concerned whenever there is big money to be made. Additionally, after the first dog park opened in Berkley, CA in 1979 the phrase "Dog Park,"

⁶⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 199.

⁶⁸ Mary Randolph, *Dog Law* (California: Nolo, 2001).

⁶⁹ American Pet Products Association, "Pet Industry Market Size and Ownership Statistics," *American Pet Products Association*, accessed January 24, 2018, http://www.americanpetproducts.org/press_industrytrends.asp.

become a part of the public vocabulary.⁷⁰ Even more telling is the amount of social research that has been conducted since Leo Bustad pioneered the field of the human-animal bond in the 1970's. There are countless studies that have specifically examined the relationship between humans and dogs; the results of these studies have highlighted the significant physical, psychological and social benefits of interactions between humans and canines. To be sure, the results of these studies have caught public attention. Reports of positive findings are frequently the subject of media reports. What's more, the establishment of therapy dog programs in the human healthcare system, dog partnered reading programs for children, the extensive expansion of the prescription of jobs for service dogs and the establishment of Federal laws, such as the 1983 24 CFR Part 243 "Pets in Elderly Housing" law that permits pets to live in federally funded senior housing facilities,⁷¹ further suggest that *Canis familiaris* flourishes at the fray of human concerns.

The Dog as Gatherer of the Fourfold

Aside from being constant, inconspicuous and humble, central to Borgmann's model is the concept that a focal thing also gathers and discloses the fourfold; this is the crucial interplay between earth, sky, mortals, and divinities.⁷² Like Heidegger's jug⁷³ and Borgmann's own examples of the good running and the great meal,⁷⁴ a dog gathers the relations of the fourfold and radiates into its surroundings, informing them about the good life. When a dog is outdoors, its

⁷⁰ Sam Gnerre, "Dog Parks: Where they Started and How They Spread," Daily Breeze Blog, *South Bay History*, June 24, 2017, accessed March 2, 2018, <http://blogs.dailybreeze.com/history/2017/06/24/dog-parks-where-they-started-and-how-they-spread/>.

⁷¹ Housing and Urban Development, "Pets In Properties That Serve the Elderly or Handicapped," *Housing and Urban Development*, accessed March 5, 2018, <https://www.hud.gov/states/shared/working/west/mf/petpolicy>.

⁷² Borgmann, *Technology*, 198.

⁷³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 198.

⁷⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 203.

presence in the natural environment is a meeting place between the sky and earth. With its four naked feet, it connects directly at four points with the earth, grounding the animal with every step it takes. It can turn its muzzle upwardly toward the sky, or take in the heavens with its eyes.

Dogs notoriously turn their faces into the wind and enjoy the feel of the celestial wind blowing their ears back. They will throw themselves upside down and roll contentedly on the earth, then pause to rest for a while, letting the sun glow warmly on their undersides. During the day, a dog might chase a butterfly as it floats through the sky, or dig a hole in the cool earth. By watching or engaging with a dog, a person has the opportunity to be enlightened as the animal discloses about freely experiencing joy and remaining firmly grounded in the moment, radiating these messages from that space where it brings together the sky and the earth. At night, a dog may howl at the moon, or a canine may turn its attention toward the darkened sky, pointing a muzzle toward the heavens. Here, the dog is eternally bound up with the sky through arrangements of stars that were named for dogs in the second Century; these are the constellations named Canis Major and Canis Minor. The ancients described these two constellations as the hunting dogs that obediently followed Orion, the Great Hunter, across the sky. Canis Major contains the star Sirius, also known as the Dog Star, which also happens to be the brightest star in the sky as seen from earth. Not only does the dog outwardly gather earth and sky, but the vital marriage of earth and sky also sustain the dog and are revealed through the dog by giving it life. The earth provides food and the sky provides water, sun and fresh air that are pillars of health. Thus, even when the dog is indoors, it serves as both testament and reminder as it reveals the great goodness that comes from this vital interplay.

The mortal's dimension of the fourfold begins with the long standing relationship between dogs and people, as previously discussed, that stretches back to antiquity. The fact that

dogs and people have shared a relationship for centuries and the idea that people have been heavily influential in the creation of the contemporary canine unavoidably gathers mortals into the fourfold from a historical perspective. Additionally, in the immediate moment of the summoning of the fourfold, a person's relationship with a dog also draws the mortal into the crucial interplay. As discussed earlier, the kinship relationship between people and dogs creates a bridge between human and non-human animal that allows humans to develop a greater understanding of their place in the natural world. Also discussed was anthropomorphism as a human reflection whereby an attentive person has the opportunity learn about themselves through their relationships with canine companions. To be sure, as much as a dog can mirror the human back to the person, or teach about the wildness of nature, the death of a beloved canine companion can bring into focus and inform a person about the meaning of mortality.

In terms of gathering the divine, Randour explains the historically spiritual significance of animals: "They have been linked with supernatural forces, acted as guardians and shamans, and appeared in images of an afterlife. They have been worshipped as agents of gods and goddesses. Many ancient creation myths, for example, depict God with a dog."⁷⁵ The historical spiritual significance that remains in the collective unconscious is also brought forth in the divine dimension of the fourfold, much like the historical human-canine relationship dimension that directly draws the mortal into the fourfold. In other words, the past becomes enfolded into the present, much like the philosopher Michel Foucault explains history not as recording the truth of the past, but rather revealing the truth of the present.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Mary Lou Randour, *Animal Grace* (California: New World Library, 2000), 3.

⁷⁶ David Garland, "What is a 'History of the Present'? On Foucault's Genealogies and Their Critical Preconditions," *Punishment & Society* 16, no. 4 (2014): 365.

In addition to this spiritual significance in history, there are other ways that the dog, as a focal thing, gathers the divine into the fourfold. One way the dog summons the holy is evident in how it models the divine through their unconditional love and non-judgmental acceptance. Dogs also summon the divine through their relationships with people. Randour writes, “the intertwining of our lives with those of so many animals makes spirituality an active possibility at any moment of any day.”⁷⁷ In his book *I and Thou* Martin Buber presents God as the eternal Thou that people can experience in all relationships.⁷⁸ When Buber writes about looking into the eyes of his house cat, he recognizes a hyperbolic exchange as “...the You-world radiated from the ground for the length of one glance.”⁷⁹ According to the Buber, if one is open to an I-You experience, the You is encountered by grace, the whole of one’s being and the unconditional love of God.⁸⁰ The nature of the exchange of glances and the relationship between humans and animals changes through the domestication process. Buber suggests that relationships with domesticated animals include an open-ness to the other when he writes, “On the whole this response is stronger, the more direct the more his relation amounts to a genuine You-saying.”⁸¹ As explained earlier, Buber suggests that domestication can only occur by giving up the "I" and saying "Thou." This process liberates both human and non-human animal, involves an openness to the other and occurs, as author Stephen Webb relates, “every time a human looks at and allows for the return look of an animal.”⁸² Webb suggests that if humans had looked at the

⁷⁷ Randour, *Animal Grace*, 38.

⁷⁸ Buber, *I and Thou*, Part III.

⁷⁹ Buber, *I and Thou*, 145.

⁸⁰ Buber, *I and Thou*, 124-128.

⁸¹ Buber, *I and Thou*, 172.

⁸² Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 101.

canine, or any other domesticated animal for that matter, from a purely “It” perspective then domestication could not have occurred.⁸³ The look of the dog, as a canine companion through the process of taming, then, invites the interpretation of a look as being one of a certain anxiety or surprise. As Buber writes, “Can it be that you mean me?...Do I concern you?”⁸⁴ This anxious exchange evokes a spiritual response from a person: a sensation of empathy and solidarity. In this way, the divine is summoned into the four-fold by the profound communion of I-Thou between the person and the dog.

When a person engages with a dog, there is the chance for reorientation as a result of the focusing that occurs during the interaction with the dog. The simple experience of petting a dog, for example, has the capacity to gather and reveal the interplay between earth, sky, mortals and divinities. The dog is a product of earth and sky, and the soft fur is the result of food from the earth and water from the sky. When a person runs their hand along that soft fur, they can feel the dog’s heart beating; this connects these two mortal beings. One gaze into the dog’s eyes that results in a reciprocal gaze reveals the soul of the dog, conjuring the mystery of the divinities. In that moment, the person becomes vitally aware of the dog and the distraction of the world falls away. The rhythmic petting in synchronicity with beating hearts of the two mortal beings is pleurably hypnotic, revealing the basic simplicity of life. The split between body and mind become healed for the person. The simple act of engaging in petting has the capacity to open up a place of profound calm, a place that restores the soul. In this petting scenario, the canine companion constitutes a focal thing in Borgmann’s scheme. The dog is the constant that has the ability to focus the experience. As discussed earlier, it is humble and inconspicuous, yet continues to flourish at the fray of human concerns. Most importantly, however, as suggested in

⁸³ Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 101.

⁸⁴ Buber, *I and Thou*, 145.

this simple petting illustration, it has the capacity to gather and disclose the fourfold: this web of engagement clarifies something central. To be sure, petting a dog is only one among many instances in which *Canis familiaris* provides a center of orientation.

The Canine Included in Focal Practices

Borgmann explains, "...focal things require practice for their welfare."⁸⁵ In contrast to a focal thing that is the constant, a focal practice is the action that orients life.⁸⁶ Borgmann further asserts that practices involve focal things, and commitment to practice both allows the experience of profound pleasure and challenges the rule of technology.⁸⁷ Borgmann explains the pathway to restoring the wholeness of being:

Practically, a focal practice comes into being through resoluteness, either an explicit resolution where one vows to regularly engage in a focal activity from this day on or in a more implicit resolve that is nurtured by a focal thing in favorable circumstances and matures into a settled custom.⁸⁸

The dog, in the capacity as a focal thing, has the ability to inform and center a person's life through gathering the four-fold. When included as part of a focal practice in Borgmann's scheme, *Canis familiaris* offers the opportunity to reorient life by creating a central wholeness in which humans can see themselves as part of a bigger scheme of being. Focal practices with a dog can also engage the senses, connect a person with the here and now and reunite people with their true selves by reminding them about what it means to be human. There are a variety of focal practices that people engage in with canines as focal things that serve to orient life. The focal practices with dogs that will be explored in the discussion that follows include everyday

⁸⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 200.

⁸⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 196-210.

⁸⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 208.

⁸⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 210.

activities, dog centered activities and sports, and assorted working relationships between dogs and people.

The Dog in Everyday Focal Practices

Engaging with a dog through petting is what Borgmann would describe as a focal event. He reflects, "...if such things are deeply touching, they are fleeting as well."⁸⁹ This is an example of what Borgmann is trying to explain when he asserts that focal things require practice for their welfare. While occasionally petting a dog gather and disclose the fourfold and allow a person to experience profound pleasure, engaging with a dog while committed to a focal practice, Borgmann suggests, is profoundly transformative.⁹⁰ To be sure, committing to spending time engaging with a dog on a daily basis is focal practice. The key action to the everyday practice, as Borgmann agrees, is "...the practice of engagement"⁹¹ with the dog. This includes activities such as going for walks, playing games such as fetch, conducting daily brushing or grooming activities, or simply petting and interacting. Caring for a dog, even though it demonstrates commitment, does not constitute a focal practice that challenges the rule of technology if it is devoid of engagement with the animal. Letting the dog out the back door for it to romp around the yard, mindlessly pouring kibble in a bowl, or taking a dog for a rushed and robotic walk while distracted by a phone conversation, do not constitute focal activities. Interactions with a dog that are devoid of engagement are simply other forms of distraction. However, these activities do hold the potential to become engaging if the person shifts awareness. Unlike with other inanimate focal things, a person's shift in awareness toward engagement may result from responding to a dog's attempt to engage the person. On the way out

⁸⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 201.

⁹⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 201-206.

⁹¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 207.

into the yard a dog may bark or jump on a person as an invitation to play. Pouring kibble in a bowl might be met with an imploring look or a lap of a tongue that causes the person to pause to pat the dog and have a silent conversation with their eyes. The rushed and robotic walk might by chance transform into a person-pooch peak experience.

As Borgmann suggests, the everyday focal practice with a dog may begin as a favorable circumstance that matures into a settled custom.⁹² For example, a person who walks their dog daily may begin this custom for a variety of reasons. The walk may begin as a way to meet other dog lovers or perhaps as a way to settle a rambunctious dog that has been confined inside the home for too long, or perhaps it begins simply for the sake of taking a walk. No matter what the reason, a person is very likely to quickly discover the pleasure that comes from walking a dog. While walking, the dog frequently “checks in” with the person by looking up and making eye contact, usually conveying excitement and joy at being out in the world. The person’s senses become engaged as the sound of the dog’s paws on the pavement or the jingle of a collar keep the beat and provide an enthusiastic pace, compelling the person to keep a similar rhythm. A steep incline along the route suddenly becomes less insurmountable and less exhausting because the dog both encourages the climb and makes it look easy. Ian Wedde describes being one in the moment while walking his dog Vincent. “My sense of the present became more vivid; concurrently, Vincent’s perceptual pace altered if he was required to share my speed. Our combined time contained my enhances sense and his altered pace; we were both fixed in vivid temporal foregrounds.”⁹³ Throughout the walk, the dog gazes around in adventure, drawing attention to things such as birds, plants, or other curiosities that a person walking alone might not

⁹² Borgmann, *Technology*, 206-210.

⁹³ Ian Wedde, “Walking the Dog,” in *Knowing Animals*, ed. Laurence Simmons & Philip Armstrong (England: Brill, 2007), 267.

otherwise notice. Perhaps the dog noses a Dandelion that is mysteriously growing in a sidewalk crack and then draws its head over to a drifting dragonfly. In this way, the dog constantly draws the person back into the moment, revealing the hidden wonder all around. Walking the dog becomes an all-consuming experience that takes on a different and deeper meaning in this context than walking for exercise or to meet people. Labor and leisure become one and through this constant engagement, the stress and worries of the day become less important and fade into the background. The mind becomes tranquil. While walking, the dog may also warn of danger by growling or showing apprehension, slow down the pace when it is tiring, or pant when hot and shiver when cold. This can create a reflective awareness of both the animal and of the self, fostering greater comprehension of the world that leads to a better understanding of the human's place in it. In walking, the dog becomes both a partner of engagement and a facilitator of experience for the person. Commitment to walking one's dog means that walks are likely happen in every kind of weather throughout the seasons and the dog may even push toward engagement when a person is not feeling up to walking. Unlike a pair of running shoes that will sit in the corner without complaint if a person decides to abstain from a good run, a dog that habitually goes for walks will signal relentlessly to a person in ways that will implore the person to become a willing participant. The sporadic walk becomes a settled custom and the added social dimension of the human canine relationship preserves the everyday focal practice during those times when it might otherwise atrophy. What's more, the focal practice of walking the dog provides structure and centers life when a person gives it a place of priority. When a person walks their dog at a certain time every day and other activities become ordered around the sacred experience of the walk, the walk takes on a centering dimension during which the person becomes renewed and sustained.

To be sure, other simple activities with a dog can just as easily become focal activities that challenge the rule of technology. A person could be distracted by a computer game when their dog drops a tennis ball at their feet. A simple game of fetch could easily become a daily all-consuming ritual of play with one's canine companion. A person's attention could be drawn away from some mindless television entertainment when their dog throws itself onto the lap of the person sitting on the sofa and insists on being patted as part of a nightly custom of pleasurable and profound relating in a non-judgmental, unconditional, and empathetic manner. As Borgmann explains, "A practice keeps faith with focal things and saves them for an opening in our lives."⁹⁴

Focal Practices as Dog Activities or Sports

While going hiking or camping with a dog offers an added dimension and incentive to the healing activity of reconnecting with nature in a positive way, designated dog activities such as good breeding and dog sports, including dog shows and performance events, provide the opportunity to orient life focally. Hobby breeding should be distinguished from commercial and back yard breeding, in that both the commercial and back yard breeder focus on financial gain whereas the hobby breeder concentrates on care and concern for the animal.⁹⁵ Commercial breeders have countless dogs that are kept only to create puppies. Back yard breeders have one or two breeding pairs of convenience that breed yearly. There is little investment beyond stock animals for both of these breeders and the survival of pups is Darwinian. There is little attachment between pup and breeder. Pups may be sold for resale or advertised and sold on the

⁹⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 209.

⁹⁵Small Dog Place, "Four Types of Dog Breeders," *Small Dog Place*, accessed March 2, 2018, <https://www.smalldogplace.com/dog-breeders.html>.

Internet to be placed in new homes as soon as pups are weaned. There is usually little or no communication between the breeder and the buyer after the transaction is complete.⁹⁶

In contrast, for the hobby breeder, caring for their dogs becomes a central and orienting force in their daily lives.⁹⁷ A hobby breeder usually has a group of dogs that live as part of the family in their home and these breeders often engage in dog sports as well. For a hobby breeder, breeding often yields their next show, obedience or agility prospect.⁹⁸ To be sure, caring for their group of dogs provides structure, order and discipline to daily life. Checking e-mail or playing Candy Crush takes a back seat to feeding the dogs at five o'clock every night. Hobby breeders also become consumed with husbandry; they selflessly spend countless hours and dollars doing what is best for their dogs. After learning about canine nutrition, they may spend Sunday afternoons cooking highly nutritious bone broth⁹⁹ as a dietary treat for their dog, and through this begin to assess their own human diets. The hobby breeder also enjoys pouring over pedigrees connecting with the past and carefully assesses the characteristics at hand of several possible studs in order to achieve the best possible future outcome with a particular female.¹⁰⁰ They recognize an inextricable interconnection between past, present and future in the wholeness of the universe. Hobby breeders act as midwives to whelping females¹⁰¹ and often participate in

⁹⁶ Small Dog Place, "Four Types of Dog Breeders."

⁹⁷ Katie Campbell, "The Backyard Breeder vs. The Responsible Hobby Breeder," *KTCampbell*, accessed March 2, 2018, <http://www.ktcampbell.com/taji/rbvsbyb.htm>.

⁹⁸ Pat Craige Trotter, *Born to Win* (New York: Kennel Club Books, 2009), 29-31.

⁹⁹ Dana Scott, "Bone Broth for Dog?" *Dogs Naturally Magazine*, 2017, accessed March 3, 2018, <http://www.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/reasons-your-dog-love-bone-broth/>.

¹⁰⁰ Trotter, *Born to Win*, 220-225.

¹⁰¹ Myra Savant Harris R. N., *Canine Reproduction and Whelping* (Washington: Dogwise Publishing, 2005), 53-63.

neonatal care by supplementing large litters or smaller puppies.¹⁰² They are profoundly and deeply aware of the delicate nature of life, and sleepless nights are chalked up as a labor of love.

Pat Craig Trotter writes about these types of breeders:

It is a way of life for them. They are prepared to make sacrifices. When friends, if they still have non-doggy ones, ask them to parties and fun events and their best bitch is due to whelp, they stay home. Social events, sporting events, symphonies, and a million and one other things that normal people do for enjoyment are missed because their dogs require care.¹⁰³

Hobby breeders carefully screen potential puppy buyers and more often than not, stay in contact with puppy buyers for the entire life of the dog.¹⁰⁴ The intense connection they make with puppies when they first open their eyes extends over their lifetime. Hobby breeders also make social connections with other people who share this common interest, which serves to strengthen the experience.¹⁰⁵ Hobby breeding can be understood as a focal practice that occurs like the casting of a large net because engagement occurs throughout the day in small doses every day amidst all the other responsibilities of daily human life. In other words, hobby breeding engages the person fully as a way of life. Nevertheless the individuals who are committed to this significant practice spend a considerable part of their lives experiencing a centeredness that stands in direct and powerful opposition to the rule of technology.

Dog sports such as dog shows and performance events that may include obedience, tracking, rally or agility, are frequently additional practices for hobby breeders.¹⁰⁶ However,

¹⁰² Myra Savant Harris R. N., *Puppy Intensive Care* (Washington: Dogwise Publishing, 2006), 26-30.

¹⁰³ Trotter, *Born to Win*, 25.

¹⁰⁴ Katie Campbell, "The Backyard Breeder vs. The Responsible Hobby Breeder," *KTCampbell*, accessed March 2, 2018, <http://www.ktcampbell.com/taji/rbvsbyb.htm>.

¹⁰⁵ Trotter, *Born to Win*, 25-29.

¹⁰⁶ American Kennel Club, "Events," *American Kennel Club*, accessed March 4, 2018, <http://www.akc.org/events/>.

these activities are very often of great interest to non-breeding dog enthusiasts and single dog owners as well. All that is necessary to participate in any of these activities is a dog, a person, and the willingness to prepare as a team. Dog showing assesses the structural quality of a purebred dog, but there is much that goes into preparing a dog for competition.¹⁰⁷ Physical conditioning and basic ring training are needed to prepare the dog.¹⁰⁸ In other events such as obedience, rally and agility that are open to purebred and mixed breeds, preparedness primarily rests on knowing the rules of the competition and having a well-trained dog.¹⁰⁹ Commitment to preparing for an event requires that the handler and dog train regularly. Donna Haraway describes the commitment to training she encountered while training her agility dog: “Workshops, training camps, and seminars abound...Most dog-human teams I know train formally at least once a week and informally all the time.”¹¹⁰ Some serious participants will set aside time every day to work with their dog. All trainers know that some days will be better than others. Some days the dog will be a crack shot and others it will seem like the dog is a novice. The dog may develop training issues along the way, such as refusing a command, that need to be dealt with.¹¹¹ A show dog may decide that it has an irrational fear of judges wearing black clothing, an obedience dog may begin lagging behind while heeling or an agility dog may begin missing the contacts on the teeter totter by springing off too soon. Sometimes the issue resides with the handler because they are giving commands incorrectly, using poor body language, or

¹⁰⁷ American Kennel Club, “Conformation Dog Shows,” *American Kennel Club*, accessed March 3, 2018, <http://www.akc.org/events/conformation-dog-shows/>.

¹⁰⁸ Trotter, *Born to Win*, 227-275.

¹⁰⁹ American Kennel Club, “Beginner’s Guide to Companion Events,” *American Kennel Club*, accessed March 4, 2018, <https://images.akc.org/pdf/events/GOCET1.pdf>.

¹¹⁰ Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minnesota: University of Minneapolis Press, 2008), 210.

¹¹¹ Terry Ryan, *The Toolbox for Remodeling Your Problem Dog* (New York: Howell, 1998).

conveying insecurity while holding the dog's lead.¹¹² Handlers have the opportunity to learn much about themselves while working with dogs in these activities. Nevertheless, training offers the opportunity to correct problems while cementing the bond between dog and handler. A handler experiences great joy in witnessing the dog become skillful with commands. Commitment to the focal practice of dog sport bears its fruit in the competition. Bound by rules and constrained by time in the fierce competition of the ring, the handler has a brief window to demonstrate the skill of the team. In the show ring, the handler must maximize the dog's attributes that are outlined in the AKC breed standard while minimizing structural faults.¹¹³ Gaïting and movement must be precise and deliberate.¹¹⁴ Obedience and Rally demonstrate precise responses to commands in spite of distractions.¹¹⁵ Agility courses test speed and precision along a numbered obstacle course that usually differ from one competition to the next.¹¹⁶

While in the ring, a well-prepared person-canine team flows as a single entity and the split between the human and non-human animal disappears. Internal distractions fade and external noise disappears as the competition at hand becomes all-consuming. The endless hours of preparation become enfolded into the moment. The competition causes the handler to push the team's limits to peak performance, to divine perfection. Haraway describes, "In my experience, few undertakings in life set such high and worthwhile standard of knowledge and

¹¹² Paul Owens, *The Dog Whisperer: A Compassionate, Nonviolent Approach to Dog Training* (Massachusetts: Adams Media, 1999).

¹¹³ Trotter, *Born to Win*, 282-285.

¹¹⁴ Rachel Page Elliott, *Dogsteps: Illustrated Gait at a Glance* (New York: Howell, 1973).

¹¹⁵ AKC, *Companion Events*, 3-6.

¹¹⁶ AKC, *Companion Events*, 9-11.

comportment.”¹¹⁷ Jittery nerves give way to a profound calm as the competition is completed. Mistakes made in the performance don’t discourage the person for more than a moment; instead errors inspire the handler to work harder and engage more fully with her dog in preparation for the next event. Success, on the other hand, reveals a sacred splendor in a focal practice with the humble canine.

Focal Practices in Working Human-Canine Relationships

In the earlier chapter that examined the dog as a device in Borgmann’s scheme, the discussion detailed the purposeful view of *Canis familiaris* in which dogs were specifically bred to perform specific jobs that augmented the lives of humans. In modern America, there is very little need for dogs to herd flocks, and there is virtually no need for dogs to turn spits. Nevertheless, in a changing technological landscape, the dog has remained at the side of human beings and along the way the dog’s natural abilities have proven useful to people. Search and rescue dogs as well as guide dogs for the blind are well-established examples of ways that dogs work for people. More recently, bomb sniffing dogs, cadaver dogs, hearing alert dogs, diabetic alert dogs, seizure alert dogs, cancer detecting dogs, and many other types of working dogs have become popular. The modern studies beginning with Leo Bustad that have highlighted the significant physical, psychological, and social benefits of interactions between humans and canines have also initiated a number of new jobs for dogs. The medical community now recognizes how dogs help alleviate loneliness,¹¹⁸ combat depression,¹¹⁹ and provide health benefits to people recovering from heart attacks.¹²⁰ Dogs are also being prescribed to assist

¹¹⁷ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 214.

¹¹⁸ Andrea Ptak, “Studies of Loneliness,” *Interactions*, 13, no. 1 (1995): 7-9.

¹¹⁹ Megan A. Souter and Michelle Miller, “Do Animal-Assisted Activities Effectively Treat Depression? A Meta-Analysis,” *Anthrozoös*, 20, no 2 (2007): 167-180.

people in coping with post-traumatic stress disorder and they aid in providing emotional support to people with anxiety disorders.¹²¹ To be sure, an added benefit for every person who shares such a close relationship with these types of working dogs is the capacity of the dog to focus the fourfold through engagement and for the person to establish focal practices with their canine companion. To a greater extent, this is really a circumstance that is foundationally no different from any other human-canine relationship. However, there is one example of a working dog whose work itself might be considered a focal practice in Borgmann's scheme: this is the Therapy Dog.

In his memoir *Yorkie Doodle Dandy*, Corporal Bill Wynne tells the story of his Yorkshire Terrier "Smoky," who was both companion and mascot during 2 years of his military service in the South Pacific during World War II. In his story, Wynne explains that after he was discharged, he and Smoky went into show business with a trick dog act. The pair entertained a variety of audiences at an array of venues that included circuses and hospitals. Wynne recounts a profound experience that illustrates the depth of Smoky's impact beyond just being a mere entertainer:

Crile hospital was a local Army hospital filled with soldiers from every theater of operations, recovering from wounds and disabilities. We performed there on several occasions. First, we performed on stage in the day room for those who were ambulatory and then in some of the wards for those who were not.

One day, the nurses wheeled several men into the day room and placed them up front. We began to perform and, suddenly, one of the patients in a wheelchair began gurgling and bouncing about in his chair. He held out his arms, and one of the nurses asked me to give him the dog. He held Smoky in his arms and began smiling and swinging her back and forth. The nurses were crying. They told me later that the soldier had been catatonic and hadn't responded to any stimulus, in fact, had not even moved in

¹²⁰ E. Friedmann, A. H. Katcher, J.J. Lynch, and S.A. Thomas, "Pet Ownership, Social Support, and One-Year Survival After Acute Myocardial Infarction in the Cardiac Arrhythmia Suppression Trial (CAST)," *American Journal of Cardiology* 76 (1995): 1213-1317.

¹²¹ Karen Becker, "Dogs are Tops, but These Other Pets are Super Anxiety Busters, Too," *Healthy Pets*, May 27, 2016, accessed March 4, 2018 <https://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2016/05/27/dog-ownership-child-anxiety.aspx>.

two years. That was the first positive sign he had shown, and they were overcome with emotion.¹²²

Cpl. Wynne's account of his experience is important because it illustrates the capacity of someone else's dog to impact a person positively. Up until this point, one's own personal dog, or a canine that a person has a relationship with has been the focus of this discussion. Now, the dimensions of the working therapy dog in a focal practice will be explored.

Therapy dog program developer Pearl Salotto explains, "In 1792, animals were incorporated into the treatment of mental patients at the York Retreat, England, as part of an enlightened approach attempting to reduce the use of harsh drugs and restraints."¹²³ The first reported use of dogs in therapeutic settings in the US was in 1919 at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C. after the Secretary of the Interior F.K. Lang wrote a letter recommending that dogs be used as companions for the hospital's resident psychiatric patients.¹²⁴ During the 1930's Sigmund Freud incorporated his Chow Chow dog "Jo-Fi" into his patient sessions. Eggiman reports, "Freud believed that Jo-Fi could signal a patient's level of tension by where he would lay in the room. If he stayed close to the patient, the patient was free of tension; if he lay across the room, the patient was tense. Freud thought that the presence of a dog had a calming influence on all patients, particularly children."¹²⁵ Post World War II, there was a notable rise in use of

¹²² William Wynne, *Yorkie Doodle Dandy* (Ohio: Lakefront Publishers, 1996), 1621-26, Kindle.

¹²³ Pearl Salotto, *Pet Assisted Therapy* (Massachusetts: DJ Publications, 2001), 28.

¹²⁴ Alpine Publications, "History of Animal Therapy," *Alpine Publications*, June 4, 2015, accessed March 4, 2018, <https://alpinepublications.net/2015/06/04/early-history-of-animals-in-therapy/>.

