

Emergent Naturecultures

From “Notes of a Sports Writer’s Daughter”:

Ms Cayenne Pepper continues to colonize all my cells—a sure case of what the biologist Lynn Margulis calls symbiogenesis. I bet if you checked our DNA, you’d find some potent transfections between us. Her saliva must have the viral vectors. Surely, her darter-tongue kisses have been irresistible. Even though we share placement in the phylum of vertebrates, we inhabit not just different genera and divergent families, but altogether different orders.

How would we sort things out? Canid, hominid; pet, professor; bitch, woman; animal, human; athlete, handler. One of us has a microchip injected under her neck skin for identification; the other has a photo ID

California driver's license. One of us has a written record of her ancestors for twenty generations; one of us does not know her great grandparents' names. One of us, product of a vast genetic mixture, is called "pure-bred." One of us, equally product of a vast mixture, is called "white." Each of these names designates a racial discourse, and we both inherit their consequences in our flesh.

One of us is at the cusp of flaming, youthful, physical achievement; the other is lusty but over the hill. And we play a team sport called agility on the same expropriated Native land where Cayenne's ancestors herded merino sheep. These sheep were imported from the already colonial pastoral economy of Australia to feed the California Gold Rush 49ers. In layers of history, layers of biology, layers of naturecultures, complexity is the name of our game. We are both the freedom-hungry offspring of conquest, products of white settler colonies, leaping over hurdles and crawling through tunnels on the playing field.

I'm sure our genomes are more alike than they should be. There must be some molecular record of our touch in the codes of living that will leave traces in the world, no matter that we are each reproductively silenced females, one by age, one by surgery. Her red merle Australian Shepherd's quick and lithe tongue has swabbed the tissues of my tonsils, with all their eager immune system receptors. Who knows where my chemical receptors carried her messages, or what she took from my cellular system for distinguishing self from other and binding outside to inside?

We have had forbidden conversation; we have had oral intercourse; we are bound in telling story upon story with nothing but the facts. We are training each other in acts of communication we barely understand. We are, constitutively, companion species. We make each

other up, in the flesh. Significantly other to each other, in specific difference, we signify in the flesh a nasty developmental infection called love. This love is an historical aberration and a naturalcultural legacy.

This manifesto explores two questions flowing from this aberration and legacy: 1) how might an ethics and politics committed to the flourishing of significant otherness be learned from taking dog-human relationships seriously; and 2) how might stories about dog-human worlds finally convince brain-damaged US Americans, and maybe other less historically challenged people, that history matters in naturecultures?

The Companion Species Manifesto is a personal document, a scholarly foray into too many half known territories, a political act of hope in a world on the edge of global war, and a work permanently in progress, in principle. I offer dog-eaten props and half-trained arguments to reshape some stories I care about a great deal, as a scholar and as a person in my time and place. The story here is mainly about dogs. Passionately engaged in these accounts, I hope to bring my readers into the kennel for life. But I hope also that even the dog phobic—or just those with their minds on higher things—will find arguments and stories that matter to the worlds we might yet live in. The practices and actors in dog worlds, human and non-human alike, ought to be central concerns of technoscience studies. Even closer to my heart, I want my readers to know why I consider dog writing to be a branch of feminist theory, or the other way around.

This is not my first manifesto; in 1985, I published “The Cyborg Manifesto” to try to make feminist sense of the implosions of contemporary life in technoscience. Cyborgs are “cybernetic organisms,” named in 1960 in the context of the space race, the cold war, and imperialist fantasies of technohumanism built into policy and research projects. I tried to inhabit cyborgs critically; i.e., neither in celebration nor condemnation, but in a spirit of ironic appropriation for ends never envisioned by the space warriors. Telling a story of co-habitation, co-evolution, and embodied cross-species sociality, the present manifesto asks which of two cobbled together figures—cyborgs and companion species—might more fruitfully inform livable politics and ontologies in current life worlds. These figures are hardly polar opposites. Cyborgs and companion species each bring together the human and non-human, the organic and technological, carbon and silicon, freedom and structure, history and myth, the rich and the poor, the state and the subject, diversity and depletion, modernity and postmodernity, and nature and culture in unexpected ways. Besides, neither a cyborg nor a companion animal pleases the pure of heart who long for better protected species boundaries and sterilization of category deviants. Nonetheless, the differences between even the most politically correct cyborg and an ordinary dog matter.

I appropriated cyborgs to do feminist work in Reagan’s Star Wars times of the mid-1980s. By the end of the millennium, cyborgs could no longer do the work of a proper herding dog to gather up the threads needed for critical inquiry. So I go happily to

the dogs to explore the birth of the kennel to help craft tools for science studies and feminist theory in the present time, when secondary Bushes threaten to replace the old growth of more livable naturecultures in the carbon budget politics of all water-based life on earth. Having worn the scarlet letters, “Cyborgs for earthly survival!” long enough, I now brand myself with a slogan only Schutzhund women from dog sports could have come up with, when even a first nip can result in a death sentence: “Run fast; bite hard!”

This is a story of biopower and biosociality, as well as of technoscience. Like any good Darwinian, I tell a story of evolution. In the mode of (nucleic) acidic millennialism, I tell a tale of molecular differences, but one less rooted in Mitochondrial Eve in a neocolonial *Out of Africa* and more rooted in those first mitochondrial canine bitches who got in the way of man making himself yet again in the Greatest Story Ever Told. Instead, those bitches insisted on the history of companion species, a very mundane and ongoing sort of tale, one full of misunderstandings, achievements, crimes, and renewable hopes. Mine is a story told by a student of the sciences and a feminist of a certain generation who has gone to the dogs, literally. Dogs, in their historical complexity, matter here. Dogs are not an alibi for other themes; dogs are fleshly material-semiotic presences in the body of technoscience. Dogs are not surrogates for theory; they are not here just to think with. They are here to live with. Partners in the crime of human evolution, they are in the garden from the get-go, wily as Coyote.

