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THE GEOGRAPHIES OF CARE AND TRAINING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ASSISTANCE DOG PARTNERSHIPS

JAMIE ARATHOON



University
of Glasgow

Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

School of Geographical and Earth Sciences, College of Science and Engineering.

University of Glasgow.

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Abstract

Human-assistance-dog partnerships form a significant phenomena that have been overlooked in both animal geographies and disability geographies. By focusing on one Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) charity, 'Dog A.I.D', a charity that helps physically disabled and chronically ill people to train their own pets to be assistance dogs, I detail the intimate entangled lifeworlds that humans and dogs occupy. In doing so, I also dialogue between the sub-disciplinary fields of animal geographies and disability geographies, by exploring two broad thematic areas – embodiment and care. As such, this thesis examines the geographies of assistance dog partnership, the care and training practices involved, the benefits and challenges of sharing a lifeworld with a different species, and the changing relationship from a human-pet bond to a human-assistance-dog partnership.

Drawing on lived experience and representations of assistance dog partnerships gathered through qualitative (and quantitative) research methods, including a survey, semi-structured interviews (face-to-face, online, and telephone), video ethnography, and magazine analysis, I contribute to research on the assistance dog partnerships and growing debates around the more-than-human nature of care. The ethnomethodological approach to exploring *how* training occurs between disabled human and assistance dog is also noteworthy as it centres the lively experiences of practice at work between species.

The thesis is organised around interconnected themes: the intimate worlds of assistance dog partnerships, working bodies, and caring relations. These thematics allow for a geographical interpretation into the governance, spatial organisation, and representations of dog assistance partnerships. I also explore the training cultures of Dog A.I.D. whilst also spotlighting the lived experiences of training through the early stages of 'socialisation', 'familiarisation', 'life skills training', through to 'task work'. Finally, the thesis focuses on the practices of care that characterise the assistance dog partnership, showing how care is provided and received by both human and nonhuman. I pay attention to the complex potentiality of the partnership, illustrating how dogs are trained to assist, but also how dogs appear to embody lively, agentic, moments of care. The thesis contributes original work which speaks to animal and disability geographies and attends to the multiple geographies of care-full cross-species lives.

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Definitions/Abbreviations

ABTC – Animal Behaviour and Training Council

AD – Assistance dog

ADI – Assistance Dogs International

ADUK – Assistance Dogs United Kingdom

APDT – Association of Pet Dog Trainers

Assistance dog – the generic term in the UK for a dog that is trained to help a disabled human.

Client – When referring to someone who is a recipient of the charity. They may be involved in this research but in the context of this phrase, I am referring to them in relation to the charity.

Diabetes Dog – specifically trained dogs from the charity Medical Detection Dogs to alert to hypo-glycaemic reactions and PoTS.

Dog A.I.D. – Dog Assistance in Disability (Charity name, may often be written as DogAID, Dog A.I.D., Dog aid, or Dog a.i.d.)

Guide Dog – capitalised when from the charity Guide Dogs, trained specifically to guide a blind or visually impaired human.

Guide Dogs – Guide Dog Association for the Blind

Handler – A human who has an assistance dog.

Hearing Dogs – Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

IAABC – International Association of Animal Behaviour Consultants

IGDF – International Guide Dog Federation

IMDT – Institute of Modern Dog Trainers

Participant – When referring to someone involved in this research (both human and animal).

Service Dog – is usually used in the American context to indicate an assistance dog but there is also an ADUK charity called Service Dogs UK (often going by Service Dogs).

Tasks – The physical trained tasks such as picking up keys that dogs are trained to do.

[...] – Indicates text removed

[] – Indicates text added

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And now for the part that everyone reads (no pressure) ...

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Author Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contributions of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signed: Jamie Arathoon

Chapter 1: Introduction: Envisioning Human-Assistance-Dog Partnerships

Envisioning human-assistance-dog partnerships

She keeps me safe. She gives me confidence. She knows how to comfort me when I'm having a rough day. Kika has changed my life beyond recognition, returning me to a level of independence I thought I had lost forever when I went blind. I always believe everything happens for a reason, so perhaps it's no coincidence that I lost my sight in November 2013 and that Kika was born in November 2013 as well. I live a wonderfully ordinary life thanks to one extraordinary dog. Kika has opened up the world to me again. She's made what once seemed impossible possible.

Amit Patel – *Kika and Me*

The above vignette – taken from the biography of Dr Amit Patel, a disability campaigner, and Kika his assistance dog – offers a glimpse into what will be at the heart of this thesis: the relationship between human and assistance dog. The affective relationship between Amit and Kika is clear throughout the book which charts how their relationship has developed over time and how they had to learn to trust one another and overcome many obstacles, both physically and emotionally. At the core of this thesis are the relationships and experiences of many participants who, so willingly, shared their experiences with me. These experiences, like Amit and Kika's, are emotionally charged, unveiling the intimate lives of human and animal. The project has become one in which I have become emotionally invested in too, through the physical and virtual time spent with participants, but also through reading and re-reading their words, and hoping to do justice to their experiences. I have become immersed in the worlds of assistance dog partnership, entangled in the processes of care and training that shape their bonds and daily lives.

In recent years, awareness of assistance dogs has been growing, with public conversations and news articles becoming more common. Such media focus on: the 'life-changing' help assistance dogs provide their human partner (ITV, 2019a), the new roles assistance dogs are being trained for (BBC, 2018; ITV, 2019b; BBC, 2021), the often 'tragic' narrative of disability that accompanies the partnership (BBC 2019), assistance dogs and disable people being grabbed or assaulted by the public (Sky, 2021), the extremes of emotional support animal access (Włodarczyk, 2019), and even new 'guide ponies' (The Guardian, 2018). Assistance dogs have begun to occupy the public psyche, with these animals appearing on TV shows such as *Blue Peter*, *CBeebies*, *Good Morning Britain*, and *This Morning*, and with Netflix now airing a show in the US called *Pick of the Litter* about such dogs in training.

As well as the presence of assistance dogs in the media, there has also been a focus on policy and legislation. The Equality and Human Rights Commission Report (2017): '*Assistance dogs: A guide for all businesses*', for example, aims to educate businesses and restaurants about the *Equality Act* in an attempt to reduce the discrimination assistance dog owners face. In addition, The Guide Dogs Association have been at the forefront of campaigning around relevant assistance dog policy and legislation. One report revealed that 62% of assistance dog owners surveyed had been refused taxi service at some point (Guide Dogs, 2019), with street garbage and fly tipping, multi-use space, and other transportation denials coming into focus.

Furthermore, many are now recognising the therapeutic benefits of dogs at home (Cutt et al., 2007; L. J. Wood et al., 2007), in schools (Carlyle, 2019), and in universities (Charles & Wolkowitz, 2019). This is prevalent in my own School (School of Geographical and Earth Sciences) where I am positioned¹. The policy outlines that some people may have an allergy or fear of dogs, or that unsupervised dogs may lead to injury from bites, but the policy also states that:

“The great benefit animals can bring to physical and emotional wellbeing is also acknowledged. It is appreciated that custom and practice has meant that it would be very difficult for some individuals to make arrangements for the care of these animals when at work, if some flexibility were not permitted” (GES, 2019: 1).

The policy strictly places dogs under human-control in typically human-occupied spaces, positioning humans as ‘response-able’ (Brown & Dilley, 2012; Haraway, 2003) for their dogs’ actions and behaviour. The policy does make space for the physical and emotional wellbeing benefits of dogs something which is a key characteristic of an array of other human-animal interactions. ‘Care farming’ is used as a therapeutic tool for a range of children and adults experiences grief, loss, drug abuse, mental ill-health, and disabilities (Cacciatore et al., 2020; Gorman, 2017; Kaley et al., 2019). Alternatively, such therapeutic engagements are now increasingly commodified by way of a range of animal ‘events’ and via particular sites such as ‘cat cafes’ (Robinson, 2019). It is worth noting that, whilst assistance dogs are not trained for emotional wellbeing, the benefits of emotional wellbeing for the human are a vital part of the partnership, and will be analysed later in this thesis (**Chapter 6**). Below, I situate this research within the wider geographical literature, providing details on how this research offers new and nuanced insights into these multi-species encounters.

Situating this research

This thesis aims to contribute to social and cultural geographies literature but more specifically to the subfields of animal and disability geographies. I draw on animal and disability studies throughout this work, benefitting from an interdisciplinarity reading of human-animal encounters,

¹ The policy only concerns dogs.

and as such, being influenced by feminist, more-than-human, posthuman, and STS approaches². I strategically summarise these frames by way of introduction.

First, animal geographies emerged in 1995 through a special issue of *Environment and Planning D*, which set out to “bring the animals back in” to geographical research (Wolch & Emel, 1995: 635). Through a series of books (Gillespie & Collard, 2015; Hovorka et al., 2021; Philo & Wilbert, 2000a; Urbanik, 2012; Wolch & Emel, 1998) and journal articles (Buller, 2014, 2015, 2016; Gibbs, 2020, 2021; Hovorka, 2017, 2018, 2019), animals have been understood as *subjects*, involved not only in human lives and practices, but with lives of their own, despite limited knowledge of animal feelings or experiences. Many geographers have argued for the need to go beyond anthropocentric methods of data collection (Buller, 2015; Gibbs, 2020), and to develop new frames that help recognise animals’ geographies (Hodgetts & Lorimer, 2015), their subjective experiences, and that “allow the nonhuman to speak for themselves” (Bear et al., 2017: 225). Methodologically then, animal geographers have been at a crossroad for a while, offering many different innovative methodological suggestions but perhaps not quite fully attending to animals’ experiences – if that were ever possible. In this thesis I have partially adapted an ethnomethodological approach, which I argue can help attend to animals’ geographies (Hodgetts & Lorimer, 2015), and ‘hear the cry’ of the non-human (Buller, 2015; Gibbs, 2020; Johnston, 2008).

Research on pets has been a key focus of geographical work, as pets are viewed in contemporary society as “objects of human affection and love” (Nast, 2006: 894), sentient beings capable of rational thought, but also objects that are under the dominance and control of humans (Tuan, 1984). Research on pet keeping has shown how pets change the spatial practices of their human ‘owners’ but also influence the spatiality of the home, occupying at once more intimate spaces such as bedrooms and bathrooms (Ad. Franklin, 2006; Holmberg, 2019), but also being limited spatially throughout the home (E. Power, 2008, 2012). Geographical work has also attended to the care of pets through veterinary clinics (Donald, 2018, 2019; Schuurman, 2017), shelters and rescues (Porter, 2019; N. Taylor, 2010), and practices of walking and play (Brown & Banks, 2015; Brown & Dilley, 2012; Goode, 2007; Laurier et al., 2006). Attending to the everyday caring practices between human and animal is vital for my work as I critically consider the boundaries of care “beyond human boundedness to consider the relationship between animals, places and care ...” (Milligan et al., 2007: 138).

Research on working animals and dog training has also been invaluable for this research (Charles et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2021; Yarwood, 2015). Drawing on geographical (and wider sociological work) on dog training can show how many ‘dog training cultures’ (Smith et al., 2021) have moved

² I adopt a posthuman rather than political ecology/lively commodities approach as it lends greater agency to animals which is vital for this research project.

from a position of dominance and negative training methods focused on punishment to positive methods focused on reinforcing behaviour through rewards (Pręgowski, 2015; Włodarczyk, 2018). Exploring the training of assistance dogs is crucial, as human and animal train together to develop their bond. My own orientation to questions of time, space, and embodiment augments a distinctive geographical contribution to these studies.

Despite the above, research on assistance animals is limited with most work being drawn from outside human geography (Eason, 2019, 2020; Higgin, 2012; Michalko, 1999; Pemberton, 2019; Sanders, 2000; Stevenson, 2013). My thesis work hence attends to the shared and lived experiences of assistance dog partnerships and leverages a spatial and temporal analysis. Moreover, my research is particularly unique in its focus on humans and pets as they train together to *become* an assistance dog partnership. This is a distinctive cross-species partnership which sees changes from human-pet to a human-assistance-dog relations. Furthermore, the training in question is done by the human partners/pet owners, with help from the charity, and this raises several distinctive questions which are outlined at the end of **Chapter 2**.

Moreover, my thesis is located with reference to disability geographies, which has a long disciplinary history, moving from classic spatial science approaches (see Wolch & Philo, 2000 for an indepth analysis of the history of mental health geographies which is closely aligned) to the medical model of disability (Golledge, 1993), through to the social model (Butler, 1994; Butler & Bowlby, 1997; Oliver, 2013), and more contemporary more-than-human and posthuman conceptualisation of the disabled body (Goodley et al., 2014; Goodley, Lawthom, et al., 2018; Hall & Wilton, 2017; Macpherson, 2009b). Focusing on the body and “its fleshy reality” (Hall, 2000: 28) has allowed this research to concentrate on embodiment within the human-assistance-dog relationship and how this influences both training and care. Disabled bodies ‘doing things differently’ is central to the human-assistance-dog relationship whether via relying on an assistance dog to navigate safely through space (Higgin, 2012; Michalko, 1999; Sanders, 2000; Stevenson, 2013), relying on medical alerts (Eason, 2020), or, as in the case of my research, relying on a dog to pick up, bring, and retrieve dropped items, push a button, or pull open a door. My focus on cross-species interdependence thus acts as a distinctive contribution to more recent approaches in disability geographies.

Care, as examined through disability research and feminist theory, has been an important frame. Starting from feminist understandings of care as a “species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible” (Fisher & Tronto, 1990: 40), I explore care as a multispecies practice through engagement with Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) work. I position care as occupying a multi-species experience and practice felt by human and animal. I focus on how the animal/human bodies ‘become with’ (Haraway, 2003, 2008) each other, to produce entangled intracorporeal subjectivities (Macpherson, 2009b).

Despite the lack of engagement between animal and disability geographies, I argue they have a lot to offer one another³. I attend to spaces, places, and practices of care between human and animal in understanding broader the entanglements of human and animal lifeworlds. Furthermore, in doing so, I aim to disrupt the polarisation of dependency and inter-dependency by examining the lifeworlds of animal assistance partnerships. Below, I situate this research in context of UK assistance dog partnership, outlining the history of assistance dog partnership in the UK, before specifically discussing the charity I will be working with throughout this thesis, Dog A.I.D., and opening the aims and objectives of this thesis.

UK assistance dog context and terminology

The history of assistance dog partnerships in the UK is shown in timeline in **Figure 1**, with the Guide Dog Association for the Blind being the first established assistance dog charity. The original charity was formed by pioneers, Muriel Crooke and Rosamund Bond, who became interested in dogs, mostly German shepherds, being trained by American Dorothy Eustis, to guide blind and visually impaired war veterans in Switzerland after the First World War (see Arathoon, 2021; Guide Dogs 2021)⁴. Guide Dogs (2021) estimate that in their 90 years of existence, they have trained and qualified 36,000 guide dogs. Guide dogs are the most common assistance dog in the UK, and the charity holding the largest budget of any of the Assistance Dog UK (ADUK) charities⁵. Guide dogs also occupy a prominent position in geographical and social science literature with many researchers exploring guide dog training and partnerships (Arathoon, 2018; Higgin, 2012; Michalko, 1999; Pemberton, 2019; Sanders, 2000; Stevenson, 2013).

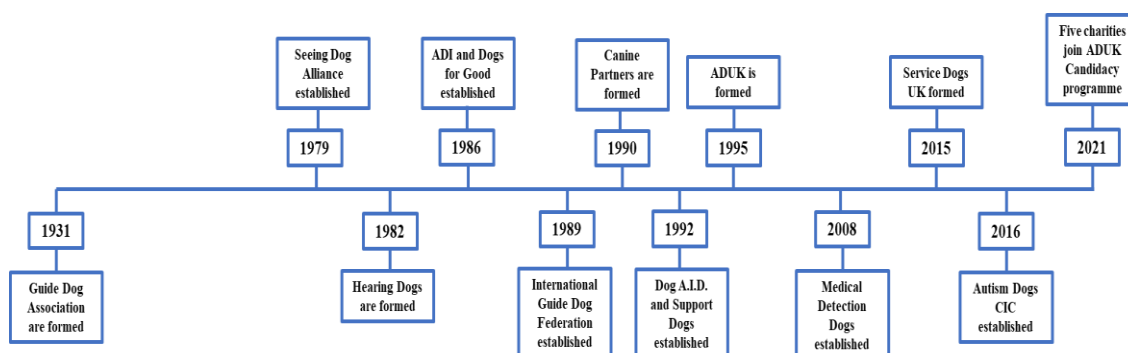


Figure 1: Timeline of the foundation of the major assistance dog UK charities and umbrella associations.

There are several UK charities that train *other kinds* of mobility and physical assistance dogs (see **Appendix 1**). These dogs are trained to help people with physical disabilities and mobility impairments, completing tasks including: picking up, finding, and bringing dropped items, pulling

³ This is also the subject of an article I submitted to *Social and Cultural Geography* entitled: “Towards an Agenda for Animal and Disability Geographies: Entanglements of Ableism, Speciesism, Care, Space, and Place” (under review).

⁴ Although the guide dog has a longer history traced through historic European paintings (see Fishman, 2003).

⁵ Assistance Dogs UK is an Umbrella organisation comprising the 10 charities seen in **Figure 1**, with greater information supplied in **Appendix 1** on the different charities’ services.

items such as light switches, and pushing objects such as doors. Since the start of this research in 2018, two new charities have joined the ADUK as full members⁶, and six charities are working towards membership status⁷. **Table 1** outlines the number of qualified assistance dog partnerships by each charity within ADUK. There is currently an estimated total of 6,821 qualified assistance dog partnerships within the UK, with the bulk of these partnerships, 4,800 of them, being from the charity Guide Dogs, and the least, 5, from the newly joined member, Service Dogs UK. This shows the importance of this research on assistance dog partnerships, the need for greater knowledge around these experiences, and shows the growing diversification of animal-human relations with people who live with different disabilities.

This research is positioned within this broader context of UK assistance dog partnership and the specifics of the ADUK charity, Dog A.I.D. Since 1992 they have had a team of volunteer dog trainers who help physically disabled people train their pet dogs to become assistance dogs. This charity model is unique in the UK with only one other ADUK charity doing similar work. This is vital to the arguments in this thesis as the humans and canines in this research *already* have a bond before their training starts. Therefore, the tasks being learnt, the training being completed, and the dogs themselves (especially breed type and age), are all different to the other ADUK charities.

⁶ Autism Dogs CIC and Service Dogs UK are both the first of their kind to gain ADUK membership.

⁷ These are Assistance Dogs Northern Ireland, Bravehound, Darwin's Dogs, Dogs for Autism, Oliver's Army, and Veterans with dogs.

Table 1: The number of qualified partnerships reported by each ADUK charity⁸.

Charity	Last reported current number of partnerships	Extra Information
Autism Dogs CIC	N/A	Details not found.
Canine Partners	438	Including 9 dual-trained dogs (4 dual guide dogs and 5 dual hearing dogs).
Dog A.I.D.	107	
Dogs for Good	285	
Guide Dogs	~ 4800	Only estimate found.
Hearing Dogs	982	
Medical Detection Dogs	84	
Seeing Dogs Alliance	N/A	Details not found.
Service Dogs UK	5	
Support Dogs	120	
Total	~ 6821	

Research objectives and themes

The research is orientated around four interconnected research objectives:

- To explore how human-pet relations change over time to become a human-assistance-dog partnership.

⁸ Information taken from various 'Annual Reports' with no data found for Autism Dogs CIC (a new ADUK charity) or Seeing Dogs Alliance.

- To explore how physically disabled and chronically ill people train to enable an assistance dog partnership with reference to spatial, temporal, and material experience.
- To examine the practices and manifestations of care across the species boundary, and how care becomes a more-than-human concern.
- To utilise a multi-method approach which attempts to centre nonhuman animals within research.

These research objectives form the basis for the following chapters which are summarised below in the ‘map of the thesis’.

Map of the thesis

Chapter 2: Bodies, Care, Entanglements brings together geographical literature on animal and disability geographies (as well as literature from sociology, animal studies, and disability studies) through two key thematics: bodies and care. The ‘bodies’ section outlines different conceptual approaches to how disabled human, and animal, bodies have been understood. I highlight the potential of relational approaches to understanding bodies and take forward the ‘positive’ and ‘mutual’ insights of domestication and dog training to attend to ‘entanglements’ of human-animal lifeworlds, and in exploring the objectives of this research. The ‘care’ section outlines different approaches to care, moving from feminist care ethics to more-than-human care. I draw on Puig de la Bellacasa’s (2017) conceptualisation of care through analysing human care for animals in multiple spaces and critique the dependency-independency binary. I bring both ‘bodies’ and ‘care’ together in ‘entanglements’ mapping out the affective relationships arising between humans and animals, showing how empathy, love, and companionship may be expressed across the different human-animal relationships. I use more-than-human conceptualisations of care to show how caring relations can go beyond companionship to more explicit forms of care *from* animals to humans that showcase the agency of animals: and, linking to one of the key objectives of this thesis, I demonstrate how care crosses species boundaries and is felt and experienced across disparate human-animal relations.

Chapter 3: Methodology: Ways of Knowing Human-Animal Lifeworlds examines the research design of the project and how the research methods were practiced. I address the theoretical concerns of bridging animal and disability geographies and completing a cross-species⁹ research project and show how my research design aims to centre animals’ agency. Reflections on ethics and COVID-19 are presented, spotlighting various challenges and mitigation strategies. I then discuss in detail how the research data was collected, stored, and analysed, and how video and ethnomethodology enabled my ambition to centre animal action within the research.

⁹ I use ‘cross-species ethnography’ rather than ‘multi-species ethnography’ as the ethnography is across two species rather than multiple.

Chapter 4: Worlds of Assistance Dog Partnerships acts as a chapter that is both scene-setting, and empirically distinct. It provides a broad contextualisation around the governance of assistance dog worlds through UK organisations, charities, and accreditation schemes. What emerges here is a messy world, with varying views on the ‘rights’ and ‘wrongs’ of dog training and its regulations.

Chapter 5: Working Bodies offers a detailed account of the two main steps of assistance dog training: ‘life skills training’ and ‘task work’. Life skills training outlines the early stages of the human-dog relationship, the geographies involved through the process of co-becoming, and the attendant embodied engagement between human and dog. Task training goes much further, utilising ethnomethodology and graphic transcripts to show the detail of human and nonhuman bodies and agencies working together. Doggy agency and human training techniques are critically examined. The key findings detail how training is a process of ‘becoming’, one in which humans and animals engage together to learn tasks.

Chapter 6: Cross-Species Caring works through three empirical themes: human care for an assistance animal; assistance animal care for a human; and the caring relationship. These continue to emphasise the spatial and temporal characteristics of the more-than-human care in question. Furthermore, this evidence questions previous scholarly perceptions of care as provided and given *by* humans, *for* humans, and thus attributes greater agency to animals and their acts. This discussion also focuses on the inter- or intra-dependencies involved in cross-species care. Additionally, and perhaps controversially, I begin to speculatively reframe ‘assistance’ as ‘care’ to enlarge a sense of how these dogs are providing care well beyond their formal roles. I emphasise that human and animal ‘mutuality’, ‘teamwork’, and ‘partnerships’ hinge on complex intimacies in spaces of assistance.

Chapter 7: Reflections on Assistance-Animal-Human Lifeworlds concludes the thesis. Here I re-envision human-assistance-dog partnerships, drawing out my key claims about these relationships, and my key contributions to animal and disability geographies. I suggest future directions for research on assistance animal partnerships, as well as reflect on the research-led impact of this project on Dog A.I.D. and the assistance-dog sector more generally.

Chapter 2: Bodies, Care, Entanglements

Introduction

To address the aims and objectives of this research (outlined in **Chapter 1**), I am looking to dialogue the sub-disciplinary fields of animal geographies and disability geographies – as already introduced and characterised in **Chapter 1** - and, to some extent, their cognate fields out with academic geography (animal studies; disability studies). I draw on more-than human, posthuman, STS, and feminist studies for inspiration in bringing together these subdisciplines. I draw on these rather than a political ecology/lively commodities approach as posthumanism allows for a greater engagement with animal agency, whereas literature around lively commodities focuses less on animal agency in animals' situational circumstances (see Collard & Dempsey, 2013). Furthermore, to dialogue these two subfields, I explore two very broad thematic areas – bodies and care – which also means bringing in other literatures (especially geographical work on bodies and care).

Under '*Bodies*' I seek to examine how geographers have addressed disabled and animal bodies. I start by outlining, and critically assessing, the medical and social models of disability and position a need to focus on bodies when discussing disability, rather than positioning them as an abstract phenomenon. Positioning disabled, ill, and pained bodies, firmly within geographical analyses is important in understanding lived experiences. I then move to address 'new' orientations to attend to disabled, ill, and pained bodies, through relational thinking. Following this I discuss animal bodies and focus particularly on dogs and process of domestication and training that work to (re)shape canine bodies.

Under '*Care*' I seek to explore how care has been positioned in theory and in practice. Moving from feminist ethics of care to more-than-human orientations of care, I map the importance of care as omnipresent in all social interactions. First, in examining care in practice, I critically assess the disability geographies literature on dependencies. I then move on to analyse care *for* animals, assessing how care has been considered in different spaces, and how care has been distinctly provided *by* humans *for* animals. Critical here is a lack of focus on care provided *by* animals *for* humans (in the wider literature), which is a theme I pick up on later.

Concluding with an excursion into what I call '*Entanglements*', I draw together claims, concepts, and cases from the previous two thematic sections to see how they might be stirred together to provide a more direct set of routes into my own empirical inquiries – that of the geographies of assistance animal partnerships. I highlight work that explicitly explores care *by* animals beyond companionship – protecting humans, finding lost humans, identifying threatening humans – and in doing so transgress beyond more mechanistic forms of learned care through training, to deal

with the outer limits of attributing caring agency to animals. Furthermore, I address the assistance animal literature, identifying the absences within both this literature, and the ‘*Bodies*’ and ‘*Care*’ sections, to advance perspectives and map critical themes emerging from this chapter that explicitly fit towards the aims and objectives of the thesis (outlined in **Chapter 1**) and the findings of the empirical (**Chapters 4, 5, 6**) later in the thesis.

Bodies

Disabled, ill, and pained bodies

Oliver's seminal works ‘*Social work with disabled people*’ and ‘*The politics of disablement*’ provided a critique of the longstanding hegemony of the medical view of sociologists, anthropologists, and medical professionals. The medical view situated disability as an individual ‘tragedy’ where technology and treatment should be used to make disabled bodies and minds more ‘normal’ (Butler & Parr, 1999; Goodley, 2011; Thomas, 2004, 2007). The medical model situated the disabled body and mind as undesirable: disabled people were treated as objects rather than agents of their own lives and were often excluded to the margins of society. These exclusions can be seen through institutionalisation and marginalisation of disabled people from society and economic activity. The medical view constructed disabled people as helpless, controlled by their disabilities, in need of a cure for their deviant bodies (Goodley, 2011). The disabled body, through this theoretical orientation, can be seen as abnormal, an undesirable body often viewed by the rest of society in terms of its limitations, one that should be ‘made normal’.

Oliver (1990) countered this hegemonic understanding of disability and the disabled body by proposing a social theory of disability that centres the ways in which society includes and excludes disabled people. The social model addresses external factors that become disabling barriers, such as social and cultural attitudes, environmental factors, and ableist political structures (Butler, 1994; Butler & Bowlby, 1997; Butler & Parr, 1999; Gleeson, 1997; Imrie, 1996). These factors are all considered social barriers that are socially constructed. The social model therefore moves away from people’s embodied impairments to focus on the causes of exclusion through these barriers. Primary social barriers are discrimination, social isolation, economic dependence, high unemployment, inaccessible housing, and institutionalisation (Goodley, 2011). The social model led to the development of a collective consciousness and strengthening of the disabled peoples’ movement (Oliver, 2013). This political movement was liberating as people were able to recognise that society disabled and discriminated against them, *not* themselves (Shakespeare, 2006). The mobilising of a collective political consciousness challenged how the media portrayed disabled people, helped make transport services and public buildings more accessible, and led to disability discrimination becoming illegal (Oliver, 1990; Shakespeare, 2006). The passing of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995, was seen as one of the key political successes of the disability movement in the UK (Shakespeare, 2006), enacting a contestation to discrimination, in

diverse guises, which had so far excluded disabled people. It helped (re)position the disabled body and mind as legitimately occupying public space, offering greater freedoms (although disability hate crime is still a key issue in public spaces both physically and online: see Burch, 2018; Hall, 2018; Hall & Bates, 2019). The social model moved away from focusing on bodily impairments in a manner that is normalising but also universalising of the disabled body.

Two main critiques of the social model have developed due to the normalisation and universalisation of the disabled body emphasising, respectively: the severed link between the body and disability; and the lack of recognition of difference (further in-depth critiques can be found in Thomas, 2004, 2007; Shakespeare, 2006; Goodley, 2011, 2013). Many researchers have argued that the body and impairment should remain a key focus point as felt and expressed experiences of different impairments continue to be the raw material out of which both exclusions and possible reparations can best be understood (Goodley, 2013; Hall, 2000; Lock et al., 2005; Parr & Butler, 1999; Shakespeare, 2006). This is pertinent to Butler and Bowlby's (1997) research on visually impaired people in public space, leading them to propose that disabled people's experiences of public space are a complex interaction between four factors: self-image; social interactions; physical and social structuring of space; and individual bodily characteristics of each individual. Throughout their interviews, disabled people highlighted issues of self-image with people being "highly self-conscious and self-critical about their appearance and behaviour in public" (423). Many people also recognised the assumptions made of disabled people being unable to cope independently and that, just because someone lacks sight, they also lack intelligence. In addition, participants also commented on the built physical environment and how it made navigation difficult. Issues here often involved a multitude of bus routes with no way to identify which is your bus or stop, the ephemeral nature of public space meaning that paths and surfaces constantly change, and difficulty navigating steps and other barriers. Finally, bodily characteristics and social discourses were recognised as affecting *how* disabled people engage with public space. As visual impairment is heterogenous, how visually impaired people experience space is different and all participants spoke of different experiences that were individual to them. Therefore, the inclusion of impairment and individual experience is important for any critical, theoretical model of disability. In a similar vein, Lock et al's (2005) research exploring stroke survivors' perspectives about their paid or voluntary work after stroke adopts a social model approach which focuses on the social barriers and oppressions that stroke survivors face in work. Vitally, though, this research shows how the social model approach was not always useful as, in some cases, it was incompatible with people's lived experiences. Whilst social barriers and oppression play a big role in stroke survivor's barriers to employment so does impairment itself:

"Difficulties with memory, processing information, speech and language, vision, walking, using the dominant hand and the effects of fatigue were all reported as barriers to employment" (Lock et al., 2005: 43).

These embodied experiences show the need to attend to disabled people's embodied lived experiences. This is backed-up further by Hall's (2000: 28) call for researchers to situate the body in "its fleshy reality", as embodied, socially and biologically, within geographical work on health, illness, and impairment. This challenge is taken on by Dyck et al (2005), who reveal how bodies and homes are both fields of knowledge, and sites of meanings, that are negotiated through the micro-politics of long-term care in the home. Through the myriad embodied bodily experiences of the women involved, we can see how the home is constructed as a space of caregiving through which the disabled body is interpreted and lived. Both the body and homespace become re-embodied through the spatial (re-)organisation of the home to facilitate the performance of a social self and the care of the body's private material limitations. Attending to the body in 'its fleshy reality' through grounding embodied bodily experiences thus helps centre the disabled body *through* its lived realities rather than via its imagined limitations. This claim is key to the research by Hansen and Philo (2007: 494) in their argument for a shift in "emphasis from doing things normally to ... simply the normality of doing things differently". Through their empirical research, Hansen and Philo (2007) explore disabled people's experiences of coping with impaired bodies in non-disabling spaces. A focus on participants' bodily practices in time and space shows how they contest ableism through 'doing things differently' such as using a wheelchair to navigate. An emphasis on the normality of doing things differently rather than just doing things normally opens up the varied ways in which the disabled body does things, and also the varied forms of care – perhaps with assistance from others, human or otherwise – that such a body may require or solicit.

Whilst the social model has been discussed, then, it does not operate as a panacea for disability research. Academics have proposed various models of disability and debate within disability studies still focuses around which model should be used and the merits and flaws of each (see Thomas, 2007 and Goodley, 2011 for discussions of other models). Alternatively, new theoretical engagements have begun to question our very understanding of the disabled body. The next section examines approaches which centre relationality at their heart – such as posthumanism and more-than-human – and how they can indeed challenge prior conceptions.

Relational understandings of disabled, ill, and pained bodies

To move beyond the binary of normal/abnormal, and the debate around models of disability, disability (and health) geographers and scholars have begun to engage with different philosophical and theoretical framings of disability that centre relationality, such as posthumanism (Goodley et al., 2014, 2019; Goodley, Lawthom, et al., 2018) and more-than human geography (Andrews, 2018; Andrews et al., 2014; Andrews & Duff, 2019; Beljaars, 2020; Hall & Wilton, 2017; Macpherson, 2010, 2011). As forms of relational thinking, posthumanism and more-than-human geographies query traditional notions of the disabled body through their relational focus. The use of posthumanism and more-than-human approaches by disability

geographers and scholars is relatively new but will be examined with reference to how they potentially rework our views on the disabled body as (a) normal/abnormal and (b) relational.

Goodley et al (2014: 348) argue that “disability is the quintessential posthuman condition: because it calls for new ontologies, ways of relating, living and dying”. The challenge that posthumanism presents is towards the very understanding of *what being human means*, embracing new ontologies that necessarily go past binary thinking. Issues of relationality come to the fore as

“disability necessarily demands and affirms *interdependent* connections with other humans, technologies, non-human entities, communication streams and people and non-peopled networks” (Goodley et al., 2014: 348 emphasis added).

Disability is then being shaped *by and with* its relations to other human and nonhuman beings. At the centre is an ontological commitment to overturning the human/nonhuman binary; it becomes increasing difficult to separate human and nonhuman life as bodies become materialised, made active, lived, felt, thought, and enacted, through complex relations. Goodley et al (2019: 13) draw on Braidotti’s (a posthuman feminist scholar) conceptualisation of posthumanism and new materialism to explain that “life is a complex amalgam of assemblages” and proposes new ways in which disability studies can engage with posthumanism.

A first mode of engagement is between disability studies’ questioning of the traditional able-bodied human and posthumanism’s extension of the human body to incorporate a multitude of nonhuman others¹⁰. Both aim to reorientate the ways in which the body is conceptualised as normal/abnormal to focus instead on its relationality with others (Goodley et al., 2014). Papadimitriou’s (2008) research on re-embodiment after spinal cord injuries through a process of ‘en-wheeling’ is an example of corporeally incorporating nonhuman others into one’s own body schema. En-wheeling is a process by which people extend their bodies through and with technology to enable themselves to move. It is a re-embodiment process where patients learn to “maneuver their bodies through the chair. Their bodily awareness is now extending to include the frame of the wheelchair” (Papadimitriou, 2008: 697). Papadimitriou’s research challenges conventional assumptions of the human body and discourses of ability to include those who are intracorporeally intertwined with technology. This is expanded upon by Sparkes et al (2018: 151) who explore the construct of disabled sporting ‘cyborg’, identifying four phases in the process of becoming a disabled athlete: “from taken-for-granted to techno-survival cyborgs; rehabilitation centres and becoming a technically competent cyborg; everyday life as an embodied cyborg; [and] becoming a disabled sporting cyborg”. These four stages offer different points of reflections on the body’s interdependencies with technology as a disabled body ‘becomes’ with technology:

“In the gradual transformation from techno-survival cyborgs to a technically competent embodied cyborg in everyday life, and then onto a disabled sporting cyborg, our findings show how our participants were able to redesign their bodies and become the architects of their own identities involved in new ways of being. For example, in becoming en-

¹⁰ Notice that ‘incorporate’ literally means to bring into a ‘body’ (corps [the French for body]).

wheeled, both everyday wheelchairs and sports wheelchairs became ‘part of them’, and the interface between the natural (human) and the artificial (machine) dissolved through repetition of daily and athletic routines and regimes” (Sparkes et al., 2018: 162).

This quote shows the agency of disabled people to ‘redesign’ their own bodies and identities. The disabled athletes ‘become’ together with technology, and so the binary between human and nonhuman (machine) becomes unclear. This relocates the traditional view of the disabled body to one that is relational:

“In becoming disabled sporting cyborgs, they were released from and directly challenged the normative myth of the disabled body as weak, passive, undesirable and tragic to become agentic, strong, desirable and celebrated as corporeal beings who took pride and pleasure in their bodies and their achievements” (Sparkes et al., 2018: 162)

The disabled athletes effectively transcended the medical conceptualisation of the disabled body often ‘prescribed’ by doctors, and the tragic narrative often seen in media, to instead the body as having agency and being composite corporeal entities. Acknowledging relationality, Goodley et al (2014: 349) state:

“Disability, then, emerges in these contemporary (posthuman) times as a moment of relational ethics: urging us to think again about how we are all made through our connections with others and encouraging us to embrace ways of love and life that are not rigidly framed by humanistic values of independence and autonomy”

This shows a broader reconceptualisation of the disabled body from being normal/abnormal, recognised as lacking, to instead being recognised as relational, in possession of potential.

A second mode of engagement is across the species divide. One aim of posthumanism is to challenge the dominant trope of anthropocentrism in society, and in disability studies it also serves to confront the dominant ableism in society. Goodley et al (2014) argue for a shift away from ‘speciesism’, usually meaning an ingrained human sense of superiority over other species, to an appreciation of what different bodies, across species, can do. Goodley et al (2014) state that there is an unconscious human desire to view animals as less-than-human and, in some cases, to treat certain humans as if they are not humans. Becoming human and animal together disputes this discourse and revalues both animals and humans through posthuman spaces of becoming (Goodley et al., 2014). The value is in the relationality between humans and animals and locating their respective bodies through this relationality. This is something I pick up in the ‘*Entanglements*’ part of this chapter.

Some scholars are not convinced whether posthumanism has the answers. Vehmas and Watson (2016) suggest that Goodley et al’s account lacks an engagement with normative issues of how things ought to be, objecting that these authors do not properly articulate the moral and political wrongs disabled people face. I would respond, however, that Goodley et al (2014) do challenge the ableist nature of society – and its many ‘wrongs’ – by opening questions about the body’s potentiality and what it can do. Reframing the body not through its limitations but its potentiality contests the moral discourses and political wrongs disabled people face. It confronts the inherent

ableism that equates impairment with a negative otherness to recognise that impairment and difference are always social, always part of and not set against some envisaged unimpaired, undifferentiated ‘us’ (Vandekinderen & Roets, 2016). A second critique posed by Vehmas and Watson (2016) revolves around posthumanist’s appeals for collective responsibility, especially the dissolving of the boundary between human and animal, which they state may put disabled people at risk. They argue this point through reference to rationality and morals, stating that only ‘rational’ beings can be ‘moral’ which implies that nonhuman animals are amoral beings, hence maybe undeserving of our (human) concern. Posthumanism sets its face against this stance, offering greater agency to animals and technology *and* thereby redistributing attributions of what might be regarded as ‘rational’ or ‘moral’ (or dispensing with such fundamentally anthropocentric representations altogether). This is significant as many humans and animals live together in intimate ways and there is a blurring of all such boundaries between human and nonhuman as life – or, better, multiple lives, differently lived – become(s) intimately connected (Goodley et al., 2018).

The posthumanist framing of disability has opened ways to think critically about the disabled body as relational and a site of rights¹¹. There is a clear and distinct challenge to traditional ways of viewing the disabled body as normal/abnormal through exploring the potentialities of bodies rather than replicating an ableist understanding of a body’s limitations. What the body can be/do is not thought of solely through anthropocentric terms, moreover, and brings to light the fundamental relations that humans have with other animals and nonhumans. Whilst this move has led to critiques (e.g., Vehmas & Watson, 2016), animals and technology have become so integrated into our collective, intimate daily lives that boundaries between human and nonhuman have become blurred. Such blurring is pivotal to everything that follows in this thesis.

In a similar vein, more-than-human approaches move away from the social and medical models of disability towards the body as constantly in process (Macpherson, 2010). This can be seen through a “shift from an epistemological emphasis on meaning and identity to an ontological concern with bodies and material doings” (Hall and Wilton, 2017: 728-729). The body is constantly in a process of becoming, interconnected with other bodies, materials, and spaces. In this way bodies are relational, and it is this relationality that keeps them in a process of becoming. This opens up new questions about what bodies can do, their potentiality, and their ability to affect and be affected (Hall & Wilton, 2017; Macpherson, 2010). Non-representational theory, as one more-than-human approach, moves beyond the impairment/disability dichotomy, recognising that multiple processes operate within, between and through bodies, materials and spaces that shape subjective becomings (Hall & Wilton, 2017). Non-representational theory does not privilege the human subject, but is instead interested in the human body’s co-evolution with co-

¹¹ Albeit this is itself may be considered another highly anthropocentric notion.

equal nonhumans, showing how nonhuman animals and materials both have agency (Thrift, 2007). Macpherson's (2009a, 2009b) research – which utilises non-representational theory – shows how for sighted guides and visually impaired walkers walking in the English countryside, the visually impaired walkers rely on other bodies (those guiding), the material landscape, weather, light, memory, the physical interaction with the landscape, to navigate and experience landscape. Macpherson's research offers an insight into the emerging inter-corporeality between bodies in the navigation of the landscape:

“Acting as a sighted guide for walkers with blindness I extended their sense of touch and their anticipation of touch beyond their own body into mine, for they held on to my arm and used my movements to guide them. Equally, I began to perceive and *move through the landscape for two, my companion absorbed into my body ... and my body mediating some of their touch*” (Macpherson, 2009a: 188, emphasis added).

This quote shows the relational engagements between guide and walker, how they navigate through the landscape together due to their bodies' inherent relationality and ability to affect one another. Through this inter-corporeal engagement, sighted guide and visually impaired walker challenge the dominant norms of how bodies should move and engage with one another. Macpherson's account centralises both the guide's and the visually impaired person's body agency through tactile engagement. Furthermore, Macpherson (2009b: 1049) examines visually impaired people's experiences of landscape and how they resonate not just with how people guiding them describe the landscape, but how memory and embodiment play an essential role:

“The process of seeing is dependent not only on the physical organ of sight but also on memory and imagination ... the mind is organizing itself so that an embodied present is partly produced out of our embodied past”.

This quote illustrates the embodiment within the landscape and how memory acts as a mode of embodiment for people with visually impairments. Both memory and physical approximation in the landscape allow people to experience the landscape through the body and mind. In another more-than-human example, Bell et al (2019) shows how weather and light affect visually impaired people's lifeworlds. Different flows, intensities, of wind, precipitation, and light, soothe, comfort, invigorate, pain, disable, disorientate, and isolate people. The weather affects and surrounds the body, with the wind being described as awakening the body but also influencing people's ability to hear. This impacts on the body's ability to navigate as many visually impaired people use sound as well as other senses and materials to navigate space. The quality of light can also affect the body in a multitude of ways:

“Challenges caused by intense or “excess” experiences of light, be it through bleaching out colour and compromising depth perception, or catalysing feelings of anxiety and discomfort if too “dazzling” or reflective” (Bell et al., 2019: 8).

The disabled body is constantly in relation with more-than-human weather worlds through different flows and intensities, shaping not only the body's ability to navigate but also a person's wellbeing through inducing anxiety or discomfort. Ultimately, through a non-representational

approach the body emerges as relational, in relation to other forces, bodies, materials, that affect the body.

More-than-human approaches aim to move beyond the impairment/disability dichotomy, recognising that multiple processes operate within, between and through bodies, materials and spaces that shape subjective becomings (Hall & Wilton, 2017). Through elaborating this approach, the present review has moved from viewing the disabled body in splendid (apparently incapable) isolation to the disabled body as relationally ‘enabled’. Prior research has shown exactly this through attention to the disabled body inter-corporeally engaging with other bodies and materials in attempts to navigate space (Macpherson, 2009a) and how more-than-human forces, such as the weather, affect and engage with the disabled body (Bell et al., 2019). These pieces of research re-orientate our understanding of the disabled body, placing it as relational, but what has been largely – if not entirely – missing in these relational pieces of research has been the disabled body’s engagement with animal bodies (taken up later in this chapter).

Animal bodies

Whether for food (Gillespie, 2014; Joyce et al., 2015), scientific research (Giraud & Hollin, 2016; Greenhough & Roe, 2011), sport (Allen et al., 2016; McManus & Montoya, 2012), or therapeutic engagement (Charles & Wolkowitz, 2019; Gorman, 2017), whether as part of (il)legal wildlife trade (Collard, 2014; Collard & Dempsey, 2013), or in the name of conservation (K. Anderson, 1995), animal bodies have been commodified and shaped for human control. Gillespie (2014: 1322) argues that “[a]nimal bodies, and particularly *farmed* animal bodies, are subject to mundane, routinised forms of violence in everyday agricultural practice”. Processes aiming to maximise profit from animal bodies rely on animals being commodities when both alive and dead (Collard, 2014; Collard & Dempsey, 2013; Gillespie, 2014). One process that has largely shaped and reshaped human-animal relations, and particularly the bodies and behaviour of animals, is domestication. Discussed in two parts, I broadly place different ideas of domestication from geographical and anthropological literature assessing how ideas of domestication have changed over time from control and dominance to mutuality and affect. I then show how debates in dog training broadly reflect these two camps. This is vital to this research in contextualising historic (and present) human-canine relations, and how scientific research influences, and reshapes these relationships.

Domestication and dog training

Domestication has been a topic of debate in geography and wider disciplines since the 1950s, when, Carl Sauer, a prominent voice in geography from the Berkley School, argued that culture (above ecological factors) was the decisive force transforming the Earth's surface. Sauer (1952, cited in K. Anderson, 1998) argued animals become domesticated less to supply food to growing populations, than to serve in religious ceremonies of sedentary populations. K. Anderson (1998:

123) notes, “in this sense, as for Shaler, culture was conceived normatively and temporally as an attribute that had arisen in conjunction with the development of man’s rational capacities”¹². The idea of rational capacity as solely a human attribute is problematic, as was, as K. Anderson (1998) contends, Shaler’s (1896) assertion that only certain (white) races had the ability to domesticate nonhumans, a view not shared by Sauer. The idea of culture as a key factor in domestication is also put forward by Ingold. A key author within the work of domestication, Ingold has previously drawn a distinction between trust and domination, illustrating how herding societies produce a human mastery over nature:

“The instruments of herding, quite unlike those of hunting, are of control rather than revelation: they include the whip, spur, harness and hobble, all of them designed either to restrict or to induce movement through the infliction of physical force, and sometimes acute pain” (Ingold, 1994: 16-17).

The use of physical force by herders demonstrates the power that humans have over animals and this relationship is consistent with anthropocentric and speciesist views of animals and nature. In Ingold’s example, whilst, on the face of it, hunting is the more oppressive regime for animals – since it exposes them to direct violence and death – but here Ingold implies that herding (‘domestication’) is the more insidious, being about control, coercion, and often then death. These themes have been dominant in human geography extending beyond human-animal supremacy to human-human domination. Ritvo (1987: 17) meaningfully explains how animal domestication in the Victorian-era, as human dominance over nature, mapped into colonial discourse, claiming that:

“the animal kingdom ... was generally compared to the lesser ranks of a domestic commonwealth” and that “the best animals were those that displayed the qualities of an industrious, docile, and willing human servant, [whilst] the worst not only declined to serve, but dared to challenge human supremacy”.

This shows that domestication is not just human control over nature but extends to control over other human societies through similar, colonialist, and racist principles. Although some authors still argue that domestication is characterised by human control over nature, thinking about the extent to which the human is the foremost actor in the domestication relationship now differs. Through this understanding K. Anderson (1997: 464), views domestication as:

“a process of drawing animals into a nexus of human concern where humans and animals become mutually accustomed to conditions and terms laid out by humans; where that which is culturally defined as nature’s ‘wildness’ is brought in and nurtured in some guises, exploited in other guises, mythologized and aestheticized in still other forms of this complex cultural practice”.

For Anderson, domestication is anthropocentric, human-centred and controlled, and, whilst there is some co-operation between humans and animals, humans are undoubtedly the superiors within the relationship. Anderson’s interpretation of domestication differs from Ingold’s, however, as

¹² Anderson here is referring to (Shaler, 1896).

she accounts for the multitude of relationships that humans and animals can have, not just exploitation as in the case of Ingold's herders, but also more subtle forms of human domination through animals mythologised in religion and the nurturing of some animals such as pets. This insight is similar to that previously taken by Yi-Fu Tuan (1984), who argues that domestication is a practice of power, akin, but not confined, to the dominance of humans over animals. One key claim that Tuan (1984) advances is that dominance habitually combines itself with affection: when this combination occurs the 'pet' is produced; when there is a lack of affection, animals are harnessed for human services. The difference is between whether there is an admission of affection between human and animal, or whether the animal is viewed mostly as a commodity rather than as a cultural or social agent.

Contrary to the argument of cultural dominance, other definitional approaches to domestication advocate a mutualistic relationship in which humans and animals are partners and share the benefits of domestication (Zeder, 2012). This approach simultaneously engages biological (or, perhaps better, ecological) and cultural dimensions (L. Birke, 2014; Clutton-Brock, 1995, 1999) and often sees animals expressing a measure of agency within the domestication process. In some cases this greater recognition of agency may even go as far as suggesting that animals 'chose' to be domesticated in the interest of species survival (Budiansky, 1995). Others offer a more cogent argument based around animal agency, such as Despret (2014), who gives the example of Zahavi, an ornithologist, and his interactions with Arabian Babblers, a grouping of birds. Despret claims that Zahavi and the babblers co-modify their behaviour to one-another through long periods of interactions and become attuned to each other. She explains that 'attunement', along with Zahavi's anthropomorphic (but helpful) rendering of their engagement, renders the babblers as quasi-domesticated, arguing that this domestication is a process of engagement between human and animal and is therefore bi-directional. Zeder (2012: 163-164) argues that a recognition of both the biological and cultural components of domestication helps realise domestication as:

“a sustained, multigenerational, mutualistic relationship in which humans assume some significant level of control over the reproduction and care of a plant/animal in order to secure a more predictable supply of a resource of interest and by which the plant/animal is able to increase its reproductive success over individuals not participating in this relationship, thereby enhancing the fitness of both humans and target domesticates”.

In this definition, whilst humans still hold most of the control in their relationship with animals, the domestication relationship is also characterised – or potentially might be characterised – as involving animal agency and reciprocal exchanges of care. It can of course be objected that, if humans are controlling the reproductivity of an animal, the relationship is ultimately skewed in the interests of humans for their economic benefits and beliefs. Furthermore, some are in opposition to this mutualistic interpretation of domestication as a two-way encounter, possibly including transfers of care in both directions. D. G. Anderson et al (2017) duly contest any crisp and clear separation between domestication as either, a form of dominance, or as a type of

mutualism. They do this by exploring strategies of control, but also of care and comfort, within the material architectures of domestication in Arctic environments. They show how the physical properties of an enclosure offer a structure appreciated as ‘home’ to reindeer herds, that also operates as a place for food, relief, veterinary care, training, harnessing, and safety. This structure acts as a zone of encounter between the herd and herders and is used for a limited time so animals can then be free to do as they please until corralled again. This example excellently demonstrates that the process of domestication and the relationship between humans and animals is characterised not solely by human control, including where herders are involved, but also by care and animal agency.

Through now exploring the training of working dogs as a learned form of domestication, allowing me to filter in some empirical material highly germane to the substance of what follows later in the thesis, I will briefly show how dogs are domesticated through training as a cultural and social modification to animal behaviour for a very specific cohort of dogs in the contemporary UK. Training approaches themselves differ spatially and temporally, and I aim to examine why different training techniques are used (see Włodarczyk (2018) on training approaches since the 19th century) and how training as a process of human-animal engagement, acts not only as a domesticating and taming process that is continuous and dynamic, but as a development of the relationship between human and dog. This detour will help build on the ‘*Entanglement*’ theme covered later in the chapter, as well as speaking directly to questions of animal embodiment.

In dog training the above ideas of domestication percolate through different training approaches. **Table 2** outlines a range of different dog training approaches and the definitions of these. There is broad overlap between some of the different approaches as detailed in the table, but it is important to note that they broadly fall under negative (punitive) approaches and positive (reward-based approaches). Critically examining these approaches is useful for this thesis (see **Chapters 4 and 5** particularly) and its goal of exploring assistance dog training.

Table 2: Training terminology and definitions.

Terminology	Definition	Citation
Behaviourism	An approach developed by B.F. Skinner amongst others that puts emphasis on observable ‘facts’. It considers the environments and stimuli’s effect on actors. B.F. Skinner developed operant conditioning (below) from this.	(Pręgowski, 2015)
Compulsions	Example negative compulsions are jerks on the choke collar or intimidating sounds, etc., that are used to get the dog to do a task.	(Pręgowski, 2015)

Dominance	The concept of dominance is that people should act as “pack leaders” (see below pack theory).	(Browne et al., 2017; Włodarczyk, 2015)
Negative methods	Removal of things (food, toys, choke collar) to punish or reinforce.	
Negative punishment	One of the four quadrants of B.F. Skinner’s operant conditioning. Negative punishment is the removal of good things (such as a ball or attention) to punish behaviour.	(Greenebaum, 2010)
Negative reinforcement	One of the four quadrants of B.F. Skinner’s operant conditioning. Negative reinforcement is the removal of bad things (choke collar) to reinforce behaviour (e.g., tightening up the leash when the dog engages in bad behaviour and loosening up on the leash when the dog walks nicely).	(Greenebaum, 2010)
Operant conditioning	Operant conditioning is the main part of B.F. Skinner’s concept of behaviourism. It has four parts: i) positive reinforcement, ii) positive punishment, iii) negative reinforcement, and iv) negative punishment.	Pręgowski (2015)
Pack theory	“The theory results from a transference onto the human-canine relationship of the (misunderstood) relationship between members of a wolf pack. According to the pack leader theory, the alpha wolf “naturally” enforces submission among other wolves ... What logically follows is that showing a dog his place in the pack hierarchy should result in his obedience to the trainer”.	(Włodarczyk, 2015: 77-78)
Positive methods	A colloquial term referring to training based on the psychological foundations of B.F. Skinner’s behaviourism and experiences from the practical application of his ideas. Positive training proponents advocate the primary use of positive	Pręgowski (2015)

	reinforcement as the most important quadrant/procedure/type of operant conditioning. When referring to positive methods people almost always mean positive reinforcement rather than positive punishment.	
Positive punishment	One of the four quadrants of B.F. Skinner's operant conditioning. Positive punishment is the embracing of the introduction of aversive stimulus after the occurrence of an unwanted behaviour.	Pręgowski (2015)
Positive reinforcement	One of the four quadrants of B.F. Skinner's operant conditioning. Positive reinforcement is adding in good things (such as a treat) to reinforce good behaviour.	(Greenebaum, 2010)
Punishment	Term often used negatively to decrease the occurrence of future behaviour.	
Reinforcement	Term often used positively to increase the occurrence of future behaviour.	

The more anthropocentric, speciesist, and controlling forms of domestication (signalled above by K. Anderson, 1997; Ingold, 1994; Ritvo, 1987; Tuan, 1984) share a greater affinity with negative and punishment-based training methods seen throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Pręgowski, 2015; Włodarczyk, 2018). The connection here is to the more oppressive and controlling approaches taken to domestication and training. The idea of human as 'master' over nature transitioned into dog training, with many early dog trainers taking the approach of human being 'master of the pack' and the dog a pack member (Pręgowski, 2015). This "top-down, discipline-heavy approach where punishment is immanent" (Pręgowski, 2015: 526) was adopted by trainers from military or police backgrounds with obedience forced on dogs through correction and punishment – e.g. jerks on the choke collar or intimidating sounds – to scare dogs into obeying. The approach is tied intimately with white, upper-class, masculinist ideals of authority and 'rational' behaviour in the late 19th-early 20th centuries (Charles et al., 2021; Włodarczyk, 2018). Therefore, this 'traditional' dominance-based method of training endorses obedience by using a *human-centric* approach that places dogs in a subordinate position (Greenebaum, 2010). These punitive approaches were largely adopted by companion, police, and gun dog trainers of the time, and despite the fact that research has demythologised the notion that dogs behave like wolves (pack theory), indicating significant differences between *Canis lupus* and *Canis familiaris* (see for example Coppinger & Coppinger, 2001), these approaches have not completely disappeared. Punitive approaches leave little room for positive engagement between human and

animal, positioning the animal as ‘wild’ and separate from the category of the ‘social’. There is also no consideration to animals as lively agentic beings, ones where empathetic engagement might lead to better ways of living together. Whilst some may say that seeing animals as ‘wild’ is precisely to see them as lively and agentic, this is problematic as it is from an anthropocentric viewpoint.

On the other hand, ideas of mutualism in domestication (discussed by D. G. Anderson et al., 2017; Budiansky, 1995; Despret, 2014; Zeder, 2012) hint at a switch to positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement is based on the ‘operant conditioning’ scientific approach outlined by B.F. Skinner (see **Table 1**). Greenebaum (2010: 129) states that reward-based methods promote “a *dog-centric* approach that highlights companionship over dominance and promotes a balance of human and dog desires and needs”¹³. Positive reinforcement thus flips from a human-centric approach to a more animal-centric approach. The power within the relationship is distributed more evenly as dogs become agentic actors in training, although power is always still in human hands (Charles et al., 2021). The aim of positive methods is to cease the unilateral nature of dog training, moving towards a bond of mutual benefit, where force-free, reward-based methods work in unison with the potential of self-development for humans (Pręgowski, 2015). The transition by many to positive reinforcement is seen as reflecting a more feminised ideal of dog training¹⁴, where, tellingly, training is entangled with an ethics of care and a responsiveness to the dog’s agency (Charles et al., 2021; Gabrielsen, 2017; Weaver, 2017; Włodarczyk, 2016). Charles et al (2021: 16) convey the shift in power relations marking the transition from punishment to reward-based training:

“Power relations are subtly changed with masculinised forms of authority being questioned and more feminised forms of power predominating. Power operates in a way which responds to the dog’s needs and desires; it reflects an affective relationship of care rooted in the recognition of the dog as an ethical subject and is based on persuasion rather than (physical) coercion”.

Despite the more outwardly looking positive approach to training here, there are some criticisms towards positive training methods. For some engaging with positive methods, the idea remains of the dog as a mechanical being or ‘tool’. Moreover, whilst I have separated punishment and reward-based training in the discussions above, the reality is that the dog training world is much more ‘messy’ than I have conveyed (see for example Browne et al., 2017; Charles et al., 2021; Włodarczyk, 2018). Rather than the seemingly unproblematic transitions from punishment to reward-based training, debate has continued about the *correct* way to proceed, and some types of dog training cultures utilise both punishment and reward at the same time (see for example, Sanders' (2006) research on police dog training in the US). Additionally, whilst Greenebaum

¹³ Here Greenebaum is using ‘reward-based methods’ to refer particularly to positive reinforcement rather than both positive and negative reinforcement.

¹⁴ This is problematic essentialism, equating a non-physically violent approach as a feminine move.

(2010) states above that reward-based methods are *more* dog-centric, it is important to question whether this can even be possible. Humans still chose when to provide rewards, they still shape the dog's behaviour and their inherent 'doggyness' to anthropocentric human ideals. Indeed, the idea of *when* to provide a reward, and the reward as the behaviour shaping tool, can be contentious:

“What is left out of the picture of this otherwise coherent and force-free approach is the well-being of the trained animal – his or her immanent needs, especially psychological needs, such as attention and bonding. Noticing such an omission and considering it a problem is more probable if one crosses the borders of behaviorism and its lack of interest in what goes on inside the black box” (Pręgowski, 2015: 532).

The 'black box' to which Pręgowski refers is the animal mind and implies a critique of reward-based methods that do not centre animal agency, subjectivity, or wellbeing. Not all reward-based trainers signify the importance of animal wellbeing in training (see **Chapter 4 and 5**). Indeed, the inner workings of animal cognition have become a point of concern in shaping recent, 21st century, animal training. Ethological work such as that by Bekoff (2006, 2011) has prompted many dog trainers to (try to) adopt canine sensibilities within their training approaches. Włodarczyk's (2017) play on words, 'be more dog'¹⁵, is about the human's role in dog training and the move to be more like dogs: to try to understand them and create an empathetic approach to training.

The seemingly smooth transition to reward-based training, and even the more recent approaches focused on animal cognition, is echoed within assistance animal training worlds (see **Chapter 4 and 5**). Critically, examining these different – but interconnected – approaches to dog training, attends to my thesis' aims in exploring *how* human and nonhuman bodies work together and *how* assistance dog training is completed.

Embodied potentials

Taking forward the relational conceptions of bodies – elaborated here through literature, concepts, and a brief engagement with the embodied training of dogs – is valuable conceptually for this research and will be expanded on in the following sections on 'Care' and 'Entanglements'. Furthermore, the conceptual and empirical foundations of domestication and dog training provide significant contextualisation to the research, clear training nomenclature, and background to the findings of this research (particularly **Chapters 4 and 5**). I take forward the 'positive' and 'mutual' insights of domestication and dog training to understand 'entanglements' of human-animal lifeworlds, and to directly address one objective of this research: *how* do disabled humans and dogs train together to form an assistance dog partnership.

¹⁵ Adopted from a famous O2 advert in which a cat plays Frisbee™ argues we should 'be more dog'.

Care

Care has been conceptualised by geographers in several different ways, with special issues paying attention to ‘spaces, practices, and experiences’ of care, ‘care of the body’ (*Social and Cultural Geography* 2003; 2011), ‘ethics of care’ (*Ethics, Policy and Environment*, 2010), ‘troubling the geographies of care’ (Area, 2019), and ‘stretching the boundaries of care’ (*Gender, Place and Culture*, 2019). Each special issue adds a further perspective to the geographies of care, reshaping care as a practice, concept, empirically important, and personally significant. This section focuses first on, conceptualisations of care, examining feminist care ethics and more-than-human conceptualisations of care. These are mapped throughout the thesis (**Chapter 6**). Second, I examine care and the dependency dyad. A significant amount of work has focused on dependency and care within disability geographies, but here – consistent with the drift of argument above about introducing relationality into disability geographies – the focus is critically trained on binary notions of dependency as bad, to be countered in practice, and independency as good, a favoured end goal (constructions which I critique). Finally, I move onto care as a practice. Here I focus separately on care for animals and care for humans, paying attention to the attendant spatialities and temporalities of care as a significant practice. Later in this chapter (and the thesis) I map how care boundaries can be deconstructed, spatially and temporally (using more-than-human conceptualisations), to show how dog assistance can be viewed *as* care (see particularly **Chapter 6**).

Feminist care ethics

Care has long been a feminist issue, being often ‘feminised’ through the patriarchal construction and performance of gender roles, women being positioned as ‘natural’ carers, and with care work also being racialised and classed. Gilligan’s (1982) work on the development of moral reasoning in children and adults was central to the construction of a feminist ethic of care. Gilligan claimed that women adopted an ethic of care based on relatedness and responsiveness to the needs of others. This depiction plays on the patriarchal construction of gender roles of women as care givers, at risk of reinforcing a sense of care as primarily a moral practice, only being done by those seemingly, possessing a moral sphere, and strengthening the dependency dyad as the normality of only certain categories of person being ‘dependent’ on women carers. Instead, Tronto and Fisher (1990: 40, emphasis original) define care as:

“A species activity that includes *everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible*. That world includes our bodies, our selves and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web”.

This definition goes beyond care solely as a moral obligation, to care as a practice, it begins to open out care further as an all-encompassing practice. This approach is developed further by Lawson (2007: 3) who argues:

“Care ethics begins with a social ontology of connection: foregrounding social relationships of mutuality and trust (rather than dependence). Care ethics understands all social relations as contextual, partial attentive and responsible”.

Lawson critiques the binary nature of dependence by centring trust and mutuality, whilst admittedly still perhaps hinting that dependence is itself a problem, a lesser state of being. I think this is important as it also goes beyond care as a moral practice, to care as a mutual practice imbued with notions of attentiveness, trust, and respect. It also goes beyond care solely for a ‘vulnerable’ other, stretching out the boundaries of care to myriad others, vulnerable or otherwise (Bartos, 2019; Cox, 2010). Indeed, both Lawson (2007) and Tronto (2006) argue that ‘care’ must be something that everyone – every *human* ‘one’ – is and can be involved in, and that everyone needs. “By recognizing that we are all recipients of ‘care’, we expose and begin to appreciate our interdependence and reject notions of care that situate it in the private family or intimate relationships alone” (Cox, 2010: 116). The ideas put forward by Tronto, Lawson, and Cox begin to develop what I see as a move towards care for *all* social actors.

Here, bringing feminist ethics of care into conversation with animals, I want to highlight some key works which extend this care beyond solely the human realm. Essential work here permeated through to veganism (Hamilton, 2016), humanities (Giraud et al., 2018), ecofeminism (Plumwood, 1993, 2000; Twine, 2010), and animal ethics (Donovan & Adams, 2007). Importantly, such contributions underscore that care is not just for humans, done by humans, but rather, it is part of the much more extensive more-than-human world. Adams and Donovan (Adams, 1990; Adams & Donovan, 1995) explicitly extend an ethics of care to animals in their own work on women, gender, and animals. Throughout their work they foreground interconnections between feminism and animals as “a sense of ethical responsibility, deriving from our historical praxis of care” (Adams & Donovan, 1995: 26). To go beyond this engagement, however, and through more sustained theoretical engagement, I now turn to Puig de la Bellacasa’s conceptualisation of care and speculative ethics.

More-than-human conceptualisations of care

We humans “need care, feel care, are cared for, or encounter care one way or another. Care is omnipresent, even through the effects of its absence” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017: 1). The presence (or absence) of care shapes our everyday lives. However, care means different things to different people, and takes many spatial and temporal forms. Furthermore, care is not only a human concern, but is important for many different animals, such as domesticated pets, laboratory mice, or sheltered dogs, in many different spatial contexts. But what does care mean in the human-animal relationship, and how do the relational aspects of care and companionship cross the species divide?

Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) draws on feminist care ethics and science and technology studies (STS) to position care as taking myriad forms through different interactions between humans and

nonhumans in different situations. She continues by saying that, whilst care can be identified and researched, it “remains ambivalent in significance and ontology” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017: 1). It is the ambivalence of care, allowing for people to understand it differently and accord it a different place, range, and meaning within their lives. Care also transpires into different forms of life; it is required for the maintenance of interdependent human and animal lifeworlds (McMaster, 2017; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017). Rather than starting from a human centre (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017), care is always in relation, networked between many human and nonhuman beings. This leads to what Mol et al (2010: 14) calls “tinkering”, recognising the ambivalence of care, its ongoing nature and the need constantly to reconfigure care to meet the needs of those involved in particular time-spaces. De la Bellacasa’s configuration of care thus aligns with other geography, STS, and sociology scholars who show how care is relational, material, and performative (Mol, 2008; Mol et al., 2010; Davies, 2012; Kerr and Garforth, 2016). Her three dimensions of care – affect/emotion, labour/work, ethics/politics – which are not equally distributed, constantly at play, in tension or unity, are vital for how care is practised. Whilst all three dimensions are entangled and should be considered together, the tensions and dominance of some dimensions in different circumstances situates other dimensions less, or more, visible (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017). Care crosses the species divide so animals are not passive in merely receiving care, for arguably, they can often also give care and are active in their own care. Two of the three dimensions, emotions/affect and work/labour, suggest the agency of animals in caring networks. Affect and emotions cross the species divide as the ability to affect and be affected is clearly not just a human sensibility (Despret, 2004). Affect acts as a form of non-verbal communication between human and animal, enacted through embodied bodily gestures and engagements (Despret, 2004, 2013; see also later in this chapter). This can be shown through Despret’s (2004, 2013) example of Konrad Lorenz, an ethologist, who explores what companionship means for a jackdaw through being with it, through being fed, playing with it, and through practising (in vain) to fly with it. Lorenz engages his own body and transforms it into a body compatible with the jackdaw to understand its animal world. Through these engagements Lorenz becomes affected by the jackdaw and the jackdaw by him: they become like each other and a bond or “attunement” is created (Despret, 2004: 125). An affective/emotional bond between human and animal is created, one that is relational, important to both human and animal (typically between companion animals and humans) (Charles, 2014; Haraway, 2008). Affect and emotions are relational qualities of care that cross the species divide, so dogs can be observed to care for humans as well as humans for dogs. Additionally, work and labour cross the species divide through different types of work such as racing with horses, working with mice in laboratory settings, or receiving therapy from an assistance dog. They are – or at least in part they necessitate – caring practices on all parts, requiring work from both human and animal to be completed. As Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) states, however, the three dimensions are not separate and in caring practices all dimensions are

commonly involved. It is valuable, therefore, to explore all three of her dimensions of care as they are entangled together and help care cross the species boundary.

Thus, using Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) three dimensions of care – affect/emotion, work/labour, ethics/politics – as a conceptual framework to understand care in a more-than-human context, I review care in practice. I draw on current work in geography, STS, anthropology, sociology, and philosophy, tackling care between humans and animals in different spaces: namely, the home, the veterinary clinic, the laboratory, and the shelter. According to Hinchliffe (2010: 34), “where species meet” matters: where exactly – the spaces and places – these interactions occurs; is critical for how the human-animal relationship is played out, and ultimately how relations of care are practised. Additionally, Philo and Wilbert (2000: 5) argue that “the spaces and places involved make a difference to the very constitution of the relations in play”.

Care in practice

In-, inter-, intra-, dependencies

As already intimated, dependency is often viewed as a negative, stigmatised with the assumed ideals of being a burden, being vulnerable, and economic reliance. Historically, dependency has been regarded in this way for disabled people, who have been largely controlled due to their ‘deviant’ minds and bodies and the assumed nature of their embodiment as ‘vulnerable’, maybe placed in asylums or other spaces of control. This approach can be considered protectionist, to limit potential harm or risks faced, but it restricts all control over an occupant’s own life. Independency, on the other hand, is seen as a positive goal, a point at which a person can gain greater agency over their life.

This distinction though, is muddled by many geographers. For example, Metzel (2005) reveals that people with intellectual disabilities are still socially and economically controlled when ‘left’ in the community living supposedly independent lives, by the intensive regulation of funding and services, potentially leading to ghettoisation and segregation. In a further, nuanced and complex example, A. Power (2008: 834) recounts how, for caregiving at home, family carers for young people with these disabilities are

“‘caught-in-the-middle’ between their ‘duty’ to care and, at the same time, perpetuating dependency; the reality being that parents have to deal with issues of being overprotective and confronting various social assumptions about disability”.

Similarly, Hall (2004, 2005) describes how sites of paid employment and independent living, which are designed to be inclusionary, can still be sites of exclusion, whereas spaces of assumed exclusion, care homes and unpaid work, can often help people feel more included. As Hall (2005: 113) discloses:

“While social inclusion policy is concerned with providing access to the (economic) spaces of the majority, it pays little attention to the structures and attitudes that dominate

in such spaces, the transformation of which PWLD [people with learning disabilities] arguably desire”.

Hall is critiquing the lack of attention paid to structures and attitudes which shape exclusionary and inclusionary spaces. Likewise, Bonehill et al (2020), in their work with adults with Cerebral Palsy, reveal the social and spatial barriers that these people face to their independent mobility:

“Stares, the material environment, and the fear experienced as a result of social reaction to the participants’ impairment, particularly wheelchair use, rendered independent travel impossible for most of the participants. Importantly, it was not necessarily the participants’ physical or cognitive inability to navigate the environment, but design failures, social stigmatisation and careless behaviour of others that rendered participants disabled in their local community”.

Indeed, social attitudes towards ideas of dependence are often prevalent in hate crime towards disabled people, framing dependence as entirely negative and targeting disabled people as ‘spongers’ (A. Power & Bartlett, 2018) or ‘parasites’ (Burch, 2018) on the state¹⁶.

Ideas of dependency and interdependency vary spatially and are dependent on the very relations they attempt to define and control. In an attempt to reconceptualise independence and ‘care-giver’ and ‘care-receiver’ Watson et al (2004) position ‘(inter)dependence’ as more suitable in that it allows for the option of living and taking care of oneself by having assistance when and how one requires. It acknowledges more widely that everybody¹⁷ has certain dependencies within their own lives. A. Power (2008, 2016) emphasises how interdependence is more about mutualism and creating social relations with others rather than dependence. Furthermore, there is greater agency attributed to social actors as it is about the care they want for a meaningful life, not care that others (e.g., parents or governments) think they should have. These ideas of interdependence are crucial for my work moving forward, feeding into how the assistance dog partnership can contest binary thinking of dependency – independency and care-giver – care-receiver.

Whilst the narrative from the sorts of charities central to this thesis is usually centred on dogs helping humans become independent, at least of needing to depend on other humans, researchers have challenged this notion. Here, I would argue that the movement from being reliant on a human to being independent should instead be seen as a movement towards interdependency, or shared-dependency, with prime ‘inter/shared dependency’ relationship now running between dog and human. Sanders (2000: 134) use the term “dog-assisted independence” to describe human-guide-dog partnerships. Whilst this move does give a greater sense of the dog’s role in caring for the human, I think that there is still a grey area here, and that the dog’s role remains positioned as that as a tool rather than as an agentic being capable of thought and action. Alternatively, Howell (2018) has categorised the human-guide-dog partnership as a model of ‘dependent agency’, arguing that the agency of the disabled human is dependent upon the agency of the dog. This

¹⁶ Similar narratives are also used in classist and racist hate crimes and abuse.

¹⁷ I extend ‘everybody’ outwards here in relation to Puig de la Bellacasa’s work above.

reflects a greater mutuality in the relationship, one where care goes both ways. This emphasis is also reflected upon by Pemberton (2019; Kirk et al., 2019), who highlights the greater mutuality in this phrase (but also does use interdependence throughout his work). Perhaps most useful though is S. Taylor's (2017: 223) evocative argument for 'solidarity' between animal and disability rights movements, and her description of her mutual dependency arising between herself and her service dog Bailey (who also became disabled) as "two vulnerable, interdependent beings of different species learning to understand what the other needs. Awkwardly and imperfectly, we care for each other". In highlighting this interconnectedness in caring roles, these words perfectly encapsulate the challenge of what I intend to do in this thesis, expanding outwards the possibilities of care to the more-than-human – as compound receiver and giver of care – and in a sense (also outlined below and in **Chapter 6**) reshaping what assistance and care means in assistance animal partnerships. The spatial vignettes that follow open up windows on cross-species embodied care relations and practices, some of which will be revisited in the empirical chapters, some of which serve to provide more substance to the claims about 'entanglements' that will close out the chapter, capturing the core conceptual insights anchoring the thesis as a whole.

Spaces of more-than-human care

Home

The home is the quintessential space of the human-animal relationship (E. Power, 2008); where the human-animal bond is arguably most developed, and people and animals most obviously live together. Pets grew in popularity in the Victorian-era amongst the middle-classes and became a part of people's homes and family lifestyles (P. Howell, 2000). For many people pets are now considered part of the family (E. Power, 2008): whether conceptualised as a 'posthuman' family (Charles, 2016) or a 'more-than-human' family (Irvine & Cilia, 2017), pets are now fully engrained in the fabric of Western society (Nast, 2006). It is hence important to explore the home as a space of relational care between species, disentangling the human-animal relationships that underpin these caring practices.

Western societies such as the UK, USA, and Australia have extremely high pet ownership rates and rates of pet ownership is rising within countries such as China, Japan and Brazil (Fox & Gee, 2016; Ad. Franklin, 2006). Due to the rise in pet ownership, the home has indeed become *the* space of the human-animal relationship (E. Power, 2008), a space of multiple human-animal becomings. Through bringing pets into 'our' human homes, they are now viewed as integral members of 'our' family, although there are conflicting views on how pets become considered part of 'our' families. Charles (2016) explores whether families can be considered 'post-human' but comes to the assertion that the kinship practices blurring the human-animal boundary exist alongside practices that also strengthen it due to the unequal power relations involved in human-animal relations. Animals occupy a liminal space in the home, regarded sometimes as human, sometimes as animal (Fox, 2006), but ultimately disposable and under human control if they

behave in ways that humans deem unacceptable, such as destroying furniture or toileting inside the home (Instone & Sweeney, 2014; E. Power, 2008). Charles (2016) is thus uncomfortable with the posthuman approach to kinship practices and highlights the porosity of the category of the human. In contrast, the more-than-human approach to families that Irvine and Cilia (2017) advocate positions families as *always* more-than-human, revealing the countless complex intertwining of humans and animals within homespaces but even here caution against ‘decentring’ humans given that the latter still establish rules, responsibilities, and are involved within care practices for their animals. Thus, for this thesis, humans and animals are always set in mutual relation with one another, rather than decentring the human and focusing just on the animal. This is because, as already stressed, caring practices are relational and rely on both human and animal. It is through practices of care, a sense of responsibility, and the provision of emotional support, that pets are permitted to transgress the boundary and be considered family (Charles, 2014, 2016; E. Power, 2008).

Human care for their pets shape family practices and the space of the home. Through mundane tasks such as walking, feeding, grooming, and housing, humans perform caring practices for their pets that become routinised into everyday family practices. Additionally, the practice of walking and the care it provides for dogs in getting exercise and staying healthy is just as important for humans in staying healthy. In this way walking is a signature relational practice of care between human and animal that, at its core, is focused on the wellbeing of one another. Whilst walking, feeding, and the like are basic biological needs, they reflect the dependencies of pets for whom humans are responsible (Charles, 2014; E. Power, 2008). A sense of responsibility is formed for which humans have a moral or ethical obligation to care for their pets in the correct way (Charles, 2014, 2016). This moral obligation, along with pets being viewed as “appropriate objects of human affection and love”, situates these animals intimately within caring practices (Nast, 2006: 894; DeMello, 2011). Positioning pets as dependents also creates the cultural perceptions of pets as children (Fox, 2006; Nast, 2006), ‘furry babies’ (Greenebaum, 2004), and ‘flexible persons’ (Shir-Vertesh, 2012). Such cultural framings rely on human responsibility for animals, allowing them to cross the human-animal boundary to (human) child-like status and thus needing of care. However, pets can just as easily go back to their animal status and be given up (Fox, 2006; Nast, 2006; Shir-Vertesh, 2012), indicating a breakdown in the human-animal relationship and attendant caring practices. Ultimately, though, love and affection, along with care and companionship, are the key characteristics that shape this human-animal relationship.

Human care for pets shapes the home through the introduction of pet-specific furniture such as doggy beds, bird cages, litter boxes, scratching posts, and fish tanks (Ad. Franklin, 2006). Furthermore, many people increasingly let animals into more intimate spaces within the home such as in bedrooms, to share the bed, or on sofas (Ad. Franklin, 2006). This shows the intimacies between humans and animals, intimacies that are entangled with love and affection, with the latter

affective states, also the underlying causes of the expansion of pet related commodities since the 1990s (Fox & Gee, 2016). The rise in pet commodities such as doggy spas and groomers, pet yoga, pet cafes, and luxury bedding, food, toys, and clothing has arisen through changing expectations of what is considered as appropriate care for animals. A greater sense of responsibility by human owners, and through the individual recognition of animals as sentient beings with personalities and subjectivities has led to this change of what is appropriate care. Care for a pet is then entangled with the three dimensions of care identified by Puig de la Bellacasa (2019), as noted above, particularly the ethical and affective dimensions.

Yet animals also care for humans, so it can be argued: care is not unidirectional, but relational and ongoing, transgressing the species boundary. Pets or companion animals in the home may 'care' for their human owners, maybe performing trained roles such as opening and closing the dishwasher or fetching items (E. Power, 2008), through performing a sibling role for children offering them a form of non-parental companionship and care (E. Power, 2008; Tipper, 2011), or much more commonly just 'being themselves' as co-occupants within the homespace who seek embodied engagement (e.g., strokes or cuddles). Moreover, animal care for humans may include promoting a greater sense of security, even the creation of a sense of home and belonging, for people who are homeless (Gillespie & Lawson, 2017; Irvine & Cilia, 2017). A greater sense of security and belonging seemingly comes from being-with animals and having their company within daily life, and for people who are homeless this sense may also help combat problems such as loneliness (Gillespie & Lawson, 2017). Human-animal encounters are thus experienced as intimate, affectionate, and caring encounters, and it is particularly telling for the broader arguments of this thesis that animals might be enlisted as home-makers, capable of undertaking the caring roles essential for home-making.

Crucially for this thesis, though, home-based care between animal and human can also be expressed through, and in certain respects formally trained, into assistance-dog partnerships. Such partnerships are normally nurtured in the homespace and are required, by the humans concerned, to help them manage within the home, although contributions to coping in a plethora of public spaces are also vital as well. Sanders (2000) explores how guide-dog-human partnerships are a transformative experience helping humans navigate safely, creating an intimate human-dog relationship and helping people acquire greater confidence. The human-assistance-dog relationship is clearly one that is based upon an affective relational relationship. Animal care for humans is thus relationally fostered through the affective engagement between human and animal. There needs to be greater attention paid to these caring relationships, particularly how animals might be shown to be caring for humans. In these instances, animal methods such as ethology, which focuses on animal movements, gestures, and interactions (Buller, 2015), could be vital in analysing *how* animals affect and work to care for humans, as will be considered in **Chapter 3**.

Veterinary spaces are synonymously a space of care and companionship, science and medicine, fear and grief. However, they are often heavily regulated by scientific discourse rather than bringing into consideration emotions and affective relations (Donald, 2019; Satama & Huopainen, 2018; Schuurman, 2017), even though the animals and humans within veterinary spaces may often share a strong emotional bond characterised by their companionship and joint lifeworlds. It is useful to look at care in the space of the veterinary clinic through Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) dimensions of care, to understand the relational practices of care that cross the species divide even in a heavily medicalised 'animal space'. This matter can be explored through three significant time-periods of care within the veterinary clinic, through looking at care before, during, and after death of companion animals¹⁸.

