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"DOGS DON'T SPEAK". A CONSIDERATION OF THE FLOW OF KNOWLEDGE BETWEEN DOGS, ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND HUMANS

Within anthropological studies of the human-animal relation much has been written about the objectification of animals in "Euro-American" ontology and the need to reconsider this approach. Yet, although "Euro-American" ontologies on the human-animal relation have been the focus of critique, I suggest that the question of how we might reconsider this issue is still pertinent. In this article, I offer an ethnographic account of dog owner narratives on the dog-owner relation in Croatia. Through a consideration of these narratives in terms of the "flow of knowledge" (cf. Strathern 2004), I propose that knowledge between humans and animals is already flowing but it has just not been made visible as such.

Key words: animal-human relation, knowledge production, flow

Unequal Exchanges

In anthropological writing on the human-animal relation, a number of authors (e.g. Shanklin 1985; Ingold 1988; Noske 1993; Mullin 1999) have pointed out that anthropological interest in this relation has taken quite a distinct focus for some time: namely, it focuses on what the humans are doing in these relations. For example, in Mullin's overview of the anthropological treatment of the human-animal relation, she writes:

> My impression is that scholars studying human-animal relationships seem to vary considerably in their attitudes toward animals, to the extent that these can be discerned, but Noske is right that sociocultural research in this area tends to be much if not more concerned with humans' relationships with other humans and has rarely departed from anthropocentrism. (Mullin 1999:217)

One consequence of this interest in humans is that in these accounts animals end up taking the guise of "animate objects" who only become animate because of the interests and needs of humans. In light of this, recently there has been an increasingly audible call (e.g. Kohn 2007; Nadadsy 2007; Candea 2010) for a reconsideration of how anthropologists might analytically approach the human-animal relation. Some scholars have argued that the anthropological analytical gaze should be opened up to include the interests of animals, where the relation between humans and animals is considered in terms of being a social relation. They argue this because, in their research, they have observed instances of human-animal sociality, where the humans in such relations consider animals as persons. Although humans in these relations say that animals see the world in a "different"[1] way, they regard the knowledge that animals offer about the world to be just as meaningful as the knowledge that humans offer.

Nevertheless, these scholars highlight the presence of a formidable road block, which they argue needs to be addressed before it is possible to do this. This is that "Western" or "Euro-American" ontologies frequently do not treat animals as persons, but instead place them into a hierarchical relation where they are considered to be lower or lesser beings than humans. As Nadadsy (2007) has written "[V]ery few Euro-American scholars are willing to accept the proposition that animals might qualify as conscious actors capable of engaging in social relations with humans" (Nadadsy 2007:29). Therefore, the question arises as to how can we as anthropologists employ an analytical framework that considers the relation between humans and animals as a relation between persons, while at the same time acting as participants[2] in an ontological setting that has a propensity to "de-personalise" them?

In this article, I want to consider this question by offering an account of the way dog owners in Croatia negotiated their relations with their dogs. I do this because according to my observations of the way dog owners spoke about their dogs, their narratives appeared to be much more in keeping with non-Euro-American discourses on the human-animal relation than with Euro-American discourses.

As I will examine in the first half of this article, although all the owners I spoke with maintained a conceptual difference between themselves and their dogs, in that they saw themselves as being members of different "species", I do not think it would be possible to state that any of them saw their dogs as animate objects.

[1] Viveiros de Castro's (1998) account on perspectivism considers this point extensively.

[2] In his consideration of the distinction between Melanesian and non-Melanesian knowledge practices, which shares many parallels with the Euro-American/non-Euro-American distinction, Gell (1996) writes "[T]he Melanesia of GG [Gender of the Gift] is not the actual nation states of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and so on, but a manner of speaking, or more precisely the site of certain problems of expression and understanding, peculiar to the cultural project of anthropology, which is (almost) exclusively a 'western' project, like it or not" (Gell 1996:34).