Prehensions

Many versions of process philosophies help me walk with my dogs in this manifesto. For example, Alfred North Whitehead described “the concrete” as “a concrescence of prehensions.” For him, “the concrete” meant an “actual occasion.” Reality is an active verb, and the nouns all seem to be gerunds with more appendages than an octopus. Through their reaching into each other, through their “prehensions” or graspings, beings constitute each other and themselves. Beings do not preexist their relatings. “Prehensions” have consequences. The world is a knot in motion. Biological and cultural determinism are both instances of misplaced concreteness—i.e., the mistake of, first, taking provisional and local category abstractions like “nature” and “culture” for the world and, second, mistaking potent consequences to be preexisting foundations. There are no pre-constituted subjects and objects, and no single sources, unitary actors, or final ends. In Judith Butler’s terms, there are only “contingent foundations;” bodies that matter are the result. A bestiary of agencies, kinds of relatings, and scores of time trump the imaginings of even the most baroque cosmologists. For me, that is what *companion species* signifies.

My love of Whitehead is rooted in biology, but even more in the practice of feminist theory as I have experienced it. This feminist theory, in its refusal of typological thinking, binary dualisms, and both relativisms and universalisms of many flavors,

contributes a rich array of approaches to emergence, process, historicity, difference, specificity, co-habitation, co-constitution, and contingency. Dozens of feminist writers have refused both relativism and universalism. Subjects, objects, kinds, races, species, genres, and genders are the products of their relating. None of this work is about finding sweet and nice—“feminine”—worlds and knowledges free of the ravages and productivities of power. Rather, feminist inquiry is about understanding how things work, who is in the action, what might be possible, and how worldly actors might somehow be accountable to and love each other less violently.

For example, studying Yoruba- and English-speaking mathematics elementary school classrooms in post-independence Nigeria and participating in Australian Aboriginal projects in math teaching and environmental policy, Helen Verran identifies “emergent ontologies.” Verran asks “simple” questions: How can people rooted in different knowledge practices “get on together,” especially when an all-too-easy cultural relativism is not an option, either politically, epistemologically, or morally? How can general knowledge be nurtured in postcolonial worlds committed to taking difference seriously? Answers to these questions can only be put together in emergent practices; i.e., in vulnerable, on-the-ground work that cobbles together non-harmonious agencies and ways of living that are accountable both to their disparate inherited histories and to their barely possible but absolutely necessary joint futures. For me, that is what *significant otherness* signifies.

Studying assisted reproduction practices in San Diego and then conservation science and politics in Kenya, Charis (Cussins) Thompson suggested the term “ontological choreographies.” The scripting of the dance of being is more than a metaphor; bodies, human and non-human, are taken apart and put together in processes that make self-certainty and either humanist or organicist ideology bad guides to ethics and politics, much less to personal experience.

Finally, Marilyn Strathern, drawing on decades of study of Papua New Guinean histories and politics, as well as on her investigation of English kinreckoning habits, taught us why conceiving of “nature” and “culture” as either polar opposites or universal categories is foolish. An ethnographer of relational categories, she showed how to think in other topologies. Instead of opposites, we get the whole sketchpad of the modern geometrician’s fevered brain with which to draw relationality. Strathern thinks in terms of “partial connections;” i.e., patterns within which the players are neither wholes nor parts. I call these the relations of significant otherness. I think of Strathern as an ethnographer of naturecultures; she will not mind if I invite her into the kennel for a cross-species conversation.

For feminist theorists, who and what are in the world is precisely what is at stake. This is very promising philosophical bait for training us all to understand companion species in both storied deep time, which is chemically etched in the DNA of every cell, and in recent doings, which leave more odoriferous traces. In old-fashioned terms, *The Companion*

Species Manifesto is a kinship claim, one made possible by the concrecence of prehensions of many actual occasions. Companion species rest on contingent foundations.

And like the productions of a decadent gardener who can’t keep good distinctions between natures and cultures straight, the shape of my kin networks looks more like a trellis or an esplanade than a tree. You can’t tell up from down, and every thing seems to go sidewise. Such snake-like, sidewinding traffic is one of my themes. My garden is full of snakes, full of trellises, full of indirection. Instructed by evolutionary population biologists and bioanthropologists, I know that multidirectional gene flow—multidirectional flows of bodies and values—is and has always been the name of the game of life on earth. It is certainly the way into the kennel. Whatever else humans and dogs can illustrate, it is that these large-bodied, globally distributed, ecologically opportunistic, gregariously social, mammalian co-travelers have written into their genomes a record of couplings and infectious exchanges to set the teeth of even the most committed free trader on edge. Even in the Galapagos Islands of the modern purebred dog fancy—where the effort to isolate and fragment breeding populations and deplete their heritage of diversity can look like model experiments for mimicking the natural disasters of population bottlenecks and epidemic disease—the restless exuberance of gene flow cannot be stilled. Impressed by this traffic, I risk alienating my old doppelgänger, the cyborg, in order to try to convince readers that dogs might be better

guides through the thickets of technobiopolitics in the Third Millennium of the Current Era.

Companions

In “The Cyborg Manifesto,” I tried to write a surrogacy agreement, a trope, a figure for living within and honoring the skills and practices of contemporary technoculture without losing touch with the permanent war apparatus of a non-optional, post-nuclear world and its transcendent, very material lies. Cyborgs can be figures for living within contradictions, attentive to the naturecultures of mundane practices, opposed to the dire myths of self-birthing, embracing mortality as the condition for life, and alert to the emergent historical hybridities actually populating the world at all its contingent scales.

