

Deep Canine Topography

Reconnecting with the 'wild' through the artistic practice
of walking with companion species.

Darren O'Brien



Figure 1 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *Early Experiments in Deep Canine Topography, Bardon Hill*, digital photograph, 2018.

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Abstract

In recent decades many contemporary walking artists and psychogeographers have sought to engage with landscape as a more-than-human meshwork whilst challenging the legacies of colonialism and capitalism's exploitation of land and bodies. This has seen the emergence of new strategies which reach beyond psychogeography's initial concerns of the influence of geographical space on the individual and embrace new-materialist concepts of the fluidity of bodies in motion. Such approaches seek to de-individualise the human by privileging more-than-human agency, assemblages, affects and relations. Within a new-materialist frame, walking-art is re-positioned as a more-than-human practice which challenges notions of human exceptionalism. This thesis introduces the practice of deep canine topography to explore the art of walking with dogs as a more-than-human artistic collaboration. A term coined by the author, deep canine topography asks that we abandon upright, bipedal, ocular-centric human points of view, and embrace the vibrant world of our canine companions through affect, immanence, and playful improvisation. By attending to contact zones between human and canine, the walk or walkies is positioned as a shared, co-authored art practice which re-connects the human with the multiplicity of the more-than-human elements that make a world. Utilising artistic research methodologies, I propose, perform, and reflect upon deep canine topography as a novel and creative multispecies practice. In doing so, I embrace canine navigational skills as an invitation to follow the nose and to engage in a more-than-human exploration of place, space, and time through sensory entanglement, leading to the emergence of new radical cartographies. I propose that such radical cartographies problematise Philosophical Humanist concepts of the animal and the nature-culture divide, contributing to wider dialogues in contemporary walking-art practice, critical animal studies and philosophical posthumanism.

Acknowledgements

With deepest thanks and gratitude to Professor Duncan Higgins, Dr Andrea Moneta, Dr Andrew Brown, and Associate Professor Danica Maier for their continued support and guidance throughout. My gratitude is also extended to Henry Rogers, Jonny Golding, and Theo Reeves-Everson, for their inspiration and groundwork during my MA in fine art at The Birmingham School of Art. Thanks are also extended to Nottingham Trent University's Brackenhurst School of Animal and Environmental Studies for their advice and guidance at key points in the research. I would also like to thank the following artists and academics who kindly offered their time in the form of informal discussions about their practice; Angela Bartram, Allison Lloyd, Belén Cerezo, Layla Curtis, Lee Deigaard, Miranda Whall, Simon Faithfull, and Tina Richardson. I would also like to thank Lindsay Nova and Catherine Grailey for their invaluable dyslexia and ADHD support. Finally, my deepest gratitude is extended to the Midlands 4 Cities Doctoral Partnership for their funding, training, and support throughout.

Co-Authorship

Throughout this thesis I position my canine companion as artist and co-author, which I discuss in both the *Introduction and Methodology* and Chapter 2, *Becoming Bodies*, in the section *Co-authored Bodies*. As such, when referring to the practice element of the thesis, I deliberately label collaborative works as 'our' practice. I have always had an unease about imposing a human name on my canine companion within the text, but conventions in the UK require that his name appears on his RSPCA (Royal Society for the Protection of Animals) adoption certificate and official veterinary and insurance records as Dexter O'Brien. Therefore, in line with both academic and artworld conventions, all artistic-walking outputs, photographs, video, sonic, and GPS drawing works, composed by both human and canine bodies, are credited as O'Brien and O'Brien to reflect the equality of our collaboration. My decision to deliberately name both human and canine artists in this way is also designed to challenge such conventions and begin to tease at the idea that subjectivity, creativity, and the generation of knowledge are exclusive to the human condition.

The More-Than-Document.

Initially employed as a means to document our collaborative walking-art practice, the document has become something more-than a static record or evidence of practice. Therefore, the document becomes activated through the agency of human, canine and documentary apparatus (camera, GPS trackers, microphone and so on). In this sense the creative outputs encountered throughout this thesis should be read as both documentary evidence and as collaborative, multispecies co-authored artworks in their own right. I address this in more detail in Chapter 2, *Becoming Bodies*.

Land Acknowledgement

The lands we have walked during our research are currently known as Aylestone Meadows, Ratby Meadows, the ancient borough of Lubbethorpe, Leicester Forest East, the National Forrest and Bradgate Park. They are situated within the wider area of the Soar Valley, which was formed during the ice age by the receding of the ancient River Bytham, in the county of Leicestershire, United Kingdom. The principal site of activity as chosen by my canine companion is Aylestone Meadows, which is intersected by the Grand Union Canal and the disused Great Central Railway line (now a traffic-free cycleway). This mix of nature reserve and post-industrial landscape is home to many more-than-human inhabitants. I would like therefore to acknowledge this land and its many more-than-human inhabitants and their entangled interconnectedness. Our encounters with their rich ecosystems have helped to shape the research through each and every walk we have conducted.

Research Outputs Stemming from the Thesis

The following list indicates significant research outputs and published work undertaken as part of the project.

Conference Workshops, Talks and Creative Outputs

M4C 2020 Festival of Research.

Creative Showcase, Canine Soundscapes.

Fourth World Congress of Psychogeography (Online).

It's ok they're friendly, Workshop on collective Deep Canine Topography and Q and A.

04-06/09/2020.

<https://www.4wcop.org/>

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/shared/252777aad9d6ef9a543c842cdaae4c5d>

Uncommon Worlds II, Life With and Without Animals, University of Derby.

Paper - Further Adventures in Deep Canine Topography, paper and Q and A.

07/11/2020.

University of Derby.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=focS5KI004c&feature=youtu.be>

M4C 2021 Festival of Research

Creative Showcase, The Beach Beneath Our Feet (Debut)

M4C 2022 Festival of Research

Creative Showcase, Two Bodies Drawing.

WARP Walking Research Conference.

Paper - Deep Canine Topography, Some Simple Steps, Performative Presentation and Q and A.

29-30/09/2022.

University of Amsterdam

<https://asca.uva.nl/content/research-groups/warp/walking-as-research-practice.html>

[Transcript.](#)

Posthuman Bodies & Embodied Posthumanisms.

Paper - Deep Canine Topography, Reconstructing radical cartographies and sensory entanglement through the use of the canine-mounted action camera.

12-14/10/2022.

University of Warwick and Nottingham Trent University

[Transcript.](#)

Exhibitions

Two Queens Gallery, Members Show.

'A Single Breath', November 2020.

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/shared/bacabbaacca500997715e95285e71ac0>

Two Queens Gallery, Members Show.

'The Beach Beneath our Feet', November 2021.

Publications

The Dog Headed People, Video Work: and Two Bodies in Motion - Surface Encounters Paper.

Part of a multimedia presentation Becoming Feral 2 publication.

November 2021.

[Becoming Feral 2](#)

Deep Canine Topography: Captive-Zombies or Free-Flowing Relational Bodies? MDPI Arts, Special Issue "Art and Animals and the Ethical Position"

<https://doi.org/10.3390/arts12020068>

Deep Canine Topography, Some Simple Steps.

Walking as Research Practice, Special Issue WARP and Soapbox Journal.

Printed Journal, July 2023.

<https://www.soapboxjournal.net/>

Forthcoming Papers and events at the time of Submission.

Not Quite King, Not Quite Fish

Exhibition and workshop, Doctoral Research Symposium at the Vilnius Academy of Arts, November 2023. (Abstract accepted)

Embracing The Doggy Derive.

Humanimalia Journal, Special issue, Uncommon Worlds 2.

Spring 2024. (Abstract accepted)

Thesis Map

This thesis is presented through a number of practice expositions and is supported by an exegesis in the form of theoretical discourse and critical reflection. Following the introduction and methodology chapter there are three core chapters which are structured as follows:

- **Context** – Situating the practice within a specific area/field of enquiry.
- **Concepts** – Introduction and discussion of key philosophical concepts, towards the building of a theoretical framework.
- **Contemporary Artistic Practice** – A discussion of contemporary artistic practice which includes canine collaboration, walking, mapping, and expanded landscape art.
- **Critical Reflection** – A critical self-reflection of my artistic practice.
- **CODA** – Concluding remarks.

As an artistic research project, this thesis should be read in conjunction with a number of practice expositions, hosted on the Research Catalogue. Specific practice expositions are reached through hyperlinks at the beginning of each of the three core chapters and should be visited prior to reading each chapter. Each chapter-specific exposition hyperlink also has a duration, for example 20 minutes, however you are invited to spend longer with the work and revisit as necessary. A critical self-evaluation of each exposition is located towards the end of each of the core chapters.

On arrival to the Research Catalogue, each exposition will have a title page with a brief description and in some cases instructions for navigation. Clicking on the open exposition button will launch the specific exposition.

Alternatively, the complete set of expositions, including some which are not referenced within the written thesis, can be explored through a central map. This allows the reader to explore the practice in a nonlinear format. This central exposition page contains a number of user-activated short videos, alongside the soundtrack of a single walk. When designing this page, I aimed to emulate a physical exhibition space, with the option to wander, explore, and interact as you might encounter the practice in the context of a sonic and video gallery installation, whilst acknowledging the limitations of this virtual and rather flat space.

Central Exposition Hyperlink

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/shared/d02a6304aecb2a659a653cd31a9a41ef>

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'Because I become with dogs, I am drawn to the multispecies knots that they are tied into and they retie by their reciprocal action.' (Donna Haraway).¹

¹ Donna J Haraway, *When Species Meet*: Vol. 3. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 249.

STEP LIGHTLY



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Figure 2 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, (2022).

The beginnings of this research, this speculative investigation into the walkies as something more than an entangled domesticated task, lie with the discovery of a decomposing body in a local suburban park. The body in question was discovered by my canine companion, who, seemingly bored and frustrated with my efforts in walking-art research, disappeared from sight into a forgotten thicket of trees, brambles, and hawthorn. With much trepidation and difficulty, I squeezed into a clearing to find him standing quietly with a kin of some distant kind, its remaining fur a clue to its material being, a shell of diffracted decomposing matter, taut skin, stretched across the arch of rib bone. I became consumed by a powerful shift in atmosphere as my companion began to slowly circle the remains of an adult fox.²

² Darren O'Brien. "Deep Canine Topography, Some Simple Steps," *Soapbox Journal, Walking as Practice Research*, (2022): 107-139.

Introduction and Methodology

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Introduction

In their 2018 study *(Just) a Walk with the Dog?*, reader of sociology Dr Thomas Fletcher (Leeds Beckett University) and interdisciplinary researcher Louise Platt (Manchester Metropolitan University) describe the humble dog walk as, '[...] a significant arena where relations of power between animal and human are continuously mediated.' They go on to propose that canine agency, as encountered in the dog walk, should be fully considered as part of a shared human-canine ontology.³ Responding to Fletcher and Platt's call for further research, this thesis aims to explore the significance of the dog walk through the praxis of walking-art and psychogeography, thereby reframing the walkies as a collaborative multispecies act of making. In doing so, I aim to explore human-canine relational ontologies and examine how walking with a canine through a creative alliance enables a deeper connection with place and space. The initial set of research questions are as follows: What would happen if I sought to reframe the ubiquitous walkies as an artistic collaboration within the field of psychogeography and walking-art? How might this reframing offer new insights into human-canine relational ontologies and, as the title suggests, how might walking with companion species facilitate a deeper connection with nature? Through examining these questions, I argue that approaching walking with dogs as a co-authored walking-art practice offers the potential to radically re-map how we engage with place and space, and, in the process, reimagine human-canine relational encounters. In this sense, both the human and canine meet the environment as part of a shared multispecies alliance built on affect, immanence, and playful improvisation.

What follows, therefore, is an autoethnographic, multispecies account of an extended period of creative human-canine collaboration. For a little over three years, my canine companion and I have engaged in a number of artistic walking activities and experiments. During this time, we fully immersed ourselves in a collaborative partnership which sought to trouble human exceptionalism and human-centred navigational assumptions.

In this opening chapter I lay out the details of the methodological framework and guiding principles through which the research is situated and approached. I introduce

³ Thomas Fletcher and Louise Platt, "(Just) a Walk With The Dog? Animal Geographies and Negotiating Walking Spaces." *Social & Cultural Geography* 19, no. 2 (2018): 211-229, 213.

psychogeography as a point of departure and explore recent advances in positioning walking as a research methodology, situating my approach within the wider framework of research creation. I also briefly introduce several key philosophical concepts which form a critical dialogue with the practice, thus building an underlying theoretical framework. I then make the case for taking both an autoethnographic and multispecies ethnographic approach as appropriate forms of expression. Finally, I briefly explore the ethical framework employed within the research, before introducing *A Methodological Guide to Walking Differently* as a set of guiding principles for the project.

Psychogeography and the Doggy Dérive



Figure 3 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

As an artistic research project, deep canine topography is informed by psychogeography and its methods, as first developed in the mid-1950s by the Marxist revolutionary group of artists and activists the Situationists and their previous incarnation the Letterist International. Spokesperson for the Letterist and Situationist groups, Guy Debord, defined psychogeography as, *'[...] the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, whether unconsciously organised or not, on the geographical emotions and behaviour of individuals.'*⁴ Captured within the spectacle of post-war Western European mass consumerism, the Situationists became specifically concerned with critiquing the structures and flows that capitalism imposed on urban geographies. Such structures, they argued, sought to impose order and control space, time, and the individual. To this end, the Situationists devised the technique of the *dérive* or drift as a revolutionary walking-art practice. The *dérive* employed

⁴ James Trier, *Guy Debord, the Situationist International, and the Revolutionary Spirit*, (Boston: Brill, 2019), 17.

strategies of chance and playful improvisation in order to disrupt the order imposed upon the body in urban space.⁵ Debord defined the *dérive* as, '[...] a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances', which often included playful, subversive actions and events designed to disrupt assumed ideas of the journey.⁶

In the years following its liberation from Nazi occupation, the city of Paris, the main site of the Situationist's activity, remained under strict state control. Writing on the emergence of the concept of the *dérive*, critical theorist McKenzie Wark suggests that it appears to have arisen in a direct response to the question of freedom to walk through a city, not only within the context of early mass consumerism but also recovering from the oppression of Nazi occupation amid ongoing political unrest. Within this context, Wark defines the *dérive* as, '[...] the experimental mapping of a situation, the trace of the probabilities of realising a desire.'⁷ This link with desire and the freedom to roam plugs directly into both the navigational imperatives of the canine body and the complex relational ontology of human-canine co-evolution. The question of freedom, therefore, forms the ethical spine of deep canine topography as the thesis unfolds. Furthermore, exploring the dog walk from a psychogeographic perspective has led me to grapple not only with how we encounter place and space but with the very concept of agency central to human-canine companionship.

Although inspired by psychogeography and its methods, deep canine topography draws its inspiration specifically from contemporary psychogeographer Nick Papadimitriou's concept of Deep Topography (2012) and author and academic Tina Richardson's concept of Schizocartography (2014). Furthermore, deep canine topography draws directly from approaches developed by Stephany Springgay and Sarah Truman's Walking Lab research centre, by positioning the walk as a research methodology within the wider methodological framework of research creation.

⁵ Tina Richardson, ed. *Walking Inside Out: Contemporary British Psychogeography*. (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 2.

⁶ Trier, *Guy Debord*, 17.

⁷ McKenzie Wark, *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International*. (New York: Verso Books, 2015), 57.

First appearing in Nick Papadimitriou's 2012 book, *Scarp, In Search of London's Outer Limits*, the term deep topography combines memoir, social history and a meditation on walking as an embodied practice.⁸ Deep topography can be described as a methodology which enables a deep communion with the geographies and histories contained within a landscape. Deep topography, therefore, facilitates a closer relationship with place and space beyond both scientific observation and the romantic gaze. Writer and academic Luke Bennett likens Papadimitriou's deep topography to political theorist Jane Bennett's concept of vibrant materialism. In doing so he suggests that both concepts attend to the material vibrancy and agency contained within the multiplicities of matter which make a landscape.⁹ Both Papadimitriou and Bennett (Jane) ask us to abandon our human-centric worldview in favour of approaching objects, including the objects of the landscape, as vibrant, dynamic and always in formation.¹⁰ It seems fitting then to borrow this term in relation to the canine body's particular vibrant connection with the materiality of the landscape. In its canine form, therefore, deep topography refers to the immediate and embodied sensory entanglement between the canine body and its environs.

Tina Richardson's concept of schizocartography is also of particular interest to deep canine topography in that it combines philosopher and critical psychiatrist Felix Guattari's concept of schizoanalysis to the practice and methods of psychogeography to examine and challenge the dominant power structures at play in urban spaces.¹¹ Likewise, a theoretical analysis of deep canine topography develops through the combination of psychogeography, Erin Manning's concept of relational movement, and Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of becoming animal and nomadic subjectivity. It does so by employing a new-materialist critique of what it is to be human alongside the concept of animal surfaces as generative zones of contact, activated through artistic practice, as proposed by critical theorist Ron Broglio. All of these are explored in more depth later in this chapter and throughout the thesis.

⁸ Nick Papadimitriou, *Scarp: In Search of London's Outer Limits*. (London: Hachette, 2012).

⁹ Luke Bennett, "Incongruous Steps Toward a Legal Psychogeography," in *Walking Inside Out: Contemporary British Psychogeography*, ed. Tina Richardson (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 61.

¹⁰ Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2010).

¹¹ Tina Richardson, "Developing Schizocartography: Formulating a Theoretical Framework for a Walking Practice," in *Walking Inside Out: Contemporary British Psychogeography*, ed. Tina Richardson (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 181.

Walking as a Research Methodology



Figure 4 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

Dogs and wolves sense and shape the atmospheres in which they live. They have distinct means of tuning in to the world in wild and domestic settings, and their presence can shift the experience of those spaces for others around them. (Jamie Lorimer et-al).¹²

Since its inception in the mid-20th century, psychogeography has blossomed and merged with a wide range of walking practices in art, performance, literature, architecture, and more recently the social sciences. Contemporary conversations in walking-art continue to make strong arguments for the potential of walking as a research methodology both within and beyond the field of artistic research. For example, the work of the aforementioned Walking Lab, a joint research project by Stephanie Springgay (McMaster University, Canada) and Sarah Truman (University of Melbourne Australia), positions walking as a powerful research tool. In

¹² Jamie Lorimer, Timothy Hodgetts, and Maan Barua. "Animals' Atmospheres," *Progress in Human Geography* 43, no. 1 (2019): 26-45.

their joint research, Springgay and Truman build on the strategies and techniques of psychogeography to open new methodological possibilities which trouble structures of academia and traditional epistemology and pedagogy.¹³ In positioning walking as a research methodology, Springgay and Truman state that walking '[...] provides a way to open up the non-visual senses, finding ways of knowing and communicating through movement, and helps to de-familiarise everyday actions.'¹⁴ Feminist, critical theorist and philosopher Rosi Braidotti describes de-familiarisation as occurring through, '[...] experimenting with new practices that allow for a multiplicity of possible instances.'¹⁵ This deliberate strategy of de-familiarisation is akin to the Situationist's strategy of détournement. Détournement is described as a technique for appropriating and subverting capitalism's semiotic apparatus and structural flows through the act of hijacking or re-routing.¹⁶ In deep canine topography, it is the relational ecologies of the human and canine that merge to trouble and de-familiarise landscapes through sensory entanglement. Deep canine topography also subverts the everyday notions of the walkies by embracing canine agency towards the de-familiarisation of human subjectivity. Such de-familiarisation raises many questions, not only related to geographies of the body, movement, and the senses but also the very histories and structures of the human-canine domestic

¹³ Extract from Walking Lab website:

WalkingLab is a SSHRC-funded research-creation project co-directed by Stephanie Springgay (McMaster University) and Sarah E. Truman (University of Melbourne) that studies and advances the theory and practice of walking methodologies, exploring, and developing innovative interdisciplinary practices.

The various projects and events activated at WalkingLab draw on feminist-queer, anti-racist, anti-ableist, and anti-colonial thought and practice with a goal to question who gets to walk where, how we walk, under whose terms, and what kind of publics we can make. The flaneur, we contend, is a problematic walking trope in that he is conditioned by autonomy, ability, Whiteness, and masculinity, and as such he is able to walk anywhere, detached from the immediate surroundings. In order to counter this overused Figure, WalkingLab developed critical walking methodologies that don't assume walking is a convivial, automatically embodied, inclusive and depoliticized mode of doing research and teaching.

We argue that walking methods must engage with the intersections of gender, race, sexuality, and disability. Critical walking methods accounts for the ways that walking is imbricated in legacies of settler-colonial harm, white supremacy, and functions to police and regulate bodies. Critical walking methodologies insist that intersectionality, the place where research takes place, and how one moves through space be critically complicated and accounted for.

Accessed June 2023: <https://walkinglab.org/about/>

¹⁴ Sarah E Truman and Stephanie Springgay, "Propositions for Walking Research." in *The Routledge International Handbook of Intercultural Arts Research*, ed. Pamela Burnard, Elizabeth Mackinlay, Kimberly Powell (London: Routledge, 2016), 259-267.

¹⁵ Truman and Springgay, "Propositions for Walking Research," 261.

¹⁶ Richardson, *Walking Inside Out*, 188.

relationship. Furthermore, as we see in environmental geographer Jamie Lorimer's quote which opens this section, dogs have a unique way of tuning into the world and opening up new ways of experiencing place and space.

The core method employed to activate our own doggy form of the *dérive* is the walking score or prompt. In psychogeography, the score often manifests as a set of simple instructions, a prompt or proposition, designed as an invitation to engage with place and space differently to usual forms of perambulation. Such scores are often deliberately fluid and open to interpretation. Usually, the score is devised by a human, sometimes through a random act or a chance remark, or in response to a specific stimulus such as a poem or other literary reference. In the case of deep canine topography, however, the score is proposed through the actions of the canine body and initially through his discovery of the body of the fox as encountered in the prose at the beginning of this chapter.

Springgay and Truman position the score as a proposition and the generator of research questions. Such questions, they argue, are not pre-formed, but emerge through and out of the event itself. Springgay and Truman suggest that *'Propositions are different from research methods or a research design in that they are speculative, and event orientated. They are not intended as a set of directions or rules that contain and control movement. Scores emphasise chance and improvisation.'*¹⁷ They go on to propose that, *'We need to shift from thinking about methods as processes for gathering data towards methods as a becoming entangled in relations,'* thus, suggesting that knowledge is situated within praxis and therefore activated through a direct dialogue with the proposed action or event. In our case, the proposed event is captured within the invitation of the canine to walk alongside and embrace their navigational skills and knowledge.¹⁸

Deep canine topography began with a simple walking score, interpreted into the following proposed action; *'Go for a walk with a dog, follow their lead, allow them to dictate route, duration, pace and so on. Only intervene if you perceive a risk to the dog, yourself, or others*

¹⁷ Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E. Truman, "On the Need for Methods Beyond Proceduralism: Speculative Middles, (in) Tensions, and Response-ability in Research." *Qualitative Inquiry* 24, no. 3 (2018): 203-214, 204.

¹⁸ Springgay and Truman, "On the Need for Methods", 204.

(including non-human others).¹⁹ The walks, or research events, enabled by the score become the site of encounter by placing both human and canine in speculative relations through an entangled improvisation. With this in mind, the structure of this thesis attempts to examine moments of becoming from several angles and with the help of several concepts. As such, each chapter in this thesis seeks to address questions which emerge through the act of walking as a creative human-canine alliance. What is important about the choice of walking as the principal research method is that it is an activity in which both human and canine bodies are well-versed.

To document our walking practice, I employ several additional artistic methods. For example, the canine-worn action camera acts as a bridge between human and canine worlds, which I discuss in more depth in Chapter 2, *Becoming Bodies*. The resulting collected footage is then used as material to compose a document, or documentary, which can be encountered after the event of the walk. I also employ site-writing, in the form of short free-writes, written during or shortly after each walk. This process is informed by Jane Rendell's specific form of situated critical art writing, in which she emphasises the site specificity of the direct relational encounter with an artwork, architecture, or for that matter any place or space. Rendell describes the fluidity of site-writing as emerging through a combination of feminist theory and psychoanalysis, citing Rosi Braidotti's theory of the nomadic subject as important in, '[...] *not only a spatial sense of movement, but also an epistemological condition, a kind of knowingness (or unknowingness) that refuses fixity.*'²⁰ I hope that the prose generated by site writing and offered throughout this thesis, alongside canine-embodied photography, reflects the canine refusal of fixity, thus acting as an opening into alternative relational readings of place. The lack of conventional punctuation in these sections of prose reflects both a stream of consciousness and the fluidity of thoughts and bodies in motion. I also hope that the prose has a vocative quality, as described by Max Van Manen, in that it evokes something of the experience phenomena of the walk to the reader.²¹ The act of free-writing itself becomes a phenomenological process, an attempt to transport oneself back into the folds of the walk and

¹⁹ Darren O'Brien, "Deep Canine Topography: Experiments in Human Canine Entanglement and the Walkies as Method" (2018). Accessed June 2023, <https://darrenobrienart.wordpress.com/current-projects/>.

²⁰ Jane Rendell, "Site-writing: She is Walking About in a Town Which She Does Not Know," *Home Cultures* 4, no. 2 (2007): 177-199, 179.

²¹ Max van Manen, ed. *Writing in the Dark: Phenomenological Studies in Interpretive Inquiry*. (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2003).

somehow invite the reader into their own spatial/visual encounter which, in a sense, brings them along with us. Similarly, the dog-cam footage encountered at various points in the thesis, both moving and still, invites the viewer to explore the walk through the direct visceral experience of the canine body. Therefore, the dog-cam still images, encountered throughout the text should also be read as a parallel photo essay which attempts to capture the canine voice alongside the written text.

Research Creation as a Wider Methodological Framework



Figure 5 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

Research-creation can be described as the complex intersection of art practice, theoretical concepts, and research. It is an experimental practice that cannot be predicted or determined in advance. It is trans-disciplinary and is used by artists and designers who incorporate a hybrid form of artistic practice between the arts and science, or social science research; scholars attuned to the role of the arts and creativity in their own areas of expertise; and educators interested in developing curriculum and pedagogy grounded in cultural production. Research-creation is attuned to processes rather than the communication of outputs or products. (Springgay and Truman).²²

In the above statement, Springgay and Truman offer a clear definition of Research Creation as a methodology, which has been adopted and developed within academia in both Canada and Australia in the first part of the 21st-century. Research Creation is also the underpinning methodology adopted and developed by Erin Manning, et-al through their work at the

²² Stephany Springgay and Sarah E Truman, "Research-Creation." Accessed June 2023 <https://walkinglab.org/research-creation/>.

SenseLab (laboratory for thought in motion), which was established in 2004 as a working and thinking environment for the creation of new modes of encounter.²³ Following Springgay, Truman and Manning, deep canine topography falls within the broad methodological framework of research creation. Deep canine topography is principally an artistic practice which seeks to speculate on and problematise human-animal relations and geographies by positioning and attending to the walk as a speculative action/event. Although one might suggest, following Springgay and Truman’s definition, that true research creation requires trans-disciplinary collaboration, in the case of deep canine topography I argue that such collaboration comes in the form of trans-species co-authorship.

Springgay and Truman put forward several propositions for effective research creation, which offer a set of guiding principles underpinning my approach to this project, as set out in Table 1 (below).

<p>Speculate. Research-creation is future event oriented. As a speculative practice, it invents techniques of relation.</p>
<p>Propose enabling constraints. Enabling constraints are expansive and suggestive. They operate by delimiting process and possibility, although they always include more possibilities than any given event realizes.</p>
<p>Create problems. Research-creation is a practice that does not seek to describe, explain, or solve problems. Rather, it is an ‘event’ that creates concepts that problematize. Concepts are not pre-given or known in advance. As an event of problems research-creation brings something new into the world.</p>
<p>Think-in-movement. The aim of research-creation is not to reflect on something that has passed. Thinking-in-movement is to think in the act; it is a thinking saturated with rhythm and affect.</p>
<p>Note emergences — rework emergences. Concepts proliferate in research-creation, and with them ethico-political concerns emerge. Once an ethico-political concern emerges, re-work it to see what it can do.</p>

²³ Erin Manning “About SenseLab”, Accessed June 2023, <http://erinmovement.com/about-senselab>.

More-than-represent. Rather than attempting to ‘represent’ or report on research-creations, use them to propel further thought, and create something new: new concepts, new ethico-political concerns, new problems.²⁴

Table 1 - Propositions for Research Creation. Springgay and Truman, <https://walkinglab.org/research-creation/>

In summary, research creation positions walking as an embodied, sensory methodology for enacting research.²⁵ Its parameters enable speculative artistic research in ways which do not seek to solve problems, but to reveal and grapple with concepts towards new ways of thinking, doing, and knowing. To this end, I deliberately position my canine companion not as object, subject, material, or muse, but as artist, collaborator, and co-author of the event of the walk. Whilst acknowledging the impossibility of adequately expressing his true lived experience, I hope that his voice is expressed through encounters with practice and its document. Research Creation, therefore, offers an approach through which practice remains central and generative, thus enabling active and mobile dialogues with the complexity of questions, situations, and concerns which emerge through practice.

²⁴ Stephany Springgay and Sarah E Truman, “Research-Creation.” Accessed June 2023 <https://walkinglab.org/research-creation/>.

²⁵ Sarah E Truman and Stephanie Springgay, "Propositions for Walking Research." in *The Routledge International Handbook of Intercultural Arts Research*, ed. Pamela Burnard, Elizabeth Mackinlay, Kimberly Powell (London: Routledge, 2016), 259-267.

Philosophy and its Concepts



Figure 6 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

Think of philosophy not as that which frames an already completed process, but as that which has a history of launching its speculative apparatus in relation to modes of knowing beyond its purview such as artistic practice. (Erin Manning).²⁶

Artistic practice remains at the heart of this project and drives our enquiry through the activation of the walk as the central artistic method. Alongside this praxis deep canine topography employs several philosophical concepts which help to develop an underpinning theoretical framework to explore the phenomena encountered through the practice. As such, each chapter introduces several theories and concepts, alongside a critical reflection on practice, to create a dialogue between practice and theory. What follows is a brief account of the main concepts encountered in this thesis.

²⁶ Erin Manning, "Ten Propositions for Research-Creation." in *Collaboration in Performance Practice*, ed. Noyale Colin and Stefanie Sachsenmaier (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 133-141.

Relational Movement. Erin Manning's concept of relational movement explores the affective forces that both propel and connect bodies in motion.²⁷ Manning argues that bodies become constituted through relational movement, making this an ideal theory to explore how human and canine bodies are capable of forming new radical cartographies through the action of the walk.

Gathering Ecologies. Andrew Goodman expands on Manning's concept of relational movement to explore how the body extends and responds to relational encounters with the places and spaces we move through.²⁸

Becoming Animal and Nomadic Subjectivity. Poststructural philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of becoming animal is controversial, complex, and obscure, however, most readings place it as an important philosophical moment in the flattening of human-animal hierarchies. In relation to deep canine topography, I introduce becoming animal as both a critique of contemporary capitalism's framing of the canine body and as a vital move towards the idea of human-canine hybridity which occurs through the practice. Perhaps the most useful definition of becoming animal, related to human-animal-landscape relational encounters, comes from Rosi Braidotti's 2012 book *Nomadic Theory* in which she proposes that becoming animal expresses a profound and vital interconnection towards an ethical appreciation of what, '[...] bodies (human, animal, other) can do.'²⁹

Contact Zones and Surface Encounters. Linguist Mary Louise Pratt coined the term contact zones to describe, '[...] places where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other.'³⁰ Pratt argues that such zones offer a point of contact from which conflicts can be resolved from within often highly asymmetrical power relationships. Donna Haraway points to Pratt's use of the term, as borrowed from the field of linguistics, to suggest a form of improvised language which acts as a bridge between companion species.³¹ This form of improvised language, as argued by

²⁷ Erin Manning, *Relationescapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009).

²⁸ Andrew Goodman, *Gathering Ecologies: Thinking Beyond Interactivity*. (London: Open Humanities Press, 2018).

²⁹ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 85.

³⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Profession* (1991): 33-40.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25595469>.

³¹ Donna J Haraway, *When Species Meet: Vol. 3*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 216.

Ron Broglio, forms the basis of cross-species communication through surface encounters between artists and their animal collaborators, which form new affirmative creative zones of contact.³² Pratt's influence on both Haraway and Broglio offers a useful and constructive language through which to explore zones of contact between human and canine. It also helps to establish new relational cartographies between human, canine and the places and spaces we explore together.

Some additional theories are discussed to explore specific aspects of the practice as the text unfolds, including: Henry Lefebvre's rhythm analysis, Donna Haraway's companion species, Rosi Braidotti's nomadism, and Jack Halberstam's zombie humanism, to name but a few. (A comprehensive glossary of concepts is provided in the appendix).

As Manning describes in the opening quote of this section, philosophy and its concepts form a language for exploring critical dialogues through practice rather than framing artistic practice.³³ Therefore, I aim to utilise theory as an apparatus in a search for new knowledge, which is situated within practice but is often hard to express without some speculative conceptual leaps of faith.

³² Ron Broglio, *Surface Encounters: Thinking With Animals and Art*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 105.

³³ Erin Manning, "Ten Propositions for Research-Creation." in *Collaboration in Performance Practice*, ed. Noyale Colin and Stefanie Sachsenmaier, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 133-141.

Making a Case for Multiple Modes of Expression



Figure 7 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

My multispecies storytelling is about recuperation in complex histories that are as full of dying as living, as full of endings, even genocides, as beginnings. In the face of unrelenting historically specific surplus suffering in companion species knottings, I am not interested in reconciliation or restoration, but I am deeply committed to the more modest possibilities of partial recuperation and getting on together. I call that staying with the trouble. And so, I look for real stories that are also speculative fabulations and speculative realisms. These are stories which multispecies players, who are enmeshed in partial and flawed translations across difference, redo ways of living and dying attuned to still possible finite flourishing, still possible recuperation. (Donna Haraway).³⁴

I've chosen to open this section with a full and direct quote from Donna Haraway's 2016 book, *Staying with The Trouble*, as it perfectly captures the motivations and intentions of deep canine topography. As a project, deep canine topography aims to explore human and more-than-

³⁴ Donna Haraway, *Staying With the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2016), 11.

human relationships through what is essentially a co-authored multispecies story. Although the methods of expression open to me at the beginning of this project are situated within autoethnography, my aim is that a multispecies ethnography emerges through multiple modes of artistic expression.

Autoethnography can be defined as the study of culture from the perspective of the self. As a research methodology, autoethnography is characterised as an outward view of the world, our communities, and relationships from the position of our identities, thoughts, feelings, and experiences.³⁵ Ethology is defined as the study of human and animal behaviour from a biological and psychological perspective, mostly concerned with a detached or distanced observation of animals, including humans, in their natural habitats. By embracing a multispecies approach, I aim to situate both myself and my canine companion as central to a co-authored narrative. Such narratives move beyond the boundaries of classical ethology to acknowledge the complex entangled web of human-canine relations. As such, this thesis reports back from the centre of an entangled multispecies relationship.

In recent years, the field of multispecies ethnography, as proposed by Haraway, has emerged as an attempt to decolonise Western scientific taxonomies and histories of speciesism and to heal the territorial binaries of the nature-culture divide. As we read in Haraway's quote, which begins this section, multispecies storytelling can be defined as an acknowledgement of the complex web of cultural and political relations between human and more-than-human entities. Thus, the position of the human as a detached rational observer is troubled. Deep canine topography is not therefore the study of the animal from a critical distance, rather it embraces a hybridity of entangled human-canine inquiry. Therefore, I attempt to weave a multispecies story through the document of the walk as an artistic research methodology. Curator Ida Bencke and academic Jorgen Bruhn, in their introduction to *Multispecies Storytelling in Intermedial Practices*, argue that in traditional ethology the human becomes a well-meaning spokesperson who assumes the right to speak for the non-human other, '[...] confirming, rather

³⁵ Tony E Adams, Stacy Holman Jones, Carolyn Ellis, *Autoethnography*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press Incorporated, 2014).

*than challenging, the normative taxonomical hierarchy of Western science.*³⁶ At stake here is the *how* of multispecies storytelling, which privileges non-linguistic interspecies communication. Therefore, following Bencke and Bruhn, what I am proposing here is an approach which attempts to reflect deep canine topography through an entangled multispecies narrative. My perspective and critical reflections on practice, therefore, are presented through the written text, whereby my canine companion's perspective can be approached through the document of the walk. Such encounters act as a more-than-document in that they seek to embody the canine position. My position, as human co-author, can be read as autoethnographic and as such I make the case for the use of the first person throughout. I also modulate between other perspectives through the aforementioned prose and creative site-writing, as appropriate throughout the text.

³⁶ Ida Bencke and Jørgen Bruhn, *Multispecies Storytelling in Intermedial Practices*, (Santa Barbara: Punctum Books, 2022), 10.

Ethics



Figure 8 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

Working with a more-than-human collaborator raises several ethical questions both within and beyond an academic research framework. As well as seeking advice from Nottingham Trent University School of Animal and Environmental Studies, I also explored the writings of artists and theorists well-versed in multispecies and more-than-human ethics.

One such example is Mark Dion's 2000 manifesto, *Some Notes Towards a Manifesto for Artists Working With or About the Living World*, in which he proposes a set of ethical considerations available to the artist which may not be available in specific academic fields, such as zoology.ⁱ In short, Dion argues that artists are free to use their creativity to develop new ways of seeing and being in the world whilst simultaneously upholding their ethical responsibility towards multispecies life-worlds.³⁷

³⁷ Giovanni Aloj, *Speculative Taxidermy: Natural history, Animal Surfaces, and Art in the Anthropocene*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 257.

Of particular interest in this 20-point manifesto are the following statements:

13. Animals are individuals and not carbon copy mechanistic entities. They have cognitive abilities, personalities, and flexible behaviour, which is not to suggest that they exhibit distinctly human characteristics.

14. Anthropomorphism has long been guarded against in the field of zoology as an impediment to understanding animal behaviour in their own context. While a pitfall in ethology, artists may find the rich tradition of anthropomorphism too powerful a tool to surrender, particularly when probing the boundaries between humans and other animals.

I explore broader issues of ethical and political human animal relations throughout this thesis. For example, I touch briefly on Jack Halberstam's concepts of zombie humanism and bewilderment and Donna Haraway's extensive writings on multispecies entanglement. Suffice to say, the issue of ethics raises several questions for deep canine topography as a practice and research methodology. I address these questions as they arise and, as such, the issue of ethics runs as a sub-theme throughout.

It could be argued that the central concern when considering a more-than-human ethics lies with the concept of ethics itself, as developed through Western Enlightenment philosophical and political discourse. That is to say that the position of the human as the logical, civilised animal, with interiority and rationality, proposes a particular kind of ethics, and one which dominates Western society. Critical posthuman philosopher Cary Wolfe offers an alternative posthuman ethics based on what he terms trans-species affinity. Here Wolfe argues for a moral obligation towards non-human animals which, rather than being built on the foundations of human rights and responsibilities, is constructed based on a shared vulnerability.³⁸ Wolfe argues that an ethics founded on a liberal humanist rights-based position conceptualises the animal as other, and therefore only worthy of human rights when somehow elevated to the position of, or alongside, the human. This can be seen in the distinction between canine (dog) as (hu)man's best friend and therefore availed of certain legal and cultural positionality and bovine (cow) which ultimately, however humanely cared for and euthanised, still has the status of biological machine in modern mechanised farming. Such ethical positions vary according to

³⁸ Cary Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 140.

cultural significance. Wolfe argues that to fully explore and formulate an ethics based on trans-species affinity, one must also radically unsettle human subjectivity and offer a complex analysis of an ethics based on our shared experience of being in the world.³⁹ I discuss the ethics of human and canine relational ontologies in greater depth in Chapter 2, *Becoming Bodies*, and an account of the main philosophical posthumanist positions on the animal question is offered in the *Glossary of Terms and Concepts* in the appendix.

³⁹ Darren O'Brien, "Deep Canine Topography: Captive-Zombies or Free-Flowing Relational Bodies?," *MDPI Arts*, vol. 12, no. 2, (2023): 68.