Rather, they offered numerous instances of how "what their dogs had told them" had influenced the course of their everyday practices and their relations with other humans. In their opinion, what their dogs told them was just as meaningful as what other humans told them, and thus they appeared to treat their relations with their dogs as a social relation that was of the same importance to them as their social relations with other humans. In light of this observation, I think it could be therefore very informative to reflect upon how dog owners are constructing, and representing this relation with their dogs. If in the Euro-American ontological setting dog owners are able to consider their relations with their dogs as equal social relations, then how might their practices inform ours? What are they doing that is different?

In order to contemplate this, in the second section I will place these accounts offered by dog owners in a comparative position with academic discourses about animal knowledge. Taking Strathern's (2004) account on the travels of knowledge in academic social relations as the starting point for my discussion, I suggest that dog owners are in a position to treat their dogs' knowledge in this way because they are offering them in a field of social relations that enables them to do so. What they present as dog knowledge is the product of their individual observations about their dogs' practices. However, within academic social relations these observations would most probably not be considered as knowledge at all. This is because in the academic field of social relations, observations about animals are required to go through the "scientific process" before they can be presented to others as *knowledge*, and it is these different approaches to knowledge that I discuss at the end of this article.

The Responsibilities of "Ownership"

To begin, I am going to draw out in detail how dog owners considered this notion of ownership in their relations with their dogs. All the persons I spoke to referred to themselves as the "owners" of "their" dogs, and at first glance, their employment of the label[3] "owner" would appear to implicitly infer that they saw their dogs as being a form of property. In turn, this would seem to negate any notion that these owners saw themselves as being in a relation with other social persons. Within the body of literature that focuses on animal rights and animal welfare (e.g. Francione 1995; Cavalieri 2001; Hauser *et al*. 2006; Singer 2006), the notion of animals as property is one that has been much criticised. The argument is offered that by giving animals the legal status of property, and thus by putting them in a position where they can be owned, they are reduced to objects and the apparent hierarchy

[3] Borkfelt (2011) offers a detailed discussion on how the act of naming affects human relations with animals.

in the human-animal relation is reinforced. It is for this reason that some scholars propose that the legal status of animals needs to be changed, where animals are granted the status of legal personhood (cf. Francione 1995). However, for my purposes here, I do not want to enter into a detailed discussion of the intricacies of the debates in the literature on animal rights and animal welfare. Rather, I will outline in more detail how dog owners treated ownership as more a relation of responsibility than the possession[4] of a "thing". This sense of responsibility on the part of the owners appeared to come from what they saw was a need to help their dogs negotiate the "human world".

Nearly all of the dog owners described their dogs as no longer living in their "natural" habitat, and this appeared to have substantial implications for the form their relation took. Very often they explained that when dogs lived in their "natural" state they roamed in packs and survived on their instincts,[5] as they claimed their dogs ancestors the wolves had done. However, these owners argued, due to the fact they were now living with humans in a city, their dogs were no longer able to rely on their natural instincts or the pack. In fact, now that their dogs were living in this "human world", their dogs' natural instincts were a source of concern for their owners since they were worried they might work against them. For instance, one owner told me how she tried to make sure that her dog did not eat things when they were outside. She said that when she discovered him chewing something when they were on a walk, she would order him to spit it out. Her explanation was that although it was probably his natural instinct to eat any food he finds, in that this is what he would do in the wild, in this context it was dangerous because someone might have laced some morsels with poison. She said that he could not know "how bad some humans can be", and therefore she felt that it was her responsibility to use the knowledge she had about humans to protect him. Another area where owners foregrounded the responsibility they had towards their dogs was when they spoke about their dogs' health care. They all said that when their dog was ill they would take them to the vet, and nearly all of the owners whom I spoke with said that after they had been to the vet, if their dog had a more serious condition, they would read more about it on the Internet. Again, they voiced this in terms of responsibility, in that it was the responsible thing to do, to use all the knowledge they had available to them as humans for the benefit of their dogs. Subsequently, my impression of these owners' narratives was that they considered themselves

[4] It is not possible to assume that all ownership relations imply possession (cf. Strathern 1999).

