

# THE OTHER;

An ontological examination via animal proxy

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What is human? What is animal? Where do the boundaries lie? Is our animal nature more base, or more honest -- without the complications and manipulations of human social construct?

Whether in opposition to the human or as a means of exploring our origin and unconsciousness, throughout history we have used the animal to define ourselves. My project investigates modern society through the eyes of an *other* -- 'man's best friend.' The human canine relationship spans millennia and during this time the domesticated dog has evolved alongside man. While they have learned from us, there is much we can learn from them -- not only in how they perceive the world, but in how we have constructed ours.

# The Face of the Other

Throughout his writings, Derrida raises the “Question of the Animal,” referring to the ways in which philosophers have traditionally written about animals in reductive and essentialist terms. His work is predicated on the assumption that the face of *the other* cannot be delimited a priori to the realm of the human (Calarco, 5). Derrida, recognizes the inter-reliance amongst the species. While in the past, the exploration of the other served largely as an aid for metaphysicists to define humanity against, contemporary theory recognizes the human-animal relationship in more holistic terms. Erica Fudge reinforces this point: “To contemplate the being we call human is to conjure up many beings that are not human. In these terms, the dominion of the human is undone because what a human is is already reliant on and in hock to animals” (Fudge, 2.)

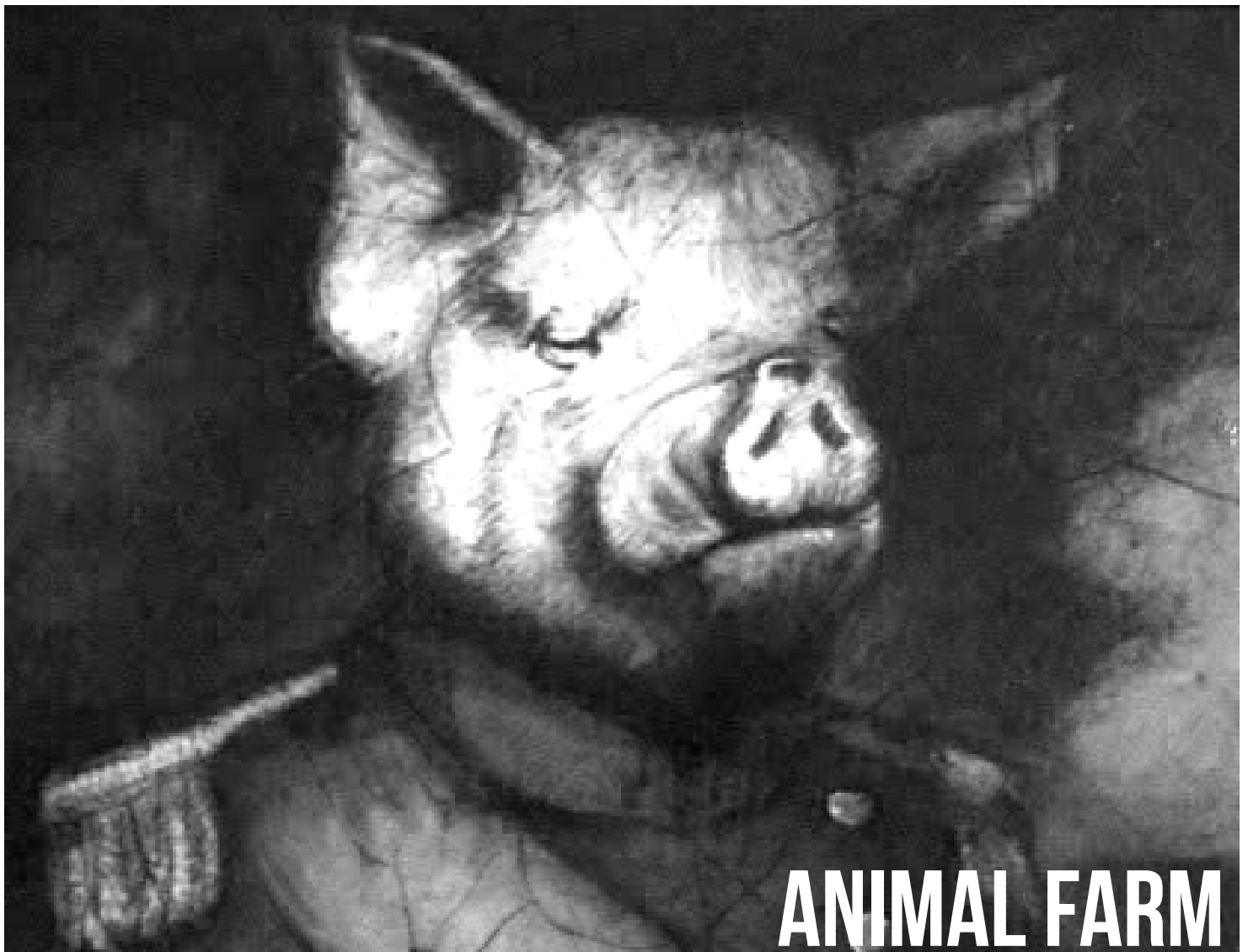
However, this contemporary critique of inter-species relations, particularly questioning human dominion, does not align with Enlightenment and Humanist theory. Man was set in opposition to the animal; he reigned supreme over a lesser being. Though traditional theorists debated what differentiated the two -- reason, language, or death, for example -- they saw a sharp distinction amongst the species. Essentially, man was not animal.

