

Carrots and sticks: A discourse on interspecies partnership and culture in dog sport

by

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Declaration

I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted by Candice Reynolds for the degree of Masters in Anthropology at the University of the Free State is my own, independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at another university/faculty. I furthermore cede copyright of the dissertation in favour of the University of the Free State.

Candice Reynolds

Bloemfontein

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Summary

Dogs are not only good to think but good to live and become with. In this study I explored the overarching concerns of interspecific relations among “*schutzhund* people”: an emerging multispecies sub-culture in South Africa pertaining to a German dog sport called *schutzhund*. Four predominant areas of investigation developed: dog training philosophy, dog-human communication, interspecies partnership, and multispecies culture.

The aim of this study was to conduct an ethnographic enquiry into the culture (i.e. minds and lives) of dog-handler partners in the multispecies total institution of *schutzhund*. A blend of multiple techniques was used to gather information, including in-depth interviews, participant observation, photography, and kinesics. Data was collected from multiple sites and analysed by means of triangulation. An attempt was made at combatting the “problem of voice” so common in human-animal studies by including dogs in the research process as subjects rather than objects.

Primary findings revealed firstly, that dog-training philosophy has a direct impact on how humans perceive dogs. Three key training philosophies were identified, namely: carrots (positive reinforcement), sticks (compulsion), and motivational training (a combination method). Secondly, the components and requirements for dog-human conversations were described in the form of a toolkit. The concept of speaking bodies emerged as dog and human co-created their own “third language” in training. Thirdly, research portrayed the interspecies partnership between dog and handler as a dance; an attempt at synchronized negotiations of power, control, and leadership. Various interactive restrictions were exposed such as ambiguity, inconsistency, and anthropomorphism. I argue here that the relational boundaries between humans and animals are markedly blurred by mutual embodiment. Finally, dogs were characterized as agents of empire who were discovered to be co-constructors of the social and cultural realities humans share with them. Findings also pointed to *schutzhund* as serious leisure and in conflict with many “real-life” commitments which raised various political and feminist concerns.

Opsomming

Honde is die ideale diere om mee saam te lewe, te dink en te ontwikkel. In hierdie studie ondersoek ek die oorkoepelende kwessies van interspesifieke verhoudings tussen "schutzhund mense": 'n ontluikende Suid-Afrikaanse multispesie subkultuur wat verband hou met 'n Duitse hondesport genaamd *schutzhund*. Vier primêre areas het in die ondersoek ontstaan, naamlik honde-opleidingfilosofie, mens-hond kommunikasie, interspesie verhoudings en multispesie kultuur.

Die doel van hierdie studie was om 'n etnografiese ondersoek te loods na die kultuur (m.a.w. denke en lewens) van honde-handelaars in die algehele multispesie institusie van *schutzhund*. 'n Kombinasie van verskeie tegnieke is gebruik om inligting te versamel, onder andere in diepte onderhoude, waarneming van deelnemers, fotografie en kinesie. Data is uit verskeie oorde ingewin en deur middel van triangulasie geanaliseer. 'n Poging is aangewend om die "stemprobleem", wat algemeen in mens-dier studies voorkom, aan te spreek deur diere as subjekte eerder as objekte in die navorsingsprojek te betrek.

Primêre bevindinge onthul dat, eerstens, honde-opleidingfilosofie 'n direkte impak het op die wyse waarop mense honde sien. Drie kern opleidingsfilosofieë, naamlik wortels (positiewe versterking), stokke (dwang) en motiverende opleiding ('n gekombineerde metode) is geïdentifiseer. Tweedens word die komponente en vereistes van mens-hond gesprekke bespreek in die vorm van 'n stel hulpmiddels. Die konsep van sprekende liggame het ontstaan soos die mens en die hond 'n "derde taal" tydens opleiding ontwikkel het. Derdens word die interspesie verhouding tussen hond en handelaar as 'n dans uitgebeeld; 'n poging om mag, beheer en leierskap te sinkroniseer. Verskeie interaktiewe grense, soos tweeledigheid, inkonsekwentheid en antropomorfisme, is ontbloot. In hierdie geval voer ek aan dat die verhoudingsgrense tussen mense en diere opmerklik versteur word deur wedersydse verpersoonliking. Laastens word honde gekarakteriseer as ryksagente wat optree as medeskeppers van die sosiale en kulturele werklikheid wat mense met hul deel. Die bevindinge toon ook aan dat *schutzhund* as ernstige ontspanning bestempel word en teenstrydig is met baie "werklike" verpligtinge – 'n bevinding wat verskeie politiese en feministiese kwessies opper.

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List of acronyms and phrases

Bite work	Synonymous with protection work and man work. This is the phase in <i>schutzhund</i> that involves the dog being trained to attack and bite a criminal (the helper) in a padded suit.
GSD	German Shepherd Dog; the versatile breed of dog which is commonly equated with the police dog.
GSDFSA	German Shepherd Dog Federation of South Africa. This federation manages all the German Shepherd Dog clubs in Southern Africa and is predominantly made up of two opposing halves: breed-show enthusiasts and sport enthusiasts.
Handler	The human trainer and owner of the dog.
HAS	Human-Animal Studies is an emerging interdisciplinary field focused on evaluating the complex entanglements of human-animal relationships.
Helper	The individual (usually male) who assists in training dogs for protection work. He always wears protective gear, namely a padded sleeve, thick scratch pants, and a bite work suit (that covers the upper body and arms).
IPO	Internationale Prüfungs Ordnung, German for International Trial Rules.
KUSA	Kennel Union of Southern Africa – an internationally recognised registry for pedigreed dogs. KUSA-affiliated dog clubs are open to all breeds and activities include any dog-related sport from dog-carting and agility to various levels of obedience.
pers. com.	Personal comment made by a research participant.
<i>Schutzhund</i>	German for 'protection dog'. This is a dog sport consisting of three, interlocking phases: tracking, protection work. While the sport is called <i>schutzhund</i> , the dog is very often referred to as a <i>schutzhund</i> too.

PREFACE

Years of living with animals of various shapes and mannerisms has trained me to see animals as persons. Animals seemed to gravitate towards me as a child and even as an adult, but once they were there, I never really had the knowledge to do much with them all the while I found myself searching for a connection with animals beyond bed-sharing or meal time begging or asking for the odd paw shake. I wanted the “poetry in motion” so often found between horse and rider performing dressage, even though I was not sure that this connection existed at all. I wanted structure and specificity, but I also wanted natural flow and I believe that this contradictory combination is what drew me to the sport of *schutzhund*: trust and control; power and containment.

Tackling a Masters dissertation on the topic of interspecies partnerships in South Africa is a daunting undertaking, especially one involving a sport so physically and culturally far removed from its German origins. Yet, it is a story that must be told from a South African perspective, including the influence that our history, culture, and mentality has had on the sport and the dogs. My design for this dissertation was not only to introduce the true nature of *schutzhund* to those who were unaware of its existence but to use it as a platform for a deeper understanding of interspecies and cultural connections. Beyond the academic objectives of the study, it became clear fairly early on that there was a need to compose this narrative in such a way that it was readable, relatable, and enjoyable for two different people: those who were unfamiliar with *schutzhund* as well as seasoned handlers.

I wrote most of this dissertation in the company of my dogs, particularly Raven who lay sprawled out on her bed in my study, watching me vigorously attack a small black keyboard at awkward hours of the day and night. Every now and then I would look over at her, catch her gaze and wonder what her opinion would be if she could read what I was writing. Bindi, my sport dog, accompanied me on most of my fieldwork adventures. Her presence added so much depth to my research as she allowed me the unique experience of engaging in participant observation together with my dog on the field. Therefore, my dogs' otherness and personal participation in this research has been incalculable.

As is the case with most research, however, I started out with ideals in mind (ideals about animal-human relationships, ideals about the sport, the handlers and the dogs, ideals about the part that I played) that I soon realised had to give way to reality. And upon completion, I now realise that reality has surprised me by far surpassing my initial ideals in both depth and purpose.

Candice Reynolds

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

"Dogs strike deep chords in us, ones that are bolstered by...individual experiences...by the culture at large, and by history"

Caroline Knapp in *A Pack of Two*

It was from a dull and uncomfortable, concrete grandstand in Kyalami stadium, Johannesburg that I caught my first glimpse of a real *schutzhund*¹ - a prancing, black speck against the foreground of a stark, grey athletics field, my proof that poetry in motion could exist between man and dog. What I had not realised at the time was that what I captured through the lens of my small Kodak camera would change my philosophy on dog-human relationships forever.

It was the middle of winter and our local dog-training group decided to set out on a road trip to watch the GSDFSA *Schutzhund* Nationals in Johannesburg. Upon arrival, the gathering seemed sparse and unimpressive, and apart from a few scattered dog equipment and food vendors, the support did the occasion no justice. Being a rookie in the game, however, everything excited me. I had not, yet, seen a real "grey dog" in action before or witnessed the standard of what I have only now come to know as *schutzhund*. I had only heard whispers of the great Mark Daniels, Wayde Linden, and Hugh Grand, and the full extent of my knowledge about the sport at that point was limited to a few borrowed DVDs on motivational training. But when Hugh Grand stepped onto the field with his jet-black, charismatic German Shepherd Dog, something shifted. Every step, every heartbeat, seemed to be in sync with one another. It was almost as if dog and handler shared exact thoughts; breathed the same breaths of frosty air. The duo were so tuned into one another that the man's slightest move (a tilt of the shoulder, or jerk of the chin) commanded the dog's exacting obedience. They moved and thought and breathed as one. It was like watching an eloquent ballet; a carefully constructed moment of two beings meeting, each becoming like the other in ways that escape the average gaze. Human and dog each had an intuitively technical understanding of the other's body and desires. No leash, no equipment, no food, no fighting: just two forms – a dog and a human. The routine was

¹ German for protection dog

simple, but the bond was undeniably compelling. There was something about them that moved my reasoning. But there is a reason why I call myself a rookie, an amateur with wistful hopes of perfect harmony. The true “game” revealed quite a different reality.

Humans and animals have been paired together for centuries, but the partnership has not always been a harmonious one. Animals can be viewed as objects, weapons, hunting aids, pets, companions, food items, fur providers, pests, family members, hobbies, capital investments, the list can go on. But we genuinely battle to see them as our equals. Given that animals are consistently viewed as humans’ ‘other’ means that ‘the very idea of the human – the way we understand and experience ourselves as humans – is closely tied up with ideas about animals’ (Armstrong & Simmons, 2007:1). The question, however, still remains: what makes dogs, or any other animal for that matter, culturally relevant?

Anthropology beyond humanity

Since Franz Boas, anthropologists have expended copious efforts to decipher nature-culture interactions (Lévi-Strauss, 1963; Geertz, 1972; Alger & Alger, 1999; Young, 2002; Birke, 2007; Downey, 2010; Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010). Animal matters tend to prompt impassioned and politicised outlooks (Best, 2009:11), charged with various conflicting emotions. When the dog-human relationship is examined critically, one realizes that dogs are not merely passive participants in our daily lives; they are actually change-making creatures with the capacity to influence how people live, think, and represent themselves (Fudge, 2006). From an anthropological perspective, the value of dogs, and animals at large, is usually researched via two common avenues: their literal and metaphoric meaning to human society.

‘Windows and mirrors’

At face value, dogs are beneficial to humans in many literal ways. Dogs were initially used for utilitarian purposes such as food and clothing (Beck & Katcher, 1996:ix) and in South African history, people capitalized on their ability to hunt, herd, track, and protect. Modern times brought dogs indoors, exchanging their working careers for the title of “pets” with therapeutic value, such as psychological security, positive bodily responses, lower blood pressure, and relaxation (Fukuda, 1997:4). Furthermore, dogs with jobs are invaluable to many human institutions. Dogs are still vastly used by the police, for bomb and narcotics detection, for herding and protecting livestock, in military exploits, as guide dogs, as therapists (i.e. thera-pets) with proven, dramatic transformations in their “patients”, and so on.

Dogs are also metaphorically significant. Studies have investigated the dog as a symbol of oppression in South African history (Van Stittert & Swart, 2008). The saluki, Sloughi, and Azawakh are all African dog breeds that symbolise masculinity in north African and Middle Eastern Islamic society (Hall, 2003:xx), and dogs are occasionally used in African rituals and medicines (Hall, 2003:xxi). The symbolic significance of a dog, however, differs vastly according to culture, from being cherished as man's best friend, to symbols of filth in the Near east, and being devoured with enthusiasm in China, Korea, and the Philippines (Serpell, 1986:v). Anthropologists often examine human-animal relationships with the specific intent to understand the human element – exploring how people assign meanings to animals, how they categorize them, and methods and reasons for using animals as symbols, food, or substitute humans (Mullin,1999:207). Thus, the dogs', and other animals', ability to reflect their human counterparts has been the source of many investigations (Beck & Katcher, 1996; Birke, 2007; Geertz, 1972; Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles: 2013; Mullin, 1999).

Lévi-Strauss (1963:89) declared that animals function well as totems as they are “good to think” more than they are “good to eat”. Geertz' ground-breaking research on cockfights in Bali (1972) initiated inquiry into the ways in which animal behaviours act as a ‘window’ for cultural analysis (Ham & Senior, 1997; Ohnuki-Tierney 1990:150). In 1985, Shanklin published an article in *The Annual Review of Anthropology* that provided an overview of recent animal-associated research – at the time researchers centred on domestication, cultural ecology, animal sacrifice, myth, and metaphor. Shanklin concluded that analysing human-animal relationships could be seen as one of the most prolific undertakings within anthropology (1985:380). Such interspecies interaction is not only becoming a progressively commendable field of research, but will most likely persist as a trend in various disciplines across the board (Mullin,1999:219). Perpetuating Lévi-Strauss' ideology of animals being “good to think”, animals have, since and before, been used as metaphors and symbolic vehicles to understand human societies, economy, rituals, dietary codes, verbal abuse, and many other areas of human concern (Harris, 1974; Leach, 1964; Lévi-Strauss, 1963; Mullin, 1999; Wilkie, 2013:6).

More than just ‘windows and mirrors’

It is, however, problematic that anthropological research on human-animal relations will almost certainly continue to be more about the human than the animal (Mullin, 1999:201). Animal rights advocates find anthropological research lacking, arguing that it is anthropocentric, and fails to contemplate the multispecies relationship from the animals'

vantage point (Mullin, 1999:211). One great limitation in anthropology is that research has used the animal as a proverbial “window”, over and over again, to study humanity instead of allowing the relationship itself to be the object of interest (Mullin, 1999:219). Noske (1993; 1997) suggests that anthropologists need to place less emphasis on the human, broaden their gaze, and consider how animals relate to people as equally important to the human aspect.

Recent research, however, has attempted to move away from the anthropocentric assertions involved with using animals to understand people in an effort to instead understand the importance of the animal itself. According to Mullin (1999:202) the human-animal divide is fluid, a source of major debate among anthropologists on matters such as whether or not animals have culture or history. Humans are said to share attributes with animals (Ingold, 1994b; Salisbury, 1997). Hence, animals can “fuse, refuse, and confuse nature–culture categories and ontologies” (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010:553). Furthermore, a pet's ambiguous, indeterminate position allows it to be viewed as a mediator because it is equally associated with humans and animals (Leach, 1964; Shir-Vertesh, 2012:426).

Knight emphasises “an interest in animals as *subjects* rather than *objects*, as *parts* of human society rather than just *symbols* of it, and in human *interactions and relationships* with animals rather than simply human *representations* of animals” (2005:1). Haraway (2010) proposes “zooethnography” as a new title for animal anthropology. Multi-species ethnography (see chapter 2) has catapulted the anthropological significance of animals well beyond “food,” “taboo,” or “symbol” into a realm where humans are examined from the perspective of their minglings with other living selves (Adamson, 2012:34; Kirksey Helmreich, 2010:546). This means that social scientists now have to be attentive to real-life animals and peoples' genuine encounters with them, accentuating that animals are no longer mere symbols, but ‘symbols with a life of their own’ (Daston & Mitman, 2009:13). This is an emerging direction for scholars in animal studies as it points to people's relational quandaries with other species in various notable contexts (Haraway, 2008:4). The search for “more-than-human” interpretations of social life has begun (Wilkie, 2013:11). Animals are no longer just “windows and mirrors” (Mullin, 1999), “good to think” (Lévi-Strauss, 1963) or even “good to eat” (Harris, 1974); they are agents and unique persons “to live with” (Haraway, 2008).

Multi-species ethnography and the “animal turn”

Multi-species ethnography marked the “species turn” for anthropology highlighting the possibility that anthropology had transcended its former four-field model (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010:547-548). It involves rewriting culture as well as re-generating anthropos and its worldly companions (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010:549).

The substantial attraction to all things interspecies is demonstrated by the recent flood of animal-orientated journals, graduate programs, books, symposia, and societies across the world (Shapiro & DeMello, 2010: 307). In 30 years the humanities have conscripted in what Franklin has coined the ‘animal turn’ (Armstrong & Simmons, 2007:1). Contemporary studies on animals, as well as Sir David Attenborough’s (among several others’) classic commentary behind countless documentaries and nature films, have expanded human understandings of the animal mind, sentiment, culture, social life, and means of communication and culture. Televised documentaries allow humans to tap into the secret lives of animals and ‘decentre humanity by...reducing the perceived distance between humans and animals’ (Franklin, 1999:48).

The reputable brainchild of the ‘animal turn’ was Human-Animal Studies (HAS) – an interdisciplinary field ‘devoted to examining, understanding, and critically evaluating the complex and multidimensional relationships between humans and other animals’ (Shapiro, 2008:5; Wilkie, 2013:1). HAS requires a ‘creative marginality’ that cross-cuts disciplines, blurs species boundaries, and defies human-centred accounts of life (Carter & Charles, 2011; Taylor & Signal, 2011). Such ‘innovative scholarship presupposes intellectual cross-fertilization’, encouraging contact with HAS scholars across various disciplines, and offering a melting pot for academics who are intent on hybrid-related inquiry (Shapiro & DeMello, 2010; Wilkie, 2013:5-11; Zerubavel, 1995:1102). Its academic boundaries are more “messy” than conventional fields, but blending borders allows scholars to attend to any blind spots in localised theory and to ‘animalise the [academic] imagination’ (Myers, 2003:46; Wilkie, 2013:11). The future of HAS, therefore, lies squarely on the shoulders of graduates who are willing to question any outmoded views on animals (Irvine, 2012:127).

The animal turn may be seen as a cause of scholarly discontent as its creative marginality ‘messes up’ comfortable categories like human, animal, society, and nature (Wilkie, 2013:11). Nevertheless, the vast efforts that have gone into re-negotiating, re-creating, and re-affirming such neat categories (i.e. the infamous nature-culture debate) attest to the

substantial cultural significance of this emergent field of interspecies scholarship (Wilkie, 2013:6).

Why animals and why dogs?

In his presentation titled "Anthropology Beyond Humanity", Professor Tim Ingold (23 October 2013) opened with this question: "Why should anthropologists end up paying more attention to animals than to human beings?" According to Anna Tsing, "human nature is an interspecies relationship" (2012:141). When the livelihood and wealth of people appear to be entirely engrossed in the comings and goings of animals, it becomes of central Anthropological concern (Ingold, 2013). Often people can talk of little less than their dogs, spend vast amounts of time and emotional energy on their care and maintenance, invite them into their intimate spaces, capitalise on their necessities (in the business world), and incorporate their needs and desires into the human budget, daily routine, travel plans, and family eating arrangements. The dog can become a significant part of the human lifeworld in a variety of material ways. In speaking of material, the Anthropology of materiality has received an oversufficiency of attention by researchers. Why is it that we investigate dead materials and not living materials? Humans live with dogs and this addition to the human lifeworld comes with conditions, responsibilities, and culturally significant consequences.

We may never know precisely when man's best friend committed himself to humanity. It might have been on a cold winter's night when an early canid crawled close to a cave dweller's hearth for warmth (Sloane, 1955:285). And perhaps the man offered the dog a bone as a symbol of amity. Who knows! What we do know is that animals, dogs in particular, have been intimately entangled with human society for so long that one cannot deny their infiltration into the very fabric of our culture (Bryant, 1979:400; Van Stittert & Swart, 2008:1). It is possible that the attachment of early dogs to the human race assisted in domesticating man (Sloane, 1955:285). Yet, from panacea to pariah, dogs continue to occupy a liminal position on the continuum of our highly volatile attitudes toward them (Serpell, 1986; Van Stittert & Swart, 2008:1). They laze on our *stoeps*, loyally follow us into the night, track, hunt, and protect, welcome us home, sniff out newcomers, and have left paw prints across our cultural history (Van Stittert & Swart, 2008:1). The intimacy humans experience with their dogs is often incomparable to the complex relations they share with other humans (Beck & Katcher, 1996:xiii). Dogs act as our proxy; an extension of ourselves that embodies our identity, so much so that an insult aimed at the dog, automatically reflects upon the owner (Beck & Katcher, 1996:76; Van Stittert & Swart, 2008:34).

Fido is so many things to us humans and we only seem satisfied when he is “under control” by our very human understanding of the concept. We expect him to be born with a basic grasp of human language, making disobedience to so-called obvious commands like “come here” and “stop that” rather infuriating to the owner. He is scolded for using his mouth instead of his paws to explore, and denied many natural inclinations like barking and digging and jumping about. But is he really the one who does not understand, or is it we humans who have not taken the time to get to know him, consider his ways, walk in his paw prints for a while?

One method humans have used to better understand and communicate with the dog is through training. When successful, dog training offers proof that two species can communicate with one another with genuine understanding through a process of education and intimacy. A dog begins his education when he enters a human home as a puppy. In a matter of months puppies not only gain knowledge about their own physical abilities and limitations, but they also learn the meaning of human behaviours, body language, tone of voice, and some words coupled with actions through a combined process of trial, error, and reinforcement. Dogs are very astute scholars because their survival depends on it, but it is not surprising to find that humans are often quite unwilling to learn from dogs. This is, however, not an option when a human takes on a seriously competitive dog sport.

There are numerous dog sports across the globe but there is not one that showcases the versatility, speed, intelligence, and raw power of a dog better than *Schutzhund*². A dog sport that started as a humble competition between a few German Shepherds in Salzburg, Austria in 1975 has developed into a full-fledged World Championship that draws dog-handler partners from each populated continent in the world (Landau, 2013). *Schutzhund*, as discussed in more detail later, constitutes three phases: tracking, obedience, and protection work, and was formulated to showcase the intrinsic qualities of the German Shepherd Dog. The sport requires a lifestyle change, commitment in the face of challenging conditions, a true bond with a dog, and accurate interspecies communication. Dogs and humans live in close quarters and share valuable resources and copious amount of time with one another.

² now more commonly referred to as IPO

Reading roadmap

This dissertation, therefore, aims to tell a story about the subjective and semiotic entanglements of a multispecies society wherein dog and human bodies, cultures, and lifeworlds become enmeshed by their communal role in and around a dog sport called *schutzhund* (Locke, 2012:1). The chapters of this dissertation were designed to provide a holistic view of *schutzhund* and the complex dog-human interactions and communications therein. Therefore, every chapter can be viewed as both a stand-alone work and part of the integrated whole.

- Chapter 2 ('The Research Act') offers a detailed description of the various qualitative methods used to collect data on interspecies relations, the research participants (both humans and dogs), my role as both an insider and outsider, the importance of multi-sited ethnography, and ethical considerations when dealing with animals in research.
- Chapter 3 ('Educating Fido') provides a general literature review of the various dog training philosophies applied in different training contexts and specifically in *schutzhund* environments. It also details what *schutzhund* is, the complexities of the sport, and its origins in South Africa, the combination of which produces a vital entry point to interspecies understanding. I found it necessary to open with this chapter as it sets the stage for grasping key concepts used throughout the entire dissertation. Although Chapter 3 takes on the appearance of a detached chapter, it is highly relevant as it provides the necessary theoretical background for the contextualisation of every chapter thereafter. Dog training theories are in vogue and without providing the appropriate descriptions of these theories and concepts, the chapters to follow would lack orientation and meaning. The dog handler's approach to every aspect of the sport is rooted in training philosophy; each interaction is dictated by covert philosophy, from choosing which tools handlers use in the communication process to the human's general perception of the dog and his or her capacity for agency.
- Chapter 4 ('Learning to speak dog') builds on the theories and methods discussed in chapter 3 by demonstrating the application of different tools in training relationships to produce a flowing conversation with a dog.
- Chapter 5 ('Interspecies partnership') explores the possibility of mutual partnership between man and dog by drawing from intersubjective moments of embodiment and co-being experienced by handlers with their dogs. This chapter also identifies the role of animal personhood, control, and power in training relationships and applies economic

analogies to dog-handler dyads in an attempt to unpack what lies at the core of each partnership.

- Chapter 6 ('Canine culture and heritage') tackles the cultural aspects of *schutzhund*. Dogs as agented beings come to the fore in this chapter as they are represented as the instigators of human culture as well as their own. The emerging subculture of "schutzhund people" is explored along with various accompanying group dynamics such as social organisation, politics, feminist concerns, and the role of the human ego.
- In the final chapter (Chapter 7), I conclude by reflecting upon my personal experiences in the research process and drawing out the strengths and weaknesses of the study. The value of this research as a contributor to the growing field of Human-Animal Studies is also explored.