In Western pet-keeping culture the death of a pet is often managed in the space of the veterinary clinic. Owners take their pets to veterinary clinics to be humanely euthanised, aiming to end pain and suffering in a way that is caring for both animal and human (Schuurman, 2017). Care during death is seen as vital to the wellbeing of animals. The need for a 'good death' is viewed as necessary by many veterinarians and caretakers of animals. 'Good death' is the literal translation of euthanasia (Rollin, 2009, *cited in* Schuurman, 2017) but it has different meanings. Primarily euthanasia is a painless ending to a life that can no longer be lived, but additionally it can mean the 'correct' procedure of killing an animal (Holmberg, 2011; Law, 2010; Schuurman, 2017). It is the veterinarian's responsibility to perform euthanasia to a high standard, but performing a good death is complex, reflecting the situated experiences and emotions involved in a human-animal relationship, the agency and sentience of animals, and the cultural acceptability of killing animals. The practice of euthanasia is entangled with care and compassion, and it may be recognised as a "killing with kindness", a predominately caring practice (Sanders, 1995: 195; Schuurman, 2017; Schuurman and Franklin, 2018). Care before death combines Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) three dimensions of care, showing how these qualities are configured so as to cross the species divide.

First, care before death is critical for the wellbeing of the animal. Killing animals that are termed 'companions' or 'pets' is often more difficult due to their social position, assumed mindedness, and cultural value (Sanders, 1995; Schuurman, 2017). The decision to euthanise a pet is that of the owner, whereas the veterinarian acts as a mediator to render this decision acceptable (Schuurman, 2017). Caretakers often rely on the advice of veterinarians regarding the 'right time', as it is a worrying and difficult decision-making process (Dickinson et al., 2011). There is a binary created between killing, and the fearfulness and guilt that arises with this act, and the desire to end the pain and suffering of an animal, certainly from the standpoint of the owner. Whilst caretakers rely on veterinarians for advice, many veterinarians report that they wish their

¹⁸ This choice came from the literature, and a realisation that, much geographical and social science work on the spaces of veterinary clinics explores the killing or death of animals, rather than everyday procedures or check-ups.

professional training had placed greater emphasis on communication skills, empathy and emotion, in regards to the euthanasia of companion animals (Dickinson et al., 2011). This could help both to manage the emotionally charged work that they undertake and to assist those grieving. The decision to euthanise an animal is tied up with the three dimensions of care as concurrently “a vital affective state, an ethical obligation and a practical labo[u]r” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012: 197). The ethical dimension of care is presented through ending ongoing suffering of the companion animal, whilst the care here is also affective and emotional as owners make the difficult decision to have their pets euthanised. This care and ethical obligation can then be expressed through the work of the veterinarian in euthanising the animal. The animal is not necessarily passive in its care and the decision-making process about its life and in some cases, an animal’s actions frame people’s decisions about euthanasia. In Satama and Huopalaainen’s (2018) autoethnographic research, readers get a sense of how Kerttu (a pet dog) exercised a form of agency via her body. Through the slight differences in her bodily behaviour, a form of bodily communication between dog and human is produced and Kerttu presented herself as sick and in need of care. The ability to affect required an ‘attunement’ (Despret, 2004) between human and animal, expressed through the embodied, relational, and emotional aspects of the human-animal relationship (Haraway, 2008). Care therefore crossed the species boundary as Kerttu affected her owner and thus ‘use’ her agency to demonstrate her care needs. Redmalm (2015) also considers how people describe their pets as passively communicating bodily signs of ageing and illness that were then integral to decisions about euthanasia. In sum, care for an animal here is about constantly negotiating non-verbal, bodily interactions between human and animal (Schuurman, 2017); the relational care quality of affect thereby crosses species.

During the practice of euthanasia owners can choose whether to be present or not. Dickinson and Hoffmann (2017) recognise that people who choose to stay with their companion animals do so because of feeling a moral obligation to a ‘family member’ and to reciprocate the companionship displayed by the animal. People who do not stay do so for various reasons, including feelings of guilt and sadness, rather than not seeing their pets as important to them. During euthanasia Holmberg (2011) states that the owner’s role is to care, in both taking care of the animal, and in feeling their pet’s emotionality. The latter can be experienced through the medium of touch. In the act of holding the pet in the owner’s lap, or stroking the pet during euthanasia, at the moment of death, the human cares for their pet through active responsibility for their pet’s emotional wellbeing (Schuurman, 2017). This gives an insight into how “somatic sensibilities” can facilitate “more care-ful and response-able relations” between humans and animals (Greenhough and Roe, 2011: 47). The work and emotion dimensions of care are hence simultaneously present in the human taking care of their pet during this difficult decision. Alternatively, it can also be viewed as a way for the human to deal with euthanasia and feel emotionally close to their pet and thereby care for themselves. Through the medium of touch, animals are also able to use their bodily agency to care for humans. During the act of holding a pet in one’s lap during the euthanasia

process, bodily agencies are entangled: the pet cares for the human by allowing themselves to be stroked by their owner, an act which is sensuous and calming. Thus, conclusions can be drawn about the mutuality of caring between species during death. People may also interpret their pet's behaviour as a clue to their experiences during euthanasia, involving bodily interpretation through affective engagement between humans and animals. Through such an engagement, exemplified by a family considering that their dog was 'saying goodbye' through going up to each person and interacting with them, Schuurman (2017) shows how owners give 'voice' to their pets and at the same time do something highly significant for their own emotional experiences of pet euthanasia. This example bears witness to how humans give voice to what *they* consider as their animals' emotional and physical experiences (Sanders, 1999, cited in Schuurman, 2017; Satama and Huopalainen, 2018). It also shows how care crosses the species barrier through affective engagement and attunement (Despret, 2004).

The actual moment of euthanasia itself is imbued with care. The aim is to carry out euthanasia as a caring practice (Holmberg, 2011), which is not just a technical routine but also an affective one (Schuurman, 2017). For euthanasia to be 'a good death' an animal must be seen as not suffering or being in pain. Schuurman (2017) reveals how, in some people's narratives, there is confusion as to whether the procedure has been successful and the feelings of panic over the possibility the animal is in pain. Such instances can create tension between the scientific expertise of veterinarians and the emotional investment of owners. The thought of a pet suffering in their last moments of life is a sign of failure of care in killing animals responsibly (Law, 2010; Schuurman, 2017). The three dimensions of care are clearly at tension in this example as the work dimension of care seems to be dominant without effectively engaging with the affective or ethical dimensions of care. It is critical for the owner, pet, and veterinarian that during euthanasia these dimensions are equally weighted for euthanasia to be practised well. What is considered a good death, without pain or suffering, can then be achieved.

Care for animals after death is just as important as care during death. Care after death may be regarded as a moral or ethical responsibility towards a companion with whom a human shared an emotional relationship. After the death of a pet, the space of the veterinary clinic becomes temporarily a space of privacy and mourning (Schuurman, 2017). After the practice of euthanasia many people spend time with the bodies of their pets, a time often used to 'say goodbye', a parting act of care. The interactions are bound-up with bodily tactility, with owners normally stroking and holding their pets as an intimate act of care or because of the difficulty of finally letting go (Dickinson & Hoffmann, 2017). The affective and emotional dimensions of care are then dominant through the normal next steps of dealing with a pet's remains memorialising pets after death, and for oneself in dealing with the loss of a companion.

The death of a pet is emotionally difficult for the owners of the pet, with many studies addressing the emotional difficulties of pet death and finding that many people deeply mourn, and indeed

grieve, the loss of their animals (Redmalm, 2015; Stoddart et al., 2016; Schuurman, 2017; Schuurman and Franklin, 2018). Whilst grief for pets is widespread, some people characterise it as not always socially acceptable, viewing companion animals as unlike humans, and therefore merely ‘disposable’ (Redmalm, 2015). In most circumstances, however, pets are grieved as irreplaceable, often because they were viewed as valuable, singular, distinctive members of family life (P. Howell, 2002; Redmalm, 2015). Grief for companion animals is thus a litmus-test of the deeply emotional aspect of care that circulates through the whole human-animal relationship. Through remembrance and memorialisation human grief and sense of loss can be managed. Most animals are cremated during death (Schuurman and Franklin, 2018), but other practices such as burial are also common (Dickinson and Hoffmann, 2017). The specific choice by owners of body disposal allows them to grieve and remember in a way that they find respectful towards their companion animal. For example, cremation allows owners to go to a place where human and animal spent a lot of time, a place of meaning in their joint life-worlds, to celebrate the life of their companion through the scattering of ashes (Schuurman, 2017). In some cases people have funerals or remembrance services (although some choose to distance themselves from these specific formal titles: see Redmalm, 2015), whilst other may choose to erect memorials or graves in specific pet cemeteries that act as a site of remembrance and memorialisation (P. Howell, 2002; H. Lorimer, 2019). Memorialisation and remembrance are personal and emotional choices that suggest a care for the wellbeing of oneself after loss as well as a care for – or, perhaps better, a caring about – animals who have passed. Whilst the work and ethical dimensions of care are present after death, for example through creating memorials and disposing of bodies, it is the affective and emotional dimensions of care that are dominant. Care for animals after death is entangled with affectivity and emotionality that is pervasive in caring practices. The veterinary clinic thereby marks the end of the lively emotional relationship between human and animal (Schuurman, 2017).

Experimental spaces and caring practices

Laboratories are another crucial space of human-animal interaction. Animals in laboratories are usually working animals such as experimental mice, there for experimentation to test and develop new medicines. The animals in these spaces are often solely bred for experimentation and live their lives in the laboratory under human care (or lack thereof). There are often tensions between the capacity for producing ‘good science’ whilst also caring for animals in a humane way (Davies et al., 2016, 2018). Some of these tensions revolve around the use of the so-called ‘3Rs’, to be explained shortly, whilst others arise from the a tension between emotion/affect and scientific discourse (Greenhough & Roe, 2011, 2018a, 2018b). Using de la Bellacasa's (2017) three dimensions of care, the care occurring in laboratories will be considered, with particular attention paid to the relational quality of care and how animals here can care for and affect humans and laboratory workers.

Animals have been involved in experimental procedures for many years, although precise practices of breeding, housing, experimenting, and testing, on and with animals has changed (Druglitrø, 2018). In part changes in this respect have been due to growing recognition of animals as sentient beings capable of feelings and capacities to respond, as well as an increasing interest in animal welfare, and the need to implement the 3Rs of “replacement, refinement, and reduction” (Davies et al., 2018: 603). Introduced in the 1950s, the 3Rs have become fundamental to both the practice of humane research and the improvement of animal welfare within the laboratory. The 3Rs propose an approach that:

“[P]rioritizes the *replacement* of animals with alternative mechanisms, where possible; the *reduction* of the number of animals required for a given procedure through statistical or other improvements; and the *refinement* of experimental procedures to minimize suffering and improve animal welfare” (Davies et al., 2018: 606, *emphasis original*)

The three principles form a supposedly universal policy that aims to make the use of animals in laboratory practice more humane, whilst trying to reduce or replace animals from experimental practice altogether. The 3Rs seek to weave together good science, good care, and socially acceptable practices in laboratory animal research (Davies et al., 2018; McLeod and Hartley, 2018). Furthermore, the 3Rs form a basis of regulation on many aspects of “laboratory animal welfare across policy-making, animal housing, animal care, experimental protocols, and ethical review, especially in Europe and the UK” (Davies et al., 2018: 606). The 3Rs can thus be seen as setting a moral or ethical responsibility towards animals who are working in laboratory practices, whilst Druglitrø (2018) argues therefore that good science and good care are intrinsically entangled through the standardisation and regulation of laboratory practices. If this is so, the humane treatment of animals will help secure sound and valid results (Holmberg, 2008). Standardisation allows for rules and regulations that are deemed acceptable, and the care needs of animals must be met for the work to be considered good science and humane work. Alternatively, the 3Rs can also make invisible some of the more dubious practices undertaken in some laboratories as long as needs are met. Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) work and ethic dimensions of care are evidently entangled through the 3Rs: ethical care supposedly leads to good science, but perhaps with caveats.

In some circumstances, however, the 3Rs is in tension with practices of care. Mol et al (2010) argue that rules and regulations risk eroding practices of care, particularly if they enable care to be configured as “tick-box ethics” (Donald, 2018: 3), something set in stone to be achieved rather than a constantly ongoing process of tinkering and a fluid way of working (Mol et al., 2010). The focus here becomes more on achieving a static idea of ethical care rather than one which is fluid and relational, and the work and ethical dimensions of care are not seen as performative or ongoing. Additional criticism comes from Davies (2012), who argues that the application of universal principles is increasingly being challenging due to the greater diversity and numbers of genetically altered animals. Animals even of the same species but different genetic strains have

different capacities, so universal principles become difficult to apply. Davies (2012: 7) asserts that “each mutation has the potential to alter corporeal and affective capacities, elucidating patterns of human development and disease, as well as producing animals with different welfare requirements”. The changing affective capacities and corporeality of mice and other animals in experimental contexts will then change what care is required and what is considered good care for these mice. In these circumstances the rigidity of the 3Rs does not square with the changing nature of the animal genetics underlying the animals involved in experimental practices. Care needs in terms of wellbeing and ethical demands in these circumstances become difficult to meet. Contrary to some of these arguments, Greenhough and Roe (2018b: 713) maintain that:

“What is important about the 3Rs is not only the principles they advocate, but also the extent to which those principles can be used to evoke cultural and behavioural changes that lead to day-to-day improvements in the practice and provision of care”.

They use the example of animal technicians (ATs), who are often responsible for the day-to-day care of animals, their housing, feeding, and euthanasia, and how they are constantly ‘experimenting’ with caring practices to improve them. The ATs in the study used different forms of environmental enrichment for mice such as plastic housing, nesting material and chewable tunnels, the goal being to stop mice in some cases injuring themselves and providing a stimulus (Greenhough & Roe, 2018b). What Roe and Greenhough (2021: 4) outline in a later paper – on similar work with ATs – is that they are constantly doing a “harm-care analysis, thinking through how the harms imposed on laboratory animals might be mitigated by their care work”. This shows the ATs “tinkering” (Mol et al., 2010: 14) with caring practices to improve the day-to-day lived experiences of mice in their care. Through bringing care and the 3Rs together, the ethical and work dimensions of care play a pivotal role in shaping daily practices of care and changing cultural and behavioural practices, all of which together constitutes a caring relationship between humans and animals.

There has been a call from geographers and sociologists for affect and emotions to play a greater role within scientific laboratory practices and care (Holmberg, 2008, 2011; Greenhough and Roe, 2011; Kerr and Garforth, 2016; Donald, 2018). Discussion so far in laboratory spaces has tended to focus on the work and ethics dimensions of care, and has only touched lightly on the affective/emotional dimension of care. Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) questions whether care work is still care if it does not involve some affective or emotional engagement, even if not fully invested. In reality, though, laboratory practices cannot but entrain affective, embodied, material practices, ones are vital to the practice of care (Kerr & Garforth, 2016), and thus playing a key role into how care work is performed between humans and animals in laboratory settings. In Holmberg's (2011) research, laboratory workers narrate how they create good care through affective engagements, and it is clear that, many become emotionally attached to the mice they look after and with whom they share an affective bond. In one narrative, echoing points made about death in the veterinary clinic, an animal technician describes some of the extra tasks she

undertakes when creating a caring good death for the mice in her care. In the box where the euthanasia occurs things are done to make the mice feel less stressed, such as transferring bedding, covering the box with a jacket, keeping the mice together so they do not feel worried, and closing the door so there is less sound. These measures are to make the mice feel stress free and comfortable in their new surroundings before death (Holmberg, 2011). These caring actions stem from affective engagements between humans and mice, reflecting an emotional bond that is created due to time spent caring for the mice. This emotional bond can also sometimes be a barrier to people carrying out euthanasia of mice they have cared for, so that in the end someone else has to do the killing procedure (Holmberg, 2011). The affective and emotional attachments created between human and animal may therefore create a contradiction between the work and affective dimensions of care. In this circumstance, the care work involves the (partial) removal of the affective dimension of care; but this can never be fully complete. The inability to complete laboratory work such as euthanasia due to emotions has led Arluke (1994) to argue that workers must learn to feel differently within institutions and leave their views behind. However, in other laboratory practices an ability to form an emotional or affective attachment to an animal is vital to the work and ethical dimensions of care. Despret (2004) shows how mice handled with greater emotional investment leads to greater wellbeing and care. Similarly, Holmberg (2008: 316) shows how a course on animal handling for animal technicians increases animal welfare standards by doing so “in a humane way with a feeling for the animals”. In both Despret’s and Holmberg’s research, affectivity plays a vital role within how they appraise the work dimension of care. For care to be considered good care, the affective, ethical, and work dimensions must exist in a form of harmony. Donald’s (2018) call for engagements with empathy and emotions within veterinarian medicine can enrich geographical and social science engagements within laboratory spaces, helping scholars to think about how empathy and emotions shape caring practices.

Wanted and unwanted: Care within animal shelters

Shelters are spaces of ‘unwanted’ (or lost) animals, often living in precarious positions between homes, and life and death. There are often tensions among different practices enacted at shelters, and sometimes between those that carry out and implement these practices such as volunteer workers, paid workers, and local governments. Shelters are additionally spaces of emotional labour and care between workers and volunteer animals. Puig de la Bellacasa’s (2017) three dimensions of care will again be considered in the context of shelters. Care in this space has a relational quality and is practised by both human and animal. Ultimately, care (both the absence or presence) characterises this space and the relationships between the humans and animals within, even when care for the sheltered animals may have been very limited in the past.

The function of many animal shelters is to house rescued cats and dogs. Most shelters re-home the animals in their care, but some animals may be euthanised if unhealthy or not considered ‘re-homeable’ (Taylor, 2007; 2010), which puts animal lives in precarious positions controlled by

humans. Animal shelter volunteers are often ethically responsible for animal welfare and care. It is care in terms of emotional investment, work, and ethical obligation. The work in shelters can be classified as inherently emotional (Taylor, 2010), due to the high turn-over of animals, the euthanasia of animals, and the building of emotional attachments to certain animals. Arluke (1994) argues that shelter workers must suppress their prior beliefs in some way so as to manage the highly emotional work they are undertaking, whereas Neumann (2010) and later Guenther (2017) argue that it is exactly a volunteer's prior beliefs of animal welfare that gets them engaged with shelter work in the first place. These tensions continue between volunteers and the salaried animal shelter hierarchy through disagreements about animal welfare, care, and euthanasia. This is expressed excellently by Guenther (2017), whose autoethnographic work illuminates personal despair in trying to save a dog who has contracted 'kennel cough', a treatable condition, from being put down. Guenther's research draws on the emotional and ethical investment in animals in her care, and in this case resistance to hierarchies with whose practices she disagrees. There are tensions between standard shelter practices and what is considered – or many would consider – good care. For shelter volunteers, their work is highly emotional and ethical, commonly based on their personal and political beliefs. Whilst the hierarchy within shelters suggest that emotions should be disinvested from care, others contend that care work here should be what is 'right', with euthanasia of only sick animals to save (and stop infection) of others and, of animals who will not get adopted when there is a serious pressure arising to make room for other animals. Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) asserts that tensions within care work, and between the three dimensions of care, must be acknowledged, and that addressing such situations, can help stay close to the ambivalent nature of care. This stance in effect frames care as having a plethora of meanings to different people, thus not excluding what anyone understands by the care work they undertake or receive.

Tensions also arise between past and present caring practice. These tensions are between what volunteer workers perceive an animal's past care was like and those who 'give up' their animals to shelters. Taylor (2004) explains how volunteers often view those surrendering their animals as failing to meet their lifelong responsibility towards their animals, frequently trying to instill guilt and take the moral high ground. This is often due to the firmly held beliefs of animal shelter volunteers and the "moral certainty" that drives their work (Taylor, 2004: 317). DiGiacomo et al (1998) respond that those who relinquish and surrender their animals to shelters seldom do so lightly – contrary to the belief of shelter staff – and that relinquishment is normally considered a last option. DiGiacomo et al (1998) show how *animals at shelters* should not be classified as unwanted, but rather that their *presence* within shelters is unwanted both by shelter workers and owners. Care lies at the centre of these arguments. On the one hand, volunteers consider there to be a lack of care from those that give up their animals, whereas animal owners often find themselves in a position where care can no longer be given, even if they want to. There is hence no one-fits-all conceptualisation of care that can be applied here, and thus there will always be tensions between different people involved and their respective caring practices.

Potential for cross-species caring futures

Having discussed conceptualisations of care and care in practice through different spaces, provided for humans and animals separately, I now bring the theoretical orientation and practice of care together in the ‘*Entanglements*’ section. In what follows I map out affective and emotional relationships arising between humans and animals, showing how empathy, love, and companionship may be expressed across the different human-animal relationships. I also use the more-than-human conceptualisation of care to show how caring relations can go beyond companionship to more explicit forms of care *from* animals *to* humans that showcase the agency of animals: and, linking to one of the key objectives of this thesis, I demonstrate how care crosses species boundaries and is felt and experienced across disparate human-animal relations (as also signposted in **Chapter 1**).

Entanglements

This section expands on the geographies of the body and care that were elucidated above, bringing these together through human-animal relationships, and critically assessing the relevant literature. In the following I discuss the affective and emotional geographies of human animal relationships: centring bodies and care, I examine real, felt, experiences of empathy, love, and companionship. Second, I go beyond companionship as an enactment of care, to explore the possibility for even more explicit or active forms of care by animals, to bring into the picture care as both learned behaviour and care as lively agentic acts.

Affective geographies of human-animal relationships

The entanglement between human and nonhuman bodies is dependent on affective geographies and embodied practice. Geographers interested in relational theories (e.g., non-representational theory) have taken affect as a focus for relational becomings and subjectivities (B. Anderson, 2006). As Martin (2021: 90) states, “the notion of ‘affect’, particularly in its relation to emotion, is by its very nature difficult to define in written terms, as it is “beyond... epistemological certainty” (Dewsbury, 2010: 323)”¹⁹. Lorimer (2008: 552) notes that:

“Affects are: properties, competencies, modalities, energies, attunements, arrangements and intensities of differing texture, temporality, velocity and spatiality, that act on bodies, are produced through bodies and transmitted by bodies”.

Affect is thus deeply spatial and temporal, distributed between, and outside, bodies which are not exclusively human, and might incorporate technologies, things, non-human living matter, and discourses (H. Lorimer, 2008). Indeed, the ability to affect and be affected is expressed through bodies and embodied experiences, as Bissell (2009: 911) conveys:

¹⁹ Indeed, this would also be a critique from ethnomethodologists towards non-representational theorists’ overly theoretical approach (see Loughenbury, 2009).

“This pain is an immensely powerful and undesirable beast that has the capacity to tear. This pain, both physical and emotional, is nonrepresentational in the sense that it stubbornly *refuses* to be represented discursively. It is pure, prepersonal, intensified sensation that eludes and escapes the confines of language. Pain defies order, structure, and definition. There are no boundaries, just joined intensities: different and often ungraspable points of connection and cluster. This pain is obdurate, fixed, and immobile: territorialising the body over and over, and satisfied with its resting place” (emphasis original).

Bissell highlights how affective intensities flow through, around, cohere in, and act on bodies. The affective intensity of pain is thus a highly spatial, corporeal experience, but beyond this singular, internal embodiment affective intensities can also flow between different bodies. This is because affect is not only transpersonal, but also relational and collective, as B. Anderson's (2009: 80) term ‘affective atmosphere’ indicates:

“Atmospheres are spatially discharged affective qualities that are autonomous from the bodies that they emerge from, enable and perish with. As such, to attend to affective atmospheres is to learn to be affected by the ambiguities of affect/ emotion, by that which is determinate and indeterminate, present and absent, singular and vague ... singular affective qualities that emanate from but exceed the assembling of bodies”.

For me, this idea of an ‘affective atmosphere’ – collectively affecting one another – is most obvious within the work of Saldanha (2005: 707) who explores racial dynamics in Goa’s rave scene:

“Allowing for the richness, the potentiality of music, consists of explaining why certain notes, certain timbres do such different things to different people. The hip-hop on the street will get some bodies dancing and irritate others. The Messiaen recital will draw some bodies together but excludes many others. Music has the capacity to arrange and politicize social formations, just like money does, or disease”.

Explaining further what I think of as collective affect – affective atmosphere – Saldanha (2005: 713) illuminates how:

“Music comes to ‘mean’ to a considerable extent because listeners see its effects on others around. You sense the sweat on the saxophonist’s brow, the deftness of the deejay’s fingers, your dance partner’s feet. Being amidst bodies all moving to the same beat will strengthen the listening experience of that beat. But you will also see that different bodies relate differently to the music, and thus you will appreciate, at least unconsciously, how the music helps place bodies into social groups”.

The multi-sensuous experience of music, the auditory and olfactory, the physical movement, all combine for a collective affective experience. But importantly, Saldanha’s work highlights how a collective atmosphere may make those bodies not affected, those bodies excluded, visible. Thus, the ability to affect and be affected is one of power and privilege, not only a positive embodied experience, but potentially a negative one too.

Tying this point back to human-nonhuman relationships, affect “unlock[s] and animate[s] new (human and nonhuman) potentialities” (Thrift & Dewsbury, 2000: 411) and ways of being-in-the-world. Such a claim is particularly significant for this thesis and its focus on relational becomings and human-animal partnerships (see **Chapters 5 and 6**) and what I do now is focus on two

different (but also entangled) affective intensities that shape many human-animal relationships – love and empathy.

Love and empathy in human-animal relationships

Love and empathy are two such affective emotions. First, love has been discussed in terms of sexuality and sexual desire through many different social and cultural geographic works, particularly by feminist geographers. Morrison et al (2013: 506) outline how love continues to be “a feminised topic, associated with ‘private’ spaces and feelings, and it is discursively constructed in, for example, popular culture as ‘women’s gossip’”. But beyond this, and generative for this project, is thinking of love as an affective intensity for another, an intensity that occurs in particular spaces and places through bodies, but an affective intensity that is also relational and political (Morrison et al., 2013). This caveat is significant because as McKeithen (2017: 131) conveys, “love is not just a question of absence or presence but an entire field of power in which how one loves is relationally constituted, normalized, and contested”.

Thinking of love through human-animal relationships is instructive for this research. In her discussion of critical pet studies, Nast (2006: 894) recounts how there has been “a shift from considering pets (especially dogs) as a species apart, to a reconsideration of pets (especially dogs) as profoundly appropriate objects of human affection and love”. This shift now places those with “no affinity for pets” as “social or psychological misfits and cranks, whilst those who love them are situated as morally and even spiritually superior, such judgments having become hegemonic in the last two decades” (Nast, 2006: 896). In thinking about love for a nonhuman other, particularly in this context a pet, companion, or assistance animal, we need to think more about how this love is felt and expressed. Therefore, following Morrison et al (2013: 517), we need to position more fully “[t]he embodiment of love – in all its multisensory lived, felt and contradictory experiences” within geographical studies.

McKeithen (2017), in their exploration of the discourse of the ‘crazy cat lady’, go some way in addressing the embodiment of love for a nonhuman other. McKeithen (2017) argues that women with cats reshape normative ideals about femininity, heteronormativity, and the home through their embodied relationship with cats. By replacing human-human relationships, and particularly male-female relationships, with human-feline relationships, the women with cats begin to reshape their identity. Indeed, McKeithen shows how in online spaces, women with cats subvert, queer, and rework stereotypes and create resistive narratives such as “‘Who needs a relationship when you have a cat #catladyproblems,’ ... ‘#IWishICould go home and cuddle with my cat’ and ‘#happyfriday–I have a hot date tonight. It involves cats and wine’” (p.129). These tweets, along with other intimate lived experiences of sharing homes – for example Sigi-and-her-cats who, whilst people complain about the odour that permeates their relationship, outlines how she is not lonely anymore – all serve to position cats as part of exactly who *are* humans involved, in the context of which a greater embodied sense of love for another is revealed. It is indeed a love that

for many is deemed ‘unsightly’ or ‘too much’ (Bowen, 2019; McKeithen, 2017; Probyn-Rapsey, 2019). In a further example of animal love, Bowen (2019) discusses the relationship between pets and the homeless. An already marginal relationship, love leads some humans to sleep outside without their dogs, even when a homeless shelter space is available, in a resistance to the rules that restrict dogs inside the shelter (Bowen, 2019; Gillespie & Lawson, 2017). Bowen (2019: 220) illustrates how love is the primary affective intensity despite or even because of:

“[t]he interplay of vulnerability and safety ... as sticking together exposes both human and dog to violence and the elements at the same time that it provides them with mutual vigilance and protection”.

Alternatively, there is animal love for humans. Humans often expect “unconditional love” from animals (Haraway, 2003: 32): reliant on the growing consumer market around pets, as well as media narratives, and shaped by an infantilisation of dogs in particular, love is placed as the foremost affective economy that a pet provides a human. As Zamreno (2015: 102, cited in Bowen, 2019) says, “I never understood dog people before I became one, the intense love you can feel for an animal, a gross love that can be without boundaries”. This affective intensity around pet love is felt as an extreme wave, although the presumed reciprocation of love, dog love for a human, ‘without boundaries’, can also negatively shape the relationship, as Haraway (2003: 37) notes:

“The status of pet puts a dog at special risk in societies like the one I live in – the risk of abandonment when human affection wanes, when people’s convenience takes precedence, or when the dogs fail to deliver on the fantasy of unconditional love”.

A growing trend in abandonment – dogs being placed in shelters – can show the repercussions of dogs not living up to human loving standards. As Bowen (2019: 220) conveys: “I can love a dog, and she can love me, but those loves are not identical, unchanging, fully reciprocal, or fully knowable”. Here anthropomorphism plays a key role in shaping human sense of unconditional love and ‘what love is’ and ‘should be’, supposedly for all life-forms. The anthropomorphising of love – as in projecting a sense of how humans love one another into the animal world, wondering if animals may love each other or even (some of) ‘us’ humans in much the same way is crucial to human-animal relationships – compared to ‘anthropocentrising’ such love which is a problem – in effect the demand that this love is returned to ‘us’, that ‘we’ humans must be the focus and centre of such love. The latter is what presumably leads to disappointments, rejections and abandonments (of animals that fail to love ‘us’ properly, humanly). In this research, love for a dog, and from a dog, are suggested to be both mechanic and agentic acts of care.

Second, empathy, is also a crucial affective intensity within human-animal encounters. Empathy is part of an affective atmosphere in which humans and animals can affect one another but also, it can be argued, communicate. Bringing this claim back to the examples reviewed earlier in the ‘*Bodies*’ and ‘*Care*’ sections, Despret (2004, 2013) shows how affect acts as a form of non-verbal communication between human and animal, enacted through embodied bodily gestures and engagements. Here Despret draws on engagements between humans and jackdaws, humans and

mice, and humans and horses to show how communication is felt through empathy as an affective intensity. Indeed, other work, such as that by Greenhough and Roe (2018a) shows directly how empathetic engagement through caring practices between humans and animals – in this case animal technologists and lab mice – can help quite radically to reshape lab animal housing and husbandry. For others, the act of caring (or the lack of care) can be a powerful, emotional/affective intensity that is overwhelming. Gillespie (2016: 575, 2019) writes that “the act of witnessing animals’ predicaments” – in this case bearing witness to the routinised and spatialised violence faced by farmed cows – “and then sharing their stories, is a political act that resists the erasure of individual animal lives, suffering, and deaths” (Gillespie, 2016: 575). Through Gillespie’s writing, what becomes clear is the role of empathy in shaping her connection to the animals and their suffering but also, as Greenhough and Roe (2018a: 12) reflect, by “empathising with the cattle she [Gillespie] seems to end up presenting the humans in her story in a caricatured way. Their inability to relate to the animals in their care is held up for critique as they engage in ‘jovial’ and ‘light-hearted banter’”. Here a lack of empathy of the human cattle-workers, on the one hand, and the overwhelming feeling of empathy from Gillespie for the cattle – and her less empathetic approach to human workers – on the other, collide in a fashion that I do not see clearly in other academic work. Gillespie’s reflective, critical, and nuanced accounts of witnessing animal suffering outline so clearly the affective engagement integral to her own positionality. Empathy then is not just a form of communication, but a deeply felt lived intensity.

In a further example combining disability and animal studies, the autistic ethologist Temple Grandin has used her ability to attune into bovine affective atmospheres to redesign US slaughterhouses. Through embodied empathetic fieldwork, she identifies and addresses seemingly subtle architectural and acoustic factors that cause the animals stress, slow down the slaughter process, and compromise the quality of their meat (Grandin & Johnston, 2006). This approach is exemplified in her discussion of the animals’ journey from the holding room to the slaughter room, in which the cows had to walk through a small, thin ‘chute’, but were often stopping and trying to go back the way they came. Grandin argued that the change in space and subtle changes in light from the holding room to the ‘chute’ caused fear in the cows. The engagement between Grandin and the cows can be seen as an empathetic engagement, laced with all the characteristics that Lorimer (2008) described above. Furthermore, as Grandin and Johnston (2006: 23) state, “whenever you are having a problem with an animal, try to see what the animal is seeing and experience what the animal is experiencing”. Here the emphasis is placed a lot clearer on empathetic engagement, to ‘be more animal’ (Włodarczyk, 2017)²⁰, albeit the precise purpose for such engagement – improved, more efficient slaughterhouse design – may leave many bemused about exactly what sort of ‘empathy’ is in play. The idea of being ‘more dog’, an empathetic move, is central to some caring and training engagements considered later in the thesis

²⁰ This is the second time I use this rephrase and play on words from ‘be more dog’.

(see **Chapter 5 and 6**). To ‘be more dog’, to adopt canine sensibilities for a greater ethico-political potential to be together, engages the affective with real world practices of care and attributions of love. Here, ethico-political potential resides in the idea of creating a better, more empathetic, caring relationship with an animal, and the notion of human and animal being-in-the-world together. Later in the thesis (**Chapters 5 and 6**) I will example instances of love and empathy arising within the caring relationship between disabled humans and assistance dogs, asking in detail how humans can care for animals and *vice versa*.

Caring relations beyond companionship

Having analysed human-animal entanglements and enactments of care *through* companionship, I now move to caring relations *beyond* companionship. At this point I move onto the possibility for even more explicit forms of care arising from animals – protecting humans, finding lost humans, identifying threatening humans – to bring into the picture both mechanistic forms of learned care instilled in animals through training and the outer limits of attributing caring agency to animals. This contrast will be used to advance a geographical perspective on human-assistance-dog relationships and particularly to develop care beyond a solely learned behaviour to a lively agentic act.

Yarwood's (2015) work on search and rescue dogs is a crucial piece of work, combining both the learned cross-species behaviour of the ‘search’ with the sensuous and agentic capabilities of the canine. Yarwood shows how, these specialist dogs, and their owners, work together as a hybrid team, engaging with the mountainous environment as one, through joint sensory engagement. The different stages of training and work with such dogs are outlined, from obedience training, to learning to search, to actively working on a search. The search requires the liveliness of the dog and the mechanical nature of the training to function together, with ‘trust’ often placed on the dog’s ability to scent rather than the human’s ability to see. As an act of care from (human-)dog teams for the causality, the practice is inherently multi-species, reliant on the affective and sensuous atmosphere (B. Anderson, 2009) in which humans and dogs are in effect composed.

Perhaps one of the clearest examples of dogs’ agency in expressing their care for humans is the act of some dogs physically protecting ‘their’ humans. In the above example of love, I showed how some homeless people opt not to live in shelters due to their strict rules on not allowing dogs in. The loving relationship here is shown throughout the work of Gillespie and Lawson (2017), notably when they highlight how some people (street-level ‘experts’ in human-dog relations) feed their dogs before themselves, but what these authors also make plain how the dogs provide care for the humans beyond just companionship. As Gillespie and Lawson (2017: 76) convey:

“Not only do these experts express how they experience increased feelings of safety and a sense of home with their dogs, but also their lives and relationships refuse common cultural narratives of irresponsibility, dangerousness, and disposability”.

The safety and comfort provided by these dogs offer a sense of wellbeing for ‘their’ humans, emerging in the shape of physical protection from violence but also through “the ways in which they create spaces of love and security on the streets with dogs and other humans” (Gillespie and Lawson, 2017: 786). A sense of spatial security is graphically expressed through the phrase ‘my dog is my home’. As a caring act, this is clearly less about any mechanical learned behaviour of the dog, and more about the dogs’ agency and physical presence.

In another example, police dogs can provide care beyond companionship. Police dogs are treated at once as both objects that serve, protect, and assist, and as individual companions with whom humans interact and share emotional bonds (Sanders, 2006). The police dog’s job is intimately tied up with multi-species care. Pearson (2016) shows that police dogs in early 20th century France were often represented as defenders of the law-abiding citizen, and as emotional and intelligent individuals dedicated to fighting crime. Through Puig de la Bellacasa’s (2017) dimensions of care, we can see that, through their labour, police dogs are able to practice care for humans within the wider society that they, as enlisted law-enforcers, are protecting. This form of care has an affective influence on wider publics as they start to feel safer within the urban environment due to the dominant representation of police dogs as intelligent, sensitive, skilled, and loyal (Pearson, 2016). In these examples, working animal jobs have at their core multi-species care concerned with the wellbeing of others.

Whilst the last example is about care by police dogs, there can also be a lack of care shown by police dogs and their handlers with respect to wider society. Indeed, police dogs can be used as tools for oppressive control, and through archival research Shear (2008) exposes how police dogs in South Africa were used to control and order the population within South Africa’s oppressive and racist regime of the 1940s. This usage included trialling people only on police dog evidence and a greater targeting of black people in criminal cases. This example suggests a lack of care shown to the wider population through racist, incorrect, and ‘unlawful’, police practices, within which police dogs were (blamelessly) enrolled. Although this is a historical case, contemporary examples may also reveal a distinct lack of care on a police dog and handler’s part, sometimes leading to lengthy legal disputes (Sanders, 2006).

Exploring caring relationship beyond companionship is key to the aims of this research (see **Chapter 1**) and for the materials covered in **Chapter 6**. Furthermore, these acts of care, both as mechanical and lively practices provided by dogs and humans, map into the key focus to which this chapter now turns, to advance a geographical perspective on assistance animal partnerships.

Assistance animal partnerships: Advancing geographical perspectives

Geographical, social science, and humanities research, on assistance animal partnerships has been growing²¹. Guide Dogs, Diabetes Dogs, and therapy dogs, now occupy the realm of (disabled/ill) human-dog relations²². Considerable research has focused on the specific impacts of different varieties of assistance dogs on their human partners, including: the social benefits of increased confidence, companionship, reduced isolation and loneliness, and increased independence (Arathoon, 2018; Michalko, 1999; Sanders, 2000), and physical benefits in the form of the ‘tasks’ that the dogs undertake (Arathoon, 2018; Eason, 2019, 2020; Higgin, 2012; Sanders, 2000; Stevenson, 2013). The ‘doing’ of tasks (and particularly the benefits of these) has been a vital part of this new research base. Guide Dogs occupy much of it, with the ‘doing’ of tasks being focused on a dog guiding²³ visually impaired or blind persons through space (Arathoon, 2018; Higgin, 2012; Michalko, 1999; Pemberton, 2019; Sanders, 2000; Stevenson, 2013). A spatial task, guiding requires both training and trust between human and animal, as well as a strong bond. Alongside being spatially significant, the task of guiding also places a reliance on material connection, as Pemberton (2019: 97) emphasises:

“Serving as a prosthesis and interface, the harness facilitated a sensory blending and feedback loop encompassing the handler, the dog and the environment. It constituted a sensitive instrument transmitting non-verbal, corporeal signals, enabling each other’s steps and every variation in speed and change of direction to be communicated and adjusted to. In this way, the harness played an analogous function to the language of caress, helping to constitute an additional shared corporeal language for both parties to learn and respond to each other through as they moved together”.

There is dependence on the harness as a physical connection between human and nonhuman, but it also acts as a tool for dog and human to communicate with one another. Going beyond verbal communication, the harness transmits bodily communication through tensions and movement, enacting a corporeal engagement between dog and human. These greater forms of ‘attunement’ (Despret, 2004, 2013) are also a key characteristic of task work by other assistance dogs.

The task work done by diabetes dogs draw on the dog’s olfactory senses, notably the ability to sense, and then to alert, the human partner to changes in the human’s blood glucose levels (Eason, 2019, 2020; Holland, 2021). This work further underlines the highly embodied attunements between human and dog, as Holland (2021: 8) recounts in her observation of trainers and Medical Detection Dogs:

“Although dogs do not communicate in verbal utterances akin to humans, they are nevertheless recognized as highly communicative in nonverbal ways ... When a trainer makes themselves available to “listen” to an individual dog over repeat interactions, they develop the ability to work with the dog to reliably indicate the presence of target odors

²¹ Whilst I am focusing on assistance dogs, others have explored the therapeutic benefits of human-animal health relations (Bolman, 2019; Gorman, 2017; Robinson, 2019; C. S. Taylor & Carter, 2020).

²² Capitalisations are used for ‘Guide Dogs’ and ‘Diabetes Dogs’ as they are from specific charities.

²³ A navigational task.

as a human–dog team. Furthermore, they also build an understanding of the nuances of that dog’s body language in order to deduce further information about the details of the particular odors – beyond the binary “positive” or “negative”– that are embodied in the dog’s movements”.

Communication with nonhuman animals through nonverbal modes of engagement is hence extremely significant in the training of assistance dogs and the ability of human and animal to do assistance successful.

As well as these tasks and forms of embodied communication, there has been a move – conceptually and empirically – to consider human-assistance-dog relationships as an entanglement of multiple bodies, into one element, moving through the world together. This aspect is illustrated through Michalko’s (1999: 5) phrase “The two in one” as he explains, “Smokie and I are, almost literally, extensions of each other...”. This co-becoming, the development from one-to-two, is also echoed by Stevenson (2013: 1162), who, when talking about Abbi and Toni, recounts how, Abbie–Toni walk as a six-legged assemblage for navigating and accruing emplaced knowledge, one inter-corporeal entity, that contests the “individualising of the self”²⁴. The attribution of the identifier ‘Seeing-eye Dog’ also hints at these hybrid, inter-corporeal ways of being – the dog literally becomes the human’s eyes. Whilst inter-corporeality may signify the way many humans and assistance dogs live together, perhaps inter-corporeality loses focus on the individuality of both actors. Both the conjoinedness and individuality of the assistance dog and human are a concern for the thesis, since I aim to tease out the former’s embodied, caring agency, as something arising from the dog, even if only expressed through this co-mingling. In a similar vein, and importance, is the construction of human-assistance-dog relationships as ‘teams’ (Arathoon, 2018; Michalko, 1999; Stevenson, 2013) or ‘partnerships’ (Eason, 2019, 2020; Pemberton, 2019), which reflects the general parlance used in positive reinforcement training philosophies. The idea of ‘teams’ or ‘partnerships’ reflects the mutuality that characterises both positive reinforcement and these human-assistance-dog relationships.

Keeping this extant animal assistance research spotlighted within my thesis, but moving beyond it, I combine the above sections on bodies, care, and entanglements, into my analysis of human-assistance-dog lifeworlds is vital for several reasons:

First, this research examines a very specific type of human-assistance-dog relationship. The participants involved in this research have physical disabilities and chronic illnesses, and they do not fit into the categories of visually impaired/blind/type 1 diabetic that the other assistance animal papers referenced above tackle.

²⁴ In my previous work (Arathoon, 2018) I have also been privy to this move, utilising Macpherson’s (2009, 2010) research on inter-corporeal blind-human-sighted-guide teams to conceptualise human-assistance-dog training.

Second, in this research, the dog is the human's pet *before* assistance dog training begins. This has many implications for *how* the human-animal bond changes and develops.

Third, the assistance animal literature cited above has had relatively little to say about dog training (although see: Arathoon, 2018; Pemberton, 2019). Most clients of ADUK charities are given an already trained dog and go on an intense course with them, whereas, since the clients of Dog A.I.D. already have a dog, both parties, human and animal, do their training together.

Fourth, the embodied requirements of each human in this research are different, and thus each partnership brings with it quite particular goals, challenges, and concerns.

The specifics of the human-assistance-dog relationship as outlined above bring to the fore many considerations and questions which – whilst unique to this research – are important geographically. Focusing on the role that bodily agencies play in 'work' between nonhuman and human, I explore the geographies at play in the development of such relationships. Analysing such work – its spatial, temporal, and material manifestations – can grasp how training is practised and experienced by both human and animal. Furthermore, in doing so, I ask how is training undertaken between human and animal? What are the key characteristics of this training? How do humans and nonhumans communicate? How is this work characterised, and what is the role of anthropomorphism (and maybe too anthropocentrism) in this work?

In previous research dogs are often left out of analyses in terms of care that they receive and give beyond the physical tasks for which they are trained. Combining the more-than-human conceptualisations of care outlined above – with analysis of animals' work – doing tasks and offering care – the research provides a novel insight into what animals' care looks like. Furthermore, this care challenges the previously humanistic understanding of care as provided and given by humans, for humans, attributing greater agency to animals and their acts. This can help to muddy the dependency dyad somewhat inadvertently created in disability geographies and assistance animal literature – the implication that before an assistance dog arrives there is only dependency, whereas due to partnership there is now complete independency – and instead focuses on the multiple inter- or intra-dependencies involved. Additionally, and perhaps controversially to some, I begin to reframe 'assistance' as 'care' so as to enlarge the sense of how these dogs are providing care well beyond their formal, task-driven roles. Here I want to emphasise that, it should not be controversial to reposition – or attribute even – what have normally been taken as distinctly human care roles/tasks/affordance to nonhuman animals²⁵. What I accentuate and expand upon throughout the chapters to come is a sense of what care entails,

²⁵ I refer to anthropomorphism in **Chapter 3** and how I find anthropomorphism helpful rather than a hinder.

teasing out how participants²⁶ view/feel/experience this care. My line of empirical inquiry here is paralleled by an insistence that care in the human-assistance-dog partnership is running in all possible directions between human and animal, creating ‘mutuality’, ‘teamwork’, and ‘partnerships’, all hinging crucially on the complex grounded inhabitations, utilisations and subversions of spaces (of all kinds).

²⁶ Emphasis here on participants as both human and animal.

Chapter 3: Methodology: Ways of Knowing Human-Animal Lifeworlds

Introduction

Animal and disability geographies traditionally occupied a distanced geographical trajectory – as subfields previously unconnected to one another. Bringing these subfields together is not only conceptually complex, but also requires geographers to address methodological concerns in light of the influence of anthropocentrism and ableism. I have tried to attend to these by developing a cross-species video ethnographic approach which aims to be sensitive to the embodied and affective registers of the lifeworlds of my participants (Ellis, 2021; Sinha et al., 2021; Whatmore, 2002), amongst other tactics. In this chapter, I justify my research design and practice, chosen methods of data collection, and analysis of data. I recount the role the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the research and my attempts to mitigate and adapt the research due to loss of face-to-face engagement within participants. Furthermore, I also detail the various ethical considerations before, during, and after the research project, and how these matters are entangled both through ‘bureaucratic’ ethical procedures and ethics-in-practice.

Methodology at the intersection of animal and disability geographies

The research sits at the intersection of animal and disability geographies. Developing a research methodology which encompasses both disabled humans and animals, centring their experiences and lifeworlds, has been vital in how disabled humans and animals live and work together. This research project has also been framed by an attempt to ‘bring in’ or ‘hear’ the ‘voices’ of animals and disabled people.

Since the call of Wolch and Emel (1995: 636) “to bring the animals back in”, human geographers have revived their interest in animals, previously treated in a zoogeographical mode simply as mobile objects within a ‘natural’ environment or landscape. Moving from animals as objects of human inquiry to subjects in their own rights, animal geographers have sought to explore the various ways in which humans and animals reside together in the world. Scepticism remains about whether geographers (and by extension other scholars) can ever know what animals think and feel. However, in a move from animal spaces to beastly places (Philo & Wilbert, 2000a) – from spaces designated for animals by humans, to places made by animals themselves – geographers have begun to develop “methodologies that will allow us to move closer to the animals themselves as individual, subjective beings” (Urbanik, 2012: 186). Buller (2015: 375) argues that “methodologies have been the mechanism by which ... ontological and epistemological divisions have, in the past, been maintained”, and adds that to develop new methodologies, we are required to attend to animals as sentient beings with individual capacities for thought. Geographers have

thus took it upon themselves to begin developing an array of different methodological approaches to animals' geographies (Hodgetts & Lorimer, 2015). Geographers have championed multi-species ethnography (Gillespie, 2019a; Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010), mobile ethnography (Brown & Banks, 2015; Brown & Dilley, 2012), ethology (Barua & Sinha, 2019; H. Lorimer, 2006, 2012), photovoice (Margulies, 2019), videographic approaches (Bear et al., 2017; J. Lorimer, 2010; N. Taylor & Fraser, 2019), and embodied encounters with animals, as ways to centre animals' geographies. The overarching question remains: "what can we know of animals, and what might we do with that knowing?" (Buller, 2015: 374).

Two of the main problems with studies of animals and trying to 'bring the animals back in' to geographical analyses has been anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism. Anthropocentrism is a term used to refer to animals only *in relation* to humans. They are not human-like but are ascribed value due to their usefulness to human life. Furthermore, as Lynn (1998: 288) argues "anthropocentrism claims that moral value is centred in *Homo Sapiens* alone. Humans are the centre of all intrinsic value: we are ends in ourselves, alone within the boundary of moral community, and owe consideration only to other human beings". The nonhumans then only hold "extrinsic value: they are either means to human ends or instrumentally valuable for the continuation of ecosystem functions. They are not morally considerable as they exist outside moral community, and they consequently have no moral standing or significance within that community" (Lynn, 1998: 288). Here, anthropocentrism ties intrinsically with speciesism, as humans are *the* species of value, but also because different species within the category of the animal will have different values due to their differential uses for humans. Elder et al (1998) point out the exclusionary nature of anthropocentrism and outline that it undermines any inclusive politics that animal geographers may strive towards. Traditional geographic approaches to research, such as interviewing, have been critiqued by some as anthropocentric as they illicit only human talk (Seymour & Wolch, 2010).

Anthropomorphism, on the other hand, is to give animals 'human' features. Here, the issue is that anthropomorphism leads to an uneven geography, one where animals are not valued "as individual, subjective beings" (Urbanik, 2012: 186), but instead serve to make animals like us to understand them. As Philo and Wilbert (2000) argue, the basic logic to anthropomorphism critique is that a category mistake is being made. This is framed in the binary of human/animal, and nature/culture, where there is an assumed radical difference between humans and animals, so that to portray animals in relation to humans – to imagine them as behaving or feeling like 'us' – is to misrepresent their quite different 'true nature', and thus to foster misunderstandings of what 'they', the animals, are all about (Philo & Wilbert, 2000). So, animal geographers trying to 'bring the animals back in', need to avoid anthropomorphism to get at "animals' geographies" for and in themselves, and thereby to appreciate animals as individual, sentient beings (Hodgetts & Lorimer, 2015: 286).

The difficulty of avoiding anthropomorphism and its entrenched 'nature', is that, in doing so, the academic keeps rigid the boundaries between human and animal, something that animal studies scholars have otherwise tried to deconstruct (Haraway, 2003, 2008). The implication is that maybe, after all, there could be merit in retaining anthropomorphism within, not ousting it from, animal geography studies. As Philo and Wilbert (2000: 27-28) state:

“Anthropomorphism allows humans to explode into many different registers of the real, so that fragments of what we normally deem ‘human’ can be traced throughout the animal and whole ‘thing’ world. Anthropocentrism, however, wishes to close down around the existing figure of the human, referencing everything back to the human, and not paying much attention to anything that does not directly pertain to the conventional human and its usual scale scope of operation”.

To put this in other words, anthropocentrism has an inward-looking spatiality, closing potentialities down, whilst anthropomorphism has an outward looking spatiality, opening potentialities. I find this a particularly important when it comes to ‘thinking methodology’, and I would therefore differentiate between what is speciesist anthropocentrism and what is cautious anthropomorphism. In this case, I argue that geographers should try to contest the anthropocentric impulses of the subfield but recognise that, when it comes to anthropomorphism, the latter can be both a hinderance and help. Particularly in this research (as centralised in **Chapter 5 and 6**), I argue, anthropomorphism is a crucial way of meaning-making for participants, so much so that anthropomorphism acts as a way of expressing the value of the human-canine relationship.

Historically, disabled people have been objects of inquiry, subjected to a biomedical pathologising gaze, dehumanised, and exposed to real and systemic violence in the name of inquiry (Chouinard, 1997, 2000). The move from this medicalised view of disability and impairment, which centres disability as an individual problem, to disability as both socially constructed by physical barriers produced within space and prejudicial social and cultural attitudes towards impairment, can be attributed to the desire to learn more about disabled people’s lived experiences. Researchers have an ethical responsibility to research alongside, and with, disabled people, and not to engage in predatory research practices that disadvantage or even exploit disabled people (Chouinard, 2000; Dyck, 2000; Kitchin, 2000). This ethics ties to what Gleeson (2000: 65) calls an ‘enabling geography’:

“First, an enabling geography presumes a social model approach, requiring explorations of how social and spatial processes can be used to disable rather than enable people with physical impairments. Second, an enabling geography seeks to contribute something positive to disabled people: for example, knowledges that can be used to empower disabled people and disempower ableist structures, practices and institutions”.

There are said to be barriers to creating an inclusive methodology that leads to an enabling geography: ableism and accessibility. As Chouinard (1997: 380) states:

“Ableism refers to ideas, practices, institutions, and social relations that presume able-bodiedness, and by so doing, construct persons with disabilities as marginalized, oppressed, and largely invisible ‘others’. This presumption, whether intentional or not,

means that one's ability to approximate the able-bodied norm, influences multiple facets of life: such as the character and quality of interpersonal relations, economic prospects, and degrees of physical and social access to various life spaces".

Geographers have outlined the inherent ableism and inaccessibility of many different methods that geographers (sometimes unintentionally) deploy. Castrodale (2018) argues that 'go-along' interviews can represent a means by which processes of disablement and able-bodied privilege can be explored *in situ*, but also outlines that there is a need to explore the ableist/sanist structures when engaging with mobile methods. In Castrodale's (2018) work, what it means to be disabled/Mad within space, can lead to uneasiness. Likewise, Hall and Kearns (2001: 243) comment that 'traditional' research methods such as questionnaires and interviews are exclusionary as they "can fail to represent the geographical lives of intellectually disabled people". Kaley et al (2018) agree, arguing that research through the written and spoken word can reinforce ableist notions and exclude participants who might have visual, hearing, or cognitive impairments. Indeed, Parr (1998) also considers how the interview setting can reinforce the power dynamics of patient-psychologist when interviewing people with mental ill-health, leading to participants trying to justify their 'illness'. Furthermore, Kitchen (2000) notes that the opinions of disabled people about social research shows that they do not like methods that fail to capture the complexities of their disability. Immediately, then, geographers need to contend the exclusionary nature of some research designs through empirical and theoretical work that attends to power relations, ableism, and accessibility, and which rejects a politics of research that may disempower those with whom we research (Chouinard, 2000; Gleeson, 2000). As Chouinard (2000: 71) exclaims, "a key challenge for critical geographers is thus to find ways of producing and using knowledge that empower disadvantaged groups in struggles for social change", change that leads to an 'enabling geography'.

Having discussed the concerns posed to exploring lived experience due to anthropocentrism, anthropomorphism, ableism, and accessibility, as well as acknowledging uneven power dynamics within research methodologies, I now turn to how my own research project tries to tackle these matters. Through a relational approach that centres agency and subjectivity (see also **Chapter 2**), I aim to explore the becomings of training practices and the sinews of care running between human and animal. As Hall and Wilton (2017: 728-729) argue, there is a need to move away from "an epistemological emphasis on meaning and identity to an ontological concern with bodies and material doings ... in favour of an emphasis on relational becomings". I centre relationality throughout the methodology of this research to focus on bodies and agencies, how they are expressed and entangled, and how they do things in intimate relation with one another. I draw largely on the literature outlined in the '*Entanglements*' section (**Chapter 2**). Both subfields relevant to my research have turned their attention to the issues of embodiment and affect that as relational, and as crossing bodily and species divides (Andrews, 2018; Andrews et al., 2014; Andrews & Duff, 2019; Goodley, Liddiard, et al., 2018; Hall & Wilton, 2017; Law & Miele,

2011). This thesis aims to engage with these concepts through a more-than-human approach that centres relationality to this exploration.

Research design

The methodology of this research adopts a multi-method, cross-species ethnographic approach, comprising two online surveys, interviews (in various formats, with dogs), observation and video recording, photography, and online social media analysis, that collectively aim to elicit an understanding of both the human's and the animal's roles in the human-assistance-dog relationship, specifically addressing the care and training which characterise it. As Buller (2015: 377) states:

“Recognizing the limits of purely representational and often problematically anthropomorphized accounts of human-animal relations, animal geographers and others have turned to ethnographic means of accounting for animal presence and agency and, in doing so, have considerably extended the ethnographic repertoire”²⁷.

Influential for this work, then, are a number of ethnographic studies such as Laurier et al's (2006) ethnomethodological study of dog walking in a Swedish park, Lorimer's (2006, 2012) multi-method, ethological research with reindeer and seals respectively, Bear et al's (2017) visual ethnographic work with cows and robotic milking, Taylor and Fraser's (2019) online visual ethnography of human-animal relations, and Smith et al's (2021) exploration of police dog training through videographic and photographic mediums. Moreover, disability geographies work by Gorman (2017) and Kaley et al (2018) also offer guides to sensitive ethnographic research with disabled people. These latter papers provide a similar framing which centre human's and animal's bodies in the research. The focus on bodies and their movements, and the affective, often sensuous nature of engagements between humans and animals (as well as between animals in their own terms), shows how “we may not share language with non-humans but we do share embodied life and movement” (Buller, 2015: 378). Equally, the movement towards affective engagement and the ‘more-than-visual’ (Arathoon, 2018) can address the ableist notions inherent in the spoken or written word (Kaley et al., 2018), but still place too much emphasis on the visual. Video ethnography has the potential to capture non-verbal modes of expressions such as body language and movements, facial expressions, voice tones, and physical interaction which make visible the perspectives of disabled people (Kaley et al., 2018) and animals. Cross-species visual ethnography opens ways of being-in-the-world that are available to both humans and animals. As Castrodale (2018) explains, offering a variety of research formats where people can act, move, and express themselves in diverse modalities may address issues of accessibility. I reflect on this at a later point of this chapter.

²⁷ In line with my previous discussion, my intention is precisely not to create an ‘unproblematic’ anthropomorphism but instead a cautiously, carefully, sensitively ‘anthropomorphised’ approach.

The multi-method approach of this research was designed to allow a degree of choice to participants as they could choose which methods to engage with. As shown in **Appendix 2**, 70 participants chose a variety of the different methods and different ways of completing them. At the start of the research, five²⁸ ADUK charities were emailed to try to generate access and a conversation around completing my PhD work with them (see **Appendix 3** for an example of an introductory email). Of the five charities, positive responses were received from Dog A.I.D. and Hearing Dogs. After initial emails, Dog A.I.D. provided the most positive engagement and conversations took place between me and then Charity CEO, Mike McDonald. The conversations between myself and Mike included information on the proposed theoretical and methodological approach of the research, the questions and aims of the research, and what could be provided to the charity in terms of knowledge exchange and impact. The relationship between Mike and myself seemed open and productive and might have been aided by Mike's position as a part-time PhD researcher. Mike acted as a gatekeeper and looked over the online questionnaires and information flyers before sending the flyers into the Dog A.I.D. channels. After Mike left the charity²⁹, Rachel Rodgers started in July 2020 as Head of Dog Training³⁰, becoming the charity's lead and my main point of contact, gatekeeper, and a participant in the research. In September 2021, Rachel also left her position at the charity and Alison Barrett was appointed as the new CEO. Maintaining a working relationship with the charity during these changes was particularly difficult, especially when responses were limited due to the shutdown of the charity during the first four months of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the envisaged research design and the proposed research design had to be adapted to the changing local-regional-nation-global context.

Influence of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a wide-reaching impact on this research as well as in the everyday life of the researcher and participants. As the lockdown in the UK was announced in March 2020, I was in the middle of the research, planning to attend a Dog A.I.D. training weekend, which would have provided a substantial opportunity to meet with participants and recruit for both video ethnographic research and interviews.

Ultimately, this event did not happen and was cancelled. The lockdown changed the spatial geographies of all participants, in part due to restrictions in the day-by-day operations of Dog A.I.D. and wider ADUK charities (see Canine Partners, 2020; Dogs For Good, 2020; Guide Dogs,

²⁸ The five contacted charities were Canine Partners, Dog A.I.D, Dogs For Good, Hearing Dogs, and Support Dogs. The charities not emailed were Medical Detection Dogs, Guide Dogs, and Seeing Dogs Alliance. Autism Dogs CIC and Service Dogs UK only became ADUK members in 2021.

²⁹ Mike McDonald left this role in February 2020, four months after the start of the project. No new CEO was appointed until September 2020.

³⁰ Between Mike McDonald leaving and the appointment of Rachel Rodgers, no contact was received from the charity. This coincided with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2020; Medical Detection Dogs, 2020; Support Dogs, 2020). The human participants in this research, almost all deemed ‘vulnerable’, entered a prolonged period of ‘shielding’, spatially isolated and segregated from others due to the risks posed from COVID-19 (Cutchin & Rowles, 2021; Goggin & Ellis, 2020; Hall, 2021). Dog A.I.D. began a period of unsubstantial uncertainty, with workers furloughed, restrictions on their ‘vulnerable’ clients, and whilst looking for a new CEO. I was ‘locked’ in my flat, confined to my bedroom, a space that now operated as a space of work as well as relaxation (J. Wiles, 2021), uncertain about the impact that COVID-19 was going to have on my research, naively unaware of the lasting temporal and spatial affects the pandemic was going to have (Andrews et al., 2021; Ho & Maddrell, 2021; Rose-Redwood et al., 2020; Sparke & Anguelov, 2020).

During the pandemic, I knew little of what was occurring at the charity, as my emails went unanswered (I was then unaware that the CEO, who I had been in touch with before, had left just before the pandemic), and the charity prioritised the safeguarding and protecting of its clients. After meetings with my supervisors, we began to envision changes to the research, to keep myself and any potential clients safe, whilst also processing the fact that face-to-face research would likely not recommence. The first mitigation factor was to design an online survey aimed at the wider assistance dog population, to seek understandings of dog partnerships, practices of training, and forms of care. The survey could be completed online, providing substantial qualitative and quantitative data that would help me to reconstruct at least some key features within the worlds of assistance dog partnerships (see **Chapter 4**). A second mitigation strategy, tied directly to this, was to collect relevant charity magazines, and to examine them as specific spaces of knowledge production regarding the assistance dog partnership (outlined later in this chapter).

Further, primary research engagements were designed to various extents. To deal with the effects of closed charity services, cancellation of dog training classes, the stopping of face-to-face research, and the increased effects of social isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I designed online group sessions to take place for an hour a week with Dog A.I.D. intended to engage clients with whom I had had previous contact. The group sessions would act as an online space of engagement to chat with participants about dog training and life during the pandemic. However, as the previous CEO had left, I had no response to this proposal. In July 2020, however, Rachel Rodgers acted as a point of contact and gatekeeper. By this time, the charity had begun doing its coffee sessions again and some dog training was beginning depending on each devolved country’s rules and regulations. In the end, Rachel sent my flyers to clients and dog trainers for online interviews.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued, and Scotland (and the rest of the UK) eased out of lockdown in 2020, I began to complete risk assessments on a potential return to in-person video ethnography. The video ethnography would have been completed at a Dog A.I.D. dog training class which I received an invitation to attend. The event would have been outdoors (where

possible) with a limited number of people, thus meeting lockdown and social distancing rules. However, the reinforcing relationship between the ongoing pandemic and the University's hesitation to resume face-to-face research with people meant that the field risk assessment took weeks to be approved, by which time the winter lockdown had commenced and face-to-face Dog A.I.D. training was thus cancelled again.

Whilst this was occurring, I became uncomfortable with my position as a researcher with a 'healthy' body. For a while I found myself avoiding re-designing the research as I felt uncomfortable asking the charity to send my research flyers to participants who were most at risk from COVID-19, especially as I was unaware of participants' individual and personal circumstances. These personal circumstances of participants came to the fore after organising a telephone interview with one participant³¹. She lived in supervised living accommodation, which, due to the embodied nature of many inhabitants, had been under lockdown by order of government. During the telephone interview, she described how the living accommodation had been "like a morgue". The combined failure of governmental procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as a reduction in social services funding over time due to austerity (Goggin & Ellis, 2020; Phillips & Andrews, 2021; A. Power, 2013; A. Power & Bartlett, 2019; A. Power & Herron, 2021) had led to this situation. I felt horrible calling to ask about dog training at the same time as the participant was having to experience all of this. I felt extremely aware of my positionality and, honestly, just glad to hear they were okay.

Later during the January lockdown (2021), I received an email from another participant about getting involved in the research through an online meeting. After extensively emailing over a period of a few weeks, the participant stopped emailing and I was unsure why. I sent a follow-up email after two weeks and they responded saying that they had contracted COVID-19 after they attended a funeral, but still wanted to get involved at a later date. In this case I expressed my empathy and sympathy and asked the participant to email me when they felt ready to get involved. They did indeed email me a few weeks later, and, as we chatted and set up an interview. I understand that for some, to talk about one's life, can be a helpful outlet and be therapeutic. Again, though, the disconnect between me, as the 'healthy' researcher with my specific research interests, and my disabled participants – vulnerable in many ways, both human and animal – complicated matters immeasurably, including my own feelings about the research and its relevance.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a much larger impact on my work than I could have ever anticipated. It made me think more deeply about doing research, and I hope that I have managed to mitigate and adapt my research in appropriate ways. As the methodology now moves on to

³¹ Here I do not use the participants' (human or animal's) pseudonyms at risk of them becoming identifiable due to the other, important, information included in this paragraph.

discuss research ethics, I think the COVID-19 pandemic made me more profoundly aware about the ethics of doing research with disabled people.

Research ethics: Vulnerability, illness, and relationality

During the initial creation of the research project two ethics applications were submitted to the University Research Ethics Committee. The first was done during my Masters (Arathoon, 2018) and acted as a good pilot, as I was able to gain skills that were useful to the application for this research (application number 300180203: see **Appendix 4**). The ethics application was devised through this previous experience as well as using the ESRC *Research Ethics Framework* (2015). The project required an information sheet (see **Appendix 5**), a consent form (see **Appendix 6**), and a discussion of how participants would be recruited, what they would be required to do, how anonymity and confidentiality would (attempt to) be maintained, and how they would be assured that they could withdraw from the research at any time.

Key to research ethics was the bureaucratic framing of ‘vulnerability’, informed consent, and anonymity. Authors von Benzon and van Blerk (2017) describe ‘vulnerability’ as socially constructed, dependent on the ways in which power relations are created between marginalised people, be they children, elderly, sick, disabled, or other minority social groups, and those who hold power within society. Importantly, the academic ethics process often applies vulnerability to those within these social groupings (as well as animals), irrespective of whether the person themselves would position themselves as ‘vulnerable’. At the heart of the conceptualisation of vulnerability are ideas of oppression and exploitation (Darling, 2020), and geographers should develop research methodologies that do not reinforce problematic power dynamics. Within this research, then, as I have previously pointed to in discussing the research design, the idea is to create a research project to ‘work with’ and ‘alongside’ those participants who are (generously) engaging with the research. This aims to develop one of the key ethical objectives of this research project, which is to create an ‘enabling geography’ (Gleeson, 2000). To do so, following the *Social and Cultural Geography* Special Issue on vulnerability (2017), I operationalise vulnerability, and in general, research ethics, as inherently relational. As von Benzon and van Blerk (2017) suggest, vulnerability is context-dependent, with groups being more or less vulnerable to exploitation based on the particular circumstances of an encounter. A relational approach like this, applied in practice, rather than bureaucratically, can develop a caring approach to research since, as King (2021: 12) asserts, “care in research is always responsive, multiple and sometimes, urgent”. Furthermore it is in practice that different ethical and caring practices might emerge during research (see Muñoz, 2021), ones which require thought beyond the submitted ethics form. In my research, different ethical and caring approaches were needed with different participants depending on their embodied capacities and our relationship. Whilst I strove to make sure the spaces of the research encounter were chosen by participants, that participants had the choice of what parts of the research to get involved with, that the materials were accessible, and

that I asked participants any rules about interaction with their assistance dogs, ethical and caring decisions were still always ongoing and had to be made *together* during the fieldwork.

Informed consent is another issue raised during the bureaucratic research ethics process. Written informed consent was required by the university ethics procedure, but in practice signing university documents can strengthen power dynamics rather than redress them. I felt a lot of participants became uncomfortable with the forms, despite my explanation and in some cases my insistence on a signed copy rather than verbal confirmation. Informed consent is vital in showing the participants understand the research and what it entails, but I do think that the consent forms unsettled power dynamics. Furthermore, as Philo and Laurier (2020: 33) note, “consent is more than a signature on a form: it is processual and not a one-off”. Given the relational view of ethics put forward, consent must be treated the same. Further issues arise when combining consent with assumptions of vulnerability. As Philo and Laurier (2020: 35) describe:

Legally, there are categories of individuals who are not thought straightforwardly able to give their consent because they are not considered to possess the necessary intellectual/reflexive capacity and are unable to be informed adequately.

Indeed, Philo and Laurier (2020), as well as Horton et al (2020), point towards the problematic construction of consent in these terms, the use of assumption about cognitive capacity, and the ageist and ableist understandings that uphold the idea of consent. Moreover, issues arise with informed consent and working with animals. As Gillespie (2020) contends, animals do not consent to research the same way humans do. The idea of consent by proxy is key to exploring the relationship between human and animals, but that does not mean it is always an ethical endeavour. As Philo and Laurier (2020: 41) conclude:

It [consent] is not just that we need to allow participants to stop the research at any time: we need to be attentive to the occasions when and where we expect consent to emerge and how such spaces are constructed, and in so doing also push ourselves to accept people stopping their involvement on those occasions where we did not expect them to stop.

Anonymity and confidentiality are interlocking ethical concerns. Anonymity is designed to protect people’s identity whereas confidentiality is keeping personal information that they share secret. Anonymity is about maintaining privacy and protecting research participants and subjects from the negative effects of disclosure (Wilson, 2020). Bureaucratic ethics suggests that assigning a pseudonym and not including personal information such as place names are the main steps to protecting anonymity and confidentiality. This tactic is muddled when taking the above considerations of voice and ownership into account. When working with disabled humans and their assistance animals and focusing on developing an ‘enabling geography’ which aims to contribute something positive to the lives of the participants involved, not *disempowering* participants, deploying pseudonyms may actually *remove* the agency and voice of those participants involved.

In a similar vein, anonymity becomes an issue when completing visual research. The steps of pseudonyms and removing personal information might not work if images and videos of participants are used, even more so when the actions of the participants in videos are a point of exploration³². In some of the images a natural blurring of light or specific positioning of bodies may obscure the faces of participants, but the use of multiple graphic transcripts and figures may make people recognisable, especially within the small, close, charity community of Dog A.I.D. As R. Wiles et al (2012: 41) convey, there are:

“Ongoing tensions between, on the one hand, research participants’ rights and researchers’ desire for participants to be *seen* as well as heard and, on the other hand, researchers’ real and perceived ethical responsibility to safeguard participants” (*emphasis original*).

These are important points and, set within an ‘enabling geography’ approach, *not* to include these images removes the agency of participants and arguably risks a paternalistic approach. Furthermore, R. Wiles et al (2012) contend that perhaps there is too much anxiety around images compared to words, as images without contextual and identifying material offer little threat to an individual being revealed. Additionally, there is little consensus on the exact ethical approach that should be taken with visual data (although there is guidance: see BSA, 2017), but a careful approach still needed to be adopted here. The closeness of many research participants – many knew each other and were part of Dog A.I.D. – and the close nature of the community (see **Chapter 4**), that participants are going through similar journeys, created a comradeship between the participants. Thus, when presenting on my research to Dog A.I.D, and showing some images and videos, there were shared congratulations to those who were involved in the research. It was my judgement that in this context the ‘normal’ bureaucratic rules about anonymity could, indeed should, be relaxed, precisely reflecting the relational and contextual approach that I was taking to ethics and indeed my whole project.

Animals

“There is no animal geography without ethics. The very coupling of the words gives rise to an ethical endeavour; an acceptance that animals have a geography, a making visible of animals within our human geography and scholarship, an acknowledgement that our relationship with animals has consequences” (Buller, 2016: 422).

Animal geographies has at its heart the issue of ethics. Through our research “we are remapping the moral landscape of animal-human relations, revealing a diverse world of ethically relevant nonhuman beings” (Lynn, 1998: 280), with “animals as co-respondent subjects” giving “them a moral placing within the academy that, arguably, they rarely enjoyed before” (Buller, 2016: 422). As I have highlighted above, ethical issues do not stop after the bureaucratic process, rather they are a relational and ongoing issue, one that requires an ethics of care that, as Greenhough and Roe

³² Participants agreed for images and videos showing their faces for research purposes. Two participants asked ‘where’ their faces would go, showing dis-ease that I was to post them on Facebook (which I assured I wouldn’t).

(2011: 50) state, “emerges from affectual, embodied understandings of human and nonhuman relations”. They phrase this ‘somatic sensibilities’, which comes from our (human) relationships with animals and our shared experience of simply ‘having a body’ and making our bodies available for interaction. Taking this approach forward within this research, I ask: what does it mean to engage with assistance dogs in ethically considerate ways?

As assistance dogs are working animals, there are several ethical considerations here. First, many participants within the research talked about issues with the public distracting their assistance dogs. These distractions can be beckoning or making noises at an assistance dog, petting, or stroking an assistance dog, or feeding an assistance dog. All these actions can negatively impact the training of the assistance dog as well as the confidence of the human. Thus, when working as a researcher with humans and their assistance dogs they were in a space where they felt comfortable – usually home-spaces – and had previously enjoyed positive experiences, which often meant *non*-public spaces free from extraneous distractions. Furthermore, I did not distract or touch the assistance dog without the owner’s permission. This may reinforce ideas of human dominance and control over animals (Tuan, 1984), but, as the dog needs to learn not to be distracted (see **Chapter 5**), this was an essential approach to take.

I took this approach during interviews and ethnography, and two different ethical situations occurred. First, during an interview with Beth in her home, Daisy, the assistance dog, made her body available for caress multiple times by sitting in front of me and putting her paw on my knees. One time, when Beth was making herself tea, I went to move my hand towards Daisy and she jumped back and barked, quickly running off to Beth. Beth laughed saying “did you touch her?”. I responded saying “yes”, saying that Daisy put her paw on me, so I thought she was inviting me to pet her. Beth explains that it takes Daisy a while to be okay with someone touching her, even if she does put her paw on your knee. Later in the interview, Daisy started climbing up on me to ‘sit’ on my knee. Beth laughing said “I think it’s okay if you touch her now”. This time Daisy was okay with me petting her, physically not jumping backwards or barking, but instead wagging her tail. These engagements show the ethics of touch and making bodies available to touch. As Haraway (2003: 53) notes, “in relationships, dogs and humans construct “rights” in each other such as the right to demand respect, attention and response”. These are key characteristics that I tried to take forward in all my engagements with the animal participants.

In a second example, my position as ‘observer’ was put into question as the following research diary extract recounts:

“... Pepper was very muddy so Sara did not want to let her into the car and instead asked me if I would walk Pepper over to the centre (it was only a short walk, 50m, across the carpark). Sara explained that this can act as part of Pepper’s training as Pepper needs to get used to Sara not being in the room or being walked by other people. I obliged and asked what cues to use when Pepper would turn around to see where Sara was or if she were to whimper. Sara said when Pepper stops and turns around to find her [Sara] say

‘come’ and if she did to praise her. I began to walk her over and Pepper began jumping up and turning around, her body language was alert and she vocalised loudly – a whimpering sound. I said, ‘Pepper come’ clearly and firmly and she followed and walked, after which I immediately praised her - ‘well done Pepper’, in a positive happy voice. The process was repeated two or three more times and when we got to where the other participants were waiting, I told Pepper to ‘Sit’ and ‘Wait’ as Sara got out the car. Pepper did so and as soon as she got sight of Sara began to jump up and vocalise loudly. Sara was extremely happy with Pepper, shouting well done to her and praising her and giving her a treat” (Fieldwork Diary, 270220).

Whilst this interaction between myself and Pepper went well, I felt very anxious about handling, as in commanding, Pepper. As I am not a dog trainer, nor do I have experience training dogs, I was nervous that I might do something that could adversely affect Pepper and thus indirectly impact the training between Sara and Pepper. Here, I made sure to follow Sara’s instruction during the interaction between myself and Pepper, and this is something that I did throughout the whole of the research: to engage with canine participants on terms that their human partner deemed okay, but also on terms with which the canine participant was familiar too.

In dealing with trained animals there were extra challenges for this research to understand the relationship from a ‘dog’s eye’ perspective. It is hard to interpret doggy acts and relations outwith the constraints of trained bodies – particularly as I discussed in **Chapter 2**, how entangled human-assistance-dog bodies are – and I worked hard to try and recognise, or learn to recognise, the different ‘dog modes’ in each individualised partnership and in the complex encounter where animals are caring companions. I encountered many ‘dog modes’ throughout the research and these encounters of – dogs as dogs, dogs as learners, dogs as trained companions, and dogs with the potential to care beyond training – are always already compromised because of the anthropomorphic categories at work metaphorically and practically in this multi-species research. Throughout the training I attended to these dog modes and here I would like to analyse these further (before discussing methods in practice). **Figure 2** shows an image from a still video of the dog mode ‘dogs as dogs’. Play is the key identifiable feature of this dog mode with the image showing Pepper and Rocky’s engagement with one another. The engagement between species – dogs and dogs – particularly through play allowed for me to ‘read’ and understand the dog’s perspective greater. In the image the language of both Pepper and Rocky is alert, ears and tails up, bodies on the move. **Figure 3** shows the dog mode ‘dogs as learners’. This mode occupies an inbetweenness where dogs are not quite at their ‘trained’, or ‘qualified’, status but also more-than a pet. In **figure 3** we can see the confusion between June and Quake in completion of the task ‘pick up the lead’. This image was also used in **Chapter 5** but shows the earlier stages of the developing relationship and particularly, Quake’s agency in not picking up the lead and instead moving towards me for attention. This dog mode is identifiable in-training, especially for those partnerships who were working towards the level one and two qualification.



Figure 2: Pepper and Rocky playing with a ball in a sock.



Figure 3: Quake not completing the task.

Figure 4 shows the dog mode ‘dogs as trained companions’. In the image we can see Daisy pull open the door for Beth. This image is used later in **Chapter 5**, but it shows Daisy completing a task that she is already trained to do. This mode is signified by her behaviour and actions in the image – her quick movement, body language, and urgency in completing the task. **Figure 5** shows the dog mode ‘dogs with the potential to care beyond training’. This image shows Hannah and Missy in an embrace and is used again in this chapter. This dog mode is recognisable not through trained behaviour but through Missy making her body available for touch. This dog mode forms a key part of **Chapter 6**. The different ‘dog modes’, behaviours, and actions, were key to understanding animals’ geographies. It is nonetheless difficult to know if my interactions with animal participants within this research have been ‘ethical’, as the question always remains, what do the dogs involved think and feel? What more could I have done to create a more equal ethical engagement?



Figure 4: Daisy pulling open the door.



Figure 5: Hannah and Missy locked in a caress.

Methods in practice

Survey (online)

The first step of the research was to use an online survey to gain a broad range of qualitative and quantitative responses to get a basic understanding of Dog A.I.D. client's experiences. The online survey was sent to then Dog A.I.D. CEO Mike McDonald to check that questions made sense in the context of Dog A.I.D. and, once edited, was posted on the Dog A.I.D. clients Facebook page. As an outsider, I did not have access to this page, so, even though I provided an introductory statement to go with the post, I do not know whether this was posted, or how the survey was received by the members of the group. The Facebook group was used as it acted as a space of quick dissemination to all Dog A.I.D. clients, although it is limited to those who have Facebook and are active members of the group.

The survey started with an information sheet (see **Appendix 5**) to inform the participants of the project, its aims, what to expect from the survey, the storage of data, and the ability to back out of the survey and not complete it once started. Furthermore, the information sheet stated that no personal information, such as names, was needed unless participants wanted to be involved with further research later in the project. Once read, the survey required the participants to consent via a tick box before continuing to the questions. The survey was designed via JISC Online Surveys, which met the requirements for GDPR, ethics, and anonymity. Furthermore, JISC had various ways to improve accessibility such as suggestions for colour contrast, font size, and the ability to listen to how the survey would sound read aloud by audio-software. In addition, the survey was designed to be entirely navigable through the space and enter keys of a keyboard. All responses

were downloaded from the secure JISC website and stored in my University OneDrive File and given the file name 'DAS – 01' to indicate the Dog A.I.D. Survey and the response number. The General Population Survey file name was 'GP – 01'.

The questions ranged from closed tick box questions to open-ended questions, the latter aiming to explore more deeply people's experiences of assistance dog partnership and ensure a range of different data types (Cloke et al., 2004; McLafferty, 2010; Parfitt, 2005: see **Appendix 7**). The survey was designed to start with general, essentially factual biographical information, such as the breed of the assistance dog, whether the human respondents were qualified or in training, and how long they had been training or how long it had taken to qualify, whilst later in the survey the questions became more personal and interpretative, asking about how social and physical mobility, and mental wellbeing, had been affected by assistance dog partnership.