CODA



Figure 9 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

In this introductory chapter, I have situated the practice of deep canine topography within the methodological frameworks of walking-as-research and research creation. In addition, I have introduced psychogeography as a major influence and point of departure. I have briefly introduced the idea of multispecies co-authorship, which I return to in Chapter 2, *Becoming Bodies*. Finally, I have begun to explore some of the key critical concepts and ethical considerations exposed by human-animal artistic collaboration.

Furthermore, I would like to offer our explorations of deep canine topography as an invitation. To borrow a term from Haraway, I see this artistic research project as a form of tentacular thinking, which seeks to reach out to others who may wish to explore the world differently and make their own stories of human-canine interactions.⁴⁰ In doing so I propose that deep canine

⁴⁰ Donna J Haraway, *Staying With the Trouble : Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 30-57.

topography has the potential to contribute towards ongoing conversations in artistic research, walking-as-research, multispecies ethnographies, and wider questions on the posthuman condition. As such, I offer the following methodological guide (which is explored in more detail in Chapter 3, *Becoming Radical Cartographies*).

A Methodological Guide to Walking Differently

A Manifesto for Deep Canine Topography, or a methodological guide for walking differently - Two legs bad, four legs good, six legs better

We offer this guide as an invitation to walk differently, to embrace canine navigational imperatives, to meet all you encounter with an open nose, to lose human subjectivity and to abandon upright, ocular-centric, horizon-focused, bipedal modes of being.

deep canine topography is trusting your senses to take you to new and interesting places, following the tracks and traces of other bodies and elemental forces, made either recently, read in their decay, or in the past through lines of desire, forged over time through ancestral connections to deep time, long before the taming of the earth by the two-legged folk and our often-troubled mutual alliance.

deep canine topography requires a direct and visceral connection with the ground unfolding beneath the paw, following the rhythm of the paw and the rhythms and cross rhythms of the land, as the beating flight lines of beasts and humans crisscross and intermingle in a multiplicity of potential becomings, embracing the draw to wild spaces, to the river in full flow, to the deep grasses in which you become lost in a sensorial soup.

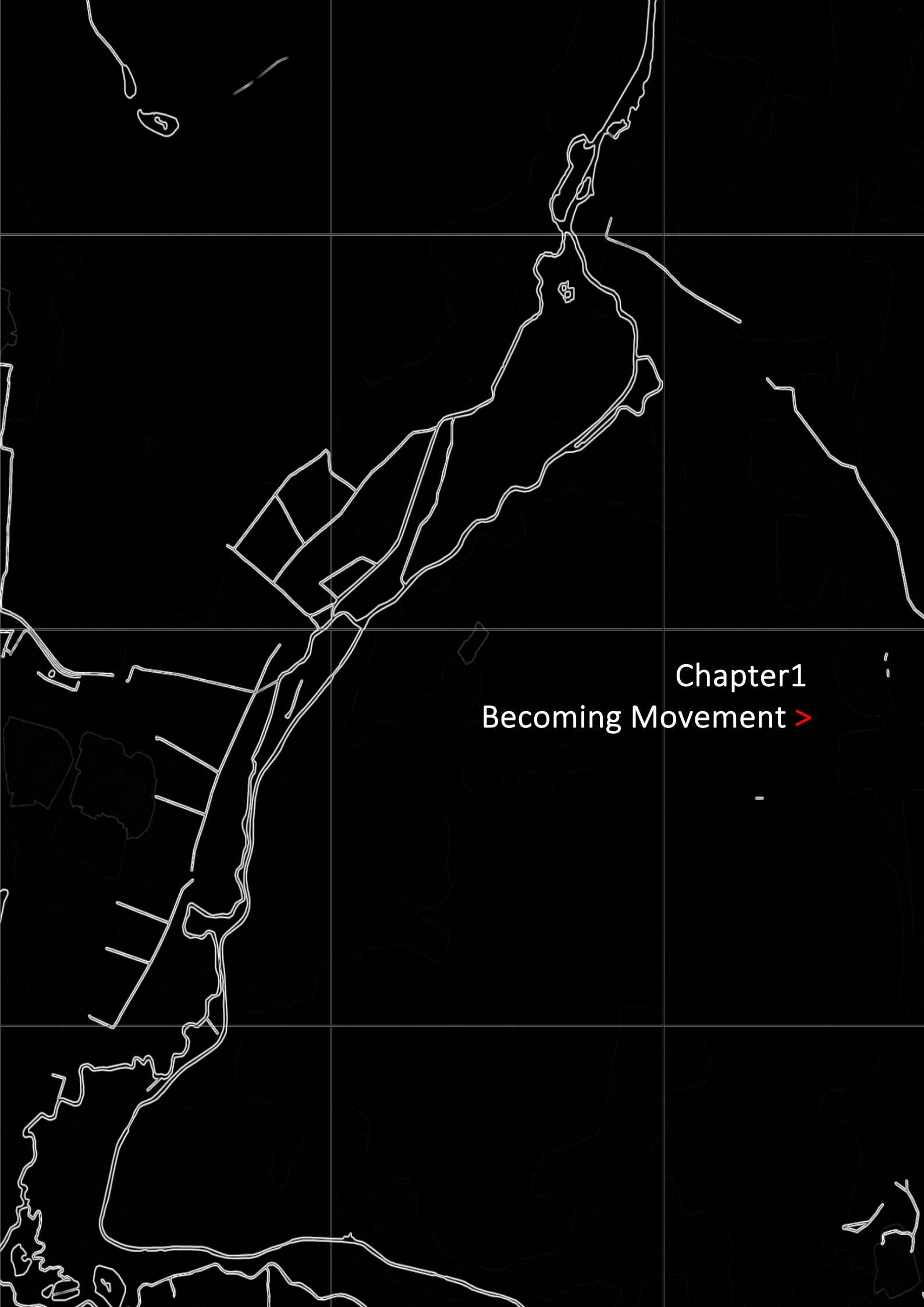
deep canine topography is chasing the ball and running with a vitality that knows no bounds, for no other reason than the joy of running, embracing the art of everyday chance encounters with other bodies and vibrant objects that form the multiplicities of the unfolding landscape.

deep canine topography is *never* a claiming and taming of territory, **is *never*** the drawing of the quickest, most efficient line between two points, and **is *never*** a solitary act.

Table 2 - A Methodological Guide to Walking Differently, published as, A Manifesto for Deep Canine Topography, O'Brien, 2023.⁴¹

⁴¹ Darren O'Brien, "Deep Canine Topography, Some Simple Steps," *Soapbox Journal, Walking as Practice Research*, (2022): 107-139.

MOVE WITH GRACE



Chapter1
Becoming Movement >



Figure 10 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *10x10x10*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2020.

It's 6:30 am and it's already beginning to get light outside, I'm hungry, rested from a good night's sleep, and need to pee, reliant as I am on others to open doors and provide my food, I make a muffled sound, half whimper, half muted bark to alert the others to my needs, conscious of the early hour, as the world slowly awakes from slumber, in constant movement, towards a new becoming.

Chapter 1 - Becoming Movement

Before reading, please visit the following practice expositions:

Canine Soundscapes (Practice Encounter, time-based media, 20 min)

10x10x10 (Practice Encounter, 10 visual and sonic essays on walking)

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Introduction

In this opening chapter, our walk begins without a map. We dispense with human navigational tools and imperatives choosing instead to follow our noses. Waving us off as we go are Stephany Springgay and Sarah Truman, advocates for the emergence of more-than-human walking practices. We are briefly joined by Blake Morris, Deirdre Heddon, Cathy Turner, Misha Myers, and Phil Smith, to take a glance at contemporary walking-art and psychogeography, which includes a brief but important critique of the latter. Next, shifting our emphasis to an exploration of how bodies move, we take a close look at Erin Manning and Andrew Goodman's twin concepts of relational movement and gathering ecologies, both of which help us to loosen the joints and stretch the muscles for the journey ahead. We momentarily encounter Ron Broglio, who asks that we hold the concept of contact zones in mind as we walk, before considering the work of contemporary artists Lee Deigaard and Angela Bartram. Diving deeper into Manning's relational movement we also take a brief account of how rhythm acts upon bodies in motion, before finally reflecting on two early experiments of our particular human-canine collaboration. Here, we begin to examine how human and canine relational dynamics emerge through contact zones as encountered through walking as an artistic practice. This sets the scene for the following chapters, *Becoming Bodies* and *Becoming Radical Cartographies*.

Questions explored:

- What important questions are posed by positioning the dog walk within the medium of contemporary walking-art and psychogeography?
- How are bodies influenced and shaped through movement and what are the implications of relational movement for examining human-canine collaboration?
- How, through exploring relational movement and gathering ecologies, do we start to shift from walking through the world to walking *with* the world?

A Brief Account of Contemporary Walking-art, Including a Minor Critique of Psychogeography

In his 2019 book, *Walking Networks*, walking-artist and researcher Blake Morris explores the history of walking-art with a focus on contemporary practitioners in the field. In doing so, he argues that walking-art represents a distinct artistic medium, stating that, '*Walking's potential as an artistic medium is in the opportunities it provides to creatively imagine the world through slow, detailed engagement with the contours of the landscape and the people with whom we inhabit it.*'⁴² In Stephanie Springgay and Sarah Truman's 2018 book, *Walking Methodologies in a More-Than-human World*, we encounter an extension of contemporary walking practices which reach beyond the human as the central figure. Thus, it is suggested that the sensing body becomes a node in a rhizomatic network connected to a multiplicity of human and more-than-human geographies. Here, Springgay and Truman are signalling a significant shift away from walking-art's Philosophical Humanist origins towards more relational and affective posthuman walking strategies and practices.⁴³

Springgay and Truman also offer a direct critique of psychogeography in suggesting that, '*Liberal humanism presumes that psychogeography is an activity of paying attention to the corporeality of walking in space, casting off usual relations, in order to become more 'enlivened' by walking and place.*'⁴⁴ This critique acknowledges psychogeography's historical relationship to the flaneur as a 19th-century observer of modern urban life, or urban explorer. First appearing in Charles Baudelaire's 1863 essay, *The Painter of Modern Life*, the flaneur conjures up an image of a certain white, male, in this case Parisian figure, free to observe from a safe distance and of seemingly independent financial means. The flaneur, therefore, is somewhat untethered from the trappings of the everyday and almost animal in their freedom to roam, or, as Baudelaire states,

The crowd is his domain, just as the air is the birds, and water that of the fish. His passion and his profession is to merge with the crowd. For the perfect idler, for the

⁴² Blake Morris, *Walking Networks: The Development of an Artistic Medium*. (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2019), 190.

⁴³ Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E Truman, *Walking Methodologies in a More-Than-human World: WalkingLab*. (London: Taylor & Francis Group 2018), 95.

⁴⁴ Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E. Truman, "On the Need for Methods Beyond Proceduralism: Speculative middles, (in) tensions, and response-ability in research." *Qualitative Inquiry* 24, no. 3 (2018): 203-214.

passionate observer it becomes an immense source of enjoyment to establish his dwelling in the throng, in the ebb and flow, the bustle, the fleeting and the infinite.⁴⁵

The playful act of walking embodied in the figure of the flaneur, and by extension early psychogeography, places certain assumptions on the freedom of the body of the walker. Firstly, it assumes a free-walking spirit, capable of transcending normative flows, breaking the spell of urban space, and opening new lines of flight. Secondly, it assumes a freedom of movement is rarely a true reality for many people, and as such represents a privilege often associated with whiteness, masculinity, the able-bodied, and of middle to higher social class. That is not to say that the flaneur's *dérive* is a flawed strategy, but one which needs to remain open and attentive to the individual experiences of all moving bodies. Therefore, walking-art needs to remain critical to political and societal assumptions surrounding the conceived freedoms of the walking body, both human and more-than-human. This critique is further explored by walking-artists and academics Deirdre Heddon and Cathy Turner in a much-needed feminist account of the histories of psychogeography and walking practices. Here, Heddon and Turner argue that walking-art practice is often framed through a masculinist lens, present throughout its genealogy, including the work of walking-art pioneers, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Henry David Thoreau, Andre Breton, and Guy Debord.⁴⁶ Heddon and Myers also argue that such conceptions of walking-art practices, as an aesthetic act, are framed by two enduring historical discourses, '[...] *the Romantics, tramping through rural locations, and the avant-gardists, drifting through the spectacular urban streets of capitalism.*'⁴⁷ In highlighting a lack of attention to gender, predominant in the historical discourse of walking-art and psychogeography, Heddon, Turner, Myers, Springgay and Truman, alongside the rise of contemporary radical walking-art practices, continue to challenge and critique historic conceptions of psychogeography. This shift is reflected in walking-art as a rich, vibrant, cross-disciplinary, and global community of practice and research in recent years.

⁴⁵ Charles-Pierre Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life*, (London UK: Penguin, 2010), 9.

⁴⁶ Deirdre Heddon and Cathy Turner. "Walking Women: Shifting the Tales and Scales of Mobility," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 22, no. 2 (2012): 224-236, 225.

⁴⁷ Deirdre Heddon and Misha Myers, "The Walking Library for Women Walking," in *Walking, Landscape and Environment*, ed. David Borthwick, Pippa Marland, and Anna Stenning (London: Routledge, 2019), 114-126.

Writing on the condition of psychogeography in 2010, walking-artist and academic Phil Smith concludes that,

Rather than commanding presence, contemporary psychogeographers walk less confidently and more questioningly about their purpose, wondering how future psychogeographers will walk around rising waters or terrain where humans are no longer the top predators.⁴⁸

Smith's comments could be read as an acknowledgement of psychogeography's need to adapt to the posthuman condition, in light of the geological epoch of the Anthropocene, and the embracing of walking-art as a practice which draws attention to contemporary global and political challenges. However, whilst agreeing with Smith's diagnosis, I think he, perhaps unintentionally, does contemporary psychogeography a slight disservice by suggesting a lack of confidence. Rather, I would argue that psychogeography and wider walking practice, especially in the twelve years since Smith's assessment, has been enhanced by feminist, queer, neurodivergent, indigenous, ecological, and critical race theory's embracing, and development of its methods. Although I would argue that there is still some way to go, this shift in walking-art's development is perhaps most evident in Springgay and Truman's Walking Lab collection of associated artists and researchers.⁴⁹

As a subcategory, Smith also points to new walking movements' acknowledgements of non-human agents by citing works of contemporary artists such as Miranda Whall (who joins us later in Chapter 2, *Becoming Bodies*), Thomas Thwaites and Charles Foster. All three artists assume a more-than-human positionality by employing strategies such as crawling, anatomical modifications, or living as a specific animal, to occupy the world from a non-human perspective, as experiments in new ways of seeing, sensing, and being in the world. It is alongside this more specific field of walking, crawling, or being animal bodies that I would position deep canine topography as a posthuman practice. However, rather than adopting the position of the canine body, my interests lie in our relational entanglement with place and space by activating the walk as a shared act of making. I am also interested in how attending to walking with canine bodies enlivens questions of our deeply problematic human-canine

⁴⁸ Phil Smith, "The Contemporary Dérive: A Partial Review of Issues Concerning the Contemporary Practice of Psychogeography," *Cultural geographies* 17, no. 1 (2010): 103-122.

⁴⁹ Sarah E Tuman and Stephanie Springgay, "Gallery, Walking Lab," Accessed June 2023, <https://walkinglab.org/galleries/>.

shared histories and how we might move through space differently as a result of attending to such concerns. Deep canine topography, therefore, draws attention to human-canine relational encounters and proposes an abandoning of Philosophical Humanist master-saviour conceptions of human-animal relations. As a practice, deep canine topography questions and troubles walking-art and psychogeography's Liberal Humanist origins. Furthermore, the practice of deep canine topography seeks to position both canine and human as equals when engaged in a co-authored artistic practice. Such practice is built on affect, immanence, and playful improvisation, seeking to engage with the world through its material vibrancy. Here, dog and human walk together whilst interacting with the unfolding landscape through a shared sensory experience as articulated in the moment of the walk. My intention, therefore, is to examine how the disruptive nature of my canine companion troubles pre-conceived ideas of walking-art and psychogeography, towards a more-than-human walking methodology. One which is neither steeped in the ideals of romanticism, nor overburdened with the baggage of psychogeography's masculinist origins, but is perhaps more attuned to current social and political concerns. Specifically, my focus is on human-animal relational ontologies as part of a wider ecocritical dialogue.

Exploring Relational Movement and Gathering Ecologies, One Step at a Time



Fig 11 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *10x10x10*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2020.

Movement courses through the me that is in formation: experience, perception, feeling – all of these are movements, and each of them contributes, in an infinity of ways, to what 'I' will become in any given occasion. (Erin Manning).⁵⁰

A common defining feature of walking-art is the direct encounter between the body and the landscape. Morris argues that *'[...] walking acts on the body to create a unique aesthetic experience with the potential to transform our relationship to each other and the spaces we traverse.'*⁵¹ For deep canine topography, there are always at least two bodies, entangled in a creative aesthetic dance. This entanglement extends outwards to the world or landscapes we move through and with. Erin Manning's concept of relational movement explores how bodies

⁵⁰ Erin Manning, "Wondering The World Directly - or, How Movement Outruns the Subject," *Body & Society* 20, no. 3-4 (2014): 162-188. 166.

⁵¹ Blake Morris, *Walking Networks: The Development of an Artistic Medium*. (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2019), 165.

come to move and commune with each other and with the world. As such, the concept of relational movement helps us to speculate on the affective connections and mechanisms at play in our walks by attending to how the body moves as an unstable subject. In Chapter 2, *Becoming Bodies*, I explore how the introduction of the canine body disrupts human motion, and therefore human subjectivity, by opening up possibilities for human-canine hybridity. For now, however, I examine how Manning's concept of relational movement gives some insight into what forms the body in motion. My attention is also on what relational movement reveals about the walk as a potential zone of contact for cross-species communication.

Manning proposes that before the step there is the potential of the step becoming. That is to say that each action is already in motion before it takes form.⁵² Manning employs the term incipient action as that which, '[...] predicates a body toward its becoming.' suggesting that '*The body becomes through forces of recombination that compose its potential directionalities.*'⁵³ Here, we begin to get close to the way in which the walk is formed by unconscious forces, out of which movement occurs. Such forces, Manning argues, are relational and therefore, '[...] we are always more than one.'⁵⁴ Thus, we are never moving in isolation, but in relation to the forces of those around us, 'worlding' as we go. In exploring how bodies might be unsettled through movement, Manning also suggests that '*Bodies are dynamic expressions of movement in its incipency, they are not yet converged into final form.*'⁵⁵ Here, I am interested in how bodies are formed through movement and the potential of human and non-human bodies to become entangled as hybrid forms through relational movement.

Andrew Goodman unpacks and develops Manning's ideas further in his 2016 essay *Walking with The World*, proposing that the emergence of what he terms as a gathering ecology is possible through framing walking as an embodied sensory practice.⁵⁶ Goodman opens his essay with the evocation that to walk with a dog or a small child has the potential to re-align the body to the wonder and adventure possible through the act of walking. Goodman states that '*With*

⁵² Erin Manning, *Relationescapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), 6.

⁵³ Manning, *Relationescapes*, 6.

⁵⁴ Manning, *Relationescapes*, 13.

⁵⁵ Manning, *Relationescapes*, 6.

⁵⁶ Andrew Goodman, "Walking with the World: Toward an Ecological Approach to Performative Art Practice," in *Walking and the Aesthetics of Modernity*, ed. Klaus Benesch and Francois Specq (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 141-154.

*a dog or child in tow, or towing me, my walk can never be simply a blinkered move from “A” to “B”. Instead, it splits to become multiple, consisting of many foci, intensities, and heterogeneous singularities.*⁵⁷ Here, we begin to explore how relational ecologies emerge through movement which fundamentally destabilises bodies. This complicating and disrupting of established social, physical, and mental boundaries extends *[...] the potential of the body space.*⁵⁸ Following Goodman, we can begin to see how walking with another, in our case non-human body with differing sensory schema, begins to de-territorialise movement, space, time and ultimately bodies, towards the reconstruction of new cartographies.

Ron Broglio proposes that, as animal worlds present limits to human knowledge, they also serve as a point of contact for artists interested in challenging structural concepts of Philosophical Humanism and its historical attempts to master nature. In doing so, he suggests that *‘Art brings something back from this limit and horizon of the unknowable; it bears witness to encounters without falling into a language that assimilates or trivialises the world of the animal.*⁵⁹ Broglio offers surfaces as sites for productive and creative encounters, which have the ability to reprogramme our cultural codes and address the question of the animal in art and philosophy. As a methodology, deep canine topography seeks to explore such encounters through the act of *walking with* as an articulation of Broglio’s call to *think alongside* the animal. Here, contact zones exist not only between the extending human-canine body in motion, but also between bodies and the vibrant material of the landscape.

Returning to relational movement, the concept of the extending body, as we will see, is a key step in Manning’s process. It is possible therefore, I would argue, for human and canine bodies to form a hybrid human-canine unit through an exchange of sensory inputs. Furthermore, this notion of becoming extends to all other human and more-than-human travellers as the landscape becomes merged with the body through our relationality. Or, as Springgay and Truman suggest, *‘Objects do not exist as discrete entities that come together through*

⁵⁷ Goodman, "Walking with the World", 141-154.

⁵⁸ Goodman, "Walking with the World", 141-154.

⁵⁹ Ron Broglio, *Surface Encounters: Thinking With Animals and Art*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xxiii.

*interactions but are produced through entanglement.*⁶⁰ Exploring this notion of entanglement further, it is worth considering the following quotation from Manning in full, as it contains the crux of what I sense is taking place through the practice of deep canine topography. Manning proposes that,

[...] we move toward a notion of a becoming-body that is a sensing body in movement, a body that resists predefinition in terms of subjectivity or identity, a body that is involved in a reciprocal reaching-toward that in-gathers the world even as it worlds.⁶¹

Specifically, Manning's quote suggests the potential for a de-territorialisation of human subjectivity and the re-territorialisation of unique hybrid cartographies. If we take it as read that the body is unstable and in a constant state of becoming in relation to the multiplicities and potentialities surrounding its sensing trajectories, then we can also speculate that the canine body is also in a parallel state of becoming. However, the canine body is more in tune with its surroundings and less reliant on navigational technologies. Both bodies, therefore, are in a state of co-becoming, or a, '[...] *sympoiesis* [...]'⁶², albeit from different sensory positions. We return to the concept of hybridity in Chapter 2, *Becoming Bodies*, through Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming animal and Rosi Braidotti's reading of the concept of nomadic subjectivity. For now, however, I would like to briefly consider the work of the American artist Lee Deigaard and her canine collaborator as an example of how human-canine-embodied choreographies are formed through relational movement. I also consider Angela Bartram's work *Be Your Dog*, as an example of human-canine co-becoming in action.

⁶⁰ Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E Truman, *Walking Methodologies in a More-Than-human World: WalkingLab*. (London: Taylor & Francis Group 2018), 6.

⁶¹ Erin Manning, *Relationescapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), 6.

⁶² Donna J Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2016), 125.

Canine Choreography – Lee Deigaard and Angela Bartram



Figure 12 - Lee Deigaard, *Vixen Vector*, digital photograph, 2013-17.⁶³

Artist Lee Deigaard lives and works in New Orleans, Louisiana, and Georgia, where she engages and collaborates with wild and domestic animals, including an ex-street dog, through an ongoing practice titled *Vixen Vector*. Deigaard's practice focuses on canine navigational knowledge and choreography as their walks with other dogs and horses unfold. *Vixen Vector* challenges Cartesian dualism and geometry and explores proximity and empathy as the connective tissue between human and animal. 17th-century philosopher Rene Descartes defined the mind and body as constituting two different substances. Cartesian dualism, also known as the mind-body split, is summarised in his famous dictum, *I think therefore I am*. Descartes's edict sets up a division between mind and body, nature and culture, and subject

⁶³ Lee Deigaard, *Vixen Vector*, selection from photographic series "Admixture of Will and Seduction", 2013-17, digital photograph, 8"x8", *Walking as Artistic Practice*, Accessed March 2020, <https://teaching.ellenmueller.com/walking/2022/08/19/lee-deigaard-vixen-vector/>.

and object, which has been central to the Modernist project in Western European Philosophical Humanism.⁶⁴ Here, Deigaard's practice refuses the dictum of the nature-culture divide in favour of an ontological entanglement, realised through canine navigational knowledge, which is revealed through human and canine relational movement.

Deigaard employs photography and drawing to capture the canine body's smooth progression through space and their interactions with the ecologies and cosmologies of animals and humans. For example, Deigaard draws our attention towards the complex relational shapes which the canine body performs when walking, playing or just hanging out with other dogs or horses. This includes bodily mirroring through which will dogs copy each other's body shapes and gestures falling into step and with one another and with horses by adjusting their gait to harmonise rhythm and speed.

I had the privilege of meeting Deigaard at the Animal Gaze Constructed Conference at London Metropolitan University in April 2020, just before the UK national COVID-19 lockdown was enforced. Here, Deigaard presented a performance lecture titled *Vixen Vector, Chronicling Sympathetic Alignments and Other Canine Geometries*, through which she examined the situated knowledge and dexterity of her canine companion as they explore the world together.⁶⁵ In their collaborative practice, Deigaard is led by and observes the complex choreography of her unnamed canine companion as they explore encounters with suburban and wild spaces. I was struck by the compassion through which Deigaard engages with the animals she is drawn to and sees as both protagonists and collaborators. In drawing attention to the shapes animals form Deigaard uncovers a whole new counter-choreography which is driven by more-than-human situated knowledge. Deigaard's practice has become a major influence on deep canine topography, and I often find myself returning to *Vixen Vector* as a key example of human and more-than-human relational practice. Ultimately, Deigaard and her canine collaborator reveal just how relationally attuned the canine body is, not only to the contours of the landscape, but to other canine, equine, and human bodies. *Vixen Vector* offers

⁶⁴ Fabio Valenti Possamai, "Nature and Culture Dualism: Genesis of an Obsolete Dichotomy", *Philosophy Study* 3, no. 9 (2013): 836.

⁶⁵ Lee Deigaard, "Vixen Vector. Chronicling Sympathetic Alignments and Other Canine Geometries," Lee Deigaard, Accessed January 2023, <http://leedeigaard.com/vixen-vector-video/>.

an important example of the expanded field of human-animal relational practice in its reading of the world through an alliance between the senses of the canine and the human. This is represented largely through photographic observations presented in the gallery, sometimes framed, and sometimes arranged to construct fascinating visual maps and trajectories (see Figure 13).



Figure 13 - Lee Deigaard, *Vixen Vector*, exhibition view, digital photograph, 2013-2017.⁶⁶

Examples of bodily mirroring, as seen in *Vixen Vector*, are also explored through artist and academic researcher Angela Bartram's 2016 work, *Be Your Dog*. Here Bartram turns the idea of mirroring behaviour on its head by inviting human participants to copy the embodied expressions of their canine kin. Staged at KARST creative arts space in Plymouth (UK) in 2016 and funded by the Live Art Development Agency, *Be Your Dog* consisted of a series of

⁶⁶ Lee Deigaard, *Vixen Vector*, 2013-17, digital photograph, "Walking as Artistic Practice", Accessed March, 2020, <https://teaching.ellenmueller.com/walking/2022/08/19/lee-deigaard-vixen-vector/>.

workshops, in which participants explored strategies for establishing more equal human-canine relations. This culminated in the staging of a group, gallery-situated, human-canine, collaborative encounter. The gallery itself is a conventional white cube space with a number of plinths and assorted canine paraphernalia, such as bowls, toys, and soft play mats. A time-lapsed video of the encounter documents a playful choreography of human and canine bodies in motion, followed by several still images capturing moments of human-canine intimacy.⁶⁷ Interestingly, the staging of the encounter in the gallery, a human-constructed space very much designed for a specific visual aesthetic encounter with art objects, not only subverts the traditional idea of human and canine choreographic encounters, but also the very concept of art in its static, visual, object-oriented, gallery encountered form. For example, plinths became staging posts for human-canine bodily forms and the floor became a temporary bed where the action is led by the canine participants, their human companions following their lead (See Figure 14). The reading of the gallery as a quiet, contemplative space is disrupted by the presence of the non-human animal as protagonist. In the staging of *Be Your Dog*, Bartram directly addresses human-canine relational ontologies through the act of shared, collaborative, human-animal practice and in doing so asks us to confront our human-canine relationships from a uniquely canine perspective.

⁶⁷ Live Art Development Agency, "DIY: 2016 – Angela Bartram 'Be Your Dog'," Accessed June 2023. <https://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/opportunities/diy-13-2016-angela-bartram-be-your-dog/>.



Figure 14 - Angela Bartram, *Be Your Dog*, KARST Gallery, Plymouth (UK), digital photograph, 2016.⁶⁸

The disruption of the gallery space in Bartram's *Be Your Dog* has some echoes of Francis Alÿs' 2004 work, *Night Watchman*, a 20-channel video work, filmed through security cameras, which follows the exploits of a fox as it makes its way through an after-hours National Portrait Gallery.⁶⁹ Alongside a critique of the rise in urban surveillance cameras, Alÿs addresses the dissonance between the viewer and the viewed or surveilled. For example, the choice of the National Portrait Gallery suggests an underlying dialogue between the many eyes of the portraits themselves and the disruptive nature of the animal gaze.

Early experiments in deep canine topography follow a similar choreographic methodology. For example, the 10x10x10 series of works, undertaken shortly after encountering Deigaard's practice, represent a human-canine walking alliance as presented in photographic and sonic essay format. However, in comparison to Deigaard's visual presentation, the sensory schema of my canine companion, largely olfactory, plays out at ground level. This led me to explore

⁶⁸ Angela Bartram, "Be Your Dog, 2016, digital photograph, University of Lincoln Repository", Accessed September 2023, <https://eprints.lincoln.ac.uk/id/eprint/24965/>.

⁶⁹ Tate Gallery Online Archive, "Francis Alÿs, The Nightwatch," Accessed June 2023 <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/alys-the-nightwatch-t12195>.

sound and video as forms of relational encounter through which the human binocular, bipedal, upright position is troubled. The human, focused on the horizon, and the speculation of what might lay beyond, or above, is disrupted through the canine's much more direct and visceral material connection with the ground beneath the paw. The human is less connected with the ground beneath the feet and more distracted by signs and signifiers of carefully constructed visual, and increasingly virtual fields, aided by locative media, maps, compasses, and many digital navigational technologies. I take a closer look at our chorographic experiments later in this chapter.

Relational Movement, a Deeper Look



Figure 15 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *Walking the Meadow Behind Bars with Alison Lloyd*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2021.

Engaged as we are in a shared pre-conscious, pre-cognitive sensory exploration through the dance of deep canine topography, I will now employ Manning's process of relational movement to dig a little deeper into the co-becoming of the human-canine walk. Manning's theory pivots on the articulation of what she terms preacceleration, or how movement, '[...] outruns the subject.'⁷⁰ Preacceleration is a pre-conscious, affective, relational force which precedes movement, or in Manning's words, '*To move is to engage in the potential inherent in the preacceleration that embodies you.*'⁷¹ Here, the suggestion is that there is no static state of being with no beginning or end to our movements. Manning goes on to state that, '*Movement is one with the world, not body world but body worlding,*' thus, defining preacceleration as '[...] a movement of the not-yet that composes the more than one that is my

⁷⁰ Erin Manning, "Wondering The World Directly - or, How Movement Outruns the Subject," *Body & Society* 20, no. 3-4 (2014): 162-188.

⁷¹ Erin Manning, *Relationescapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), 13.

body.⁷² Manning's account of preacceleration has some similarities to proprioception, also known as kinaesthesia, which allows the body to sense movement, action, and location, without which it is said that we would be unable to move without consciously enacting movement. In other words, proprioception allows us to walk without having to make the conscious effort to think about each step, acting as a kind of muscle memory, moving the body through space. A simple demonstration of proprioception is the ability to close your eyes and instinctively locate the nose with the finger. However, Manning makes a clear distinction between preacceleration and proprioception, suggesting that,

The concept of preacceleration is a way of thinking the incipiency of movement, the ways in which movement is always on the verge of expression. Bodies invent motion incessantly, creating habits to satisfy the carrying out of these inventions. These habits tell us how to keep our balance as we take one step after another, how we reach the floor with our toes as we crawl out of bed in the morning, how we find the bathroom at night without running into walls. Proprioception provides us with clues that precede our cognitive understanding of where we are going. [Adding that in], Preacceleration: we are going always already.⁷³

Thus, Manning asks us to explore the senses, not from a static, rational, fixed perspective, but from the perspective of the body as unstable, in flux, and always in the process of becoming. Seeing the body as an unstable construct allows for new ways of thinking and moving through our relation to other bodies and objects. Thus, moving bodies create space-time. They are not simply moving through a pre-structured space but *moving with* and responding to other bodies and objects in a continuous dance. For example, Goodman describes a walk through the city as a bodily composition through chaos, out of which improvisation, in a negotiated response to the bodies of others, helps us to creatively navigate space.⁷⁴ Similarly, urban walks with my canine collaborator are constructed through a series of improvised and negotiated movements. Head down, intent on following the scent of fellow canine travellers, always, it seems in search of food, he will happily pull me in a particular direction. Often this follows a well-trodden route, but more often than not he will pull me away from the urban towards the edge-land or parkland, where his whole being becomes playful and expressive. Where, as a

⁷² Manning, *Relationscapes*, 13.

⁷³ Manning, *Relationscapes*, 14.

⁷⁴ Andrew Goodman, "Walking with the World: Toward an Ecological Approach to Performative Art Practice," in *Walking and the Aesthetics of Modernity*, ed. Klaus Benesch and Francois Specq (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 141-154.

human, I have learned to seek out the quickest and most direct route between A and B, intent on zoning out of various sensory stimuli competing for my attention, my companion seeks out experiences in which he can become entangled and engulfed in sensory overload. In the extra-urban and parkland spaces, his movements become more animated as a new choreography occurs. This is especially true when we meet a safe space, far from road traffic or livestock, in which he can run free. This newfound vitality of movement creates an affective atmosphere more akin to wonder and the joy of being alive than the survival mode which seems to dominate our urban trajectories. Such relational encounters bring a great responsibility built as they are on sensory entanglement. This sense of connection and responsibility, through a re-territorialisation of the self, is what separates more-than-human walking methodologies from that of a more Philosophical Humanist and individualist modality offered by the solitary figure of the flaneur.

In an attempt to unpack Manning's relational movement, I offer the previous diagram (See Figure 16). Moving from the centre, and then clockwise around the diagram, relational movement begins, as discussed, with *preacceleration* and the potentiality of that which is yet to move, but already in motion. We then move on to *relation*, perhaps best described as affect or feedback between bodies, objects, and elemental forces which constitute space. The next step is the *interval*, an opening or rupture which momentarily contains infinite possible trajectories. As affective forces merge the potential of the *virtual* becomes an intensification, or a singularity of relational forces forming from the *infinite* and the *virtual* towards actualisation. *Actualisation* is the realisation of the *virtual* through actual gesture or movement. *Extension* describes how bodies reach beyond themselves to form relations with other bodies and objects. Finally, *displacement* describes the extended body's ability to change and act upon other bodies and objects and folds back into *preacceleration*.

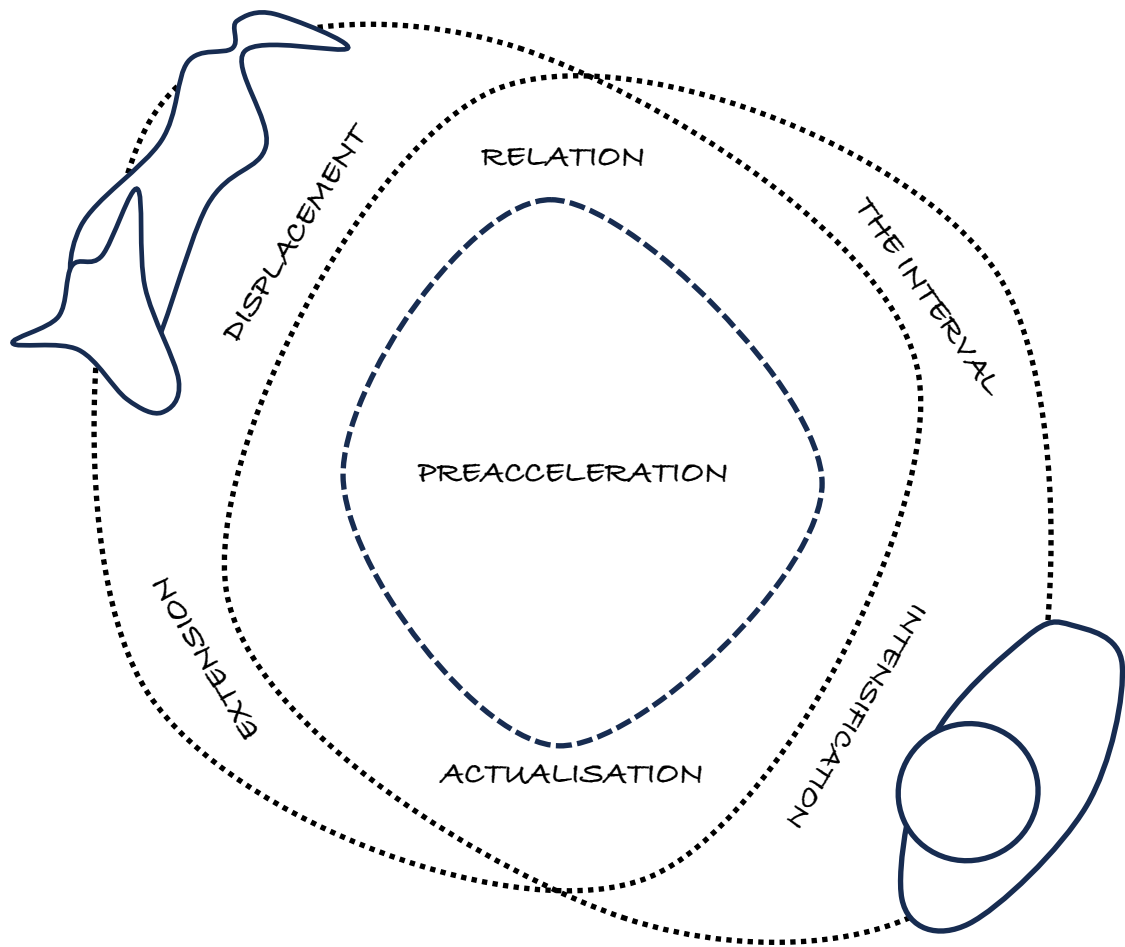


Figure 16 - Darren O'Brien, Diagramming Relational Movement, 2022.

The concept of relational movement requires the conceptualising of bodies as constantly in flux thus, representing the ephemeral in both the mechanisms leading to actualisation and in the actual assemblage of moments and bodies as fleeting and unstable. With this in mind, we can assume that each and every step moves through this process whilst folding in on the previous step as we move. As Manning proposes, preacceleration is the force behind each step in relation to other bodies and the space entered. Movement creates the interval as a moment of pure potential where *'Pure plastic rhythm is a machinic way of redefining what a body is and even more so what a body can do.'*⁷⁵ Furthermore, Manning proposes that bodies are poised in a togetherness which contains an infinite possibility of actions, which she describes as, *'The*

⁷⁵ Manning, *Relationescapes*, 10.

elasticity of the almost [...]’⁷⁶ This sense of teetering on the verge of becoming tangible and an intensifying of actualised movement is where bodies in motion are formed. Manning states, ‘*The essence of relational movement is the creation of a virtual node, an in-between that propels the dance, that in-forms the grace that is not strictly of the body but of the movement itself.*’⁷⁷ Rather than being a linear process, relational movement is not only cyclical but constantly overlapping with each moment of preacceleration, already in motion. As such, motion is constantly modified through relational encounters.

Let us then imagine the doggy *dérive* as an act of co-becoming, co-authoring, or co-creating through moments of improvisation, enabled by a merging of sensory experiences between bodies human, bodies canine, and bodies landscape. Operating as a multiplicity, our relational movement unfolds through the interval as an opening towards the landscape and its elemental forces, material vitality, contours, obstacles, boundaries, textures, smells, photons, and so on as they act and react upon bodies in motion. As the canine body responds to its environs, the human body is invited into the interval created by the canine towards the forming of a human-animal hybrid. Here, the human is invited to become *other* through a unity of relational movement of bodies and space. My observation of the mechanics (for want of a better word) at play in deep canine topography recognises the engine of relational movement as realised through improvisation, incipient-action, imminence, and the sheer vitality of the canine body in flight, always connected to his human companion and always connected to the landscape unfolding. This connection bridges the void between human exceptionalism’s disconnect with nature and the canine body’s deep contact with the wild. The canine invites the human to become entangled through the vitality of his material and more-than-human engagement with the soil, grass, water, and the elemental forces of the spaces we walk together. This invitation invites me to leave the ‘I’ of the self behind and enter the multiplicity of potential and affective intensities of the walk unfolding.