However, cyborg refigurations hardly exhaust the tropic work required for ontological choreography in technoscience. I have come to see cyborgs as junior siblings in the much bigger, queer family of companion species, in which reproductive biotechnopolitics are generally a surprise, sometimes even a nice surprise. I know that a US middle-aged white woman with a dog playing the sport of agility is no match for the automated warriors, terrorists, and their transgenic kin in the annals of philosophical inquiry or the ethnography of naturecultures. Besides, 1) self-figuration is not my task; 2) transgenics are not the enemy; and 3) contrary to lots of dangerous and unethical projection in the Western world that makes domestic canines into furry children, dogs are not about oneself. Indeed, that is the beauty of dogs. They are not a projection, nor the realization of an intention, nor the telos of anything. They are dogs; i.e., a species in

obligatory, constitutive, historical, protean relationship with human beings. The relationship is not especially nice; it is full of waste, cruelty, indifference, ignorance, and loss, as well as of joy, invention, labor, intelligence, and play. I want to learn how to narrate this co-history and how to inherit the consequences of co-evolution in natureculture.

There cannot be just one companion species; there have to be at least two to make one. It is in the syntax; it is in the flesh. Dogs are about the inescapable, contradictory story of relationships—co-constitutive relationships in which none of the partners pre-exist the relating, and the relating is never done once and for all. Historical specificity and contingent mutability rule all the way down, into nature and culture, into naturecultures. There is no foundation; there are only elephants supporting elephants all the way down.

Companion animals comprise only one kind of companion species, and neither category is very old in American English. In United States English, the term “companion animal” emerges in medical and psychosociological work in veterinary schools and related sites from the middle 1970s. This research told us that, except for those few non-dog loving New Yorkers who obsess about unscooped dog shit in the streets, having a dog lowers one’s blood pressure and ups one’s chances of surviving childhood, surgery, and divorce.

Certainly, references in European languages to animals serving as companions, rather than as working or sporting dogs, predate this US biomedical, techno-

scientific literature by centuries. Further, in China, Mexico, and elsewhere in the ancient and contemporary world, the documentary, archaeological, and oral evidence for dogs as pets, in addition to a myriad of other jobs, is strong. In the early Americas dogs assisted in hauling, hunting, and herding for various peoples. For others, dogs were food or a source of fleece. Dog people like to forget that dogs were also lethal guided weapons and instruments of terror in the European conquest of the Americas, as well as in Alexander the Great’s paradigm-setting imperial travels. With combat history in Viet Nam as an officer in the US marines, Akita breeder and dog writer John Cargill reminds us that before cyborg warfare, trained dogs were among the best intelligent weapons systems. And tracking hounds terrorized slaves and prisoners, as well as rescued lost children and earthquake victims.

Listing these functions does not begin to get at the heterogeneous history of dogs in symbol and story all over the world, nor does the list of jobs tell us how dogs were treated or how they regarded their human associates. In *A History of Dogs in the Early Americas* (Yale, 1997), Marion Schwartz writes that some American Indian hunting dogs went through similar rituals of preparation as did their humans, including among the Achuar of South America the ingestion of an hallucinogen. In *In the Company of Animals* (Cambridge, 1986), James Serpell relates that for the nineteenth-century Comanche of the Great Plains, horses were of great practical value. But horses were treated in a utilitarian way, while dogs, kept as

pets, merited fond stories and warriors mourned their deaths. Some dogs were and are vermin; some were and are buried like people. Contemporary Navajo herding dogs relate to their landscape, their sheep, their people, coyotes, and dog or human strangers in historically specific ways. In cities, villages, and rural areas all over the world, many dogs live parallel lives among people, more or less tolerated, sometimes used and sometimes abused. No one term can do justice to this history.

However, the term “companion animal” enters US technoculture through the post-Civil War land-grant academic institutions housing the vet schools. That is, “companion animal” has the pedigree of the mating between technoscientific expertise and late industrial pet-keeping practices, with their democratic masses in love with their domestic partners, or at least with the non-human ones. Companion animals can be horses, dogs, cats, or a range of other beings willing to make the leap to the biosociality of service dogs, family members, or team members in cross-species sports. Generally speaking, one does not eat one’s companion animals (nor get eaten by them); and one has a hard time shaking colonialist, ethnocentric, ahistorical attitudes toward those who do (eat or get eaten).

Species

“Companion species” is a bigger and more heterogeneous category than companion animal, and not just because one must include such organic beings as rice, bees, tulips, and intestinal flora, all of whom make life for humans what it is—and vice versa. I want to write the keyword entry for “companion species” to insist on four tones simultaneously resonating in the linguistic, historical voice box that enables uttering this term. First, as a dutiful daughter of Darwin, I insist on the tones of the history of evolutionary biology, with its categories of populations, rates of gene flow, variation, selection, and biological species. The debates in the last 150 years about whether the category “species” denotes a real biological entity or merely figures a convenient taxonomic box sound the over- and undertones. Species is about biological kind, and scientific expertise is necessary to that kind of reality. Post-cyborg, what counts as biological kind troubles previous categories of organism. The machinic and the textual are internal to the organic and vice versa in irreversible ways.

Second, schooled by Thomas Aquinas and other Aristotelians, I remain alert to species as generic philosophical kind and category. Species is about defining difference, rooted in polyvocal fugues of doctrines of cause.

Third, my soul indelibly marked by a Catholic formation, I hear in species the doctrine of the Real Presence under both species, bread and wine, the transubstantiated signs of the flesh. Species is about the

corporeal join of the material and the semiotic in ways unacceptable to the secular Protestant sensibilities of the American academy and to most versions of the human science of semiotics.

Fourth, converted by Marx and Freud and a sucker for dubious etymologies, I hear in species filthy lucre, specie, gold, shit, filth, wealth. In *Love's Body*, Norman O. Brown taught me about the join of Marx and Freud in shit and gold, in primitive scat and civilized metal, in specie. I met this join again in modern US dog culture, with its exuberant commodity culture; its vibrant practices of love and desire; its structures that tie together the state, civil society, and the liberal individual; its mongrel technologies of purebred subject- and object-making. As I glove my hand in the plastic film—courtesy of the research empires of industrial chemistry—that protects my morning *New York Times* to pick up the microcosmic ecosystems, called scat, produced anew each day by my dogs, I find pooper scoopers quite a joke, one that lands me back in the histories of the incarnation, political economy, technoscience, and biology.