¹²⁵ Eggiman, J. "Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy: A Case Report—Animal Assisted Therapy," *Topics in Advanced Practice Nursing eJournal* 6, no. 3. (2006): 2, accessed August 30, 2016, <http://www.janeggiman.com/images/animalassistedtherapy.pdf>.

animals for outpatient therapy, and Salotto reports “During the 1970’s, numerous case studies of animals facilitating therapy with children and senior citizens were reported.”¹²⁶

The majority of early pet-people studies centered on relationships where there was the variable of attachment between person and animal, but this did very little to explain the positive benefits noted when other people’s pets made weekly visits to health care facilities. Studies began to focus on the health benefits of unfamiliar pets on people in various health settings, but according to Salotto, “Studies of health benefits of pet programs for nursing home and health center residents often are flawed methodologically or reported incompletely.”¹²⁷ Nevertheless, Millennial studies have documented the biochemical changes that occur in the human brain that have behavioral, emotional, and psychological effects when a person spends time with a dog.¹²⁸ These biochemical changes have been determined to occur in a person whether the dog is familiar or not and studies suggest that the health benefits that a dog provides as the result of acting as a stress buffer are not limited to familiar dogs. Milena Penkowa explains,

These benefits are easy to reach, as they simply require any dog’s presence whether it is our own pet dog or a dog belonging to someone else or a professional therapy dog (Aoki et al., 2012; Beals, 2009; Cole et al., 2007; Handlin, 2010; Handlin et al., 2011; Nagasawa et al., 2009a; Odendaal, 2000; Odendaal & Meintjes, 2003)...Nevertheless, the bond with a pet dog is naturally stronger than the affiliation to an unfamiliar dog, and so some of the molecular changes may occur faster when you interact with your own dog as compared to a stranger’s dog, even if the benefits take place in either case (Cole et al., 2007; Handlin, 2010; Nagasawa et al., 2009a, b; Odendaal & Meintjes, 2003)¹²⁹

In other words, these studies demonstrate that attachment is not necessary for a dog to have a positive affect on a person. This same phenomenon of an individual experiencing positive health

¹²⁶ Salotto, *Pet Assisted Therapy*. 29.

¹²⁷ Salotto, *Pet Assisted Therapy*. 32.

¹²⁸ Milena Penkowa, *Dogs and Human Health: The New Science of Dog Therapy and Therapy Dogs* (AU: Balboa Press, 2015).

¹²⁹ Penkowa, *Dogs and Human Health*.

benefits without having an attachment to a dog also occurs with individuals who work with therapy dogs in Animal Assisted Therapy.

The use of a therapy dog in a focal practice provides the opportunity for individuals to experience a profound connection with a canine companion on a regular basis while pursuing a therapeutic end. Therapy dogs, also known as “comfort dogs” are used in Animal Assisted Therapies designed to improve, social, emotional, cognitive and/or physical performance of a human client.¹³⁰ Official therapy dog teams consist of a dog and a handler who may undergo training and evaluation before becoming registered by one of the many nationally recognized Therapy dog organizations.¹³¹ In the preparatory training and evaluation process, gentle and affectionate therapy dogs may be screened for the types of settings in which they might work successfully.¹³² For example, some dogs have the patience for visiting with children while others are better suited for working with adults. For a human client, no matter what the venue, a visit from a therapy dog is likely to offer a welcomed break from the artificiality of an institutionalized setting and for some clients the animal provides a greatly needed connection to the natural world. Even though there is no initial attachment bond between the person and the animal, interacting with the dog lifts the therapy client out of their wounded circumstance and restores them to a place of peaceful interconnectedness. When the person makes eye contact with the dog, they recognize the spirit-lifting otherness of the “Thou” and the kind soul of the animal who accepts them unconditionally regardless of their circumstance. Through this connection, the person comes to realize that she is not alone. Therapy dogs do not care if a child has reading

¹³⁰ Salotto, *Pet Assisted Therapy*.

¹³¹ American Kennel Club, “Therapy Dog Organizations,” *American Kennel Club*, accessed March 4, 2018, <http://www.akc.org/events/title-recognition-program/therapy/organizations/>.

¹³² American Kennel Club, “Training Your Dog to be a Therapy Dog,” *American Kennel Club*, October 5, 2015, accessed March 5, 2018, <http://www.akc.org/content/dog-training/articles/training-dog-therapy/>.

challenges or stutters.¹³³ The dogs don't seem to mind if an aged adult is paralyzed and confined to wheelchair after having a stroke or if a young adult needs leg braces while learning to walk again after being injured in a car accident. The therapy dog is nonjudgmental and regardless of how physically, mentally or emotionally limited a person appears, the canine willingly makes contact to participate in a silent conversation that often occurs while petting. While interacting with the dog, both fear and loneliness melt away;¹³⁴ there is mutual understanding between person and dog, dignity returns and love fills. Salotto writes, "Are pets in nursing homes the answer to the void? Probably not—but they might come closer to alleviating the pain than anything I know of, with the exception of not being in the institution at all."¹³⁵ In the presence of the dog, there is no position of power to be held; instead the person and animal interact mutually in the here and now of the earthly plane. The person may identify with the creature comfort that displays joy even though it is largely dependent upon another person. In essence, the split between being broken and being whole becomes healed.

What's more, life becomes ordered around visits with the therapy dog when a person habitually spends time interacting with a therapy dog. Most therapy dog teams commit to making regular visits to a location, and individuals staying at those facilities voluntarily choose if they want to interact with the dog. The practice becomes established when the individual at the facility may choose to forego an array of other activity choices that are available to them, and instead regularly chooses the richness and the realness of spending time with the therapy dog. A person at an assisted living facility, for example, might choose to visit with the therapy dog

¹³³ Therapy Dogs International, "Libraries," *Therapy Dogs International*, accessed March 5, 2018, <http://www.tdi-dog.org/OurPrograms.aspx?Page=Libraries>.

¹³⁴ Therapy Dogs International, "Nursing Homes," *Therapy Dogs International*, accessed March 5, 2018, <http://www.tdi-dog.org/OurPrograms.aspx?Page=Nursing+Homes>.

¹³⁵ Salotto, *Pet Assisted Therapy*, 47.

rather than the diversions of playing Bingo or watching a movie in the activities room. Similarly, a child with reading challenges might prefer to go to their local public library to participate with a visiting therapy dog in a “read to a dog”¹³⁶ program rather than being distracted by a video game at home. To be sure, there may be a very simple end goal for working with a therapy dog, such as “sharing smiles and joy,”¹³⁷ but engagement with the dog provides the opening to creating a greater wholeness in a client’s life. Whether aimed at a particular outcome such as helping a child learn to read or lifting the spirits of someone in an assisted living facility, for example, focal practices involving therapy dogs initiate an engaging and orienting interaction between a person and a therapy dog that gathers the fourfold. In other words, in addition to the aim of improving the social, cognitive, emotional or physical function of a human client, time spent engaging with the therapy dog is a deep and profound experience that connects the individual to the cosmic wealth. Over time, an attachment to the dog may develop, which only serves to intensify and expand the therapeutic experience for the human client. This may provide an explanation for Salotto’s assertion, “Pet programs have proven superior in producing psychosocial benefits in comparison to some other alternative therapies (e.g., arts and crafts programs, friendly visitor programs, and conventional psychotherapy).”¹³⁸

Summary and Conclusions

The information presented in this chapter has examined *Canis familiaris* as a focal concern. More specifically, it not only discussed the dog as focal thing that has the capacity to disclose and inform by gathering the fourfold, but also explained how focal practices that include

¹³⁶ Therapy Dogs International, “Tail Waggin’ Tutors,” *Therapy Dogs International*, accessed March 4, 2018, <http://www.tdi-dog.org/OurPrograms.aspx?Page=Children+Reading+to+Dogs>.

¹³⁷ Alliance of Therapy Dogs, “About the Alliance of Therapy Dogs,” *Alliance of Therapy Dogs*, 2017, accessed March 4, 2018, <https://www.therapydogs.com/alliance-therapy-dogs/>.

¹³⁸ Salotto, *Pet Assisted Therapy*, 32.

canines have the capacity to center and engage the human individual with the richness of life. In the summary of Borgmann's concept of focal concerns, it was noted that focal things are the constants that focus and inform by gathering the disparate parts of their context. Focal things, common yet inconspicuous, need focal practices to thrive. Habitual engagement with a focal thing, what Borgmann call a focal practice, restores and sustains the central wholeness in a person's life. *Canis familiaris* was then examined in relationship to three key ideas concerning focal things in Borgmann's model. These are (1.) being a constant, (2.) being inconspicuous and humble, yet flourishing at the fray of human concerns, and most notably (3.) having the capacity to gather and disclose the fourfold. It was suggested that the continuity of relationship that has existed since pre-history has generally made the faithful dog a constant in human experience. The examples of Argos, Bobby, Hachiko, Fido, Salty and Cash were used to illustrate the stable fidelity of dogs to their human companions. It was also more specifically suggested that the modern dog is constant because of its steady presence in the daily lives of people due to their commitment of caring for their beloved canines. This constant nature of dogs makes them rather mundane and ordinary, rendering them humble in Borgmann's scheme. Yet, in spite of their constant presence in rather large numbers in places like New York City, it was explained that dogs are inconspicuous because they are seldom part of the public arena. In fact, the majority of dogs spend their lives behind doors in the comfort and safety of the family home. Even more interesting is the notion that although dogs are seldom part of the public area, they flourish at the fray of human concerns. This flourishing concern is evident in the laws that have been enacted to promote the well-being of dogs, the multi-billion dollar commercial pet product industry and development of programs based upon the social research that highlights the significant physical, psychological, social, and spiritual benefits of interactions between humans and canines. Finally,

in the inquiry of the dog as a focal thing, *Canis familiaris* was described as a gatherer of heavens, earth, mortals and divinities. The simple act of petting a dog was used to illustrate how interacting with a dog has the capacity to summon and disclose the four-fold, subsequently providing a place of profound calm that restores the human soul.

Finally, focal practices that include the dog as a focal thing were explored. These practices included everyday habits, such as taking the dog for a daily walk or spending time petting a beloved dog. Key to this part of the discussion was the idea of the need for engagement with the animal, and the reader was reminded that interaction that is devoid of engagement is tantamount to the dog being yet another distraction. Other focal practices were examined, such as hobby breeding and dog sports. Hobby breeding was described a central and orienting force in a person's daily life because this focal practice is highly important to the person. An exploration of dog sports such as dog shows and companion events portrayed how the commitment to preparation culminates in the competition. Lastly, focal practices in working relationships between people and dogs were explored. A specific evaluation of therapy dogs was particularly interesting since in these practices a human client becomes reoriented through engagement with the therapy dog even though there is no initial attachment between the canine and the client. This provides further support for the constant characteristic of the dog as a focal thing. When the late naturalist and notable dog enthusiast Roger Caras said, "Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole,"¹³⁹ he might have been engaging in a focal practice with one or all of his twelve beloved dogs.

Thus, when examined within the theoretical framework of Borgmann's philosophy involving what he describes as focal concerns, understanding about the human-canine bond and

¹³⁹ Roger Caras, "Quotable Quotes," *Good Reads*, 2018, accessed January 7, 2018, <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/19168-dogs-are-not-our-whole-life-but-they-make-our>.

encounters with the sacred, is furthered. It appears that in Borgmann's scheme relationships with dogs hold the potential to vividly connect people with reality and the discovery of the divine. The dog, as a focal thing, gathers the fourfold that informs and discloses the sacred. Engaging with a dog as a focal thing in a focal practice, Borgmann explains, "...keeps faith with focal things and saves for them an opening in our lives." In other words, in relationships with a dog, the canine may potentially constitute a focal thing that offers the opportunity for a person to witness and experience the sacred. Additionally, habitual engagement with a dog in a focal capacity presents the person with the possibility of regular encounters with the sacred.

Chapter IV

Human-Canine Relationships and Connections to the Good Life and to God

Dogs have given us their absolute all. We are the center of their universe. We are the focus of their love and faith and trust. They serve us in return for scraps. It is without a doubt the best deal that man has ever made.

—Roger A. Caras

Introduction

Relationships with dogs as focal interests can support a person's quest for a meaningful life in modernity. The information presented in Chapter III examined *Canis familiaris* as a focal concern in Borgmann's scheme. It not only presented information about the dog as focal thing that has the capacity to disclose and inform by gathering the fourfold; "...this is the crucial interplay between earth and sky, mortals and divinities,"¹ but the information also outlined how focal practices that include canines have the capacity to both orient and engage the human individual with the richness of experience. In modernity, where life is characterized by isolation and disenchantment because technology is the dominant way of taking up with the world, Borgmann asserts that focal concerns, such as good running or the great meal, generate wealth and can lead to the good life.² The good life, he explains, not only begins with the mindful ordering of one's life that results from engaging with focal concerns, but Borgmann also asserts

¹ Albert Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Modern Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 198.

² Borgmann, *Technology*, 210.

in his book *Power Failure* “technology can awaken in us a new capacity to hear the word of God.”³

This chapter will examine connecting to the good life and to God through relationships with dogs through applied philosophy, ethics and theology. Influential thinkers and guiding models will be identified, then relationships with dogs and dog culture will be tested within in the framework of the models. More specifically, the information presented in this chapter will explore how relationships with dogs have the ability to connect people to the good life and to God using a two-pronged approach. More specifically, the information presented in this chapter will not only show the ways that the dog as a focal concern generates wealth and leads to the good life by examining the philosophical underpinnings of various influential philosophers, but the information will also indicate the possibility of a new metaphor, *Canis familiaris* as model of God, and explore religious, ontological, and phenomenological concepts in tandem with the contemporary perspective of theologian Sally McFague. This part of the investigation, however, will obviously be limited, as it leaves room for in-depth study, nuances, details, and exceptions that are beyond the scope of this writing.

The first part of this investigation will explore ways that the dog as a focal concern generates wealth and leads to the good life. It will begin with an overview of Borgmann’s philosophy concerning wealth and the good life. According to this philosopher, wealth is experienced when focal things are used in focal practices and technology becomes relegated to a place of lesser importance.⁴ In his discourse, Borgmann references Aristotle’s philosophy that living well and doing well constitute the good life and other intriguing concepts⁵ worthy of

³ Albert Borgmann, *Power Failure* (Michigan: Brazos Press, 2003), 82.

⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 221-222.

deeper discussion in relation to focal practices involving dogs. Next, Aristotle's idea of complexity⁶ will be discussed with focus on both his and Charles Darwin's historical writings about dogs.⁷ This examination will address the possibility that a person may achieve an excellence that leads to flourishing when engaging with dogs. The third part of this first section concerning the good life will aim to answer the vital question that Borgmann poses in his discourse about the good life: Can a device ever become a focal thing?⁸ This question, of course, will not only be examined by specifically addressing the dog as device, but it will also incorporate Borgmann's criteria that the device must transform into something that fulfills and centers a person's world.⁹ The next section will examine Borgmann's three directions to personal reform through relationships with dogs. Namely, these are 1.) Create a clearing, 2.) Simplify the context, and 3.) Extend the sphere of engagement.¹⁰ Borgmann suggests that these three directions lead a person to take a selective attitude toward technology, thus ushering in the good life. The final section in the first part of this chapter will provide information about the traditional virtues that measure wealth and the good life. According to Borgmann, these are: world citizenship, gallantry, charity, and family.¹¹ Borgmann interprets these concepts in the

⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 213-216.

⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 213.

⁷ Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (London: John Murray, 1872). Print. *Darwin On-Line*, accessed March 14, 2018, <http://darwin-online.org.uk/content/frameset?pageseq=1&itemID=F1142&viewtype=text>.

⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 218.

⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 196-210.

¹⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 222.

¹¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 223-226.

framework of contemporary life and the aim of the discussion is to explore if *Canis familiaris*, as a focal concern, can inform a person about each of these traditional concepts.

Because some philosophers believe that God is necessary for the good life and because Borgmann suggests that technology can awaken a person's awareness of the holy spirit, the discussion in the second part of this chapter will propose a new metaphor that connects people to God: The dog as a model of God. The first section of this investigation will provide an overview of McFague's theological perspective regarding models of God in modernity. According to this feminist Christian theologian, there is an urgent need to replace the monarchical metaphor with a new model of God that captures the richness and complexity of the divine-human relationship that is suitable for contemporary life.¹² The next three sections will aim to explore how the dog models unconditional love, nonjudgmental acceptance and companionship in a Godly manner. The final section of this chapter will discuss how the dog, as a metaphor of God, models divine universality in a holistic manner.

***Canine familiaris* as a Focal Concern and the Good Life**

The first part of this investigation will provide information that explores ways that the dog, as a focal concern, cultivates wealth and the good life. This major section is divided into five sub-sections. The information in the first sub-section will present an overview of Borgmann's concept of wealth and the good life. The second sub-section will provide information that details Aristotle's idea of complexity and relate this concept to a person's experience of the good life in relationships with dogs. The next part of this major section will consider Borgmann's questioning if a device can ever become a focal thing. The fourth sub-section will focus on Borgmann's three directions to personal reform through relationships with

¹² Sally McFague, *Models of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), ix-xv.

dogs. The final part of this major section will present information that examines human-canine relationships as they facilitate the traditional virtues of excellence, which are a measure of wealth and the good life.

Overview of Borgmann's Concept of Wealth and the Good Life

When Borgmann discusses wealth and the good life, he asserts that focal concerns both generate wealth and can lead to the good life.¹³ He references Aristotle's idea that the excellence of a person's life is determined by the complexities of the faculties that the person develops.¹⁴ Said differently, the more complex skills a person cultivates, the more that person partakes in excellence. For Aristotle, the good life is flourishing or living well and doing well.¹⁵ He asserts that the good life is the happy life, and because happiness is an end in itself, the good life is sacred.¹⁶ He explains, as an activity of soul, "...happiness is believed to be the most desirable thing in the world."¹⁷ Borgmann finds this Aristotelian principle attractive and in applying it to the modern technological life, he proposes interchanging the idea of "engagement" with Aristotle's notion of "complexity."¹⁸ For Borgmann, the good life is one of engagement and this interchange of "engagement" for "complexity" captures the essential difference between technological devices and focal concerns.¹⁹ He explains that "engagement" is what distinguishes

¹³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 210-226.

¹⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 213-214.

¹⁵ Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics," in *An Historical Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, ed. Michael F. Wagner (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1991), 57.

¹⁶ Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics," 58.

¹⁷ Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics," 58.

¹⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 213.

¹⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 213-214.

the great chef from the fast food junkie.²⁰ He further explains that unlike engagement through focal concerns, any engagement that happens to occur with technological devices, such as video games, is one-dimensional and does not connect a person with the wider physical universe of which humans are a part.²¹ What's more, Borgmann provocatively wonders if a device can ever become a focal thing, "...one that, whatever its genesis, has taken on a character of its own, that challenges and fulfills us, that centers and illuminates our world?"²² He immediately responds to this musing with uncertainty, "...it is possible that such an invention will appear and that technology will give birth to a focal thing or event. But none are to be found now..."²³ Ultimately, he suggests it is best to wait and see.²⁴

Borgmann reminds the reader that in pre-technological times, religious life mattered as the ultimate focal concern.²⁵ He explains that reform movements such as the scientific revolution, the rise of democracy and technological proliferation have changed the modern reality into one where a plurality of focal concerns are available.²⁶ Borgmann suggests that in an arena where there are so many choices that there is not a single unifying concern.²⁷ Instead, he believes that each person can connect with the rest of humanity by cultivating their own focal

²⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 214.

²¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 214.

²² Borgmann, *Technology*, 218.

²³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 218.

²⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 218.

²⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 212.

²⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 212.

²⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 211.

practice and contributing their own experience.²⁸ He writes, “It [a focal practice] sponsors discipline and skill which are exercised in a unity of achievement and enjoyment, of mind, body and the world, of myself and others, in a social union.”²⁹

Borgmann suggests that the focal thing can lead to the reform of technology.³⁰ He explains that although the device paradigm would remain in place, focal practices restrain the paradigm by restricting technology from being the dominant and default way of being.³¹ He says that through focal practices, technology becomes relegated to a place of lesser importance because people adopt a selective approach toward it.³² Technology is demoted to a place of lesser importance and is discriminately allocated to the foreground of a person’s life.³³ Borgmann suggests that people can then benefit from technology when it is selectively allowed to do its job of disburdening.³⁴ In this way, focal practices allow people to put technology in its proper place. Borgmann suggests that this constitutes “wealth.” He explains,

Such a life is centrally prosperous, of course, in opening up a familiar world where things stand out clearly and steadily, where life has rhythm and depth, where we encounter our fellow human beings in the fullness of their capacities, and we know ourselves to be equal to that world in depth and strength.³⁵

²⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 213.

²⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 219.

³⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 219-223.

³¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 220.

³² Borgmann, *Technology*, 221-222.

³³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 221.

³⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 222.

³⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 223.

In modernity, according to Borgmann, focal practices offer wealth to the individual as they lead to a deepening of concepts of excellence such as world citizenship, gallantry, musicianship, charity and family.³⁶

Aristotelian Complexity

To be sure, when Aristotle documented his keen observations about dogs in Books 2, 6, and 9 of his *History of Animals*,³⁷ he was providing a rudimentary glimpse into the complexities of the dog. His description of the availability of milk in a pregnant Laconian Hound female details one such example of canine complexity:

The bitch is usually supplied with milk five days before parturition; some seven days previously, some four; and the milk is serviceable immediately after birth. The Laconian bitch is supplied with milk thirty days after lining. The milk at first is thickish, but gets thinner by degrees; with the bitch the milk is thicker than with the female of any other animal excepting the sow and the hare.³⁸

What's more, the detail of his writing about the breeding cycle, whelping, and pup development in Book 6 surely suggests the possibility of cultivating excellence in understanding canine reproduction. Similarly, Darwin highlighted the complexities of body language and emotions of animals, among them dogs, in his 1872 book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*.³⁹ His detailed descriptions and drawings provide valuable insight into a broad range of things that dogs do. To illustrate, Darwin describes the complex behavior of a puppy nursing on its mother's milk:

³⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 224.

³⁷ Aristotle, *History of Animals*, trans. D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson (Australia: University of Adelaide, 2015), accessed August 31, 2018, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/history/index.htm>.

³⁸ Aristotle, *History of Animals*, trans. D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson (Australia: University of Adelaide, 2015), bk. VI, pt. 20, accessed August 31, 2018, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/history/index.htm>.

³⁹ Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (London: John Murray, 1872), *Darwin On-Line*, accessed March 14, 2018, <http://darwin-online.org.uk/content/frameset?pageseq=1&itemID=F1142&viewtype=text>.

Kittens, puppies, young pigs and probably many other young animals, alternately push with their fore-feet against the mammary glands of their mothers, to excite a freer secretion of milk, or to make it flow.... Having referred to the act of sucking, I may add that this complex movement, as well as the alternate protrusion of the fore-feet, are reflex actions; for they are performed if a finger moistened with milk is placed in the mouth of a puppy, the front part of whose brain has been removed. It has recently been stated in France, that the action of sucking is excited solely through the sense of smell, so that if the olfactory nerves of a puppy are destroyed, it never sucks.⁴⁰

Like Aristotle, Darwin's work not only emphasizes intricacies, but it also presents an opportunity for a person to achieve excellence through applied knowledge.

Any person who habitually interacts closely with a dog is well aware of the complexities inherent in the human-canine relationship. When a person develops the various skills involved in the whole of building a positive relationship with a dog, a person can experience excellence and hence, happiness. From the time and research that goes into choosing the perfect puppy to learning how to care for the geriatric dog and everything in-between, having a relationship with a dog is about developing a complex ability. Every dog owner knows that something that might appear to be so simple to an outsider, such as teaching a puppy not to eliminate in the house, can be extremely complex.⁴¹ This is because there is no single tried and true method that works for every puppy when it comes to house training.⁴² As such, success often requires investigating various approaches, trying different problem solving techniques, and achieving a deeper understanding of the puppy, all while maintaining a great deal of patience, dedication and commitment. Success in this one aspect of the relationship occurs when the pup learns not to soil inside the house, and there is no doubt that this constitutes a moment of pleasurable triumph for a

⁴⁰ Darwin, *Expression of the Emotions*, 46-47.

⁴¹ Clarice Rutherford and David Neil, *How to Raise a Puppy You Can Live With* (Colorado: Alpine Publications, 1981), 59-60.

⁴² Mara Bovsun, "How to Potty Train a Puppy, A Comprehensive Guide for Success," *American Kennel Club*, November 2, 2015, accessed March 19, 2018, <https://www.akc.org/content/dog-training/articles/how-to-potty-train-a-puppy/>.

person. The development of smaller skills that contribute to the greater whole of the human-canine relationship also apply to things such as teaching the puppy appropriate chewing behavior, exposing them to social situations, or teaching them basic manners. Similarly, things such as figuring out what a dog is trying to communicate, learning about dog health care, or fashioning a daily routine that works for both canine and person also involve developing skills.

In the process of developing these many faculties for the daily life with a dog, a person engages with their canine counterpart. When the dog scratches the back door to signal that she needs to go outside to the bathroom, for example, she is engaging the person both through her actions and by providing positive feedback to the person regarding the effectiveness of their house training abilities. Additionally, a person's need for skill development does not become arrested once the puppy is grown. For example, a dog may develop anxiety as an adult and may exhibit behaviors that should be understood and responded to. A geriatric dog may become blind, and the person will need to develop skills for relating to a dog with this condition.

Even the simple endeavor of taking an enjoyable walk with a dog is ultimately the result of developing some complex faculties. The dog must be taught to walk steadily at a person's side amidst a bounty of distractions, which takes time, commitment and practice. In the process of teaching the dog to walk politely, a person might need to try several different collars before finding the collar that works best for controlling their dog. A person also needs to become familiar with the dog's response to various situations and they must learn how to manage unexpected encounters along the walk. For example, if a dog is fearful of fire hydrants, then care must be taken to train to extinguish the fear, to learn to manage the behavior or perhaps to choose to walk along a route that is devoid of fire hydrants. Even when a dog is trained, a person must always be mindful of the dog's well being before, during and after the walk. This requires

engaging with the dog and developing an awareness of what is normal baseline behavior for a dog. Additionally, a person may need to develop a plan for things to carry on the walk, such as waste bags or a small container of water; these will likely change with weather or circumstance. Aristotle would agree that the pleasurable walk that results from building dog-walking skills is developing an excellence that brings happiness.

People who participate in dog-centered activities and sports or who sustain working relationships with dogs acquire additional complex skill sets that are supplementary to the everyday faculties of the human-canine relationship previously mentioned. All of these various endeavors have training methods, handling proficiencies, conditioning methods and in some cases competition rules that can be quite complex. Excellence in any of these dog-related undertakings requires developing the complexities of the specific endeavor. For example, social scientist Donna Haraway writes about the joy she experiences by participating in sport agility with her dog Cayenne, an animal that is not only her sport partner, but also happens to be her pet and a research dog in the History of Consciousness Department at the University of California.⁴³ Haraway describes dog agility as a passionate avocation that requires commitment because it is technically demanding.⁴⁴ She explains that teams typically practice several times a week and to hone skills, “Workshops, training camps, and seminars abound.”⁴⁵ In her book *When Species Meet*, she provides a detailed list of training pitfalls that she has gathered from her own experience and presents them as helpful guidelines for the agility enthusiast.⁴⁶ She comments

⁴³ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 205-246.

⁴⁴ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 208-214.

⁴⁵ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 210.

⁴⁶ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 212-213.

that each dog team has a uniqueness that becomes revealed through engagement.⁴⁷ She insightfully comments about Cayenne, for example, “This dog is easily annoyed by food rewards, for example, when given during her intense sit-stay at the start line before the release word to begin the run, when what she wants is to fly over the course.”⁴⁸ When writing about her own serious commitment to the daily training sessions that she has with her dog, she astutely observes, “The human being actually has to know something about one’s partner, oneself, and the world at the end of each training day that she or he did not know at the beginning.”⁴⁹

Haraway describes the complexities involved to prepare for success on the agility course, explaining the importance of attending to the details.⁵⁰ When a person watches a dog and handler successfully run an agility course, there is little doubt that engagement with the dog occurs regularly, and the competition represents the culmination of a complex development of faculties.

Haraway illustrates,

Players see the course for the first time the day of the event and get to walk through them for ten minutes or so to plan their runs. Dogs have not seen the course until they are actually running it. Humans give signals with voice and body; dogs navigate the obstacles at speed in the designated order. Scores depend on time and accuracy. A run typically takes a minute or less, and events are decided by fractions of seconds. Agility relies on fast-twitch muscles, skeletal and neural! Depending on the sponsoring organization, a dog-human team runs from two to eight events in a day. Recognition of obstacle patterns, knowledge of moves, skill on hard obstacles, and perfection of coordination and communication between dog and handler are keys to good runs.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 220-222.

⁴⁸ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 220.

⁴⁹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 214.

⁵⁰ Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003), 58-62.

⁵¹ Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, 59-60.

For Aristotle, a good run would represent flourishing in agility. Additionally, Haraway describes the goal of agility as being "...an oxymoron of disciplined spontaneity."⁵² She explains that for her, *in training* comes the "...personal fact of joy in time and work with my dogs,"⁵³ and *through training* comes magic: "Then, the dog and human figure out, if only for a minute, how to get on together, how to move with sheer joy and skill over a hard course, how to communicate, how to be honest."⁵⁴ Aristotle would likely not be surprised to learn that Donna Haraway affirms, "I experience agility as a particular good in itself and also as a way to become more worldly..."⁵⁵

Positive relationships between humans and canines represent development of the complex faculties that Aristotle describes as contributing to the good life. In associating with their dogs, people recognize the complexity of relating to another species. Aristotle included details about dogs in his early writings and other scholars, such as Darwin, followed suit. Today, there exist volumes of writing on virtually every aspect of dogs. This available knowledge can contribute to the formal development of faculties for people, but most often, people grow their skills from real experiences while engaging with their dogs. The examples of everyday proficiencies, such as house training or dog walking, illustrate that even the simplest faculties can involve complex nuances. Additionally, dog-centered activities can take the faculties of everyday human-dog relationships to a higher level by augmenting complexities and providing additional opportunities for excellence. When a person develops the various skills involved in the whole of building a positive relationship with a dog, whether it be in the everyday or in the pursuit of dog-centered activities, a person can experience excellence and hence, the good life.