Each step has its own unique trajectories, such as the *elasticity of the almost*, which is born of the *interval* offering infinite choreographic possibilities. Here, I am interested in how the concept of relational movement helps us to gain an understanding, of sorts, of how our human-

⁷⁶ Manning, *Relationescapes*, 32.

⁷⁷ Manning, *Relationescapes*, 31.

canine-landscape bodies perform the walk as an action/event of improvised co-production. Or, as Manning suggests, *'To improvise is to be able to pull incipient movement out of the directions, to create the elastic out of the line (that itself becomes elastic), to redirect force, and move with it. To create an event.'*⁷⁸ From my position, it seems that to my canine collaborator, with his superior navigational knowledge and athleticism, such concepts are second nature, as his body hugs the contours of the landscape with poise and grace.

Springgay and Truman argue for a more-than-human ethics in the methodologies employed by walking-artists engaged in sensory and affective practices, stating that, *'Sensory Studies, and the various approaches to affect share an interest in non-conscious, non-cognitive, transmaterial and more-than representational processes.'*⁷⁹ By embracing Manning's concept of relational movement, deep canine topography seeks, at the very least, to acknowledge more-than-human bodies and affects as shared sensory experiences. Interestingly, through our walks we not only make contact with the multiplicities of more-than-human spaces, the meadows, the trees, and the soil, but our urban walks also bring us into direct contact with the cosmologies of other human and more-than-human bodies, their trajectories, and histories. Springgay and Truman also insist that, *'Walking methodologies need to account for the ways that more-than-human sensations and affects circulate, accumulate, and stick to different bodies and spaces in different ways.'*⁸⁰ Therefore, our accountability is to each other and to those we touch through our walks as zones of contact, including people, animals, plants, insects, and a whole host of other creatures with whom we share our entangled worlds. Ultimately, our aim has to be to leave no trace, to do no harm, and to make meaningful contact with the more-than-human, whilst also acknowledging potential asymmetries in the marks and impacts we make in the wake of our walks.

Rosi Braidotti also takes the position that the body is an assemblage of forces, flows, intensities, and passions that solidify in space and consolidate in time within the singular configuration commonly known as an individual self.⁸¹ It is this individual self that I argue has the ability to

⁷⁸ Manning, *Relationescapes*, 37.

⁷⁹ Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E Truman, *Walking Methodologies in a More-Than-human World: WalkingLab*. (London: Taylor & Francis Group 2018), 34.

⁸⁰ Springgay and Truman, *Walking Methodologies*, 48.

⁸¹ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti*. (New York, Columbia University Press, 2012).

become destabilised and de-territorialised through our relations with companion species as encountered through the act of walking, especially when we consider the walk as an artistic and creative act. One which is not only dependent on the body and the self and the body of another, non-human actor, but also in relation to a multiplicity of forces, flows and relations with all non-human actors encountered on the walk. The canine, therefore, and by extension the human body is in a constant relational exchange with its environment through sensory entanglement with the world. Such responses can be seen as a form of poetic empathy, in that the canine body reacts with an ease of creativity, responding, moving, and shifting both with and in direct response to sensory stimuli. With this in mind, I will now explore two early examples of our practice, which began to test deep canine topographical methods and their potential to embrace and enact forms of sensory entanglement.

Attending to Rhythm, Through Canine Soundscapes, A Critical Reflection



Figure 17 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *Further Adventures in Deep Canine Topography, Experiments in Canine Soundscapes, Attending to Rhythm and Repetition*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2020.

[...] to grasp a rhythm it is necessary to be grasped by it; one must let oneself go, give oneself over, abandon oneself to its duration. (Henri Lefebvre).⁸²

In order to embrace Manning and Braidotti's interpretation of the body as an assemblage of forces and the relational affective zones between bodies, as activated through movement, deep canine topography employs a number of artistic strategies, methods, and techniques to document our shared artistic-walking practice. Such methods not only operate as a document of practice, but also offer encounters which invite others into the canine spatial experience.

⁸² Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*. (London: Continuum, 2004), 27.

One such early experiment in deep canine topography involved recording sound from the canine perspective to generate an embodied canine soundscape. You may have already encountered this by following the link at the start of this chapter. If not, or if you wish to revisit it, you can do so here: [Canine Soundscapes](#).

Rhythm is a core aspect of walking to which we often pay little attention. Walking with an eager canine companion not only interrupts a normal human pace, shaped by boundaries and borders enmeshed in capitalist flows and structures but regulates pace in direct relation to the landscape. Springgay and Truman describe rhythm as, [...] *embodied accounts of moving and sensory expressions of feet, limbs, and breath. In other instances, rhythm pertains to the pulse of the city, such as traffic, crowds, music, and other environmental phenomena that press on a walker.*⁸³ This is reflected in the disruptive nature of canine rhythms as encountered in the walk. Urban walking, for example, takes on a steady rhythm as four paws fall into step with two feet interrupted by roadside stops and starts and scent marking in the employment of transmitting and receiving canine olfactory signs and signifiers. On the other hand, park walks are driven by the call of wide open spaces and the need to run, chase and play. Other embodied rhythms play out in heartbeats, breathing, and tail wagging, as well as the tempo of the ambient soundtrack is punctuated by passing cars, sirens, or temporal exchanges with the landscape, and the ever-present distant roar of rubber on tarmac. Many walking-artists attend to the speed and rhythm of the landscape in an attempt to escape industrialised, and more recently digitised notions of space and time, and to realign the body in motion with the natural rhythms of the seasons and landscape. Others deliberately seek to trouble the urban by slowing the pace to better attune the senses to the complex layers of sounds, rhythms, and temporality of urban spaces.

Similarly, 20th-century Marxist theorist and architect Henri Lefebvre's concept of rhythmanalysis seeks to understand everyday life through its rhythms and repetitions. In doing so rhythmanalysis privileges natural rhythms against the mechanistic rhythms of capitalist logic and industrialised efficiency. Similar to the strategies employed by psychogeography, rhythmanalysis draws attention to the seemingly relentless flows of capitalist time and motion

⁸³ Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E Truman, *Walking Methodologies in a More-Than-human World: WalkingLab*. (London: Taylor & Francis Group 2018), 4.

that embody a city.⁸⁴ I'm drawn to the application of rhythmanalysis as a potential methodology for exploring how deep canine topography attends to beats and cross beats against the counter rhythms and oscillations that often go unnoticed. With this in mind, deep canine topography seeks to explore the playful interplay of canine-human hybridity as a method for deconstructing time, speed, and rhythm through the act of the walk. Rhythms and cross-rhythms, also integral to Manning's process of the virtual becoming the actual through relational movement, play out as the canine and human enter into playful, harmonious, rhythmic, and syncopated flows. This plays out against the backdrop of the autorhythmic beat of landscapes and geographies and lines of flight of other human and non-human actors. For Manning, rhythm is generated through relational movement and in response to the rhythms and cross-rhythms of relational encounters, suggesting that, *'To posit rhythm as extra or external to experience is to misunderstand how rhythms make up events. Rhythm gives affective tonality to experience, making experience this and not that.'*⁸⁵

The concept of rhythmanalysis was explored through early iterations of deep canine topography, including experiments in sound, which explore the rhythms and repetitions of more-than-human encounters. These early experiments capture the sense of rhythm as a relational encounter as something that builds from moments and cross-rhythms into a multispecies sonic composition. Feet and paws fall into step against the rhythms of beeps and clangs of suburban and urban soundscapes, snippets of conversation, slamming doors, and roaring flows of traffic. The aim of this experiment was to test the idea of embodying the canine sensory experience through the limitations of our human sensory apparatus. I wanted to explore if it was possible to get closer to the soundscape as experienced by the canine, in this case walking through an urban/suburban space, by isolating sound as a common zone of contact. The following journal extracts offer more detail on how this experiment manifested as a relational encounter.

⁸⁴ Chris Butler, *Henri Lefebvre: Spatial Politics, Everyday Life and the Right to the City*. (London: Routledge-Cavendish, 2012).

⁸⁵ Erin Manning, *Relationescapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), 10.

Edited Journal Entry - October 2019 – January 2020

In our first experiment into recording and documenting our walks, I built, tested, and developed a canine-embodied binaural sound recording rig. The rig consists of an old walking/running dog harness, an Olympus digital sound recorder, a pair of Roland in-ear binaural microphones, pieces of bicycle innertube, insulating tape and nylon twine.

The experiment aimed to capture sound from the canine perspective. As such the microphones are positioned on either side of the harness, as close as possible to the ears, with the recorder positioned in a waterproof bag on the back of the harness. This rather Heath Robinson contraption produced some exciting results. At first, I had to tweak the design to eliminate as much of the sound of harness rubbing on fur as possible by experimenting with microphone position and recording levels, but once I had found a sweet spot we set about recording our daily urban walks.

Our morning urban walk usually consists of a 15min stroll around the block, taking in two busy urban main roads, and some quieter back streets. Taking the most interesting recording of many, one which featured encounters with traffic noise, growls and barks and snippets of human conversation, I installed a sound file in the Bonington Building's dedicated Sound-cinema during January 2020. I presented this to peers during a PhD DREAM seminar (an artistic research seminar to test ideas and generate critical discussion). The LiSten iN sound cinema is a sensory box, around the size of a public phone box, in which a single participant can sit in darkness, partially isolated from ambient sounds, and experience binaural sound works. Participants on this occasion reported feeling 'transported' into the body of the canine. Many reported strong visualisations, seeing the world from a lower-than-usual bodily perspective. The speakers in the sound cinema are installed above head height, enhancing the low-down bodily position of the dog. My aim, at time of writing, is to explore ways of sharing this experience with a wider audience.

Edited journal entry - May 2020

During the first UK-wide COVID-19 lockdown, we set out again, this time to record the absence of sound, in what turned out to be unprecedented restrictions on movement, rendering the city in a new ghostly form. Sounds usually drowned out by human activity came to the fore, as did the rhythmic sounds of the canine body. Both soundscapes can be experienced together as an interesting comparison between human-generated urban soundscapes and an eerie glimpse into some kind of post-apocalyptic, post-human future. Both this and the previous sound work were also exhibited as part of the 2020 Midlands Four Cities Doctoral Partnership, Festival of Research, online event in June 2020, and submitted to the 2020 Annual Sound Walk September, international event.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ The Sound Walk September version of the work can be viewed here: Accessed June 2023 <https://walklistencreate.org/walkingpiece/further-adventures-in-deep-canine-topography-attending-to-rhythm-and-repetition/>.

On reflection, such canine-embodied soundscapes offer a powerful zone of contact, acting as a bridge between the embodied experience through which the human momentarily occupies the canine world. I am interested in how such soundscapes become a language of sorts and one which has transformative potential to reach across species boundaries. Whilst we cannot hear as canine, due to their higher frequency range, we can at least try to imagine how sounds are experienced and embodied from a canine position. For example, in the first recording, we hear how passing traffic sounds almost like a low-flying aircraft from a position much closer to the ground. In the second example, recorded during the first UK COVID-19 lockdown, we hear how the absence of sound fundamentally reshapes the same walk as an altogether different encounter.

Adapting Deep Topography, 10x10x10, A Critical Reflection



Figure 18 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *10x10x10*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2020.

Another significant early experiment in deep canine topography, *10x10x10*, took place at the height of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and had to conform to tight central government restrictions on movement and recreational exercise. My initial project proposal included extended periods of remote field work, where my companion and I would walk long distances, over several days, in remote locations. However, this was quickly modified in light of COVID-19 restrictions. In response to such restrictions here in the UK and specifically during the extended lockdown experienced in the city of Leicester (where we live), I developed a simple iteration of the walking score, *Undertake 10 walks, of up to 10 miles, within a 10-mile radius of home*. In this project I wanted to test Nick Papadimitriou's concept of deep topography, as introduced earlier in the *Introduction and Methodology* chapter, to re-map familiar landscapes. By attending to minute topographical details of the landscape deep topography offers a method

for communing with the landscape through the memories held in its marks, scars, and material objects.⁸⁷

For example, one of the early walks in this series explored the landscape of Warren Hill, a disused granite quarry from which my father used to haul tarmac in the 1970s and 80s. At the time this active quarry was one of only two sites where red tarmac, used extensively in the area surrounding Buckingham Palace, The Mall, St James's Park and so on, was produced. Once depleted in the mid-1980s, the quarry was backfilled with domestic waste and reconstructed as a hill, now out of bounds to walkers due to trapped methane gas which fuels a small experimental power station. I was keen to use the time afforded by the pandemic to explore such places with my canine companion to see how his presence might shift my perception of place and memory. I experimented with documentation, through photography, sound recording, and text, to form ten short visual, sonic, and textual essays, which if not already encountered at the start of this chapter, can be visited here: [10x10x10](#).

At this point in the research, I was still unclear of the role of my canine companion and our newfound creative partnership. In nearly all of the 10 walks, it was I who chose the starting location for example although my companion often took up and dictated the route, distance, and duration. In one of the walks however, *Looking for Grandpa's House*, my canine companion led me to the park opposite the house where I lived from the age of 18 months to 8 years which is full of childhood memories. We have visited the park previously, so it was already on my companion's radar. The location, Braunstone Park, has an interesting history of its own as part of a vast country estate on the outskirts of the city, previously the seat of the Winstanley family and purchased in 1926 by the local authority to build an inter-war housing estate. This garden city style utopia retained much of the country estate as parkland. However, like many social housing projects, despite its innovative design, it fell into disrepair in the 1980s through a combination of lack of investment and changes to social housing policy, thus gaining a reputation as one of the most deprived estates in Europe.⁸⁸ On this walk, the commentary is

⁸⁷ Nick Papadimitriou, *Scarp: In Search of London's Outer Limits*. (London: Hachette, 2012).

⁸⁸ Tomila V Lankina. "Leicester City Report," in *Regenerating Urban Neighbourhoods in Europe: Eight Case Studies in Six European Countries*. Aarau: Working Paper Series of the Aarau Centre for Democracy Studies at the University of Zurich. Centre for Democracy Studies Aarau, Aarau, Switzerland, ed. Céline Widmer and Kübler Daniel, (2014): 27-44.

provided in the form of a mobile phone text conversation with my older brother regarding the exact location of our maternal grandparents' house. The unfolding conversation was, in a sense, activated by my companion's choice of location and the rich and vivid childhood memories it evoked.

Other walks in the series were more incidental. For example, the walk *Trespass* was undertaken whilst on a family shopping trip to a local out-of-town supermarket. At the time, shoppers were encouraged to shop alone rather than in groups to prevent overcrowding and allow for social distancing, leaving me and my companion to wander around an area dominated by offices and predominantly designed for the car. As a result of advice to work from home, the business park was largely deserted, allowing us to trespass, no doubt in full view of surveillance cameras, through what appeared to be a small surviving orchard situated very close to the original route of the ancient Fosse Way Roman Road. I have a particular interest in these surviving wild and semi-wild spaces which cling on despite urban sprawl and their links to previous settlements. They are both simultaneously held captive by urban sprawl and left relatively alone to become pockets of wilderness.

After completing the 10x10x10 walks, it was clear that I was perhaps still having too much influence over our newfound alliance. By attempting to adopt and employ Papadimitriou's deep topographical methods, my canine companion assumed the role of colleague by listening to my ramblings, mute perhaps in words, though not in actions. I was concerned that this was taking us away from the initial intention of deep canine topography as a multispecies methodology. However, looking back on these walks, it was clear that I had to get something out of my system in order to let go, unlearn, and allow my canine companion to lead me. Perhaps this was the first step in discovering a new becoming by giving up reliance on my well-trained human anxieties and navigational conditioning. In a deep topographical sense, each moment, or singularity, becomes an enfolding of past, present, and future memories, written in the topographical scars, undulations, twists, and turns encountered on each walk.

In a similar move to Papadimitriou's deep topographical methods, Dorota Golanska suggests the complex entanglement of past, present, and future is always oscillating between the realm of the actual and the virtual, proposing that, *'Memory persists and sustains an illusion of*

*personal, yet fluid, subjectivity, even though each actual occasion remains entirely singular and unrepeatable.*⁸⁹ This oscillation between the virtual and the actual, the past present and future, folded within the singularity of the walk, becomes something different when experienced alongside a canine companion. Springgay, Truman, and Manning propose methods of thinking through movement that embrace the affective connections and vibrancy of the more-than-human whilst avoiding representation and anthropomorphism. Such methods require a de-centring of the human and therefore problematise human exceptionalism, or as Springgay and Truman suggest, we need to find ways to embrace, '[...] *the Inhuman's capacity to create circuits of force that rupture and shatter human emotive capture.*'⁹⁰ Therefore, the question from this point onwards becomes, how might a true human-canine walking alliance further trouble and enhance such moments of fluid subjectivity?

If the 10x10x10 walks have led me to explore familiar places with new eyes and ears, then they have performed their task. However, it was clearly time to let go of human connections with the past and fully embrace a creative alliance with the canine lifeworld. With this in mind, I developed a methodological guide for deep canine topography encountered in the *Introduction and Methodology* chapter and explored further in Chapter 3, *Becoming Radical Cartographies*, specifically as an expanded score and set of underlying principles to guide our future walks.

⁸⁹ Dorota Golańska, *Affective Connections: Towards a New Materialist Politics of Sympathy*. (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 152.

⁹⁰ Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E Truman, "Stone walks: Inhuman Animacies and Queer Archives of Feeling," *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 38, no.6 (2017): 851-863.

CODA, From Becoming Movement to Becoming Bodies



Figure 19 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

To conclude this section of our walk, I have briefly considered walking as a lively contemporary artform, partially influenced by psychogeography and its methods, which has blossomed into a rich network of contemporary artists and researchers. I have also explored some of psychogeography's common problems and assumptions and the emergence of posthuman methods in walking practice. Furthermore, by exploring Nick Papadimitriou's deep topographical methods, alongside Erin Manning's concept of relational movement and Andrew Goodman's thoughts on gathering ecologies, I have started to build a conceptual framework to explore how deep canine topography might begin to trouble human subjectivity, in pursuit of a radical cartography. I have briefly introduced Ron Broglio's appraisal of animal surfaces as contact zones rich with creative potential, which we pick up again in more depth in the next chapter, *Becoming Bodies*. I have also explored Deigaard and Bartram's practice as examples of human-canine collaborative choreography in action.

In the final section, I critically assessed two early experiments in deep canine topography, which highlight the development of the project and how questions are generated through speculative practice. I therefore offer deep canine topography as a methodology which asks that we embrace uncertainty and surrender our navigational urges to the desires of the body of a non-human other as a novel psychogeographic strategy. However, what sets deep canine topography apart from traditional methods of psychogeography is my attempt to embrace canine knowledge to undo and unlearn human ways of moving through and engaging with place and space. In the next chapter *Becoming Bodies*, I explore Deleuze and Guattari's twin concepts of becoming animal and nomadic subjectivity by examining how deep canine topography might test the limits and potential of bodies in motion.

Walking Prompt 1

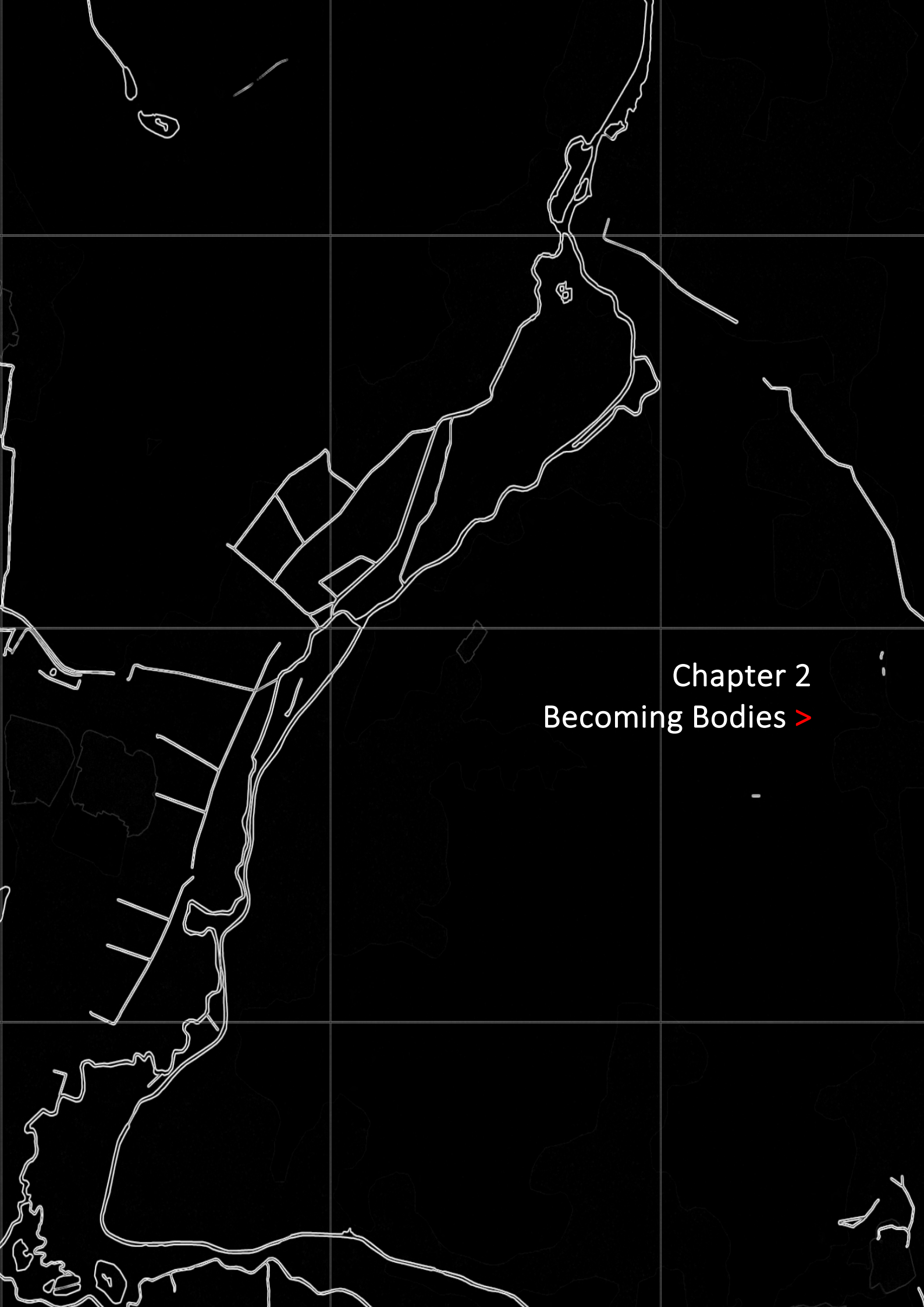


Figure 20 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

This section of our walk has seen us tackle some steep inclines, with more to come, as well as some deep valleys to explore. This might be a good time to take a rest. You are invited, therefore, to take a stroll, if convenient, with the following prompt as your guide:

Go for a short walk, follow the sound of birdsong, and see where, when, and how it takes you.

LOOK HARDER



Chapter 2
Becoming Bodies >



Figure 21 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

I want to wallow in the soil, roll on my back, taste the air, burrow in the earth, eat the grass, absorb, and digest the pollen, mingle with the smells of others who have been and those yet to come, I sense the potentiality of this landscape, open, dynamic, and alive, I could walk for miles, get lost without fear, unearth something new, create something new with every step, absorb, digest, and consume the knowledge of the landscape as it unfolds beneath my paws, I make knowledge from the mud, from the earth as I snuffle and snort its microbes, its dust, its traces, and its potential, I want to get muddy, dirty, dig and dig, explore the subsoil and its memories, breath it in, eat and consume its earthy taste, play with it, ingest it, It is not enough that the mud remains as a surface, as exterior, I must make it part of me, I must become part of it as I inevitably one day will become soil, I ingest the once was fellow travellers, their smells, their rotting flesh, their bodies without organs, mingled as they are with the dust of the trail.⁹¹

⁹¹ Darren O'Brien. "Deep Canine Topography, Some Simple Steps." In *Walking as Practice Research*, Soapbox Journal special issue resulting from the WARP conference, University of Amsterdam, 107-139. July 2023.

Chapter 2 - Becoming Bodies

Before reading, please visit the following practice expositions:

Two Bodies Drawing: (Practice Encounter – 10min)
The Beach Beneath Our Feet: (Practice Encounter – 20min)

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Introduction

Hoping that we are all suitably rested, let's start the next leg of our walk. In the previous chapter, we explored how Erin Manning's relational movement might help to unlock and reveal contact zones between human and canine bodies when engaged in an aesthetic walking practice. In this chapter, we move on to consider what bodies (both human and canine) can do when activated through the walk, alongside a critical exploration of human-canine relational ontologies. The chapter is split into three sections to reflect this tricky terrain.

We begin with a brief account of the status of the animal and the canine in Western philosophy, before moving on to explore more radical accounts of human-animal relations as offered by Jacques Derrida, Donna Haraway, Ron Broglio, and Roberto Marchesini. We then consider the complexity of human and canine relational ontologies through Deleuze and Guattari's treatment of the domestic canine, as critiqued by Donna Haraway, and explore a darker critique of our relationship with our canine kin courtesy of Jack Halberstam's zombie humanism. We walk for a while with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming animal and nomadic subjectivity, as further developed by Rosi Braidotti, to explore what bodies might become through fluidity and motion. We then consider the argument for multispecies co-authorship in human-more-than-human artistic practice. Finally, we explore the role of digital technology, the more-than-document of practice, and its potential as an alternative human-canine-embodied encounter.

Questions explored:

- What is the status of the domestic canine in modern Western philosophical thought?
- How might deep canine topography as a human-animal collaborative practice address the human-animal, nature-culture divide?
- How might the encounter with the world through the animal body unsettle human subjectivity and evoke a becoming animal?
- What is the role of the document as an aesthetic encounter with the canine lifeworld?

Part 1, The Wounded Body



Figure 22 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

The Posthuman Canine

Every dog has, as I do, the urge to question. And I, like other dogs, have the compulsion to be silent. (Franz Kafka).⁹²

Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BCE) proposed that animals lack the ability to calculate, recollect, remember, recognise right from wrong, and possess a certain kind of speech, whereas, humans have the ability to deliberate, theorise, count, use logic, and humour.⁹³ In doing so, despite affording some emotional intelligence to non-human animals, Aristotle proposed significant differences which cemented the position of the human as the most sophisticated of all animal kind.⁹⁴ 17th-century French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650) took Aristotle's ideas to the extreme in defining the animal as a biological machine which is devoid of mind and soul.⁹⁵ Descartes based his theory of the animal, as nothing more than a sophisticated biological machine or automata, on two main observations. The first of which Robert Lurz describes as the notion that, '[...] *animals appear incapable of transferring their skills in one domain (e.g., migration) to any other domain (e.g., locating new habitats)*'.⁹⁶ Therefore, Descartes's position argued that the animal's inability to adapt to new situations signalled an absence of reason over automatic, pre-programmed, instinctive, and situated behaviour. Descartes's second observation echoed Aristotle's proposition in arguing that a lack of speech accounted for a deficit in direct expression of, and therefore absence of, consciousness and thought.⁹⁷ Both positions have been widely contested throughout Western philosophy and rejected by the contemporary posthuman discourse.

The 17th-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) argued against purely biological human-animal differences by proposing that all species are united through their capacity for social relations and abilities to respond to affects which unite them as a single kind.⁹⁸ However, as Susan James discusses, Spinoza suggests that the differences between humans and animals

⁹² Franz Kafka, *Investigations of a Dog*. (London: Penguin, 2018), 23.

⁹³ Sophia M Connell, "Animal Cognition in Aristotle." In *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Biology*. Ed. Sophia M Connell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 195-207.

⁹⁴ Connell, "Animal Cognition in Aristotle."

⁹⁵ Robert W Lurz, ed. *The Philosophy of Animal Minds*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2.

⁹⁶ Lurz, ed. *The Philosophy of Animal Minds*, 2.

⁹⁷ Lurz, ed. *The Philosophy of Animal Minds*, 2.

⁹⁸ Susan James, "Spinoza on The Constitution of Animal Species," in *A Companion to Spinoza*, ed. Yitzhak Y. Melamed, (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2021): 365-374, 365.

are sufficient to block their affective exchange.⁹⁹ Therefore, Spinoza's thesis on animal relations seems to stop short of the ability to form mutual inter-species social bonds. Those of us who share our lives with dogs, however, would dispute this, given their abilities to form very strong social and cultural bonds with humans. Spinoza is often accused of ambivalence when it comes to the animal question and to some extent a continuation of the Cartesian thesis on the animal. However, Spinoza does confront us with the possibility that rather than biological automata, animals possess the capacity for social relations, which hints at a more sophisticated model of animal interiority. In discussing the complexity and contradictions of Spinoza's thesis on the animal, Hasana Sharp highlights examples of how human-animal relations are capable of enriching humanity through shared co-existence. In specifically discussing the benefits of the human-canine bond, Sharp suggests that, *'There is clear evidence that our minds no less our bodies are enabled by relations with nonhuman animals.'*¹⁰⁰ Here, Sharp proposes that Spinoza's concepts of agency and affect offer something of a hint of the enabling aspects of, *'[...] the involuntary affective community between humans and animals.'*¹⁰¹

It is true to say that, throughout Western cultural and philosophical discourse, a special place has been reserved for our canine companions. Furthermore, it is also true to say that unlike any other techno-animal, which is the product of years of human intervention and breeding, the canine is afforded a unique status alongside the human. In this section, I will briefly explore this very special and ethically complex bond in relation to my position as an artist working with a canine collaborator. In doing so, I highlight and address some of the limitations and pitfalls presented in affording my canine collaborator the status of co-author and artist-animal.

In discussing the question of dogs in Greek mythology, author and academic Susan McHugh offers the story of Argos, Odysseus's faithful dog, to demonstrate a very special bond between canine and human which, for Socrates, saw the humble canine afforded the status of the true philosopher.¹⁰² In Homer's story of *The Odyssey*, Argos faithfully awaits his master's return

⁹⁹ Susan James, "Spinoza on The Constitution of Animal Species," in *A Companion to Spinoza*, ed. Yitzhak Y. Melamed, (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2021): 365-374, 365.

¹⁰⁰ Hasana Sharp. "Animal affects: Spinoza and The Frontiers of the Human," *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, Volume IX, Issue 1/2, (2011), 64.

¹⁰¹ Sharp. "Animal Affects", 65.

¹⁰² Susan McHugh, *Dog*. (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 46.

from his 20-year epic voyage home from the battle of Troy. Odysseus returns to Ithaca disguised as a beggar and is instantly recognised by Argos but, now an old and weak dog, he does not betray his master's identity. Tragically Argos dies shortly after, content in the knowledge of Odysseus's safe return, with his unconditional love cementing his loyalty and status as (hu)man's best friend. The concept of the canine as researcher, philosopher, and observer of life is also taken up in Franz Kafka's eponymous 1931 essay *Investigations of a Dog*. Kafka considers the unique position of his canine protagonist, moving amongst their human cohabitants, as an explorer in a strange land full of incomprehensible human creatures.¹⁰³ In both examples, the status of the dog is suspended somewhere between animal and human and lifted beyond companion status to the giddy heights of intellectual, philosopher or scientist. The domesticated canine, therefore, as with the wolf, fox, and other wild canids, seems to hold a special place in philosophy, which renders it as a bridge between the human and the animal.

Jacob von Uexküll, widely regarded as the founder of modern ethology, invites us to imagine the world through the bodies of animals and to consider their interiority beyond the Cartesian notion of the animal as a biological machine. In his book *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans* (first published in 1931), Uexküll considers all animals (including humans) as inhabiting the same earth, but different lifeworlds (umwelt).¹⁰⁴ Uexküll highlights animal lifeworlds as dependent on the limits of the sensory apparatus afforded to each creature's evolutionary niche, suggesting that there is no separation between mind, body, and environment. In what appears to be a direct response to the Cartesian model of the animal, Uexküll proposes that, '*Whoever wants to hold onto the conviction that all living things are only machines should abandon all hope of glimpsing into their environments.*'¹⁰⁵ For his most famous example, the tick, Uexküll describes its unique lifeworld and its relation to the world around it as limited to three carriers of significance: the detection of animal sweat, the temperature of animal blood and the temperature of animal fur.¹⁰⁶ With only these three significant sensory markers to navigate the world, the tick can locate a live mammal, attach

¹⁰³ Kafka, *Investigations of a Dog*.

¹⁰⁴ Jakob Von Uexküll, *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans: With a Theory of Meaning*. Vol. 12. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013)

¹⁰⁵ Uexküll, *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans*, 41.

¹⁰⁶ Uexküll, *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans*, 44.

itself, and feed on the animal's blood. Anyone who has been on the receiving end of the tick's unique existence or has had to deal with the removal of a tick from the canine body will know just how well-equipped they are for performing this task and how tricky they are to remove once embedded deep into the skin. The tick has no problem penetrating surfaces as it burrows head-first in search of its elixir. The point here is that the tick's *umwelt* differs markedly from that of the human, and its unique perspective is not only beyond our comprehension, but highlights the limits to what we can ever know beyond our observational perspective. We may have developed ever more sophisticated experiments and apparatus to get a closer understanding of the lifeworlds of other animals, but we will never be able to truly inhabit the consciousness of any of the many variations on the animal or wider variations on life, including plants, rocks, protons, stardust, dark matter, and so on. This does not prevent us, however, from claiming to know the very complex nuances of our canine companion's interiority by often attributing them with human characteristics in order to invite them into the human fold.

Ron Broglio suggests that we should consider Uexküll's invitation into the world of other animals as instrumental in unbalancing our evaluation of the human.¹⁰⁷ In other words, the limits of human ability to inhabit the lifeworlds of other animals draws into question our assumed position as the pinnacle of evolution. Broglio draws us to three core lessons that can be gleaned from Uexküll's thesis on animal worlds:

- The world can be assessed through effects outside the subject. We can look for perceptual cues to understand the animal's world.
- The animal is fitted to its world such that there is no poverty of world for the animal as perceived within its *umwelt*.
- The animal's world creates for us a sense of wonder. It is suggestively familiar and translatable, while in crucial ways remains stubbornly remote. Failures in translation create opportunities for re-evaluating the privileged interiority of the human subject.¹⁰⁸

Perhaps a better position, therefore, is to reconsider human consciousness as one of many lifeworlds which constitute the multiplicity of being. Thus, Uexküll presents us with a

¹⁰⁷ Ron Broglio, *Surface Encounters: Thinking with Animals and Art*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 65.

¹⁰⁸ Broglio, *Surface Encounters*, 65-66.

multiplicity of potential modes of being, or as Broglio summarises, *'We are left with the understanding that there is no single unitary world, and no unified space or time; instead, time moves differently for each species, and each animal senses and shapes space quite differently.'*¹⁰⁹

A note on the body as a sensory organ: Most humans value sight as the dominant sensory schema for coding and decoding space, whereas the canine sensorium, especially the scent hound, is dominated by a far superior olfactory sense.¹¹⁰ To get an idea of how the canine worldview is so radically different, it is worth noting that the average human has 5 million scent receptors with the beagle in comparison possessing 350 million. Not only does the sheer volume of scent receptors far outweigh that of the human but there are also certain anatomical features, not to mention the beagle's proximity to the ground, which render the canine body an olfactory super animal. All dogs, for example, have slits to the side of their nostrils which help to facilitate circular breathing. This ability simultaneously to breathe in and out through the nose, creates a kind of smell vortex which intensifies the olfactory experience. Beagles also have the advantage of long floppy ears which are thought to help to waft and contain smells around the nose. My companion walks with his head to the ground using his nose as his main navigational tool. Therefore, we can assume that my canine companion values olfactory coding over visual coding. It is through the document of the walk from the canine perspective that a sense of hybridity is translated as a visual encounter. Thus, the document of the walk, as expressed through film and immersive installation, also presents an encounter through which the viewer embodies the canine position. In such encounters, the viewer employs sight in an attempt to decode the olfactory world of the canine which is understandably disorientating. This merging of the senses, as we attempt to decode the olfactory through the visual, acts as a kind of forced sensory synaesthesia. The encounter becomes destabilising and disorientating, testing the sensory limits of the human. Such encounters offer the ability to move beyond surfaces and glimpse the interiority of the canine lifeworld, which in turn offers a certain kind of fluidity to the surfaces that separate human and non-human.

¹⁰⁹ Broglio, *Surface Encounters*, 103.

¹¹⁰ Renee A Pistone. "Onto-Ethological Studies: How an Environmental Imaginary Envisions a Shared Human-Beagle Umwelt," *The International Journal of Engineering and Science* 4, no.5 (2015): 45-52.

This brings me to the complex question of the domesticated canine as occupying a domain suspended somewhere between human and wild animal, or between dog and wolf. To explore this further, we need to consider the animal turn in Western Philosophy in the last 40-years or so. Matthew Calarco draws our attention to Jacques Derrida's contribution to the animal question, in Western 20th-century philosophy, as a pivotal moment in critical animal discourse. Calarco points to Derrida's deep suspicion of classical formulations, offered by ontological Humanism, when it comes to human-animal distinctions and posits his attempts to rethink such differences, in non-hierarchical and non-binary formulations, as a major step forward.¹¹¹ Calarco identifies two main themes in Derrida's thesis on the animal. Firstly, Derrida's argument that where we identify with the animal, we also find difference, affect, reciprocity and responsibility, suggesting a connection perhaps exposed in his famous naked feline encounter, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. Here, Derrida invites us, standing naked before the gaze of his cat, to consider the limits of the human-animal divide and how the animal gaze radically complicates traditional human-animal hierarchies. Calarco identifies that Derrida offers a perspective through which there is, '[...] no clear separation between human and animal inasmuch as both "kinds" of beings are irreducibly caught up in the "same" network of differential forces that constitute their modes of existence.'¹¹² Secondly, Calarco identifies Derrida's lengthy discussions on the violence and injustices suffered by animals, at the hands of ontological Humanism, as follows,

[...] not only does Derrida explicitly extend [these] infrastructures to include animals, thus bringing them within the scope of ethics and politics, he also insists that animals have the capacity to interrupt one's existence and inaugurate ethical and political encounters.¹¹³

He goes on to suggest that Derrida, '[...] makes it clear that animals confront us with as much ethical force as human beings do, if not more so.'¹¹⁴ Such relational encounters are evident in the simplest of human domestic-canine co-habitation, collaboration, and communication, something I discuss later through Halberstam's concept of zombie humanism, which brings the domestic animal squarely into sharp ethical and political focus.

¹¹¹ Matthew Calarco, *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal From Heidegger to Derrida*. (New York: Columbia University Press 2008), 105.

¹¹² Calarco, *Zoographies*, 106.

¹¹³ Calarco, *Zoographies*, 106.

¹¹⁴ Calarco, *Zoographies*, 106.

Feminist critical theorist and philosopher Donna Haraway also cites Derrida's importance in the animal turn in Western philosophy through two critical essays; *And Say the Animal Responded* (1997) and the aforementioned *The Animal that Therefore I Am* (2002), as crucial moments in philosophy's treatment of the animal. However, she also points to a failure in his work to consider the world from the animal perspective, stating that, '*Derrida failed a simple obligation of companion species; he did not become curious about what the cat might actually be doing, feeling, thinking, or perhaps making available to him in looking back at him that morning.*'¹¹⁵ One might speculate that Derrida was attempting to avoid anthropomorphizing his cat by putting words into her mouth and conjuring her thoughts as language. Nevertheless, Haraway states of his feline encounter, '*What happened that morning was, to me, shocking because of what I know this philosopher can do. Incurious, he missed a possible invitation, a possible introduction to other-worlding.*'¹¹⁶ However, echoing Calarco, Haraway also draws us to the importance of Derrida's rejection of the imperial view of animals and its failure to even consider any ethical considerations when it comes to the animal question. For Haraway, Derrida highlights two types of imperialist representations of the animal: 1, those who observe real animals and write about them but never meet their gaze: and 2, those who engage animals only as literary and mythological figures.¹¹⁷ She goes on to offer a third critique on the limits of human knowledge to be radically changed by such encounters with the animal gaze and warns of the consequences of avoiding such encounters, stating that,

He [Derrida] did not explicitly consider ethologists and other animal behavioural scientists, but inasmuch as they engage animals as objects of their vision, not as beings who look back and whose look their own intersects, with consequences for all that follows, the same criticism would apply.¹¹⁸

Furthermore, Haraway asserts that the animal gaze is capable of unravelling imperialist foundations of scientific enquiry. Ultimately, Haraway's analysis of Derrida, despite an accusation that he falls short in some respects, asks us to take risks and to dispense with fears of anthropomorphizing the animal which endangers human-animal relational kinship. In doing so, Haraway asks that we acknowledge the deep entangled dance of human and more-than-

¹¹⁵ Donna J Haraway, *When Species Meet*: Vol. 3. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 20.