Ultimately, this study makes use of *schutzhund*, along with dog-training methods, as a lens through which to analyse dog-human relationships and the possibility of true interspecies co-operation and partnership. In so doing, this dissertation endeavours to explore the emergence of *schutzhund* as a dog sport in South Africa, as well as a definitive and evolving cultural shift (subculture) within dogdom³ (i.e. the national dog community) towards more positive methods of training dogs: "using carrots" rather than "sticks".

³ The world of dogs and, more specifically, the world of dog-training.

Chapter 2

THE RESEARCH ACT

“There [are] facts about dogs, and then there [are] opinions about them. The dogs have the facts, and the humans have the opinions. If you want the facts about the dog, always get them straight from the dog. If you want opinions, get them from humans”

J. Allen Boone

Entering the field

When a different species enters the research process, a researcher needs to be willing to expand on one’s “typical” research method to accommodate animals and provide ways for them to be represented equally. This means looking beyond the scope of interviews and verbalised interactions towards collecting information by observing bodies that are not only human. In the direct words of one of my participants, “dogs are not complicated” and so I found it necessary to not over-complicate the research process with outlandish or laborious techniques, but to rather use the most suitable tools to gather the essence of interactions between man and dog.

This dissertation is based on findings drawn from not only focused ethnographic fieldwork carried out in 2013 and 2014 at various *schutzhund* training sites across South Africa, but also my personal involvement in the sport for the two years preceding the initiation of this project. I observed the training methods and interactions between various handler-dog partners over weekend fieldwork trips to Johannesburg, George, East London, and Cape Town, most accompanied by my own dog as well as my key informant: Mark Daniels. These weekends constituted long hours of observation, participant observation, and conversations with many handlers and trainers on or around the training field. I followed participants over gravel, mud, sand, and tar roads to appropriate tracking grounds, protection work sessions, and obedience fields. Most weekends involved preparatory training for handlers and dogs entering into the GSDFA IPO Nationals in 2014 – some were normal training weekends, others were planned seminars. Therefore, my adventures ended with my trip to watch the *schutzhund* Nationals in a very wet Cape Town, drawing up field notes from the three-day

long “canine triathlon” where dogs and handlers competed for a place on the World championship team.

The bulk of the data was sourced from in-depth interviews, a focus group session, casual discussions with *schutzhund* enthusiasts, participant observation, and plenty of canine observation. The interviews and focus group session were recorded by dictaphone, transcribed, and lasted anything from 20 minutes to 4 hours (with various breaks in between). Because I visited participants on “heavy” training weekends to capture as much of the experience as possible, the interviews were intermittent; sometimes they were conducted in the quiet of a living room, but at other times questions were discussed in a work room, on the tracking field, or in the kitchen between meals before heading out for more training. I was also able to meet various bite work helpers across the country and was exposed to the training standard of esteemed German judges during the two National events I attended.

I spent a great deal of time with my key informant whether during formal interviews, travelling long hours in the car together, or training on the field. This on-going interaction not only provided me with valuable data but also afforded me the opportunity to confirm or disprove developing hunches as they surfaced during fieldwork (Sanders, 2006).

Sample selection

The mode of entry into the field was my current involvement with a dog-training group in Bloemfontein and my pre-existing contact with experienced *schutzhund* trainers in the country. Using these associations I developed a “snow-ball” network of people to interview and observe who are involved in *schutzhund* training. The nature of the study called for smaller, more concentrated samples instead of large random ones. Therefore, while many participated in this study (through observation, social interaction, and casual conversation) a non-probability sampling method was utilized to hand-pick a purposive sample of eight adult *schutzhund* handlers to interview as a representative sample in South Africa. These humans are specialists and enthusiasts in the field of dog ownership, handling, training, showing, and breeding. The pool of available research participants in South Africa is small owing to the fact that *schutzhund* is a fairly new sport here (only properly introduced in the 1990s). The most important prerequisite for selection was, therefore, knowledge and success in the sport at both National and International level. The eight were then selected: one of the most esteemed protection trainers and sport-dog breeders in the country, the most

recent World Championship representative for South Africa (2013), the latest South African Nationals champion (2014), two dog behaviourists who compete at National level, and some local, Free State talent.

It was my initial intention to interview and observe other canine trainers including those associated with the SANDF and/or SAPS and the sheepdog training centre in Middelburg. Yet, as my research progressed it became abundantly clear that such an endeavour would broaden the scope of this study beyond the capacity of a M.A. thesis. Although I have no doubt that this input would have been valuable, there was a need to ultimately choose one vein of dog sport in order to streamline gathered data and to capture patterns of dog-human interaction that could be ascribed to a particular multispecies society within dogdom. I was concerned that a broader perspective would be detrimental to the quality of my work.

The key informant

My key informant (pseudonym: **Mark Daniels**) is a white male who has been training dogs for close to 50 years, and has been involved in *schutzhund* since its proper arrival in this country: around 1995. Mark is a short, opinionated, highly politicised man of dogdom whose battered body bears the markings of countless hours spent “catching dogs” in the sun. Years of helper work have left him physically impaired and somewhat cocky as he enjoys taunting his human subjects – all, however, is in true jest, and underneath it all, I found him to have a soft, generous heart. A handful of pills, and a lot more courage, are required for him to rise every morning only to return to the very training field that manufactured his injuries. Every limp and weathered inch of skin tells a story of where he has been in the world and the wide variety of dogs that he has worked with – two damaged knees, one serious calf bite that produced a distinct, angled hobble, and numerous shoulder operations that have not only curtailed his range of physical motion but the lifespan of his career as well. His body will not be fit to catch any more dogs soon, and still, people flock to his “farm” in Johannesburg year-round for his expert advice, unmatched knowledge of the sport, and invaluable skill as a helper.

Mark’s speciality is protection work and he has performed several training seminars throughout the years not only in South Africa, but in the United Kingdom, America and Canada as well. His alliances with Joanne Fleming-Plumb (a very successful, Canadian *schutzhund* trainer, and founder of the Plumb Method) and Baldur Kranz (a German dog

trainer specialised in “fixing” schutzhund-related problems) have opened doors for South Africans to gain access to renowned knowledge and world-class training during their pilgrimages to our country. Furthermore, Mark’s girlfriend is a vet who specialises in canine breeding and artificial insemination. This is what made him a vital asset to this study as his connections spread worldwide.

Mark’s skill-set surpasses the sport as he has been heavily involved with the training of canine officers in the UK in the past. Mark also mentioned briefly training dogs for television earlier on in his life. He has been an esteemed breeder of German Shepherd Dogs, Belgian Malinois, and Staffordshire Terriers for years too. The “farm” and his house are overridden with dogs, crates, and training gear, and when he invites you to join him on his travels, you can scarcely fit yourself in (let alone your bag) alongside the heaps of dog training equipment and supplies.



Photo 2.1



Photo 2.2



Photo 2.3

Photo 2.1.: Mark posing with some of his sport-line puppies.

Photo 2.2. & 2.3.: A typical day in the life of Mark Daniels – catching dogs

The handlers

Wayde Linden (East London) was the South African representative at the WUSV *Schutzhund*⁴ World Championships in 2013 with his partner at that point in time: Asco vom Lande Konnige. He is an upper-class, white male in his mid- to late-thirties and lives on a farm in East London with his wife and young child (soon to be two). He recently imported a sport-line GSD from Germany, Kondor von der Brandachsneise, who is his new partner in the sport. Wayde grew up in a family who had kept shepherds for many years. In high school, he began attending a breed club for show-line German Shepherd Dogs with the two dogs he owned at the time. When he tired of the antics of the “show side” and acquired an injury from horse riding he decided to breed and qualify his dogs. Over time he realised that the dogs were not well-equipped for the sport and bought Asco vom Land der Könige from Germany as his first real sport dog.

Wayde happens to be married to **Wendy Linden** (early forties), who went on to represent South Africa as part of the Worlds team in 2014. When Wayde bought Kondor, Wendy took Asco over from him because her working bitch at the time was retired. Asco and Wendy went on to win the *schutzhund* Nationals this year (2014). Wendy has trained dogs for many years starting at the age of about fifteen with KUSA obedience trials. Her mother was also a dog trainer and this influenced her decision to take dog sport further. Wendy is also a very successful horse rider and competed and won on numerous occasions. When she sold her horse and moved to East London in 2006, she decided to take dog training more seriously. The initial plan was to buy a Golden Retriever, but when she met Dana Voss at a training seminar, she was convinced to attempt *schutzhund* resulting in the purchase of a brilliant specimen: a pitch black, sport-line German Shepherd puppy named Zac.

Photo 2.4: Participants at the 2014 WUSV World Championships

Mark Daniels, Wendy Linden, and Wayde Linden featured sitting in the world championships stadium in



⁴ Currently referred to as the WUSV IPO World Championships

Wayde and Wendy were also related to a dog behaviourist who lived in their vicinity, **Kate Brown**. Kate comes from the United Kingdom. Kate and Wendy run dog training classes and boarding kennels together from the Linden farm. She is an “old hat” at training dogs and her passion began with a small terrier who became her travel companion in the UK – the dog would accompany her on her work rounds as she was a driver at that stage. The terrier was very disobedient, and his behaviour prompted her to seek help in training the animal. Kate began with clicker training in the mid-80s under the influence of both Dana Voss and a friend of hers and veterinarian, Helen Schultz, and has since become a certified dog behaviourist and trainer. Of all the dog partners she has had in her life, she mentioned three that had had a vast impact on her as a person: a Border Collie named Holly, her first GSD called Logan, and her current partner, Bryn (also a sport-line German Shepherd).

From the seaside to the Free State, I interviewed a middle-aged, Afrikaans woman (**Hettie Cilliers**) who had been involved in German Shepherds, especially mainstream clubs, for over 10 years. Her affiliation to, and experience within, the GSDFA served as an instrumental perspective to draw from as none of the other participants were very willing to discuss matters of the federation. I.e. Her involvement in both the breed and sport side of German Shepherds provided a nuanced viewpoint. Hettie is currently the only other person committed to *schutzhund* in Bloemfontein besides myself. Her partner is Nero vom Haus Harrock. Hettie began training dogs at dog clubs in Bloemfontein when she was a teenager. Her first dog was a Rottweiler/Shepherd mix, and thereafter she trained three German Shepherd dogs before Nero. He is, however, the first dog she has trained using modern techniques. She was the chairperson of the Bloemfontein GSD Club for about two years, and as such is acquainted with the inner workings of the federation.

In addition to the interviews, a focus group session was conducted with **Lydia Mead**, **Karen Wessels**, and **Martie Wessels**, women who have handled, or desire to continue handling, dogs for the purpose of *schutzhund* in Bloemfontein. Lydia Mead is the manager of the Bloemfontein Dog Training club and is affiliated with KUSA. Karen and Martie are former committee members of the Bloemfontein GSD Club.

Other significant contributors to the research (in a lesser capacity) were **Dana Voss** and **Hugh Grand**, both very successful dog handlers in the sport. Dana is a world-renowned dog behaviourist who performed part of her training at an Israeli dog shelter that is well-known for its proficiency in eradicating kennel stress. She has taken several dogs to the Nationals and does seminars all over the world especially in Australia. Hugh Grand was placed 11th at the

WUSV *Schutzhund* World Championships with one of his previous dogs (a huge achievement for South Africa), was the Nationals champion for 7 years standing, and was the only South African team member to take a dog to the “Worlds” in 2014.

The dogs

Special care was taken in recording every interaction, so as to best try to portray the animal as maintaining an active role in the dog-human relationship and the research process. Certain observable parameters were used to indicate the dogs' perspective, such as body language, behaviour, and response to handler. The dogs' opinions could also be meted by the choices they made in their interactions with humans and other dogs (Alger & Alger, 1999:202). Mark's “farm”, as well as the other dog clubs I visited, allowed me access to a wide variety of dogs training for *schutzhund* and personal protection. I observed Rottweilers, Doberman Pinschers, Pit Bull Terriers, Black Russian Terriers, Belgian Malinois, and even Australian Cattle Dogs, all of which contributed in some or other way towards this research. However, all of the dogs in the partnerships I focuses on were sport-line GSDs.



Photo 2.5: Vektor vom Thielenhof

Vektor and Mark during the obedience phase of the Nationals in Johannesburg (2013)

Vektor vom Thielenhof: Mark imported Vektor from Germany a few years ago. He is a dark sable GSD with a *Schutzhund* 3 title and shows power, drive, and great movement on the field and works with sensibility, understanding, and stability. He is always on the go and ready to work. Vektor was treated quite poorly by his prior care takers which nurtured a bad temper and mistrust of many humans. Thankfully Mark was skilled enough to take him on, and the pair appeared at the SA Nationals in 2013 with excellent results. Vektor has produced exceptional offspring in South Africa but to quote Mark “he is not a toy, he's serious business”.

Asco vom Land der Könige [a.k.a. “Fat Boy”]: SA National *Schutzhund* Champion 2014, handled by Wendy but previously handled by Wayde. Asco is a large, gentle-natured sable GSD with a unique character. Asco was imported directly from Germany at a fairly young age. He tends to be a bit slow and precise on the field, but produces impeccable scores.

Asco has had many adventures and successes, the greatest of which was his entry into the World Championships in USA (2013). Sadly, Asco was diagnosed with cancer just before he was scheduled to fly out to the world championships in France this year (about the same time that my observations ended). He was instantly retired from work and currently enjoys loafing on the couch at the Linden's farm and playing with their daughter.

Photo 2.6 and 2.7: Asco vom Land der Könige

Asco featuring at the Nationals in Cape Town (2014). The pouring rain added various complications to the event.



Kondor von der Brandachsneise: Wayde imported Kondor from Germany at the end of 2013, therefore, their partnership was not yet as established as the other handler-dog teams I interviewed. Kondor explodes into his work and has exceptional movement on the field. He is extremely playful and energetic, but sometimes he is so “high” that he has trouble containing himself. During the first few weeks of his arrival Wayde noticed an interesting habit of his – Kondor took himself to the pool for a swim after his “work outs” on the field, to the serious disgruntlement of his previous owners. This dog has a serious job to do according to the Lindens and is, therefore, not allowed to interact with the family as would a normal pet. Only Wayde works with him.

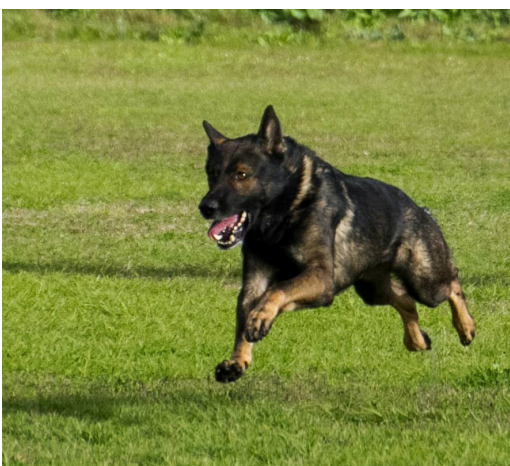


Photo 2.8 Kondor flying into action at the Nationals (2014)



Photo 2.9: Kondor von der Brandachsneise

Kondor demonstrating keen focus on Wayde.

Amy vom Stadttor: currently retired but previously handled by Wendy. Amy and Wendy both delivered their babies at the same time, and to everyone's amazement, appeared on the Nationals field in 2013 shortly afterwards. Amy is a real fire-cracker on the field. However, she has developed a few strange habits – she has basically ground away all of her teeth on supposedly durable items. Some of her victims include metal buckets and cement bird baths. This habit has resulted in an early retirement because she no longer has the teeth to grip onto the helper's sleeve in protection work. Amy is also quite territorial and tends to bark and rush anyone who enters the Linden house – even Wendy's in-laws who have lived on the same property for several years.

Arem of Kianira [aka Bryn]: a young, large, sable GSD with a *schutzhund* 1 grading. Kate took Bryn to the Nationals in 2014. Bryn is a dog with lower drive than the other dogs I observed (I believe this was because his owner is advanced in age, and he matches his energy to her needs). Nevertheless, he is very playful and charismatic and tends to be a bit of a chance-taker in competitions.

Proton of Haveloc [aka Zac] (**deceased**): the large, pitch black shepherd mentioned by Wendy many times in the course of our discussions. I believe that he inspired and prepared Wendy for all that she has achieved in the sport today. From the way she described him, Zac was a robust, energetic dog with exceptional ability and continues to hold a special place in Wendy's heart.



Photo 2.10: Arem “Bryn” of Kianira
Bryn in a long down on the training field



Photo 2.11: Proton “Zac” of Haveloc
Wendy's beloved and beloved Zac.



Photo 2.12: Nero "Duke" vom Haus Harrock

Nero vom Haus Harrock [aka Duke]: one of the few sable GSDs in Bloemfontein and the only other dog working towards a *schutzhund* title besides my dogs in the Free State. Duke is a quirky, clown-like character who is always ready for work no matter the time of day or night. He adores his handler, but knows very well that she adores him in return, and has often manipulated this aspect of their relationship to gain what he wants. Duke is a sensitive dog who learns very quickly, but battles to "unlearn" something taught to him incorrectly. He cannot seem to handle much cuddling before he starts to excitedly mouth your clothes and appendages profusely. His lifestyle is not as strict as the other dogs observed. While he is kennelled during the day,

he is allowed the freedom of the backyard during the night time to guard the property, and this difference has an impact on the nature of his relationship with his handler as well as his work.



Photo 2.13: Berry - the prancing black speck

Berry vom Lippewäldchen: "the prancing, black speck" from chapter 1. Berry is a jet black GSD with a never-say-die attitude to life and his work. He is always willing to please and works tremendously hard for his handler (Hugh Grand). His energy and enthusiasm has inspired many and he was the only canine, South African representative to compete in the WUSV World Championship in France in 2014. Similar to Kondor, he has an immense level of drive and this sometimes produces containment issues where his heart and desire to work override his ability to keep his "head in the game".

Dante' vom Chantian and Circe vom Chantian: currently holds a *schutzhund* 2 title and is yet to enter into the Nationals (still working towards this goal with Dana). Dana bred Dante' from her bitch Circe and his siblings are all with working partners in different provinces in South Africa – I have met a few including Dona and D.J. Dante' is a vibrant bi-colour GSD who is always in the air and hopping about with enthusiasm. He has high drive and demonstrates power and keen focus on his handler. He is quite an eccentric dog and has been known to

destroy or swallow various items whole including cell phones, scarves, beanies, and sunglasses. Circe, the mother of Dante', is currently retired from the sport after 8 years of hard work. Like Dante', Circe is constantly air born and eager to please. I watched Circe's final routine on the Nationals field in 2013.

Bindi vom Haus Harrock [a.k.a. Bam Bam] **and Raven:** my own two bitches could not go without mentioning as participant observation was performed with them very often in tow. Bindi is a sable, sport-line bitch out of Vektor. She is a real clown and still behaves very childishly in spite of her being almost two years old. She has recently discovered her voice and will bark at anyone who comes into her direct space, but Bindi is generally an exceptionally gentle-natured, sensitive dog, and if the sport did not require restrictions on her social interactions, she would be a real "social butterfly". One must be very careful about the tone of voice you use to address her with as she is highly perceptive to mood and emotional changes. Bindi is still in the initial stages of her training, but shows great promise and speed on the field. Raven is a rescue dog that I adopted from the RSPCA in Bloemfontein when she was only 10 weeks old – she simply chose me. She is a GSD, but not registered, pedigreed, and certainly not genetically sound. But what she lacks in genetics, she makes up for in heart. Raven's lifestyle is vastly different from Bindi's – she is allowed in the house and has bonded quite well to my parents with the result that her bond with me is not as enduring as Bindi's. Raven is stubborn and manipulative but only because I have allowed it, and she tends to only listen to a raised voice before she complies. Otherwise she will turn her backside to your face and do whatever pleases her best. In training, however, she is exceptionally willing to please and keenly intelligent.

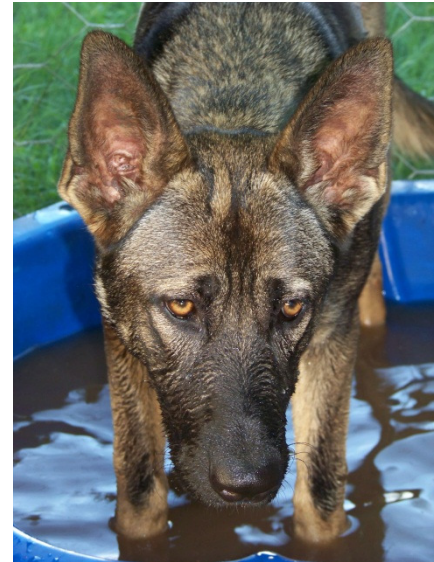


Photo 2.14: Bindi vom Haus Harrock (aka "bam bam")



Photo 2.15: Raven

Multiple settings

The very nature of *schutzhund* is multi-sited, therefore demanding a multi-sited approach to research. Multi-sited ethnographies make use of more than one site for fieldwork (observation and participation) instead of the conventional singular setting to merge “local” and “global” spaces (Marcus, 1995:95). It calls for re-evaluating “space” and “place” in ethnography and is evidently less common than its exhaustively employed single-sited counterpart (Marcus, 1995:96,104). “Cultural logics are always multiply produced within sites” (Marcus, 1995:97). Hence, multi-sited ethnography evolved from a need to manage empirical variations across the globe, and the resultant, ever-changing cultural climates (Marcus, 1995:97). The emergence of multi-sited ethnography is linked to postmodernism (Marcus, 1995:96). It “moves out from single site[d]...research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space...[T]his mode investigates and ethnographically constructs...the life-worlds of variously situated subjects...” (Marcus, 1995:96).

This “mobile ethnography” is made possible by physically following presumed relationships, networks, and associations (Marcus, 1995:96-97). These travelling methods are well suited to multi-species ethnographies. Animals move, and so do humans, therefore studying them often requires the multi-species ethnographer to follow, across land or sea, to discover cross-species becomings (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010:555-556). I quite literally had to follow my participants across the country in their search for resources, good tracking fields, and excellent trainers. The sites I visited varied from agricultural areas (ploughed farm fields) and grass farms, to formalised dog training centres, school yards, private property, and formal event venues (for competitions). Wherever the dogs needed to go to expand their education, we followed.

Multi-species relations thrive in various settings. Each place creates a new “becoming-with” (new humans and animals) produced by the “unpredictable bonds” observed when circumstances change (Segerdahl, 2012:157). In search of these different bonds, I conducted research in Bloemfontein, Johannesburg, East London, George, and Cape Town. Combining data from these different locations helped me to form generalized accounts of human-animal interactions (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:51).

Gaining access to these research settings was not a challenge for me as my participants were fairly comfortable inviting a current *schutzhund* handler into their circle and homes for

discussions on a topic that they were all clearly passionate about. Thankfully, none of my informants were involved in training dogs for police or military service as this would have posed the typical problem that researchers experience when attempting to access any area pertaining to law enforcement. I entered all of the settings upon permission granted by the owners of the property or accompanying dog club members onto sports grounds. Although most participants were welcoming, some were less than enthusiastic about my presence on the field. Nevertheless, armed with the key contacts I had developed during my personal training times, I set up field work trips and consequent interviews telephonically or by email.

Despite the relative ease of access to the multiple sites and permission to conduct my research, I found both the training locations and terrain quite challenging. The tracking grounds were always significant distances from the main training centre in Johannesburg and George. Often decisions about where we were going to train (exact directions) were only provided a couple of hours prior to the remote training session (Sanders, 2006). Such arrangements were further complicated by weather. My key informant's schedule was fairly erratic, making meeting times somewhat unplanned. I spent a lot of time waiting for humans, and sometimes arrived on time only to find that I had to wait some more on account of a change of plans that had not been conveyed. Furthermore, some training grounds made it difficult to observe dogs and handlers (especially pertaining to tracking) and politics on the field sometimes sent me to the opposite end of the farm to construct my track, which took time away from my observations. In spite of these minor setbacks, I was able to observe and participate *ad libitum* in multiple settings, and managed to collect rich field notes and interviews. Consequently, my unique position as a trainee in the sport made me privy to "behind the scenes" opinions which were usually reserved from outsiders (Sanders, 2006).

The researcher as an outsider: the value of being human

I am, quite obviously, not a dog. And no matter how genuine and persistent my efforts to transcribe a dog's experiences prove to be, I am faced with the reality that I will never be able to capture a dog's life-world as accurately as he would himself: had he the capacity and desire to document the process.

I do, however, believe that being concurrently human and an outsider is a beneficial, vulnerable, and exemplary position to occupy in a multi-species setup. Being human in a

dog's world affords the human the opportunity to write from the position of the subaltern and, consequently, attempting meaning-making from the perspective of an alternate species. In essence, the researcher must set aside any presumptions of human exceptionalism and become the "other" (the subaltern) in the field in order to be open to new understandings of multi-species partnerships.

Kohn (2007) claims that "if we take otherness to be the privileged vantage from which we de-familiarize our 'nature,' we risk making our forays into the nonhuman a search for ever-stranger positions from which to carry out [our research]". Nature is then at the risk of being viewed as an "exotic" culture (Kohn, 2007), corroding our connection with it.

Many articles claiming the status of *multi-species ethnography* are in fact human-centric (Brandt, 1995; Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013). While the human is questioned about his horse or dog or cockerel, the animal is not, in essence, given a voice, neither does he or she feature as a research participant. After all, animals cannot speak (in human terms), therefore they cannot be interviewed. Yet, I find this reasoning flawed. A central consideration should be the skill of the listener in the evoked conversation. Does voice depend on the capacity of the speaker, or the ability of the listener to divulge multi-species understandings in a way that best describes the "other"?