The examination of the animal served predominantly as a tool to better understand what it meant to be human, limiting the animal to a counterpoint in the investigation. Attempts to understand what it is to be animal in and of itself were not considered worthy until the recent emergence of animal studies.

To understand canines, one must look beyond the reductionary role animals have been placed in as merely a species we are set against. We must explore the human-animal relationship. However, to create a critically aware project that investigates what it is to be animal, what it is to be human, one must trace the philosophical discourse that has surrounded the animal for the past five centuries. Moreover, one must actively engage the anthropocentric focus that prevails in metaphysics. Poten-

tially, one can utilize anthropomorphism in a new manner that elevates the canine while at the same time questioning mankind's mores. By displacing modern societal practices from the human to that of an *other*, we can examine our consumer culture at a removed stance.

At no point in time, with the possible exception of the Darwinian revolution, is this investigation more salient than now. As Lippit states in *Electric Animal*, "... human advancement always coincides with a recession of nature and its figures -- wildlife, wilderness, human nature and so forth" (Lippit, 1.) However, there is much we can learn from animals. According to Donna Harroway, "animals have continued to have a special status as natural objects that can show people their origin, and therefore their pre-rational, pre-management, pre-cultural essence." (Harroway, 11) How will an animal behave in an interior where human cultural construction guides the experience if the space is adapted to their physical and sensorial capabilities? In observing



their reactions, what do we learn about our own consumer culture?

I maintain that by applying qualities, senses and behavioral practices typically considered human to the animal in an environment, we can explore both *the other* and contemporary culture in a type of imaginative thinking experience. However, I agree with Derrida as Calarco relates his theory that “essential discourse on animals attempts to create homogeneities where only radical heterogeneity can be found” (Calarco, 5.) Thus, the environment will examine a specific subspecies, the domesticated canine, and its relationship to humans to avoid the broad-stroke generalities often imposed on animals.

Throughout the shared history of human-animal relationships, major hurdles have consistently confronted us. Can we divorce ourselves from an anthropocentric viewpoint? Can we understand what it is to be animal? Michel De Montaigne asks this question plainly: “When I play with my cat, who knows if I am not a pastime to her more than she is to me?”

Of course, one cannot fully know the essence of what it is to be animal. Even if one could communicate fully with a cat, we would certainly face similar restrictions as when communicating with a person. However, re-evaluating the anthropocentric philosophical tradition allows us greater understanding of *the other*. To extend beyond humanist anthropocentric thought we could choose to engage in thinking from other-than-human perspectives -- “an overcoming of the human must pass through a metaphysical reversal of human chauvinism and a ‘becoming-animal’ of the human” (41, Calarco.) However, can we attempt this goal in the “becoming-human” of the animal? Will we consider the animal differently if we engage in an experiment that adapts practices modern society engages in, while at the same time exploring an animal species’ behavioral psychology and sensorial perception?

Calarco’s reversal confronts centuries of established theory that has only begun shifting in recent contemporary critique. By tracing the philosophical dialogue from Descartes to Darwin, one can examine what now seems like radical disparities

in the status applied to and delineations between humans and animals in the seventeenth century. The slow progression towards inclusivity of these theories continued until the Darwinian Revolution forced humans to re-examine the very nature of their being, and in turn that of the animal.