¹¹⁶ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 20.

¹¹⁷ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 21.

¹¹⁸ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 21.

human as part of a much wider earthly cosmology.¹¹⁹ Similarly, feminist and queer theorist Karen Barad, when calling for a more-than-human ethics, states that, '*A humanist ethics won't suffice when the "face" of the other that is "looking" back at me is all eyes, or has no eyes, or is otherwise unrecognisable in human terms. What is needed is a post-humanist ethics, an ethics of worlding.*'¹²⁰

Following Haraway, Broglio, and Barad, I argue that a multispecies artistic collaboration is possible. I would also define collaboration as a mode of poetic empathy through a unique bond enabled through improvisation, call and response, and refrain as the human-canine collaborative, artistic walk unfolds. To do this we have to move beyond a visual coding of place and space and embrace the unique *umwelt* of our canine companion's sensory body, as we navigate the world together, allowing ourselves, in the process, to be radically changed by our human-animal encounters. With this in mind, I return to Broglio's invitation to think beyond surfaces by embracing traditional Western philosophy's concept of the animal as devoid of interiority, as a furtive ground for artists who are adept at illuminating lively imaginaries from the flatness of material surfaces.¹²¹ I would add to this the tendency of cartography to reduce the world and landscapes to a flat surface, as readable visual images expressed through the history of the map, as a means of taming and claiming of territory, thus, also rendering landscapes as devoid of interiority, vibrancy, and dynamism. I consider this in more depth in the next chapter *Becoming Radical Cartographies*, but it is worth noting cartographies as we begin to explore how and what our bodies are capable of *becoming* in relation to the world around us. Therefore, I would like, when discussing surfaces as points of contact, to consider the landscape as an active and dynamic space, rather than a flat surface on which humanity is performed. From this perspective space and all that it contains, walks alongside the human and the canine in the many foldings and unfoldings of the deep topographical walk.

Broglio also reminds us of the perceived abyss between human and animal phenomenology by echoing Derrida in stating that, '*Animals look at us, and we are confounded by their radical*

¹¹⁹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 22.

¹²⁰ Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. (New York: Duke University Press, 2007), 329.

¹²¹ Ron Broglio, *Surface Encounters: Thinking with Animals and Art*. (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xvii.

otherness, as well as the fact that we may be objects in their world as much as they are objects in ours.¹²² Broglio proposes that artists who seek to collaborate with animals develop new forms of communication in a noble attempt to bridge the abyss between the human and the animal, suggesting that, *'This expressive language found in the double fold of these surfaces create conditions for thinking the problem of contact between the surface animal world and one's own.'*¹²³ Deep canine topography explores such double folds, through the action/event of the walk, as a relational encounter activated through bodies in motion (See Chapter 1, *Becoming Movement*). This infolding of skin and fur represents contact zones between human and canine, through subtle communications and expressions, played out in the moment of the walk. Here, surfaces also extend to the ground beneath the paw and foot, the breathing of the air, and the entanglement of complementary human and canine sensory apparatus which dictate direction, speed, duration and so on.

More recently, in examining animal creativity, contemporary posthuman philosopher Roberto Marchesini makes a strong case for animal cognition and subjectivity beyond the model of the Cartesian automata. In doing so, Marchesini argues that *'The animal is subjective, and because of its desires, it is the protagonist of its own life. It is not a passive entity but rather a continuous self-presentation, an irrepressible being that is looking for something.'*¹²⁴ Marchesini's argument for animal subjectivity and intelligence revolves around the animal's capacity for creativity with a particular emphasis on improvisation and problem-solving. In developing a philosophical ethology, Marchesini observes that animals possess effortless adaptation to their environments observed as an intrinsic virtuosity and an innate (tacit) knowledge that, *'[...] gives individuals an initial advantage in facing the challenges of life, and this will then be followed by the experiential process that they will develop through particular circumstances with which they will be confronted.'*¹²⁵ He goes on to suggest that creative improvisation forms a major strategy employed by the animal to address the subjective challenges of everyday life, which is both creative and non-repetitive.¹²⁶ For me, the central message of Marchesini's thesis on animal

¹²² Broglio, *Surface Encounters*, 59.

¹²³ Broglio, *Surface Encounters*, xvii.

¹²⁴ Roberto Marchesini, "What is Philosophical Ethology?" *Humanimalia* 9, no. 1 (2017): 46-68.59.

¹²⁵ Roberto Marchesini, *The Creative Animal: How Every Animal Builds Its Own Existence*. (London: Springer Nature, 2022), 3.

¹²⁶ Marchesini, *The Creative Animal*, 26.

creativity is that rather than operating as a pre-programmed machine, animals possess a plurality of inert, tacit knowledge alongside the ability to learn through improvisation. In our case, such knowledge is generated through shared human and canine improvisation where subjectivities can become entangled in the moment of creative expression. Such human-canine entanglement has developed over thousands of years of co-evolution, but also reflects an intrinsic bond between skin and fur on an individual relational level. Taking Marchesini's theory of animal creativity on board confronts us with the very real challenge of animal intelligence against the enduring Cartesian position of the animal as a biological machine. However, the structures underpinning the animal question, despite some concerted effort on the part of critical animal studies and animal rights discourse, remain stubbornly intact and to dismantle such structures requires a radical untangling of thousands of years of culture and tradition of Western European thought. Adding to this the history of human-canine co-evolution, and technological manipulation, the question of the dog remains problematic and complex in its constitution. It might be argued therefore, that the dog, in all its forms, represents the first posthuman animal in that it is a result of a long and complex human-animal co-evolutionary story. However, as others contest, such kinship is nothing more than the manifestation of a deeply exploitative relationship. The domestic canine exists as a direct result of human intervention and therefore holds a unique position as companion animal. Unlike other animals, perhaps with the exception of domesticated horses and cats, the dog performs an existence alongside the human for mutual benefit. However, as I explore in the next section, such human-canine relational ontologies are strongly contested and reflect deeper ethical questions of human-animal relations.

Companion Species; Friend or Foe?



Figure 23 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year with the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body. (Deleuze and Guattari).¹²⁷

In their joint philosophical opus, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 20th-century poststructural philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari present a direct attack on the very human obsession with domesticated companion animals. They are especially damning of *canis familiaris* as captivated by capitalist human vanity, as a commodity, and as a slave, stating that pets represent, '*Oedipal animals each with its own petty history, "my" cat, "my" dog. These animals invite us to regress, draw us into narcissistic contemplation [...]*'¹²⁸ Here, Deleuze and

¹²⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1988), 257.

¹²⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 240.

Guattari, perhaps deliberately, wrench us from our cosy idea of companion animal relations to reveal a darker underbelly of the structurally reductionist institutional realities of animal domestication and symbolism.

In addressing the animal question more broadly, Deleuze and Guattari propose the classification of three types of animal. The first classification offered is the Oedipal animal. This animal is individuated and sentimentalised (as seen in the previous quote). The domestic canine fits their Oedipal charge, given its unique history, its emotional alliance with the human and its adopting of human characteristics, such as a name and the position of a quasi-human family member. This definition, I would argue, also extends to any animal whose evolutionary trajectory has been significantly altered by human intervention. The term Oedipal is also employed as a direct critique of Freudian psychoanalysis in which the animal often becomes the symbol or metaphor for complex inter-family human relationships. The second type of animal we encounter in Deleuze and Guattari's writing is the archetypal animal. More akin to Jungian psychoanalysis, the archetypal animal is reduced to the symbolic, the mythical, and of wider cultural significance. The third type of animal, the demonic, is the main focus of their attention when exploring the process of becoming animal. The demonic animal is flexible, fluid, adaptable and already part of a multiplicity. Deleuze and Guattari offer these classifications, not as a scientific taxonomy, but as modes of relating to animals, suggesting that, *'[...] cannot any animal be treated in all three ways?'*¹²⁹ Therefore, theoretically, any animal can be tamed, any animal can be reduced to the symbolic, and any animal can return to the wild and unadulterated position of the demonic. This classification, of sorts, underpins Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming animal, which I address later in this chapter. I am interested in how the process of becoming animal taps into the demonic of the domestic canine and by extension the demonic of the human, brought together in a creative alliance. However, as we see in the opening quote to this section, Deleuze and Guattari propose that bodies are just as capable of mutual destruction as they are of forming creative alliances.

In her book, *When Species Meet* (first published in 2007), Donna Haraway launches quite a robust attack on the concept of becoming animal by describing Deleuze and Guattari's concept

¹²⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 241.

as a, '[...] *fantasy wolf-pack version of becoming animal*.'¹³⁰ Haraway argues that despite working so hard to move beyond the human-animal divide, Deleuze and Guattari's joint project has a distinct and, '[...] *profound absence of curiosity about or respect for and with actual animals*.'¹³¹ Haraway is right to point us to some fundamental flaws in Deleuze and Guattari's treatment of the animal, especially the domesticated canine, which is after all where our attention lies. Interestingly Haraway contests that Deleuze and Guattari present us with a, '[...] *philosophy of the sublime, not the earthly, not the mud*.' She continues to argue that their philosophy feeds off an opposition between the wild and the domestic, the dog and the wolf, as signalling a, '[...] *symptomatic morass for how not to take earthly animals, wild or domestic, seriously*.'¹³² However, reading between the lines, despite the very glaring problems attended to by Haraway, the underlying concept of becoming animal, presented by Deleuze and Guattari, offers a radical position which questions human exceptionalism and goes some way to undoing the human-animal nature-culture divide.

Whilst I agree with Deleuze and Guattari's critique of the domestic animal as part of a wider critique of capitalism, my objection is related to their assumption that all human-canine relations are equally malignant. I also agree that, in Western neo-liberal terms, both humans and by extension their companion animals are often captive, both consumer and consumed, as played out in the commodification of canine bodies. I would argue, however, following Haraway, that we are entangled in a complex multiplicity with our companion animals and that the process of becoming animal is relevant to both domesticated dogs and domesticated humans. It is in the process of learning to get along together, as part of a wider multiplicity of more-than-human animals and objects, that human-canine relational ontology comes alive. My companion, therefore, is no more *my* dog than I am *his* human, but circumstances have brought us together and care and responsibility are paramount. Leaving legal responsibilities aside for a moment, ownership is not a construct that cannot be troubled by deep canine topography. Therefore, rather than seeing the domesticated animal and the domesticated human as captive within human cultural and societal structures, it is perhaps more helpful to imagine both as captive but capable of becoming animal together by engaging in a creative

¹³⁰ Donna J Haraway, *When Species Meet*: Vol. 3. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 27.

¹³¹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 27.

¹³² Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 28-29.

collaboration beyond the accepted Western cultural position of human master/saviour and canine slave. To use Deleuze and Guattari's provocative animal classifications, the domestic canine, or Oedipal animal, becomes a demonic animal in the action/event of the walk. This is most apparent through my canine companion's draw towards wild spaces on the edges of the city. Tease spaces are often designated as edge land spaces engaged in their very own business of becoming. They too are suspended somewhere between cultivated and wild and become activated through our joint effort of seeking to reconnect and acknowledge our entanglement with wild spaces and, by extension, with our animal selves. Although I might agree with Deleuze and Guattari's proposal that the companion animal and the human are locked into a regressive, narcissistic embrace, if we adopt Haraway's concept of kinship, we can turn this embrace into a generative dance and as an opportunity for mutual escape.

Although dogs are major players in companion animal histories, when Haraway speaks of companion animals she extends its definition far wider than her own stories of canine relational entanglement. In referencing Karen Barad's concept of agential-realism, Haraway calls for a recognition of the many relational encounters, or intra-actions with more-than-human agents, to propose a *becoming-with* that reaches further than those companion animal relations that are more visible to us. Karen Barad posits that human subjectivity is constituted through continuous intra-actions, stating that, '*There is no res cogitans that inhabits a given body with inherent boundaries differentiating self and others. Rather, subjects are differentially constituted through specific intra-actions.*'¹³³ In short, Barad, a quantum theorist by training, recognises the constitution of radical matter as constructed through relational entanglement. I will briefly revisit Barad's theory of agential realism in Chapter 3, when considering the possibility of multispecies co-authorship.

In Haraway's hands, *companion* becomes the catch-all term for all kinds of life, biological and otherwise including at the quantum level, caught up in a mutual co-existence, from the microbiome that lives in our gut, without which we would not be able to glean nutrients from food and fight infection to the people and other animals we share our immediate environments with. Furthermore, in redefining the term species, Haraway offers a definition which

¹³³ Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. (New York: Duke University Press, 2007), 375.

recognises, '[...] *the dance linking kin and kind*,'¹³⁴ In reclaiming the term from its scientific taxonomies, as exploited by colonialism in the business of othering, Haraway argues that,

The discursive tie between the colonised, the enslaved, the noncitizen, and the animal - all reduced to type, all Others to rational man, and all essential to his bright constitution – is at the heart of racism and flourishes, lethally, in the entrails of humanism.¹³⁵

Haraway's definition of companion species goes much further than a recognition of our closest animal kin by offering an important critique of the Philosophical Humanist project. For Haraway, such kinship begins with a deep reflection on human-canine relational encounters as a model of interspecies becoming, which quickly widens to an exploration into the darkest corners of the human condition and the threat of the sixth mass extinction. Furthermore, Haraway has the knack of bringing us back from these dark corners safe in the knowledge that we are capable of so much more if we only embrace our fellow more-than-human 'critters' as messmates and as kin.

Diving deeper into the tricky territory of companion species co-evolution, critical and queer theorist Jack Halberstam delivers a harsh but pragmatic account of the very concept of the pet. This is summarised in their following description of the Western neo-liberal economy and its impact on human-animal kinship,

In this zombie economy, the pet occupies a high place in the hierarchy of liveliness — it is not living dead like the cattle we slaughter or the chickens we raise; it is warm, real, and alive. Its liveliness depends absolutely on its being tethered to us, its “species companion,” and its survival depends on its ability to please us or to answer to our anthropomorphic call for companionability in the forms we mandate — a pet can nip and chew but not bite and scratch; it can whimper or purr but should not bark or whine; a pet must learn obedience and eat and shit when we say, and it must adapt to a carceral reality in exchange for not being eaten.¹³⁶

This damning account of the companion animal raises the following questions for the practice of deep canine topography:

- Is positioning the canine as an artist, as co-author, and as instigator of the walk simply another way of exploiting the canine body?

¹³⁴ Donna J Haraway, *When Species Meet*: Vol. 3. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 17.

¹³⁵ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 18.

¹³⁶ Jack Halberstam, *Wild Things: The Disorder of Desire*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 119.

- Does this position render our human-canine psychogeographic endeavour as simply another act of zombie humanism?

One could justify our project by remembering that my canine companion is a rescue dog and destined for euthanasia, had we as a family not agreed to take him into our home. However, Halberstam has an answer for this justification by suggesting that,

Within zombie humanism, all wildness — human/animal/vegetable — becomes fodder for an economy of voracious human consumption. And, so, the human tells her- self she is saving the animal as she enslaves it; she tells herself that she is most alive when she makes death a distant reality.¹³⁷

This is hard to argue against and makes for a difficult truth, but I re-assert that I am not responsible for the state we find ourselves in when it comes to companion-species relations. With this in mind, I accept my part in the risk of perpetuating the status quo whilst safe in the knowledge that I am just as conscious of my captivity as that of my canine kin. I would rather justify this project as being complicit in nothing more than the reality of the here and now and as a repositioning of the animal as an artist in an attempt to trouble human exceptionalism. But equally, I may well be digging an even deeper hole for us both to fall into. A trap of my own making.

What is at stake, in Halberstam's wider discussion, is a critique and a queering of the very human, Western, colonial concept of wild and wildness. I pick this discussion up again in the next and final chapter where my attention moves towards radical cartographies. For our research however, I propose that knowledge is generated through a multispecies alliance, whilst also remaining open and critical to the problematic, historical, ethical, and political dialogues surrounding human-canine relations. Deep canine topography, therefore, seeks to keep such questions alive by critically examining human-canine relations through a creative alliance which troubles human-animal hierarchies whilst acknowledging critical differences. However, Halberstam again delivers a harsh critical blow to our search for human-canine collaboration in a direct critique of Donna Haraway's positioning of the canine as companion-species, as follows,

¹³⁷ Halberstam, *Wild Things*, 119.

Haraway herself talks about a human co-history with the dog and about coevolution that must be written as an “ontological choreography,” a dance between and among species and not one that features only human dancers. While Bennett [In reference to Jane Bennett’s concept of Vibrant Matter] would add that such an ontological choreography would have to recognize the presence of all kinds of vibrating life forms, my emphasis on zombie humanism would also note that the dance is still created, enacted, and performed by humans with animals, pets, and other things as props rather than coplayers.¹³⁸

Ultimately, Halberstam frames human-canine companionship as built on tens of thousands of years of human exploitation of animal bodies disguised as a mutual co-evolution. Similarly, Justyn Włodarczyk also draws our attention to the cultural refinement, embraced by Modernism’s problematic introduction of breed standards, as ultimately leading to eugenics through the breeding of the uber-mutt or the super-dog, stating that,

In the mid-nineteenth century, the predominant trend in dog breeding moved from selecting mates on the basis of their use value (as hunting dogs, sheepdogs, etc.) or simply geographic proximity, to basing breeding programs on the quest to produce a “eugenic specimen” whose appearance perfectly embodies the written breed standard and whose body metonymically evokes the character features listed in the breed standard: for example, elegance, strength, courage, persistence, aggression, and human notions of femininity and masculinity.¹³⁹

Therefore, what seems like a benign companion-animal relationship is underscored by a complex and difficult history. However, we need to consider our responsibility in upholding this relationship and perpetuating our joint captivity alongside a reality that is only just becoming apparent, like the lifting of a veil, revealing a troubled experiment in the colonisation of an entire species, the wolf. However further reading exposes a long and complex history where the status of dogs as the domesticated grey wolf is contested.¹⁴⁰

This discussion on the status of the canine as a pet leaves us with two choices:

- Do we attempt to reverse-engineer our canine companions to their wolfly origins?
- Or do we acknowledge our difficult past, accept that we have created a monster, look our companions in the eye and make peace with them as equals?

¹³⁸ Halberstam, *Wild Things*, 119.

¹³⁹ Justyn Włodarczyk, “Postmodern Breed: the Crisis as a Master Narrative of the Dog World,” in *Animals and Their People: Connecting East and West in Cultural Animal Studies*, ed. Anna Barcz and Dorota Łagodzka (Boston: Brill, 2018), 176.

¹⁴⁰ Susan McHugh, *Dog*: (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 12.

Deleuze and Guattari's depiction of the pet offers us a harsh reality which runs throughout their joint Capitalism and Schizophrenia project and proposes that both human and canine are consumed by late capitalism's pervasive commodification of bodies and identity. If we read this commodification of human and canine bodies and identities alongside Susan McHugh's tale of the complex co-evolution of humans and dogs, then we ultimately arrive at the eugenics of pedigree and best in show as the pinnacle of human-canine exceptionalism and identity politics. Here the identity of the canine is split between the purity of pedigree and mutt, or crossbreed, upheld by institutions such as The Kennel Club and international events such as Crufts. McHugh proposes that in the 19th-century Western European rise of the canine breed as distinct categorical identities, the crossbreed adopts the symbol of the outsider, the every-dog. Therefore, for McHugh, the 'mutt' has come to represent part of a mixed community and not simply a representation of the oppressed by enabling new forms of identity and societal imaginaries.¹⁴¹ A deep and detailed acknowledgement of human-canine shared histories, however complex and troubled, is, I would argue, a necessary step towards enabling such new human-animal imaginaries. As Carla Freccero suggests, *'To forgo any representation at all in order to avoid the traps of anthropomorphosis is to relinquish responsibility (in the sense of responding, responding to) the coarticulations of lives, histories and cultures called human and animal.'*¹⁴²

Through the concept of nomadism, which draws on the work of Deleuze and Guattari, Rosi Braidotti directly challenges the very frameworks through which human and animal relations are conceptualised. She argues that we need to lift such relations out of the dominant Western Oedipal narrative, *'As a nature-culture compound, a dog – not unlike other products of techno-science – is a radical other, albeit a significant other.'* She also goes on to call for the need to, *'[...] devise a symbolic kinship system that matches this complexity.'*¹⁴³ I argue, therefore, that in seeking to reframe human-canine relations, deep canine topography, as an artistic practice, seeks to acknowledge the deeply problematic histories which bind us. It is through a creative

¹⁴¹ McHugh, *Dog*, 170.

¹⁴² Carla Freccero, "Wolf, or Homo Homini Lupus," in *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*, ed. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, Nils Bubandt, Elaine Gan and Heather Anne Swanson (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 2017), 102.

¹⁴³ Rosi Braidotti, "Posthuman, All Too Human Feminism: Towards a New Process Ontology," *Theory Culture and Society* 23, (2006): 197-208.

co-alliance that I attempt to redress this by positioning the canine not only as a companion, but as an artist and co-author.

Taken together, Deleuze and Guattari, Halberstam and McHugh, offer a stark reality which contains within it a damning critique of Philosophical Humanism's oppressive social and hierarchical structures. If, however, we utilize Braidotti's concept of nomadism and Haraway's concept of kinship as positive moves towards a new materialist ontology, one which defies late capitalism's constant divisions of nature and culture, then we might arrive at a more harmonious form of human-canine-landscape hybridity. I propose, therefore, that embracing the canine as artist, collaborator, and co-author allows for a radical re-positioning of human-canine relations.

I will stop digging, for now, what is turning out to be a bottomless hole full of bones and return to the task at hand of exploring how human and canine bodies might become de-territorialised and re-territorialised through the practice of deep canine topography. For this quest to continue we need to keep moving and keep walking with a vibrant restlessness which is forever nomadic. With this in mind, I will now go on to discuss the twin concepts of becoming animal and nomadic subjectivity in more depth as proposed by Deleuze and Guattari and developed further by Rosi Braidotti.

Part 2, Bodies in Transition and Transformation



Figure 24 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

They visit us often, we sense them coming, we welcome them, we engulf them, the four-legged one meets us as one of our own, a long-lost soul wrapped within a muscular body, a body without organs, he sniffs us, draws us in to become with us, he rolls in our tendrils, he reaches out as we reach him as we embrace.

The two-legged one walks with his head in the clouds, he has much to learn.

Becoming Animal - Becoming Nomadic



Figure 25 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

Becoming Animal [consequently] is a process of redefining one's sense of attachment to a shared world, a territorial space. (Rosi Braidotti).¹⁴⁴

To even begin to unpick Deleuze and Guattari's complex concept of becoming animal, which populates and grows through their collective works, becoming resolved in their 1980 opus, *A Thousand Plateaus*, we need the help of those who have walked this path before us. Gerald L. Bruns, in his 2007 essay *Becoming Animal (Some Simple Ways)* defines becoming animal as follows.

Becoming animal is a movement from the major (the constant) to the minor (the variable); it is a deterritorialization in which a subject no longer occupies a realm of stability and identity but is instead folded imperceptibly into a movement or into an amorphous legion whose mode of existence is nomadic, or alternatively, whose

¹⁴⁴ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 94.

'structure' is rhizomatic rather than arborescent, that is, restless, insomniac, or in flight rather than settled, upright, at one with itself and at peace with others.¹⁴⁵

Alongside the concept of becoming animal, Deleuze and Guattari also introduce us to the concepts of the rhizome, the molar and the molecular. The rhizome is offered as an antidote to arborescent systems and structures of knowledge. Arborescent systems are hierarchical, with a central trunk, branches, a beginning, a middle, and an end, whereas rhizomatic structures are anti-hierarchical, with no centre or periphery, no beginning middle or end, and more importantly no central privileged viewpoint. Becoming animal is offered therefore as a rhizomatic move. The concepts of molar and molecular are a little harder to grasp. Nonetheless, in simple terms, the molar is associated with the conscious, perceptible, rigid, and organised. The molecular is, on the other hand, associated with that which is unconscious, supple, and fluid. Here, becoming animal is offered as a molecular move. That is to say that it operates as a fluid, de-territorialised process which lends itself to theorising the unconscious flows and forces at play in the practice of walking with a canine companion. Such flows, forces and unspoken connections require what Deleuze and Guattari describe as a becoming imperceptible. Imperceptibility represents a move towards eliminating everything that exceeds the moment or as a de-territorialisation, an uncoupling of the ego towards an act of communion with the world. In terms of walking-art practice, this could be interpreted as engaging with the world from a point within the landscape, or as Deleuze and Guattari rather poetically suggest, '*To be present at the dawn of the world.*'¹⁴⁶ To explore this further, it is worth considering the following quote from Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, from the chapter *Becoming Intense, Becoming Animal, Becoming Imperceptible*. In discussing what they term as the three virtues of imperceptibility, indiscernibility, and impersonality, Deleuze and Guattari describe moments of *becoming* as follows.

One is like grass: one has made the world, everybody/everything, into a becoming, because one has made a necessary communicating world, because one has suppressed in oneself everything that prevents us from slipping between things and growing in the midst of things. One has coined "everything" (le "tout"): the indefinite article, the infinitive-becoming, and the proper name to which one is reduced. Saturate, eliminate, put everything in.

¹⁴⁵ Gerald Bruns, "Becoming Animal (Some Simple Ways)," *New Literary History* 38 no.4 (2007): 703-720.

¹⁴⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 280.

One could interpret this quote as akin to Papadimitriou's deep topographical communion with the landscape, as introduced in Chapter 1, *Becoming Movement*, but also as an attempt to define the very deep connection between human and canine. Furthermore, one could read this as the very essence of how the canine body explores and communes with the world through playful improvisation, responding to each sensory stimulus as a poetic and creative entanglement with and of the landscape. Interestingly Deleuze and Guattari go on to suggest that movement is central to becoming imperceptible and therefore to becoming animal.

Movement has an essential relation to the imperceptible; it is by nature imperceptible. Perception can grasp movement only as the displacement of a moving body or the development of a form. Movements, becomings, in other words, pure relations of speed, of slowness, pure affects, are below and above the threshold of perception.¹⁴⁷

This neatly circles back to Manning's concept of relational movement as discussed in Chapter 1, *Becoming Movement*, or as Manning proposes, '*Movement courses through the me that is in formation: experience, perception, feeling – all of these are movements, and each of them contributes, in an infinity of ways, to what 'I' will become in any given occasion.*'¹⁴⁸

The concept of becoming animal, it could be argued, is equally relevant to many artistic practices in which an element of improvisation and trust in the openness of the unknown is at play. Alongside walking-art, performance, dance, and music are perhaps the most obvious artistic practices which also enter moments of pure becoming through improvisation. The trick here, however, is not to seek out or necessarily try to create the conditions for such transitions and becomings, where the boundaries of the self become fluid and slippery, but to have an awareness of the concept of becoming animal helps to recognise when it happens, however fleeting and ephemeral. To put it more simply, there is a point in the walk where the human and the canine seem to align in the moment of walking through, or perhaps more accurately walking *with* the landscape. In such moments, the human self assumes the position of a point in a network or multiplicity. Each twist, turn, improvised movement, call and response, refrain and so on constructs the walk unfolding. Rather than observing the landscape from an ocular-centric, bipedal position, human and canine senses seem to align as an unspoken connection

¹⁴⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 281.

¹⁴⁸ Erin Manning, "Wondering The World Directly - or, How Movement Outruns the Subject," *Body & Society* 20, no. 3-4 (2014): 162-188.

is formed, and the walk becomes a dance. To speculate on this idea further, it is worth pausing here to consider a further quote from Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*.

Each individual is an infinite multiplicity, and the whole of Nature is a multiplicity of perfectly individuated multiplicities. The plane of consistency of nature is like an immense Abstract Machine, abstract yet real and individual; its pieces are the various assemblages and individuals, each of which groups together an infinity of particles entering into an infinity of more or less interconnected relations. There is therefore a unity to the plane of nature, which applies equally to the inanimate and animate, the artificial and the natural.¹⁴⁹

Here, we can see the influence of 17th-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza's *Ethics* on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of radical immanence and the beginnings of the new-materialist concepts that inform contemporary posthuman philosophy.¹⁵⁰ For me, this direct quote hints at the possibility of an assemblage of a human-canine-landscape abstract machine, and the beginnings of a radical cartography of human-animal relations. Furthermore, becoming animal challenges the concept of a fixed identity or an otherness on which the very existence of taxonomies and hierarchies, which dominate human animal relations, are formed. Scholar of philosophy, Jim Urpeth, in his 2004 essay *Animal Becomings*, reads the previous quotation as an '[...] affirmation of "creative lines of escape" from the "human" into the impersonal terrain of material intensities shared with the animal.'¹⁵¹ Such material intensities are born out in the way the canine body relates to its environment in harmony with the topography of the landscape and its multiple sensory stimuli and infinite potential. To unpick this further it is worth briefly exploring Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory of which becoming animal is an important move. Assemblage theory examines how systems self-organise by suggesting that assemblages are formed through a process of coding, stratification, and territorialisation. Such assemblages are formed from what Deleuze and Guattari term as constellations.¹⁵² As we see in the previous quotation from Deleuze and Guattari, constellations are formed through assemblages present in a multiplicity of potentially infinite interconnected relations. If we relate this to the walk, as encountered through deep canine topography, then we can begin to consider how each step, each movement, connected as they are between human, canine and

¹⁴⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 244-5.

¹⁵⁰ Baruch Spinoza, *The Essential Spinoza: Ethics and Related Writings*. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2006).

¹⁵¹ Jim Urpeth, "Animal Becomings," in *Animal Philosophy: Essential Readings in Continental Thought*, ed. Matthew Calarco and Peter Atterton (London: Continuum, 2004), 101 – 110.

¹⁵² Deleuze and Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*.

the world we move through, opens an infinite possibility of lines of flight and potential assemblages of human-canine-landscape becomings. What is at stake therefore, in the concept of becoming animal is a radical immanence or interconnectedness which is not built on pre-determined hierarchies but is rhyzomic in nature and through which radical cartographies or new ways of becoming, emerge. In such moments our senses are attuned to the complex web of multiplicities that surround us, or as anthropologist Tim Ingold suggests, we become entangled within a meshwork of the world unfolding.¹⁵³ Such hybridity pivots on moments of instability as ephemeral zones of contact, which momentarily deconstruct human subjectivity and open potential sensory connections with the landscape beyond the capabilities of the human body alone. Two legs bad, four legs good, six legs better, to steal and re-purpose an Orwellian phrase.¹⁵⁴

In summary, for Deleuze and Guattari the process of ordering matter around a body is a form of coding, a making sense of the world through the senses. When coding bodies come into proximity, they form an assemblage, therefore constructing a territory, a step known as territorialisation.¹⁵⁵ Becoming animal forms a vital step in the process of deep canine topography, through the process of de-territorialization, that is the breaking down of human subjectivity as an opening to the potential forming of human-canine-landscape assemblages. In this scenario, the action/event of the walk becomes the zone of contact through which such assemblages are constantly formed and re-formed. This also resonates with Manning's theory of relational movement, as an example of assemblage theory, expressed through proximities of bodies in motion. Here, Manning proposes that movement forms bodies through moments of relational co-becomings played out in the rhythms and repetitions of the walk or in Manning's own words, '*Repetition is another word for magic. One foot in front of the other, what we repeat is not the walk as such but the creation of intervals to the refrain of a simultaneous becoming.*'¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. (London: Routledge, 2021), 63.

¹⁵⁴ George Orwell, *Animal Farm* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

¹⁵⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.

¹⁵⁶ Erin Manning, *Relationescapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), 25.

Rosi Braidotti's theory of nomadism, which builds on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of nomadic subjectivity, describes a certain kind of assemblage, which is of significance to deep canine topography as a methodology.

By entering into affirmative ethical relations, the process of becoming-animal/minoritarian engender possible futures. They constitute possible worlds through a web of sustainable interconnections. This is the point of becoming: a collective assemblage of forces that coalesce around commonly shared elements and empower them to grow and endure.¹⁵⁷

Here, through Braidotti's words, we begin to explore how nomadic subjectivity might support deep canine topography as a methodology which embraces a shared act of co-becoming. This is not just in the literal term of the choreography of relational movement of bodies through space, but as an agile and mobile body of thought which challenges the very ground upon which our human animal relations play out, through nomadic, rather than static modes of subjectivity. Braidotti also offers a clear discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming animal as an ethical, bio-egalitarian turn, proposing that contemporary philosophy (after Michel Foucault) enables a non-hierarchical bond between human and more-than-human by suggesting that '*Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's theory of becoming animal express this profound and vital interconnection by positing a qualitative shift of relationship away from speciesism and toward an ethical appreciation of what bodies (human, animal, other) can do.*'¹⁵⁸

Furthermore, Braidotti asks us to consider the history of the animal as represented through Enlightenment thought which posits the human from an ideal, white, heterosexual, male perspective, responsible for the origin of the concept of *otherness*. This is echoed in Halberstam's critique of the origins of the terms wild and wildness as an implicit tool in the logic of colonial violence.¹⁵⁹ Braidotti argues that anything which sits outside of this ideal is rendered as *other*, as *wild*, placed at various points along a hierarchy upon which the ideal human reigns supreme. Such hierarchies are upheld by notions of transcendence, an upward move to logical and rational detachment as the pinnacle of being, as opposed to the radical immanence suggested by becoming animal. In critiquing Leonardo da Vinci's Renaissance

¹⁵⁷ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 96.

¹⁵⁸ Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*, 85.

¹⁵⁹ Jack Halberstam. *Wild things: The Disorder of Desire*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 123.

Vitruvian Man, as a visual representation of such ideals against which all other bodies are judged, Braidotti argues that,

All other modes of embodiment, in the sense of both dialectical otherness (non-white, non-masculine, nonnormal, non-young, nonhealthy) and categorical otherness (zoomorphic, disabled, or malformed), were pathologized and cast on the other side of normality—that is, viewed as anomalous, deviant, and monstrous¹⁶⁰

This includes the bodies of animal others and allows ethics to justify a continued violent exploitation of animal bodies and their habitats. As an antidote to the Philosophical Humanist position Braidotti draws us back to that now familiar move of de-familiarisation, or, '[...] *estrangement* [...]'¹⁶¹ Here we again return to the crux of deep canine topography as a practice and a methodology, that is that walking in unison with another non-human body, or other more-than-human entities and essences, requires what Braidotti refers to as the de-Oedipalisation of the animal as a momentary troubling human exceptionalism. This move requires a form of estrangement or a radical repositioning of the human subject as nomadic rather than as a static identity. Braidotti describes the Oedipal relationship with animals as based on the, '[...] *dominant human and structurally masculine habit of taking for granted free access to the consumption of the bodies of others.*'¹⁶² In essence, Braidotti is calling here for a radical reconstitution of the self, not as defined through Enlightenment logic and reason, but through what she terms as, '[...] *a bio-egalitarian turn* [...]'¹⁶³ Furthermore, the concept of de-familiarisation owes much to Guattari's concept of the body without organs as a pre-emptive move for becoming other than our structural conditioning allows us to be.¹⁶⁴ In such terms, a de-identifying, de-familiarising self, or a loss of ego, becomes a necessary step towards becoming animal and goes some way to understanding how deep canine topography might trouble human exceptionalism.

¹⁶⁰ Rosi Braidotti, "Animals, Anomalies, and Inorganic Others," *Theories and Methodologies*, 124, no. 2 (2009): 526-532. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2009.124.2.526>.

¹⁶¹ Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*, 83.

¹⁶² Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*, 81.

¹⁶³ Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*, 82.

¹⁶⁴ Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2005).

Becoming Mountain – Miranda Whall



Figure 26 - Miranda Whall, *Crossed Paths – Sheep*, 2018.¹⁶⁵

In her ongoing series of works *Crossed Paths* 2018 – present, artist, and academic Miranda Whall, explores more-than-human worlds by unsettling human-centric encounters with landscape. In one of her early works in the *Crossed Paths* series Whall occupies the position of the sheep by crawling on all fours wearing a symbolic sheep skin or fleece which Whall describes as a, '[...] *gesture towards transforming my persona.*'¹⁶⁶ Employing a number of body-mounted action cameras, attached to limbs, head and torso, Whall captures a unique and compelling position of the world grounded in a direct communion with the earth, grass, and mud. In doing so, Whall positions the body as organic matter thus challenging the boundaries between body and landscape, human and animal, matter and mattering. The resulting multi-screen video and sound installations invite the viewer into a variety of non-human worlds by presenting the rhythms of the landscape activated through the crawl as a performance. Accompanied by incidental music in collaboration with composers and performers Tim Noble,

¹⁶⁵ Miranda Whall, "Crossed Paths – Sheep, 2018", *Miranda Whall Space*, Accessed September 2022, <https://www.mirandawhall.space/crossed-paths-sheep/>.

¹⁶⁶ Rhys Thwaites, dir. 2021. *Woolly Maggot*. Accessed October 2022, https://vimeo.com/263207913?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=13443285.

Harriet Earls, Angharad Davies, Toby Hay, Jasper Salmon, Ric Lloyd, Diarmuid Johnson, and Sam Christie, Whall's video installations invite us into a deeply immersive, more-than-human world. Whall describes *Crossed Paths* as follows.

Crossed Paths is a project about going deeply into the living landscape, ecosystems, and interspecies dynamics to explore animal, plant, land and human narratives. The project is inspired by two seminal books; Nan Shepherd's *The Living Mountain* and David Abram's *An Earthly Cosmology: Becoming Animal*.¹⁶⁷

In an early iteration of *Crossed Paths, Sheep 2018*, Whall presents eight large multi-screen videos, projected in a semi-circle at ground level, to convey a sense of otherness through the disorientation of the camera position. The resulting encounter offers a seldom experienced position in which moving images work alongside music which flows and follows the motion of the body and the landscape. Often working with climate scientists, Whall's *Crossed Paths* series draws attention to the materiality of the living, vibrant matter of the world, the peat bogs, and the heather, by drawing attention to the insignificance of the human in the landscape. In a commentary on Whall's *Crossed Paths* eight-screen video installation, at the Oriel Davies Gallery in 2018, curator Iliyana Nedkova describes the work as an, '[...] *unequivocally non-romantic approach to mountains by taking the viewer into the underbelly of the landscape and under the skin of the mountain*.'¹⁶⁸

Largely influenced by Nan Shepherd's book *The Living Mountain*, originally published in 1977, Whall's crawls, whilst being meticulously planned, also confront the very act of endurance necessary in each performance. Her practice seems to encompass the necessity to lose oneself in the landscape, to the point at which she becomes mountain, becomes badger, otter, sheep, or hare, not in the literal sense, or some kind of imitation of the animal, but in the sense of challenging the boundaries of what it is to be human. In the case of *Sheep*, it is almost as if the animal fleece acts as a talisman or shamanistic device to facilitate an opening of the human. *Crawling*, therefore, becomes an act of freeing the human from transcendental subjectivity towards what we might describe as radical immanence in a merging or absorption of the self,

¹⁶⁷ Marinda Whall, "Miranda Whall, Interdisciplinary Artist: Crawling About," Accessed October 2022,

¹⁶⁸ Iliyana Nedkova, "Edgework: Cultural Environmentalism of Hope," Accessed October 2022,

<https://www.edgework.co.uk/single-post/2018/06/06/cultural-environmentalism-of-hope>.

A video documentation of this work can be viewed here: Accessed October 2022,

<https://vimeo.com/279986525>.

the 'I', or ego, into the very soil the body comes to occupy. Furthermore, Whall's use of eight body-mounted cameras draws us away from a bipedal, horizon-focused coding of landscape and towards an embodied bodily seeing and sensing mode of becoming landscape.