The very nature of an interview has developed from the desire to not only interact with a participant, but to gain a deeper understanding of their life-world; even if the understanding achieved is only partial. A question that I would like to pose is: why can anthropologists not expand their useful skill set to include tools that are applicable across the species divide? The usual argument for animal exclusion is that "no [animals] were interviewed...[therefore] it is their humans that speak on their behalf" (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:324). I, hereby, challenge the notion of animals not participating in research.

Multi-species investigation calls for the need to embrace the inner subaltern. Instead of sidestepping so-called "obvious" barriers in communication and intersubjectivity, researchers in this field should combine their experience to introduce interspecies, communicative techniques. Anthropologists are so well-equipped, that I no longer find it justifiable to continue making excuses for genuine interspecies research; scholars need to be proactive in overcoming seemingly "obvious" and "insurmountable" hindrances in interspecies relationships. Reading body language (kinesics), interpreting space dynamics (proxemics), making an effort to understand the other species' behaviour by learning

animal behaviour (ethology), and observing the animal's choices, are just a few basic, inclusive ways to welcome animals into the research process.

The researcher as an insider: the value of being a handler

Considering that almost 50% of homes in the United Kingdom are “multi-species households”, it is probable that numerous European researchers coexist with pets (Franklin, 2006:139; Pet Food Manufacturers' Association, 2012).

Just as background assumptions may partly explain why some scholars regard some theories as more 'intuitively convincing' than others, then perhaps colleagues who have been socialised into multispecies relations, assumptions and scholarship, may regard largely human-centric accounts of social life as intuitively unconvincing.

(Gouldner, 1970:30)

I have never lived in a home without animals. Over the past 26 years I have coexisted with various species from dogs, cats, rabbits, hamsters, rats, and a horse, to chickens, parrots, canaries, budgies, tortoises, and several fish. I have recently added a pig to the family too. I am convinced that each 'person' had a unique character with something exclusive to offer. My first word (Tammy) was apparently my dog's name – if a baby can technically claim “ownership” and responsibility for a dog. Having always lived in a multi-species household, I have never known an existence without a dog's presence or influence. It is arguable that this may make me biased as a researcher, but I believe that it has the potential to add irrefutable depth to a multi-species study such as this one. Prior studies have attested to the value of personal “becoming with” animals, stating that years of keeping animals affords the researcher privileged “insider” knowledge and understanding of the field (Brandt, 2004).

Although house-sharing was a constant, I only entered the dog-training sphere less than four years ago. The combination of growing up with dogs, and my personal experience in training them, has afforded me the inherent vantage point of an insider, not just an outsider. Considered a



Photo 2.16: Bindi and I engaging in participant observation on Mark's field

rookie in the eyes of the *schutzhund* community, I am not yet immune to the various learning processes and refined techniques that encapsulate this world. On the contrary, being an insider, and experiencing co-being first-hand, makes me all the more receptive to the cultural context under study. I have a vested interest in the outcome of my research, thus my personal agenda has more often than not been the driving force behind the near constant probing for vivid explanations and new meanings that may lead to my personal success as a dog handler, and consequently, as a researcher.

A qualitative approach to representing animals

“The problem of voice” and writing the animal in

The challenge of representation has long been a root of contestation in writing to, and for, animals. Arjun Appadurai refers to this historic dilemma as “the problem of voice” (‘speaking for’ and ‘speaking to’) [intersecting] the problem of place” (speaking ‘from’ and speaking ‘of’)” (1988:17). Ethnography is considered a proficient method to capture the subjective experience of life (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:44). Yet, when researching animals within an organisational culture, the efficiency of ethnography is questioned (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:44). How do we represent animals as ethnographers – are they “objects”, “agents” or “colleagues”? Moreover, how should anthropologists speak for and with animals (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010:554)?

An animal's “point of view” does not amend itself to the structure of qualitative investigation (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:46). We should be wary that the methods chosen to conduct research do not silence animals or their role in relationships with humans (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:48). In their study on laboratory animals, Latour and Woolgar (1988) highlighted that what “truly” happens in the field is often written out while producing texts. In the quest for understanding the animal-other, the various strategies used by scientists to transcribe experiences, render the animal lost in translation (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:47). The animal-other thus becomes merely an-other; an element of research deemed less important and discarded accordingly.

Scholars using a post-human template generally suggest ethnographic methods, with thick descriptions and observations (Buscher, 2005; Haraway, 1991), to transcribe the animal world. Ethnography implicates “writing people” and observing specifically human qualities, whereas the lived-experience of animals is almost inconceivably different from our own (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:46). Even the prerequisites for thorough ethnography, such as

extensive field notes and log keeping, are wholly governed by human sensation. Typically human approaches to gaining knowledge are inferred from the ways we characterize and categorize others. Therefore, any human-animal boundaries that exist (social or symbolic) are cultural constructs, and are not “the natural order of things” (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010; Latour, 2004).

The term “non-human,” so often used to identify animals, is problematic. Susan Leigh Star (1991) refutes the label as surmising the absence of something, similarly implied in using a category such as “non-white”. This suggests that every trait claimed to be human, is automatically lacking in the animal. Consequently, ‘animal’ embodies, and becomes adversely associated with, an accumulation of all of these deficits (Ingold, 1994a:3). ‘These categorical errors have historical roots in philosophical and religious ideas that...ensured a subordinate...status for nonhuman animals’ (Shapiro, 2008:7). Kemmerer (2006:10-11) proposes that the ‘lexical gap’ in language produced by this dilemma has inspired either the application of clumsy terms (like ‘nonhuman animal’, ‘other-than-human animals’, and ‘other animals’), or the creation of new ones (like ‘anymal’) to avoid human exceptionalism (Wilkie, 2013:2).

Pederson (2013:718) argues that zooethnographic representation (participating in the experiences of animals and representing them) is impossible in certain situations. In a slaughterhouse, for instance, the human occupies a safe position that keeps him/her from death, creating an existential gap between the human (safe) and the cow (compelled to a violent death) (Pederson, 2013:718-728). While this status allows us close proximity to observe, the human cannot know the experience of the animal. In a way, the death of the animal marks the ultimate threshold of our understanding – the end of the animal is where human “knowing” ends (Pederson, 2013:728). Therefore, certain spaces nullify any opportunity for data to “get lived”; instead “data” die with their research participants (Lather, 2013). Because humans have to work with representations rather than reality, even a revolutionary, multi-species or cross-disciplinary slant will render parts of an animal’s life, and meaning-making processes, inaccessible to human comprehension (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:49). Therefore, we can never be indisputably sure that our interpretations are as we suppose them to be.

Nevertheless, one does not have to be Caesar to understand Caesar. It is argued that ethnography remains “unrivalled in its ability to penetrate and document the life-world of

'others"', human or animal, in spite of these representational restrictions (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:46). Ethnography must, however, evolve (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:50).

Multi-species ethnography

The need to adopt a multi-species approach to this ethnography became clear when I realized that my study was not only about how humans partnered with dogs in sport, leisure, breeding, and policy-making but that I was researching the intricate relations of two persons, only one being human (Locke, 2012). A multi-species ethnographer studies the various creatures linked to the social worlds of humans, and how these organisms are sculpted by the changing dynamics of culture, economy, and politics (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010:545). Eduardo Kohn describes it as "an anthropology that is not just confined to the human but is concerned with the effects of our entanglements with other kinds of living selves" (2007:4). The object of study is "contact zones" – any point where usual nature-culture boundaries are crossed or disintegrated (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010:547).

A multi-species approach provides an opportunity to unearth the complexities of human-animal relations (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:322). Beyond "giving voice, agency or subjectivity" to other-than-humans, the goal of multi-species ethnography is to acknowledge their otherness and to question who and what "we" are at a deeper level (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:49; Haraway, 1995; Kohn, 2007; Weider, 1980). It calls for the "radical rethinking" of the formidable nature-culture dichotomy (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:323), where "becomings" ensue from non-hierarchical mergers (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010:546).

Viewing life through the multi-species lens (Wilkie, 2013:1) affords the researcher insights into the everyday interactions and experiences shared by humans and animals (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:322), and by extension, how these cultural exchanges shape the dog-human relationship. In essence, the everyday, humdrum activities we occupy ourselves with culminate with the multi-faceted term *culture*. In their study on co-being and intra-action in horse-human dyads, Maurstad, Davis and Cowles (2013:324) highlighted that the life-worlds expressed in their participants' narratives crossed bounds of "nature–culture, control–mutuality and object–subject" to demonstrate what Quinn (2005:2) coined 'culture in talk'. Hereby, a pertinent intention of using a multispecies rubric is to identify and study the culture of another species: in this research, the culture of the dog (Robinson, 2011:70-71). Perhaps

an improved aim would be to investigate the collective culture found at the heart of dog-human partnerships.

Choosing the “best” ethnographic tools

Given the challenges and prior studies, I chose to allow my research to take on the form of a multi-species ethnography wherein a mixed-method approach would be utilized. This method has involved one predominating, data collection technique: *Relaxed Rapid Appraisal Techniques and Strategies* (RRATS), a somewhat all-encompassing technique for travelling anthropologists (Gordon, 2010). I believe that applying RRATS will be a useful attempt at fair human and animal representation.

I found it necessary to apply various supplementary, anthropological techniques to the research process, namely:

- Kinesics and proxemics
- Sensory observation
- Narrative photography
- Participant-observation

A literature review was also performed, exhuming knowledge from prior research on this topic. Ferraro (2001:97) insists that “by using multiple techniques, the investigator can collect different types of data around the same set of issues, which can be used to cross-check one another” during data analysis.

1. RRATS!

The RRATS⁵ approach stemmed from a need for inexpensive, efficient, and more accurate research methods in the social sciences (Gordon, 2010:1). Using participant observation as the point of departure, RRATS is a “quick and dirty” method of data collection that allows researchers to learn and capture data speedily and continually, from and with people, while simultaneously improving on conventional approaches (Gordon, 2010:2). The strength of this method lies in its flexibility. It is not rigid nor is research directed according to a predetermined blueprint – it is opportunistic, continuously adapting its techniques, and open to improvisation, conscious learning, and all forms of engagement. Although adaptable,

⁵ Relaxed Rapid Appraisal Techniques and Strategies

the RRATS approach allows researchers to make brief, methodical observations while encouraging locals to engage with the outsider (Gordon, 2010:3).

The RRATS method employs a combination of tools. Due to the shortened research period, crosschecking information through “triangulation” (looking at data from different angles) becomes vital (Gordon, 2010:4). “RRATS is iterative: what has been learnt is constantly reviewed and analysed in the field...[resulting] in the research focus, techniques used and people talked to, being constantly adjusted” (Gordon, 2010:3). RRATS also necessitates intentional introspection to counterbalance bias by soliciting the diverse opinions of various individuals through listening and probing.

The RRATS approach incorporates anything except questionnaires, rendering its approach both post-modern and licentious. Robert Chambers (1992:15-19) lists various “quick and dirty” strategies used within the RRATS approach – these tools can be matched to the study in question by appropriateness, used concurrently, or modified to suit the specific needs of the research. Listed below are only those applicable to this research:

- **Materials:** Photographs and articles (as secondary sources)
- **Participants:** Key informants
- **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews (SSI), interview chains, probes, spontaneous focus groups, ethno-biographies (of the dogs), case-studies, stories
- **Participant-observation:** Involvement in local tasks, transect walks

Chambers (1992:15-19) and Gordon (2010:18) insist that report writing be done directly after fieldwork to preserve “the feel” of the experience and, where possible, to provide feedback to the locals. At implementation level it is critical to conduct oneself with humility, patience, and respect, demonstrating willingness to learn when participating in activities to develop rapport (Gordon, 2010:3).

Gordon (2010:11) considers the interview (the SSI in particular) as “the core of a good RRAT”. Such interviews involve engaging a broad range of informants in open-ended conversations guided by a series of, topic-specific questions. The researcher needs to remain adaptable in the situation, allowing enough leeway to explore concerns as they surface during discussion, probe for more information, and amend their topic checklist. Interviews were recorded with permission, and conducted on a one-on-one basis as far as possible.

These relaxed conversations often spontaneously morph into focus groups – usually owing to interest in the topic discussed (Gordon, 2010:12). If such group discussions develop, they can

be allowed to unfold naturally or they can be carefully structured. While interviewing, transect walks can be used to further verify information by “observing, listening, asking and identifying” (Gordon, 2010:13). Time-allowing, case studies and stories can also be collected via interviews (Gordon, 2010:17). Relevant data was drawn from all the interviews⁶, matched to emerging themes, and presented as the major contribution to the findings. In addition, one focus group was set up to clarify research findings.

2. Kinesics, proxemics, and ethology

According to Hunt (1971:948), Prill-Brett (2011) and Stern (1973:114) kinesics is the study of body language; a method of communication that makes use of bodily movements (head, trunk, and limbs), facial expressions, body rhythms, and other signals to convey a message that can confirm or contradict speech. The term ‘kinesics’ was coined by Birdwhistell (1962, cited in Pack, 1972) who highlighted that communication could mainly occur through four channels, namely vocal (speech), visual, olfactory, and tactile (body contact and proprioception – “sense of self”) (Hunt, 1971:949; Prill-Brett, 2011). Kinesics has since been used by anthropologists and primatologists as a data collection technique to determine cultural meanings in the field.

Proxemics refers to the study of one’s use and perception of space and is believed to be related to territoriality (Hall, 1968). The use of the space around a body can be used to communicate comfort, discomfort, and various other messages. Everyone has a certain proximity limit where a certain closeness of another body becomes too close.

The usefulness of body language lies in its ability to serve as both a window into the subconscious of another being, as well as a method to triangulate conversation for research purposes (Prill-Brett, 2011): an essential requirement when applying the RRATS approach. Therefore, capturing these thoughts as a researcher may be detrimental to interpreting life-worlds and cultures in the field as accurately as possible (Prill-Brett, 2011).

Different species communicate with one another, yet the majority of this dialogue is nonverbal. Animals have “cultural kinesics” and frequently send nonverbal signals to people (Hunt, 1971:949) who need to interpret them accurately for the “conversation” to be understood and reciprocated. One complication is that each species has its own set of culturally-specific kinesic signals. This is, however, not an insurmountable obstacle. On the

⁶ The human participants’ personal comments were cited as “pers. com.”

one hand, research suggests that dogs are better at interpreting human cues and demands when compared to any other other-than-human critter on earth (Downey, 2010). Dogs even go as far as to adopt human communicative cues to convey messages to humans (Pettersson, 2009:1). On the other hand, humans have made great progress in interpreting and coding canine behaviour. “The fact that humans, not just dogs, can cue off the perceptions and non-verbal communication of other animals suggests that the animal connection is a manifestation of social intelligence” (Downey, 2010). Ethology⁷ thus became an indispensable element in this multispecies setting. Capturing the unconscious thoughts of a dog through the messages it sends via body language may be one way to “give voice” to the intentions of the animal.

The limitation of this form of communication is that we are often ignorant of how to use our bodies as successful tools to communicate with other humans, let alone animals (Pack, 1972:8). “No body position or movement, in and of itself, has a precise meaning” (Birdwhistell, cited in Pack, 1972:9). Body language is not universal and should always be interpreted in context, whether interpreting the kinesic signals of an animal or a human (Pack, 1972:9; Prill-Brett, 2011). Finally, we cannot ever presume that we are absolutely sure of what message we are sending to someone else and how they interpret it (Pack, 1972:8).

3. Sensory observation

Human-animal exchanges are often non-verbal and capturing this is essential (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:48). Observation thus becomes paramount. Buscher (2005) as well as Brown, Dilley, and Marshall (2008) propose using thick descriptions alongside sensory observation and experience, and visual ethnography to record field data when animals are participants to avoid an anthropocentric overtone. The multi-species ethnographies by Hayward (on cup coral) and Kosek (on bees) were characterized by a multisensory approach. In this instance, the researcher needs to comprehend that animal senses are different from humans, which may entail tackling these “unfamiliar sensoriums” of smell, sight, taste, and touch in order to gain insights (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010:565). Even though the entire embodied experience of the dog was beyond my grasp, the best efforts were made to describe incidents and interactions in detail using all the senses.

⁷ The study of animal behaviour

Observable parameters

- Clear overview of the sport: Observation of all three phases of *schutzhund* being performed by experienced handlers and dogs provided me with an overall grasp of the sport and what was considered “correct” performance or success in the sport. This was critical as observing correctness and incorrectness illuminated successes or discrepancies in communication between dog and handler.
- Training method used: The most effective way to determine what training method was used was through simply observing over a period of time. The use of motivators like food or toys indicated motivational training while the overuse of aversive stimuli like pinch and electric collars indicated dominant techniques.
- Handler behaviour: I observed the overall body posture of the handlers, hand movements and signals (used appropriately or overused), use of voice and tone, and timing of reward (which in turn indicated overall ability to accurately communicate with the dog).
- Dog behaviour: I considered this the most important observable parameter, as the body language of each dog was the main method of interpreting their thoughts and opinions. I looked at distraction, body posture, body condition, movements and position of the head, ears, and tail, response to motivators and punishers, displacement behaviours like lip-licking, yawning, opening and closing the mouth, yelping, jumping up, sniffing the ground, shaking, lifting of the front paw, or tail tucking to indicate stress and discomfort.
- Interspecies interaction: The way that the partners interacted indicated whether or not the team “clicked”. This was observed by watching the body orientation and proxemics of the human and dog (towards or away from the other), the dog's willingness to learn from the human, the human's willingness to communicate with the dog in a way that he/she understood and to co-operate with the dog as an individual.

4. Narrative photography

Many anthropologists have used photography to present their social research (Schwartz, 1989:118). “Now, more than ever before, ethnographers are using visual and digital images and technologies to research and represent the cultures, lives and experiences of other people” (Pink, 2004:1). Photos are said to embody and express the inner concerns and emotions of the photographer (Schwartz, 1989:119). Although contradictory in nature, a photograph offers a snapshot of reality; an unprejudiced visual narrative of our involvement in a cultural experience (Cañete, 2008:2; Schwartz, 1989:119-122). This makes photography

an ideal data collection device as it merges central anthropological concerns with reality in one neat frame. Context and captions are, however, critical (Cañete, 2008:2; Schwartz, 1989:119). Using photos as data requires providing the picture with the contextual information necessary to invoke meaning (Cañete, 2008:2; Schwartz, 1989:119). After all, “photographs, shorn of their contexts, are nothing but empty images chemically fixed on a piece of paper” (Cañete, 2008:3). Photographs are not the only ethnographic aids; the camera itself can also be used as a non-threatening means of entering the field, and a specific community, as picture-taking is a natural conversation starter (Schwartz, 1989:125).

Photography was utilised to capture the essence of dog-human partnerships in various settings. The presence of my camera in the field prompted mixed responses. Many top dog trainers are uncomfortable with photographs being taken as it reveals the reality of certain methods used to train dogs that some individuals would prefer to keep concealed. Photographs can be used as evidence via social media and there are trainers who do not want their names associated with punitive training tools as it can be detrimental to their reputation. Thankfully the individuals I interviewed were comfortable with the pictures taken. The camera itself also invited others to be involved in the research process as I sometimes handed it over to fellow handlers so that they could snap some shots too.

Much was captured through the lens of the camera: the multiple settings where fieldwork was conducted, a clear visual of what the sport entails, the gear worn by the dogs and humans, several social exchanges, how the dog responded to the handler and training, and far more. I found that photography was particularly invaluable in deciphering dog-human communication during training sessions – i.e. how dogs and humans use their bodies to communicate. The pictures captured exact expressions in the dog and human as well as posture and techniques used to encourage and calm the dogs in the various phases of *schutzhund*. Photos also aided my explanations of how equipment was used and how handlers achieved absolutely correct positions in the dogs for the obedience phase.

5. Participant observation

Attempting participant observation with other-than-humans reminds one of the humanist epistemology that forms the basis of traditional ethnographic fieldwork (Locke, 2012). Participant observation comprises a researcher gaining insight by physically participating in whatever their participants are doing (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:44). However, in order to be physically involved one has to “act like” and as Hamilton and Taylor (2012:44) put it: animals

are “not all like us” in straightforward ways – they do not write or talk about their lives. Alger and Alger (1999:199) are, however, convinced that employing an ethnographic approach of participant observation is best suited to studying animals and interspecies intersubjectivity.

According to Gold's typology of participant observer roles, I assumed the stance of “participant as observer” (Gold, 1958). As both a member of a local dog training club, and a *schutzhund* trainee, I was already an accepted constituent of the group under study. Access to persons (both canine and human) was easier owing to foundational trust having already been established. Therefore, observations took precedence during fieldwork, as the other group members (participants) already expected me to participate in all cultural activities. Being already fully immersed in the sport of *schutzhund*, participant observation not only became a natural progression of my fieldwork, but my current lifestyle too. In the course of this study, I noticed that fieldwork trips became an amalgamation of research-based participation and professional training for my own enrichment (for me and my dogs). This unique dual-purpose situation fuelled keener, more astute observations in the field, which further resulted in personal experiences of “becoming-with” every day while handling my own dogs. In addition, I gained embodied knowledge through continual participation on the field, therefore, interweaving my personal experience as a handler with that which I observed in other partnerships became an unavoidable step in the research process.

Research design

Having considered all the implications of human-animal research, a qualitative, phenomenological research design was adopted as the objectives of the study were simply not quantifiable. The findings have been documented as a multispecies ethnography, making an effort to represent dogs and humans equally through the use of the qualitative research tools mentioned above. Staying true to the essence of ethnography, rich descriptions were used to portray interactions between handlers and dogs. There was also an overall attempt to write the dissertation in a narrative style to allow for moments where I could write myself into the text alongside other experiences.

The nature of the study also called for a comparative stance to account for the relational contradictions found in different interpersonal contexts and partnerships. Therefore, the study could not be limited to one geographical location but rather required the flexibility of a multi-sited ethnography within South Africa to provide accurate accounts. Various aspects were considered for comparison and subtly woven into the findings: handler and

dog gender, success in the sport, philosophy on training and communication methods, training routines, interaction between dogs and handlers, body language, perspectives on the sport of *schutzhund* and dogs in general, and space-sharing arrangements were all considered and compared.

Objectives

A researcher cannot deny their humanity. Therefore, acknowledging the impossibility of presenting a non-anthropocentric ethnography in absolute form, my overall aim was to at least represent animals and humans equally. The goal was to write both species in to a proportionate extent so as to insist upon their equal validity and importance in the relationship and this research; a relationship of balance reflected in the balance of views in this paper. Similar to Tim Ingold's research on human-animal relations, I would like this paper to have "as much, if not more, to say about [dogs], than about humans" (Ingold, 2013).

The aims of this research can be summarised as the following:

- to introduce and discuss various dog training philosophies and the role that they play in the dog-human relationship
- to decipher and translate modes of interspecies communication in dog training and how miscommunications come about
- to unravel the concept of interspecies partnership by exploring the possibility of embodiment, kinship, intra-action, co-being, and becoming with a dog
- to determine whether or not dogs have their own culture and heritage, or whether they are merely instigators of human culture and to explore their role in human politics

The intention of this dissertation is thus to explore the constructive tension between these diverse, yet complementary, concepts (Liu, 2013) and the manifestations thereof. The primary enquiry focuses on what lies at the core of interspecies partnership and the overarching parameters of the relationship in an effort to determine whether or not these dog-human relationships are intersubjective, or merely products of operant conditioning. The dog's body is viewed as an embodied vessel of human emotions and a reflection of the "self" during training. Implying the dog's capacity for embodiment will initiate further investigations into the repercussions of modifying such a body, themes of power and control, animal personhood, and possible feminist concerns. In addition, the research seeks to analyse the dynamics of space-sharing and social hierarchies in the household as a probable implication of interspecies kinship.

My point of entry will be a specialised dog sport called *schutzhund*. It is from this vantage point, and within the context of this “culture” that the above objectives are to be discussed.

Analyzing the data

By means of descriptive analysis, the data collected from the field was analysed against the backdrop of previously documented sources to highlight developing patterns in cultural practices, mind-sets, and macro-trends in the dog-human relationship. An attempt was made from the very beginning to match current research with experiences in the field (having spoken to informants and observed dog-human partners in action). This comparison was intended to emphasise the equal importance of the data from both previous research and practical experience in this particular study, as well as to validate and compare findings consecutively throughout the paper.

The predominant technique of data analysis was triangulation. The mixed-method approach used (RRATS) afforded me the opportunity to cross-check findings. By blending multiple techniques and systematically validating and comparing viewpoints gathered from assorted sources, in various ways, and across time and place, a more comprehensive picture could be formed (Gordon, 2010:3).

Ethical considerations

The research process was carried out in an ethical manner by complying with the required standards of informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. All human participants signed forms consenting to their contribution to the research. This informed consent allowed them the freedom to withdraw at any point, and participants were offered the option of using pseudonyms. I made sure that participants were made fully aware of their involvement in, and contribution to, this research as well as what was expected of them during the process before interviewing and observation commenced. Access to facilities and various training sites was granted on the basis of permission by land owners. The photographs, videos, and voice recordings used for the purpose of this research were consented to before use.

In terms of data collection, interpretation, and presentation, the research was performed in such a way as to honestly report the results instead of using data that was misleading, plagiarizing, interpreting data unfairly or intentionally altering the data (Babbie, Mouton, Vorster, & Prozesky, 2001; Stangor, 2011).