In sum, “companion species” is about a four-part composition, in which co-constitution, finitude, impurity, historicity, and complexity are what is.

The Companion Species Manifesto is, thus, about the implosion of nature and culture in the relentlessly historically specific, joint lives of dogs and people, who are bonded in significant otherness. Many are interpellated into that story, and the tale is instructive also for those who try to keep a hygienic distance. I want to convince my readers that inhabitants of tech-

noculture become who we are in the symbiogenetic tissues of naturecultures, in story and in fact.

I take “interpellation” from the French post-structuralist and Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser’s theory for how subjects are constituted from concrete individuals by being “hailed” through ideology into their subject positions in the modern state. Today, through our ideologically loaded narratives of their lives, animals “hail” us to account for the regimes in which they and we must live. We “hail” them into our constructs of nature and culture, with major consequences of life and death, health and illness, longevity and extinction. We also live with each other in the flesh in ways not exhausted by our ideologies. Stories are much bigger than ideologies. In that is our hope.

In this long philosophical introduction, I am violating a major rule of “Notes of a Sports Writer’s Daughter,” my doggish scribblings in honor of my sports writer father, which pepper this manifesto. The “Notes” require there to be no deviation from the animal stories themselves. Lessons have to be inextricably part of the story; it’s a rule of truth as a genre for those of us—practicing and lapsed Catholics and their fellow travelers—who believe that the sign and the flesh are one.

Reporting the facts, telling a true story, I write “Notes of a Sports Writer’s Daughter.” A sports writer’s job is, or at least was, to report the game story. I know this because as a child I sat in the press box in the AAA baseball club’s Denver Bears’ Stadium late at night watching my father write and file his game stories. A sports writer, perhaps more than other news

people, has a curious job—to tell what happened by spinning a story that is just the facts. The more vivid the prose, the better; indeed, if crafted faithfully, the more potent the tropes, the truer the story. My father did not want to have a sports column, a more prestigious activity in the newspaper business. He wanted to write the game stories, to stay close to the action, to tell it like it is, not to look for the scandals and the angles for the meta-story, the column. My father's faith was in the game, where fact and story cohabit.

I grew up in the bosom of two major institutions that counter the modernist belief in the no-fault divorce, based on irrevocable differences, of story and fact. Both of these institutions—the Church and the Press—are famously corrupt, famously scorned (if constantly used) by Science, and nonetheless indispensable in cultivating a people's insatiable hunger for truth. Sign and flesh; story and fact. In my natal house, the generative partners could not separate. They were, in down-and-dirty dog talk, tied. No wonder culture and nature imploded for me as an adult. And nowhere did that implosion have more force than in living the relationship and speaking the verb that passes as a noun: companion species. Is this what John meant when he said, "The Word was made flesh"? In the bottom of the ninth inning, the Bears down by two runs, with three on, two out, and two strikes, with the time deadline for filing the story five minutes away?

I also grew up in the house of Science and learned at around the time my breast buds erupted about how many underground passages there are

connecting the Estates and how many couplings keep sign and flesh, story and fact, together in the palace: of positive knowledge, falsifiable hypothesis, and synthesizing theory. Because my science was biology, I learned early that accounting for evolution, development, cellular function, genome complexity, the molding of form across time, behavioral ecology, systems communication, cognition—in short, accounting for anything worthy of the name of biology—was not so different from getting a game story filed or living with the conundrums of the incarnation. To do biology with any kind of fidelity, the practitioner *must* tell a story, *must* get the facts, and *must* have the heart to stay hungry for the truth and to abandon a favorite story, a favorite fact, shown to be somehow off the mark. The practitioner must also have the heart to stay with a story through thick and thin, to inherit its discordant resonances, to live its contradictions, when that story gets at a truth about life that matters. Isn't that kind of fidelity what has made the science of evolutionary biology flourish and feed my people's corporeal hunger for knowledge over the last hundred and fifty years?

Etymologically, facts refer to performance, action, deeds done—feats, in short. A fact is a past participle, a thing done, over, fixed, shown, performed, accomplished. Facts have made the deadline for getting into the next edition of the paper. Fiction, etymologically, is very close, but differs by part-of-speech and tense. Like facts, fiction refers to action, but fiction is about the act of fashioning, forming, inventing, as well as feigning or feinting.

Drawn from a present participle, fiction is in process and still at stake, not finished, still prone to falling afoul of facts, but also liable to showing something we do not yet know to be true, but will know. Living with animals, inhabiting their/our stories, trying to tell the truth about relationship, co-habiting an active history: that is the work of companion species, for whom “the relation” is the smallest possible unit of analysis.

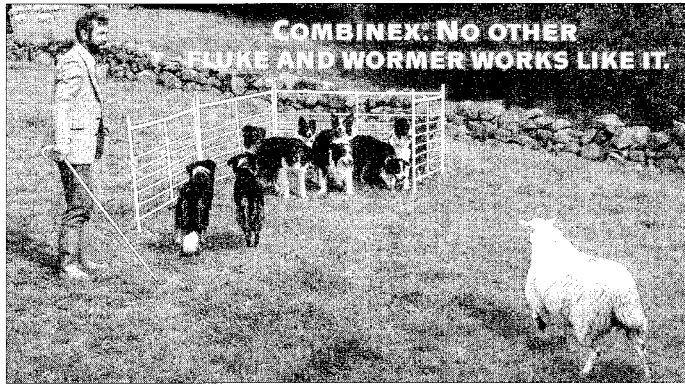
So, I file dog stories for a living these days. All stories traffic in tropes, i.e., figures of speech necessary to say anything at all. Trope (Greek: *tropós*) means swerving or tripping. All language swerves and trips; there is never direct meaning; only the dogmatic think that trope-free communication is our province. My favorite trope for dog tales is “metaplasm.” Metaplasm means a change in a word, for example by adding, omitting, inverting, or transposing its letters, syllables, or sounds. The term is from the Greek *metaplasmos*, meaning remodeling or remolding. Metaplasm is a generic term for almost any kind of alteration in a word, intentional or unintentional. I use metaplasm to mean the remodeling of dog and human flesh, remolding the codes of life, in the history of companion-species relating.