[5] It was in these conversations that often the television personality Cesar Millan (2006) was mentioned. The owners would say that they found his programmes and books very helpful in understanding their dogs. When I asked them why they said because in his programmes and books he offered the dog's perspective, and in this way helped to explain to them things that their dogs were saying that they had not previously understood. They said that what they liked about his approach was that he treated dogs as dogs, rather than dogs as humans. See Millan (2006:11) for an example of his "dogs as dogs" approach.

as gatekeepers for their dogs who were "now" living in a "human world". Since their dogs were no longer in their own or "natural world", owners saw themselves as being in a constant negotiation between their dogs' natural instincts and needs, and the needs of the human world in which their dogs were living. On the basis of this, and to return to their dogs' status as "property", I would therefore propose that at no point did this ownership relation result in the owners considering their dogs as animate objects.

Nonetheless, although owners foregrounded what appeared to me to be a moral responsibility in their relations with their dogs, it would not be possible to say that the legal obligations in this relation were totally absent. All the owners told me that as dog owners they had certain legal obligations, such as the need to vaccinate their dogs, and that in the city legally their dogs should wear a muzzle and be on a lead. When I asked them about other legal obligations of this relation, such as the ones set out in the *Law on Animal Protection* and the City of Rijeka's Ordinance on how pets should be kept, they said they were not aware of them. All of the owners, bar one, stated that they had never read these Ordinances or Laws, or the pamphlet published by the City of Rijeka entitled *What do you need to know about pets?* (Mijanović *et al*. 2006) that offers a summarised outline of these Ordinances and Laws. Thus, in terms of their understanding of the legal relation, it appeared these owners had not reflected upon their legal obligations too deeply. However, when they spoke about the issue of dog-training, the legal aspect of this relation did become an issue. Nearly all the owners spoke of the importance of training their dogs and teaching them to listen to their commands. When I asked them why they were so keen that their dogs behave in these prescribed ways, they offered the point that they wanted their dog to be "good" and "listen" to them so that they could be outside when they wanted. One woman told me that her dog never listened to her and that she wished he would because then they would be able to go to the park to play with other dogs. She explained that "in the wild" her dog would most probably "sort it out" with the other dogs as they would in the wild, but because they were living in the city she could have problems with the other owners if this were to happen. She told me that she was worried that the other owners might sue her if her dog bit their dogs, especially as the law said that they should be on a lead and muzzled at all times. As she said "I am not worried about the other dogs, I am worried about the humans, by law if he bit another dog and was declared aggressive he could be put to sleep, and that is why I need to protect him". It is her point that as the owner *she* would be sued because of her dog's actions that I want to consider in detail now. This sense of responsibility that dog owners so often foregrounded when talking about their relations with their dogs is perhaps the result of one quite distinctive feature of this relation. This is its "singular" quality, where it would seem that in human social relations, owners

are considered by others, and consider themselves, to be the only meaningful, or perhaps visible, humans in their dogs' lives.

An area where this singular quality of the dog-owner relation was most apparent concerns what happens to dogs' bodies after they have died. The issue of what to do with the bodies of their dogs after they have died was one that was of considerable worry for many owners. They told me that by law they were not allowed to bury their dogs, and instead must send them to be burned in a furnace in another part of Croatia. Many of them described this practice as being "inhuman". However, in one part of Rijeka there is a graveyard for animals, and although it is not officially in use anymore there are still a number of animal graves there. Quite a few of these graves have been built using the same materials that are the same shape and size as the graves in the human graveyard. When I told other persons that I was interested in the graveyard for animals, many responded that this practice of burying dogs and other animals in this way was "not normal" and some persons reacted quite strongly. When I asked them why they felt so strongly about this, they told me it was not "right" to bury a dog in a human-like grave. They said that although they could understand that persons loved their dogs and wanted to give them an appropriate burial, building a grave like this for them was "wrong". At first I interpreted their "negative" reactions in terms of a reaction to what they saw as a transgression[6] of the boundaries they perceived were present in the human-animal relation. By burying their dogs in a human-like grave, they were giving their dogs a human-like status. Yet, a comment by one man suggested otherwise, or perhaps offered a more nuanced interpretation of the "nature" of this transgression. He said that the problem he found with humans burying their dogs in this way was because he didn't see "the point of it". Upon my enquiring what he meant by this he said that these graves were an act of self-indulgence on the part of the owner. He explained that he felt part of the reason why humans build graves for other humans is so that the "family" has somewhere to visit, whereby graves offer a focal point for the grief of those left behind. However, he argued that in the case of dogs, the only person who will want or need to visit this grave is the owner since this is the *only human relation the dog has*. He posited that there will be no visits by relatives to visit the dog's grave on All Saints Day, nor will friends of the dog pass by to light a candle on his grave. Thus, in his eyes the "source" of the owners' indulgence was that the owners had built a grave that only they would visit.