The survey received 19 responses out of the 64 engagements (a 26% response rate from those who engaged). Dog A.I.D., in 2019, had 108 qualified partnerships and 123 partnerships in training, therefore the survey responses cannot be considered representative of the wider Dog A.I.D. population. The survey did provide some good in-depth information, but sometimes participants responded with just one-word answers. Of the 19 responses, 11 participants left their name and email for interviews, with six participants then completing interviews.

A second survey was designed to explore the relationship between humans and a wider range of assistance dogs across the UK. Whilst the technical aspects of the survey design were the same as those designed above, there were several changes. The second survey was designed to explore the role of assistance dog partnership for all kinds of assistance dog owners, whether trained under the ADI or ADUK, via other charities, or through self-training. The first survey and some of the initial interviews aided in the new survey design, as I became more aware of the worlds of assistance dog partnerships, the jargon, and experiences of training.

Since the survey was designed for potentially the whole UK assistance dog partnership population, the survey was posted via Twitter (see **Appendix 8**) and via two closed Facebook groups³³ after no email responses were received from other ADUK charities to share the survey. Responses received from charity contact were often given as 'limited resources', so they could not share the survey and non-responses were deemed to be due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The sharing of the survey in the two closed Facebook groups was completed after initial contact with the group administrators. Again, I was an outsider to the groups, so, whilst I provided text to be shared with the survey, I do not know if this text was posted, or how the survey was generally received beyond the (positive) feedback from the two administrators.

³³ These Facebook groups were both open to all assistance dog handlers, whether part of a charity or self-trained. As far as I am aware, having an assistance dog was the only requirement.

The second survey also utilised both tick-box, closed, and open-ended questions and was generally well received with less blank and one-word answers than the first survey. The survey received 42 responses out of the 224 engagements (19% response rate from those who engaged). **Figure 6** outlines the number of participants of the research project as a whole, who are aligned with specific charities or are self-training their assistance dog.

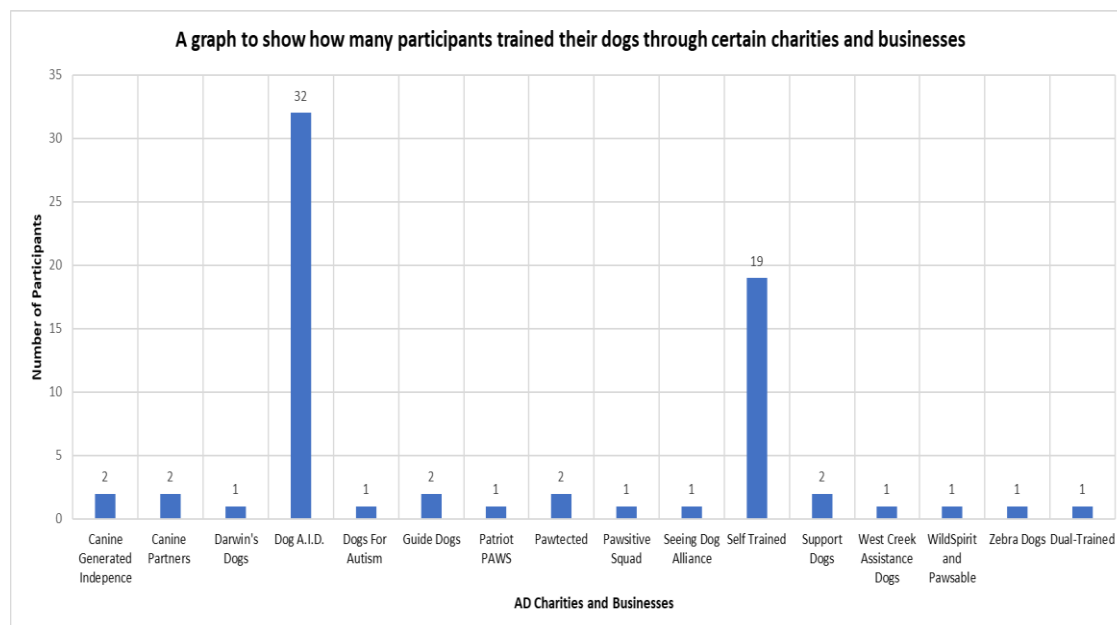


Figure 6: How many participants trained their dogs through different charities and businesses³⁴.

The survey cannot be considered as representative of the general assistance dog-using population due to the small number of responses but also, as **Figure 6**, shows only two out of the 43 responses were from the charity Guide Dogs, which currently has the highest number of partnerships of any ADUK charity. Interestingly, though, 20 of the participants were qualified with 22 still in training, giving a good range of experiences across the training spectrum. Furthermore, of the 20 qualified participants, the average time taken to qualify was 13.8 months, with a range between 2 weeks and 37 months. On the other hand, 20 of the 22 in-training participants who left numerical data for the time they have been in-training yielded an average of 11.8 months, with a range between 4 and 36 months.

Interviews: face-to-face, online, telephone

A range of different semi-structured interviews were undertaken during the length of the research with Dog A.I.D. clients and dog trainers (see **Table 3**). Starting with Dog A.I.D. clients, the interviews were designed to be semi-structured, exploring how the relationship between human and dog had developed since they started training, their experiences of training, and how they care for their assistance dogs. The clients who left their details in the survey to be contacted for

³⁴ The dual-trained participant is trained through both Dog A.I.D. and Seeing Dogs Alliance. West Creek ADs and Pawsable identify themselves as businesses. Wildspirit is ran by a Dog A.I.D. trainer who also has their own assistance dog.

an interview were sent an email three days after they submitted their survey response. The initial contact email contained an introduction from myself, the information sheet about the research, and the consent form. Other participants were recruited either at a Dog A.I.D. training class, in which information was provided before starting ethnographic work, and through a research flyer (see **Appendix 9**) sent by Rachel Rodgers to the Dog A.I.D. mailing list. Emails before the interviews were important. First, they acted as a medium to introduce myself, my work, and allow participants to ask any questions before the interviews. Furthermore, emails allowed for me to start building a rapport with participants. This was of vital importance as some of the participants outlined their anxieties (June, Megan, Sara), and talk before interviews helped participants feel (if only slightly) more comfortable. When organising the interviews via email, some participants returned signed copies of the consent form whilst others asked me to bring printed versions for participants to sign. Furthermore, the pre-talk allowed us to decide on the space of interview, as the spaces needed to be (easily) accessible, comfortable, and familiar to the participants.

Table 3: Number and type of interview undertaken.

Interview Type	Number
Face-to-face	5
Online	11
Telephone	5

Face-to-face Interviews

First, face-to-face interviews were done with five clients who left their details in their survey responses. These face-to-face interviews were all done pre-pandemic. There was a lot of organisation (through email) about where, when, and how the interviews would take place. The interview procedure was agreed mutually with the days decided together, but the timings and spacings of the interviews were left to participants to decide. Many participants indicated how specific times of day would be difficult for them to do the interview, with Mark explaining that “when I wake up is the hardest part of the day, so I tend to know around then what the day is going to bring in terms of health problems or not” (IR), so it was best to schedule his interviews for the afternoon, whilst Dominique preferred the interview to be completed earlier in the morning. Furthermore, decisions about the spaces of the interview were left for the participants to decide. There were several reasons for this. First, the space where the interview is undertaken should not *a priori* be assumed to be a ‘safe space’ in which to talk about feelings and assumptions, as suggested by Pile (1991). Bondi (2014) critiques the assumption of interviews being – taking place in – a safe space, arguing that the implication of being able to talk relatively easily, freely, and unproblematically is to ignore the power dynamics that may still be at play. Furthermore, by presuming a ‘safe space’ there is a lack of attention to the embodiment,

individuality, and “subjectivity of the bodies and minds we map” (Parr, 1998: 350). This is particularly important as the subject matter of the interviews is personal and emotional, often relating to mental (ill-) health and disability, and thus the participants being able to choose a space in which they feel (even if only slightly more) comfortable was crucial. Furthermore, as outlined in **Chapters 4 and 5**, and in various pieces of research (Guide Dogs, 2019; Lindsay & Thiagarajah, 2021), assistance dog partnerships often face exclusion from various public spaces, as well as the previously mentioned risk of distractions caused by other members of the public. Whilst exclusion due to assistance dog partnership is legally recognised as a form of discrimination, and public spaces ranging from governmental buildings to restaurants and shops are required to allow assistance dog partnerships access, exclusion still occurs. Therefore, allowing the participants to choose a space with which they are familiar with, and ideally had previous positive experiences in, was crucial in helping the participants feel comfortable during the interview.

Three interviews were completed in participants’ homes and two in cafés before the COVID-19 pandemic occurred. The interviews in the participant’s homes facilitated a spatial knowledge of their experiences, whilst limiting travel for participants, and allowing us to chat in a space in which they felt more comfortable (although this does not mean that issues of power entirely dissipate). The participants who were interviewed within cafés chose ones to which they regularly attended. Mark chose a café where all dogs were allowed in, whereas Sara chose a high street café. Whilst both these interviews went well (I received positive follow up emails from both Mark and Sara, and Sara also invited me to a training class), within the space of the café I did become more aware of the emotional and personal content of the interview and worried whether anyone could overhear.

Despite Seymour and Wolch (2010) critiquing interviews as anthropocentric, marginalising animal experiences and eliciting only human experiences and human-centred interpretations of animals, during my face-to-face interviews the assistance dogs in attendance became actively involved in the interviews, whether conducted in the spaces of the home or the café. Assistance dogs became involved in the interviews in four ways: completing work, expressing care, expressing a sense of self, and through being a catalyst for storytelling. Throughout the interview with Beth, for instance, Daisy actively completed work, both when being asked and through her own agency. In the following abstract the telephone rang, and Beth asked Daisy to retrieve it:

“[House phone rings, Daisy’s ears become perked].

Beth: Daisy, get the phone.

[Daisy jumps on the couch and reaches over to the house phone, grabbing it with her mouth, and passing it to Beth].

Beth: Good girl... [passes over dry biscuits to Daisy and then answers the phone]” (Beth, IR).

In another example:

During the interview Daisy started bringing items into the room for Beth without her asking; a walking stick, and a basket of items they used for training. Beth explained that Daisy often does this to see her smile, make her happy, and show off in front of other people. Beth praised her even though she had not asked for the items and gave her a treat (Fieldwork Diary, 231119).

During the interview with Beth, Daisy completed work both by direction and through her own agency. The completion of this work helped show further Daisy's agency within the interview and the relationship between herself and Beth.

Expressions of care during interviews were also common with care in action being observed (and talked about) during an interview with Sara in the space of the café with her assistance dog sat on her knee:

"Sara: ... And he has done things, for example this [leaning and cuddling into Sara's shoulder], he didn't start training for me till he was four and a half, he had never ever sat on anybody's shoulder like this. Raven did it all the time, because she was small, she would always do it, and it helps with the pain. So, at four and a half years old he suddenly starts doing it...

J: He just started...

Sara: And I was kind of like what, no training, nobody asked him to do it, he just jumped up and started doing it. My daughter had specifically taught him not to 'sit' on her knee because she finds that painful ... I like the dog on my knee because that helps to ease my pain...

J: Right...

Sara: So, this dog who had spent his whole life sitting beside and had never sat on anybody's knee, but he suddenly started sitting on my knee...

J: Without you even...

Sara: No encouragement, no nothing. I just accepted that he would be sitting beside me, I didn't want to – I didn't want to try to train him because Raven knew when I was in pain, it was never something I asked her to do, she did it because she knew I was in pain, I didn't even know about training him for that, how was he going to sense when I need it, yet he did..." (Sara, IR).

The action of care, and talk about care, during the interview allowed me to understand in greater depth the intimate relationship between Sara and Sage.

Throughout the face-to-face interviews, assistance dogs also expressed their agency through expressions of what I am going to term, allowing myself an anthropomorphism, their self. In the following field dairy extract, about my time in Beth and Daisy's home, I describe how Daisy became actively involved with the interview:

Throughout the interview Daisy was very vocal, whimpering, and 'talking' to myself and Beth. Beth explained that she does this all the time, and they often have conversations together. Daisy would stare at me while making noises and often come up to me for a stroke, she had got used to my company now. Beth was trying to get her to 'sit' quiet throughout the interview, using the hand sign for quiet and verbally telling her to be quiet,

although a lot of the time she did this whilst laughing. (Field Diary, 231119: *see also text earlier in this chapter*).

During the interview, Daisy expressed her characteristics and became an active part of the interview. Often ‘talking’ and making the interview a more interactive experience. This observation builds towards what Fletcher and Platt (2018: 218) recount as: “having dogs present during the interviews acted as a catalyst for story-telling. On recounting stories where their dogs had been naughty or disobedient, for example, respondents would frequently address their dogs directly with some utterance of disapproval”. Various examples of dogs acting as a catalyst for storytelling occurred during the interviews, as the following excerpt with Megan shows:

J: Yeah, I see the cat and the dog playing now [laughter]. Did you have the cat before the dog?

M: No [Laughter] she’s just gone 1 year old, I got her last year, I wasn’t planning on getting a cat. She was a rescue and desperately needed a home.

J: Right.

M: He was terrified of her when she first came [Laughter]

AP: [Sam jumps up and away from cat] [Noise of paws on wooden floor]

J: Sam was?

M: Yeah, but they are best friends now, which you can see...

AP: [sound of dog paws on wooden floor]” (Megan, IR).

The actions of the Sam, and his presence within the room, acted as a catalyst for storytelling about multi-species interrelations. This storytelling prompted the two humans present to discuss lively acts in more detail through past narratives. The four different ways in which dogs became actively involved with face-to-face interviews, as narrated here, shows they are not passive in the interview experience, but rather can materially shape the course of the interview.

Telephone Interviews

Five interviews were completed via telephone. The interviews lasted between 20 and 120 minutes. The shorter interview was a follow-up interview completed by one of the clients, whilst the other interviews were chosen by participants to take place via telephone. The interviews were organised in the same way as the face-to-face interviews, as semi-structured interviews with the participants being able to lead the conversation in ways that they thought best illuminated their own experiences. The follow up interview acted to verify previous information with one participant and to hear their progress as they had continued their training. The telephone interviews worked okay, but one interview was hindered by both bad connection and a strong regional accent, which made it difficult to hear the participant. Furthermore, there was a loss of the ability to empathise through more-than-verbal language with clients on the telephone when interview topics became more personal (Boyle, 2019a), and furthermore at times there was some missing communication. Telephone interviews, unlike the face-to-face or online interviews, also obscured the dog’s role.

Whilst dogs were, to an extent, involved in both face-to-face and online interviews, at times expressing their agency, and influencing conversation topics, on the telephone this agency was limited. Dogs were not visible here of course, but did occupy a small space of verbal talk, with June asking someone where Quake was in the follow-up interview. The telephone interviews were undertaken in the researcher's home, audio-recorded directly onto the computer and saved via the researcher's University OneDrive. The file in the recording system was then deleted.

Online Interviews

The remainder of interviews, 11 in total, were all completed online via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Participants were given the choice of which platform they preferred, with some participants choosing Zoom due to their familiarity with the platform as a result of Dog A.I.D. training moving online during the pandemic (Hannah), and one participant preferring Microsoft Teams (Erin) (see **Appendix 2**). Online interviews limited travel and costs for both myself and the participants, and since I had a pro Zoom account interviews were not interrupted due to the time-constraints placed on not having a license. Additionally, the interviews proceeded with little to no internet connectivity issues, and one benefit was the ability to record the interviews on the platform in which they occurred (with permission), thus having both audio and visual files of the interview. These files were saved via the University OneDrive account and deleted from their original saved folder on the researcher's computer.

The synchronous nature of the online platforms aided the flow of the interviews as participants could see who they were talking to. This was important when the interview questions were personal and emotional. The participants could see my visual expressions of empathy, and I could see their body language, which helped me to take a caring approach when the participants were talking. Furthermore, the synchronous nature of Zoom, coupled with the space and lighting within the space of my bedroom, acted to facilitate greater accessibility for Hannah:

"I'm I am deaf so, and by the way thank you for your setup, because I can lip read you ... Yeah, people forget that when you're in a wheelchair, a lot of people talk to me from behind" (Hannah, IR).

This was an unintended positive outcome of completing the interview synchronously online, as I did not foresee this accessibility issue when planning the interview. The online nature of the interviews also worked well for Erin, as she could complete the interviews in a comfortable, familiar space, not constrained by time:

"J: Before I carry on, we're coming up to about 45 minutes now. So, you know, when you do want to stop, just let me know and we can, I'll bookmark where I am about in the questions and then we can always be arranging again for another time.

E: Yeah, possibly. All right. Maybe we could rearrange. Yeah, probably, because it really, I'm sitting probably an hour now" (Erin, IR).

Organised earlier through email, the ability to complete the interview online, and in two separate parts, helped Erin, who stated she would get stiff and lose focus if she was sat longer than an hour.

The interviews lasted between 60 and 180 minutes and, whilst having a list of questions, the interviews were largely guided by the participants. This worked well as we could talk about what the participants found most meaningful. Furthermore, through this approach, after the first interviews I edited my questions, adding and removing questions as more prominent themes started emerging or because some questions were difficult to ask or phrase (see **Appendix 10**). Completing the interviews online also limited any anxieties around sharing personal information in public space such as a café. Indeed, since the online interviews were done in the home, the space of the home became present within the interviews as participants could point, move the camera, and show things when talking about them. For example, in **Figure 7**, Dominique moved her camera to a door which Ross opens for her. Additionally, dogs were present in the spaces of the home during the interview and could be seen (by me) as taking up active positions within the interview. **Figure 8** shows a still photo of Hannah and Missy: Missy is sat on Hannah's knee as she caresses her. This action of care is thus made visible to the researcher via the online interview.



Figure 7: Dominique showing the door that Ross pulls open.



Figure 8: Hannah and Missy cuddling during an online interview.

There was also one online ‘group’ interview completed with two participants. The online group interview was a mitigation strategy due to the coronavirus pandemic, the intention being to utilise Zoom, and Dog A.I.D. clients’ familiarity with it due to Dog A.I.D. events being on the platform, to try attend to shared experiences of training, care, and health and wellbeing. The group interview flyer was sent to Rachel Rodgers and was also advertised in the Dog A.I.D. magazine (see **Appendix 11**) and sent to Dog A.I.D. clients. The clients responded to Rachel directly and there were four responses. In planning for the group interview, Rachel acted as a gatekeeper, facilitating the organisation, and sending of consent forms and information sheets to individual clients. Rachel was also present during the group interview. I designed a set of questions with an interactive section where participants could also write physically on the screen to facilitate greater interaction and acting as a mind mapping exercise. Despite the planning, there were some limitations that occurred with this approach. First, only two participants of the four ended up turning up online for the interview. Personally, I found this made the flow of conversation difficult, with, often at times, one participant agreeing with the other without explaining how they felt or experienced something. Furthermore, despite the clients’ familiarisation with the Zoom online platform, the note taking was limited, and so this medium was ditched halfway through the interview. Overall though the interview did facilitate some interesting qualitative experiential data.

Elite Interviews

Interviews with (professional) dog trainers were completed via telephone (two) or Zoom (six) (see **Appendix 12**). The interviews were designed to be semi-structured, exploring the dog trainers’ training biographies and philosophies. The questions were organised chronologically, working from the trainers first involvements in animal training, their role in Dog A.I.D., and their

philosophies around dog training. The trainers were recruited either through their clients asking if they would like to get involved after I had interviewed them (snowballing), or through a recruitment flyer posted via Dog A.I.D.'s mailing list by Rachel Rodgers (see **Appendix 13**). Initial contact was made by the trainers to myself, and then I replied, introducing myself further and providing both an information sheet and consent form. All the recruited dog trainers were women, with many being professionals with their own businesses and members of various accrediting bodies (see **Appendix 12**). The fact that all the interviewees were women possibly reflects greater the growing dominance of women dog trainers, or people identifying as women trainers, within the profession (Gabrielsen, 2017; Włodarczyk, 2018).

Through my experience interviewing dog trainers, I would classify the interviews as what are sometimes termed 'elite' interviews, with the participants being mostly educated professionals (Harvey, 2010, 2011), although their Dog A.I.D. roles were as volunteers. My positionality, as a younger, non-professional, came through in many of the interviews, with interviewees often controlling the narrative of the interviews. Furthermore, the use of jargon, and the reciting of names of other professional trainers, often put me in a position of not knowing what, or who, they were talking about. To mitigate this, I researched the professional websites that the dog trainers often included in their email signature to get a basic understanding of their professional lives and businesses before interviews began. I completed additional reading around jargon and professional trainer names that appeared in the first interviews. Both these strategies helped me to gain more confidence when talking to trainers, assisting the flow of the conversation, and aiding me presenting myself as someone who is not only interested in, but knowledgeable of and involved in, dog training worlds.

Visual ethnography and observation

Visual ethnography and observation were keyways in which I aimed to involve the assistance dogs within the research, or to see the relationship in-action and *in situ*. The aim of observation was to 'learn by witnessing' (H. Lorimer, 2012) and 'noticing' (Laurier, 2014b) the practice of assistance dog training. Visual ethnography was completed with six participants (see **Appendix 2**), in the homes of two participants, during a training class with three participants, and during an online training class with one participant (see **Table 4**). The completion of ethnography within these different spaces offered a (limited) look at different spatial contexts and associated experiences of training.

Table 4: Type of ethnography undertaken and number of participants.

Ethnography	Number
Online	1
Face-to-face (home)	2
Training Class	3

Observation and videorecording within people's homes took place with two participants before the COVID-19 pandemic. The videorecording took place as a show-and-tell of the training that the participants had either completed or were working on. In the home settings my presence influenced what training was shown with the participants sometimes talking to me whilst doing the tasks. This was also backed up by Beth who said, "what else do you want to see?". My presence had a clear impact on what was shown by the participants, and it might be judged that the training became more of a performance than a practice. The home also had a spatial influence on the recording, with the spaces often being limited in size, thus fitting human and animal bodies into the lens of my GoPro camera was difficult. Completing these observations within the home was valuable, though, as it centred the *in situ* nature of the human-assistance-dog relationship. Observing Beth and Daisy allowed me to see how the furniture within the home both helped and hindered the training, for instance, the couch allowing Daisy easily to reach the phone (see **Figure 9**) whereas the door and position of couches created obstacles when Daisy tried to bring the walking stick into the living room (see **Figure 10**). Furthermore, being there in person allowed me to hear the training, as when Daisy went to get the walking stick, the sound of walking stick hitting the radiator was unmistakable and pointed towards the constrained nature of the space. The material nature of space allowed me to develop a more rounded picture of training practices within the home.



Figure 9: Daisy climbing up on the couch to retrieve the telephone.

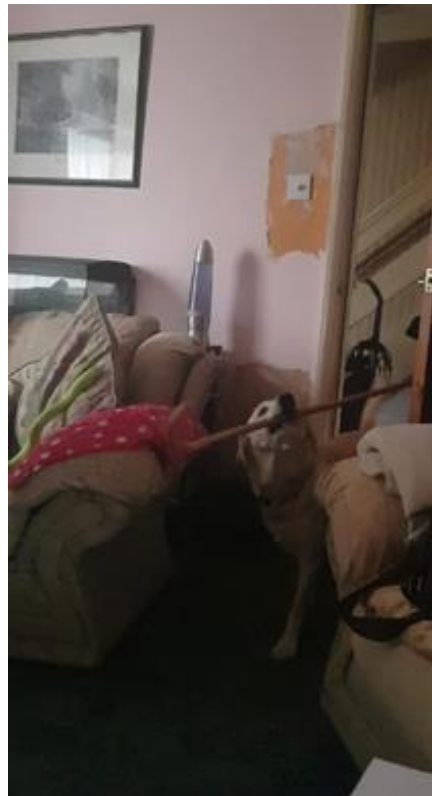


Figure 10: Daisy twisting her head to carry the walking stick through the door and the two couches.

During attendance at the face-to-face training class, I relied on Sara for access, as she invited me to observe the training (with client permissions). I also relied on meeting Sara and travelling with her to the training class, which was in a scout hut in a small town. Whilst Sara gave consent to complete video ethnography during the interview, I took along her consent form to remind her of what she consented to, and in case she wanted to change her mind, and I also took information sheets and consent forms for the other participants. Consent, and discussion of the project, was gained during conversations over tea and coffee. The aim of the visual ethnography in the case of the training classes (both online and face-to-face) was to act as an unobtrusive, undemanding, hopefully largely forgotten-about observer (similar to Laurier *et al.*, 2006). This was so participants were able to complete the training that was important to them, and that they were simply 'working on', rather than me asking participants to 'perform' exercises or tasks for me to record (which occurred more, if unintentionally, with the home training observations). This positionality was far from flawless because, as I described particularly within the ethics part of this chapter, I was positioned by some as an expert and thus they asked me to handle their dogs and get involved with the training. Furthermore, the nature of being present in the room meant that I was actively talking to and getting involved with some of the training as a participant observer (Laurier, 2010), an unavoidable extending and complicating of the 'ideal' ethnomethodological role.

During the face-to-face training class, I set up various GoPro cameras where partnerships were training so that I could record the training of multiple participants at once whilst also observing

from a distance. The GoPro camera is pictured in **Figure 11**. The capacity of the camera to collect audio data was one limitation as the space in which the training was occurring was noisy. Another limitation was that, in observing and having multiple cameras, sometime the training moved outside of the camera's view and so sometimes only parts of the bodies and training were recorded. For the most part the use of the cameras worked well, however, collecting important information even when I was not present and observing through the camera lens. The cameras were visually present to the participants, with Joan and Carla both indicating to me when they had stopped their training so I could stop recording. Furthermore, Joan inquired during some of the training if the camera can see what her and Cain were doing.

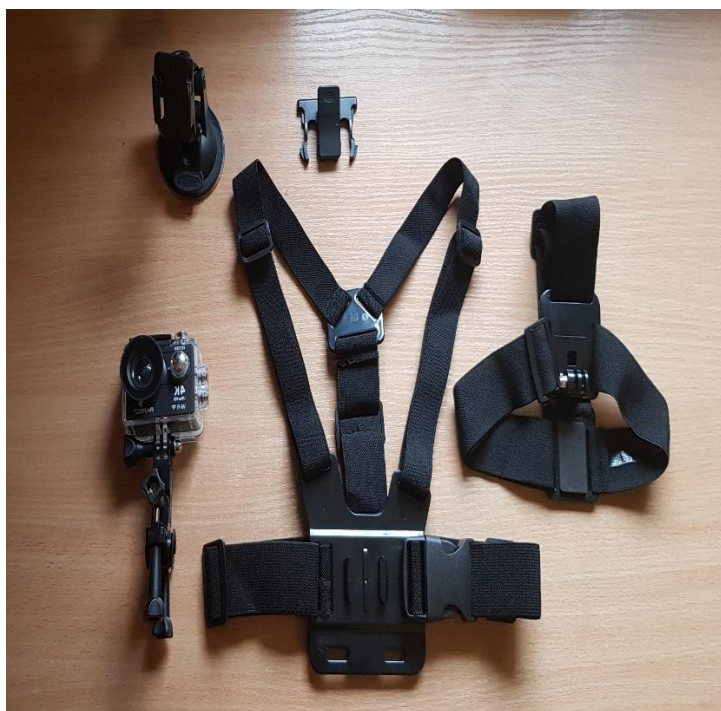


Figure 11: GoPro camera and some of the equipment.

I also attended one online training class with one participant, Emma, and Rachel Rodgers, her trainer. Rachel acted as a gatekeeper, negotiating access for me to attend the class. I provided the consent form and information sheet to Rachel to send over to Emma and received the consent form back before attending the class. The class took place on the Zoom platform for 90 minutes. During the class I acted as an observer with my presence acknowledged before, during, and after the training was finished. The training was formatted for Emma to share a video of the training that herself and Amber did, which was specifically about the things they were working on, the objective being, once this video was reviewed, to complete some of the training in the class itself. In this way, my attendance was not as disruptive as during the face-to-face training in homes and training class. There were some difficulties with observing the online class, with it being particularly reliant on the participant being technologically savvy and able to centre the training in the camera frame whilst completing the training (thus requiring the use of both hands). Furthermore, observation and recording relied on an internet connection which was patchy due to

the sharing of video online. The use of online training still allowed me to see how training occurred across several different spaces. Emma and Amber's recorded video took place in a shopping mall, with the (re)practice of training taking place in the home, whilst all this was shown online. Emma sharing the video in the class of training in the shopping mall worked well, as the space was centred in the recording. This can be seen in **Figure 12** showing Emma and Amber in Marks & Spencer's doing food avoidance (where the dog is *not* attracted to or distracted by food on the shelves). The re-doing of certain training aspects in real time over Zoom allowed the spatial nature of the home to become present, but combining the recording, training, and fleeting nature of engagement was tricky. Blurred screens, laughter, and "did you see it?" became the prominent conversation.



Figure 12: Emma and Amber walking past food in Marks and Spencer's.

My presence in all the training settings helped when it came to the analysis of the video, as I was able to use my knowledge from observing to fill in the blanks of the video when bodies obscured actions (Laurier, 2010). Furthermore, reviewing the videos allowed me to notice what I did not notice during the training classes, whether this was a dog's behaviour or a fleeting engagement between human and animal, too quick for the eye in ordinary circumstances.

Online social media

Part of my COVID-19 mitigation strategy was to explore online spaces of community. As a fluid and ephemeral space, the internet sets up new research possibilities into exploring social life online. Practising online methods, though, requires significant ethical consideration: as Madge (2007: 654) states, there is "a need for existing ethical principles to be examined in the light of

these new virtual research strategies”. Madge underlines five key issues of ethical conduct in online research: informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, debriefing and ‘netiquette’. Discussing these points in relation to social media data, in this case tweets, will help to account for the ambivalence that is directed towards online methods within bureaucratic frameworks (by university ethics committees and research funders) and in practice by researchers. I highlight the need for research ethics to be viewed as a fluid and ongoing process (see for example Madge, 2007; von Benzon, 2019), constantly evolving, not least not that online dimensions of research are becoming increasingly commonplace.

My research adopted an approach to analysing data (tweets) without necessarily interacting with the account users. In social media worlds this is known as ‘lurking’, carrying certain (unjustified) negative connotations, and has been undertaken by geographers previously (for example, see von Benzon, 2019). Lurking is the practice of viewing social media without necessarily taking part in conversations. This is a practice that is done daily by millions of people on social media sites like Twitter. In a research context, it is seemingly against the practices and expected norm of informed consent (von Benzon, 2019), which can only arise if the researcher stops ‘lurking’ and actively engages with the people involved, but there is little guidance of informed consent when using online data (Madge, 2007; ESRC, 2015; BSA, 2017). In practice, large numbers of research projects nowadays do extract ‘data’ from online sites, even from social media sites which are publicly accessible and where it can legitimately be assumed that site contributors are ‘okay’ with widely (and indiscriminately) sharing whatever it is that they share, without informing or requesting permission from the producers of the online content. I would nonetheless argue that this does not mean that researchers can just take what they want without thinking of the wider ethical implications. My approach will hence follow others who have used online publicly available data freely *without* consent (see, for example, Madge and O’Connor, 2006; Pedersen and Lupton, 2018; von Benzon, 2019). To approach online data this way still requires thinking about the public nature of online social media accounts.

Morrow et al (2015) argue that, instead of thinking about the internet as ‘more-than’ a big archive of freely available information, it should be thought of as a material extension of our everyday lives across space. This conceptualisation is important for discussions around the public-private dichotomy and therefore the use of this data. Twitter is clear in outlining that it is a ‘public domain’ within its privacy policy, but that efforts to make an account ‘private’ can be made by changing account privacy settings and by using a pseudonym (Twitter, 2021). Consideration should be taken from this statement. First, accounts that need to be ‘followed’ in order to ‘gain access’ should not be used by researchers, as the owners have in effect taken steps to move their accounts from the public realm towards the private. Second, whilst users are given the privacy policy to read before signing up to Twitter, it is often left unread. Some academics argue that people know that their accounts are public and therefore know the implications of sharing

information on social media, thus this data should be used freely (Pedersen & Lupton, 2018), the assumption that I rehearsed above. Conversely, many academics are more cautious about this matter and argue that people are generally unaware what their data could be used for, particularly within an academic context. For those at the latter end of this argument, the narrative falls on predatory academics interested only in their work, and vulnerable participants being exploited (Illingworth, 2001). I would perhaps strike a middle zone between these two polemic accounts, arguing that not everyone is fully aware of the implication of sharing on social media but that this knowledge is growing. What is needed is for the researcher to think carefully about the ethical implications of using data from Twitter and the personal nature of each tweet used, but also about these tweets in a wider relation to the whole profile of the person. Through doing this, I can reflect carefully upon whether certain data should be used and the ethical implications of doing so since the data can be traced back to account users through the Twitter search engine. Due to the ethical implications of using tweets from an account, the account itself, its apparent spirit and purpose, should be taken into consideration when using single tweets. In line with other academics, moreover, I would argue that to reduce traceability direct quotations should not be used and that identities should not be revealed (Pedersen & Lupton, 2018; von Benzon, 2019). Instead, when I archived relevant tweets in NVivo, I have referred to the tweets by their tweet identity number given by NVivo, rather than by name. This move will help to reduce the traceability of the tweet and thus help better keep identities anonymous when using online data.

Another concern when using online data is so-called 'netiquette'. Netiquette refers to the ability to act appropriately on the internet, addressing considerations to do with courtesy and issues of online harassment (Madge, 2007), and can be linked to the ethical ideal of 'do no harm'. Each social media platform will have different rules regarding netiquette; however, they often revolve around the same issues of causing no harm when communicating with other users. Whilst I will not be interacting directly with the Tweepers, I still consider netiquette. Concerns around netiquette are like confidentiality and anonymity, asking what would happen if people became identifiable through my research and the impacts if this were to happen. I have previously outlined how direct quotations will not be used to reduce traceability and thereby to protect the identity of online users, thus reducing the risk of identification and online abuse arising from anything that I have deployed as data in my written thesis.

Further ethical consideration should be given to the type of accounts being used, since in this research the focus has alighted on accounts created, presented, and 'written', as if by assistance animals themselves. There are some clear anthropomorphic issues here as, to state the obvious, dogs cannot sign up for Twitter accounts, and it is the human partners who are often running these accounts. However, the language used on such accounts move towards 'dog speak' (DeMello, 2018) and only reference human partners from the 'perspective' of the assistance dog. At points in what follows, I draw upon accounts where bios, profile photographs, and names, are all those

of the assistance dog, leaving little traces of human identity. Beyond issues of anthropomorphism with these accounts, I propose that we should take these accounts for what the authors are trying to construct them as: the experiences and thoughts from the perspective of their own assistance dogs. Following von Benzon (2019) this will show respect to the owners of this accounts whilst also following other ethical procedures outlined above; more conceptually, drawing from these accounts fits in with the cautious anthropomorphism that is a key manoeuvre throughout this project and its write-up. To analyse these accounts, I undertook an analysis of the frequency of certain ‘animalised’ words to gain quantitative data of the accounts. I also set them into a wider qualitative context of the accounts and the (sometimes) daily tweets that bring into consideration the daily lives of assistance dogs (and their human partners). **Table 5** shows the number of tweets analysed from ADUK Twitter accounts whilst there were 36,615 tweets analysed from 33 assistance dog Twitter accounts. This material is used in **Chapter 4**, to examine online spaces of the assistance dog community and charity representations of assistance dogs and disability.

Table 5: Number of tweets analysed from ADUK Twitter accounts.

Twitter account	Number of tweets
Autism Dogs CIC	565
Canine Partners	2527
Dog A.I.D.	1810
Dogs for Good	3140
Guide Dogs	551
Hearing Dogs	2798
Medical Detection Dogs	2988
Seeing Dogs Alliance	51
Service Dogs UK	1622
Support Dogs	2995
Total Tweets: 19047	

Magazine analysis

Additional mitigation strategies for the coronavirus pandemic, included the collection of magazines from the ADUK charities in order to analyse representations of disability and assistance animals, as well as to explore the magazines as spaces of knowledge production and dissemination. As a form of secondary data, the magazines offered a novel way to collect freely available data (Cloke et al., 2004). Geographers have analysed magazines and periodicals to understand knowledge production historically. Philo (1987) explored the *Asylum Journal* and how it shaped the institutional geography of the ‘mad-business’ and understandings of ‘madness’ and ‘mental illness’ in the 19th century, whilst Bressey (2012) completed a close reading of reports of

racial oppression in the 19th century periodicals *Anti-Caste* and *Fraternity*. Furthermore, in a specific animal geographies example, Cole (2016) explored the *Oologists' Record*, a magazine for bird's egg-collectors, as a space combining scientific exploration with visceral enthusiasm and leisurely practice. Another such example is Kalof and Amthor (2010) undertaking an analysis of the cultural representations of 'problem' animals in *National Geographic*. They argue that representations of such animals occupy three themes: animals as dangerous and disruptive to humans and their property; humans as dangerous to the natural world; and animals as dangerous to the natural world. Kalof and Amthor (2010) outline that *National Geographic* narratives contribute to cultural knowledges of animals as invasive and dangerous, reinforcing historical fears of animal savagery, whilst also situating humans as particularly harmful to the natural world over time. Vrla et al (2020) also explored representations of animals on the front covers of *National Geographic Kids* magazines. Importantly, they show how representations of animals in children's nonfiction represent animals considered as 'charismatic', or those more likely to be anthropomorphised, most frequently, with no representations of farm animals, captive animals, invertebrates, or detritivores on the front covers. They propose that this absence can lead to the undervaluation and exploitation of vulnerable species, and potentially reinforcing stereotypes of many types of animals. The analyses of the magazines and periodicals above all show how these forms of media communication can be powerful in shaping representations of, and knowledge of, animals.

Therefore, I sought to analyse the representations of assistance animals and disabled people in ADUK charity magazines to inform more fully my grasp on the worlds of assistance dog partnerships (see **Chapter 4**, also discussed earlier in this chapter as a COVID-19 adaptation strategy). **Table 6** outlines the seven charity magazines consulted, the number of issues available, and the frequency of publication. In total 86 magazines were collected from the seven charities. There were some limitations in collection as the magazines were posted online via charity websites, and in most cases only the most recent issues were available, so a comprehensive look at changes over time could not be implemented. Charities were contacted to try to source earlier versions of the magazines, but there were no responses. Each magazine's target audience included both the members of the charity as well as the wider public. As such, the magazines shared vital information to their clients, such as *Paws For Thought* containing information on charity Annual General Meetings or *Aura* providing information on organisational and other changes within the charity. Whilst the magazines aimed to show the significance of the assistance dogs to the human, they also highlighted their other services, such as *Forward* providing information about their sighted partnerships and *Favour* sharing information on assistive technology. Furthermore, some magazines were priced for sale (*Favour*), whilst the majority were available for free online. Two of the magazine's audiences were widened through their scientific approaches. *The Sniff* often had sections on the latest research being done by academics, and their own researchers, on dog's olfactory senses and ability to detect different types of cancers and illness (Eason, 2019, 2020;

Holland, 2021), whilst *Favour* had (to a lesser extent) information on different hearing impairments.

Table 6: Table to show the magazines analysed and some basic information about them³⁵.

Charity Name	Magazine Name	First Issue Available	Last Issue Available	Total Available Issues	Publication Frequency
<i>Canine Partners</i>	<i>Let's Go!</i>	Winter 2012	Summer 2021	13	Bi-annually
<i>Dog AID</i>	<i>Paws for Thought</i>	Winter 2009	Summer 2021	25	Bi-annually
<i>Guide Dogs</i>	<i>Forward</i>	Winter 2017	Summer 2021	8	Bi-annually
<i>Hearing Dogs</i>	<i>Favour</i>	50	64	15	Bi-annually
<i>Medical Detection Dogs</i>	<i>The Sniff</i>	6	19	14	Annually to Bi-yearly
<i>Seeing Dogs Alliance</i>	<i>Lead On</i>	Summer 2016	Autumn 2019	5	Random
<i>Support Dogs</i>	<i>Aura</i>	32	38	7	Bi-annually

The magazine's dual aims, targeting both clients and wider public audiences, was illustrated and detailed through a vast array of images of assistance dogs, testimonials, quotes, and articles on charity work done by people for the associated charities. Furthermore, the quasi-scientific space that *The Sniff* created helped the magazine to inform readers through scientific evidence as well as personal experience.

I undertook a contents analysis of the photographs within the magazines, analysing the number of occurrences of the photographs that correspond to different categories across all the magazines

³⁵ Seeing Dogs Alliance Magazine *Lead On* seems to be printed randomly with discrepancy between dates. Dogs For Good, Autism Dogs CIC, and Service Dogs UK, do not produce a charity magazine.

(see **Chapter 4**, particularly **Table 7, 8, 10, 12**. The form of contents analysis adopted here followed the four steps outlined by Rose (2016): finding your images, devising your categories for coding, coding the images, and analysing the results. In particular, in ‘reading’ and analysing the images, and following Rose (2016), I kept in mind the more critical aspect of visual analysis: namely the ways in which the images were produced, the image itself, the circulation of the image, and its audience. These considerations are important because the magazines are a cultural representation that actively constructs knowledge about assistance dogs and assistance dog owners, usually with a particular underlying message about the essential ‘value added’ of the charity’s work.

Data analysis and organisation

Analysis of survey, interviews, magazines, field notes

The organisation and analysis of data occurred through NVivo 12. NVivo 12 was used as it offered the ability to work with multiple different types of data (audio, visual, written) at once. The organisation of data in NVivo was thus one of the biggest draws, as I was able to group data via the methods in which they were collected (see **Figure 13**). I created ‘case files’ and assigned ‘attributes’ to each participant, which outlined relevant biographical information as can be seen in **Appendix 2**. I assigned each case file the corresponding interview audio files, transcript, photographs, and videos. I assigned pseudonyms to the participants (both human and animal) involved in the research.

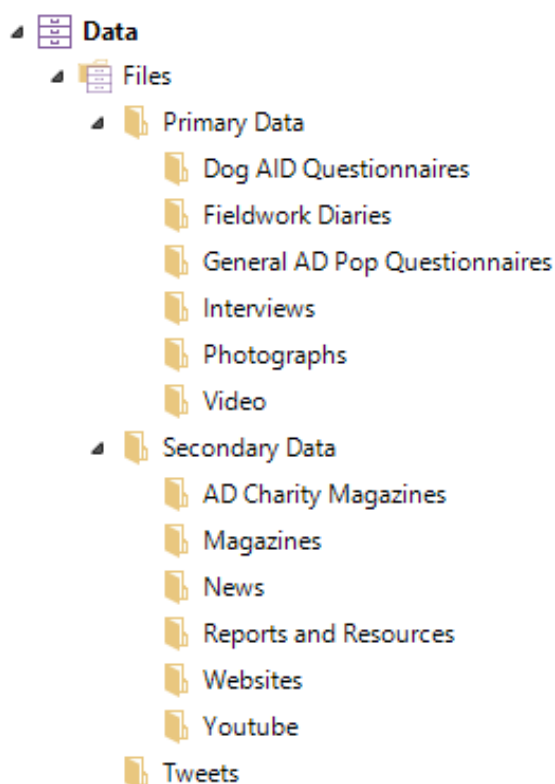


Figure 13: NVivo 12 file organisation.

Analysis involved “reading, reflecting, coding, annotating, memoing, discussing, linking, [and] visualizing – with the results of those activities recorded in nodes, memos, journals and models” (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013: 68). These strategies were deployed to learn *from* the data, with the different processes detailed here being undertaken multiple times, allowing the data to be recoded to new and emerging themes only realised later in the analysis. The coding of this wealth of qualitative data used a constructivist, thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) rather than a grounded theory approach (objectivist). The difference here being, thematic analysis allowed for the emergence of themes whereas a grounded theory approach is based on inductive reasoning. As Boyle (2019b: 123) states with respect to her inquiry into the geographies of social anxiety, “employing an approach that was ‘content-driven’ proved critical to shaping a project that aimed to acknowledge the words and experiences of others”. Like Boyle, though, I found this difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish in an entirely pure fashion *solely* driven by the data-contents generated in my research. Whilst I am not an ‘insider’ within the community under study, I could not help but bring past information, research, reading, and conversations into the analysis. Coding required sorting the data into different themes (also sometimes known as ‘nodes’) and then grouping these themes into categories, subcategories, or sub-subcategories, as shown in **Appendix 14**. Codes range from being purely descriptive (‘this is a task that is undertaken’), to offering labels for topics or themes (‘this is about independence’), through to more interpretative or analytical concepts (‘this is an example of anthropomorphism’) (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Through the process of coding, the themes were periodically checked to ensure they were still relevant to the subject matter at hand, and to offer a chance to revise, or change, some of the themes. Categorising and subcategorising the themes created an order within the data, making links between the themes, and opportunities for new themes to develop. This gave clarity around the themes, giving them greater meaning, and helping to develop a better sense of the data and the emerging patterns gradually being disclosed within it (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). However, there was significant overlap in many of the themes, with it being difficult to separate data into distinct categories, although that, of course, is merely a reflection of the thoroughly relational worlds under examination. This data is used throughout the thesis, appearing in full in **Chapter 4**, with interviews, surveys, and fieldnotes, also appearing in **Chapters 5** and **6**.

Analysing multi-species video

To centre both humans and animals in training through video ethnography, my analysis of the video material utilises an ethnomethodological approach that is particularly centred around one of the aims of this thesis: namely, *how* humans and assistance dogs train together. Ethnomethodology is the study of how social order is produced through social interaction. Ethnomethodology is hence less a particular method, but rather an approach to research that documents the procedures and the (ethno)methods that ‘members’ – meaning the agents, usually human but not necessary, in a given situation – use to produce meaningful, as in noteworthy,

activities in interaction with others (Strebel, 2014). The approach is interested in the ‘doings’ of social practices, for example *how* a person walks with a dog through a park (Laurier et al., 2006) or *how* a person plays with their dog (Goode, 2007), rather than continually asking *why* they do this. Ethnomethodologists argue that what they are researching are ‘naturally occurring’ behaviours and social processes, sometimes termed the ‘ethno-methods’ of the people (and sometimes nonhuman ‘people’) under research. The approach is hence focused on the methods and practices of doing everyday social life, and is sometimes critiqued as an intense empiricism or anti-theory, with ethnomethodologists being faulted for failing to engage with theoretical understandings or in making “judgments of adequacy, value, importance, necessity, practicality, success or consequentiality” (Coulon, 1995; Lynch, 1999: 221). Some researchers who adopt an ethnomethodological stance – and I would include myself in this regard – partially accept such a critique, and hence embed the ethnomethodological component of their inquiries within a broader matrix of conceptual orientations and research methods. This can be seen through my focus not only on the mechanical operations of practice that attract the ethnomethodologist’s attention, but following Loughenbury (2009), the liveliness of practice, which is where geographical input has influence. Academic geography does not have a long history of engagement with ethnomethodology compared to the wider social sciences. It is mostly the work of geographer Eric Laurier and colleagues that has been at the forefront of this engagement. Laurier’s work has been key in geographic engagements with ethnomethodology, with his 2001 article on ‘*why people say where they are doing mobile phone calls*’ being a close, programmatic authoring of an ethnomethodological-geographical manifesto³⁶. Moreover, geographers have attempted to contest some of the aforementioned critiques of ethnomethodology: for example, Laurier and Philo (2004) interface ethnomethodology with the theoretical underpinnings of Michel Foucault, whilst Laurier (2009) argues that human geography has a deeper affinity with the early and later concerns of ethnomethodology in its attendance to the conjointness of human practices and particular place, moreover, they are both concerned with how it is that similar forms of agency or subjectivity or identity emerge differently in each and every place.

It is the return to embodied senses and concern with forms of agency and subjectivity within space and place, as well as its “richly descriptive approach to practical minutiae” (Lynch, 1999: 221), that animal geographers might find most useful. Ethnomethodology’s focus on the sequential organisation of embodied practices, and on how practices are accomplished by all participants in a situation, makes the approach well-suited to centring nonhuman animals’ behaviour and actions in geographical research. Animal geographers are increasingly exploring animals’ ‘atmospheres’ and experiences (Hodgetts & Lorimer, 2015; J. Lorimer et al., 2019), as well as multi-species communication arising through embodied actions, gestures, tones, and body language. These

³⁶ Laurier’s ethnomethodological work has also engaged with animals (see Laurier, 2014a; Laurier et al., 2006).

forms of multi-species embodied communication tie to the (ethno)methods that an ethnomethodological approach centres. Additionally, the *in situ* nature of ethnomethodology, in the case of this research accomplished through videorecording of specific occasions of human-dog interaction, allows for a close exploration of animals' doings and, by extrapolation, experiences with the spaces and places which they inhabit (Philo & Wilbert, 2000b).

Figure 14 shows one attempt at combining this ethnomethodological approach to the mechanical operations of dog training with an openness to the liveliness of practice. The analysis was undertaken on NVivo 12 as it offered a good functional setting to analyse the mechanics of the practice of dog training, and to begin to develop 'graphic transcripts' of the training, the latter being a tool commonly deployed by ethnomethodologists as a readily comprehensible means to track and annotate the unfolding of practices in time-space (video) frame-by-frame. As Laurier (2014: 235-245) conveys:

"The graphic transcript brings together familiar comic strip features such as panels, guttering, speech bubbles and captions with the transcript's criteria of providing an evidentiary record of earlier events that is available for re-inspection and re-interpretation by other analysts ... [connecting] the timing and spacing of the verbal, visual, embodied, environmental, material and kinaesthetic aspects of that earlier event".

A lot of care and labour goes into making graphic transcripts, as I need to be attentive to multiple factors such as the humans' and animals' bodily movements, gestures, speech (sounds), tone of speech (vocalisation), materials, and time and space.

As should be evident from **Figure 14**, there are multiple things to do when analysing the video and producing an associated graphic transcript. Looping the video through a set timespan allows for a constant reviewing without having to find the same point every time. The speed at which the videos are replayed can be changed: I often watched the video at normal speed multiple times before slowing the speed to half. This helped me to focus on different things within the clip: at first, I will watch the video, then I will focus on the animal for a few viewings, then the human, then sounds and the wider environment, then back to the video *in toto*. This immersion within the video helps to construct a narrative of *how* the training or tasks were done. There are further issues to consider such as where to stop and start the video, something that I have spent a lot of time figuring out with each transcript I have made, since starting or ending at the wrong point can miss parts of how the practice was done. Furthermore, there is the consideration of when to take the screenshots which generate the individual frames. With the analysis, I am analysing the video rather than the images I screenshot, so when to screenshot, and what to crop when designing the transcript, is key. The narrative needs to weave in the actors and agencies within the video, to understand *how* training is completed. As Laurier (2014) and Lloyd (2020) have pointed out, the detail in even a 1 min fragment of video record is sufficient for pages of written description.

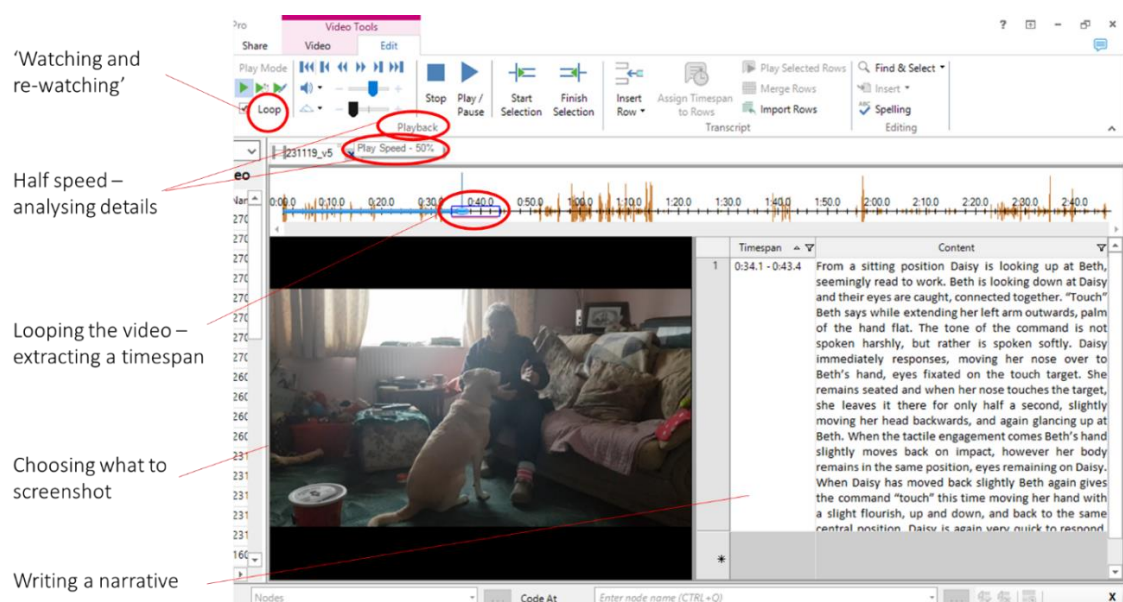


Figure 14: NVivo screenshot to outline the process of analysing the recorded videos.

When analysing the movements and embodied interactions of the assistance animal, I attempted to engage with an ethological knowledge of canine behaviour. I used a canine ‘ethogram’ (**Figure 15**) to try to get at the dog’s feelings and behaviour, whilst reading literature based in ethology (Barua & Sinha, 2019; Bekoff, 2006; H. Lorimer, 2012). The ethogram in **Figure 15** helped to give an indication of the type of behaviour being displayed by the dogs and whether this was social or antagonistic behaviour. The ethogram did rely on my prior knowledge to recognise and locate given behaviours in the grid, but I think it helped when writing the narratives of the training practices. Whilst I would not consider my approach an ethological understanding of dog’s behaviour during training³⁷, I do think this approach facilitated my desire to centre the dog’s behaviour and actions and attend to the liveliness of practice that Loughenbury (2009) recommends should indeed be centred in ethnomethodology. This data is used in **Chapter 5** and helped communicate the key issues at hand on human-animal training.

³⁷ It is worth noting here on the possibilities for adopting an ethologically-informed approach when researching animal geographies (Barua & Sinha, 2019; H. Lorimer, 2006, 2012).

and substantively – ethnomethodology meets ethology meets a cautious anthropomorphism, a kind of engagement that permeates all levels – participants become amateur ethologists and their readings provide backbone to the research – their ethological readings are of course anthropomorphic, but a highly informed anthropomorphism resulting from sustained living-with-and-alongside particular nonhuman animals.

As a result of this process, the following three chapters are reflected through three themes: entanglements, bodies, and care, respectively (these were also key organisational thematics in **Chapter 2**). Importantly, the chapters are organised to build upon what came previously. First, **Chapter 4** opens the worlds of assistance dog partnerships, providing an overview of these worlds. **Chapter 5** expands these worlds, taking a deep dive into the training of a pet dog, outlining the three different training phases which form the basis of the partnership, whilst also exploring the experiences of training. Finally, **Chapter 6** addresses the caring relationship between humans and assistance dogs. This chapter shows how care is provided within everyday spaces of the human-animal relationship, and how care crosses species boundaries.

Chapter 4: Worlds of Assistance Dog Partnerships

Introduction

In this chapter I explore the worlds of assistance dog partnerships to examine the various ways in which these worlds are lived, experienced, and represented as vibrant, affective ‘spaces’ of being and belonging. Through charity magazine representations (including testimonials), interviews with clients and trainers, questionnaire responses, and social media posts, the entanglements and tensions of assistance dog worlds are brought together. In attending to the different dimensions of assistance dog partnerships, this chapter acts as a scene-setting view of the diverse organisations governing the worlds in question, as well as providing substantial empirical material on the lived and embodied experiences of entangled human-assistance-dog lives comprising the substance of these worlds - which in this respect – writing phenomenologically, I call ‘life-worlds’.

Exploring entangled human-animal partnerships and worlds is relevant as animals and humans share many physical spaces together: in and through the home, farm, lab, and veterinary clinic (**Chapter 2**). Analysing such spaces enables a focus on entangled emotional relations such as care, empathy, grief, and love (**Chapter 2**). A vast amount of time, emotional commitment, and training goes into the development of a strong human-assistance-dog bond. To appreciate how this bond is developed, and how training is, or should be, undertaken (**Chapter 5**), I explore the hierarchy and structures that surround the worlds of assistance dog partnership.

An exploration of the governance and governmentalities of assistance dog charities and training programmes can aid understandings of the regimes of care enacted by these institutions, notably relating to how various actors and their actions bring about change and control within assistance dog worlds. Attention to governance and governmentalities can unveil the structures of charity organisations and related programmes and trainers, establishing how these provide ‘good training’ (in adaption of a ‘good death’³⁸) (Al. Franklin & Schuurman, 2019; Schuurman & Al. Franklin, 2018). These forms of training shape what it is to be an assistance dog and in port of an assistance dog partnership. These social practices and actions are conveyed through the institutions’ own self-representation, and I consider how these different modes of self-representation map onto lived, experienced, affective ‘spaces’ of being and belonging.

First, I explore the governance of assistance dog worlds through organisations such as assistance dog charities and dog training organisations, through representations in charitable print and online

³⁸ An anthropocentric phrase in which humans judge what they think is a morally ‘good’ and ‘correct’ way to euthanise an animal. In adaption here I indict ‘good training’ as an anthropocentric phrase for what humans consider the morally ‘good’ and ‘correct’ way to train animals. Around both these phrases there is an inherent policing on these practices from organisations, professionals, and individuals.

media. The analysis of this material will emphasise how training, and representations of assistance dogs and disability, seek to govern the behaviour of the human-assistance-dog partnerships. Second, I explore how these representations map onto assistance dog communities, asking about how these worlds are lived, experienced, represented, and accessed as vibrant, affective ‘spaces’ of being and belonging. Through exploring assistance dog communities, both online and in-person, the lived and felt experiences of assistance dog partnership are brought to the fore to understand how these social worlds are enacted.

Governance of assistance dog worlds

The term ‘governance’ is widely used across human geography, political science, and social policy studies to indicate “a shift from centralised and bureaucratic forms of decision-making [commonly ‘government’] to a plurality of coexisting networks and partnerships that interact as overlapping webs of relationships at diverse spatial scales, from the neighbourhood to the globe” (Hubbard et al., 2002: 175-176). Exploring networks of governance, across the different scales of umbrella organisations, charities, and communities that constitute the landscape of assistance animal worlds, can unravel much about how these worlds operate. Shifting from a focus on governance to governmentality I also explore how assistance dog charities and training programmes produce regimes of care, notably relating to how “governmentality seeks to act on the actions of others to bring about particular comportments, behaviours and subjectivities...” and “the ways in which subjects act on themselves to produce particular bodily habits and attitudes to the self” (Huxley, 2008: 1635)³⁹. I will thus write of the governance of assistance dog worlds – addressing the more-formal, institutional structuring of assistance dog partnerships through legislation, lobbying, and auditing, and the governmentalities of assistance dog partnerships – addressing the embodied and lived practices that are still, in effect specified, directed, and to some extent policed from elsewhere.

There are currently ten main assistance dog charities in the U.K. that are governed by the umbrella association ADUK (shown in **Appendix 1**), and they amount for over 7,000 currently active assistance dog partnerships. ADUK (n.d.) operate at a national scale and seek “to promote the freedom, independence and rights of people with assistance dogs across the UK”. The ADUK charities are all part of the Assistance Dog International (ADI) organisation⁴⁰, which works as a membership and accreditation scheme and have three main aims: i) to standardise assistance dog acquisition, training, and partnership; ii) to facilitate communication and learning among member programmes; and iii) to educate the public on the benefits of assistance dogs and ADI membership (ADI, 2020). As of 2019, the ADI has 27,852 active assistance dog partnerships across North

³⁹ Huxley is writing in a Foucauldian mode here.

⁴⁰ Guide Dogs and The Seeing Dogs Alliance are also part of the International Guide Dog Federation. The ADI operates at a global scale, and to be part of the ADUK you must be an accredited member of the ADI.

America, Europe, and Oceania. The ADI and ADUK accreditation schemes aim to implement good practice and standardise all aspects of the member organisations, from dog training and welfare to client support and supporting infrastructures. The governmentality deployed by the ADI and ADUK thus seeks to work on the actions of its members to bring about control and regulation, to influence its members' behaviours and subjectivities, and to produce desired bodily habits and attitudes (Huxley, 2008). One way in which the ADUK aim to standardise practices is through a change in legislation.

The governance led by ADUK is influential in trying to amend national legislation through the Equality Act (2010). In their written evidence submitted for the amendment of the Equality Act, ADUK (2015: 1, *own emphasis added*) state that they help “*genuinely* disabled people and those with *genuine* medical conditions, who use or would benefit from an assistance dog, with queries regarding rights of access and the standards of training assistance dogs need to have to perform their duties and be granted access”. ADUK (2015: 1, *own emphasis added*) continue by arguing that “the rights of *genuinely* disabled people who use assistance dogs are being threatened” and identify five issues that are causing this problem: i) the legal definition of assistance dog, ii) no definition of “prescribed charity”, iii) rogue operators, iv) standards of training, and v) difficulties experienced by assistance dog users. In relation to each of these issues the focus is placed on ‘illegitimate’ assistance dogs and assistance dog handlers, proposing potential solutions that position the ADUK and ADI/IGDF charities as connecting ‘good’, ‘legitimate’ assistance dog providers to ‘genuine’ disabled people (and casting those providers who are non-accredited as essentially ‘fake’). This logic can be shown by some charity magazines which state that:

“Our dogs have reached high standards of training set by Assistance Dogs International, whereas dogs trained by non-accredited bodies may not meet those standards. This could put vulnerable people at real risk. This autumn we held a reception at the House of Commons where we urged MPs to look at improving regulations and standards regarding this” (*Aura*, issue 33: 3).

The tensions between what is seen as legitimate and illegitimate is crucial, permeating the ADUK’s push for a legal definition of an assistance dog as seen in **Textbox 1**. The ADUK focus on three things with their suggested solutions: legitimacy of disability, a form of required standards in training, and assessment and verification. These standards all point to a greater policing of disabled people and their bodies, questioning what an ‘*acceptable*’ disability and illness is, as well as policing the practices of smaller non-ADUK assistance dog charities. The dogs and clients of these charities would not be identified as recognised handlers due to the ADUK’s amendment for charities to be ADI or IGDF regulated. This creates a problem, as owner-trained assistance dog handlers (and handlers who have gone through smaller non-ADUK accredited charities) often claim that ADUK charity waiting lists are too long⁴¹, are not specific

⁴¹ QR GP 3, QR GP 4, QR GP 27, QR GP 29, QR GP 32, QR GP 41.

enough to their needs, or do not provide dogs for their specific disabilities⁴², or do not meet their idea of what disability and mental health entail⁴³. This issue has led to more people joining smaller non-ADUK accredited charities.

Textbox 1: ADUK's proposed definition of an assistance dog.

"An assistance dog is a dog trained to the required standard which supports an individual's *legitimate* disability or medical condition by means of defined tasks. For the user of an assistance dog to obtain access to all public places and services, the following criteria must apply:

- i. The assistance dog and its user will have been trained to the *required standard* and supported through the dog's working life by an assistance dog organisation that has been accredited by Assistance Dogs International (ADI) or the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF), or another accrediting organisation nominated by the Secretary of State.
- ii. The assistance dog and its user will have passed an assessment carried out by a registered assistance dog assessor accredited by ADUK or another body nominated by the Secretary of State to carry out such assessments.
- iii. The maintenance of the *required standards* of training and welfare, health and hygiene of the assistance dog will be *reassessed* every 12 months by an organisation accredited as in (i).
- iv. The user's disability or medical condition will have been *verified* as part of (i) above as a genuine disability, or a medical condition, where an assistance dog can assist the user through the consistent delivery of trained, defined tasks.

The "*required standard*" means the standard set by ADI or the IGDF or another accrediting organisation nominated by the Secretary of State for the purposes." (2015: 2-3, *own emphasis added*).

Furthermore, through their focus on disability legitimacy the ADUK create a form of body policing, effectively challenging disabled people's identity. Questioning the legitimacy of disability or illness and putting in place verification and assessment processes risks exclusionary practices, possibly leading to what Włodarczyk (2019: 82) calls a "politics of suspicion". Włodarczyk (2019: 82) "argues that the insistence on establishing firm boundaries between 'legitimate' service animals and ESAs [Emotional Support Animals] actually fosters a politics of suspicion, which can easily ... be directed at the human handlers of the animals"⁴⁴. Challenges to disabled people's status and sense of self have been experienced by women with fibromyalgia as state institutions classify whether they are 'disabled enough' to receive income and health care support (Crooks et al., 2008). Questions of legitimacy are often associated with contested chronic illnesses such as fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome (Moss & Dyck, 1999, 2002), and similar tensions surrounding legitimacy are now common throughout media representations of service animals (Włodarczyk, 2019). Increased boundary-making governance from international and national organisations - which seeks greater standardisation of disabled and assistance dog

⁴² QR GP 4, QR GP 5, QR GP 6, QR GP 8, QR GP 9, QR GP 20, QR GP 22, QR GP 27, QR GP 33, QR GP 34, QR GP 35, QR GP 40.

⁴³ QR GP 15.

⁴⁴ Emotional Support Animals are "animals whose physician-ordained presence serves as a complementary form of therapy for different mental health conditions, most usually depression and anxiety" (Włodarczyk, 2019: 83). They are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and are separate from 'service' or assistance animals who have to undergo a large amount of training. In the UK there is no legal definition of an ESA (see, Emotional Support Animals UK, 2021).

bodies – therefore risk a destructive politics of suspicion created through questions of legitimacy. Whilst this politics can be seen through the ADUK’s written amendments above, it also permeates into people’s lived experiences: from the governance of ADP worlds to the governmentality of ADP life-worlds.

Both ADUK and non-ADUK assistance dog handlers report denial of access from some public spaces due to questions of legitimacy about themselves or their assistance dogs. Some conveyed their reasons for this, specifically linking to a questioning of the legitimacy of their disability, and their dog’s status as an assistance dog:

“Shop owner denied access as they demanded identification that my dog was a ‘registered assistant dog’ - as there is no register in the U.K. this is impossible” (QR GP 12).

“Devastated, it’s like I was being refused because I was born with a disability. Lack of education, the mall had a “guide dogs only” policy apparently and refused to believe that other assistance dogs were legitimate” (QR GP 22).

“I’ve been challenged as he’s an “unusual breed”, but once explained we’ve never been outright refused... I’ve thought of it as a learning exercise, and he is always so well behaved that people soon are aware that he’s genuine” (QR GP 3).

“Really embarrassing...I went back to the centre the next day, explained to customer service what happened (they asked me for an ID badge which Dog A.I.D. don’t supply and asked me to leave because I didn’t have one) spoke to the head of security off the back of it, and they said they would carry out staff training immediately” (QR GP 24).

Spatial exclusion and ableist attitudes have been explored by geographers previously (Butler & Bowlby, 1997; Chouinard, 1997; Imrie, 2001) and here participants felt like they were being excluded because of scepticism about disabled status – yet “I was born with a disability”⁴⁵ – and with others feeling their “rights”⁴⁶ to space were being denied. This politics of suspicion faced by participants have led to participants feeling ‘angry’⁴⁷, ‘crushed’⁴⁸, ‘devastated’⁴⁹, ‘embarrassed’⁵⁰, and ‘humiliated’⁵¹, and ‘like I wasn’t human’⁵² when faced with these forms of social exclusion and questioning of legitimacy. Some people also expressed their own concern about the legitimacy of their own disability:

“One of the issues I had when training, and to an extent even now, is a sense of guilt about the extent of my physical disability compared with the others I have met at the training weekends or even when we [names omitted] trained as a group. This was a major part of sometimes hanging back and confidence levels...” (Mark, IR).

Mark communicates his sense of guilt about his own physical disability, compared to others he met from within the charity, indicating how disabled people continually question their own

⁴⁵ QR GP 22.

⁴⁶ QR GP 17, QR GP 20, QR GP 21.

⁴⁷ QR GP 1, QR GP 17.

⁴⁸ QR GP 18.

⁴⁹ QR GP 22.

⁵⁰ QR GP 3, QR GP 4, QR GP 12, QR GP 17, QR GP 30.

⁵¹ QR GP 4, QR GP 20, QR GP 31.

⁵² QR GP 18.

legitimacy in light of the ADUK's focus on the 'genuinely disabled'. National governance can thus have an influence at a local and individual level when a politics of suspicion entails a greater surveillance of disabled and assistance animal bodies. This surveillance occurs through the assessment of dog training, the assessment of human and dog bodies, and the questioning of training practices. This occurs as the governance seeks to bring about particular idealised versions of what assistance animal and disabled bodies should be.

Exploring the governance of assistance animal worlds from the international and national spatial scales of the ADI and ADUK, tensions exist between ADUK and non-ADUK charities, and that several tests have been created that permeate into disabled people's lives due to the ADUK focus on legitimacy, assessment, and standardisation. Taking a closer look at the meso-scale, the next section focuses on assistance dog charities. The focus is placed on how the charities represent assistance dogs and disability through their forms of media (particularly magazines) and how these representations map into the lived experiences of disabled people and assistance animals, acting to create a greater form of control around assistance dog worlds.

Charities: Animal and disability representations

For many people with disabilities, their first port of call for training an assistance dog to help with their disability is a charity. The governance of the charities and how they represent assistance dogs and disability is vital in how they effectively create 'an assistance dog', and how this idealised figure gets mapped into the lived, embodied experiences of assistance dog partnerships.

Animal representations

The ten AD UK charities can be argued to represent assistance animals through 'aesthetic non-human charisma' (J. Lorimer, 2007). Aesthetic nonhuman charisma is an "affective charisma" that "relates to the aesthetic properties of an organism's appearance and behaviour when encountered visually by an observer either in the flesh or as a textual inscription" (p.918). Textual and visual representations are used by all ten AD UK charities, giving assistance animals 'a face' (Jones, 2000), and playing off an emotional anthropomorphic 'cuddly charisma' (J. Lorimer, 2007). Whilst nonhuman charisma is mostly associated with flagship species, wildlife, and conversation (Kalof & Amthor, 2010; J. Lorimer, 2007; von Essen, 2020; Vrla et al., 2020), it is worth addressing how nonhuman charisma is mobilised in assistance dog charity media, since the latter controls most representations of the dogs they provide and train (and of which kinds of dogs, more generally, are reckoned suitable *for* training). Specifically, assistance animal aesthetic charisma is represented in three ways: i) images of dog breeds which are not 'common' in the AD world; ii) images of smaller puppies and assistance dogs in-training; and iii) images of dogs doing jobs. All three of these forms of aesthetic nonhuman charisma are accompanied by textual representation which aims to represent the unique role of the assistance animal to human lives and, often as well, to position animal as agents of their own lives. **Table 7** shows the number of

occurrences of these forms of nonhuman charisma across the number of magazines and photographs analysed.

Table 7: Table indicating the number of magazines analysed, the number of photographs in these magazines, and the occurrence of three points of analysis⁵³.

Magazines	Charity	Number of Magazines	Number of photographs	Uncommon dog breeds	Puppies and young dogs	Dogs doing jobs
Aura	Support Dogs	7	271	25	22	20
Favour	Hearing Dogs	15	1074	9	226	-
Forward	Guide Dogs	8	623	2	46	27
Let's Go!	Canine Partners	13	629	34	151	28
Paws For Thought	Dog A.I.D.	25	888	113	31	65
The Sniff	Medical Detection Dogs	14	564	40	43	51
Total		82	4049	223	519	191

First, images of dog breeds which are not common in the assistance dog world are used to show the aesthetic charisma of assistance dogs. The most common assistance dog breeds are Border Collies, German Shepherds, Labradors, and Golden Retrievers (and in some charities Spaniels)⁵⁴. Dog A.I.D. have a recommendation booklet outlining the dogs deemed 'suitable' and 'unsuitable' for training, and considerations for potential clients to think about when getting or wanting to train a pet to be an assistance dog. **Textbox 2** outlines some of the key considerations, such as size, strength, height, feeding, type of coat, temperament, and insurance prices. Some of these factors will be dependent on what the human would like the dog to do, i.e., a small dog will not be able to retrieve a walking stick, whilst other concerns revolve around practicality. The guidance further recommends certain breeds (those dogs traditionally used as gun dog or herding dogs, e.g., collies or terriers), whilst suggesting to avoid: very large dogs (e.g. Mastiffs) due to them having short working lives and heavy jowls⁵⁵, very small dogs (e.g. Dachshunds) as they might not be able to complete tasks required or be visible in public space⁵⁶, dogs that shed a lot of fur (e.g.

⁵³ Hearing Dog's jobs were not included as it was deemed difficult to know if an image represented a dog detecting audio stimuli through print.

⁵⁴ Spaniels are common within Hearing Dogs charity.

⁵⁵ A heavy jowl leads to a lot of slobbering and thus a discrepancy with the 'clean' standard that assistance dogs are required to adhere to when in public space.

⁵⁶ One participant I spoke to has a chihuahua and they are at the Level Two stage of their training.

Shiba Inus) as dogs need to be groomed regularly, guard dogs (e.g. Dobermans) due to their temperament, and brachycephalic breeds (e.g. French Bulldogs) due to breathing and health problems. The construction of the AD world in this way, through anthropocentric and anthropomorphic requirements of breeds, leads to marginalisation of some breeds and uneven representation across charities. The charity thus place dog's physical bodies as 'in-place' or 'out-of-place', including or excluding them due to their 'animalness' (Philo, 1995). This is also the case with pet owners as Breed Specific Legislation (BSL) is in operation across the UK, excluding and demonising certain breeds such as Rottweilers (McCarthy, 2016; Nash, 2020).

Textbox 2: Things to consider when acquiring a dog for assistance dog training.

But there are some things that you *really* do need to think about:

- **Size.** Do you want a dog that will be able to 'sit' on your lap and give you comfort as well as being able to fetch items for you?
- **Strength.** Will you want your dog to help you up from a chair or bed?
- **Height.** Will you need your dog to be able to reach door buttons and light switches and things from worktops?
- **Feeding.** Can you afford to feed a large dog?
- **Type of coat.** A dog with a thick, dense coat of fur (long or short, straight or curly) will need to be groomed daily. They may also need to be clipped professionally. Will you be able to groom the dog every day? Can you afford to pay for regular grooming?
- **Temperament.** A shy, timid dog might not cope in crowds or busy places. A fast, energetic dog will need plenty of exercise. Think carefully before making your choice!
- **Insurance.** How will you cover vet bills? Will the breed and size of the dog affect the cost of the insurance?

(Dog A.I.D., n.d.: 1).

Despite this marginalisation assistance dog charity magazines often use photographs of uncommon assistance dog breeds. **Table 7** shows that there were 223 occurrences of this form of aesthetic nonhuman charisma across the 4049 photographs analysed. The highest number of images, 113, were found in the magazine *Paws For Thought*, whilst the lowest number of these images were found in *Forward*, two. This was expected as Dog A.I.D. train people's pets to be assistance dogs thus the breed variation is larger, whereas Guide Dogs have their own breeding centres, and the dogs are the 'iconic' Labrador or Golden Retriever. The different breeds occupy both front page images⁵⁷ and smaller images alongside stories or testimonies. The focus is on their uniqueness and aesthetic appeal, with breeds from Dalmatians⁵⁸ to Schnauzers⁵⁹ being represented on front pages. The front-page images act as an affectual visual encounter (Wilson, 2017) for the reader to experience. The encounter is between the reader and bodies-who-are-different, as many of the images are of 'uncommon' assistance dog breeds and are designed to elicit an anthropomorphic emotional response. The images, often portrait in style, portray a clean-cut imaginary of the assistance dogs, with the dogs performing the 'sit' task or cuddling or playing

⁵⁷ See for example *Aura*, issue 36; *Let's Go!*, Summer, 2016; *Paws For Thought*, Spring 2014, Summer 2014, 2019, 2020, Winter 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020.

⁵⁸ *Aura*, issue 35: 1, 4.

⁵⁹ *Paws For Thought*, Summer 2019.

with their owners. This portrays a ‘good dog’, one whose behaviour is correct in manner and is thus clearly trained to the correct standard. The text alongside these images often plays on the aesthetic appeal of the dogs by often referencing the ‘cuteness’ of the animals or the fact that the assistance dog is ‘the first of its breed’ to be an assistance dog. **Figure 16** shows Dalmatian Digby, an in-training assistance dog, and reference is made to his aesthetic charisma: “SPOT THE UNUSUAL ASSISTANCE DOG ... He’s the first dog of his breed to qualify as an assistance dog with Support Dogs and is busy transforming the life of owner/client Katie Baldock” (*Aura*, issue 35: 4). The representation plays on the visual difference of Digby, representing him as unique due to his role as an assistance dog and breed. The charity plays on the fact that the dogs they train are the first of their breed and thereby the charity is doing something unique, new, and cutting-edge by training these dogs to be assistance dogs.

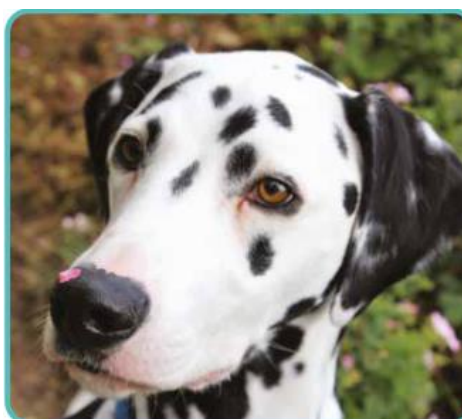


Figure 16: Dalmatian Digby, an assistance dog trained by Support Dogs (*Aura*, issue 35: 4).

Second, images of puppies are often used to provoke affective and emotional responses from readers and audiences. **Table 7** highlights that there were 519 occurrences across 4049 photographs analysed. The magazines with the most images of puppies came from charities which breed their own dogs such as *Favour* (226 images - Hearing Dogs) and *Let’s Go!* (151 images - Canine Partners), whereas there were relatively few images of puppies in *Aura* (22 images – Support Dogs) and *Paws For Thought* (31 images – Dog A.I.D.). Whilst this approach is very subjective, sometimes assessing an image to tell if the dog was a puppy or not was difficult and drew on my own opinion of what a puppy *is*, or *should* look like, the analysis was helped by the words and phrases accompanying the images. Phrases such as ‘puppies’, ‘puppy’, ‘puppy-raiser’, or ‘newest recruit’, were often used alongside images as shown in **Table 8**.

Table 8: Frequency of phrases indicating a 'puppy'.

Phrase	Frequency
Puppy	1679
Puppies	576
Future	400
Newest recruit	9
Total: 2664	

Figure 17 shows the front page of a dedicated ‘Puppy Edition’ of *Paws For Thought*, which contains practical advice for training new puppies with respect to socialisation and toilet training (which are examined in detail in **Chapter 5**). Like the previous front-page image, the magazine grabs the reader’s attention via the dog’s aesthetic charisma. Through an anthropomorphic representation, the dog is meant to be ‘read’ as happy, whilst the words ‘Puppy Edition’ promise that the reader may see more of these images throughout the edition. Furthermore, ‘Puppy Edition’ plays on the fact that charities willingly utilise aesthetic nonhuman charisma throughout their media, as some magazines explicitly acknowledge:

“Over the past few months a chorus of ‘oohs’ and ‘aahs’ has been reverberating around Support Dogs’ social media channels as we posted yet another photo of a cute puppy on Facebook and Twitter” (*Aura*, issue 33: 4).

“Good news, inspiring stories and lots of cute pups to make you smile” (*Favour*, issue 62: 1).

Here the charities explicitly seek to play on ‘doggy’ charisma, and particularly the ‘cuddly charisma’ integral to the affective and emotional relationships that people often have with dogs (Charles, 2014; Fox & Gee, 2019; Nast, 2006; Owens & Grauerholz, 2019; E. Power, 2008). The charities position the photographs of assistance dogs that they share through their media as ‘cute’ and ultimately position (assistance) dogs “as profoundly appropriate objects of human affection and love” (Nast, 2006: 894).

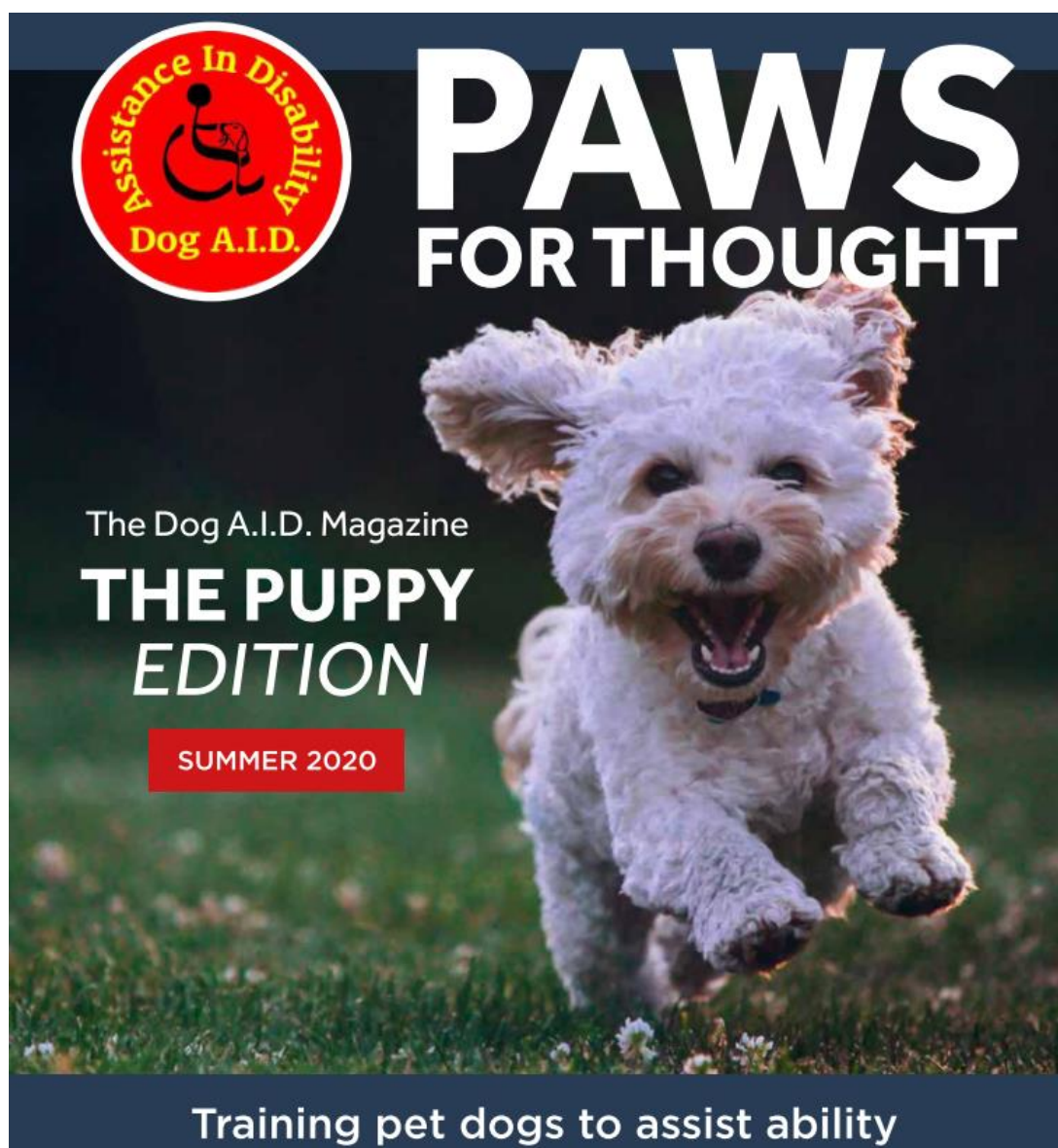


Figure 17: *Paws For Thought* front cover (Summer, 2020).