⁵² Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, 62.

⁵³ Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, 61.

⁵⁴ Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, 62.

⁵⁵ Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, 61.

The Question of Shifting from Device to Focal Thing

In his discussion regarding the good life, Borgmann provocatively wonders if a device can ever become a focal thing.⁵⁶ He suggests that the criteria for the device-to-thing transition lies in the ability of the device to transform into something that ultimately fulfills and centers a person's world.⁵⁷ Arguably, in certain circumstances *Canis familiaris* fits Borgmann's criteria. One must first consider the idea that although the dog is believed to be a descendent of the wolf,⁵⁸ all the pure breeds that exist today are the result of purposeful breeding that created the different breeds to perform specific tasks.⁵⁹ In other words, the dog is a technology. One must next reflect on the view of the dog as a device that is presented in Chapter 2. There, it is suggested that the rise and rule of technology contributed to the standardization, disposability and domination of dogs, concepts relating to dogs that can still be seen today. Additionally, Descartes' machine theory of animals is deeply rooted in modern thought, and continues to be the basis for the continued use of dog in scientific research as a basis for theories used in dog training.⁶⁰ For Borgmann, the device is ultimately a commodity that relieves a burden that is not only a means to an end, but is also lacks a context.⁶¹ In contrast, a focal thing is inseparable both from its context and from a person's engagement with it. The thing also provides a focus for practice. In this regard, one should also take into account the dog as a focal thing that is

⁵⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 218.

⁵⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 218.

⁵⁸ Elizabeth Schuler ed., *Guide to Dogs* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1980), 10.

⁵⁹ AKC Government Relations, "Congressional Veterinarians Introduce Resolution Honoring Purebred Dogs," *American Kennel Club*, April 13, 2017, accessed March 19, 2018, <http://www.akc.org/expert-advice/news/congressional-resolution-honoring-purebred-dog/>.

⁶⁰ Payal Naik, "Behaviorism as a Theory of Personality: A Critical Look," *Personality Research*, accessed March 12, 2018, <http://www.personalityresearch.org/papers/naik.html>.

⁶¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 57-68.

presented in Chapter 3. There, it is explained that the dog is a constant that is inconspicuous, yet flourishes at the fray of human concerns while also having the capacity to gather and disclose the four-fold. There are a number of examples of focal practices involving dogs that are also presented in this earlier chapter. So, on the one hand, the dog is seen as a device, yet on the other hand, the dog is a focal thing. This dichotomy of the dog as device and the dog as focal thing is a phenomenon that speaks directly to Borgmann's important question.

Believe it or not, there are people who have never had an interaction with a dog. There are also people who unquestioningly ascribe to a hard-lined anthropocentric view, where animals do not count. There are people who see the dog as a means to an end, such as the commercial puppy and research industries. And, there are those people who get a dog simply as an object to possess as part of the American ideology. These individuals acquire dogs to complete their vision of the complete modern life—or worse, to outdo the Joneses. They put very little thought into their role as caretaker and place an “order” for a dog much like a person might choose the fabric and style of a sofa. All of these people share one commonality: they have a device view of the dog. That is, they see the dog as a commodity that is disposable.

Clearly, not all people in modernity share a device view of the dog. In fact, there are many people who seemingly *never* have this comprehensive “dog as device” understanding of *Canis familiaris*. Perhaps this is because some people just appear to be born with an inherent understanding. Or perhaps they experience immediate connections with dogs through learning at a young age or as the result of exposure later in life. Nevertheless, the individual source of the distinction between these two views is not the immediate question at hand. Rather, the inquiry at hand has to do with Borgmann's question of whether or not a dog that is viewed as a device at one point in time can transition into a focal thing. The simple answer is “yes.” In order for a dog

to transition from device to a thing with focal character, a person must engage with the dog and either connect with the natural world through the dog, or cross the human-canine divide in some way. In doing this, a person has the capacity to develop a profound awareness of nature that exists within themselves, their dogs and the world around them.

Borgmann addresses this idea of engagement with a device in his discussion of the good life.⁶² He suggests that it is possible for a person to connect with a device. He offers computer games as one example⁶³, and he discusses virtual reality in his later work *Holding On to Reality: The Nature of Information at the Turn of the Millennium*.⁶⁴ However, engaging with computer games, Borgmann asserts, does not make the computer game a focal thing because the engagement is one-sided.⁶⁵ To be sure, although engaging with a computer game may inform a person about a deeper reality, it does not connect that person to the wider physical universe.⁶⁶

Similarly, with regard to virtual reality, Bray explains

Albert Borgmann (1999) has argued that virtual reality and cyberspace have lead many people to confuse them for alternative realities that have the same actuality of the real world, thus leading to a collapse of the distinction between representation and reality, whereas according to him VR and cyberspace are merely forms of information and should be treated as such.⁶⁷

In other words, Borgmann believes that virtual reality is not actual reality, and thus does not constitute focal character. However, when a person engages with a dog, they are engaging with

⁶² Borgmann, *Technology*, 214.

⁶³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 215-217.

⁶⁴ Albert Borgmann, *Holding On to Reality: The Nature of Information at the Turn of the Millennium* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

⁶⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 217.

⁶⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 217.

⁶⁷ Philip Brey, "Virtual Reality and Computer Simulation," ed. Kenneth Himma and Herman Tavani, *Handbook of Information and Computer Ethics* (New Jersey: John Wiley, 2008), 366.

a three-dimensional living being in the context of actual reality. Therefore, rather than having a one-sided experience, as is the case with computer games, engaging with a dog connects a person to the multi-dimensioned wider universe. Additionally, when a person engages with a dog, they have the opportunity to cross the human-canine divide. When this happens, they are likely to experience a profound awareness of the dog as other. It is through engagement with the canine and subsequent crossing of the divide that the dog transitions from a device to a focal thing.

Directions to Personal Reform Through Relationships with Dogs

Borgmann asserts that a person's commitment to focal concerns causes her to intelligently impose limits on technology, thereby technologically de-cluttering their lives.⁶⁸ To this end, he asserts, "In happy situations, the personal and private reforms take three directions."⁶⁹ The three directions, he explains, are (1.) creating a clearing, (2.) simplification of context, and (3.) extending the sphere of engagement.⁷⁰ These three directions appear to be evident when a person commits to focal practices that include *Canis familiaris*. In other words, the three directions of personal reform realized through focal practices with a dog ultimately allow a person to have a selective attitude toward technology in their life, thus ushering in the good life.

Borgmann explains that when some individuals are struck by a focal concern, the first thing that they do is voluntarily remove technological clutter from their lives so they may create a central space for the focal thing.⁷¹ To be sure, when a person has a dog, the routine of their

⁶⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 220-222.

⁶⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 222.

⁷⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 222.

⁷¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 222.

daily lives are often arranged around taking proper care of their beloved pet, thus making it a central concern. In the everyday, a person with a dog must be concerned for feeding and potty schedules, for example, which arranges small but consistent clearings in a daily schedule. Focal concerns such as taking a daily walk, petting, or playing games with one's dog require that a person clear additional space in order to spend engaged time with their dog. To be sure, interacting with a dog in any of these circumstances means hitting the pause button on routine or time-consuming chores, thereby creating an opening for engagement that fills the spirit. Additionally, if a person happens to participate in dog-related activities, then that person must create a clearing in order to establish inviolate time to participate in pursuits such as training classes or sport competitions. Borgmann does not suggest that a person eliminates technology altogether in this process. Instead, he suggests that a person selectively relegates the technology in the foreground of his or her life.⁷² A person may eagerly cast aside the chore of doing laundry, willingly leave the mindless diversion of television, or readily ignore the pull of endless e-mails for the chance to experience the sacred splendor that comes from time spent engaging with their dog. Through this process a person is likely to recognize and restrain the paradigm, thus relegating technology to a place of lesser importance. However, a person may need a car to get them to the dog show, a crate to contain the dog during the drive and the GPS to help them find their way to the show grounds. This is an example of Borgmann's idea of judiciously allowing technology into the foreground.

Borgmann explains that the second direction of personal reform is the simplification of the context that surrounds and supports the focal area.⁷³ Although Borgmann does not provide any concrete details of what he means by this statement, it is not difficult to apply the idea of

⁷² Borgmann, *Technology*, 222.

⁷³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 222.

simplifying the context to the canine focal area. A person may do things or obtain instruments that simplify daily life with a dog. He or she may fence their yard off of a door to simplify providing a secure environment where a dog can eliminate or play. By doing this, rather than having to take the dog out to potty at its every whim, a person can just simply open the door and let the dog out to do its business. A person may place a container filled with food on the kitchen countertop to simplify daily feeding instead of going to the garage to retrieve dog food from a large bag of kibble. A person might choose to clip long hair off their dog to simplify grooming care. This might mean that time can be spent petting the dog rather than struggling to brush out tangles. A person may obtain a crate to simplify house training, or they may choose from a variety collars to make leash training virtually effortless. People who participate in dog activities are likely to leave their cars packed with certain items that they regularly use, such as crates and leashes, rather than packing and unpacking the car for every outing. Thus, rather than becoming a project, something like taking the dog to a weekly training class is just an effortless matter of popping the dog in the crate and driving to the destination. And, even when they reach the destination they might have a lightweight fabric crate collapsed in the car that they can easily assemble in seconds once inside the training center. These are a few examples of the many instruments and tactics that are aimed at easing the relationship between dog and owner. When things are made easier through simplification, which may include the judicious use of technology, the clearing for the focal concern is augmented.

Borgmann suggests that the final direction of personal reform is extending the sphere of engagement.⁷⁴ He explains, “Having experienced the depth of things and the pleasure of full-bodied competence at the center, one seeks to extend such excellence to the margins of life.”⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 222.

To be sure, the “do it yourself” maxim most certainly applies to the dog as a focal concern. Peripheral engagement with the focal concern may come in several forms. Preparing food at home is one such example. Correctly feeding a dog fresh food requires learning both about general dog nutritional needs as well as the needs specific to a particular dog.⁷⁶ Considerations must be made about whether to feed a home cooked or a raw diet, as well as how to prepare, store and serve the chosen food.⁷⁷ Similarly, a person may decide to groom their dog at home instead of sending it to a professional. This requires learning things such as how to cut nails, clean ears, and do trimming. A person may invest in purchasing a grooming table, a professional dryer and perhaps some electric clippers. They might quickly discover that there is much that goes into grooming a live animal. Once they master this engaging task, they are likely to have a sense of great achievement while deepening the bond with their dog. Training one’s dog oneself instead of hiring a professional is another example extending the sphere of engagement. There are many schools of thought and approaches to training⁷⁸ that a person might encounter when trying to get behavioral compliance from their dog. The learning trainer is sure to discover that there is neither one approach to take with every dog, nor a single style that works for every task. The reward, of course, comes with the pride and sense of accomplishment associated with getting a dog to do what is asked. These are but a few examples among many that illustrate extending the sphere of engagement. Not only is each one aimed at self-sufficiency, which favors

⁷⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 222.

⁷⁶ Liz Palika, *The Consumer’s Guide to Dog Food* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 102-108.

⁷⁷ Denise Flaim, *The Holistic Dog Book* (New York: Wiley Publishing, 2003), 1-22.

⁷⁸ Cindy Ludwig, “What are the Different Styles of Dog Training Common Today,” *Quora*, February 7, 2016, accessed March 12, 2018, <https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-different-styles-of-dog-training-common-today>.

the good life as Borgmann explains,⁷⁹ but in these extensions also lies the opportunity for a person to become more closely orientated to their canine as a focal concern, which in turn leads to the intelligent limitation of technology.

Borgmann does issue a warning about the dangers of the do-it-yourself methodology, however. He suggests that an overzealous attempt at self-sufficiency has the potential to disconnect a person if she spends too much time preparing for focal things yet never engages with them.⁸⁰ This might be like the person who constantly shops for the latest grooming equipment, yet never spends time petting their dog. Borgmann suggests that benefits come when a person puts technology in its proper place and does not get caught in the trap of laboring for leisure's sake.⁸¹ He explains, "In one or another area of one's life one should gratefully accept the disburdenment from daily and time consuming chores and allow celebration and world citizenship to prosper in the time that has been gained."⁸² Focal concerns allow people to relegate technology through the three directions of reform, thus constituting "wealth."

Excellence and the Human-Canine Relationship

Borgmann also uses the traditional virtues of excellence to measure wealth and the good life.⁸³ He explains that because they create a center of orientation from which to determine what really matters in the world, focal things highlight traditional concepts of excellence that include world citizenship, gallantry, charity and family.⁸⁴ Borgmann asserts that in the modern era the

⁷⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 222.

⁸⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 222.

⁸¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 222.

⁸² Borgmann, *Technology*, 222.

⁸³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 224.

⁸⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 224.

device paradigm has caused these classical concepts to atrophy and explains that focal things help to facilitate the recovery of these concepts of excellence because in the centered life things stand out clearly and steadily.⁸⁵ Importantly, he recognizes the fact of technology in modernity and he appropriately interprets these classical concepts within the framework of contemporary life.

As a focal thing, *Canis familiaris* can potentially inform a person about each of these traditional notions of excellence. Borgmann explains world citizenship as that "...standpoint from which one can tell what matters in the world and what merely clutters it up."⁸⁶ By this, Borgmann means knowing what is important, real and authentic, and he asserts that the focal concern itself provides that place of orientation. As discussed earlier, engaging with a dog as a focal concern gathers the fourfold, thus embedding the person in the natural world.

Anthropomorphism gives the person knowledge of herself and the shared kinship with the canine imparts a better understanding of her place in the world. Concerns for animal welfare further crafts this authentic world appropriation. Additionally, the ability of focal concerns to enable the personal reform of technology significantly contributes to the rightful order of things that matter in world citizenship.

Borgmann interprets gallantry in the modern era as "...the fitness of the human body for the greatness and the playfulness of the world."⁸⁷ To be sure, there are many physical activities that one can do with a dog to promote fitness. Daily walks are one such example. Running around an agility ring is another. Caring for dogs, whether it be through daily brushing, lugging

⁸⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 224.

⁸⁶ Borgmann, *Technology*, 225.

⁸⁷ Borgmann, *Technology*, 225.

bags of dog food, throwing a ball, or shoveling a path through the snow in the dog yard present challenges to the physical body that are simply not offered by sitting on the sofa watching television or by playing a video game.

Borgmann asserts that traditional musicianship has survived in the technological world.⁸⁸ He uses live performances of jazz and popular music to illustrate his point.⁸⁹ He writes about the rhythmic grace that characterizes music.⁹⁰ He discusses the authentic devotion to music and writes about consumption, suggesting some importance in the role of the listener in the modern understanding of musicianship.⁹¹ If the listener is to recognize excellence, it might be suggested that idea of musicianship can be extended to listening for the sounds of nature in the modern world. To be sure, the rhythmic gait of a dog, the sounds of paws hitting a surface, can be music to a dog owner's ears. An owner might feel transcended by deep-breathing sounds of a sleeping dog. The sounds that dogs make while on the hunt have also been recognized as musical sounds. One author describes the "bell-like quality" of the American Foxhound howl, as being distinctly different from the "...rural yodeling of blueticks [Coonhound] and redbones [Coonhound]."⁹² From a centered perspective where excellence in music requires that a modern listener recognize it as such, Borgmann would likely agree that a person might find perfection in rediscovering the symphony of nature.

Finally, Borgmann expresses hope that focal concerns will deepen charity and reconnect

⁸⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 225.

⁸⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 225.

⁹⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 225.

⁹¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 225.

⁹² David E. Petzal, "The 21 Greatest Gun Dogs," *Field and Stream*, accessed March 19, 2018, <https://www.fieldandstream.com/features/gun-dogs/>.

families.⁹³ He explains that technology causes disengagement, and this in turn makes people callous.⁹⁴ He suggests that the choice of living simply brought about by focal things can cultivate the empathy needed to put people in touch with the plight of others.⁹⁵ In fact, studies with children suggest a relationship between the human-animal bond and empathy among children.⁹⁶ Poresky, specifically looking at dogs, found that “Empathy toward children was correlated with empathy for pets, and children with a strong pet bond had higher scores on empathy for children than young children without pets.”⁹⁷ Similarly, Vizek-Vidovic, Arambasic, Kerestes, Kuterovac-Jagodic, and Vlahovic-Stetic found that children who had a pet during their childhood were more empathetic, more prone to enter a helping profession, and were more oriented toward social values than those without a pet.⁹⁸ To be sure, the dog as a focal concern is much different than good running and the great meal in that the dog is a living, breathing animal that provides interaction and continuous feedback to the person in ways that other focal concerns simply cannot. Because of this constant flow of information, one might easily understand how engaging with a dog focally creates empathic concern for others and a respect for life. As a focal concern, relationships with dogs can lead to understanding of the plight of others as personal reform causes the sphere of engagement to expand.

In chapter 18 of *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life*, Borgmann suggests

⁹³ Borgmann, *Technology*, 225-226.

⁹⁴ Borgmann, *Technology*, 225.

⁹⁵ Borgmann, *Technology*, 225.

⁹⁶ R.H. Poresky, “The Young Children’s Empathy Measure: Reliability, Validity and Effects of Companion Animal Bonding,” *Psychological Reports* 66, (1990): 931.

⁹⁷ R.H. Poresky, “The Young Children’s Empathy Measure.”

⁹⁸ V. Vizek-Vidovic, L. Arambasic, G. Kerestes, G. Kuterovac-Jagodic, & V. Vlahovic-Stetic, “Pet Ownership in Childhood and Socio-Emotional Characteristics, Work Values and Professional Choices in Early Adulthood,” *Anthrozoos* 14, (2001): 224.

that modern technology has disintegrated the modern family.⁹⁹ In particular, he highlights the impact that television has had in the raising of children, asserting that TV interferes with the ability of parents to raise their children.¹⁰⁰ He further asserts that when families engage in focal practices together, this connects the family around an engaging, shared experience that forms meaningful tradition.¹⁰¹ Having a dog can bring a family together. The care of a dog, for example, is often a family endeavor. Each family member may be responsible to let the dog out to potty at intervals during the day, thus providing each with an opportunity to engage with the canine companion while working toward a collaborative family endeavor. Having a dog provides a common focus that has the potential to unify the disparate members of the family. As each family member is able to engage with the dog in daily life and then connect with other family members, for example by simply talking about the dog as a shared concern, they are brought together. In this way, the dog is a meaningful focus in the family that is able to draw the family together for the possibility of an enjoyable shared experience. Similarly, when the family gathers to engage in focal practices involving the dog, whether these occur in daily life or through dog-centered activities and sports, then family traditions form. Borgmann's idea of excellence and the good life lies within the bonds of family and the closeness that is reaffirmed through the shared experience of the dog as a focal concern.

***Canis familiaris* as a Model of God**

As previously written, Borgmann explains that religious life was the ultimate concern in pre-technological times. He writes, "Focal practices in pretechnological times clearly possessed this dominance and exclusiveness. In the early Middle Ages, everyone went to church on

⁹⁹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 124-143.

¹⁰⁰ Borgmann, *Technology*, 142.

¹⁰¹ Borgmann, *Technology*, 143.

Sundays and holy days, and Hubert, who went hunting, was a sinner for that reason.”¹⁰² During each of their respective times, Aristotle,¹⁰³ Thomas Aquinas,¹⁰⁴ and Søren Kierkegaard¹⁰⁵ all believed that God was necessary for the Good Life. Aristotle asserts that people need God for contemplation, where as Aquinas and Kierkegaard believe that the good life begins with having a friendship with God.¹⁰⁶ Modern Christian scholar Pastor Steven Cole explains, “The truly good life comes from having God’s blessing upon us...”¹⁰⁷

The information that follows in this second major section propose a new metaphor that connects people to God: this is *Canis familiaris* as a model of God. This section will be divided into five sub-sections. The information in the first sub-section will present an overview of McFague’s theological perspective regarding models of God in moderntiy. The next three sub-sections will provide an exploration regarding how the dog models unconditional love, non-judgmental acceptance and companionship in a God-like manner. The discussion in the final sub-section will explore how *Canis familiaris*, as a metaphor of God, models divine universality.

Overview of McFague’s Models of God

In her book, *Models of God*, Sally McFague suggests that there is a need for humans to

¹⁰² Borgmann, *Technology*, 212.

¹⁰³ Mike Austin, “Aristotle,” *God and the Good Life Blog*, September 13, 2010, accessed March 13, 2018, <http://godandthegoodlife.blogspot.com/>.

¹⁰⁴ Mike Austin, “Thomas Aquinas,” *God and the Good Life Blog*, September 20, 2010, accessed March 13, 2018, <http://godandthegoodlife.blogspot.com/>.

¹⁰⁵ Mike Austin, “Soren Kierdegaard,” *God and the Good Life Blog*, October 4, 2010, accessed March 13, 2018, <http://godandthegoodlife.blogspot.com/>.

¹⁰⁶ Mike Austin, *God and the Good Life Blog*, accessed March 13, 2018, <http://godandthegoodlife.blogspot.com/>.

¹⁰⁷ Steven J. Cole, “Lesson 16: The Good Life And How To Live It (1Peter 3:8-12),” *Bible*, accessed April 18 2017, <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-16-good-life-and-how-live-it-1-peter-38-12>.

take a holistic view of reality in modernity.¹⁰⁸ She explains that humankind's contemporary relationship with the earth is based on an outdated understanding of a person's grasp of their place in the cosmos.¹⁰⁹ She asserts that the Western belief that humans are "in charge of the world"¹¹⁰ has put the future of the world in grave danger.¹¹¹ McFague suggests that this attitude of domination has grown out of the literal interpretation of religious text that was a product of the Protestant Reformation.¹¹² It was during this time in history that the understanding shifted away from the symbolic nature of the religious language that had been handed down from the past, and toward a plain meaning of text.¹¹³ So, in terms of literalism, McFague explains, "If the Bible says God is 'father' then God is literally, really, 'father.'" ¹¹⁴ In other words, God *is* father, is literally a man who is endowed with qualities, even the negative ones, that people associate with fathers. McFague further asserts that because of how people have grown to interpret the language used to describe God, Westerners have also wrongly endowed themselves as having precedence over the rest of creation, and she explains that because of this, the earth is dying.¹¹⁵ Instead, McFague suggests that people need to realize that they are merely a part of the greater world and do not have priority over all else.¹¹⁶ She explains that God has created and loves all of

¹⁰⁸ McFague, *Models of God*, 5.

¹⁰⁹ McFague, *Models of God*, 3.

¹¹⁰ McFague, *Models of God*, 14.

¹¹¹ McFague, *Models of God*, 3-28.

¹¹² Sally McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 5.

¹¹³ McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 13.

¹¹⁴ McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 5.

¹¹⁵ McFague, *Models of God*, 6-21.

¹¹⁶ McFague, *Models of God*, 7-8.

creation,¹¹⁷ and change is needed to reflect this. She writes:

It has become increasingly and painfully evident to many Westerners, both those within the Judeo-Christian tradition and those outside who nonetheless are influenced by its imagery, values, and concepts, that the language used to express the relationship between God and the world needs revision.¹¹⁸

McFague explains that although people use language to describe God, humans must truly realize that God can never be truly understood by human words.¹¹⁹ According to her, because God is beyond words, God is best understood metaphorically.¹²⁰ She equates this idea of metaphor with a person's use of imaginative story to understand reality.¹²¹ By way of example, if it is said that God is a father, this does not literally mean that God is father in so much that God is a male. Instead when understood metaphorically, the statement "God is a father" conjures up ideas such as God has the power to create, or offer parental love and concern.

McFague also explains,

The difference between a metaphor and a model can for our purpose be simply stated: a model is a metaphor with 'staying power.' A model is a metaphor that has gained sufficient stability and scope as to present a pattern for relatively comprehensive and coherent explanation.¹²²

Because God cannot truly be known, she suggests that "...some models are better than others for constructing an image of God..."¹²³ Additionally, where Jacques Derrida finds risk in the idea of a metaphorical theology, "If metaphor, which is *mimesis* trying its chance, *mimesis* at risk, may

¹¹⁷ McFague, *Models of God*, 42.

¹¹⁸ McFague, *Models of God*, 20.

¹¹⁹ McFague, *Models of God*, 33-34.

¹²⁰ McFague, *Models of God*, 192.

¹²¹ McFague, *Models of God*, 33.

¹²² McFague, *Models of God*, 34.

¹²³ McFague, *Models of God*, 192.

always fail to attain truth, this is because it has to reckon with a definite absence,”¹²⁴ McFague ascribes opportunity, “...metaphorical theology encourages nontraditional, unconventional, novel ways of expressing the relationship between God and the world.”¹²⁵

McFague sees major flaws in the dominant western historical model of God. Ian Barbour explains that the prevailing monarchical model of God is one that was developed in Jewish thought, in Medieval Christian thought and in the Reformation.¹²⁶ The monarchical model is one where God is father and King.¹²⁷ In this model, God is understood as patriarch, harsh autocrat and ruling lord.¹²⁸ This high and mighty God is King with absolute power; which includes both benevolence and harsh punishment.¹²⁹ McFague describes the dominant western historical model of God in simple terms; this is as the absolute monarch ruling over his kingdom. She finds three problems with this model that include 1.) God being distant from the world because he is the high and mighty King,¹³⁰ 2.) God relating only to the human world, because the model is anthropocentric,¹³¹ and 3.) God controlling the world through domination or benevolence, both of which are tendencies of Kings and patriarchal fathers.¹³² Additionally, the direct implication of the monarchical imagery, McFague asserts

¹²⁴ Jacques Derrida, “White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy,” *New Literary History* 6 (1974): 42.

¹²⁵ McFague, *Models of God*, 35.

¹²⁶ Ian Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigms: A Comparative Study in Science and Religion* (New York: Harpor & Row: 1974), 156.

¹²⁷ McFague, *Models of God*, 64-69.

¹²⁸ McFague, *Models of God*, 64-69.

¹²⁹ McFague, *Models of God*, 64-69.

¹³⁰ McFague, *Models of God*, 65.

¹³¹ McFague, *Models of God*, 67.

¹³² McFague, *Models of God*, 69.

In this picture God is worldless and the world is Godless: the world is empty of God's presence, for it is too lowly to be the royal abode. Time and space are not filled with God: the eons of human and geological time stretch as a yawning void back into the recesses, empty of divine presence; the places loved and noted on our earth, as well as the unfathomable space of the universe, are not the house of God....The king's power extends over the entire universe, of course, but his being does not: he relates to it externally, he is not part of it but essentially different from it and apart from it.¹³³

McFague advocates the need to replace this monarchical metaphor with a new model of God that captures the richness and complexity of the divine-human relationship that is suitable for modernity.¹³⁴ To this end, she proposes taking a more inclusive approach that addresses contemporary concerns and explores using the models of God as mother, lover, and friend.¹³⁵ She asserts that the organic model of the world as God's body expresses the profound immanence and transcendence of God.¹³⁶ When McFague writes, "The world is our meeting place with God,"¹³⁷ she means that God's immanence is universal and God's transcendence is worldly, which certainly aligns with a holistic approach to understanding God. McFague also suggests that because "God is the model of love,"¹³⁸ people can learn about God's love through the models they encounter in the world. She explains "...we perceive or become aware of God not as solitary individuals who meet God in moments of religious ecstasy but as workers--- parents, lovers, and friends --- in the world."¹³⁹ She advocates reorienting the trinity in terms of love by using the metaphors of mother, lover and friend to provide an expanded alternative to the

¹³³ McFague, *Models of God*, 65.

¹³⁴ McFague, *Models of God*, 69-87.

¹³⁵ McFague, *Models of God*, 69-87.

¹³⁶ McFague, *Models of God*, 77-78.

¹³⁷ McFague, *Models of God*, 185.

¹³⁸ McFague, *Models of God*, 125.

¹³⁹ McFague, *Models of God*, 185.

monarchical model.¹⁴⁰ McFague believes that personal images of God are suitable for today, however she does recognize the possible limits imposed by them,¹⁴¹ and although she does not provide one, she suggests considering alternatives to the personal model, “Nonpersonal metaphors would be either metaphors from nature (other animals or natural phenomena such as the sun, water, sky, and mountains)...”¹⁴² The dog as a model of God is one such proposal. As a metaphor of God, *Canis familiaris* provides a divine model for unconditional love, a model for non-judgmental acceptance and a model for companionship. These three divine qualities of the dog not only address McFague’s reoriented trinity of love in a single package, but the dog as a metaphor of God that models divine universality, which wholly integrates the sacred with the profane. The discussion that follows will focus on the dog as a divine model for unconditional love, for non-judgmental acceptance, for companionship, and for universality.

Unconditional Love

“The true measure of God’s love is that He loves without measure.” – Bernard of Clairvaux

Like all understanding, the concept of love is a human construct that is both bound and limited by the human point of view. Nevertheless, love is an inextricable facet of the human condition. People experience feelings of love, the desire to love, and the longing to be loved throughout the whole of their lives. People explain that human love is different from God’s love because divine love is perfect,¹⁴³ whereas human love is flawed. Human love is imperfect because it often becomes intertwined with things such as jealousy, control and manipulation.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ McFague, *Models of God*, 91.