On a personal note, every effort was made to be punctual for research sessions and to conduct myself in a professional manner, as I realized that I was not only representing my field of study but the institution through which I was studying. Even when conditions were difficult, miscommunications occurred, or certain participants were unwelcoming, I tried to maintain a polite, patient approach. Every effort was made to be respectful of participants' busy schedules, personal opinions, and worldviews.

The ethical reality of researching and representing animals is that gaining their consent is exceptionally problematic. With humans, one can ask for permission to observe their routines and behaviours, but with animals, there is no simple way to gain their consent in the research process. I, therefore, implemented the only ethical approach that I could think of in this regard: respect. I respected the dogs by not imposing on their personal space, by acknowledging their personhood and their capacity for agency, by not making assumptions about their behaviour without taking into account the context, and by accepting that every dog is unique and possesses a distinctive character, genetic make-up, coping mechanisms, response time, intellect, speed, physique, willingness to cooperate, and ability to learn.

In the process of writing the dogs into the study, I steered clear of anthropomorphizing or mechanomorphizing the animals. All dogs were referred to by name where applicable or as "he" or "she" so as to indicate personhood, and not "it" or any terminology that was disrespectful or appeared diminutive in any way. I believe that by respecting the dog as a species in its own right with its own, unique, embodied experiences and by not imposing human values, expectations, and assumptions upon the dog that a genuine effort was made to represent the dogs in this study as ethically as possible.

Chapter 3

EDUCATING FIDO

“Behaviour doesn't just flow like a fountain. Behaviour is a tool animals use to produce consequences”

Dr. Susan Friedman

“I've never trained a dog in my life”. Coming from a dog trainer with just under 50 years of experience, Mark Daniels' assertion could hardly fall on informed ears without at least some deliberation. These words had followed a case of poor handling⁸ in protection work. In the world of *schutzhund*, where resilience is more a survival tactic than a preferential character trait, such criticism is dealt out often. This particular reprimand, however, leaves one wondering: is dog training more about training the human than the dog?

The training of animals, dogs in particular, is an age-old practice dating back more than 10,000 years to the first domesticated wolf (Davis & Valla, 1978; Young, 2001:174). Every human society has trained and employed animals for human gain, and perhaps none of them can function properly without animals' expertise (Young, 2001:174). “Sniffer” dogs are used extensively by airports to detect explosives, weapons, and narcotics, not to mention scent-detection dogs trained to indicate cadavers or live bodies in rescue situations (Lit & Crawford, 2006; Young, 2001:174). Dogs with specialized training are deployed with the military or enter the police service, while others are trained to assist people with disabilities such as blindness, hearing impairments, seizures, mental illness, diabetes, and even autism. The list of ways in which humans employ animal capital is an extensive and ever-increasing one as we continue to recognize the potential of tapping into dogs' capacities via training (Young, 2002:176). Animal trainers are, therefore, gaining distinction in society.

The mere implication of educating Fido lies in a desire to create an obedient dog; to generate in the dog a willingness to listen and promptly obey human commands without argument or distraction. “Educating”, therefore, denotes the need to humanize or civilise the animal. But is not civilisation a term to be interpreted in context? Do we not have civilisations of varying shapes and sizes across the world? Can dogs not claim their own

⁸ The handler had displayed poor training technique during the training session.

civilisation? Moreover, do the answers to such questions not influence and question our humanity and culture? If so, then perhaps in training environments it is the humans who need to be more civilised from the dog's perspective. This would follow to say humans would need to be more dog-centric in their actions and general state of being. It would mean coming to grips with what it really means to communicate with a dog on his or her level, to know how every human cue is interpreted by the dog, and to briefly view life through the lens of a very different species. All of these aspects are essential if one wants to succeed at any dog sport, especially *Schutzhund*⁹.

But, before delving into dogdom and the particulars of South African sport-dog culture, a general orientation to canine training philosophies and *Schutzhund* is required. A useful starting point may perhaps be gatherings where we would find elements of both training and sport: in controlled clusters called dog schools.

Dog schools: organised interaction

Modern times have reduced much of the human-animal relationship to mediated, structured interactions within formalised institutions (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:45) such as trips to the vet (Sanders, 1994; Sanders, 1995), zoo visits (Mullan & Marvin, 1998), farming, and even the meat industry (Ackroyd & Crowdy, 1993; Vialles, 2006). In South Africa, one such common organization for mediated interaction would be a dog club. The dog world constitutes various different communities and each one has its own set of rules, traditions, electorates, and brands (Birke, 2007:230). Of the dog clubs that exist in South Africa, each usually falls within one of three groupings: The Kennel Union of South Africa (KUSA), the German Shepherd Dog Federation of South Africa (GSDFA), or private initiatives. The GSDFA originated from the need to specialise the training, breeding, and showing of German Shepherd Dogs (GSDs), placing the onus of training "all other breeds" on KUSA. There are various different breed clubs like Boerboel Clubs, Bulldog clubs, Ridgeback clubs, and so on, but their breeding rights are dependent on KUSA.

Some people prefer to receive accredited training, while others gravitate towards informal training, seeking methods outside of the "system" (Birke, 2007:219). Private initiatives sometimes develop in response to limitations in clubs and so, one also has the option of enrolling for privatised puppy socialisation classes, coaching sessions, or canine behavioural consultations. Apart from entrepreneurial work, some not-for-profit initiatives have also taken

⁹ *Schutzhund* is explained in detail from pg. 52

root. First National Bank's (FNB) "You Can Help" campaign called *Dog training can help* involves a group of dog trainers who have begun to introduce the concept of dog schools and training to informal settlements in and around Johannesburg (FNBTv, 2014). With the increasing variety of canine interest groups and services made available to the public, coupled with the various inspiring welfare campaigns, it is no surprise that the South African dog-handling community is on the rise and, along with it, a decrease in ignorant caretaking.

However, all these interactions between dogs and humans, whether in a dog school, under the supervision of a canine behavioural consultant, or doggy day-care, are formalised and structured, often questioning whether or not space is created for freedom of wills, true interspecies inter-action, and co-being¹⁰.

Dog training philosophy 101

According to Hearne (1995:454) some people consider any form of animal training as cruel, violent, exploitative, and incongruent with nature. The essence of this argument is a question of perceived freedom. Using a detailed comparison to language, Hearne argues that just as grammar is to language, training is to animal. Formality is required for any knowledge to exist – without grammar (formality), for example, we would not have language. The issue is that humans tend to see form as restrictive (because some forms are). But, if "the forms of two creatures meet in the right ways, the result can be friendship, or sometimes art, and, in the case of [dog] training, it can be both at once on occasion" (Hearne, 1995:455).

The carrot or the stick?

There is more than one way to train a dog; in fact, there are several (Hiby, Rooney, & Bradshaw, 2004:63). Philosophies on canine behaviour, as well as viewpoints on human responsibility in the equation, differ vastly from one method to another, and the training method used often exposes the trainer's personal beliefs about the relationship between man and dog (Greenebaum, 2010:129).

Most companion dogs are at least trained at a rudimentary level, such as being taught to eliminate outside, walk on a leash, sit, and lie down (Hiby, Rooney, & Bradshaw, 2004:63). Yet, very few people buy dogs with training in mind, and even fewer see it as a necessity.

¹⁰ Co-being is a term used by Maurstad, Davies and Cowles (2013), the application of which will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

They buy the dog, they have a problem, [and] they then look for a training environment. People don't generally buy a dog with the intention [of] going to train it. It becomes a problem and that's why they train it. So because the dog has become a problem, they then look for a training environment to correct the mistakes that they have created.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Most, if not all, animal training systems are based on the concept of operant conditioning whereby the dog learns that there are consequences for responses to commands (Reid, 1996). A consequence is the appearance or withdrawal of a favourable (positive) or aversive (negative) stimulus. Consequences in training commonly present themselves in one of four forms, and to understand any dog-training system, or philosophy, requires one to grasp these four basic concepts (Haverbeke, Laporte, Depiereux, Giffroy, & Diederich, 2008:110; Lieberman, 1999; Reid, 1996):

- **Positive reinforcement (PR):** reinforcing a wanted behaviour by giving the dog a reward for performing it. E.g. receiving a favourite food item or a toy.
- **Negative reinforcement (NR):** to remove a harmful stimulus or to stop applying force when the dog behaves in a desirable manner. E.g. to stop jerking on a pinch collar or choke chain.
- **Positive punishment (PP):** applying force or a harmful stimulus when the dog presents an unwanted behaviour. E.g. a hard "pop" on a pinch collar or an electric shock.
- **Negative punishment (NP):** removing an appetitive stimulus when an unwanted behaviour is presented E.g. withholding a food reward.

In simple terms, if when the dog is asked to sit, he/she sits and receives a food reward (**PR**), the dog learns to associate the command with a reward (Haverbeke, Laporte, Depiereux, Giffroy, & Diederich, 2008:110) and, if continuously reinforced, the dog will most likely offer the behaviour repeatedly for reward. If the dog, however, does not sit after the command is given, and receives an electric shock (**PP**), for example, he will associate not sitting with being punished. It is on this point that training perspectives diverge: should the dog be trained positively (rewarded for correct behaviour) or negatively (punished for undesired behaviour)?

Years of behavioural research and experience has highlighted three main dog-training philosophies: dominance-based training (a.k.a. compulsion – the traditional method), reward-based training (a.k.a. positive reinforcement or force-free training), and motivational training. **Compulsion** is considered a human-centric approach to dog-training that positions

the dogs as subservient to its “master”; submission and obedience being the only goal and focus of the relationship (Greenebaum, 2010:129). In contrast, **positive reinforcement** and **motivational training** are both dog-centric training systems that involve behaviour modification techniques emanating from companionship rather than dominance or intimidation, which further endorses a balance between the demands and desires of both species (Greenebaum, 2010:129). Positive reinforcement and motivational training are, however, quite different.

THE STICK

Dominance training (also called compulsion) has been in use for decades and is commonly referred to as the Koehler method of the 1960s and 1970s (Greenebaum, 2010:132). Around that time dog-training was guided by social-dominance theories and notions on wolf behaviour (Yin, 2007:414). Handlers used choke chains, pinch collars, and e-collars (electronic collars) to stop undesired behaviours based on the faulty¹¹ premise that wild wolves gained higher rank through force. The reference to “dominance” in the name, therefore, arises from the emphases on dominating a dog into submission, and ultimately, obedience (Greenebaum, 2010:132). Compulsion mainly makes use of negative reinforcement and/or positive punishment to train dogs (Haverbeke, Laporte, Depiereux, Giffroy, & Diederich, 2008:110; Lieberman, 1999).

It is, therefore, commonplace in dominance training to use the following techniques (Koehler, 1962):

- The alpha roll: This involves flipping the dog, so that it is on its back, and pinning him or her down by the throat (Young, 2002:178). This manoeuvre is still widely used and is a favourite of the televised hero of dog behaviourism – *The Dog Whisperer* (Cesar Millan).
- The helicopter move: The trainer spins the dog around, mid-air, by the collar using the leash.
- Hanging the dog: This is an alternative to the previous technique and involves hanging the dog by the collar (usually a choke chain) – oftentimes with all fours off of the ground. Handlers have been advised to hang the dog until it passes out as a way to conquer its aggression or resistance (Yin, 2007:415). This proved to be an ineffective way to deal with aggression.

¹¹ This premise is only seen as faulty by modern standards, as at that point, researchers truly believed that dominance was achieved by force. Researchers have only recently proven this to be untrue through various behavioural experiments (Yin, 2013).

- The use of punitive devices (the garrotte, choke chains, pinch collars, throw chains, and shock collars): the garrotte has the same effect as hanging the dog, yet it is more instantaneous. It is a thin tube shaped like a noose that is placed around the dog's neck and is intended to maintain control or to subdue high drive. "Popping" (yanking on) the choke or check chain indicates a correction. Pinch collars and shock collars are used in a similar manner with a more severe consequence. Finally, throw chains are used to surprise the animal by throwing them at the hindquarters without the dog knowing where or who the chain came from.

Of all the collars used on dogs, the electric collar is the one most clouded in controversy. In a study on the effects of using electric collars to train German Shepherd dogs during obedience, protection work, and free walking, it was discovered that shocked dogs presented body postures that suggested fear, pain and stress, such as cowering, high-pitched yelps, squeals, redirected aggression, lip-licking, avoidance, lifting of the front paws, or lowering of the ears (Schilder & Van der Borg, 2004:319). It was also proven that if one uses a shock collar in training, the dog definitely associates both the handler, and possibly even the commands given by the handler, with being shocked. Such a negative connotation (i.e. expecting something negative to happen when the handler is around) can be detrimental to the training relationship. For example, one of the dogs who were shocked immediately after the command to "heel", yelped after the next command in anticipation of a shock that never came (Schilder & Van der Borg, 2004:332). All dogs experience being shocked as stressful and continuous use exacerbates this condition. However, there is no evidence suggesting that the long-term welfare of these animals is at stake by being shocked. The study concluded with the belief that a more positive training experience would most likely lead to less anxiety in the dogs (Schilder & Van der Borg, 2004:332).

In dominance training, it is the dog's duty to be compliant to the handler (Greenebaum, 2010:140) and not to succeed personally, enjoy his work, or even to be content. The techniques used merely reinforce attempts at human dominance and power in the relationship in the pursuit of "breaking" the dog and forcing their respect. Training this way seems like a constant battle between dog and handler, and even between the chief trainer and the pair; an unceasing collision of wills. Dominance training relegates the dog to a marginal status in the home, placing considerable distance between the pet (subordinate) and the family (superior), (Greenebaum, 2010:140).

Even though these methods are infamously outdated, and considered by several contemporary trainers as cruel (Greenebaum, 2010:132), they remain surprisingly popular in South Africa. I have personally witnessed many accounts of severe compulsion used in Bloemfontein and Johannesburg training environments. It still seems to be a misconception among handlers of “aggressive dog breeds”¹² that compulsion is the only way to control them. Yet, such hands-on, physical methods have been proven to increase aggression in dogs (Polsky, 2000: 345; Schilder & Van der Borg, 2004). Dog behaviourists have mentioned time and again that in an aggressive state, a dog met with violence or physicality will exhibit violence in defence mostly as a fearful response. If the coin was flipped and a human was hit in the face or kicked in the ribs, would they not retaliate or at least try to defend themselves? Even though certain punishments are harmful, it is still generally believed to be the best method to train certain tasks (Beerda, Schilder, van Hooff, & de Vriesl, 1999).

While many of Koehler’s approaches have been phased out in other parts of the world, the essence is still applied to varying degrees or adapted *ad libitum* (Greenebaum, 2010:132). Cesar Millan (television’s “the dog whisperer”) is one such instructor. To the untrained eye, Millan’s techniques are certainly attractive – they are quick, efficient, well-informed, and at times produce what seems to be magical results in very little time. Viewers, however, will never know what happens behind the scenes, his methods are no doubt effective but they are grounded in dominance theory.

Millan has been equally criticised and worshipped, but I have observed that his main deviation from pure dominance (if one could call it that) is, firstly, that the dog’s needs are always factored into the situation, and secondly, the human is usually pointed out as responsible for the state of the dog. Millan states that dogs tend to feed off of human energy, therefore displacement behaviours, or being aggressive, disobedient, or anxious are closely linked to the presence of humans and what they have reinforced in the dog throughout its lifetime.

I personally commend Millan on his famous byline: “exercise, discipline, and affection, in that order”. He also insists that people should not hit or hurt any dog, but rather use sound, eye contact, and energy or a firm correction with the hand (Millan 2008:131). He asserts that many aversives are used inappropriately and should never be implemented when angry or irritated (Millan, 2007), a line of reasoning commonly found among many motivational

¹² German Shepherds, Belgian Shepherd, Mailinois, Doberman Pinchers, Black Russian Sheepdogs, Bull terriers, Pitbulls, Boxers, and Staffordshire terriers.

trainers and handlers. He also acknowledges breed-specific needs in dogs and applies training techniques accordingly. For example, if an owner complained about their husky being completely hyperactive and uncontrollable, he may suggest that the owners get a sled for the dog to pull to release his/her pent-up energy. Similarly, he encourages Sheep and cattle-dogs to engage in herding regularly, Beagles and Bloodhounds to be taught to do random searches, and working dogs (like Dobermans and German Shepherd dogs) to participate in breed-appropriate training. All modern dog breeds are descendants of dogs with a working inheritance and were bred for specific purposes. Millan recognizes these strengths in the dogs and uses them to benefit both the dogs and their owners.

THE CARROT

Pure positive reinforcement is what one could call the direct opposite of compulsion whereby no aversive stimuli are used (Booth, 1998). “This means trading in rolled-up newspapers for dog treats, roaring yells for happy praise, and hard smacks for soft pats. Positive punishment becomes positive reinforcement, where good behaviour is rewarded rather than bad behaviour being punished” (Pomeroy, 2013).

“Positive” dog trainers and behavioural consultants (such as Karen Pryor and Sophia Yin) use operant conditioning to teach and produce automatic responses in dogs (Greenebaum, 2010:133). It is a technique that positively reinforces desirable behaviours by “marking” them with rewards (food and/or toys) and in so doing, rapport is built between dog and handler (Fennell, 2004; Hiby, Rooney, & Bradshaw, 2004:63). Many working dogs have been trained using positive reinforcement, such as guide dogs and “sniffer dogs”¹³ (Adams & Johnson, 1994). The main aim of reward-based training is to strengthen the dog-human relationship. Training in this way is not a unilined process; both human and dog are trained in such a way as to endorse respect within the partnership (Fennell, 2004). Positive trainers are looking for willing cooperation, not a dog forced to succumb to human commands by the imposing of human will on the animal. Rather, trainers want to see a dog that enjoys training, becomes a minded instigator in the relationship, and seeks out opportunities to connect and work with their handler. The idea is to work with the dog, so that the dog chooses out of his own free will to perform desirable behaviours based on a strong, trusting partnership with a human (Fennell, 2004). Hence, a modern trend to refer to handlers as “guardians” in this training context.

¹³ Dog trained to detect drugs and other illegal substances

Motivational training: big carrot, small stick

Who motivates whom?

“Positive is not permissive” is the by-line of a book titled *Ruff Love* by Susan Garrett (2002), where the author offers a program for handlers and dogs intending to build a better working relationship. This slogan sums up motivational training fairly accurately, as this technique employs positive methods, but is by no means permissive to miscreant behaviour and substandard performance in training. Other versions of this method can be called “nothing in life is free”, “no free lunch”, or the “learn-to-earn program” (Yin, 2007:417). Quirky names aside, motivational training focuses on establishing leadership through the control of all and any resources that motivate the dog. These resources are then used as a reward for good or desired behaviours. This method gives the dog a choice and the handler then simply rewards the dog for making the right choice, thus giving credit to the dog’s natural intellect and sensitivity (Booth, 1992).

Motivational training is not only based on the premise of rewarding appropriate behaviours, but also removing any rewards for undesirable ones (Yin, 2007:417; Yin, 2013). The reward is usually the dog’s daily rations but can also be playing with a ball, going for a walk, being petted, being let out into the back garden, and so on. The dog then begins to see the handler as the provider of resources and, through training, learns how to gain access to these resources by presenting certain behaviours (Yin, 2007:417). The handler must set rules and then convey these to the dog by reinforcing the desired behaviours directly as they transpire. This simple concept, coupled with the correct timing and body language, creates the foundation for trust in the partnership. Training this way is said to be more gratifying and enjoyable as opposed to the “battle of wills” often observed in dominance training (Yin, 2013).

In motivational training the dog motivates the handler to actually come to the party – where the dog is driving you, offering you a direction, offering you behaviours. When speaking of motivational training, we speak about the dog motivating the handler to a behaviour, which is primarily motivating the handler to release food or a toy as a reward.

If the dog came to you and you offered him a position to the food...you lifted the food up into a position and he gave you the behaviour, he motivated you to reward him. So if he came to you and you said to him “sit” and he sat, that is a reaction-reward...so he’s reacting

to your instruction to obtain the reward...If you show him the sit or the down or the heel position, more of that is done with you showing him where to motivate you. Now you've got the dog driving you for reward.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Reward: The big carrot

Another way to look at motivational training is to see it as what motivates the animal and not the human, and to use that which motivates the dog to his, and your, best advantage in the training partnership. This sometimes calls for sacrifice on the part of the human – sacrificing what could be described as normal emotional frustrations and fluctuations.

Dogs, like humans, are governed by many drives. What motivates or drives a dog?

- **Food:** a dog with food drive is intent and focused on food.
- **Prey:** this is the drive to chase and hunt down a moving object whether it be a stick, a toy, or a rabbit.
- **Fight:** the instinct to fight.
- **Defence:** the drive for a dog to defend itself.

A dog can also be motivated by praise and affection from a handler but, while this is an essential part of training it must be combined with other motivators to be effective. Additionally, praise is only meaningful and effective if there is an established bond between dog and handler (Frawley, 2007b). Lastly, force can motivate a dog into a behaviour. As an aspect of motivational training, force should be the last resort and should be used to shape behaviours that have already been taught, rather than teaching them from scratch.

Each dog is different, meaning that not all dogs are motivated by the same things. An integral part of training is determining what drives the dog, and developing any other drive that may be necessary for the type of training the handler wants to do, but is noticeably lacking from the start. For example, the intensity of prey drive depends on the dog and its genetic make-up, but it can be developed through training (Frawley, 2007b). Even when inherited it should be continuously developed as it can decline or dissipate altogether. Some dogs are not driven by toys at all, while others are so driven for the toy that it is impossible for them to think clearly. In this case, it is better to begin with food and work towards using a toy in training. The following aspects not only have an influence on motivational levels in a dog but also affect how motivators are applied in order to be most effective (Frawley, 2007b):

- The dog's temperament
- The inherited, genetic drive of the dog
- The bond between the dog and the handler
- Distractions in the field
- The experience of the handler
- The training phase that the dog is in

It is important that the motivators used in training are congruent with the dog's personal interests and preferences. Drive satisfaction is when the dog obtains the food or the prey, is allowed to play with the toy, is praised by the handler, or avoids correction (Frawley, 2007b).

Consequence: The small stick

To train an animal implies the expectation of a desired outcome having invested the necessary skill, time, and practise. Expectations are generally met or not, and this is where training becomes a challenge. How does one correct or redirect unwanted behaviour while reinforcing what is actually desired? How does one effectively communicate to the dog that the behaviour offered is incorrect, while not discouraging the dog from the activity entirely? In dominant training circles, unwanted behaviour is corrected using devices and behaviours of control such as alpha rolls, hanging by the collar, or collar pops or corrections¹⁴ (Greenebaum, 2010:139). Research participants who came from this training background mentioned the physical demands this placed on their own bodies (aching arms and shoulder sockets), not to mention the physical and psychological scarring on the animal, and the persistent tension between human and dog. Several trainers shout at their dogs¹⁵ and use force to push the animals into a "sit" or a "down" (Greenebaum, 2010:136). Positive reinforcement permits no force, which may result in a dog that is enjoying himself during training, but will not produce what trainers call "correct" and "reliable" behaviour every time. Dog trainers who discourage any form of correction in dog-training lack experience (Frawley, 2007a). Once Fido has reached a particular level in training where he has been taught an exercise correctly, and then refuses to follow through it, the handler must ask:

¹⁴ sharp tugs or yanks on the dog's pinch or choke collar

¹⁵ It must be noted that frustration and occasional shouting is present in any training environment, and should not be considered as exclusive to dominant trainers.

- 1) Does the dog understand?
- 2) Was the dog motivated enough?
- 3) Is the dog possibly being defiant and challenging the leadership of his handler?

If he falls into the last category, he needs to receive a correction (Frawley, 2007a). In motivational training, certain devices are used to correct incorrect behaviours, but the dog is taught how to respond to them in a positive way. This is where the concept of consequence comes in. Motivational training requires correctness which then follows to necessitate consequences to incorrectness. There are consequences of varying forms and degrees (see **Table 3.1**), and the form and degree of consequence depends on both the behaviour presented by the dog as well as the personal preference of the handler. For example, some handlers refuse to use pinch collars on their dogs, but have no objection to withholding food. What is surprising is that most seemingly harsh punishments are considered less scarring to the dogs than those that are not physical in nature.

If we say "I offered him the facility to listen, he didn't listen", therefore, the consequence was: "I withheld reward". So the withholding of the reward becomes a punishment. Now, that is not a physical punishment; that is an emotional punishment. That is ten times more severe and upsetting to the dog's psyche than a physical correction [on a pinch or remote e-collar].

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Most corrections are expressed simultaneously with a word such as "nope", "no", or "uh uh", however, all handlers are advised to remain completely unemotional when directing consequences. As emphasised by many of my participants, motivational handlers should not apply consequences unless a basic understanding of correctness is grasped by the dog. From there, the degree of incorrectness often determines the form and level of consequence (see **Table 3.1** for examples).

But what we must [not] forget is...with every aspect of motivation you have to come to a consequence. And that consequence is a negotiable point. Do you apply compulsion? Or do you apply sweeties? And at what point is it sweeties and at what point is it compulsion? So you would have to give a lot of thought to your...consequence; [it is the handler's choice].