Third, images of assistance dogs doing jobs are often used to present to the audience what it is the charity does. Of the 4049 images, 191 were of dogs doing jobs (**Table 7**)⁶⁰. The images are often of dogs doing a range of tasks from bringing, finding, and retrieving items, to removing socks, and filling washing machines, but also more uncommon tasks such as training to detect the odours of cancer. The spread of the images of dogs doing jobs was much smaller between charities but *Paws For Thought* (65) and *The Sniff* (51) had the highest occurrences. The reason for these charities representing dogs doing jobs slightly more than the others maybe that for Dog A.I.D., they are a small charity and need to show greater what their dogs do, especially when the breed is ‘uncommon’, and linking to the previous discussion – the questioning of public might be higher.

⁶⁰ The magazine *Favour* was left out. This was because of the dog’s role of alerting humans to sound was difficult to visualise in print. Having looked at *Favour* it was deduced that no images could be construed as dogs doing jobs. Furthermore, for some dogs, their role is tactile engagement and images of this were included as dogs doing jobs.

Whereas, for Medical Detection Dogs, due to their scientific approach (as outlined in **Chapter 3**) they want to disseminate information around what it is their dogs do and how exactly they do it. These tasks and images present the audience with an affective visual ‘encounter’ (Wilson, 2017) for the reader to experience. The encounter, like the previous one between the reader and the ‘uncommon’ dog breeds, is between the reader and bodies-who-are-different. This is particularly true for **Figure 18** and **Figure 19**, in which the tasks being done are both different from the ‘standard’ Guide Dog representation of spatial navigation (Arathoon, 2018). **Figure 18** shows a cancer detection dog in training, smelling, and alerting to the odours of cancer. This image offers the reader a potentially new encounter with a cancer detection dog, the charity Medical Detection Dogs, and the science behind their approach, both being relatively new and novel. **Figure 19** offers a slightly more common task for ‘regular’ assistance dogs, retrieving and bringing items.

The use of text to highlight the charisma of working animals was also common. There was a tendency to play on the fact that a dog was ‘the first’ to undertake a certain job type, to highlight a charity’s innovative work and the assistance dog’s unique job. This aspect includes Zeta, the ‘first Diabetic Hypo-alert dog’ (*The Sniff*, issue 07: 4), and ‘Willow, Medical Detection Dog’s first ever air-born nut allergy detection dog’ (*The Sniff*, issue 09: 6). There is also an attempt through textual representation to represent the assistance dog’s role through anthropomorphic – or technomorphic – language (Laurier & Philo, 1999), such as describing the assistance dogs as “sophisticated bio-sensors with wagging tails” (*The Sniff*, issue 08: 3). *Favour* takes this anthropomorphism further, spotlighting a dog in each issue with their handler writing a small profile of their dog’s likes and dislikes from the perspective of their dog, as seen in **Figure 20**. Writing from the perspective of their assistance dogs, handlers attribute human emotions, feelings, and personalities to their dogs. This metaphorical move, often done unwittingly, is an extremely valuable and indispensable resource at the heart of how humans understand, and act, in the world (Laurier & Philo, 1999). Moreover, ‘morphisms’ help the handlers better their relationship with their dog and allows readers to garner a greater insight into the affective and emotional bond between assistance dog and handler⁶¹. Pet owners writing from the perspective of their dog and using ‘dog language’ is common on Instagram (Kertész & Berzleja, 2019) as well as in interviews with pet owners when describing their dogs (Charles, 2014; Fox, 2006; Shir-Vertesh, 2012), and will be analysed later in this chapter. It is worth noting, however, that whilst *The Sniff* uses this anthropomorphic language, this magazine also takes more of a scientific approach than the other magazines in discussing assistance dog jobs and roles, precisely because of the type of dogs that they are training: medical alert dogs and bio-detection dogs. Their work is based around a scientific approach as they are often working on training dogs to detect changes in odour that would indicate signs of cancer or oncoming seizure, thus, if dogs were to get this

⁶¹ The conundrum between a ‘helpful’ anthropomorphism and ‘speciesist’ anthropocentrism as argued by Philo and Wilbert (2000) is analysed in **Chapter 3**.

wrong, it could be detrimental to the human's health.



Figure 18: Cancer detection dog at work (*The Sniff*, issue 09: 13).



Figure 19: Ruby passing Kim an item (*Aura*, issue 34: 4).

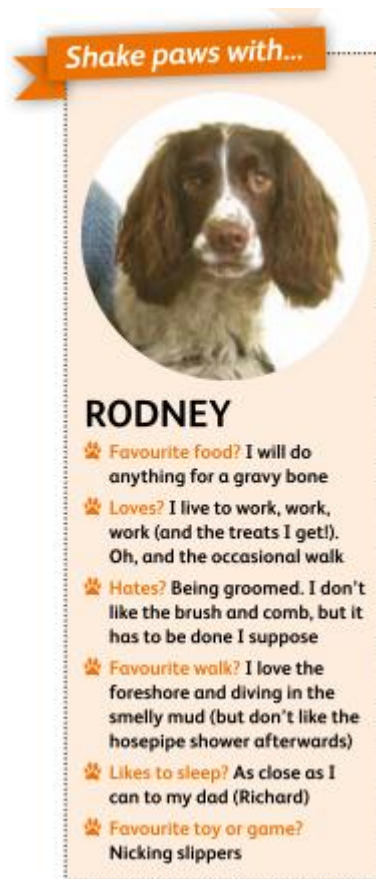


Figure 20: Shake a paw opinion file from *Favour* (issue 62: 6).

Most of the ten AD UK charity representations of assistance dogs are ‘positive’, affirmed by phrases such as ‘saving-lives’ or images of the dogs doing tasks. This focus on the potential benefits of assistance dog partnership is unsurprisingly common throughout assistance dog literature, and Gravrok et al (2019) argue that little is known about the potential challenges of assistance dog partnership and that more needs to be done in identifying and evaluating such concerns. Indeed, in charity media representations there is less of a focus placed on more ‘negative’ aspects of assistance dog partnership such as assistance dog death or assistance dog retirement, the increased public attention for individuals that assistance dog partnership brings, or assistance dog training difficulties (or failures). Of these potential concerns, assistance dog death and retirement are comparatively covered in the magazines, the former often represented through moving tributes full of affective and emotional charge:

“Sadly, that day has come, the terrible day when after a very short illness I had to decide that although my beautiful Daisy had saved my life I was unable to do any more for her. My only role was to ensure that she was spared any unnecessary suffering. She died while I held her” (*The Sniff*, issue 14: 5).

“Bereavement is bleak and the summer and autumn of 2015 were grim. I filled in the paperwork for a successor dog and promptly shut myself away again. I had needed more help at home during Pip’s old age and, nice though my personal assistants are, I felt

dependent and diminished without Pip by my side” (*Let’s Go!*, Summer 2016: 15)⁶².

The first quote shows the impact that Daisy had on Claire’s life, as well as the sorrow and guilt that she felt when Daisy passed away. Claire’s admission that she wanted to make sure Daisy ‘was spared from any unnecessary suffering’ shows the importance of quality of care for Daisy and hints at the practice of giving a ‘good death’ (Schoorman, 2017). The second quote shows the emotional as well as physical impact of assistance dog death, as Ros highlights how she shut herself off after Pip’s death and felt diminished without her trusted assistant. These testimonials show the affective bonds shared between handler and assistance dog (Arathoon, 2018; Eason, 2020; Stevenson, 2013), in addition to the highly emotional experience of loss and grief when a loved animal departs (P. Howell, 2002; H. Lorimer, 2019; Redmalm, 2015; Satama & Huopalaainen, 2018).

These aspects are similar to what is conveyed about assistance dog retirement, where the focus is largely on the positive job done by the retired assistance dog and the emotionality experienced by the handler on the dog’s retirement. ‘Retirement’ for different charities means different things and **Table 9** outlines what happens during retirement. The following outlines different ways in which retirement is an emotional process:

“Heidi is 11 this year and for some time I have known that she would need to retire. Not something I really wanted to think about before a few months ago” (*Paws For Thought*, Winter 2017: 10).

“Brady and Tyler have an enduring bond of friendship which is unlikely to change with the dog’s retirement” (*Aura*, issue 32: 10).

The magazines highlight the human-assistance-dog bond (Arathoon, 2018; Eason, 2020; Stevenson, 2013) and how the bond is stressed by the difficult decision of retiring an assistance dog. These decisions are often made due to the dog’s ill-health, advanced age, or the dog’s self-retirement (through the dog demonstrated incapacity or even unwillingness to continue providing assistance). This emotionality travels across to what happens to the assistance dog on retirement, with a focus placed on whether the dog will continue to live with the handler or be rehomed:

“There is no way I would give Baby away when she officially retires. I would like a bigger Support Dog next time, but as Baby will get a say about my next dog, we’ll have to see!” (*Aura*, issue 32: 4).

As the above testimonial shows, the bond shared between handler and assistance dog influences the decision on rehoming upon retirement, and perhaps also – the possible next step of the retirement process – the decision to whether the handler applies for a successor assistance dog. There are indications of initial hesitations by some handlers in testimonials about their guilt⁶³, or feelings of disloyalty⁶⁴, on being with a new dog or whether they can build a relationship with a

⁶² See also lists of canine obituaries in *Forward*, Winter 2017, p.22-24; *Forward*, Spring 2018, p.30-34.

⁶³ See *Dog A.I.D.*, Winter 2014: 9.

⁶⁴ See *Let’s Go!*, Summer, 2017: 19.

new dog whilst the retired dog is still there⁶⁵, but ultimately these feelings are juxtaposed with the eventual success of the partnership, as an overall positive. For both assistance dog death and assistance dog retirement, greater research should be undertaken into the emotional, social, and wellbeing impacts of these life-and-death processes (Miller, 2019; Yamamoto & Hart, 2019).

Table 9: Retirement process of assistance dogs from each charity.

Charity	Retirement	Extra Information
Autism Dogs CIC	No information found.	
Canine Partners	Stay with owner or rehomed.	
Dog A.I.D.	Stay with owner.	Dogs are the human's pets therefore the human has sole decision-making when retirement happens.
Dogs for Good	"Some clients like to keep the dog if they are able to. Others arrange for him [sic] to be rehomed with family or close friends. If these options are not possible then we have a long list of people who would like to re-home our retired dogs" (Dogs for Good, n.d.).	
Guide Dogs	Rehomed, on occasion may stay with the human partner as a non-working assistance dog.	
Hearing Dogs	"Almost always remain living with the deaf person who they've helped so much throughout their working life, or with a close family member" (Hearing Dogs, n.d.).	
Medical Detection Dogs	Stay with human partner.	
Seeing Dogs Alliance	Rehomed.	

⁶⁵ See *Aura*, issue 35: 13.

Service Dogs UK	No information found.	
Support Dogs	Can stay with the human partner or be rehomed.	

There is also little to no focus on the increased public attention that assistance dog partnership can bring beyond commentary on denial of spatial access. Whilst scholars have indicated that assistance dogs act as an indicator of disability (Michalko, 1999; Sanders, 2000), a signifier of embodied human difference sometimes attracting problematic responses from others in public, the charity magazines provide little advice for what to do *about* increased attention from the public. Although some of the increased attention can be positive, with some participants describing people talking to them precisely because they have a ‘special’ dog or being more likely to offer assistance (discussed later), increased attention may also take the form of negative interactions such as people petting or stroking the assistance dog without consent⁶⁶, people distracting an assistance dog when it is working⁶⁷, or people acting in adverse ways towards an assistance dog and the handler due to fear of dogs⁶⁸. More research is also needed, therefore, to explore these negative interactions, how they manifest spatially, how they impact the relationship between human and assistance animal, and the potential ways in which relevant advice and help might be provided.

Throughout the different charity magazines there is attention on assistance dog training (discussed later in **Chapter 5**), but only a small focus on training difficulties, with some magazines providing how-to-guides or training tips. This approach can be seen, as introduced earlier, through the socialisation and toilet training tips in the ‘Puppy Edition’ of *Paws For Thought* (Summer 2020: 10-12) but can also be seen in the same magazine’s recommendation of dog training books (Winter 2020: 6). Here we have two different emphases, the first being a direct guide on training tips for difficult tasks with a puppy, and the second a more open advocacy of ‘find what works for yourself and your dog’ (perhaps akin to the work of Włodarczyk, 2017). Whilst there is this emphasis on training, and on how to do it, there is little information on assistance dog failure. This is not surprising, as the charities want to represent their work as effective, of high quality, and overwhelmingly successful. When failure is mentioned, it is done so in a more light-hearted way and referred to as ‘withdrawal’. There is even a positive spin put on withdrawal, as one Dog A.I.D. article mentions: “Today Dog A.I.D. is working closely with Guide Dogs for the Blind, to set up a scheme whereby clients can apply through the trustees for a withdrawn Guide Dog”

⁶⁶ As was mentioned in the following questionnaire responses: QR GP, 3, QR GP 14, QR GP 20, QR GP 25, QR GP 26, QR GP 28.

⁶⁷ As was mentioned in the following questionnaire responses: QR GP 7, QR GP 14, QR GP 20, QR GP 22, QR GP 26, QR GP 28, QR GP 34.

⁶⁸ On example is screaming because of being scared of dogs as mentioned by the following participants: QR GP 22, QR GP 27, June IR, Megan IR.

(*Paws For Thought*, Summer 2013: 10). The implication is that the withdrawn Guide Dog can now become a standard pet for a Dog A.I.D. client with the view to completing training for assistance dog qualification. Additionally, *Let's Go!* (Winter 2018: 18-19) ran a two-page section on rehoming withdrawn and retired assistance dogs. Although the magazine briefly mentions reasons for withdrawal such as “due to being unsettled in and around public transport” (p.18), “struggled to settle and was easily distracted” (p.19), and the slightly vaguer, “due to some sensitivities” (p.18), the positive future relationships that these dogs could have with rehomed families – maybe doing new jobs – took centre stage. This can be seen through Pedro, who became a family pet and “has settled in beautifully, bonding well with Nancy and providing a wonderful source of therapy for her as a very special pet dog” (p.18); or through a more humanised lens, as one article reads: “Meet Noah ... pursuing a career in security overseas” (p.19). The focus on the positive outcomes shows the dogs’ potentiality for new relationship and roles within society. However, a largely positive outlook on withdrawal can shroud the difficult experiential aspects of assistance dog withdrawal for both the dog and the human handler. More needs to be done to address the potential ‘negative’ effects of assistance dog partnership to create a more ‘realistic’ view of assistance dog partnership and as Gravrok et al (2019) explain, address unrealistic expectations of assistance dog partnership.

Disability representations

Through a reading of the different ADUK charity magazines as well as tweets, representations of disability can also be drawn out from these cultural spaces. I compare and contrast these representations with experiences of participants from interviews and surveys to examine how different constructions of disability are understood. The magazines tend to focus on how the dogs helped ‘change’ their disabled partner’s lives by utilising phrases such as ‘life-changing’, ‘lifeline’, ‘life-saving’, and ‘life-transforming’ as shown in **Table 10** and **Table 11**.

Table 10: Frequency of wording of impact of assistance dogs from magazine analysis.

Word	Frequency
Life changing	177
Life giving	4
Lifeline	37
Life saving	58
Life transforming	17
Total: 293	

Table 11: Frequency of wording of impact of assistance dogs from ADUK charities social media accounts.

Word	Frequency
Life changing	658
Life giving	3
Lifeline	55
Life saving	179
Life transforming	42
Total: 937	

These phrases create positive representations on assistance dog partnership and the roles assistance dogs play in the human's life as shown from some magazines below:

"The impact of our epilepsy seizure alert dogs isn't just life changing, it is life-saving" (*Aura*, issue 34: 3).

"... the events of this year have made it clear just how vital our amazing dogs are to the lives of the people we support and the essential lifeline they have been in lockdown" (*Let's Go!*, Winter 2020: 4).

"We often refer to our wonderful assistance dogs as 'life-transforming' but for Ann Watson her three epilepsy seizure alert dogs have been literally life-saving" (*Aura*, issue 33: 9).

The above narratives create a positive representation of the impact of the assistance dog but going deeper than that, form an understanding that before the assistance dog their (human) lives were not worth living. The magazines paint the assistance dog partnership as a positive 'tool' for the creation of a better life that is akin to the medical model of overcoming disability, and the dog as mobility aid. ADUK charities also use this language in their social media accounts, as shown in **Figures 21, 22, and 23.**

@canine_partners: "We know our amazing dogs are a lifeline for our parents and even more so at this difficult time. Our specialist training programme means our dogs are able to support their partner in an emergency as well as helping with day-to-day tasks".

Figure 21: Tweet from Canine Partners outlining the lifeline their dogs provide.

@autismdogscic: "promoting a healthy lifestyle, encouraging participation in daily activities, and responding to anxiety, self harm, and meltdowns. The effect that Autism Assistance Dogs have on their handlers and their families can be life changing".

Figure 22: Tweet from Autism Dogs CIC describing the role of their dogs.

@MedDetectDogs: “Mabel and Todd were on security so if anyone interesting entered the vicinity, they could let their humans know. They are Medical Alert Assistance Dogs in training who’ll provide their clients with the ultimate security contract – a life-saving one”.

Figure 23: Tweet from Medical Detection Dogs outlining the 'life-saving' role their assistance dogs have.

Figure 21, from Canine Partners, outline how their dogs act as a lifeline for providing support for everyday tasks, in an emergency, but also during the pandemic. Here the charity are using the phrase lifeline to paint a positive picture of the assistance dog and how they help doing the pandemic when disabled people may be greater isolated (Hall, 2021; Phillips & Andrews, 2021). **Figure 22** also uses positivity to show how assistance dogs can influence the affective intensities of autism. Whilst in **Figure 23**, from Medical Detection Dogs, outlines the human as the assistance dog’s client, playing greater on language that will be discussed later in this chapter. The phrases used here again outline how without the dogs, the human lives are ‘less-than’. In fact, these comments were also prevalent throughout many of the interviews and questionnaires responses:

“But in terms of mental wellbeing and bringing out yourself, you can’t beat her ... erm, that to me has been the biggest difference, and it has been life-changing, I see that as a massive plus, if not the biggest plus out of this” (Mark, IR).

Mark outlines the significance of Lucky in helping him in terms of his mental wellbeing, indicating that Lucky made him feel more confident in himself. He positions this effect as the biggest impact that Lucky has had on his life and says it has been life-changing, tellingly denoting the positive effect of Lucky on Mark’s wellbeing, a common claimed benefit of being partnered with an assistance dog (Pemberton, 2019). Assistance dog handlers also use phrases such as ‘lifeline’ and ‘life-changer’ to illustrate their relationship with their assistance dog:

“Sam is everything to me. He is my world, and alongside my family, he is the most important thing in the world to me. He is my lifeline. Lots of people’s pets are regarded as family members, but assistance dogs have an extra important role of being lifelines too. They are absolute life-changers” (Megan, QR 2).

“Honestly, it’s amazing we rely on each other so much and he is my life-saver” (QR GP 7).

Megan ascribes Sam’s identity as both a family member and an assistance dog, but also as a ‘lifeline’ and ‘life-changer’. The multiple identities that Megan attributes to Sam clarifies the bond shared by Megan and Sam, and the important role Sam plays in helping Megan in her daily life. The questionnaire respondent, meanwhile, arguably indicates a still greater symbiotic relationship with their assistance dog, stating not only the care from assistance dog to disabled human, as a life-saving, but also the care from disabled human to assistance dog (see also Eason,

2020), a mutuality of caring that will become more significant later in my thesis.

Charities also operationalise other terminology to describe disability throughout their media, with many representations highlighting the ‘inspiring’⁶⁹ or ‘inspirational’⁷⁰ effect of assistance dog partnership and arguing that partnership helps disabled people have a ‘better life’⁷¹ or a ‘normal life’⁷² as shown in **Table 12**.

Table 12: Frequency of ‘inspirational’ wording from magazine analysis.

Word	Frequency
Better life	5
Inspiring	152
Normal	91
Normal life	14
Total: 262	

Many disability scholars have shunned the tragic and inspirational narratives and representations frequently circulating about people with disabilities (Oliver, 1990, 2013; Parr & Butler, 1999); and, whilst all the human participants in this research indicated at least some positive impacts of assistance dog partnership to their lives, none narrativised these positive impacts through tragic or inspirational models to describe their lives. Rather, there was a mixture of responses which, in effect, adopted a combination of both the medical and social model views of disability, keeping impairment and the body in the picture (Hall, 2000; Hansen & Philo, 2007; also as reviewed and critiqued in **Chapter 2**). These responses were very personal to each respondent, in how they viewed themselves and their disabilities and chronic illnesses were often expressed with highly emotive language. Sara discusses her own disability:

“I think with most people with disabilities the social isolation is a really, really big issue. Pre-disability, I was very, very capable, very, very confident person. I lost all that, I lost all my confidence, my capabilities have never come back, my communicative capabilities has never come back because part of fibromyalgia is cognitive disfunction. There are times where I can’t even remember my own name, and ... you’re going out in public, and you are going into an environment like the opticians: ‘Name please?’, ‘I ain’t got a clue’, but you are not alone so you can kinda make a joke of it then, you can make a joke with your dog – ‘oh dog, what’s my name?’ – whilst getting a card out your pocket that has a name on it and you check ...” (Sara, IR).

Sara discusses her disability both in terms of the social impacts and influences and how her disability remains in the picture. Sara indicates how she considered herself very capable and very

⁶⁹ See *Favour*, issue 62: 1, 5, 21; *The Sniff*, issue 08: 3, 09: 3, 18, 25.

⁷⁰ See *Forward*, Summer 2018: 5, 10, 13, 2019: 5, 12, 14, 24; *Let’s Go!*, Winter, 2019: 21.

⁷¹ See *Aura*, issue 34: 9.

⁷² See *Aura*, issue 33: 10.

confident, but that the onset of her disability changed all that. Sara specifically reveals how her cognitive dysfunction impacts her communication capabilities. Sara situates her 'mind-body difference' and how her cognitive dysfunction influences situations which her assistance dog can help to alleviate. She also uses humour as a mechanism to help her navigate these situations. The use of humour is recognised in other studies of disability (Macpherson, 2008) as a way of both managing a situation and potentially alleviating it. Carla discussed her change in lifestyle:

“Carla: It is just frustrating more than anything, because obviously having an active lifestyle you are used to going out and doing what you want when you want, with no worries, but now it is trying to plan something and be careful that you rest before the day you plan, which is really frustrating ...

Jamie: Yeah, and do you have to be careful not to plan too much? ...

C: Yeah, give it a couple of weeks and then I'd maybe plan something else, rather than saying on this date it's not too bad. If I say, right, I am going down to see my son in uni on say Saturday, ... I'd have to rest for the entire week to make sure I was okay to go down to his then. But I couldn't say, right, tomorrow we will go do this because I don't know what tomorrow is going to bring, so it is a case of seeing how things are – because obviously I have had to cancel plans because of my health, which is really annoying, but it is just one of those things – it is just adjusting to your new life kinda thing.

J: Yeah, because you said it was difficult socially when it first changed ...

C: Yeah, I wouldn't talk to anybody, I hated everybody, ... but then with [assistance dog], he gave me something more to focus on, and with him being a assistance dog you go into shopping centres and it's like 'oh, there's a brand new puppy over there that we have got to go talk to'; it made me talk to people, ... and it really helped a lot with that, and it still does. Like some days, I don't feel like talking to somebody or anybody, but you end up talking to them anyway because you don't want to be rude because you have also got a charity logo stuck on your coat, and it is not good for them ...” (Carla, IR).

Through the narrative above, Carla communicates a sense of frustration about her change in lifestyle, from an active lifestyle to one needing greater planning and self-management. She identifies that her physical impairment acts as a disabling factor, for example, explaining that she has to rest for a week before she goes to visit her son. Carla also indicates how the increased planning has an effect socially, as the ephemerality of her health means she often has to cancel plans more often. Furthermore, Carla highlights how this has led to her not wanting to socialise, but also how her assistance dog Buzz has helped her in difficult social situations. Carla's experiences show the entanglement of the social model of disability with her life experience, but also how her body remains firmly in the picture (Lock et al., 2005; Shakespeare, 2006). She also states how 'it's just adjusting to your new kind of life'. This was a sentiment shared by Elizabeth, who stated how she “just get on with things” as she has “always done things differently” (Elizabeth, IR). This echoes Hansen and Philo's (2007: 493) argument for paying attention to “the normality of doing things differently”. Both Carla and Elizabeth focus on “doing things differently” rather than “doing things normally” (p.493). In addition, whilst Carla reflects on her life before disability, she is not crafting a tragic narrative but rather frames her life now as a new life. Elizabeth, on the other hand, asserts how she has 'always' done things differently, as she has

had Polio since she was young. For Elizabeth, then, ‘doing things differently’ was always the way to do things.

The different descriptions of disability presented here are all personal, indicating the highly personal nature of disability to each person. Whilst some representations produced by charities are closely aligned to the assistance dog and handler’s relationship, others diverge from the plethora of personalised meanings that the participants hold. Representing these diverse meanings helps to create a fuller picture of disability, and what disability means. What is shown above are the tensions between charity magazine representations and the experiences of participants.

Training worlds

To step into the world of dog training is to explore a vibrant and eclectic world with many different ideas, philosophies, and, indeed, forms of governance, about what animal training *should be*. The dog training world has seen massive change over the past 150 years (Włodarczyk, 2018). These changes can be seen through a range of roles for which dogs are trained (as discussed in **Chapter 2**), from training dogs for more traditional work such as herding (Marschark & Baenninger, 2002; Savalois et al., 2013), hunting (Corkran, 2015), and policing (Knight & Sang, 2020; Sanders, 2006), to emerging trends with new modes of assistance and therapy (Eason, 2020; Pemberton, 2019), as well as for enjoyment, hobby, and sport (Haraway, 2008; Włodarczyk, 2016). With these changes there has also been a general shift in the methods of practice used by trainers to train dogs, notably from negative to positive reinforcement methods (Pręgowski, 2015; Włodarczyk, 2017, 2018)⁷³. ‘Negative’ reinforcement is essentially punitive, involving punishments for bad behaviour or failing tasks such as withholding food or even physical blows; ‘positive’ reinforcement is one that rewards good behaviour or completing tasks, hence deploying treats and signs of approval and affection. These ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ methods are troubled historically and when instead of reinforcement, they are paired with punishment (Pręgowski, 2015; Włodarczyk, 2018; and as discussed in **Chapter 2**). These changes have occurred through changes in scientific research and what is considered ‘the correct way’ to train a dog. Mapping these multiple shifts across different scales as discussed earlier – (inter)nationally (charities and accrediting organisations) and locally (trainers and clients) – is crucial in how training functions in assistance dog worlds.

As discussed previously international and national accreditation schemes and charities work to shape the assistance dog world, and this is also the same for worlds of dog training. There are numerous (inter)national accreditation schemes which aim to regulate and standardise dog training to control what is the ‘correct’ way to train a dog. (Inter)national organisations such as the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) and the Institute of Modern Dog Trainers (IMDT)

⁷³ This is a simplistic description and Włodarczyk (2018) has written a much more in-depth book charting the changes in dog training methods 1850-2000 but **Chapter 2** also goes into more detail on this.

are two organisations in which trainers can become accredited members after completing training courses⁷⁴. Unlike the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), which veterinary surgeons must join if wanting to practice veterinary medicine, joining the APDT and IMDT is optional and becoming a member requires undertaking a course; however, like the RCVS, the ADPT and IMDT aim to define the role and responsibilities of dog trainers and then to regulate dog training through their own code of ethics (Donald, 2019). Through the code of ethics, responsibility for dogs, and their ethical treatment through ‘correct’ methods, is the foremost concern. This point is highlighted by the ADPT, who state that “the training techniques employed and advised by members are assumed to be the application of scientifically-based research and knowledge and to result from practical experience of the use of non-compulsive methods” (APDT, 2020). This emphasis on rigorous scientific research and non-compulsive methods is also key to the code of ethics held by the IMDT outlined in **Textbox 3**.

Textbox 3: IMDT Code of Ethics.

“To train dogs professionally with honesty, integrity and in the best interest of the dog, owner, the public and the IMDT.

Actively provide and promote force-free training methods and actively reject any methods or equipment that may cause physical or mental discomfort.

Continue Professional development through books, workshops, courses & seminars.

Respect the privacy and confidentiality of clients.

Carry suitable professional insurance including public liability.

Members agree to work within their professional limits and agree to refer owners with needs beyond those limits to a suitable professional.

Provide and promote science based, proven dog training principles to a high, professional standard.

Avoid positive punishment as a tool for training dogs.

Accept IMDT Committee decisions as final.

Proactively benefit dogs and dog owners.

Proactively promote The IMDT” (n.d.).

We can see these codes of ethics around animal training permeate down from these international and national organisations to national charities. Charities are keen to represent their approach to training to show that they are *ethically* training assistance dogs to what is considered ‘morally’ and ‘scientifically’ correct standards. The focus on scientific methods positions animal experiences as explained by science, rather than by the animal’s own lived and felt experiences *per se* (Buller, 2015). The scientific methods used in training by charities are outlined in **Chapter 2** and come from the work of B.F. Skinner and new ethological work by Bekoff. Guide Dogs

⁷⁴ The APDT and IMDT focus on dog training and methods, but there exist other accrediting bodies such as the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC) and the Animal and Behavior Training Council (ABTC) which, as well as focusing on training standardisation, also focus on regulation of animal behaviour therapy.

outline their training methods in *Forward* (Summer 2019: 16): “STEP: stands for Standardised Training for Excellent Partnerships. It uses positive reinforcement right the way through, from start to finish”. They highlight how positive reinforcement is the ‘right way’ to train a dog and highlight in a different edition that using positive reinforcement training helps “create strong partnerships” (*Forward*, Summer 2018:15). Likewise, in *The Sniff* (issue 10: 14), when talking about puppy socialisers⁷⁵, they say:

“Training is always done with kindness and rewards, never with a raised voice, water spray or other deterrents. The reward is food that comes out of the daily allowance; socialisers are given feeding guidelines and advised not to feed from the dinner table to avoid begging in the future. Food is supplied and any extras strictly not reimbursed — no risk of overweight dogs here then”.

The indication here of training with ‘kindness’ projects, in effect, a human emotion on to animals, centralising what humans consider kind for the dogs. Furthermore, there is a focus on the dog being cared for ‘correctly’, as any food (rewards or ‘treats’) for training must come out of the daily allowance, so the dog does not become overweight. The magazine goes on to discuss that in training:

“Socialisers are also given a training manual and a list of commands to use that are universal to trainers and clients so as not to confuse the dogs ... It’s a fine balance between encouraging the dog to behave appropriately but not discouraging the dog with negative training — the dog could eventually be with a client who might be in bed when needing an alert for a hypo for example and you don’t want the dog to be frightened to approach in this situation” (*The Sniff*, issue 10: 14).

The onus is placed on effective communication (in this case verbal commands) from human to animal, so that the dog is encouraged to do what the socialiser (and future handler) asks. Effective communication is key to creating a good human-assistance-dog partnership, but this communication moves not just from human to animal but also animal to human (Arathoon, 2018; Pemberton, 2019), as will be explored further later in the thesis (**Chapter 5**), something that could be better integrated within the code of ethics at the (inter)national scale.

Furthermore, whilst the IMDT and APDT both position animal welfare as the foremost factor in their code of ethics, animal welfare is described solely through the power dynamics of human-animal relations in which humans hold the power for deciding what is right for animals. This can be seen further through both organisations highlighting that negative (punishment-based) methods are the incorrect way to train a dog, in line with a shift throughout the training world (see Pręgowski, 2015; Włodarczyk, 2018). The APDT (2020) are clear about which methods they deem unacceptable, such as “pinching – ears/feet/toes, hitting, biting (of dog), ‘alpha roll’, any

⁷⁵ Puppy socialisers refer to the volunteers of ADUK charities that breed their own dog. The puppy socialiser houses and raises puppies for these charities and begins to socialise them before their formal training begins.

manhandling that causes pain or discomfort”⁷⁶, and highlight inappropriate equipment such as:

“check/choke chains, prong or spike collars, electric shock devices in any form, and high frequency sound devices which are designed to startle ... pet corrector – emits a hiss of cold air, dog stop – emits a high-pitched sound, remote controlled spray collars, automatically triggered spray collars antibark collar – emits spray directed onto dogs’ skin (including new product jet master), and training discs”⁷⁷.

Such highly embodied, interventionist methods (pieces of equipment) are all essentially punitive, punishing a dog for doing something wrong or badly. This might be cast simply as ‘negative reinforcement’, but it is little different from pulling on a lead to slow a dog down who is running ahead or pulling the human walker. Essentially these cause fear, anxiety, and stress to the dog through pain and discomfort. Whilst it is undeniable that these methods are ones that adversely affect a dog’s wellbeing, the ADPT and IMDT position trainers as responsible for the dog’s welfare, rather than focusing on the dog’s experience and response to any training method (whether through negative reinforcement, positive punishment, or positive reinforcement). Furthermore, the ADPT (2020) also highlight that “there can never be a definitive list of equipment and techniques that the Association does not permit”. Once again, the concern is on the moral consciousness of the human who is practising animal training rather than on the animal’s ability to feel and experience the methods of training themselves. Here we can see that the (inter)national accrediting bodies operate a form of embodied governmentality which entails a generalised type of power “aiming to form and guide the conduct, behaviours and/or the inner-states of individuals – ‘the conduct of conducts’” (Foucault 2002: 341, cited in Huxley, 2008: 1641). We can see this operation of power not only through national charities, but between individuals as they “shape the actions and comportments” of others (Huxley, 2008: 1642).

At an individual scale, trainers and clients were keen to express their own moral beliefs in dog training. **Table 13** shows which trainers are accredited to which accreditation scheme.

Table 13: Trainers and their accreditations.

Trainer	Accreditation Scheme
Kim	None
Jean	APBTC, APDT
Rachel	APBC, APDT
Harriet	ABTC, IAABC, Karen Pryor Academy Certified Trainer, Master of the Guild of Dog Trainers
Nina	None
Martha	ADPT, IMDT

⁷⁶ Pręgowski (2015: 528) explains that the ‘alpha roll’ is “a disciplinary technique encouraging the reader [trainer] to flip the misbehaving dog onto his/her back, holding the canine until there is submission”.

⁷⁷ It is worth noting that some of these approaches are banned in different parts of the UK, such as the use of shock collars in Scotland and Wales.

Charlie	Kennel Club accredited instructor
Heidi	IMDT

There are different requirements to become an accredited member for the different organisations as outlined in **Table 14**. The different accreditation schemes show different levels of exclusion/inclusion through forms of education required, experience, time, and cost. This helps to push dog training's image as a 'middle-class' practice accessible to a relative few – although it is noted that some trainers do not apply for accreditation and that there is a vast difference – especially in cost – between them.

Table 14: Professional accreditation schemes and their requirements.

Accreditation Scheme	Requirements
ADPT	The membership assessment process consists of three parts, written, practical and oral.
APBC	Full Members are practising behaviour counsellors who have achieved CAB or ABT level, which requires at least a higher degree level education in companion animal behaviour and related subjects, obtained relevant practical experience through mentorship, and who have been in practice for a minimum of one year. Full Members are required to undertake a minimum of 30 hours a year of continued professional development. £160.
APBTC	Completion of a variety of professional and academic courses.
Guild of Dog Trainers	The Guild has five levels of membership available for its members; GODT Certified Dog Trainer & Behaviour Assessor, Master Trainer, Trainer, Assistant Trainer and Member Subscribers.
IAABC	<p>We suggest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of 2 years experience dog training • A working knowledge of learning science, training, and husbandry, and seminar, mentorship, and other additional education <p>Accreditation awarded is Accredited Dog Trainer (IAABC-ADT). Accredited Dog Trainers pay yearly dues of \$95.00 and are required to log a minimum of 36 continuing education units every three years to maintain accredited status.</p>

IMDT	Completion of the 2 day 'Career As A Dog Trainer' Course, the 4 day 'Practical Instructor' Course and the 2 day 'IMDT Assessment'. Sessions are open to all but at a total cost of £860.
IMDTB	Completion of the Level 5 'Understanding and Working with Canine Behaviour' Correspondence course with prior completion of the IMDT course.
Karen Pryor Academy	Complete all 21 online lessons, quizzes, at-home training exercises, and writing assignments; complete all workshops successfully; pass the online Knowledge Assessment and two practical assessments (one focused on teaching and one focused on training). Price of \$5,600.
Kennel Club	9 stage programme with a recommendation of 5 years' experience. Approximate cost of £450.

For some trainers, becoming certified with specific (inter)national accreditation schemes was a decision based on a match between the trainer's philosophical beliefs about what dog training should be and the organisation's supposed ideals and practices:

"I made the decision [to join IMDT] because I really liked the owner of the company and I really thought – because he has released a few different books before I signed up, he's called ... I just think his ideology at the core was really nice and he was really nice, and I will probably do more [accreditations] in the future anyway" (Heidi, Trainer IR).

Heidi explains here that the ideology of the organisation, and particularly the person in charge, was what made them sign up to the accrediting body itself. A match in their philosophies of what dog training is, and should be, was key to this move. For other trainers, the charity's practices matching to their personal beliefs were also significant in their decisions to start training with them:

"... so, Dog A.I.D., kinda of, I suppose it's a charity reflects what I believe to be to best way to train assistance dogs, to be with the disabled person from as young as possible so they are socialised in that environment from the beginning. ... I think it is so important for the relationship between the handler and the dog to be so close, and that definitely can happen if an adult dog is placed with a person for sure, but I think that it is sometimes made a little easier when the puppy is really young" (Heidi, Trainer IR).

"To be able to help people to train their own dogs to be an assistance dog, is there a better way to spend your time? So, I needed to get in on that" (Harriet, Trainer IR).

"I thought okay, Dog A.I.D. are along that line [in their use of clicker training⁷⁸], I don't mind helping them out and then" (Jean, Trainer IR).

Heidi describes how Dog A.I.D. reflected what she believed was the best way to train an assistance dog, fitting what she thinks the human-assistance-dog relationship should be, and how

⁷⁸ A clicker is a device used in positive training which emits a sound when clicked. The click indicates the task completion, and once the click occurs the human gives the treat. The dog therefore learns that when the click occurs a treat is received.

best to go about dog training. Harriet shared this reasoning, placing emphasis on the fact that Dog A.I.D. train people to train their own pets to be assistance dogs, which was enough for her to become involved with the charity. Jean, on the other hand, discusses how Dog A.I.D.'s methods through clicker training and choice matched her own personal practice of dog training. Furthermore, Jean clarifies how she loves Dog A.I.D.'s philosophy of getting the best out of the human-dog relationship and how this was how one of her own clients viewed their relationship with their assistance dog:

“For me I have seen how some of the other assistance charities work and I love Dog A.I.D. because it’s about both parties getting the best out of the relationship, and ... with [clients’ name] particularly is very much like that; you know, she wants her dog to ... go and have fun and go and have a run, like she even pays someone to take [dog’s name] out when she can’t make it ...” (Jean, Trainer IR).

A parallel concern between Jean and her client for the dog’s wellbeing, and hence shared idea about what the bond between human and assistance dog should be, was key to Jean’s working relationship with her client. It made Jean feel like the work she was doing was positive for both the client and their assistance dog, as well as for her own wellbeing and moral conscience. Clients highlighted their own beliefs regarding dog training too, with many stating that they chose Dog A.I.D. because the organisation’s root approach is all about building a close relationship with their own dog from puppyhood:

“I wanted the bond of having my own dog from a puppy rather than having an adult dog placed with me” (QR, 12).

“The bond that would build between us and having a dog to help with my individual needs” (Beth, QR 19).

For the above clients, the bond developed with their assistance dog is the most valuable part of the training, and Dog A.I.D. offered a way for them to have such a bond with their own dogs from the very start of training rather than being placed and matched with a dog. This aspect was also a reason that many stated for choosing to owner-train their assistance dogs⁷⁹, to take on the difficult job of training up their own dog from scratch. The bond between human and their dogs already exists with Dog A.I.D., as the dogs are pets before training begins so a human-pet bond exists, and this bond adapts to a human-assistance-dog bond due to training, play, and care (see **Chapters 5 and 6**).

Although there is a focus on the methods of training and the practices of the charities, trainers, and clients, the dog training world is full of tensions. One way they came to the fore is through discussion of the different accreditation schemes and, as Harriet contends, the lack of standard regulation and the pitfall of people just doing things for themselves:

“I think there is an awful lot lacking out there in the dog training world, an awful lot, and I feel until the profession is more tightly regulated that will always be the case, but I don’t

⁷⁹ QR GP 7, QR GP 19.

think even in my lifetime it will ever get to being a modicum of regulation because there are so many bodies now: ‘oh I have trained with that body, well I have trained with that one’ and ‘this trainer hates that trainer, and this trainer won’t talk to that one’; it’s just, ... we are all in here trying to help people, but there is no standard, there really isn’t any standard, and, because I have been in the game for so long and I have learnt so much from so many different people, I just think there is so much that these people who are like ‘well I have trained with this body or that body’ and there are all these new bodies coming out and the people at the top don’t, you know they are the ones that are not handing down huge amounts of information that needs to get out there” (Harriet, Trainer IR).

For Harriet there needs to be greater communication and cooperation in the dog training world to create greater regulation throughout the professionalising of dog training. Harriet thinks there are too many different training bodies and ideas that have led to a fracturing – even a failing to share – any overall, or agreed, body of information or good practice (e.g., guidelines or regulations). She sees greater regulation and communication as a way to foster mutual learning and to share knowledge to create a better profession. Greater regulation in dog professions is also enforced in search and rescue dog training (Yarwood, 2015) and police dog training (Knight & Sang, 2020; Sanders, 2006; Smith et al., 2021). Nonetheless, it also hints at there perhaps being lots of good trainers/bodies out there – each with some value, from which she (Harriet) has learned a lot – but indeed, perhaps militating against an overall coherence of instruction. Sara confirms Harriet’s point, as she describes her experience of training her assistance dogs:

“... since training [old assistance dog] and [current assistance dog], I am very keen on expanding my own knowledge. I do research on the internet and I do look at ... the top trainers, what are they putting out, what are they saying, and seeing what is changing and asking other people as well, because sometimes people will go ‘do you know you can teach an instant down like this?’ – yeah, [I] never thought about doing it that way, let’s give it a go...” (Sara, IR)

As above, with Harriet, there is a subtlety here – lots of trainers all putting their ideas ‘out there’ is not in itself necessarily a problem, indeed it can be beneficial – but it does mean that there may be inconsistencies, and an overall incoherence in the governance of ADP worlds. However, Sara indicates an eagerness to learn new ways of training and to keep her own practices to a high standard through research on top trainers. Here she indicates how conversations with others about sharing how to do training practices has helped her to approach tasks differently. Shared knowledge serves to help Sara learn new practices and potentially find more suitable ways to complete a task, although such differences can of course also sometimes be confusing, frustrating or, to be sure, sources of tension.

Forms of tension do therefore exist between trainers, such as over different philosophies of training, as Jean relates:

“As you go along you kind of realise the subtle differences between trainers that make the grade for this sort of thing and the ones that don’t get in because, just their background, they can be very knowledgeable or experienced about dogs, but ... they might be experienced but the knowledge isn’t good theoretical[ly] – proper level animal learning theory type thing” (Jean, Trainer, IR).

Jean exercises judgement about trainers and their use of methods for training as linked to their theoretical knowledge and her view of a ‘proper’ level of animal theory. This judgement shows how trainers may respond to an other’s apparent beliefs and actions, effectively policing what counts as ‘correct’ knowledge:

“... comparing myself to trainers that won’t have [made the cut in working for Dog A.I.D.] – I know everybody comes up from a different angle – but I can genuinely tell trainers that are coming from a place of experience and dominance, whether they want to admit that or not, but they will still call themselves a reward-based trainer, but it is that underpinning ethics of [training]: are we referring to attachment theory, or are we talking about pack theory and the wolf and all that” (Jean, Trainer IR).

Jean describes being able to ‘genuinely tell’ whether other trainers come from a background of positive training or one of just exerting dominance or command over the dogs. She indicates a hesitance of, or even, an embarrassment, of those from a ‘dominance’ background for dog training. Furthermore, she indicates a sense of shamefulness on the part of those trainers who cleave to dominance practice, and ‘pack theory’ (see **Chapter 2** for more on ‘pack theory’). In doing so, she creates a dualism between positive training and dominance training, the latter being common among a lot of dog trainers and clients as they stick to their own philosophical and moral beliefs of animal training.

Dog training is a complex – sometimes confused or even conflicted world – shaped by different ideas, philosophies-of-practice, and forms of governance. Governance at different scales impacts on the methods and philosophies of the practice of dog training as can be seen through the move away from negative methods of training in the assistance dog world. These negative methods – often involving punitive, emotional, or bodily harm – are positioned as ‘out-of-place’ (Cresswell, 1996) within assistance dog training cultures. Instead, what is used as positive – often reward-based methods – are justified through various scientific research (see Bekoff, 2006, 2011; Pręgowski, 2015; Włodarczyk, 2018 for greater detail) that focus on the dog as a minded, sentient being (Włodarczyk, 2017). (Inter)national accreditation schemes and charities put into effect these positive forms of training as they are what they consider ‘morally correct’ dog training practices, and these are taken onboard at the individual scale by trainers and clients. The trainers match themselves to charities and organisations which seemingly correspond with their own prior ideas about morally correct training. As a unique ‘dog training culture’ (Charles et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2021) the geographies of training are different to that of police dogs, gun dogs, and companion dogs. As Charles et al (2021) argue, different training cultures are associated with different ways in which dogs are understood and the extent to which their needs and views are attended. Charles et al (2021: 17) reveal that:

“While in contemporary companion dog training literature the affective quality of the dog-human relationship is foregrounded, in gundog training manuals the relationship is viewed in more instrumental terms. Contemporary dog training literatures therefore assumes different dog-human relations and ways of understanding dogs: human dominance continues to have a place in gundog training where dogs are expected to

perform certain tasks on command in order to do a job of work, while in companion dog training there is an emphasis on dogs' choosing to learn".

The training culture discussed in this thesis may align greater then with contemporary dog training and the attendant literature. Whilst being a 'task-based' relationship there is a great level of awareness of the dogs' mindedness, their feelings and needs. Greater work could be done in comparing these dog training cultures and their spatial differences.

Communities

The assistance dog world is a vibrant world that operates as an overall 'community' for disabled people and their assistance dogs. Community acts as a valuable social, emotional, and cultural, network that is expressed through shared identity. At both a national scale (charities) and a local scale (individual clients and trainers) a sense of this community is undoubtedly very important.

Physical communities

Charities often represent community in their magazines through a plethora of textual and visual representations. For some charities, community is shared through celebrations of new assistance dog partnerships and qualification to new levels or to assistance dog status. For Dog A.I.D. and Guide Dogs, it is common for their magazines to name the partnerships of those that have qualified or advanced to a new level (*Paws For Thought*) or have been newly partnered (*Forward*), shown in **Figure 24**. Sharing these names, rather than solely the number of new partnerships, helps to foster an inclusive environment of which clients can feel part.

New partnerships

Congratulations to our new partnerships

New partnerships are listed by community team.
Each listing details owner, guide dog, town, breed,
puppy walker, brood bitch holder and boarder.
Warm congratulations to all our new qualifiers.

Belfast

June Best & Clyde from
Craigavon GRxGR Ronald
Ferguson from Glenrothes
* Lindy Howlett from
Bransford, Mr & Mrs Pete
& Louise Millard from
Lutterworth, Miss Emma
Cuthill from Montrae.
Eleanor Jackson & Cooper
from Portadown GRxGR
Margaret Morrison from
North Berwick * Lindy
Howlett from Bransford,
Mr & Mrs Pete & Louise
Millard from Lutterworth,
Mrs Claire McDiarmid
from Portar, Mrs Philippa
McCreight from Hollywood.
Caroline McAllister &
Ebony from Larne LxGR
Morag Tannock from
Stratford-upon-Avon.
Mrs Lena Taylor from
Stratford-upon-Avon.
Mr Robert Kirk from Irvine.
Pauline McKenna &
Kelda from Downpatrick
LxL, Karen Clark from
Arbroath * Sue Lancaster
from Bedford, Mr
Geoff Whiteman from
Coatville, Miss Kelly
Murdach from Dundee.

Barry Toner & Oyster
from Lisburn GRxL, Helen
Boird from Belfast *
Howard Darnell from
Worcester, Mr Paul
Crawe from Kenilworth.
Angela Wales & Vera
from Greenisland L, Ricky
Flanagan from Belfast *
Mr & Mrs Griffith from
Warwick, Mr & Mrs Lowe
from Coventry, Mr Ricky
Flanagan from Belfast,
Michael & Jill Armer from
Downpatrick, Mr & Mrs
Richard & Karen Hambleton
from Carrickfergus.

Birmingham

Kerry Boyd & Colby from
Worcester GRxL, Michael
Gurney from Worcester *
Sue Wilkins from Rugby.
Ann Marie Kavanagh
& Lexi from Nottingham
L, Amanda Lewis from
Warwick * Lynn Jones
from Rugby, Mrs Sharon
Broer from Coventry,
Mr Adam Grissell
from Halesowen,
Rachel Martin & Jamie
from Birmingham LxGR
Julia Yarker from

Ann Nicholls & Yoda
from Fairfield GR
Leonora Tromans from
Kidderminster * Marie
Court from Halesowen,
Mrs Glenice Battalagiu
from Birmingham.
Paul Nicholls & Una from
Birmingham LxGR David
Small from Pontypool
* Jane Roberts from
Wellesbourne, Miss
Sarah Sheasby from
Bromsgrove, Mrs Felicity
Stratton from Warwick.
Marie Taylor & Colwyn
from Evesham GRxL, Judith
Gill from Caldicot * Neil
& Elizabeth Smith from
Northampton, Mr Adrian
Claxton from Warwick,
Mr Don Powell from
Leamington Spa, Mrs Sue
Cox from Leamington Spa.

Cardiff

Lloyd (Jonathan)
Davies & Harvey from
Cardiff STPxL,
Julie Matthews from
Keynsham * Mary Smith
from Moreton-in-Marsh,
Mr & Mrs Landsberg
from Milton Keynes.

Nia Hicks-Brew & Una from
Pethell GRxL, Lynne Thomas
from Porthcawl * Natasha
Aylott from Birmingham,
Mrs Lynne Jones from
Stratford-upon-Avon.
Timothy Hill & Falcon
from Cardiff GRxL,
Lindsay Huntington from
Cheltenham * Ben & Rhianon
Horton & Davies from
Kidlington, Mrs Catherine
Egan from Worcester,
Gill Jones & Clover
from Rhyll LxGR Ian And
Hermione Pantling from
Warwick * Sue Wilkins
from Rugby, Mrs Hannah
Lalind from Warwick.
Stephen Lawrence & Jax
from Pontypool LxGR Sara
Dixon from Dartmouth *
Lisa Smith from Warwick,
Mrs Kim Roberts from
Stratford-upon-Avon, Mrs
Sue Phillips from Cardiff.
Andrew Muslow & Ernie
from Rhonda Cynon
Taff GRxL, Eric Welch
from Trowcester * Sam
Simmons from Kenilworth
Mr Michael Rudge from
Solihull, Mrs Emma Scott
from Leamington Spa,
Geraldine Newman &

Figure 24: New Guide Dog partnerships (*Forward* spring/summer, 2021)

Furthermore, all the magazines share experiences of volunteering and fundraising events, largely to show how much they have raised, but also fostering a sense of common cause between those who are volunteering and would like to do so in the future. This is illustrated in **Figure 25**, which shows a fundraiser from the charity Support Dogs. This shows a physical sense of community beyond the space of the magazine.



Figure 25: Fundraising events from *Aura* (issue, 32).

For a smaller charity like Dog A.I.D., their magazines have historically highlighted testimonials and photographs from training workshops and small charity events as shown in **Figure 26**. Here the emphasis is placed on a particularly close-knit form of community and the clients of the charity are thereby made to feel a greater part of the charity. The physical space of community is shown through the space of the workshop and occupies a community for human and assistance dog.



Figure 26: Client workshop event (*Paws For Thought Summer*, 2018).

For many participants, community and friendship were often expressed as a benefit of assistance dog partnership:

“I’ve made new friends from the community” (Megan, QR 2).

“I’ve got to know people at Dog A.I.D.” (Elizabeth, IR).

As can be seen above, feelings of community were expressed by getting to know people and making friends through specific charities and the assistance dog community. For some, their new

world of assistance dog partnership meant being part of a collective with a shared identity:

“I have a whole new world of Assistance Dog owners who share identity with me through both disability and our AD'S” (Sara, QR 11).

For Sara, the assistance dog partnership helped her to feel part of a wider community with other assistance dog handlers, helped her develop a sense of belonging, but also with others in terms of her disability. The shared identity of the community, assistance dog handlers, and disabled persons “provides the powerful affective bond of belonging and collective identity that binds the community together” (Valentine & Skelton, 2008: 472). For others, they expressed how their social mobility, through community, had been enhanced by having an assistance dog:

“Massively increased it [social mobility] as I’ve made so many new friends through meeting up other people’s assistance dogs. I also made new friends through people started talking to me about my dog and through training” (QR GP, 22).

“It’s worked wonders. I can spend longer going out with friends or even just go out where I couldn’t before. I’ve also gained so many friends who also have assistance dogs and through that, gained support on issues surrounding disability, having a dog, work and all kinds of other understanding I wouldn’t have had otherwise” (QR GP, 20).

As these participants expressed, their social mobility increased not just through making friends within the assistance dog community, but also through people talking to them about their dog and through their training classes. Increased social mobility through new friendships, communities, and socialisation, is a benefit of assistance dog partnership (Sanders, 2000) that many participants of this research discussed. Moreover, respondent QR GP 20’s quote here shows how being part of a new community can help provide support on different things such as having a disability, having a dog, and work. This supportive environment was also expressed by Sara and Carla too:

“Sara: So that makes all the training easier because we [the training group] have an online group chat ...

Jamie: For the group? ...

S: Yeah, so we can share highs and lows ...

J: And you can help each other out with problems? ...

S: Help each other out yeah, and it is it is great because training [old assistance dog] on my own originally you are trying to show her something and you are saying to people [in general] ‘and she picked up the keys!’, and they are like ‘that is lovely and really clever, yeah’, but if you tell someone who has been doing it [training] as well, they are like ‘Oh my god! She picked up the keys, how amazing is that?!’ ...” (Sara, IR).

“... [I]t’s like a little family and a support group in a way because like I thought of the doorbell and everyone was like actually that might help me, ... so, somebody will say something to [trainer] and ... obviously you are not listening in, but you are in a way, you know not nastily kinda thing, and it’s ... ‘oh actually, I could do with that’, because I mentioned if I fell outside I’d need [assistance dog] to get my partner and then [other participant] was ... ‘do you know what that would be good if I have left my phone in the house and I am gardening and I can’t get up or something, and then her dog can get her husband ...’” (Carla, IR).

For Sara, her training group within the charity offers support to one another emotionally through

positive and negative life experiences. This support shows the friendship and close bonds that many people form through their assistance dog training classes. Sara discusses how what is occurring in the space of their face-to-face training class transcends to providing support in the online space through group messaging. Sara also indicates here that, because of the shared identities of the group, the support becomes more meaningful as they all share similar experiences and are all trying to reach the same end goal: namely, assistance dog qualification and an improved quality of life. Carla also talks about her group and how through sharing advice and training with others the training group becomes one of support and family.

Assistance dog communities offer support and feelings of belonging around shared identities as ‘trainers’, ‘clients’ and ‘disabled people’. Support can come in various forms through practical advice for training, to emotional support during life events. The physical spaces of training and workshops help to foster a sense of community and support between the clients whilst the charity magazine helps to foster and develop this sense of community further. It is critical to note that, although the communities discussed so far have been largely through face-to-face training groups, there is a greater presence of online communities involved in the assistance dog world.

Online communities

Whilst community has been discussed so far in terms of personal face-to-face interaction, I now note how online communities play a prominent role in assistance dog handlers’ lives. There is a growing interest by geographers in disability and online communities. This research is generally split into two sections: the internet as a ‘tool’ for gaining greater health information (Crooks, 2006; Parr, 2002); and the internet as a place to meet others and form online communities (see Bertilsdotter Rosqvist et al., 2013; Boyle, 2019; Campbell & Longhurst, 2013; Davidson, 2008; Valentine & Skelton, 2008). Below I will discuss the internet as a place to meet others with shared experience, which is important for many of the participants in this research.

For many disabled people, the internet acts as a place to meet others and form online communities. One such community is found online through the social media platform Twitter. Here there are a plethora of accounts which assistance dog handlers create *for* and even *of* their assistance dogs, as if the dogs were those ‘tweeting’. The accounts hence have the names, profile pictures, and bios (mini biographies), to assume the identity of the assistance dog (rather than the handler), sharing information about what they like and dislike, what they think and feel, and providing an insight into their ‘working’ lives. In essence, these accounts are run by the handler but assume the anthropomorphised identity of their assistance dog (similar to Instagram account of dogs, see Kertész & Berzleja, 2019). The accounts offer the opportunity to explore a more-than-human community online, a community in which the boundary between human and animal is blurred⁸⁰.

⁸⁰ Arathoon (2018) talks about this blurring through the phrase ‘seeing-eye’, in which the dog and human become bodily bounded together.

Furthermore, they provide a point of exploration into the deeply emotional and interpersonal bonds shared between human and assistance animal (Eason, 2020; Pemberton, 2019).

The account's handle (the username in the format @username) would often include the name of the dog along with their role such as 'Arthur' or 'Sally', and 'GD' (Guide Dog), 'retired GD' (Retired Guide Dog), or 'AD' (Assistance Dog). Through bios and tweets, an 'animal voice' is adopted, with phrases being animalised (and anthropomorphised) to help show that this is the assistance dog 'talking' (tweeting)(DeMello, 2018). Such phrases were common throughout the Twitter accounts analysed and some key phrases are shown in **Table 15**.

Table 15: Frequency of animalised language used in the tweets of Twitter accounts of assistance dog owners.

Phrase/word	Frequency
Dad	1294
Food	338
Hooman (Human)	460 (1679)
Love	2399
Mum	4749
Noms	311
Pawfect	7
Pawsome	527
Pawtastic	61
Woof	1354
Total: 13179	

The tweeted words chosen were the most commonly used phrases of 'animalised language' and were originally found through a word cloud analysis of the tweets as well as a general exploration of a selection of the analysed tweets. The phrases can be broken down into the categories of 'pet parent', food, and 'dog talk'.

Pet parent language reflects greater the close emotional bond between human and assistance dog. Many pet dog owners refer to themselves as pet parents (Charles, 2016; Irvine & Cilia, 2017; Owens & Grauerholz, 2019), with their pets being recognised as 'furry babies' or 'children' (E. Power, 2008; Shir-Vertesh, 2012), and this can be seen greater through some of language used in the accounts. The high usage of phrases such as 'hooman', 'human', 'mum', and 'dad', refer to the assistance dog directly talking about – or even to – their human partner. Some examples of these tweets are shown below in **Figures 27, 28, 29, 30**.

‘I’m having a lovely free run while the hooman has been dealing with a split poo bag. He’s a mucky pup’.

Figure 27: Tweet using the phrase 'hooman'.

‘My #GuideDog harness is off whilst my human has a coffee break. But I’m still well-behaved and ignore distractions. Reckon I deserve a treat for that, don’t you...?!’

Figure 28: Tweet using the word 'human'.

‘Took mum to the cafe this afternoon, she was a lot better bonus in the cafe I found some crumbs #starving’.

Figure 29: Tweet using the word mum.

‘Dad promised me a trip to the park on our way home but to be honest I wasn’t holding my breath as we missed our train. But he surprised me & delivered - what a great way to end the week!’

Figure 30: Tweet using the word dad.

Figure 27 directly adopts the animal voice through the phrase ‘hooman’ and ‘mucky pup’. Hooman meaning human, is a more animalised phrase that takes the ‘oo’ of a dogs’ ‘voice’ into the phrase. Mucky pup – perhaps often used by parents to refer to a child – is used to indicate messiness. This is a switch of the animal as child, human as parent binary. **Figure 28** on the other hand directly refers to the job the assistance dog does for the human from a less anthropomorphised – and perhaps less child-like – voice. **Figures 29 and 30** directly address the human partners as parents describing the work, they do for them, but also the care the human does for the dog. It was often common for many of the assistance dogs to position their handlers as parents, showing an intimate bond of kinship and care between assistance dog and handler, an affectively complex (and debateable) crossing of species divides (humanising the dog but also maybe animalising the human owner).

The second category is shown directly through the word ‘food’ and the phrase ‘noms’. The phrase ‘noms’, meaning treats or food, is also used to show the dogs’ affection and are examples in **Figure 31** and **Figure 32**.

‘I love my dinner But I get so over excited when Mum serves it in my puzzle feeder. It’s food AND a game!?!’.

Figure 31: Tweet about food.

‘Sadly the best dog-sitter in the whole world has
now gone home...guess there'll be no more
"accidental" double noms :-((‘.

Figure 32: Tweet using the phrase 'noms'.

Figure 31 refers to food as a way of sharing import in the ‘animal voice’. Here food and play come together to share the dogs’ opinion. On the other hand, **Figure 32**, uses food, through the phrase ‘noms’, to show affection for a human carer.

The final category, ‘dog talk’, refers directly to animalised words such as ‘pawfect’, ‘pawtastic’, ‘pawsome’, and ‘woof’. These phrases offer an animalised play on words between an assistance dog’s body and the words ‘awesome’, ‘perfect’, and ‘fantastic’. The phrases were used to indicate that it is the dog’s opinion being spoken, and are shown in **Figures 33, 34, 35, 36**.

‘What an honour! Massive thanks to @TwitterUK for featuring me as
one of their top 10 pawfect dogs to follow for #NationalDogDay
❤️ #GuideDog #DogsOfTwitter #AssistanceDogDay #DogsDayOut

Figure 34: Tweet using the phrase pawfect.

‘I had a pawtastic day’.

Figure 33: Tweet using phrase pawtastic.

“It’s pawsome being part of

Figure 35: Tweet using phrase pawsome.

‘Woof - sorry I've been unnaturally
quiet folks, but it's been a hectic few
weeks’.

Figure 36: Tweet using dog talk - woof.

Figure 33 and **Figure 34** use a combination of perfect and fantastic with the word paw. Both these tweets are used in a positive way, with the first indicating greater the idea of the online Twitter dog community. Moreover, **Figure 35** draws greater on this language to express a sense of community and the feeling of belonging that the assistance dog feels in the charity. Whereas **Figure 36** uses the phrase ‘woof’ as a substitute for the word ‘hello’. This uses doggy sounds as a greeting to express a doggy sense of self. This animal sense of self is reflected greater through tweets about the dog’s own interests, a common device through a lot of the tweets as shown in **Figures 37 and 38**.

‘Best day of the week as it’s lots of new people to meet, lots of cuddles and strokes and (the best bit) lots of new smells to investigate...’.

Figure 37: Tweet indicating greater doggy sensibilities and expressions.

‘The day started with a trip to a new church. That meant lots of new humanpaws to love me! There were gazillions of minihumans so my ears got loads of tiny paws stroking them’.

Figure 38: Tweet describing the dogs' interests.

Here both quotes express assistance dog’s likes through an ingeniously – if for some, it might strike as cloying – animalised voice. The first tweet indicates the excitement of the dog at meeting new people and having interactions between them both in a tactile sense, through stroking and petting, and through new olfactory engagement (new smells), the assumption being that a dog’s engagement with its life-world is indeed deeply shaped by the ‘smellscapes’ around it (Porteous, 1985). These engagements are positioned as critical to the assistance dog’s experiences and are something to which they look forward. The second tweet again places importance on the assistance dog’s engagements with new people through animalisation of the human bodies by describing hands as ‘humanpaws’ and ‘tiny paws’ and calling children ‘minihumans’. These tweets, whilst offering an anthropomorphic understanding of assistance animals on the part of their human handlers, also offer an ‘animal-morphic’ view *back* on ‘us’ humans, in understanding how the assistance dog handlers view, and indeed comprehend, their assistance dogs’ needs, likes and dislikes, in essence a consideration *of* assistance animals’ (own) geographies (Hodgetts & Lorimer, 2018). In addition, as a unique cultural space, these assistance animal Twitter accounts, crosscut the world of dog ownership, and dog training. There is scope for much greater research into more-than-human online communities such as offered by these accounts.

Conclusion

This chapter provides a scene-setting introduction into the worlds of assistance animal partnerships, bringing together both the structuring and living of experiences: both the governances giving form to assistance dog partnership worlds and the governmentalities inflecting handler-dog life-worlds. I explored the governance of assistance animal worlds through various scales, (inter)nationally through accreditation schemes, dog training organisations, and assistance dog charities, and locally and individually through trainers and clients and their social worlds. I sought to explore how these forms of governance and different scales shaped the assistance animal world from legislation formation to animal and disability representation, to the lived experiences of clients and trainers. Through this governance, there is a risk of instilling what Włodarczyk (2019) called a ‘politics of suspicion’, in which diverse disabled people’s bodies and

their assistance dog's legitimacy could be challenged. I also suggested that there may be various effects on lived experience which permeate through to disabled people's – and their assistance dogs' – access to public space. I also explored how assistance dogs and disability representation are shaped and governed by charities who aim to show the 'positive effect' of charities and assistance dog partnership, reflecting on how more 'negative' dimensions of training are often represented and judged. I explored the linkages that these representations had on people's lived experiences.

Furthermore, through an exploration into the worlds of dog training, governance was explored from (inter)national to local scales to the scales of everyday practices, the orbit of governmentalities, central to the living of these worlds in the most embodied, affective, and emotional ways. At the 'top', at an (inter)national level, different accreditation schemes attempt to govern what they consider the correct and moral ways to train a dog. This is done through the accreditation schemes' membership programmes that trainers and charities are encouraged to join. Trainers join the schemes and charities that fit into their ideas and philosophies of what training *should* entail, and when training they spread the accreditation schemes' ideas to the clients and others with whom they work. The form of governance enacted here does not stop from a top-down scale but also works individually between trainers and clients as they effectively police and judge one another based on their specific approaches to training. In effect they spread their ideals of training to others, sometimes in a manner that can create tension and unease, but mostly in a manner respectful of, and prepared to learn from, other versions of governance or even governmentality.

Finally, the idea of community was explored to give a brief insight into assistance dog worlds. Community is adopted through shared identity and experience for many of the assistance dog handlers through both their identity as handlers and as people with disabilities. The community plays a supportive role for trainers amongst one another, offering support and advice on shared experiences, as well as increasing the overall social mobility of handlers. Emerging online communities were also explored through the online social media platform Twitter, which gives an insight into the deeply affective and emotional relationships that assistance dogs and their handlers share, as well as gesturing towards the more entangled relationships in play here that will become central to later arguments in this thesis.

This chapter aimed to be both scene-setting, contextualising the assistance dog world and its governances and governmentalities, and substantial, in providing preliminary empirical material illustrative of the lived and embodied experiences of entangled human-assistance-dog lifeworlds. On reflection, it is difficult to consider whether this chapter is about the governing of assistance dog worlds, its structures, representations, or experiences of its members⁸¹. What it has hopefully

⁸¹ As was asked in the viva.

shown though is how all these different aspects of living as part of the worlds of assistance dog partnership combine, are not easily untangleable. This chapter provides vital contextualisation to the worlds of assistance dog partnership and for what is to come next in the thesis: exploring the practice of training and bodies at work (**Chapter 5**) and exploring caring relations between human and assistance animal (**Chapter 6**).

Chapter 5: Working Bodies

Introduction

Having previously discussed the structures and governance around ‘training worlds’ (**Chapter 4**), in this chapter I focus down onto the ‘working bodies’ that inhabit these worlds. In doing so, this chapter seeks to explore how training is undertaken between disabled humans and assistance dogs, how and why individual tasks are learned, and how the human-assistance-dog bond begins to develop through the training process.

I draw on dog training literature and more-than-human and posthuman scholarly work (**Chapter 2**) to view dog training as an affective, embodied, and sensuous cross-species practice which involves co-learning between humans, dogs, and materials (Haraway, 2003, 2008; Smith et al., 2021). In doing so, I explore in detail the co- or intra-actions between human and animal bodies (Lynda Birke et al., 2004), arguing that assistance dog training is a process which develops attunement between human and animal bodies (Despret, 2004, 2013) and a form of hybridity co-mingling attributes and aptitudes of both (Haraway, 2008; Whatmore, 2002). Furthermore, I frame training as a pedagogical cross-species practice through co-learning and the development of the human-animal relationship.

Following calls across animal geographies and interdisciplinary animal studies for methods and theories to move away from anthropocentric frameworks (Buller, 2015; Gibbs, 2020), and instead to focus on animals’ geographies and atmospheres (J. Lorimer et al., 2019), my approach here is to investigate dog training through an ethnomethodological frame, one attentive to the complex practices and relationships between disabled humans and their dogs.

For the clients of Dog A.I.D., the dog training occurs between disabled people and their own pets, although in the case of those with successor dogs, these are purchased *specifically* for assistance dog training. The relationship between human and dog is therefore different from most human-assistance-dog partnerships where the humans never ‘own’ their assistance dog and are instead provided with an already trained assistance dog, one which, upon retirement, is often given back to the charity. There is hence a specific emphasis in the training of Dog A.I.D. partnerships to enable a move from a human-dog bond to a human-assistance-dog bond.

More specifically, I explore what I called ‘life skills’ training, outlining what exercises make up life skills and how and why they are undertaken. Life skills provide the first step into training a dog, building on socialisation and habituation as well as mandatory exercises to which all assistance dog partnerships must adhere. Second, I explore task training. Task training is specific to each partnership, and each assistance dog will learn tasks specific to their role and their disabled human partner’s individual needs. I outline the range of tasks Dog A.I.D. assistance dogs are

trained for, picking out the four task training categories: finding/picking up/bringing items; touch and push; pull; and tasks not fitting these categories. I probe how these tasks are trained, drawing on graphic transcripts and video clips of these tasks in order to capture their complex, cross-species embodiment, illustrating examples of both success and failure, it being crucial to capture not just what goes well but also the difficulties and frustrations for all involved. Third, I explore agency and self-expression within training drawing particularly on animals' agency within the training. I outline stories of animal agency and sentience highlighting three themes: dogs doing tasks they have not been trained to do, dogs doing tasks without direction (intelligent disobedience), and cross-species dog-dog training. Finally, I highlight the human experiences of assistance-dog training that form over the duration of the partnership.

Life skills

Before training tasks, dogs and humans are required to train together and learn life skills⁸². Life skills involve socialisation, habituation, familiarisation, and exercises, as well as health and welfare (health and welfare will be discussed in **Chapter 6**). Exercises, such as 'sit' and down, are regarded as a type of life skill, preparing the dog for *doing* tasks later in their training, but also providing them with key skills for everyday situations. Life skills operate at the boundary between pet and assistance dog training, as many pet owners want their pets to 'sit', not jump up, 'lie down', return when off lead in a park, and not respond adversely to loud noises, but do not need them *also* to be able to complete an emergency stop, toilet on command, and to some extent, 'settle' when in public places. All clients of Dog A.I.D. are required to learn life skills throughout their Level One and Two training and are provided with a training handbook which outlines "working together towards a partnership" (Dog A.I.D., 2017a: 1). I will unpick the processes of socialisation, habituation, familiarisation, and exercises, that form life skills throughout this section, drawing on representations of the different skills from the handbooks and analysis of how they were completed by participants.

Socialisation and habituation

Socialisation and habituation are tied together through a dog's early training. Socialisation is the process where a dog learns how to interact with other people, dogs, and other animals that the dog is likely to encounter over its lifecourse. Socialisation involves introducing the dog to different social stimuli in a controlled setting. Habituation on the other hand is the process where a dog learns to ignore things like traffic, animals, dogs, and people such as joggers, cyclists, or children. T. Howell et al (2015) argue that puppy socialisation practices play a crucial role in the

⁸² Life skills is the phrase used by Dog A.I.D. Head of Trainer Rachel, who indicated that the term "obedience" has negative overtones where dogs having no choice but to obey the human. Instead, she highlighted that assistance dogs and humans form a partnership and that life skills are important throughout the life of the partnership. The term fits with the positive reinforcement language used by Dog A.I.D. and is adopted throughout this thesis.

development of adult dogs that display few undesirable behaviours, and can help to establish a positive, lifelong relationship with their owner. Whilst T. Howell et al (2015) explain that age-appropriate socialisation practices should begin within a few days of birth in the early period of a dog's life (3.5 weeks to 12 weeks), and that socialisation should extend well into adulthood, importance is placed here on the dog breeders to have begun socialisation and for the new handlers to continue this process from the onset of ownership. Other assistance dogs such as Guide Dogs are introduced to different social stimuli from a young age by breeders and puppy-raisers and socialisers (Batt et al., 2009; Mai et al., 2021), but it is unclear whether socialisation is undertaken with Dog A.I.D. dogs before ownership with their current handlers, due to most dogs being pets before the training started and hence their socialisation – certainly as understood through these more formal and systematic lenses – may not have occurred. The relationship and the kind of socialisation before starting training could have potential implications on the early levels of Dog A.I.D. training. The value of both socialisation and habituation is stressed through the *Level One Handbook* and *Level Two Handbook* of Dog A.I.D., with **Figure 39** showing the range of different stimuli to which dogs must be introduced. Dogs are not expected to be introduced to all the stimuli in Level One, but such exposure is meant to be ongoing through the training period. The aim is to socialise and familiarise the dogs to reduce anxiety, fear, and undesired behaviours such as aggression, barking, begging, and hunting. These undesirable behaviours are listed in **Figure 40** and shows which behaviours will be assessed by the trainer when doing the social skills assessment.

Socialisation Checklist and Scoring Method: 1 Not Socialised 2 More Needed 3 Well Socialised			Children:	Score	Comment, if any	Environment	Score	Comment, if any.
People	Score	Comment, if any	Babies: still; moving			Strange house		
Women of all nationalities			Toddlers: still; moving			Park		
Men of all nationalities			Teenagers			Outside children's play area		
Young adults			Animals	Score	Comments, if any	Shopping Areas Quiet and Busy		
Middle aged adults			Dogs: A variety of size and breeds			Outside a school		
Elderly adults			Cats			Train; bus station		
Jerky; quiet; loud adults			Small pets			Village hall		
Joggers; Fast moving people			Horses			Country walks		
Delivery people			Fowl: Hens; Ducks; Geese etc.			Pub		
People carrying: rucksacks; shovels; umbrellas; bags etc			Sheep and other Livestock			Fete/car boot sale		
People wearing glasses; sun glasses; beards etc.			Birds			Party		
People wearing hats: hoods; Balaclavas; helmets; etc.			Familiarisation To Sounds	Score	Comments, if any	Slippery floor		
People wearing: uniforms; flappy or fluorescent coats			Washing Machine			Floor surfaces, e.g. Metal covers in road/pavement		
Person carrying a child			Vacuum Cleaner			Boarding kennels		
			Clothes Dryer			Grooming parlour		
			Hand Dryer					
			Items pulled off rolls: foil; cling film					
			Loud sounds					
			Applause					
			Baby crying					
			Smoke alarm					
			Vehicle noise					
			Lorries; reversing; air brakes					
			Planes					
			Helicopters					
			Car horn/police/ambulance sirens.					
			Phones: different					
			Screaming					
			Church bells					
			Sneezing; coughing; snoring					
			Fireworks					
			Other					

Figure 39: Socialisation check for Level One clients (Dog A.I.D., 2017a).

General Assessment
Social skills training: The following will also be assessed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No aggression (biting, snapping, growling, or predatory behaviour). No inappropriate barking. No inappropriate jumping up at strangers. No inappropriate jumping up on work surfaces etc. No begging for human food. No inappropriate sniffing of people. No excessive hunting behaviours.

Figure 40: General Assessment, Level One social skills (Dog A.I.D., 2017a).

Many participants discussed how they undertook socialisation and habituation and why they are important. June describes how she had begun familiarising Quake to the sound of the hoover, a sound that dogs notoriously dislike:

“She really really hates my hoover because of the noise, so I have been working with her on that so when my care [worker] is in and she is hoovering ... she stays in one position when the hoover is on and she is not running round barking at the hoover; but that seems to be going really well at the moment, it is just like a handful of biscuits, and I have a load of them and I will put them in my pocket and I won’t even be looking at her, and just like every 20 seconds I will be dropping her one down, while they carry on hoovering,

and my carer had the hoover this morning right next to her [the dog's] bed here, and as she [the carer, was] doing that I was just dropping and she [the dog] was thinking 'hang on a minute that's not so bad, the noise is not bad' ..." (June, IR).

June explains how she uses positive reinforcement to familiarise Quake to the sound of the hoover. Through this narrative we can see how June's method of rewarding Quake with a treat every 20 seconds when lying down and not running and barking at the hoover helped to reinforce the idea that lying down when the hoover is used will result in a treat. June seeks to confirm this pedagogical experience by adopting Quake's animal voice – imagining what the animal might be thinking – when indicating how the completion of the task must mean that Quake now thinks the noise is not bad. Other participants adopted this animal voice to confirm their socialisation experiences, as Hannah recounts:

"Distraction training, we do to the nth degree we do here because [of] the cat. I have also got hens and she [the dog] doesn't have a problem with hens. Where we walk, we go past sheep, and they all go scattering away and she does 'why are they all running away mum?', you know, she's puzzled" (Hannah, IR).

This socialisation led to the correct desired behaviour from Missy, in not bothering with animals or chasing them. Like June, she clarifies this training through Missy's voice, explaining how Missy is puzzled that the sheep do not want to be near her. Furthermore, this extract shows the blurring of species boundaries that is so central to the thesis. Other participants also indicate the significance of socialising their dogs to other animal bodies, noises, and smells. **Figure 41** shows Ross being socialised to farm animals. This is so Ross can learn how to act around the animals and perform in the desired way. Hannah reveals further the relationship her and Missy share, and how socialisation and habituation are important but that boundaries must retain:

"Everything we have done has always been about play, never work, and I have always been mindful of where we were heading. I am never going to cure her of being over-exuberant with the people she loves and knows, that's her nature. Most people are really good now in understanding to ignore her and she just goes 'oh alright then, I will go lay down'" (Hannah, IR).

Hannah explains that socialisation and habituation should not be used to change Missy's character, or anthropomorphically engineer her personality, because that is who she is. This questions how a truly animal-centric account of training would thus be critical of training as, to an extent, 'taking the dog out of the dog', in a switch of Włodarczyk's (2017) phrase for humans to 'be more dog'. What Hannah's quote alludes to then is the difficulty of training with regards to anthropocentric control, affecting a de-animalising of the animal, and with anthropomorphic traits (as I emphasised in **Chapter 2**). As previously highlighted, the tensions of dog training can be seen through the critique of this training as ultimately being about domestication in the sense of dominance and control (K. Anderson, 1997; Tuan, 1984), rather than the more subtle reading adopted by Hannah, Bekoff (2006), and others (Włodarczyk, 2017; Zeder, 2012), on training and partnerships wherein proper 'space' is accorded to 'doggy agency' (see later in this chapter and **Chapters 6 and 7**). Hannah further indicates her close bond with Missy and how she has kept

possibilities open for the partnership. She also signifies a greater knowledge transfer from the partnership to those other humans with whom they interact, relying on others as well to react in a required way so Missy can ‘settle’.



Figure 41: Ross being socialised and familiarised to sheep (Sent by Dominique – permission given to reproduce).

The aim of socialisation and habituation is to teach the dog to express desired behaviour towards social stimuli rather than ‘wild’ or ‘doggy’ behaviour. As a process of domestication (and all the attendant uneven power relations that characterises domestication) socialisation and habituation are important, as Nina expresses the need for handlers:

“To have a dog with an upbeat confident temperament to ensure that their welfare isn’t compromised by this lifestyle” (Nina, Trainer, IR).