## From Descartes to Darwin

In the sphere of animal studies, Descartes is notorious for his strident segregation between human and animal, serving as a marker for how far contemporary philosophical discourse had to travel. In his *Discourse on the Method*, Descartes likened animals to automata, stating that not only “do beasts have less reason than men, but they have no reason at all” (Descartes, 45.) Descartes expounds anthropocentric humanism to a near extreme: humans conjure up the universe and occupy its center because of their unrivaled capacity for reflection. The capacity for reason and consciences determines the ontological universe, animals, unable to speak, serve as mimics and reflect the priority of humanity’s presence (Descartes 42 - 46.) While Descartes suggests similarities in regard to visuality and optics, he determines that the limits of animal language and lack of reason create an abyss between the two species.



Rousseau, like Descartes before him, related non-humans to “ingenious machines” while at the the same time his theories extend their state of being. He grants animals more capacity for understanding and intelligence via their senses. “Every animal has ideas since it has sense.” (Rousseau, 44 -45) Their ideas, or primitive intelligence, however, do not translate into language or imagination -- necessary attributes in the quest for self perfection. In turn, according to Rousseau, acts toward self perfection lead man to ponder finitude via contemplating death. He states: “Knowledge of death and its terrors is one of the first acquisitions that man has made in withdrawing from the animal condition” (Rousseau, 46.) Thus, being unable to fathom death in life reduces the animal’s status.

Death, both its perception and its transformative capabilities, becomes a major concern for Schopenhauer. Yet Schopenhauer sees a shared experience for both man and animal which eluded both Descartes and Rousseau. “That which cries ‘I, I, I want to exist’ is not you alone; it is everything, absolutely everything that has the slightest trace of consciousness. So that this desire in you is precisely that which is not individual but common to everything without exception.” (Schopenhauer, 70)

For Schopenhauer, all consciousness is animal consciousness. Though destroyed in death, it is shared by all creatures in life. Furthermore, it is only a minor component of corporeality, with little bearing on what is essential in being. With its disappearance in human death, the individual is born, transcending man into an authentic state of being. Thus, the distinguishing factor between man and animal is not consciousness but rather the ability to perish and a restoration of man to his original state as “will.” (Schopenhauer, 72 - 75.)

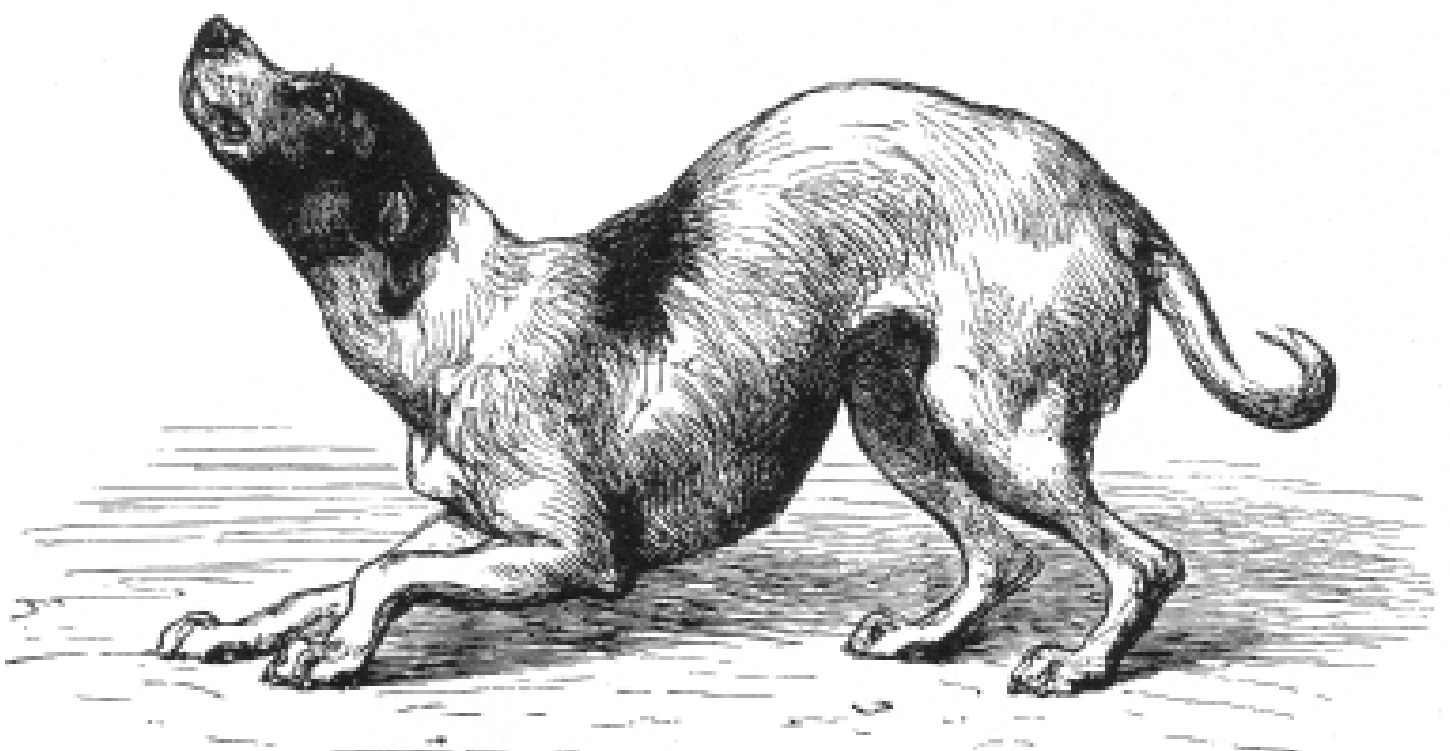
The palingenesis, or rebirth of the will which avoids death by manifesting itself in a new individual, is the result of an “indestructible primal being” that composes man. Animals are purely phenomenal -- they do not share in the “will” (ibid.)