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Table 3.1: *The different forms of correction and their comparative effect on the dog*

Form of correction	Category	Level	Example
Withholding reward	Psychological	Mild-severe	The handler asks the dog for a "platz" and the dog's back leg flops to the side
Time-out	Psychological	Mild	Dog does not want to work and is distracted
Push away with knee	Physical	Mild	Handler asks dog for "fuss" from seated position and dog jumps out in front of handler instead of waiting for the handler to take a step forward and going with the handler.
Flat collar pop	Physical	Mild	Dog looks away during heel position
Pinch collar pop	Physical	Moderate	Dog looks away during heel position
E-collar	Physical	Moderate	Aggression towards another dog (different walking past, or dog won't let go of the settings) sleeve.
Garrote	Physical and psychological	Severe	Dog bites the helper without the command and won't let go.

And, therein, lies one major difference between motivation and compulsion. With compulsion training the dog relies on the correction to tell him what is correct – i.e. he is trained negatively. Whereas with motivation, the dog is first taught the correct behaviour through positive reward (food or toy), and compulsion is only applied when a correction is needed once that understanding is in place (i.e. to shape what is already learned). The response a handler desires from the dog when corrected is for the dog to drive back into them or push harder for the reward. Therefore, handlers often spend time teaching their dogs how to respond positively to corrections. One such exercise was demonstrated by Dana Voss where she taught Dante that every time she bumped him with her knee, he would get a large piece of food. Later in training, if Dante was losing concentration, Dana would just bump his side with her knee and his attention snapped immediately back to her. It is also essential to let the dog make mistakes as the realisation of failure only serves to motivate the dog to try harder when the exercise is requested in the future (Frawley, 2007a).

Acceptance and acknowledgement are two different things. You acknowledge a behaviour; you reward perfection. What is a consequence? If it's not fast enough, you withhold reward. If it's fast enough, but not straight enough, you can acknowledge, but you

can't reward. So you can only start rewarding an absolutely correct behaviour. What is a correct behaviour? What is good enough? Now we're talking about the sport at the highest level.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

A dog sport called **Schutzhund**

What is Schutzhund?

Schutzhund (German for protection dog) originated in Germany to test the inherent ability of German Shepherd Dogs to perform a range of diverse exercises neatly packed into three intensive phases excluding herding: tracking, obedience, and protection (Daniels, pers. com., 2014; Foster, 2013). The new appellation for *Schutzhund* is IPO (Internationale Prüfungs Ordnung) which, when translated into English, stands for International Trial Rules (Foster, 2013), a deceptively vague title for a sophisticated dog sport. I have chosen to refer to the sport as *Schutzhund* instead of IPO throughout this dissertation, as I feel that this German term not only refers directly to its origin, but also provides a better overall account of the sport to laymen than its upgraded title.

Schutzhund is the triathlon of dogdom: "Three events, one dog, one handler, one day" (Rainey, 2012). What started out as a trivial, national competition in Salzburg, Austria (1975) for German Shepherds in and around Western Europe, fast developed into a decidedly specialized dog sport commanding phenomenal fitness, effort, and commitment (Landau, 2013; Rainey, 2012). Nowadays, each year draws the finest working dogs from thirty countries across the globe together to vie for the name of World Champion (Landau, 2013). The test is tailored to the specifications of the German Shepherd Dog and was thus initially restricted to the breed. Yet today, the sport is tackled by various working breeds such as the Belgian Shepherd (Malinois), Doberman Pinscher, Rottweiler, Boxer, Bouvier des Flandres, Black Russian Terrier, and, on the rare occasion, small terrier breeds (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). In fact, in the FCI World Championships, the Malinois is right up at the top on many occasions. The ability of the dog is more important than the breed, and good ability comes by good breeding.

The ability (and character) of the dog is a genetic factor...A lot of the breeders say "it's all training, it's not selecting of bloodline", [which] is absolutely wrong...You can't ignore the bloodline...

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

THE THREE PHASES

One definition of culture explores the “tendency for all aspects of a culture to function as an interrelated whole” (Haviland, 1999:44) or integrated system of learned behaviours, and it is from this standpoint of integration that *Schutzhund* can best be explained. In short, *Schutzhund* consists of three interlocking phases: tracking, obedience, and protection (Daniels, pers. com., 2014; Foster, 2013). They consequently call it the T.O.P. Dog sport (Rainey, 2012). At conceptual level, the dog has to show the ability to be proficient in all the duties within these three phases, proving him/herself to be the ultimate, versatile working dog (Foster, 2013; Daniels, pers. com., 2014;). Although each phase is, in itself, unique and can function independently, when training for *Schutzhund*, the separate parts operate as an integrated whole. E.g. A person can train a dog to do tracking, protection, or obedience alone and excel in just that one phase. But once the dog is doing all three unique phases simultaneously, these separate phases function as an integrated whole, where evidence of poor training or changes in one discipline will surface in either one or both of the other disciplines. Falling short in one area does not only have a detrimental, overt effect on the other phases, but it also brings down the whole score at a competition.



Diagram 1: The three interlocking phases of *schutzhund*: Tracking, obedience, and protection

The three phases are described by Foster (2013) in his informative video, *IPObservations* in the following way:

Tracking: At the highest level (SchH3), a 800 pace track with four ninety-degree corners is laid by an unidentified person up to 60 minutes before the dog is asked to track the scent of the layer meticulously and calmly. The dog must also find three articles¹⁶ along the track and indicate them clearly to the handler. Passing this test proves the dog's ability to track sheep or a thief (without the assistance and interference of the handler) should the

¹⁶ *Articles* are small, scent-laden objects left on the track by the tracklayer (Foster, 2012).

occasion arise in real life (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). The dog is allocated a score out of 100 for tracking (Landau, 2013).



Photo 3.1: Tracking in George

A female participant and her dog (Donna vom Chantian) demonstrate tracking on vegetated plough with Mark Daniels.



Photo 3.2: Kate and Bryn tracking on plough

Bryn tracks on plough in winter at a Baldur Kranz seminar.

Obedience: This phase is performed on a large sports field and all exercises are done off-leash (Landau, 2013). It consists of a broad range of physical exercises that test the dog's gymnastic ability, intellect, and eagerness to work for his/her handler with speed and precision. These tasks include a gunshot test, "heelwork under distraction, positions in motion, retrieves over flat ground, over the hurdle, and the A-frame, send away with emergency down, and a long down while separated from the handler under distraction" (Daniels, pers. com., 2014; Foster, 2013). According to one of my key participants, "all [exercises] under distraction" was only brought in recently, meaning two dogs working on the field simultaneously during the trial (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). High drive, and the capability to cap it, is crucial here (Rainey, 2012). A score out of 100 is awarded considering "joy of working", speed, accuracy, and unwavering attentiveness of the dog to the handler (Landau, 2013).



Photo 3.3

Photo 3.3: Berry and the A-frame

Hugh and Mark teach Berry to conquer the A-frame.



Photo 3.4: Bryn at the 2014 Nationals

Bryn demonstrating an exceptional heeling position.

Protection: Also known as bite work, the protection phase is the part of a *Schutzhund* test whereby the sport derived its name. It is generally the highlight of all three disciplines, lending itself to remarkable tests of courage and action-packed displays of raw power by the dog. Protection tests the dog's ability to search for and pursue a "criminal"¹⁷ (known as a helper) whom the partners (dog and handler) are trying to capture. If the dog finds the helper, he/she must detain them using a hold and bark until either a) the helper attacks the handler and dog, b)¹⁸ the helper attempts escape, or c) the dog is commanded to disengage from the helper. The challenge of *Schutzhund* protection work lies in testing the dogs' dutiful commitment to both active and passive helpers (Foster, 2013). The dog must have a strong drive (and natural instinct) to defend the handler along with the obedience with which to listen under pressure (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). Once again, the dog is scored out of 100 points. The dog fails instantly if one of three things happen: the dog refuses to grip the sleeve when the Helper becomes aggressive, the dog grips any place other than the sleeve, or the dog refuses to release the sleeve when the Handler gives the command to release it (Landau, 2013). Therefore, while courage is both important and impressive, control is obligatory.



Photo 3.5, 3.6, & 3.7.: Kondor's bite work routine at the 2014 Nationals

Kondor's powerful protection work display at last year's Nationals (photos borrowed from Sherriffs Shots photo studio)

There are varying qualifying levels or titles within *Schutzhund* namely SchH1, 2, and 3 (more recently, IPO1, IPO2, and IPO3). There are also titles for each separate phase, namely: FPr 1-3 (tracking title), UPr 1-3 (obedience only title) or SPr 1-3 (protection only title). In addition,

¹⁷ Criminal is placed in inverted commas because none of the helpers in any of the tests are real criminals; they are merely acting as criminals in a staged role-play that is uniform across all trials on the same level, for all dogs.

¹⁸ In both case a and b, the dog must try to stop the helper by biting him

dogs must pass a temperament test called the BH (*Begleithundprüfung*, meaning "traffic-sure companion dog test") before the dog can try out for SchH1 or any of the other variations (Reid, 2012). Each title is harder to obtain than the one before. For example, SchH1 requires a sit and down from motion with the addition of a stand from motion and extra recalls for SchH2 and 3 (Rainey, 2012). The height of the jump in obedience also becomes higher as the dog progresses from one stage to the next. SchH1 only requires the indication of two articles on a 400 metre track with only two corners and the track is laid by the handler, while tracking at SchH level 3 requires three article indications, three corners, and tracking the scent of an unknown tracklayer for almost 750 metres (800 yards) (Rainey, 2012). A dog with SchH3 is therefore, considered as far more valuable than one with SchH1. Completing and qualifying at the previous level serves as a prerequisite for entering the next level, hence most trainers agree that the dog should only enter SchH1 when he/she is ready for SchH3. In this way, the dog is qualified quickly and with the highest possible scores.

Having gained a better understanding of each discipline, one can begin to realise that if a dog's obedience training is not on par with his protection training, for example, the handler will have trouble controlling him in the protection phase, if the dog was asked to disengage from the helper or move away from him. The ability of the dog lies formally in his genetic make-up; therefore, the three phases provide an all-round display of the dog's heritable capabilities.

If a dog is able to perform, then theoretically his progeny should be able to [as well]...Originally [*Schutzhund*] was only a breed test, then you [must] put into the equation how much [of] ability is genetics, and how much [of] ability is quality of handler. So with all the different dogs getting these qualifications, and one person saying, "I'm better than you", competition began.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

THE ELEGANCE OF THE SPORT

Schutzhund is deceptively elegant and challenging by design: simple to grasp as an observer, but ingeniously deep as a competitor (Foster, 2013).

At a fundamental level, [*schutzhund*] is a series of many challenges that comprise of diametrically opposed requirements. To score maximum points, the dog must resolve heavily conflicted states of minds with clarity and confidence. If we take the concepts of speed and accuracy as an example, it's fairly easy to go fast without being accurate, like a drag racing car...It's also fairly easy to do something that requires meticulous accuracy at a slow pace, like threading a needle. But to be able to drive at the speed of a drag racer, with accuracy equivalent to threading a needle (which is basically required of a formula one car), is extremely challenging and takes huge amounts of resources, ingenuity, and raw skill to

achieve. Almost every exercise in [schutzhund] holds that same conflict of requirements. It is essentially a relentless balancing act at the core of each challenge, which can be generally boiled down to drive versus control.

(Foster, 2013 in *IPObservations: The elegance of the sport*)

In tracking, high points are awarded to dogs that are simultaneously intense and meticulous; checking each footprint, taking each corner, and calmly but distinctly indicating articles (Foster, 2013). In the obedience phase, a judge looks for a driven, motivated dog who is fast and exact, a dog which teems with energy, yet remains controlled and which illustrates a strong bond with his/her handler but is calm when left alone. Finally, in protection work, the dog must exhibit the strength and, what Foster (2013) so accurately refers to as, “instrumental aggression” to take charge of the adversary. Yet, the dog must switch instantly from a state of active aggression to complete obedience at the slightest request of the handler (Foster, 2013).

Every aspect of the sport presents the dog with an internal conflict that necessitates immense mental strength (Foster, 2013). And herein lies the true essence of the test: an accomplished *schutzhund* will learn to channel her drives to resolve and transcend these conflicts (both internal and external). Triumphant over this challenge is the greatest reward, proving the dog worthy of the title: “true working dog” (Foster, 2013).

The build-up of drive and then stopping it and compressing it becomes an art form. Eventually that build-up has to explode. By design, that is inevitable. By training and luck, that explosion becomes crisp, correct, and joyful obedience. The sheer joy of having your dog at your side, completely amped up and yet focused on you and remaining compliant and biddable, is absolutely unequalled.

(Rainey, 2012 in *Schutzhund: The dog sport of masochists*)

SCHUTZHUND VERSUS DIENSHUND

Schutzhund training is often equated with training K-9 officers for police service, and this belief holds true to an extent. Police-dog trial systems developed from a combination of *Schutzhund* training, ring sports (Belgian and French), and Dutch police trials (Engel, 2013:10), and many dog-training facilities overseas deploying dogs for military and police service demand a SchH3 from the dog before they can enter the field. However, police-dog training is called *Dienshund* and dogs complete a different training “syllabus” to *Schutzhund* (Daniels, pers. com., 2014).

The classic police dog emerged in Belgium, Germany, and other areas in Europe and was epitomized by the German Shepherd Dog, commonly recognised across the globe as the police dog (or in South Africa, often referred to in Afrikaans as a “polisie hond”) (Engel, 2013:10). A police dog is intended for protection, search and rescue, and interdiction, or for the detection of cadavers, narcotics, explosives, and other illegal substances (Engel, 2013:10). Although dogs in *Schutzhund* may have the faculties and capacity to be trained to do the above, the dog’s main job is to excel in the three phases mentioned above.

According to Bryson (2002) police dogs need to be clearly healthy and balanced in their ability to play, search, be social, and aggressive. Selecting a dog based on high drive and aggression alone is counterproductive. Moreover, human socialisation is imperative, as the dog must react appropriately in both controlled and unpredictable environments (Bryson, 2002). Even normal family interaction is encouraged. Moreover, from the earliest stages of training, a bonding program is set in place to ensure and build a strong officer-dog partnership (Hart, Bryson, Zasloff, & Chrstensen, 1994). The *Schutzhund* selection criteria are not very different. It is, however, preferable for the dog to see the handler as number one, and for everyone else (spouse and family of the handler, etc.) to be of no importance to the dog (Wayde Linden, pers. com., 2014). *Schutzhund* dogs need to be well socialised, but the handler must be the only motivation on the field; no other person should be more, or equally, as important as the handler in the dog’s eyes. The selection of these dogs is based on excellent health and conformation, as well as high prey and food drive.

Like other relationships with dogs, ambiguity exists with regards to the human perception of dogs in police work (Sanders, 2006). Police handlers find it difficult to balance their views of the dog as both a tool for law enforcement and a sentient being with personhood (Sanders, 2006:148). This relationship in particular presents conflicts as the dog is often interchangeably treated as a weapon at work, and passive family member at home. Similar conflicts are experienced by *Schutzhund* owners who battle to balance their view of the dog as an object used to progress in a sport, versus a unique animal with its own preferences, temperament, and characteristics. This ambivalence leads to inconsistent treatment (Sanders, 2006:148). A study done by Haverbeke, Laporte, Depiereux, Giffroy, and Diederich (2008:111) on Belgian army-dog training revealed that many dogs intended for service are trained using compulsion and were often not rewarded for good work. In the *Schutzhund* arena, there is great ambivalence with regards to how to train these dogs. All of the handler-dog teams who have reached the highest level in the sport have used compulsion

at some or other point and some of the best in the world use severe compulsion to get results (Daniels, pers. com., 2014).

Schutzhund is often confused with *Dienshund*, although the greatest difference between the two can be highlighted in bite-work training. In the sport, the dog is placed in a position of internal conflict during the “hold and bark” as upon locating the helper, the dog must bark until he’s allowed to bite. Permission is given by either the helper’s behaviour to attack, or the handler’s command (Bryson, 2002). Police training has to refute these techniques as teaching the “hold and bark” is inappropriate for service dogs for several reasons. One main goal for training a K-9 officer is to produce a dog that is reliable in unpredictable and constantly changing circumstances. Real-life suspects do not behave like helpers who follow a choreographed sequence for the sport. Real criminals are not acting, playing around, or dressed in padded clothing. Therefore, a police dog must, above all else, listen to his/her handler as situations occur on the street that call for responses beyond the patterned behaviours taught in training sessions (Bryson, 2002). The officer must have the final say in high-pressure conditions for both active and passive criminals regardless of their actions, not the dog, while in *Schutzhund* the dog must bite when the helper makes an advance on the handler. Sport-line breeders put an immense amount of pressure on law enforcement agencies to buy their dogs (trained for the sport) to use in police work (Bryson, 2002). Yet, employing *Schutzhund* dogs who have been taught the “hold and bark” can cause considerable interagency tension and public confusion as this has led to accidental bites.

A brief history of schutzhund in South Africa

The true, competitive sport of *schutzhund* has only existed in South Africa since the mid-1990s, around the same time that our first team went to the WUSV¹⁹ world championships in 1997 under the umbrella of the FCI²⁰ (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). Before this point in time, South Africans had classical working trials and domestic trials, which included a track and some protection work, as well as elements of *schutzhund* at a very basic level. Yet, the quality of training was vastly different to the high standard found in *schutzhund* today (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). It was only after the 1997 “worlds” that a number of South Africans became seriously involved in the sport.

¹⁹ Welt-Union der Vereine für Deutsche Schäferhunde

²⁰ Fédération Cynologique Internationale – the international umbrella organization for all things dog-related

At the outset, all *schutzhund* dogs in South Africa were trained by pure compulsion-release methods, meaning that if the dog obeyed his/her owner, the compulsion would be released (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). Initially, this technique was not about choice, it was the result of limited knowledge. "At that time, like everyone else, the choke chain and pinch collar and a well-timed correction formed the cornerstone of dog training for me" (Yin, 2013). This is how the dog learned: if she did something wrong she would receive a jerk (positive punishment), if she complied, the negative stimulus would be released (negative reinforcement) – this release is then seen in the dog's mind as a reward when compared to the punishment. Some participants referred to it as the correction method. Handlers then used their voice or physical touch (patting) to praise the dog, but no food was used (Cilliers, pers. com., 2014). There was no concept of motivation in all the aspects of training; everything flowed from compulsion. Therefore, a motivated, high-in-drive dog did not exist at that time (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). Even today, many classical obedience fraternities are simply satisfied if the end result of correctness is achieved - whether or not the dog is motivated and driving high is secondary. Hettie added that compulsion is even more prevalent in Bloemfontein; food was only subtly introduced around the year 2000 with compulsion still being the favoured method in Bloemfontein dog clubs to this day (pers. com., 2014).

The needs and interests of communities change with the passage of time and the same seemed to occur in the South African dog-training community. In the past, a handler simply wanted a dog that would walk with them, listened when commanded, was well-behaved around other dogs and people in the park, came when called, and would protect them if necessity arose (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). There was little or no regard for the enjoyment of the dog or his personal needs and motivations.

If he was under control, why would you need him to be happy? If you were at home, and he came running out, and you said "come here", and he came to you, and you said "sit still", and he sat still, and you said "get out" or "get in" or "get up" or "get off" and he did all the things that you needed him to do...those were the factors [at the front of everybody's mind].

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

As new information became available, the face of dog training slowly began to change. Birke (2007:219) posits that a search for humane alternatives usually transpires when the broader cultural agenda emphasises animal rights, valorising "the natural" in popular culture through avenues such as diet, cosmetics, and health care. Positive and motivational training symbolises a noteworthy cultural shift within dog training culture due, in part, to it being so firmly disparate from traditional, negative methods of handling and training animals but also

because it mirrors cultural transformation occurring in the broader context of society (Birke, 2007:231). Animal welfare campaigns and movements began to gain prominence in society in the late 20th century raising questions about the humane treatment of animals, which further spurred on a global change in how humans viewed animals. Such avenues could be stretched to include how humans interact with and train animals. Positive methods became popularised in America and Europe by key figures such as Karen Pryor (the founder of clicker training). As per a common cultural inclination in South Africa, trends set overseas are admired and followed. Shadowing our foreign founders' example, positive methods were introduced in the 90s where the first trainers started to use food and toys (balls and bite-rolls) to reward desired behaviours (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). This was also, coincidentally, the same time period when sport-line shepherds arrived in South Africa. Those now opting for "enlightened" methods over conventional ones saw the old system as lacking care and respect for animals, even to the extent of cruelty and commodification (of both animals and people) (Birke, 2007:231). One respondent in Birke's study felt that horses were treated like cars, by traditional methods: "Gas them up, take them out for a drive, put them back in the garage, and hope they never break down" (2007:231). Similar patterns exist in some *schutzhund* circles, especially in Europe and America where dogs are used and seen as just another object in the production line (Daniels, pers. com., 2014).

The specific training techniques required for *schutzhund* were brought to South Africa by foreign professionals willing to travel with the information in the early 80s, such as George Jantry, Franz Hannes, Baldur Kranz and other top European trainers (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). They all offered fresh concepts but no one in South Africa, at that point, wanted to change their ways until the World Championships in 1997, where South African handlers realised how far behind they were – "they weren't just behind, they were light-years behind" (Daniels, pers. com., 2014).

Photo 3.8: Hugh Grand and Berry represent South Africa at the 2014 WUSV World Championships. Wayde and Wendy Linden accompany Hugh and Berry at the Worlds. Sadly, Lynda's Asco qualified for the team but could not attend due to illness.



THE SOUTH AFRICAN STANDARD

Certain dog clubs and trainers in South Africa have developed the appropriate framework for *schutzhund* training as well as the required standards for dog care and handling. Such expertise became available in South Africa through various exchanges between German and South African dog trainers – a process of cultural transmission/acclulturation that began before the 1990s (through similar processes to those mentioned above). Therefore, much of what leading South African *schutzhund* trainers practise is an attempt to replicate more professional, foundry training occurring in Europe and America.

This formal training framework, however, does not promise that dog handlers will grasp dogmanship²¹ (Birke, 2007:219). No matter how sound the training methods or trainers are, there is no guaranteeing that “something extra,” the indefinable essence that is dogmanship – to embody an almost instinctive understanding of dog behaviour, and creates a partnership so intimate that each is able to anticipate the others' next move.

In spite of these respectable training frameworks, we still find adverse opinions about the judging systems in our country and the preference for German judges at competitions. Perhaps the reason for this is because South Africa acquired *schutzhund* training techniques; *schutzhund* and even dog training as such did not originate in South Africa. Perhaps this instigates the belief that the finer details have been “washed out” in the process of transmission. The greatest downfall in our country is the confusion caused by handlers attempting to train themselves, and others, in isolation, using their own personalised and untested techniques (Daniels, pers. com., 2014; Wayde Linden, pers. com., 2014). This mix-and-match, muddy method often results from lack of access to professional training, where handlers take matters into their own hands by teaching themselves through educational DVDs and books. This approach does not better the quality of the sport, it only serves to amplify negative assumptions about our country's standard by aggravating the already present uncertainty found in training environments across South Africa.

The stick-to-carrot conversion

When “more positive methods”²² (motivational training) became popularised in South Africa, several *schutzhund* handlers realized the potential of these methods and wanted to

²¹ Dogmanship is derived from, and similar to, the term horsemanship used by “horse people”.

²² I say this in inverted commas because as already made evident, there are negative aspects of this method – it is, however, still more positive than pure compulsion

apply them, but had already trained their dogs using pure compulsion. Some decided to buy new dogs altogether, while others wanted to re-train their current dogs – necessitating a shift from dominant, forceful techniques, to those involving food rewards and motivation. Birke (2007) writes about a similar instance in the horse world, where horse riders, having become increasingly educated on natural ways to keep and train horses, seem to be converting from traditional methods, to what they refer to as “natural horsemanship”.

This stick-to-carrot conversion often results in boundary-making: explicitly rejecting all conventional techniques in exchange for overwhelming enthusiasm for the more positive, enlightened methods that the handlers have adopted (Birke, 2007:223). It occurred to me that handlers did not even want to be associated with compulsion, insisting that their methods were positive, even though negative consequences were applied from time to time. Participants felt that compulsion had a negative effect on the dog, characterizing it as brutal, placing precedence on the technique over the animal's perspective, and cultivating a “grab it and go mentality” (Birke, 2007:223). One participant, having retrained her dogs, mentioned that the entire posture of a dog trained under severe compulsion is full of fear, whereas dogs worked under motivation appear far happier, more confident, and eager to work (Cilliers, pers. com., 2014).

However, conversion has consequences for both human and animal. One serious consequence is confusion (Birke, 2007:225). New-and-improved methods can be just as rigid as traditional techniques, which generate additional complications and misunderstandings between the two species. In the process of switching, horse owners (similar to dog owners) feel that “the first horse you take through the program is your sacrificial horse” (research participant cited in Birke, 2007:224). Another drawback to converting is the temptation to use a “best of both worlds” approach, and mix various divergent techniques and expert opinions, causing further confusion and anxiety, manifested as over-excitement in the dog (Birke, 2007:221; Hiby, Rooney, & Bradshaw, 2004:68).

In spite of these difficulties, a shift is ultimately better than training a dog using pure compulsion. Birke (2007:222) reported many positive aspects of converting: the new methods not only changed handlers as people (participants grew in self-confidence), but they witnessed improvements in their relationships with their horses. Their attitudes to the horses started to change. There was a shift from human-centric ideals in training to prioritising the horse's well-being, insisting on humans learning to “speak horse” for more effective

communication to take place (Birke, 2007:226). Interactions became intrinsically equine, creating a “shared meaning” between two species (Birke, 2007:226; Brandt, 2004).