Irrespective of whether one accepts his argument that the construction of graves is predominately motivated by the need for bereaved persons to have somewhere to visit, it is his point that owners are the only meaningful human relation that dogs have that I want to consider. From the position of an observer

[6] In light of the edited edition by Giffney and Hird (2006) *Queering the non/human*, one might describe this transgression as a "queering" of the human-animal relation.

one might be tempted to argue otherwise, in the sense that dogs might postulate they have other meaningful human relations (such as neighbours, vets, other members of the household). Nevertheless, according to the owners' (as well as others) conceptualisation of this relation, their dogs become visible[7] both in the human world, and in human social relations, through the relation of ownership. On the basis of the narratives offered by dog owners above, one might say that they conceive of the ownership relation as being a linking device[8] between two worlds – their dog's "previous" natural world and the human world. Thus, in terms of the flow of knowledge between dog owners and their dogs, the singular quality[9] of this relation results in all human knowledge passing through the owner to her dog. One might say that the humans in this relation act as filters, or funnels, through which human knowledge must flow. Even visits to the vets involved this act of funnelling, whereby the owners had to first take their dog to the vet in order for the vet to be able to apply their human knowledge to the dog.

However, on the basis of the owners' narratives on this relation, knowledge does not only flow in a unidirectional fashion, it also flows[10] from dogs to their owners. In my conversations with dog owners, they often told me that their dogs had told them things. A number of owners said that their dogs told them a lot about the character of another human from the way they reacted to that person. For instance one man told me that he knew for certain that his neighbour was a bad person from the way his dog reacted. He told me that he had always had doubts about this particular neighbour, but it was only when his dog had started growling at him that his suspicions were confirmed. He explained that it was because of this that he was always very cautious in his dealings with this neighbour. In addition to this, I also observed that dog knowledge can inform the practices of other humans through the mediation of their owners. On one occasion a group of about eight of us were walking in the dark on a path towards a mountain refuge where we had

[7] See Strathern's (1999:3-6) discussion on the "ethnographic moment" for further consideration of the role of "time" in the ethnographic project.

[8] This "link" is further evident when one thinks about stray dogs. In the absence of this human connection, even though they are still very much present in the world, being ownerless they appear less visible in the field of human relations. It would be interesting to think about this in terms of Malkki's (1992) discussion on rootlessness.

[9] In my mind, it is the singularity of this relation that makes it notable in comparison to other relations. For instance, in kinship relations (i.e. parents-children), children are still considered to have meaningful relations with other persons. It is perhaps this singularity that creates the intimate effect of this relation between dogs and their owners. See Kuzniar's (2006:107-135) discussion on intimacy.

[10] I think we can see this flow of dog knowledge in other areas, such as in those dog-human relations where dogs are labelled as working or service dogs and where the owners become labelled as handlers. Other examples of relations where dog knowledge informs the practices of humans are between police dogs and their handlers, service dogs and their owners, and sniffer dogs and doctors.