¹⁴¹ McFague, *Models of God*, 79-82.

¹⁴² McFague, *Models of God*, 82.

¹⁴³ Psalms 18:30 OT.

¹⁴⁴ 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 NT.

In McFague's scheme whereby people can learn about God's love through the metaphors they encounter in the world, the dog provides a divine model of unconditional love. Mary Lou Randour suggests,

There really is no adequate way to explain love. This is not a failure, but rather a statement about its nature. We intuit and experience love, rather than know it rationally. It is the stuff of poetry, not prose; of mystery, not certainty. Love, like all that is sacred and holy, cannot be categorized, dissected, or ever completely penetrated by rational, conscious methods. Trying to grasp love with words is futile and can lead us away from it. Animals simply live love. With their help, we can too.¹⁴⁵

The dog provides a model of God's unconditional love because like God, *Canis familiaris* appears to give love freely. Webb explains, "When dogs get to know you, they love you naturally, automatically."¹⁴⁶ Dogs do not hold grudges when humans fail them, and they offer love no matter what, beyond all reasons that can be given. There is no better example of this than the mistreated dog that crawls up into the lap of the person who raised a hand to her. McFague describes this as agape;¹⁴⁷ this is a love that gives with no thoughts of return.¹⁴⁸ In her discussion, McFague also equates agape love with a parental love whereby, like a parent, God acknowledges, "It is good that you exist."¹⁴⁹ Similarly, humans interpret a dog's love as affirming a person's existence. A dog is always happy to see its owner. People understand the acknowledging wag of a tail, the approving lap of a tongue, an affectionate whine, or a dog's turning its muzzle flews into a submissive smile as examples of how their dog communicates "It is good that you exist."

¹⁴⁵ Randour, *Animal Grace*, 22.

¹⁴⁶ Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 125.

¹⁴⁷ McFague, *Models of God*, 104.

¹⁴⁸ "Love – Agape (Greek Word Study)," *Precept Austin Ministries Blog*, August 22, 2016, accessed March 13, 2018, <http://www.preceptaustin.org/love-agape>.

¹⁴⁹ McFague, *Models of God*, 107.

Unconditional love is the *promise* of divine love. In scripture, God says "...and lo, I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20).¹⁵⁰ Like God, the dog provides steadfast and dependable love even when a person's circumstances change rapidly. A dog's affection for a person does not waiver during personal turmoil or times of great pain; these are conditions when a person is most likely to be abandoned by other people and feel alone in the world. Like the shepherd who guards his flock all day, every day, a dog in the abode is present to its humans through all of life's trials and tribulations. What's more, in order to be loved, people do not need to manage their images around dogs, like they often feel obliged to do around other people. A person can let down their guard to reveal their authentic self in the darkest moments around their canine, and like God, the dog still loves them immeasurably. Garber explains that the U.S. Senator George Graham Vest from Missouri, while working as an attorney in 1870, spoke about the unconditional character of the canine during a famous closing argument:

A man's dog stands by him in prosperity and in poverty, in health and in sickness. He will sleep on the cold ground, where the wintry winds blow and the snow drives fiercely, if only he may be near his master's side. He will kiss the hand that has no food to offer. He will lick the wounds and sores that come in encounters with the roughness of the world. He guards the sleep of his pauper master as if he were a prince. When all other friends desert, he remains. When riches take wings, and reputation falls to pieces, he is as constant in his love as the sun in its journey through the heavens.¹⁵¹

The emotional life of dogs is not in question, as science has already determined that dogs do experience emotions. However, a discussion about a dog's affection for humans would not be complete without addressing the elephant in the room; this is the assertion that dogs show affection to their owners because they suffer from Stockholm Syndrome, which refers to the psychological condition that causes hostages to develop affection for their captors as a survival

¹⁵⁰ Matthew 28:20 NT.

¹⁵¹ Marjorie Garber and William Kenan, Jr., *Profiling Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 188-189.

strategy during captivity.¹⁵² There are many problems with this assertion, the first being that referring to the complexities of Stockholm Syndrome in such a basic manner is a gross oversimplification of the condition. Were the condition as simple as developing affection for one's captors, then it could be said that all infant and toddler children also suffer from the same condition. In the same sense that dogs are both protected from the dangers of the outside world and rely upon people to feed them, which resemble being held captive, so are children. What's more, data from the FBI's Hostage/Barricade System indicates that only 8% of hostage victims showed aspects of having Stockholm Syndrome.¹⁵³ This very small percentage of incidence among human hostages is drastically lower when compared to the suggestion that all dogs have the syndrome. It is also important to also note that hostage taking constitutes a violent and severe situation, in which a human hostage experiences terror and fearing for their life. These frightening circumstances of abduction are much different than the shared relationship between a dog and a person. In fact, causes of Stockholm Syndrome include the idea that terror and fear initiate a coping mechanism for survival.¹⁵⁴ Here, a distinction should be drawn between being held hostage and being domesticated. A hostage is imprisoned against their will. In contrast, the dog is an example of a domesticated animal that "...acceded to the authority of man without constraint."¹⁵⁵ To be sure, Stockholm Syndrome, as it is currently understood, does not apply explain a dog's affection for humans.

¹⁵² Celia Jameson, "The Short Step From Love to Hypnosis: A Reconsideration of the Stockholm Syndrome," *Journal for Cultural Research* 14, no. 4, (2010): 337–355.

¹⁵³ Nathalie de Fabrique, Vincent B. Van Hasselt, Gregory M. Vecchi & Stephen J. Romano, "Common Variables Associated with the Development of Stockholm Syndrome: Some Case Examples," *Victims & Offenders*, vol. 2, no. 1, (2007): 91-98.

¹⁵⁴ DA Alexander and S. Klein, "Kidnapping and Hostage-Taking: A Review of Effects, Coping and Resilience" *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 102, no 1, (January 2009): 16–21.

¹⁵⁵ Schuler, *Dogs*, 12.

Non-judgmental Acceptance

Canis familiaris also provides a divine model of non-judgmental acceptance. To be sure, a dog will accept a person whether she is a queen or a pauper. Unlike their human counterparts, dogs do not ascribe meaning and judgment to labels such as “disabled” or “criminal.” A dog does not care about the color of a person’s skin, what wrongs they have done in the past, their political views, or how they dress. Webb explains, “Animals show us that God loves waste, that God identifies with complexity and excess and not just order and organization.”¹⁵⁶ The dog is inclusive in its acceptance of people, and like biblical Parable of the Great Banquet described by Luke (14:15-24) where it is written, “Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame’,”¹⁵⁷ the dog also invites the outcasts to partake in the fulfillment of joy. Through non-judgmental acceptance, as a metaphor of God, dogs find the beloved to be valuable. McFague describes this type of love as eros, and links it to salvation and healing.¹⁵⁸ Through accepting the outcasts, the dog mirrors a God who suffers with the suffering. Salvation occurs in knowing that one does not suffer alone and healing comes in feeling valued as a beloved. Additionally, the sense of fellowship that results from relating to all who live inclusively facilitates feelings of compassion and empathy, which also promote healing. Prison dog programs offer a very good working example of this concept.¹⁵⁹ In these programs, prison

¹⁵⁶ Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 121.

¹⁵⁷ Luke 14:15-24 NT.

¹⁵⁸ McFague, *Models of God*, 129.

¹⁵⁹ Steve Fentress, *Have You Ever Spelled Dog Backwards?* (California: Aventine Press, 2007), 95-96.

inmates may be assigned rescue dogs to train for eventual re-homing in the outside world,¹⁶⁰ or they may train pups as service dogs for the disabled and law enforcement.¹⁶¹ The dogs-in-training remain with the prisoners full-time and through the course of their relationship, the prisoner experiences non-judgmental acceptance from the dog.¹⁶² Often times, a person experiences healing that results from being with the dog. The Healing Species Prison Program reports, "...changes among inmates is noticed by others who see their character developed by expressions of compassion, responsibility, selflessness, empathy for others."¹⁶³

Companionship

The dog also provides a divine model of companionship. This is the idea of God as friend. McFague equates this with *philia*;¹⁶⁴ this is a love that shares and works towards a vision of good.¹⁶⁵ She describes this unique relationship, "...friendship is a free, reciprocal, trustful bonding of persons committed to a common vision."¹⁶⁶ Friendships sustain in that there is joy in being together with others, and friendships create community because in these relationships there is concern for others. Additionally, friendships accentuate interdependence. They are the freest of all relationships because they are voluntary and because, as C.S. Lewis explains, friendships

¹⁶⁰ Inmates Who are Giving Back, "Dog on Death Row Get Second Chance," *Healing Species*, 2013, accessed March 13, 2018. <http://www.healingspecies.com/programs/prison-program>.

¹⁶¹ Puppies Behind Bars, "Programs," *Puppies Behind Bars*, accessed March 13, 2018, <http://www.puppiesbehindbars.com/explosive-detection-canine-program>.

¹⁶² Fentress, *Spelled Dog Backwards*, 96-97.

¹⁶³ Inmates Who are Giving Back, "Dog on Death Row Get Second Chance," *Healing Species*, 2013, accessed January 7, 2018. <http://www.healingspecies.com/programs/prison-program>.

¹⁶⁴ McFague, *Models of God*, 159.

¹⁶⁵ McFague, *Models of God*, 163.

¹⁶⁶ McFague, *Models of God*, 171.

are unnecessary.¹⁶⁷ Friendships with dogs are free because the bonds are voluntary, and there is no expectation of quid pro quo. Dogs and people chose one another. To be sure, not every person may like dogs. Others may like dogs but may not want to have a dog for any number of reasons. To be sure, ultimately a person chooses to have a dog. Similarly, in a home with many family members or with multiple dogs, a particular dog may choose a particular family member to bond strongly with. In this case, the dog may wait by the door for their chosen member to return home or may follow that chosen person around endlessly from room to room just for the purpose of being close to that person. What's more, a dog does not demand to be walked because she gave a person comfort after a fight with her mother-in-law. She gave that person comfort out of concern for her, and the dog is unlikely to hold a grudge if that person does not walk her. And, comparable to God as a friend who does not betray, neither does the dog. Dogs are authentic by nature and do not have any hidden agendas. Friendships with dogs are sustaining because shared activities, such as playing, walking and petting are mutually pleasurable. Webb explains, "I want to compare God to the companion of a dog, somebody who cares just for the joy of caring."¹⁶⁸ Fentress suggests that because of the presence of ego, human-human relationships are two-way streets that separate people from one another, ultimately undermining humanitarianism.¹⁶⁹ He illustrates how a person might experience the absence of ego on the part of the dog in a friendship with a canine companion:

Consider one who always *chooses* to treat you with dignity and respect, never demonstrating an unkind feeling toward you regardless of your failure to reciprocate. Constantly, your friend expresses a positive attitude toward you, always revealing

¹⁶⁷ David J. Theroux, "Mere Friendship: Lewis on a Great Joy," *C.S. Lewis*, July 20, 2009, accessed March 19, 2018, <http://www.cslewis.com/mere-friendship-lewis-on-a-great-joy/>.

¹⁶⁸ Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 123.

¹⁶⁹ McFague, *Models of God*, 93-94.

optimism, always greeting your appearance with true joy, and truly rejoicing in your presence.¹⁷⁰

Fentress is describing the dog modeling God as friend. In the absence of ego, relationships can become interdependent and work towards the collaborative vision of fellowship and fosters the common good.

Universality

Like God, the dog is universal. Scripture says, “I am a God who is everywhere and not in one place only” (Jeremiah 23:23).¹⁷¹ The Gospel of Thomas 77b says “Split a piece of wood; I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there.”¹⁷² It can be said that God is present in every moment. This is how dogs live: in the present moment, every moment. Unlike people, dogs do not regret, or get stunted by past mistakes. They do not get trapped in worry about what the future may hold. Instead, like God, they respond fully, with open and willing hearts, to the conditions of the moment. This is one way they are universal.

Dogs as models of God are also universal because they incorporate McFague’s reorientated trinity of love in a single source. McFague uses the metaphors of God as mother, God as lover and God as friend to undergird her vision of a new holistic sensibility. She ascribes a type of love to each of these metaphors, agape, eros, and philia, which reorients the traditional blessed trinity to one of love. God as mother is agape, the love that gives with no thought of reason. God as lover is eros, the love that finds the beloved valuable. God as friend is philia, the love that shares and works for the vision of the good. As a non-personal metaphor, or model

¹⁷⁰Fentress, *Spelled Dog Backwards*, 99-100.

¹⁷¹ Jeremiah 23:23 OT.

¹⁷² “The Gospel of Thomas. II, 2.” *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, trans. Thomas O. Lambdin, ed. James M. Robinson and Richard D. Smith (New York: HarperCollins, 1990), 124-38. *The Gnostic Society Library*, accessed March 14, 2018, <http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/gthlamb.html>.

taken from nature, the dog as a model of God provides a divine model for unconditional love, non-judgmental acceptance and companionship from one source, thus rendering it universal as a model of God. Webb asserts, “Nevertheless, everyone hears at a young age that dog is God spelled backward, suggesting a connection between the two that is more than wordplay to dog lovers. Is it so strange to claim that God loves us like we love our dogs, indeed, that those two loves are the very same thing?”¹⁷³

Finally, *Canis familiaris* as a model of God is universal because the dog combines the sacred and the profane. As a domesticated animal that resides in the human home, the dog is a representative of the natural world. On the one hand, the true animal character of dogs represents the vulgar side of nature. Dogs eliminate and reproduce in full view; they greet one another by sniffing and licking nether regions; they roll in, consume, and vomit unsavory matter; and they do so many other things that humans consider to be crude and unacceptable. What’s more, the dog maintains a low status within human social circles, and dating back to the Christian and Middle Ages, Mery Explains, “The word ‘dog’ became an insult and all thieves and murderers were described as ‘curs.’ ”¹⁷⁴ On the other hand, the lowly dog provides a divine model for unconditional love, non-judgmental acceptance and companionship that instructs people about God’s love. The Rabbi Jonathan Slater teaches:

So, people turn to their dogs for solace, and for affirmation. In offering love to their dogs, and receiving love in return, their hearts find ease. Resentment thins, anger abates, confusion settles down. Dogs, responding with love, meet our love, inviting its growth. Received without judgment or challenge, we can once again allow our love to flow. Their unconditional love allows us to practice unconditional love.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 125.

¹⁷⁴ Mery, *Life, History, and Magic*, 45.

¹⁷⁵ Rabbi Jonathan Slater, “God Loves Like a Dog,” *Rabbi Paul Kipnes Blog*, 2013, accessed January 7, 2018, <http://www.paulkipnes.com/god-loves-like-dog/>.

As both a representative of the profane and the sacred, the dog simultaneously embodies this dichotomy, signifying holism.

Summary and Conclusions

Thus, relationships with dogs have the capacity to connect people to the good life and to God using a two-pronged approach. This chapter presented information that explored ways that the dog, as a focal concern, generates wealth and leads to the good life by examining the philosophical underpinnings of various influential philosophers and it also proposed a new metaphor: The dog as model of God. Religious, ontological and phenomenological concepts regarding this proposed metaphor of God were discussed in tandem with the theological perspective of Sally McFague.

The information in the first part of this chapter investigated ways that the dog as a focal thing cultivates wealth and the good life . It began with an overview of Borgmann's scheme. According to him, wealth is experienced when a selective approach to relegate technology to a place of lesser importance in daily life. Borgmann explains that this occurs when focal things are used in focal practices. In his discourse, Borgmann references Aristotle's philosophy, explaining that the good life is one in which a person flourishes by living well and doing well. Borgmann also explains Aristotle's idea that excellence in a person's life is determined by the complexities of the faculties that the person develops. Aristotle's idea of complexity was discussed in greater detail. The discussion began with a focus on both his and Charles Darwin's historical writings about dogs that highlighted the complexities and intricacies inherent in relating to dogs. To be sure, as a person develops the various skills involved in the work of building a positive relationship with a dog, that person can achieve excellence, and hence happiness. For Aristotle, a happy life is a good life, and since happiness is an end itself, the good

life is sacred. The third part of this first section concerning the good life delved into Borgmann's questioning if a device can ever become a focal thing. By specifically addressing the dog as device and incorporating Borgmann's criteria that the device must transform into something that fulfills and centers a person's world, the simple answer to this question is "yes." However, this answer is contingent in that the person must engage with the dog and a.) connect with the natural world through the dog, or b.) cross the human-canine divide in some way. The discussion in the next section examined Borgmann's three directions to personal reform through relationships with dogs. A person could impose limits on technology by 1.) creating a clearing, or space to spend time with a dog; 2.) simplifying the context, or doing things to make daily life with a dog easier; and 3.) extending the sphere of engagement, or doing things oneself for a dog. The discussion in the final section in the first part of this chapter explored relationships with dogs as they facilitate the traditional virtues of world citizenship, gallantry, charity, and family, all of which are a measure of wealth and the good life. It was determined that *Canis familiaris*, as a focal concern, can inform a person about each of these traditional concepts.

The discussion in the second part of this chapter proposed a new metaphor that connects people to God; this is the dog as a model of God. Because Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and Søren Kierkegaard all believed that God was necessary for a good life, and religious traditions explain that God *is* love, the discussion centered on love. The first section of this chapter provided an overview of McFague's theological perspective regarding models of God in modernity. Her writing asserts an urgent need to replace the monarchical metaphor with a new model of God that captures the richness and complexity of the divine-human relationship that is suitable for contemporary life. The next three sections provided an exploration about how the dog models unconditional love, nonjudgmental acceptance and companionship in a God-like fashion. As a

model of unconditional love, the dog, like God, gives love freely with no thoughts of return. As a model of God's nonjudgmental acceptance, the inclusive attitude of the dog finding value in the beloved was illustrated. As a model of Godly companionship, the dog was shown to be a voluntary friend whose abandonment of ego enables her to work in fellowship toward a vision of good. The discussion in the final section of this chapter explored how as a metaphor of God, the dog models divine universality by constantly living in the moment, incorporating McFague's reoriented trinity of love in a single source, and simultaneously representing the sacred and the profane. In this regard, McFague would likely agree that *Canis familiaris* provides a truly holistic model that is fitting for modernity.

Hence, when examined within the theoretical framework of Borgmann's philosophy concerning the good life and through the lens of Theology as a prospective "Model of God" in Sally McFague's scheme, understanding regarding encountering the sacred through relationships with dogs is furthered. Not only can a person experience the sacred both by building positive relationships with dogs and through the traditional virtues of excellence, but interactions with dogs may also serve to impose limits on the pernicious rule of technology in modern life. Additionally, when analyzed in McFague's scheme, the dog as a model of God offers a plausible alternative for remythologizing the relationship between God and the world. Through this analysis, it was also proposed that the dog as metaphor not only unifies her trinity of love, but also represents a non-personal model. To be sure, the domestic dog as a model of God quite possibly represents the ultimate reorientation for contemporary life.

Chapter V

Home Sapiens-Canis Familiaris Relationships, Myth and Matrix

Dogs are not our whole life, but dogs make our lives whole.

—Roger Caras

Introduction

The discussions in previous chapters have examined the relationship that human beings have with *Canis familiaris* in the modern era. More importantly, these earlier discussions have also explored ways in which a person's relationship with a dog can orient that person to the wholeness and richness of real experiences that not only lend themselves to living a meaningful life, but also usher in the good life and connect a person to the Divine. To be sure, technology plays a role in fostering positive and harmonious associations with dogs, as owners often turn to any number of tools for assistance when relating to their canine counterparts. Collars, leashes, crates and choices among a plethora of commercially prepared dog foods are a few examples of simple, yet concrete tools that ease everyday life with dogs. Similarly, training philosophies and behavior or veterinary science are a few examples of abstract tools that are available to be called upon to augment the relationship when needed. Any of these tools may be considered beneficial when usefully integrated into the relationship, and to some extent in the bigger scheme, integrated tools become part of the circumstances that ultimately enable a person to experience the sacred in a relationship with a dog. Additionally in modernity, there exist other tools and technologically mediated phenomena that are external to the relationship yet can help inform a person *about* the sacred in their relationships with *Canis familiaris*.

This chapter will provide information that This chapter explores how people connect to the sacred through experiences with *Canis familiaris* in modernity by examining ancient and cultural artifacts. This is done by sifting through the body of canine culture artifacts from ancient and contemporary contexts to identify those that function by providing openings to the sacred sphere, and then interpreting or evaluating significant artifacts for their purpose of connecting a person to the sacred sphere when called upon via the human-canine relationship in modernity. More specifically, it will 1.) investigate myth, sacred stories in their ancient and contemporary contexts, and 2.) test Stephen Spyker's matrix¹, a tool for evaluating technologies in terms of their impact on a person's spiritual life. The first aim will be to explore ancient myths about dogs and to provide examples of how these sacred stories, and ancient archetypes continue to guide people about dogs and relationships with canines in modernity. This first goal will be achieved by surveying artifacts that convey myths about the dog in ancient and modern contexts, while considering various philosophical perspectives, history of ideas, literary analysis, as well as perspectives of influential mythologists. This part of the investigation, however, will obviously be limited, as it leaves room for in-depth study, nuances, details, and exceptions that are beyond the scope of this writing. The second major goal of this chapter will use the eight critical lenses of Stephen Spyker's evaluative matrix to test the dog and observe the influence that the relationship with a dog has on a person's spiritual life. This exposition will include an overview of Spyker's intellectual perspective and then will correlate Spyker's eight critical lenses with canines and people's relationships with dogs by considering various religious, ontological, philosophical and phenomenological concepts.

The discussion presented in the first part of this chapter will selectively survey and present ancient myths about dogs as well as provide contemporary examples of sacred stories or

¹ Stephen Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality* (Vermont: Skylight Paths, 2007).

ancient archetypes that continue to inform people about relationships with dogs. The first section will begin with an overview of the nature and purpose of myth. The writing will explain that myth represents a sacred history that not only informs people about life and provides models for behavior, but myth may also facilitate cultural learning. The sections that follow will provide information about dogs in ancient oral history and will provide numerous examples of ancient myths across cultures that portray dogs and gods, dogs as cultural heroes, celestial canines, hellhounds, and will also include evaluative myths from antiquity that depict various characteristics of dogs. The second section of this first part of the chapter will explore stories of dogs in modern myth, suggesting that these stories have been refashioned to reflect cultural circumstance, which ultimately perpetuates the myth. It will be suggested that film, literary works and the Internet keep myths alive as openings for encountering the sacred, by providing examples of myths mediated by these technologies in modernity. The final discussion in the first part of this chapter will explore *Canis familiaris* and connections with Grail myth archetypes and symbolism in Lasse Hallström's 2017 film *A Dog's Purpose*.²

The second major goal of this chapter is to use the eight critical lenses of Stephen Spyker's evaluative matrix to test the dog and observe the influence that relationships with dogs have on people's spiritual lives in the age of information. The writing that follows in the second section of this chapter will begin with an overview Spyker's writings about how people can determine whether to use or reject technology to enhance their spiritual lives. Spyker, an engineer and technologist with 35 years experience at the intersection of technology and spirituality, asserts that technology influences the way people think about and practice faith. Next, the inquiry will discuss human-canine relationships as viewed through each of the eight

²*A Dog's Purpose*, directed by Lasse Hallström (Amblin Entertainment, 2017), DVD (Universal Pictures, 2017).

lenses of Spyker's matrix. The eight lenses that Spyker presents when looking at spirituality and technology are: 1.) Boundary, 2.) Simplicity, 3.) Transparency, 4.) Community, 5.) Identity, 6.) Velocity, 7.) Connectivity and 8.) Liberty.³ Through the lens of boundary, or the starting place, it will be suggested that a person may develop awareness of thought constructions about their own concepts of spirituality, dogs, and relationships with them for the purposes of self-discovery that will foster further critical thinking. Next, *Canis familiaris* will be viewed through the simplicity lens to determine if relationships with them are harmonious with a spiritual way of life. Spyker's transparency lens reveals how the technology people use changes how they think and who they become. Using this lens, a historical snapshot of the human-canine bond will illustrate the shaping Spyker describes. The lens of community, an essential ingredient in a spiritual life, will be used to think about how relationships with dogs affect the experience of and relationship to community. Spyker's lens of identity concerns how technology shapes a person's identity and how a person identifies with a technology. To this end, explored will be the ideas of "knack" and how the nurturing of gifts with dogs influence identity. The velocity lens addresses the faster pace of modern life. Relationships with dogs will be evaluated regarding their ability to mediate experience. The lens of connectivity is about finding the sacred in the invisible relationships that constitute the emerging view of reality. Finally, the lens of liberty will evaluate *Canis Familiaris* in terms of the ultimate promise to be fully human and live in concert with the divine. The use of Spyker is both a necessary and useful final task for this work because his matrix not only provides an opportunity to rigorously test the dog by working through the components of the spiritual life, but also testing the dog through Spyker's matrix draws together the findings from the previous chapters in this study.

³ Spyker, *Technology of Spirituality*.

Overview of Myth

Myth, according to Mircea Eliade, "...narrates a sacred history; it relates to an event that took place in primordial time, the fabled time of the 'beginnings.'"⁴ The myth is a traditional story that deals with important matters concerning human existence such as explaining the early history of a people, a practice or belief, or a social or natural phenomenon.⁵ These stories usually take the form of symbolic narratives that have been forged in the folk tradition and have been passed down from one generation to the next.⁶ Gerald and Loretta Hausmann explain, "Myth is the closest thing we have to sacred oral history."⁷ Since antiquity, myths have been adopted, and then adapted into a particular community; this is a fashioning that includes making subtle changes in the story, which facilitate an appropriate "fit" of the myth into a particular set of cultural circumstances. Borgmann asserts, "A myth does not just aid survival; it defines what truly human life is."⁸ Thus, the constant evolution of the narrative over time throughout history embodies the collective knowledge of humanity. To be sure, as the timeless themes in the narratives have been re-fashioned by every culture throughout history, ancient themes have perpetuated into modernity. Because myth continuously transcends and includes the whole of human existence, the narratives provide a method by which humanity discovers its universal oneness with nature. Campbell explains, "Myths are clues to the potentiality of spirituality of the

⁴ Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (Illinois: Harper and Row, 1963), 5.

⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary, online*, s.v. "myth," accessed April 14, 2018, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/us/myth>.

⁶ Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 6-25.

⁷ Gerald and Loretta Hausman, *The Mythology of Dogs* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 6.

⁸ Borgmann, *Technology*, 207.

human life.”⁹ According to him, this is not only about connecting with the universe and humanity’s place in it, but it is also about *experiencing* life -- from within.

Myth is a means of spiritual vision. The primary appeal of myth is to the human imagination, connecting with the human intuitive sense of "knowing." Myth taps into Carl Jung's idea of humankind's collective unconscious as an attempt to illuminate, explain, or provide a comprehensive explanation of the world and the people who are a part of it.¹⁰

Campbell explains that the richness of myth appeals to a person’s inner life and asserts, “We’re so engaged in doing things to achieve purposes of outer value that we forget that the inner value, the rapture that is associated with being alive, is what it’s all about.”¹¹ He further suggests that myths not only teach people to turn inward, but these stories also serve valuable functions that reconcile a person’s experience of the outside world with their inner reality.¹² In other words, by serving mystical, cosmological, sociological and pedagogical utilities, myths can inform individuals about their own lives. Campbell describes the overarching function of myth, “What myths are for is to bring us into a level of consciousness that is spiritual.”¹³

The creative allure of myths is that they are rooted in stories that spark unconscious memories of age-old matters that intrigued primitive peoples. Eliade explains that myths “...narrate not only the origin of the World, of animals, of plants, and of man, but also all the primordial events in consequence of which man became what he is today—mortal, sexed,

⁹ Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 5.

¹⁰ Carl Jung, “Concept of Collective Unconscious at Jung,” *Carl Jung*, accessed April 14, 2018, http://www.carl-jung.net/collective_unconscious.html.

¹¹ Campbell, *Power of Myth*, 6.

¹² Campbell, *Power of Myth*, 11-12.

¹³ Campbell, *Power of Myth*, 14.

organized in a society, obliged to work in order to live, and working in accordance with certain rules.”¹⁴ As myths perpetuate, they are processed through the individual imagination and then they become accepted and integrated as truths to the person.¹⁵ Ultimately, myth connects the whole of society as a representation of cultural learning.¹⁶ A society's ability to respond to the collective dream enables self-healing and the fulfillment of spiritual needs. Eliade suggests, that a myth is “‘living,’ in the sense that it supplies models for human behavior and, by that very fact, gives meaning and value to life.”¹⁷

What separates myth from historical reality is the cyclical nature of the myth. History is linear in nature; these are specific, clearly identifiable occurrences at explicit and particular points in time. When the human person relates to the outer world of history, he or she understands it as a series of events that occur in a specific order, under an identifiable and cognitive set of circumstances. In contrast, the myth is cyclical; it appeals to the innermost self, and its mystical nature capacitates continual transformation and renewal; this is a feat that cannot be achieved by history. This is not to say that the origins or symbols present in myth must be devoid of any historical orientation, but rather, that the myth itself must possess elements that appeal to the human imagination. Additionally, Eliade explains “‘Living’ a myth, then, implies a genuinely ‘religious’ experience, since it differs from the ordinary experience of everyday life.”¹⁸

¹⁴ Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 11.

¹⁵ Campbell, *Power of Myth*, 82-83.

¹⁶ Campbell, *Power of Myth*, 55.

¹⁷ Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 2.

¹⁸ Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 19.

Dogs and Ancient Myth

This section will selectively survey ancient myths about dogs. More specifically, this section will present information about dogs in ancient oral history and provide numerous examples of ancient myths across cultures in a variety of subsections that include: dogs and gods, dogs as cultural heroes, celestial canines, and hellhounds. The final sub-section will present some evaluative myths from antiquity that depict various characteristics of dogs.