This shift in mindset and lifestyle from dominant to positive tactics can ultimately be described as a cultural shift, not only in global dog training but personal habits and perceptions too. “Within these shifting cultures, people define boundaries and redefine themselves” (Birke, 2007:222). Handlers need to change their practices and how they work with and around dogs (Birke, 2007:225). Working with the dog thus becomes less of a chore, and more of a conversation with the animal where you learn how to relate to one another (Brandt, 2005; Game, 2001). Various aspects of *schutzhund* training require handlers to play with their dog. The power of play should not be underestimated; similar to horse-human relations, play serves as a means of earning the dog's cooperation and trust (Birke, 2007:226)

One, middle-aged female participant came from a background of parents who used to train their dogs using compulsion, with the result that they now have trouble observing and accepting her use of food as a training tool (female participant, pers.com., 2014). She expressed that what she has found over the years is that compulsion is more attractive because it is easier and less time-consuming. Compulsion only requires about one training session a week (depending on the skill of the handler), whereas, using food to train a dog means that you have to work at it every day. This routine slowly develops into a lifestyle of “working the food” which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Discussion

Like many other animal-related topics, animated debates usually arise from discussing which training method is best – best for the dog, best for the human, best for both. All three methods are technically effective if viewed in light of desired results. If the desired result is to qualify a dog with a *Schutzhund* title then, essentially, both compulsion and motivation get the job done. However, when the dog's personhood, well-being, and working attitude become a deciding factor, the outcomes of these methods are vastly dissimilar. While most dog trainers will agree that leadership is vital in training, they digress on the mechanics and philosophy thereof (Greenebaum, 2010:131). Training a dog to behave involves training the human handler to be a leader who is both predictable and dependable (Yin, 2007:414). But does leadership demand dominance (see **Table 3.2**)?

Table 3.2: The key differences between negative and positive dog training methods (some additions by: Viselé-Jonkman, 2010).

Point of divergence	Negative training	Positive training
Main premise	Wolf model Pack rules and wolf mentality/analogy and dominance.	Dog model Education before consequence – increasing dog's understanding/ interpreting canine behaviour/ not anthropomorphizing or wolfing – dog is a dog.
Main techniques used	Positive punishment Forceful techniques with physical punishment or use of aversives and coercion when dog is non-compliant. Negative reinforcement Release of aversives.	Negative punishment Withholding of food when dog is non-compliant. Positive reinforcement Food and toys as main form of reward.
Rewards/form of acknowledgement	Release from compulsion. Praise and patting with the occasional use of toys.	Food (daily rations and favourite foods), toys, physical affection, and vocal acknowledgement.
Handler's body language	Rigid, domineering, commanding control.	Mostly neutral. Emotionally upbeat if more drive is needed, or completely calm if the dog is too excited.
Dog's body language (Note: may be influenced by temperament and gender)	Anxious and sometimes highly-strung, flinches at reprimand, tail often tucked between the hind legs (fear), lowered shoulders and head, ears back. General appearance of submission.	Whole body attentive to handler, tail high or wagging, ears erect, excitable and bouncy (sometimes over excited). General appearance of confidence and enjoyment.

Handler's tone of voice	Shouting and harsh tones that switch to praise if the dog performs.	Higher and lower pitches to excite or calm in varying situations. Shouting and harsh tones also occur.
Outer picture of the relationship	Battle of wills; lots of tension.	More harmony and enjoyment. Battles do ensue when humans get frustrated.
Perspective of the dog	Object, subordinate.	Partner.

Although many consider traditional techniques as harsh and even barbaric, the fact remains that if one comes from that background it seems only logical to model one's training methods after the alpha wolf; dogs did descend from wolves after all (Yin, 2007:415). Yet, there are a number of reasons why the dominance/wolf model is lacking. The first problem is that just as humans are not apes, no matter the similarities, dogs are essentially not wolves (Yin, 2007:415). Second, even if dogs were wolves, the reasoning behind the model is becoming increasingly outdated. Recent research on wolves has proven that subordinate wolves offer submissive postures to the dominant wolf as a sign of respect (Yin, 2013). Alpha wolves do not command submission, it is offered freely from a mutual understanding within the relationship. Third, people employing dominant techniques need to continuously threaten the dog with aggressive displays of physicality to ensure that the dog submits consistently (Yin, 2007:416). Fourth, the philosophy behind dominance theory is based on priority access to resources (e.g. food, mates, or resting spots) which is completely irrelevant to what most people want to teach their dogs: to come, to play fetch, or to walk calmly on a leash. Lastly, in order for a dog-human relationship to work, the human needs to establish leadership which *can* be achieved by force but also reward-based methods. The human can choose the option that neither incurs pain or fear, nor has an adverse effect on the relationship (Wendy Linden, pers. com., 2014; Yin, 2007:417).

Ethical concerns arise when one trains a dog using punishment only (whether physical or verbal) (Hiby, Rooney, & Bradshaw, 2004:68). Using aversives threatens the well-being of dogs, causes suffering and pain, promotes dog-dog-aggression²³ and poses health risks due to stress which can have negative implications for their welfare (Beerda, Schilder, van Hooff, & de Vriesl, 1999; Haverbeke, Laporte, Depiereux, Giffroy, & Diederich, 2008:1211; Roll & Unshelm, 1997). Research on the effects of smacking and yelling are inconclusive (Pomeroy,

²³ Proven by a study on the effects of compulsion used in Schutzhund training

2013). The biggest issue is that punishment does not effectively eliminate problematic behaviours. Instead, punishment exacerbates and generates issues caused by the dog's anxious response to the stimulus (Hiby, Rooney, & Bradshaw, 2004:68). Applying aversives requires incredible skill to produce the desired effect without incurring unforeseen side-effects (Wendy Linden, pers. com., 2014), which is why it is not advised for inexperienced handlers.

Several present-day trainers view the Koehler method as abusive and potentially hazardous (Greenebaum, 2010:132). While it is possible, and perhaps sometimes even justifiable, to control formidable animals like dogs and horses (Birke, 2007:217), one should never attempt to use force on an animal that can easily overpower one (Voss, pers. com., 2013). A horse is unlikely to cooperate with a human who uses force and in the process, exposes him/herself to considerable risk (Birke, 2007:218). It is better advised to work with a dog. Unfortunately, compulsion generates competition and fear which can ruin a relationship because the focus is on intimidation instead of addressing the emotional state underlying the behaviour (Yin, 2007:415).

Motivational training and positive reinforcement methods have also had their fair share of criticism. Some believe that aspects of these systems can be just as cruel as conventional methods (Birke, 2007:224). A horse trainer in Birke's research mentioned how her initial enthusiasm for so-called kinder methods faded to the extent of viewing certain techniques as punitive and "not dissimilar to using a choke chain on a dog". Unfortunately, outliers and extremists exist in most common-interest groups; people who will take things too far "in the name of the sport". When aversive equipment is easily attainable, combined with poor handling skills and a general lack of interspecies understanding, cruelty and abuse of varying degrees becomes more prevalent, justifiable, and acceptable. Birke (2007:224) reports seeing many self-acclaimed natural horsemen hitting their horses, an act completely contrary to the fundamental scruples of the practice. Ultimately, we reach the over-expended deduction that ambiguities seem to preside over any and all human-animal relations. Compared to their canine counterparts, humans cannot seem to manage the internal conflicts that the relationship naturally presents.

There are misconceptions about, and objections to, the use of food in dog training. Some say that utilizing food denigrates the relationship (Donaldson, 2008). Others view it as the old image of a donkey chasing a carrot, where the carrot is never reached or devoured. In this

way, individuals come to see food as a manipulative device to tempt the animal into doing the human's bidding. Others still see using food as spoiling the animal.



Diagram 2: The donkey chasing the carrot

Positive reinforcement is not exceptionally structured, making resultant behaviours fairly imprecise (one major clash with motivational training). Dogs usually learn by trial and error in the beginning, therefore, guardians require patience as they often have to wait for an action to occur (Greenebaum, 2010:138). There are various ways to implement this method – clicker training, using food rewards, or even toys – as long as the primary focus is on what interests the dog, and that the dog is rewarded for requested behaviours. While accuracy with regards to timing is paramount for the dog to learn successfully (Greenebaum, 2010:138), some trainers regard this method as lacking correctness.

What is the using of a clicker?...it's marking of a behaviour. For example, if you're going to...mark a behaviour of a dog sitting, and the dog sits, but the dog sits slowly. At what point do you mark the behaviour? [That] he sits, or that he sat slowly? So if you're using the aspect of a clicker, with no consequence, what behaviour are you acknowledging? The part-behaviour or the correct behaviour?

[Mark Daniels, pers. com.]

In spite of its effort to make all human-dog interaction positive, one is highly unlikely to find a dog-human dyad that solely uses positive reward in all aspects of the relationship. While disobedience from the dog can be dealt with positively in many ways, there are some behaviours that can only be dealt with by implementing negative consequences. As both an observer and trainer at a local dog school, advocating and implementing positive training methods, I am yet to see a dog handler who does not implement consequences for unwanted behaviour at some point in the relationship. For example, while a puppy chewing a slipper may be handed a chewable item in exchange for the slipper, how would one

respond positively to incessant barking, fence fighting, or chasing cars? Using a toy as a distraction for teaching stronger recalls could be a temporary solution. If the dog, however, finds that barking and chasing is more rewarding than what you have to offer, he/she will persist unless a negative consequence is implemented. In advanced stages of training, if the dog does not sit the first time, food is withheld until a sit is achieved. Is that not a negative consequence? In this way, dog rearing and training seem similar to childrearing in that discipline, boundaries, and structure are important regardless of the method. The concept of consequence will always be applied in this dyad even if the intention is force-free training.

Whether or not one can actually label any dog training system as dog-centric is moot, as the ultimate goal of training is in the mind and hands of the handler. Which dog in her natural, day-to-day routine would willingly lift her head high and prance about tight on the side of a human, or even lie down on command unless there was some form of compensation? I certainly agree that some methods place the dog's needs at the forefront, but we cannot escape the fact that the entire idea of training is a human construct, created with human ideals and outcomes in mind. However, both positive reinforcement and motivational training methods need and apply the notion that dogs are minded actors with personhood (Greenebaum, 2010:133); this is a concept that is omitted from the dominant system. The shift in society's viewpoint of dogs as agented beings with personhood has prompted a global change in dog training systems (Greenebaum, 2010:139). While compulsion remains popular, force-free methods are on the increase, and the prevalence of these conflicting means to the same end attest to the persisting human ambivalence regarding companion animals. In effect, this dichotomous view of dogs as partner versus object has strong implications for these rivalled training philosophies (Sanders, 2006:149).

As objects, dogs are subjected to behavioristically modelled training processes intended to **mould** their behaviour so that they will **behave** in acceptable and predictable ways. As sentient individuals, on the other hand, dogs are primarily **taught** in the context of a developing relationship in which the animals learn expectations and roles so that they **act** in ways that produce "collective action" (the merger of situational definitions, goals, and plans of action) in concert with their human co-actors.

(Irvine 2004:58-60)

A leading reason for abandonment in dogs is problematic behaviours, so training philosophies that engender obedient animals could relay consequent welfare benefits (Hiby, Rooney, & Bradshaw, 2004:68). What is perceived as "what's good for [animals]", like

dogs and horses who regularly participate in high-level competitive environments, is vastly contestable terrain, shaped in part by culture (Birke, 2007:228). One factor that influences the choice of method is the social construct of “master” versus “guardian” (Sanders, 1993; Sanders, 1999; Greenebaum, 2004; Irvine, 2004). The training philosophy and equipment which a trainer chooses to employ says something about their inner self and worldview, how they view dogs in relation to humans, and what their status should be in society: kin, companion, co-worker, or commodity (Greenebaum, 2010:134).

One participant mentioned that dogs' working attitudes are vastly different when comparing those worked under compulsion to trainers applying motivation (Cilliers, pers. com., 2014). A venerable study by Schwizgebel (1982) verified that trainers who used a lot of compulsion (force, beatings, harsh punishment, kicks, prong collar corrections) during training sessions produced stressed dogs who cowered and displayed rigid body positions, paw lifting, and lip-licking. Training is thus experienced as stressful and not enjoyable for the dogs when done in this manner. Another participant, however, disagreed, saying that dogs worked under either method can have similar working attitudes.

...you can have a dog that is worked under severe compulsion look as good as an end result, because he has learned that if he doesn't comply it's going to be painful and if he does comply, the pain goes away. If the dog is worked through compulsion, he can look as good as a dog that has been worked with motivation... So which one is better? There is no “better”! Which one is most effective? There is no “most effective”!

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

A study by Hiby, Rooney, and Bradshaw (2004:68) confirms that when assessing obedience, there is no comparable difference between dogs trained by compulsion or positive reinforcement. Yet, positive methods have come to be recognised as more effective, especially when viewed in light of their (i.e. the positive methods) being the “welfare-compatible alternative” to compulsion (Hiby, Rooney, & Bradshaw, 2004:68).

It is true, however, that compulsion remains the method of choice in training for *Schutzhund*, and that all dogs at top-level competition have experienced compulsion at some point (whether minor or severe) to acquire correctness. *Schutzhund* training demands precision, speed, drive, intelligence, and physical versatility from a dog, meaning that the handler must possess the timing and body co-ordination to teach the dog to excel in all three phases (tracking, obedience, and protection). *Schutzhund* is deceptively technical. The downside is that the average passer-by does not appreciate these complexities because they do not know what they are really looking at when they watch the routine. There are

multiple technicalities and fine tunings aimed at correctness and perfection that often escape the gaze of an uninformed bystander. *Schutzhund* phases may seem simple and entertaining to watch but when the layers of simplicity are peeled away, an infinite pool of complex manoeuvres, alongside a deep dog-human connection (in the way of reciprocal understanding) is uncovered. A look beyond the surface of *Schutzhund* makes one realise not only what is at the core of the test, but also why the German Shepherd Dog still remains the most versatile, illustrious, and popular working dog in the world (Foster, 2013).

In closing, I return to the question posed in the beginning of this chapter: who essentially trains whom? Few trainers are willing to admit the possibility that training a dog could be a reciprocal process²⁴ (Young, 2002:175). I believe that, as humans train and interact with dogs, dogs begin to train and mould people's responses to them. They can train us. With the rise and expansion of positive methods, the animal's well-being and relationship with people is illuminated (Birke, 2007:236). This calls for a conscious effort to consider the dog's point of view regardless of method. Such efforts may not put a stop to cruelty, but they may instigate a global movement towards finding ways to relate to animals based on respect rather than coercion. Alongside acknowledging animal personhood, there is an inherent need to learn how to "speak dog" in training partnerships. Acquiring the skill to converse with a powerful animal has the potential to alter a person (Birke, 2007:234). The dog simply needs to train the human in how to speak her language, and how to listen to what she is saying.

²⁴ Karen Pryor (renowned "clicker trainer") recorded that dolphins have made trainers fall into the training pool with them by shaping the human behaviour to reach out with a target further than their balance can maintain (Young, 2002:175).

Chapter 4

LEARNING TO SPEAK DOG

“After years of having a dog, you know him. You know the meaning of his snuffs and grunts and barks. Every twitch of the ears is a question or statement, every wag of the tail is an exclamation”.

— Robert R. McCammon in *Boy's Life*

The driveway to Mark's "farm" is perched on the verge of a precarious road near the outskirts of Diepsloot in Johannesburg. A short, bumpy path leads to the training field – a meadow-like grassed area expanding the length of the one side of the property, hemmed on both far sides by kennels with constant, raucous occupants. There are two houses on the "farm" both occupied by the kennel workers (three black, male employees and their families). Upon entering the main house you are immediately struck by an excess of dog food and equipment. Very often the workers are cooking up tripe, liver, and other animal by-products that constitute healthy dog "slop" in the kitchen, and the house is filled with the stewy smell. Every room is jam-packed with dog crates, full and empty dog-food containers, canine medication, and various other paraphernalia. The only room that is fairly neat is the bathroom and the main room in operation is the work room, where Mark makes and mends his own dog-training gear. He spends hours in front of his industrial sewing machine fixing broken pockets, making leads, adjusting pinch collar straps, converting old jeans into treat bags, and mending the padding on his protection work apparatus.

His main breeding kennels (only about four) are close to the main house and secured behind a fence for the safety of the puppies and mothers weaning them. Each kennel is furnished with a wooden Wendy house, wood-chip flooring, large rubber water buckets, and it is not uncommon to find the remnants of a beef hock or shoe lying about to soothe teething. Fly traps (ensnaring flies that worry the dogs during the hot summer months) hang from the trees above that provide heavy shade for the runs. The rest of the expansive yard is full of trees and littered with old wheel-less dog trailers packed with straw. These are used by many handlers to contain their dogs during training sessions if their vehicles become too hot.

The numerous kennels on the other side of the field contain boarders, a large dipping tank, and what I have come to call the "retirement village". The kennels are not much to look at,

but are functional, partitioned by fences, and clean. Most have cement flooring with small private areas. The “retirement village” is a set of spacious kennels for all the retired working dogs and breeding bitches. One particular favourite is Devil, a decrepit Belgian Malinois whose kennel is positioned directly next to the training field. When the excitement leading from the training area becomes too much for Devil to handle, he throws himself down on his side in a fit of barking and digging. Needless to say, it is always noisy on the farm.



Photo 4.1



Photo 4.2



Photo 4.3

Photo 4.1 to 4.3.: The field

Images showing different angles of the field on Mark's farm including the training equipment, storehouse, yellow sign, and seating area while the dogs work on the field.

The field itself is spacious and sparsely decorated with equipment: six hides for bite work, an A-frame, a couple of jumps, and some flood lights. Sometimes when Mark trains puppies, a few extra obstacles will be laid out for the youngsters to negotiate to develop their flexibility and balance. All extra items are stored in a small Wendy house next to the field with a very bright, yellow sign nailed to it saying “PLEASE clean up after your dog”. Off to the left of the entrance to the field is a “seating area” with a few tyres dug into the ground to separate the humans from the dogs and helpers working on the field and a table to keep equipment and coffee on. On the opposite side are three towers made from stacked tyres used during protection training. The field is used for both protection work and obedience training. There are rules for this field that dictate human and dog behaviour; the norms and values expressed by all who visit it point to the larger subculture to which they all belong. And it is on this field that many dog-human conversations are had.

Channels of communication

“Dogs don't speak English, French, or Spanish; they speak canine” (Irvine, 2008). Dogs are not born with an inherent knowledge of human language. Initially, terms like “yes”, “no”,

“cookie”, and “three bags of rice” are all relative mumblings in a dog's velvety ears. Human words, as well as actions, need to be learned through a process of association for them to mean anything to a dog. Therefore, one overarching goal of training a dog is acquiring the necessary skills to communicate with dogs effectively (Greenebaum, 2010:134). Inter-species communication usually occurs through tools and symbols, and according to Schilder and Van der Borg (2004) this makes dog training the ideal lens through which to study these exchanges. For example, a human can reward, punish or communicate with a dog using food rewards, gadgets (like collars and leashes), vocalisations, and, most importantly, body language (Greenebaum, 2010:135).

A dog's life experiences, especially prior training history, has the potential to shape how a dog responds when conversing with humans (Marshall-Pescini, Passalacqua, Barnard, Valsecchi, & Prato-Previde, 2009:417). Trained dogs tend to better understand the use of pointing, gazing, and head orientation as communicative cues (Marshall-Pescini et al., 2009:417). This study, therefore, showed that both genes and life experience influence how dogs interpret human signals. Training shapes the behaviour of a dog in two ways: first, their willingness to communicate, and second, the unique style with which the dog converses (Marshall-Pescini et al., 2009:421). It then follows to say that the method and purpose of training affects the response of the dog. For example, dogs trained for agility need to look at their handler to show them which obstacle to go through or over, and are, therefore, more prone to look at the human when compared to search and rescue dogs who are trained to work independently (Marshall-Pescini et al., 2009:420).

The symbolic nature of dog-human communication, therefore, necessitates the use of a toolkit. *Schutzhund* training primarily uses the following devices for inter-species exchange:

- 1) Food
- 2) Toys and sleeves
- 3) Body coordination
- 4) Voice
- 5) Mind
- 6) Gadgetry

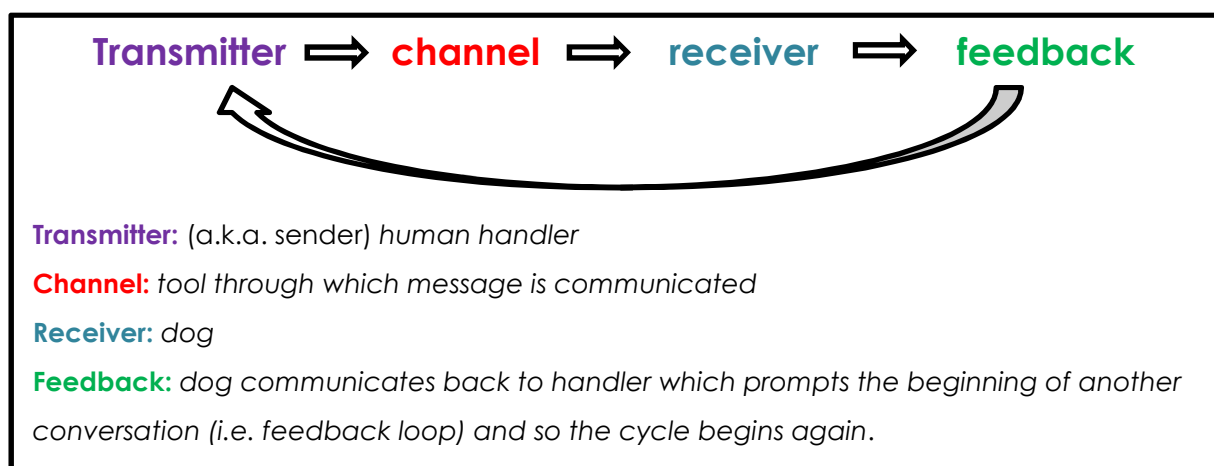
The conversation

Using tools like these facilitates a dog's understanding of human cues, while teaching humans how to choose and apply the appropriate tools in the kit to achieve the desired

results (Greenebaum, 2010:135). In this way, one can start to view training as an on-going dialogue between two species – a dialogue that in itself is brief, but unremitting. Dog and handler are always building on what they have learned from one another during their preceding sessions together; they simply resume the “conversation” that they had had with one another during their previous interaction. This was confirmed during fieldwork when most handlers referred to their relations with their dogs as “dialogues” or negotiations focused around a specific exercise.

According to Abrantes (2007) human-animal communication occurs within a system consisting of an environment, transmitter, receiver, and signal. I observed that regardless of how the conversation started between dog and handler, this concept could be applied to all dog-handler conversations I witnessed, in a basic feedback loop. It may look something like **Diagram 3** if the human, hypothetically, initiated the conversation:

Diagram 3: Human-dog training conversations form a basic feedback loop



Via a process of association and practice, dogs (**receiver**) can also learn to use the tools that handlers (**transmitter**) use to feed information back to the sender in a system of reciprocal communication. The tools mentioned earlier serve as communicative channels (regardless of whether they are of the “carrot” or “stick” genre). These **channels** not only ensure that the human communicates his/her desires effectively to the dog, but that the dog (in its response) “talks back” via the same channel. The dog’s **feedback**/response (as well as the accuracy of the human’s ability to “read” the message) is vital. This response is fed back into the conversation again, prompting an immediate reaction from the handler. Hence, both species are sender and receiver of a message at one point or another in the conversation. A basic, practical example can be drawn from my field notes:

Mark was coaching handlers on how to use food in training with their very young puppies (about 8 weeks old), when he asked me to get my dog and show him what I had been doing with her at home. I brought Bindi onto the field and she seemed very distracted. She was looking about at everyone, and if she caught anyone's gaze, her ears would go flat back on her head and her whole body would wriggle with excitement as she strained on the lead to go and greet everyone. "Go down on your haunches," said Mark. And when I did, I seemed to become a point of interest to Bindi because she came right to me. "Now make her push for the food". So I reached into my pocket, grabbed a handful of food, proceeded to show her that I had food in my hands, closed my fingers around it, and proceeded to make her push for the food. Only when she pushed her hardest to pry the food from my hands would I allow her access to it. Once she had swallowed she came back for more, pushing harder for the food than before.

From this experience I realised that both my body and the food were tools used to communicate with the dog. Firstly, lowering my body to the dog's level immediately made me more accessible and exciting to her; the moment she focused her attention on me, the exercise began. Then the food became the channel used to communicate. In this case, I (transmitter) initiated the conversation by presenting Bindi (receiver) with food (channel) in my hands. She then engaged in the conversation with me by attempting to get at the food (feedback). I communicated back by not allowing her access to the food until she pushed harder, and she received the full reward when she understood the message: push very hard and you will get the food. Then Bindi initiated the conversation after that by coming back and pushing at my hands again, asking for food, thus not only making her the transmitter in the next portion of our conversation but also confirming her understanding of the message I was trying to convey to her.