Compare and contrast “protoplasm,” “cytoplasm,” “neoplasm,” and “germplasm.” There is a biological taste to “metaplasm”—just what I like in words about words. Flesh and signifier, bodies and words, stories and worlds: these are joined in naturecultures. Metaplasm can signify a mistake, a stumbling, a troping that makes a fleshly difference.

For example, a substitution in a string of bases in a nucleic acid can be a metaplasm, changing the meaning of a gene and altering the course of a life. Or, a remolded practice among dog breeders, such as doing more outcrosses and fewer close line breedings, could result from changed meanings of a word like “population” or “diversity.” Inverting meanings; transposing the body of communication; remolding, remodeling; swervings that tell the truth: I tell stories about stories, all the way down. Woof.

Implicitly, this manifesto is about more than the relation of dogs and people. Dogs and people figure a universe. Clearly, cyborgs—with their historical congealings of the machinic and the organic in the codes of information, where boundaries are less about skin than about statistically defined densities of signal and noise—fit within the taxon of companion species. That is to say, cyborgs raise all the questions of histories, politics, and ethics that dogs require. Care, flourishing, differences in power, scales of time—these matter for cyborgs. For example, what kind of temporal scale-making could shape labor systems, investment strategies, and consumption patterns in which the generation time of information machines became compatible with the generation times of human, animal, and plant communities and ecosystems? What is the right kind of pooper-scooper for a computer or a personal digital assistant? At the least, we know it is not an electronics dump in Mexico or India, where human scavengers get paid less than nothing for processing the ecologically toxic waste of the well informed.

Art and engineering are natural sibling practices for engaging companion species. Thus, human-landscape couplings fit snugly within the category of companion species, evoking all the questions about the histories and relatings that weld the souls of dogs and



*Figure 1. In the mid-1990s, this image of a ewe reversing life's inequities by penning nine Border Collies graced a Ciba-Geigy advertisement for its sheep and cattle flukicide and vermicide. Subject to the hard eye and stalk of the camera, the UK national sheepdog trial champion Thomas Longton stands on his Quernmore farm in Lancashire ready to close the pen on his accomplished dogs. Later, without the reference to *Combinex* but with a Dutch windmill airbrushed onto the landscape, a mirror image of the scene circulated widely in dogland on the Internet. Without credits or identifying information, the photo bore the apt title, "Border Collie Hell." Even without the relocated Dutch windmill, the photo was always a cyborg composite. For starters, two of the dogs are repeats of the same individuals, but from different angles; the young dogs in the rear are tied by invisible leads to the pen fence; the ewe was melded into the scene from another photo. In *The Companion Species Manifesto*, "Border Collie Hell" signals the ironic reversals embedded in naturecultures. Animals, people, landscapes, corporations, and technologies are all in on the joke. The photo also pleases those who 1) enjoyed the film *Babe*, and 2) work with herding dogs other than Border Collies. Thanks to Thomas Longton for the ad brochure and the story. Thanks also to webs of science studies, editorial, corporate, and Border Collie people who helped me track everything down.*

their humans. The Scots sculptor Andrew Goldsworthy understands this well. Scales and flows of time through the flesh of plants, earth, sea, ice, and stone consume Goldsworthy. For him, the history of the land is living; and that history is composed out of the polyform relatings of people, animals, soil, water, and rocks. He works at scales of sculpted ice crystals interlaced with twigs, layered rock cones the size of a man built in the surging intertidal zones of the shore, and stone walls across long stretches of countryside. He has an engineer's and an artist's knowledge of forces like gravity and friction. His sculptures endure sometimes for seconds, sometimes for decades; but mortality and change are never out of consciousness. Process and dissolution—and agencies both human and non-human, as well as animate and inanimate—are his partners and materials, not just his themes.

In the 1990s, Goldsworthy did a work called *Arch*. He and writer David Craig traced an ancient drover's sheep route from Scottish pastures to an English market town. Photographing as they went, they assembled and disassembled a self-supporting red sandstone arch across places marking the past and present history of animals, people, and land. The missing trees and cottars, the story of the enclosures and rising wool markets, the fraught ties between England and Scotland over centuries, the conditions of possibility of the Scottish working sheepdog and hired shepherd, the sheep eating and walking to shearing and slaughter—these are memorialized in the moving rock arch tying together geography, history, and natural history.

The collie implicit in Goldsworthy's *Arch* is less about "Lassie come home" than "cottar get out." That is one condition of possibility of the immensely popular late twentieth-century British TV show about the brilliant working sheepdogs, the Border Collies of Scotland. Shaped genetically by competitive sheep trialing since the late nineteenth century, this breed has made that sport justly famous on several continents. This is the same breed of dog that dominates the sport of agility in my life. It is also the breed that is thrown away in large numbers to be rescued by dedicated volunteers or killed in animal shelters because people watching those famous TV shows about those talented dogs want to buy one on the pet market, which mushrooms to fill the demand. The impulse buyers quickly find themselves with a serious dog whom they cannot satisfy with the work the Border Collie needs. And where is the labor of the hired shepherds and of the food-and-fiber producing sheep in this story? In how many ways do we inherit in the flesh the turbulent history of modern capitalism?

How to live ethically in these mortal, finite flows that are about heterogeneous relationship—and not about "man"—is an implicit question in Goldsworthy's art. His art is relentlessly attuned to specific human inhabitations of the land, but it is neither humanist nor naturalist art. It is the art of naturecultures. The relation is the smallest unit of analysis, and the relation is about significant otherness at every scale. That is the ethic, or perhaps better, mode of attention, with which we must approach the long cohabitations of people and dogs.