Kant, in regard to animal studies, examines the origin of man as a defining feature. Though nature exists first, man’s existence is not derived from it. This is clearly



communicated in his *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*, “Unless one is to indulge in irresponsible conjectures, one must start out with something which human reason cannot derive from prior natural causes -- in the present case the existence of man” (Kant, 54.) Like Descartes, Kant examines the role of language in distinguishing between man and animal. He designates a primary utterance in animals, which he concludes is mimicked by man. However, “as yet alone, man must have been moved by the urge of communication to make his existence known to other living beings”; thus, animals cannot communicate their existence. (Kant, 40.)

Kant does not return animals to Descartes’ automata; however he continues the anthropocentric metaphysical discourse. As critical theory regarding inter-species relationships progressed, it became more inclusive. However, the process of valuing the other alongside and not beneath man developed slowly. Without the radical shift in our understanding of what becoming human entailed, presented by a man born five years after Kant’s death, the animal might have been perpetually relegated to man’s heel.



Charles Darwin, *The Expression of Emotions*; Figure 6

Darwin's work went beyond assailing many of the tenets of metaphysics. It profoundly altered scientific, philosophical, psychological, theological and sociological fields. In regard to animal studies, it serves as a key turning point in how humans viewed the other; essentially, we realized we had been *the other* -- there was no rigid distinction between man and animal. Though earlier versions of evolutionary theory had been circulating, the publication of *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 and *The Descent of Man* in 1871 connected us to the animal in way previously not considered.

According to John Dewey, "The influence of Darwin upon philosophy resides in having conquered the phenomenon of life for the principle of transition, and thereby freed the new logic for application to the mind and morals of life" (Dewey, 308.) We, in fact all creatures, are in flux due to natural selection and biological adaptation. This was a direct reversal of the Enlightenment theory that concluded man's capacity to reason allowed him the ability to triumph over the chaos of nature.

Moreover, Darwin stresses the importance of corporeality and the interdependence of the mind and body, challenging previous philosophies that placed the mind in a separate realm above that of the body. "Experience shows that the problem of the mind cannot be solved by attacking the citadel itself -- the mind is a function of the body" (Darwin, 331.) Of primary influence for animal studies, is the disintegration of a strict segregation between man and animal, or as Freud said, "[Darwin's theory of descent] tore down the barrier that had been arrogantly set up between man and beast" (Freud, 19: 221.)

French philosopher Henri Bergson helped bridge this barrier by recognizing the importance of immediate and sensorial experiences and intuition over rationalism, again challenging established Enlightenment ideals. For him, change or duration, the perpetual movement and becoming of things, ideas and entities in time, was key to understanding the structure of being -- both in terms of subjectivity and consciousness. (Lippit, 83) Stating that "the truth is that we change without ceasing, and that the state itself is nothing but change," he argues that "privileged moments" have been analyzed

too heavily in metaphysics. (Bergson, 4) To illustrate this point, he chooses the model of the animal, a being he sees placed between instinct and intelligence. “The ratio of instinct to intelligence determines, for Bergson, the degree of an animal’s consciousness.” (Lippit, 84)

It’s important to note that Bergson is creating a spectrum by allowing animals to be considered individually; moreover, the spectrum applies to all living beings. Bergson notes the overriding focus on intelligence, on what is thought, over instinct, what is acted, as a detriment to philosophical discourse.