arranged to stay the night. On the one side of the path there was a field, and on the other side there was a very thick forest. One of the people on the walk had brought his dog with him, and he was at the front of the group walking with his owner. Since it was winter and quite icy, we were walking very carefully in a row. Everyone was holding onto each other or their bags that they had brought with them for the night. There was a bright moon so although it was dark it wasn't pitch black. The atmosphere was very light-hearted. People were joking and teasing each other about who was going to fall over on the ice first and talking about how walking on such icy ground in the dark was probably not a sensible thing to be doing. But after about ten minutes of walking, suddenly the dog stopped dead in his tracks, and started to bark. He was looking in the direction of the forest, was growling and barking, and was in a hunched position that looked like he was ready to attack something. Since we were walking in a row, and the front of the group had stopped, we all stopped. One of the members of the group asked the owner whether this was normal, if his dog normally stopped in his tracks and barked like this. The owner replied that it wasn't at all normal, that he must see something in the forest since he never did this on walks usually. The atmosphere in the group changed from being one of merriment to seriousness. Even though it had been the source of teasing only a few moments earlier, someone commented that it was really actually very stupid to be walking in the dark on the edge of forest, especially considering that it was a known fact that the forest had bears in it. Someone else asked the dog's owner whether they thought he had seen a bear. The owner said that they had no idea what his dog had seen, but that he had definitely seen something. The dog was still looking in the direction of the forest and barking. We all agreed to carry on walking, but the mood in the group had changed greatly. Rather than being a noisy joking atmosphere, there was an air of tension and fear. Some people were whispering about what one was supposed to do if confronted by a bear, while others were saying that it had to be something else because it was winter and bears were supposed to be hibernating. One person, in what appeared to be an attempt to alleviate the tension, said that maybe the dog had got it wrong and had seen something that wasn't there. But this suggestion was rebuked by the rest of the group where they offered the argument that there was definitely something there because (a) his owner had said he didn't normally react like this, and (b) they were sure that dogs can see things that we cannot as humans. The knowledge he offered through his body "language" was taken seriously by the majority of the group. Therefore to sum up, I would suggest that knowledge flows through the dog-owner relation, between humans and dogs on equal terms.

"Hot House" Descriptions

Although, there appeared to be an equal exchange of knowledge between dogs and their owners, there is, however, a very slight but critical "turn" in the way these relations manifest themselves in the field of human relations. Even though dogs and their owners have this apparently singular relation in that they are what Haraway (2003) might term "a becoming", at the same time, the humans in such relations are also part of a network of human relations. For instance, earlier I mentioned how one dog owner spoke of her concern that she might be sued by other dog owners if her dog bit their dogs. If her dog was to bite another dog, she would be sued by other humans. In being sued, she would enter into an exchange relation with other owners *about her dog*, and in these human exchanges her dog would most probably take on the guise of an object. In terms of the flow of dog knowledge in human social relations something similar occurs: in human exchanges it also takes on the form of an object. It is this objectification of dog knowledge, both in non-academic relations and academic relations that I consider now.

One noticeable "characteristic" about the narratives offered by dog owners about what their dogs had told them was an apparent lack of concern on their part as to how these accounts might sound in relation to other human accounts about dogs. For example, they explained to me that their dogs told them things, that they warned them about possible dangers from other humans, or they described how their dogs were sometimes embarrassed or grumpy. Seemingly, the tone of their accounts about their dogs seemed to take a very similar tone to Darwin's account of his dog's "hot house face" (Darwin 2009 [1890]:3), when he was disappointed he wasn't going for a walk. In Crist's (1999) account, she examines Darwin's account of the expression of emotions in animals in detail since she says that it has been quite often criticised in more recent scholarship as being anthropomorphic. Due to the apparent similarity in tone and content between the narratives offered by dog owners on their dogs and Darwin's account of his dog, one might therefore be tempted to also describe them in terms of being anthropomorphic. But I argue that to do so would be problematic. All the owners I spoke to were extremely aware about the issue of anthropomorphism, and when I raised the point with them that their narratives might be determined by some humans as having anthropomorphic qualities, more than once I was told that those humans who made such comments had obviously never lived with a dog.

It was this response that I found notable, since they did not appear to show any concern about how their narratives might relate to other narratives about dogs or what other humans might think of the way they spoke about their dogs. What makes it notable is that within academic discourses about animals there

does appear to be evidence of this concern. For instance, in Nadadsy's (2007) article about the relation between Cree hunters and animals in North America, he describes an "extraordinary experience" that he had with a rabbit and his problems about what to "do" with this experience. As he describes during his fieldwork on Cree hunting practices and beliefs, he set some rabbit snares about half a mile from his cabin, and whilst the snares were in place, he observed a rabbit escaping from one. Five days later, he discovered a rabbit outside his house with a snare around its neck, and was quite certain that it was the same rabbit that he had observed earlier. He said that he had a very strong impression that the "rabbit came looking for me, that it had quite literally given itself to me" (Nadadsy 2007:36), which he describes as being an experience that "fits" Cree ontology about the animal-human relation. As he outlines in his article, in Cree ontology of the animal-human relation, animals regularly speak to humans in this way and thus when he explained what had happened to Cree persons they offered the same interpretation of the rabbits' behaviour as he had. But for him, it raised the issue of what to "do" with this "experience" and how to treat it analytically. He writes:

> No matter how relevant and useful such experiences may be to understanding the people with whom we work, we tend not to report them *for fear of embarrassment or of becoming the objects of suspicion among our colleagues (the "Castañēda effect")*. (Nadadsy 2007:36. Emphasis added)

A further instance of this scholarly concern is visible in Crist's (1999:41-49) discussion on the use of "anecdotal evidence" in academic discourses about animals. Referring to Griffin's writing, she also points out a form of scholarly "self-censorship" in scholarly narratives about animals. She writes:

> While the "official unusability" of anecdotal data weeds out the occasional tall tale with respect to animal capacities, it also excludes exceptional or unique information (ibid.). Further, in connection to the question of animal mind, Griffin has noted that because of the disparagement of anecdotal data, *"field observers often fail to report evidence suggestive of conscious thinking even when they obtain it, and editors of scientific journals are reluctant to publish it"* (1984:14, 15). (Crist 1999:40. Emphasis added)

Thus, in contrast to dog owners who did not express any such apprehensions when speaking about their dogs, visibly there is scholarly concern as to what they can and cannot include in their narratives on animals.

Here it is helpful to consider this difference in light of Strathern's (2004) writing on the travels of knowledge. Strathern suggests that in order for knowledge to be able to travel, it firstly needs to be rendered portable. As she highlights, when one thinks about academic knowledge production in this way, it becomes apparent that the transformation of information into knowledge involves what could be described as being an awful lot of work. In the production process, where Strathern (2004:19) writes that publications are the academic product *par excellence,* information

needs to be gathered, choices have to be made about what information gets put into a publication and what is left out, the fledgling product has to be reviewed by other scholars, its relation to other publications in the form of citations has to be made visible and so on. It is only when all this has been accomplished that knowledge becomes visible as a product: in the form of a publication. Strathern therefore suggests that when contemplating how knowledge is rendered portable, one should go back a stage "to the actual site of the creation of the product, to the point at which everyone is still working together, and the outcome is still in the future" (Strathern 2004:20). In relation to my interests here, this suggestion by Strathern (2004) to go back a stage to the point where the "outcome is still in the future" is very informative. When one takes one's focus of analysis back a stage to the "site of creation" and considers how dog owners spoke about their dogs and *how* scholars write about animals, in my mind, there is a noticeable difference.

On the basis of Nadadsy's (2007) and Crist's (1999) discussions on the exclusion of certain types of knowledge about animals in the academic product, scholars are seemingly moving backwards and forwards in time. During the writing process, they are already considering the effect of their outcome, the publication, which at this particular point (at the site of creation) is still in the future. Due to their concern that certain observations might have a detrimental effect on the projected outcome of their product, they then appear to "return" to the present where they choose to filter them out. In contrast, dog owners do not appear to move backwards and forwards in time. And one might interpret this absence of "time-travel" in the case of the dog owners as a result of there being an absence of a projected product or outcome, at least on their part. When offering their narratives about dogs, dog owners did not have to consider the effects of these narratives on the outcome or product. In this particular situation, and in what can be described as a "not quite replication" (Strathern 1991) of their role as mediators between their dogs and the human world, concerns over the outcome or product rest upon my shoulders (as the author of this text). Once again, in a "not quite replication" of what they were doing in their relation with their dogs, as the author of this article I am the one who negotiates their interests and the interests that are present in what one might call the academic field of social relation. This, as a wealth of anthropological knowledge has argued, involves an act of mediation or translation, which one might say is similar to what dog owners are engaging in when they are negotiating their dog's interests with the interests of other humans.