Nina recognises the stresses and vicissitudes of an assistance dog’s life. She positions the assistance dog’s welfare as a key factor and implies how this could be impacted by their lifestyle. Living free from fear and distress and being free to express most normal behaviour is part of good assistance animal’s welfare (J. A. Serpell et al., 2018). Socialisation and familiarisation can reduce fear and distress when developing a dog with a confident temperament. Nina explains that when socialisation or familiarisation go wrong, or when an adverse event occurs, it can have an extreme effect on a dog’s welfare:

“My first client did have to go through retiring her dog early ... Unfortunately, something happened in the dog’s life that was so stressful that impacted the dog’s sensitivity to noise, to a point where the dog was too stressed” (Nina, Trainer, IR).

What is described as an unforeseen and unfortunate event, adversely impacting the assistance dog’s socialisation and habituation with noise, led to the dog not being able to live without stress or fear. This event shows the importance of socialisation and familiarisation to an assistance dog’s welfare and working life.

Many participants expressed the influence that socialisation and habituation has had on their dog's behaviour. There was a tendency for participants to reflect on the change in their dog's behaviour by highlighting things with which they previously struggled and how that has changed, as Megan recounts:

“Sam would never have been able to walk through shopping centres without wanting to greet ever single other human in there. Now, he takes no notice of other people. He will walk past fellow assistance dogs and ignore them whilst staying focused. He used to be crazily excitable around other dogs, but not anymore!” (Megan, QR).

Due to socialisation Sam now expresses more desirable behaviour that is required of an assistance dog and is able to not be overwhelmed by social stimuli. Other participants mention how their dogs became more attuned to the space around them:

“When I was first matched with my second dog who I'm using for this [to answer questionnaire], he wasn't an easy dog to work with. He needed the relationship building before he really wanted to work with anyone. He also got very overstimulated in new environments something that massively improved with persistence and time” (QR GP, 30).

“She is much more tuned in to what is going on around us” (QR, 9).

Both participants reflect on how their dogs became more attuned to, and more aware of how properly to cope with, the spaces that they occupy. Being aware of the environment in which they are working allows the partnership to operate safely for both participants, and it also implies a level of comfort experienced by the dogs about being exposed to different spaces with perhaps unfamiliar occupants (human and otherwise) and sensory stimuli. Other participants outline how their dog's behaviour has changed and how they are now:

“A lot more confident and outgoing, as well as calmer and happier in herself when given a job to do” (QR GP, 22).

“He is a lot more confident than when we started and has gained (slightly) more impulse control” (QR GP, 9).

“She is much more confident in public/ busy situations. She is more tolerant of sudden noise. She is more assertive with our other larger and older male dog” (Mark, QR).

These accounts all reflect a greater level of socialisation, confidence, and comfort. All the participants indicate behaviour that is desired by assistance dog owners during the assistance dog's work. Socialisation and habituation, always ongoing, are used to help to shape an assistance dog for work. They help the assistance dog partnership function affectively and are an invaluable part of an assistance dog's lifecourse, helping to develop their ability to cope in potentially stressful environments in a stress-free way. Socialisation and habituation are dominant features of the earlier stage of the partnership, they are crucial for shaping human-animal and animal-animal interactions and human-assistance-dog futures.

Exercises

The second part of life skills training involves exercises. A range of exercises and requirements are outlined in **Figure 42** from the Dog A.I.D. *Level One Handbook*, essential for assistance dogs at the early stages of their training. **Figure 43** shows how the requirements for these exercises change for Level Two, with distance increasing for many tasks and the spaces in which they are undertaken being diversified, a fundamental geographical upscaling of activity and its ranges. There are basic skills depicted here that are required to become a qualified assistance dog. I will go through each of these exercises outlining their importance and how they are learned by both human and animal, tackling exercises in groups rather than individually as many of the exercises build on the previous knowledge of already learned exercises. Before I do this, however, I outline how Dog A.I.D. provides information to clients on how they should go about training these exercises.

Level 1. Exercises and explanation of exercises.	Exercises and explanation of exercises. <i>continued</i>
<p>1. Toilet on command. The dog must be able to toilet on command, on a variety of surfaces and in appropriate places. <i>See page 25 for Toileting requirements for Assistance Dogs</i></p>	<p>9. Sit or Down stay. The dog must remain in position while the handler moves to a distance of 5/10 metres for 1 or 2 mins.</p>
<p>2. Controlled walk on lead. The dog may walk on either side of the handler making it suitable for the type of wheelchair or walking aid. The dog may walk ahead but must not pull. He must have his head up, not sniffing the ground.</p>	<p>10. Control when lead is taken off. Dog should remain in a sit or down when lead is taken off and not move until handler has given release command.</p>
<p>3. Recall. The dog must be off lead in a suitable exercise area. The dog should be called back when he is running free and come on the first call, a second call is acceptable in certain circumstances. The dog should remain with the handler until released again.</p>	<p>11. Controlled greeting. Not jumping up on greeting. Not greeting until permission is given by handler or person they want to greet.</p>
<p>4. Behaviour getting in and out of car. The dog must be under control while the door is opened and must not get in or out until told. The dog may sit or stand.</p>	<p>General Assessment</p>
<p>5. Behaviour in car and public transport. In the car the dog must be in a safe place e.g. harness, kennel or behind a guard. On public transport the dog must remain quiet, under control and unobtrusive.</p>	<p>Social skills training: The following will also be assessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No aggression (biting, snapping, growling, or predatory behaviour). No inappropriate barking. No inappropriate jumping up at strangers. No inappropriate jumping up on work surfaces etc. No begging for human food. No inappropriate sniffing of people. No excessive hunting behaviours.
<p>6. Staying in car quietly. The dog must remain in the car for approx 15mins and the owner should be out of sight.</p>	<p>The owner to be assessed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of the dog's welfare and health. Ability to handle dog. Ability to groom dog.
<p>7. Control through doors. The dog must be under control on a loose lead. He may go ahead or behind depending on which is most practical for the handler</p>	
<p>8. Sit down and stand. The dog must sit or down or stand on one command. These positions can be at either side or in front of handler.</p>	

Figure 42: Level One exercises (Dog A.I.D., 2017a).

Level 2 Exercise and explanation of exercise	Exercise and explanation of exercise	Exercise and explanation of exercise
1. Appropriate lead walking. Dog should be attentive and not pulling. Equipment to be suitable and comfortable. Dog to be self correcting and owner to work without repeated verbal communication..	7. Ability to be taken away from owner. The dog should be confident to have its lead taken and walked away from the owner without any undue whining or pulling to get back.	14. Food refusal, from hand. <i>See pages 10,11 and 12 for training this exercise</i> The dog will be expected to ignore a variety of food in the hand eventually enabling the dog to walk past people picnicking or children with ice-cream etc.
2. Controlled walk with dropped lead. The dog walks on loose lead, owner to drop lead and dog should continue to walk beside owner and then pick up lead when asked.	8. Stay at external door at house. The dog should stay in position while owner organises him/herself or goes through door to put rubbish out etc.	15. Food refusal from a surface. <i>See pages 10,11 and 12 for training this exercise</i> The dog will be expected to ignore food on coffee tables, work surfaces and on shop counters
3. Recall Dog must be running free. Usual environment with distractions. Second trial is acceptable.	9. Control when getting in and out of car. Dog must remain steady while waiting to be loaded in and out of car or owner gets in and out of car. This can be in a stand or sit	16. Food Refusal from ground. <i>See pages 10,11 and 12 for training this exercise</i> The dog will be expected to ignore food found or dropped on the ground, both indoors and out.
4. Control when lead is taken off. Dog must remain by owners side when lead is taken off and only run free when given the release command.	10. Control in car or public transport. In the car the dog must be in a safe place e.g. harness, kennel or behind safety grill. On public transport the dog should remain calm and unobtrusive to other passengers.	17. Down at a distance. <i>See pages 13 and 14 for training this exercise</i> Dog must be running free and a distance from the owner. On first command the dog should Sit, Down or Stand on the spot. This ensures the owner has control at a distance and the command can be used in an emergency
5. Sit, Down and Stand on command. This can be at the side or in front of owner on verbal or hand signal.	11. Ability to be left alone . The dog should be able to spend at least 15/20 mins alone in the car or house without the owner. The dog should settle and the owner must be out of sight.	18. Retrieving ability. The owner should have one clear command for each item the dog is required to pick up.
6. Sit and Down stays at a distance from owner with distractions. Stays will be for 2 mins with owner at a minimum of 2 metres away from dog. The dog should remain while someone runs past. He will be expected to ignore sound, food distractions and remain in position when stroked. Moving from sit to down or vice versa should not be penalised. It is the stay that is being assessed.	12. Long Down Stay, Lying quietly while owner and others are eating. The dog will be expected to lie quietly beside or under the table while people are eating. Teaching the dog to go under the table where he will be less intrusive when he eventually is able to go into restaurants	19. Control through doorways, gates and narrow spaces. The dog should allow the owner to go through doors and gates first unless told otherwise. The owner should be able to ask the dog to go behind or in front depending on the owners needs.
	13. Behaviour when greeting people. The dog should remain calm when people approach, not jump up and allow contact without any undue fear. Greet when released to do so.	20. Toilet training. The dog must be toilet trained on command, only toilet in appropriate places both off lead and on lead and on a variety of surfaces . <i>See page 8 for toileting requirements for assistance dogs</i>

Figure 43: Level Two exercises (Dog A.I.D., 2017b).

Outlined in the handbook are two interlinked training strategies, the use of clicker training and the ‘4 D’s method’. Clicker training (outlined in **Textbox 4**) is a tool for training through positive reinforcement, one used to mark desirable behaviour at the correct time (Gabrielsen, 2017; Pręgowski, 2015). Correct or desired behaviour is marked by the sound of the clicker and then a reward is followed shortly. In this way the clicker operates as a tool for operant conditioning: the dog learns to expect a reward due to the click (Gabrielsen, 2017). What is clear from the textbox is the need for the human to be attuned to their assistance dog’s body, to know when to click and when not to click. Clicker training further develops the bond between human and assistance dog through the reading of each other’s bodily actions. Clicker training was discussed by many trainers and participants:

“With clicker training, it’s different because you are teaching the dog to think for itself, make its own decisions, giving it choices ...” (Kim, Trainer, IR).

Kim positions clicker training as positive by outlining the ability of the dog to make a choice in completing a task or exercise rather than being coerced into doing so, as illustrated by Sara when explaining that clicker training made Pepper want to train:

“S: She has already started stealing the clicker, which they have all done, they’ve all done that stealing it, they bring it to you.

J: Like saying they want to train?

S: Yeah, come on teach me something, let me work ...” (Sara, IR).

Sara highlights Pepper’s desire to train, suggesting Pepper’s enjoyment of training through the very action of stealing and bringing the clicker to her.

Oddly perhaps, I did not see the use of the clicker during my ethnographic work, possibly because some partnerships were merely performing the task to show me what they have learned. For other participants, their adopted strategy of not using a clicker did not seem to disadvantage their

partnership in anyway. In addition, my in-person encounters were limited due to COVID-19, and I might have seen clicker training had I been able to complete more ethnographic work.

Textbox 4: Suggestions for successful use of the clicker.

Choose a quiet place indoors away from distractions. If you have more than one dog you need to train separately, only you and one dog in the room. If someone is watching they must not distract you by moving or making comments --- one dog, one trainer.

Sessions need to be short but frequent, 5 minutes is probably enough.

There is nothing magical about a clicker it simply communicates more clearly than a voice.

The click tells the dog precisely what behaviour earned the reward. When the behaviour is established you then introduce a word for that behaviour.

The following simple rules will help you to use the clicker successfully.

- 1 Always click **first**, then treat.
- 2 Click as the behaviour occurs, the **timing is crucial**.
- 3 Only click once. If you want to show you are really pleased increase the **treats** not the clicks.
- 4 Avoid using the clicker to get your dog's attention, or for any other signal.
- 5 Once your dog has learned the beginning of a new skill withhold the click to encourage the dog to try harder.
- 6 If a behaviour your dog knows well begins to go wrong, **go back to previous stage**.
- 7 Don't think you can read your dog's mind, **don't anticipate**.
- 8 **Always** finish on a high, put the clicker away before you begin to feel frustrated.

(Dog A.I.D., 2017a: 28).

Tied to clicker training is the 4 D's method outlined in **Textbox 5**. The 4 D's – difficulty, duration, distraction, and distance – work as a pedagogical method when used in combination with other methods of training. The 4 D's aim to make training progressively more difficult through spatio-temporal variances in the training practice. The change in the spatio-temporal nature of the training helps to instil the training and solidify the exercise or task behaviour. To start with, the 4 D's method advocates a neutral or home space for ease of learning an exercise or task, it being a space of familiarity for both humans and dogs (Charles, 2016; E. Power, 2008), hence providing a comforting environment in which to commence training. Once the exercise or task is learned to a good standard, an additional 'D' is added, initially through duration. Increasing the duration of the performed task can help the dog learn the behaviour and sustain it. A further 'D', distraction, is added once the task has been completed to an appropriate length of time. Distraction training is crucial as it more fully emulates everyday encounters that the partnership may have in public space. The difficulty, the underpinning 'D', is increased through distractions as the training may move space from the home to the garden and a range of desirable (and undesirable) stimuli thereby become added, such as other people, animals, movement, noises, and toys. The aim is for the partnership to get used to doing tasks in distracting environments. Once the task is completed with distraction, the duration is added back into the training to provide an extra difficulty. Once all this has been completed, the final 'D', distance, is added. The aim with adding increased distance between human and dog is for the partnership to perform these exercises or tasks at a

distance from one another. This is key later when training things like a recall and an emergency stop, or for when humans need the dog to ‘stay’ where they are. The exercise or task would be completed focusing on distance with a decrease in the duration and with no distractions. Once the exercise or task has been completed, the duration and distractions are added in again along with the distance. The 4 D’s method aims to start the exercise training easily and become progressively harder, ensuring that at the earlier stage of training the partnership can gain confidence and create a bond. This bond is vital for the confidence of both human and animal and helps with their success as the training becomes more difficult. Throughout the following exercises the 4 D’s method was applied by most participants, although it was difficult for me to achieve a full engagement with the outworking of the method – across many subtly different iterations of difficulty, duration, distraction and distance – due to the inevitably partial nature of the ethnographic work.

Textbox 5: Training with the 4 D’s: Difficulty, Duration, Distraction, Distance.

“Difficulty: Make it easy at first; train the exercise in your own home or neutral environment. When your dog can perform the exercise with ease, increase the difficulty by adding another ‘D’.

Duration: Extend the length of time the dog can perform the exercise, e.g., your dog has learnt to ‘sit’ on command in a neutral environment, now gradually increase the time he can remain in the ‘sit’.

Distraction: When your dog can perform a two-minute ‘sit’ exercise in a neutral environment, it is time to move into an environment that has distractions in it, such as your garden. To begin with you need to reduce the time you expect your dog to remain in the ‘sit’ increasing it only when he can cope with the distractions presented. When he gets proficient at handling one distraction, add another, always watching for signs of stress. Use different types of distraction such as movement or noise, perhaps a ball being rolled past or someone clapping. Whatever you choose, make sure it is easy for the dog to get it right and reward good responses.

Distance: When appropriate, increase the distance between you and your dog by moving away whilst he performs the exercise, but reduce your expectations of the other D’s. Do not expect your dog to be able to cope with distance, distractions, difficulty and duration all at once. Once your dog is confident of an exercise and environment start all over again!”

(Dog A.I.D., 2017a: 27).

I draw out the geographies of this 4D’s method and paying attention to them throughout this chapter. Central to the Dog A.I.D. exercise training programme, progress is so obviously predicated on gradually expanding the spatiality (and the temporality) of each exercise, increasing its scale of operation – its range (and duration) – from the single room to the wider home (both inside and outside) to the local neighbourhood. Progressively increasing the ‘distances’ involved, including between human and dog, but also in terms of what more things, events, people, animals, stimuli and hence ‘difficulties’ are encompassed in the scenes which the dog is allowed to enter or is presented with. To an extent, I suggest that the human-dog relationship is supposed to be progressively *tested* by widening the spatial optic of the encounters – and associated challenges – with which the partnership is supposed to engage. This testing ultimately goes towards

qualification, and as discussed in **Chapter 4**, the partnerships' right to public space (Lefebvre, 1996) and to be 'in-place' (Cresswell, 1996).

The first lot of exercises operate at the boundary of pet-assistance dog. The cues 'sit', 'down', 'stay', and 'stand' are used by both pet dog owners and assistance dog handlers. These are essential skills which an assistance dog and handler must learn but may also have developed before the assistance dog training started due to their previous pet status. To complete the tasks through positive reinforcement food is used as a training lure. Greenebaum (2010: 138) outlines the typical way in which a pet dog is first taught how to 'sit' and 'lie down':

"To get the dog to 'sit', a treat is held over the nose. To get the dog to 'lie down', the trainer makes an "L" motion with a treat, starting from the nose to the ground. As the dog stays in position (duration, distraction, distance) they are praised for it. If the dog gets up, the trainer needs to ignore her and not give her a treat. When the dog does the command, the guardian marks the behavior with a "yes" and gives the dog a treat. The instructor reminds the guardians that reward training takes patience; guardians need to wait for the right behavior to come along as dogs first usually learn by accident or trial and error. When the dog does the desired behavior, the guardian must praise the dog with an excited voice and release the dog from the command before they break out of the position. The precise timing is critical in order for the dogs to learn successfully".

Greenebaum describes the basic way to teach a dog how to 'sit' and 'lie down' using positive reinforcement, outlining the importance of timing to give the treat and thus reinforce the desired behaviour rather than the undesirable. In addition to what is outlined above, the assistance dog handler would also add in a verbal cue such as 'sit' or 'down' as well as a hand signal. Hand signals often vary between handlers as shown in **Figure 44**, which shows different participants' hand gestures for the 'sit' exercise. Once the dog responds to both the cue and hand gesture, and when the exercise is completed to a good standard for a good length of time, the treat would be held back rather than given every time. The treat is held back due to the fact that in 'real world' situations, such as crossing the road or getting on public transport, the treat cannot be given immediately due to safety. Hence, the dog is effectively being trained to do the action without necessarily expecting the treat immediately.



Figure 44: Different hand signals for 'sit' cue. Left to right - Image 1: closed fist. Image 2: open fist, flat hand. Image 3: open fist, flat hand.

The 'stay' or 'wait' exercise is often trained as an extension through the 'sit' and 'down' exercises and is a measure of duration. The stay cue is given verbally through either 'wait' or 'stay' with the addition of a gesture, in most cases a pointed finger. This is shown in **Figure 45** and requires eye contact between human and dog. Once the 'wait' exercise is completed, the dog is rewarded with a treat.



Figure 45: Beth using the 'wait' gesture to ask Daisy to wait.

Once the basics of 'sit', 'lie down', 'stay', and 'stand' are trained to a good standard, there is an increase in both duration of the exercise and spatial proximity between human and dog. Furthermore, the partnership must begin training these exercises in new spaces with greater distractions. The aim is thus to familiarise dogs to different environments in which they will likely work, and for the pair to learn to work together to develop the shared life skills necessary for navigating busy and distracting environments. One example of 'sit', 'lie down', and 'stay', with distractions was encountered during ethnographic fieldwork at a training class. Practising this as

a group, several assistance dog handlers and their dogs all gathered in a circle and gave the cue for their dog to ‘sit’ or ‘lie down’. Joan and Carla, who were already qualified with their dogs Sal and Buzz, asked their animals to ‘lie down’ and ‘stay’ as they, the humans of these two pairs, sat at the edge of the room, whilst Sara and her dog, Pepper, as yet unqualified, stood together in the room, Sara asking Pepper to ‘sit’ and ‘wait’. The trainer, Kim, then walked around the room, initially doing nothing else but subsequently bouncing a ball. The aim was to test the partnerships’ distraction training, their ‘sit’, ‘wait’, and ‘down’ capacity, with increasing temporality and difficulty. Both Sal and Buzz stayed in the ‘down’ position for the entirety of the time, seemingly uninterested in both the trainer and the bouncing ball. Sara and Pepper stayed engaged with each other for the whole of the task despite the barking of another dog. Throughout the task Sara reiterated the ‘wait’ cue and after every few seconds in which she deemed Pepper to have completed the task handed her down a low value treat. **Figure 46** shows Sara and Pepper engaged in this ‘sit’ and ‘wait’ exercise.



Figure 46: Sit, stay, wait, with distractions.

The second exercise, ‘settle’, develops the skills learned in the first exercise group. ‘Settle’, also referred to as “long down stay” in the *Level Two Handbook* (Dog A.I.D., 2017b: 4), is used when the assistance dog partnership enters restaurants, theatres, and public transport. The aim of the ‘settle’ exercise is for the assistance dog to ‘lie down’ whilst the human is eating in a restaurant, sitting on public transport, working, or completing another activity. In the more informal wording “long stay down” connotes temporality as its main tenet, whilst it is also dependent on the spaces in which the partnership occupy. **Figure 47** shows three different assistance dogs completing the ‘settle’ exercise. Image one shows ‘settle’ on public transport and images two and three show

settle within a dog training class. In all three images the dogs are asked to ‘lie down’ and ‘stay’ whilst the humans travel, eat, or chat. The assistance dogs here are effectively still working but taking a passive role, resting until required. Training the ‘settle’ exercise requires a good response to the ‘down’ and ‘stay’ cues. ‘Settle’ is then developed further through increased duration of the task and with greater distraction in different spaces. Settle thus allows the human to take the dog into restaurants or work environments without the dog negatively impacting on the activities that regularly occur in such spaces. In this sense, as some more critical animal geographers may argue, the ‘settle’ exercise acts as a form of domestication which limits the ‘doggyness’ of dogs by teaching them to perform required behaviour within a specific space. This might be seen as an ‘over-anthropomorphising’ (or de-animalising) the dog but is a vital part of access to public space.

The ‘settle’ task also provides the basis for a dog’s behaviour in private and public transport. Assistance dogs are required to relax and ‘settle’ when in cars, buses, or trains. These exercises build on previous socialisation and habituation through dogs being left alone and through the exercises ‘sit’, ‘down’, and ‘settle’. Dogs are required to perform a ‘settle’ in transport due to the safety requirements for themselves and others. **Figure 47 (Image 1)** shows Quake lying down on an underground train. During attendance at a fieldwork training class, I also experienced the ‘settle’ exercise in private transport as follows:

“Pepper, Sara’s assistance dog was sat on the floor in the front of the car, she was a light beige coloured toy poodle, and Sal, Joan’s assistance dog, a golden retriever, sat silently in the boot of the car. We drove to the training centre about 30 minutes away and both assistance dogs remained in the ‘settle’ for the entire journey ...” (Fieldwork Diary, 270220).

Both Pepper and Sal completed the ‘settle’ exercise within the car over a long duration. Completing this task shows their tolerance and socialisation to the car, its noises, and its enclosed spatiality. Furthermore, this example gives an insight into the level of training that the partnerships had already completed before observing training at the training class.

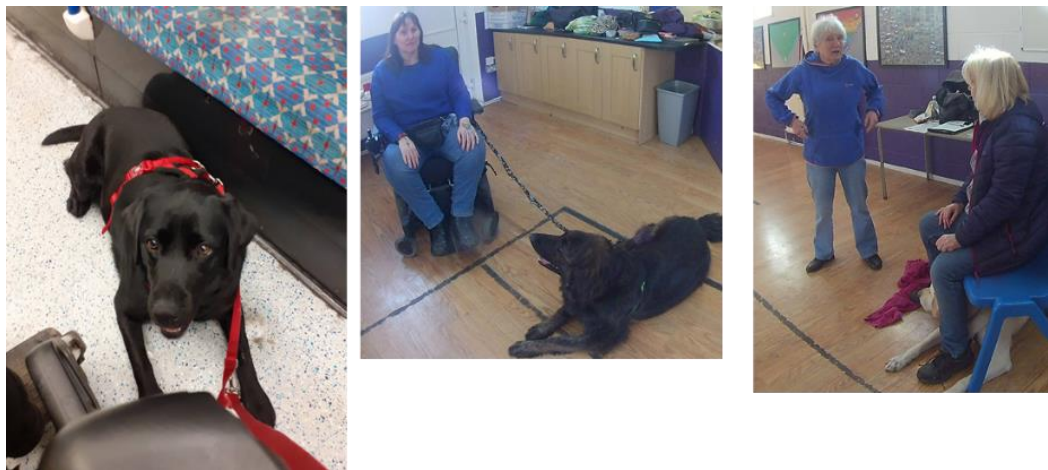


Figure 47: Left to right - Image 1: ‘settle’ on public transport. Image 2: ‘settle’ in a training centre. Image 3: ‘settle’ in a training centre.

The third exercise group builds on the assistance dog’s independence from the human. Two important exercises are the dog’s ability to cope with being left alone and the dog’s ability to cope when being taken away from the owner. These exercises build on the dog’s socialisation and habituation, as well as their ability to perform exercises if they are with another person. The close bond between human and assistance dog makes this task a challenge as both spend the large amount of the day together (Eason, 2020), but here they are spatially parted and other humans introduced. At the training class I became directly involved in the exercise of a dog being left alone with another person, me. In the diary abstract below I detail an account of being asked to walk someone’s dog across the carpark as they move their car closer to the entrance of the training centre for greater ease of access, and so as not to get the inside of their car muddy and wet. I was the only option for this exercise as the two other participant both had their dogs with them. The exercise occurred as follows:

“Pepper was very muddy so Sara did not want to let her into the car and instead asked me if I would walk Pepper over to the centre, a short walk across the carpark. Sara explained that this can act as part of Pepper’s training as Pepper needs to get used to Sara not being in the room or being walked by other people. I felt nervous but obliged and asked what cues to use when walking with Pepper. Sara explained [that,] when Pepper stops and turns around to look for her, say ‘come’ and if she did to verbally praise her. I began to walk over with Pepper, and she began jumping up and turning around, her body language was alert and she vocalised loudly – a whimpering sound. I said, ‘Pepper come’ clearly and firmly and she followed and walked after which I immediately praised her with a ‘well done Pepper’ in a positive happy voice. The process was repeated two or three times ... before we got to the door of the centre. As the duration of the task increased, Pepper’s anxious body language subsided. I asked Pepper to ‘sit’ and ‘wait’ as Sara got out the car. Pepper did so and as soon as she got sight of Sara began to jump up and vocalise loudly. Sara was extremely happy with Pepper shouting well done to her and praising her and giving her a treat” (Field Diary, 270220).

The above encounter between myself, Sara, and Pepper, entailed training through a triad rather than usual dyad. In this exercise I became actively involved in the training between Sara and Pepper in an attempt to socialise and habituate Pepper to being left with another person and to

complete exercises with them. Throughout the exercise Pepper expressed anxious behaviour due to being left with myself, through her whimpering vocalisations, alert body, and jumpy actions. Through my use of positive reinforcement, asking Pepper to ‘come’ and verbally praising her, rather than forcefully dragging her to the other side of the carpark, Pepper’s anxious body language eased as the duration of the task continued and she was met with overwhelming praise from Sara. Separation anxiety is prominent with dogs, as indicated here by Pepper’s vocalisations and restlessness (Lund & Jørgensen, 1999), but more work needs to be done to explore this matter with assistance dogs as, arguably, human and assistance animal spend so much time together that any time apart is likely to be a highly anxious experience for the dogs. Furthermore, experiences of separation anxiety need to be explored with retired assistance dogs as their relationship with their human changes when the human becomes partnered with a successor dog (Ng & Fine, 2019), and then again there is the specific impact that COVID-19 lockdown has had on experiences of separation anxiety (see, for example, Holland et al., 2021). When attending this training class, I never intended to become an active participant in the training. My initial feelings of anxiety at being involved in the training of assistance dog, and being briefly left alone with the dog, stemmed from a fear of doing something wrong. Having never actively trained a dog beyond teaching my own pet dog to ‘sit’, ‘lie down’, and ‘stay’, this was a new experience for me. Sara showed a level of trust with me in leaving Pepper in my care, albeit for a brief amount of time. I think my position as a researcher of assistance dog training led to Sara positioning me as an ‘insider’ in the assistance dog world and thus being capable of doing this exercise.

The fourth exercise group requires both human and assistance dog to walk together appropriately using a lead. Dog walking, whilst seemingly straightforward, is subject to a range of procedural competencies (Laurier et al. 2006) that often relate to dogs being kept under control (Brown & Dilley, 2012); and, in terms of assistance dogs, the aim is to keep both human and dog safe whilst still facilitating nonhuman work. The unescapable fact about the lead is that it is a technology of control, signifying the unequal relationship between human and animal (although this is not always the case with disabled person as discussed below⁸³). Humans and assistance dogs must learn how to walk together in a controlled and appropriate manner both on the lead and off the lead, or when the lead is dropped. The task requirements state that the “dog should be attentive and not pulling ... equipment to be suitable and comfortable [and] dog to be self-correcting and owner to work without repeated verbal communication” (Dog A.I.D., 2017b: 2). The dog being attentive and not pulling on the lead incorporates the assistance dog’s ability to provide caring work and acts as a safety measure for the human. For a guide dog owner not pulling on the lead and being attentive in providing spatial navigation is the dog’s fundamental role in the partnership (Arathoon, 2018; Stevenson, 2013). For diabetes alert dogs walking inappropriately and being non-attentive could potentially lead to a missed olfactory alert of a hypoglycaemic reaction

⁸³ Also see **Chapter 2** for a greater discuss on power relations and control in dog training.

(Eason, 2020). For Dog A.I.D. clients and participants of this research, pulling on a lead or being non-attentive can lead to injury, especially for participants who require their dogs to help with balance (see a later section in this chapter) or for participants with muscle pain, nerve damage, or stiffness. Hence, the ‘physical’ power may often be with the assistance dogs in these relationships and due to this, dogs are required to walk with a loose lead, as shown in **Figure 48**.



Figure 48: June and Quake walking together with a loose lead.

Walking with a loose lead helps show the human’s control over the dog, demonstrating that the human is managing the situation and controlling the walk. Furthermore, loose-lead walking shows that the dog has been socialised and familiarised to being on the lead and to the noises, smells, and sights of social stimuli when on the lead. This situation can be seen in **Figure 49**, where June is asking Quake to ‘wait’ whilst another dog goes past when Quake is on the lead. This acts as a form of distraction training when on the lead and the image shows eye contact and active communication and ‘listening’ between June and Quake. Although the behaviour of the other dog (and their owner) cannot necessarily be controlled or anticipated, Quake’s experiences through socialisation and familiarisation (thus how she reacts to other dogs), comes into effect as a mechanism of control and ‘appropriate’ behaviour or appropriate dog-assistance-dog engagement.



Figure 49: Waiting will another human and dog walk past.

The second part of the Dog A.I.D. quote requires dogs to be comfortable with the equipment and for the equipment to be suitable. Materials and equipment enable the walk to occur as “walking is not done unequipped”; rather, the clicker, the harness, “... the lead, the path, the ball, or stick, the reward, are a basic lexicon and/or store of oriented-objects or equipment for this practice” (Laurier et al., 2006: 20). The materials used entangle human and animal together into becoming a hybrid: human-harness-dog or ‘hudogledog’ (human-doglead-dog: Michael, 2012, cited in Laurier et al., 2006: 20). Rachel and Emma discuss how the change in equipment had helped Amber’s body language during walking:

“E: So, you can see it’s kind of busier in Marks⁸⁴.

R: She still looks relaxed though, compared to when we first started looking at videos of her, her body language, it’s so much better without the head holder on. She looks much happier.

E: Yeah.

⁸⁴ Marks – Marks and Spencer’s (supermarket).

R: Bless her with all the gear with their lead sleeves that are hardest at her jacket and a little bow tie. She's got so like a full-blown outfit on.

E: Yeah.

R: At least she doesn't treat it like Buckeroo and the more things you put on, she gets more frustrated, [but] she's coping with it all well.

E: Yeah no, she quite likes it. When it's cold outside, she literally refuses before you, if you don't put a jumper on her" (Emma and Rachel, Online Training Class).

Removing the 'head holder', which restricts movement and goes over the dog's head and face, helped Amber be more relaxed and happier when walking. Rachel is quick to point out Amber's change in behaviour, indicating it as something positive within Emma and Amber's relationship. The conversation goes on to other forms of materials as Rachel expresses joy about the various items that Amber wears and interacts with. Emma points out Amber's subjective experience of these items, linking a dislike for cold weather with a want to wear a jumper, arguably a subtle extension of care between human and assistance dog (a theme to be revisited later in this thesis).

The third point from the Dog A.I.D. quote, and the most difficult, is for the dog to be correcting itself whilst walking, rather than needing constant input from the human. What 'walking correctly' means is subjective and dependent on each partnership. Dogs would normally be required to match the pace of the human, not walk slower or faster, and would largely be required to walk to the side and slightly in front of the human. Humans correcting this behaviour might occur like the following:

"Yeah, usually when I when I'm walking, if she goes too far, I just kind of take a circle" (Emma, Online Training Class).

Emma indicates an attempt to correct Amber's walking by walking back around in a circle to the start of where the inappropriate walking behaviour began, a method used when dogs walk too far ahead and meant to be a way of correcting the walk. A common way dogs may begin to self-correct whilst walking is through looking up, or checking back, to the human when walking, as shown in **Figure 50**. This looking acts as both a form of attentiveness and a checkpoint for where the human is and whether to slow down, speed up, or reorientate. **Figure 50** also shows how the materiality of the walk – in this case best illustrated through Michael's (2012) phrase 'hudogleadog' – can impact what it means to 'walk correctly'. The materiality of the physical connection of the lead – at once a tool of unequal power and control – changes the spatiality of the task, physically restricting the spatiality between human and dog. In **Figure 50** image two June's wheelchair also plays a key material role in their training of loose lead walking. The lead and wheelchair work together to facilitate the walk, changing the spatiality of the task – through their proximity to one another – but also the temporality of the task – through the wheelchairs mechanical motor. Completing the three points within the Dog A.I.D. quote allows humans and dogs to walk together safely, essential for when humans and assistance dogs access spaces such as shops once qualified.



Figure 50: Left to right - Image 1: Amber checking up for Emma's position. Image 2: Quake checking on June's position.

The fifth exercise group is about the dog's behaviour in public space when off the lead, since the assistance dog is required to be kept under control when off the lead in public spaces. This 'control' may take the form of a dog walking, sitting, standing, or lying down next to the human when off the lead, the controlling aim being to stop any unwanted expression of the 'wild' or 'unruly' within public space (K. Anderson, 1997). One way this control is exerted is through the recall – literally re-call – exercise, whereby a dog is required to return to the owner when the first cue, normally the dog's name, or 'here', is called. Like all the other exercises, recall is trained through the 4 D's method. First the task is started in the garden and then moved to public space like a park or field which the partnership regularly inhabits. The task involves calling the dog's name and, when they return, clicking the clicker and rewarding the dog. The click and reward need to be done at the right time to ensure that the dog knows the reward is for returning in answer to the cue. To move this task from the private enclosed space of the garden to the open public space of a park can be challenging, as various distractions and stimuli may be present and uncontrollable. Kim recounts advice that she normally gave to handlers when they first start the recall task:

“Now normally I would say you need somebody to help when you first let the dog off and you call the dog back: it's not that the dog doesn't want to come back too, it's just that it gets off the lead and suddenly it's free and it sees another dog and it will go and say hi and you can't go get it back ... so that's when you need somebody else to help in the situation ...” (Kim, Trainer, IR).

Kim's advice is to help prevent the potentiality of the assistance dog not returning and the human being unable to get them back. Having the extra person there can thus be helpful to handlers who have limited mobility and cannot move across grass or wet surfaces. Furthermore, Kim explains

the assistance dog's behaviour through a desire to socialise, to engage in their 'natural' behaviour – a tendency to 'flight' – when off the lead, rather than them not wanting to be with the human. This 'natural' behaviour is of course opposed to the process of training and domestication which aims to remove their unruly or wild instincts (K. Anderson, 1997). Having the extra person to assist with the recall task can help to control or manage any potential expressions of such unruly, wild 'doggy' behaviour. It is this flight nature that Elizabeth expresses as hesitancy about letting Ace off the lead to practice recall:

“That was the hardest [recall] because I was frightened of letting him off and him not coming back ...” (Elizabeth, IR).

Fear of the dog not returning on a recall is a major concern for some participants, the potential loss of the assistance dog and the 'lifeline' that they provide making the practice of recall seriously anxiety-inducing. The difficulty increases further due to distractions. In public spaces dogs may interact with other animals and humans, increasing their desire to chase or socialise. June describes that she is:

“... practicing recalls at the moment, especially when its busy and there is seagulls or squirrels ... Quake was actually really good because yesterday I called her back – what was she doing? she was trying to get a squirrel that went up a tree – and I just went “Quake, leave it alone!” and she like looked at me and came running back to me and sat down next to my wheelchair and looked at me as if to say “okay, I'll leave the squirrel” ...” (June, IR).

The success of the recall training was expressed through Quake returning to June when asked and sitting down next to her, and it is telling that June deployed the animal voice to characterise how she interpreted Quake's positive response to the recall cue when looking up at her human companion. Completing a recall when distractions are present was also an eureka moment for Mark:

“Well, I knew when we cracked it [recall] and we were out on the moors, a rabbit popped up in front of us, she teared off after the rabbit and I just put the command in and she were straight back” (Mark, IR).

Completing a recall even in the face of distractions such as squirrels and rabbits is seen as the conclusive proof that an assistance dog knows the exercise and will perform it when asked, whatever the environment and happenings of the moment.

Then next step from the recall is to learn how to complete an emergency stop. An emergency stop is a difficult exercise to train, requiring the dog to stop immediately where it is and 'sit', 'stand', or 'lie down'. Different from the recall, emergency stop requires the dog to 'stay' where they are and *not* return to the owner. Emergency stop acts as a safety measure if a dog was about to run into a road, a body of water, or the like, or any other potential hazard was about to occur. The Dog A.I.D. *Level Two handbook* outlines three different methods for training an emergency stop (also known as 'distance control' or 'down at a distance'). **Textbox 6** shows the first method: Double Handling. Double Handling requires two people, with the assistance dog on a lead held

by a person who is not its handler. Drawing on the ‘down’ exercise, the handler will say the cue ‘down’ and the dog is meant to lie down and not move over to the handler, their movement of course being restricted by a lead which the other person is holding. It is made clear that no punitive methods should be used to stop the dog returning, such as pulling the dog back. The main concern with the emergency stop is teaching the dog to ‘lie down’ or ‘stand’ still where they are rather than return to their human. Once the task is completed to a decent level, the 4 D’s method is used as the difficulty increases through the handler and non-handler switching roles, the distance increasing, and the dog completing the task off the lead. Once this is completed in a space such as the garden, the exercise is then be done in different public spaces. Again here, the lead acts as a tool of power. Furthermore, the spatial proximity from the human partner, and the close emotional bond shared between can be quite distressful for the dog, as outlined in the field dairy extract above.

Textbox 6: Distance Control Method 1 - Double Handling.

For this exercise you will need two people, ‘A’ and ‘B’.

Step 1. ‘A’ has dog on lead, this is to act as an anchor so that the dog is restricted from moving towards the person giving the down command. ‘A’ has treats.

‘B’ with clicker moves a few feet away and asks the dog to ‘lie down’. at this point the dog may move towards ‘B’ but the lead will restrain him *do not pull him back or speak, be patient and wait*. When dog responds ‘B’ clicks and ‘A’ rewards. Reverse the roles so that the command is coming from the other person.

Step 2. When dog is responding confidently, gradually increase the distance, approximately 2 metres.

Step 3. Now take the exercise to other areas starting at Stage 1 again.

Step 4. Repeat from Step 1 but lay the lead on the ground, if the dog moves forward put your foot on the lead.

Step 5. Repeat with dog off lead.

(Dog A.I.D., 2017b: 13).

The second method, targeting, is outlined in **Textbox 7**. This method requires a target, normally a mat or towel, and the ability to throw a treat, whilst the click of the clicker reinforces the dog returning and lying down on the target. As the duration of training increases, the distance of the human from the dog increases and distractions are built into the task. Making the target smaller or removing the target altogether increases the difficulty of the task further.

Textbox 7: Distance Control Method 2 - Targeting

Step 1. Using an old towel teach your dog to lay down on it next to you, click and throw the treat away from the dog so that he has to get up to get it. (Targeting)

When he has eaten the treat wait to see if he goes back to the mat to lay down. Repeat until the dog is confidently going back to the mat each time you throw the treat.

Step 2. Now begin to move away from the mat, increasing the distance in small increments so that the dog is working at a distance.

Step 3. Begin throwing the treats nearer to you until you drop them at your feet or give from the hand.

Step 4. Now you can begin saying your down command as the dog reaches the mat just before the dog lays down. Repeat the exercise until you have at least 2 metres between you.

Step 5. Start to build in distractions by doing all 3 steps in another area.

Step 6. Now begin to make the target towel smaller until it is almost non-existent.

Step 7. When you are confident, he knows the command try without the target. If he doesn't respond you have gone too far too fast, go back a few steps.

(Dog A.I.D., 2017b: 14).

The third method, the throw, works in a similar way and is outlined in **Textbox 8**. For the throw method, the click and reward are marked for looking at the hand gesture: the dog's ability to 'stay' where they are and carry on looking at the hand is the critical part. Again, as duration of training increases the distance between the dog and human increases. Adding the down cue with the hand gesture and clicking once completed reinforces the behaviour, whilst going to the dog to reward them is added. This movement might create confusion once done the first time but going back a step should help the dog understand what is required. Doing this in a different space with potential distractions is required to solidify the training. Hannah, on the one hand, shares her experience of training an emergency stop with Missy:

"When I need her to stop normally, I tell her to 'leave' ... but of course an emergency stop needs to be more definitive, and I have to plonk her down on the spot ... I am pleased because she didn't come back. I can still throw, unlike some of the clients. So, I can throw her reward, so she doesn't come back to me. So, it might be difficult if you couldn't throw because you need to be able to reward your dog, but you don't need them to return to you" (Hannah, IR).

Hannah outlines how her capability in throwing helped her to train the emergency stop and how, without it, she would have found this part of the training more difficult. Dawn, on the other hand, discusses her difficulties in training the emergency stop exercise with Bella:

"Well, it [emergency stop] was difficult in a sense that I can't see, so if the dog is a distance away from me, I don't know if she is doing a 'sit', a down, or if she is standing. So, in that sense because it is a very visual thing ... it wasn't necessarily difficult, it was only so because of me being blind. So, for example, you were supposed to stop the dog and walk up to the dog to praise her and give her a treat. But if I don't know where she is, that's quite hard ... [A]t the time [during training] my trainer took my arm, walked up to Bella, and gave her the treat. What I do now if I stop her, I listen to see if she has waited because she wears bells on her collar. Then I call her to me. It's not technically how you should do it, but it is easier for me" (Dawn, IR).

Dawn positions the emergency stop exercise as a particular visual practice at odds with her blindness, which meant that she and her trainer effectively reorientated the double handling method (**Textbox 6**) in the service of training an emergency stop. Dawn relied on her trainer to confirm that Bella had stopped and sat or lay down, and to walk her to where Bella was to be rewarded. This example shows a reorientation of required training to fit better with Dawn's embodied experience of blindness. Dawn also gives an insight into how the partnership completes an emergency stop now they are qualified, with Dawn relying on her auditory senses to hear whether Bella is still and on duration before calling her back.

There were also discrepancies in the use of language and verbal cues for the emergency stop. As previously stated, Hannah uses the cue 'leave' when signifying a stop rather than saying 'stop', the former normally being used for food refusal, whilst Samantha also indicates using a different cue for an emergency stop:

"Bertie is bilingual [laughing] ... We found he does not react to stop whatsoever; stop is not a word that makes an impression. But, if I say 'warte', which means he has to stop and wait he does that at the edge of the road and, if I do it in the woods, he will stop dead" (Samantha, IR).

Samantha's use of the cue 'warte' (German for 'wait') is due to Bertie's response to the cue. The cue 'stop' gained no response, but Samantha's 'warte', spoken during interview in a very soft tone, gained an immediate response from him in different spatial settings. The change of the cue indicates Samantha's deep-seated recognition of Bertie's very particular capacities for agency, as well as highlighting the mutuality of their relationship.

Text Box 8: Distance Control Method 3 - The Throw.

You will need some treats big enough to throw and an area with a wall behind like a hallway so the dog cannot move away. Lay a lead or piece of rope on the floor in front of the dog parallel with the wall. The object is to keep the dog behind the marker.

Step 1. Standing in front of the marker, hold the treat high in the air, as the dog looks at the hand, click and throw the treat behind the dog. Be ready for the dog to look back at you as he does raise the hand again and mark looking at the hand with a click and throw the treat again. Repeat a few times.

Step 2. Begin taking a step back increasing the distance by small increments. The raised hand should keep the dog behind the lead and the treats will help to reinforce this as that is where the reward is accessed.

Step 3. Once you feel the dog understands the raised hand means 'stay where you are' you can begin to ask for a down before you click. Continue to throw the food behind the dog.

Step 4. When you feel the dog is confident in stopping and laying down you can begin to click and go to him to reward him so that he remains where you have stopped him.

Step 5. Do all steps in another area e.g. garden fence/wall.

(Dog A.I.D., 2017b: 15).

The sixth exercise requires an assistance dog to toilet when asked. **Textbox 9** outlines toileting requirements for assistance dogs from the Level One Dog A.I.D. handbook, where it is stated that dogs must toilet in appropriate areas such as on grass or pavement. When asked to stop doing otherwise, the assistance dog is supposed immediately to desist toileting inappropriately.

Furthermore, there is emphasis placed on potential human inability to clean up after the dog. These requirements outline the ‘out-of-place’ nature of dog waste in public spaces (Carolan, 2007; Instone & Sweeney, 2014). There is a push for dogs to toilet in appropriate, private, or ‘less visible’, spaces away from public space. Furthermore, the requirements highlight a moral responsibility for humans to dispose of their dog’s waste and thus be a responsible dog owner (Brown & Dilley, 2012; Instone & Sweeney, 2014). This moral responsibility was expressed by handlers during an encounter at a training class:

“Sal went the toilet in the middle of the park and Joan went to clean up the waste. Assistance dog owners do not have to pick up dog litter by law, but Sara explained that both herself and Joan always clean up after their dogs because it is a moral responsibility. To do this Joan called Sal over and used his specially designed harness to steady herself and move slowly over the mud and grass towards the dog waste. She then promptly cleaned it up and then used Sal for balance back towards the path” (Fieldwork Diary, 270220).

The moral responsibility taken by Joan and Sal is expressed through a form of civic duty, or care, for others in the park. The requirements of toileting for assistance dogs fits an overall trend of animal bodies and animal waste products being unwelcome beyond the home and garden (Carolan, 2007; Philo, 1995). Whilst assistance dogs have access right to across public space, the toileting requirements aim to limit unwanted (wild) animal actions in human space, a very graphic illustration of how the animality of the assistance dogs, as all dogs in human spaces, is subject to powerful de-animalising tendencies.

Text Box 9: Toileting requirements for Assistance Dogs.

“Dogs must learn to toilet in appropriate areas. If dogs can be taught to use different surfaces when instructed, it makes the likelihood of the dog toileting inappropriately, less likely.

Clients may not be able to pick after their dogs when they are off the lead, so may need the dog to toilet before leaving home.

For clients who can manage to pick up but are not able to travel across grass to locate any toilet, dogs should get used to toileting when on the lead.

Male dogs need to learn not to scent mark when on the lead”.

(Dog A.I.D., 2017a: 25).

The final exercise, food refusal, is important for several reasons. First, certain foods are poisonous and dangerous for dogs to consume, so assistance dogs must learn not to scavenge or accept food from strangers. Second, as assistance dogs have public rights accesses, the assistance dog must learn not to take food from tables or from the ground in restaurants or shops. Third, taking food when working can distract the dog from the task at hand, so food should only be given to the assistance dog from the handler. Dog A.I.D. outline two ways in their *Level Two Handbook* whereby a partnership might go about training food refusal. **Textboxes 10** and **11** show two different ways to train food refusal. The method in **Textbox 10** requires the dog to be off-lead and work on leaving treats from a closed and open hand, as well as leaving treats placed on the floor. **Textbox 11** shows a more difficult method of training the exercise on-lead and the

participant throwing the treat, requiring greater mobility on the part of the handler and thus making the task slightly harder. Both the outlined methods initially start in a comfortable home environment using both a clicker and the 4 D's method. As the duration of the exercise increases, the difficulty of the task, as well as the distance and distractions, become increasingly challenging. Both methods require the human to have knowledge of the foods that their assistance dog values and to train through their dog's desire for the food, and it is this intimate cross-species knowledge of a dog's likes that allows the training to function (Smith et al., 2021). The difficulty of the two different methods lies in the human's reactions to their dog's behaviour and the different forms of mobility required for both methods, as well as the dog's temptation for the food. Doing the task in different spaces, with higher value treats, increases the difficulty further, but allows the exercise to become strong through association with higher value treats. The change in space allows the exercise to be practised in a more demanding environment as Carla explains:

“[The] food café there [at the shopping centre] ... is good for food refusal because [of] the amount of food that is usually under the table when the children are eating; that was good to know that he would not pick up the food ...” (Carla, IR).

Text Box 10: Food Refusal Method 1

“Step 1. Dog off lead. Using boring dry treats, put one in a closed hand (make a fist). Put hand at dog's level. The dog will sniff, paw and try to get it. The moment the dog stops click and reward with a treat from the other hand. Gradually you will see the dog move away from the closed hand as he realises that moving away is the action that gets the click/treat.

At no time use any command or verbal encouragement. In fact, do the whole thing in silence. Do not go on to the next stage until you are confident the dog will step back as the hand nears him.

Step 2. Next step is holding the treat in an open hand. Exactly the same procedure. If the dog moves forward close the hand. Remember, no verbal communication.

Step 3. Put treat on the floor (or a low surface) be ready to cover it with your hand or foot if your dog moves forward.

Step 4. Do all 3 steps in different rooms.

Step 5. Do all 4 steps using the higher value treats.

Step 6. Go back to step 1, now you can predict the dog will offer to move away use your leave command just prior to him doing it. Use a clear, quiet, voice. Work through the steps using your command.

Now your dog should be beginning to associate the word with the deed. **That does not mean he fully understands it yet.** Try the exercise in the garden. Do not do it if there are other animals about at this stage.” (Dog A.I.D., 2017b: 10-11).

The distractions and spatial setting of the café allowed for a greater challenge towards developing the ‘leave it’ exercise with Buzz. Carla expresses that Buzz completing food refusal in the space of the café really allowed her to trust and know that Buzz would not pick up food. The introduction of the cue ‘leave it’ does not occur until the exercise has been complete to a required level in different spaces. Finally, completing the task with distractions once the word has been associated with the exercise allows for the replication of a potential real encounter for the partnership. Distractions make the exercise harder to complete, as Elizabeth describes:

“The food refusal we’ve got trouble with as well because they [grandchildren] keep feeding him ... They are very good at giving him crisps when I am not around” (Elizabeth, IR).

Elizabeth describes how adding the distraction into the food refusal training has made the exercise difficult, requiring greater awareness of the situation and exactly what is occurring. Food refusal is an important exercise for an assistance dog and, as Greenebaum (2010: 139) outlines, “the goal of this skill is for the dog to learn that if they listen to the guardian, they will be rewarded ...”.

Socialisation and habituation are processes in which human and animal partnerships develop behavioural responses to stimuli, operating at the boundary of pet and assistance animal, and indicating the start of the formal assistance dog training. The life skills exercises are an important stage of the training relationship between human and assistance dog. Life skills develop the relationship between human and assistance dog and help partnerships learn many of the mandatory requirements needed for assistance dog qualification. The life skills exercises can be seen as a process of co-learning and becoming (Haraway, 2003, 2008), an inherently pedagogical practice where both human and animal are learning together to become a partnership. However, the training is inherently spatial and temporal in nature, relying on proximity and duration changes at all stages for all tasks for their operation. Furthermore, other geographies involved from leads,

Text Box 11: Food Refusal Method 2.

“If you are in a wheelchair and not able to reach the floor to pick up the thrown treats you may need a second person to help with this exercise.

Step 1. With dog on lead throw a dry treat on the ground out of reach of the dog. The dog will move forward but the lead will prevent him getting the treat. At no time pull the lead or speak. The lead will tighten, but wait. Eventually he will turn to look at you. As soon as he does click and treat with a higher value treat. Repeat this until the dog is looking at you as soon as the treat is thrown.

Never allow the dog to pick up the treat from the floor as a reward, the reward should always come from you.

Step 2. Do this in different areas, another room, the garden, someone else’s house.

Step 3. Begin to drop treat nearer and nearer. Be sure of your dog’s capability, if the dog gets the treat it is your fault not the dog’s. You have progressed too far too fast. If this happens, go back to Step 1.

Step 4. Repeat Steps 1,2 and 3 and as your dog looks back at you say your ‘leave’ command in a clear, quiet voice. Your dog should be beginning to associate the word with the deed.

That does not mean he fully understands it yet.

Step 5. Repeat Steps 1, 2, 3 and 4 using higher value treats.

Step 6. Drop a low value treat beside or in front of the dog. Click and reward with high value.

Step 7. Throw a low value treat and walk your dog past it.

Step 8. When you are confident that your dog will look at you when you say your command you will need to set up situations. Food on a low table, food at the edge of a worktop, food in the garden, dropped food on the pavement. Each situation needs to be practised as your dog will not necessarily generalise the behaviour to another area.” (Dog AID, n.d., 11-12).

treats, people, animals, stimuli, and other encounters encompassed in the training test human and dog and their ‘co-becoming’ (Haraway, 2003, 2008).

Tasks

Task training forms part of the second and third stage of assistance dog training at Dog A.I.D.. This is the stage at which handlers and dogs start learning individual tasks that are important to the handler’s needs. As Nina explains:

“... Assistance dog tasks tend to focus on one of three things, they either tug something, push something, or bring it to you” (Nina, Trainer, IR).

I broadly agree with this statement but would also include tasks requiring touch and certain other tasks which do not fit into the categories above. Therefore, in this section I explore four categories: bringing items, which also involves the processes of finding, retrieving, and picking up items; tasks requiring touching or pushing objects; pulling objects; and a final category of tasks not fitting these other categories or descriptors. The four sections will outline each of these tasks individually, drawing on graphic transcripts to explore *how* these tasks are trained, learned, and enacted by human and animal participants. Furthermore, these sections look at how the tasks are trained, but it is worth noting that some partnerships were already qualified and were ‘performing’ the task for me, whilst others were doing a task for the first time or refreshing the task exercise. In addition, graphic transcripts were also limited to tasks which I observed and recorded, as not all tasks are relevant to each individual partnership or were being trained at the time when I attended training sessions.

Find/retrieve/pick-up/bring

Working on a dog’s retrieval ability begins at the earlier stage of the human-assistance-dog training relationship. Retrieval occurs through play, with dogs bringing named items to humans such as a ball, rope, or frisbee. Play develops a dog’s skills for training as it builds on the dog’s natural ability to retrieve or ‘hunt’, something important for other working dogs (Knight & Sang, 2020; Smith et al., 2021), and playing through games sustains the dog’s and handler’s fun during the training. Finding, retrieving, picking up, and bringing items are crucial tasks for many participants: 18 of the 19 Dog A.I.D. clients responded to the questionnaire indicating that their dogs pick items up for them. In the general assistance dog population questionnaire 32, 30, and 26, participants indicated that their dogs bring, pick up, or find items, respectively. Megan describes that:

“For me, Sam picking things up is one of the most important tasks he does. In doing this, he stops my hips from partially dislocating from the act of bending down ...” (Megan, QR).

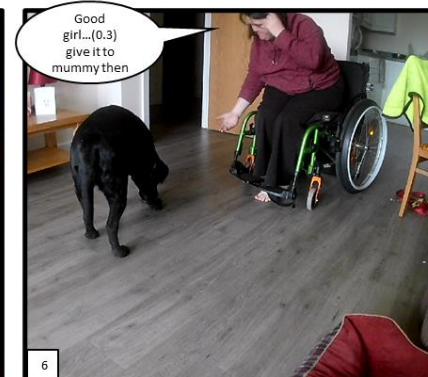
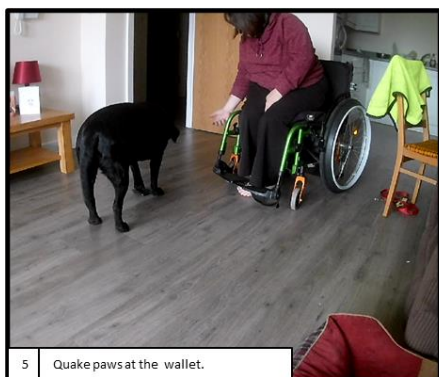
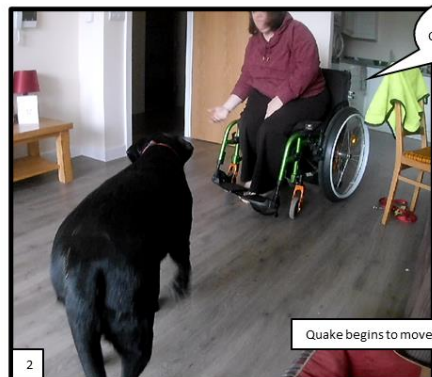
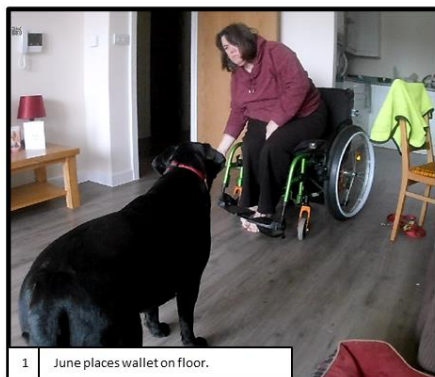
Sam thereby acts as a sentient aid for Megan, going beyond the material nonhuman object of a reacher-grabber that would require greater human mobility. I now explore how humans and dogs train together to pick up, find, and bring items.

Graphic Transcript 1 shows an example of Quake picking up a dropped wallet for June. In the video clip (Panel 1) of the training exercise, the start of the ‘pick up’ task is indicated by June wheeling backwards and dropping the wallet on the floor. As June moves backwards, eye contact between herself and Quake is maintained. As June drops the wallet Quake watches her hand move and the wallet drop to the floor. Quake begins to move towards the wallet before June gives the cue ‘Quake, pass it’. Quake’s action in moving forward before the cue is given indicates her prior training in recognising that June is inviting her to pick up the wallet. Furthermore, the drop of the wallet, eye contact and verbal cue all act as an invitation for an embodied interaction between June and Quake (Laurier et al., 2006).

When the cue is given (Panels 2 and 3), June’s hand is in a position to receive the wallet from Quake, acting as a gesture for the ‘pass it’ cue and providing Quake with a further visual confirmation of the task. When Quake walks over to the wallet, her tail wags slightly as she first begins to move the wallet with her nose. In Panel 4 June repeats the cue, asking Quake, ‘can you pass it?’ June’s hand remains out to receive the wallet and her eyes remain on Quake, who is focused on the wallet. On the repeat of the cue, Quake paws at the wallet twice, moving it away from June. June is quick to praise Quake for the action, saying ‘good girl, give it to mummy then’. With this praise, Quake picks up the wallet in her mouth. In one motion flicking her head forward, Quake attempts to put the wallet in June’s hand. In doing so the wallet falls to the floor (Panel 8), but part remains sticking upwards providing an easier point for Quake to grasp in her mouth. As Quake is reaching for the wallet again, June says ‘that’s it, in my hand’, providing further direction for Quake. At the second attempt Quake manages to lift the wallet by the flap and place it in June’s hand. As June receives the wallet, she begins praising Quake saying ‘thank you’ in an extended high-pitched voice. As June is saying thank you, she turns to grab Quake’s reward off the table. As June is completing this praise and movement, Quake’s eyes are fixed on June’s reaching hand. This indicates Quake’s anticipation of a reward which comes in panel 12 as June gives Quake ‘squirty cheese’ and praises her further, saying ‘good girl’. The reward, and verbal praise throughout, act as a spatio-temporal event where the act of rewarding is placed on the human and is timed to provide reinforcement for the completed behaviour and to conclude the task (Laurier et al., 2006).

This training encounter took place over an 18 second period. The interaction between June and Quake shows a cross-species performance and a strengthening of the task, ‘picking up items’, that they had already begun to learn together. The task comprises a group of training actions where human, and dog must learn to respond to one another. These actions and responses can be seen through the clear verbal expressions and physical comportments of the human and animal bodies

involved, as well as more subtle intricacies such as sustained eye contact between June and Quake. The actions and responses throughout the training encounter help to form June and Quake's cross-species communication as they read one another's body language and hence cooperate to complete the task (Despret, 2013; Haraway, 2003, 2008).



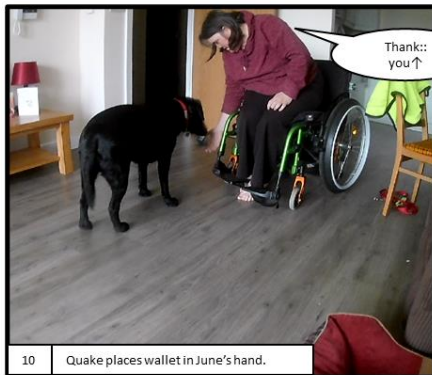
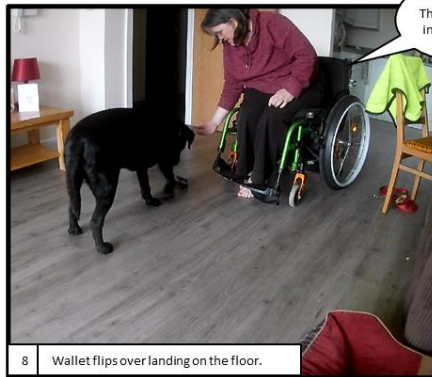
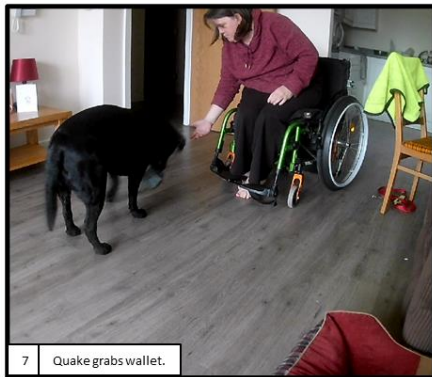
Transcript 1: Picking up a dropped item.

... Pause in Speech

(0.5) Time speech paused (s)

: Extenuation of last letter

↑ High pitch



Transcript 1 : Picking up a dropped item.

... Pause in Speech
(0.5) Time speech paused (s)
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↑ High pitch

As well as picking up dropped items, human-assistance-dog partnerships may also train together to find and bring named items. **Graphic Transcript 2** shows an example of Beth and Daisy performing the find and bring task for one named item, 'phone'. In the video clip the task is initiated by Beth, who puts her hand to her chest saying 'Oh, I need help'. Daisy, who is shaking in Panel 1, stops still at the sight on the gesture and the sound of Beth talking. Daisy's eyes engage, and Daisy expresses an alert body posture with her tail up and wagging and ears back. Upon Daisy standing to attention, Beth begins to give the cue 'phone' and point towards the telephone (Panels 3 and 4). Again, before Beth completes the verbal cue, Daisy begins to move towards the telephone to her right. Daisy's anticipation here creates a miscommunication as Beth says 'no, this way' and claps her hands to gain Daisy's attention. The light one and a half second clap, along with the spatial cue 'up', gives Daisy direction from down by the right side of the couch to go up on to the couch. Further direction is given again when Daisy begins to move round to her starting position and Beth again says 'up', this time accompanying it with an 'up' gesture (Panels 8 and 9). Daisy jumps up on to the couch with her front legs resting on the back of the couch. At the instance of Daisy jumping up, Beth repeats the cue 'phone' twice as Daisy's head moves from left to right, tail alert and wagging. As Daisy's head move slightly towards the phone, Beth says 'yes', which acts as confirmation of the task. In response to this confirmation, Daisy turns her head to the right and takes two attempts to grab the phone. The beep of the phone and the lighting of the screen act as a visual and auditory cue to the ethnographer that Daisy has grasped the phone in her mouth before she quickly turns to her left towards Beth. As Daisy turns, she lands on her front two legs and lowers her head down to Beth's hands. Daisy steps forward in response to Beth saying thank you and places the phone in Beth's hand. Beth continues verbally praising Daisy by saying 'thank you, well done' and clicks a button on the phone whilst placing it on the table next to her.

Beth continues the praise by saying well done and she creates eye contact with Daisy (Panel 14). In response Daisy initiates the completion of the task by moving her nose towards the pouch which Beth is wearing, one containing treats. Unlike the previous task in which the human initiates the reward, Daisy's movement here can be seen as concluding the training and wanting to be rewarded for the task completion (Laurier et al., 2006). In response, Beth points to the floor and asks Daisy to 'get down'. Beth repeats the cue 'down' quickly, and Daisy responds by jumping and standing in front of Beth, looking up at her. Beth replies quickly with the cue 'sit'. As Daisy begins to 'sit', Beth moves her hand to get a reward for Daisy. Daisy watches Beth's hand move towards the pouch and becomes fixed on it. As Beth goes to pass Daisy the treat, Daisy's hindquarters rise slightly off the ground, and she leans forward to get the reward.

Throughout the video clip the quick movements and reactions from both Beth and Daisy readily establish the solidity of their training and bond. For Beth and Daisy, a qualified partnership, this was merely a performance of their partnership rather than them training a new task, although even


here some miscommunication can occur (when Daisy initially searches to the right of the sofa). Their strong bond was exemplified not just through the quick embodied actions and responses, but also through reorientation to what was being asked. Furthermore, Beth's quick directions and cues such as 'phone', 'sit', 'down', and 'up', as well as her accompanying hand gestures and short clear praises, help to clarify their communication further. The performance palpably discloses the co- or intra- actions of human and nonhuman actors (Lynda Birke et al., 2004; Haraway, 2008) that form training practice and then actual 'real world' co-operations.



1 | Daisy shakes..



2 | Oh, I need help ↑



3 | Beth starts phone command.
Phone.



4



5 | Daisy moves round the couch towards the phone.
No...(0.5)
This way...



6 | Beth claps her hands..
CLAP, CLAP, CLAP



7 | Up ↑

Transcript 2: Finding and bringing the phone.

... Pause in Speech
(0.5) Time speech paused (s)
: Extenuation of last letter
↑ High pitch



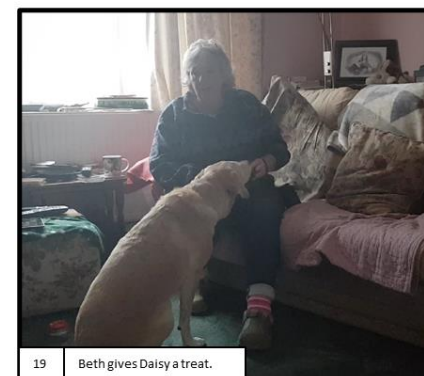
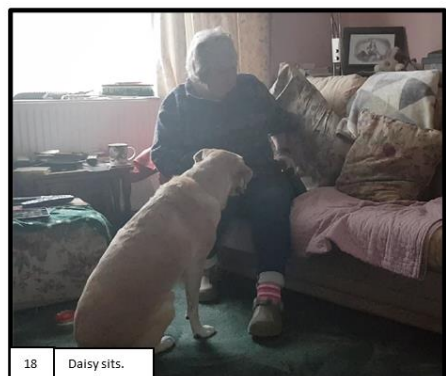
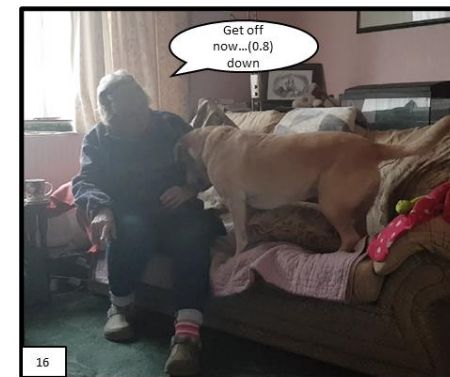
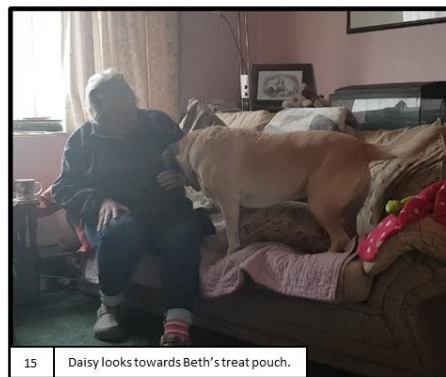
Transcript 2: Finding and bringing the phone.

... Pause in Speech

(0.5) Time speech paused (s)

: Extenuation of last letter

↑ High pitch



Transcript 2: Finding and bringing the phone.

... Pause in Speech

(0.5) Time speech paused (s)

: Extenuation of last letter

↑ High pitch

A further example of finding and bringing a named item is shown in **Graphic Transcript 3**. Here Beth and Daisy are performing the find and bring task for the named item ‘stick’ (walking stick)⁸⁵. Beth initiates the start of the task with the phrase ‘ready’ and a pointed finger indicating a ‘wait’ response. Both the verbal cue and the gesture grabs Daisy’s attention as she looks up at Beth, creating eye contact and expressing alert body language. As Beth says the cue ‘stick’ and puts the palms of her hands out flat to indicate the cue ‘where’ (which is also the BSL⁸⁶ for ‘where’), Daisy begins to move to the right of the video clip and towards the door. As Beth finishes the cue saying, ‘where’s the stick?’ (Panels 3 and 4), Daisy is already exiting the room. Daisy’s quick response to the cue ‘stick’ again demonstrates the strength of the partnership’s training and Daisy’s ability to recognise verbal cues and vocalisations. Whilst Daisy is off camera in the video clip (Panel 6), an indication of what she is doing occurs through the clunking sound of the walking stick on the hallway radiator. A second later she reappears with the walking stick in her mouth, handle to the right side of her body. As Daisy approaches the open door, she twists her head so the handle is lower than the bottom end of the door so she can fit through with the stick in her mouth (Panel 8), although there is another slight clunk as the stick hits the door frame. As Daisy walks through the open door, her tail is alert and wagging, and as she approaches the couches, she cranks her neck upwards to lift the stick over the couch so she can fit through. Her tail remains wagging as she walks confidently over to Beth, who has already begun to reach out. Beth takes the walking stick in her left hand and moves it over to her right, praising Daisy with a calmly spoken ‘thank you’. Daisy’s eyes follow Beth’s hand as the latter moves to get a treat for Daisy. As Beth is trying to get the treat, Daisy moves forward to Beth’s hand rather than waiting for the treat to be passed forward, showing an expectation of receiving the reward.

This video clip shows a second example of the find and bring task. This example is important not only as an aid to Beth’s mobility, but also in providing an example of an assistance dog finding and bringing a larger item. The walking stick provided several problems throughout the video. First, the size of the stick meant that it was difficult to pick up, suggesting that this task could not have been completed and maybe not even trained if Daisy was a smaller dog breed. Second, the length of the stick led to Daisy having to problem-solve and manoeuvre her body between objects. The stick became a bodily extension to Daisy as she navigated her way through the open door and between the couches (Macpherson, 2009b). In problem-solving and manoeuvring her body and stick in tandem, Daisy enacted her agency in a manner that can be described as ‘knowing’ and ‘skillful’. Furthermore, once the task was performed, Beth explained that:

“What the trainer said was, she was very space aware, she knew, you know, even as a youngster she used to turn her head” (Beth, IR).

⁸⁵ A still image of this is also used in **Figure 5 (Chapter 3)**.

⁸⁶ BSL – British Sign Language.

Beth alludes to the spatial knowledge possessed by Daisy and her ability to complete the task and navigate as a dog-stick duo.



Transcript 3: Finding and bringing a named item (walking stick).

... Pause in Speech
(0.5) Time speech paused (s)
: Extenuation of last letter
↑ High pitch

The find, retrieve, bring, and pick-up tasks are a core part of the co-learning that takes place between human and assistance dog (Haraway, 2008). These tasks require a close embodiment between human and animal that, once developed, turns into a performance. The performative mode of the task training becomes clearer with the participants who were qualified, displaying more fully the agency and sentience of the assistance animal in making decisions when engaging their body with materials. Furthermore, all the tasks were completed in the space of the home, which indicates the wider influence that the home space holds for the training of tasks. All the tasks were completed comfortably without outside pressures, although my presence and that of the camera may have served as an additional stress (but this was not picked up). The home hence offers a relaxed space for training to take place, which is implied by the 4D's method training: it is the small, familiar spatial basis from which further training necessarily has to venture (thereby freighting the training with further distraction, distance and difficulty).

Touch and push

A prerequisite to much training is a dog and human co-learning of the 'touch' cue. There are many tasks that require a dog to touch objects: pushing objects such as doors, and pressing buttons. Greenebaum (2010: 139) refers to training touch as "a target game. To teach this, you hide food in your hand and when the dog touches your hand, you mark it with a yes and the dog gets a treat". Adapting this approach through Dog A.I.D.'s 4 D's method, participants would start this task in the home space and not giving a verbal cue. Once the exercise is completed to a good standard, the next step would be withholding the food for a longer duration, so the dog does a longer touch, making the task more difficult (one of the 4D's) but itself being vital for human participants who require their dog to complete a longer, more sustained touch, rather than one which is fleeting. Adding the last 'D' distraction can help to solidify the training. Once these steps are complete, adding the verbal cue 'touch' serves to add a form of auditory signalling to the bodily cues that the human offers.

The following **Graphic Transcript 4** comes from a video where the participants wanted to show some of the things that they had learned together. Beth and Daisy are a qualified partnership and performed (almost at lightning-quick speed) the touch task. From a sitting position, Daisy is looking up at Beth, seemingly ready to work. Beth is looking down at Daisy and their eyes are caught, connected together. "Touch", Beth says, extending her left arm outwards, palm of the hand flat. The tone of the cue is not spoken harshly, but rather softly. Daisy immediately responds, moving her nose over to Beth's hand, eyes fixated on the touch target. She remains seated and, when her nose touches the target, she leaves it there for only half a second, slightly moving her head backwards, and again glancing up at Beth. When the tactile engagement arrives, Beth's hand slightly moves back on impact, but her body remains in the same position, eyes remaining on Daisy. When Daisy then moves back slightly, Beth again gives the cue "touch", this time moving her hand with a slight flourish, up and down, and back to the same central position. Daisy is again

very quick to respond, this time moving her nose to Beth's hand and moving from a seated to a crouched to a standing position, all whilst keeping her nose fixed on the touch target, Beth's hand. Daisy's tail, when moving from seated to standing, wags slightly side-to-side seven times, indicating her alertness to the tasks 'in hand'. Daisy's nose is orientated on Beth's hand for about two seconds and then Beth moves her hand upwards and away from Daisy's nose. She stops it above Daisy's head and closes into a fist, saying 'sit'. Daisy's eyes follow Beth's hand as it moves from the touch to 'sit' gesture, her gaze never disengaging, and she begins to 'sit' just before the cue is fully given. They are now ready to repeat the task.

This short video clip of about seven seconds shows the prerequisite training for tasks requiring a push or touch, but also the standard at which partnerships who are qualified complete the touch task. Throughout the video human and animal are fixated on one another, engaged in communication through the spoken word, gestures, bodily movement, and tone. It is clear that both participants are totally attuned to each other's bodies (Despret, 2004, 2013), expressed through their quick action and reactions, cues and responses. The participants are affecting one another and reading each other to communicate and complete the task. This video clip shows just one way of completing the training of the touch task, underlining that the training depends not only on the human's embodied capabilities but also the dog's, the trainer with whom they have worked, and the spaces in which the training and tasks take place.



Transcript 4: Touch training.

... Pause in Speech
 (0.5) Time speech paused (s)
 : Extenuation of last letter
 ↑ High pitch

The touch training outlined above builds the skills for touch tasks like pressing buttons. In **Graphic Transcript 5**, Beth and Daisy practice pressing a button. The start of the practice is signified through Beth giving the cue ‘ready’, which immediately grabs Daisy’s attention, as can be seen in Panel 1 where Daisy is looking up at Beth. Beth then gives the cue ‘press’ it, along with two gestures, a flat palm pressing downwards transitioning into a quick point towards the target (the button). Although Beth is providing the cue and gesture, Daisy has already started to move, as can be seen in Panel 2. As Daisy moves, her ears are slightly backwards and her tail up, indicating her alertness. Daisy first moves to the bucket seen in Panel 3 and inspects it quickly before moving towards the button. Daisy’s transition between the bucket and the button is quick and there is no further gestural or verbal input from Beth to tell Daisy to move from the bucket to the button. When Daisy approaches the button, she presses it quickly with her front right paw (Panel 4). At the indication of the ‘clink-clunk’ sound of pressing the button, Daisy begins to move back towards Beth. When Daisy is back facing Beth, the button repeats ‘that was easy’⁸⁷. When Daisy approaches Beth, the latter reinforces the task with verbal praise, saying ‘good girl’ in a high-pitched voice. When Beth moves her hand to the food pouch that she carries, Daisy follows her hand in anticipation of a food reward and moves to get the food reward before Beth has removed it from the pouch. Daisy’s eyes and nose follow Beth’s hand until she has received the food reward.

This short video clip, of about five seconds, shows Beth and Daisy practising pressing a button. The video shows communication between Beth and Daisy, but also Daisy’s ability to differentiate between objects. Daisy’s quick distinguishing between the bucket, where she would be asked to put loose change, and the button, which she would be asked to press, illustrates Daisy’s autonomous agency. Her ability to distinguish objects and think quickly is critical for her role as an assistance dog in providing help and care for Beth, as expressed by Beth herself:

“I have got the red button on the floor, and the phones and everything and we have got a special button for Daisy, it is [the] button on the top and there is one in the hall, and they are all done wireless, and I can send her to press it and then at least help will come ...”
(Beth, IR).

Beth casts the touch exercise as vital to her health and wellbeing, since Daisy pressing a button acts as a medical alert. With the press of a button the ‘careline’ will be contacted and a carer will know to come as swiftly as possible to help Beth. Daisy’s ability to respond quickly shows her capacity in a performative manner.

⁸⁷ ‘That was easy’ is an electronic verbal response from the button when pressed. It can act as a verbal confirmation that the task is done, paired with the verbal praise from Beth.

1

2 Daisy starts moving before the cue.

3 Daisy moves to, and inspects, the bucket.

4 Daisy presses the button.

5

6 Daisy moves to receive the treat.

7 Daisy receives the treat.

... Pause in Speech
(0.5) Time speech paused (s)
: Extenuation of last letter
↑ High pitch

Transcript 5: Press the button – attempt 1.

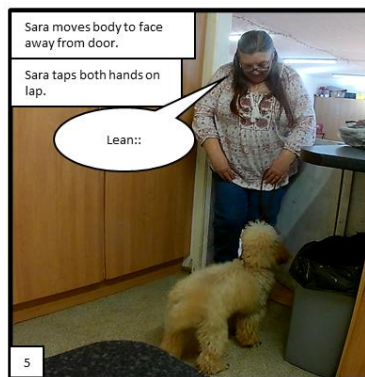
Once touch training has developed to a high standard, human-assistance-dog partnerships move on to tasks that require pushing or touching other objects. Push requires the basics of touch training as this provides an engagement with targeting objects. The following **Graphic Transcript 6** draws on a video clip of a successful example of Sara and Pepper training together to push open a door. Pushing a door open is essential for Sara as she has the chronic pain condition fibromyalgia, often making the act of pushing painful if not impossible; and, as she indicated during the ethnographic work, all the doors in her home require push actions.

In the first panel Sara can be seen pointing with her index finger at the wooden door which is slightly ajar. This gesture indicates a point which Sara wants Pepper to touch, outlining a target for Pepper. Instead of keeping her finger in the same position, Sara wiggles her index finger slightly, moving it from the low centre of the door slightly higher to the left. Sara's eye contact with Pepper is maintained as she says, "over here Pepper ... Pepper". Maintaining eye contact and providing a clear and concise cue is important for multispecies communication to work. On hearing the cue and seeing the gesture, Pepper becomes attentive as her ears become perked and her tail curls upwards. Moving between Panels 1 and 2 in the video clip, Sara taps the door with her finger, moving her body closer to the door and leaning over slightly. The combination of the cue, gesture, tone, and previous touch training completes a communication between Sara and Pepper, prompting Pepper to move confidently towards the target area of the door, placing her nose on Sara's finger, the indication of touch. As Pepper moves closer, Sara gives a positive response in nodding her head, an affirmation that appears to be crucial in spurring on Pepper to meet the cue.

Moving between Panels 2 and 3 in the video clip, we can see Pepper take a step back slightly and look up at Sara, whose index finger remains on the door. Sara gives the cue "lean" followed by a short break then says, "you can do it ... go on". In response, in Panel 4 Pepper hunches down slightly, uninterested, and perhaps confused. The latter may have arisen here from the extra dialogue in saying "you can do it ... go on" and the gesture of pointing, different from what Sara normally uses for the 'lean' cue. In response to this micro-situation, Sara steps in front of Pepper, and Panel 5 sees Sara move her body to face away from the door and towards Pepper. In recognising Sara's motion in moving, Pepper takes two steps back whilst still looking up at Sara, her tail curled upwards. In the motion of moving, Sara taps both her hands flat on the top of her legs and says "lean" with the 'n' extenuated and high pitch, which is common when asking a question (in this case though perhaps this is more of a command than a question). In this case the gesture, cue, and tone are different to the previous one, but work together in tandem as a form of multispecies communication. On hearing and seeing both command and gesture, Pepper jumps up with her front two paws to lean on Sara's legs. Sara greets this with positive reinforcement, caressing Pepper's head and praising her by saying "good girl!" in a positive upbeat manner.