While Darwin helped establish the biological connection between man and animal and Bergson advocated duration as necessary to understanding being, in addition to creating a spectrum for instinct and intelligence, Freud illuminated the psychological integration between man and animal. Accordingly, Freud refuses to separate the animal from man; in fact, animal nature resides inside of us, informing our unconsciousness or non-rational dimension of being. He surmised that “biological research destroyed man’s supposed privileged place in creation and proved his descent from the animal kingdom and his ineradicable animal nature.” (Freud, 16: 285)

With the development of Freud’s theory of the unconsciousness, harboring the edos, or idea of animal being, he creates a system that allows for the existence of other worlds. It serves as a mediator between the worlds of humanity and animal. According to Lippit, “Freud’s unconscious opens the possibility of a bridge between the human and animal worlds, which are vigorously kept apart in philosophical studies.” (97)

Furthermore, it helps elucidate acts and thoughts in the conscious world. “Conscious acts remain disconnected and unintelligible if we insist upon claiming that every mental act that occurs in us must also necessarily be experienced by us through consciousness” (Freud, 14:167.) Thus, to better understand oneself, one must recognize that subjectivity does not exist in a unified topology; we must explore our animal nature and in turn *the other*.



# Derrida and Modern Discourse

“The question of the living and living animal ... will always have been the most important and decisive question. I have addressed it a thousand times, either directly or obliquely, by means of reading all the philosophies I have taken an interest in.”

Jacques Derrida (402)

Derrida takes a thorough look at inter-species relationships and is critical of Heidegger's discourse and of Humanist philosophers in their work pertaining to animals. He comments in *Eating Well* that the “Heideggerian discourse on the animal is violent and awkward, at times contradictory.” (Derrida, 111). In his writing on Dasein's finitude, Heidegger harkens back to Descartes, noting that animals never properly die; they can only perish. I agree with Derrida's critique: in many instances Heidegger's work breaks with the developing progressive nature of human-animal relations. Therefore I will only briefly touch on one of his most famous writings pertaining to animal studies.

In “The Origin of the Work of Art,” Heidegger strips animals of their place in the world by stating: “A stone is worldless. Plant and animal likewise have no world; but they belong to the covert throng of a surrounding into which they are linked” (Heidegger, 44-45.) According to Heidegger, human beings possess the means, *techne*, to make the world appear while animals can merely exist in another's world, unable to access it themselves. However, as Calarco explains in *Zoographies*: “By contrast [to the stone], the animal does have access to those beings among and with which it lives.” (24) Heidegger offers animals a more developed sense of being than the stone by stating, “every animal as animal has a specific set of relationships to its source of nourishment, its prey, its enemies, its sexual mates, and so on” (Heidegger, 1995:132.) Therefore, while the animal has ‘no world,’ they do have, in a sense, their own world through their relationships.

Derrida expands the role of the animal, not just to including its presence in the world, but surmising that without it we cannot comprehend our own presence. To understand ourselves we must investigate *the other*, what we are not. Thus, without

the animal we cannot understand the human. As Calarco notes, “we find in *Of Grammatology* the claim that the term “human” gains sense only in relation to a series of excluded terms and identities, foremost among them nature and animality” (104.) It is important to note that Derrida does not place animal in strict opposition to the human; rather, he sees the relationship as one of inter-reliance. By contemplating human, we contemplate what is not human and thus are depending on animals to help define what we are not.

This ideology is shared by many modern philosophers; among them Cary Wolfe, who writes that “the animal has always been especially, frightfully nearby, always lying in wait at the very heart of the constitutive disavowals and self-constructing narratives enacted by the fantasy figure we call ‘the human’” (Wolfe, 2003:6.) Thus the animal is not only a creature we share an inter-reliance with, but by highlighting the ‘fantasy’ of the human, Wolfe confronts the fallacy of the demarcation between human and animal. Though how we view animals has changed, even if we choose to exclude animals from our consideration they are part of the narrative we have created to better understand and rationalize our existence.

Moreover, just as we look at them, they look back at us. Derrida confronts this reality in his lecture, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. “Just as I see it [his cat] as this irreplaceable living being that one day enters into my space, enters this place where it can encounter me, see me, see me naked” (378-789.) The animal is an active participant, not a passive object. Calarco states that Derrida “makes it clear that animals confront us with as much ethical force as human beings do, if not more so” (106.)