I was lucky enough to have an informal conversation with Whall in July 2021, in which we discussed our practices and approaches to research. Our conversation revealed some comparisons between the *Crossed Paths* series and deep canine topography, such as the use of the action camera and the blurring of human subjectivity. In our respective practices, we both seek to experience some kind of becoming other through shifting perspectives in the nowness of the moment through direct contact with new ways of seeing and being in, or of, the landscape. However, unlike our own walking practice, Whall's sense of transition also comes through endurance, with her performances lasting up to twenty-four hours or crossing large distances in an all too inhuman position. Both practices could be positioned somewhere in the realms of hybridity where, rather than becoming animal, the aim is to become hybrid human-canine-landscape or human, sheep, badger, landscape and so on. In doing so we both seek to reframe and reconceptualise relational encounters with more-than-human worlds by employing in Whall's practice her own body and in ours by collaborating with a non-human body through the act of walking as an artistic practice and an artistic research methodology.

Crossed Paths engages with the landscape in an attempt to unsettle our romanticisation and dominance over the natural world and our responsibility to manage ecosystems through collaboration with the landscape and the bodies of the animals with which we share this planet. Whall is employing the animal position, perhaps symbolically, as a gesture towards transformation revealing a situated knowledge from the ground up. However, one could argue the domesticated canine already occupies the position of human-animal hybrid, with a unique wild connection that draws us towards new conceptions of landscape through the act of becoming landscape. This crossing of human-animal experiences does, I would argue, offer new conceptions of place beyond the romantic and beyond the position of human as both master and saviour of environmental catastrophe.

In this subsection, *Bodies in Transition and Transformation*, I have tried to capture the practice of deep canine topography in a way which reflects a radical shift in the definition of the self, experienced as a de-familiarisation, as a prelude to a becoming animal. In this move, the ego is momentarily lost in the moment of becoming canine. I am not suggesting here that I become canine or adopt an all-fours position. What I am proposing in deep canine topography is a kind of unity of bodies, a hybridity through which the surfaces that separate human and canine are capable of becoming fluid and permeable, enabled through the simple act of walking together. The key to this hybridity is playful improvisation by approaching each walk as an adventurous shared creative act with no other motive than to make a walk. At first, this entailed me following my canine companion, but through experience and repetition, we now seem to have mastered the art of negotiating space as one body in a constant negotiation through a process of relational movement, as explored in Chapter 1, *Becoming Movement*. In the next section I consider how bodies might become transformed through the concept of multispecies co-authorship.

Part 3, Co-authored Bodies



Figure 27 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

This ground that unfolds before me, these smells that draw me and drive me towards them, this overwhelming desire to move, to run, to chase, my senses are alive, every part of my body tingles, every part of my body mingles with the grass, it's smells move beyond skin and bone to become part of my very being, my becoming, my unfolding, my moment of grass, mud, gravel, stone, water, fur, skin, all become one, outreached through space towards infinity, no up, no down, no back only forward, but with no particular destination in mind, in body, my body becomes space and space moved with me, I am landscape, I am space, I am multiplicity, connected and entangled through my senses with the bodies of others, past, present, future bodies, all on the move, all in relation, all immanent, all in a state of becoming, entropy and decay, becomings, de-territorializations, re-territorializations, anything is possible, all possible futures merge with the present.

What Might Bodies Become? The Question of Multispecies Co-authorship

Symptosis is a simple word; it means “making-with”. Nothing makes itself; nothing is really autopoietic or self-organising. (Donna Haraway).¹⁶⁹

As discussed in Chapter 1, *Becoming Movement*, psychogeography and the myriad of walking practices which owe something to its legacy have, until recently, developed along a largely human-centred trajectory. I would argue, however, that in this time of climate emergency, we can no longer consider the artist walk as a human-centred action, but as a multispecies entanglement that de-centres human subjectivity and embraces more-than-human knowledge. Donna Haraway defined the term companion species in an attempt to draw attention to the complex entangled co-dependency of humans and other animals. In doing so Haraway reminds us that we are animals and not immune or somehow capable of transcending the web of human-more-than-human forms we already occupy, arguing that, ‘*Companion species are relentlessly becoming-with.*’¹⁷⁰ It is therefore difficult to imagine human-canine relations as anything other than a collaborative adventure and as a co-authorship performed in our daily domestic coexistence.

Considering the boundaries of authorship from an artistic practice perspective, it is perhaps useful to briefly explore the Fluxus Movement and its origins in 1960s avant-garde intermedial performance, art, and music. Fluxus as a movement is difficult to pin down and continues to resist neat definition. However, one aspect of Fluxus that is of particular interest to this project is the issue of authorship and the very ambiguity of authorship exposed throughout its many iterations. In the introduction to the book *Fluxus, The Practice of Non-Duality*, author Natasha Lushetich, in the absence of any real art historical consensus, attempts to distinguish the main critical tenants of the Fluxus movement as follows, ‘*The entire Fluxus opus [which] privileges dynamic relationship-formation over object-hood, interactivity and thus performative multiplicity over authorial singularity, mass production of works over their uniqueness [...].*’¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Donna Haraway, *Staying With the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016). 58.

¹⁷⁰ Haraway, *Staying With the Trouble*, 13.

¹⁷¹ Natasha Lushetich, *Fluxus: The Practice of Non-Duality*. (Amsterdam: Brill, 2014), 9.

What specifically interests me about the Fluxus Movement, in relation to deep canine topography, is its refusal of individual authorship and the pursuit of art as a mode of dynamic relationship formation over and above the production of objects and artefacts.

In common with a key feature of psychogeography and the *dérive*, many Fluxus works also employed the score as an activator for artistic collaboration to be interpreted, acted upon, or performed in many varied ways. Such scores, as pioneered in music by Fluxus founding members John Cage and in art by Yoko Ono, Alison Knowles, and Emmet Williams, are utilised to generate collaborative actions. For deep canine topography, as I have already suggested, the simple score, *follow the dog*, was translated directly from the actions of my canine companion. Thus, it could be argued that the score was written by a non-human actor through a pigeon language, expressed through the contact zones of human-canine bodily interactions. If we take the position that the score is the generator of the walk, and by extension the research, and agree that the score is one written in the actions and behaviours of my canine companion, then we might even position him as the principal author or instigator. My position in the research shifts to become the investigator into the phenomena that unfolds as a result of his invitation, his score, his proposal. Alternatively, if the walks are conceived as performance, in the Fluxus sense, then it is perhaps better to say that there are no authors, only actors and improvisations as we respond in the moment to subtle communications and fluctuations as the walk unfolds. Furthermore, if we fold the concept of authorship back into Manning's exploration of movement (see Chapter 1, *Becoming Movement*), then we begin to see bodies, both human and canine, as embraced in a collaborative, improvised, relational dance. The question of who instigates the walk, who chooses the route, who chooses the time and duration, *who's walking who*, becomes a symbiosis of many bodies in motion.

Although originating in the actions of my canine companion, each and every walk becomes an action-event-reaction to sensory stimuli encountered throughout the walk. Therefore, it could also be argued that authorship is shared with a multiplicity of moments of becoming which simply renders the concept of authorship redundant. Within this redundancy lies the refusal of the authority of the human over and above the companion animal and by extension all other more-than-human entities encountered on the walk. Returning briefly to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming animal, when discussing the pack as a multiplicity of affective

communication they suggest that, '*Schools, bands, herds, populations are not inferior social forms; they are affects and powers, involutions that grip every animal in a becoming just as powerful as that of the human being with the animal.*'¹⁷² With this in mind, I suggest that the walk becomes the site of affective communion between human-canine and landscape engaged in an ongoing co-authored relational choreography.

The position of the single author is also contested by performance artist Annette Arlander in her essay *The Shadow of a Pine Tree, Authorship, Agency and Performing Beyond the Human*, which cites a number of influential theorists and concepts which might contribute towards an understanding of multispecies co-authorship. Principally, Arlander cites Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, Jane Bennett's concept of thing power, and Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory. Arlander also cites Karen Barad's concept of agential-realism which proposes that it is *intra-action* which, '[...] signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies.'¹⁷³ Arlander states that '*After Barad, there are no authors, actors or agents in the given world; rather they are produced through specific intra-actions and cuts of exclusion and inclusion.*'¹⁷⁴ Karen Barad utilises their knowledge and background as a quantum physicist to develop a theory of entanglement at the quantum level. For Barad, entanglement not only constitutes an entwined connection between individual entities but also troubles the very idea of an independent self-contained existence. Thus, when considering authorship, it could be argued that our very existence is continually being co-authored, and therefore we remain in a constant state of becoming with the world through subtle and constant intra-actions.¹⁷⁵ It could therefore be suggested that the refusal of authorship is also a refusal of the limits of the body and what the body might become. By this, I refer back to Uexküll's idea of a world constructed of individual lifeworlds constituted of sensory apparatus and stimuli. If we consider the senses to represent the limits of our bodily knowing, then we can only make sense of a world based on those sensory limitations. However, if the points of contact between human and more-than-human lie beyond our sensory reach, as proposed by Barad's concept

¹⁷² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*, 241.

¹⁷³ Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 33.

¹⁷⁴ Annette Arlander, "The Shadow of a Pine Tree: Authorship, Agency and Performing Beyond the Human," in *Situated Knowing: Epistemic Perspectives on Performance*, ed. Ewa Bal and Mateusz Chaberski (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2020), 162.

¹⁷⁵ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*.

of agential-realism, it does not mean they do not influence how we make a world together. Therefore, by merging sensory apparatus in the action of the walk, it is possible for two bodies, working in unison, to exceed the limits of their fleshly boundaries.

To draw this section to a close, I would like to reiterate that what the practice of deep canine topography has revealed for me is the potential afforded by positioning human and animal bodies as capable of becoming co-authors and collaborators. By attending to the contact zones between human, animal, and landscape, bodies become unsettled, troubled, and de-territorialised in the moment of the walk towards a moment of collapse. This is, however, difficult to document and translate beyond perhaps the invitation to follow the score, with a familiar canine companion, and see where and how this takes you as a human-canine hybrid. Inevitably, this is always destined to be a unique experience but perhaps one connected by some common threads. For those without a companion to walk with it is perhaps through the documentation of the walks that one might encounter something of the unsettling nature of deep canine topography. Here I am interested in how the document itself, in the form of video, immersive installation, global positioning system drawing, and soundscapes, draws the viewer into the canine sensorium, thus unsettling the position of the human. In the next section, I consider the role of the more-than-document through the canine-mounted action camera, microphones, and digital track-logs, as sites of encounter with deep canine topography. In doing so I critically assess two such artistic outputs, *Two Bodies Drawing* and *The Beach Beneath Our Feet*, encountered at the beginning of this chapter.

Becoming Techno-Bodies



Figure 28 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

Technologies are not mediations, something in between us and another bit of the world, rather technologies are organs, full partners, in what Merleau-Ponty called 'infoldings of the flesh'. (Donna Haraway).¹⁷⁶

In Donna Haraway's 2013 account of the emergence of the wildlife animal-mounted camera, or *critter-cam*, as a post-human extension of the animal body, she argues that the camera acts as more than a bridge between humans and other animals. Such fleshly infoldings, as described by Haraway, are present in the document of deep canine topography. The entangling of flesh, fur, camera, and microphone ties human, canine, and landscapes together through movement. In such moments of becoming the screen acts as an opening, rather than a flat surface or projected image, allowing the viewer to step in, stepping with paws in motion, suspending fleshly boundaries through zones of contact, thus creating an affective synaesthesia which unsettle human, bipedal, ocular centric ways of seeing and being in the world.

¹⁷⁶ Donna J Haraway, *When Species Meet*: Vol. 3. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 249.

Experiments with canine-mounted digital recording equipment, cameras, microphones, and GPS trackers, initially as a form of documenting our walks, have become important zones of contact in the form of filmic and immersive video, embodied drawing, and sonic encounters. It is through such encounters that the voice, for want of a better word, of the canine is encountered as a shared experience, rather than through detached observation or attempts at representation. When I dismiss the term *voice* it is because it assumes a linguistic position that all knowledge can only be realised through the vocal or literary explanation and description. My point here is that we have no way of accessing the interiority of the canine beyond our mutual zones of contact, and therefore such encounters operate beyond the limits of spoken and written language. Western intellectual enquiry, specifically Philosophical Humanism, has defined language as that which separates the rational human from the animal. If however we adopt a human-animal position then we can begin to unravel language, as suggested by Bencke & Jørgen, as a gathering technology and as a tool for separation and control.¹⁷⁷ To do this we need to acknowledge and adopt the position that the world is in a constant state of becoming through relational encounters, where the landscape, according to curator Ida Bencke and professor of comparative literature Bruhn Jørgen, is buzzing with, '[...] *sound, movement, gestures, hormones, electrical signals.*'¹⁷⁸ Here, we begin to test the limits of language in its written form. Furthermore, Eco-philosopher David Abram asks that we consider language not as a human phenomenon, but as a sophisticated mode of communication between species, arguing that, '[...] *all things have the capacity for speech – all beings have the ability to communicate something of themselves to other beings.*'¹⁷⁹ My attempts at giving a voice to the canine body, through textual representations as presented throughout this thesis in prose form, soon become an inadequate way of expressing canine interiority as something which remains tantalizingly out of reach. Therefore, to allow ourselves to become fully infolded in the sonic and visual encounter requires a certain kind of cross-species connection operating outside of speech and text as the dominant logic of communication. The camera, therefore, represents an infolding of our ocular-centric decoding

¹⁷⁷ Ida Bencke & Bruhn Jørgen, *Multispecies Storytelling in Intermedial Practices*. (Santa Barbara: Punctum Books, 2022), 9.

¹⁷⁸ Bencke & Jørgen, *Multispecies Storytelling*, 9.

¹⁷⁹ David Abram, *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology*. (New York: Vintage, 2011), 172.

of movements into a movement that folds into an olfactory-driven set of gestures, motions, and navigational desires. Here, as a technological apparatus, the camera itself becomes infolded into flesh and fur, eyes, and nose. It becomes difficult to know when and where camera-canine-human begins and ends as sensory boundaries are crossed and become entangled through motion.

Writing in 2016 on the explosion of canine-mounted camera memes on social media film, theorist Natasha Seegert suggests that the multitude of scents, textures, and feelings offered by the dog-cam directly challenges the professional wildlife documentary narrative of jeopardy, survival, and wildness, which seek to position the human as saviour.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, we should perhaps consider the camera as a vibrant object enmeshed in a relational choreography of human and canine bodies. If we extend this to encompass the compound eyes of the many watching the spectacle of the multitude of animal camera memes that populate the internet and social media, it could be argued that the camera not only facilitates a human-more-than-human assemblage but becomes an active component of such assemblages. Seegert's suggestion that the democratisation of the critter-cam offers an alternative narrative to the humanist position of saviour speaks to Halberstam's concept of zombie humanism. In this scenario, the camera, in the hands (or paws) of the canine filmmaker, offers something which ruptures the master-saviour narrative of the zombie economy. The narrative is no longer one constructed by the human hand, through clever editing of something more palatable to human consumption, but a seemingly frenzied unfolding of a world as experienced through the body of the canine. This is apparent in my journey of discovery as our filmic presentations began with a need to edit a slick aesthetic narrative but, over time, have become something much more disorientating and unfamiliar where I try to unlearn my editing habits and embrace my inner canine. However, it could also be argued that the very act of filming from the animal's point of view is in itself a form of captivity by stepping into worlds we have no authority to invade. Yet perhaps such encounters might offer an opening of sorts.

¹⁸⁰ Natasha Seegert, "Dogme Productions, With an Emphasis on the Dog: Revealing Animal Perspectives," *Journal of Film Criticism* 40, no. 2 (2016): <https://doi.org/10.3998/fc.13761232.0040.209>.

The dog-mounted camera, at the very least, might be capable of if not radically shifting, then at least gently troubling, human exceptionalism. For example, with a practice beginning in the early 1990's, Japanese born artist Nobuhira Narumi might be considered as a pioneer in the use of the dog-cam as an insight into the worlds of our canine kin. Narumi's practice involved travelling to unfamiliar cities and asking strangers if he could take their dogs for walks. The resulting walks were recorded using a head-mounted canine camera. Writing on the significance of Narumi's dog-cam films, David Williams states that, '*The camera registers the animal's agency, its itinerary through the city, and its point of view: its interests, drives, encounters with other dogs, its loops, and returns, its largely curb side knowledges of the city.*'¹⁸¹ Here, the dog-cam, as in our human-canine adventures, reveals a deep olfactory scrutiny of the city, offering an eccentric and embodied mapping of urban space.¹⁸² Williams goes on to describe the canine in Narumi's films as becoming, '[...] *a relational medium generating new rhythms and unforeseen occasions of embodied interaction.*'¹⁸³ Williams also describes Narumi's human-canine collaborations as co-authored, stating that, '*A number of the dog cam films propose a wry political critique in their defamiliarizing perspectives on human economies of exchange, power relations, and the micro politics of encounters in the everyday.*'¹⁸⁴ For me, this observation also aligns with my thoughts on Braidotti's use of de-familiarisation of human subjectivity as a challenge to power relations and political structures and, when considered alongside the original aims of psychogeography, might even position the act of walking with the canine body as a form of political activism. Williams's reading of Narumi's dog-cam films also supports my own experiences and accounts of the de-familiarising effects of encountering our collaborative dog-cam footage, as played out in the ephemeral moments of the walk. It is through the encounter with the dog-cam videos made during this research project that I seek to convey something of the unsettling nature of my accounts of de-territorialisation, which occurs during the walks, as an extension of the document beyond its initial purpose. The speed of the rapid passing of landscape and the fragmentation of the visual field through the eye of the dog-cam enables a sense of synesthetic hybridity. At this moment, our eyes and ears attempt to decipher and decode the olfactory world of the canine.

¹⁸¹ David Williams, "Inappropriate/d Others: Or the Difficulty of Being a Dog," *The Drama Review* 51, no. 1 (2007): 92-118.

¹⁸² Williams, "Inappropriate/d Others" 103.

¹⁸³ Williams, "Inappropriate/d Others" 103.

¹⁸⁴ Williams, "Inappropriate/d Others" 104.

Here, the document(ary), as seen from the canine perspective, acts as an embodied, otherworldly experience, a becoming other, a becoming animal, where the viewer is momentarily suspended between both human and animal forms.

Returning to Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory, when considering the canine sensory schema as largely dominated by olfactory coding, and the humans by visual coding, I would argue that an assemblage of olfactory and visual sensory encounters can be arrived at through the canine-mounted camera footage. The filmic encounter, therefore, is not only disorientating, but unsettling enough to constitute a de-territorialisation of human subjectivity. Here, the attempt to make sense of the olfactory, through the visual, leads to a re-territorialization, or hybrid human-canine assemblage. This sense of hybridity as understood through assemblage theory is also present in the sonic experiments encountered in Chapter 1, *Becoming Movement*, something which I revisit in the final chapter when reflecting on experiments in the real-time merging of human and canine soundscapes through the use of remote wireless microphones. Perhaps to fully experience human-canine hybridity we have to acknowledge the limits of our sensory schema and embrace the movement of the canine body in flight, hold tight, and enjoy the ride.

I now explore this further by reflecting on two practice experiments, encountered at the beginning of this chapter. The first of which, *Two Bodies Drawing*, employs GPS technology to track relative movements of human and canine bodies as a form of embodied drawing. This can be revisited here if required - **Two Bodies Drawing**. The second example, *The Beach Beneath our Feet*, utilises both canine-mounted and handheld cameras, alongside binaural microphones, in a merging of human and canine sensory encounters with a wild space. This can be revisited here: **The Beach Beneath Our Feet**.

Two Bodies Drawing, a Critical Reflection

This experimental embodied drawing practice employs global positioning technology, not as a navigational tool, but as a drawing tool which tracks relative and relational movements between human and canine bodies. Drawings are animated, using open-source software, to create a collaborative human-canine mark-making practice. The resulting animations reveal an improvised dance of two bodies reacting to each other and the terrain, responding to the sensory stimuli of the landscape as the walk unfolds. The resulting drawings express the vitality of canine navigation as drawn through the landscape by sensory stimuli rather than by forging the direct and quickest route from A to B. The canine-drawn line darts back and forth in a playful dance following contours, edges, smells, and sounds, always keeping an eye on my position, checking in every so often for reassurance, before darting off again in the direction of a new sound or smell.

The first of the two animations (see Figure 29) represents an embodied drawing that simultaneously tracks the movement of canine and human bodies across an open field. The human body, although following the canine, takes a more direct route between points whereas the canine body moves quickly between olfactory stimuli, drawing an altogether more spontaneous trajectory. Paths cross as the canine checks in with the human through subtle and continuous invitations to follow. The darker indigo line represents the human trajectory, whilst the canine line is drawn in a lighter cyan colour.



Figure 29 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *Two Bodies Drawing*, digital animation, 2020.

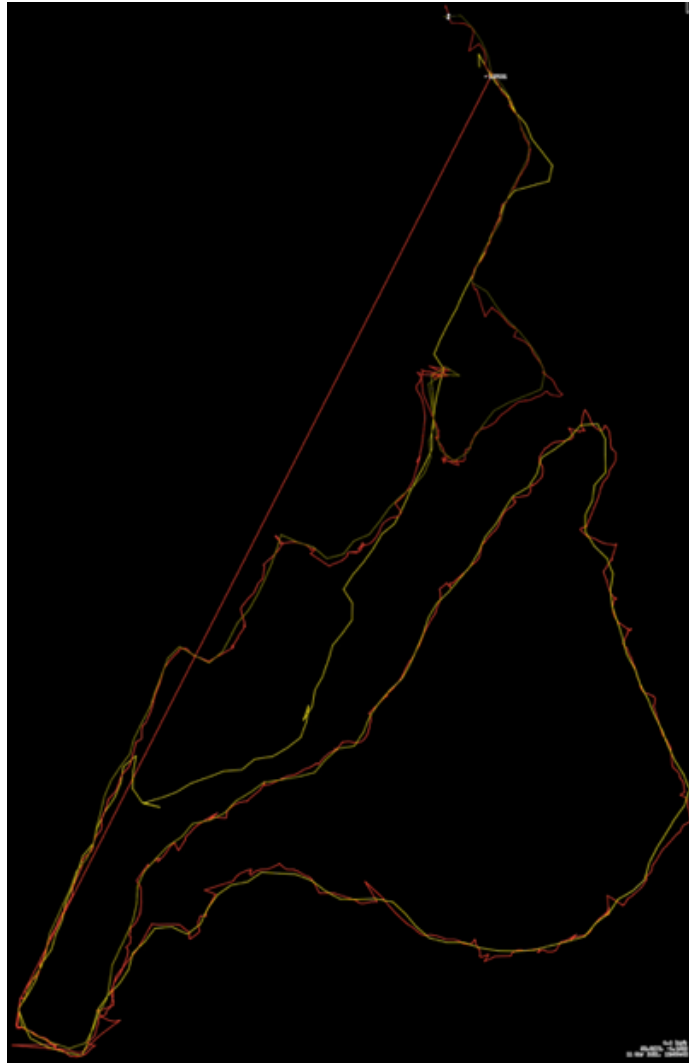


Figure 30 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *Two Bodies Drawing*, digital animation, 2020.

In the second example, human (yellow) and canine (red) tracks are animated from different points in time by editing the track log timecode. This approach offers another example of the difference between ocular, horizon-focused bipedal human navigation of space and the canine's seemingly more improvised movement, which is less dependent on visual cues driven by direct visceral connections with the landscape through smell and touch. There is a slight glitch on the canine line due to signal dropout, thus drawing a straight line between two points. This highlights some of the limitations of both the tracking system and the retrieval of the GPS data for animation purposes. Both drawings, when read as collaborative actions of mark-making, reveal something of the relational embodied and performative, co-authored nature of deep canine topography.

The Beach Beneath our Feet, a Critical Reflection



Figure 31 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *The Beach Beneath our Feet*, three-channel video, and binaural sound, 9m14s, 2021.

In this example of human-canine collaborative filmmaking, the now familiar score of *follow the dog* has become so natural to us both that it could perhaps be modified to *walk with another familiar non-human body* as my companion's cues and invitations become more subtle and intuitive. This is especially evident on the beach as an open space and a landscape which is much more alien to a pair of city dwellers, and about as elementally raw a landscape as one might encounter. In this film, the body of the canine is free to roam along the expansive, ever-changing border between land and sea on a coastline constantly threatened by elemental forces. As with the edge-land spaces we visit in Chapter 3, *Becoming Radical Cartographies* this landscape is a space of entropy. It is forever in motion, dynamic, and a space where human civilisation's fragility is thrown into sharp focus. Interestingly, on the beach, the canine trajectory is more linear, following a direct line and occasionally engaging in playful interactions with the handheld camera. With the sea on one side and the cliffs or dunes on the other, my companion could quite easily walk until the tide restricts our flow or his legs get tired. Perhaps it is the openness and navigational pull of the space that drives my companion's desire to keep walking stopping only occasionally to greet other canine travellers.

The Beach Beneath Our Feet borrows its title from McKenzie Wark's 2015 book *The Beach Beneath the Street, The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International*, which

explores the history of the Situationist's revolutionary art practices, including that of the *dérive*.¹⁸⁵

In 2014, the site of *The Beach Beneath Our Feet*, Happisburgh Beach, became of international significance when the oldest human footprints discovered in Europe were exposed by the receding tide.¹⁸⁶ Also, as one of the most eroded sections of the North Norfolk coast, there is a real feeling of a community clinging to the edge at Happisburgh, offering itself to the elements reflected in the fragility of the wooden houses close to the cliff edge along the aptly named Doggets Lane. The striking red and white lighthouse, just a few hundred meters from a rapidly eroding cliff edge, seems surprisingly solid despite its almost inevitable fate. The beach epitomises the dynamic nature of wild spaces as a point of twice-daily elemental shifts eroding and uncovering deep history through exposing cliff strata and evidence of long-gone brick and concrete buildings. *The Beach Beneath Our Feet* employs the concept of the *dérive* and deep topography, as related to ideas of deep time, through the choice of location, its elemental forces through the historical importance of the landscape. My companion loves the beach and its wide expanse as a place to run without fear. He is not so keen on the sea however, given his love-hate relationship with water. At one point he managed to find a large dead adult seal in an advanced stage of decomposition to roll in, once again revealing his need to commune with the rotting flesh of another and fully immerse himself in the landscape.

The resulting three-channel video follows our walks along this stretch of coastline during a momentary lift in COVID-19 restrictions in October 2020. The film includes both handheld and canine-mounted camera positions, merged with binaural sound from the human perspective. Interestingly, at certain points in the walk the handheld camera modulates between an observational object following the canine body and an object of playful interaction. Here I was keen to experiment with the merging of human and canine sensory experiences and points of view to emphasise a hybridity of encounter with a wild space. This particular film was exhibited as part of the 2021 Midlands Four Cities Doctoral Partnership Festival of Research as an online

¹⁸⁵ McKenzie Wark, *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International*. (New York: Verso Books, 2015).

¹⁸⁶ Nick Ashton, Simon G. Lewis, Isabelle De Groote, et al, "Hominin Footprints From Early Pleistocene Deposits at Happisburgh, UK," *PLoS One* 9, no. 2 (2014): <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0088329>.

experience and as part of a group show at Two Queens Gallery in November 2021. In both instances, it was presented as a three-channel video, with binaural sound, as encountered at the beginning of this chapter.

Both practice examples presented here encompass how technology, in the form of the camera, binaural microphones and GPS tracking, are employed not only as a document of our walks, but as a way of engaging with and merging of human-canine lifeworlds. Such encounters offer ways of experiencing something of the sensory crossing that constitutes co-authorship and unsettles human experience.

CODA: Towards Radical Cartographies



Figure 32 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

Writing in 2018 on late 20th and early 21st-century human-canine artistic practice, art historian Jessica Ullrich concludes that, '*What one may possibly learn from the artistic creation of dog-human contact zones is perhaps that dichotomous thinking of human-and nonhuman animals should be abandoned because it reproduces claims of authority.*' Here, Ullrich draws our attention to the complex power relations of human-canine artistic endeavours, which, despite the efforts of artists and their companion animal collaborators, she argues, continues to function as a critique of the human largely based on existing and firmly established hierarchies. She goes on to suggest that, '*Human as well as dog being is never a static condition but a becoming.*'¹⁸⁷ Such critical reflections highlight a fundamental concern of deep canine topography as a practice, namely that it seeks to problematise and re-examine human-canine

¹⁸⁷ Jessica Ullrich, "Contact Zones - Where Dogs and Humans Meet: Dog-Human Metamorphoses in Contemporary Art." in *Animals and Their People: Connecting East and West in Cultural Animal Studies*, ed. Anna Barcz and Dorota Łagodzka (Amsterdam: Brill, 2019), 53-68.

hierarchies, rather than utilise the canine as some form of metaphor for the human condition. As previously stated, it is not my intention therefore to position the canine as object or muse, nor is it my intention to perpetuate the master-slave, (hu)man's best friend narrative or to perform some kind of human-canine metamorphosis, or a becoming dog. I intend to think alongside the animal in ways that trouble such narratives and assumptions. In response to Jessica Ullrich's critique of human-canine collaborative art practice, in adopting a Deleuzoguattarian approach alongside Haraway's definition of companion species and Halberstam's zombie humanism, my hope is that the practice acknowledges the deeply complex and contested nature of human-canine relational ontologies. Although the aim of deep canine topography might also be accused of employing the canine body as a critique of the human condition, this is not my intention. My intention is the formation of a mutually constituted alliance which has the potential to render bodies and landscapes as dynamic, fluid, and in a non-hierarchical communion. Having said this, the tensions and asymmetry, although momentarily dissolved in the moment of hybridity as experienced in the singularities of the walk, remain and are difficult to ignore. Such tensions oscillate between moments of hybridity, or harmony, and the constant concerns of human-canine relational histories of ownership and exploitation as suggested by Halberstam's zombie humanism. The action/event of the walk, therefore, acts as a momentary suspension of such concerns and as a speculative moment where a more harmonious relationship between human, animal, and landscape can be imagined. However, such concerns are thrown into sharp focus in a crossing of a threshold between the wildness and abandonment of the edge-land spaces, where the rules of the city are suspended, and a return to the hard edges and sharp angles of the city streets. This contrast in power relations between built and edge-land environments is explored in the next and final chapter, *Becoming Radical Cartographies*.

In this chapter, with the help of the concepts of becoming animal and nomadic subjectivity, I have explored how the practice of deep canine topography troubles the boundaries between bodies. I have also examined how, through shared human, more-than-human (canine) co-authorship, such surfaces become permeable, fluid, and capable of moving towards a human-animal hybridity. I have also considered how such hybridity has the potential to unsettle traditional human-animal relations and a flattening of human exceptionalism. But this aim is fraught with potential traps, which threaten to capture both human and canine bodies in the

perpetual anthropomorphic dance of the zombie economy. In attempting to explore a radical redefining of human and canine bodies, therefore, whilst acknowledging potential traps and dead ends, my aim is at least emerging with some hope of a move towards new and radical human-canine cartographies.

This section of our walk has taken us along some treacherous ridgelines, with sharp vertical drops on either side and with no easy way down. But now we have reached another point of rest before the final chapter. Here, my focus turns to counter-cartographic methods and considers deep canine topography as a radical cartography by bringing together relational movement encountered in Chapter 1 and nomadic subjectivity encountered in this chapter.

Walking Prompt 2



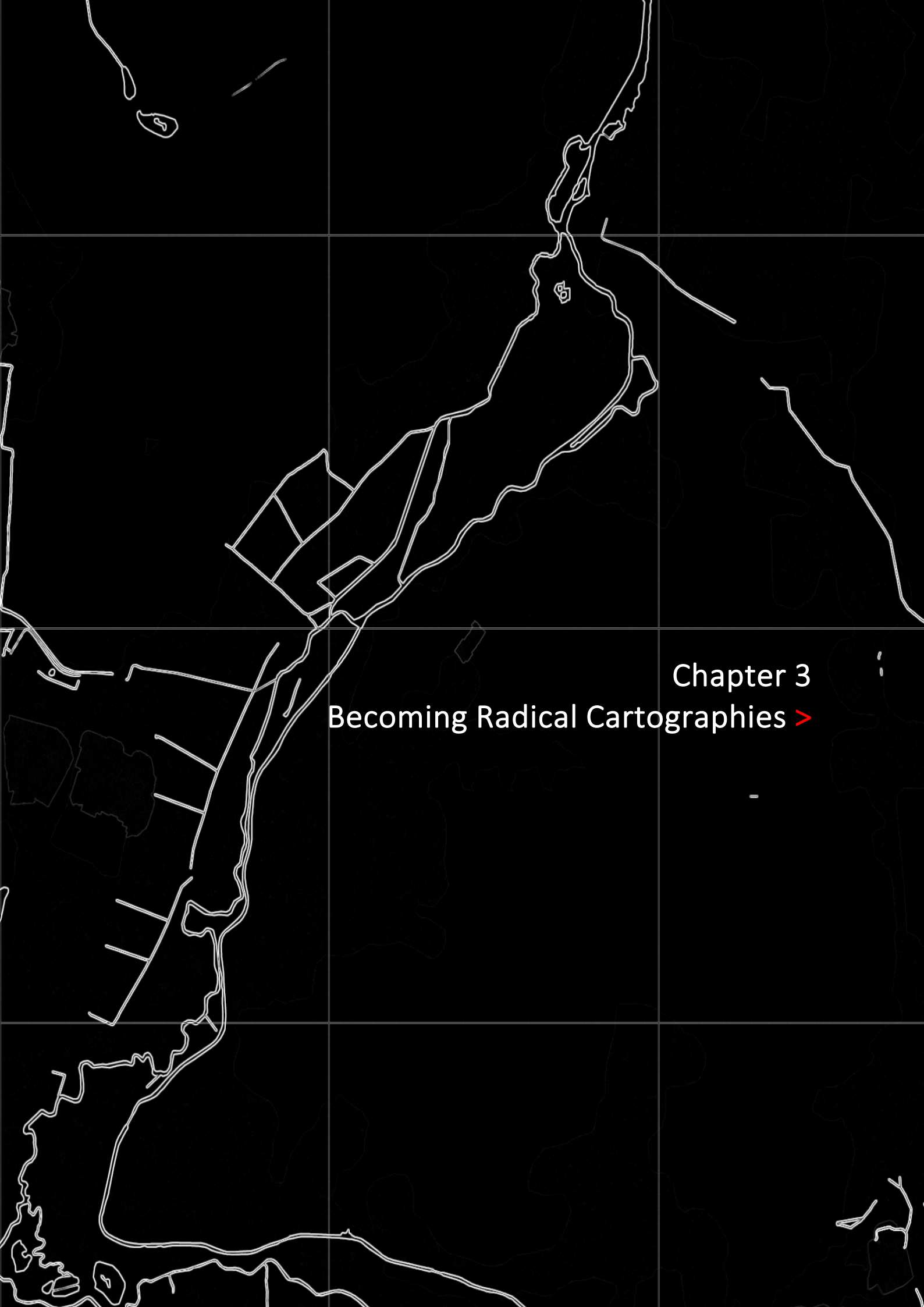
Figure 33 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

This chapter has seen us traversing some complex and technical terrain, but hopefully, we have now arrived on firmer ground, ready for the next leg of our walk. If convenient, I again invite you to move, with the following prompt as your guide:

Go for a short walk. Look for signs of the wild encroaching on the hard edges of modernity. See where and how such signs take you.

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GO WELL



Chapter 3
Becoming Radical Cartographies >



Figure 34 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *Experiments in Counter Cartography, Deep Urban Canine Topography*, digital photograph, 2021.

Today is a hot day as we take our regular 11am walk around the block, one of the hottest on record in an age of anthropocene, my canine companion is in a stubborn mood and tries to tug me to the right, towards the meadows or the park, but I want to go left and take a loop around the block, aware of the heat and needing to keep this walk short, with an ever-growing to do list weighing heavily on my mind, my canine companion is unrelenting, as always challenging the rhythms of labour and efficiencies of human time, he lays down flat, chin on floor, digging in, becoming an immovable object, I relent and follow his lead as we reach a compromise and walk to the local pocket park, in the park he sniffs tree trunks, as I watch crows take slow swoops across the fresh cut grass and pigeons waddle through the overgrown scrub, left to form a natural border during the recent covid lockdown, where all attempts at taming through cultivation of public space were momentarily abandoned, my companion stops for a poo, and we find a bin to deposit his deposit, a small group of men roll a joint and a deal is done with a guy on a mobility scooter, efficiency of time and exchange a feature of the supply and demand of this visible yet underground cosmology, more sniffing, zigzagging across the park, before gathering ourselves for the journey home along the local high street, to the draw of the many shops and takeaways, through rich pickings of casually abandoned food.

Chapter 3 - Becoming Radical Cartographies

Before reading, please visit the following practice expositions:

Into the Wild – A Year with the Meadows: (Practice Encounter 19min)
Further Experiments with 360° Video and Live Immersive Canine Augmented
Soundscapes: (Practice Encounter 5min)

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Situating Deep Canine Topography as a Radical Cartography	>146
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Introduction

In the final leg of our journey, we move on to look at the map. So far, we have deliberately dispensed with human navigational tools to be led by our curiosity, anxieties, animality, and desires, merged with those of our canine companion's navigational imperatives. This chapter, therefore, explores concepts and methods of counter and radical cartography, through which I begin to consider how deep canine topography might unsettle traditional map-making and offer a radical cartography of its own. It also brings our attention back to space as we explore the urban, parkland and edge-land spaces of our daily walks. My companion draws me towards a wilderness hiding in plain sight, under our noses, which enlivens the senses and the canine body.

We are joined on this section of our walk by geographer Doreen Massey, anthropologist Tim Ingold, and expert in canine cognition, Alexandra Horowitz, alongside two artists whose work employs counter-cartographic methods to unsettle imperialist histories of map-making. Firstly, Simon Faithfull challenges notions of colonial exploration through drawing and more recently an alliance with a canine protagonist, whilst Linda Knight employs affect as the key driver to mapping how we engage with the forces and flows of the world through direct relational encounters. We also meet the now familiar voices of Andrew Goodman and Jack Halberstam, who offer a critique of the construct of wildness, Tina Richardson, and Nick Papadimitriou, who reacquaint us with deep topographical methods. Finally, we return to Stephanie Springgay and Sarah Truman's analysis of more-than-human approaches to walking and mapping. We then explore two further practice experiments which seek to map space through the canine body before taking a closer look at *A Methodological Guide to Walking Differently*, introduced in the *Introduction and Methodology*, as an invitation for others to engage in their own human-canine creative walking alliance.

Questions explored:

- What is counter and radical cartography?
- How does deep canine topography represent a radical cartography?
- How might deep canine topography, as a practice, represent a relational rather than transactional cartography through *thinking with*, and *making with*, the animal?

A Brief Introduction to Counter and Radical Cartography

Space is more than distance. It is the sphere of open-ended configurations within multiplicities. (Doreen Massey).¹⁸⁸

My companion has his own canine communications network read in the complex signals of fellow canine travellers in their scent trails and urine deposits. Their lines reach across time and space, collecting and leaving information on lampposts, tree trunks, and street corners. Such pheromone-coded communications mingle with the cosmologies of the many human bodies encountered in our walk, all engaged in their own unique journeys. A myriad of counter-cosmologies unfolds in front of our eyes and under our noses, creating a sea of affective forces and lines of flight which reach out to both an embrace and a repulse as our walks enter into a complex choreography of the many bodies in motion. In the city, my canine companion seems to walk with indifference to the human activity around him, yet it is his path we are following through human-constructed and populated spaces. My observations matter little to him. He is, however, the engine of the walk. It is his curiosity and his desires, manifested through twists and turns, that pull us as a unit through the multiplicity of activities in this shared space. Affective forces act upon movements, forming lines of connective tissue through an improvised dance of human and more-than-human bodies.