So, in *The Companion Species Manifesto*, I want to tell stories about relating in significant otherness, through which the partners come to be who we are in flesh and sign. The following shaggy dog stories about evolution, love, training, and kinds or breeds help me think about living well together with the host of species with whom human beings emerge on this planet at every scale of time, body, and space. The accounts I offer are idiosyncratic and indicative rather than systematic, tendentious more than judicious, and rooted in contingent foundations rather than clear and distinct premises. Dogs are my story here, but they are only one player in the large world of companion species. Parts don't add up to wholes in this manifesto—or in life in naturecultures. Instead, I am looking for Marilyn Strathern's "partial connections," which are about the counter-intuitive geometries and incongruent translations necessary to getting on together, where the god-tricks of self certainty and deathless communion are not an option.

A Category of One's Own

Anyone who has done historical research knows that the undocumented often have more to say about how the world is put together than do the well pedigreed. What do contemporary companion species relations between humans and “unregistered” dogs in technoculture tell us about both inheriting—or perhaps better, inhabiting—histories and also forging new possibilities? These are the dogs who need “A Category of One's Own,” in honor of Virginia Woolf. Author of the famous feminist tract, “A Room of One's Own,” Woolf understood what happens when the impure stroll over the lawns of the properly registered. She also understood what happens when these marked (and marking) beings get credentials and an income.

Generic scandals get my attention, especially the ones that ooze racialized sex and sexualized race for all the species involved. What should I call the categorically unfixed dogs, even if I stay only in America? Mutts, mongrels, All-Americans, random bred dogs, Heinz 57, mixed breeds, or just plain dogs? And why should categories for dogs in America be in English? Not just “the Americas,” but also the United States is a highly polyglot world. Above, concentrating on Great Pyrenees and Australian Shepherds, I had to suggest the conundrums of inheriting local and global histories in modern breeds by a couple of shaggy dog stories. Similarly, here I cannot begin to plumb the histories of all the sorts of dogs that fit into neither functional kind nor institutionalized breed. And so, I

will offer only one story, but one that ramifies further into webs of worldly complexity at each retelling. I will tell about Satos.

“Sato” is slang in Puerto Rico for a street dog. I learned this fact in two places: on the Internet at www.saveasato.org and in Twig Mowatt's moving essay in the Fall 2002 issue of the glossy dog cultures magazine, *Bark*. Both of these sites landed me squarely in the naturecultures of what gets politely called “modernization.” “Sato” is just about the only Spanish word I learned in either site; that cued me into the direction of the semiotic and material traffic in this zone of dogland. I also figured out that Satos are capitalized, in lexical convention and monetary investment, in the process of moving from the hard streets of the southern “developing world” to the “forever homes” of the enlightened north.

At least as important, I learned that I am interpellated into this story in mind and heart. I cannot disown it by calling attention to its racially-tinged, sexually-infused, class-saturated, and colonial tones and structures. Again and again in my manifesto, I and my people need to learn to inhabit histories, not disown them, least of all through the cheap tricks of puritanical critique. In the Sato story, there are two kinds of superficially opposed temptations to puritanical critique. The first is to indulge in the colonialist sentimentality that sees only philanthropic (philocandic?) rescue of the abused in the traffic of dogs from Puerto Rican streets to no-kill animal shelters in the United States and from there to proper homes. The second is to indulge in historical structural

analysis in a way that denies both emotional bonds and material complexity and so avoids the always messy participation in action that might improve lives across many kinds of difference.

About 10,000 Puerto Rican dogs have made the transition from street life to suburban homes since 1996 when airline worker Chantal Robles of San Juan teamed up with Karen Fehrenbach, visiting the island from Arkansas, to set up the Save-a-Sato Foundation. The facts that led them to action are searing. Millions of fertile and usually diseased and starving dogs scavenge for a meal and shelter in Puerto Rico's impoverished neighborhoods, construction sites, garbage dumps, gas stations, fast food parking lots, and drug sale zones. The dogs are rural and urban, big and little, recognizably from an institutionalized breed and plainly of no breed at all. They are mostly young—feral dogs don't tend to get very old; and there are lots of puppies, both abandoned by people and born to street bitches. Official animal shelters in Puerto Rico mainly kill the dogs and cats surrendered to them or collected in their sweeps. Sometimes these swept-up animals are owned and cared for; but they live rough, vulnerable to complaint and official action. Conditions in the municipal shelters are the stuff of an animal rights horror show.

Very many dogs of all sorts in Puerto Rico are, of course, well cared for. The poor as well as the wealthy cherish animals. But if people abandon a dog, they are far more likely to let the pooch loose than bring him or her to an under-funded and poorly-staffed "shelter" that is certain to kill its charges.

Furthermore, the class-, nation-, and culture-based animal welfare ethic of sterilizing dogs and cats is not wide-spread in Puerto Rico (or in much of Europe and many places in the US). Mandatory sterilization and reproductive control have a very checkered history in Puerto Rico, even when one restricts one's historical memory to policies for non-human species. At the very least, the notion that the only proper dog is a sterile dog—except for those in the care of responsible (in whose view?) breeders—brings us smashing into the world of biopower and its technocultural apparatus in the metropole and the colonies. Puerto Rico is both metropole and colony.

None of this removes the fact that fertile feral dogs have sex, whelp lots of puppies they can't feed, and die of awful diseases in great pain and large numbers. It's not just a narrative. To make matters worse, Puerto Rico is no more free than the United States of damaged, abusing people of all social classes who inflict dire mental and physical injuries on animals both deliberately and indifferently. Homeless animals, like homeless people, are fair game in the free trade—or maybe better, free fire—zones.