John Berger explores our reaction when an animal confronts us with their gaze. “The eyes of an animal when they consider man are attentive and wary. The same animal may well look at other species in the same way. He does not reserve a special look for man. But by no other except man will the animal’s look be recognized as familiar. Other animals are held by the look. Man becomes aware of himself returning the look. (4 - 5.)” He proposes that human beings find the animal’s look familiar because

it fosters them to recognize themselves; “In lieu of comprehension, animals provide humanity with a glimpse of subjectivity at its limit” (5.)

Whether defining ourselves against the animal or participating in communication with the animal, they foster a greater understanding of humanity. Both in an active and passive manner, animals enrich our experiences and add to our epistemological knowledge of the world. While the concept of *the other* is addressed at length in modern philosophy, there is no rigid barrier between species. Instead, we exist on spectrums of various hierarchies, if any at all, depending on what quality is being evaluated -- intelligence, honesty, adaptability, sensorial awareness.



## Social Wolves, Designed Beings & Pets

Thus far, I have evaluated the development of inter-species critical theory as it is an important element to illustrate the historical progression of human-canine relations. Moreover, it demonstrates centuries of human hierarchy and an unwillingness to participate as equals in inter-species relationships. However, creating a contemporary project examining man's relationship to animals would inevitably ignore important differences amongst the species and result in generalities. Thus, as previously



mentioned, it creates “homogenities where vast heterogeneties” exist, perpetuating an anthropocentric and humanist tradition. To better comprehend man’s relationship with the domesticated dog, one needs not only the species of canis but additionally our relationship with pets, or animal companions, and their roles in modern society.

As we have moved away from nature, into more urban environments, we have increasingly invited the animal into the home. The domesticated animal, our pets, serve as ‘man-animal’ providing a link to the natural world in our homes. In many ways, the dog is actually a ‘designed’ being. According to John Bradshaw, the author of *In Defense of Dogs*, “Domestication has altered the dog considerably, more than any other species” (Bradshaw, 4.) In addition to coming in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, the dog has adapted to human behavior and environments.

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when this process of domestication began. It dates back at least 12,000 years, making dogs the first domesticated species. (ibid.) Throughout their history they have been used predominately as a tool for work. It is only relatively recently, about 100 years ago, that our relationship to dogs changed.

We tend to erroneously associate the dog with the myth of the lone wolf. However, comparative zoology studies were based on wolves kept in captivity; they were usually separated from their family and placed in environments unlike those found in the wild. (ibid, xvii). Over the past decade, new methods of studying wolves enabled by technological advances have altered our understanding of their sociability and adaptability. “The wolf pack, always the touchstone of studying dog behavior, is now known to be a harmonious family group except when human intervention renders it dysfunctional” (ibid.) The alpha male is ‘dad’; the female, ‘mom’. The rest of the pack? Usually, they are offspring that stay on until they are ready to mate and create family groups themselves, serving as babysitters helping mom and dad raise the next year’s litter. (ibid, 17). When this new understanding of the wolf is applied to its distant descendant, the domesticated dog, it is evident why dogs are such suitable pets and members of a human family group.

Pets, according to anthropologist Edmund Leach, are “man animals,” neither human nor purely animal (45). This places pets negatively in an intermediary category; Leach is stating that pets have lost their status as animal because of their domestication, and that being animal is intrinsically tied with being wild. In addition to this being an over-simplification, much is to be learned about humans through their relationships with pets. Whether you agree or disagree with the humanizing of pets, how society has chosen to do this teaches us as much about ourselves, our culture, environments and economy as it does the innate potential of animals to learn and adapt.

Berger argues that the rise in the number of pets since the nineteenth century is a sign of modernity; it “is part of a withdrawal into the private small family unit, decorated or furnished with mementoes from the outside world, which is a distinguishing feature of commercial societies” (12). The pet not only helps connect us to the ‘outside’ or natural in our man-made environments, but also serves as an outlet for affection and physical contact in our increasingly physically isolated human interactions. Technologies that enable physically solitary conversation and a loss of community can be partly attributed to globalization; in a new era of ‘connectivity’ we desperate to connect palpably.

The pet creates a sense of home, and offers “ontological security,” according to sociologist Adrian Franklin. By being stable and predictable, they provide “a somewhat nostalgic set of old fashioned comforts. They make long term bonds with their human companions; they rarely run off with others; they are almost always pleased to see “their” humans; their apparent love is unconditional and they give the strong impression that they need humans as much as humans need them” (85).