The caress occurs for about 2-3 seconds and then in Panel 7 Sara takes a step to the side. In doing so, Pepper flops from the lean position to the ground, landing softly on her front two legs, tail still curled upwards. Sara then gives the cue “lean” in a question form like previously, but her hand is now flat on the door in front. In Panel 8 Pepper confidentially steps forward two paces and jumps up, leaning on the door with both front paws. In doing so the door swings open and Pepper lands softly on her front two paws on the ground, looking up at Sara in an almost submissive way. Sara is quick positively to reinforce this behaviour by verbally praising Pepper. “That’s it, clever girl”, she says in an upbeat and happy manner, again the tone of this dialogue being high-pitched and upbeat. In Panel 10 the verbal praise is backed up with a treat. Sara reaches down and passes over a treat to Pepper from a pouch she is wearing, and Pepper eats it out of her hand. In Panel 11, Sara continues the verbal praise by saying “well done”, again the tone being consistent with other praise. Whilst giving this verbal praise, Sara closes the door and turns her body back to face Pepper, who has taken a few steps backwards. They are ready to practice this task again.

Although this whole interaction only takes place over approximately 19 seconds, it once again shows the development of multiple species communication through embodied actions, gestures, tones, and body language, but with the shared ‘development’ even more apparent. Indeed, the panels briefly show miscommunication, which is not instantaneously corrected, as above when Daisy moved unprompted from the bucket to the button but requires reading and adaptation by Sara to re-establish what is required from Pepper in order to complete the specific task. The re-direction and recognition of confusion, alongside and the evident ability of both human and animal to ‘read’ each other’s body language, compellingly captures the ‘becoming’ of their relationship (Haraway, 2003, 2008).



Transcript 6: Assessing a successful attempt at opening a door.

... Pause in Speech
(0.5) Time speech paused (s)
: Extenuation of last letter
↑ High pitch



Transcript 6: Assessing a successful attempt at opening a door.

... Pause in Speech
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 : Extenuation of last letter
 ↑ High pitch

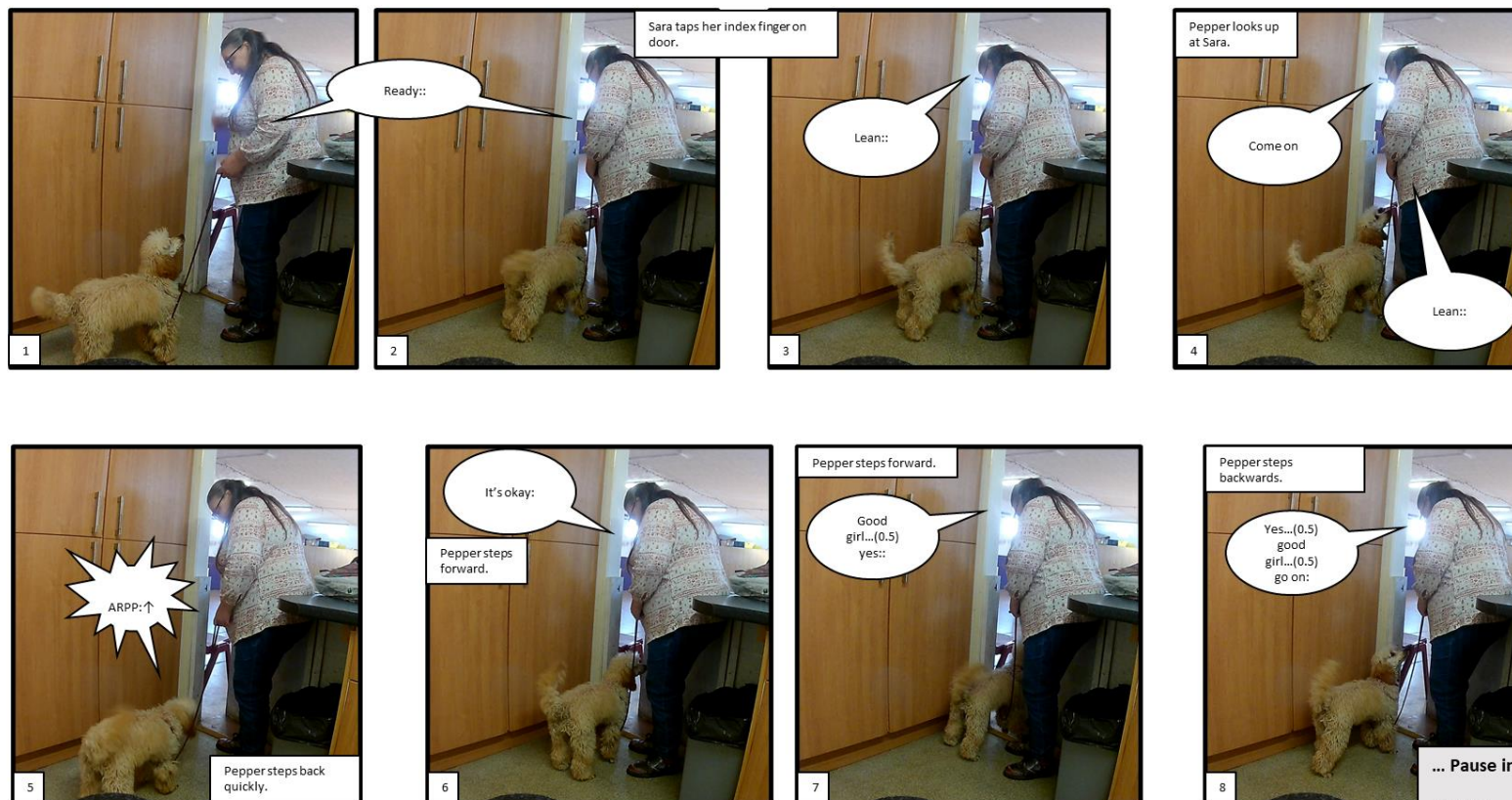
Graphic Transcript 7 explores an entirely unsuccessful attempt to push open a door between Sara and Pepper. After feeding and praising Pepper and taking a short break (approximately 20 seconds), Sara positions herself to start the task of opening the door again. In Panel 1 her body is facing Pepper and she is looking down at Pepper holding her lead. The lead looks tight in the image as it is wrapped underneath and round the leg of Pepper who is at attention, tail slightly straightened, ears alert, and eyes gazing up at Sara. “Ready”, she says with a slight inclination at the end of the phrase. She taps her index finger again on the door. At the sight of the gesture, Pepper moves forward tentatively, this time her tail is up, indicating her alertness, and placing her nose towards the touch target. In Panel 3 we can still see Sara tapping her index finger on the door, as she gives the cue “lean” again with a slight inclination at the end of the phrase. Pepper’s nose remains on the door rather than the doing the lean action, indicating another cross-species miss-communication. This moment is then compounded with Sara’s “come on”, which leads to Pepper looking up at Sara confused. Sara repeats the cue “lean” which leads to a negative response from Pepper, who steps back two paces quickly, with her body hunkered down slightly and her head lowered into a submissive state. As she makes herself small, she vocalises a sharp and high-pitched yelp.

In sensing Pepper’s discomfort and hesitancy, Sara tries to calm Pepper, ushering her forward with a softly spoken “it’s okay” which leads to Pepper stepping forwards, her body language slightly calmer but still submissive, looking upwards again towards Sara for direction. In Panel 7 Pepper again steps forward in response to Sara, who is now tapping her finger index finger against the door. In response to Pepper stepping forward, Sara praises her with “good girl ... yes” but omits the command lean. This omission leads to hesitancy again, as Pepper looks around sideways, her confusion clear as she steps back one pace and looks up at Sara. Sara is trying to comfort Pepper saying “yes ... good girl ... go on”. This positive language is meant as praise as she is trying to tempt Pepper into opening the door again, but seemingly it serves to discomfort Pepper even more, leading her in Panel 9 to vocalise again with a sharp and high pitched “ARPP”, stepping backwards one pace, sitting down and looking upwards at Sara for greater clarity. In response, Sara speaks to Pepper, saying “are you confused? ... yeah?”. Pepper then looks both at Sara, for greater direction, and then across to me as I am sat watching in the corner. In response to the ‘ARRP’ vocalisation, from the background the trainer begins to head over towards Sara and Pepper. Sara is now saying “come here” to Pepper in an attempt to calm her, alongside the lean gesture with Sara bending her knees slightly and tapping both her palms flat on her legs. In Panel 12 Pepper jumps up into the lean position on Sara’s lap and Sara caresses Pepper, stroking her head with both hands and saying, “good girl”, hoping to calm and reassure Pepper.

Whilst **Graphic Transcript 6** showed cross-species communication and a successful attempt at opening the door, this graphic transcript has shown cross-species miscommunication between human and dog and a ‘unsuccessful’ attempt at completing the task. Throughout **Graphic**

Transcript 7, therefore, we can see how the participants aimed to repeat the previous practice of opening the door, but communication was misinterpreted by Pepper and miscommunicated by Sara. This 24-second-long clip shows how training is an ongoing process, requiring practice and engagement, fraught with pitfalls and blockages.

It is also worth pointing out that I have shown the failure after the success, because that is how it happened within the video with Sara and Pepper: the successful attempt analysed first occurred before the unsuccessful attempt, showing that the partnership completing the task successfully once is no guarantee that it will always be repeated the same or successfully. This situation duly points to a cross-species ‘becoming’ rather than a cross-species ‘being’ (Haraway, 2003, 2008), a continuation of learning and ongoing communication and training.



Transcript 7: Assessing an unsuccessful attempt at opening a door.

... Pause in Speech
 (0.5) Time speech paused (s)
 : Extenuation of last letter
 ↑ High pitch



Transcript 7: Assessing an unsuccessful attempt at opening a door.

... Pause in Speech
 (0.5) Time speech paused (s)
 : Extenuation of last letter
 ↑ High pitch

Pull

Tasks which require dogs to pull objects, such as to open or close a door, tug a light cord on or off, and pulling off clothes, draw on the game of tug that can be played between human and animal. Tug occurs between human and dog both as a game of relaxation and as a reward for doing a task. The use of tug allows human and assistance dog to bond through play and can also be a motivation for dogs who are not food orientated. **Figure 51** shows the game of tug between human and assistance dog. As both a game and a reward, the objective in the end is to let the dog win and thus be rewarded with the toy.



Figure 51: Beth and Daisy playing tug.

Participants indicated the importance of tasks which draw on pull methods, as Samantha reveals:

“Some days, I can hardly move on certain things, one of them being my back being very stiff ... and erm, he will take my socks off for instance” (Samantha, IR).

Bertie pulling off her socks can help when she is experiencing stiffness or pain. Bertie doing this task means that Samantha does not have to bend down and thus can help limit painful experience. On a larger scale pull tasks can also be used to open doors, although there can be issues for a dog’s health when pulling large objects, as June indicates with respect to Quake:

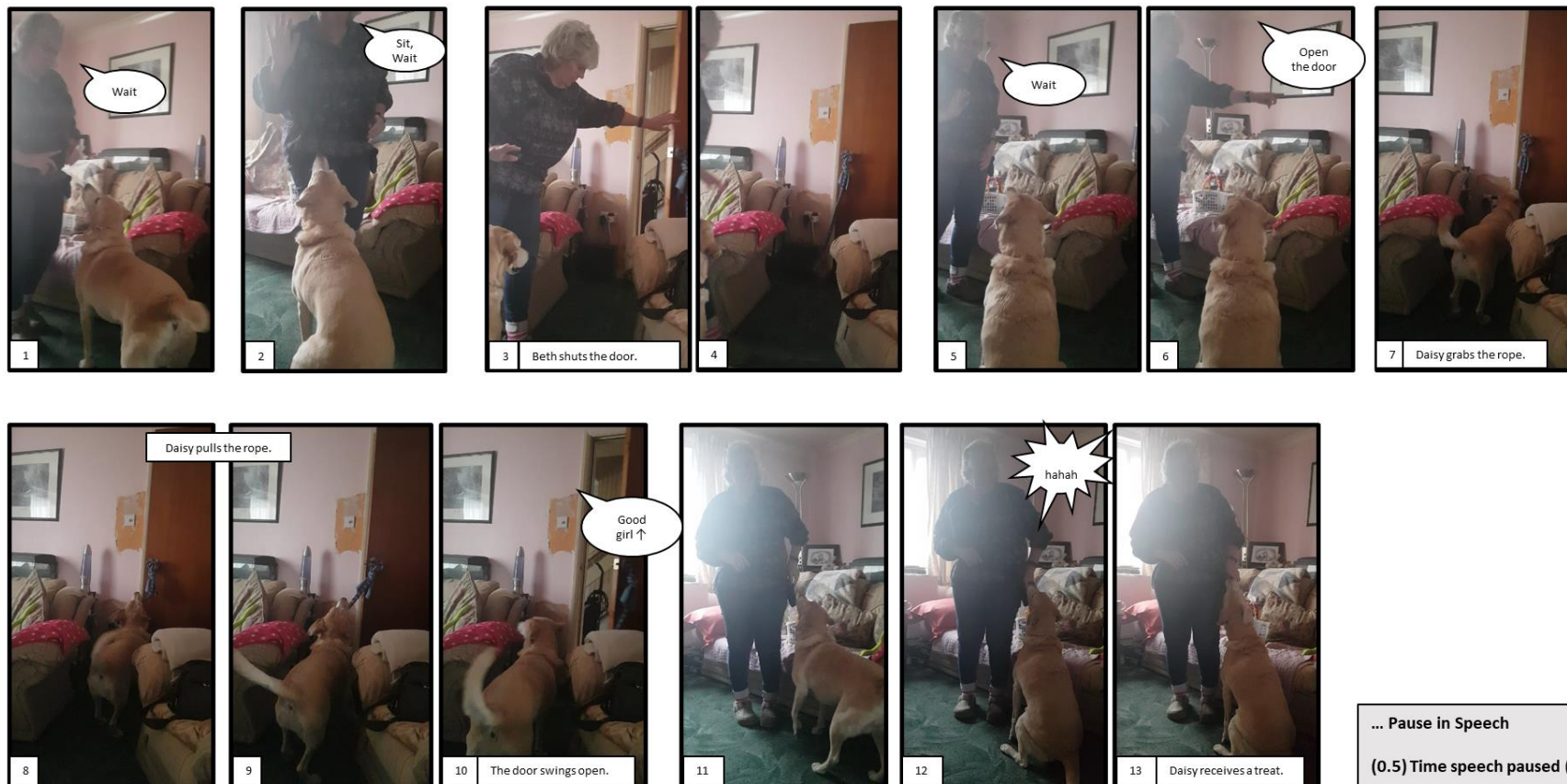
“No actually she’s gone off that [pulling the door open] at the moment because we had a bit of an incident where she slipped on the floors upstairs, so since then she has been really scared of pulling the doors in case she slips, so [trainer] said not to worry when she

sees her, she is going to help me get her confidence back on it. Yeah, so what I have done is put a carpet down in the front room now, but I think we need a larger size carpet because it's just still slipping at some points. I also want to buy an extra-large kitchen rug and one for the hall because it's just when she slips you can see she is scared and doesn't want to get hurt again" (June, IR).

Having to move a heavy object requires the dog to push down onto the floor whilst grasping a rope in its mouth and pulling backwards, and the risk here to the dog of slipping or causing injury is not inconsiderable (Coppinger et al., 1998). Although injury risk is a concern, June explains that Quake stopped doing this task due to a lack of confidence and being scared, arguably a 'sensible' agentic appraisal of the risks involved but necessitating mitigation strategies to rebuild Quake's confidence back on this task.

The following **Graphic Transcript 8** shows how pulling open a door works in practice, derived from a video clip of Beth and Daisy performing the pull open a door task. The start of the task is initiated by Beth, who gives the 'wait' cue and gesture to Daisy. As Beth says 'wait', Daisy makes eye contact with Beth, following her as she begins to move the door to close it. Beth then gives the 'sit' cue to Daisy, followed quickly by the 'wait' cue, again giving the 'wait' gesture (Panel 2). Daisy sits down immediately but her eyes remain on Beth as she begins to shut the door. When shutting the door, Beth is still giving the 'wait' cue and Daisy can be seen watching Beth close the door. The door has a blue rope tied to it with a big knot at either end. When the door shuts and Beth has moved back to where she was originally stood, she restates the 'wait' cue. In response Daisy looks up and Beth, still awaiting further instruction. When Beth says, "open the door" and gives the gesture, a point towards the target, Daisy immediately responds, moving towards the door before the cue and gesture are complete. When Daisy moves, she pants and her tail is up in an alert position, moving slightly side-to-side. The action of grabbing the rope in her mouth and walking back to pull the door open occurs over a matter of a second. It is a quick, fluid action, an easy engagement between dog and material, which leads the door to swing open with ease. Daisy lets go of the rope at the last second, so the door swings open the rest of the way. As the door clunks open and Daisy begins to turn to her left in a half-circle and back to Beth, Beth gives Daisy verbal praise, saying "good girl!" in a softly spoken voice. Daisy returns to Beth, tail still alert and wagging with her ears slightly back. Daisy immediately moves towards Beth's left hand which is in the pouch where she keeps the food rewards: she stays with her nose touching Beth's hand and sits without direction as Beth fishes out a treat for her. Daisy's nose on Beth's hand, and her sniffing and searching whilst still sitting, makes Beth laugh as she provides Daisy with the reward.

Through executing this task of 'pull open the door', there has been an intimate engagement between human, animal, and material, through Beth closing the door, communicating with Daisy, and providing a treat, and through Daisy communicating with Beth, and pulling the door open, the small, swift but complicated elements of the event all occurring with practised ease and even grace.



Transcript 8: Pulling a door open.

... Pause in Speech

(0.5) Time speech paused (s)

: Extenuation of last letter

↑ High pitch

Other tasks not fitting these trends

Tasks which fall into the previous three groupings are all completed by most Dog A.I.D. participants, but there are additional tasks and exercises which are key to various individuals that go beyond finding, bringing, picking up, pushing, pulling, and touching objects. These tasks highlight the difference of Dog A.I.D. from other charities due to humans training their pet dogs to be assistance dogs, signalling the importance of individualisation in the training process. Participants outline a range of tasks that they were learning, or for which their dogs are trained, including balance, deep pressure therapy, emotional support, getting help, medical alert, and navigation. Some of these tasks blur the boundary between official assistance dog tasks and things that participants trained ‘outwith’ (beyond the auspices of) the charity. Furthermore, some of these tasks may be learned without any training (see next section on agency and self-expression) or may be considered forms of care rather than ‘tasks’ per se (see **Chapter 6**). For this reason, deep pressure therapy and emotional support will be discussed in **Chapter 6** rather than explicitly as a task in this section, where I will now narrow down on how and why participants train their assistance dogs for balance, getting help, medical alert, and navigation.

For some participants, relying on their dogs to get help or provide medical alert is vital. Although medical alert is not trained by Dog A.I.D. trainers themselves, some participants outlined their dog’s knowledge of their human body and the ability of their dogs to alert them to subtle changes in their body (see also next section). Medical alert is a task trained into medical detection dogs, whilst other dogs can be trained for hypoglycaemic alert (diabetes dogs) or seizure alert (seizure dogs) (Eason, 2019, 2020), and echoes of such training – and dog skills – can be found in my study. Dog A.I.D. participants indicate a wide range of medical alerts that their dogs can make before, during, and after, an event has occurred. Beth explains how Daisy:

“... Giv[es] me warnings before things got too bad (able to take medication to hopefully stop things escalating)” (Beth, QR).

Daisy’s alerts to Beth act as a warning to oncoming pain, giving Beth advance notice and the time to stop this pain escalating, but they require a deep bodily connection between human and assistance dog, and a capacity for the assistance dog to be affected by changes in the human body (Despret, 2004, 2013). Due to the ephemerality of chronic illness, dogs may alert their humans to oncoming events of fainting, pain, or seizure, and for some participants, alerting to pain might become a greater part of their job, as one participant conveys:

“He got me through the three years I was quite ill at one stage with a very low blood count: every time I went to pass out my dog would nudge me with his nose” (QR, 10).

The participant here describes how their dog keeps them ‘in the moment’ during low blood count, and the value of the relationship is through the dog being affected by the human body and affecting the human body in response. This is similar to Sara, who said:

“When in particular pain [she] alerts to people moving quickly or in very close proximity” (Sara, QR).

Sara experiences fibromyalgia as a chronic illness that, for her, manifests through her body going into bouts of chronic pain. She highlights how Pepper knows when she is in pain and alerts her to people moving quickly and closely so as to avoid contact and any effects that could result for Sara. For other participants, management, and alert during and after medical events are important, with one participant explaining how their assistance dog:

“Licks my face to wake me if I pass out ... Pulls emergency cords ... Gets help if I fall” (QR, 12).

Here the participant outlines the tactile engagement between their dog’s body and their own, registering a dependence on their dog for alerting themselves but also others through pull tasks and finding other humans and leading them to their human partner. These are common features for many participants, as some mention:

“Alerts in the event of a fall or fetches my husband from another room” (QR, 15).

“... Her [assistance dog] main role now is she will go and find my wife, or she will go and find my mobile” (Mark, IR).

“Barking on command to get attention if I need help” (QR, 18).

Alert during and after an event is crucial in helping the human partners, and participants here discuss a range of different alerts that their dogs are trained to perform, notably finding, and bringing assistance to their human partner. This can be done through ‘fetching’ and ‘bringing’ another person and is a capability built largely through training on the find/bring tasks which require a dog to ‘fetch’ a named person or know how to react in the event of fainting, pain, or seizure. The other is for a dog to stay with their human partner and bark to get another person’s attention and alert them to the situation.

Spatial navigation is a task which is most commonly assumed to be the primary task of a guide dog (Arathoon, 2018; Michalko, 1999; Pemberton, 2019; Stevenson, 2013). However, for some Dog A.I.D. client’s spatial navigation is also used to “find routes through busy areas” (QR, 4). Spatial navigation is critical task for Dawn and Bella, who are a dual-trained partnership for both physical tasks (Dog A.I.D.) and spatial navigation (Guide Dogs/Seeing Dogs Alliance). Dawn states that:

“Her [Bella’s] main task is her guiding which she does for me ... I have had her assessed by the Seeing Dogs Alliance”.

Dawn is blind, and her relationship with Bella includes spatial navigation and other tasks that a ‘traditional’ guide dog would do, such as stopping at roadsides, finding routes through crowds, and finding the pelican crossing box (see also Arathoon, 2018). Dawn and Bella also do “assistance tasks in the house, and sometimes when we are out as well,” but it is the guiding that is their main shared task. Little research has been carried out with dual-trained partnerships; and

working with and exploring dual-trained partnership could be useful for cross-collaboration between charities and for increasing assistance dog services for humans who may want to enlist an assistance dog from multiple charities. For other participants spatial navigation is also used, as one participant reveals how:

“Sometimes my tics are so severe I am wheelchair-bound. Although I still need a wheelchair for long distances, I am able to walk short distances with a lot more stability as my dog provides forward momentum to keep me walking in a straight line and prevents my legs from ticcing or causing me to fall” (QR GP, 8).

This participant showcases the importance of their assistance dog in spatial navigation and in keeping them from falling over, revealing how finding routes through crowds, spatial navigation, and providing balance for individual partnerships is closely bound up with the human’s specific embodied (in)capabilities. As Mark explains further:

“The tasks I need Lucky literally to do is walk to my left just to give me that leeway of room and yeah ... it’s not the first thing that comes to mind for an assistance dog to do but for me it stops me knocking into things or people ...” (Mark, IR).

For Mark, Lucky helps with both spatial navigation and balance when in public space, similar to Erin, who describes how she wanted Luas to be:

“On my right side for two reasons: A) I was left-handed anyway, and B) one of the tasks I wanted was the dog to actually block my right side from people actually banging into it because I have nerve pain and nerve damage in the right side. So, people even just slightly touch it that aggravates pain, so having the dog there prevented that” (Erin, IR).

Assisting with direction, balance and blocking people from knocking into them are valuable tasks that Lucky and Luas perform for Mark and Erin and Luas, and Luas in particular can be seen as a bodily extension of Erin through her arm and lead (Macpherson, 2009b; Michalko, 1999). Their bodies become one when navigating space together, requiring the finest of attunement between bodies and awareness of their extended bodily positions. Joan also uses Sal to help with her balance, as shown in **Figure 52**, where Joan grabs on to Sal’s harness to move from a seating to standing position and to help her balance when doing so. This is important for Joan as she has trouble bending down and with stability, so Sal provides that extra stability. In the figure we can see Sal hunch and push down as Joan holds and pushes on the harness adding her weight: Sal’s stability when Joan adds her weight to his body helps Joan to stand up safely and Sal not to injure himself. This balance task was further observed during the fieldwork class when outside, and here I enlarge a quote that I have used previously for a different purpose:

“We walked around the park slowly as there were a lot of puddles and mud and Joan alluded to how she struggles to keep her balance on wet surfaces. I asked Sara if this is a problem for her too and she said yes and that it is harder to do things when the weather is bad. Moments later Sal went the toilet in the middle of the field and Joan went to pick it up. Assistance dog owners do not have to pick up dog litter by law, but Sara explained that both her and Joan always pick up because it is a moral responsibility. Joan called Sal over, and used his specially design harness to steady herself, moved slowly over the mud towards the dog mess to pick it up. Joan held onto Sal while bending down to pick up the

dog mess and then they slowly made their way back to the path”. (Fieldwork Diary, 270220).

This extract and **Figure 52** both show the importance of tactile engagement and bodily connection between Joan and Sal. As in the previous examples, there is a distinct inter-bodily connection being made between Joan and Sal that requires the materiality of the harness to function. Their interconnected bodies work together as one to move through space both vertically and horizontally as a cross-species dyad or team (Arathoon, 2018; Macpherson, 2009b; Stevenson, 2013).



Figure 52: Joan using Sal for balance and to help move.

This section provides examples of tasks not trained specifically by Dog A.I.D. trainers but seeks to show the potential individualisation of human-assistance-dog partnerships that can occur throughout their working lives. Medical alert, getting help, providing balance, and helping navigate space are all tasks which draw outwards from other assistance dog charities, but are performed by and within specific partnerships to help their everyday engagements within space. These examples usefully elaborate still more the entangled bodily engagements arising between human and assistance dog, as human-assistance-dog partnerships become a dyad. Then next section explores at greater length the agency and self-expression of assistance dogs in training and focuses again on bodily engagements between human and dogs, particularly unearthing the dog’s ability to make its own choices during training.

Training experiences

Having examined how training life skills and tasks takes place, I now turn to exploring participants’ experiences of training. Exploring the experiences of training for participants is important as Dog A.I.D. operates differently to other assistance dog charities. As previously discussed, Dog A.I.D. clients are training their own pets to become assistance dogs, and therefore the development of the human-assistance-dog bond is different to that fostered by other charities where clients are provided with an already trained assistance dog. Trying to move from a human-pet bond to a human-assistance-dog bond, in addition to clients doing the training themselves, doubtless leads to different experiences and challenges of training for the humans and animals that are part of Dog A.I.D.

Figure 53 shows the Dog A.I.D. participants' questionnaire responses to how they feel about their training. 'Rewarding' (18) and 'challenging' (15) are the most common responses from the 19 participants that answered the questionnaire, with 14 out of the 19 participants opting for both these responses. Less common responses are 'hard' (4), 'difficult' (3), 'straightforward' (3), and 'easy' (2). Three participants also responded with 'other', opting to name their own feelings on how training was "educational". These responses only give a superficial indication of participants' experiences of the training, but respondents were also asked to expand on their experiences. Some participants opted directly to explain *why* they chose the specific words, providing examples of *why* they found training challenging, whilst some provided a more general overview. Analysing these responses and triangulating them with both the general assistance dog population questionnaire responses and the assistance dog handler and trainer interviews, three key themes emerge about how participants' experiences of training are shaped: the human's embodiment of their disability, health, and illness; the tasks/skills required to complete training; and the human-animal bond.

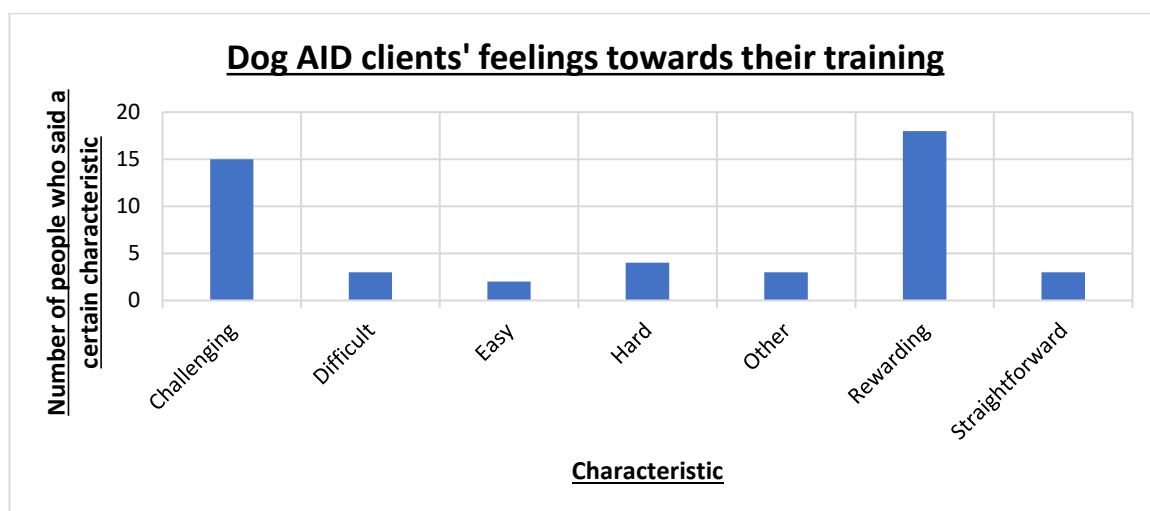


Figure 53: Graph of Dog A.I.D. clients' feelings towards their training.

One common factor that participants specify as impacting their experiences of training was how their embodiment of their disability, health, and illness manifested in their everyday lives, manifested in multiple ways:

“Illness between sessions” (QR, 16)

“When illness stopped training, it was disheartening. Sometimes things slipped backwards due to lack of practice. E.g., heelwork⁸⁸ can become sloppy without practice, but you can't practice whilst in bed ...” (Sara, QR).

“Being able to provide consistency is very tiring when chronically ill but the rewards are wonderful” (QR GP, 11).

⁸⁸ Heelwork refers to the dog walking (off-lead) at a normal pace at the persons heels. Heelwork is also a performance canine sport.

“Challenging as with mental illness every day is different and there are months [I’m] unable to do anything” (QR GP, 15).

“OMG! It depended on the tasks but also on where I was with my illness at the time :)”⁸⁹ (QR GP, 6).

Participants indicate how the ephemeral nature of chronic illness disrupted their training experiences. The fleeting nature of chronic illness impacted the ability of the participants to provide consistency in training, leaving some of the participants to find training challenging or disheartening. The in-between-ness and temporality of embodying chronic illness (Moss & Dyck, 2002) acted as barrier to the training. This was also found by Gravrok et al. (2019: 4), who states that “handlers who experienced multiple or complex medical conditions, particularly if these consistently or rapidly changed, experienced more challenges compared to people with single or relatively constant disabilities”. Other participants discussed how their embodiment of specific disabilities, such as agoraphobia, led to difficulty in training:

“I was borderline agoraphobic when I went initially, so going on outings and spending full days in training was very stressful. We still have to retrain and recertification every year and it’s anxiety inducing. Necessary, but scary. I’m always worried he’ll struggle with something, and we’ll lose our certification, though the trainers are always patient. We all know dogs are dogs and they make mistakes but I’m a worrier” (QR GP, 21).

The participant describes how the spatiality of training outings, required as a latter part of training and during annual recertification, acted as a trigger to the participant’s agoraphobia. Agoraphobia, the fear of certain places, has spatial roots and acts as an affective experience of anxiety and stress (Callard, 2006; Davidson, 2000). This participant’s self-identification as a ‘worrier’, together with their embodied experiences of agoraphobic anxiety, influenced the difficulty of their training experiences. The idea that the participant and their dog would lose their certification made recertification assessment highly anxiety-inducing for them. Anxiety in case of loss of certification aligns with the importance that participants placed on gaining certification earlier in **Chapter 4**.

Other participants discuss how their embodiment influenced training:

“[It is] challenging because training in a powerchair [is] a little more difficult and hard going when you get a sticking point but very ... rewarding” (QR, 10).

Using a wheelchair is an embodied act, with the materiality of the wheelchair becoming a bodily extension of the human (Gaete-Reyes, 2015; Papadimitriou, 2008). The participant positions training as challenging due to her entangled embodiment with her powerchair and, in a sense, positions training as typically an abled-bodied practice. Using a wheelchair whilst training a dog led to many fascinating, and diverse interactions between human, nonhuman, and materials.

Figure 54 shows a photograph of Carla and Buzz at a training class. Carla designed her own lead

⁸⁹ Smiley face emoticon used to indicate happiness. Here though I think there is a sense of irony from the participant due to the changing nature of their illness.

which can be extended or shorten through a series of clips that attaches to the side of her powerchair. Carla designed the lead this way as she could not physically hold the lead whilst operating her powerchair. Carla thus relies on her powerchair to control Buzz and her ability to know when to change the length of the lead. This was observed during on interaction:

“After getting only a small way around the park we turned back to go a different way as it was too wet. When we got back to the start Carla and Buzz arrived and came into the field. Carla used an electric wheelchair and had to navigate with Buzz, a German shepherd, through a folding gate. She reversed through the gate with Buzz behind her wheelchair saying “Back, back, back” until in the enclosed area, and the gate could swing open, then she was able to move out of the closed area and into the field” (Field Diary 270220).

The interaction between Carla and Buzz shows their reliance as a partnership on technologies. The powerchair and lead enable them to move together and traverse through space. This was also the case in **Figure 55** between June and Quake. Their entanglement here can be seen as an adaptation of ‘hudogledog’ (Michael, 2012) to a human-powerchair-lead-dog entanglement. In this sense the powerchair mitigate for the physical mobility of the human and animal in three ways: as a mobility aid for the human to physically move through space, to connect human and animal where the lead cannot be held, and thus as a mobility aid between the human-animal dyad.



Figure 54: Carla and Buzz at a training session.



Figure 55: Human-powerchair-lead-dog entanglement.

Another participant also made clear their frustration of dog training due to their disability and rigid nature of dog training:

“Rigid set rules, [but] it should be adapted to my disability not one set way, as things we have to do, I don’t require her to do and hinders my disability” (QR, 7).

This participant indicates that the regulations and requirements make training difficult as they require the partnership to do things that are not individualised to their own specific needs, leading them to regard the requirements of training as a hinderance to their disability. Instead, they argue the need for training, and for the requirements of training, to be adapted to their individual embodied condition and capacities. Other participants found training challenging and placed training as a visual and physical practice at odds with their embodiment:

“It’s challenging in the fact of it’s very physical to train a dog and I have mobility and vision issues (I’m blind and have mobility/heart issues due to two genetic disorders). That’s hard because some days, I just can’t bend down to set up retrievals⁹⁰ for her. With guide⁹¹ as well, sometimes I don’t know where something exactly is, and she doesn’t know what I’m asking, so it’s a bit hard for me to train those sorts of things” (QR GP, 41).

The participant positions training as chiefly a visual practice, wherein the human ideally needs to know where things are to complete the practice. They also highlight how the visibility and

⁹⁰ A find or fetch task.

⁹¹ Navigational task normally done by a guide dog or a dual-trained dog, this task requires training from Guide Dogs or Seeing Dog Alliance.

physicality of training renders it hard for them to communicate effectively with their assistance dog, and thus makes the training challenging.

The second theme relates to specific skills and tasks required as part of the assistance dog training. Some participants express the belief that they did not have the skills required to train their dogs, as Sara details:

“Clicker training is ‘easy’ but does require skills that I lacked. Dog and I both learnt a lot! ... There were days I cried, believing we would never be good enough. It was physically and emotionally challenging and draining ...” (Sara, QR).

Sara recalls clicker training as easy but acknowledges that she lacked the necessary skills at the start of training. She details the mental and physical challenges that training had posed for her, admitting a sense of anxiety and self-judgement, a matter that should be explored further: as Dog A.I.D. clients train their own pets to be assistance dogs, it might be a concern unique to charities like Dog A.I.D.

Other participants detail specific tasks that formed a significant part of their experience, often revolving around tasks that formed part of the life skills in the early stages of training. Participants describe how they found “food refusal off floor, lunging on lead, [and] recall” challenging (QR, 13), or how they were “still having trouble with scent marking, toileting at home, [and] instant stay at a distance” (Elizabeth, QR). Life skills represent a challenge to many participants as these are the first skills that are learned in the early stages of partnership and may be harder to teach ‘older’ dogs set in their ways. Mark recounts his experiences of doing life skills training with his dog Lucky:

“It [the experience of training] depended on the task. She is superb at things like food avoidance and refusal. Recall and off lead work she picked up in no time. However, distance stays were incredibly difficult with even the smallest wobble on my part immediately bringing her to my side. Even now it is still a weakness. I would argue that in her mind her job is to look after me and she cannot do that if she is more than a lead’s length away from me. There was a massive sense of pride too in her accomplishments the first time she did more than 80% of the multiple tasks course on the training weekend” (Mark, QR).

Mark elaborates on why he thought the distance stay task was so difficult due to his embodiment of chronic illness, causing him sometimes to wobble due to balance issues. He also explains how the requirements of a distance stay (dog remaining sat at a particular distance from the human for a set time) ran counter to the close affectual bond that they had developed. Indeed, Mark argues from Lucky’s viewpoint that she thinks her job is to provide care for Mark and that this cannot be done from a distance, thus making the task difficult due to Lucky’s own thinking. Mark positions the bond between himself and Lucky as integral to their relationship and to Lucky’s role as an assistance dog (Arathoon, 2018; Michalko, 1999; Sanders, 2000). Megan, meanwhile, discusses how the emergency stop was hardest to train:

“I think his emergency stop [was the hardest]. So, that is something I had never even heard of before Dog A.I.D., so basically your dog is running around and doing whatever he wants and, when you shout ‘stop’, the dog has to stop wherever he is: doesn’t matter if he’s facing you or going away, he has to stop. And ... always he came back to me, which is good if you wanted recall, but with the emergency stop you don’t want recall because like, if there had been a car and I told him to like stop because of the car, I wouldn’t want him to run in front of the car ... Yeah, that took ... quite a while for him to get because he just kept wanting to come back, which then made training recall really difficult because he was doing the thing that I want, just not at the right time...” (Megan, IR).

Megan hence elaborates on the similarities between emergency stop and recall, remarking on how these similarities became an issue for her dog during the training. Some of these exercise and task related issues were discussed early in this chapter, to be sure, but exploring how they impacted the experiences of the partnership, as covered here by Megan, is also important.

The third theme relates to the bond between human and dog. Assistance dog training is key to developing a strong bond between human and dog and is a vital part to becoming a successful partnership. Participants express a range of experiences that relate to this theme, such as challenges and success in communicating with their dog and in recognising their dogs’ needs:

“My training has been a challenge at times, [and] there are times when you feel like you and your dog will never “get” it but when things fall into place the feeling is just wonderful. Training has made the bond between myself and my dog so much stronger” (QR, 15).

This participant indicates how training was challenging due to the ineffective communication between human and dog but contrasts this downside with experiences of euphoria when things did start to go well. An insight is thereby offered into the up-and-down nature of training as a challenging cross-species practice. In addition, this participant describes how, when this practice is done right, the training helped make their bond with their dog much stronger. Sara also highlights the range of emotions that she experienced during her training:

“Feelings that I was letting the dog down were overwhelming. But nothing can express the joy when you see your dog’s eyes light up as they ‘get it’. It’s not just the human who is joyful, the dog is too. The day your dog clicks ‘oh I look after the person I already love and adore!! I can do that!!’ is unforgettable. Starting to become a team is amazing. Preempting each other’s moods, needs etc. Learning to understand when your dog does something to care for you that they haven’t been taught; when they become the carer and do what they think is important. The end result is beyond rewarding. It gives a life, freedom, companionship, counselling, friendship and more” (Sara, QR).

Sara indicates a rich range of emotional experiences that she underwent during her training with her assistance dog Pepper, using, as here, the animal voice on occasion to convey her sense of what was occurring for both participants, human and animal. Throughout these experiences Sara centres, the close bond between her and Pepper. She notes her anxiety in feeling that she was letting Pepper down, but also the joy and euphoria when Pepper realises the task at hand. Sara emphasises the range of benefits from the training, such as positioning Pepper as her carer – a

core claim to be examined further in **Chapter 6** – to highlighting the companionship, independence, and friendship arising due to the development of their partnership (Arathoon, 2018; Michalko, 1999; Pemberton, 2019; Sanders, 2000). In addition, Sara infers Pepper's agency and feelings around the training and partnership, proposing how Pepper knows that she is now helping Sara.

Other participants speak of challenges in communicating with their assistance dogs:

“Challenging – If he didn't understand the task, it was a challenge to approach the training in a different [and] more meaningful way for him. Also, he was such a quick learner that I had to ensure I didn't push him too fast too soon before he'd really understood the task ...” (QR, 18).

This participant reflects on how training was difficult due to the dog's inevitably partial understanding of what they were being asked to do. The task was a human one, in trying to communicate effectively with, or reorientate training strategies for, their assistance dog so that their dog could indeed complete the tasks. This is unique to Dog A.I.D. as a charity that trains humans and their pet dogs to become an assistance dog partnership. The training is thus not just about the dog learning the tasks but also the human learning how to communicate in the most effective manner with their dog (Smith et al., 2021). Furthermore, as this participant expresses, there is a need for a greater embodiment to be nurtured between human and animal during the training. The participant acknowledges not wanting to push their dog too much and for a need to appreciate, before proceeding further, that their dog has understood the task that they are doing. This claim points to the development of an attunement between human and animal (Despret, 2004, 2013) rather than a superficial form of engagement. It also hints at the big expectations that humans often have of their assistance dogs, as one participant explains:

“It was rewarding because I can see how far she has come, but it is taking longer than I anticipated” (QR GP, 42).

Whilst this participant sees the training as a rewarding experience, they hint at greater expectations. As Gravrok et al (2019) argue, managing and understanding the expectations of the human can reduce unrealistic expectations and lessen the likelihood of behavioural problems occurring.

Exploring the partnerships' experiences of training helps in knowing how training influences the development of the partnership. In addition, this section has outlined many challenges and experiences that could be explored further and can potentially provide Dog A.I.D. with things to consider in the training of future partnerships. Academically, a continued exploration, particularly into these concerns of assistance dog partnership and training, is needed' as outlined by Gravrok et al. (2019), but such research needs to go beyond their own small-scale study and the subsequent narrow issues that they highlighted.

Agency and self-expression

Having already pulled out the active roles of dogs within life skills and task training, I want now to explore further the agency and self-expression of dogs within training work. The co-learning of humans and dogs is a continual process of becoming, one that requires the humans to understand their dog's bodily expressions and manifestations of what can, I feel, legitimately be termed dimensions of 'self and agency' (Haraway, 2003, 2008). At the same time, moreover, the dogs learn to understand and respond to their humans' cues, gestures, and bodily actions. In line with the broader goals of this thesis, greater emphasis needs to be placed on exploring 'beastly places' (Philo & Wilbert, 2000a) and 'animals' atmospheres', animals' social and emotional experiences, and animals' individualities (J. Lorimer et al., 2019). In this section, therefore, I discuss some stories of animals' agency surfacing through my inquiries into assistance dog training. Although often presented through a human voice, these stories of doggy agencies provide an interesting insight into the relationship between humans and animals, providing a glimpse into animals' atmospheres, and paving the way to claims in later chapters (**Chapter 6 and 7**) about the entanglings integral to the care running between impaired humans and their assistance dogs.

Doggy agency 1: doing tasks independently

Stories of dogs doing things unaided, untrained, and unexpectedly were a common occurrence, as Megan recounts:

“Yeah, I think he had taken my socks off and I was like ‘oh that’s a really useful task’... [Laughter], because bending down for me is quite difficult, and I was like hang on a minute, actually you know he might be able to be *useful in other ways* as well ... [emphasis]” (Megan, IR).

Sam taking her socks off without *explicit* direction acted as a catalyst to her decision to train Sam to become an assistance dog. He was able to complete a task seemingly having not been trained or directed by Megan to do so, and unsurprisingly she places high value on this experience and Sam's ability to do things of his own accord. Her valuing of Sam's agency opened the potential for a new relationship between them both. Samantha shares a similar experience with her assistance dog Bertie:

“There are interactions that he does for me that are not specifically taught but he does for me, if you are with me on this? It's a roundabout way to say how much the dog actually does for me” (Samantha, IR).

Samantha places value on Bertie doing things for her that were not specifically taught, praising this work and recognising the things that Bertie does beyond the 'official' tasks that they learned together. Furthermore, her quote highlights the dependence that she has on Bertie within her daily life. Sara also discusses how her dog Sage does tasks without direction:

“And he has done things, for example this [leaning and cuddling into Sara's shoulder]. He didn't start training for me till he was four-and-a-half and he had never ever sat on anybody's shoulder like this. Raven [old assistance dog] did it all the time, because she

was small, she would always do it, and it helps with the pain. So, at four and a half years old he suddenly starts doing it and I was kinda like, what, no training, nobody asked him to do it, he just jumped up and started doing it no encouragement, no nothing ...” (Sara, IR).

Sara expresses amazement about this unexpected encounter between herself and her assistance dog Sage. She emphasises the significance of the bodily interactions between herself, Raven, and Sage⁹², in providing her with an ease to her chronic pain. Furthermore, she indicates throughout the narrative that Sage did this of his own accord:

“I just accepted that he would be sitting beside me, I didn’t want to – I didn’t want to try to train him because Raven [old assistance dog] knew when I was in pain, it was never something I asked her to do she did it because she knew I was in pain. I didn’t even know about training him for something, how was he going to sense when I need it, yet he did and, you know, when – the whole concept, how does he know, when did he find out he knew – he had never done it before, why is he suddenly doing it now, and it very much felt like Raven had been giving him lessons ...” (Sara, IR)⁹³.

Sara compares Sage and Raven and how she had accepted that Sage would not be able to do the same job as Raven. She indicates that Raven and herself had a deep bodily connection and that Raven was able to tell when she was in pain: *Raven knew*. This highlights the emotional bond between Sara and Raven and the attunement between their bodies. Similarities can be drawn here between the attunement of Sara and Raven, and later Sara and Sage, and the attunement between assistance dogs who alert their human partners to oncoming seizures, low blood sugar, or other medical conditions (Eason, 2020). Furthermore, Sara discusses the fact that she was unsure how to train for this task given the fact that she had not trained Raven to do so previously. She highlights the unknown ways in which Raven and Sage read her body, and how they know when she is feeling pain. Sara thus calls attention to the subjectivity and agency of both Raven and Sage and their animal ways of knowing her human body. Moreover, she concludes that Raven *must* have been showing Sage how to read and respond to her bodily signals, pain, and the things she likes. Whilst training is discussed as a human-animal development of knowledge, there is little indication in the literature of cross-species training, a dog teaching a dog, or more specifically in this case, a retired assistance dog teaching a successor dog new tricks. There were other stories that expressed dog-dog learning, as Sara states:

“P: I watched Sage one day, I was there with my friend: he is brilliant with pulling [is] Sage, and he pulls doors open no bother at all ... because at home, wherever, ... the normal request would be pull because of how the doors open and closed, so I am never telling him to push, always to pull...

J: Yeah...

⁹² Raven was Sara’s assistance dog when Sage was Sara’s daughter’s dog (and being trained to be an assistance dog). Sage then moved over to Sara when Raven passed away unexpectedly.

⁹³ This extract was used previously with greater prior context in **Chapter 3**, to show how the dog’s physical presence in the interview helped shape the conversation during the interview, whereas now, it is being discussed in the context of a dog’s own agency.

P: So, whilst Raven and my friend were having a cuddle, we decided to have five minutes training on push, so I was getting him to shut my freezer door and he jumps at it with no weight behind [and] goes scrap, scrap, scrap, scrap, scrap [does a pawing action] and I am like, let's give this another go, you have got to run up at it and get your weight behind it. Second time, scrap, scrap, scrap, scrap, scrap, nothing. I set him up to give him a third turn and out of nowhere Raven appears and I am totally focused on him, so I didn't see her coming, she appears comes round behind him runs at the freezer slams the freezer door shut and looks at him and I swear the look said that is how you do it stupid [laughing].

J: [laughing]

P: She then ran off and I thought she had gone straight back for a cuddle – I took advantage of this and instantly got him to have another go, and he was like, ohh I can do it now, bang!

J: Right, so he had seen how she did it and copied her...

P: What I didn't know till later, my friend said to me, 'you do know she didn't come straight back to me', 'what she did she do?', 'She went about 6-feet away from you and watched and soon as the freezer door was shut that is when she came back for the rest of her cuddle'. Not only was she showing him how to it, *she was making sure* [original emphasis]" (Sara, IR).

Unlike the previous example, where it is assumed by Sara that Raven was teaching Sage how to 'sit' on her shoulder, this second encounter was experienced by Sara. In this encounter it is the assumed failure of the task being completed by Sage, and Raven's prior training and agency, that led to her shutting the door before Sage's third attempt. Raven identified a task that needed to be done and opted to complete it. The intra-species training comes visible when Sara's friend says to her that Raven then sat and watched Sage complete the task before leaving the room. Raven completing this task, and then watching Sage, can indeed be cast as an instance of dog-to-dog training and communication. It shows an engagement between their contact zones and a mode of co-learning that is intra-species (Haraway, 2003, 2008).

Retired assistance dogs teaching successor dogs was also discussed by Rachel, who says that:

"With a couple of the successor dogs, they [the handlers] might have said to you actually the puppies are learning off the [retired] assistance dog because they see them getting a treat for bringing in the washing or picking something up, so they just like stick their head in the washing machine even though they aren't meant to be doing the formal training yet, and the puppy is like, 'look, I can do it too'" (Rachel, Trainer, IR).

Whilst Sara discusses how dog-dog training has occurred, Rachel explains why it maybe occurs. Instead of indicating a direct form of training between dog and dog, Rachel highlights the agency of the successor dogs in copying tasks that they see being done by the retired dogs so they can get a treat. Rachel describes these interactions through the training philosophy of positive reinforcement, where task completion equals a reward (Haraway, 2008; Pręgowski, 2015; Smith et al., 2021). Therefore, although Rachel considers these interactions as dogs learning off one another, the interaction is more about the reward at the end rather the agency of the retired dog in teaching the successor dog, as discussed by Sara. Further research needs to be undertaken to explore this training 'triad' and any implications that it might hold for training successor dogs.

The current research was limited in exploring cross-species training, or dog-dog training, for two reasons. First, there was a limited number of participants involved in this research who had both a retired assistance dog and a successor dog, thus limiting the likelihood of dog-dog training being observed. Second, regulations dictate that assistance dog handlers cannot handle two dogs at once if one is working when in public. This spatial constraint means that dog-dog training is limited to the home, so that future research would need to study dog-dog training through the space of the home.

Although the stories so far have been largely about dogs doing things that their human partners said they were not trained to do, there are many stories of dogs doing (or wanting to do) tasks they have been trained to do, but of their own accord, without direction. One example of this is from Beth and her assistance dog Daisy. Throughout the interview Daisy was very vocal, displaying both high-pitched vocalisations and low grumbling whilst moving between myself and Beth, trying to initiate play. Daisy would ‘sit’ in front of me, placing her paw or head on my knee, and at one point even tried to climb up and ‘sit’ on me on the couch. As well as these displays of Daisy’s self, there were a few occasions where Daisy tried to initiate task-work, as Beth describes below:

“[AP brings a basket full of training equipment into the room and puts it on Beth’s lap]

P: You weren’t supposed to do that yet [laughing] [directed at AP]

P: That’s my emergency basket... [laughing]

J: [laughing]

P: That lives in the hall” (Beth, IR).

In this interview with Beth, Daisy attempted to initiate task work by bringing in the basket of training items which is kept next to her bed in the hall, which was met by Beth saying that this was not the right time to do the training, hinting at doing it later (they showed some training to me whilst I was there after the interview). This encounter is compounded by humour with both Beth and I laughing at the situation. Whilst this encounter was humorous, it shows an expression of agency by Daisy in wanting to train, similar to another encounter at a training day:

“We were chatting and having lunch, sat around in a circle, when Joan realised Sal was stood at the other end of the room with a bag in his mouth waiting for her to notice him. Everyone found this funny, and Joan called him over and praised him for the bag. She said he gets so excited with training and that she did not realise he was waiting. After praising him, she then got up and did some more training with him” (Fieldwork Diary Extract).

Through this encounter, Sal impacts Joan through his body language – stood staring across to Joan, motionless, and holding the bag. This leads to Joan calling Sal over, praising him, and then continuing their training. This affective encounter also shows an expression of agency on the part of an assistance dog and communication between dog and associated human, with Joan reading Sal’s body language and understanding his gaze, stance, and demeanour as Sal wanting to

continue the training. The encounter highlights an interaction between their bodies (Despret, 2004, 2013) and an expression of canine agency. A further example between June and her dog Quake highlights canine agency through dogs completing tasks without command:

“I had dropped something, which I didn’t really want but she automatically just went over and picked it up and I thought ‘ooh that was good’, so I just rewarded her ...” (June, IR).

In this encounter Quake’s agency is valued by June and actively reinforced through a reward.

This example is perhaps similar to the ‘intelligent disobedience’ that is learned by guide dogs, where the dogs actively have to make decisions based on their training (Arathoon, 2018). This may include walking around scaffolding rather than under it or assessing whether it is safe to cross a road. Quake makes the decision to pick up the object based on the prior positive reinforcement training undertaken with June, using her agency and knowledge to know that if an object is dropped then it should be picked up and brought to the human. Other participants praised their dog’s agency for similar actions, whether through picking up dropped gloves that the human did not realise they had dropped (Samantha, IR), picking up dropped coins or wallets (Beth, IR; Sara, IR), and picking up items that the human cannot see (Dawn, IR).

The value of such animal agency and decision-making was also acknowledged by Mark, who states:

“P: She’s a border collie, you have to expect her to make her own decisions, and she is a border collie girl, and they are incredibly independent ... Like we have had times where she wouldn’t make her own decisions and I think you have got to care for that, she’s her own person, or dog should I say [laughing] ...

J: [laughing]

P: ... You know what I mean, and on the farm, she would have been expected to make her own decisions there, so why not here: not every situation is the same, you don’t want a robot” (Mark, IR).

Mark indicates the importance of Lucky having her own agency and doggy personality. Although he originally equates Lucky’s agency with personhood, he is quick to correct himself from an anthropomorphic standpoint, albeit precisely this move – to attribute non-humans of all stripes with ‘personhood’ – is one taken by various anthropologists borrowing from indigenous cosmologies (see Bird-David, 1999; Ingold, 1991). Mark expects Lucky to make her own decisions and that he would not want Lucky’s training to make her ‘mechanistic’, which is another intriguing position to adopt on the ontology of agency, pitting flesh-and-blood against machinic life. Others have discussed the relationship between animals and robots and the wider philosophical problem that this leads to (Bear et al., 2017; Holloway, 2007). Mark places value on Lucky’s agency, decision-making, and sentience, and implies a bond of trust shared between himself and Lucky, one perhaps best framed as ‘interdependency’ because as Mark highlights how he cares for Lucky’s decision-making. Interdependency and a bond of trust were also shared between Samantha and Bertie, as Samantha explains:

“... [I] rely on him to figure it out because he has done a lot of things like that” (Samantha, IR).

Samantha projects trust onto Bertie’s agency and his ability to figure things out. Assistance dog partnerships are often considered teams (Arathoon, 2018; Haraway, 2008; Stevenson, 2013), moreover, where trust is a key affective relation which has to be learned and developed by both human and animal. Throughout both Mark’s and Samantha’s narratives trust in their dog’s ability to make decisions is key to their interdependent relationships. Howell (2018) might describes this as a form of ‘dependent agency’: here where the agency of the disabled human is dependent upon the agency of the assistant animal, with reliance co-constituted between human and dog and a partnership built on shared interdependency on one another (Pemberton, 2019). This has far-reaching implications for the rest of the thesis in how care is practiced by human and animal, and how human-assistance-dog partnerships reframe debates around dependencies (discussed further in **Chapter 6**).

Doggy agency 2: not doing things

The stories of canine agency have provided a somewhat affirmative account of the assistance dog’s actions thus far. Whilst I hope I have not provided a romanticised account of assistance dog partnerships, but rather a nuanced narrative of the development of human-animal contact zones and animal ways of knowing, I now focus on dogs opting not to do tasks. These accounts are not meant to be read in opposition to the previous stories of dogs doing things on their own accord but are rather meant to provide further examples of assistance dog agency.

Stories of dogs not doing tasks were rare but remained overtly positive. If tasks were not completed, this non-completion was often discussed in the form of difficulties during training that were subsequently overcome before achieving qualified status, as discussed in the training experiences section of this chapter, or as an indicator of an assistance dog beginning to self-retire. There was little about the dog actively not choosing to do tasks, and perhaps participants were aware of the repercussions that could arise for the partnership if they were qualified⁹⁴. A discussion of dogs not doing things occurred during an ethnographic encounter with Beth and Daisy. Beth and Daisy were performing their training when the following conversation transpired:

B: And she wouldn’t do this [training] if she didn’t want too.

J: Yeah.

B: She just wouldn’t do it.

J: Has there been times where she hasn’t done something because she didn’t want to?

⁹⁴ Repercussions may involve dogs being retired or being deemed ‘unfit’ to work. There are annual ‘recertifications’ to check each partnership and this could be a potential route to ‘disqualification’ (although no participants in my research had experienced this).

B: No, no [laughing]. She might run off with the phone and then come back because “look what I have got, I have got the phone ...” (Beth, Video Recording).

In this conversation Beth foregrounds Daisy’s agency in deciding whether to complete a task. This possibility of the dogs exerting a choice in positive training is exemplified in both the Dog A.I.D. handbooks and in the literature (Dog A.I.D., n.d.; Gabrielsen, 2017; Greenebaum, 2010). Beth outlines this choice, but when asked about it further decides that Daisy always chooses to complete the task. Beth discusses Daisy’s occasional tendency to parade an item like prize or reward, but the ultimate action is for the task to be completed. Other participants did discuss their dog’s decisions not to complete a task, one indication being given by Hannah and her in-training assistance dog Missy:

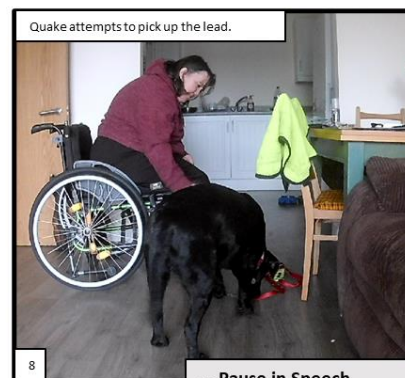
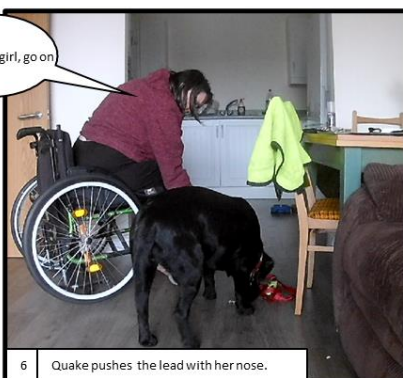
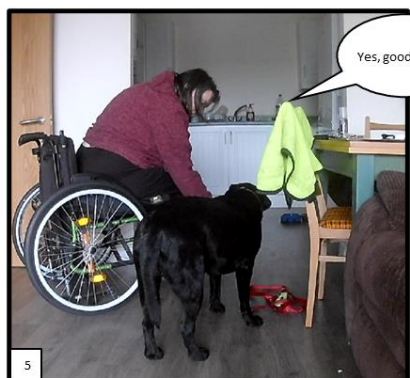
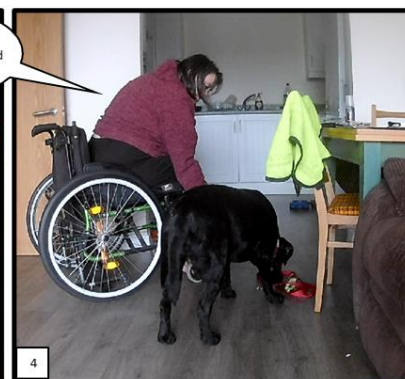
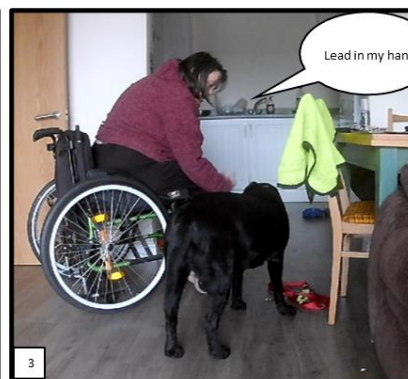
“There are tasks she won’t do for me because she feels I can do them. So, you know the door button thing? She said, ‘yeah I know, but you can reach that one’, and she wouldn’t go and do it [laughing]. So, if there is a reason for her to do something, she does it” (Hannah, IR).

Unlike other participants who discussed dogs not doing tasks (correctly) as a difficulty of training, Hannah foregrounds Missy’s agency and knowledge of her (human) body as the reason for Missy choosing not to press the button. Hannah suggests that Missy is aware of her (Hannah’s) embodied capabilities – intriguingly, using the animal voice to do so – and that Missy chooses not to do tasks when she reckons that Hannah can still do them. As discussed previously in the chapter (and in **Chapter 6**), humans often expressed that their dogs know what they, the human, can and cannot do (Eason, 2020); and so Missy’s choice in not completing a task is here positioned as itself due to the partnership’s bond.

A similar example comes from an ethnographic encounter where June and Quake were practising some of the tasks that they were learning to do together. **Graphic Transcript 9** shows the events of this training encounter. In the video clip June initiates the training task by calling Quake’s name, saying the cue ‘lead’, and gesturing with a pointed finger to the lead. These short verbal actions, along with the embodied action of the gesture, grab Quake’s attention as she looks up to June and steps forward, tail wagging, towards the point target (the lead). As Quake approaches the lead, June issues another direction, saying ‘give me the lead’. In response, Quake lowers her head to the lead hesitantly, sniffing at the lead before looking up at June for greater direction, at which point June says, ‘lead in my hand’. Quake continues to nose at the lead, causing the end to move slightly but continues to look up at June for more instruction. As the lead moves, June is quick to praise and says ‘yes, good girl, go on’. June’s praise acts as helpful confirmation of the task as Quake now uses her mouth to pull back the lead further, her tail wagging slightly as the lead moves. Quake then paws at the lead twice, moving the end out further as June continues the praise, ‘that’s it, yeah’. Quake takes two attempts to pick up the lead: at the first she does not quite grasp the lead; and in the second she lifts the lead slightly off the ground before it falls back down. As Quake is attempting to lift the lead, June gives further direction, saying ‘to me’. In

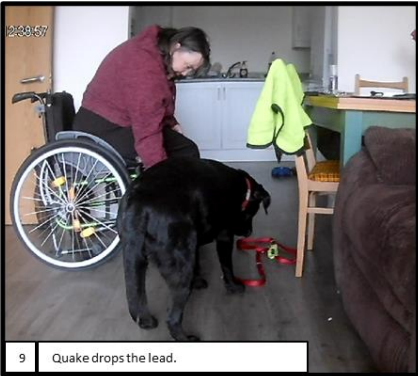
response Quake looks up to June, seemingly confused. June gives further direction reiterating her pointing hand at the target but does not give a verbal cue. In response, Quake turns away and walks towards me, tail and bottom wagging. She paws at my leg, and I laugh a little. June tries again to get Quake's attention calling her name and saying 'oi, come, can you pass me the lead?'. Quake responds to her name but instead looks up at the couch and jumps up, curling into a ball and lying down. June responds to this by saying to me 'no, she [Quake] says, "I'm going back to bed!"'.

This training encounter took place immediately after Quake and June had completed the 'pick up wallet' task described earlier in this chapter. It is arguably significant as it shows both mis- or ineffective communication and an assistance dog seemingly not wanting to complete a task. Throughout this encounter June's verbal cues become longer and less direct, moving from the cue 'lead' to longer sentences. This form of communication becomes ineffective because Quake cannot differentiate exact words, exemplified through Quake's continued glances towards June for greater direction. The communication breaks down as the task progresses, and eventually Quake responds by lying down on the couch. This action is read by June as Quake not wanting to work and rather wanting to rest. Quake shows her agency by choosing not to complete the task, but there remains the question whether this was because of the ineffective communication, because she simply did not want to do the task, or even because she maybe wanted to do something else entirely (such as play with me, the supposedly unobtrusive researcher).



... Pause in Speech
(0.5) Time speech paused (s)
: Extenuation of last letter
↑ High pitch

Transcript 9: (Not) picking up a lead.




9 Quake drops the lead.




To me

Quake looks up.
June reiterates her pointing.

10 Quake mouths the lead.




11



Lead ↑


12



No

hehe

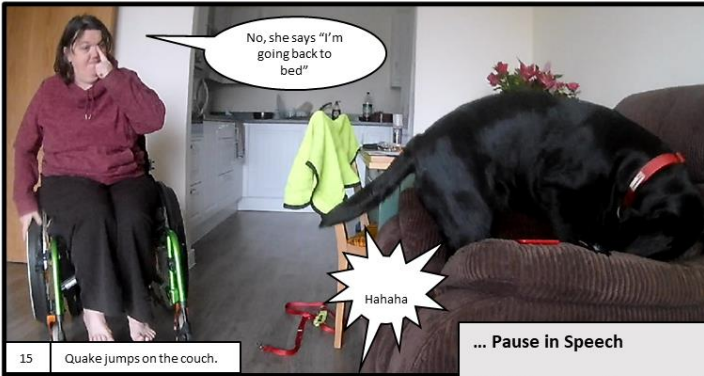
13 Quake moves in a circle around the room, paying particularly attention to me.



Quake... (1.0)
Oi, come... (0.5)
Can you pass me the lead?

Quake moves in attention.

14



No, she says "I'm going back to bed"

Hahaha

15 Quake jumps on the couch.

... Pause in Speech
(0.5) Time speech paused (s)
: Extenuation of last letter
↑ High pitch

Transcript 9: (Not) picking up a lead.

The section sought to uncover greater animals' atmospheres and agencies during life skills and task training. The stories outlined recognise, albeit often through anthropocentric means, the agency of assistance dogs during training and the need to focus more on doggy ways of knowing. This section suggests the need to take animal agency more seriously and for it to be explored further through animal-centred methods. Whilst I used video to explore animal agency, most of the above stories, excepting that captured in **Graphic Transcript 9**, were expressed through the device of verbal human communication rather than the encounters being made visible during ethnographic work. A longer period of ethnographic engagement might have helped to illuminate further the assistance dog's roles, agency and possible misconduct, even resistance, throughout the training process.

Conclusion

This chapter has spotlighted the geographies of assistance animal training, examining these geographies through the life-course of training, from the initial start of socialisation and habituation training, through to life skills, and onto the more specialised assistance dog tasks. Through an engagement with dog training literature and post-human and more-than-human geographical work, woven together with my in-depth ethnographic, interview-derived, and questionnaire-based empirics, I have shown *how* dog training is intended to be completed by participants, *how* dog training is completed by participants, and *why* socialisation and habituation, life skills, and tasks are crucial. Furthermore, I have explored in greater detail instances of animal agency throughout the human-assistance-dog relationship, striving to understand animals' roles in the practice of training. In addition to these moves, I also explored participants' experiences of training. These experiences are as varied as the characteristics of both the humans and animals that form the partnerships in question. Some key themes emerge from this chapter in which I would like to develop, both here, and in the following chapters to come (**Chapter 6 and 7**).

First, the geographies of practice detailed here highlight new ways in which to envision a connection between disabled and animal bodies. Through the practice of dog training, human and animal actively engage with each other's bodies and their attendant embodied capacities. Furthermore, I want to stress here the material (e.g., with rooms, surfaces, objects, and paths) and sensuous (e.g., sight-lines, sounds, pitch and tone) elements of training, and how bodies become together through this material and sensuous engagement in their time-space stories. This research opens up the potentiality to explore other human-animal practices in similar ways – whether animal sports (e.g., racing), animal training (e.g., horses, seals), or other animal work (e.g., ploughing horses, fairground donkeys).

Second, in drawing back to the key thematic, and title of this chapter – '*Working Bodies*' – this chapter draws unique perspectives of the geographies of animal work. Here I position animal work as not just mechanical learned behaviour but also as a lively agentic practice capable of

reshaping human-animal lifeworlds. Here dogs are co-actors – and to use anthropomorphic language adopted in this chapter and the next – carers and confidants – social partners in domesticated relationships. Here dogs co-exist in the space of home-work – their homes are workspaces – and this is enabled through the process of training detailed above.

Furthermore, these findings have interesting implication for the concept of anthropomorphism through animal work. As I have previous outlined (see **Chapter 3**), I find anthropomorphism a useful concept for several reasons such as: it deconstructs human-animal boundaries, attributing animals greater agency and cognitive ability (important in a disability studies context too), and its outward looking spatiality with the ability to open up potentialities. Throughout the chapter I hope to have shown how anthropomorphism during animal work is a way of meaning-making for many participants and helps open up a wider sense of belonging and potentiality. This theme of anthropomorphism at work is picked up in **Chapter 6**, but this time through anthropomorphism through care work, where anthropomorphic attribution might be looked at more critically by some.

Additionally, moving onto the premise of ‘animal methods’ discussed earlier in this chapter (and **Chapter 3**), this chapter has utilised ethnomethodology, video, and graphic transcripts to get closer to dogs’ geographies, actions, and behaviour within the practice of assistance dog training. The use of the approach of ethnomethodology and the methods of video and graphic transcripts allowed me to centre the dogs agency in the analysis with video and graphic transcripts acting as a record of the earlier event imbued with the emotional, material, sensuous, and embodied characteristics of that event (Laurier, 2014c). Furthermore, these methods reshape how geographers might view the geographies of work, caring co-species relations, and anthropomorphism by situating animals’ agency as a key part of care and work. Analysing dogs’ agency through ethnomethodological engagement muddles cross-species caring boundaries – what it means for animals to provide care for a human – and ultimately, reshapes, and reconceptualises, the dependency dyad through caring together. This is a key theme that is revisited in **Chapters 6 and 7**.

In a similar vein, the findings here can help inform the scholarly traditions of both disability geographies and animal geographies through challenging binary thought of human/nonhuman and disabled/abled, and how disabled humans and assistance dogs occupy a cross-species partnership or team (again discussed also in **Chapter 6** through the practice of care).

In addition, the partnerships involved, the ‘teams’, in which a relationship – full of care, support and ‘mutual aid’ (to suggest a play on the concept by Kropotkin (2006), the anarchist geographer along with the charity name [Dog Mutual A.I.D.]) is being co-produced, co-fabricated, between the impaired humans and the assistance dogs: a relationship of inter- or co-dependency that expressly sets itself against both the problematic ideal of the autonomous, independent, all-

capable human and a simple 'animal liberationist' vision of all animals let loose from human circles and environments. Critical here then is a challenge to wider geographies on the role of animals in humans lives and vice versa, as well as a more direct contestation to disability and health geographies and the deconstruction of the dependency dyad, a theme picked up in the **Chapter 6**.

Chapter 6: Cross-Species Caring

Introduction

This chapter aims to explore the relations of care that form, or at least comprise a dimension of, the human-assistance-dog relationship. In doing so, this chapter extends what I have argued previously about the worlds of assistance dog partnerships (**Chapter 4**) when highlighting the lived and intimate connections between humans and assistance dogs. Specifically, and distinctively, I position working bodies (**Chapter 5**) within the caring nexus, of care practices through engaging with the nonhuman as embedded in a web of care as both caregiver and care receiver. In doing this I attempt to build on the themes of bodies, care, and entanglements that are shaping the structure of this thesis (**Chapters 2, 4, 5**), showing how care crosses species boundaries, how care is practiced and experienced by *both* the human and the animal. To anticipate, I address the potentially contentious notion that animals, in this case assistance dogs, can and do ‘care’ for humans, in this case their disabled owners, just as much as humans may care for animals, emphasising the intricate spatialities woven into the embodied work of this mutual, reciprocal caring. In one sense this claim is obvious, since the assistance dogs are precisely trained as *assistance* animals, providing assistance to humans, but the additional move that occurs – ultimately a conceptual, imaginative move – to configure this assistance as ‘care’, and the animals involved as ‘carers’, remains a challenging one, certainly for many academic scholars if not necessarily for the human participants in my study. This move is vital for the participants themselves, as will be highlighted, throughout the chapter.

Engaging with feminist, STS, and more-than-human/posthuman conceptualisations of care forms the framing for this chapter. In **Chapter 2** I discussed feminist care ethics and a move to the development of more-than-human concepts of care. Here I revisit these as a reminder, but to also begin to couch this chapter within these very discussions of care. A generic, and well accepted, definition of care was put forward by Fisher and Tronto, who state that it is:

“a species activity that includes *everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible*. That world includes our bodies, ourselves and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web” (Fisher & Tronto, 1990: 40, emphasis original, cited in Cox, 2010: 115).

In this definition, Fisher and Tronto place particular emphasis on care as work that *interdependent* beings do for one another and hint at wider ethical and moral obligations featuring in the act itself. The focus on care as “everything we do” opens up its boundaries beyond just representational acts to a host of embodied practices, but the ‘we’ here – the species in question – nonetheless appears to be essentially human.

Outlining care as a species activity moves the focus of care giving and receiving care from solely and distinctively, a human activity, to care experienced by nonhuman animals. Both Lawson (2007) and Tronto (2006) position care as something which everybody needs and is involved with, but there is little clear recognition of the nonhuman in these webs of relations. ‘Every body’ is arguably *not* entrained in this understanding, since only *some* bodies, human bodies, appear to matter, certainly as the givers of care. Puig de la Bellacasa (2017: 5) advances Tronto’s view of care as having three dimensions: “... labor/work, affect/affections, ethics/politics – [that] are not equally distributed in all relational situations, nor do they sit together without tensions and contradictions, but they are held together and sometimes challenge each other in the idea of care ...”. Care is thus simultaneously “a vital affective state, an ethical obligation and a practical labour” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012: 197). As an affective state, care is an embodied act, entangled with emotional intimacy. As a practical labour, care involves the physical acts ‘we’ do for (and with) another. Finally, as an ethical obligation, care is entangled with the moral obligation of ‘do no harm’ and to engage with others as equally as possible. But more, than this, the ethico-political dimension of care, with all its moral reasoning, affective intensities, and practicalities, I argue can help develop ‘ethico-political potentialities’. By this I mean a speculative ability, an ability to create a mutual meaning-making, for a more-ethically sound, responsible relationship. Importantly, I take this as a process that changes with time and space and as Puig de la Bellacasa (2017: 5) argues stays “with the unsolved tensions and relations between these dimensions [to] help us keep close to the ambivalent terrains of care”. In a similar vein, Puig de la Bellacasa is thus seeking to expand the orbits of care *beyond* the human. Ultimately, Puig de la Bellacasa (2017: 13) asks: “what does caring mean when we go about thinking and living interdependently with beings other than human, in “more than human” worlds?”. This concern, and Puig de la Bellacasa’s triad of caring dimensions form a point of analysis which I draw out through discussion of human and nonhuman practices of care.

In exploring practices of care between physically disabled and/or chronically ill humans and assistance dogs, I attempt to attend to the ‘where’ of care. Both public and private spaces tend to be dominated by human control, with the majority of animals typically being (re)moved from public spaces, due to sanitisation and urbanisation, although birds, insects, pests, and pets remain present to varying extents (Hubbard & Brooks, 2021; Philo, 1995; Philo & Wilbert, 2000). Within the home, animals also occupy a position dominated by human control, their geographies often limited to specific beds, cages, tanks, or other animal homes (Fox, 2006; E. Power, 2008). Pets, and particularly assistance dogs, trouble this spatiality of control. Assistance dogs learn to behave in, and occupy spaces, in ways that have been historically limited for animals. Thinking about assistance dogs, then, and considering their access, responsibility, and – as I will configure them – caring conducts within different spaces such as the home (inside and outside), café, park, shop, and veterinary surgery, I show how care manifests spatially. I stress how care arises and moves within the partnership, here between human and dog, significantly (re)shaping relations in space.

Furthermore, focusing on the temporality of care, I show how care occupies set routines, fleeting relations, minuscule moments, and large swathes of time, all combining bodies and spaces in intimate, enduring entanglements.

The chapter is structured through practices of care. First, I explore care practices by physically disabled and/or chronically ill humans *for* their assistance dogs. I explore not only how these practices are viewed, but how they are felt and experienced within different spaces of everyday life. Second, I explore acts of care *by* assistance dogs for their human partners. These acts of care done by dogs extend the points in the previous chapter on working bodies (**Chapter 5**), positioning training exercises not just as a thing learned together, but as an intimate act of care expressed by the nonhuman. Acts of care beyond exercises are explored, particularly highlighting the emotional and intimate connections between humans and assistance dogs that form – deliberately to use anthropomorphic terminology⁹⁵ – companionship, friendship, and love. This approach challenges, and troubles, our prior knowledge of care as a ‘human’ practice, concern, and obligation, instead positioning the nonhuman as not merely a passive but also an active agency set within webs of care that are spatially, and temporally, distinct. The final section of this chapter elaborates the assistance dog partnership, casting care as a relational entanglement and as a mutual, symbiotic, practice – or, better, basket of practices – occurring between species, further underscoring the role of co- or inter-dependence.

Caring for an assistance animal

Care has largely been explored as a human practice, within dominantly human spaces. Caring for an assistance animal troubles⁹⁶ the boundaries of care that are dominant in geographical work, moving to a conceptualisation that takes note of *interdependent* species in the caring nexus. Most social science literature around assistance animals shows the benefits of the animal to the human’s everyday life experiences (Higgin, 2012; Sanders, 2000; Stevenson, 2013), even if not conceiving these benefits as ones expressing ‘care’, but also do not highlight the role of the humans in their assistance animals’ care beyond specific ‘positive’ training engagements (Pemberton, 2019) that are couched in wider welfare narratives.

This section aims to examine different forms of care, given by humans, to their assistance dogs. In doing so, I place the assistance dog and human in a network of care and attend to the spatialities and temporalities that characterise it. I consider a plethora of practices of care that occupy a multitude of different spaces, from the home (and garden) to the café, park, shop, and restaurant. I show how care crosses species boundaries, how care is practised and experienced by both human and animal, and how considering the nonhuman within the caring nexus reconceptualises our

⁹⁵ For a greater discussion on anthropomorphism and its use, how I see it as a helpful tool, see **Chapter 3**.

⁹⁶ Here (and throughout this chapter) I am using ‘troubles’ and troubling in the same spirit of Puig de la Bellacasa who herself derives this notion from Haraway (2016).

understanding of care. To the more sceptical reader, perhaps some of these ‘caring’ tasks done by humans for their assistance dogs may be completed in ‘other’ human-canine-relationships (Fox, 2006; Fox & Gee, 2016; Nast, 2006), and thus are not very ‘special’ or ‘specific’ to human-assistance-dog partnerships. I would argue though that exploring these practices, however mundane, can help expanded a sense of what care entails, that care is running in both directions, between human and animal, creating ‘mutuality’, ‘teamwork’, and ‘partnerships’, that hinges crucially on the complex (and mundane) grounded inhabitations, utilisations and subversions of spaces.

‘Everyday’ care practices

Everyday care practices for an assistance dog take a range of different forms, within a variety of different spaces. Outlined in the Dog A.I.D. *Level One Handbook*, care largely takes the form of dog health and welfare, with the most basic aspect being the provision of food, water, and shelter. **Textbox 12** shows guidance taken from the handbook on food and water provision for assistance dogs. **Textbox 12** outlines the importance of unrestricted access to food and suitable food in relation to each individual dog’s health. The guidance positions what it considers ‘good’ and ‘bad’ practices of basic care for an assistance dog placing ‘response-ability’ (Haraway, 2008) on the human partner to meet their assistance dog’s needs. The textbox further highlights the dependence of the nonhuman on the human through the practice of providing food and water, strengthening the status of dogs as akin to younger children (Charles, 2014; E. Power, 2008; Shir-Vertesh, 2012).

Textbox 12: Dog Health and Welfare – Food and Water.

Unrestricted access to fresh water should be provided at all possible times, particularly for those dogs fed on dried food.

A dog’s main means of temperature control is by drinking and panting and without adequate water provision, dehydration and increased body temperature can cause major problems.

Correct amounts of suitable food:

- Choose the correct food for your dog’s age and lifestyle.
- Avoid artificial flavours, colours and preservatives.
- Never feed less than twice daily, e.g., morning and evening, this helps maintain an even blood sugar level.
- Never feed at busy times of the day and allow at least an hour either side of rigorous exercise.
- Home prepared diets must provide the necessary nutritional components for a balanced diet.

Feeding Time:

Feed a minimum of two meals a day in a regular, but flexible feeding routine. Your dog has an amazing body clock, and a rigid time schedule may create anxiety should you be late for some reason.

(Dog A.I.D., 2017a: 2-3).

Most participants place food, water, and shelter as some of the basic needs that they meet for their dogs, as the following participant describes: “He is walked, played with, fed, watered, comfortable place to sleep ...” (QR GP, 12). Whilst food and water are considered basic needs, other participants position food, water, and shelter with a greater importance in their caring routine for their assistance dogs:

“I strive to feed them the best diet possible and also make sure they receive vitamins and supplements plus ample fresh clean water. Both have several comfortable beds which are laundered weekly ...” (QR GP, 14).