Maps have a certain aesthetic appeal, a neatness, a comforting logical and rational representation of seemingly chaotic and irrational space. An accepted logic of the map is its ability to direct and deliver people, goods, and services to specific places within a specific timeframe. This is an extension of the same logics that became such a powerful tool in the mobilisation of colonial expansion, military invasion, and late capitalism's subsequent global reach. Such logics of time and efficiency, as argued by geographer Doreen Massey, flatten space thus reducing it to a commodity as something to be exploited, controlled, and tamed, to the point that space begins to be consumed by time.¹⁸⁹ There is also an assumption that maps provide us with a true picture or snapshot of the world, mapped out to the minutest detail, as we run our finger across the creased surface of an unfolded Ordnance Survey map, following

¹⁸⁸ Doreen B. Massey, *For Space*. (London: Sage, 2005), 91.

¹⁸⁹ Massey, *For Space*.

topographies represented in contour lines, colours, and text. More recent advances in the democratisation of the aerial view, via the internet, Google Maps, aerial drones and so on, allow us to see the surface of any part of the Earth in a rich detail unimagined outside of military surveillance, as recently as 20 years ago. Although such images are neither without censorship nor are they in real-time, they do offer the impression that we can zoom in and out of the world from our armchairs, adding to the illusion of the map as a true representation of the world around us.

In their 2021 book *New Directions in Radical Cartography*, Michael Duggan and Phil Cohen describe an emergence of critical and radical geographers and cartographers in the 1960s, who began to challenge the strong links between the science of cartography and the expansion of capitalism, colonialism, and state control. Influenced by poststructuralism's deconstruction of enlightenment logics, they sought to critique the dominant Cartesian model of cartography and the role of maps in rational geographic enquiry.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, psychogeography emerged around the same time, in response to the post-World War II expansion of capitalism and the expansion of cities and should, therefore, be considered an early form of counter or critical cartography.

The examples of counter-cartographic methods that follow emerge from a critique of political, geographical, and cultural histories. They employ methods which seek to reclaim a direct and visceral phenomenological connection to the world as encountered. Therefore, the cartographies explored in this chapter do not follow traditional notions of map-making. They do not see land as a commodity to be conquered and contoured, exploited, or tamed. Instead, they seek to critique conventional maps and explore ways of engaging with landscapes outside of conventional cartographic methods.

Cartographer Mark Denil suggests that for cartography to be defined as radical, it should disrupt the accepted schema of what he terms mapicity or the functional structure of traditional maps, stating that,

A truly radical cartography would be one where the accepted schema of mapicity, or significant parts of it, is broken down and replaced. Cartographic radicality, as a

¹⁹⁰ Michael Duggan and Phil Cohen, ed. *New Directions in Radical Cartography: Why the Map is Never the Territory*. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2021), xxv.

condition, would be connoted by a major paradigmatic shift: a change that introduces a new vocabulary, grammar, and syntax.¹⁹¹

Doreen Massey, in her 2005 book *For Space*, argues that maps have helped to pacify how we commonly experience space, leading us to conceptualise space as a closed and coherent system.¹⁹² Here, the map becomes more than the sum of its parts, a collection of signs and symbols designed as a navigational tool, or a set of data points, but often exceeds its power to assume an order over that which is forever in flux. Therefore, traditional maps represent the order of things and as a means to locate the self within a vast and often chaotic space, or as Massey suggests, '[...] to get a handle on the world'.¹⁹³ Massey stresses that space should not be conceptualised as a sphere of a discrete multiplicity of inert objects but as a heterogeneity of practices and processes which are products of relational interactions.¹⁹⁴ Massey goes on to argue that space is always open and unfinished, stating that, '[...] this arena of space is not firm ground on which to stand. In no way is it a surface'¹⁹⁵, thus, proposing that space is conceptualised as fluid and always under construction through relational encounters.

Following on from the previous chapter, *Becoming Bodies*, if we accept that both bodies and space are constantly in flux, and have the ability to become entangled through relational encounters, then neither space nor bodies can ever really be fixed to a single point in space and time but remain fluid and open. As a radical cartography, therefore, deep canine topography challenges the concept of the map as a fixed representation of space as much as it challenges the self and identity as a fixed and forever anchored facet of the body. It is in this context that deep canine topography seeks to employ a creative alliance which troubles traditional ideas of the map as a locational device. Instead, it makes maps from the very process of relational encounters with space as read through human-canine hybrid bodies.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, Tina Richardson, in combining Guattari's schizoanalysis with psychogeography, proposes a methodology which challenges dominant

¹⁹¹ Mark Denil, "The Search For a Radical Cartography." *Cartographic Perspectives* no. 68 (2011): 7-28. <https://doi.org/10.14714/CP68.6>.

¹⁹² Doreen B. Massey, *For Space*. (London: Sage, 2005), 219,

¹⁹³ Massey, *For Space*, 220.

¹⁹⁴ Massey, *For Space*, 220.

¹⁹⁵ Massey, *For Space*, 221.

power structures as they appear in space. Richardson describes an opening for multiple ways of reading and operating in environments in a direct challenge to, '[...] *conventional ways of viewing, interpreting and mapping space*.'¹⁹⁶ Similarly, in combining psychogeography and Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of becoming animal, and of nomadic subjectivity, I offer deep canine topography as a direct challenge to the dominant structures of mapped space as the tamed and civilised order of things. Richardson argues that psychogeography and the *dérive* (or drift) repositions walking as an act in which, '[...] *the body can trace a new map, one that escapes the rigid hierarchies of order*.'¹⁹⁷ I propose that the canine body directly challenges such hierarchies by reading space through an altogether more animal, visceral, and sensual connection, which, following Manning and Massey, is forever dynamic and under construction.

Anthropologist Tim Ingold, on discussing lines, likens walking to the process of weaving, drawing, writing and storytelling, seeking a commonality within such modes of expression which employ gestures to draw and direct our attention.¹⁹⁸ In doing so, Ingold reminds us that lines are in constant formation, crossing and interweaving with each other to form an entangled, interconnected warp and weft. Whilst discussing the act of travelling through space, Ingold proposes that, '*While on the trail the wayfarer is always somewhere else. The inhabited world is a reticulate meshwork of such trails, which is continually being woven as life goes on along them*.'¹⁹⁹ Ingold also expands the definition of the map to include the transitory, as expressed in stories of myth and legend, as offering directions that others may follow observing that, '*For the most part such lines are entirely ephemeral, consisting of traces either scratched in sand, mud or snow, using the fingers or a simple tool [...]*.' In such lines and traces, as with traditional storytelling, the map is never fixed but an assemblage of marks conveying information relevant to the time and space in which they are shared.²⁰⁰ Where imperial maps and maps of commerce and trade attempt to fix space and time, this broader definition of maps as lines, as expressed through stories, suggests an altogether more fluid interpretation of what a map might be or become.

¹⁹⁶ Tina Richardson, ed. *Walking Inside Out: Contemporary British Psychogeography*. (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015), 181.

¹⁹⁷ Richardson, *Walking Inside Out*, 182.

¹⁹⁸ Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2007), 1.

¹⁹⁹ Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History*, 84.

²⁰⁰ Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History*, 84.

In her 2013 book, *On Looking, Eleven Walks with Expert Eyes*, scholar of canine cognition Alexandra Horowitz turns her attention to an exploration of a familiar walk around a New York city block through the senses of what she describes as eleven expert travellers, such as artists, ethnographers, and the visually impaired.²⁰¹ In doing so, Horowitz asks us to consider what we miss on an everyday basis, from the insect eggs on tree leaves to the fossilised remains of prehistoric shellfish captured in sandstone buildings. Both Ingold and Horowitz examine how we have become experts at filtering out and paying attention to the job at hand by zoning into what we need to go about the business of being human in the modern city. As an antidote to this condition of blinkered zoning, both Horowitz and Ingold ask that we draw our attention to the things that we habitually pass by, such as the birds that nest in the gaps between buildings, the insects burrowing through the soil beneath the pavement, and all sorts of sensory stimuli that we expertly block out to forge a path between two points. My argument here is that psychogeography, in the form of the *dérive*, asks us to pay attention to the things which can never be conveyed by maps, including the affects, forces and flows of other bodies in motion.

When walking through the urban environment, we tend to miss relational encounters and their invitations through what Andrew Goodman describes as forces that operate within cities. Here Goodman suggests that bodies become attuned to such forces, *'[...] unified and ordered by habit and subjectification, succumbing to stasis and loss of breadth of expression.'*²⁰² Echoing Erin Manning's concept of relational movement, Goodman explores how such relational encounters can become sites of creative rupture, arguing that, *'[...] movement complicates and disrupts established spatial relations, multiplying and creating new immanent connections to extend the potential of body in space, it might also allow for a becoming-minor of a body.'*²⁰³ By employing the term *minor*, Goodman is utilising a Deleuzoguattarian idea which posits that as the major represents the majority, or accepted structural norm, the minor has the potential to disrupt normative structural flows towards new potential becomings. Here, the minor represents a political and radical resistance to the normative majority. Deleuze and Guattari define the distinction between the major and the minor as follows; *'[...] the majoritarian as a*

²⁰¹ Alexandra Horowitz, *On Looking: Eleven Walks With Expert Eyes*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013).

²⁰² Andrew Goodman, *Gathering Ecologies: Thinking Beyond Interactivity*. (London: Open Humanities Press, 2018), 111.

²⁰³ Goodman, *Gathering ecologies*, 111.

*constant and homogeneous system; the minorities as subsystems; and the minoritarian as potential, creative and created, becoming.*²⁰⁴ In the case of deep canine topography, therefore, becoming minor, or *minoritarian*, is synonymous with becoming animal as a move towards a radical re-reading of space.

In considering the dynamism of space, beyond its many two-dimensional representations, I would like to return to the quote from Doreen Massey that opens this chapter: *'Space is more than distance. It is the sphere of open-ended configurations within multiplicities.'*²⁰⁵ She adds a further quote in which she argues that space is the *'[...] sphere of a dynamic simultaneity, constantly disconnected by new arrivals, constantly waiting to be determined (and therefore undetermined) by the construction of new relations'*²⁰⁶ Here, Massey reasserts that we read space, not through surfaces as represented by the map, but as a dynamic and ever-changing set of relational encounters. As Ron Broglio points towards Western philosophy's reduction of the animal to a set of surfaces (as I have introduced in Chapters 1 and 2), Massey presents us with the tendency of the map to flatten the dynamism and relational constructs of space. I would argue this flattening of both the animal and space represents a furtive ground for artists who wish to subvert the very concept of the map towards a true account of material, spatial, and more-than-human relational phenomena.

Returning to Alexandra Horowitz, I would like to take a slight detour into the world of the canine olfactory map. Both domestic and wild canines engage in urine-marking. However domestic dogs, contrary to popular myth, do not always mark territory. Horowitz argues that the spaces occupied by domesticated canines are more linear than territorial, suggesting that dogs use scent to mark routes and runways through shared space in what is most likely a conveyance of social information. Canine urine contains a rich soup of hormonal information, including indicators on sex, health, diet, and so on, in what Horowitz whimsically terms as *'[...] pee-mail.'*²⁰⁷ However, Horowitz admits that science has a long way to go before it can

²⁰⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1988), 105.

²⁰⁵ Doreen B. Massey, *For Space*: (London: Sage, 2005), 91.

²⁰⁶ Massey, *For Space*, 221.

²⁰⁷ Alexandra Horowitz, *Being a Dog: Following the Dog into a World of Smell*. (London: Simon and Schuster, 2016), 16-19.

adequately decode the complex signals of the canine olfactory schema. My canine companion spends considerable time deeply investigating and counter-marking scent trails on both urban and edge-land walks. Furthermore, I am convinced that some of his marking behaviour, especially when walking off the lead, is purely navigational. Just as digital global positioning devices lay down periodic tracklogs, my companion seems to be leaving a trail to follow, should we get lost. In these instances, rather than spending time sniffing and sometimes licking the urine deposits of other dogs, he simply leaves a short marker before moving on. On longer, off-lead walks he also seems to take a circular route, suggesting that his wayfinding and homing skills enable him to read his own scent markers over some considerable distance. Florence Gaunet and Sandie Besse's recent research on guide dogs' navigational skills suggests that they have remarkable homing skills. This includes the ability to take detours and shortcuts on shorter more familiar routes.²⁰⁸ The ability to modify routes suggests sophisticated navigational skills. Again, my companion regularly exhibits remarkable shortcutting and detouring abilities, confirming Horowitz's assertion that, '[...] *your dog knows the way to the nearest half-dozen pet stores, by car or on foot – as well as any cafes or banks that supply a biscuit or a treat on your route.*'²⁰⁹ My companion's behaviour confirms this claim by ensuring that many of our local, circular edge-land walks take us past a canal-side tearoom which offers a canine menu of sausage, popcorn, and dog-friendly ice cream.

Returning to the main discussion, the fields of walking as art, walking as social research, human geography, and radical cartography have coalesced in recent years through initiatives such as Springgay and Trumans Walking Lab,²¹⁰ the Walking Artists Network,²¹¹ and The Living Maps Network.²¹² The resulting global community of walkers and counter-cartographers is, I would argue, in a healthy place at the time of writing. I suspect this is largely in response to post-colonial studies and attempts to reclaim cartography from its deep association with colonial expansion and towards more ecological concerns. For example, if we return to Springgay and

²⁰⁸ Florence Gaunet and Sandie Besse. "Guide Dogs' Navigation After a Single Journey: A Descriptive Study of Path Reproduction, Homing, Shortcut and Detour," *Plos One*, 14, no. 7 (2019): <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0219816>.

²⁰⁹ Alexandra Horowitz, *Our dogs, Ourselves: The Story of a Unique Bond*, (London: Simon Schuster. 2019), 147.

²¹⁰ Stephany Springgay and Sarah E Truman, "Walking Lab, Welcome to WalkingLab," Accessed June 2023 <https://walkinglab.org/>.

²¹¹ "Walking Artist Network, Home Page," Accessed June 2023, <https://www.walkingartistsnetwork.org/>.

²¹² "Livingmaps Network, Home Page," Accessed June 2023, <https://www.livingmaps.org/>.

Truman's redefined components of walking as a research methodology, we detect a clear counter-cartographic imperative which seeks to explore walking as a more-than-human relational encounter.²¹³ Through their joint research, which positions walking practice within the wider framework of research creation, Springgay and Truman have identified a number of key focal components of contemporary walking practice, which they list as *Place*, *Sensory Enquiry*, *Embodiment* and *Rhythm*. Springgay and Truman modify these common themes, suggesting the following revised definitions which position walking within a more-than-human framework.

Place is modified to include:

- **Land and Geos:** More-than-human walking methodologies must take account of the ways that place-based research is entrenched in ongoing settler colonization. As such, place in walking research needs to attend to Indigenous theories that centre land, and posthuman understandings of the geologic that insists on a different ethical relationship to geology, where human and non-human are imbricated and entwined. Land and geos are important concepts for walking methodologies because they are attentive to situated knowledges that disrupt human-centrism.

Sensory Enquiry is modified to include:

- **Affect:** In tandem with more-than-human methodologies is a turn to affect theory. Affect, informed by vital materialist theories, attends to the intensities and forces of an affecting and affected body. However, because there is a tendency to ascribe affect to pre-personal sensations, some uses, and theorising of affect can consequently erase identity. In contrast 'affecting subjectivities' brings intersectional theories to bear on affect theories, emphasising the ways that subjectivity is produced as intensive flows and assemblages between bodies.

Embodiment is modified to include:

- **Transmateriality:** If embodiment conventionally focuses on a phenomenological and lived account of human movement, then trans theories, which rupture heteronormative teleological understandings of movement and reproduction, disrupt the notion of an embodied, coherent self. Trans theories emphasise viral, tentacular, and transversal conceptualisations of difference.

Rhythm is modified to include:

- **Movement:** Movement, as it is conventionally understood in relation to walking, suggests directionality. One walks to move from one place to another. The movement theories we draw on in this book understand movement as inherent in all matter, endlessly differentiating. Movement as a force and vibration resist capture. This

²¹³ Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E Truman, *Walking Methodologies in a More-Than-human World: WalkingLab*. (London: Taylor & Francis Group 2018).

understanding of movement is indeterminate, dynamic, and immanent and intimately entangled with transmaterial theories and practices.²¹⁴

In redefining walking as a more-than-human practice, Springgay and Truman open up the possibility of maps to be relational, ephemeral, in-the-moment, and radical in both their methodologies and presentation. Their redefining of walking as a more-than-human practice also moves psychogeography beyond the scope of its human-centric origins. This redefinition also offers credence to the practice of deep canine topography as a more-than-human walking methodology offering an important checklist through which to examine practice against a set of contemporary, ethical, decolonial, and ecocritical concerns.

To further explore radical approaches to map-making, I now consider two artists who directly confront the idea that the map is a closed and complete representation of space. Both artists employ methods which embrace the rich cosmologies of relational encounters to produce new radical cartographic possibilities.

²¹⁴ Springgay and Truman, *Walking Methodologies*, 6-7.

Subverting the Map, Simon Faithfull and Linda Knight

Simon Faithfull

An Expanding Atlas of Subjectivity, (2000-present) and 0°00 Navigation Part I: A Journey Across England (2009)

My practice has been described as an attempt to understand and explore the planet as a sculptural object – to test its limits, to sense its processes and to report back on how it feels. (Simon Faithfull).²¹⁵



Figure 35 - Simon Faithfull #1287 Sahara Imbiss (13:02, 23/7/21, N.52°495, E.13°434), 2021.²¹⁶

The first of Faithfull's works explored here is his long-term project the *Expanding Atlas of Subjectivity*, which offers a cartography of experience, of fleeting notions of presence and memory which, as the title suggests, expands into a network of subjective experiences in the form of simple line drawings. The construction of the map in *An Expanding Atlas of Subjectivity*,

²¹⁵ Simon Faithfull, "Bibliography," Accessed June 2023, <https://www.simonFaithfull.org/biography/>.

²¹⁶ Simon Faithfull, #1287 Sahara Imbiss (13:02, 23/7/21, N.52°495, E.13°434), digital drawing, date unknown, Simon Faithfull.org, Accessed September 2021, <https://www.simonfaithfull.org/limbo-drawing/1288-sahara-imbiss/>.

as a set of ephemeral encounters and experiences, speaks to Papadimitriou's deep topography in the sense that both methodologies produce an experiential cartography built on direct and intimate communion with the landscape. However, Faithfull's work captures this deep topographical communion through drawing rather than Papadimitriou's thick textual descriptions.

Beginning in the year 2000, Faithfull's intricate monochrome line drawings, using a handheld digital drawing device, reflect the pre-smart-phone era of portable technologies available at the time. Subsequently, the images take on a lo-fi, pixelated quality. Although you could argue that any kind of emotionally subjective connection between the drawer and drawn object is flattened by the medium, there is something about the delicate simplicity and formal qualities of the work which perfectly reflects how one might remember place as fragments. When exhibited together in grid formation, the sheer volume of these fragments creates an entirely new cartography. Each drawing is numbered, titled, dated, and positioned through a longitudinal and latitudinal grid reference.

In 2011, Faithfull also developed a locative media application, Limbo, with programmer Jude Venn, providing up-to-date additions to this ever-expanding work creating a real-time map of his location at the time of each drawing. Limbo is no longer available; however, Faithfull continues to distribute regular drawings through various social media channels. In 2014 I was lucky enough to visit an exhibition and artist talk at the Cube Gallery in Leicester, in which Faithfull exhibited several recent drawings alongside a hard-bound, printed atlas (See Figure 36). The idea of the physical manifestation of the project, as printed atlas, confronts the Sisyphean task of attempting to capture and map an ever-changing dynamic landscape within a fixed objective form. The use of social media to distribute Faithfull's drawings also seeks to unsettle how landscape, in the age of the smartphone, is consumed through digital images, as summarised in the following description of the project to date.

Over 1,200 drawings now record the view from one person's eyes as they wander near and far over the surface of the planet. In a world awash with a torrent of digital images, An Expanding Atlas of Subjectivity creates small, slow disturbances in this seamless photo-machine.²¹⁷

²¹⁷ Simon Faithfull, "Drawings and an Atlas," Accessed February 2022, <https://www.simonfaithfull.org/projects/expanding-atlas-subjectivity/>.



Figure 36 - Simon Faithfull, *An Expanding Atlas of Subjectivity*, 1000+ digital drawings, Phoenix Cube Gallery Leicester, 2014.²¹⁸

Siberian Dog Proposal

A second, more recent example of Faithfull's practice, *Siberian Dog Proposal*, has some obvious parallels with deep canine topography. Unable to travel due to COVID-19 restrictions in Western Europe, Faithfull proposed to employ the body of a canine protagonist to make a film to be exhibited at a gallery in Siberia (see Figure 37). The resulting film sees Faithfull's canine protagonist ascending the steps to the gallery and walking through several exhibition spaces. The dog seems, from the limited features visible such as ears and colouring, to be a sighthound or a border collie perhaps. As such, its observation of the city is much more visual than my canine companion's olfactory, ground-level explorations. They (the dog) seem to favour higher ground by climbing stairs to explore the different levels of the gallery space during an exhibition install, seemingly indifferent to the human forms they encounter. At one point, having reached the top floor of the gallery, they find and descend a staircase, stopping to re-orientate themselves by looking through windows for a better view of the harbour outside. On leaving the building they explore the immediate grassy areas outside of the gallery before finding a suitable spot for a quick dip in the river.

²¹⁸ Simon Faithfull, "An Expanding Atlas: Leicester", 2014, Simon Faithfull.org, Accessed September 2022, <https://www.simonfaithfull.org/works/an-expanding-atlas-of-subjectivity/>.



Figure 37 - Simon Faithfull, *Proposal: Stray Dog Records the City*, proposal drawing enacted by the institution as HD video, 2021.²¹⁹

What is interesting about Faithfull's work, from a radical cartographic perspective, is his use of the body and the senses as an observational instrument and his counter-cartographic forms of presentation. This includes drawing, video, sculpture, and in the last example the employment of the canine body, all of which draw attention to the futility of fixed representational forms of geographical space.

²¹⁹ Simon Faithful, "Proposal: Stray Dog Records the City, Proposal Drawing Enacted by the Institution as HD video", 2021, HD video, provided by kind permission of the artist.

Linda Knight - Inefficient Mapping

Inefficient mapping pays close attention to distributed energies and affects, tuning into “the strange logics of turbulence” of things in phenomena (Linda Knight).²²⁰

Turning to artist and academic Linda Knight’s *Inefficient Mapping* we can begin to explore the role of affect and immanence within radical cartographic practice.



Figure 38 - Linda Knight, *Untitled*, (date unknown).²²¹

Knight’s inefficient mapping methodology explores non-representational forms of mapping which are attuned to phenomena and affective forces. Mapping is produced whilst walking and moving, thus inefficient mapping is a methodology which happens in the moment, in space, tracing unique and individual flows and forces as they are encountered. Inefficient mapping offers a radical cartographic alternative to traditional forms of mapping making steeped in political divisions and commodification of place and space.²²² Whilst critiquing the dominance of Western mapping and its social and political imperatives, Knight is quick to acknowledge that inefficient mapping, although counter to, is not immune from traditional zoning as it takes place within the dominant structures, hierarchies, and privileges of colonial history. It is worth

²²⁰ Linda Knight, *Inefficient Mapping: A Protocol for Attuning to Phenomena*. (Santa Barbara: Punctum books, 2021), 195.

²²¹ Linda Knight, *Untitled*, date unknown, lindaknight.org, Accessed October 2022, <https://lindaknight.org/inefficient-mapping/>.

²²² Knight, *Inefficient Mapping*, 19.

noting that Knight, originally from the UK, lives and practices in Australia with its histories of colonial violence and oppression of indigenous cultures and traditions being a dominant political discourse in academia and beyond. Against this backdrop, Knight offers inefficient mapping as a radical cartographic practice which, *'[...] attends to different readings of space, life, community, presence, time and belonging.'*²²³

With a background in illustration, feminist theory and radical pedagogy, Knight also critiques the reductive role of informatics and data, as presented in diagrammatical form, to offer an altogether more holistic approach to capturing and presenting spatial phenomena. In doing so Knight offers the term chaosgraphics as a counter to the more common field of infographics, stating that the term *'Chaosgraph is a neologism that describes the presentation of visual data as it was originally recorded, that is as it is traced in the chaotic arrangements of things happening in phenomena.'*²²⁴ As with deep canine topography, inefficient mapping is a situated practice producing situated knowledge, the challenge of which is how to adequately capture or convey its essence in a static form without falling into traps of representation. Knight explores this conundrum by arguing that mappings emerge through immersion and a clustering of relationalities rather than by an impartial observation from a safe distance, whilst acknowledging the challenge of expressing such situated experiences in a fixed visual form.²²⁵ As such, Knight describes her mapping technique and resulting drawings as arrangements that *'[...] plot objects, sounds, times, atmospherics, the lingering sounds from things already done, the intense presences of things to come. The mappings create chaosgraphics that do not attempt to simplify the richness of the occasion.'*²²⁶

Claiming inefficiency as a term of resistance and speculation Knight describes her mappings as more aligned at first glance to fine art drawing, particularly gestural drawing techniques.²²⁷ What sets inefficient mapping apart from fine art drawing practices, however, is its task of mapping phenomena and affective forces rather than capturing a representational or abstracted rendering of landscape. What emerges from this form of inefficient, non-

²²³ Knight, *Inefficient Mapping*, 22.

²²⁴ Knight, *Inefficient Mapping*, 44.

²²⁵ Knight, *Inefficient Mapping*, 137.

²²⁶ Knight, *Inefficient Mapping*, 44.

²²⁷ Knight, *Inefficient Mapping*, 138.

representative map-making are highly abstracted marks that focus on the orientation of bodies and phenomena in relation to immanent and speculative theories.²²⁸ Such mapping, Knight suggests, includes, '[...] *observing, witnessing and recording the movements and presences of things around.*'²²⁹

Embracing research creation as an overarching methodology, inefficient mapping acknowledges the presence of the research and the researcher as entangled in the liveliness of the world, thus placing the researcher as an active participant within the speculative middle-ground of the research.²³⁰ Affect is the motor of inefficient mapping as the body responds to sensations, forces, intensities of the surrounding phenomena, and the spaces between movements, sounds, gestures, and actions. Knight proposes that, '*Affect helps the topologies caused by lively, transmaterial edges that peak up through the compositional registers of phenomena.*'²³¹ What drew me to inefficient mapping, when it comes to deep canine topography, is the role of affect in influencing how, when, and why we move through and map space in relation to more-than-human forces and flows.

Knight describes her motives and wider research concerns in developing inefficient mapping as follows.

What led me to the way of mapping was the challenge of how to think methodologically with speculative and immanent theories and how to bring theories into focus and make apparent new forms of association through visually tracing affects and sensations in phenomena.²³²

Whilst Knight is concerned with the multiplicity of relational forces acting on the body my interest lies in how walking with a canine companion changes and influences how we move with such phenomena. This might be extended to many more-than-human bodies we encounter in our walks but there is, as explored in Chapter 2, *Becoming Bodies*, a specific bond between humans and canines that influences how we approach such questions through a form of hybridity. Despite the differences in our approach, the same speculative, non-

²²⁸ Knight, *Inefficient Mapping*, 141.

²²⁹ Knight, *Inefficient Mapping*, 143.

²³⁰ Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E. Truman, "On the Need for Methods Beyond Proceduralism: Speculative middles, (in) tensions, and response-ability in research." *Qualitative Inquiry* 24, no. 3 (2018): 203-214.

²³¹ Linda Knight, *Inefficient Mapping*, 150.

²³² Knight, *Inefficient Mapping*, 13.

representational challenges are present in both inefficient mapping and deep canine topography in attending to the complexities and imperfections of place, space, and relational interactions.²³³

Faithfull and Knight offer two distinct approaches and methodologies in what might be termed as radical cartographies. Such approaches, I would argue, go a long way to meeting Denil's challenge of radical cartography to dismantle accepted structures of mapicity by introducing new vocabularies, grammatical schemas, and syntax.²³⁴ Furthermore, both artists confront the current geological epoch of the Anthropocene by imagining new creative practices which seek to re-connect humans, environments, and animals beyond the Cartesian dualist logics which continue to uphold the division between nature and humanity underpinning Western European cartographic techniques. Furthermore, Knight proposes that, *'Inefficient mapping brings arts practices and speculative theories together through critical, creative praxis, thereby creating a geonto-logic methodology for theorizing life in the current ecological crisis.'*²³⁵

²³³ Linda Knight, "An In-depth Introduction to Inefficient Mapping, A Practical Guide", Accessed February 2023, <https://vimeo.com/513573223>.

²³⁴ Mark Denil, "The Search For a Radical Cartography." *Cartographic Perspectives* no. 68 (2011): 7-28. <https://doi.org/10.14714/CP68.6>.

²³⁵ Knight, Linda, "Inefficient Mapping: The Ethical Wayfinding Potential of Drawing While Walking." *Journal of Public Pedagogies* no. 4 (2019), 218.

Situating Deep Canine Topography as a Radical Cartography



Figure 39 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *Experiments in Counter Cartography, Deep Urban Canine Topography*, digital photograph, 2021.

During the initial stages of our project, despite some concerted effort, it was difficult to find other examples of human-canine creative walking alliances aside from Lee Deigaard and Nobuhira Narumi, as discussed in the previous two chapters. Searching beyond the field of art, however, I discovered author, academic and canine cross-country runner Stephanie Merchant's account of a human-canine running alliance. Interestingly, Merchant also describes her human-canine running routine through a Deleuzoguattarian becoming animal frame of reference. In doing so she explores a collaborative hybridity with her canine companion when engaged in the moment of the canicross run and the lasting impact this has on human-canine relationships, suggesting that,

I do not claim that we have become one, morphed in focus and ability, to reach a singular common goal (although on a good day it may temporarily feel like it for me). However, what I do claim is that we are no longer what we were before, and that we

have become canicross runners together in a powerful cat's cradle of success and failure, anecdote and routine, frustration, and joy.²³⁶

Here, Merchant describes the fleeting and ephemeral nature of human-canine hybridity also experienced in our own creative endeavour, thus, suggesting that both human and canine are capable of becoming *other* through a shared relational experience. This sense of *becoming other* not only radically shifts how we connect with landscape but also troubles the very borders and boundaries of the self. It is through such fluidity of identity that I argue human and animal becomings are radically re-mapped. Therefore, it is in this unsettling of the self and our relations to land and geos, as encountered through walking with companion species, that we might consider the emergence of a radical cartography, one which both re-maps how we engage with space and the complex web of human-canine relational ontologies.

With this claim of relational alliance in mind, situating deep canine topography as a radical cartography, I would now like to return to *A Methodological Guide to Walking Differently*. By exploring it in detail, I will summarise and synthesise the practice in such a way that others might engage in their own human-canine deep topographical adventures.

Two legs bad, four legs good, six legs better, Unpacking A Methodological Guide to Walking Differently

- Deep Canine Topography is: trusting your senses to take you to new and interesting places, following the tracks and traces left by others, either recently, read in their decay, or in the past through lines of desire and ancestral connections to deep time, long before the taming of the earth by the two-legged folk and our often troubled mutual alliance.

This first statement attempts to shift our perception of place and space from an ocular-centric, upright, bipedal, horizon-focused position towards a richer sensory engagement with, and of, the world. It assumes that we are drawn by the desires of our canine guide, driven through smell, touch and affect. We feel our way through the world on a sensory level, which to some extent ignores our semiotic coding and urban design constructed as it is to ease the rapid

²³⁶ Stephanie Merchant, "Running With an 'Other': Landscape Negotiation and Inter-relationality in Canicross." *Sport in Society, Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics, Sports Geography: New Approaches, Perspectives and Directions* 23, no. 1 (2020): 11-23.

transit of goods and people, inevitably privileging time (and money) over space. The urban architectural aesthetic is dominated by the smoothness of surfaces and a sealing off of the earthly mud to aid clean lines towards efficiency of movement. The canine body is drawn to a wider sensory stimulus, indifferent to the busy roads which act as obstacles and barriers to the richness of the wild spaces that lie beyond, the meadows, the open, full of olfactory and tactile stimuli. Tethered to a lead for safety, it is no wonder that in urban spaces our walks are often frantic, as my companion drags me towards the nearest green space. As with Papadimitriou's deep topography, my protagonist reads deep time somehow connecting with the landscapes' true contours long erased by urban development as if connected to psychogeography's fabled beach beneath the street.²³⁷

- Deep Canine Topography requires a direct and visceral connection with the ground unfolding beneath the paw, following the rhythm of the paw and the rhythms and cross-rhythms of the land, as the beating lines of flight of beasts and humans crisscross and intermingle in a multiplicity of potential becomings, by embracing the draw to wild spaces, to the river in full flow, to the deep grasses in which you can become lost in a sensory soup.

Following on from this connection with landscapes beyond our reach, the canine body feels, through the direct contact between paw and ground, a harshness of concrete and tarmac giving way to the greener spaces of park and edge-land. We follow the trails of others, presumably read in their olfactory freshness, which elicits a new urgency in his step as he pulls ahead, barking at the anticipation of the pursuit of another canine body. This can often get embarrassing as his barks become a loud and insistent howl. It is hard to know whether to curtail this behaviour through the distraction of a treat, thinking back to our puppy training classes when he would often fail in his recall, more interested in exploring the perimeter of the pound, eventually returning on his terms only. But if I follow his lead, we soon encounter a familiar face, in either canine or human form, whom he greets with joy and enthusiasm. We have two leads, a red rope-style lead, and a full harness to which several leads can be attached, including a 10-meter-long training lead. Interestingly, when we use the rope lead, my companion assumes that we are about to undertake an urban walk, perhaps shorter than

²³⁷ McKenzie Wark, *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International*. (New York: Verso Books, 2015).

usual, and as such will lead me to one of two local parks, or along a circular street walk. If, however, I place the harness on his body, he seems to see this as the signal for a longer and more adventurous expedition and nearly always draws me to the meadows (a local nature reserve). Here we find a river, long grasses, and a rich mix of edge-land wildlife and of course, more canine companions to meet, greet, and play with.

- Deep Canine Topography is chasing the ball and running with a vitality that knows no bounds, for no other reason than the joy of running, embracing the art of everyday chance encounters with other bodies and vibrant objects that form the multiplicities of the unfolding landscape.

In urban spaces, our rhythm falls into step, only interrupted by the aforementioned anticipation of an encounter with another familiar body. In the meadows, however, my companion's body becomes more animated and vibrant, often let loose from the shackles of the lead able to explore on his own terms. He walks ahead, stopping to check out where I am, sometimes out of sight but always connected by an invisible thread. Sometimes he will walk behind or crisscross my own path, which is always more direct and linear. He will approach me with a gentle nudge to the back of my knee as a reminder of his presence. Here we walk as one.

Another key aspect of the off-lead walk, in edge-land and park-land spaces, is play. Balls and sticks of various sizes take on their own vitality as objects of canine curiosity and desire. A tennis ball excites my companion's instinct to play as the object of the ball and its vitality taps into his desire to chase and catch. He is not a retrieval dog, and once caught the ball remains firmly in his grasp until he is distracted by another object, canine kin, or smell. At this point, I will collect the ball and the chase will resume, eagerly jumping and stamping his paws until I release the ball in a long arc, running, stopping, and listening for its fall to earth before chasing it down. This ritual will be repeated several times on a long walk until the ball is either destroyed or he loses interest. Perhaps the ball triggers a hunting instinct in this gentle boisterous animal who has never even killed a fly. This might be surmised from the ball's eventual demise, as he strips it of its skin to reveal its inner flesh, which might suggest that the ball's animation mimics an animal in flight. However, rejecting the Cartesian notion of the animal as automata, we might alternatively read this act as based on pleasure and enjoyment.

His favourite game is to hunt the ball in the long grass, excited by the very idea of seeking the object using scent alone as he bounces, tail wagging, deftly shifting direction in an all-fours leap, head down, tail high, smelling the air before shifting direction. The sheer joy of finding and retrieving the ball sends him into a dizzy spin of excitement and ecstasy.

- Deep Canine Topography is *never*: a claiming and taming of territory, *never* the drawing of the quickest most efficient line between two points and is *never* a solitary act.

Our walks seem to transcend political and sometimes physical boundaries to the extent that I worry about my companion's urge to explore and the conflicts we may uninvitedly stumble into. Obviously, in the urban environment, we have to use the lead and negotiate boundaries between us. This is my world, the human-built environment, and I am perhaps more alert to its dangers than my companion. In the wilder edge-land and park-land spaces however, where my companion leads me, I lose myself to his exploratory nature moving between sensory stimuli with no concept of time's mastery of space, and no concept of arbitrary lines, boundaries, and edges. Still compounded within an area surrounded by urban sprawl in the meadows we are free to make our own lines and trajectories based on affect, immanence, and improvisation. We always walk together and, driven by the canine draw to the pack, we often find ourselves walking with other dogs and humans, strangers in fleeting crossings of cosmologies connected through a deep urge for kinship. In such instances, he quickly falls into step with other bodies, forcing me to do the same.

There is, of course, nothing new about the familiar sight of a human/canine walking alliance but shifting the emphasis away from a negotiated act and privileging the canine senses as guide opens us to alternative ways of moving through urban, extra-urban, rural, and wild spaces, helping us to further deconstruct space through our entangled dance. My suggestion is that through the re-imagining of the humble walkies as an artistic collaboration between human and canine, we can trouble our relationship with space as directed by capitalism and its structural flows by constructing new relationships with space as a complex network of interconnected multiplicities.

Returning to Mark Denil's attempts to define radical cartography we should perhaps consider the conclusion to his 2011 essay *The Search for a Radical Cartography*, to test how deep canine topography might meet its criteria,

Claims of cartographic radicality are impossible to evaluate without clear and widely applicable definitions of mapicity and radicality. Mapicity is that quality that allows the artifact to be recognized as a legitimate candidate for the tests of use, usability, and persuasiveness (the test of maphood), and is a quality all maps must possess in order to be seen as maps. It is judged against a schema provided to the map reader by the various intersecting interpretive communities to which the reader belongs. Radicality is a quality that sets a radical map apart from the conventional and operates on the level of subverting and remaking the schema. One expects the subversion of the schema will be disturbing to the reader because it presents unexpected affordances (and likely abandons others), through which it offers new possibilities. These definitions should be of utility in consideration of current and future claims of cartographic radicality.²³⁸

Here, we see an attempt to define mapicity and maphood through the utility of the map, as encountered by the reader, suggesting that to be conceived as radical, alternative, or counter, cartographies should disturb or abandon accepted conventions of the map. However, Denil argues that to be conceived as a map, however radical, it must retain something of its utility, either as a guide or as a rendering of specific data. Using this definition, I would argue that the examples encountered in this chapter, including our adventures in deep canine topography, could be defined as radical cartography. Our methodology, therefore, could be read as a guide or a conceptual map which can be applied to any space, with any number of human-canine walkers, as an invitation to explore differently (radically).

Circling back to cartography as an instrument of colonial violence this would be a good point to explore Jack Halberstam's concept of bewilderment and how this relates to our own psychogeographic doggy ramblings. Halberstam proposes a concept of 'wild' and 'wildness' beyond its colonial epistemology that renders nonmetropolitan spaces and people as savage, beyond normative realms of civilisation, and in need of cultivation, or taming. Here, Halberstam offers a reclaiming of the wild through the term bewilderment, which holds within it a trace of the wild, captured by traditional colonial ideas of space, orientation, and the navigational imperatives of the colonial project. They go on to suggest that bewilderment, '[...]

²³⁸ Mark Denil, "The Search For a Radical Cartography." *Cartographic Perspectives* no. 68 (2011): 7-28. <https://doi.org/10.14714/CP68.6>.

refers to an immersive sense of being lost or standing outside of a system of knowing or of merging with other systems of space and time that linger in the background to those we have selected as meaningful in the contemporary world.²³⁹ Within this definition of bewilderment we are placed within a space of unknowing or enchantment, bafflement, or confusion towards a, '[...] becoming that moves in an opposite direction to colonial knowing.'²⁴⁰ Halberstam posits that artists and theorists who seek bewilderment as an aesthetic strategy do so against and beyond the cartographic origin of the term to become untethered, adrift, not only in the sense of losing one's way, but also in the sense of losing oneself, or subjectivity, by embracing bewilderment as an anti-colonial framework.²⁴¹

Deep canine topography embraces the term bewilderment in the sense that allowing one's body to become lost in the navigational imperatives of a more-than-human canine agent is the name of the game. This sense of losing oneself folds us back into the concept of de-territorialisation and de-familiarisation, offered by Deleuze and Guattari and expanded by Braidotti's nomadism, where the 'self' seeks to become adrift, bewildered, and nomadic. Whilst Halberstam reminds us that the term wild and wildness is always haunted by its colonial past, when I refer to the word *wild* in the title of this thesis I do so in full knowledge of the complex history surrounding the word, its definition, and concepts. I also, however, seek to reclaim the word in its positive form to acknowledge a sense of reconnection, or re-territorialisation, with the animality of the human, as a relational re-encountering or sensory entanglement through zones of contact with spaces outside of our normative zones of comfort. Here, my canine companion invites me to lose my tethering to the domestic and embrace the messy unknowingness of the walkies as an aesthetic strategy which momentarily offers a becoming other or a becoming animal.