The action taken by Robles, Fehrenbach, and their supporters is, to me, as inspiring as it is disturbing. They established and run a private shelter in San Juan that functions as a half-way house for dogs on their way to mostly international adoption. (But Puerto Rico is part of the United States, or is it?) The demand in Puerto Rico for these dogs is slight; that is not a natural fact, but a biopolitical one. Anyone who has thought about human international adoption

knows that. The Save-a-Sato Foundation raises money, trains volunteers to bring dogs (and some cats) to the shelter without further traumatizing them, organizes Puerto Rican veterinarians who treat and sterilize animals for free, socializes the future adoptees in manners proper to the north, prepares papers for them, and arranges with the airlines to ship about thirty dogs per week on commercial flights to a network of no-kill shelters in several states, mostly in the northeast. Post 9/11, tourists flying out of San Juan are recruited to claim crates of emigrating dogs as their personal baggage so that the anti-terrorist apparatus does not shut down the rescue pipeline.

The Foundation runs an English-language website to inform its potential adopting audience and to link support groups to people who take the dogs into, in the idiom of the website, their “forever families.” The website is full of successful adoption accounts, pre-adoption horror stories, before and after photos, invitations to take action and to contribute money, information for finding a Sato to adopt, and useful links to dogland cyberculture.

A person in Puerto Rico can become a member of the Save-a-Sato Foundation by rescuing a minimum of five dogs per month. Volunteers mainly pay whatever it costs out of their own pockets. They find, feed, and gentle dogs before urging them into crates and taking them to the half-way house. Puppies and youngsters are the first priority, but not the only ones picked up. Dogs who are too sick to get well are euthanized, but many severely injured and ill dogs recover and get placed. All sorts of people become

volunteers. The website tells about one elderly woman on social security living close to homelessness herself who recruited homeless people to gentle and collect dogs, for whom she paid \$5 each out of her meager funds. Knowing the genre of such a story does not mute its power—or its truth. The photos on the site seem to be mostly of middle-class Puerto Rican women, but heterogeneity in the Save-a-Sato Foundation is not reserved for the dogs.

The airplane is an instrument in a series of subject-transforming technologies. The dogs who come out of the belly of the plane are subject to a different social contract than the one they were born into. However, not just any Puerto Rican stray is likely to get its second birth from this aluminum womb. Smallish dogs, like girls in the human scene, are the gold standard in the dog adoption market. US fear of aggression from the Other knows few bounds, and certainly not those of species or sex. To follow this point, we need to get from the airport to the excellent shelter in Sterling, Massachusetts, which has placed more than 2000 Satos (and about 100 cats) since it joined the program in 1999. Once again, I find my bearings in dogland’s exuberant cyberculture (www.sterlingshelter.org).

Animal shelters in the US northeast in general have too few dogs in the 10-35 pound range to fill the demand. Being the owner (or guardian) of a mid-sized, sterilized, rescue-derived, well-behaved dog confers high status in much of US dogland. Some of this status comes from pride in not succumbing to the eugenic discourses that continue to luxuriate in pure-

bred dog worlds. But adoption of a street or thrown-away dog, mutt or not, hardly removes one from the swamps of class- and culture-rooted “improving” ideologies, familial biopolitics, and pedagogical fashions. Indeed, eugenics and the other improving discourses of “modern” life have so many shared ancestors (and living siblings) that the coefficient of inbreeding exceeds that of even father-daughter couplings.

Adopting a shelter dog takes a lot of work, a fair amount of money (but not as much as it costs to prepare the dogs), and a willingness to submit to a governing apparatus sufficient to activate the allergies of any Foucauldian or garden-variety libertarian. I support that apparatus—and many other kinds of institutionalized power—to protect classes of subjects, including dogs. I also vigorously support adopting rescue and shelter animals. And so my dyspepsia at recognizing where all this comes from will have to be endured rather than relieved.

Good shelters get lots of requests for Sato dogs. Getting such a dog keeps people from buying from pet stores and supporting the puppy mill industry. The Sterling shelter tells us that 99% of puppies brought to it from the US are medium to large dogs, all of whom get adopted. Many largish puppies and youngsters come into the Sterling haven from the Homebound Hounds Program, which imports thrown-away dogs to the northeast from cooperating shelters in the US south—another area of the world where the ethic of sterilizing dogs and cats is not secure, to say the least. Still, people looking for

smaller shelter dogs are largely out of luck in the domestic market. These folks’ family enlargement strategies require different layers of locals and globals. However, just as with international adoption of children, it is not easy to get an imported dog. Detailed interviews and forms, home visits, references from friends and veterinarians, promises to educate the dog properly, counseling from on-site trainers, proof of home ownership or written documentation from landlords that pets are allowed, and then long waiting lists: all this, and more, is normal. The goal is a permanent home for the dogs.

The means is a kinship-making apparatus that reaches into and draws from the history of “the family” in every imaginable way, literally. Proof of the effectiveness of the companion-species, family-making apparatus is to be found in a little narrative analysis. Adoption success stories regularly refer to siblings and other multi-species kin as mom, dad, sister, brother, aunt, uncle, cousin, godfather, etc. Purebred adoption stories do the same thing, and these adoption/ownership processes involve many of the same documentary and social instruments before one can qualify to get a dog. It is nearly impossible—and generally irrelevant—to read from the stories what species is being referred to. A pet bird is the sister of a new dog, and the human baby brother and aged cat aunt all are represented to relate to the human adults of the house as moms and/or dads. Heterosexuality is not germane; heterospecificity is.

I resist being called the “mom” to my dogs because I fear infantilization of the adult canines and

misidentification of the important fact that I wanted dogs, not babies. My multi-species family is not about surrogacy and substitutes; we are trying to live other tropes, other metaplasms. We need other nouns and pronouns for the kin genres of companion species, just as we did (and still do) for the spectrum of genders. Except in a party invitation or a philosophical discussion, “significant other” won’t do for human sexual partners; and the term performs little better to house the daily meanings of cobbled together kin relations in dogland.