The participant’s focus on ‘the best diet’ shows their desire to extend care for their assistance dog through a moral aspiration to be doing ‘the best’ by their animal. Furthermore, the addition of vitamins and supplements show how care moves beyond merely providing food to being cognisant of the nutritional sustenance and health of the dog. This shows dependency at its most basic – the provisions needed to survive. In addition, both the participants focus on a ‘comfortable’ animal space within their descriptions of care. The image in **Figure 56** shows Daisy and Bessy in bed. This is an animal space within the home. Although the bed is a space of comfort and care for an assistance dog, the bed is a multi-functional space. In **Figure 56** the bed is in a crate which can act as a space of enclosure (Watts, 2000). This was exemplified during the interview with Beth:

“[AP vocalises whilst looking at me]

J: [Laughing]

P: I will put you in your crate, he is not talking to you [directed at AP] ...” (Beth, IR).

The bed is configured as *also* an animal space there remains an element of human control over the space. Beth uses the crate as an example of punishment but does not carry out this punishment throughout the whole interview; instead, Daisy continues to be involved as part of the interview throughout my time in their home (see **Chapter 3**). The bed acts as both a space of care and control, and in a very immediate fashion shows the entanglement between dominance and affection (Tuan, 1984). This control is further muddled by acts of care within the space, as a further example from the interview Beth shows:

“P: She [Daisy] is quite shy, she prefers me, and this is the bond. My trainer told me I was going to have to get a soft crate, with a zip at the top and I had to sleep with my arm in it when she was 8 weeks...

J: So, she got used to you...

P: Yes, so the bond grows...

J: Ah right, I hadn’t heard of that before...

P: She, thinks outside the box. So, we wanted a strong bond and that’s what she said works, and yes so I managed to do it till she was what, 20-weeks, and I couldn’t do it anymore, and that was with help from the doctors and things like that because they had to put me back together, because sleeping on your front with your arm out you can’t do very well ...” (Beth, IR).

In this example, familiarisation is used as an act of care to help develop their bond. This is care through the affective dimension and required a specific bodily engagement between human and nonhuman. This care was given by Beth to her dog until she physically could not provide this very specific form of embodied care anymore. Beth's practical labour challenged her own embodiment in order to realise a greater ethico-political potential between herself and Daisy, the development of the human-animal bond. The development of the social bond between Beth and Daisy was put before Beth's own care, although it is also the case that Beth could envisage longer-term bonding benefits for her, the human, arising from Daisy's own wellbeing. Furthermore, in a sense, this form of care – utilising familiarisation techniques (see **Chapter 5**) – shows specifically how dogs may be 'trained for care' – but on a basis that such training initiate 'attunements' (Despret, 2004, 2013) that could give rise to further potential for more-than-trained caring relations.



Figure 56: Bessy and Daisy laying in their bed in their crate (sent by Beth - permission given to reproduce).

Food is also a way that many participants show love and affection for their assistance dogs, with one participant explaining that: “She’s well fed, [and has] even got a slow cooker just to cook her nutritionist meals ...” (QR GP, 27). A further example shows other acts on care involving food and affection, as Carla reveals:

“So, we have got this menu – the dog eats better than I do to tell you the truth, and [trainer] told me how to make liver cake, and it was like what the hell, and all the dogs even if they’re fussy, like one of them in the Tuesday group is quite fussy and she was like ‘I’ll have some more of that’. So, I used to make it every Wednesday ready for Thursday to give to everybody, and then I started doing something else so that went on the back burner but [trainer] showed us all – like oh if you make this for your dog it will help in this way, like obviously garlic and pumpkin seeds, help with fleas and ticks, and worms ...” (Carla, IR).

Carla uses her own labour to provide care not just to her own assistance dog but others within her training class. In this example food is used as an object of care to show love and affection to the


nonhuman (Nast, 2006). Food takes the form of care through not just being a treat for training, but also as an aid to ward off various health concerns. Likewise, **Figure 57** shows some different dog treat recipes from a Dog A.I.D. magazine. The use of these recipes in the magazine extends food as an act of care to the Dog A.I.D. community.

LIVER CAKE

1 Egg
1 lb Liver
Spelt wholemeal flour, Tapioca Flour or Plain wholemeal flour - (enough to form a fairly stiff cake mix) - half and half plain and tapioca flours gives good results with less crumble.
½ tsp fresh herbs (optional)
1 clove garlic (optional)
Spoonful of coconut or olive oil (optional)

Method:

1. Liquidise liver, (+ herbs, garlic, oil if using) and egg together.
2. Stir in flour until mixture resembles cake mix and can be able to stirred.
3. Put into greased and lightly floured baking tin large enough to get mixture about 1 to 1½ inches deep.
4. Bake in oven, gas mark 5 or electric equivalent for approx. 20 to 30 minutes or until knife comes out clean.
5. When cool, cut into small blocks and freeze. Take out what you require daily and defrost before cutting into tiny pieces



COOKING WITH CAROLE!

TUNA, SALMON OR SARDINE CAKE

1 tin of sardines in tomato sauce - use tuna, salmon or mix
2 eggs
1 clove Garlic (optional)
350g flour
Milk to mix

Method

1. Mix sardines garlic and eggs
2. Add flour then use as much milk to make it a runny cake
3. Grease or line a Swiss roll tin and pour mix into it
4. Bake in a moderate oven for about 20-25 mins
It should be a bit like play dough when cool. Cut it up and bag and freeze it.

Trainer, Carole Husein, cooks up some 'tasty treats'
– if you have some favourite culinary creations, please share them with us and we may feature them in future issues!

Don't give your dog the same treats all the time – variety is the spice of life! Cold meats cut very small, a little cheese, pumpkin seeds, kibble, carrot, apple etc. Kibble can be flavoured by leaving in airtight tin with something smelly – i.e. small lump of blue cheese or dried fish skins. A teaspoon of water in the pot overnight will soften kibble so you can break into very small pieces and moist treats are easier to digest.

Toys, play, verbal and physical praise and life rewards are also valuable reinforcers.

Verbal and physical praise is also valuable and very important because you always have your voice and hands with you. Don't just deliver a treat - make it count by using praise too.

Vary the types, size, and number of rewards and keep the special one for when it is needed most, for example, in the perfect recall.

SALMON CAKE 2

1 Egg
1 Clove Garlic (opt)
1/3 cup of rice flour
6 - 8ozs salmon fillet - skin removed
Water

Method:

1. Puree the salmon and garlic in a blender or food processor with about 1/3 cup of water until smooth.
2. If you're using a food processor, add the egg and blend. Then add enough of the rice flour to make a thick batter.
3. If you're using a blender, transfer the salmon/garlic puree to a bowl, add the egg and mix. Then blend in enough of the rice flour to make a thick batter.
4. Spread batter into an approximately 6x8 inch baking pan lined with release-coated foil (or greased & floured).
5. Bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees for approximately 20 minutes, or until the centre is firm. Be careful not to overcook!
6. Remove from pan when finished baking and allow to cool.

Finished treats:
Treats must be stored in the refrigerator, or frozen for later. The key to getting a nice, firm, slightly rubbery consistency in the treats is the rice flour. Either brown or white rice flour may be used. 1 1/2 tsp. of garlic powder may be substituted for fresh garlic and add 2 tbsp. of fresh, chopped parsley if you desire.

amazon smile

You shop. Amazon gives.

You shop, Amazon gives – search for
Dog Assistance in Disability at
smile.amazon.uk and it doesn't
cost you a penny!

Figure 57: Recipes for cakes for dogs (Dog A.I.D., 2019).

There are also contentions with food as an act of care, as explained by Megan:

“He used to be really fat when he was a puppy and I didn’t realise because you see your pet as the most perfect little thing in the world don’t you and kinda at some point we realise he was actually pretty big [laughing], he was too fat, he was just like a turd, just long and round and at that point no amount of change in different food would help and it just all seemed to irritate his stomach. So, I changed to raw, and it was the best decision made, he lost that extra weight and he’s now nice and healthy and he loves it...” (Megan, IR).

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Megan indicates a tension between food and health for her assistance dog Sam. Megan positions Sam's body as 'too fat' and positions herself as response-able in reshaping Sam's body to the socially constructed norm of a thin and healthy body (Bunyak, 2019). Megan nonetheless hints at a conflict between the affective dimension of care and the ethico-political dimension of care. She identifies her love and affection for Sam as a reason for his 'fat' body and ultimately how this came into tension with her ethical obligation to care for Sam's overall physical and, as conceived here too, emotional health. Here, love, an affective intensity can be understood to 'territorialise' (Bissell, 2009) Sam's body. She places fatness as something that is unwanted and unhealthy. In addition, a further tension arises in Megan's striving for Sam's leaner body since her own embodied agency – in experimenting with Sam's diet – initially caused Sam health issues in the guise of an upset stomach. Care can of course sometimes, as the adage goes, be 'cruel', an aspect that may sometimes recur as the animal seeks to 'care' for its human owner (discussed later in the chapter).

Beth also talked about Daisy's weight:

P: I do dry biscuits now and she does get a bit of meat and vegetables because she is on a diet with the weight she has put on [laughing]

J: Did you have to go the vets to know that?

P: Yes, my vet tells me 'She's fat' [laughing] but you know she has had nearly a year off [because of injury] with not much exercise so now is the time to get it off her which we are aiming to do by summer ..." (Beth, IR).

Beth hints at a wider medicalisation of fatness that positions her as responsible for reshaping Daisy's body in line with veterinary knowledges (Bunyak, 2019). Fatness here is positioned as unwanted through the phrase 'get it off' and through the limiting of food through dieting. Beth hints at the wider tensions involved in Daisy's changing body shape due to her injury and subsequent lack of exercise. Here, too much food and the injured or impaired body is constructed as causing the fat or unhealthy body. Like Megan, Beth hints at the ethical obligation to care for Daisy's body and to reshape it to correct cultural standards.

A second area of care involves grooming practices. Grooming practices are crucial in spatial access for the assistance dog partnership and thus are a required practice for all assistance dog partnerships. **Textbox 13** outlines some grooming information from the Dog A.I.D. *Level One Handbook*. The handbook places emphasis on the 'response-able' human in the care for their assistance dog through grooming. Grooming is expressed through the need to remove dirt, hair, and other animal products judged 'unsightly' from human space (Hubbard & Brooks, 2021; Instone & Sweeney, 2014; Philo, 1995). These grooming practices act to control animal bodies within human spaces, although, as will be illustrated, they can also be acts with a caring role orientated to both the physical wellbeing and sensual needs of the animal partner. The practice of grooming is also spatial. First, grooming is done to keep private spaces (home) free of animal

detritus (e.g. hair) and to also to stop potential damage to the home (e.g. nails scratching wooden floors) (E. Power, 2012). Second, grooming in public is only key for some animals not others, and assistance dogs have a notable presence in public spaces, thus are required to keep an appearance that is considered – anthropocentrically – to be acceptable for in human spaces.

Textbox 13: Dog Health and Welfare - Grooming.

It is essential that your dog's coat is kept healthy and clean. As an assistance dog, it will be privileged to go anywhere with you so minimal hair loss is of the utmost importance.

Daily grooming, checking over and cleaning teeth:

Grooming not only removes dirt and secretions but also stimulates the skin to aid in the natural shedding process.

Long haired dogs: Comb and brush daily to prevent matting, paying special attention to the tail, trousers and behind the ears.

Short haired dogs: Daily brushing is excellent for removing dead hair and scurf. After exercise run your hands over your dog to check for grass seeds, burs, and thistles, particularly between the toes.

Check eyes and ears for any discharge, check nails and pads for damage and to see if nails need trimming. Check under tail, clean, if necessary, some long-haired dogs' benefit from a trim in this area. Keeping teeth clean is vital to promoting good health; decayed teeth and gum disease have been linked to causing infection in other parts of the body including bloodstream, heart, digestive, and urinary system.

(Dog A.I.D., 2017a: 5).

For many participants grooming is part of their everyday care practices:

“The girls are exercised and groomed daily and are weighed every 8 weeks or so” (QR GP, 14).

“Her teeth and coat are brushed daily, and nails done weekly” (QR GP, 22).

“Like anyone else would with their pet dog. He's regularly groomed and washed ...” (QR GP, 20).

“Grooming, baths, walking, working, playing. She loves everything except the bath, much prefers the sea” (QR GP, 24).

Grooming has a specific temporality for each partnership, reliant on the breed of the assistance dog and type of hair they have. As two participants show, grooming is a weekly task. For the second participant grooming extends from the practice of brushing to also cleaning teeth and clipping nails. For the third participant the temporality of grooming is slightly murkier, whilst for the fourth participant bathing is also a grooming practice that is recognised specifically as care. These acts of care were listed as things people do for their assistance dogs but as expressed in the textbox, they are also done to control animal bodies in human space. Furthermore, the requirements for an assistance dog partnership in public space (see **Chapter 4**) show how grooming is a vital practice. For Harriet, though, there needs to be a greater awareness of these caring exercises relayed by fellow trainers:

“I mean, there’s an awful lot of information that a lot of trainers miss giving. You know, they’ll teach people how to do ‘sit’ and the recall, yes, they’re important. But what about easy ways to give mental stimulation? What about advising on diet? What about advising on husbandry skills? You know, I find it’s really sad that people come to me with two- or three-year-old dogs they have had since a puppy and went to puppy classes, and the trainers from their puppy class didn’t teach them how to teach the dog to be touched? Or have its nails clipped or have its ears inspected? You know, or even to give it a brush out? I just find that is really sad” (Harriet, Trainer IR).

As Harriet argues, trainers need to have a greater impact on teaching assistance dog partners (and other pet owners) with regard to how to provide care to their dogs, and specifically she positions care *through* grooming animals as vital in the relationship between human and dog. This care takes the form of familiarisation and socialisation (see **Chapter 5**) as dogs learn to be touched and groomed, as both parties in the relationship learn to be affected by another. Whilst Harriet outlines a range of skills such as how to provide a good diet and mental stimulation, that are vital to the care of the assistance dog, her quote here revolves particularly around the highly embodied acts of grooming (brushing, cutting nails, ear inspections, touching). As Puig de la Bellacasa (2017: 96) states “understanding contact as touch intensifies a sense of the co-transformative, in the flesh effects of connections between beings”. The affective intensities felt through touch here allude to better care for both human and animal. Though the practice of grooming and learning to be touched, human and animal enter a phase of co-becoming (Haraway, 2003, 2008). Some participants did outline the precise ways in which they groom their assistance dogs, as Dawn explains:

“When I groom her, I know by touch if any areas are sore or need to be looked at or whatever ... So, what I did with Bella was, as I was grooming her, I named all her body parts and clicked after each one and gave a reward. So now if I say teeth, for example, and I’m sat on the chair, she’ll come and she’ll basically ‘sit’ facing away from me with a bum in between my legs waiting for me to do the toothpaste and things” (Dawn, IR).

Drawing on clicker training and touch tasks (outlined in **Chapter 5**), Dawn teaches Bella a verbal cue for each body part and, when Bella responds, by giving a paw, rolling over onto her back, or sitting in between her legs facing away, Dawn reinforces this response with a food reward. Dawn relies on this learned behaviour to provide care to Bella through the medium of touch. As Puig de la Bellacasa (2017: 20) conveys, “touch expresses a sense of material-embodied relationality”: to touch is to directly engage in the act of care, to affect another and be affected by them. The act of care between Dawn and Bella is a deeply embodied and intimate act of care, requiring a knowledge of one another’s bodies and their changes over time. Furthermore, care here is not just a bilateral process, being given by one actor and received by another, but rather is an ongoing and relational process. In learning to be touched, Bella enacts care for Dawn, engaging in the way that Dawn’s embodied capability requires. Such caring mutuality will be foregrounded more obviously later in the chapter.

The engagements of care through the process of learning together, or co-becoming (Haraway, 2008), also require an engagement with more-than-human materials and objects. Touch is not just

done through hand to body, but, for instance, hand-toothbrush-toothpaste-body, implicating an engagement with materials and objects of care. This aspect is also shared by Erin, who describes Luas's subjectivities through the act of bathing:

"He's been getting groomed since he was a puppy and then because he's got a skin condition and he has to be washed in such a shampoo every week. So, he tolerates it, he doesn't. I like it. It's a 'do I have to?'. He doesn't like the hairdryer; I think it's the wind of it because he's fine with noises and things. So, ... I think it's more the air, he just doesn't like it, so I brought him a power robe that he puts on after a bath" (Erin, IR).

Erin's labour in grooming Luas is valuable for his embodied sensibility. Bathing and shampooing acts to soothe his skin condition and requires bodily engagement between Erin and Luas that tie together Puig de Bellacasa's three dimensions of care. Furthermore, Erin focuses on Luas's subjectivities in these acts of caring by interpreting the bathing as something he tolerates and noting his specific dislike of the hairdryer. Luas's subjectivities have thus reshaped this act of care, changing the material engagement of care that he experiences, notably in that he now has a 'robe' to wear after a bath, although the reshaping here is of course reliant on Erin recognising Luas's subjectivities and acting on them. Intriguingly too, when Erin declares that Luas does not like the bath, she immediately adds that she *does* like it, another small indication of how care-as-affect may circulate between human, animal, and things (here water, shampoo, bathtub).

In another act of care, Hannah recounts bathing Missy:

"I have a wet room, so we both go in the wet room, and this is probably too much information, I'm stripped off [LAUGHING] and I 'sit' down on the shower chair, and I shampoo her. It's [the wet room] got a heated floor, so while she's laying on the heated floor drying off, I then shower because obviously I'm covered in dog hair. So, it works really well because it means I can still maintain her condition and look after her" (Hannah, IR).

Hannah expresses a more intimate act of care in the process of cleaning and showering with her dog Missy. This act of care from human to assistance dog fits with what Franklin (2006: 154) says about how "cohabitation is expressed both semiotically and sensually, in communication and in flesh". The act of cleaning together within the wet room shows care between species within the bathroom, a highly privatised space of the home. Sharing intimate spaces within the home such as the bedroom or bathroom shows the emotional and intimate bond shared between human and their assistance dog or human and pets in general (Holmberg, 2019; E. Power, 2008, 2012), intimacies only replicated in the closest of human-human relations.

Other care practices involve weather related issues, as outlined in **Textbox 14**, which highlights the different risks to assistance dogs due to adverse weather and some preventative measures that can be taken to protect an assistance dog. The emphasis for an assistance dog's care during adverse weather falls on individual responsibility, for the human partner to *know* what is best, although the dogs here might still display some agency (such as a reluctance to go outside when it is raining or windy).

Textbox 14: Dog Health and Welfare – Weather conditions.

Protection from extremes of heat, cold and wetness.

Most dogs have dense fur and are able to cope better in cold conditions rather than heat. Dogs eliminate excess body heat by panting, but if the surrounding temperature is too high, panting becomes ineffective and body temperature can rise rapidly. Never leave a dog in the car on a warm day, nor in direct winter sunlight: *Dogs Die in Hot Cars*.

Extreme heat: in summer limit exercise to early morning or late evening, however a short-nosed dog or a densely coated dog should not be exercised at all on hot days.

Extreme cold can chill the whole body and although most dogs are protected by their fur, the extremities have the least protection and can suffer local freezing or frostbite.

Being wet will reduce temperature even further so, short coated, elderly, less active or less hardy dogs really need a warm waterproof coat in such weather. When outdoors keep the dog on the move, once home, dry him off and ensure access to warm, dry bedding.

(Dog A.I.D., 2017a: *emphasis original*, 3).

Some participants outlined specific practices they undertake to care for their dogs and to protect them from the weather, as one participant reveals:

“He also has boots for when it’s hot, cold, or there are things on the floor that could hurt his feet (chlorine or grit mainly) and has gentle foot rubs to keep his paw pads in the best condition” (QR GP, 20).

The participant outlines the various things they do to keep their dog safe when they are outside. The use of dog clothing is an effective way to stop burns due to hot pavements and to prevent cuts, and indeed dog clothing is part of a wider trend in care products for canine partners (Fox & Gee, 2016; Nast, 2006). Whilst dog fashion is a growing trend, the boots used by the participant have a functional purpose rather than solely an aesthetic one. Another participant shares how they protect their dogs from adverse weather too:

“He wears booties when it’s hot, cold, or I’m worried about the ground being unsafe. He also has a winter coat and a raincoat, though the raincoat is more for me, permanent wet dog smell living in London otherwise!” (QR GP, 21).

Like the previous participant, this participant outlines how dog clothing helps to protect their assistance dog from adverse climate conditions. There is a difference explained between the clothing though and who the care is for: the winter coat and boots are designated as clothing to aid in the care of the assistance dog, keeping them warm, whereas the raincoat has a dual purpose, protecting the dog from the wet weather, but also the human from the smell of wet hair. The human concern is emphasised in the care for their assistance dog. Whilst this act of care is not particular to care-assistant partnerships – these forms of doggy care practices occur in human-companion animal relations too – perhaps there is a greater emphasis placed on these practices *for* assistance dogs by their human partners. Furthermore, the requirements of assistance dogs

within space – well-groomed, trained, and clean – place greater emphasis on these doggy care practices.

Play (and work)

Play is one form of care that many participants enrol as part of their partnership. Play is multi-spatial, occurring in a range of different spaces. Furthermore, play requires a range of engagements between human, nonhuman, and materials that help both species to flourish. Outlined in **Textbox 15** are different practices of play from the Dog A.I.D. *Level One Handbook*. The focus on play outlined in the textbox is on interactivity between human and dog, dog and dog, or dog and material. Play between different actors helps to aid in training by the dog learning and developing skills needed to complete specific task work, but also to stimulate the dog's mind and keep them fit and healthy. Furthermore, some of the types of play described in the textbox also have further benefits, such as aiding socialisation and familiarisation, and thus limiting unwanted behaviour when dog-dog interaction occurs and helping the human-animal bond develop further.

Textbox 15: Play.

Chewing Toys: Dogs of all ages need to chew since this action encourages relaxation and aids digestion. Appropriate chew toys satisfy this need safely and help keep teeth clean.

Occupational Feeding Toys: Hollow toys made for stuffing with either wet or dry food; the challenge of getting the food out of the toy is a great game for your dog providing both mental stimulation and fun. These toys can also be used to help prevent greedy dogs from bolting their food, by slowing down the delivery, the choking risk is minimised, and the digestive process aided.

General Play: Toys used for either solo play or interactively to instigate games like search, hide and seek and retrieve, all these games stimulate the dog's mind and aid training. Rotating toys by putting some away and changing them on a regular basis, will help maintain your dog's interest in them. Use a variety of weights and textures to increase the items your dog will pick up.

Sufficient contact with other dogs: Throughout a dog's life there is a need for interaction with its own species; this serves to maintain positive socialisation by the ability to practise polite 'doggy' greeting behaviours.

Exercise: This provides your dog with the opportunity for exploration, mental stimulation, and physical fitness. Daily, off lead exercise in the fresh air is essential for optimal health; it stimulates the metabolism and circulation, promoting the removal of wastes. Avoid too much fast running as it can over stimulate the production of adrenaline which increases stress levels.

(Dog A.I.D., 2017a: 4).

Play was signified as something valuable for participants do for their assistance dogs, as one participant revealed:

“He is walked, played with, fed, watered, comfortable place to sleep, and not far from a vet if he gets sick or injured, he has mental stimuli and physical exercise but most of all he is loved ...” (QR GP, 12).

Play is positioned in the welfare of the assistance dog, along with other 'natural' needs such as food, water, and shelter. Play is also combined with mental stimulation and physical exercise in

providing care for an assistance dog, as is also described in the textbox. Furthermore, the positioning of love as the primary, and most important part of the relationship is quite interesting. As suggested previously (see **Chapter 2**), love is an affective intensity (B. Anderson, 2006) felt between human and animal (imbued with anthropomorphism) and a desire to be with another being. The situation of affect/ion as a significant part of the relationship that a human provides a dog shows not only the importance of the partnership, but that such affect/ions are the partnership.

Another participant positions play in the care needs of their assistance dog:

“I ensure all her needs are met, especially in making sure she has plenty of play and down time” (QR GP, 31).

Play is suggested as a vital part of care for an assistance dog, as too is ensuring ‘down time’ to stop dogs becoming exhausted from the activities that they, in their assistance role, are almost constantly undertaking. Play and ‘down time’ are hence positioned in opposition to the labour or work that an assistance dog provides for a human. The idea of play as relaxation was expressed in the textbox specifically, and hints at a difference between labour and relaxation. For other participants work and play are entangled together:

“We play at least an hour a day and work on tricks or tasks for another 45 minutes or until he gets tired” (QR GP, 21).

For this participant play and work, enacted together, form physical and mental exercise for the assistance dog. There is also a temporal nature to play that is both routinised and subjective, which was also expressed by another participant who states:

“She has a strict diet and treat plan, and specific set times of work time and play time” (QR GP, 22).

The structured nature of play and work, here conceived as disjointed rather than mixed-up, form a routine between human and nonhuman. For this participant play and work are separate forms of human-animal interaction kept distinct through their relations and temporal nature (Goode, 2007).

This separation is nonetheless troubled by other participants, such as Megan, who discloses that:

“To be honest he spends most of his time playing, there’s stuff at home that I don’t know whether he would class [as work], like emptying the washing machine. I mean the amount of time he gets a sock, runs around the house really excited with it in his mouth then comes back with it [laughing] and I don’t mind because I am at home, you know it doesn’t matter if it takes him half an hour to give me that sock, he’s having fun [laughing]...” (Megan, IR).

Megan indicates an overlap in the activities of play and work which is also discussed in textbox. The boundary between play and work becomes blurred for Megan and Sam through Megan’s interpretation of Sam’s ‘classing’ of some exercises as ‘fun’. Megan’s recollection of these exercises, and her laughter when recalling them, show how meaningful these interactions are for her. In this circumstance there is also a spatial element to the blurring of work and play. Megan makes clear that this blurring of boundaries takes place in the home: care is extended in the home

through the ‘fun’ exercises that human and animal engage in, such as removing, running round with, and finally bringing back the sock. Here care-work *by* Sam appears to merge seamlessly with a form of care extended by Megan *for* Sam, allowing him to play whilst working. The longevity of completing the task (in this case a caring act for Megan) is extended, both temporally, to be an act of care for Sam, and spatially, due to the home being a flexible caring space. Here I am conceptualising assistance *as* care, which may be a problematic, but I argue that such acts of assistance cannot be anything but imbued with care. If this act were required outside the home (a retrieve), the immediacy of the act would be more clearly defined, rather than elongated through play. June also explains the crossover between play and work:

“Well, she goes to the park, that’s her time, that is her time. She has time in the flat too, like we play games, ... and she doesn’t know it is part of her training too, but we do like tug of war games with her because I need her to pull stuff; and when we go to the park we have ball games and I won’t get the ball and I’ll make her fetch it and bring it back to me, and it is all part of fun and games, but yeah it is great fun but I love watching her in puddles or going swimming ...” (June, IR).

For June play is not just because it is a caring act for Quake but play builds on the skills that Quake needs to learn in order to provide care for her. In this case play becomes a functional act with a specific end goal, rather than something that is done entirely for fun. The sense of fun and enjoyment for June comes when play has less of a functional characteristic, namely Quake’s enjoyment of water. There is also an inherent spatial organisation expressed by June through the act of play. The park is designated as Quake’s space and the home as June’s, which in a minor register reinforces the spatial boundaries of animal spaces (specific designated areas of the home) and beastly places (animals’ own places) (Philo & Wilbert, 2000a). Whilst the boundary between play and work is blurred in both these spaces, it is the space of the park that becomes more synonymous with acts of play that are done ‘for fun’ such as running through puddles, whilst play in the home remains structured towards having a functional purpose towards building training skills. Furthermore, in the example from Megan, work became play, in the example from June, play became work. In both the examples we can see the three dimensions of care at play. The relational nature of care emerges as work and labour, and affect and emotion, play out together, under the guise of ethico-political potential, in an attempt to develop the bond between human and animal. This bond, to draw on Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) is about developing non-exploitative forms of togetherness.

Participants also explained the types of play in which they engaged. Play combines both physical exercise and mental stimulation, as Dawn discussed:

“... I’ve gone out over lockdown and bought – I forget the name of it, I’m so sorry – but you can probably look it up, it’s a tricky toy ... it’s a bit like the Manners Minder⁹⁷, but

⁹⁷ The Manners Minder is a remote-controlled device used for dog training hold food and when a task is done – e.g., a ‘sit’ – a button can be pressed so a treat will be released for the dog to collect. In the case of

a more basic version. So, it's a box, a remote-controlled box, that you put food into, and then you have this button, and you can put the button on the stand that comes with it, or you can have it on the floor, or whatever. So, you teach the dog to push the button and then the dog can have the treat, basically. So, pressing the button makes the treats come out and then you can have the button and the treat, say 60 meters apart, so basically you could feed the dog its dinner doing this by dispensing – you can choose how many treats come out at a time. So, the dog would go and press that button, and then it would run the 60 meters to eat to the box where the treats have come out, eat the treat, run back, press a button, etc. So, things like that, that you know, stimulate the dog's mind are good" (Dawn, IR).

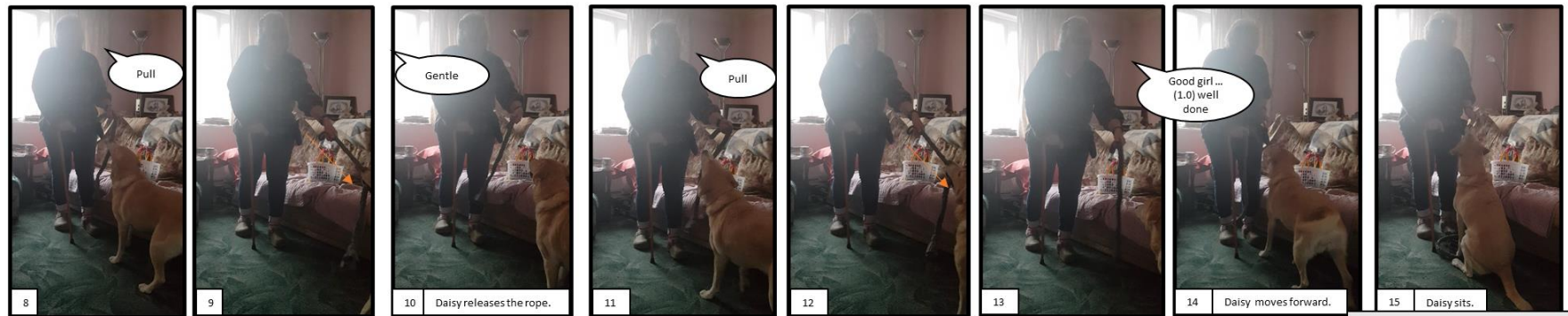
Whilst other games are played between human and dog, this game is an engagement between dog and machine. The dog learns that pressing the button leads to the treat, and physical exercise is gained through the dog running the distance between dispenser and button. The human's role in the game is through choosing how much food is dispensed and how far apart to place the button and dispenser. In this sense the human partner exerts some power over the exercise: they can choose the amount of food they think their dog should receive for each button press and how far they should run to receive this. Again, this game, whilst providing exercise and mental stimulation has a functional purpose, since Bella learns that pressing a button leads to a treat, which is vital for Bella learning tasks that require pressing buttons such as opening automatic doors (see **Chapter 5**). Even so, Bella retains some agency, in that she can show no interest in the game or withdraw from it when she has eaten enough, and hence potentially 'refuse' this particular instance of care displayed by Dawn. Furthermore, the acts of play discussed above – with all their inherent spatial, temporal, and material entanglements – show how dogs may be 'trained for caring'. This idea of being trained to care, emerges through the specificities of play, whether to learn how to retrieve an item, or press a button, and through the idea that play, and work are so entangled. It is through this blurring of play-work then that the basis for such 'training as care' is initiated, and that gives rise to the potential for more-than-human trained caring relations.

Play was also observed between participants and is visualised in **Graphic Transcript 10**. The graphic transcript shows an example of the game 'tug', being played between Beth and Daisy. In the video Beth and Daisy are in their living room and Beth is using a walking stick to help with her balance. In panel 1 Beth is looking through a box of items with Daisy standing at attention, ears and tail pointed showing her alertness, and eyes on Beth's hand. As Beth pulls the rope out of the box, Daisy follows Beth's hand with her eyes and her tail wags. Beth holds the rope out with both hands saying "Are you ready?". Daisy grabs the rope in her mouth, looking up at Beth. Beth says, "Go on, pull!", and in response Daisy takes five quick steps backwards as the rope extends and the tension in the rope increases. In doing so, Beth's body rocks forward and she takes one step forward (panel 5). As this motion occurs, Beth initiates the end of the game by saying "Good girl" and Daisy's response is to drop the rope. As Daisy drops the rope, she watches

Dawn, her Manners Minder was button controlled by the dog and acted as a way to teach, and reinforce, 'pressing the button'.

it fall whilst Beth steps back to her starting position. Daisy then steps forward as Beth holds the rope out in her hand. Daisy grabs onto the rope and, as she does so, Beth initiates the game again by saying “Pull”. Daisy again takes five quick steps backwards and the tension in the rope increases, causing Beth to rock forwards in with the motion of the pull. Beth’s reaction is to say “Gentle”, which causes Daisy to release the rope. Beth initiates the start of the game once more, saying “Pull” as Daisy grabs the rope. Daisy again takes five quick steps backwards and the tension in the rope increases. Beth’s body rocks forward and she praises Daisy, saying “Good girl, well done”. On receiving the praise, Daisy drops the rope and steps forward, tail moving side-to-side. As Daisy moves forward, Beth reaches into the treat pouch and Daisy’s eyes follow Beth’s hand, expecting the reward. Daisy sits in front of Beth with her eyes still following Beth’s hand as she receives the treat.

This act of play between Beth and Daisy, whilst done for fun, has a functional purpose too. Playing tug and learning to pull gently is a vital prerequisite for many pull exercises such as opening and closing a door (see **Chapter 5**). In playing tug, the relation of power is largely within Beth’s hands. She both initiates and ends the game (several times) within the video through verbal cues, yet Daisy retains a physical power within the relationship through her ability literally to pull Beth over during the game.



Transcript 10: Playing tug.

... Pause in Speech
(0.5) Time speech paused (s)
: Extenuation of last letter
↑ High pitch

Erin also discussed Luas's subjectivities when it comes to play:

"He's never been a huge player ... he always liked tug, especially with Ted, you know I'm pulling it one end and because it's ... big, ... it's probably ... about two or three and a half feet long, you know, it's a big Ted. So, no, he loves pulling and pulling it, me, and him ... he will pull it around and shake it about and lay on it and lick it and do a lot. He has never been into playing with a ball or anything like that, you know, taking the ball back. But what I have done is I found a ball, instead of a ball type thing that has a hole in it, you I would throw the ball, I put a bit of food in it. It's like, being a spaniel, he loves scenting things rather than me throwing a piece of food because he'd find that easily. Put it [the food] in the ball, ... fire [it] off somewhere ... [but he] even find[s] it easy. So, we ended up ... having to pick up the ball, because he is not interested in that, but ... he would thirst for the food when we are out for a walk and stuff. He used to when he was younger have a football, sort of a children's football, he used to like football with me and him, ... he would push it with his with his nose, but he doesn't really do that now. I did take it out and he's just not interested, I think he's at the stage where his joints are not up for it, I think" (Erin, IR).

Erin explains how Luas only likes to play specific games. She foregrounds Luas's subjectivities in the interactions, showing how the act of play is influenced by Luas, given whether and how he chooses to play. Material interactions form a significant part in the act of play, with Luas interacting with the teddy, ball, food, and football. These interactions help to develop the bond between human and nonhuman but are shaped by these material choices: playing with the teddy, ball and food is evidently deemed by Luas a much more desirable interaction than playing with the football. Additionally, we can see how play is impacted by Luas's health. This dog's embodiment shapes and limits the practices that occur, showing how, if play is done wrong, it can impact his health negatively rather than positively. The example here also shows Erin's alertness to Luas's physical condition, suggesting that his 'joints' are not as good as they used to be, and, of course, the human's knowledge and interpreting of their assistance dog's body – its condition, (in)capacities, ageing, and more – is central to all the caring practices and relations discussed in this chapter.

Beth reveals how after an operation:

"... she [Daisy] doesn't run after the ball now, she does run on her own, and she was doing gentle work, I wouldn't take her shopping, but she would come to a meeting with me ..." (Beth, IR).

Beth outlines Daisy's acts of self-care, not playing ball anymore, but still running on her own. Beth's own acts of care for Daisy thereby extend over the blurred boundary of play and work. As well as this limitation to play as an act of care, another participant discussed further limitations of and on play:

"He loves sports, agility and flyball, but I feel they put excess stress on the legs and back, so don't partake in these" (QR).

In this instance, whilst the other participants limit acts of play due to their assistance dog's current embodiment and health, this participant limits acts of play because of play's potential to cause future

bodily injuries. In this instance the human partner limits their animal's access to agility and flyball, due to human concern, although maybe too with an eye to how the animal's future bodily difficulties might then rebound into reduced work that they can do to 'care' for the human. Care between human and assistance dog in this example takes the form of human control running between human and dog. This can be viewed through the lens of 'dominance and affection' as the act of care, in limiting these specific types of play, is chiefly (if not exclusively) done out of affection, or love, for the assistance dog (Tuan, 1984).

Medical practices

This section tackles a range of medical practices undertaken between humans and assistance dogs to show how care crosses species divides, how assistance animals become part of the care nexus, and how medical care is practised and experienced by both human and assistance animal. Again, whilst medical care for a canine companion is not solely a practice completed by assistance dog handlers for their assistance dog, perhaps greater emphasis is placed on the dog's health due to their 'life-saving' and 'life-changing' impact that humans so often describe (see **Chapter 4** and later in this chapter).

Everyday healthcare

The largest focus on medical practices for dogs, or pets, is on the veterinary professional undertaking practices in the sanitised space of the veterinary clinic, which will be examined shortly, but a vast range of medical practices undertaken for an assistance dog are also done by their human partner within the space of the home. Practices such as treating general ailments such as cuts, scraps, and allergic reactions, as well as administering daily tablets are all undertaken by the human partner. These practices and their routines have been little considered in the literature but can show us how everyday care practices are accomplished between human and animal and help us to better understand the relationship between human and assistance dog.

As outlined in **Textbox 5**, there are suggestions about different signs that human partners should look out for in their assistance dog that might disclose canine illness. These common signs of illness are important in helping human partners attend to their dogs' body, potentially identifying when the need arises to shift medical care from the space of the home to the space of the veterinary clinic, from nonprofessional to veterinarian. Like the previous practices of everyday care, there is an emphasis here on the 'response-ability' of the human in the care for their animal partner. Rachel reinforces this need for participants to understand their animals' bodies and behaviour:

“There's a vet nurse, who set up an online free course, she normally does first aid courses, like face-to-face ones for dog owners, and she did a paw pad nail injury course, which was free access and we shared that with all the clients as one of their weekly tasks to do: they had to work through that and get their certificate to say they'd done that. So ... I love stuff like that and I think it is so important because it is still a pet dog at the end of the day, and they

want to look after those dogs and care for them; and, with the free work session I am doing, it is all about kind of helping them to recognise the signs in their dog because ... so much of the time ... they don't know what the dog is displaying with their body, they don't understand it, [and] then you miss those signs and you don't pick up on the subtle indicators that maybe the dog isn't fully comfortable in a situation; and I am so keen on making sure that the dog's welfare is paramount that all of those little bits feed into the training as well. It is not just about dog training, it is about welfare and behaviour too, as a whole" (Rachel, Trainer IR).

Rachel amplifies the need for human partners to have knowledge of their dog's bodies and bodily capabilities, speaking to the role of attunement between human and dog, an affective bodily engagement where human and animal affect one another as a form of communication (Despret, 2004). This attunement works across the species divide through non-verbal communication such as gestures and movements between bodies. Rachel emphasises this vital affective and ethico-political engagement alongside the practical labour of completing physical tasks such as applying first aid. Rachel puts equal emphasis on both the more speculative and practical forms of medical care, other participants also shared a deep engagement between themselves and their dogs, as Beth conveys:

"Not only do I know every inch of my dog's body, but I also know how she moves. It is most important that she gets the best care I can give her. I know when she is not well or unhappy and this is when the role of carer reverses. Her welfare is the top of my list!" (Beth, QR).

As well as offering a revealing remark about who is the 'carer' here – chiming with the deeper concerns of this chapter – Beth describes an intimate embodied knowing between herself and Daisy, an attunement that helps her to know Daisy's body, her changing movement and wellbeing. Beth positions this caring role as a care 'reversal', thereby indicting the mutuality or symbiotic nature of their relationship that is similar to other assistance dog partnerships (Eason, 2020). She couches this caring role and her knowledge of Daisy's body through the ethico-political dimension of care. To provide care or be a caregiver for her nonhuman partner is vital to their partnership. Furthermore, this care is valued through the phrase 'the best', indicating the importance of care for Daisy (and echoing claims above about 'the best diet'). June also captures an attunement with Quake:

"I can really tell. I can tell when she is upset, or she is scared because I have noticed her body language. Once we were out in the park and there was a dog who was being a bit funny towards her and you can see her backing off a bit. I can tell when she is upset, or in pain because her little head will go down and she is looking at you like [puppy-dog eyes] ..." (June, IR).

June reads Quake's body language to tell if she is upset, scared, or in pain. There is an affective engagement occurring here, as through her own embodied action Quake affects June. Quake is able to communicate through her body and June is able to read this. Whilst there is a hint of anthropomorphic understanding through the aesthetic charisma (J. Lorimer, 2007) of 'puppy-dog eyes', and June's enactment of this in the interview, June is nonetheless able, or indeed enabled, to know Quake's embodiment. Another participant considers how they know their dog's body:

“Based on the AD, welfare comes first always. Trained to spot signs of stress or discomfort. Taught positive training methods only. Taught how to meet AD physical and emotional needs and ensure that they have the best working life ever” (QR GP, 16).

Whilst Beth and June both illustrate an intimate embodied knowing of their dogs that relies on engagement, this participant indicates being taught how to spot signs of discomfort. They indicate that their training has enabled them to understand their dog’s emotional and physical needs, rather than it being an inherent knowing through embodied interaction.

Knowledge about animal health and welfare is crucial in providing care to assistance dogs. There is a growing trend in the medicalisation of companion animals and an increase in the different procedures and practices available to provide ‘better’ care for animals (Fox & Gee, 2016, 2019). Many participants also explained the various medical practices they offer for their dogs. Megan described some of these caring procedures:

“He’s had lots of vet checks, he’s all tip-top healthy, itchy ears from time to time but he’s got medicine for them. Same with his feet, he’s got medicine for his feet if they get itchy. He’s got boots so that he doesn’t have to touch the grass because it itches his feet ...” (Megan, IR).

Applying medicine is a mundane but important practice that Megan completes for Sam to stop itchiness. This care practice is done through Megan’s labour in giving Sam medicine, but also affection, through the care-fullness of the exercise. Medicine forms just one facet of the dog first aid kit that Megan shared with me during our interview (as shown in **figure 58**). Other items such as toothbrush and toothpaste show the everyday aspect of the contents, whilst other items such as allergy medicine and particular forms of medicine show the individual nature of the first aid kit, tailored to Sam’s needs, and how the contents of care may differ between first aid kits. Some items used for dressing injuries and wounds would be common across both human and nonhuman first aid kits, whilst others are clearly animal-specific (and sometimes specific to the specific animal, such as Sam).



Figure 58: Contents of a dog first aid kit.

Other participants discuss everyday practices they complete for their dogs:

“I make sure he gets the right kind of food. He has sensitive skin and allergies and I make sure the treats I buy him are safe. I do my best to look after him in every way” (QR GP, 21).

As this participant communicates, they provide their dogs with specific food due to their dog’s allergies, a mundane but important care practice that helps prevent adverse bodily reactions to food and other materials. Erin also recounts changing food practices as a form of care for Luas:

“Make sure he’s got a good diet and in fact, because he’s got allergies, ... I spent a lot of time researching to get a food you know he’d eat okay; and then obviously it’s actually gluten free, and then he has ... allergies like to beef and lamb and it’s usually either chicken or turkey, but like even there now, probably about a year, maybe even less than a year, ago, the food he was on for years seemed to be starting to have an issue ... So, the food he was on wasn’t working for him again, so had to do a bit more research. But he’s on one that’s got added probiotics to it because, during this part of his treatment to get him walking again, probiotics seem to work very well with dogs with gastritis ... because we’re worried then you may be getting an inflammatory bowel, but thankfully he didn’t but the probiotic I used in that [acted] as treatment of that as well” (Erin, IR).

Erin identifies Luas's health issues and his allergies, underlining her care for Luas through her labour in researching and finding suitable food products for him that will not cause an increase in his gastritis. This individual act of care is tailored to Luas and his specific bodily needs. A further specific everyday practice was undertaken by Beth for Bessy, her new successor dog. Bessy, having not had her vaccinations yet, was at risk of illness and infection and therefore was not allowed to go outside and interact with other dogs. Although Beth needed to walk and exercise Daisy, she could not leave Bessy alone, so, as seen in **Figure 59**, took Bessy out in the pushchair whilst walking Daisy. This combines both care for Daisy, through physical exercise, and care for Bessy, in protecting her from harm due to non-vaccination.



Figure 59: Bessy in a pushchair (sent by Beth – permission given to reproduce).

Other participants presented a concern with vaccination and traditional western medical knowledge as one participant outlined:

“I’m very concerned with the over vaccination of dogs and the use of chemicals for flea and worming. I use homeopathic treatments. As gut health is most important, I give him daily kefir. I am a Reiki practitioner, so use Reiki on him too. I’ve had work with dog massage and find this a real help” (QR).

This participant questions traditional western veterinarian knowledge as ‘expert’ (Fox & Gee, 2016), preferring instead to utilise homeopathic or ‘natural’ treatments. They extend their personal beliefs into care for their dog, highlighting a range of practices they pursue. These alternative forms of care have the potential to increase through access to health care on the internet and there needs to be greater research around the use of practices, such as Reiki and massage, with nonhuman animals. Carla also

focuses on the internet and social networks in gaining knowledge to provide good medical care for Buzz:

“I haven’t had a problem with Buzz with fleas or worms or ticks since having all the stuff my trainer had been telling me about. She has had dogs for 40-odd years and not once has she had a problem, like she does take them the vet if she did get a problem or something went wrong, and there is like a Facebook group, I can’t remember what it is called, but it is to show you a different way instead of using all the chemicals that the vets give you ...” (Carla, IR).

Carla highlights collective knowledge and community in providing medical care to her assistance dog Buzz. She particularly mentioned her trainer, as someone with expert knowledge that provides informative knowledge. Additionally, she centres community access to knowledge online as a way of sharing best practice and information on assistance dog health and welfare (see **Chapter 4**). This section thus begins to highlight the role of dependency between human and assistance dog. The vulnerabilities of assistance dogs are expressed along with the role of the human in caring for their dog. This section thus starts to open the complex dependencies between human and assistance dog, something that is discussed later in this chapter.

Medical practices and the veterinary clinic

Medical practices that are undertaken in the space of the veterinary clinic are ones which a professional must administer the care. The veterinary clinic acts as an enclosed space of human care and control, dominance and affection (Tuan, 1984), a space in which humans deem what is ‘good care’ for the animal (Mol, 2008; Schuurman, 2017). The idea of ‘good care’ in the UK centres on the scientific and rational approach put forward by the Code of Conduct of the Royal Veterinary College of Surgeons (RVCS), one that limits empathetic awareness and emotional care by prioritising rationalism in medical treatments of sick animals (Donald, 2019; Satama & Huopainen, 2018; Schuurman, 2017). In this sense, whilst animals occupy the space of the clinic, and are the focus of care, their subjectivities are at times limited – or, rather, regarded of limited importance – when they are receiving care (although see Donald, 2018a, and Satama and Huopainen, 2018, for examples of resistance). I explore care for animals within these spaces, but also to attempt to centre animals’ experiences within the care nexus, rather than only viewing animals as passive recipients of veterinary care. Furthermore, there is a need more fully to explore veterinary practices beyond euthanasia, practices that are not solely life or death. In this instance, then, I situate the experiences of care between human and assistance dog and the role that emotions play in understanding these veterinary encounters.

Medical care, in relation to the space of the veterinary clinic, is positioned as a space of care by many of the Dog A.I.D. trainers. Tina touches on her role as a dog trainer for clients of Dog A.I.D.:

“We always advise the clients to go to the vet. We don’t, I don’t, do any of that [medical] stuff. I am a holistic veterinary practitioner, which just means I can tell you which herbs will make your dog feel better. But we don’t give out any advice at all. That’s not my, I don’t feel qualified to do that. I wouldn’t feel comfortable doing that. I wouldn’t want Joe Bloggs to tell me how to diagnose my dog. No, I want the vet to tell me that. So, we do teach about body language. We teach about that side of it, and we teach the holistic stuff, but we don’t, I wouldn’t [suggest medical health practices]” (Tina, Trainer IR).

Tina positions the scientific knowledge of the veterinary practitioner as expert in the health of dogs, although still suggesting some contention between her own holistic practices and a veterinary professional’s medical practices. Veterinary practices are presented as knowledge that should be unchallenged, whereas her own knowledge, whilst important for understanding animal body language, should not be taken as better than that of the veterinary professional. Harriet locates a need for a greater awareness of dog body language, within the space of the clinic:

“That’s it, so long as the dog walks on the lead, and sits at the curb and comes back when it’s told, then that’s all they [pet owners] need. But then what happens when it’s got to go to the vet? They’ve never done [training] pertaining [to] vet visits, for example, and the dog gets in there and it’s absolutely terrified. And depending on the dog’s functional character will depend on how the dog deals with that trauma and where and how quickly it was bounced back, if at all” (Harriet, Trainer IR).

Harriet spotlights the veterinary clinic as a space of anxiety for dogs, one that can impact on their wellbeing. She highlights the role of responsibility within the human-canine relationship, foregrounding the responsibility of humans to care for their dogs through the processes of familiarisation and socialisation, even potentially with respect to veterinary visits and spaces. She suggests that human care for the assistance dog, through familiarisation, as vital to the dog’s wellbeing and their ability to cope in spaces of trauma. Rihanna also states the importance of why assistance dog owners need to familiarise their dogs to the space of the veterinary clinic:

“Making sure that the dog’s happy in the vet, because if they [the human partner] need assistance from the dog in the veterinary clinic, and the dog is fearful of the vet, their behaviour is not what they would normally do, they might not perform, because they’re too scared. So, they might not be able to pick up items for the person because, when a dog is fearful, learned behaviours aren’t the priority, it’s survival. So, a little aspect of that is, you know, taking more priority to make sure the dog is comfortable in every environment” (Rihanna, Trainer IR).

Rihanna’s explanation is arguably anthropocentric, focusing on the dog’s role to facilitate care for the human and how this role can be adversely impacted if the dog is scared within the space of the clinic, rather than caring for the dog because they are uncomfortable within the space. She proposes a need for the human partner to care for the animal partner so the animal is comfortable within the clinic environment, but so they can ‘perform’ when required.

Unsurprisingly, a lot of the participants positioned going to the vets as something they do to provide care for their dog and to protect their dog's welfare, as one participant stated:

“My dog's welfare and happiness are always paramount to me. I always ensure that his health is checked regularly by his vet and any concerns are reported and investigated” (QR 15).

The participant makes clear that a part of the care they provide their dog is through health checks, whilst concerns over health are a source of anxiety for some participants, as June explains:

“I didn't realise how important her welfare was, so now I make sure that even the slightest little thing, I think ‘ooh’, then I will go to the vet and normally there is nothing wrong, but you don't know, so I want her to be fit, healthy, happy. So, if I think there is the littlest thing wrong with her, I will keep an eye on her and take her for a check over” (June, IR).

June acknowledges her change in perspective over the importance of Quake's welfare. She outlines a greater anxiety now around Quake's health and how, if she thinks something is wrong, she will seek veterinary advice, thereby, in common with most other human participants in this study, regarding veterinary knowledge as expert in understanding Quake's health. The temporality of veterinary check-ups is also important. Participants outline their frequency of going to the vets, from June stating she goes whenever she thinks there is a problem, to other participants going dependent on the medical practice:

“[I go] yearly to the vet for a titer test⁹⁸ (or vaccines) to make sure his immune system is still going strong as well as getting a full health check from the vet to make sure he's fit and healthy” (QR GP, 20).

“She also has vet check-ups every six months, and a specific parasite control regime” (QR GP, 22).

“We have to take her to the vet every three months, and he checks her over and hence why we pick up things very quickly ...” (Beth, IR).

Temporality of medical care is dependent upon each partnership and the assistance dog's embodied capabilities. Beth and Daisy go to the vets every three months because, at the time of the interview, Daisy was close to retiring (and is now retired). The other two participants completed a more standard practice: indeed, going to vets for check-ups is required very six- or twelve-months dependent on the assistance dog charity. These two participants also highlight the individual nature of their visits. The first participant explains their visits through the need for ‘titer tests’ and vaccines to make sure their dog's immune system is okay, whilst the second emphasises their assistance dog's specific parasite prevention regime and the routine veterinary treatment that this requires.

⁹⁸ The titer test determines the immunity a pet has to different diseases so that the human owner can make the decision on whether to vaccinate them (Blue Cross, 2021).

Practices of care enacted in the space of the veterinary clinic were experienced by many of the participants as highly emotional events and encounters. Megan recalls one such encounter:

P: I mean, obviously he gets his yearly vet checks, and actually he sees the vet quite a lot. He had surgery last year ... we had to go down to [city name] for it, well we didn't have to, but they were the *best* in the country, so I was like, Dad, please can we go down, because I didn't, not that I didn't trust anybody, I...

J: But when you hear those words 'they're the best in the country'...

P: Yeah, I want *the best* operating room. It was quite a delicate surgery, if it had gone wrong I would have ended his career that he had only just started ... so, I wanted to go to *the best*, but yeah it wasn't fun, he was off work for quite a bit, but I think I gave him longer and he was bald from here down [shows me on dog's body from midriff to hind legs] [laughing]" (Megan, IR).

Megan's desire for 'the best' veterinary clinic, and hence 'the best' care for Sam, expresses her entanglement with the three dimensions of care. Whilst Megan is not doing the medical procedure herself, she is tied up in the emotional labour of the caring practice of surgery through researching and finding the veterinary clinic she thinks will provide Sam with 'good care' (Mol, 2008). This 'good care' is entangled with the ethico-political dimension of care, 'the best' indicating a moral standard of care that is above what is expected by most veterinarians. Both these dimensions are tied up with the affective and emotive dimension of care through her intimate relationship with Sam, but also her interdependence with him. She hence expresses the affective and emotional dimension of care through not wanting Sam to be adversely affected and thus having to retire, and through giving him less responsibility to work and more time to recover. Although some self-interest was evident here, Megan not wishing to lose the assistance provided by Sam, nor to have to start training a new dog, she is clearly prepared to forsake some of her self-interest by delaying Sam's return to 'active duty'. Megan also expresses that she wanted 'the best' operating room. Bringing the space and its materiality into play, she positions the operating room as not just a space *of* care, but a space *for* care, and a space that *gives* care. Like Megan, Dawn also explains her specific desire for veterinary surgery for her dog:

"She had ovariectomy via laparoscopy⁹⁹. That's my preferred way of doing it, and so she's still got her womb ... I wanted it because I knew the recovery time was so much quicker, and I knew that her stitches would be less, and also I'd read that the hormones for pyometra¹⁰⁰ and things like that tend to go when the ovaries go, so she's not so much risk of that, plus keeping the womb in place means that she's got less risk of becoming incontinent when she's older, so to me it's a win-win" (Dawn, IR).

⁹⁹ A laparoscopic ovariectomy is a 'key-hole' neutering procedure for female dogs where the ovaries are removed but womb remains.

¹⁰⁰ Pyometra is an infection of the womb. It's caused by the womb filling with pus and, if left untreated, it can lead to kidney failure, toxemia, dehydration and, in some cases, death (Blue Cross, 2019).

Dawn itemises her reasons for the specific surgery through the ethico-political dimension of care. She places emphasis on the recovery time, side-effects, and bodily impact that this specific surgery would have on Bella compared to other forms of ovariectomy. In doing so, she positions Bella's body as a site of care and change, recognising how the ovariectomy would 'territorialise' Bella's body (Bissell, 2009), altering it through medical practice. June narrates her emotional experience of Quake undergoing a medical procedure:

“... he [the vet] said “you really need to get her spayed¹⁰¹, like I know you wanted to wait till February of this year”; that was last year ... and he said, “I would get her done now”, so we did, and I was so upset because it was the same vet where my dogs went [to get euthanised], and I was in bits. I didn't want her to have it done, I was worried, I was crying, and my trainer rang me up and was like “do you want me to come with you?” and I was like “no its okay, I think I'll manage”. She said, “I'll come and see you and we will talk about it”, and she told me all the way through about what I could do to make me feel happy about leaving Quake in the vet. So, she said ... “take her toy with her, one of her favourite toys, take her favourite blanket, let her know how you are feeling, and she actually rang my vet and said to them ‘can you give Quake pre-med while June is in the room, and let her wait till she is sleepy’” ... – I might feel a bit better about leaving her ... So, I went to the vet, they sedated her, and I gave her her favourite toy, I gave her her favourite blanket and I said, “if she gets upset, put Radio 2 on ...” (June, IR).

June's experience is entangled with her emotional response to, and memories of, the space of the veterinary clinic, in part because previous of her dogs had been euthanised there. Euthanasia of a pet is an extremely emotional process, often bound up within the space of the veterinary clinic (Satama & Huopalaainen, 2018; Schuurman, 2017). Through June's narrative we can see how different actors became involved in the caring nexus for Quake's surgery, but also how care extended towards June. June's trainer became an actor involved within the caring nexus (digitally) by trying to calm June's anxieties around the surgery, and in trying to make her feel at ease with the surgery. In doing so the trainer deployed Quake's subjectivities – or, rather, June's intimate knowledge about what makes Quake 'happy' or 'settled' – as a way for June to provide Quake care before the procedure. In providing Quake with her favourite toy and blanket, and even in the suggestion about a radio station to play, June felt better about the procedure going ahead and for Quake to receive care. However, it of course remains the case that we get little indication of how Quake felt receiving these items, or how she coped during the procedure: her animal being as a recipient of medical care unavoidably remains somewhat opaque.

Beth recounts her experience of Daisy's veterinary procedure and her care for Daisy afterwards:

“J: What was that experience like, her being in the vet and going through that?”

¹⁰¹ Spaying is the term used to describe the surgical procedure - ovariohysterectomy. In this procedure, the ovaries and uterus are removed completely in order to sterilise a female dog.

P: It wasn't, it wasn't nice. I went down, because we, she had a mass in her chest, we found a lump in the chest first in October and within ten days she had that removed because the biopsy came back as inconclusive, so I agreed 'get it out', see what it is, and although it was a type of cancer it wasn't something that was going to spread, thankfully. So, we had to have a scan round that area, and it looked like they got it, and nothing came up, so we were lucky there; so, she was off then, but it was rest and it was until the stitches came out, and it was ten days' rest; and I think for the first five days I slept down here [in the living room on the sofa] with her. Difficult, because I have to change my routine and it doesn't fit in very because I get stiff, ... I hurt, but I have to do it for her, to make sure she was okay. She wasn't allowed upstairs, and she wasn't going to be happy being down here ..." (Beth, IR).

The immediacy and quick nature of this veterinary procedure, as well as the unknowingness of the biopsy, placed Beth in a difficult emotional position when caring for Daisy at this time. Through Beth's decision-making about the procedure, the relational dimensions of affection/emotion and ethics/politics once more emerge. Beth's acts of care for Daisy tested her *own* care and wellbeing, in part through disrupting the usual geographies of the human-dog relationship in Beth and Daisy's home. Beth sleeping close to Daisy, to provide her care when needed, challenged the embodiment of her own disability, showing how Beth here placed Daisy's care above her own. Beth and I discussed further her care for Daisy post-operation, disclosed below:

"J: And when she was off was trying to do stuff for you still?

P: Yes

J: And was that difficult in trying to get her to rest ...

P: While she had to rest, I had to rest, so it was a lot of watching the TV, because if I moved, she moved, the baby gates had to go back on the stairs, because she wasn't allowed up and down the stairs. If I went out, I had someone to come 'sit' in with her. Eventually she was allowed up the stairs at night and down the stairs in the morning, and that was it" (Beth, IR).

Beth outlines the entangled nature of care for Daisy. The close affectual relationship between Beth and Daisy meant that Beth had to change her everyday practices to care for Daisy, and she also indicates how care for Daisy stretched beyond the dyad of human-dog to involve other actors when she had to leave the home, accenting still more the wholly *interdependent* nature of such care. Beth also noted how, in caring for Daisy, she had to change the spatial arrangement of the home. The use of boundaries in homes with pets has been discussed previously by other researchers, for instance in delineating spaces within the home as 'human only' (E. Power, 2008, 2012), but in this case the boundaries acted as a tool of care, limiting nonhuman access to certain spaces but at the same time limiting the potential of injury or damage during the phase of animal recuperation following surgery.

Caring for a human

An assistance dog's primary role is to complete a set of specially trained tasks for their human partner (see **Chapter 5**). Assistance dogs therefore provide what can plausibly be cast as 'care' to humans through completing these tasks, in effect as a feature of their specialised and trained role, but arguably

also by providing a wide range of other ‘services’ through offering emotional and mental wellbeing support, companionship, and maybe the likes of affection and friendship. Such an expanded care role as provided by assistance dogs to their human partners has already been glimpsed in this chapter, whenever the mutual or reciprocal aspects of co-caring have surfaced in the empirical examples explored, but the remainder of this chapter will now centralise this expanded role.

Caring practices: Emotional and mental wellbeing

Mental health geographies¹⁰² now has a growing interest in the nonhuman, whether this is through nature engagement (Bell, 2019; Bell et al., 2019), particular ‘green’ or ‘blue’ spaces (Bell et al., 2018; Dobson, 2021; Foley & Kistemann, 2015), or whether through direct and sustained engagement with animals (Bell, 2021; Bolman, 2019; Eason, 2020; Gorman, 2017; Robinson, 2019; L. Wood et al., 2005). For many of the participants, they indicated a change in their mental health¹⁰³ due to partnership with their assistance dog. As one participant describes:

“I used to be very anxious going out as people would stare and laugh at my tics. I have had CBT [cognitive behavioural therapy] and Independent Travel Training and having my dog with me has helped me through therapy and to be less anxious travelling on new routes and being out in public” (QR GP, 8)¹⁰⁴.

The participant indicated their anxiety due to people’s attitudes and actions towards their physical manifestations of their disability. As Beljaars (2020: 286) elaborates, “dwelling in public spaces can invoke tics and that the presence of others is often mediated by performing tics in a less noticeable fashion or suppressing them altogether”. The participants explain a range of different medical and therapeutic strategies to help them be less anxious in public space, including being partnered with an assistance dog. The combination of the therapy, travel training, and assistance dogs’ companionship has evidently changed their spatial experience when travelling through public space and made them more comfortable and less anxious. Megan also signals the positive impact of Sam on her mental wellbeing:

“Sam has been incredibly good for my mental well-being. Having autism, going outside was very anxiety inducing for me. I wouldn’t go anywhere without another adult with me. With

¹⁰² Mental health geographies essentially began with the spatial epidemiology of mental illness and with the geographies of institutional provisions (asylums then ‘post-asylums’) provided for the treatment of mental illness, but increasingly have been reorientated towards what might be the environmental situations most conducive to mental good health (especially at a ‘population’ rather than ‘individual’ level) (Wolch & Philo, 2000).

¹⁰³ The term ‘mental health’ here is used as a broader-brush label for one’s mental wellbeing which can include positive and negative states (but much more than might be labelled as ‘mental ill-health’ or ‘mental illness’). Mental ill-health on the other hand, is usually indexed, however problematically, as diagnosed or sub-clinical ‘mental illness’ (Wolch & Philo, 2000).

¹⁰⁴ Beljaars (2020: p.286) states “motor and vocal tics are closely related to urge-driven bodily interactions with the environment and are also part of the Tourette’s symptomatology. They are generally understood as sudden, repetitive, stereotyped movements or vocalisations”.

Sam at my side, I am able to go outside without being as anxious ... He gave me a reason to get up every morning” (Megan, QR).

Sam has been able to help Megan with the spatial manifestation of her anxiety, allowing her to voyage out into the wider world more often and more confidently. Furthermore, she reveals a deep connection to Sam as a motivation every morning, something also stated by another participant:

“He gives me something to live for and get up for, he keeps me busy so I can’t focus on my mental health issues, and he makes me want to get better so I can be happier with him” (QR GP, 34).

This participant indicates the ability of their dog to change their focus, moving from their mental health issues to the assistance dog’s physical needs, and in the process lessening the negative dimensions of the former. In this sense, needing to care for their dog keeps these participants ‘in the present’, not dwelling on the past or problems. Furthermore, this shift of focus also ushers into the picture the shared potential future of human and assistance animal, in which regard ‘getting better’ – maybe working positively on good mental health – is something done not just for the human’s self but for their assistance dog.

Helping with mental health and anxiety is an important part of the human-assistance-dog relationship. It is an affective/emotional form of labour with the ethico-political potential to be well together. But, whilst participants indicate a change in their mental health, it does not necessarily mean that their mental ill-health disappears, but rather that it is managed differently, or that its manifestations change. This is expressed by one participant who explains with reference to her assistance dog:

“I have had some very trying times of increasing disability, but she has helped me stay in the present, helped me be a productive person, where without her I may have stayed in getting more depressed” (QR, 17).

This participant indicates how their changing disability has previously impacted their mental health, but also celebrates the role of the assistance dog in caring for the human here is to help them ‘stay in the present’. The help of the assistance dog in managing their mental health helped this human partner be more productive, implying also the social and cultural pressures that society place upon them (to be a ‘useful’ member of society).

Relatedly, the space of the home is often considered by human study participants as a space of isolation and worsening mental ill-health, one needing, if possible, to be escaped or transformed, in which respect the assistance dog might prove invaluable. This point is conveyed by another participant:

“It’s an amazing change. I still have bad days, but he [the dog] gives me a reason to get out of bed every day and try my best. And the general improvement in quality of life has improved my mental health substantially” (QR GP, 21).

The participant identifies the bedroom as a room of spatial isolation, one which they inhabit when having ‘bad days’. A more positive mental health is then indicated due to their dog’s ability to affect them through changing their spatial experience, making them leave the bedroom, and to engage more fully with what a day might bring. The participant also reveals that they have experienced a general change in their quality of life which has improved their mental health. The phrase ‘bad days’ was a common phrase from participants, as June notes:

“Mentally she [the dog] is improving my mental health, and I get bad days, I get good days, ... because I suffer with severe PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] as well, so yeah, it is really helping. Even just having her in the flat, it is company, I can talk to her, although she won’t answer back [laughing], but, no, it is helping me mentally, it really is, because it is getting me out the house, it is meeting people, it is talking about what she does ...” (June, IR).

The use of phrases like ‘good’ and ‘bad days’ shows how the binary constructs of being healthy *or* ill, sane *or* insane, are troubled by people’s experiences of slipping in and out of mental ill-health. June, and other participants with mental ill-health, or chronic illness, as Moss and Dyck (2002: p.33-34) conclude, “are “in-between” hegemonic discourses – not quite ill but not quite healthy, almost disabled, and almost abled ... [Such] women ... exist at the interstices of specific identities”. This crucial claim hints at the ephemeral nature of mental ill-health, its changing nature, and manifestations. June also illustrates how Quake has helped her mental health status very directly through a simple companionship, a humble being-there. Whilst Quake’s doggy-ness means that she does not verbally talk back, June positions talking-to Quake as a valuable engagement, along with her companionship, that has helped June to leave the spatial confines of the home and to meet other people (with whom she may then talk *about* her dog, a more indirect benefit of the dog’s ‘care’).

For other participants, their dogs helped them through suicidal thoughts, often keeping them in the present, to re-use that key expression, or, as one participant relates below, physically stopping them from self-harming:

“Having my assistant dog has changed my mental wellbeing so much for the better. I still have issues that will never change, but he helps me with them just being a goof till I can’t help but smile, and give a big cuddle, because he knows I need one. He has also physically stopped me committing suicide and lay on me till I calmed down” (QR GP, 12).

Companionship, tactile engagement, and ‘goofing’ (or messing) about helped this participant during episodes of mental ill-health, even to the point, it is asserted, of a highly embodied, even restraining, intervention. As well as this physical action, assistance dogs provide emotional support to their human partners through their relationship. Here Beth recounts how Daisy has helped with her mental health:

“Suicidal thoughts were definitely there before bringing my dog home. Although those kinds of thoughts do [still] pop up occasionally, they are few and far between. Would I do it? ... never say no, but my dog knows, and I just could not put her through that. My dog gives me

the reasons to smile, to laugh, she is such a clown sometimes. My mental wellbeing is much improved having my dog here” (Beth, QR).

As Beth puts it, having Daisy present in her home dampened the occurrence of her suicidal thoughts. She indicates the continuing of these thoughts and how they never truly go away, but reasons that Daisy ‘knows’ that she, Beth, has mental ill-health and responds accordingly, maybe through ‘clowning’ around – a variant on ‘goofing’ about – and making Beth laugh. Beth thus uses Daisy’s agency as a reason why she would not self-harm since she does not want to cause her distress. There may be some tricky anthropomorphisms occurring here – in what these human partners are placing on the conducts of their dogs – but, however matters are conceived, the attunement between the likes of Beth and Daisy, as well as their companionship, is unequivocally a key factor in Beth’s improving mental wellbeing.

Some participants disclosed *how* their dogs helped with anxiety and mental health through physical expressions of care. Physical actions such as nudging and pawing were seen as caring acts, as described by June:

“Quake also knows when my anxiety is getting bad, it is really weird how she has worked that one out, she will come and she will nudge my leg, or she started putting her paw up, or she started leaning on me to say like “it’s okay you got this” and a cuddle or she will put her head there [on her lap] and look at me like that [puppy-dog eyes]” (June, IR)¹⁰⁵.

June indicates an attunement between Quake and herself through Quake’s ability to affect, and be affected by, June’s body and mind (Despret, 2004). The physical actions of care received and experienced by June are considered actions of companionship and love. June’s own narrative of Quake’s actions is indeed highly anthropomorphic, attributing human speech to the dog’s actions, but this serves to make the encounter even more meaningful for June. Through these physical actions, Quake provides care to June that combines the three dimensions of care. First, through physical actions that affect June’s body and mind; second, through physical labour; and third, through ethico-political potential to be well together (Kirk et al., 2019).

Mark also explained how his dog Lucky has an attunement with his body, and how she, Lucky, provides physical comfort when he, Mark, is experiencing pain:

“P: She also knows when I am having a bad day. This is something we have took on, she can tune into my body language, and she knows when I am having a bad day, I am not mobile, and my energy levels are low, [and] she’ll just come and ‘sit’ with me she’ll ‘sit’ across my lap...

¹⁰⁵ This is the second occasion June has performed ‘puppy-dog eyes’ to get across the notion that Quake, in this instance, is providing an innocent affection. This link to puppies and eyes is a common anthropomorphic notion seen throughout media representations of puppies – positioning them as ‘cute’, ‘innocent’, and ‘child-like’.

J: Yeah, she can just sort of sense...

P: Yeah, and most of the times she is at my feet, and I have bad days and even [pet dog's name] gets warned on, she gives him that Welsh Sheepdog look, and he knows he has to stay the other side of the room, or he is going to have to answer to her" (Mark, IR).

Low energy and mobility levels characterise Mark's chronic illness, and he indicates the value of his encounters with Lucky when he is experiencing these affects. This encounter, along with warning the other dog, Mark's pet rather than assistance dog, can be positioned as an act of care from Lucky to Mark. Through their attunement, Mark and Lucky's bodies affect one another, and Lucky is able to help Mark through physical tactile engagement. The implication here is that this form of care – a crossing of the affective, labour, and ethical dimensions – cannot be trained, but rather arises from an attunement between Mark and Lucky that initially came through them developing their bond through assistance dog training. Equivalent physical, embodied, acts of care were also experienced during an interview, as the following excerpt involving Sara, the human participant (P), and her assistance dog, Sage, nicely illustrates:

"P: Yes, I know [directed at Sage, who is jumping at P's legs], I don't know if you have realised but he's gone under the table and he has tried pulling on his lead, which is a 'pack it in, you need to go' [sign], then I gather he lent on you did he?

J: Yeah, he did [laughing].

P: Yeah, that is 'can I get you to join in here and get her [Sara] to move? she is not listening to me' ... he does that to any of my friends and they back him up...

J: Speaking of that, though, it is 2.30 and you said you need to be somewhere else soon..." (Sara, IR).

This encounter encapsulates an embodied act between Sage, Sara, and me. Sara indicated that Sage tried to alert her to tell her to get up and go. When Sara did not move, Sage then attempted to make me move and thereby, as Sara described through anthropomorphic language, 'get her [Sara] to move'. This happened to coincide with the time Sara said she would have to leave the interview for another meeting. Sara places great value on the embodied engagement between herself and Sage as one that is imbued with care for her. Physical, haptic engagement, was also valuable for Eleanor, who admits:

"I'm quite an anxious person, I get very anxious about things. And I find him [her assistance dog] very calming. I find he helps me, stroking him makes me relax. It makes me calm" (Eleanor, Group IR).

Touch acts to mediate care between Eleanor and her assistance dog, Bright, who makes his body available to Eleanor's touch. Tactile engagement from hand to fur, a soft caress, is a calming and reassuring act for Eleanor, reflecting precisely that play between 'dominance and affection' identified by Tuan (1984) – the dominant human can affectionately 'pat' the animal pet – but maybe here complicated by how the care embodied in the stroking act actually passes in both directions.

For some participants, their assistance dogs played an indispensable part in their life, with one participant – echoing what was said above about suicide prevention – acknowledging that “I wouldn’t be here today if wasn’t for my collie” (QR GP, 27); another stating that their dog had “given me purpose, confidence and a better sense of well-being” (QR, 4); and another again exclaiming that “I used to exist, now I live” (QR GP, 34). Other participants tell of how being partnered with their assistance dog helped them either to reduce or to stop using medication, “I no longer need to take antidepressants” (QR GP, 38), and others clarify that “I have seen the doctor less” (Samantha, IR). The interactions between assistance dog and human are duly placed as valuable acts of care running between both members of the partnership. Although assistance dogs enhance the mental wellbeing of their human partners, they do not completely resolve more deep-seated (maybe diagnosed) mental ill-health; rather, such mental ill-health is an ongoing process for many of the participants, inextricably entangled with their different disabilities and/or chronic illnesses, not curable by the presence and ‘care’ of their assistance dog but quite possibly alleviated by it. Furthermore, the interactions here matter significantly, as they highlight the ‘life-changing’ and ‘life-saving’ impact assistance dog partnership can have (see **Chapter 4** on representations of assistance dogs by charities).

Caring practices: Benefits of assistance dog care

As well as providing emotional and mental wellbeing benefits through care practices, assistance dogs care for humans through basic companionship, as already hinted in places. Although companionship is an important part of the emotional and mental wellbeing care provided by assistance dogs to their humans, there are also a range of other, more specific benefits experienced by humans due to this relationship, such as raising confidence, combatting loneliness and isolation, gaining independence, and meeting new people. These benefits are well reported in human-guide-dog partnerships (Arathoon, 2018; Higgin, 2012; Michalko, 1999; Pemberton, 2019; Sanders, 2000; see also **Chapter 2**), although less has been said along these lines about the relationship between humans and other varieties of assistance dogs (although see Eason, 2020). Nevertheless, I explore these benefits as they play a key part in participants’ narratives during both interviews and ethnographic work, as well as in questionnaire responses. Furthermore, I argue that the benefits of assistance dog care outlined in the following section, can help show the significance of inter- or co-dependencies. Rather than celebrating independency and trashing dependency, the caring relationship shows how shared vulnerabilities come together within the human-assistance-dog relationship. In addition, little has been said in animal geographies on these benefits being acts of care provided by an assistance dog through the bond shared with the human partner.

One of the key benefits of human-assistance-dog companionship is confidence. Confidence has been in some measure already discussed previously in this chapter, coming through the assistance dog’s

help in management of anxiety, but confidence plays a key role in both the wider benefits of partnership, and the experiences of the human partner, as Mark explains:

“... in terms of mental wellbeing and bringing out yourself, you can’t beat her. That to me has been the biggest difference, and it has been life-changing. I see that as a massive plus, if not the biggest plus out of this, the confidence, the breaking of barriers” (Mark, IR).

Lucky helped Mark through her physical presence, making him feel more confident, and Lucky’s presence also acted to break down both emotional and social barriers. It is revealing just how strong Mark’s statements are in this respect: ‘the biggest difference’, ‘life-changing’, and ‘breaking barriers’, are not phrasing that people usually voice lightly, and hopefully serve to quell any sceptical thoughts about the merits of assistance dogs – or, indeed, of academic research into the social worlds of human-assistance-dog relations – that readers might harbour.

For other participants, the physical tasks that an assistance dog fulfils comprise an act of care that helps them, the human partners, gain greater confidence:

“Helps me have the confidence to go out on my own as a power wheelchair user” (QR, 17).

This participant indicates the breaking down of physical barriers and a change in their spatial occupancy of wider places due to their assistance dog, as echoed by another participant:

“[I] am much more confident going out on wheelchair, including buses, as she bails me out if I get in a mess” (QR, 9).

The second participant here discloses how, with their assistance dog, they are much more confident within public space and public transport, there being a dependence on their assistance dog to complete physical tasks that make the participant feel more confident. A lot of the time confidence is linked to safety, as one participant states:

“I feel more confident and safer going about my daily life knowing Luka will help me. When I fell from my buggy on a morning walk Luka barked on command to attract people to help me” (QR, 18).

Luka enables the participant to feel safer through her capacity to ‘alert’ others, a task that requires an assistance dog to bark on command. Feeling safer then helps the participant be more confident through knowing that there is help there, or that help can swiftly be summoned, in case of an accident.

Confidence can translate into many other benefits, such as leaving the home and accessing a larger, richer mix of places, people, and activities. ‘Going out and about’ signifies a change of spatial experience. For many participants this change is indicated through a move from the home (private space) to shops, work, and to meeting new people (public space), a spatial up- or, better, out-scaling of experience. June describes one particularly pleasing encounter in which her assistance dog, Quake, was central:

“I went to a café the other day on Sunday, and we went on a nice long walk down to the river and stuff and she [Quake] was running around as well, and I thought I really fancy a coffee and I thought I would have a go and I said to the bloke [at the café] ... “she’s in training, I got a letter for her” and asked if I could bring her in because it was quite cold and he went “yeah, bring her in”. So, I ... got her blanket out, got her a chew toy out, ... I had food and stuff, and I give it to her on the floor and I had coffee and I thought ‘ooh’ she is relaxing, I might have something to eat here on my own. *I sat in a café for the first time in an age and I had something to eat and drink on my own and I was like oh my god* [spoken excitedly]” (June, IR).

The ability to ‘sit’ in a café as part of a walk was a valuable encounter to June, whose excitability at the newly regained ability simply to ‘sit’ in the café thanks to Quake, was crystal-clear. Quake influenced June’s spatial experiences through her role as an assistance dog and her ability to provide June with specific care. Sara explained one similar delighting moment and the future impact it heralded for her family:

“Part way through training I ... went to the corner shop on my own and that was the first time I had gone anywhere on my own in a long, long time, and I came back and I was like “look, I brought some gravy granules”, and my daughter and my (at the time) husband were ecstatic; and I went through a phase where my daughter was allowed to have her phone with her in school and she would phone me every hour to check if I was alright. Once Sage started looking after me, pre-qualification, once my daughter could see that Sage was taking care of me, she stopped phoning, [which] gave my daughter her life back, it gave my husband his life back, because they spent so much time worrying about me ...” (Sara, IR).

Sara’s increased mobility through leaving the home is a moment of ecstatic joy for herself and her family, a moment of progression in her spatial experiences. The impact of Sage on Sara’s mobility led to impacts on the family as well, for Sara’s daughter’s and husband’s anxiety were reduced due to Sage’s care for Sara. In this sense, Sara’s daughter and husband’s spatial experiences also changed, became diversified, and less fixed on particular times and places, due to Sara and Sage’s partnership. In a similar vein, Eleanor shared how Bright’s desires made her mobility change:

“Bright likes to work. And I also enjoy it because I have Bright, I go out, I think Bright makes me go out. I think it’d be very easy to not go out if I didn’t have Bright” (Eleanor, Group IR).

Bright’s physical desires, to work for Eleanor, makes Eleanor leave the spatial confines of the home. Completing assistance dog work requires the partnership to occupy multiple spaces, thus changing Eleanor’s spatial experiences. Eleanor also reflects on this impact, echoing Sara, stating that without Bright she would probably still be isolated at home. This shows the impact that Bright has had on Eleanor’s confidence through partnership and training, with spatial knock-ons and, relatedly, enlarged horizons for engaging socially and competently with what the wider world has to offer.

For many participants, therefore, their dog giving them confidence meant they could go to college, university, work, or volunteer. As one participant says, “I’m able to go to Uni for the first time and

I'm making new friends" (QR GP, 22). Mark also benefitted from Lucky's care and felt confident enough to undertake studies:

"Without her I would not have had the confidence to undertake my part time studies at university or visit a wide variety of places with more difficult terrain" (Mark, QR).

For other participants, the relationship with their dogs led to them undertaking studies to develop their knowledge of animal behaviour and welfare:

"When I started training her, I knew this was something I wanted to do and so I did my BSc and MSc in animal behaviour and welfare" (QR GP, 10).

"[I] attended college 2019-2020 with my AD to further my knowledge and understanding and learning stuff such as dietary needs etc" (QR GP, 27).