I leave the last word in this section to Doreen Massey, who perfectly encapsulates the discussion so far in this chapter, before going on to critically evaluate two more creative experiments in deep canine topography:

Space will never be definitively purified. If space is the sphere of multiplicity, the product of social relations, and those relations are real material practices, and always

²³⁹ Jack Halberstam, *Wild Things: The Disorder of Desire*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 66.

²⁴⁰ Halberstam, *Wild Things*, 66.

²⁴¹ Halberstam, *Wild Things*, 67.

ongoing, then space can never be closed, there will always be loose ends, always relations with the beyond, always potential elements of chance.²⁴²

²⁴² Doreen B. Massey, *For Space*: (London: Sage, 2005), 95.

Into the Wild – A Year with the Meadows, a Critical Reflection



Figure 40 - O'Brien and O'Brien, Still from *A Year With The Meadows*, 3 channel video, 18m 41s 2022.

Hampered by pandemic restrictions at the beginning stages of the project, I abandoned my initial idea of visiting more remote places and allowing myself and my companion the experience of living a more nomadic existence. A pre-research visit to the High Peak area of Derbyshire turned out to be our only experiment in such a journey. This walk was mostly to test logistics and exposed many limitations on my part as I carried far too many home comforts. This meant that despite my companion's energy to walk long distances, I would need to seriously rethink what I needed to carry and what comforts I needed to abandon if this were to be our method. Energised by the sensory experience of Kinder Scout and the beginning of the Pennine Mountain range, my companion's energy, on the other hand, seemed boundless.

Instead, due to covid restrictions our walks soon became corralled by circumstance. As a result, we limited our longer walks to an average of two or three per week, with my companion choosing the time of day, distance, duration, and direction of travel. On most of the walks, he drew me towards a local network of fields, meadows, and rivers which make up a local nature reserve. With this in mind, following our initial 10x10x10 experiments as encountered in Chapter 1, *Becoming Movement*, I decided to focus exclusively on documenting site-specific walks over a 12-month period, which culminated in the film *A Year with the Meadows* (working title) encountered at the beginning of this chapter. This extended period of employing the methods of deep canine topography often led us into parts of the meadows previously

unexplored. Aylestone Meadows is defined as an edge-land, post-industrial nature reserve, which is partially consumed by wilderness, uncultivated, forgotten, on the edge of the city and the edge of a dualist existence of civilisation, wildness, and careful environmental management. Such non-spaces are places of entropy where the urban becomes wild, where edges become blurred, and where once well kempt sculpted hedges become impenetrable thickets of blackthorn and bramble. This is a space occupied by a rich variety of wildlife. It is not uncommon to encounter semi-feral horses, makeshift human encampments, wild rabbits, weasels, foxes, and grass snakes amongst its semi-cultivated contours. Evidence of corrugated fields, of feudal system strip farming, abandoned roads, railway infrastructure, and burnt-out mopeds mingle with newly born foal placenta, muntjac deer, kestrels, egrets, cormorants, and herons.

In the making of *A Year With the Meadows*, we walked for between two and four hours, twice a week, from November 2020 to November 2021 through snow, high floods, an explosive wildflower spring, through a dry summer and a russet and umber autumn. Each time we visited the meadows we took a slightly different route, as if my companion wanted to explore every inch of its 8.8 acres and beyond. This included squeezing through broken fences to the off-limits ex-gasworks and rail tracks and areas of industrial heritage long consumed by wilderness. Allowing myself to become entangled in the moment of the walk and the seasons, which included a paddle in the river in the hotter months, I slowly began to become de-territorialised and enfolded in our co-exploration. The document of this year-long adventure is presented as an 18-minute three-channel video work to be shown either as a film or multi-screen installation.

The choice of the tryptic, or three-channel video, was something first explored in the previous work, *The Beach Beneath Our Feet*, as encountered in the previous chapter. What interested me about the use of three simultaneous images is how they draw the eye and concentration between renderings of the constantly unfolding landscape. Whereas a more singular, one-screen view might draw the viewer more directly into the canine world. Here, the act of moving between the three images further deconstructs and confuses the visual field, including a nod towards the canine's superior periphery vision. The central screen is also slightly slower to reflect canine visual coding which operates at a faster 75 frames per second in comparison to

the human frame rate of 30 to 60 frames per second. The result is that the canine can absorb more visual information in each second, perhaps accounting for their super animal ability to catch a moving object and to weave around obstacles at speed. Here, as in previous experiments with canine embodied film, we are drawn through the landscape at an all too unfamiliar and disorientating ground level, further complicated by the multiple fields of vision.

The soundtrack which accompanies the film is a simple piano arpeggio, composed through improvisation to an earlier edit of the film, in an abandoned attempt at trying to follow the rhythms and cross-rhythms and somehow transpose this into music. However, I found that the soundtrack I composed through this method seemed a little contrived. I decided, therefore, to take a small repetition of the arpeggio and time-stretch it to the duration of the film. This elongated soundtrack offers something of a nod to the deep-time as a slow unfolding of the landscape, and its continued historical trajectory, far beyond the fleeting encounters of the human and canine bodies that populate its current surfaces.

Further Experiments with 360° Video and Live Immersive Canine Augmented Soundscapes, a Critical Reflection



Figure 41 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *Deep Canine Topography: VR Experiment 1*, 360° video still, 2022.

In this final experiment in documenting our walks, I wanted to explore virtual and augmented realities as an immersive encounter with the canine lifeworld. The aim was to investigate and develop a canine-embodied virtual reality experience which invites the viewer to explore and navigate the world from the canine point of view. Building on methods developed through making *A Year With the Meadows*, I explored the immersive potential of the document by introducing 360° video footage and sound. The resulting short experimental videos introduce an immersive element beyond the limits of traditional film media. The results are quite disconcerting at first, especially when viewed through the VR headset, as you cling to the canine body being dragged, sometimes at speed, through the landscape. Although you do have the ability to rotate the view through 360°, it is the canine body that dictates direction, speed, and so on. However, this not only adds to the sense of de-familiarisation, but also hints at another form of human-canine hybrid experience.

Live Immersive Canine Augmented Soundscapes

Live immersive human-canine soundscapes are also a relatively recent discovery in the documenting of deep canine topography. I initially acquired a pair of remote, wireless microphones to cut down on the weight of the equipment carried by my canine companion, but soon realised their potential as another form of human-canine sensory entanglement. The experience of merging human and canine sound, in the moment of the walk, is difficult to document and describe without direct experience of the phenomena. This experience is best summed up in the following journal extract:

Edited Journal Extract September 2022

In a more recent experiment in canine embodied sound, I utilised a pair of RODE wireless microphones, again mounted on my companion's harness, but this time I was able to directly monitor his soundscape in real-time. We visited the meadows, a local nature reserve, and I let him off the lead in a field adjacent to the canal/river, through which the old river course cuts an oxbow, to form a wildflower meadow of long grasses, riverside trees, with plenty of sensory stimuli. This is one of those spaces where my companion loses himself, running, jumping, full of joy. He ran through the long grass chasing a ball and we set off on a short circular walk which took us through overgrown tracks flanked by tall summer grasses and wildflowers, arching back to an open mowed field, dominated by electricity pylons, and back into the field through another entrance. At this point, my companion bolted through the long grass towards a farm ditch. Out of sight and still monitoring his sound I experienced a dual sonic perspective of walking-human/running-dog. This eerie merged sensory experience is at first unsettling but ultimately enriching. I found myself closing my eyes as I walked and somehow feeling my companion's movement through my own body, merging with my own sensory inputs, the smell of the pollen, the warm breeze, even to the extent of imagining the water now sloshing around his paws as he lapped up the ditch water. Trying to resist my concern that I may not have waterproofed the microphones enough for this aquatic excursion and knowing that the water would likely be polluted with farm and traffic runoff, I snapped out of this hybrid sensory experience to retrieve him from his sludgy bathing, knowing that he would need a bath when we got home. This action/event formed a minor breakthrough in what I consider, following Broglio, to be an affective zone of contact experienced through sensory merging. In this moment our sensory entanglement was suspended within the anticipation of the almost, the not-yet, the ephemeral moment of becoming held within the infinite possibilities of the virtual, and the many possible lines of flight this opened. Although at first disconcerting and destabilising, this experience ultimately takes us a step closer to the concept of the human-canine hybridity. Exploring and experiencing the world through a merger of sensory inputs offers a shock to the stable human condition, the result of this merging of sound acts as a bridge between human and canine life-worlds.

The use of a 360° camera and live immersive sound raises questions for future research into virtual walking and hybridity. The experience of real-time video and soundscapes troubles human-centred navigation of space by shifting the sonic experience closer to the ground, in a merging of human-canine sensory experience. This raises the following questions for a future project:

- How might such experiences trouble human exceptionalism and bring us closer to appreciating more-than-human lifeworlds?
- How might a merging of sensory inputs in real-time canine augmented walking, as a relational encounter, contribute towards a wider understanding of conservation and what therapeutic benefits might it also offer?

These questions are taken forward in the conclusion as recommendations for future research.

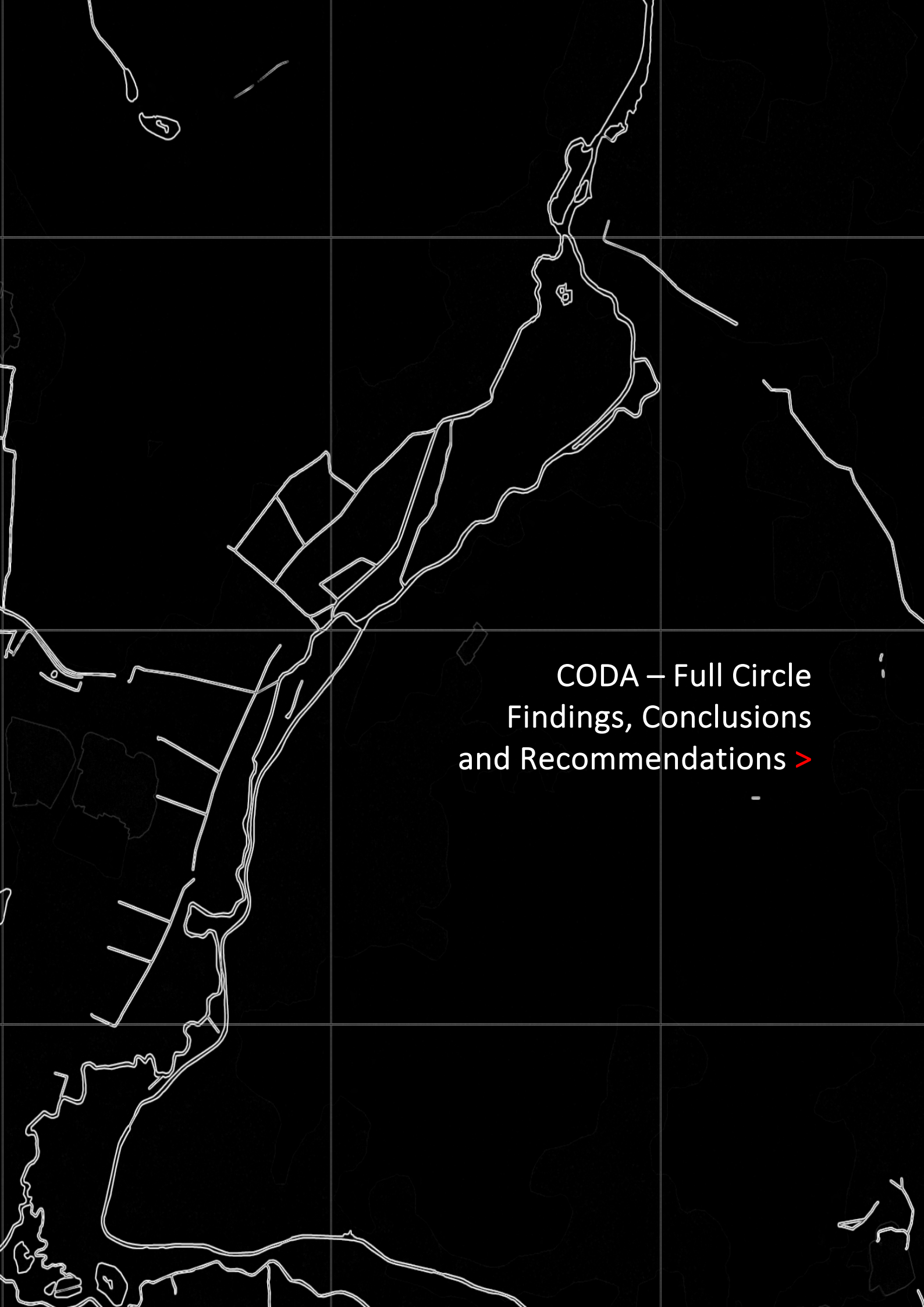
CODA: Journeys End

In this chapter, we have briefly considered the history of the map as a tool for colonial violence and the rapid expansion of capitalism. We have also explored how post-structural ideas, and more recently the posthumanist and new-materialist philosophies which followed, have led to creative counter and radical approaches to the map. I have explored two contemporary examples of artistic practice which seek to re-conceptualise cartography. We have also considered how deep canine topography might be offered as a novel, radical cartographic practice and how the concept of bewilderment helps to reclaim a working definition of the wild and wildness. Finally, in situating deep canine topography as a radical cartographic method, through the critical reflection of two examples of practice, I have further considered how walking with a canine body, connected through digital apparatus, can de-territorialise human subjectivity towards a form of human-canine-landscape hybridity. My central argument is that if we embrace the explorative and curious nature of dogs through a creative human-canine alliance, then we can radically shift how we map, read, and engage with place and space.

This chapter also brings to an end our journey, so far, and I (we) hope that you have enjoyed our walk together. The final chapter, *CODA - Full Circle*, is offered as a refrain and a synthesis of the research and its methods alongside the questions it has exposed and key findings and recommendations for further research.

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INHALE



**CODA – Full Circle
Findings, Conclusions
and Recommendations >**



Figure 42 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *A Year With the Meadows*, canine embodied photography, digital photograph, 2022.

Late afternoon in November, the missing link in the year with the meadows, the sun is low, the sky is clear, and it is wet underfoot following a few days of rain, not wet in the usual flooded sense, still passable with care, with the right footwear of course, it is surprisingly warm, the slight mist of evaporation, the river is in full flow, heading north as we head south, in harmony, not in opposition, the marshes have been replenished following a dry summer, the leaves are turning russet, brown, red, and gold, yet there remains a surprising amount of lush dark green vegetation, punctuated by the last remaining wildflowers of the summer, water on ground reflects the sun and the sky creating the illusion that the horizon has been abolished and the ground and sky are one, no up nor down, no land nor sky, we pick our way along familiar tracks, through gaps in hedges, up into the woods, my companion forging ahead, his movements are poetic, balletic, as I pause, scanning for the path through the woods, a vague memory of its trajectory made foggy by leaf fall obscuring the track, he sweeps past in an arc, jumping a felled branch, immediately switching back and jumping again, as if to capture the sheer joy of being in that moment airborne, he stops about 20 feet ahead, looks back, does his playful four-legged stamp, tail raised, head down, beckoning me to join in this chase through the woods and forging his own path for me to follow, he draws a line with his body, poised and athletic, weaving through trees up to a path beyond a path, sweeping round to the open field where he meets another much smaller dog, and they engage in a playful chase, sometimes stumbling, obviously the older of the two, I worry that such playful energetic adventures may be numbered as time collapses, and 12 months of walking the meadows become a singularity, one event constructed of many moments and memories, condensed in a single moment.²⁴³

²⁴³ Darren O'Brien. "Deep Canine Topography, Some Simple Steps." In *Walking as Practice Research*, Soapbox Journal special issue resulting from the WARP conference, University of Amsterdam, 107-139. July 2023.

CODA – Full Circle: Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

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Refrain



Figure 43 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *Early Experiments in Deep Canine Topography, Bardon Hill*, digital photograph, 2018.

In this artistic research project, I have proposed deep canine topography as a multispecies creative alliance by reframing the humble dog walk through the praxis of walking-art. In this final refrain, I briefly summarise the thesis chapters before synthesising the research in diagrammatical form. I also summarise how the research might contribute to the field of walking-art and critical animal studies, before proposing recommendations for future research and offering some final words of reflection.

In the *Introduction and Methodology* chapter, I situated deep canine topography as a walking-art practice, informed by psychogeography, and set out a methodological framework, within the wider scope of *research creation*, to enable a reflexive dialogue between theory and practice. I also introduced *A Methodological Guide to Walking Differently* as a set of guiding principles and as an invitation for others to engage in their own human-canine walking adventures.

In Chapter 1, *Becoming Movement*, I explored the field of walking-art and psychogeography in more depth, before examining Erin Manning's concept of relational movement as a useful conceptual frame for exploring human-canine relational choreography.

In Chapter 2, *Becoming Bodies*, I briefly considered the complex history of human-canine relational ontologies before arriving at an account of contemporary posthuman discourse on human-animal relations more broadly. I also explored how the twin Deleuzoguattarian concepts of becoming animal and nomadic subjectivity help us to examine the potential for deep canine topography to trouble boundaries between human, canine and landscape. I then considered how multispecies co-authorship troubles traditional ideas of human exceptionalism.

In the final chapter, *Becoming Radical Cartographies*, I explored the map as a visual representation of space and proposed deep canine topography as a radical cartographic practice. Finally, I return to Manning's concept of relational movement before circling back to and unpacking *A Methodological Guide to Walking Differently* in more detail.

Throughout the three main chapters, I have also considered the work of contemporary artists whose practice touches my own in some way, either by way of inspiration or who address similar themes and concerns. The three main chapters are also book-ended by practice expositions and critical self-reflections which firmly place artistic walking practice and its document as the central methodology.

Diagramming Deep Canine Topography

From a new materialist point of view, a body (of any kind) is never defined in terms of what it *is*, but rather it is conceived in terms of what it *becomes* and what it *does*, or—more precisely—of what it is potentially capable of doing. Hence, a body is an assemblage of the actual and the virtual, a bundle of intensities and flows. Its ontology, therefore, is understood as constant fluidity and dynamism, or an incessant procedure of transition. This process may be seen as a ge(nea)(o)logy of becoming, an entanglement of past, present, and future, or a zone of emerging potentiality. (Dorota Golanska).²⁴⁴

In describing the new materialist concept of the body as dynamically constituted, Dorota Golanska challenges the concept of subjectivity as the sole possession of the autonomous being. In doing so, she also describes the concept of situated knowledge as generated through relations, rather than as the product of a single autonomous mind. She proposes that situated knowledge *‘[...] offers a concept of knowledge as a dynamic bodily-intellectual practice produced together with other bodies—these bodies are not necessarily human and not necessarily organic.’*²⁴⁵ Here, knowledge, as with the new materialist concept of the body, becomes a process of a continuous becoming-with or, as Golanska suggests, *‘It embod-ies a continuous tension between remembering and forgetting, or between sustaining old habits or routines and opening to something new or unexpected.’*²⁴⁶ Therefore, if we take a new materialist view in considering the dynamism of the human body, coupled with the fluidity of the canine body in motion, then my own experience of moments of co-becoming, as a form of situated knowledge born out of human-canine hybridity, is supported. Furthermore, extending this concept of fluidity alongside Papadimitriou’s deep topographical methods, which trouble the boundaries between bodies and the landscapes we walk, an alliance with the canine body has the potential to bring us closer to human-canine-landscape hybridity. It is as a result of such hybridity, I argue, that new knowledge is generated through new ways of seeing, being and knowing/un-knowing, enlivened through an alliance with the canine body. Therefore, deep canine topography is always destined to remain an open and speculative practice which embraces uncertainty and resists neat resolutions. To capture what is after all a very personal

²⁴⁴ Dorota Golanska, *Affective Connections: Towards a New Materialist Politics of Sympathy*. (London: Rowman & Littlefield Unlimited Model, 2017), 147.

²⁴⁵ Golanska. *Affective Connections*, 154.

²⁴⁶ Golanska. *Affective Connections*, 154.

and ephemeral process of becoming-with, I offer a diagrammatical framework (See Figure 44). Through this diagram, I attempt to describe my own experience of deep canine topography by way of opening a dialogue with existing and future developments in theory and practice. This framework should not be read as a *model* but as a way of thinking through concepts to arrive at some form of speculative understanding of human-canine-landscape relational encounters as a radical cartography. Therefore, the diagram performs as a coalescence of thoughts, ideas, and concepts to explore a particular experience as encountered in our walks, which I will now unpack.

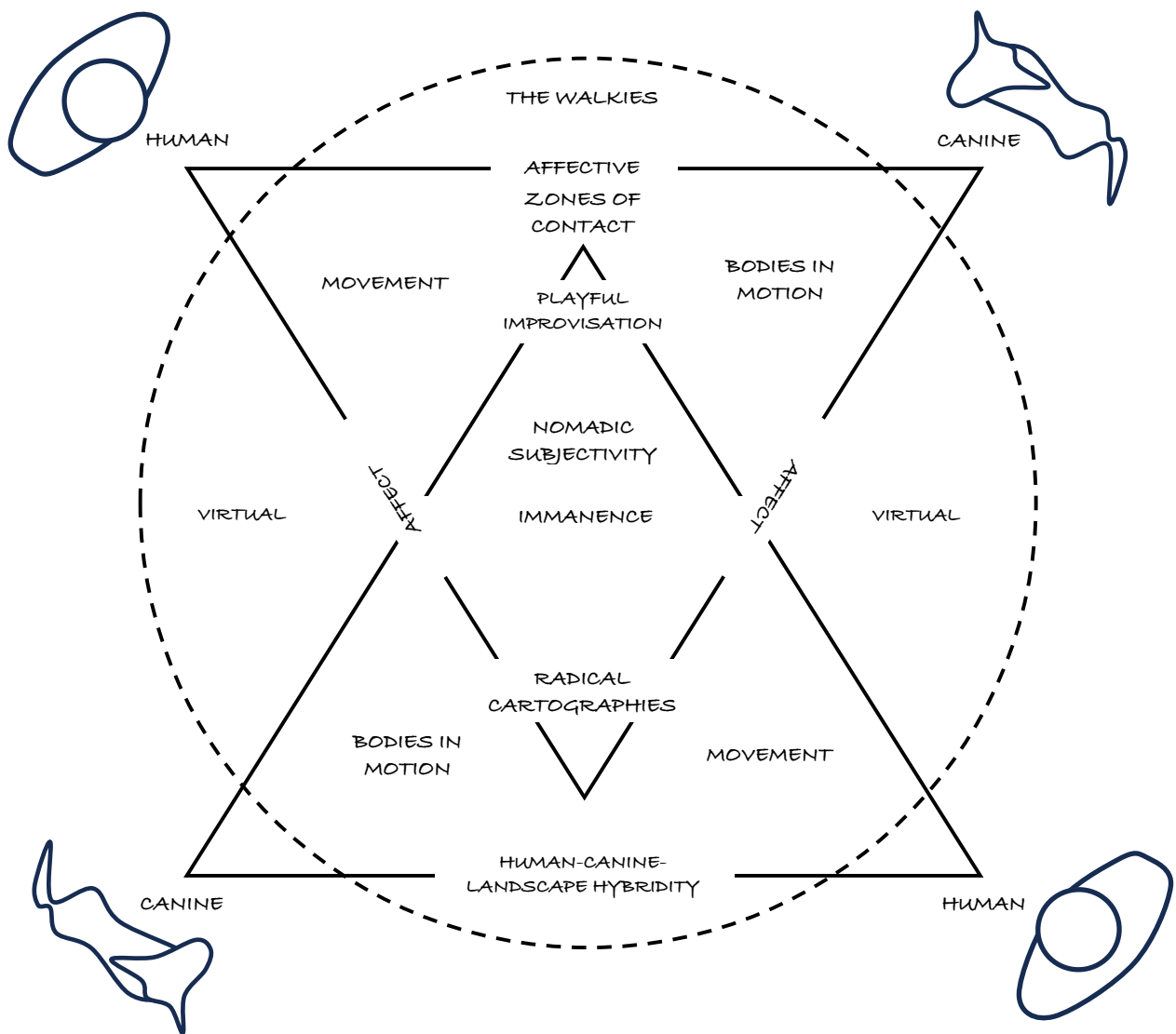


Figure 44 - Darren O'Brien, Diagramming Human-Canine-Landscape Hybridity Through Nomadic Subjectivity, 2023.

The Walkies

As the diagram proposes, deep canine topography requires at least two bodies, one human and one canine, activated and connected through the movement of the walk. The walk activates the research. Both human and canine bodies are entangled through affective connections and zones of contact, which extend to encompass affective relations with all other bodies. If a new-materialist approach is embraced, then contact zones are extended to include all objects and elemental forces or ecologies that we encounter. A sense of hybridity emerges through affective zones of contact where the boundaries between human, canine, and environments (or the world) become fluid and permeable. In such moments of fluidity, the subject becomes nomadic, therefore enabling a more entangled sensory relational encounter with the world unfolding.

Human-Canine

Moving through and around the diagram, we can see how human and canine bodies become united through the action of the walk. Here, following Manning and Goodman, both human and canine bodies become unstable through movement, thus entering into a relational dance in which the sensory and navigational desires of the canine body are privileged. This shift in agency is an important step in deep canine topography in that it assumes an equal, bioegalitarian alliance between human, canine and landscape. This alliance is built through a complex negotiation which is ultimately dependent on subtle affective forces encountered during each walk.

Movement and Bodies in Motion

Andrew Goodman proposes that, *'Walking moves us beyond a stable configuration of relations between a subject and objects, and towards a more complex experience that begins to escape such boundaries.'*²⁴⁷ Therefore, movement, as activated through the walk, seeks to destabilise the subject towards a more relational encounter with the world. When read alongside the Deleuzoguattarian concept of nomadic subjectivity, as further developed by Braidotti, we can begin to see how walking with another non-human body further complicates and destabilises

²⁴⁷ Andrew Goodman, *Gathering Ecologies: Thinking Beyond Interactivity*. (London: Open Humanities Press, 2018) 112.

movement and therefore subjectivity. Here, as Goodman suggests (following Manning), movement becomes the, '[...] *temporal, re-combinatory operation of becoming that decentres subjectivity and troubles stasis.*'²⁴⁸ Goodman also draws our attention to the stratification of bodies in urban spaces by suggesting that bodies become unified and ordered by habit and subjectification.²⁴⁹ Following Deleuze and Guattari's twin concepts of becoming animal and nomadic subjectivity, we can begin to explore walking's potential to destabilise the subject towards moments of becoming. For deep canine topography, the presence of the canine body, their agency, and sensory navigational desires further destabilises the subject by enabling a decoupling of the self as nomadic and therefore more connected with the landscape as a unified human-canine sensory subject.

As previously described, the urban renders the human body as constrained by and attuned to relational forces both acting upon and within bodies, tied together by the lead, in an act of negotiation between the will of the canine body and various risk factors presented by the modern city. In the edge-land or parkland, however, such restricting forces are lifted, and the canine body becomes electrified by a newfound energy before taking flight in an athletic and improvised performance. This lifting is extended to encompass the human body as the senses become more attuned to the world unfolding. Here, the human and canine are no longer connected by the lead, but by an invisible and unspoken trust.

Affective Zones of Contact

Affective forces are activated through movement which in turn generate relational zones of contact between human-canine and environments. Affect and contact zones also generate movement through the invitation of the canine *to walk alongside*, as expressed through subtle, embodied, non-verbal communication, the pull on the lead, the nudge of the snout on the back of the leg, and so on. Here, it is the canine who chooses the destination, pace, and duration of each walk. As the walk unfolds, affective forces enable a sensory exchange which disturbs bounded bodies, or as Goodman suggests, enables a, '[...] *folding [of] the body into the world and the world into the body.*'²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Goodman, *Gathering Ecologies*, 111.

²⁴⁹ Goodman, *Gathering Ecologies*, 111.

²⁵⁰ Goodman, *Gathering Ecologies*, 112.

Playful Improvisation

Improvisation is the engine of the walk as a creative alliance which is experienced through an ever-evolving call and response between human and canine bodies. Again, improvisation is extended to include relational encounters and affective elemental flows and forces of the environment we walk through or with. For example, a chance encounter with another dog or the olfactory traces of other animals dictate the direction and speed of the walk. Each and every encounter elicits a multitude of potential relational movements as shapes and lines of flight are formed in each twist and turn of the walk. Here, alongside Roberto Marchesini's suggestion that improvisation forms a key facet of animal creativity, which challenges the dominant Cartesian model of the animal as automata, improvisation becomes the binding force through which human exceptionalism is troubled.²⁵¹ Improvisation, therefore, lies at the heart of human-canine co-authorship, or co-worlding, that unfolds through walking as a shared multispecies artistic practice.

Nomadic Subjectivity (Becoming Animal)

As we saw in Chapter 2, *Becoming Bodies*, the twin Deleuzoguattarian concepts of nomadic subjectivity and becoming animal help us to explore the potential of bodies in motion to become fluid and unstable. In such moments, however fragile and ephemeral, human and canine subjectivities become folded in the moment of becoming bodies. Our senses become attuned to each other and to the complex web of multiplicities that surround us or, as anthropologist Tim Ingold suggests, we become entangled within a *meshwork* of the world unfolding.²⁵² Such hybridity pivots on moments of instability which momentarily deconstruct human subjectivity and open potential sensory connections with landscape, beyond the capabilities of the human body alone.

Immanence and the Virtual

Immanence, in the Deleuzoguattarian sense, represents the infinite plane on which the walk plays out. Each twist and turn, each subtle communication between human and canine bodies, responding in the moment to environmental flows, forces, and affect, opens a multitude of

²⁵¹ Roberto Marchesini, *The Creative Animal: How Every Animal Builds Its Own Existence*. (London: Springer Nature, 2022).

²⁵² Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. (London: Routledge, 2021), 63.

virtual potential human-canine-landscape assemblages. Such virtual potentials become actualised through a direct engagement which is always in motion and always in formation. Human-canine-landscape assemblages are formed through a de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation of bodies and subjectivities, which are altered by the potential of every micro-moment and movement.

Radical Cartographies

Nomadic subjectivity suggests a radical remapping of the self as the central point of experience, which effectively extends the body, or bodies, towards a multitude of potential relational encounters. This realigning of the self enables a remapping of place and space and therefore a radical human-canine worlding is enabled through the activation of the walk. Such sensory connections with environments are enabled through a nomadic disturbance which occurs through the creative ruptures enabled by the playful improvisations of the canine body. The invitation to follow and engage in a sensory exploration of the world, not constrained by the usual forces which constrict the human body, opens the body to the potential of human-canine sensory entanglement. Therefore, the lines drawn by the canine body open the human to new radical cartographic constellations and engagements with place, space, and time. Such radical cartographies also trouble human-canine relational encounters by offering non-hierarchical and collaborative relational ontologies. Here, maps are redrawn by the canine body and therefore how we meet and relate to the world is shifted towards a radical re-composition, always nomadic and always suspended in potential moments of becoming human-canine-landscape.

Human-Canine-Landscape Hybridity

By hybridity, I propose that each walk has the potential to compose human-canine relational encounters through a form of sensory synaesthesia. This crossing of human and canine senses re-draws not only geographical routes, duration, rhythm, and speed, but also redefines how human and canine relate to each other in ways which are unique to framing the walkies as art and the canine as artist and co-author. Furthermore, such creative alliances problematise human-canine relational ontologies by suspending notions of human master, saviour, and colonial definitions of the wild and wildness.

Contributions

As we have seen, deep canine topography begins with a speculative question, as instigated by the will of the domesticated animal and his call to the wild through the simple invitation of the score, *follow me*. This simple act leads to an exploration of both human and canine bodies in motion to investigate the relations between human and canine as an aesthetic act. This investigation has taken us (my canine companion and I) much further than we might have at first imagined by highlighting and bringing into question the human and canine relational ontologies that underpin the complex histories of our companionship. Such questions consider not only movement and navigation through the act of walking but also question the very surfaces and boundaries that separate humans from animals, which are built on a complex story of co-evolution and a refusal of the animal as other. The aim, therefore, is not only to engage in a collaborative creative act, but to critically evaluate what both human and canine bodies are capable of becoming if hybridity, in the form of co-authorship, is our quest, while also acknowledging that we will never know what it is like to become canine and that to ponder such a question is, in itself, wonderfully absurd. Therefore, the initial research proposition was arrived at through an observation of the actions of my canine companion, which led to a subsequent and radical shift in my own psychogeographic practice.

Artistic Walking Practice

The resulting practice outputs include several original works of human-canine collaborative art, as manifested through the document of our walking practice, published alongside this written thesis on the web-based Research Catalogue. In addition, I have published the aforementioned *A Methodological Guide to Walking Differently* under the title, *A Manifesto for Deep Canine Topography*, in a special edition of Soap Box Journal for Cultural Analysis in July 2023, following a contribution to the 2022 Walking as Research Practice conference at the University of Amsterdam. This manifesto, or methodological guide, is offered as an invitation, or prompt, for others to build their own human-canine walking alliances recognising that each will be unique to those involved. During the project, I have also presented workshops and talks at a number of international conferences, alongside exhibiting works in progress, and published further papers on specific questions raised by the practice (See full list of research outputs, page vi). Therefore, the contribution to the field of walking-art centres around a move away

from human-centric modes of walking towards the emergence of practices which embrace more-than-human encounters as generative alliances. This in turn problematises how we engage with concepts of wildness and the sublime. In shifting the emphasis away from the human as a lone, romantic figure walking through the landscape and by engaging with the canine body, the emphasis moves towards conceptualising the body as a fluid, unstable entity which is capable of a deeper communion with place.

Critical Animal Studies

Deep canine topography also offers a unique contribution to the field of critical animal studies in art, specifically in exploring how human-canine co-authored practice might trouble human exceptionalism and contribute towards deeper insights into more-than-human artistic collaboration. By positioning the canine as an artist, deep canine topography contributes to ongoing posthuman dialogues specifically the story of the complex co-evolution of human and canine relational ontologies. Here, the complexity of human-canine companionship is further problematised through a rejection of the dog as a pet, beast of burden, and/or protector of human property, towards the framing of the companion animal as collaborator and co-author of creative practice.

Recommendations for Future Research

As previously described, the majority of the project was undertaken during the SARS-COVID-19 global pandemic, and as such its trajectory shifted away from my initial social practice and public engagement ambitions towards a more autoethnographic approach. Therefore, any future research built on deep canine topography as a methodology should explore human-canine relations as a social practice through public engagement. The realisation of a public-facing immersive exhibition, for example, would be a good place to share and test virtual/augmented reality as a form of cross-species encounter. Such encounters might have the potential to raise important questions about how we share space with our more-than-human kin, both canine and beyond. One area of development was tested briefly at the 2020 World Congress of Psychogeography through a dispersed walking workshop titled *It's ok, They're Friendly* and could be extended to test and explore the methodology with a wider group of human-canine artists.²⁵³ This would explore potential social, relational, and therapeutic applications of deep canine topography as a social practice. Deep canine topography also has implications for examining how we occupy and navigate cities, as human-canine hybrids, by considering how more-than-human relational encounters, which often go unnoticed, play out within the built environment. This could be achieved by recruiting human and canine companions to share their walking activities as a collective act of map-making, alongside architecture and public realm design. This would highlight potential implications for future urban design towards embracing existing human-animal relations and multispecies cohabitation.

²⁵³ Darren O'Brien, "It's ok, they're friendly, 4th World Congress of Psychogeography Workshop," Accessed June 2023, <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-exposition?exposition=1641660>.

The Document as a Future Immersive Encounter

My initial ambition to present our joint creative output as an immersive installation was sadly thwarted by the COVID-19 global pandemic. Instead, I opted to utilise the Research Catalogue to offer what might be an approximation of my initial vision. The technical nature of the installation requires a specific space and/or a number of projectors, sound equipment and technical support. Although I approached two potential spaces, sadly delays to gallery to programs and funding restrictions would have pushed any such installation a couple of years into the future, beyond the submission date of the PhD thesis. In an attempt to paint a picture and describe something of my rationale behind what might still become a future reality, I have written the following proposal.

Adventures in Deep Canine Topography Installation Proposal

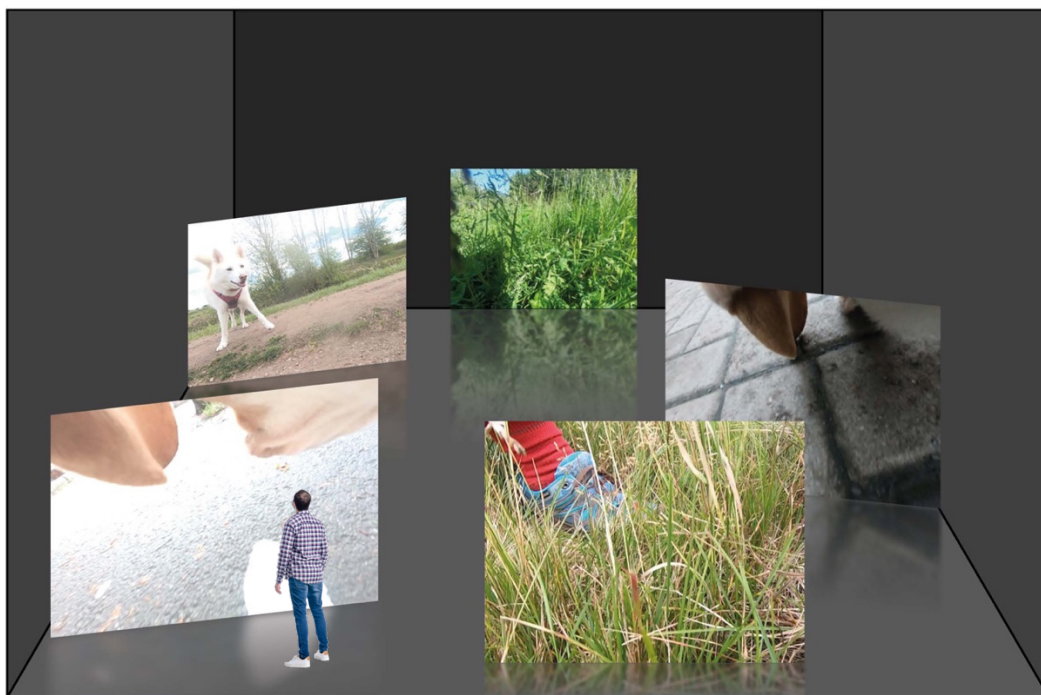


Figure 45 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *Adventures in Deep Canine Topography Installation Proposal*, an approximation of a video projection and sonic installation, 2024.

Artist and Deleuzian scholar Simon O'Sullivan, in discussing art as a complex encounter capable of generating new knowledge, describes the rupture and affirmation as, '*[...] two moments of the same encounter, two moments that only seem opposed if considered in the abstract, outside of actual experience. Art, in breaking one world and creating another, brings these two moments into conjunction.*' With O'Sullivan's description of rupture and affirmation in mind, I propose a multi-screen video and sonic installation which invites humans to experience the canine lifeworld as an immersive encounter (see Figure 45). Such an encounter would include

an arrangement of large video projections of dog-cam footage alongside a constructed binaural soundscape. The scale and arrangement will place the human viewer on a 1-1, or larger scale with the canine body. Likewise, by placing the bottom edge of the screens adjacent to the floor, a blurring of boundaries between human and canine visual fields and realities may occur. I hope that such an encounter would offer a rupture in both human and canine realities towards an entanglement or affirmation of a new human-canine hybrid reality.



Figure 46 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *Adventures in Deep Canine Topography Installation Proposal*, an approximation of a site-specific video and sonic installation using outdoor LED screens, 2024.