Dogs and Gods

As explained in Chapter II (The Dog & Nature), the true beginnings of the human-canine bond are still unknown. History suggests that humans and early canines shared an association as partners on the hunt in antiquity. Science asserts that the domestic dog, as it is known today, evolved from wolves. However, ancient mythology offers a number of stories that illustrate the primordial existence of the dog. Leach provides five examples of dogs that accompany a deity in pre-creation myths. Her accounts include the Kato Indian myth of Nagaicho, a dog who accompanies the Creator as he covers the face of the earth with growing things.¹⁹ Leach astutely comments, “Nowhere in the story is any mention made of the creator creating the dog—evidently because he *had* a dog.”²⁰ Leach also tells the account of the Shawnee Indian creatress Kukumthena (Our Grandmother), whose grandson and dog follow her as she finishes and perfects the new world.²¹ Leach relates the tale of the Micmac Indian’s creator Gluskap, who has more than one dog as he makes the world.²² She tells the story of how the faithful “agile dog” companion, from the Iranian myth, helps the heroic Mithra kill the bull from which plants and

¹⁹ Maria Leach, *God Had a Dog* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1961), 3.

²⁰ Maria Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 3.

²¹ Maria Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 5.

²² Maria Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 6.

animals spring forth onto the earth.²³ Finally, Leach recounts the Philippine myth of the Skygod Kapigat who creates mountains, hills and valleys in the flat world so that he can hear the echo of his dogs barking.²⁴

There are thousands of creation myths that explain how the earth was made, and many that include the idea that the creator also created all the animals, which includes the dog. However, there are a small number of myths that explain how dogs, specifically, came into being. In his book *L'esprit de bêtes*, French naturalist Alphonse Toussenel writes “Au commencement, Dieu créa l’homme, et le voyant si faible il lui donna le chien” (In the beginning, God created man, but seeing him so feeble, He gave him the dog).²⁵ Leach shares the general European Biblical Legend where the dog was created to help protect the herds. She writes, “Jesus was left to watch the sheep and in order to drive off threatening wolves created the dog to help him.”²⁶ Christian religious philosopher John S. Mtibi shares the African creation account of the Anuaks, whereby the creator Juok creates the dog before making the first human pair.²⁷ He explains that when Juok makes the man and the woman, they are mere children. When God sees the hairless, funny looking bodies of the pair, he tells dog to throw the humans away. Instead, the dog saves the humans by hiding them in a tree. Dog feeds and nurtures the children, and when they get too big for the tree the humans go to the country and build a house. When they eventually grow up, becoming a man and a woman, dog brings them to meet God. As the

²³ Maria Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 7.

²⁴ Maria Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 9.

²⁵ Alphonse Toussenel, *L'esprit des Bêtes: Zoologie Passionnelle* (Paris: Librairie Societaire, 1847), 144.

²⁶ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 31.

²⁷ John Mtibi, “A Live Dog Does Not Refuse a Bone: The Role of Animals in the Spirituality of African Religion and Religiosity” (*International Conference of African Spirituality*, Nairobi, Kenya, May 23-25 2007), 1.

legend goes, according to Mtibi, “When the dog brought them to God, Juok wanted to kill them, but the dog asked him to let them live as his brother and sister.”²⁸

In addition to the five pre-creation dogs and a small number of myths that specifically address the creation of the dog, Leach identifies 71 mythical gods who had companion dogs to assist them in some manner.²⁹ She writes about dogs that carried gods on their backs, acting as vehicles that moved these deities from place to place.³⁰ She describes dogs who were messengers of the god and those who acted as watchdogs or guards for the gods.³¹ Importantly, Leach also identifies myths where gods manifest themselves in the dog.³² A familiar example is the Ancient Egyptian god Anubis, depicted as a man with the head of a dog, who guided and protected the spirits of the dead. His was a vital activity, since safe passage to afterlife was of utmost importance to the Egyptians. Anubis is associated with the eye of Horus, because he was responsible for awakening and guiding mummies to the god of the underworld, Osiris.³³ In the *Book of the Dead of Hunefer*, Anubis is illustrated leading Hunefer to the judgment scales where he supervises the weighing of the mummy’s heart against a feather (see fig 5.1). The British Museum explains, “The ancient Egyptians believed that the heart was the seat of the emotions, the intellect and the character, and thus represented the good or bad aspects of a person’s life.”³⁴

²⁸ Mtibi, “A Live Dog,” 1.

²⁹ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 10.

³⁰ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 11-13.

³¹ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 13-17.

³² Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 17-20.

³³ Caroline Seawright, “Anubis, God of Embalming and Guide and Friend of the Dead,” *Tour Egypt*, accessed April 14, 2018, <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/anubis.htm>.

³⁴ The British Museum, “Hunefer’s Judgement in the Presence of Osiris,” *Smarthistory*, December 11, 2015, accessed September 30, 2017, <https://smarthistory.org/hunefers-judgement-in-the-presence-of-osiris/>.

Additionally, Leach explains dogs are not only depicted in myth as symbols of a god, but she also provides dozens of examples of dogs that accompany a god.³⁵ Although she expresses that it is not inevitably the case, Leach asserts, “The dog which accompanies the god is nearly always sacred to the deity...”³⁶ She includes the example of the Aztec Indian Xolotl, who was the faithful dog of the sun (god) who accompanies him during his daily journey across the sky.³⁷ In a well-known Aztec myth, Xolotl was sent by the sun to the underworld to bring back bones of ancestors in order to create the first pair of humans. As the story goes, while leaving he underworld Xolotl gets caught with the bones in his mouth and the god of death chases him. Running in terror, the dog drops the bones after tripping on a rock and the shattered pieces of the bone yield the all the tribes and races of humankind.³⁸

These ancient myths might not only have functioned to work out the mysterious origins of the dog, explaining that the dog simply has existed from the beginning as in the case of the pre-creation myths, but they also symbolically illustrate the dog’s qualities as companion and helper to humans. Most notably, in each case the myth associates the dog with a supreme being; this is an association that provides the dog with a spiritual dimension. Mtibi explains that these myths not only generate “awareness of the invisible world” but they also are an “invitation for further reflection.”³⁹ Since the dog is inherently spiritual through its ancient association with deities, each time these myths are perpetuated they provide openings to connect a sacred past with the profane earthly existence of the present via the human imagination.

³⁵ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 22-30.

³⁶ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 22.

³⁷ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 27.

³⁸ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 40-41.

³⁹ Mtibi, “A Live Dog,” 5.

Canine as Cultural Hero

According to Gerald and Loretta Hausman, “In the myths of our ancient past – that is to say, the prehistory of our race—the dog wasn’t relegated to servitude, but delegated by God to lend a helping hand to humankind.”⁴⁰ Examples of such myths include some Native American stories of the dog stealing fire and bringing it to humans. The Wishok Indians of California tell of how the dog creates fire by rubbing two sticks together.⁴¹ In a myth told by the Nyanga people of the Belgian Congo, the dog Rúkuba belonging to the high god Nyamurairi gives fire to the mortal Nkhánga to bring back to his village. When the high god discovers what his dog has done, he becomes angry and his dog runs away to save himself from punishment. When the dog arrives at the home of Nkhánga, the man happily welcomes the dog and feeds him. Later in the myth, the dog is described as rightfully resting by the fire because he supplied it.⁴²

Chinese mythology tells the story of how a dog brings rice to humanity after a great flood. Leach writes:

But they found the face of the earth washed bare, and they had nothing to eat. Mankind was about to starve. Then one day a man saw an old dog come crawling out of a ditch. And he noticed that a number of yellow seeds were stuck to his muddy tail. These he planted and after a time young slender shoots came up. The man watched them with eagerness and anxiety, and in time there was a rice crop. And so the people ate. The Chinese forever after have been grateful to the dog for rice.⁴³

The importance of these myths lies in recognizing just how valuable things such as fire and rice were to the lives of ancient people. Fire is precious because it not only kept humans warm and could be used for cooking, but it also protected people from dangerous predators. Similarly, rice

⁴⁰ Hausman, *Mythology of Dogs*, 5.

⁴¹ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 43.

⁴² Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 44-45.

⁴³ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 46.

is unique because it can grow in wet environments where other crops cannot survive.⁴⁴

Additionally, in terms of importance, not only was rice “...a major crop in Sri Lanka as early as 1000 BC,”⁴⁵ but it also continues to be a staple food that directly feeds more people than any other crop in the world.⁴⁶ Stories that depict the dog as bestowing precious things with life-sustaining capacities unto humanity, endow the canine with mystical qualities.

Celestial Canines

When people turn their eyes to the sky, they experience a connection to the great mystery that lies within the heavens. The theater in the night sky is a stage for many heavenly bodies: planets, stars and groups of stars that form constellations. Greek and Roman mythology not only influenced the naming of these heavenly bodies, but these stories come back to life each night as these glowing bodies preserve a sacred space while they dance across the evening sky. Leach writes, “There are many dogs in the sky,”⁴⁷ and in Chapter III (Dog as Focal Thing) it is suggested that the stars named for dogs eternally unite the canine on earth with the heavens above. What’s more, the stories of the divine spirits associated with the dog stars are timeless narratives that are retold each night as the skies of antiquity encapsulate the modern world below.

There are myths associated with the well-known dog-named constellations Canis Major, which contains the Dog Star Sirius, and Canis Minor, or little dog. In Greek mythology, Canis

⁴⁴ Riceapedia, “Rice as a Crop,” *Riceapedia*, accessed April 14, 2018, <http://ricepedia.org/rice-as-a-crop>.

⁴⁵ Riceapedia, “History of Rice Cultivation,” *Riceapedia*, accessed April 14, 2018, <http://ricepedia.org/culture/history-of-rice-cultivation>.

⁴⁶ Riceapedia, “The Global Staple,” *Riceapedia*, accessed April 14, 2018, <http://ricepedia.org/rice-as-food/the-global-staple-rice-consumers>.

⁴⁷ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 56.

Major, Sirius, and Canis Minor are often referred to as the dogs of Orion the hunter.⁴⁸ Canis Major is depicted pursuing the Hare, represented by the constellation Lepus, which is found at Orion's feet. Canis Major, whose name translates into "greater dog" in Latin, was the most important constellation in ancient times because it contains the brightest star in the sky, which made it useful for navigation. Ian Ridpath explains that the Greek didactic poet "Aratus referred to Canis Major as the guard-dog of Orion, following on the heels of its master and standing on its hind legs with Sirius carried in its jaws."⁴⁹ Although Sirius is identified as Orion's dog in both Greek and Roman mythology, it has also been named as the dog which guarded Europa; Laelaps, the hound of Procris; and Orthrus, the brother of Cerberus.⁵⁰ In the *Illiad*, Homer likens the shine of Achilles' armor to Sirius:

Him the old man Priam was first to behold with his eyes, as he sped all-gleaming over the plain, like to the star that cometh forth at harvest-time, and brightly do his rays shine amid the host of stars in the darkness of night, the star that men call by name the Dog of Orion.⁵¹

The Greeks and Romans believed the star had a heating effect and named the long, hot days from July 31-August 11 "The Dog Days" after the star. This is the time when the star is closest to the sun, and the Greeks and Romans correlated this with lengthening drought, scorched crops, people getting sunstroke and dogs going mad from the heat. Leach writes, "The Romans used to sacrifice red-haired puppies to the Dog Star in the spring (late April), with prayers for the preservation of new-sown seeds, in the hope of forestalling blight and the burning of crops by

⁴⁸ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 58.

⁴⁹ Ian Ridpath, "Canis Major The Greater Dog," *Ian Ridpath Startales*, accessed October 15, 2017, <http://www.ianridpath.com/startales/canismajor>.

⁵⁰ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 58.

⁵¹ Homer, *The Iliad with an English Translation by A.T. Murray, Ph.D.* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann, Ltd., 1924), ln. 25-30. Accessed October 15, 2017. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hom.%20Il.%2022&lang=original>

Dog Star heat.”⁵² In the mythology of the Alaskan Inuit, Sirius is the “Moon Dog,” and the Blackfoot called it “Dog Face.”⁵³ The ancient Chaldea referred to it as “Dog Star that leads,” and Sirius was called “Dog of the Sun” in Assyria and Akkadia.⁵⁴

Canis Minor, or “lesser dog” from the Latin, is not only known as a dog of Orion, but is also representative of the little dog Maera in the Attican myth. The ancient account can be pieced together from different sources. Ian Ridpath explains that after the dog of wine Dionysus teaches Icarius to make wine, the mortal gives some of his wine to shepherds from Marathon for tasting. The shepherds do not take the time to water down the wine, and as a result they get frighteningly drunk. Never having been so drunk before, the shepherds become convinced that Icarius has poisoned them, so they kill him and bury his body under a tree. Icarius’s dog Maera sees the whole thing, and the hound bitch runs away howling to get Icarius’s daughter Erigone. When she finds the girl, the dog uses her teeth to lead her by her dress to the father’s body. Leach adds the detail of Erigone’s death by explaining that when the girl sees what has happened, Erigone becomes consumed with grief and hangs herself from the tree.⁵⁵ *UPenn* also explains that Maera kills herself by jumping into a well,⁵⁶ whereas *Greek Mythology* describes Maera as being so

⁵² Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 59.

⁵³ “Let’s Get ‘Sirius’ About the Dog Star, Sky’s Brightest Twinkler,” *Indian Country Today*, February 1, 2014, accessed April 14, 2018, <https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/environment/lets-get-sirius-about-the-dog-star-skys-brightest-twinkler/>.

⁵⁴ April Holloway, “The Ancient Wonder and Veneration of the Dog Star Sirius,” February 1, 2014, accessed April 14, 2018, <http://www.ancient-origins.net/news-history-archaeology/revered-ancient-times-sirius-set-shine-its-brightest-glory-week-001296>.

⁵⁵ Leach, *God had a Dog*, 58.

⁵⁶ University of Pennsylvania, “Icarius,” *Upenn*, accessed April 14, 2018, <http://www.classics.upenn.edu/myth/php/tools/dictionary.php?regexp=ICARIUS&method=standard>.

devastated by all of this that she jumps off a cliff to her death.⁵⁷ The *Constellation Guide* explains that Zeus set Maera (Canis Minor) and Erigone (Virgo) in the sky to remind people about this unfortunate story.⁵⁸ Ian Ridpath writes about the Athenian response to the disaster, “To atone for their tragic mistake, the people of Athens instituted a yearly celebration in honour of Icarus and Erigone.”⁵⁹ This piecemeal account of the myth is an example of the fluid nature of the oral tradition of ancient myth and the phenomenon of the myth changing in circumstances as the story was retold over time.

Cherokee mythology explains the Milky Way as that path “where the dog ran.”⁶⁰ Leach explains that one version of the story begins with a corn mill in some southern place. One morning, the people pounding the corn noticed that some corn meal was missing and they saw the tracks of a dog. The next night, they watched in secret until they saw a little dog come down from the north and begin to eat the white meal. When they chased him away with noisemakers, the meal that was stuck on his feet left a great white trail across the sky “where the dog ran.” Alternatively, Leach also explains that the Seminole Indians say that the Milky Way is the spirit road by which dogs travel together with their masters to their heavenly home.⁶¹

These myths were important stories in antiquity that helped people make sense of the world. The fact that Orion in the sky also had a dog that hunted rabbits connected the earthly activity to the spiritual realm. The narratives connected with Sirius, for example, not only

⁵⁷ Michael Karas and Charilaos Megas, “Maera,” *Greek Mythology*, accessed April 14, 2018, <https://www.greekmythology.com/Myths/Figures/Maera/maera.html>.

⁵⁸ Constellation Guide, “Canis Minor Constellation,” *Constellation Guide*, accessed April, 14, 2018, <http://www.constellation-guide.com/constellation-list/canis-minor-constellation/>.

⁵⁹ Ian Ridpath, “Canis Major The Greater Dog,” *Ian Ridpath Startales*, accessed October 15, 2017, <http://www.ianridpath.com/startales/canisminor.htm>.

⁶⁰ Leach, *God had a Dog*, 62.

⁶¹ Leach, *God had a Dog*, 62.

endowed the dog with magical powers, but they served as an explanation for why it was so hot at a certain time in the summer. The story of the mortal beings Maera and Erigone being placed in the eternal sky serve as a reminder of human frailty and also as a reason for ritual, thus uniting the sacred with the profane.

Hellhounds and Death

Not only are there myths about dogs in the heavens above, but there are also myths about dogs at the gates of hell. To be sure, the most notorious dog associated with death is Cerberus, the three dog-headed guardian of the underworld in Greek mythology.⁶² Cerberus was not regarded as an evil or vicious beast, but rather, as Melvin Peña explains, “In fact, Cerberus is a working dog; his task, to guard the gates of the underworld.”⁶³ His job was to make certain that everyone alive remained outside of the underworld, and that everyone dead did not escape the afterlife. At this time in human history Hades was not yet considered a place of damnation, so there was simply a place between the living and the non-living where Cerberus kept perpetual watch.⁶⁴ There are myths that involve Cerberus, such as the myth where Orpheus sedates Cerberus with music in an attempt to rescue his wife after she accidentally dies.⁶⁵ Another popular myth is the story where Hercules, as part of his 12 heroic labors to purify himself after killing his family, goes into the underworld and kidnaps Cerberus. Hercules does this by subduing the beast with his bare hands.⁶⁶ There are many notorious hellhound entities that have

⁶² Leach, *God had a Dog*, 135.

⁶³ Melvin Peña, “Meet Cerberus, Hellhound of Greek Mythology,” *Dogster*, October 15, 2016, accessed November 2, 2017, <http://www.dogster.com/lifestyle/meet-cerberus-the-hellhound-of-greek-mythology>.

⁶⁴ Melvin Peña, “Meet Cerberus.”

⁶⁵ Museum of Mythology, “Cerberus,” *Museum of Mythology*, accessed April 14, 2018, <http://www.museumofmythology.com/Greek/cerberus.htm>.

grown out of the ancient mythical Cerberus; these include the Hound of the Baskervilles, Cujo, and Harry Potter's "Fluffy."⁶⁷

There are other myths that associate dogs with the underworld. Hecate, the goddess of the underworld and witchcraft in Greek mythology, roamed the earth at night with her pack of red-eyed hellhounds.⁶⁸ It was said that only dogs could see her. Similarly, goddesses of the underworld in Semitic, Syro-Hittite, and Mesopotamia myths were accompanied by a pack of dogs hunting for lost souls.⁶⁹ Additionally, several North American Native American Indian tribes including the Iroquois, Huron, Ojibwa, Menominee, Seminole, and Central Eskimo all perpetuate myths that depict a dog as the guardian of the entrance or path to the otherworld.⁷⁰

Dogs in European mythology are often associated with death; this is most likely due to the fact that dogs were known to scavenge human bodies, even buried ones, if they were not burned. Dogs associated with death are most often depicted as being black in color, and in history there are a vast number of mythical stories about black dogs. Most often, the stories depict devilish black dogs such as England's Black Schuck,⁷¹ who was believed to cause the immediate death of any person who saw him.⁷² However, there are a few stories of benevolent black dogs, such as Coren's telling of the churchgoing Tollesbury Midwife, that insured safe

⁶⁶ Perseus Digital Library, "The Life and Times of Hercules," *Perseus Digital Library*, accessed April 14, 2018, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/Herakles/cerberus.html>.

⁶⁷ Melvin Peña, "Meet Cerberus."

⁶⁸ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 145.

⁶⁹ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 145.

⁷⁰ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 145.

⁷¹ Stanley Coren, *Gods, Ghosts and Black Dogs* (England: Velose Publishing, 2016), 47-51.

⁷² Coren, *Gods, Ghosts and Black Dogs*, 51.

passage for worthy-hearted travelers at night.⁷³ These dogs would protect travelers who were pure in heart from the devil, demons and witches.

Through this association with death and the afterlife, dogs served as guardians of church graveyards, known as Church Grims. Like Hellhounds, who are leashed to the spiritual world as guardians of the entrances to the world of the dead, Church Grims are the spirits of sacrificed dogs who guard graveyards by protecting the souls of the inhumed.⁷⁴ Interestingly, a Pet Yak columnist explains, “In cultures where cremation was common or [the dead were] placed in cairns, such as with the Celts, there was no association of dogs with death.”⁷⁵ This distinction illustrates how cultural circumstances contribute to the shaping of the myth.

For the ancients, the significance of associating dogs with death and the underworld perhaps served to acknowledge those animal qualities of humankind’s best friend that were mysterious and perhaps even frightening. To be sure, ancients were not aware that the scientific explanation of why dog’s eyes glow in the dark is the presence of a structure in the eye known as the *tapetum lucidum*.⁷⁶ The ancients did not know that this same structure is what endows the dog with extraordinary vision at dusk and dawn, making her both a formidable predator and protector. The ancients only knew that the dog possessed some mysterious qualities. They not only understood that the loyal dog could be a compassionate companion that fiercely protected its people, but they knew the canine could also be demonic both in the way it looked as well as in

⁷³ Coren, *Gods, Ghosts and Black Dogs*, 52-55.

⁷⁴ Graeme Davis “Black Dogs, Church Grims, and Hell Hounds,” *Roleplayer*, January 1993, accessed April 14, 2018, <http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/Roleplayer/Roleplayer30/GhostDogs.html>.

⁷⁵ Pet Yak, “Dogs in Mythology,” *Pet Yak*, 2015, accessed November 2, 2017, <http://www.petyak.com/dogs/general/articles/dogs-in-mythology>.

⁷⁶ Friderun Ankel-Simons, “The Tapetum Lucidum,” in *Primate Anatomy* (Massachusetts: Academic Press, 2007), accessed April 14, 2018, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/veterinary-science-and-veterinary-medicine/tapetum-lucidum>.

its ability to bite, growl, attack, and terrorize human beings. What must have been even more horrifying to the ancients was the fact that a hungry dog could, and would, monstrosly consume the flesh of dead people.

Characteristics of Dogs

In addition to the wealth of ancient myths that offer explanations for the dog's place in the cosmos, there is also an abundance of myths that provide accounts for various behavioral and physical characteristics of dogs. These stories, also known as explanatory or descriptive myths,⁷⁷ address a wide range of canine characteristics. For example, the Kiowa Indian's myth explains why the dog does not speak as people do.⁷⁸ The Gonds of Central India, and the Pardhans of the Mandla fashion their own accounts of how it came to be that the dog began to bark.⁷⁹ In contrast, the Nyanga myth of Rúkuba explains why the Basenji, in particular, does not bark. In his book *Gods, Ghosts and Black Dogs*, Stanley Coren provides a full account of the ancient myth, part of which explains,

'Now it appears that men will always be sending me here and there, taking messages and going on errands.' He thought to himself, 'All of this is happening because I can speak. If I couldn't speak, I could not be a messenger. So I know the solution to my problem, I will never speak again,' and from that day to this, the dog of the Nyanga people, the Basenji, has been barkless.⁸⁰

Among many other cultural myths explaining dog behaviors are accounts such as why dogs chase cats⁸¹ or deer,⁸² kill rats,⁸³ lift their legs,⁸⁴ and there are even myths that provide explanations as to why dogs sniff each other under the tail.⁸⁵

⁷⁷ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 199.

⁷⁸ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 210-211.

⁷⁹ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 209-210.

⁸⁰ Coren, *Gods, Ghosts and Black Dogs*, 112.

⁸¹ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 202-208.

Additionally, there are many myths that provide explanations for the physical features of dogs. The Hausman's provide the ancient Bornu account of the pair of Afghan Hounds that used their noses to plug holes that were leaking water into Noah's Ark during its tempestuous 40 days and 40 nights at sea, thus explaining in mythological terms "...why dogs have wet noses."⁸⁶ There are ancient accounts describing how the dog got its tail⁸⁷ and how dogs got their scent.⁸⁸ The delightful Creek Indian story of why the dog has short teeth explains that a discontented Dog went to his Maker asking for long teeth in order to fight off dangerous animals.⁸⁹ According to the narrative, God tells Dog to go to sleep over on a pile of skins and return for an answer in the morning. During the night, Dog does not sleep and instead gnaws on the skins because they smell so good. The next morning when Dog returns to God, the Maker sees the damage that Dog has done to the skins and refuses to grant his wish for long teeth. Swanton explains, "When he came on the morrow, his Maker said to him 'Behold what your short teeth have done in one night. Were I to make them longer, great destruction would result.'"⁹⁰ Additionally, there are myths about why dogs have black noses,⁹¹ and how the dog got fur.⁹² There is also the charming

⁸² Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 213.

⁸³ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 222.

⁸⁴ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 210.

⁸⁵ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 217-220.

⁸⁶ Hausman, *Mythology of Dogs*, 9.

⁸⁷ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 215-216.

⁸⁸ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 220-221.

⁸⁹ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 223.

⁹⁰ John Reed Swanton, *Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1929), 74.

⁹¹ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 202.

myth explaining why dogs whelp many puppies. Leach relates the acculturated nativity story as told by Laguna and Zuni Indians, “Because the dog was among the animals who kissed Mary after the birth of Jesus, the dog now possesses the blessing of great fertility and gives birth to large litters.”⁹³

Notably, Leach describes a sharp contrast in the explanatory stories of the same canine behavior or characteristic between different groups of people, further suggesting that culture impacts the shaping of the myth. She writes,

The explanatory story from primitive cultures reveals the keen observation and understanding and acceptance of the dog’s physical and mental makeup that has come from long association with the animal. Very seldom does the primitive tale carry an element of judgment. The tales from Western cultures, however, are more fanciful and rationalized, and especially those of Biblical reference carry a moralizing explanation that the dog is now thus and so (usually a reward or punishment) because of some god or bad deed performed long ago or some admirable or despicable character trait.⁹⁴

To be sure, sharing these explanatory and descriptive stories helped the ancients to make sense of their world before the intervention of science and reason. Because they contain supernatural elements and they appeal to the imagination, when called upon these myths created openings for connecting the earthly and spiritual realms. As the subject of these stories, whether the myth explained a behavioral or a physical characteristic, the dog provided the bridge between the profane and the sacred for both the storyteller and the listener. The Scientific Revolution, because it provided biological, genetic or behavioral evidence for answers, likely usurped the need for perpetuating explanatory myths such as these. Eliot explains, “Reason is a stiff-necked soldier whose saber blade has separated many a ‘This’ from ‘That,’ many a ‘Yes’ from ‘No,’ and

⁹² Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 214-215.

⁹³ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 201.

⁹⁴ Leach, *God Had a Dog*, 199.

many a fine insight from its life.”⁹⁵ In modernity, such stories are sometimes the subject of imaginative children’s books. Still, a person such as this writer can only wonder if a person might read the myth of why dog’s have wet noses in a writing such as this, and the next time they feel the poke of their beloved dog’s wet nose, instead of contemplating the biology of the wet nose, they may reach into their imagination and recall the story of Noah’s dogs, thereby connecting to the sacred. Perhaps that person may even share the tale with another individual in a passing conversation about a dog’s wet nose, thus perpetuating the myth.

Modern Myth

The section that follows will explore stories of dogs in modern myth, offering that old stories about dogs have been refashioned to reflect cultural circumstance, thus perpetuating the myth into modernity. The information will be presented in two sub-sections. The first sub-section will present examples of myths that are mediated and, more importantly, kept alive by modern technology. The second sub-section will provide information that explores *Canis familiaris* and Grail Myth archetypes in the popular contemporary film *A Dog’s Purpose*, thus perpetuating the greatest of all spiritual endeavors.

Dogs and The Modern Myth Makers

Over time in the evolution of humanity, not only did the rise of science cause logos to triumph over mythos, but also the spread of literacy caused the written word to supplant the oral tradition in the western world. During this time, people continued to fashion myths about dogs that reflected their cultural circumstances. After the widespread creation of the individual breeds, for example, stories became fashioned around a particular breed —far too many to include in this brief discussion. Nevertheless, Eliot explains, “Primal myths are built into our brains, our genes, and our blood. However distant they may seem, they still surround, embrace, imbue, and color

⁹⁵ Alexander Eliot, *The Universal Myths* (UK: McGraw Hill, 1976), 12.

human consciousness.”⁹⁶ In modernity, the universal myths, including those involving dogs, continue to stir in the depths of the human mind. References to canine archetypes in modernity perpetuate the myths of antiquity. For example, characteristics such as the faithfulness of a dog like Odysseus’s Argus, the protectiveness of Cerberus, or those relating to the ability to judge a person’s character as might be connected with Anubis perpetuate these mythic archetypes. Contemporary stories of a heroic dog such as Omar Eduardo River’s “Dorado,” or the German Shepherd “Cash” who remained next to her deceased owner’s body that are written about in Chapter III (Focal Things), no doubt stir up imaginings of Argus and Cerberus.

Campbell explains how myth perpetuates in modernity when he writes, “Myth must be kept alive. The people who can keep it alive are artists of one kind or another. The function of the artist is the mythologization of the environment and the world.”⁹⁷ In this age of technological proliferation, myth is disseminated through contemporary technological means such as film, literary works and the Internet. Characters like “Cujo” in Stephen King’s *Cujo* and “Fluffy” in JK Rowling’s *Harry Potter* discussed in the earlier section about Hellhounds and Death both engage the imagination of the reader and connect the reader to the spirit world. Films based on these literary works further introduce the added mystery of the inner workings of the technology itself. The character “Chewbacca” from George Lucas’s 1977 film *Star Wars* is another example. Campbell explains that this film uses mythological figures when he explains, “The first time I saw *Star Wars*, I thought, ‘This is a very old story in a very new costume.’ The story of the young man called to adventure, the hero going out facing the trials and ordeals, and coming back

⁹⁶ Eliot, *The Universal Myths*, 2.