The relationship between human and assistance animal was a considerable motivator to study at college and university, with many people wanting to learn more about dogs as then to provide 'good' care to their assistance dog. 'Good' care here refers to welfare, dietary needs, and the dog's emotional wellbeing. For other people, increased confidence due to assistance dog partnership led to them setting up their own assistance dog charities and services, as Erin relates:

"Setting up Capable Creatures to help people with mental health conditions train their emotional support/mental health assistance dogs and peer support" (Erin, QR).

These are instances of direct, palpable, and positive impacts of the assistance dog on their human partner. The role of the assistance dog could even be seen as so positive that the participant wanted to provide this support to other humans. Other participants were thereby led to take up volunteering due to increased confidence, as one participant notes:

"He has definitely widened my social circle more than I would ever normally be OK with, but he has also given me the confidence to do things I wouldn't normally, like going to volunteer at the charity that is training him (which I never would have been able to do before)" (QR GP, 9).

Increased confidence changed this participant's physical and social practices, prompting them into doing things they would not have done before. Volunteering directly with the charity in which the assistance dog and human are working was quite common, as one participant states:

"I am outward going, I talk to people, I have even started giving talks to groups about Dog A.I.D. and their wonderful help" (QR GP, 37).

Beth also volunteers for Dog A.I.D. doing talks for local schools and clubs, as well as volunteering for a local heritage area:

"We have even gone volunteering, ... we are on the scrutiny panel for [designated heritage area] and you never know we are looking at going as part of the board and that is all down to her. I would have never done it before because what happens if anything goes wrong, now it doesn't matter, I got her [and] I don't need anyone else" (Beth, IR).

Beth's reliance on Daisy to complete physical tasks and help her be safe was a major reason in her decision to volunteer locally. The dependence on Daisy is key to Beth undertaking new things. Beth operationalises a cross-species 'we' – it is not just her on the scrutiny panel but Daisy too. This idea of 'we' – to indicate human and animal together – was used by other participants and hints at a wider cosmopolitics (Hinchliffe et al., 2005). More research needs to be undertaken on the role an assistance dog plays in the decisions of their human partners to go to college, university, work, or volunteer. This is such an important issue because disabled people face a range of challenges to equal employment such as cultural attitudes, stereotypes, and a lack of understanding of disabilities, as well as a lack of opportunities for education and a lack of accessibility in workspaces (Butcher & Wilton, 2008; Hansen, 2002). Challenges of gaining employment or working with an assistance dog within an educational or workspace, include a lack of empathy from the employer on what exactly *is* an assistance dog, as well as about what comprise disabilities that can be accommodated, in addition to the more obvious forms of discrimination and exclusion. There are benefits that assistance dogs bring to disabled people looking for, or gaining employment, such as improvements in employment status, employers' recognition of service dogs as a workplace accommodation, lower absenteeism, ability to travel to work, and increased career progression (Lindsay & Thiagarajah, 2021). It is vital to explore these matters further and to assess, and promote, the role that assistance dogs can play in people going to college and university, as well as for people taking up volunteering or choosing to develop their own businesses and charities.

The assistance dogs themselves clearly contributed enormously to people's ability to socialise and meet new people through their presence, as one participant reflects:

“It hurts when people give you those looks like you're a nuisance given they don't know there's a disability there. With him by my side, I know there's an explanation and a lot of disabling symptoms are lessened. I spend more time being social with other people where I really didn't before. I love going out, I love shopping and I love meeting new people given I have something to talk about - my assistance dog” (QR GP, 20).

Assistance dogs make (in)visible disability visible (Arathoon, 2018; Sanders, 2000) causing some disabling symptoms, such as people staring or asking questions, to reduce. The assistance dog can help combat the politics of suspicion that surrounds disability through their physical presence (Włodarczyk, 2019), lessening anxiety (for all) when in public space. This lessening has led to the participant above going out more and socialising with friends. Furthermore, their assistance dog can act as a topic of conversation and as an icebreaker, as Erin mentions:

“Because also with people, sometimes the focus is removed from you, and also the awkwardness of those people, because you're disabled. People find it awkward and don't, you know, have a conversation with you. So, when you have a dog with you, the focus moves to them and then you relax and then the conversation can open up that way” (Erin, IR).

The disabling gaze is reduced through the assistance dog taking away some of the attention – or studied *inattention* – that disabled people often still encounter in public spaces. Additionally, as briefly noted earlier, the assistance dog acts as a conversation starter negotiating the awkwardness with which non-disabled people sometimes approach disabled people.

These benefits can be summed up through how the relationship between human and animal is characterised. Participants position the relationship with their assistance dogs as a “very close relationship” (QR GP, 37) with an “extremely strong bond” (QR GP, 36) where an assistance dog “sticks to me like glue! (QR GP, 19). One participant described their assistance dog as a “best mate ... [I] could not cope without him” (QR, 13); another positions their AD as “my buddy. He's part of the family” (QR GP, 1); another again states that their assistance dog was their “best friend, she’s a godsend I dunno where I’d be now if it wasn’t for her”¹⁰⁶ (QR GP, 2); and one participant even suggests that their assistance dog “is like one of my children, I call her my first born” (QR GP, 10). These articulations by human partners – even if the anthropomorphisms displayed might jar with some readers – show a deeply emotional, embodied connection, one which brings to the fore the kinship between human and dog (Charles, 2014; Haraway, 2008). The relationship as affective is seen in the human’s ability to ‘feel’ the benefits of the partnership and to feel cared for. These expressions also link the benefits of the partnership to the next section, on the relationship as one imbued with care.

A caring relationship

Having demonstrated the various caring practices disabled humans undertake for their assistance dogs, and assistance dogs for their humans, I now attempt to discuss this caring relationship as a whole. Many of the practices discussed outline the ways in which the three dimensions of care derived from Puig de la Bellacasa’s conceptualisation – labour/work, affect/affections, and ethics/politics – operate relationally across the species divide when providing care for an *interdependent* other. The relational and interdependent nature of care is important in positioning the human-assistance-dog relationship as mutually beneficially, a symbiotic relationship¹⁰⁷. Gorman (2019: 318) states that “mutualism involves a symbiotic relationship in which both actants benefit from ‘living together’”. I argue that this is a good framework through which to address the human-assistance-dog relationship, as a symbiotic relationship, of mutual care. Furthermore, the idea of symbiosis also projects connotations of interdependence, but without the negative connotations of ‘dependence’ that arise all too glibly in the likes of neoliberal discourses about the ‘active citizen’ proactively carving out an

¹⁰⁶ Dunno – slang phrase for ‘don’t know’.

¹⁰⁷ Symbiotic has positive connotations but here refers to ‘togetherness’ (see also Gorman, 2019). This togetherness does not have to be of mutual benefit but can also involve parasitic relations.

independent, self-regarding, self-sufficient place in the world. Therefore, I explore the interconnections between the care, mutuality, symbiosis, and dependency triad, to try to chart further how the human-assistance-dog partnership is understood and experienced by human and animal.

The relationship between human and assistance dog is considered a relationship imbued with care by many of the participants. Care here is not just a key characteristic of the relationship, but a key factor in how humans understand their assistance dogs. As Beth says, Daisy is “my pet and my assistance dog ... but also my carer!” (QR). Although many dogs are considered workers, with a range of jobs, positioning a dog as a ‘carer’ for a human indeed troubles conventional notions of care as a human practice. Sara takes this ascribed identity for her dog Pepper further, explaining how Pepper is:

“Family, counsellor, confidante, carer, loved one” (Sara, QR).

The range of identities Sara ascribes to Pepper shows the importance of Pepper to Sara. Whilst dogs are often positioned as family members (Charles, 2016; E. Power, 2008; Shir-Vertesh, 2012), and in this research as carers, positioning a dog as a ‘counsellor’ and ‘confidante’ pushes the envelope still further, implying a still greater emotional relationship and friendship. Both Beth’s and Sara’s knowledge of their dogs draws on anthropomorphic language, closing the gap between human and animal, situating them as ‘more-like-us’. Other participants ascribe their dog the identity of a ‘teammate’, as Mark states:

“She is much more than either a pet or working dog so do not see her as one or the other or mixture. She is my assistance dog and as such is my teammate and support” (Mark, QR).

‘Teammate’ obviously infers an expanded sense of relationality and mutuality within the human-assistance-dog relationship. It has the feeling of aiming to reach a certain goal together in the case of physically disabled and chronically ill humans, which can be expressed through the idea of ‘being well together’ (Kirk et al., 2019). It is different from the ascribed identity of ‘partner’, which infers a greater emotional relationship, with no specific goal, but rather an ethico-political potential (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017), one in which the partnership is in a state of becoming (Haraway, 2003, 2008). This possibility is signified by one participant who says:

“As an assistance dog “partnership” we look out for each other at work and play” (QR, 9).

This participant views the relationship as one of mutuality, extending temporally and spatially, to both work and play. Samantha describes further her ascribed identity for Bertie:

“The way I see him is as a partner. He is a partner that helps me a bit like a human partner in respects to doing tasks for each other. Okay, he can’t make me a cup of tea. But he can do so much for me that maybe somebody else wouldn’t do” (Samantha, IR).

Samantha refers to Bertie as a ‘partner’, explicitly named as akin to a human partner. Whilst anthropomorphising Bertie here, Samantha also speaks of both his limits in an anthropocentric sense

– he cannot make the tea – and things that he can do beyond-animalness. It is Bertie’s beyond-humanness to which Samantha ascribes value, his ability to do things that a human cannot, a fascinating additional imaginative move in the ‘space’ being envisaged here which starts to open up new doors for thinking about *more-than-human* forms of or affordances for care.

As well as ascribing the identity of assistance dogs with care, the relationship, and the relations between human and dog, is often considered one of care. Care itself was considered a mutual practice by many of the participants, with the following participants stating that the relationship is as follows:

“Honestly, it’s amazing, we rely on each other so much and he is my life saver” (QR GP, 7).

“... he always looks after me. So, I return the act” (QR, 13).

Both the participants highlight the relationship as one of inter- or co-dependence, of relying on each other and ‘returning the act’ of care. Again here, there is value placed on being dependent on a nonhuman other, a dependency that has clear positive connotations. Care here is viewed as mutual, something you do for each other. Hannah places care within the relationship as one of *interdependence*:

“It’s a double thing with her because she needs me to do things to enhance her life, but she needs the support to be able to do it. Yes, it’s like mutual care” (Hannah, IR).

Hannah highlights how caring for Missy helps to improve Missy’s life, but specifically recognises the mutuality of their relationship and the importance of this mutuality. Different to Hannah, the following participant outlines how caring for their assistance dog helped them better care for themselves:

“Huge confidence, responsibility, respect from others, in looking after her I look after me better” (QR GP, 6)

Whilst this is an anthropocentric view of care, since caring for the dog will mean that ‘I’ am also looked after better, the idea of care within the relationship is still of mutuality. Mutuality can also be seen through the idea of responsibility too. Mark discussed responsibility between himself and Lucky, linking back to her deployment of the ‘teammate’ projection:

“... and the assessor we had ... it was the first thing she said, was “you and Lucky are a team, aren’t you?”, and I thought that was, in a way, a compliment, but that’s how we see it, because I have my responsibilities to her as much as she has got her responsibilities to me...” (Mark, IR).

The idea of the assistance dog partnership being a team is one expressed by others exploring assistance dog relationships (Arathoon, 2018; Eason, 2020; Higgin, 2012; Pemberton, 2019; Stevenson, 2013). Mark underscores the relationship as one of team-based responsibility, where responsibility is indeed imbued with symbiotic care for one another, positioning the human-

assistance-dog partnership as one, as already stressed, of mutuality and interdependence. This picturing goes beyond the idea of ‘response-able’ pet-keeping discussed by Haraway (2008) and Brown and Dilley (2012), whose focus is a lot more on the human being responsible for their dog’s action and behaviour in (public) space. Rather, responsibility becomes a mutual act where the responsibilities at stake travel, and need to be realised, in *both* directions¹⁰⁸. Perhaps – again – attributing animals ‘responsibility’ in a human sense – the responsibility to help Mark navigate space and not lose his balance – may be considered anthropomorphic. I believe though that this real, practiced, trained, and cared for, responsibility that Mark ascribes to Lucky helps counter the more speciesist and anthropocentric ways humans *use* animals and in doing so, at the same time, highlights the vital significance of human-assistance-dog partnerships.

Mutual or symbiotic acts of care were also discussed with participants and observed during ethnographic work. These acts or recollections of care are understandable as mutual through there being clear benefits for both human and animal (Gorman, 2019). One way a caring act might be viewed as mutual is through the idea just mooted of responsibility for another. This possibility is shown in **Figure 60**, which comes from a videorecording of Sara and her new assistance dog Pepper learning to push open the door. After moments of successfully *and* unsuccessfully doing the task, both participants became a bit frustrated and uncertain in their abilities, which led to miscommunication. In recognising this fracture, they stopped training and comforted each other through caress, an intimate embodied act, to calm one another. Through touch, an affective embodied material engagement (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017), and reading one another’s body language, Sara and Pepper were able to comfort and care for each other through the physical act of ‘caress’. Caress, as Pemberton (2019: 95) describes:

“caress constituted a shared, cocreated affect registering both human bodily action and the dog’s perceived aptitude for reading human emotions: a prime example of Despret’s ‘anthropo-zoo-genesis’ (Despret, 2004)”.

Crucially, moreover, there is still a lot of ‘care’ going on here, even in the event of ‘failure’ in terms of training and performing the formal caring task (Pepper opening a cupboard for Sara) – and it really does not seem to be stretching matters too far to declare that the ‘care’ here is shared between the two participants.

¹⁰⁸ It is worth highlighting here that Gorman (2019) argues mutual does not always mean equal. Humans may still have more responsibility for their dogs in terms of the law for example.



Figure 60: Sara caressing Pepper after they struggled to complete a task.

Play can also be another way to show mutual care between human and animal. As previous stated (in this chapter) play is mostly done *for* dogs, as a form of exercise or to keep them healthy. Play nonetheless also helps to develop the bond between human and animal and can help the assistance dog learn skills useful for work. Play can be for fun, as shown in **Figure 61**, a still image sent to myself of June and Quake swimming. June and Quake both enjoy water and swimming together. Swimming as a care practice utilises play as an act for mutual care. Blue spaces have therapeutic value and for June and Quake the swimming pool (as well as the ocean)¹⁰⁹ acts as a place of relaxation. Exploring the physical and emotional acts of care in such a context aids geographers in appreciating more fully the role that care plays within the human-animal bond. These examples show the mutuality of care in-action rather than verbal articulations of care after the event.

¹⁰⁹ June also outlined in an interview that she takes Quake the beach a lot to swim.



Figure 61: June and Quake playing together (sent by June – Permission given to reproduce).

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to bring together worlds of assistance dog partnerships (**Chapter 4**) and working bodies (**Chapter 5**) to understand the caring relations between physically disabled and chronically ill humans and their assistance dogs. This research is vital, as it provides a deeper grasp of the everyday experiences of care running between physically disabled and/or chronically ill people and their assistance dogs. Furthermore, it pushes the boundaries of care outwards through utilising Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) more-than-human conceptualisation of care, questioning *how* dogs provide care to their human partners and *how* this care is understood and experienced. Indeed, in drawing attention to the significance of the companionship – and care – provided by assistance dogs to their human partners, I should how care in this sense – anthropomorphically expressed – challenges, shapes, and reconfigures the human norms of spaces such as 'home' and 'café'. Here, as outlined above, there is a blurring of animals spaces and beastly places (Philo & Wilbert, 2000a). What needs to be explored in the future is exactly this care in action. Due to the coronavirus pandemic of 2020-2021 the ethnographic portion of this work was limited (discussed in **Chapter 3**). What needs to be explored further is the active role of the dog in providing care: whilst this was experienced in person, there needs to be a greater engagement with care through animal methods such as video (discussed in

Chapter 3 and utilised in **Chapter 5**). Furthermore, I want to draw out three key contributions and considerations this chapter makes.

First, is that throughout the chapter I have, in a sense, reframed assistance as care. This has been exemplified through tasks and assistance provided by dogs, but I have shown how this assistance can be nothing but care. Controversially, perhaps, in the chapter I attribute what are usually reserved as distinctively human care roles, tasks, or affordances to nonhuman animals. Whilst this fits the theoretical mantra I adopt, the anthropomorphism of dogs to distinctively not only care *for*, but care *about*, their human partners might make some readers uncomfortable. Indeed, I think this move is necessary to reflect greater on the animals' agency within the research and I believe that anthropomorphism, used cautiously, can be a help rather than a hinderance to examining human animal relationship. But this does leave greater questions to reflect on in this thesis' conclusion (**Chapter 7**). Namely, to consider the extent to which ordinary pets often or sometimes perform this expanded care role?

Second, what is being claimed throughout the chapter, and what I want to draw out now more explicitly here, is that the expanded sense of what care entails that I have drew out is paralleled by an insistence that care is running in both directions, between human and animal, creating 'mutuality', 'teamwork', and 'partnership'. Throughout this paragraph I have shown that becoming a team or partnership are not just end goals, they are a process of mutuality (Eason, 2020) that exists across different timings and spacings. This distinctly highlights the significance of inter- or co-dependencies, rather than celebrating independency or trashing dependency. In addition, I move beyond demonstrating entanglements and co-dependency to also assert the importance of seeing dependency as a political good in and of itself (as opposed to signalling a weakness/abnormality/victim status). This is highlighted in particular through the section on how the assistance dogs help their humans manage mental ill-health. This has some crucial permutations that will be discussed in **Chapter 7**, such as the shared vulnerabilities of human and animal, the capacity to respond to, and for, one another, and to squarely acknowledge the basis for a 'positive' vision of vulnerabilities and care (one in which dependency is allowed and then worked with).

Finally, this expanded sense of care, running in all possible directions between human and animal hinges crucially on the complex and grounded inhabitations, utilisations, and subversions of spaces in which they co-habit. This was drawn through the chapter more clearly, but it is worth picking up on again. The unfolding of the relationship occurred in various spaces throughout the chapter, showing not only that care is present in these spaces, but care takes place, and is shaped by these spaces. Considering space further (see **Chapter 7**) to show not only care in these spaces, but to begin

to show tensions of care, which arguably this thesis lacks, raises questions of what is left absent in these spaces, and are there spaces in which care does not exist?

Chapter 7: Reflections on Assistance-Animal-Human Lifeworlds

Introduction: Addressing research objectives

The objectives of this thesis were:

- To explore how human-pet relations change over time to become a human-assistance-dog partnership.
- To explore how physically disabled and chronically ill people train to enable an assistance dog partnership with reference to spatial, temporal, and material experience.
- To examine the practices and manifestations of care across the species boundary, and how care becomes a more-than-human concern.
- To utilise a multi-method approach which attempts to centre nonhuman animals within research.

In **Chapter 1**, I set the overall tone for the thesis, charting the history and present situation of assistance dogs and associated organisations in the UK. I briefly outlined the attendant bodies of literature tackling the geographies of assistance animals, care, and disability, and with a critical edge, outlined how these literatures need to move forward together. Building from there **Chapter 2** delved more deeply into the existent interdisciplinary landscape through a focus on two thematics: bodies and care. The '*Bodies*' section started by charting geographical work on disabled, ill, and pained bodies, examining the continuing debates around geographic conceptualisations of disabled bodies. I highlighted moves in disability geographies (and more widely disability studies) towards relational thought in conceptions of the body, emphasising work by proponents of non-representational theory (Hall & Wilton, 2017; Macpherson, 2009a, 2009b) and posthumanism (Feely, 2016; Goodley et al., 2014; Goodley, Lawthom, et al., 2018). I then moved on to discuss animal geographies (linking across into animal studies), specifically noting histories of domestication and how these are intertwined with the histories of dog training, mapping (perhaps overly systematically) a move from dominance, to reinforcement, to 'being more dog' (Włodarczyk, 2017). Next, I moved on to the theme of '*Care*', examining both the theory and the practice of care. I detailed how a feminist ethic of care has been vital to the development of work on geographies of care and how this ethic of care continues to inform relational and more-than-human understandings of care, especially the speculative ethics developed by Puig de la Bellacasa (2017). A crucial concern running throughout my reading of these literatures was the dependency dyad – a tendency to polarise dependency and independency, often seeing the former negatively and the latter positively – with my critical reasoning being that an alternative

(relational, more-than-human) perspective is instead required: one speaking of interdependency or mutuality shared across cross-species dependencies. Finally, in two sections, taking a spatial focus, I outlined the spatio-temporal nature of care for humans and care for animals. Bringing these materials together in a section that I called '*Entanglements*', I expanded on the geographies of the body and care, bringing these together by foregrounding human-animal inter-relations attuned to all bodies of all possible sorts and directions of care. I ultimately moved towards companionship as an enactment of care and explored in greater depth relevant literature on human-animal relationships. Throughout, I stressed the real, felt, and lived experiences of humans and animals who care for one another, through the affective embodied intensities of love and empathy. In sum, I charted why my work with assistance animal partnerships is vital and different to existent work, and the key conceptual themes to be taken forward and gaps to be addressed.

Chapter 3 outlined the multi-method cross-species approach that this research implemented. First, by drawing on methodological debates in animal and disability geographies, the research mapped the methodological concerns of both these subfields, as well as their shared challenges of 'hearing the voice' of both animals and disabled people. I critically discussed anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism within geographical work, and outlined how in this thesis, anthropomorphism would be deployed (if cautiously) so as to learn from its outward looking spatiality, compared to anthropocentrism's inward-looking spatiality where the human is always centred. I then described how this research had been impacted by Covid-19 and resultant restrictions, before reflecting on the ethics of the research and how this thesis adopts ethics and accessibility as ongoing projects and 'doings' (King, 2021b; Muñoz, 2021). This ethical move was vital to the need to create an inclusive methodology that could lead to 'an enabling geography' (Gleeson, 2000) attentive to the bodily and affective registers of cross-species lifeworlds (Barua & Sinha, 2019; Ellis, 2021; Whatmore, 2002), whilst also 'hearing the cry' of the nonhuman (Buller, 2014; Gibbs, 2020; Johnston, 2008). Through laying out my research design, I then discussed the methods used 'in practice'. Particularly, I clarified again the importance of video, ethnomethodology, and graphic transcripts in attending to animals' geographies and lived experiences within the practice of dog training.

In **Chapter 4**, the first of three substantial empirically-facing chapters, I offered an analysis of '*The Worlds of Assistance Dog Partnerships*', focusing on the different hierarchies, structures, and actors within these worlds. The chapter was structured to move from the 'top' to the 'bottom' of the assistance dog world, exploring its many different umbrella organisations, charities, training philosophies, and clients. First, I explored the role of the ADUK in the definition of what an assistance dog is, their influence on legislation, and their role in regulating the practice of assistance dog partnership for all their members. Second, I examined how charities construct representations of

assistance dogs and disabled people through their magazines. These magazines drew attention to the significance of multiple imaginaries of what assistance dogs are and could be, and how these help to generate the structures and hierarchies – as well as the points of inclusion and exclusion discussed – that are part of assistance dog worlds. Third, I explored training worlds, how trainers become qualified, the differing processes of qualification and accreditation, but also trainers’ practices within their charities and with their clients. Finally, I explored assistance dog worlds as a form of community, both in a physical sense and online. This chapter thus helped set the scene for the upcoming chapters whilst also providing substantial empirical findings. Through this chapter there arises a ‘politics of suspicion’ (Włodarczyk, 2019) from the various actors about who belongs in the assistance dog world, where they should belong, and their rights in belonging to this world. The chapter started to capture the vital nature of assistance dog partnership and the features of the community around and enabling that partnership. Furthermore, it showed the entangled, and somewhat contradictory, character of the different organisations in play, and how there arguably needs to be further regulation introduced into the practice of assistance dog training.

Chapter 5 combined the video and ethnomethodological methods, with interviews and survey responses to explore ‘*Working Bodies*’. Drawing on these methods, along with further consulting more-than-human and posthuman scholarly work, I examined how physically disabled and chronically ill people train with their assistance dogs to become an assistance dog partnership and how this working partnership comes to be experienced spatially, temporally, and materially. I explored the ‘life skills’, ‘exercises’, and ‘tasks’ that shape the training between human and animal. Through very close inquiry into the training, I stressed the material (e.g., with rooms, surfaces, objects, and paths), sensuous (e.g., sight-lines, sounds, pitch and tone) elements of training, and how bodies ‘become’ together through this material and sensuous engagement in their time-space stories. I also revealed how animals express their agency during the training practices, revealing the animals’ geographies and action at the heart of these practices. Ultimately, this section demonstrated the importance of the overall methodological approach taken in attending to these geographies. Furthermore, I showed how working bodies – in particular, animal bodies at work – are not just the product of mechanical learned behaviour but also carriers of a lively agentic practice capable of reshaping human-animal lifeworlds. Here dogs emerge as co-actors and – to use anthropomorphic language adopted in this chapter – carers and confidants – social partners in domesticated relationships. Here dogs co-exist in the space of home-work – their homes are workspaces – and this is enabled through, but is arguably not entirely reducible to, the process of training. In addition, I began to show how the partnerships involved care for one another, thus challenging the care dependency dyad.

Finally, in **Chapter 6** I brought together these working bodies in the worlds of assistance dog partnerships to focus fully on the intimate relationship between human and assistance dog, indeed pulling out the care that they exhibit for one another. In ‘*Cross-Species Caring*’, I addressed the prime objective of this project by examining embodied practices and manifestations of care running across the species boundary, thereby disclosing how care becomes a more-than-human concern. I focused on three themes: caring for an assistance animal; caring for a human; and the caring relationship. In caring for an assistance animal, I outlined how ‘everyday’ caring practices, play, and medical care are part of the human partners caring practices within the spaces of the home, garden, café, park, and veterinary clinic (and in so doing returning to some of the spaces lent special attention in **Chapter 2**). First, I investigated the temporal and spatial nature of care, and outlined how this care is vital for the partnership and the development of the human-animal bond. Second, I explored care by an assistance animal for a human partner. Drawing attention to the significance of the companionship – and care – provided by assistance dogs to their human partners, I have shown how this care challenges, shapes, and reconfigures the human norms of spaces such as ‘home’ and ‘café’. Whilst I anthropomorphically ascribe care – and its distinctively human care roles, tasks, and affordances – to animals, I think that this is a necessary move to deepen reflection on animals’ agency within the partnership. As such, I unsettled the idea of care as solely human, and recast assistance *as* care, emphasising the dog’s role in enhancing the mental wellbeing of their human partners, and the role they play in the changing and managing of mental ill-health when it is not curable by the presence and ‘care’ of their assistance dog but quite possibly alleviated by it. Finally, in this chapter I discussed the caring relationship, focusing on the ideas of ‘teams’, ‘partnerships’, and ‘mutuality’ through care that can be seen as *interdependency*. Ultimately, this chapter challenged the idea of trashing dependency and celebrating independency and showed how focusing on care as a cross-species practice, in all its messiness, is vital to the ‘life-changing’ narratives put forward by many participants.

Contributions to geographical research

In this section I chart in more depth, the findings of this research, the key issues raised, the key contributions to geographical research, and suggest some future considerations which geographers should address. In sum, this thesis has made significant contribution in six key areas: geographies of practice and geographies of the body will be discussed first before the major contributions to geographies of care, methodology, animal geographies, and disability geographies.

Geographies of practice

This thesis aimed to expand on the geographies of practice, namely, the practice of (assistance) dog training (Pręgowski, 2015; Smith et al., 2021; Włodarczyk, 2017). Assistance dog training brings

together the geographies of the bodies and geographies of care discussed below into a lively, embodied practice. Dog training as depicted in this research is about developing a bond and becoming together through ‘positive’ methods of training for a better, more caring lifeworld. This thesis opens new ways to envision a connection between disabled and animal bodies through dog training. Here the bodies become one, adding to one another through processes of mutuality, to become a partnership or team (Eason, 2020; Pemberton, 2019). Through exploration of the 4D’s method (see **Chapter 4**), in which time and space play a significant role in shaping the training through, difficulty, duration, distraction, and distance, I stress the spatial, temporal, and material importance of dog training. However, with the lockdown and some dog trainers moving classes online, a real-world change occurred in these spatio-temporal characteristics. Therefore, I have two suggestions. First, I argue for the potential to explore, in greater depth, the different forms of digital dog training emerging due to the pandemic. Questions arise from these new forms of assistance animal training, such as: how does the in-situ nature of training translate across digital space? How does the embodied practice of dog training change through the medium of the internet? How does the internet as a space shape dog training? How do bodies navigate online dog training? Second, I argue that a longitudinal study may be of greater benefit to assessing the development of the human-assistance-dog relationship over time, from the initial phases of human-pet companionship through the three stages of training to qualification.

Geographies of the body

To reiterate a claim just made, I position embodied animal work as not just mechanical learned behaviour but also as a lively agentic practice capable of reshaping human-animal lifeworlds. Here dogs are indeed co-actors, carers, and confidants: they are social partners in domesticated relationships. They co-exist with their human partners in the space of home-work – their homes are workspaces – which is enabled through the process of training detailed through **Chapter 5**. When thinking about the working animal body in the case of assistance animals, I have examined how bodies work together to become a team. The hybridisation of bodies – the embodied entanglement of human and animal – shows the importance of thinking about bodies when analysing human-animal relationships.

Furthermore, these findings have interesting implication for the concept of anthropomorphism as a way of teasing out the texture and purpose of grounded animal work. As already intimated above several times, I find anthropomorphism a useful concept for a number of reasons, such as: deconstructing human-animal boundaries, attributing animals greater agency and cognitive ability (important in a disability studies context too), and its outward looking spatiality with the ability to open up potentialities. Throughout the thesis I have shown how anthropomorphism during animal

work – occurring almost whenever my human participants interpret the bodily comportments and movements of their canine partners – is a way of meaning-making for many participants and opens up a wider sense of belonging and potentiality. This theme of anthropomorphism at work was picked up in **Chapter 6**, but this time through anthropomorphism through care work, where anthropomorphic attribution might be looked at more critically by some.

Geographies of care

Continuing that point – and expanding into an area of significant contribution – this thesis contributes to inquiries into the geographies of care in several ways. First, it ‘stretches’ or ‘expands’ the boundaries of care beyond the human to reflect the role of nonhuman animals, in this case assistance dogs, as active and lively agents in the caring nexus. In doing so, I charted the different caring practices running from human to animal and animal to human, outlining the sensuous and spatio-temporal nature of these caring practices. This has led to a number of interesting findings, reflections, and future research that geographers should consider.

First, in **Chapter 6**, I have reframed assistance as care. Controversially, perhaps, I attribute what are usually reserved as distinctively human care roles, tasks, or affordances to nonhuman animals. Whilst this fits the theoretical mantra I adopt, the anthropomorphic gesture – to suppose that dogs distinctively not only care *for*, but care *about*, their human partners might make some readers uncomfortable. Many may query whether an animal can really ‘care’, certainly care *about*, but such an attribution makes perfect sense to the humans involved (and, indeed, to myself as a close observer and researcher). Indeed, this move is necessary to reflect fully on the animals’ agency within the research, and I believe that anthropomorphism, indeed if used cautiously, can be a help rather than a hinderance to examining human-animal relationship. There are additional questions raised from this move. To what extent do ‘normal’ dogs and other working dogs perform this expanded sense of caring? Is there a difference between how ‘care’ and affective intensities such as love are felt between a ‘normal’ human-pet bond, the human-assistance-dog partnerships described in this work, and other human-assistance-dog partnerships? How is anthropomorphism used, felt, or experienced within and between these different ‘care’ practices? And what different lived attributes lead to the love as an affective intensity between human and dog?

Second, one of the big claims woven through this thesis is an expanded sense of what care entails and how such an expansion may be paralleled by an insistence that care is running in both directions, between human and animal, creating ‘mutuality’, ‘teamwork’, and ‘partnership’. Throughout this thesis I have shown that becoming a team or partnership are not just end goals, they are a process of mutuality (Eason, 2020) that exists across different timings and spacings. This statement highlights the significance of inter- or co-dependencies, rather than celebrating independency or debasing

dependency. Moreover, I make a vital move beyond just demonstrating entanglement and co-dependency to assert the importance of seeing dependency as a political good in and of itself (as opposed to signalling a weakness/abnormality/victim status). This is because the partnerships involved, the ‘teams’ in which a relationship, full of care, support and ‘mutual aid’ (to suggest a play on the concept by (Kropotkin, 2006), the anarchist geographer along with the charity name [Dog Mutual A.I.D.]) is being co-produced, co-fabricated, between the impaired humans and the assistance dogs: a relationship of inter- or co-dependency that expressly sets itself against both the problematic ideal of the autonomous, independent, all-capable human and a simple ‘animal liberationist’ vision of all animals let loose from human circles and environments. Critical, therefore, is a challenge to a wider realm of geographical inquiries to enrich their openness to the role of animals in humans lives and *vice versa*, as well as a more direct contestation to disability and health geographies and the deconstruction of the dependency dyad.

Further permutations arise for how geographers understand the shared vulnerabilities of humans and animals, as well as their capacity to respond to, and for, one another, squarely acknowledging the basis for a ‘positive’ vision of vulnerabilities and care (one in which dependency is allowed and then worked with). This thesis thus deconstructs the idea that dependency is negative and highlights how depending on another (non)human being can lead to empowerment. I argue that more geographical work needs to be undertaken on such ‘shared cross-species vulnerabilities’, how these vulnerabilities are shaped in and through different spaces and places, and across different temporal scales. What only briefly became clear in this thesis, though, is the extent to which care can be cruel, and – in line with the complicating of matters attempted throughout my thesis – whether pets and assistance animals can ever be ‘cruel’ to their owners-partners¹¹⁰. Roe and Greenhough (2021) argue care and harm are intertwined so, exploring this further, whilst some dogs have the physical power to pull over their human partner (see **Chapter 5**), the question remains to what extent, are other acts of doggy-care, if only momentarily cruel? Thinking here of a greater exploration into assistance dogs defending their human, or even being attacked by other humans and dogs, can lead to a better understanding of the tensions of care for one another.

Methodological insights

The methodology used in this thesis has been original, creative, and unique, combining a number of different methods to help the researcher understand the lived experiences of disabled humans and assistance dogs. The multi-methodological approach helped open up the potentialities for

¹¹⁰ Whilst no examples of this ‘cruelness’ became clear in my research, going beyond assistance dogs, to the earlier mentioned work by Sanders (2006) and Shear (2008), show the ‘cruelness’ of police dogs in certain circumstances.

understanding animals' geographies, their lived, and – anthropomorphically – their felt – experiences. First, as outlined in **Chapter 2**, interviews helped situate human experiences within space, but also played a significant role in understanding how animals occupy the homespace. Second – and vital – the inclusion of magazine analysis helped draw attention to the significance of multiple imaginaries of what assistance dogs are and could be. To use the language adopted by many magazines – the narratives allowed for an understanding of animals as 'carers', 'family', 'lifelines', 'confidants', and 'counsellors' – using anthropomorphic language to open up the potentiality of what assistance dogs are. This helped understand the many ascribed identities of assistance dogs and the felt experiences of the human partner. Third, this thesis has offered a methodological insight into the processual nature of ethical research, which has conceived of both the ethics and accessibility of research as ongoing projects or 'doings' (King, 2021b; Muñoz, 2021). Engaging ethics and accessibility as ongoing projects has allowed this research to operate ethically, considering ethics and accessibility as they emerge during the research project. This is a significant point for *all* research engaging with humans and animals to take forward, as conceiving of ethics and accessibility in this way allows for a more ethical engagement and considers the changing nature of how humans and animals be-in-the-world-together.

Finally – and drawing out more notably contributions – this thesis has made use of an ethnomethodological approach utilising video and graphic transcripts to explore human-animal-training practices. The ethnomethodological approach centred the mechanical undertakings of dog training alongside its livelier aspects, allowing for a deeper and detailed analysis of assistance dog training. At the core of this thesis – methodologically and substantively – ethnomethodology meets ethology meets a cautious anthropomorphism, a kind of engagement that permeates all levels: indeed, the human participants themselves become amateur ethologists. Their ethological readings are of course anthropomorphic, but a highly informed anthropomorphism resulting from sustained living-with-and-alongside particular nonhuman animals. Indeed, this positioning of anthropomorphism with posthuman theory and grounded theory throughout allowed for an engagement with participants that helped sensitise me to their particular ways of being-in-the-world. This cautious anthropomorphism along with posthumanism's understanding of animals as agentic beings gave greater room to animals' and their human partner's reading of animals as amateur ethologists. This attunement has important implications for future research in animal geographies and indeed for wider geographical engagements. First, the ethnomethodological approach offers one way in which animal geographers may explore animals' own geographies, their lived and experienced life worlds, and multi-sensuous was of inhabiting space (Hodgetts & Lorimer, 2015). I argue that animal geographers (and geographers in general) should explore in more depth the ways in which an ethnomethodological approach to research can help attend to forms of agency and arising subjectivity within different

spaces and places (Laurier, 2009). Second, as already implied, there is the recognition of participants as ‘amateur ethologists’ – in the sense that they have acquired deep knowledge of everyday animal conduct, vocalising, ‘moods’, likes, dislikes, etc. – and it is their ethological readings that then provide much of the backbone to the wider claims set throughout the thesis. This has wide implications. Exploring ideas, such as the above, can tell us more about how humans understand animal behaviour and actions and how they make up, and then attribute, meanings from these. In addition, adopting an argument from Barua and Sinha (2019: p.1175) an etho-graphical conversation can help track “different modalities of knowledge at work” and provide “richer ways in which spaces of embodiment, motion and relation, of paramount importance to the ‘more-than-human’ project (Whatmore, 1999), might be sensed and their political import articulated”.

Animal geographies

This thesis provides a substantial contribution to the subfield of animal geographies. As described above, the thesis provides direct engagements with innovative methodological and conceptual approaches for understandings animals’ geographies (Hodgetts & Lorimer, 2015), as well as contributing significantly to the geographies of practice. Moreover, a new substantive concern is brought to the subfield through an engagement with working dogs, an area of research that is significantly under-explored (although for specific geographical work see: Smith et al., 2021; Yarwood, 2015). Through the practice of dog training, human and animal actively engage with each other’s bodies and their attendant embodied capacities. Furthermore, in excavating the material and sensuous elements of training, and how bodies relationally develop through these material and sensuous engagement in their time-space stories. This research opens up the potentiality to expand my findings about these working animal geographies to other human-animal relationships and also raises a number of quite specific questions: would the development from pet to Guide Dog/Hearing/Medical Dog be as successful? What different spatio-temporal characteristics would be required for the development of these relationships? What would be the main differences, felt and experienced, through training your own pet to these partnerships compared to being ‘given’ one of these dogs? How would animal bodies be regulated throughout the processes of training via the different charities if they allowed clients to train their own pets? And what would the benefits be to the wider dog population in the U.K.?

Other animal-human practices – whether animal sports (e.g., racing), animal training (e.g., horses, seals), or other animal work (e.g., ploughing horses, fairground donkeys) – could all be explored in similar ways to those enacted in my thesis. As well as continuing this research, geographers should focus on critically examining more exploitative forms of ‘animals’ work’ (as I have suggested in a paper being currently reviewed: Arathoon, n.d.). More exploitative forms of animals’ work in which

animal bodies are more physically and forcefully controlled, perhaps as a polar opposite to the relations discussed above, need to be explored to understand in more depth the multiple geographies of animals' work.

Furthermore, through the research in this thesis, I have shown how a human-pet bond can develop into a human-assistance-dog bond. This is notable in challenging how human-animal bonds develop and change over time, and in showing how human-animal bonds may go beyond companionship, to be a matter, quite literally, of life or death (Eason, 2020), as described by so many of the human participants in this research. The thesis thus contributes substantially to literature on human-animal therapeutic and health engagements (Bolman, 2019; Gorman, 2017; Kirk et al., 2019; McKee, 2015; Pemberton, 2019; Robinson, 2019), but expands these literatures by exploring possibilities arising through engagement with an animal that was once a pet. Greater research is needed to explore both the benefits and drawbacks of such therapeutic relationships: for example, how they more widely affect a human's spatial engagements for their own health (e.g., GP visit frequency, seizure decrease, medication consumption reduction), or what happens on the occasion of assistance animal withdrawal, how the bond between human and assistance dog changes after assistance dog retirement, and what are the impacts of animal death (as discussed in **Chapter 4**).

Disability geographies

Significant contribution has also been made to the subfield of disability geographies throughout. Bringing into focus disability engagements with bodies (Butler & Bowlby, 1997; Butler & Parr, 1999; Parr, 2002) and relational conceptualisations of disability (Hall & Wilton, 2017; Lock et al., 2005), this thesis has centred disabled experiences and reshaped what it means to have a disabled body. I have contested and challenged the idea of dependency being a negative conceptualisation, arguing instead that being *interdependent* – in this case being both dependent on an assistance dog but responsible for an assistance dog – helps to reshape how dependency has been viewed historically. Moreover, I make a vital move beyond just demonstrating entanglement and co-dependency to assert the importance of seeing dependency as a political good in and of itself (as opposed to signalling a weakness/abnormality/victim status). This shift could have a wider impact on how disability and dependency are thought about in future work, especially in a growing era of austerity (Burch, 2018; A. Power & Bartlett, 2019). In addition, in practice for assistance dog charities, such a shift could be useful for them in applying for funding and reshaping ideas of what an assistance dog is and the vital care role that they play.

Finally, this thesis has significantly contributed to the subfields of animal and disability geographies by examining the shared cross-species lifeworlds of disabled humans and assistance dogs. I have shown how disabled people and their assistance dogs develop a bond through training and care.

Additionally, this research has challenged how we can ‘be well together’ (Kirk et al., 2019), showing how care between human and assistance animals influence wellbeing and mental ill-health. In a similar vein, the findings here inform the scholarly traditions of both disability geographies and animal geographies through challenging binary thinking about human/nonhuman and disabled/abled, and how disabled humans and assistance dogs occupy a cross-species partnership or team within different spaces that inhabit the ‘slash’, as it were, in these respective binaries (again discussed also in **Chapter 6** through the practice of care).

Impact and knowledge exchange

Throughout the process of this research, I have engaged in knowledge exchange and impact events to expand the reach and scope of my research, whilst also trying to contribute positively to the charities involved and the words of so many of the participants who describe their relationships with their assistance dogs as ‘life-changing’ or ‘life-saving’. There are several different impact activities that I have completed for Dog A.I.D. and ADUK, and these are listed below:

- The research was used by Dog A.I.D. to evidence an application for a grant from the Pets at Home Foundation, which Dog A.I.D. received £60,000.
- Article in the Dog A.I.D. magazine ‘Paws For Thought’ entitled: ‘From Pet to Assistance Dog: Care and Training in the Development of Assistance Dog Partnerships’.
- Presentation at the ADI Conference 2021 entitled: with the same title.
- Question & Answer presentation based on ADI presentation for Dog A.I.D.

Additionally, I have planned several knowledge exchange events to develop research impact going forward. First, I believe that the research here can help Dog A.I.D. directly, through the development of a report for the charity. This report could be used directly by the charity to evidence future funding applications but will also help further develop good practice in the charity through my suggestions based on client experiences.

Second, and significantly, I believe that the ethnomethodological work here – notably the graphic transcripts of dog training – can act as a useful, alternative way of developing training resources for Dog A.I.D.. The graphic transcripts here have been developed through an ethnomethodological tradition through highlighting the sequential nature of an event, along with Laurier's (2014c) outline of graphic transcripts. The graphic transcript also relates to comic strips, as they both show events occurring sequentially (von Reumont & Budke, 2021). Kara and Brooks (2020) suggest comics can aid memory and retention of information, make the process of what people are trying to learn visible, and facilitate learning through doing. Developing the ethnomethodological approach of *how* dog training is done will thus be very transferrable in developing these transcripts into comic strips for

visual learning. I believe editing these transcripts (and continuing work to collect more video data) to show a greater step-by-step emphasis on completing a task can be useful to the charity in developing these transcripts as training resources. Research has shown how comic strips can be used as education tools for both in-class learning and practical learning (Gomez, 2014; Kara & Brooks, 2020; von Reumont & Budke, 2021), and I think that the graphic transcripts can help towards such education. Dog training as a sequential event with clear steps fits these transcripts well. Additionally, the charity already provides clients with written descriptions of how to do a task to complement the in-person training they receive. Therefore, with the emphasis of doing training beyond engagement with the trainer, I aim to work with gatekeepers to develop these transcripts as visual learning material for clients as offering visual aids to the tasks can help those who are visual learners.

Final summations

Life-saving, life-changing, life-transforming.

A best friend, career, and companion.

Some body who is there for the highs and the lows.¹¹¹

In her book, “*What comes after entanglements?*”, Giraud (2019) contends that entanglement has become somewhat a buzzword, with the focus on entanglement often losing the intricacies of human/nonhuman life. Indeed, in my viva, I was asked the question that forms part of Giraud’s thesis, why do entanglements matter?

The words above, an amalgamation of common phrases throughout people’s narratives of their experiences of assistance dog partnership show *exactly* why this situated animal work matters and, by extension, why entanglements matter. Careful academic research on humans and assistance dogs has a crucial evaluative, elaborative, role to play. The physical task completion by assistance dogs – whether picking up a dropped wallet, pushing open a door, or alerting their human partner of impending dangers – is important for many of the participants in this research, helping them to limit and manage their affective intensities of pain. But perhaps more vital, even more ‘life-transforming’, is the companionship provided by a nonhuman other, the friendship, care, and shared daily experiences. *This is where entanglements matter.*

This work has shown exactly why these relationships – whether considered anthropomorphic or not – matter, through exploring the spatio-temporal relations of care between human and assistance dog, including attention to the practice of training a pet to be an assistance dog. The research has revealed how training a pet to be an assistance dog is an affective, emotional, and sensuous practice, relying not only on the human’s understanding of training, but their application of this knowledge and

¹¹¹ These words come from both respondents to the online questionnaires and interview participants.

recognition of their assistance dogs as lively, agentic beings. Furthermore, the research has highlighted how these partnerships expand outwards – not solely a mechanical operation of a service – but as lively partnerships full of agency and life. The entanglement of bodies and care – caring bodies, bodies that care – throughout this research shows how agency and relationality shape human-animal relationships, and how care *by* an assistance dog, is completely saturated by agency and affect. This thesis thus plays a vital role in showing why entanglements matter, as it moves beyond solely demonstrating entanglement and co-dependency to instead assert the importance of seeing dependency as a political good in and of itself.

By centring the experiences of humans and animals, unearthing the everyday geographies, the mundane and the striking, I have addressed not only how these partnerships are experienced in space, but also examined their very development, what makes and forms the partnerships, what makes them ‘life-changing’.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Table of information on assistance dog services provided by the 10 ADUK charities.

CHARITIES	FOUNDED	SERVICES
Autism Dogs CIC	2016	Autism Assistance Dogs Autism assistance dogs for children. Autism assistance dogs for adults. Therapy dogs for schools, colleges, universities and hospitals.
Canine Partners	1990	Assistance Dogs Assistance dogs for adults with physical disabilities.
Dog A.I.D.	1992	Assistance Dogs Empowers adults with physical/mobility based disabilities to train their own pet dog as an assistance dog.
Dogs for Good	1986	Assistance Dogs Assistance dogs support adults and children with a range of disabilities and also children with autism. Community Dogs Community dogs and their specialist handlers help people to improve their independence, wellbeing, and skills. Family Dogs

		<p>Family Dog team gives advice and support to help families with an autistic child to get the most out of their relationship with their pet dog.</p> <p>Dementia Dogs</p> <p>The Dementia Dog Project is a collaboration with Alzheimer Scotland to develop new services for people living with dementia. Based at HMP Castle Huntly open prison near Dundee, we work with the Scottish Prison Service and Paws for Progress CIC to help train our family of Dementia Dogs.</p>
Guide Dogs for the Blind	1931	<p>Guide Dogs</p> <p>Providing adults with visual impairments or blindness a guide dog to help them spatially navigate.</p>
Hearing Dogs	1982	<p>Assistance Dogs</p> <p>Hearing Dogs for adults with a hearing impairment (aged 18+).</p> <p>Hearing Dogs for children with a hearing impairment (ages 7+).</p> <p>Sound Support Dogs for people with hearing impairments.</p> <p>Confidence and Companion Dogs for people with hearing impairments.</p>
Medical Detection Dogs	2008	<p>Bio-Detection Dogs</p> <p>Bio Detection Dogs are trained to find the odour of diseases (such as cancer) in samples such as urine, breath and sweat and our work has the potential to benefit millions.</p>

		<p>Medical Alert Assistance Dogs</p> <p>Medical Alert Assistance Dogs are provided to people to detect minute changes in an individual's personal odour triggered by their disease and alert them to an impending medical event.</p>
Seeing Dogs Alliance	1979	<p>Guide Dogs</p> <p>Providing adults with visual impairments or blindness a guide dog to help with their mobility.</p>
Service Dogs UK	2015	<p>Service Dogs</p> <p>Assistance dogs to support members of the Armed Forces and Emergency. Services with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).</p> <p>Trauma Support Dogs (Police Wellbeing Dog initiative).</p>
Support Dogs	1992	<p>Autism Assistance Dogs</p> <p>Autism assistance dogs for children aged 3-10 years old with autism. The dogs are trained to provide safety for the child and reduce stress in social environments.</p> <p>Seizure Alert Dogs</p> <p>Seizure Alert Dogs for people with epilepsy. The dogs are trained to provide a 100% reliable, 10-55-minute warning prior to the onset of an epileptic seizure, which enables them to get to a place of their choosing and take control of the situation.</p> <p>Disability Assistance Dogs</p> <p>Disability assistance dogs for people with physical disabilities. The client's own pet dog is</p>

		trained to perform tasks which are specifically tailored to their individual needs.
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Appendix 2: Table of participants involved in the research and their biographical information where known.

	Case Number or Pseudonym	AD Pseudonym *Retired AD	Charity or self-trained	Qualified (Q). Unqualified (UQ). Successor (SD).	Disabilities (If known)	Dog A.I.D. Survey (DAS). General Population Survey (GP). Interview (I); Video Ethnography (V)	Notes
1	Megan	Sam	Dog A.I.D.	Q		DAS; I	
2	Mark	Lucky	Dog A.I.D.	Q	Chronic pain	DAS; I	
3	Elizabeth	Ace	Dog A.I.D.	UQ	Polio	DAS; I	Telephone interview.
4	Beth	Daisy* and Bessy	Dog A.I.D.	SD		DAS; I; V	
5	Sara	Raven*, Sage*, and Pepper	Dog A.I.D.	SD	Fibromyalgia	DAS; I; V	Training class attended.
6	June	Quake	Dog A.I.D.	UQ	Multiple disabilities	DAS; I; V	Also took part in follow-up phone interview.
7	Carla	Buzz	Dog A.I.D.	Q	Brain injury and physical disability	I; V	Training class attended, telephone interview.

8	Joan	Sal	Dog A.I.D.	Q		V	
9	Eleanor	Bright	Dog A.I.D.			I	Completed as group interview.
10	Sally	Lola	Dog A.I.D.	UQ		I	Completed as group interview.
11	Hannah	Missy	Dog A.I.D.	UQ	Fibromyalgia	I	Online interview.
12	Dawn	Bella	Dual-trained	Q	Blindness	I	Telephone interview, also sent photographs and videos.
13	Erin	Luas	Dog A.I.D.	Q	Chronic pain	I; GPS	Online interview took place on two separate dates.
14	Samantha	Bertie	Dog A.I.D.	Q	Scoliosis and arthritis	I	Online interview.
15	Emma	Amber	Dog A.I.D.	UQ		V	Online training class.
16	Dominique	Ross	Dog A.I.D.	UQ		I	Online interview.
17	QR 1		Dog A.I.D.	UQ		DAS	
18	QR 4		Dog A.I.D.	Q		DAS	
19	QR 7		Dog A.I.D.	UQ		DAS	

20	QR 8		Dog A.I.D.	UQ		DAS	
21	QR 9		Dog A.I.D.	Q		DAS	
22	QR 10		Dog A.I.D.	Q		DAS	
23	QR 12		Dog A.I.D.	Q		DAS	
24	QR 13		Dog A.I.D.	UQ		DAS	
25	QR 14		Dog A.I.D.	Q		DAS	
26	QR 15		Dog A.I.D.	UQ		DAS	
27	QR 16		Dog A.I.D.	SD		DAS	
28	QR 17		Dog A.I.D.	Q		DAS	
29	QR 18		Dog A.I.D.	Q		DAS	
30	GP1		Self	UQ		GP	
31	GP2		Canine Partners	UQ		GP	
32	GP3		Canine Generated independence	Q		GP	
33	GP4		Self	UQ		GP	
34	GP5		Zebra Dogs	UQ		GP	

35	GP6		Self	Q		GP	
36	GP7		Self	Q		GP	
37	GP8		Self	Q		GP	
38	GP9		Dogs for Autism	UQ		GP	
39	GP10		Self	Q		GP	
40	GP11		Darwin's Dogs	UQ		GP	
41	GP12		Self	UQ		GP	
42	GP13		Canine Partners	Q		GP	
43	GP14		Seeing Dog Alliance	Q		GP	
44	GP15		Self	UQ		GP	
45	GP16		Support Dogs	Q		GP	
46	GP17		Self	UQ		GP	
47	GP18		Self	Q		GP	
48	GP19		Pawtected	UQ		GP	
49	GP20		Pawtected	Q		GP	

50	GP21		Patriot PAWS Service Dogs	Q		GP	
51	GP22		WestCreek assistance dogs	UQ		GP	
52	GP23		Dog A.I.D.	UQ		GP	
53	GP24		Dog A.I.D.	UQ		GP	
54	GP26		Self	Q		GP	
55	GP27		Self	Q		GP	
56	GP28		Self	Q		GP	
57	GP29		Self	UQ		GP	
58	GP30		Guide Dogs	Q		GP	
59	GP31		Dog A.I.D.	UQ		GP	
60	GP32		Canine Generated Independence	Q		GP	
61	GP33		Self	UQ		GP	
62	GP34		Pawsitive squad	UQ		GP	

63	GP35		Self	UQ		GP	
64	GP36		Support Dogs	Q		GP	
65	GP37		Dog A.I.D.	Q		GP	
66	GP38		Guide Dogs	Q		GP	
67	GP39		Wild Spirit Dog Training & Pawsable	UQ		GP	
68	GP40		Self	UQ		GP	
69	GP41		Self	UQ		GP	
70	GP42		Self	UQ		GP	

Appendix 3: Example of an Introductory Email to ADUK Charities.

Dear **[insert name]**,

My name is Jamie Arathoon, and I am a PhD student, funded by the Scottish Graduate School of Social Sciences, at the University of Glasgow. I am writing to express my interest in working with you through my current project which is exploring the relationship between people with disabilities and their assistance dogs. The research has three key aims:

- I. To explore how care and companionship is understood between people with disabilities and their assistance dogs.
- II. To explore how being partnered with an assistance dog influences the person's understanding of animal welfare and advocacy.
- III. To explore how assistance dogs can improve human health and wellbeing.

There are over 7,000 accredited assistance dog partnerships in the UK alone and **[insert charity name]** provides a vitally important service to its clients. The research has currently been backed by Dog AID and they have provided ample amounts of support so far, but I would like to get other charities involved.

This would entail distribution of an online questionnaire to clients that are both qualified and in-training, a potential online interview with yourself as charity CEO, as well as interviews with dog-breeders, dog trainers, and other important members of your team (where appropriate).

I am a human geography PhD student which means my research will not involve any psychological evaluations on the part of human or assistance dog and will not involve animal testing. Instead, the research will use qualitative interviews and online surveys, to explore the aims above. The research has already been approved via the University of Glasgow's College of Science and Engineering's ethical committee.

Benefit to [insert charity name]: The research will inform my PhD thesis while also being used to provide a number of outputs that could be useful to your charity such as a written report of my research findings and academic papers. If granted permission to undertake research, we could discuss the ways in which I can maximise the benefit to your organisation.

I have attached my information sheet which explains a little bit more about the research, in addition to the ethics approval certificate. I would very much like to have the opportunity to discuss this possibility further if we can arrange a date to meet or speak by phone, Zoom, or Microsoft teams.

Given the current pandemic I very much understand that your time may be limited, and the project has been changed for research to be taken online and ensure the safety of all involved. I look forward to your response.

Yours Faithfully,

Jamie Arathoon

Appendix 4: Ethics Certificate.



Dr. Christoph Scheepers
Senior Lecturer

School of Psychology
University of Glasgow
58 Hillhead Street
Glasgow G12 8QB
Tel.: +44 141 330 3606
Christoph.Scheepers@glasgow.ac.uk

Glasgow, April 8, 2019

Ethical approval for:

Application Number: 300180203

Project Title: Care and companionship: the human-assistance dog relationship

Lead Researcher: Professor Hester Parr

This is to confirm that the above application has been reviewed by the College of Science and Engineering Ethics Committee and **approved**. Please refer to the collated reviews on the system for additional comments and suggestions, if any. Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Dr Christoph Scheepers
Ethics Officer
College of Science and Engineering
University of Glasgow

Did you know? For projects requiring the use of an online questionnaire, the University has an Online Surveys account for research. To request access, see the University's application procedure at <https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/strategy/ourpolicies/useofonlinesurveystoolforresearch/>.

Appendix 5: Project Information Sheet.



Participant Information Sheet

Care and companionship: the human-assistance dog relationship

My name is Jamie Arathoon, and I am a research student in the School of Geographical and Earth Sciences at the University of Glasgow. I am inviting you to participate in a research project looking at people's relationships with their assistance dogs. The project aims to understand the relationship between you and your assistance dog and how you care for your assistance dog. This has come about due to a wider recognition of the importance of pets to human lives, but little has been understood about the relationship between humans and working animals such as assistance dogs. Before you complete the consent form, please read this information sheet which will outline my project, what participation will entail and what I am hoping to achieve. Following this please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have or to discuss the project further on the contact details provided below.

1. What will taking part in the research involve?

Participation in this research project will consist of an interview and walking interview, which may be audio-recorded and video-recorded with your permission. These aim to understand your relationship with your assistance dog and how you care for them.

Interviews:

Your participation in this research may require you to take part in an informal interview lasting between 30-90 minutes. Interviews are designed to be conversational. The time, date and location will be decided with you individually through further contact. Some of the topics I am looking to cover in the interview are:

- Your relationship with your assistance dog.
- How you care for your dog and what caring practices are involved.
- Understand how your assistance dog cares for you and helps you with everyday activities.
- Your assistance dog's personality.
- How you understand your assistance dog's welfare.

With your permission the interview will be audio-recorded or video-recorded. This is to ensure accuracy of information and also to help with dissemination of my work. However, your consent is needed before this can take place.

Walking interview:

This will involve walking along one or more of your daily known routes with yourself and your assistance dog for around 30 minutes or however long you usually walk for. This is important for understanding the activities your assistance dog helps you with. The walking interview will take place and will be video-recorded with your permission. The walking interview is again intended to be more of a conversation. The video will then be reviewed together at a later date. The time, date and routes will be decided with you individually through further contact. Some topics I am looking to cover in the walking interview are:

- How walking is undertaken with your assistance dog.
- Understand your experiences in public space with your assistance dog.
- Visualise the activities your assistance dog helps you to complete.
- Observe interactions such as cautions, guided movement, communication, and mistakes.

2. Do I have to take part?

Please ask any questions you might have about this research before deciding whether or not to take part as participating does require a lot of your time. You are free to choose whether you would like to participate in one or all of the activities. If you do agree, and then later change your mind, you may withdraw yourself and your data from the study without questions at any time. If you are happy to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

3. What happens to the research data provided?

The raw research data – audio-recordings - will be typed up into Word Documents on computer. Audio files will be saved onto a password protected device as these will be transcribed and used within the dissertation. This information can then be analysed to produce the dissertation. Video files will be saved onto a password protected device and screen-grabs and video links may be used. Password protected device will only be accessible to myself, but the data may be shared with my supervisor. The data is kept for 10 years and then destroyed.

I will make sure that all the information is kept anonymised. This means that I will not use your real name, or your dogs, or other details about you that could identify you. Anonymised data will be used in the production of a PhD thesis and possible public documents like journal articles. The findings may also be shared with the media. You will also be offered an accessible copy of a report relating to this research once the research process has finished.

4. Who has reviewed this project?

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Glasgow Research Ethics Committee. The project is also being supervised by a member of staff.

5. Contact details

Researcher:

Jamie Arathoon
School of Geographical and Earth Sciences,
Email: j.arathoon.1@research.gla.ac.uk
Phone: 07960216520.

Supervisor:

Professor Hester Parr,
School of Geographical and Earth Sciences.
Email: hester.parr@glasgow.ac.uk
Phone : 0141 330 5291

Appendix 6: Project Consent Form.



Consent form

Care and companionship: the human-assistance-dog relationships

- ☐ I have understood the information sheet.
- ☐ I would like to take part in the research project described on the information sheet.
- ☐ I would like to take part in the interview.
- ☐ I would like to take part in the walking interview and observation.
- ☐ All information I disclose may be used in the research unless otherwise stated.
- ☐ I understand that I can withdraw from the research, without penalty, at any time.
- ☐ I give permission for a tape recorder to be used, knowing that all recordings will be kept safe and secure.
- ☐ I give permission to be video-recorded during the research, knowing that all recordings will be kept safe and secure.
- ☐ I would like to use a pseudonym instead of my real name.

Signed.....

Date.....

Contact email/telephone.....

Appendix 7: General AD Population Survey: Example of Different Survey Questions (display of questions will have been different as 2a, 2b, 2c, will appear dependent on question 2).

Page 3: Charities or Self-training

2. Which charity (if any) are you/did you train your assistance dog through? (If dual trained pick all applicable charities)

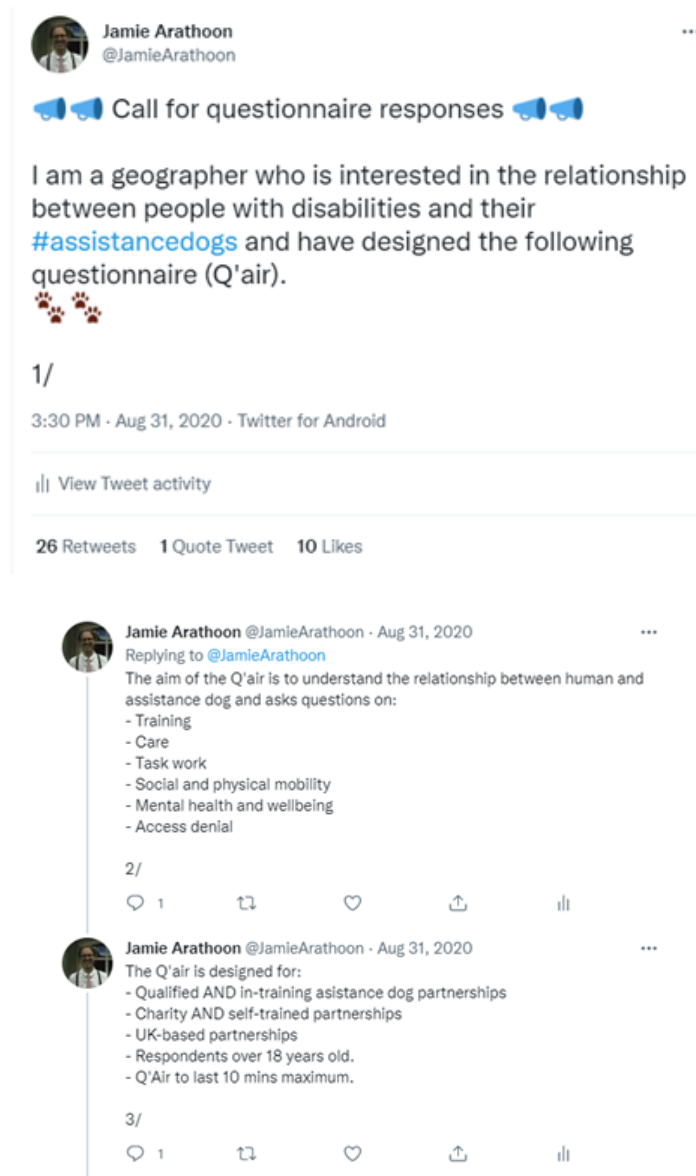
- ☐ Canine Partners
- ☐ Dog A.I.D.
- ☐ Dogs For Good
- ☐ Guide Dog Association For the Blind
- ☐ Hearing Dogs For Deaf People
- ☐ Medical Detection Dogs
- ☐ Owner Trained
- ☐ Seeing Dog Alliance
- ☐ Support Dogs
- ☐ Other

2.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

2.b. Why did you decide to apply for a dog through this charity?

2.c. Why did you decide to train your own dog through this charity?

Appendix 8: Twitter Post About Survey.





Jamie Arathoon @JamieArathoon · Aug 31, 2020

The first page gives lots of info such as:

- Q'air is anonymous
- There are no repercussions for starting and not completing Q'air
- Accessibility
- Project information
- Data Storage
- no personal details needed

Please read to inform your decision on whether to do Q'air

4/



Jamie Arathoon @JamieArathoon · Aug 31, 2020

Here is the link.

Please RT and share in other groups or with friends. Any questions please DM me!

Thank you!

glasgow-research.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/online-survey-...

#AssistanceDog #servicedog #workingdog #supportdog #dogsoftwitter
5/



Assistance dog and human care

A doctoral research project

Would you like to share your experiences of life with an assistance dog?

This is an invitation to take part in a research project. Before you decide if you would like to participate, please read the following information carefully and ask us any questions.

Special points of interest:

- How your assistance dog helps you.
- How your assistance dog provides care to you.
- How you provide care to your assistance dog.
- How you understand your assistance dog's welfare and how these conceptions may have changed over time.

What is the purpose of the research?

The research aims to explore the relationship between yourself and your assistance dog. I would like to understand how your assistance dog provide you help and care, and how your care for your assistance dog. I want to learn how this relationship has impacted your wellbeing and understanding of animal welfare.

Who is funding and doing the research?

This research is being undertaken by Jamie Arathoon, a postgraduate researcher at the University of Glasgow.

The research is funded by the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science.

It has been reviewed **AND** approved by the College of Science and Engineering Research Ethics Committee at the University of Glasgow.

Can I take part?

If you have an assistance animal then I would very much appreciate your participation in this research.

Your participation is voluntary and if you decide to take part, you can change your mind and withdraw at any time, and do not have to give a reason.



What will happen if I take part?

Informal interviews: You will be invite to take part in a short informal one-to-one conversation to talk about your life with your assistance dog. The time and place can be arranged to suit you.

Walking interviews: You will be invited to take part in a walking interview. The route and length of the walk will be decided by you o fit your needs. Its aim is to explore in greater detail your life with your assistance dog.

Video recording: You will be invited to be video recorded along with your assistance dog doing some of the tasks hey are trained to help you with. Also to record actions and engagements which constitute care and looking after your dog and yourself. Videos will be short and will be available to participants to view and comment on.

What will happen to the results of the research?

After I have collected all the data, I will analyse it to inform my PhD thesis. I will use direct quotations from the conversations we have and screen-grabs and still images from the videos we have made but your own name **will not** be included in this work. Furthermore, I will not use any personal information that may identify you.

The information you provide may also be used in research journal articles, magazines, and conference talks. Again this data will be made to be anonymous.

Will people know I am taking part?

All information will be kept anonymous— this means the researcher will know you are taking part, but I will remove details such as your name, so that you cannot be recognised. I will also remove other data that could recognise you as the research may make use of still images from videos. If you have any particular issues about videos and still images please email me and I can describe in greater detail the procedures of keeping these safe and secure and answer any questions you might have.

Only my supervisor and myself will have access to the data, including any minimal personal details collected which will be stored safely during the project and deleted once the research project is complete. The research is compliant with the University of Glasgow's Data Protection policy and your anonymity and confidentiality is assured.

Contact Us:

Primary researcher:

Jamie Arathoon

Email: jarathoon.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Tel: 07980216520

Research supervisor and ethics officer:

Prof Hester Parr

Email: hester.parr@glasgow.ac.uk



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Sòisealta na h-Alba



Appendix 10: Client Interview Questions.

Clients: Participant interviews

“This first section is going to ask you some questions about yourself and your assistance dog, this includes general questions around how long you have been together to more specific questions about animal training. The second part aims to understand greater the care and companionship between yourself and your assistance dog. It will ask questions around your mobility and mental wellbeing as well as how you understand your dog’s wellbeing and welfare. Please remember that you should only answer questions you feel comfortable answering and may stop or terminate the interview at any point should you wish too.”

- 1) How long was your assistance dog your pet before being trained as an assistance dog?
- 2) How long has your assistance dog been a trained assistance dog for?
- 3) Why did you decide to train your dog to be an assistance dog?
- 4) How did this process of applying to train your assistance dog as a pet work? What sort of things did you need to do? Did you receive a visit to see if your dog was capable? Did you need to fill out forms?
- 5) What were the different stages/levels of training you had to do? Did your dog need to be trained to a certain degree prior to this? Have you any background in dog training?
- 6) What were the hardest/easiest/most rewarding/challenging parts of this training process? Why?
- 7) Did the structure of training work well for you? Was practicing training at home difficult without the trainer?
- 8) What tasks is your assistance dog trained to help you with? What tasks were they not trained to do officially but now undertake for you? Are the tasks they are trained to do specific to your care needs?
- 9) How do you know how your dog is feeling? (Task – as an example). What happens when the dog gets in wrong? Done any tasks in different ways to what is expected?
- 9) Has the training influenced your understanding of your dog's needs/welfare? Grooming, hot weather, general behaviour, feeding, exercise, dental care?
- 10) What sort of things do you do to look after your dog?

- 11) How can animals be carers? Do you think of your assistance dog as caring? How is care reciprocated?
- 12) What was your social and physical mobility like before you trained your dog to be an assistance dog? Did this affect your relationship with your dog?
- 13) How has your social and physical mobility changed now your dog is a trained assistance dog?
- 14) How does your dog make you feel this (I.e., more confident, less anxious)?
- 15) How has your assistance dog influenced your wellbeing?
- 16) Have you ever had access issues with your assistance dog? What happened if so, and did you take any action?
- 17) How has COVID changed your training sessions?

Appendix 11: Dog A.I.D. Magazine Recruitment.

OPPORTUNITY TO BE INVOLVED IN RESEARCH	
<p>Would you like to get involved with research between PhD student Jamie Arathoon and Dog AID?</p> <p>The research aims to understand the relationship between humans and their assistance dogs looking at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Care, human-animal bond, mental health and wellbeing, social and physical mobility, and training. <p>So far many people have got involved with the research and Jamie would like to extend a huge thank you to them!</p> <p>He would also like to extend a greater invite however to the rest of Dog AID; both clients and trainers.</p>	<div>  </div> <div> <p>CLIENTS</p> <p>I would like to extend an invite to clients to have a group Zoom discussion with myself and Rachel Rodgers. The Zoom call would be on the themes of the research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Care, human-animal bond, mental health and wellbeing, social and physical mobility, and training. <p>If you would like to be involved, please email Rachel Rodgers (Rachel.Rodgers@dogaid.org.uk) with your interest with the subject heading 'Zoom Research'. Depending on interest we may schedule one or two calls so everyone can get involved.</p> <p>If you feel like you would like to contribute but would not like to do it as part of a group, Jamie will be setting up individual online calls (just email Rachel with the subject line 'Individual Call' and she will pass your email on to him with your permission).</p> <p>If you feel both these options do not suit you, or you would like to find out more about the research beforehand, feel free to take the questionnaire here. All responses are anonymous.</p> </div>
<div> <p>TRAINERS</p> <p>I would like to extend an invitation to trainers to discuss your approaches to training, why you decided to get involved with Dog AID, and your 'training biographies'. The discussion would take the format of an interview/conversation via Zoom, or your preferred format, and would last approximately one hour. If you would like to get involved please email (j.arathoon.1@research.gla.ac.uk).</p> </div>	



Appendix 12: Trainer Information.

Trainer	Gender	Number of Dog A.I.D. Clients	Working Professionally as a Trainer	Accreditation Scheme
Kim	Female	6	N	None
Jean	Female	1	Y	APBTC, APDT
Rachel	Female	2	Y	APBC, APDT
Harriet	Female		Y	ABTC, IAABC, Karen Pryor Academy Certified Trainer, Guild of Dog Trainers
Nina	Female		Y	None
Martha	Female		Y	ADPT, IMDT
Charlie	Female		Y	Kennel Club accredited instructor
Heidi	Female	1	Y	IMDT

Appendix 13: Trainer Recruitment Flyer.

Assistance Dog Training

Part of a PhD research project at University of Glasgow

What is the purpose of the research?

The research is part of a wider project around assistance animal partnership, care, and mental health and wellbeing.

The research also aims to recruit **dog trainers** working for Dog A.I.D. to understand a dog trainer's role within the process of assistance dog qualification. This may include the different types of training they undertake, how they problem solve while training, and the relationship between trainer and owner.

The research also aims to understand dog trainers 'training biographies'.

Who is funding and doing the research?

This research is being undertaken by Jamie Arathoon, a postgraduate researcher at the University of Glasgow.

The research is funded by the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science.


It has been reviewed **AND** approved by the College of Science and Engineering Research Ethics Committee at the University of Glasgow.

This research is being done in partnership with Dog A.I.D.

Can I take part?

If you have been training assistance animals for any time period for Dog A.I.D. then please get in touch!

Your participation is voluntary and if you decide to take part, you can change your mind and withdraw at any time, and do not have to give a reason.



This is an invitation to take part in a research project. Before you decide if you would like to participate, please read the following information carefully and ask us any questions.

Points of Interest:



- Your dog training history.
- Why you decided to start training assistance dogs.
- Your methods of dog training.
- The relationship you develop with clients; both human and animal.

Contact:


Primary researcher:
Jamie Arathoon

Email:
j.arathoon.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Tel: 07960216520



University of Glasgow



Scottish Graduate School of Social Science

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What will happen if I take part?

Informal interview: You will be invited to take part in a short informal one-to-one conversation to talk about your experiences as a dog trainer for Dog A.I.D. The interview aims to be both an informal conversation and a biographical exploration of your time as a Dog A.I.D. dog trainer.

The time and place of the interview can be arranged to suit you, and if preferred interviews can be done via telephone.

I will also be in attendance at the client trainer workshop in April, if you are attending it would be great, with permission from yourself and the clients, to record and photograph you all training in action. This can be discussed during the training weekend itself.

What will happen to the results of the research?

After I have collected all the data, I will analyse it to inform my PhD thesis. I will use direct quotations from the conversations we have and screen-grabs and still images from the videos we have made.

The information you provide may also be used in research journal articles, magazines, and conference talks. Again this data will be made to be anonymous.

Will people know I am taking part?

All information will be kept anonymous— this means the researcher will know you are taking part, but I will remove details such as your name, so that you cannot be recognised. I will also remove other data that could recognise you as the research may make use of still images from videos. If you have any particular issues about videos and still images please email me and I can describe in greater detail the procedures of keeping these safe and secure and answer any questions you might have.

Only my supervisor and myself will have access to the data, including any minimal personal details collected which will be stored safely during the project and deleted once the research project is complete. The research is compliant with the University of Glasgow's Data Protection policy and your anonymity and confidentiality is assured.

To get involved:

Email j.arathoon.1@research.gla.ac.uk with your interest.



University
of Glasgow



Scottish
Graduate
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Social
Science

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Appendix 14: Node Handbook

Name	Description
Accessibility	All accessibility issues, problems, and positives from both primary and secondary data.
Acquisition	When participants first got their assistance dog.
AD Attack	Instances of assistance dogs being attacked by other dogs (or humans).
AD Travel	Travel with an assistance dog (flying, trains, car).
Animal Welfare	Discussions of animal welfare.
<i>Changing perception</i>	Changing perceptions of assistance dog welfare.
Animals' agency influencing interview talk	When assistance dogs influenced the flow of conversation or when they expressed their agency within interviews.
Anthropocentrism	Anthropocentric representations of assistance dogs.
Anthropomorphism	Anthropomorphic representation of assistance dogs.
<i>Dog Talk</i>	Specifically relating to instances where a human talks from 'the perspective' of their assistance dog.
Assistance Dog Materials	Materials - relates to things such as leads, harnesses, jackets.
Before assistance dog - negatives	Negatives of life before assistance dog partnership.
Benefits of Partnership	The commonly assumed benefits of assistance dog partnership.
<i>Combatting Loneliness and Isolation</i>	References to where participants have mentioned that partnership with assistance dog has helped people combat loneliness.
<i>Community</i>	Examples of forms of community - from local groups such as Dog AID training group, to wider groups such as assistance dog owners.

Name	Description
<i>Companionship</i>	Companionship - a benefit of 'friendship' between human and animal.
<i>Confidence</i>	References or examples to where participants have said they feel more confident due to their assistance dog.
<i>Dog acts as social stimuli</i>	Dogs as conversational starter.
<i>Getting out and about</i>	References or examples of participants leaving the house more or doing new things.
<i>Meet New People</i>	References or examples where participant has said they have meet new people or made friends. This could be through work or volunteering, through dog training, or dog walking.
<i>Positive Mental Wellbeing</i>	References or examples of where participants have mentioned a positive change in their mental health.
<i>Reduced Anxiety</i>	References or examples where participants state they feel less stressed or anxious.
<i>Safety</i>	References or examples where participants state they feel safer due to their dog's presence and training.
<i>Support</i>	References or examples where participants state they feel more supported.
<i>Work, Uni, College, Volunteering</i>	Going back to one of these things due to assistance dog partnership.
Care	Examples and instance when participants say their dog has cared for them.
Charity or Self-trained	Whether participants are part of a charity or self-trained their AD.
<i>Reasons</i>	Why they chose the charity or to self-train.
<i>Self-representation</i>	Charity's representations of themselves.

Name	Description
Coronavirus	Discussion of coronavirus pandemic and its impacts.
Disability, Health, Illness	Discussion of disability, health, and illness.
<i>Illness</i>	Specific discussion about illness.
<i>Mental health</i>	Discussion of mental health.
<i>Pain management</i>	Discussions on management of pain.
<i>Physical disability</i>	Discussions of physical disability.
Dog AID	Reference too Dog AID by clients in interviews.
Dog Care	Care for the dog.
<i>Dog Death</i>	Reference to the passing of a previous assistance dog.
<i>Dog Retirement</i>	Reference to assistance dog retirement.
<i>Dog Safety</i>	Reference to the safety of an assistance dog.
<i>Dog's Food</i>	Reference to dog's food.
<i>Dog's Health</i>	Discussion about dog's health.
<i>Dog's Physical Needs</i>	Reference to dog's basic physical needs such as water and food
<i>Learning Canine Body Language</i>	Reference to learning or reading canine body language. Knowing their dogs' body.
<i>Play</i>	Reference to play, fun, 'dog's time to be a dog', free time.
Dog's Ascribed Identity	Ascription of identity to an assistance dog/dog.
Dog's Characteristics	Instances where participants talk about their dog's behaviour or characteristics.
<i>AD Breed</i>	Different assistance dog breeds.
Exclusion	Discussions about exclusion.
<i>Spatial Exclusion</i>	Reference to discussions about spatial exclusion/ access refusal.

Name	Description
H-A Bond	Instances where the human-animal bond is discussed or where examples shine through.
Independence	Reference to a gain/loss of independence.
<i>Interdependence</i>	Reference to mention of dog's reliance on human as well as human's reliance on dog.
Mobility	Discussion of mobility.
<i>Physical</i>	Discussions of physical mobility.
<i>Social</i>	Discussion of Social Mobility.
Nonhuman Charisma	Reference to J Lorimer's (2007) nonhuman charisma.
Partnership or Team	Reference to a partnership or team.
Public	Relating to issues of public perception, or distraction when assistance dog is working. Also, could be where public have asked 'positive' questions to do with assistance dog.
<i>Public Issues</i>	Issues faced from general public.
Settle	Settle - A life skill trained so a dog rest or stays still on public transport or in a public place.
Tasks	Examples of tasks.
<i>Bringing items</i>	Task - bringing an item.
<i>Deep Pressure Therapy</i>	Task - deep pressure therapy.
<i>Emotional support</i>	Task - emotional support.
<i>Emptying washing machine</i>	Task - removing or placing clothes into a washing machine.
<i>Finding items</i>	Task - finding an item.
<i>Get help</i>	Task - getting help from another human.

Name	Description
<i>Help with shopping</i>	Task - carrying shopping bags or taking items off shelves.
<i>Keeping balance</i>	Task - Helping human keep their balance.
<i>Medical alert</i>	Task - medical alert, specifically alerting another human or alerting due to hypoglycaemic reaction.
<i>Moving items</i>	Task - pushing or pulling an item.
<i>Navigation</i>	Task – guiding.
<i>Opening and closing doors</i>	Task - pulling/pushing a door open/closed
<i>Picking items up</i>	Task - picking items up such as a wallet
<i>Pressing buttons</i>	Task - pressing a button.
<i>Taking clothes on, off</i>	Task – pulling off clothes such as socks.
<i>Turn lights on or off</i>	Task - pulling or pressing a button to turn lights on or off.
<i>Waking up</i>	Task - waking up a human.
Time Length - Pet	Mention of how long participants' dogs were considered pets before starting the training process.
Training Experiences	Experiences of the training process.
<i>Ongoing Training</i>	Examples of training occurring after training has officially been completed.
<i>Representations of Training Problems</i>	Reference to representations of training problems from AD magazines.
<i>Time Length - Training</i>	Time length to complete training.

Name	Description
<i>Time Training - So Far</i>	Refers specifically to the period that participants have been training their dogs for so far.
<i>Training Accomplishments</i>	Examples of accomplishments in training. May be examples of where participants were struggling with a task and then they finally mastered it.
<i>Training Assessment</i>	Discussion about training assessment.
<i>Training Challenges</i>	Reference to what participants found challenging about training.
<i>Training New Dog</i>	Particularly in relation to a successor dog.