Abrantes (2007) highlights these points to remember in interspecies communication:

- Senses determine signal type
- What the mouth and body express are very different matters
- Human-animal communication mainly consists of kinesis (body-language) and semiosis (signals): "one signal – one action"
- A signal's value hinges on "form, meaning, intensity, timing, and consequence"

Therefore, if the timing of my reward had been off mark or the value of the reward was not great enough, the message would not have been accurately interpreted. During Abrantes' (2007) studies on human-animal communication, he discovered that any form of training (human or animal) is not possible without a well-balanced variety of positive and negative reinforcement. Success in training, therefore, lies in matching the tool to the situation and applying the correct timing and intensity.

#1 Food: the salary

Food is many things in the dog training relationship: survival, reward, catalyst, and even a token of social understanding. Food is the gravity that initially draws the dog near to its handler. It is a tool that, some argue, hinders genuine social exchanges because it appears to promote bribery and restrict freedom (Hearne, 1995:446). While others still say that food is merely the glue that binds and reinforces the partnership, as well as creates a positive association to work in the dog's mind.

Most *Schutzhund* handlers use sausages (because the longer, thinner strips make the food easier to handle in driving and heeling exercises) along with the dog's usual food (dog cubes/pellets). The combination is vital as a dog only working for one brand of sausages (or other high-value rewards) will become malnourished. Some reward-based trainers ask handlers to bring an assortment of food to training sessions, such as a "trail mix" of sausages, chicken breast, ham, cheese, or any other food the dog may like. The importance of variety here is that dogs have favourite foods and cravings just like humans do, and these desires can be volatile (Greenebaum, 2010:136).

I was never quite certain of what food really meant to the dog until Mark explained it to me by way of a diagram he sketched in the sand. Here is a description of the encounter drawn from my field notes (December 2013).

I had just put my dog away after a rather gruelling training session with Mark, when he called me over to demonstrate the meaning of "working the food" in *Schutzhund* training. He picked up a nearby stick and drew a rough circle in the sand next to the training field. He split the circle into three sections (like a pie chart) and labelled them S, S, and C. I took a guess at the symbols [having a vague reference to them at an earlier point in training] and was found to be correct: survival, satisfaction, and condition. Mark described that the circle represented the full meal of the dog (a dog eating to what he called condition). According to Mark, a dog must drive its handler hard along the spectrum [from nothing, to survival (a third of his daily portion), to satisfaction (two-thirds of his daily portion) and finally to condition]. The handler must have enough skill to stop the exercise when he/she discerns that the dog is still engaged and driving hard, and just before the dog lowers his/her intensity in the work. This will leave the dog wanting more in a good way while neutralizing any possibility of boring the animal. An over-satisfied dog may still push his/her handler to get the food, but at a far lower intensity, and the dog then learns that he/she can also get food from this lower intensity work [i.e. not giving his all is substandard and will result in lower quality performances at the end of the day]. He explained that as long as a dog receives one third of her/his usual meal per day, she/he will be fine [survival]. The ultimate aim is for the dog to reach the point of accuracy and physical fitness to drive the handler for the complete amount [condition]. But this is a process.

Although the concept is not appreciated by broader society, we do exist in an operant world. The simplest example is receiving a salary for the work you accomplish (Young, 2002:174). Humans perform certain duties and behaviours (work) with the goal of receiving reinforcers (money) (Young, 2002:175). There are two sources of income which matter most in dogdom: payment on a commission basis and a fixed salary.

Mark: Do you know of a human that will willingly, regardless, [work] for nothing? Do you know a [dog] who is going to at the end of the day say we will do all of these things, run, and bite, and etc. for nothing...That dog doesn't exist. That human doesn't exist. That environment doesn't exist.

You go to work, and you get a salary. If you went to work and did nothing, what would happen? You wouldn't get a salary. So, if you turn around and you say to the dog "do you want a salary" and the dog says to you "yes, I would really like a salary"...And then you say to the dog "for one and a half cups of salary, I need this job done. I am going to ask you to do this and this and this. If you do it in the correct manner, you will get a salary. If you don't give it to me in the correct manner, your salary stops."

Candice: So it is about controlling portion sizes...

Mark: ...when you [talk about] controlling portion sizes, you are saying to the dog "you need so much to eat, and if you want to eat, you give me so much work". [In the human working world, you often start off on a system where] you earn commission... You do x amount of work, you get x amount of [money]. So if you stop working, you get no more [money]. And in that way, the dog starts working for his salary. You start off on a commission basis. The more you work, the more you get. So if you drive hard, and you work well, you get your whole meal [salary]. But if you don't work hard enough, you only get part of the meal [commission]...the next day you'll be a little hungry, and the next day you'll be a little hungrier. And as you get hungrier and hungrier so we offer you more and more food. That the more you work, the more you get. And at the end of the day, you have a situation where he doesn't realise that he's working for food, but he's working and the food happens to be secondary...that's how you use food [in training].

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

The use of economic terminology seemed to be common when discoursing on the dog and the metaphors used served to shed the underlying perceptions of humans about dogs. From Mark's description here, the concept of a dog working for a salary appeared to place the dog in a subordinate position to the human handler as the handler is viewed as some sort of CEO (a position of power) paying the employee for work done. This negotiation of roles is something I will discuss in the next chapter.

Food for thought

The symbol of food is powerful in the dog-human relationship. I have mapped out the symbolic significance of food in training below, based on the concept of food-as-salary applied to the partnerships I observed.

Reinforcement: At a very basic level, I observed handlers use food to lure their dogs into the correct position or behaviour. The success of this interaction was determined by a negotiation of wills and skills between the dog and handler. On the one hand, the dog was either willing, or not, to work accurately for reward, which is oftentimes co-dependant on their athletic ability (e.g. those training puppies did not expect them to have the muscular physique to scale up an 8-foot A-frame). On the other hand, the handler needed to have effectual techniques and cues to lure the dog into the correct behaviour. Simply put, if Fido sat correctly following the correct technique on the part of the handler, he received the food and understood that what he had accomplished was what his handler was asking for. Thus, the food reinforced the behaviour.

Mental preparation: At a deeper level, however, food communicates far more to a dog than praise for good performance. Handlers use food to prepare dogs mentally for certain exercises through portion regulation. For example, handlers often use decreased food portions (among other things) to communicate to their dog that tracking is ahead.

Hettie: And they know if you're going to train...Saturday morning [Duke] knows we're going to go tracking because you start feeding them less and the Friday night they don't get any food

Karen: So psychologically they're also prepared

Hettie: Psychologically they know we're going to do something the next morning

(Hettie Cilliers & Karen Wessels, focus group discussion)

As explained by Hettie here, the food is slowly decreased until the day of tracking to prepare the dog both mentally and physically for the task at hand. With time, the dog starts to use their feeding portions as an indicator of what is to come (like Duke demonstrates in this example). This became clear when Hettie explained how excited Duke would become the evening before going tracking and that this behaviour would not occur unless the food was reduced. This mental preparation is visible on the field where the partnership is put to the test. Some may argue that the dog is working, not because it has been prepared, but rather because it is very hungry. Indeed hunger drives the dog to work but it remains important to remember that dogs have minds and wills of their own. I have personally experienced and witnessed dogs that by ordinary standards are very hungry and still do not work because they are not "up to it" on that particular day.

Levels of accuracy: If applied in the correct way, the process of getting and consuming food during training sessions symbolises both desired behaviour and excellence in varying degrees to both the dog and the handler. A handler knows that this psychological mind-set

has been reached in the animal, when the dog begins offering behaviours in exchange for a reward. For example, near meal times in the evenings, Hettie recounted that oftentimes when Duke sees his bowl of food he immediately presents a *platz* or a *setz* – this is what trainers call offering behaviours as the dog tries everything it has formerly received a reward for to gain the present reward. Furthermore, a dog also learns that portion sizes, “high value rewards”²⁵ or jackpots²⁶ communicate the degree of excellence in their work. For example, in a recall exercise, a dog may receive a handful of pellets for running to the handler and sitting slightly off centre, while the dog will receive a jackpot if he comes in with high speed and accurately plants himself directly and straight in front of the handler. Training in this way secures the dog in a position where he/she will push for a level of greater excellence knowing each time that a larger pile of food, or more valuable reward, is coming if he/she tries their best (Daniels, pers. com., 2014).

Satiation and workability: A dog uses food to communicate satiation levels to its handler. When a dog is fully satisfied (the outcome of a full belly), they are no longer in prime condition to work, neither will they be energetic enough. Each dog has their individual level of satiation; some seem to have an insatiable appetite, while others fill quickly. Hettie expressed that Duke's drive for food was so high that he would never stop working for food, even when he was full, while Martie needed to carefully plan her dog's meals because he became full as well as bored fairly quickly. The handler needs to learn this early on in the process of partnering with a dog and being exposed to the dog's habits in training and feeding daily, so as to always make training as positive as possible. It is the handler's responsibility to “work the food” and read the dog (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). One has to get into a habit of always ending training at a point where the dog is satisfied but still wants to work (i.e. is in a positive mood), rather than being bored, over-full, or ending the session on an overall bad note by trying to “drag” behaviours out of an unwilling partner.

Social dominance versus trust: Food can also be used as a device to navigate social dominance. Food is a very necessary resource for a dog's survival and when a human manages this valuable resource it has a clear implication for the relationship. I observed that even though handlers said that food was only withheld to intensify the food drive and willingness to work, this seemed to be a subtle method of establishing dominance over the dog and making the dog comply with human wishes.

²⁵ Foods that are a special favourite like meat, cheese, or tripe

²⁶ Containers with special treats in them

Amy had [no food drive], but why should she? Mark might have explained it well to you with the circle-pie chart in thirds...So if you can keep them between that survival and satisfaction mode that is your ultimate. Classical example is [Amy]. She lost a lot of condition but that's because I had to teach her to value food a little bit more.

(Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Wayde: I would train 4-5 times a day [with Asco when he was younger]. That's how he got his food every day; by working. He never just got food. Whether it was raining, it was every day the same thing...

Wendy: it was quite simple, if he so much as slinked off and looked away, "sorry, I was offering you food, obviously you're not hungry enough"; kennel.

Wayde: You've got to be so black and white. And unfortunately when he came out he just had no food drive. So Dana told me, put him away, leave him for a day or two, and then work him. And that's what I did and...if he came out and didn't come straight driving for food, put him away. That's ok, we'll try again later. Same thing. And he eventually clicked. [Now] he knows [if] I've got food and you let him out, it means driving.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

From a different perspective, if food is used correctly, it establishes trust and a deep bond between dog and handler. If all the good things that a dog can receive from life - especially food - come only from the handler and are given out consistently, how can the dog not trust the person? It is up to the handler to establish the training relationship in such a way that the dog is convinced of work-reward exchanges (i.e. food will certainly come if I do this). Wendy also explained that food was used in their puppy school to encourage puppies to overcome obstacles like steep stairs or balancing boards that the dogs were perhaps nervous of attempting without the incentive of food. Food, therefore, is also used to instil confidence in dogs.

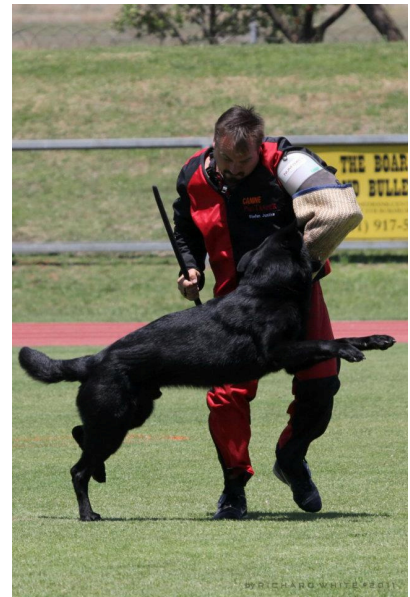
#2 Toys and sleeves: Winning the prize

Toys are used in a similar way to food in training - to reinforce behaviours as a reward for correctness. The main difference between food and a toy can be expressed as acknowledgement versus reward. Food can be used to acknowledge an effort to be correct, while a toy can only be given when absolute correctness is achieved (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). Training with toys also puts many dogs into a super, high-in-drive state. This can be excessive, sometimes creating skew positions and over-excitement in their eagerness to please.

You...teach the mechanics [of the positions] with the food. Then your [use] of the toy would be to speed up your motivation. If you are teaching the dog from the beginning with the toy, you end up with a dog that is basically hectic and all over the show. You don't end up with a dog that is what we would call correct...So you would teach with the food to have your correctness, and then your toy would motivate your speed and visual.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Protection work involves practically no food beyond the point of preparation. Dogs are often only fed a while after protection work is completed so as to create high drive for the sleeve. But, overall, protection work is not about getting a bowl of food at the end of a session, it is about “winning the sleeve” on the field. It is for this reason that I believe that food is not the only comprehensive reason why dogs work; it is not the end it is merely one of the means. From the vantage point of an observer, protection work is the ultimate depiction of a dogs’ inner drive and physical capabilities.



#3 Coordination: Speaking bodies

The body, and associated body language, is the least acknowledged yet most significant training tool. It can be used to intimidate, control, overpower, co-operate or build trust (Greenebaum, 2010:136). Sanders contends that “it is through on-going interactional experience with the dog that the owner learns to ‘read’ gaze, vocalization, bodily expressions, and other communicative acts” (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:66).

Photo 4.4:

A demonstration of power

The late Zac displaying a powerful grip in “the escape” segment of his bite work routine at the 2011 KUSA Nationals.

Bodies speak to each other. In spite of our verbosity, the majority of human-to-human communication is conveyed in bodily movements and micro-expressions. With the option of language generally being off of the table in dog-to-human communication, body language counts that much more. In a study on horse–human communication, Brandt (2004) claims that body language (i.e. speaking with your body) expands the traditional view that language is only spoken word. Body language is such a powerful tool of communication that animals and humans can use it to generate shared meaning (Brandt, 2004). A dog’s inability to speak using words often obliges humans to “speak for” them by interpreting their body language.

Candice: Reading the dog’s body is extremely important, isn’t it?

Wayde: Ja. If I take Kondor out and he’s whining and he’s not sitting and not *platzing*, there’s no way I can go on to the bite field yet. He just won’t be in control.

(Wayde Linden, pers. com.)

Human and dog bodies must speak to each other in training, and the conversation must be understood by both to achieve “flow”. Dogs rely heavily on human gestures to

communicate with humans effectively and to complete certain tasks (Marshall-Pescini et al., 2009:416). Both talking to, and maintaining eye contact with, a dog is essential in training (Virányi et al., 2008). Yet, it has been documented that puppies do not need much exposure to humans to learn how to read and exploit co-specific social cues (i.e. gesturing and gazing) – this ability is further strengthened through training (Bentosela, Barrera, Jakovcevic, Elgier, & Mustaca, 2008; Hare, Williamson, & Tomasello, 2002).

The animal gaze has received a fair amount of attention by post-modernists, such as Wendy Woodward's description of Jaques Derrida's awkward, naked encounter with his cat. Animals often gaze at people to get their attention, to initiate conversation, request assistance in "difficult" or unclear situations, and gaze-alternation is used by dogs as a powerful type of co-operative and directional communication (Hare, Call, & Tomasello, 1998; Marshall-Pescini et al., 2009:420-421). Dogs trained for *schutzhund*, when compared to untrained dogs, are proven to look at their handler more frequently during on-lead walks (Bentosela et al., 2008). These dogs have been trained (through reinforcement) to walk tight to the side of their handler, looking up into the human's face during the *fuss* ("heel") exercise, suggesting that human-directed gazing is also a learned behaviour (Bentosela et al., 2008).



Photo 4.5. & 4.6: The *schutzhund* fuss

Photo 4.5. Wayde and Kondor demonstrating the ideal picture of a typical *schutzhund* "fuss" ("heel" in English). The dog drives the handler close on his side while looking into his face producing a powerful image of partnership and interspecies co-operation. **Photo 4.6.** depicts a dog walking normally across Mark's field – note the marked differences in attitude and gaze-direction between the two dogs.

The *fuss* exercise was not the only observable activity involving the animal gaze. I noticed that dogs looked at their handlers very often when they were faced with a challenge in their work, especially when something new was being taught to them. This could suggest that the dogs look at their handlers in an effort to request help or to clarify a potentially ambiguous message. I also observed that dogs training for *schutzhund* are left-hand orientated, as this is the primary hand used to reward the dog. Many dogs looked at the left hand when they expected to be rewarded during an exercise or even bumped the hand.



Photo 4.7

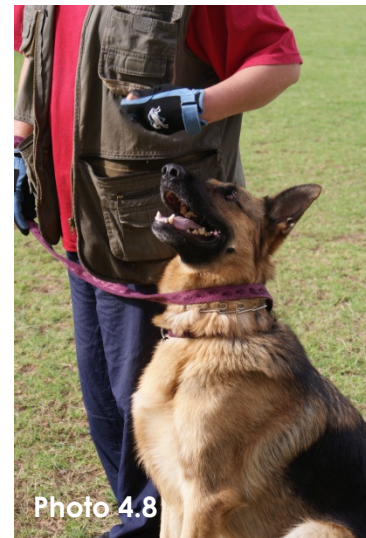


Photo 4.8

Photo 4.7 and 4.8: Left-hand orientation

Casey (handler: Karen Wessels) showing directed gaze towards the left-hand of the handler in two separate incidences (photos taken: April 2013).

The following excerpt from my field notes also demonstrates left-hand orientation.

At one of Dana Voss' seminars I observed as Dana was teaching a handler to phase out the left-hand signal for *fuss*. In the beginning of the session the position of the hand was next to the handler's left side so that the dog would look up at her and be in the correct position. But the lesson was to phase out the hand signal so that the dog wouldn't rely on the hand being there all the time to come into the correct heel position. Dana instructed the handler to start off with the hand at her side with food in the hand as usual and then slip her hand quickly behind her back. The dog immediately followed the left hand behind her back and grabbed the sausage out of her hand. Several more practice rounds were required before the dog realised that the reward would come, but only if he stayed at her side while her hand remained behind her back.

Furry mirrors

The dog's body is a furry mirror that does not lie. Dogs reflect and embody our true feelings and relations with them. They mirror our uncertainty, emotions, and actions making it quite impossible for a dog to hide a trusting versus a physically abusive relationship with its handler.

It has been confirmed by research that a dog lowers its posture when compulsion is applied in comparison to a dog motivated to work for food (Haverbeke, Laporte, Depiereux, Giffroy, & Diederich, 2008:115).

As confirmed by the behaviourists interviewed, dogs perform various displacement behaviours often accompanied by a handler-directed gaze when confused. Displacement behaviours (licking the lips, excessive panting, yawning, jumping up, shaking, lifting of the front paw, redirected aggression, and snapping) are stress indicators in a dog that are often noted following the application of compulsion during training (Haverbeke et al., 2008:115). This is why compulsion can produce habitual submission in a dog who receives repeated, inappropriate “beatings”. Displacement behaviours or cues of confusion in a dog also help handlers to understand when they have either not made something clear enough for the dog in their training, or have possibly made a mistake in the way that they have applied a correction.

While observing Hettie work with Duke, he began to present displacement behaviours during one exercise. Hettie had put the dog in a *platz*, and moved a distance away from him. Duke grew uncomfortable and upon her return to his side, he leapt up at her, gripped her with his forepaws, whined, and trotted around her before she could give him the *fuss* command. Upon querying this response, Hettie admitted that she had created confusion in the dog in the past with this particular exercise by sometimes correcting him with a pinch collar for getting up and sometimes not. She explained that a lot of time would have to be spent fixing this displacement behaviour because she was not consistent in her response to his behaviour from the beginning.

One must be very careful, though, not to assume that a dog exhibits displacement behaviours only because it is in pain or confused. I observed many dogs that displaced when they were very high in drive or excited (e.g. barking when they see the dumbbell, or panting and drooling heavily throughout an obedience routine in eager anticipation of reward).

Dogs are exceptionally sensitive to subtle body cues which could be attributed as a type of subconscious communication. The slightest change in posture, a drop of the shoulder, the directional angle of the body, or elevated breathing can all communicate something to the dog, all of which are reinforced in training. Hence, Mark, Wayde, and Wendy all emphasised the importance of keeping the general posture of the human body neutral and straight when working with dogs. Dogs also respond to dominating body language negatively such as leaning or bearing over the animal, crowding, or pushing them harshly.

Wayde: You could actually teach a dog a routine just by body...you [could] teach a dog to turn left by head [jerk] left, for example. I think we all have traits that our dogs pick up long before we actually know it. They definitely pick up on your body language, no two ways about that.

Wendy: They definitely learn more from what they see. When you go over to any dog and you put your hands on your hips and lean over them, they're going to...say "Whoa!" either whoa [like] back off or whoa, that's a challenge!

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Posture and leaning towards the ground or sides also indicates direction to a dog. E.g. being low to the floor brings the dog's body lower (demonstrated when teaching the "down") or dropping the left shoulder when turning left could be a clear indication for the dog to turn left in a routine.

Rules of engagement

The three different phases of *schutzhund* call for three different body attitudes for the varying demands of each phase on both human and animal. One thing remains constant throughout disciplines though – the actions and attitude of the human body must be choreographed to match the needs of the dog's body and temperament. Every dog is different, requiring different bodily responses and cues from the human handler to look, and be, good at what he/she is doing. Here, I do not refer to hand gestures used by handlers to lure dogs into position; I refer to the attitude of the human body that draws the dog into a certain frame of mind.

Motivational trainers are practically "hands-off" (Greenebaum, 2010:137). Unlike compulsion handlers, who use their body to physically control the dog body or try to eliminate disobedience and aggression, motivational methods encourage focusing on how to consistently correct your own body language. The risks of compulsion need not be reiterated here. It bears reminding that the danger in attempting to mimic a "pack mentality" by asserting yourself as the alpha dog intensifies problematic behaviours through harsh treatment (Fennel, 2004; Greenebaum, 2013). The direct opposite also produces unwanted behaviours. Instead of treating and respecting a dog for the species it is, humans tend to anthropomorphize them and treat them as "eternal puppies" only serving to exacerbate ill-disciplined behaviours (Fennel, 2004).

Greenebaum provides a description of how motivational trainers use their bodies effectively in training (2010:137):

Dogs have different communication skills and they read our body language [just as]... we read theirs. For example, hands folded around your chest means something different to them than hands towards your side. Walking away backwards is different than turning your back to them. Therefore, you need to be consistent. If you introduce a new posture, they might not understand... People don't speak canine very well. We violate their rules all the time.

Every relationship is defined by rules of engagement. Dogs have rules and so do humans with regards to the use of the body and proxemics. Greenebaum (2010:137) and Fennel (2004) insist that the goal in training should be threefold: adjust your body, learn to interpret canine body language, and imitate dog behavior. Dog handlers, like horse riders, need to think and behave in natural-cultural ways (Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013:325). One research participant explained how important it is to keep one's body in check around an animal. For example, behaving calmly means to not wave your arms about or scream and shout. In this way, control of one's limbs may seem like a subtle bodily gesture, but it goes a long way towards building a trusting partnership with an animal (Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013:325).

KINESICS IN TRACKING AND OBEDIENCE

All participants were in agreement that tracking should be a calm event where the dog's mind is composed and focused, rather than over-excited because they may miss the article or go off of the track completely in their enthusiasm. The conversation begins with getting ready for the trip and ends when the handler and dog come back home, all of which need to be performed in a calm, un-rushed fashion. Tracking conversations have much to do with routine. The handler needs to maintain a dependable routine for tracking (pre-, during, and post-) to ensure calmness throughout. My tracking routine is explained here:

Tracking is usually an early morning event, especially in summer, so I try to pack the bakkie and dog trailer with my gear the night before. My dogs do not interact or play before tracking as I notice that this excites them too much. They are crated separately to calm them as much as possible. My dogs know exactly when we're going tracking though, so it is quite difficult to keep them calm. The long drive to the farm is then accompanied by a quiet atmosphere. I don't play music loudly, I don't talk to the dogs that much, I just drive. Then once I've arrived, I take each dog out to toilet and have a look around to orientate themselves, and put them back in the bakkie calmly while I lay my track. Some advanced handlers put their dog in a down stay next to the field to take in the surroundings further. Once the track has aged and the dog is calm and relaxed, she is peacefully taken to the tracking pole (which indicates the beginning of the track). During the track, the line is also relaxed. If the dog has done well, some handlers unclip the dog at the end but I just walk back on a very loose lead, praising her softly. A relaxed lead communicates that the dog has done well on the track. If the dog had messed around on the track, I may take her to

the car on a restrictive lead to indicate tension. This routine is repeated each and every time we go tracking so that even though there are uncertainties on the track, my dog knows what to expect when we arrive and going through the motions puts her in the right frame of mind.

Obedience requires the dog to be in high-drive; excited, powerful, and willing, not disinterested, resistant, scared, or tired. The dog mirrors the attitude, frame of mind, and general emotional state of the human (Daniels, pers. com. 2014). If a dog is too high-in-drive during obedience (so excited that he is skew in the *fuss* position, hovers at the *setz*, wants to play with or chew the dumbbell when asked to retrieve it, and so on) then an energetic, human posture will only overstimulate the dog to the point where he will not perform accurately. Similarly, a low-energy dog, who needs a bit more drive in his/her exercises will only lag further behind if the handler is equally dreary in their actions and attitude.

Wendy: I pretended to be hyperventilating with Amy when in the group [at a trial]...We trained to go ("heavy breathing" in and out) and reward comes. So actually I was puffing and panting at that point in time because with her you've got to work your arse off to get around the obedience field; it is hard work. She's just like so [bored and lagging]. So by the time I get there, I literally am breathing heavily and she just knows that when this comes (heavy breathing) reward comes.