⁹⁷ Campbell, *Power of Myth*, 85.

after his victory with a boon for the community.⁹⁸ *Star Wars* is a contemporary interpretation of the universal myth, and like other mythic tales of heroic journeys that include beloved dogs such as Homer's *Odyssey* and Chrétien de Troyes' *Perceval*,⁹⁹ this modern film also includes a canine figure. In *Star Wars*, many people identify Chewbacca, the fur covered best friend and loyal business partner of the human character Han Solo, as a science fiction canine. In fact, the original inspiration for Chewbacca was the writer's own dog named "Indiana." Aleksandra Andonovska quotes George Lucas himself when she explains,

I had an Alaskan Malamute when I was writing the film. A very sweet dog, she would always sit next to me when I was writing. And when I'd drive around, she'd sit in the front seat. A Malamute is a very large dog—like a hundred and thirty pounds and bigger than a human being and very long-haired. Having her with me all the time inspired me to give Han Solo a sidekick who was like a big, furry dog.¹⁰⁰

Andonovska further asserts, "The name Chewbacca allegedly derives from the Russian word *chudovishye* (which means monster) combined with *sobaka* (which means dog). The combination of these two words literally translates to 'Monster Dog.'"¹⁰¹ To be sure, there are several times in the film where the relationship between Han and Chewbacca mimics the bond between human and canine. This is most clearly seen in the scene where Han solo reassuringly pats Chewy on the head.¹⁰² And even though the Wookiee bravely stands guard at the door¹⁰³ to

⁹⁸ Campbell, *Power of Myth*, 145.

⁹⁹ Jessie Weston, *The Legend of Sir Perceval: Studies Upon its Origin, Development and Position in the Arthurian Cycle* (London: Nutt, 1906-1909), 112.

¹⁰⁰ Aleksandra Andonovska, "The Character of Chewbacca was Inspired by George Lucas' Tall Hairy Alaskan Malamute," *Vintage News*, November 29, 2016, accessed December 7, 2017, <https://m.thevintagenews.com/2017/11/02/the-character-of-chewbacca-was-inspired-by-george-lucas-tall-hairy-alaskan-malamute/>.

¹⁰¹ Andonovska, "Chewbacca."

¹⁰² *Star Wars IV: A New Hope*, directed by George Lucas (20th Century Fox, 1977), DVD (20th Century Fox, 2006), TT03/17, Ch. 29/51, 1:04:59.

¹⁰³ *Star Wars IV: A New Hope*, TT03/17, Ch. 32/51, 1:12:49.

protect Han from the dangerous Stormtroopers during the rescue of Princess Leia in an earlier scene, it does not stop Han from scoldingly shouting “Get away from there!”¹⁰⁴ when Chewie annoyingly sniffs at the door in the garbage hold.

Technological advancement and the invention of the Internet have created new means for channeling myth in modernity. Not only is there a bounty of information about dogs and mythology available at the simple touch of a button, but this information can also be accessed anytime day or night. Ancient stories that could once only be shared to a limited audience by a single storyteller can now be disseminated world wide to the masses, and new stories that contain elements of myth can be shared instantaneously with the global village. Information about myths can be found through specific searches, or it can appear passively on social media. Additionally, audio, video clips and even full-length movies that are vehicles of myth can be downloaded on demand and streamed on personal devices. In a sense, the Internet has liberated mythology. For example, in a single computer session from anywhere in the world, a person could take a virtual video tour inside the British Museum in London¹⁰⁵ or search YouTube and to see the actual papyrus scroll of *Hunefer’s Judgement in the presence of Osiris*¹⁰⁶, view dozens of websites that share the stories and show various images associated with Cerberus from Greek Mythology, download the free full-text book or audio book MP3 of Sherlock Holmes’s *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, investigate “Fluffy” from JK Rowling’s *Harry Potter*, and read the story of “Cash” the German Shepherd who protected her dead owner’s body from coyotes for ten weeks that was originally published in the *Denver Post* on August 12, 2008. Stories mediated through the

¹⁰⁴ *Star Wars IV: A New Hope*, TT03/17, Ch. 34/51, 1:16:56.

¹⁰⁵ “British Museum, Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead,” *Vimeo*, accessed September 8, 2018, <https://vimeo.com/17325834>.

¹⁰⁶ Samirajeen Nagy, “The British Museum –Book of the Dead (Tom Hiddleston),” January 1, 2014, accessed September 9, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GpVEAK-n6Y>.

technology unite antiquity with modernity, thus connecting the sacred cosmos and the real world. *Hunefer's Judgement*, Cerberus, Sherlock Holmes's novel and Fluffy each may serve to inform a person. To be sure, these mystical stories serve to reconcile a person's experience of the outside world with their inner reality when they read the true story about Cash, thereby serving the pedagogical function of providing a way of being in the world.

A relic that survives from an ancient culture, such as *A Fragment from a Funerary Relief: Cerberus*¹⁰⁷ (see fig. 5.2), is another example of an artifact that connects people with the sacred in modernity. This artifact is part of real life museum holdings, and images of it also happen to be available to be viewed in detail via internet resources. The *Fragment from a funerary relief: Cerberus* is a remnant of limestone sculpture that stands 10 5/8 inches. It is Greek, specifically south Italian from the early Hellenistic period, dating about 320-280 B.C. The piece depicts three powerful Mastiff looking heads of Cerberus: one looks upward, one looks downward, and one is looking straight ahead. There are collars visible on the two that look upward and downward and the person whose foot can be seen at the bottom left-hand corner of the fragment is likely restraining them by their collars by the person whose foot can be seen at the bottom left-hand corner of the fragment. They appear to be being restrained because what remains of their legs suggests that some legs are elevated, which indicates they are moving or trying to move forward, rather than standing on all four legs or sitting. Of the three heads, the only one that survives in any detail is the one looking forward. This head is considerably detailed, as the viewer can see the zygomatic arch by the animal's eye, a detailed nose and flew skin carved in the smooth limestone. These details provide clues about the animal's emotional state. The animal does not appear to be ferocious, which was true of Cerberus, who functioned as a guardian to the

¹⁰⁷ *Fragment of a Funerary Relief: Cerberus*, c. 320–280 B.C, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, accessed September 5, 2018, <https://www.mfa.org/collections/object/fragment-of-funerary-relief-cerberus-150168>.

underworld in Greek culture. This non-ferocious demeanor is particularly evidenced by the smooth top of the muzzle and downward shape of the mouth. In contrast, an aggressive mouth (that of a Hellhound, for example) would have had horizontal wrinkles across the top of the muzzle, a “c” shaped turn of the mouth, would have likely shown teeth. The color of this artifact is a yellowed hue, as opposed to the gleaming white of new limestone, also indicative of something ancient. This depiction would have been fitting in its funerary function since Cerberus was the guardian at the gates of the underworld.

Today, this artifact connects to a sacred past in a few ways. One is that the past lives simply because this fragment survives from the ancient past. Another is that the sculpture depicts Cerberus, a mythic entity that is familiar in modernity. This fragment also connects to the past into the present because this three-dimensional dog sculpture speaks to the human imagination when it conjures up a shared experience between a modern person and the ancients; this is the feeling that comes when walking an out of control dog that feels as though it is pulling in three directions at once!

Holy Grail-Canine Connection

Laura Knight-Jadczyk asserts “...the Quest for the Holy Grail is the greatest of all spiritual endeavors...”¹⁰⁸ Without a doubt, the associated Grail Myth has bewitched the spirit and imagination of people throughout the human history. The legend itself is an interwoven collection of narratives, which is believed to be rooted in pagan myth¹⁰⁹ and further shaped by the integration of Celtic folk tales and Christian themes.¹¹⁰ The pagan nature-cult origins assert a

¹⁰⁸ Laura Knight-Jadczyk, *The Secret History of the World and How to Get Out Alive* (Red Pill Press, 2005), 308.

¹⁰⁹ Margaret Reid, *The Arthurian Legend* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1938), 129.

¹¹⁰ Anna Papadaki, “Consider the Place of Faith, Religious or Otherwise, in the Arthurian Tradition,” *Innervate* 4 (2011-2012): 91.

connection between sexual rites and fertility, whereby the coming of spring was a celebration of the awakening powers of nature.¹¹¹ Celtic bards used myth in the oral tradition to emphasize rightful kinship and sovereignty of land. The Celts believed that a fertile realm was the direct result of a good relationship between a King and his land.¹¹² They also accented the notions of regeneration and renewal. For them, when there was a disruption between the human and the goddess of the land, the hero's task was to restore balance.¹¹³ The Grail became a popular theme in medieval literature, and the first written account of the Grail legend appeared at the end of the 12th Century in Chrétien de Troyes's unfinished *chanson de geste* *Perceval*,¹¹⁴ which contains both Celtic and Christian references. Alfred Nutt explains,

The history of the Legend of the Holy Grail is, thus, the history of the gradual transformation of old Celtic folk-tales into a poem charged with Christian symbolism and mysticism. This transformation, at first the inevitable outcome of its pre-Christian development, was hastened later by the perception that it was a fitting vehicle for certain moral and spiritual ideas.¹¹⁵

The Christian interpretation of the Grail myth involved the concepts of redemption and salvation. Goodwin explains, "In these, the hero seeks his Maker, and through becoming worthy attempts to bring heaven to earth."¹¹⁶ Juliette Wood, the author of the article "The Holy Grail: From Romance Motif to Modern Genre" asserts, "Jungian analysts link the Grail with alchemical and

¹¹¹ Jessie Weston, *From Ritual to Romance* (Jessie Weston, 1920), ch. V, May 30, 2013, accessed April 14, 2018, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/From_Ritual_to_Romance/Chapter_V.

¹¹² Jimmy Joe, "Wedded to the Land," *Timeless Myths*, 1999, accessed April 14, 2018, <http://www.timelessmyths.com/celtic/celtworld.html#Marriage>.

¹¹³ John T. Koch, editor, *Celtic Culture: A Historic Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 1408.

¹¹⁴ Chrétien des Troyes, *Perceval, The Story of the Grail*, trans. Burton Raffel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

¹¹⁵ Alfred Nutt, *Legend of the Holy Grail* (London: Publications of the Folk-Lore Society, 1888), 227.

¹¹⁶ Malcolm Goodwin, *The Holy Grail*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 1994), 15.

hermetic interpretations.”¹¹⁷ Wolfram Von Eschenbach’s poem *Parzival*¹¹⁸ is the primary work for this school of thought, although it does not appear to be well studied among Grail scholars. The Jungian view centers on the spirituality of nature itself, and centers on the ideas of rebirth and the transformation of the individual.¹¹⁹ Contemporary examples of the Grail Myth include T.S. Eliot’s *The Wasteland* poem¹²⁰ and R. Lagravanese’s *The Fisher King* film.¹²¹

There are several common elements in the Grail myth; among them are the notions of a wasted land, a wounded King, the Four Hallows, and a transformation.

The motif of the wasted land has factual ties to the Celtic tradition to the sovereignty of the King over his land.¹²² The wounded King is he who has been maimed in the genitals or thigh and is rendered impotent. Goodwin suggests that this wound leaves him unable to live a prosperous life, yet unable to die.¹²³ Because he is sovereign over the land, it lays to waste.¹²⁴ The Christian wasteland, in contrast, begins with Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the garden.¹²⁵ The fall or loss of paradise is the foundation of the myth in which the wasted land is visible. The Four Hallows, Goodwin explains, “...seem to derive from early Celtic sources in Britain and

¹¹⁷ Juliette Wood, “The Holy Grail: From Romance Motif to Modern Genre.” *Folklore* 111, no.1 (October 2000): 202.

¹¹⁸ Wolfram Von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, trans. A.T. Hatto (New York: Penguin, 1980).

¹¹⁹ Emma Jung and Marie-Luise von Franz, *The Grail Legend*, trans. Andrea Dykes (New Jersey: Princeton University, 1998), 41.

¹²⁰ T.S. Eliot, *Selected Poems* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1930).

¹²¹ Richard LaGravanese, *The Fisher King* (Burbank: Tri Star Pictures, 1991).

¹²² Jimmy Joe, “The Fisher King and Maimed King,” *Timeless Myths*, June 24, 2006, accessed April 15, 2018, <http://www.timelessmyths.com/arthurian/grail.html#FisherKing>.

¹²³ Goodwin, *The Holy Grail*.

¹²⁴ Jimmy Joe, “The Fisher King and Maimed King.”

¹²⁵ Peter Ely, *Adam and Eve in Scripture, Theology, and Literature: Sin, Compassion and Forgiveness* (New York: Lexington Books, 2018), 30.

Ireland.”¹²⁶ They can be grouped principally as the female principles of the Chalice (platter and Grail) and the male principles of the Blade (sword and spear).¹²⁷ The most notable is the Holy Grail; this is the cup that Jesus drank from at the Last Supper and the vessel that Joseph of Arimathea used to collect Jesus’ blood at his crucifixion.¹²⁸ It is the most sacred of all objects: it is the symbol of God’s divine grace. In myths, the Grail has been depicted in various forms, including a dish, a chalice, and a philosopher’s stone.¹²⁹ No matter which form it takes, the Grail is portrayed as possessing miraculous healing powers. Heim remarks, “The Grail has always been a symbol of the quest for a better world.”¹³⁰ When the Grail is recovered, there is a healing of the baneful wound and a transformation of the hero. In other words, the Grail represents the ultimate transformation of both the individual and the land. Goodwin asserts, “As nurturing as a mother’s womb, it is that uterus from which there is a spiritual renewal and the rebirth of both the individual and the land.”¹³¹

Technology philosopher Michael Heim asserts that in terms of modern technology, Virtual Reality promises the Holy Grail. He writes, “Rather than control or escape or entertain or communicate, the ultimate promise of VR may be to transform, to redeem our awareness of reality.”¹³² Bill Gates asserted the possible transformative power of Super Intelligence on how

¹²⁶ Goodwin, *The Holy Grail*, 46.

¹²⁷ Graham Phillips, *The Chalice of Magdalene: The Search for the Cup That Held the Blood of Christ* (Vermont: Bear & Company, 1996).

¹²⁸ Jimmy Joe, “Holy Grail,” *Timeless Myths*, June 24, 2006, accessed April 15, 2018, <http://www.timelessmyths.com/arthurian/grail.html#FisherKing>.

¹²⁹ Jessie Weston, *The Quest of the Holy Grail* (New York: Dover Publications, 2001), 126.

¹³⁰ Michael Heim, “Heidegger and McLuhan and the Essence of Virtual Reality,” in *Philosophy of Technology*, ed. Robert Scharff and Val Dusek (Mass: Blackwell: 2003), 553.

¹³¹ Goodwin, *The Holy Grail*, 53.

¹³² Heim, “Heidegger and McLuhan,” 553.

human beings live and think. At Code Conference in 2016, Bill Gates asserted that Artificial Intelligence would transform the world. Lance Ulanoff explains that Gates, "... called it the 'holy grail' as he envisions a future 'with machines that are capable and more capable than human intelligence.'"¹³³ In the age of proliferating technology, the notion that technology holds the promise of the Holy Grail seems to be a fitting and provocative idea. However, these examples of Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence, because they are mechanistic rather than living, might ultimately be viewed as conflicting with Goodwin's idea that the Grail legend is a living legend. He explains that the vitality of the legend is due to "the fact that real blood flows through its veins – not metaphorical blood, but quite literal and real"¹³⁴ Instead, it may be suggested that *Canis familiaris*, both a technology and a living being with real blood flowing through its veins, may align more fittingly as representing the Holy Grail in the age of technology.

In W. Bruce Cameron's book *A Dog's Purpose*, the author writes from the perspective of his main character, a dog that is reincarnated many times, "That's when it occurred to me that my purpose in this world had never been just to Find; it had been to *save*."¹³⁵ Although there is no evidence that suggests that it intentionally sets out to depict the Grail Legend, the film *A Dog's Purpose* (2017),¹³⁶ which is based upon W. Bruce Cameron's best-selling novel,¹³⁷ is rich with Grail archetypes and symbolism. This post-modernist film work is a series of nested narratives

¹³³ Lance Ulanoff, "Bill Gates: AI is the Holy Grail," *Mashable*, June 2, 2016, accessed December 11, 2017, <http://mashable.com/2016/06/01/bill-gates-ai-code-conference/#bv7xQ8cROqQ>.

¹³⁴ Goodwin, *Holy Grail*, 184.

¹³⁵ W. Bruce Cameron, *A Dog's Purpose* (New York: Forge Books, 2010), 305.

¹³⁶ *A Dog's Purpose*, directed by Lasse Hallström (Amblin Entertainment, 2017), DVD (Universal Pictures, 2017).

¹³⁷ W. Bruce Cameron, *A Dog's Purpose* (New York: Forge Books, 2010).

that are told from the dog's perspective. In the main story line, a young boy and his mother save a Golden Retriever pup, that has irresponsibly been left to die in a hot vehicle, by smashing the window with a tire iron. The tire iron can be said to represent the sword. Like the sword that has two edges, the tire iron has two ends. Also like the sword, the tire iron endows the bearer with great power. When the mother hits the window with the tire iron, the glass shatters and she saves the puppy. As the boy grows, the bonds between him and his dog become strengthened through play with a deflated football, which represents the disc. A firecracker that is thrown into the teenage boy's house, causing a fire, represents the lance. Goodwin explains, "The spear signifies the piercing, arrow-like perception which aims at and penetrates the essential core of things."¹³⁸ In *A Dog's Purpose*, the teenage boy suffers a leg injury while trying to escape the fire. Here, the teenage boy represents the Wounded King.¹³⁹ This injury causes the teenage boy to abandon his dream to play football, to give up his desire to college and he loses the girl he loves, leaving him with nothing. From the moment of the wounding, the teenage boy's life lay to waste and continues along this path as he grows into manhood. The dog represents the Holy Grail. The dog, named Bailey, is a Golden Retriever. His coat gleams a bright gold; this color parallels the Grail that is made of pure refined gold that is described in *Perceval*.¹⁴⁰ Throughout the nested narratives, the dog dies and becomes reborn as various breeds to a number of different human characters, all of whom need some sort of healing. In each case, the dog heals the human character and transforms them through the bonds of love. Toward the end of the film, the dog finally becomes reincarnated as a Golden Retriever and after a journey he is reunited with the boy, who is now a middle-aged man. As a result of his teenage wounding, the man has never

¹³⁸ Goodwin, *Holy Grail*, 50.

¹³⁹ Jimmy Joe, "The Fisher King and Maimed King."

¹⁴⁰ des Troyes, *Perceval*, verse 3220.

married, he has no children and he has essentially lived a barren life that has gone nowhere. When the man and the dog meet, healing begins. The dog facilitates reuniting the man with his lost love, and the lovers marry; thus filling the farm with happiness and the richness of a large loving family. The man is transformed. In the final scene of the film, the dog shows the man that he is the reincarnation of his boyhood dog, revealing the mystery of life.

A Dog's Purpose is one example among others in film, literary works and the Internet that depict the Grail archetypes of healing and transformation as they are achieved by people in relationships with dogs in modern life. The idea that relationships with *Canis familiaris* possess a transformative potential is a concept that may be gaining momentum as more and more people recognize and acknowledge the healing capacity that is associated with interactions with dogs. Books like Michal Hingson's *Thunder Dog* (2012),¹⁴¹ Luis Carlos Montalván's *Until Tuesday: A Wounded Warrior and the Golden Retriever Who Saved Him* (2012)¹⁴² and Dion Leonard's *Finding Gobi: A Little Dog With a Very Big Heart* (2017)¹⁴³ are all autobiographical examples of spiritual and transformative bonds between a person and a dog. Notably, all three of these books were New York Times bestsellers. Additionally, the Internet hosts a plethora of real life accounts from people who share their personal stories of how a relationship with a dog has "saved" them by healing their troubled spirit. Whether they are fictitious like *A Dog's Purpose* or true accounts, transformative stories involving dogs that are disseminated to the masses appeal to the audience member's inner life by engaging their imagination and drawing upon their inner knowing. What's more, not only do these stories provide models for human behavior, thereby

¹⁴¹ Michael Hingson, *Thunder Dog* (Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2012).

¹⁴² Luis Carlos Montalván, *Until Tuesday: A Wounded Warrior and the Golden Retriever Who Saved Him* (New York: Hatchette Books, 2012).

¹⁴³ Dion Leonard, *Finding Gobi: A Little Dog With a Very Big Heart* (Tennessee, Thomas Nelson, 2017).

giving meaning and value to life, but they also connect the spiritual past with the present, thus continuing the cycle of myth.

Overview of Spyker's Intellectual Concept

In his work, *Technology and Spirituality*, Stephen Spyker recognizes that technological proliferation has affected people's identities, their relationships with other people, and most importantly their relationship to God.¹⁴⁴ He defines spirituality as "how matters of ultimate concern find expression in your life,"¹⁴⁵ and describes technology as "...how we *create* and *use* tools."¹⁴⁶ For him, technology has shaped the history of humanity, "The tools we choose to use and how we use them affect how we think, how we make decisions, how we relate to one another, how we construct knowledge, even how we think about God."¹⁴⁷ Spyker examines the relationship between technology and spirituality in modernity by looking at the phenomena from many different angles in the format of an evaluative matrix, a concept borrowed from the fields of mathematics and computer science.¹⁴⁸ He explains that the eight lenses of the matrix are not intended to diagnose, but rather this evaluative tool should be used to provide insight.¹⁴⁹ Spyker explains,

The matrix consists of eight "lenses"—though you could as easily think of them as windows or angles of view – through which we can "look" at any given technology or application thereof. Each lens of the matrix gives us a way of evaluating technologies and their applications within a particular set of properties or effects in mind.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁴ Stephen Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality* (Vermont: Skylight Paths, 2007), 2.

¹⁴⁵ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 5.

¹⁴⁶ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 3.

¹⁴⁷ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 3.

¹⁴⁸ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 9.

¹⁴⁹ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 16.

¹⁵⁰ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 11.

Vocabulary.com describes the origin of the term “matrix,” “The word *matrix* is related to the Latin word for ‘mother.’ The word originally meant ‘pregnant animal’ or ‘breeding female,’ but was generalized to mean ‘womb.’¹⁵¹ Spyker uses *matrix* as synonymous idea of “womb,”¹⁵² and this seems fitting for his investigation about spirituality since the word “matrix” appears in the Bible:

And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, that thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the LORD'S (Exodus 13:11-12).¹⁵³

Vocabulary.com defines *matrix* from the Latin origins, “A *matrix* is an environment or structure in which something originates or develops.”¹⁵⁴ Spyker suggests that his utilitarian eight lens matrix is useful to a person when making decisions regarding a technology and its role in one’s life because this tool creates a more accurate picture of spirituality, technology, and the relationship of these phenomena.¹⁵⁵

The eight lenses that Spyker presents when looking at spirituality and technology are boundary, simplicity, transparency, community, identity, velocity, connectivity and liberty.¹⁵⁶ Boundary is the starting place to examine how a person’s thoughts are framed to make sense of the world.¹⁵⁷ Simplicity relates to the characteristics of technology that are most congruent with

¹⁵¹ *Vocabulary Online*, s.v. “Matrix,” accessed April 15, 2018, <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/matrix>.

¹⁵² Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 10.

¹⁵³ Exodus 13:11-12 OT.

¹⁵⁴ *Vocabulary Online*, s.v. “Matrix,” accessed December 15, 2017, <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/matrix>.

¹⁵⁵ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 9.

¹⁵⁶ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 12-16.

the spiritual life.¹⁵⁸ Transparency concerns the ease of using technology and considers how emerging technologies can transform the world and the way a person thinks.¹⁵⁹ Community considers how technology affects experience of and relationship to community.¹⁶⁰ Identity involves how technology develops and how humans evolve and see themselves in response to it.¹⁶¹ Velocity concerns the role technology plays in addressing a person's conflicting heartfelt desires of wishing to do things faster, yet yearning to slow down.¹⁶² Connectivity deals with finding the sacred in the emerging view of a hyperconnected reality.¹⁶³ Finally, looking through the lens of liberty offers some insight about whether technology sets a person free or enables addictions.¹⁶⁴ The discussion that follows will consider the variable of *Canis familiaris* in Spyker's scheme. In other words, this discussion will next explore the Human-Canine relationship and spirituality through the eight critical lenses of Spyker's evaluative framework in an effort to spawn meaningful discussion and possibly reveal what he describes as "new frontiers between spirituality and technology."¹⁶⁵ Ultimately, Spyker advocates that the results from his matrix should guide a person to "...be selective about which technologies we use, careful about how we use them, and mindful as to how they affect us."¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁷ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 13.

¹⁵⁸ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 143.

¹⁵⁹ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 14.

¹⁶⁰ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 145.

¹⁶¹ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 15.

¹⁶² Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 15.

¹⁶³ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 15.

¹⁶⁴ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 16.

¹⁶⁵ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 12.

¹⁶⁶ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 134.

The Eight Lenses

The next section in this chapter will employ each of the eight critical lenses of Stephen Spyker's evaluative matrix to consider the influence that people's relationships with *Canis familiaris* may have on their spiritual lives in modernity. This inquiry will discuss human-canine relationships as viewed through each of the critical lenses in a designated sub-section. These sub-sections will be presented in the following order: 1.) Boundary, 2.) Simplicity, 3.) Transparency, 4.) Community, 5.) Identity, 6.) Velocity, 7.) Connectivity and 8.) Liberty.

Boundary

Spyker refers to the first lens of his matrix as "boundary." Through this lens, a person should evaluate the definitions, categories and compartmentalization of thoughts that they have created in order to understand the world.¹⁶⁷ He explains that when this artificial construction of ordering reality is examined through the boundary lens, it allows for questioning and for entertaining the possibility of reconstructing the boundaries.¹⁶⁸ Spyker writes, "The frontier between spirituality and technology is not fixed, and whatever fences lie between them are constructed largely in our minds, full of holes, easily breached, and, in some places in need of being torn down."¹⁶⁹ Employing the lens of boundary when examining the relationship between people, dogs and spirituality would reveal an individual's starting place in Spyker's scheme. He calls this zero, or the place where critical thinking begins and explains that the boundary lens extends to all other lenses of the matrix.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 1-16.

¹⁶⁸ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 12.

¹⁶⁹ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 12.

¹⁷⁰ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 13.

When a person examines their definitions, categories and compartmentalization of thoughts involving their understanding of their relationship with *Canis familiaris* and spirituality, they are likely to experience some self-discovery. The obvious outcome may be that people recognize that they enjoy the company of their dogs and their dogs make them feel good. However, the boundary lens requires that they look more closely at the components of the relationship and ask the difficult questions about their understanding of these components. For example, a person might begin by examining their understanding of the dog. Perhaps they see their dog as an object, a device for human consumption or they may view the dog as a living being with the right to possess its own life. To be sure, it is likely that they will discover that their definition of the domestic dog is something in-between. Among other things in this thought experiment, a person would also question their concept of spirituality and explore whether their definition of spirituality divorces or includes a relationship with dogs. Important to the use of the boundary lens, according to the Spyker, is the need for an individual to challenge their thought constructions "...and ask what would happen if we rearranged them a bit, redefined them, or even ignored them."¹⁷¹ In other words the boundary lens refers to the realms of discovery and possibility in the scope of the matrix.

Simplicity

Spyker identifies the second lens of the matrix as "simplicity." In his discussion of this lens he not only reminds the reader of the promise of technology to provide a simpler life, but he also expresses the importance of the spiritual value of simplicity while considering technology.¹⁷² The idea is to identify those simple characteristics in technology that align most

¹⁷¹ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 13.

¹⁷² Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 18.

harmoniously with a spiritual way of life.¹⁷³ Spyker uses the example of the Amish and asserts, “They model a way of encountering technology that would serve us all well.”¹⁷⁴ He explains how the Amish community, although it appears to be technologically backwards, is rather a community that carefully evaluates the impact that a technology may have on their community before accepting it.¹⁷⁵ In other words, their relationship with technology is intentionally based upon its effect on the structure of their religious order. This sharply contrasts with the typical mainstream American culture that blindly accepts emerging technologies. In fact, Thomson asserts, “The Amish may actually have achieved Heidegger’s ideal of a ‘free relation to technology,’ according to which we should ‘affirm the unavoidable use of technical devices, and yet also deny them the right to dominate us, and so to warp, confuse, and lay waste to our nature.’”¹⁷⁶ Ironically, the Amish have a reputation of treating their dogs inhumanely in their commercial breeding kennels because they treat them as they would any other livestock. In his *New York Times Article*, Michael Hinds explains “The Amish say they raise dogs much as they would any other livestock, restricting the dogs to small cages and killing the parents when they are no longer productive.”¹⁷⁷ The Amish interpret the Biblical idea that animals, including dogs, were created for man to be used by man. Their poor treatment of dogs in commercial breeding kennels represents a clash of cultures that presents two obvious problems that provide good examples for the application of the boundary lens. The first problem is that *Canis familiaris* is a

¹⁷³ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 143.

¹⁷⁴ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 29.

¹⁷⁵ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 28.

¹⁷⁶ Iain Thomson “From the Question Concerning Technology to the Quest for a Democratic Technology: Heidegger, Marcuse, Feenberg,” *Inquiry* 43, no. 2 (2000): 208.

¹⁷⁷ Michael deCourcy Hinds, “Amish at Heart of ‘Puppy Mill’ Debate,” *New York Times*, September 20, 1993, accessed December 23, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/09/20/us/amish-at-heart-of-puppy-mill-debate.html?pagewanted=all>.

companion animal, the definition of which differs considerably from livestock. The second problem is that the products of this commercial industry are pups that will go to pet homes as companions for people. Categorically, a puppy that is produced as a pet is a drastically different situation than a chicken or a pig that is produced as food.