# Canine Consciousness & Perception

As humans are not currently capable of full communication with their pets, we make assumptions, whether based on experience with our pets or other humans, about our pet's emotional state and preferences. This extends to perceptions about animal consciousness; just as one exists outside of one's pet, the pet exists outside of its owner. However, undoubtedly their sense of consciousness is different than our own.

However, can one ever know for certain or is animal consciousness inaccessible to humans? Given the size of their cortex, it is doubtful that dogs have a capacity for self-consciousness similar to that of humans. However, some researchers hypothesize that “dogs have a special brand of intelligence, unique in the animal kingdom, which they co-evolved with us humans, as part of the process of evolution” (Bradshaw, 181.) Have emotions and consciousness evolved in a similar manner? While there is substantial proof that dogs can feel fear, anxiety, anger, joy, and even jealousy, debate and doubt surrounds the ability for canines to experience some of what psychologists call ‘secondary emotions,’ such as empathy, pride, guilt and grief (ibid 208 - 213.) It is critical to note that humans search for emotions in dogs that they themselves have experienced. Potentially there is an entire range of emotion inaccessible to humans but commonplace for dogs. Thus, one cannot deduce that a dog's life is any less emotionally rich than that of humans based on current findings. Or as Bradshaw surmises, “If the Inuit can have fifteen words for snow, maybe dogs can experience fifteen kinds of love” (223.)

A dog derives joy from play; scientifically speaking, they “experience a surge in oxytocin during friendly interactions with people” (ibid 170.) While this might seem normal, most animals cease playing in their adult life. Conversely, dogs continue to engage in play when they are adults. Moreover, inter-species play is particularly rare. Thus, the inter-species bond between human and animals has evolved from centuries of domestication. Remarkably, “dogs' attachment to people is often more intense than the attachment to individuals of their own species” (ibid, 170.)

This attachment is particularly interesting given that human physical perception of the world differs from that of canines. The most marked difference is the dogs' sense of smell. "Smell memories last for a lifetime and affect most all canine behaviors" (Foogle, 36.) The average dog has approximately 220 million scent receptors in his nose, compared with the five million common to humans (ibid, 35.) Their sense of smell can indicate danger, identify other individuals and, studies suggest, even decipher human emotion (Bradshaw, 230 - 240.) Their sense of smell is the deciding factor in their selection of food; their sense of taste is actually less elaborate than humans. Roughly speaking, a dog's taste sensation can be broken into three categories -- pleasant, indifferent, unpleasant (Foogle, 28.)

One potential reason for the greatly reduced sense of smell in humans as compared to most animals could be our heightened visual perception. "The phasing-out of odor perception in the human roughly coincided with the evolution of three-color vision" (Bradshaw, 227). While we rely on a series of visual clues to gain information about our environment, dogs depend more on smell and sound. However, it is erroneous to assume, as humans once did, that dogs are color-blind or that their vision is not as 'good' as ours. Their sight is different, not necessarily worse. While dogs cannot distinguish between red and orange, their two-color vision does allow them to distinguish between blue-violet and yellowish green (Bradshaw, 229.) Their nocturnal vision is superior to ours as is their field of vision -- 240' compared to humans' 180' (ibid, 229.) Thus their increased lateral vision enables them to be accurately aware of distant movement outside the periphery of ours, while their limited binocular vision may make it difficult to see what is right in front of them.

However, above sight, smell, taste or sound, "touch is the earliest and possibly the most important of all the canine senses" (Foogle, 26.) Thus, it follows that being in contact-based relationships offer the richest rewards. Not too different from human relationships, and perhaps why the bond between man and his dog has evolved over millennia.



# Becoming

Both becoming animal, how we try to understand a pet's consciousness, and becoming human, how we humanize the pet, involve imaginative thinking. While I am not advocating the increased humanization of pets, I think it is illuminating to reflect on how we choose to do so. This project is not about training dogs and as such I have not chosen to reference research on the topic. Instead it will result in the realization of a space that addresses inter-species relations, how we view the dog and our social practices by extending them to the *other*.

Engaging in methods of decision making used by animals can enhance our understanding of ourselves. Therefore, adapting human behavioral psychology and social experiences to a commercial interior for dogs, which of course takes into account a canine's sense of perception as we currently understand it, is an examination of both the endonic and exotic.