Hierarchies of Knowledge

It is with this in mind that I want to return to the issue I outlined at the beginning of this article. How might the relation between dogs and their owners help us in our considerations of how to construct an analytical framework that treats the animal-human relation as a social relation? It seems to me that that there are a number of things we might learn from dog owners, but I will only focus my discussion on one point here. This concerns the way in which dog owners maintain a conceptual difference between humans and dogs, but at the same time do not consider this difference in terms of hierarchy. In terms of knowledge, their dogs' knowledge had the influence to inform their practices as much as human knowledge did. As in the example of the dog's reaction to a creature in the forest that I offered earlier, sometimes they treated what their dogs were telling them to be more informative[11] than what humans were saying. Yet, in Crist's (1999) account on what counts as anecdotal evidence in scholarly descriptions of animals, the discourses offered by dog owners would seem to fit under the auspices of "anecdotes" in that they are "singular instances of animal behaviour" (Crist 1999:40). Within the field of academic social relations, these narratives would most probably be considered to be "anecdotes" about dogs and not "knowledge" about dogs at all. They have not been through the scientific process of corroboration (peer review), scholarly discussion, any analysis of their relation to other knowledge products, and so on.

In turn, I think it is also plausible to conjecture that outwith the field of academic social relations a similar distinction might be made between the knowledge offered by dog owners and the knowledge offered by scientists. As a reader interested in dog behaviour, one might take an ethological text about dog behaviour more seriously than an account offered by a dog owner with no scholarly training. In turn, anthropological knowledge about animals is also quite probably going to be considered less valid than the knowledge offered by other scholars who are "specialists" in the field of animal behaviour. Ever since the time of Aristotle and even earlier, in the Euro-American context, the "decisive" line of difference between humans and animals has very often been held up as being the "point" that animals do not speak, or perhaps more pertinently they do not write. At first glance, this might seem a rather tired observation to make, but in my mind it has very serious implications. It seems unlikely, at least for the time being, that animals are going to be able to exchange their knowledge with humans as equal partners in academic knowledge exchanges. In academic knowledge exchanges, animals

[11] In my mind, the way dog owners see animal knowledge is summed up by a point made by Viveiros de Castro (1998) in his writing on Amerindian perspectivism about how animals see. He writes: "[A]nimals see in the *same as we do different* things because their bodies are different from ours" (Viveiros de Castro 1998:478).

will continue to "require" a human to represent them.[12] This has considerable consequences in terms of the issue of how we, as anthropologists, might construct an analytical framework that treats the human-animal relation as a social relation. Observations about animal relations and animal practices are left to the "experts", who are trained to read the "body" language of animals. One might say that as anthropologists, we are trained as ethnologists but not ethologists. This is a point that has been mentioned by others. For instance, in a discussion about whether anthropologists should take a less anthropocentric approach in their research and also focus on animals, Mullin (1999) makes the point that such an approach "[It] does raise a number of problems for anthropologists, just one being the fact that very few of them know much about animals other than primates (and most know extremely little about primates than other humans)" (Mullin 1999:217). But has this problem always been present? Kirksey and Helmreich (2010) have pointed out that "[S]tudies of animals have a long lineage in anthropology, traveling back canonically to texts such as Lewis Henry Morgan's 1868 *The American Beaver and His Works*" (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010:549). Although one could argue that Morgan's (1868) interest in beaver practices was to gain an insight into human practices, and thus direct similar criticisms to the ones I outlined at the outset of this article, what I find thought-provoking is that as an anthropologist he was able to publish a book about beaver practices.

I find this thought provoking because a seemingly more recent development in academic social relations appears to be an interest in who is "qualified" to speak about animals, and in my mind this is closely connected to the wider and much discussed issue of who owns knowledge. This is where I think we can learn from dog owners. According to the way they approach the notion of ownership in their relation with their dogs, they see it as a relation of responsibility and negotiation between two different fields of interests and needs. They do not, however, consider themselves to own their dogs as things. Neither do they regard dogs as products, nor do they see their dog's knowledge as a human product. Indeed, what at times makes their dog's knowledge more informative to them than human knowledge is the very point that it is not human knowledge. Nevertheless, because this relation is labelled as an ownership relation in human social relations, dogs become visible "in" their owners, and in turn, owners become visible in their dogs. Thus, even though dog owners see a difference between themselves and their dogs, others may not read their relation in this way.