Looking at *Canis familiaris* through the simplicity lens with the intent of identifying those simple characteristics that are most harmonious with a spiritual way of life perhaps reveals a technology that is pregnant with possibilities. As suggested earlier, the dog provides a person with a pathway back to the sanctity of nature, the dog as a focal concern reorients people by giving them a glimpse of cosmic wealth, and relationships with dogs have the ability to connect people to the good life and to God. Additionally, Spyker presents some important questions for evaluating a technology through the simplicity lens:

How simple is it? How easily and smoothly does it integrate with my life? Does it have a harmonious and uncomplicated elegance to its working? Do function and form come together in an effortless, even obvious or 'natural' way, does it feel clunky, out of place, unnecessarily complicated, or just plain ugly?¹⁷⁸

To be sure, these questions in Spyker's inquiry would surely be useful for a person to assess the harmoniousness of their relationship with their dog. A harmonious relationship between a person and dog is likely to invite opportunities for connecting to the sacred through nature, focal practices or living the good life. What's more, this line of questions is strikingly similar to the types of questions that might guide a person when they are deciding whether or not to get a dog, which breed or type of dog to get, and which individual dog to ultimately choose. It is interesting to consider the notion that most prudent people always consider these questions before acquiring

¹⁷⁸ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 143.

a dog, yet it is doubtful that the majority of people ask such questions before adopting other types of technologies into their lives.

Transparency

The third lens in Spyker's matrix is "transparency." For him, this is the idea of exposing and examining those aspects of technology that often go unnoticed; this is that they hold the potential for transforming the world and the way people think.¹⁷⁹ Spyker cites the historical examples of the automobile,¹⁸⁰ the printing press¹⁸¹ and the computer¹⁸² to illustrate his assertion, "In other words, the tools we use and how we use them help to determine how we think, what we believe, and, ultimately, who we are."¹⁸³ *Canis familiaris* provides another example.

As explained in Chapter 1 (Dog as Device), there is a rich history of the human-canine relationship that has shaped humanity in the manner Spyker describes. For example, as people harnessed nature and created individual breeds to perform different tasks such as working in the kitchen, herding flocks, controlling rodents, hauling carts or protecting personal belongings, dogs became fixed in the daily lives of people. By doing these jobs, dogs relieved people from the toil of this work, giving people more time for leisure. Poor treatment and cruelty towards these working animals then caused people to think about human morality and how animals should be treated. This discourse caused treatises to be written about the moral and ethical treatment of dogs, facilitated the making of laws to protect animals against mistreatment, and spawned the beginning of the animal welfare movement.

¹⁷⁹ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 149.

¹⁸⁰ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 38-40.

¹⁸¹ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 40-41.

¹⁸² Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 42-50.

¹⁸³ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 38.

Although there are many dogs that “work” in modernity, the primary job for the majority of contemporary domestic dogs is as a companion to people. *Canis familiaris* is so much more than just a mere companion, and the transformative potentiality of the dog in its current role continues to remain hidden from view for many people. The social, physical and psychological benefits have been studied since the 1970’s but until very recently, the dog was vehemently excluded from the human medical community. Fortunately, the exercise of transparency; that is exposing and examining the hidden aspects of the dog, reveals the potential for new types of transformation in contemporary relationships with dogs. Therapy and service dog organizations are examples of groups that use the dog as a technology in Spyker’s definition: “To put it succinctly: a technology is a way of using tools to do something.”¹⁸⁴ Therapy and service dog organizations require that a dog be properly trained and evaluated before being put to work with a person who must follow set guidelines. When these dogs are working in public, their hidden transformative potential is revealed to the external world. Fortunately, the same medical community that once shirked the dog is now beginning to recognize the healing capacity of the dog. As a result, dogs are slowly being allowed into medical treatment facilities for mental health, rehabilitation and long-term care. Additionally, public and community establishments that once prohibited dogs have begun making allowances for people to have accompanying support and service dogs. Spyker’s notion of transparency also applies to the connection between the human-canine relationship and spirituality. When a person spends time with their dog connecting with nature, engaging in a focal activity, or experiencing God and the good life, and that person subsequently recognizes these values, the hidden potentiality of the dog as a bridge to the sacred becomes visible. Nevertheless, how and *if* this transparency will ultimately manifest into a historical example in Spyker’s scheme is a story to be told by future generations.

¹⁸⁴ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 37.

Community

The fourth lens in Spyker's matrix is "community," an essential ingredient in a spiritual life. Spyker explains, "To apply it, we merely think about community and how a given technology affects our experiences of and relationship to it."¹⁸⁵ When viewing the human-canine relationship through the lens of community, among "dog people" there is clear evidence of a sense of community. Spyker uses Wood's definition of community:

...a group of people who have a sense of common purpose(s) and/or interest(s) for which they assume mutual responsibility, acknowledge their interconnectedness, respect the individual differences among members, and commit themselves to the well-being of each other and the integrity and well-being of the group.¹⁸⁶

Generally speaking, "dog" lovers identify themselves as different from, say, "cat" lovers. When a person identifies themselves as a dog lover among a varied group of people and they relate with another "dog" lover, there is an immediate establishment of common ground and sense of communal connection. In this type of dog lover's community, for example, if someone's dog becomes ill or perhaps even dies, there is an inherent sense of understanding, empathy and support that comes from a fellow "dog" lover. The Internet now hosts a number of grief support forums, chat rooms, blogs and websites dedicated to helping owners cope with the loss of their pet. To be sure, a person in this general dog community of dog lover's is very unlikely to callously comment, "It's just a dog" to a bereaved fellow dog lover, a phrase that might be said by a person who has not experienced the profound connection with a dog. The dog lovers love to share stories with other dog lovers, and they willingly share information about which dog food works best for them, where to find a good groomer or doggy daycare center and which area

¹⁸⁵ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 145.

¹⁸⁶ George Wood, *Let's Talk About Community: A Discussion of Multiple Communities Theory*, Draft edition (Muncie, IN: Ball State University, 1998), quoted in *Technology and Spirituality* by Stephen Spyker (Vermont: Skylight Paths, 2007), 53.

veterinarian they prefer. The discussion forum *Dogforum.com*, for example, has a forum for dog grooming questions that includes a post asking “What’s the best brush for my dog” from DG00100, because this person’s “....old grooming glove is losing it’s rubber teeth”¹⁸⁷ There are six replies to the post, and the back and forth among the posters in the discussion includes different suggestions, a link to one of the suggestions, questions and clarifications, and notably positive endorsement comments from another person who saw the thread and took one of the suggestions.

Sometimes, dog lovers will make plans to have doggy play dates, meet at the dog park, or take group walks with friends and their canine companions. These meetings can be arranged among a small group of friends or expand to larger social groups. Jo-ann Laughlin, the owner of *Silver City Canine Training Center* in Taunton, MA shares the example of how a small group of people who know each other through attending obediences class with their dogs will gather montly on a Sunday morning for a few hours of what they call a private “Training Party.” The group spends a few pleasant hours socializing while they work with their dogs and enjoy some pot luck food that they have brought to share at the gathering.¹⁸⁸ On a larger scale, there are formal groups established through websites and social media for organizing dog social events. For example, the group “Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Lovers of Massachusetts” accessible through Boston’s *Meetup.com* and Facebook, has a large membership from the surrounding area and comes “...together as a group monthly (sometimes even twice a month!) to play in various

¹⁸⁷ DG00100 post “What’s the best brush for my dog,” August 11, 2017(7:36 p.m. GMT), Dog Grooming Forum, *DogForum.com*, accessed April 16, 2018, <http://www.dogforum.com/dog-grooming/whats-best-brush-my-dog-330193/>.

¹⁸⁸ Jo-ann Laughlin, interview by author, Taunton, April 15, 2018.

locations throughout Massachusetts.”¹⁸⁹ The idea of community also comes to mind when dog lovers send whimsical holiday cards that feature their beloved canine to other dog lovers and when someone throws a doggy birthday party that is complete with a dog-friendly cake and party favors for the other four-footed guests. Supporting the well-being of the group becomes evident when the dog lover encounters a notice about a dog that needs a home and she networks with the rest of her dog loving community until she hear news that the dog has been adopted.

In more serious dog communities, such as the ones that exist in the population of show dog enthusiasts for example, there are very strong ties that bind. These dog people may be fierce adversaries inside the show ring, yet outside the competition their common commitment to the dogs binds them more intensely than many blood ties. When Golden Retriever breeder and author Rachel Paige Elliott from Massachusetts passed away in 2009, her memorial services included a “A Celebration of her Golden Life” on March 27th at the First Parish Church in Concord, MA. Longtime friend and fellow Golden Retriever breeder Joyce Coccia was among the group of dog relations who attended the service.¹⁹⁰ In a personal interview, she explains that 50 Golden Retrievers and their handlers, who Paige considered important members of her “dog family” were invited from all over the country to participate in the honor guard procession. Since the Golden Retriever originates in Scotland, each dog wore a tartan neckerchief and the procession was fittingly led by a bagpiper playing “Amazing Grace.” At the close of the ceremony, Joyce relates, each dog handler was gifted a sterling silver acorn trinket by the family. “This was not only a symbol of rebirth, but is also reminiscent of the large oak trees that framed

¹⁸⁹ Meetup, “Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Lovers of Massachusetts,” group profile, *Meetup.com*, accessed April 15, 2018, <https://www.meetup.com/CavalierLoversofMA/>.

¹⁹⁰ Nancy Green, “Rachel Page Elliott Memorial,” *YouTube*, March 28, 2009, accessed April 14, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbx5YI_E3xc.

the entrance to Paige's home, which had an open door policy. I always have the acorn in my pocket when I show dogs."¹⁹¹

The members in this type of dog community help other members when they are in need. For example, if a person suddenly becomes ill or if there is a personal emergency, the dog community steps up to help that person. This may be achieved by taking in, or caring for their dogs; gathering donations for financial help, or even taking care of that person during their time of need. If the need or crisis happens to be related to a dog, the help from the members of the community amplifies exponentially.

Former breeder and continued show enthusiast Polly Walsh shares her experience of the kindness of dog people during a crisis that occurred before a uprooting move.

Fourteen years ago we were relocating to Texas due to my husband's disabling accident at work. House was sold, furniture was in storage and the cars had already been shipped to Texas, our destination in the RV with 9 (?) dogs and a cat. Because of my husband's disability and medications, he could not drive. We rode out a blizzard in a dog show person's driveway in the RV. The morning we were to leave, I slipped in the snow and broke my back and my left arm. Lisa Pacheco took all of my dogs into her kennel for several days as I was getting medical care and I was figuring out plan B. She was a real lifesaver. Then, several days later, another dog show friend's husband (now her ex) drove us and all the dogs to Texas. Approximately 1800 miles. We couldn't have made it without the help of wonderful friends from the dog show world.¹⁹²

I know from personal experience that if a show dog becomes lost, *everyone* becomes involved in helping to locate the lost dog. When my top winning Cavalier King Charles Spaniel was lost in January of 2014, show people drove in a snowstorm from hours away to the location where the dog was last seen to help search for the dog. Others worked tirelessly all across the nation by networking and spreading the word about the dog until she was found.¹⁹³ The dog

¹⁹¹ Joyce Coccia, telephone interview by author, April 15, 2018.

¹⁹² Polly Walsh, Facebook Messenger private message to author, April 15, 2018.

¹⁹³ Tracie Laliberte, "How My Cavalier Went Viral." *Royal Dispatch* 11 (2014): 37-41.

community's response was equally as intense when the Golden Retriever "Bond" was lost at a dog show in Wrentham in 2013.¹⁹⁴ A supportive army of dog people stepped right in for weeks on end to help look for the dog, knock on doors, hang posters, share information and support the owners while the search was underway.

Similarly, if newborn puppies become orphaned, if a litter is too big for a mother or if her milk is bad, and the dog community becomes aware of the need, someone with a lactating bitch will step right in offering to foster the pups. Cavalier breeder Allyson Gonyo writes:

I had a litter of 5 a few years ago. The mother's milk dried up on day three, and at a week old, the pups were failing. We maintained their weight by tube feeding, but they were not gaining, and at about 9 days they were still at or under birth weight, which is a really serious situation for puppies. I really thought we were going to lose them all and no amount of tube feeding, fluids, and antibiotics was helping them. A local breeder kindly offered to let me try bringing them to her bitch, but that dam's pups were 7 weeks old and she had no interest in nursing my puppies. I was talking to my friend Stephanie Hart who had a very experienced mom with a 3 week old singleton, so she told me to hop in the car and bring my 5 puppies down. At that point I was desperate, so we did just that. We got in the car and drove 460 miles down to her house, stopping twice and at gas stations to warm up formula and tube feed the puppies under the bright lights. We knew Stephanie was right, though, when we got there somewhere around 2 or 3 am and her bitch took one look at the puppies and immediately took to them as if they were her own. Not only was Stephanie gracious enough to offer this, but she also let me stay for 2 weeks with her. We had so much fun during this time of celebration, and I am 100% certain that all of my puppies lived because of her generosity. I will never forget her kindness and how she did not think twice about going out of her way for me at a time when I really needed it.¹⁹⁵

If a dog from the northeast needs a transport to a handler at a show in Florida in the dead of winter, or if a pup belonging to someone in Kentucky needs transport to a co-breeder in Massachusetts in the intense summer heat, members of the dog show community will work together to get those dogs safely where they need to be, even if the transport involves several

¹⁹⁴ Susan LaHoud, "Reward for Dog That Ran Off From the Show in Wrentham: A Golden Retriever Named 'Bond'," *The Sun Chronicle*, June 30, 2014, accessed April 15, 2018, http://www.thesunchronicle.com/news/local_news/reward-for-dog-that-ran-off-from-show-in-wrentham/article_313bd944-008f-11e4-a39e-0019bb2963f4.html.

¹⁹⁵ Allyson Gonyo, Facebook Messenger private message to author, April 16, 2018.

people over the course of weeks. All a person in the show community has to say is “help” and there are, without hesitation or question, a group of people there to lend a hand. Though they may come from very different backgrounds, people in the community of show dog enthusiasts are connected by their common interest. Ultimately, these people dedicate themselves to promoting the well being of the dogs and they support other members of the group. The integrity of the community shines most brightly in those moments of extreme crisis when members, who may appear to be so disparate that they are only connected by their common interest, bind together to save the day.

Spyker comments about the value inherent in “real” experiences. He writes, “But chances are, some of your most pleasant or deeply meaningful spiritual experiences still revolve around place and how you get there: visiting a shrine, viewing the sunset from a beach, trekking to a mountaintop.”¹⁹⁶ Experiences with dogs, by nature, are inherently real. What’s more, activities that are organized in the community of show dog enthusiasts, such as club meetings, shows, and other canine focused events all involve real interaction with other human members of the community. To be sure, the rituals that are involved and the interaction that occurs during the course of these activities serves to further foster the sense of community among show dog enthusiasts.

What’s more, the proliferation of advancing technology has provided new opportunities to foster communities for those interested in dogs. Technology strengthens established communities for a few reasons. Cell phones, texts, e-mail, websites and social media enable faster communication and increase the breadth of communication. Where a dog group would once be geographically localized based on convenience, modern technology has facilitated the creation of a global dog community. What’s more, the establishment of blogs and groups on

¹⁹⁶ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 66.

social media now allow for rapid communication among dog folks. In a group on FaceBook called *Lhasa Apso Exhibitor & Reputable Ethical Breeders*, for example, a Lhasa Apso enthusiast in Melbourne, Australia and a same breed enthusiast in Indianapolis, Indiana may discuss which types of dog food each prefers to feed their dogs, even though the two may never meet. Spyker contends that these types of connections are real even though they occur in the virtual world:

When people, *real* people, communicate with each other, are *with* each other in a computer-mediated environment, they form real communities, communities where they share a common purpose or interest—often spiritual purposes or interests—for which they assume mutual responsibility, acknowledges their interconnectedness, respect the individual differences among members, and commit themselves to the well-being of each other and well-being of the group.¹⁹⁷

Identity

The fifth lens in Spyker’s matrix, “identity,” concerns how technology shapes a person’s identity and how a person identifies with a technology.¹⁹⁸ Spyker describes the relationship between humans and technology as a co-evolutionary process because humans and technology are both entwined and constantly changing.¹⁹⁹ Spyker writes about the idea of people “getting along” with technology and central to his discussion about identity is the idea that when it comes to identifying with technology, and getting along with it, a person may have a “knack” for making things work. He writes, “Chances are you have a knack for something, something that people tell you you are good at or that just seems to come easily for you.”²⁰⁰ He explains that the

¹⁹⁷ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 61.

¹⁹⁸ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 67.

¹⁹⁹ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 80.

²⁰⁰ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 88.

knack begins when a person is young and is “part science, part magic.”²⁰¹ Spyker describes it as the nurturing of a gift, and for him “...nurturing gifts is always a spiritual enterprise.”²⁰² To be sure, Spyker’s notion of the “knack” is much like developing complexities in the Aristotelian sense that was written about in Chapter IV (Models of Good life/God),

To be sure, there are some people who have exactly the sort of following one’s bliss²⁰³ kind of knack that Spyker describes when it comes to relating to dogs, and this becomes an inextricable part of their core identity. There are people who are naturally good with, or seem to simply have a way with dogs. Most likely, these are the people who learned to relate to dogs at a young age. Spyker would explain this the *science* part of the equation of the knack. The *magic* part of the equation happens because these individuals have the ability to, as Spyker puts it, “listen” to the other side of the relationship. In other words, the person with the knack for relating to dogs has taken the time to nurture their gift. This knack might be on a very basic level such as just being able to get along with dogs. A person may declare, “Dogs just *like* me.” In truth, this is rather likely because that person has learned how to properly approach a dog (the science part) *and also* knows how to interpret and appropriately respond to the dog’s emotional state during the interaction (the listening part). People who share their lives with dogs develop a knack for knowing their dogs well. This may be a person’s understanding what their dog “wants” with a simple exchange of glances, or a person’s knowing when something isn’t quite right with their dog even in the absence of obvious outward symptoms.

²⁰¹ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 88.

²⁰² Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 88.

²⁰³ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 88.

There are also people who nurture their gifts to such an extent that their knack with dogs becomes a part of their life path, and thus a significant part of their identity. For example, people who are focused trainers, work in rescue, or become seriously involved with breeding or dog sports all have an earnest knack with dogs. People who choose career paths that involve working closely with dogs, such as veterinarians, pet groomers, dog walkers, animal control officers or kennel owners must also have such a knack. To be sure, simply having expert knowledge about how to perform any of these jobs is not enough. Any grooming may say that simply knowing how to scissor a Poodle is not enough to successfully groom a Poodle. A person must also have the ability to “listen” in order to successfully get along with the Poodle to get it to willingly stand patiently and not move for hours and hours and *hours* of scissoring. Without a doubt, it is generally advisable for a veterinarian to have knack with dogs before she attempts to poke a vaccination needle into a potentially dangerous dog such as a Mastiff. According to Stanley Coren, the Mastiff “has been recently measured as having a bite strength of 552 pounds—just shy of the bite force that the lion has.”²⁰⁴ Thus, it may be said that when a person nurtures their gifts with dogs through a chosen dog-related profession, this spiritual pursuit inextricably entwines their identity with technology and spirituality.

Velocity

Spyker identifies the sixth lens in his matrix as “velocity.” He explains that a problem with modern technology is that although it appeals to a person’s desire to get things done faster, it often does not live up to the promise of allowing more work to be done in less time.²⁰⁵ Instead,

²⁰⁴ Stanley Coren, “Dog Bite Force: Myths, Misinterpretations and Realities,” *Psychology Today*, May 17, 2010, accessed December 26, 2017, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/canine-corner/201005/dog-bite-force-myths-misinterpretations-and-realities>.

²⁰⁵ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 104.

when it comes to various technologies Spyker asserts, “But just as often, they succeed only in making life more hectic, leaving us with a deeper desire to slow down.”²⁰⁶ He explains that speed is not the problem, in fact, when technology does live up to its promise, then it frees up time for spiritual endeavors. Using the example of a craftsman’s chisel,²⁰⁷ he explains that the right relationship with technology provides a pathway to spiritual satisfaction by allowing a person to live in the moment. For Spyker, the purpose for the velocity lens two-fold. First, this lens is to evaluate the extent to which a technology either distracts or mediates experience. He suggests asking questions such as:

How does this technology dominate my time? Does it allow me to live more fully in the present, or does it force or encourage me to focus too much of my attention on other places or times? Does it make my life more frantic, or does it allow my body and soul to live in the same place? Does it whisk me away from those uncomfortable realities I need to confront or does it allow, or even force, me to spend time in my own skin and in the divine presence?²⁰⁸

Second, this lens should be used to help people “...seek out tools and technologies that, like a craftsman’s beloved chisel, help us to live totally and fully in the moment, finding simple blessing in our daily toil.”²⁰⁹

To be sure, having a relationship with a dog is one that requires a person to work. Unlike a computer that can be placed on a table and be turned off all day, a dog needs daily care. At the very minimum, a dog must be fed and given the opportunity to eliminate. Additionally, dogs need exercise, vetting and grooming. Just merely going through the motions of caring for a dog could easily become a distraction. To be sure, letting a dog out or in several times a day and setting down a bowl twice daily, while they are done at a particular moment, these are tasks that

²⁰⁶ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 15.

²⁰⁷ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 106.

²⁰⁸ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 146.

²⁰⁹ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 113.

do not require a person be “in” the moment. In these cases, completing the task is a means to an end.

Similarly, people who work with large numbers of dogs on a daily basis, such as kennel owners or dog groomers may also be pulled away from being in the moment when caring for the animals becomes an end in itself. Instead, it is the interaction and engagement that occurs in the relationship between the person and the dog while doing these things that create opportunities for living in the moment. The owner who spends time throwing the ball to play with their dog, the kennel owner that takes a dog for a long walk instead of mindlessly sending it out into the paddock, or the groomer who reassures a frightened dog by spending time petting it are all examples of finding simple blessings. What’s more, the evaluative nature of the velocity lens might cause people to choose engaging with a dog rather than being distracted by the computer. Although both appeal to a person’s desire for instant gratification, relating to a dog is likely to provide the more immediate path to spiritual satisfaction because the dog is an intermediary to nature, has the ability center an individual as a focal concern and can connect a person to the good life and to cosmic wealth.

Connectivity

The seventh lens in Spyker’s matrix is “connectivity,” and he asserts, “Through it we examine the connections that define our reality.”²¹⁰ He writes about the importance of the idea of connections in the emerging understanding of reality, and explains that the discovery of subatomic atoms, which are invisible to the eye, relate with one another in a manner that creates what humans understand as the substance of the material world.²¹¹ In this view, he explains,

²¹⁰ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 146.

²¹¹ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 118.

“...the true nature of creation is contained in the connections, relationships, and processes we observe all around us.”²¹² Spyker discusses the notions of connectedness and invisibleness as features of spirituality and explains that like sub-atomic reality, the sacred “...resides in and defines the essence of those connections, relationships, and processes.”²¹³ This emerging concept of reality is a paradigm that facilitates the crossing of the artificial boundaries that have been established by the materialist worldview.²¹⁴ Spyker imagines the potential that lies in thinking cooperatively and collaboratively as *all* people become included in the process. He writes, “I’m confident that when they do, they will find fertile ground for developing new models of God, new ways of contemplating the Divine, new ways for thinking about the nature of life, the soul, and what it means to be a child of God.”²¹⁵

In this brief, yet rich chapter, Spyker touches upon many concepts related to spirituality and the experience of the sacred in the connected life. Spyker, like McFague supports the holistic view of reality. As such, he would likely appreciate *Canis familiaris* as a model of God that is presented in Chapter 4 (Models of God). More specifically, because he explains that the sacred and profane simultaneously exist in connections, he would likely value the universality of *Canis familiaris* because the dog combines both the sacred and the profane. Also in his discussion of connection, Spyker describes his experience of hiking along the Appalachian Trail as being deeply spiritual.²¹⁶ Spyker, like Borgmann supports the spiritual quality of nature and would likely agree with the discussion presented in Chapter 2 (Dog and Nature). *Canis familiaris* is a

²¹² Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 120.

²¹³ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 121.

²¹⁴ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 120.

²¹⁵ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 131.

²¹⁶ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 122-124.

bridge to the sacred because it both embodies nature and acts as an intermediary to the natural world. In his discussion, he also writes about the spiritual nature of discipline and routine; this is similar to Borgmann’s idea of Focal Concerns. As such, Spyker would likely appreciate the discussion of how *Canis familiaris* has the capacity to connect people with the richness of life as a focal concern that is presented in Chapter 3 (Dog as Focal Concern). Finally, Spyker describes finding God in a computer when he writes:

But I also see God when I type at this keyboard and I think of all the processes going on inside as my words pop onto a liquid crystal display—words full of meaning, words provided over the years by people in relationship with each other and to a culture, words that have additional meaning determined and refined by their relationship and proximity to each other.²¹⁷

Spyker would likely appreciate how *Canis familiaris* provides a bridge to the sacred through the richness of myth, both as a narrator of sacred history and a means of spiritual vision, which is presented earlier in this chapter.

Liberty

The final lens in Spyker’s matrix is “liberty.” This important lens evaluates technology in terms of its ultimate promise of freedom, a desire that is basic to the human condition.²¹⁸ Spyker frames the overarching question:

Does this technology free me to be myself, to be the fully human being that God is calling me to be, to live in better relationship with the Divine and with my fellow humans, or does it ultimately leave me in bondage?²¹⁹

Spyker asserts that because technology is a part of what makes people human, if people allow themselves to fall into addiction, he writes, “...we have sacrificed the very humanity we

²¹⁷ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 121.

²¹⁸ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 136.

²¹⁹ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 147.

sought.”²²⁰ He expresses that dependence on technology not only enslaves people, but this dependence can lead to addiction.²²¹ Spyker differentiates between a destructive habit and an addiction in the clinical sense that has a mind-altering effect, an indication of tolerance, and dependence upon it.²²²

Using the question criteria when evaluating the human-canine bond through the lens of liberty is a valuable exercise. First, it is unlikely that a person’s relationship with a dog would be considered addictive in the true sense, since even the extremes of animal hoarding behavior is considered to be a subtype of the mental illness obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).²²³ Whether or not the relationship with a dog causes a person to believe they are in bondage is ultimately a question for the individual person as they evaluate their unique circumstances in relation to their canine companion. However, as suggested throughout this writing, positive relationships with dogs most certainly offer persons the potential to be free to be themselves as fully human beings. Additionally, a relationship with a dog offers the potential not only for a person to live in better relationship with the Divine and with their fellow humans but *also* for a person to live in better relationship with all of the world—this aligns with the holistic model, *and* with the core idea of connectivity that Spyker presents in his discussion of his matrix.

Spyker’s matrix can connect a person with the sacred through their relationships with dogs in a few ways. The first, and most obvious way is that by viewing the relationship through

²²⁰ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 141.

²²¹ Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 138.

²²² Spyker, *Technology and Spirituality*, 138-141.

²²³ Michael Price, “Animal Hoarding is its Own Mental Disorder, Study Argues,” *Sciencemag*, September 18, 2017, accessed December 28, 2017, <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/09/animal-hoarding-its-own-mental-disorder-study-argues>.

the various lenses, a person may evaluate how their relationship with their dog impacts their spiritual life. During this evaluative process, a person may take the opportunity to evaluate other technologies as well, which may cause them to be selective about which technologies they choose. This comparative evaluation might cause a person to realize that interactions with their dog are far richer than mindlessly playing a video game. The matrix also enables a person to develop a greater awareness of the components of sacred experience and how these components of spirituality manifest in their lives, thus causing them to be careful about how they use technologies. This may cause a person to take the opportunity to engage with their dog when facilitating potty breaks during the day, instead of being enslaved by a strict schedule of putting the dog out and letting it. Finally, by the matrix might also enable a person to become more familiar with how the sacred makes them feel, thus bringing what was previously a hidden experience into foreground of a person's life. This might cause a person to become more mindful of how a technology affects them. The process of developing the awareness may cause a person to recognize, appreciate and increasingly foster real experiences with their dogs.

Summary and Conclusions

Thus, this discussion explored artifacts through which people may encounter the sacred through relationships with canine counterparts in the age of proliferating technology. More specifically, it investigated myth, sacred stories in their ancient and contemporary contexts, and tested Stephen Spyker's matrix, a tool for evaluating technologies in terms of their impact on a person's spiritual life. The discussion in the first part of this chapter surveyed and presented ancient myths about dogs well as provided contemporary examples of sacred stories or ancient archetypes that continue to inform people about relationships with dogs. The first section provided an overview of myth that explained that myth preserves a space for the sacred as it

represents a sacred history that informs people about life, provides models for behavior, and facilitates cultural learning. It differentiated between myth and history by describing the cyclical nature of myth. The next section provided numerous examples of ancient myths across cultures. The important section about dogs and gods discussed primordial myths, presented five dogs that accompanied gods in pre-creation myths. Additionally, this section offered information concerning myths about how the dog was created, gods who had dogs as companions as well as dogs who manifested themselves as gods, such as Anubis. Myths about dogs as cultural heroes demonstrated how the dog was a helper to humankind. The discussion also included stories about celestial canines, hellhounds, as well as evaluative myths from antiquity that depict various characteristics of dogs. All of these ancient myths highlighted the various ways that these ancient stories about dogs and humanity's relationship with them helped people understand their place in the cosmos, offered an explanation for their mysterious four-legged companions, and provided knowledge about their relationships with this constant creature in their midst.