How does one persuade a dog to select a product? Dr. Robert Cialdini in *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* describes six key methods used by advertisers and marketers in persuasion. Can one apply the principles of reciprocation, social validation, consistency, authority, liking and scarcity in a dog's selection process? Moreover, contemporary dining, especially in regards to dining out, is as much about the social experience, a type of entertainment, for humans as it is a means of subsistence. Dogs are social animals and as mentioned previously, "continue to play even when they are adult, unlike most species" (Bradshaw, 58.) How does one incorporate entertainment, increasing sociability into a dog's dining experience? Most importantly in applying modern practices to canines, do we blur the distinction between human and animal? Do we examine our practices differently?





## Conculsion

As we ask ourselves what it is to be canine, where the distinction lies, it is chiefly limited to those engaged in philosophy or critical theory that turn the question around. What is being human? Not solely in contrast to the pet, our domestication of animals and how we have chosen to anthropomorphize tells us much about our own contemporary existence. To reach a broader public, I am creating a commercial interior space that engages in this discourse. Moreover, to increase awareness and draw in a wider audience, I will create a website and canine lifestyle product line along with engaging in a PR campaign. While some may view a canine bakery as ludicrous, others may find it perfectly reasonable. I will not pass judgement, but I do ask for consideration as to how one's stance demonstrates their view of the other.

I believe it is in the removal of the human as key participant that we can gain insight into the human. In making of the familiar foreign we can look afresh at what we have become accustomed to in the commercial sector. By blurring the boundaries be-

tween the two species in the creation of an inter-species space that facilitates unique experiences, I hope to provoke a line of questioning.

To answer what makes a human's experience unique to that of a dog's, one must first define the experience of being human and being dog. Though we do not have a complete scientific understanding of what it is to be a dog, my interior will ask a segment of society that has chosen to engage in close relationships with canines what it is to be human. Thus, in keeping with traditional philosophical discourse, we examine *the other* once again to define ourselves. However, this time humans are not set against *the other*; rather, we are defining our culture along side them. If canines can make decisions and participate in organized forms of play in a social environment, what makes our social experiences more valid than theirs? Where, if at all, do the boundaries lie?

Perhaps the question becomes why humanize. If the goal were to study the metaphysics of being canine, humanization would be detrimental. However, this is an investigation into what we can learn from *the other*. By humanizing, I am not suggesting a path forward for human-canine relations. Rather, I am posing a question about the status of the domesticated dogs. What is the reaction to 'elevating' the dog by designing a space where they serve as the focal point? Currently, there are spaces that consider the canine but these spaces, by and large dog parks and pet shops, are still geared towards the owner. Ultimately, the physical comfort and limitations of the owner prevail in guiding design decisions over that of the canine. Conversely, the space I intend to build will allow canines to make decisions in regards to their dining selection, and where the comfort of one species must take precedence over another, the dog will be the foremost considered.

With the four-legged clearly serving as the focal point, man's modern societal mores become more pronounced. Reversing the roles so that man becomes the companion species allows him to observe human consumer culture differently, from a removed perspective. It is in the application of the familiar to *the other*, that we look again both at our daily practices and *the other*.



While I think that the benefits for man in a human-pet relationship extends beyond this ontological security, it is an important factor as to why many people initially choose to engage with pet 'ownership'. I emphasize the word ownership because it brings up a key point in how one views his or her relationship with their pet. Humans are the 'patron,' supplying food, shelter and at times clothing, so it follows that at times the relationship is patronizing. Alternatively, we could view the inter-species engagement as an opportunity for mutual growth and support; as such both species -- man and animal -- should be considered partners and equal.

Donna Harroway, gives dogs more independence from the human and rejects views and relationships that create 'fuzzy humans' by stating that ".... dogs are not about oneself. Indeed, that is the beauty of dogs. They are not a projection, nor the realization of an iteration, not the telos of anything, They are dogs, i.e., a species in obligatory, constitutive, protean relationship with human beings" (31.)

However, what does our humanizing of pets, the development of what Harroway calls 'fur babies,' tell us about our own needs? In many ways, one is trying to create relationships similar to those we share with other humans or children. In doing this, one extends many markers of contemporary commercial society: fashion, branding, social networking and domestic trends to our animal companions. Examples are numerous, including Christmas greeting cards of pets replacing unborn children, Halloween costumes for the four-legged, and pet food that veers closer to our own diets with ingredients that reinforce our beliefs -- organic, locavore, vegetarian or vegan. The Facebook profile where the owner adapts the perceived persona of his or her pet, by no means rare, illuminates just how far the effort to humanize extends. Moreover, it is an effort to project through *an other* that we are becoming one and the same -- at least in the treatment of the species by a growing population searching for a physical connection.

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