Such an installation could be staged either within a traditional dark space gallery, a theatrical project/gallery space, or in an outside setting, such as a woodland or urban park (see Figure 46). I also envisage a post-doctoral exploration of virtual and augmented reality, which entangles human and canine lifeworlds and might further problematise human exceptionalism. Such encounters might act as ruptures, as suggested by O'Sullivan, which would radically unsettle and shift human subjectivity, thus enabling new ways of seeing and experiencing the world.

Final Words

The initial question of the research, prompted by the discovery of the decomposing fox as encountered at the very beginning of the thesis, was formed of a simple proposition. What might happen if I abandon my human-centric walking research methods and shift my focus towards my canine companion's desires and navigational imperatives? Where might we arrive after three years of collaborative practice and what questions might be raised by entering into this multispecies collaboration? As such, what I initially saw as a psychogeographic strategy, a playful act of subverting the ubiquitous walkies, has opened up a whole series of questions on human-canine co-authorship and sensory explorations of place and space and human-canine relational ontologies. Therefore, what seems like a simple proposition to *follow the dog* has led to a number of speculative explorations addressed throughout this thesis. In this concluding chapter, I have revisited those explorations and questions, as explored through a combination of practice and theory, to offer a synthesis of the project findings, contributions, limitations, and recommendations for future research. I have proposed that, as an artistic research methodology, deep canine topography and its creative outputs offer a significant contribution to knowledge in both the field of artistic-walking practice and critical animal studies. Furthermore, future research which privileges multispecies spatial relations has the opportunity to radically reconsider how humans and animals navigate and negotiate shared spaces and make a world together.



Figure 47 - O'Brien and O'Brien, *Bradgate Walk*, digital photograph, 2023.

EXHALE

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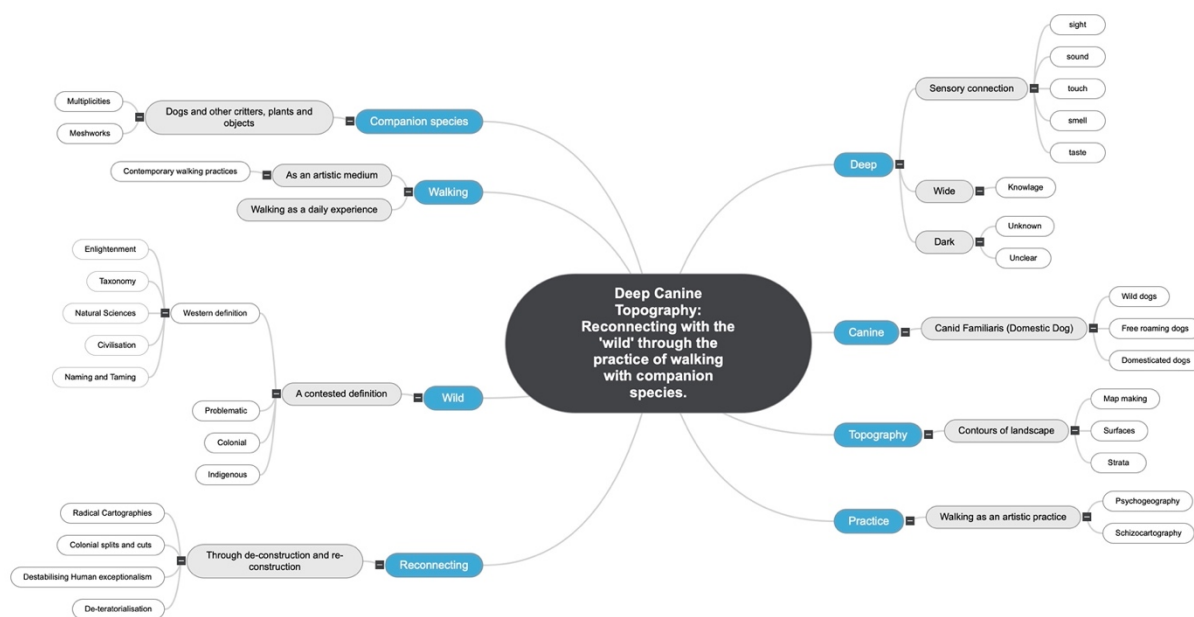
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Glossary of Terms and Concepts

This glossary begins with a diagrammatical deconstruction of the thesis title and terms used within, before going on to offer brief definitions of terms and concepts encountered and expanded upon throughout the text (in alphabetical order).

Deep Canine Topography Reconnecting with the 'wild' through the artistic practice of walking with companion species.



Deep Topography

Often used in terms of geography, *topography* deals with the study of the surface, its detail, and contours. Therefore, deep topography suggests a deep reading of landscapes through their contours, traces, affective connections, atmospheres, and so on. I first encountered the term in Tina Richardson's analysis of psychogeography in her book *Walking Inside-Out* (2015).²⁵⁴ It was here that I discovered the work of Nick Papadimitriou, who first coined the phrase 'deep topography', which I dip into at various points in the thesis, in his meditation on the English landscape *Scarp* (2012).²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴ Tina Richardson, ed. *Walking Inside Out: Contemporary British Psychogeography*. (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015).

²⁵⁵ Nick Papadimitriou, *Scarp: In Search of London's Outer Limits*. (London: Hachette, 2012).

I offer the terms topography and deep topography, not only as a study of the contours and surfaces of the landscape and its deep reading, but as potential points of contact between bodies and bodies in flight, which become permeable and fluid in their movement and choreography through space. Furthermore, the shapes formed by bodies in motion, in relation to the contours and topographic features of the landscape act as a contact zone between bodies and landscape.

Canine

The Collins Dictionary definition reads, ‘Canine. / ('keɪnaɪn, 'kæn-) / adjective. of or resembling a dog; doglike. of, relating to, or belonging to the Canidae, a family of mammals, including dogs, jackals, wolves, and foxes, typically having a bushy tail, erect ears, and a long muzzle: order Carnivora (carnivores).’²⁵⁶

Re-connecting

Throughout the thesis, I refer to moments of de-familiarisation, or de-territorialisation, which I address later in this glossary as the two terms are enmeshed within post-structuralist concepts of the self and human subjectivity. In the title, I have used ‘Reconnecting’ as an overarching word to describe how walking with a canine companion as an aesthetic practice has the ability to trouble human subjectivity, and as such offers a more embodied reading of the landscape, thus the potential to re-engage, or re-connect, the body with its surroundings through affect, immanence, and playful improvisation.

Wild (Wildness)

This brings us to perhaps the most contentious and problematic word in the title, ‘wild’. The term ‘wild’ is caught up in the notion of nature, the history of the natural sciences, romanticism, imperial colonialism, and the sublime. For this thesis, therefore, wild relates to a condition beyond the human as a rational, logical animal, or beyond the established hierarchy offered by human exceptionalism. To this end, I look to queer and feminist readings of wild and wildness as a colonial construct, perhaps best summarised by Andrew Goodman’s reading of Jack Halstom’s concept of bewilderment. In his 2022 paper, *Undoing the Human *wild**

²⁵⁶ The Collins English Dictionary Online, Accessed September 2023
<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/canine>.

Art and a Poetics of Ecology, Goodman draws our attention to Halberstam's assessment of the problematic histories of European colonialism in proposing that,

Europeans, particularly post-Enlightenment, have a complicated relationship to wildness, both mourning its supposed loss and the urge to tame or eradicate it. [...] In this sense, wildness is a space imagined, constructed, and disavowed by colonialism in order to create a boundary to an imagined normativity.²⁵⁷

Deep canine topography seeks, through its practice, to face such criticism of the term 'wild' and 'wildness' head-on through an unsettling of the human as subject and by critiquing the very colonial origins of their contemporary definitions. Goodman goes on to explore Halberstam's critique of colonial concepts of wildness: '*Wildness, Halberstam argues, trades a psychologically bounded self for a wide open space across which an unknowable self is dispersed.*'²⁵⁸ Halberstam's concept of bewilderment offers an alternative reading of wild and wildness as a queer failure which rejects *found*-ness and the knowing subject for creative confusion and abandonment. As Goodman states,

[...] such abandonment does not entail separation from the messiness of life as is the white fantasy, rather it predicates a re-immersion in its coming into being, disorientating the self (whether the experimenter or the experiment is under consideration as subject), through 'becoming vulnerable' to the field of ecology (Singh 2018: 67), through listening to other voices and other forces in the world. Opening, in other words to the *wild*.²⁵⁹

It is in this state of unknowing, confusion and abandonment, by placing one's trust in the animal, that the aforementioned re-connection occurs as a hybrid osculation between human-canine and wild spaces that deep canine topography seeks to venture.

Walking (as practice)

In his 2019 book, *Walking Networks*, Blake Morris explores the histories of psychogeography and its influence on contemporary walking practices, suggesting that, '*Walking's potential as an artistic medium is in the opportunities it provides to creatively imagine the world through slow, detailed engagement with the contours of the landscape and the people with whom we*

²⁵⁷ Andrew Goodman. "Undoing the Human: * Wild* Art and a Poetics of Ecology." (2022), 6.

²⁵⁸ Goodman. "Undoing the Human", 7.

²⁵⁹ Goodman. "Undoing the Human", 7.

*inhabit it.*²⁶⁰ Walking, therefore, is an established creative and artistic practice which manifests in many forms and media. Walking also forms the predominant research methodology here, which is expanded in the *Introduction and Methodology* chapter. Where deep canine topography departs from Morris's description is in the proposal that walking can no longer be considered a human-centred activity. Deep canine topography, therefore, proposes from the outset that we are always walking with, and within, a multiplicity of humans, non-humans, objects, forces, elemental and quantum, and so on. The aim is to shift walking practices away from its humanist and romantic routes towards an engaged practice which seeks to challenge human exceptionalism.

Companion Species

Companion species, as coined by Donna Haraway, is defined by the *Oxford Dictionary of Critical Theory*:

Donna Haraway's term for the mutually dependent—Haraway's term is 'obligatory'—relationship between human animals and certain kinds of non-human animals. Companion species differs from companion animals (such as guide dogs for the blind) in this crucial respect: it implies a two-way dependency. Haraway argues that neither human animals nor non-human animals pre-exist their relationship to one another. This is because the relationship is productive or co-constitutive. Haraway takes this line of thought back to the origin of both humans and dogs and argues that their development has to be seen as an instance of co-evolution. Neither species would be what it is today without the other. Humans are in a state of coexistence with countless microorganisms, Haraway argues, so 'our' sense of 'self' needs to be rethought.²⁶¹

For the purposes of deep canine topography, companion species refers both to our canine companion, co-author, and main protagonist, as well as the varied animals, plants, elemental forces, and vibrant objects we encounter.

Affect Theory

As a general overarching theoretical position, affect theory offers a way of conceptualising precognitive forces which act on bodies through relational encounters. Such relational encounters include encounters with objects, animals, and other humans. Affect theory runs a

²⁶⁰ Blake Morris. *Walking Networks: The Development of an Artistic Medium*. (London: Rowman & Littlefield Unlimited Model, 2019) 169.

²⁶¹ Ian Buchanan. *A Dictionary of Critical Theory*: (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2018) 122.

thread through many of the concepts explored in this thesis, for example as the underlying theory of Manning's relational movement, Goodman's relational ecologies (See chapter 1), affective theories in geography explored by Jamie Lorimer's animal atmospheres, and in counter cartography, as explored through Linda Knight's inefficient mapping (See chapter 3). Furthermore, the origins of affect theory can be seen to emerge through Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Spinoza's ethics. For the purposes of this thesis, affect theory offers a framework through which to discuss non-linguistic and precognitive forces which underscore human-canine relational encounters.

Anthropocene and Capitalocene

The Anthropocene is a term used to describe the current geological age, viewed as the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment. Similarly, the term Capitalocene critiques the role of global capitalism in accelerating the dominance of negative human activity on global ecosystems. Jason Moore argues that the Capitalocene is intrinsically a product of colonial global expansion, which began in the 15th-century and has evolved towards a total dominance of nature.²⁶²

Assemblage Theory

In their 1988 opus, *A Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari draw from dynamical systems theory, which explores the way material systems self-organize, and extends the system to include that of the social, linguistic, and philosophical to create assemblage theory. In assemblage theory, assemblages are formed through the processes of coding, stratification, and territorialisation. Deleuze and Guattari use the term 'constellation' when describing an assemblage. A constellation, like any assemblage, is made up of imaginative contingent articulations among myriad heterogeneous elements. This process of ordering matter around a body is referred to by Deleuze and Guattari as coding. According to Deleuze and Guattari, assemblages are coded by taking a particular form; they select, compose, and complete a territory. In composing a territory there exists the creation of hierarchical bodies in the process of stratification. Drawing from the constellation metaphor, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the constellation includes some heavenly bodies but leaves out others, the included

²⁶² Jason W Moore, ed. *Anthropocene or Capitalocene?: Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*. (Oakland: Pm Press, 2016).

bodies being those in close proximity, given the particular gathering and angle of view. The example constellation thus defines the relationships with the bodies around it and the way the universe is viewed. Territorialization is the final process of assemblage theory and is viewed as the ordering of the coded and stratified bodies that create the assemblage. Assemblages territorialize both forms of content and forms of expression. Forms of content, also known as material forms, include the assemblage of human and nonhuman bodies, actions, and reactions. Forms of expression include incorporeal enunciations, acts, and statements. Within this form of territorialisation, assemblages do not remain static; they are further characterized by processes of de-territorialisation and re-territorialization. De-territorialisation occurs when articulations are disarticulated and disconnected. Re-territorialisation describes the process by which new articulations are forged, thus constituting a new assemblage. A key feature of Deleuze and Guattari's presentation of immanence concerning the geographies of deep canine topography centres around the concept of the surface. Radical immanence rejects transcendence and dialectics and asks us to consider rhyzomic connections, or the interconnectedness of all things, as played out on a flat, non-hierarchical (arborescent) plane. This allows us to approach the process of deep canine topography in two ways: 1 – In geographical terms, the canine follows the contours of the surface, meeting the world through direct sensory entanglement, and 2, the position of the human as physically upright, and focused on the horizon, does not dictate superiority or exceptionalism. In this sense, the human, canine, and by extension environments, form an assemblage in the moment of the walk, which momentarily suspends hierarchies.

Becoming Animal and Nomadic Subjectivity

Becoming animal is a movement in which a subject no longer occupies a realm of stability but rather is folded into a nomadic mode of existence in which one is always an anomaly, that is, inaccessible to any form of definition. Taken literally, it could be read as a fluidity of identity in which the human subject might enter into a more intuitive animal state of being. In relation to deep canine topography, I introduce the concept of becoming animal to discuss how the human subject might be radically re-composed through the act of entering into a creative alliance with the canine body. I describe the twin concepts of becoming animal and nomadic subjectivity, as introduced by Deleuze and Guattari and developed by Rosi Braidotti, in-depth in chapter 2, *Becoming Bodies*.

Contact Zones

In 1991, Linguist Mary Louise Pratt introduced the concept of the contact zone, proposing the term as referring to, '[...] *social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they lived out in many parts of the world today.*' In doing so Pratt posited the contact zone as the site of linguistic and cultural encounters, where power is negotiated often from an asymmetrical standpoint. Pratt describes such zones as furtive sites from which to confront asymmetry through struggle and negotiation.

Contact zones, in terms of artist and animals, are further developed by critical theorist Ron Broglio and also taken up by Donna Haraway through her writing on companion species. Both Broglio and Haraway's reading of contact zones features as an important theory in deep canine topography. Therefore, I utilise the term to describe points of contact between human and canine subjectivities and the material of the landscapes we walk together.

Immanence and Territorialisation

Immanence, as described by 17th-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza and developed by 20th-century post-structuralist philosopher Gilles Deleuze, offers an alternative position to transcendence in transcendental philosophy and theology. Transcendence considers the mind-body split, most famously encountered as a concept in 17th-century philosopher Rene Descartes's maxim *I think therefore I am* (Cogito ergo sum) suggesting that the mind, or soul, is capable of independent existence without a body, whereas immanence considers the condition of *being* as entirely within or present in a material sense. Therefore, immanence, whilst presenting its own complex paradoxes, dispenses with hierarchies of transcendence, often at the root of taxonomies which support human exceptionalism, by offering flatter, rhizomic and chaotic structures, from which new assemblages are formed. For the purposes of this thesis, I refer to radical immanence, as described by Rosi Braidotti and Karen Barad, to explore the spatial plane of immanence, from which a multitude of interrelated connections might occur. In the walk as an improvisation of bodies in motion, for example, the plane of immanence represents the possibility for a multitude of potential human-canine-landscape assemblages. This is further explored in Chapter 2, *Becoming Bodies*.

Improvisation

Improvisation, or as I may refer to it from time to time, playful improvisation, is used to describe to process of deep canine topography as it unfolds in practice. Improvisation is defined as the act of composing actions, either in music or dance, with no prior knowledge or preparation. In the case of deep canine topography, improvisation refers to the generation of the walk through a constant interplay of human-canine choreography as negotiated between two bodies in motion. In addition, both bodies, human and canine, also respond directly to the environments we encounter which influence our choreography.

Posthumanism

Posthumanism is a concept which has evolved from a direct critique of Philosophical Humanism. Posthumanism represents an important philosophical movement in terms of human-animal relations as it assumes a flat ontology which challenges traditional anthropocentric positions and embraces material agency and the responsibility of addressing humanist asymmetry in the geological epoch of the Anthropocene. Critical theorist Cary Wolfe describes two different kinds of posthumanism; humanist-posthumanism and posthumanist posthumanism. In the former, the human retains a sense of sovereignty from which an ethical consideration of the non-human other is extended. Here, it might be said that empathy is extended like an outstretched arm, embracing the animal by lifting its status to that of the human. The latter, however, acknowledges an understanding of the consequences of a radical redefinition of human knowledge by embracing knowledge not only in the possession of the human but also as situated elsewhere.²⁶³

In his 2015 book *Thinking Through Animals*, Matthew Calarco presents us with a comprehensive account of the three main schools of thought that underpin contemporary posthuman dialogues. Calarco defines the three critical approaches to the animal question which emerged in the 20th and 21st centuries as identity, difference and indistinction.

The first of the three is the concept of identity. As we have seen, the sharp distinction of human-animal relations begins to dissolve with the advent of Darwin's Theory of Evolution, but

²⁶³ Cary Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?*: (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 91.

it is with the advent of animal rights theorists such as Peter Singer, Paola Cavalieri and Tom Regan that animal ethics are thoroughly tested by the emergence of the animal liberation movement of the 1970s. Influenced by evolutionary biology, supported by scientific and empirical enquiry, the identity theory argues that there is no clear distinction between human and animal capacity for intelligence. Instead, it proposes that sentience is a continuum, from the simplest of single-cell organisms to the most complex cognitive processes of the human brain. In this sense, identity theory argues that equal ethical consideration should be attributed to animals with whom we identify as part of a continuum of being. Therefore, for example, discrimination on grounds of not belonging to a dominant species is regarded as prejudice, thus rendering speciesism a form of irrational discrimination. For example, contemporary philosopher of animal rights Tom Regan, calls for an egalitarian ethical framework based on shared human-animal properties. For Regan the most important shared property is subjectivity or being a subject-of-a-life, finding the concept of sentience too simplistic a basis on which to explore equality.²⁶⁴ Therefore, following Regan, perhaps the question of animal sentience should be modified to animal subjectivity, which can only be adequately considered if we begin to conceptualise the subject not as a static form, but as nomadic and capable of change.

However, the underlying principle of identity theory still holds the human as the pinnacle of evolution and as such draws a line around the human, a boundary which might be extended to include other animals with similar traits, such as primates, but also those who live within close proximity, such as the canine. Here, ethics becomes selective and ultimately it is the human that gets to choose, through the employment of human-constructed ethical frameworks, who enters the circle, or how far the arm of ethical consideration is reached around our animal kin. This is of course legally and culturally defined. For example, welfare in farming is often measured against cost and human nutritional needs where intensive farming practices are justified and more compassionate choices come at a cost only accessible to certain social groups. Here the human retains the position as the evolutionary dominant group, and within human social and political structures, certain humans get to hold a higher position than others. Therefore, it could be argued that an inherent inequality lies at the heart of the identity theory,

²⁶⁴ Matthew Calarco, *Thinking Through Animals: Identity, Difference, Indistinction*. (California: Stanford University Press, 2015), 16.

or as Calarco argues, *'The fate of other animals, humans, and non-humans who are not sufficiently like "us" would remain, within the identity framework, as precarious as ever.'*²⁶⁵

Difference theory emerges, as we have seen, through the writing of Jacques Derrida and Cary Wolf, alongside Judith Butler. Moving away from the anthropocentric view of the identity framework, difference theory dispenses with the concept of similarity and continuity, to embrace and respect critical differences between humans and non-humans. The main principles of the difference framework or theory, therefore, is a critical attitude towards ontological humanism and the development of an ethics of otherness. In a critical humanist approach, the very definition of the human as somehow the dominant species is deeply questioned and deconstructed. In this sense, humans begin to be seen as relational beings, rather than having a fixed essence of being from which all other beings are measured. Here, we see echoes of Spinoza's classification of species as built on affects, rather than biological determinism. This position allows for a flatter ontological notion of what constitutes life, and we begin to conceptualise the human in relation to all living things. The individual subject, therefore, becomes part of a wider relational network, where individual subject differences are simply defined as *other*. Here, otherness equates to equal but different. Therefore, central to the ethics of the difference framework is the encounter with the strangeness of otherness. From this position, such an encounter with otherness forces us to rethink our own position as a species. The presence of the otherness of dogs, for example, forces us to consider our position as humans only capable of showing love towards other humans. The very idea of loving, caring, and grieving for a non-human animal confronts us with a radical otherness. When measured against the identity approach, however, the difference framework could be argued to lack pragmatism, that is the ability to influence the status of the animal through existing legal frameworks. As such it remains an important but nevertheless highly conceptual paradigm, whose time is perhaps yet to come. Furthermore, the difference approach maintains anthropological differences and within its framework, any attempts to dissolve such differences ultimately fail.

²⁶⁵ Calarco. *Thinking Through Animals*.

Indistinction, on the other hand embraces the theoretical concepts of Deleuze, Guattari, Val Plumwood, and Rosi Braidotti. Representing the current paradigm in animal studies, indistinction aims to remove human exceptionalism and anthropological distinctions by measuring the human through similarity to the animal, rather than distinguishing the animal through similarities with the human. Emerging from eco-feminism, queer and critical disability studies, and radical animal rights activism, the indistinction framework does not deny similarities between humans and animals but critiques the very position from which the ethical question of identity is approached. The concept of indifference, therefore, moves beyond anthropological difference to explore a shared space through relational encounters by inhabiting a zone of indistinction, defined by Calarco as a, '[...] *zone of exposed embodiment*.'²⁶⁶ For example, in deep canine topography the embodiment of the walk as a site of the co-authorship through a shared act of making reveals moments where our defences dissolve or are radically troubled whilst the dominance of the construct of human-animal difference is exposed. The indifference approach considers the human-animal divide as a result of a performative apparatus which upholds a specific reality of human uniqueness and exceptionalism built on patterns of social, political, theological, and historical concepts of the human. Therefore, if we abandon the uniqueness of humanity as a stand-alone animal, we can enter into a more meaningful relational encounter with all life, animal or otherwise. In this proposal, differences can be explored, acknowledged, and maintained on new ethical grounds of what Braidotti describes as bio-egalitarianism, where new kinds of posthuman identities can be formed. Here, we see the necessity of nomadic subjectivity in the redefining, or perhaps re-performing, of the human as animal. In summary, the indifference framework asks us to shift from the position of thinking about the animal question to a position of thinking with the animal as equally united by our very animal being. The question for indifference then is how existing dominant structures can be dismantled or reimagined by abandoning the anthropocentric position. This move requires a becoming animal of the human, in which human subjectivity is troubled and becomes nomadic, fluid, and unstable.

²⁶⁶ Calarco. *Thinking Through Animals*.

Psychogeography and the Dérive

Psychogeography is a concept developed in the late 1950s by the Paris-based group the Situationists and the Letterist International group. Spokesperson for the Letterist and Situationist groups, Guy Debord, defined psychogeography as, '[...] *the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, whether unconsciously organised or not, on the geographical emotions and behaviour of individuals.*'²⁶⁷ The dérive is defined as a psychogeographic practice or technique for the rapid passage through various ambiances, as employed by the Situationists, which seeks to subvert the traditional notions of walking and the journey, often through the employment of playful strategies, chance, and improvisation. Psychogeography is explored in depth in the *Introduction and Methodology* chapter.

²⁶⁷ James Trier. *Guy Debord, the Situationist International, and the Revolutionary Spirit*: (Boston: BRILL, 2019) 17.

Scoping The Field – An Alternative Literature Review

The field of human-canine artistic collaboration is surprisingly quite narrow, although I discovered two significant essays by Jessica Ullrich and David Williams which explore such interactions, both of which offer interesting insights into human-canine artistic encounters. Therefore, this scoping exercise is presented as an alternative to the traditional literature review and includes significant artists whose work I have studied in relation to the scope of the research, some of whom are discussed throughout the thesis.

Jessica Ullrich

Jessica Ullrich's 2018 essay *Contact Zones—Where Dogs and Humans Meet: Dog-Human Metamorphoses in Contemporary Art*, appears in *Animals and Their People, Connecting East and West in Cultural Animal Studies*, offers a useful critique of several artworks and performances across late 20th and early 21st-century, which feature some kind of partnership between human and canine. Ullrich concludes that, despite the artist's intentions, the many manifestations of human-canine artistic collaborations she examines constitute an extension of the artist's agency, rather than a true human-canine collaboration. Here, Ulrich argues that the canine often stands in for representations, proposing that, '*The dog functions as means for constituting human identity.*'²⁶⁸ Ultimately, Ullrich's critique exposes the complex and contested power relationships between humans and their canine companions, even when they intend to problematise such asymmetrical power relations.

David Williams

In his 2007 essay, *Inappropriate/d Others, or The Difficulty of Being A Dog*, David Williams introduces a brief history of more unusual human-canine collaborations, including artists such as Joseph Beuys, Oleg Kulik, and Nobuhira Narumi. In this quite broad exploration of human-canine encounters, Williams explores the many complex modes of representation and collaboration between human artists and their canine kin. Sometimes, as with Oleg Kulik, this involves assuming the form and animality of the canine through performance, and perhaps more relevant for this thesis, Nobuhira Narumi engages in a collaborative human-canine

²⁶⁸ Ullrich, Jessica. "Contact Zones—Where Dogs and Humans Meet: Dog-Human Metamorphoses in Contemporary Art." In *Animals and Their People*, pp. 53-68. Brill, 2018.

photographic and video practice, which employs a similar psychogeographic framing of place and space.²⁶⁹

Significant artists who work directly with canine collaborators

Angela Bartram

Angela Bartram is a British artist, whose considerable body of practice includes many human-canine collaborative encounters. For example, in the 2016 work, *Be Your Dog*, Batram invited humans and their significant canine companions into a traditional white wall gallery space to engage in a collaborative encounter, in which participants were invited to mimic and mirror the actions of their canine companions. In more recent experiments, Batram engages in the practice of reading philosophy to animals. Batram's first human-canine collaboration, *Licking Dogs* (2007) saw the artist exchange facial licks with dogs, whose breeds were specifically selected due to their large size, amount of slobber and perceived aggressive tendencies. In an account of *Licking Dogs*, Batram states that *'[...] the rules of engagement between different species become shaken and fragile through interaction considered improper and unacceptable'*²⁷⁰

Joseph Beuys

Cited by many as a significant work in human-canine encounters, Joseph Beuys' 1974 performance *I Like America and America Likes Me*, Rene Block Gallery, New York, saw the German artist arrive at Kennedy Airport, transported by ambulance to the gallery, where he spent three days in the company of a wild coyote. During this short cohabitation, both the artist and the wild dog engage in several spatial and territorial negotiations. In a detailed exploration of Beuys' sculptural and collaborative encounter with the coyote, David Williams concludes that their movements compose an artwork which, *'[...] assumes a complex stasis in terms of*

²⁶⁹ David Williams, "Inappropriate/d Others: or, the Difficulty of Being a Dog," *The Drama Review* 51, no. 1 (2007): 92-118, 103.

²⁷⁰ Angela Bartram, "Between Bodies: An Artist's Account of the Oral Connection Between Human and Dog," *Intimacy Across Visceral and Digital Performance*, ed. M. Chatzichristodoulou et al. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 102.

authorship.²⁷¹ Although I do not refer to Beuys specifically in this thesis, *I like America and America likes me* is cited here as a significant artwork which explores human, and in this case, wild canine relational interaction, although here perhaps as a metaphor for wider political and territorial concerns.

Significant artists who work within the field of radical and counter-cartography

Layla Curtis

Layla Curtis's practice focuses on place, landscape, and mapping and often examines the attempts we make to chart the earth, how we locate ourselves, navigate space, and represent terrain. Works include *Trespass*, an app for iPhone which maps an oral history of a northern English edge-land and tempts the user to trespass to access the work; *Polar Wandering*, a 27,856-mile-long interactive online drawing charting her journey to Antarctica, exhibited in solo shows at New Art Gallery, Walsall and Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast; and *Tong Tana*, a moving image work made while trekking with nomadic hunter-gathers in the Borneo Rainforest and exhibited at Matt's Gallery, London. I am particularly drawn to Curtis's practice as an example of counter and radical cartography which sits slightly outside of walking practice.

Simon Faithfull

Simon Faithfull's ongoing *Ever Expanding Atlas of Subjectivity* offers an example of counter-cartographic visual art practice in which the artist makes daily drawings on a digital palm top, which builds a database of images, layered onto an interactive world map *Limbo*. Faithfull's work offers an example of how creative outputs from the project might be organised and shared in ways which challenge the very concept of traditional cartography. Faithfull's wider practice considers the body as a sculptural sensing object, sent out into the world to report back on its findings.

Linda Knight

Linda Knight is an artist and academic specialising in critical feminist and speculative arts practices and methods. Knight's *Inefficient Mapping* is a significant contemporary counter-

²⁷¹ David Williams, "Inappropriate/d Others: or, the Difficulty of Being a Dog," *The Drama Review* 51, no. 1 (2007): 92-118, 103.

cartographic methodology which attempts to map space through relational affective forces and flows, acting upon the body in space.

Nick Papadimitriou

Nick Papadimitriou is a British writer, historian, and psychogeographer, who coined the phrase deep topography in his 2012 book, *Scarp*.²⁷² Academic Tina Richardson describes Papadimitriou's deep topography as a direct communion with the landscape, and as such has been an important point of departure for the development of deep canine topography.

Those who bridge the two fields of enquiry

Francis Alÿs

Belgian-born, Mexican-based artist Francis Alÿs often utilises walking as a generative, often performative, method to address issues of power relations in urban spaces and wider geopolitical concerns. The dog seems to be a recurring symbol in Alÿs's vast body of work, perhaps most present in the 2003 video *El Gringo*, in which Alÿs collaborated with Rafael Ortega. *El Gringo* depicts a walk through a Mexican landscape, where the artist is confronted by a pack of dogs guarding a small group of houses, resulting in a territorial stand-off, which gets more frantic and confrontational until the artist is forced to abandon the camera. The camera then takes on the role of object of curiosity as the dogs regroup. Other examples of the animal presence in Alÿs' work include *The Night Watchman*, in which the artist releases a fox into the deserted National Portrait Gallery, which I briefly discuss in Chapter 1, *Becoming Movement*. Dogs also appear in Alÿs's many documented walks in Mexico City.²⁷³

Belén Cerezo

Belen Cerezo is a contemporary, Nottingham-based artist and academic. Cerezo's practice explores the position of filming with the body and navigating space as an embodied practice. In her 2018 multi-screen video and sound installation, *Viviendo el día (Living the Day)*, Cerezo

²⁷² Nick Papadimitriou, *Scarp: In Search of London's Outer Limits*. (London: Hachette, 2012).

²⁷³ Francis Alÿs, *The Politics of Rehearsal*, (Los Angeles: Hammer Museum, 2007).

utilises the dog walk as the central generator for exploring sensory encounters with place and space.²⁷⁴

Lee Deigaard

Lee Deigaard is an artist based in New Orleans, whose current practice *Vixen Vector* explores the geometry of her companion canine and the shapes she makes whilst walking in the local neighbourhood, captured by drawing and photography to build a body of human-canine collaborative practice.

Simon Faithfull (Canine-specific works)

Simon Faithfull's, *Siberian Dog Proposal* saw the artist submit several proposals for an exhibition in Siberia during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Unable to attend due to travel restrictions, Faithfull instead employed the body of a canine collaborator to perform the proposal. A camera is placed on the back of the dog documenting its roaming journey through and around the gallery space. This work is explored further in Chapter 3, *Becoming Radical Cartographies*. Faithfull also created an animation in 2004, commissioned by Chanel 4 and the Arts Council England, which followed an imagined journey of his canine companion through an urban landscape along the A13 trunk road in London.²⁷⁵

Miranda Whall

Miranda Whall's *Crossed Paths* series of works takes us into the landscape through the body of the animal. Through performance, Whall explores more-than-human worlds and the spaces they occupy, challenging human-centric encounters with landscape. From her first work in the *Crossed Paths* series, Whall occupies the position of the sheep, a familiar occupant of the Welsh landscape, wearing a symbolic sheep skin or fleece whilst adopting an all-fours position. Employing a number of body-mounted cameras, Whall captures the world from the ground up, in a direct communion with the earth, its mud, and grass, positioning the body as organic matter, and challenges the boundaries between body and landscape, human and animal,

²⁷⁴ Belen Cerezo, "Artist Biography, Primary Artist Studio, Members," Accessed January 2023, <https://www.weareprimary.org/belen-cerezo>.

²⁷⁵ Simon Faithfull, "'13' HD Animation From Digital Drawings," Accessed June 2023 <https://www.simonfaithfull.org/works/13/>.

matter and mattering. The resulting multi-screen video and sound installations invite us into a variety of non-human worlds, marrying the rhythms of the landscape and the 'crawl' (as a form of walking practice) with incidental music in collaboration with composers and performers.











Nobuhira Narumi

In the same paper that Williams explored Joseph Beuys' encounter with the coyote, he also introduces the dog-cam projects of Japanese born video artist Nobuhira Narumi. First devised in the late 1990s, *Dog Cam* sees Narumi visiting several cities and contacting dog owners, asking if he can take their dogs for a walk.²⁷⁶ Each dog, effectively a stranger to Narumi, wears a specially adapted head-mounted camera which takes a picture each time the dog nods its head. The resulting images record canine desires and deep olfactory examinations of place and space, as the dogs act as a guide to the city.²⁷⁷ The resulting images create a dog's eye map of the city in photographic form. Narumi also presents short video works, filmed from the canine point of view, reminiscent of my own canine filmmaking exploits.

²⁷⁶ Williams. "Inappropriate/d others."

²⁷⁷ Nobuhira Narumi, "Selected works, Dog-cam projects, 1997-1999," Accessed June 2023 <https://www.nobuهرانarumi.net/selected-works>.

Chronological Practice Exposition Table

Image	Title	Research Catalogue URL
	FURTHER ADVENTURES IN DEEP CANINE TOPOGRAPHY: EXPERIMENTS IN CANINE SOUNDSCAPES: ATTENDING TO RHYTHM AND REPETITION.	https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-exposition?exposition=940557
	10 X 10 X 10 EDGELANDS:	https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-exposition?exposition=930702
	A SINGE BREATH:	https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-exposition?exposition=947115
	IT'S OK, THEY'RE FRIENDLY:	https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-exposition?exposition=1641660
	ADVENTURES IN DEEP CANINE TOPOGRAPHY. PART 3: THE BEACH BENEATH OR FEET: A HUNAN-CANINE EXPLORATION OF WILD SPACE: (FILM)	https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-exposition?exposition=1288823
	WHY LOOK AT HUMANS?	https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-exposition?exposition=1506060
	TWO BODIES DRAWING:	https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-exposition?exposition=1590446
	A YEAR WITH THE MEADOWS: (FILM)	https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-exposition?exposition=1495540
	360° EXPERIMENTS IN DEEP CANINE TOPOGRAPHY:	https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-exposition?exposition=1964879
	DEEP CANINE TOPOGRAPHY: RE-CONNECTING WITH THE WILD THROUGH THE ARTISTIC PRACTICE OF WALKING WITH COMPANION ANIMALS.	(Central exposition landing and navigation page) https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-exposition?exposition=1466774

Notes

ⁱ Some Notes Towards a Manifesto for Artists Working With or About the Living World – by Mark Dion (2000)

1. We are not living in a simple age and as artists of the time our work reveals complex contradictions between science and art, between empiricism and the idea, between nature and technology and between aesthetic conventions and novel forms of visualization. Our goals vary. While some may wish to dissolve the contradictions in our social relations to the natural world, others may be interested in analyzing or highlighting them.

2. A: Humans do not stand outside of nature: we, too, are animals, a part of the very thing we have tried to control, whether for exploitation or protection.

B: Just as humanity cannot be separate from nature, so our conception of nature cannot be said to stand outside of culture and society. We construct and are constructed by nature.

3. Our work, rather than being 'about nature', can be better characterised as being focused on ideas about nature.

4. Artists working with living organisms must know what they are doing. They must take responsibility for the plants' or animals' welfare. If an organism dies during an exhibition, the viewer should assume the death to be the intention of the artist.

5. Artists do not break international wildlife protection laws (unless those laws are irrational).

6. The relationship we have to living organisms is a passionate one. Our subject rules our lives. We live, breathe, and eat our field of investigation. This passion is essential for the production of compelling artwork.

7. Artists who produce work about biology or who collaborate with fungi, plants or animals are not bound by forms or materials. One can produce an argument in many different languages; no form of expression is more perfectly suited to ecological issues. Painting, architecture, landscape design, photography, performance, virtual technology, sculpture, installation, video, horticulture, and agit-prop have all been deployed to great success.

8. Understanding the past's traditions of nature, in folk culture, science, aesthetics, philosophy and religion, is a source of illumination for the present and also the future. The beliefs of the past form the foundations for contemporary institutions and more often than not, still persist in their own operation.

9. Artists must resist nostalgia. We never do 'golden age' history. When we reference the past it is not to evoke 'the good old days'. Our relation to the past is historical, not mythical.

10. Nature does not always know what is best.

11. We reject the notion of the environment as a perpetually stable and self-regulating system, existing in a constant state of balance. The natural world is far more dynamic and intricate, and it's history, for at least ten thousand years, has been more entwined with human history than notions of natural balance allow for.

12. The more a notion of nature is touted as free of culture, the more likely it is to be a successful product of it.

13. Animals are individuals, and not carbon copy mechanistic entities. They have cognitive abilities, personalities and flexible behavior, which is not to suggest that they exhibit distinctly human characteristics.

14. Anthropomorphism has long been guarded against in the field of zoology as an impediment to understanding animal behaviour in their own context. While a pitfall in ethology, artists may find the rich

tradition of anthropomorphism too powerful a tool to surrender, particularly when probing the boundaries between humans and other animals.

15. 'The first thing you have to ask is, "Is it scientifically right?" This is still nothing but it is essential'. Ruskin.

16. The ivory tower of science is a ruin. Science is not a pure realm of truth beyond the taints of ideology and business but a field of ideas enmeshed in a power struggle. Increasingly industry and economics dictate the direction and priorities of research. Whilst informed by science, we are ever vigilant against claims of scientific neutrality, and ever skeptical of the 'official story' of natural history presented by scientific institutions.

17. Taxonomy, i.e. the classification of the natural world, whilst a useful tool, is a system of order imposed by man and not an objective reflection of nature. Its categories are actively applied and contain the assumptions, values and associations of human society.

18. Our societies can afford wildlife conservation and the preservation of natural habitats.

19. The variety and variability of life is a wonder of infinite complexity. There is no more curious and uncanny topic than the biodiversity that surrounds us. The objective of the best art and science is not to strip nature of wonder but to enhance it. Knowledge and poetry are not in conflict.

20. We believe and affirm that human interaction with the natural world need not result in the degradation and homogenization of natural habitats and landscapes. Cultures have a choice to determine the future of our relationship with the living world, as efficiently as the environment is destroyed it could also be protected.

Source: Giovanni Aloj, *Speculative Taxidermy: Natural History, Animal Surfaces, and Art in the Anthropocene*. (Columbia University Press, 2018) 257.