I think that it is more than possible to relate this point to academic social relations. As the authors of our texts, we give them our names, and we are seen by others as the "owners" of these texts. In addition, when we speak of others' texts, we refer to them using the name of the author. Thus, the knowledge within these

[12] In fact one might be tempted to state that it is this act of representation that makes animals "animals".

texts is often considered to be "owned" by the authors. But, in academic social relations, if ownership was approached in the same way as dog owners approach it, the relation between the knowledge offered in these texts and the author would alter. In the anthropological project, we would become representatives of the knowledge of "our" informants, where their knowledge becomes visible "in"our texts, but we could not claim to own it. For example, from this perspective and in relation to this particular text, although I have put my name on this particular academic product, the knowledge that makes up this text includes knowledge from dogs, rabbits, meerkats and humans. It is, in effect, a multi-species or multi-animal knowledge product, and yet it is presented and will be treated in academic social relations as being solely a human knowledge product. As Crist (1999) has so thoroughly described in her account of the "mechanomorphic" treatment of animals, in academic knowledge production, animal knowledge that is made visible in academic products is shaped by the conventions and practices of that particular "specialism". And furthermore, considering the point offered by Nadadsy (2007) in his discussion of what to "do" with the exchange he had with a rabbit, any (potential) knowledge products that fall outside the boundaries of these conventions and practices are often regarded as being highly questionable.

Therefore, in terms of how we might analytically approach the animal-human relation as a social relation, and following the example of how dog owners treat their dog's knowledge, I propose that it might be very worthwhile to consider animal knowledge as a product in its own right. From this starting point, we could then turn to investigate ethnographically *how* "animal products" become visible in the field of human social relations (both academic and non-academic). For instance, how does the knowledge offered by a police sniffer dog become transformed into legal evidence that is meaningful in human relations? This may seem a rather experimental suggestion in that it would require taking animal knowledge seriously, and treating it as an artefact in its own right, but I would argue that those anthropologists who have advocated treating their "informants" knowledge practices in this way have already demonstrated how much can be gained from such an approach.

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"PSI NE GOVORE". RAZMATRANJA O PROTOKU ZNANJA IZMEĐU PASA, ANTROPOLOGA I LJUDI

SAŽETAK

Paul Nadadsy (2007) se u prikazu ljudsko-životinjske društvenosti u Yukonu osvrće na zazor antropologa prema doslovnom shvaćanju narativa koji komunikaciju između životinja i kazivača predstavljaju kao recipročnu i ravnopravnu. Prema njemu se taj zazor može vezati uz činjenicu da su antropološke teorije o odnosu ljudi i životinja sve do danas onemogućavale antropolozima da taj odnos "sagledaju" na bilo koji drugi način. "Antropološki zazor" u članku razmatram iz perspektive svojih istraživanja odnosa ljudi i pasa u svakodnevnom životu u Rijeci. Dok neki smatraju da se protok i razmjena znanja između pasa i ljudi odvija u ravnopravnim uvjetima, drugi razmjenu i protok smatraju limitiranom čime se, čini se, približavaju shvaćanju odnosa između ljudi i životinja u antropološkim teorijama. Pritom, kao i u antropološkim teorijama, svoje gledište objašnjavaju time što "psi ne govore". Navedenu razliku u pristupima u nastavku teksta propitujem etnografski i uspoređujem je s antropološkim tretiranjem odsustva jezika/govora u životinja. Tvrdim da bi antropološki zazor mogao biti proizvodom znanstvenog "mrtvog kuta" koji proizlazi iz specifičnosti razmjene i protoka znanja u akademskoj zajednici. Riječi (u obliku usmenih kazivanja ili pisanog teksta) su medij kojim se u antropološkom polju znanje najčešće, premda ne nužno, dijeli i razmjenjuje. Potrebno je stoga uzeti u obzir sljedeće: u polju u kojem se znanje u pravilu razmjenjuje riječima nužno su ograničene mogućnosti ravnopravnog tretmana znanja vezanog uz odnos koji ne počiva na riječima.

Ključne riječi: životinjsko-ljudski odnos, produkcija znanja, protok