The discussion in the second section of this first part of the chapter explored stories of dogs in modern myth, suggesting that ancient myths have been refashioned into stories to reflect cultural circumstance. An ancient depiction like Cerberus that reappears as Cujo or Fluffy, provide examples of how such myths perpetuate into modernity. Technologies such as literature, the Internet and films such as *Star Wars* were also described as mediating myth in modernity. The final section of the first part of this chapter explored *Canis familiaris* and connections with Grail myth archetypes and symbolism in the 2017 film *A Dog's Purpose*. A brief analysis of Grail symbolism in this film not only supports the idea that relationships with *Canis familiaris* possess the same transformative potential as the Holy Grail, but by experiencing the film and/or

having a healing relationship with canines also connects people with what is considered to be the greatest of all spiritual endeavors.

The second major goal of this chapter was to observe the influence that relationships with dogs have on people's spiritual lives when viewed through the eight critical lenses of Stephen Spyker's evaluative matrix. This second section began with an overview Spyker's assertions about the relationship between technology and spirituality in modernity. Next, the inquiry evaluated the relationship between dogs, people and spirituality through each of the eight lenses of Spyker's matrix. Through the lens of boundary, or the starting place, it was suggested that a person may develop awareness of thought constructions about their own concepts of spirituality, dogs, and relationships with them. Next, it was suggested that the guiding questions of the simplicity lens could reveal the harmoniousness of a person's relationship with their dog, and hence opportunities for connecting to the sacred. Spyker's transparency lens reveals how the technology people use changes how they think and who they become. A view through this lens revealed the hidden potential for new types of healing and transformation in contemporary relationships with dogs. The lens of community presented the example of dog lovers and other dog centered groups to illustrate the focus of dog communities. Also suggested was the idea that modern technology offers the potential to strengthen communities and virtual technology creates new opportunities for real communities to emerge on a global scale. Spyker's lens of identity explored the idea of identity relating to "knack." When person chooses a dog-related profession that nurtures their gifts with dogs, this spiritual pursuit inextricably entwines identity, technology and spirituality. The velocity lens addressed the faster pace of modern life and revealed that engaging relationships with dogs can help people find simple blessings in their daily toil. Next, Spyker described the emerging view of reality. Through his lens of connectivity it was explained

that people might connect to the sacred via dogs relating to nature, focal concerns, through myth and as models of God. Liberty is the final lens in Spyker's evaluative matrix. Through this lens, as it has been suggested at many points throughout this writing, a relationship with a dog most certainly offers a person the potential to be free to be themselves as a fully *human* being. What's more a good relationship with a dog also presents a person with the opportunity to live in better relationship with the Divine.

Thus, when examined within the selective survey of myth and the theoretical framework of Spyker's matrix, understanding regarding the human-canine bond and encounters with the sacred is furthered. Ancient myths about dogs may have been very useful spiritual guides for helping people make sense of their experience with the dogs that surrounded them in the world. In modern times, where myth lives through technology, a film such as *A Dog's Purpose* keeps great spiritual archetypes and symbolism alive and further informs people about the healing capacity in relationships with dogs. Additionally, the dog as a technology can be systematically examined through each lens of Spyker's matrix, which suggests that the domestic dog is a technology which holds a position in the new frontier between spirituality and technology. The application of the matrix to a person's distinctive set of circumstances in relationship with dogs would foreseeably reveal a more accurate picture of the unique relationship that exists between the phenomena of the individual's association with dogs and that person's own spirituality to that person. Such a revelation, in turn, might initiate the mindful seeking of spiritual experience.

Conclusion

Summary and Findings

Thus, this investigation has selectively surveyed dog artifacts and used key questions regarding humanity and the technological, and placed encounters with the sacred via human-canine relationships into a more systematic framework, suggesting that they are not random, but rather part of a greater human pattern. Using a purposive sampling procedure, the present study approached the subject matter by interpreting and synthesizing the disciplines of anthropology and archaeology by 1.) using animal “remains” and material culture to understand and explain the co-development of humans and canines from prehistory into modernity and 2.) following Foucault’s example of digging through sedimented layers of discourse in the history of ideas to recover artifacts of ways of thinking that characterize certain eras, this investigation produced an archeology of knowledge using key questions regarding a.) humanity and the technological and b.) the how and why they have bonded; attempting to rethink the traditional binary and hierarchical categories defining humans versus animals, belief versus reason, and dominion versus stewardship.

Chapter 1, The dog as device in the *Homo sapiens-Canis familiaris* relationship presented information about the influences that significantly contributed to shaping people’s view of the dog as a device in the contemporary human-canine relationship. The guiding questions led to many findings. The first is that the dog can be characterized as being viewed as a device that resulted from the inescapable pattern of technology that began during the Enlightenment and gained momentum during the Industrial Revolution in Europe. Borgmann explains the rise and rule of technology began during the Enlightenment and gained momentum during the Industrial

Revolution in Europe and America, whereby people began viewing the world through the pattern of the device. It was during this key point in history when people began to view the dog as a device. Evidence suggests that the European mindset of standardization, one of the tenets of Borgmann's discussion regarding the device, shaped the creation of many individual breeds. This mindset reduced the dog to a series of parts to be viewed individually and perfected with precision by dog breeders. Another feature of the device paradigm presented by Borgmann, disposability, was seen when people abandoned their breeding programs when things went wrong. Dogs were dominated, the final tenet in Borgmann's scheme, as they were exploited, forced to work long hours, and often treated cruelly by people. Colonists settling in America, continued the European approach that they already knew with regard to their relationship with dogs. This European pattern usurped the Native American traditional relationship with dogs that was characterized as helping and sharing. The evidence further suggests that the dog's path of becoming a decontextualized commodity in contemporary culture, began around the 1920s. This was also a time when economic prosperity, widespread urbanization and the invention of the automobile popularized dogs. Moving forward from this time, dogs became an integral part of the emerging American Iconic image that materialized through the influence of presidential dogs, the circumstances related to war and the appearance of dogs on television. Evidence also suggests that the dark side of the dog as a device turned commodity was revealed in the 1980s, as there was a crisis in the number of abandoned dogs in the American shelter system. What's more, the sheer number of dogs that were made available to the greater public through the shelter system during that time alludes to Heidegger's notion of the standing reserve.

Descartes' machine theory of animals, which asserted that dogs were non-feeling stimulus response machines, also influenced the device view of dogs. Descartes' specifically

choosing of the language *machina animata* or “animated machine” instead of choosing, perhaps, “mechanized animal” immediately framed the dog as being a thing rather than as being a being. His machine view, asserting that dogs could not feel pain, was readily adopted by scientists, a very influential community. This not only meant that dogs could be exploited, overworked and treated poorly without the need for compassion or moral obligation, but it also meant that these animals were fair game for scientific research. Critics have since provided strong evidence that dogs do feel pain and several other emotions. Descartes’ assertion that animals do not have the capacity for language was refuted by a number of thinkers including Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, Voltaire, Charles Darwin, and Stanley Coren. Most recently, the Cartesian suggestion that animals do not possess consciousness has been refuted by a public statement issued by group of scientists who collaborated in 2012 on the issue in Cambridge, England. Nevertheless, the machine theory of animals is deeply rooted in modern thought, and Descartes’ influence remains evident in the continued use of dogs in scientific research. Additionally, the idea that dogs are stimulus-response machines is a concept that is also seen in contemporary approaches to dog training.

Chapter 2, *Homo sapiens-Canis familiaris* relationships and connections to nature, explored the evolution of the human-canine divide and presented the Five Positive Pathways that overcome the human-canine divide in evolving modern human-canine relationships. Evidence revealed that the human-canine relationship co-evolved as humans attempted to understand their environment and their place in the world. Relationships with dogs evolved to align with a culture’s focus, and dogs readily adapted to these changes. Prehistoric people and dogs were partners on the hunt during a time when survival was the primary focus of both animals. The Egyptians regarded dogs as partners in life, death and the afterlife in a culture that lived in

preparation for the afterlife. As history progressed, humankind's understanding of its relationship with dogs began to change with the introduction of Aristotle's anthropocentric hierarchical scheme in ancient Greece. This was a time where dogs were viewed dualistically, as colleagues or sacrificial offerings, reflective of great cultural changes. The Ancient Romans, focused on nature, viewed their dogs in human terms. However, the focus on nature accentuated the inferiority of animals with the rise of Christianity, developing a clear boundary between people and dogs. The boundary was affirmed when St. Thomas Aquinas built upon Aristotle and described human beings as the sole animal having the capacity for rationality and self-determination. Aquinas's claim that animals existed for the benefit of human beings allowed people to justify their continued close working associations with dogs.

Ironically, as the Enlightenment initiated the rise and rule of technology and Descartes' means-end split contributed to creation of the dog as a device, Descartes' scientific inquiry also highlighted the similarities of humans and animals, which challenged anthropocentrism and ultimately provided a pathway back to nature. Presented were the model of Five Positive Pathways that overcome the human-canine divide in some way, as these pathways explain the complex emergence of an evolving modern human-canine relationship. Jeremy Bentham first initiated concerns for animal welfare that instigated thinking and public discourse about the moral status of animals as well as their thought and language capacities. Thinking about the similarities between humans and dogs narrowed the human canine divide and shifted people's relationship with reality as they contemplated the whole of their circumstances. In other words, humans developed a greater awareness of both canines and of themselves through this growing concern for the humane treatment of dogs.

Charles Darwin stressed the commonality of all life forms and introduced the idea of kinship among all living things in his writing. He suggested that humans and animals differed in degree of mental and expressive ability rather than in the actual nature of those mental processes. Darwin firmly embedded humans into nature and inextricably connected people with the rest of the living world through this highlighting of kinship. This caused people to further realize their connection with nature and develop an awareness of nature through their bonds with their canine companions. E.O. Wilson's biophilia hypothesis describes this innate human desire to connect with animals, which explains a person's instinctive desire to continuously deepen their relationship with their dog, often to being familial, thus intensifying a relationship with nature.

Although anthropomorphism is considered an undesirable concept in scientific circles, it acquires a new significance when it potentially expands a person's awareness of their own humanity by reflecting the image of a person back onto him or herself. The interactions between people and dogs, understood entirely and unavoidably through a human lens, provide a continuous opportunity for a person to affirm their own human nature as they assign meaning to interactions. Human interactions with a dog also present the chance for new openings that might expand self-knowledge; this occurs when a person discovers new things about themselves during the anthropomorphic process. Conversely, a person can connect with nature by developing a profound awareness of the dog as other through the recognition of *Thou* in a canine companion. Philosopher Martin Buber describes this as a relational phenomenon that occurs when a person recognizes true "otherness." The recognition of otherness requires openness to the other, which is natural in the taming process. The recognition of *Thou* is dynamic and ongoing through the relational exchange with the other, making taming an ongoing process when a person shares their life with a dog. The recognition of *Thou* engages the fullness of experience through the

connection, the profoundness of which is illustrated in the eloquent examples of breeders encounters with the opening of the eyes of neonatal pups at around 14 days old.

Finally, dogs can act as an intermediary to nature because dogs get people to go outside. Each time a person opens the door to the outside world for a dog, whether to simply let the dog out in the back yard to go to the bathroom, or to take a dog for a walk, that person is presented with an opportunity to connect with nature. Small realizations of nature may lead to greater ones if a person spends time outside doing things with their dog, aligning with Borgmann's idea that experience with nature builds upon itself. Additionally, sharing the company of a dog is the sole reason why a person who lacks suitable human companionship might decide to go camping or hiking. Sharing a relationship with a dog provides a connection to nature, something that Borgmann describes as being walled-off in modernity. Not only does the dog, a representative of nature itself, bring nature inside to the human, but a canine companion can also be an initiator for getting a person to move beyond the restrictive walls and into the open space of natural world outside. Thus, nature can also attain a new and positive significance, what Borgmann describes as reorientation, through the proposed Five Positive Pathways whereby the human canine divide is crossed in some way and a person develops a profound awareness of nature that exists within themselves, their dogs and the world around them.

Chapter 3, the dog as a focal concern in the *Homo sapiens-Canis familiaris* relationship, applied Borgmann's philosophy, not only revealing that the dog constitutes a focal thing that has the capacity to disclose and inform by gathering the fourfold, but also finding that focal practices that include canines have the capacity to center and engage the human individual with the richness of life. Using Borgmann's characteristics of focal things that include (1.) being a constant, (2.) being inconspicuous and humble, yet flourishing at the fray of human concerns,

and most notably (3.) having the capacity to gather and disclose the fourfold, the dog was shown to be a focal thing. First, the continuity of relationship that has existed since pre-history has generally made the faithful dog a constant in human experience. The stable fidelity of dogs to their human companions was seen in the examples of Argos, Bobby, Hachiko, Fido, Salty and Cash. Additionally, the modern dog is constant because of its steady presence in the daily lives of people due to their commitment of caring for their beloved canines. This constant nature of dogs makes them rather mundane and ordinary, rendering them humble in Borgmann's scheme. Yet, despite their constant presence in rather large numbers in places like New York City, it was also explained that because most dogs spend their lives behind doors in the comfort and safety of the family home, canine companions are inconspicuous because they are seldom part of the public arena. Even more interesting is the notion that although dogs are seldom part of the public area, they flourish at the fray of human concerns. This flourishing is evident in the laws that have been enacted to promote the well-being of dogs, the multi-billion-dollar commercial pet product industry and development of programs based upon the social research that highlights the significant physical, psychological, and social benefits of interactions between humans and canines. Finally, in the inquiry concerning the dog as a focal thing, *Canis familiaris* was described as a gatherer of heavens, earth, mortals and divinities. The dog demonstrates the interplay between earth and sky by both having its feet on the ground and its muzzle turned upward, and by the vital marriage of earth and sky that gives the dog life. The dog summons the mortal into fourfold through its relationship in history with humans as well as with the person present, who both recognizes kinship with the animal and is also informed about nature and their place in the world. The dog draws the divine into the crucial interplay through its spiritual significance in the collective unconscious of humankind, its ability to model the divine, and

through its capacity to initiate *I-Thou* relationships with people. The simple act of petting a dog illustrates how interacting with a dog has the capacity to summon and disclose the four-fold, subsequently providing a place of profound calm that restores the human soul.

Focal practices that include the dog as a focal thing were also investigated. In such practices, dogs offer the opportunity to reorient life by creating a central wholeness in which humans see themselves as part of a bigger scheme of being. These practices included everyday habits, such as taking the dog for a daily walk or spending time petting a beloved dog. Everyday care for a dog is focal because of the need to keep a regular schedule, thus ordering one's life, when caring for a dog. Key to this part of the discussion was the idea of the need for engagement with the animal, and the reader was reminded that interaction that is devoid of engagement is tantamount to the dog being yet another distraction. Still, the distraction can become focal when a person becomes engaged, whether on their own or perhaps initiated by the dog. Walking a dog has the potential to become an all-consuming experience for a person that takes on deeper meaning, as labor and leisure become one, the stress of the day fades into the background, the mind becomes tranquil, and the person experiences a profound sense of being in the world. Additionally, unlike other focal things, such as sneakers, the dog will signal its desire to go for a walk to the person. Other focal practices were examined, such as hobby breeding and dog sports. Hobby breeding was described a central and orienting force in a person's daily life because aspects such as dog care, husbandry, and the "way of life" aspects of this focal practice make it highly important to the person. An exploration of dog sports such as dog shows and companion events portrayed how the commitment to preparation culminates in the competition, an all-consuming experience that pushes the team's limits to peak performance. Lastly, focal practices in working relationships between people and dogs were explored. Of interest were

therapy dogs, where life becomes ordered around visits and the potential for healing the split between being broken and being whole resides in interactions with the animal. Notable to this focal practice is that human clients may become reoriented through engagement with the therapy dog even though there is no initial attachment between the canine and the client. This provides further support for the constant characteristic of the dog as a focal thing.

Chapter 4, *Homo sapiens-Canis familiaris* relationships and connections to the good life and to God, used Borgmann's philosophy concerning the good life and McFague's theological approach to show how relationships with dogs have the capacity to connect people to the good life and to God. The information in the first part of this chapter determined ways that the dog as a focal thing cultivates wealth and the good life. Borgmann references Aristotle's philosophy, explaining that the good life is one in which a person flourishes by living well and doing well. Borgmann also explains Aristotle's idea that excellence in a person's life is determined by the complexities of the faculties that the person develops. The discussion began with a focus on both Aristotle and Charles Darwin's historical writings about dogs that highlighted the complexities and intricacies inherent in relating to dogs. To be sure, as a person develops the various skills involved in the work of building a positive relationship with a dog, that person can achieve excellence, and hence happiness. Housetraining successes, teaching appropriate chewing behavior, basic manners, learning what a dog is trying to communicate, learning about health care and fashioning a daily routine are all examples of ways to develop excellence. Since every dog is different, dogs change over time, and the relationship with a dog is dynamic, so developing excellence is an on-going process. What's more people who engage in dog-centered activities must develop additional complex skill sets beyond that extends beyond the everyday. Aristotle would likely say the building of positive human-canine relationships represent the

development of complex abilities leading to the good life. For Aristotle, a happy life is a good life, and since happiness is an end itself, the good life is sacred.

The third part of this first section concerning the good life delved into Borgmann's questioning if a device can ever become a focal thing. By specifically addressing the dog as device and incorporating Borgmann's criteria that the device must transform into something that fulfills and centers a person's world, the simple answer to this question is "yes." However, this answer is contingent in that the person must engage with the dog and a.) connect with the natural world through the dog, or b.) cross the human-canine divide in some way. The discussion in the next section examined Borgmann's three directions to personal reform through relationships with dogs. A person could impose limits on technology by 1.) creating a clearing, or space to spend time with a dog; 2.) simplifying the context, or doing things to make daily life with a dog easier; and 3.) extending the sphere of engagement, or doing things oneself for a dog. Evidence suggests that a person may impose limits on technology in accordance with Borgmann's three directions. Creating a clearing to engage with one's dog means pushing the pause button on pulls from technology, daily routine, and time-consuming chores, thus relegating them to a place of lesser importance. However, there are times when technology is judiciously allowed into the foreground, such as when using a car, a crate, and a GPS to get to a dog competition. A person may simplify the context by fencing their yard, placing a container of dog food in the kitchen, trimming their long-haired dog short or getting a crate to aid in housetraining. These attempts to simplify the context help to bring the dog closer to a place of immediate importance, thus rendering it more accessible for focal activity. In terms of extending the sphere of engagement, a person may extend excellence in many ways that may include preparing their own dog food, learning to groom their dog themselves or spending time formally training their dog themselves.

The discussion in the final section in the first part of this chapter explored relationships with dogs as they facilitate the traditional virtues of world citizenship, gallantry, musicianship, charity and family, all of which are a measure of wealth and the good life. It was determined that *Canis familiaris*, as a focal concern, can inform a person about each of these traditional concepts. Relationships with dogs facilitate world citizenship by gathering the fourfold, through anthropomorphism, and by sharing kinship; all of which inform a person about their place in the world. Borgmann interprets gallantry in the modern era as fitness, and to be sure, interacting by walking a dog, throwing a ball, or even shoveling a path through the snow for one's dog promote physical prowess. Musicianship is experienced, among other ways, in the rhythmic sound of paws hitting a surface, the sound of a snoring dog, or even the sound of a dog bark. In terms of charity, relationships with dogs cultivate empathy, and through the constant flow of feedback from the animal, teaches people about the plight of others. As a focal concern, the dog draws family together in activities involving the dog or by the canine being a topic of discussion.

The information presented in the second part of this chapter tested *Canis familiaris* in McFague's models of God as challenging the traditional Western view of God. The findings support the dog as a plausible alternative model of God. Because Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and Søren Kierkegaard all believed that God was necessary for a good life, and religious traditions explain that God *is* love, the discussion centered on love. More specifically, the dog was shown to model unconditional love, nonjudgmental acceptance and companionship in a God-like fashion. As a model of unconditional love, the dog, like God, gives love freely with no thoughts of return. The assertion that the dog is suffering from Stockholm Syndrome grossly oversimplifies the complexities of the condition when it exaggerates the actual incidence of the condition, and confuses a severe and volatile hostage situation with becoming domesticated. The

dog provides a model of God's nonjudgmental acceptance because it has an inclusive attitude, whether a person is a pauper or a princess, and finds the beloved to be valuable. As a model of Godly companionship, the dog was shown to be a voluntary friend whose abandonment of ego enables her to work in fellowship toward a vision of good. The discussion in the final section of this chapter illustrated how as a metaphor of God, the dog models divine universality by constantly living in the moment, incorporating McFague's reoriented trinity of love in a single source, and simultaneously representing the sacred and the profane. In this regard, McFague would likely agree that *Canis familiaris* provides a truly holistic model that is fitting for modernity.

Chapter 5, *Homo sapiens-Canis familiaris* relationships, myth and matrix, provided information that demonstrates how people connect to the sacred through experiences with *Canis familiaris* in modernity by examining ancient and cultural artifacts. More specifically, it 1.) investigated myth, sacred stories in their ancient and contemporary contexts, and 2.) tested Stephen Spyker's matrix: a tool for evaluating technologies in terms of their impact on a person's spiritual life.

The discussion in the first part of this chapter surveyed and presented ancient myths about dogs well as provided contemporary examples of sacred stories or ancient archetypes that continue to inform people about relationships with dogs. The first section provided an overview of myth that explained that myth preserves a space for the sacred as it represents a sacred history that informs people about life, provides models for behavior, and facilitates cultural learning. The next section provided numerous examples of ancient myths about dogs across cultures and successfully presented them in an organized scheme. The important section about dogs and gods discussed primordial myths, presented five dogs that accompanied gods in pre-creation myths.

Additionally, this section offered information concerning myths about how the dog was created, gods who had dogs as companions as well as dogs who manifested themselves as gods, such as Anubis. These myths might have functioned to help ancient people work out the mysterious origins of the dog, and to illustrate the dog's qualities as companion and helper. Myths about dogs as cultural heroes demonstrated how the dog was a helper to humankind, and endowed the canine with mystical qualities by depicting the dog as bestowing precious life-sustaining gifts to humanity. The discussion also included stories about celestial canines, hellhounds, as well as evaluative myths from antiquity that depict various characteristics of dogs. These ancient myths highlighted the various ways that these ancient stories about dogs and humanity's relationship with them helped people understand their place in the cosmos, explained their mysterious four-legged companions, and provided knowledge about their relationships with this constant creature in their midst. What's more, evidence indicated a positive correlation between spirit of a culture and the shaping of ancient myth.

The discussion in the second section of this first part of the chapter explored stories of dogs in modern myth, demonstrating that ancient myths have been refashioned into stories to reflect modern cultural circumstance. Technologies such as literature, the Internet and films such as *Star Wars* were identified as mediating myth in modernity. It is through these various mediums that an ancient depiction like Cerberus reappears in the examples of Cujo or Fluffy, perpetuating the myth, as something that preserves a space for the sacred, into modernity. The final section of the first part of this chapter explored *Canis familiaris* and connections with Grail myth archetypes and symbolism in the 2017 film *A Dog's Purpose*. A brief analysis of Grail symbolism in this film supports the idea that relationships with *Canis familiaris*, when called upon for connecting with the sacred, possess the same transformative potential as the Holy Grail.

Experiencing the film and/or having a healing relationship with canines connects people with the greatest of all spiritual endeavors.

This chapter also tested the dog by viewing it through the eight critical lenses of Spyker's evaluative matrix, depicting the influence that relationships with dogs have on people's spiritual lives and revealing new frontiers between technology and spirituality. The inquiry evaluated the relationship between dogs, people and spirituality through the lens of boundary, or the starting place, and it was revealed that a person may develop an awareness about thought constructions concerning their own concepts of spirituality, dogs, and relationships with them. The guiding questions of the simplicity lens revealed how assessing the harmoniousness of one's relationship with a dog could provide opportunities for connecting to the sacred. Problematic to Spyker's use of the example of the Amish in his guiding example for this section is that the Amish regard the dog as a device, representing a clash of cultures which calls for further assessment through the boundary lens. A view through Spyker's transparency lens revealed the hidden potential for new types of healing and transformation in contemporary relationships with dogs. The lens of community presented the example of dog lovers and other dog centered groups to illustrate the focus, integrity, and binding capacity of dog communities. What's more, technology builds these communities because it increases both the availability and immediacy of members and of information. In other words, modern technology offers the potential to strengthen communities and virtual technology creates new opportunities for real communities to emerge on a global scale. Spyker's lens of identity explored the idea of identity relating to "knack." When person chooses a dog-related profession that nurtures their gifts with dogs, their identity, technology and spirituality become entwined with their life's path. The velocity lens addressed the faster pace of modern life, and revealed that engaging relationships with dogs can help a person find simple

blessings, such as living in the moment, in their daily toil. Through the lens of connectivity as an emerging interconnected view of reality, people might experience sacred via dogs through a connected experience of life relating to nature, focal concerns, through myth and as models of God. Liberty is the final lens in Spyker's evaluative matrix. Through this lens, as it has been asserted at many points throughout this writing, a relationship with a dog most certainly offers a person the potential to be free to be themselves as a fully *human* being. What's more a good relationship with a dog also presents a person with the opportunity to live in better relationship with the Divine. The value of Spyker's matrix lies in the ability of a person to use it to evaluate how their own relationship with their dog impacts their spiritual life. During the process, a person might comparatively evaluate other technologies, causing them to realize the richness of their interspecies relationship. Collaterally, the matrix may foster a greater awareness of how the spiritual manifests in their life, thus expanding their intentional encounters with the sacred and increasing the fostering of real experiences with dogs.

Future Directions

The findings from the present study contribute to the existing literature in the following core areas: humanities, technology, religion, philosophy, theology, social science, holistic science and animal science among others. Furthermore, the results and conclusions generated from this study have provided a theoretical framework for further studies of the *Homo sapiens-Canis familiaris* bond as a bridge to the sacred. From the applied knowledge point of view, the present investigation has shown that the relationship that people have with a domestic dog creates encounters with matters of ultimate concern as they manifest and reveal themselves in the religious and the ordinary, inspiring feelings of awe.

The present findings are pregnant with possibility for further study. Due to the absence of scholarship in this area of study, any part of this work invites further in-depth study. For example, future investigations could examine the distinctions between people who own dogs solely as pets and those who are part of the greater professional dog community. Longitudinal studies could follow a person's experience of the sacred for the entire life of a dog. Studies could also focus on certain breeds or breed characteristics. For example, an investigation could examine whether dogs with large eyes, such as a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, facilitate the experience of *I-Thou* relationships differently than dogs with smaller eyes, such as a Tibetan Terrier. Investigations could compare technology use among various populations of people in households that have dogs versus those that do not have a dog. The co-evolution of the bond, the on-going process of taming, comparison of focal practices that include dogs, and modern canine archetypes are just a few examples of the many aspects of this work that merit further in-depth study. Human-canine relationship studies involving respondents on Social Media could also potentially introduce an entirely new opportunity for exploration within the dog fancy. Additionally, this work could also be taken wholly, and used as a model for other interspecies relationships, such as those between humans and felines for example, and encounters with the sacred.

Further, with the findings from the present study, programs could be developed to promote and support dog ownership in this age of technological proliferation. Educational programs that articulate balancing the benefits and responsibilities of dog ownership could become more widespread, thus promoting a greater acceptance of the canine in the public sphere. Laws could be passed that expand the rights of people who own dogs. Programs could be established that initiate interaction between canines and those people who suffer from a crisis of

spiritual deficiency much like those programs that currently use dogs for service and therapeutic purposes. Most importantly, the findings of this study could be used to promote stronger and more widespread relationships with those animals that can facilitate clear connections to the sacred.

It seems fitting to end the present discussion by returning to July 20, 1969, that fateful date in human history when the first man---the first human---stepped out into space and walked on the moon. Hidden in the shadows is the role that the dog played in achieving this historical milestone. In fact, humans were not the first animals to successfully go into space, orbit, return to earth and recover from a space mission. Rather, dogs were the first to orbit through the final frontier as Russian scientists used them to first test the safety of space for humans. While the American space program was unsuccessfully working with rats and chimpanzees, the Russians chose dogs because of what they already knew about dogs and training dogs from Pavlov's work.¹ On August 19, 1960, the Soviet Union successfully launched two small terriers named Belka and Strelka into space for 24 hours, during which time the dogs made 17 revolutions around the Earth before safely returning home.² Prior to them, dogs had gone and returned, but Belka and Strelka were the first to orbit and return unharmed, moving the dream of going to the moon closer to becoming reality. *The New York Times* reported that the dogs' cabin was "equipped with everything necessary for the future flight of a man" and explained that scientists watching the dogs on television screens during the flight "even saw one of the dogs take food."³

¹ Dan Beaumont Space Museum, "Soviet Space Dog, 'The Reluctant Tailor' BBC, Part 1," *YouTube*, October 22, 2013, accessed September 15, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fb4PkSm6D7c>.

² Soviet Space Program, "Soviet Documentary about Belka and Strelka in Space," *YouTube*, September 14, 2015, accessed September 18, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvxdnh5d9sY>.

³ Seymour Topping, "Animals Unhurt," *New York Times*, August 21, 1960, accessed September 18, 2018, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1960/08/21/286145392.html?pageNumber=1>.

The Apollo 11 Moon landing was an “astonishing technological achievement” and the image looking back at the earth became the “spiritual symbol for our times.” Four paws traveled weightlessly in the heavens above so that two feet could follow. In this achievement, the dog truly represents a bridge to the sacred.

Illustrations



Figure 5.1. *Hunefer's Judgement in the presence of Osiris*, Book of the Dead of Hunefer, 19th Dynasty, New Kingdom, c. 1275 B.C.E., papyrus, Thebes, Egypt. AN815830001. (Image courtesy of the British Museum).



Figure 5.2. *Fragment from a funerary relief: Cerberus*, Early Hellenistic Period, c. 320–280 B.C., limestone, South Italy, Probably from Tarentum. (Photo © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

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