But perhaps I worry about words too much. I have to admit that it is not clear that the conventional kin idioms in use in US dogland refer to age, species, or biological reproductive status much at all (except to require that most of the non-humans be sterile). Genes are not the point, and that surely is a relief. The point is companion-species making. It’s all in the family, for better and for worse, until death do us part. This is a family made up in the belly of the monster of inherited histories that have to be inhabited to be transformed. I always knew that if I turned up pregnant, I wanted the being in my womb to be a member of another species; maybe that turns out to be the general condition. It’s not just mutts, in or out of the traffic of international adoption, who seek a category of one’s own in significant otherness.

I yearn for much more reflection in dogland about what it means to inherit the multi-species, relentlessly complex legacy that crosses evolutionary, personal, and historical time scales of companion species. Every registered breed, indeed every dog, is

immersed in practices and stories that can and should tie dog people into myriad histories of living labor, class formations, gender and sexual elaborations, racial categories, and other layers of locals and globals. Most dogs on earth are not members of institutionalized breeds. Village dogs and rural and urban feral dogs carry their own signifying otherness for the people they live among, and not just for people like me. Nor are mutts or so-called “random bred” dogs in the “developed world” like the functional kinds of dogs that emerged in economies and ecologies that no longer flourish. Puerto Rican strays called “Satos” become members of Massachusetts “forever families” out of histories of stunning complexity and consequence. In current naturecultures, breeds might be a necessary, if deeply flawed, means to continue the useful kinds of dogs they came from. Current US ranchers have more to fear from real estate developers from San Francisco or Denver than from wolves, no matter how far they get from the parks, or from Native Americans, no matter how effective they are in court.

In my own personal-historical natureculture, I know in my flesh that the largely middle-class, white people of Pyr and Aussie land have an as yet unarticulated responsibility to participate in re-imagining grasslands ecologies and ways of life that were blasted in significant part by the very ranching practices that required the work of these dogs. Through their dogs, people like me are tied to indigenous sovereignty rights, ranching economic and ecological survival, radical reform of the meat-industrial complex, racial

justice, the consequences of war and migration, and the institutions of technoculture. It's about, in Helen Verran's words, "getting on together." When "pure-bred" Cayenne, "mixed-breed" Roland, and I touch, we embody in the flesh the connections of the dogs and the people who made us possible. When I stroke my landmate Susan Caudill's sensuous Great Pyrenees, Willem, I also touch relocated Canadian gray wolves, upscale Slovakian bears, and international restoration ecology, as well as dog shows and multi-national pastoral economies. Along with the whole dog, we need the whole legacy, which is, after all, what makes the whole companion species possible. Not so oddly, all those wholes are non-Euclidean knots of partial connections. Inhabiting that legacy without the pose of innocence, we might hope for the creative grace of play.

From "Notes of a Sports Writer's Daughter," June 2000:

Ms Cayenne Pepper has shown her true species being at last. She's a female Klingon in heat. You may not watch much television or be a fan of the Star Trek universe like I am, but I'll bet the news that Klingon females are formidable sexual beings, whose tastes run to the ferocious, has reached everyone in the federated planets. The Pyr on our land, the intact 20-month-old Willem, has been Cayenne's playmate since they were both puppies, beginning at about 4 months of age. Cayenne was spayed when she was 6 1/2 months old. She's always happily humped her way down Willem's soft and inviting backside, starting at his head with her

nose pointed to his tail, while he lies on the ground trying to chew her leg or lick a rapidly passing genital area. But during our Memorial weekend stay on the Healdsburg land, things heated up, put mildly. Willem is a randy, gentle, utterly inexperienced, adolescent male soul. Cayenne does not have an estrus hormone in her body (but let us not forget those very much present adrenal cortices pumping out so-called androgens that get lots of the credit for juicing up mammalian desire in males and females). She is, however, one turned on little bitch with Willem, and he is INTERESTED. She does not do this with any other dog, 'intact' or not. None of their sexual play has anything to do with remotely functional heterosexual mating behavior—no efforts of Willem to mount, no presenting of an attractive female backside, not much genital sniffing, no whining and pacing, none of all that reproductive stuff. No, here we have pure polymorphous perversity that is so dear to the hearts of all of us who came of age in the 1960s reading Norman O. Brown.

The 110-pound Willem lies down with a bright look in his eye. Cayenne, weighing in at 35 pounds, looks positively crazed as she straddles her genital area on top of his head, her nose pointed toward his tail, presses down and wags her backside vigorously. I mean hard and fast. He tries for all he's worth to get his tongue on her genitals, which inevitably dislodges her from the top of his head. It looks a bit like the rodeo, with her riding a bronco and staying on as long as possible. They have slightly different goals in this game, but both are committed to the activity. Sure looks like eros to me. Definitely not agape. They keep this up for about three minutes to the exclusion of any other activity. Then they go back to it for another round. And another. Susan's and my laughing, whether raucous or discrete, does not merit their attention. Cayenne grunts

like a female Klingon during the activity, teeth bared. Remember how many times the half-Klingon B'Elanna Torres on Star Trek Voyager put her human flyboy lover Tom Paris in sickbay? Cayenne's playing, but oh my, what a game. Willem is earnestly intent. He is not a Klingon, but what feminists of my generation would call a considerate lover.

Their youth and vitality make a mockery of reproductive heterosexual hegemony, as well as of abstinence-promoting gonadectomies. Now, I, of all people, who have written infamous books about how we Western humans project our social orders and desires onto animals without scruple, should know better than to see confirmation of Norman O. Brown's Love's Body in my spayed Aussie dynamo and Susan's talented Landscape Guardian Dog with that big, sloppy, velvety tongue. Still, what else could be going on? Hint: this is not a game of fetch or chase.

No, this is ontological choreography, which is that vital sort of play that the participants invent out of the histories of body and mind they inherit and that they rework into the fleshly verbs that make them who they are. They invented this game; this game remodels them. Metaplasm, once again. It always comes back to the biological flavor of the important words. The word is made flesh in mortal naturecultures. ■