Wayde: You've got to know your dog and you've got to read the body...With Asco you need to build drive [but with] Kondor, I mustn't...I don't want to kill his drive because I want the drive, it must just be in control.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)



Photo 4.9

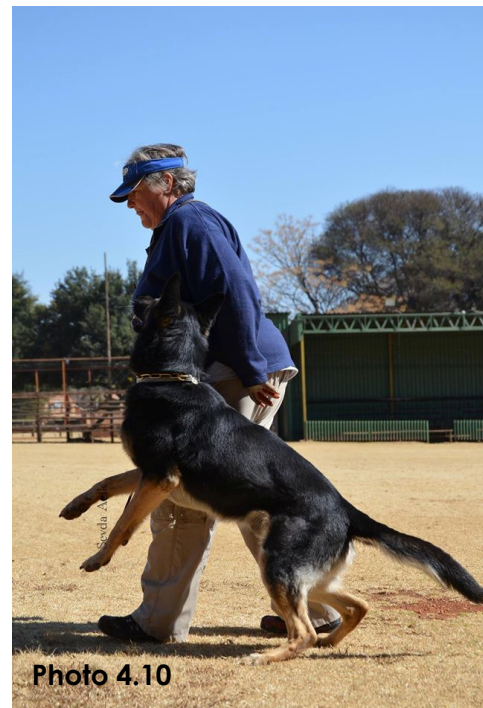


Photo 4.10

Photo 4.9 and 4.10: Co-ordinating calmness using the body

Dante' is, according to Dana, always in the air. He gets so excited during training that he is often found leaping up and bouncing in the heel exercises. In both incidences captured here, Dana is seen maintaining a completely neutral body language in an attempt to not over-stimulate an already excitable dog.

Wayde cautioned that one should not confuse the signs of a hectic dog with a dog that is high-in-drive. Wendy proceeded to provide a vivid example of containment to emphasise the point:

Wayde: one thing that people make a mistake with is a dog in high-drive versus one that is hectic. People think "oh my dog's got so much drive!" meanwhile the dog's hectic. [You need] to know the difference. How to explain it...

Wendy: It's the little kettle, the balloon, it's letting out air [slowly], it's containment. As soon as you've got a dog containing itself, containing vocally and with movement and it's driving you for reward. So it's getting you, it's working you to reward it. That is in my mind what drive is. Hecticness is when the dogs become vocal and there's no containment. So it's all bubbling at the surface and the lid is off and everything is allowed to escape everywhere. As soon as you can teach the containment, to put the lid on, and get the dog to learn to contain [itself, it is driving you]. Because you want the bubbles, but you need to keep the lid on. And to drive you, it's working for you, pushing you for reward, driving you for reward.

Wayde: Some dogs with very high drive tend to go into being hectic. Their minds get totally blocked up and not clear...

Wendy: ...and then they revert to foundation, so if the foundation wasn't good enough then you're screwed. Zac was like that.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Wayde and Wendy's discussion here points to the importance of the dog's body in the conversation. Not only is reading the dog's body vital in training, but the dog itself has to learn to contain his or her own physical power and excitement and release or channel their energy appropriately. Wendy went on to discuss how important the dog's tail is along with other body parts that communicate a message...

Candice: You mentioned to watch the tail?

Wendy: It's a very clear indicator of where the dog is up here (pointing to her head). Especially on the track because you get to see the tail.

Wayde: Even just walking to your field, if the dog's tail is doing this (used finger to indicate an upright tail) you know he's looking for a fight. Then again, you know your dog, you can read by the dog's tail what it's doing.

Wendy: [Not just the tail but the] ears, its mouth; there's so much you can read through how they are communicating with their bodies.

Wayde: Even the judges are watching, they need to read...during the retrieve, what are the dog's ears doing? Even on the long bite, are the ears up like this or are they flat? If the dog's ears are flat back when it's going through, then you know the dog's just going [for it], it's not worried. But then you'll get dogs that slow down before the bite (ears forward - alert)...Obviously you want a dog whose ears are down and he's just going for it because then the dog is not really bothered about the stick or anything, he's just...but you know, a dog could have been hurt previously that's why it does the slowing down.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

KINESICS IN BITE WORK

Protection work demands control, confidence, and a commanding, no-nonsense tone and body posture. One study confirmed that handlers tend to use a lot more negative reinforcement (jerking the leash, hitting, shouting) and punishment for mistakes during bite work than during obedience training or tracking (Haverbeke et al., 2008:115). Yet, in spite of this, handlers were still found to apply more positive reinforcement than punishment across the disciplines which included verbal praise, patting or stroking, and rewarding with food or toys (Haverbeke et al., 2008:114).

The significance of body language is more complicated in bite work because, unlike the other two disciplines, there is another body on the field that matters just as much as the dog and handler: the helper. In bite work training, the handler needs to allow the dog to do the work, while listening to the directions of the helper. The helper needs to be experienced enough to read the dog's body language and to determine from that specific communication, what techniques should be applied to either build drive, calm the dog, or coax more confidence.

The helper often begins protection exercises side-on, not face-on. Face-on confrontations are more intimidating to a dog, while side-on confrontations make the human body look smaller, less daunting, and thus more approachable; a dog is more willing to charge a less daunting target (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). As mentioned in chapter 3 the dog must ultimately detain a helper who is 1) inactive and non-threatening ("hold and bark"), 2) tries to flee ("the escape") or 3) attacks head-on ("long-bite"). The preparatory exercises for this final demonstration of courage start with confidence building and achieving a full, calm, grip. Body postures differ from preparatory training to the day of the competition. As observed at the 2014 Nationals, on the day of competition the handler needs to assert absolute postural and vocal control as this phase of the sport can easily derail if an overexcited, aggressive dog, is paired with a meek handler who lacks all confidence in their prior training. The helper, on the other hand, must remain as neutral as possible in the hide when the dog approaches – no bodily movements, no eye contact with the dog, no aggravations or antagonizing to create drive – to demonstrate the dog's true reaction to an inactive assailant.

Before entering a competition, the dog must be prepared (through training) to deal with these circumstances. This is where the helper's body becomes a vital communicative tool. I

drew a few examples from my fieldwork experiences to illustrate how the helper's body facilitates training and communicates with the dog:

I gathered, from my time spent on Mark's "farm", that he enjoyed mentoring younger men (and, on the rare occasion, women) interested in becoming helpers. In one such instance, I found Mark discussing some body strategies with his latest apprentice. The apprentice was trim, tall, in his late twenties and proficient in kick-boxing and mixed martial arts. Mark used his own body to show the trainee how to build confidence in a dog, and then asked him to demonstrate what he had learned on the next dog that came onto the field. Mark emphasised that lying down sideways could help a dog to deal with confrontations (especially in bite work, when the dog is ultimately expected to attack an assailant approaching face-on at competition level). He instructed the apprentice that once the dog had a good grip on the sleeve in this sideways position, the helper should get up to the knees and allow the win. Once the dog had gripped the sleeve confidently a few times at this level of the exercise, the helper could then proceed to initiating a grip on his knees, and then move to a stand, allowing the dog to finally win the sleeve in this upright position to build further confidence.



Photo 4.11: Mentoring on the farm

Mark shown here discussing body strategies with his apprentice while the handler and dog are present (photo taken: May 2014)



Photo 4.12



Photo 4.13



Photo 4.14

Photo 4.12 to 4.14: Side-on and lowered body postures

The apprentice demonstrating a grip while kneeling, then getting up while the dog still maintains a good grip, and finally a win while in the standing position – Lexx Vom Stoersrudel (a sable, sport-line German Shepherd Dog) in the final photo happily winning the sleeve (photo taken: May 2014).

Mark went on to explain that the body of the handler can also be used to instil courage in a young, insecure dog during bite work exercises. Placing your body, as the handler, in a physically subordinate position to the dog (lowering yourself into a sitting or kneeling position) allows the dog to gain confidence. This “lowering” action initiates a sense of dominance and “nerve” in the dog that tends to give it the courage to defend his/her handler. This is another reason why handlers are asked to not hover over their dogs in training as this can cause submission and cowering instead of confidence and drive.



Photo 4.15



Photo 4.16

Photo 4.15 and 4.16: Human subordination

A young handler assuming a subordinate position during training so that his puppy can gain the confidence to achieve a good grip on the bite roll (photo taken: May 2014).

These discussions pointed to the vital nature of the helper not only in the sport, but in understanding the dog's personality, strengths, and weaknesses. Furthermore, the helper's body (in conjunction with helpful training gear: whip or baton) very often serves as a tool for developing and increasing drive by “teasing” the dog into defence.



Photo 4.17

Photo 4.18

Photo 4.17 and 4.18: Making drive

The apprentice seen here, using the whip and his lowered body to initiate this dog's defence drive. Swift nose taps are also commonly used to “make drive” (photo taken: May 2014).

#4 Voice: speaking to and for dogs

Speaking “to” dogs

A dog focuses more on the tone of voice used in speaking to them, than the actual words in the sentence. This is why people quite often confuse the dog understanding every word they say, with them playing out what they have learned from that tone of voice the last time you used it with them. Vocal pitch and tone is, therefore, essential, and handlers believe that it sends a direct message to the dog about your emotional state: happy, angry, frustrated, weak, confident, and so on. I observed that happy, light, high-pitched tones (and general active demeanour) tended to excite the dogs, while coarse, low tones either intimidated them or commanded immediate obedience (once again dependant on previous learning experiences). Neutral tones paired with slow movements seemed to have a calming effect. During bite work a lower tone is used to encourage obedience without creating more drive in the dog so as not to interfere with the bite. Whereas in obedience, the handler wants the dog to exercise just the right measure of drive and containment, and to explode into his/her work, therefore, a higher pitch with a more excited lilt is often used by handlers in obedience training.

Wendy: [with tracking the tone of voice is] very caaaaalm, zooooog. For Asco I've got to go Fuss! (high-pitched and very excited). If he does that with Kondor he'll end up on his head (pointing at Wayde). It depends on the dog.

Wayde: then in bite work it's the same, [make the commands] clear, and obviously when you train, [Mark] will tell you this a lot, don't shout. Go: "aus" (neutral tone)...keep it low and calm and then obviously in the trial, it depends if there's lots of background noise, [and] lots of wind...go clear and make sure the dog can hear you. Do it the same as how you do your training.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Even though the concluding statement here suggests that tone of voice must remain constant from training to trial, I noted a marked difference in tone and volume at the Nationals' bite work phase when compared to the preparatory training. It could be possible that the National event produced a lot of excitement in both dog and human or that the weather conditions warranted the volume. Nevertheless, one after the other, every handler's voice was notably, purposefully raised to a shout.

Speaking “for” dogs

Interactions between dogs and their owners is usually quite verbal (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:67). Researchers refer to this dialect as “motherese” or “doggerel” (Beck & Katcher, 1991:268; Veevers, 1985:20). Dog owners often see their dogs as “virtual persons” (Rasmussen, Rajecski, & Craft, 1993) and through on-going interaction, owners learn to “read” their dog’s gaze, vocalizations, and actions (McConnell, 1991; Serpell, 1986) and speak with their dog. Due to the dog not “talking” back with words, owners feel the need to speak for the dog (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:66). One can identify common ways in which humans speak to, and often for, their dog:

1) Interlocution: Interlocution is common in situations where one member of the interaction has diminished ability to speak for themselves (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:63), such as Alzheimer or mentally impaired patients. It is also widespread among dog trainers where they attempt to construct the mind of the dog. Interlocution implicates that the language-enabled communicator understands the likes, dislikes, plans, and mood of the dog based on their shared history (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:63). In layman’s terms it involves “putting words” in someone else’s mouth – giving voice to the mute interactant’s current experiences. In some cases interlocution is used for the speaker’s benefit; at other times, it is intended to promote the interests of the dog (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:67).

[Logan] was a very worried dog. He was a very unhappy dog, because I think in his mind he was [constantly] guarding [something or someone]. He wasn’t a happy, carefree dog and would never have been...We trained him quite successfully although the pressure of competition was too much for him. Eventually I just retired him because he never got to grips with having people around him, dogs barking at him. Everything used to pressurise him and it was better if he was just left at home.

(Kate Brown, pers. com)

2) Direct questions: Dogs are often asked direct questions such as “what do you see?” or “do you want to leave now?” and common in working dog relations: “are you ready to work?” (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:69). By doing so, handlers directly give voice to what they believe their dogs would think about and say if they could use words.

3) Excusing tactics: Excusing tactics involves the “more responsible” member of the dyad feeling obligated to excuse the dog’s actions by justifying them in an attempt to repair the damage done to social decorum or even their own reputation (Hewitt & Stokes, 1975). This also occurs when adults excuse their child’s behaviour or an individual with a mental disorder (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:70).

4) Triangling: This term was coined by Ann Cain in 1983 and implies inverting the speaking-for process where the human speaker represents the virtual voice of the dog to convey the wishes and concerns of the dog to others. A veterinary client might use triangling to order another human around such as: “Why doesn’t Mike put me in the car while mommy finishes packing for our trip (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:70-71)?”

All forms of speaking for dogs, except for triangling, were present in dog-human pairs across the board during my fieldwork expeditions. This could possibly be because the nature of the relationship between sport-dogs and their handlers is not at all similar to the pet-human relationship. Handlers in *schutzhund* very rarely refer to themselves as a parent of the dog. Furthermore, most verbal conversations with the dogs took place off of the field because experienced handlers know that talking must be kept to a minimum²⁷ while working with the dog. It is interesting that excusing tactics were often used to “save face” for the handlers when their own abilities let them down – it seemed easier for them to blame it on the dog and his/her habits than to acknowledge any real error in themselves. E.g. “She always does that” or “He can do the exercise perfectly at home!” or (my personal favourite) “She must be coming into season”.

I think a lot of the time, people are looking for an excuse as to why their dog is not performing in front of the public eye...“Oh, it’s because there’s a bitch on season and somebody allowed their bitch to tinkle here”. Everyone looks for an excuse instead of just taking it...our pride gets dented doing [*schutzhund*] at such a level.

(Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Beyond the literal conversation going on between dog and handler, there is a general and continuous discourse about dogs amongst handlers. Such discourses about the dog also serve to build up the dog’s identity, assume certain preferences on behalf of the dog, and confirm or negate chosen methods to handle certain prevalent traits.

I’ve been through both [training methods: compulsion and motivation]. My dog didn’t want to go to the club any more [because of the compulsion]. That’s why I had a broken finger, because she didn’t want to. It was not nice for me, [and] it was not nice for her.

(Karen Wessels, pers. com.)

#5 Mind: the think tank

Wayde considered the mind to be the most important training tool on the field. Training requires mental work from both dog and handler (Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013:325). When humans think about communication, we generally think about talking and body

²⁷ Limited to cues and corrections

language, but we often forget an element that influences both of them: our mind and emotional state. Since dogs behave as our mirrors, our emotions have a direct influence on them.

Candice: Dogs mostly read your body language, don't they? Would you say so?

Mark: Your body language, your attitude, your inner feelings, your...everything. You know, all of these aspects are very, very important in the dog.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Dog minds

I often hear this expression: "If only my dog could speak, he could tell me what he was thinking or feeling". To unlock the exact thoughts of a dog may indeed not be possible, just as the unlocking of the mind of another human is equally beyond our reach. To be a unique person is to be *like* another, but never exactly the same. Dogs have individual personhood meaning that partially unlocking the mind of one, does not necessarily unlock another. We can, however, recount our experiences with them and by means of rough interpretation, at least appreciate the workings of a dog's mind and try to understand their messages that way. Humans seem so trained to listen for words instead of using their eyes to acknowledge communications. If we were willing to observe more than listen, the assumed silence on the animal's part would become filled with symbolic messages ready for interpretation.

The mind of the dog, as mysterious as it may seem, has a vast capacity for retention of information. An excerpt from my personal training journal helps to clarify this assumption:

I am quite amazed at the ability of my dogs to remember and skilfully put into practice something that they had learned months before without repetition in between. My dogs only have their bite work training when I am able to travel to Johannesburg (one long weekend every three to four months on average) and, yet, they can start directly where they ended off the last time they were there. The same can be said for tracking. I remember tracking in George in May 2014 with my puppy, finding no tracking grounds in Bloemfontein until mid-August, and still Bindi retained what she had learned months before. What's more, is that what she had learned, she could apply to different contexts. In George, I had tracked (30 paces straight to a corner and 20 paces thereafter to the end) on richly vegetated, fairly level plough, in very windy and cold conditions, while in Bloemfontein I laid a similar track on dry plough where she had to traverse deep crevices between contours in fair weather. Two completely different terrains and weather conditions and yet her ability to track was almost identical.

This affirms the canine ability for problem solving and retention. Highly trained sport dogs depend less on their handler for solutions and are more pro-active at solving problems (Marshall-Pescini et al., 2009:417). However, a keen capacity for problem solving and

allowing the dog to teach itself something can become a problem in *schutzhund* training. Wendy and Wayde described the "free shaping" techniques they used to train Zac to run the blinds and clear the jump.

Wayde: The problem with that is the dogs start to think for themselves. When you don't want them to do something or you're not giving them the reward, they say "oh, ok let me try this!"

Wendy: You must be waiting for me to try something new

Wayde: So you're trying to do one thing, they'll go and do something totally disobedient. So I don't like training like that. You give them too much freedom to allow the dogs to do other things

Wendy: These dogs are so genetically headstrong, that you don't want them to start to think for themselves.

There is a conflict of interest here. Unlike other dog-centric vocations which capitalize on the dog's ability to problem-solve, *schutzhund* requires an intelligent dog, but allowing the dog to use their full capacity to solve problems does not seem desirable. The only phase that necessitates problem solving seems to be tracking.

In bite work, where is there a problem to solve? I tell you to run around the hide, you run round, you come back, hold-and-bark, you explode into bark, grip, out, sit, helper back – none of that is problem solving. The only time you teach a dog problem solving and not necessarily to think for himself [is] if you are teaching tracking...because he is on the end of a 10 metre line and he has got his nose on the ground and [he is the only one who] knows what's going on. [Even then] he's not having the problem of should I follow the track or should I go somewhere else...[it's rather] how many footsteps is this...One footstep leads to the next, leads to the next; happens to come to an article, you lie down, you get up from the article, you put your nose forward. If there's a footprint you carry on forward, if there's no footprint, solve the problem of finding where the [next] footprint is...That's it, that's the [extent of] problem solving of the dog. Giving the dog the freedom and the ability to think and think for himself? No. I don't understand where you would do that. In obedience there's no problem solving, the dog must do the job to the highest degree and [as] correct as possible. You throw the dumbbell, the dog has got to jump over the jump, pick the dumbbell up and return. Where's the problem [solving] in that?

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Mark went on to say that giving the dog the freedom to think for themselves would be a sign of bad training. Good training would be to allow the dog time to mentally prepare him/herself for work. Similar to the use of food-withholding in tracking, there are various things that handlers can do to set a dog up for work.

The biggest thing is when they get to a trial [and] they get out and the environment is totally different and they get on the field and have to *platz* there for a while. So do it in your training, go onto the field, *platz* the dog...do a bit of that then go on. Do as much as possible to what you're going to be doing at Worlds or Nationals. So that when you go, it's

just another routine to the dog, it's no different. People just want to get out and work their dog and then when it comes to a trial or nationals it's a totally different picture. The dog immediately knows, something's not right.

(Wayde Linden, pers. com.)

Human minds

Dog handlers, like horse riders, need to think and behave in natural-cultural ways (Maustad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013:325). Each animal, within its species, is unique despite the similarities they share with others of their kind – just like humans. The handler needs to reach a mental understanding of the dog as an individual with its own personal character and socio-cultural experiences. This mental understanding has a body element, and the handler must work hard for body and mind to co-operate for the message to be properly interpreted by the dog. In their study on human-horse communication, Maustad, Davis, and Cowles (2013:325) express this oneness between body and mind required of riders while training:

'When I decide to do a thing, I first think it, then I start to do something with my body, and then, I must let the horse have a chance to get it into his [mind]. Not rush, be patient, give him a chance to get it, to solve that task'.

(Interview with a participant, 2011)

This further serves to prove how important body control is in human-animal interactions. And the body is ultimately controlled by the mind and our emotions at any given moment. This synchronisation where body and mind meet can be described as embodiment, a sign of true intersubjectivity²⁸. Wendy described a situation where she and Asco were at a trial and how her loss of focus had a detrimental effect on their conversation.

Just an area that I need to work on is this trial that we just had last weekend. Wayde did his obedience and it was shocking...it was like lovely, because the power, speed, all that. But it just looked very messy...and now I've got to live with him, so now I know that there's disappointment. I think more on my part than his and the whole time I'm thinking: I know how hard this guy works, and I know where his passion lies. So I start off and I'm focused with Asco and everything's going well and then suddenly I find myself calculating [Wayde's] points to work out what score he needs to get for his bite work to qualify for Worlds! And here's me now worried about him, instead of "ok, it's me and the dog, and stuff him and his dog for now" while I'm on the field. So that's a big thing that I'm going to have to get through. I couldn't believe it! Busy calculating what points he will need. [And then] Wayde's sister came with her little kid (my child's cousin) and they were looking after [the two kids]...they were playing in the clubhouse [when] McKenzie hit [my child] on the head with a spoon who screamed out loud...like it was there...it was just at the back of my mind, I could hear her screaming. And I've got to learn to just zone out. But now that I'm aware of where my weakness is with training Asco, I think it will be better next time. I hope so...

²⁸ See chapter 5 for a detailed analysis on these concepts: embodiment and intersubjectivity.

Schutzhund is clearly a mind game; challenges are ever-present and trying to solve each one becomes a habitual practice of placing mind over matter. The handler must keep watching the dog to figure out what they understand and what they do not and then try to make it clear to them in the best, quickest possible way (Wayde, pers. com. 2014). Training with the dog must be a calculated thought process and it is also very helpful to have someone knowledgeable to analyse "the game" with you (Wendy, pers. com. 2014). Wayde then described the absolute necessity of having to have a clear, focused mind when you are with your dog.

When you go on the field it's not about the crowd...even when I went on at Worlds, not once did I even think about the crowd. It's just you and your dog, and you're working your dog. And if I'm thinking about "ooo, look at all these people!" you lose the connection [that] you've worked [at getting] all that time ...just think about you and your dog and that's it. Who's on the side? Doesn't [matter]. There's no point, because the more you panic about it then it spirals and you're finished.

Emotional states

When I asked Mark how the human emotional state affects the dog, he could not have emphasised the extent of the impact more:

[It's] very, very, very, very important. Your emotional state is what controls and dictates the majority. So if you are going through a bad emotional state it's sometimes better to leave the dog alone and not go and train. It's better to let the dog not get into your emotional baggage line. If you take the dog and use it as a tool, you use it as a bouncing board, you know, [you get all] pissed off and you want to take it out on the dog. [This is] totally unacceptable. The dog is there to work with you and [to] work for you. Not for you to abuse.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Humans are emotional beings, and oftentimes our emotions dictate our actions. Interspecies communication can be a frustrating process for both dog and human as the process is time-intensive, emotionally taxing, and there is often a lot riding on the success of a dog-handler team. Hettie emphasised that she had worked so hard, and had spent so much money and time on the sport that it had become quite an emotional matter for her. Therefore, when misunderstandings occur, it seems natural for handlers to get upset but because dogs are such sensitive beings, handlers mentioned their constant awareness and need to control their emotions in training.

Wayde: You know when you get cross with [the dog], or put compulsion in [for a mistake]...as soon as the dog does something right [again] you've got to flip to "good"! Like Jekyll and Hyde. You can't get emotionally involved and be cross with the dog

because obviously they'll pick up on it but when it's wrong it's "no" (stern voice), and when it's right it's good boy!", "Super!" (tone suddenly changes to cheerful).

Wendy: And it helps [observing and learning from] somebody who's very unemotional [like Baldur Kranz]. He's black and white!

Wayde: He will go hard on a dog and be cross and red and spitting, and soon as the dog does something right: "good boy!!" It's like split personalities from one, killing the dog, to "good boy!"

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Emotions are not confined to the field. Humans experience emotional pressure as a result of goings on at their workplaces, in their interpersonal relationships, and from various other stressors. This has a direct effect on the dog.

Wayde: If you have a really sensitive dog and you're angry...they definitely pick up on your vibe...Sometimes you get angry when things don't go right, things at work or whatever. If I'm not feeling like training I don't because you don't want to go and train and bother [the dog] and [end up] doing nothing. Rather do it properly.

Wendy: That I found with Zac especially. I would wallow, lose concentration or allow emotions to take charge and he was all over me...he was just fuuuuus, plaaatz (unwilling behaviours)...They are very quick to pick up [on] what's happening.

Hettie: If I am tired and irritated, I tend not to work with him, because it does influence him - he becomes unsure and starts doing little things that irritate me even more. When I'm like this I put him on the treadmill and read a book or watch a DVD - I do not want to influence him in a negative way. [Similarly] if I am sick, I don't work with him. [If you're in a negative frame of mind you'll transfer it to the dog].

(different interview excerpts, 2014)

Dogs have and express emotions too, but in a different way to humans. I noted in my interactions and discussions with *schutzhund* handlers that their perspective on dogs and how they function was a lot less subjective than general pet-owners. While all handlers acknowledged the presence of emotions in dogs, they were unwilling to accept them as complex workings.

Wendy: It's a difficult one. People would come to the kennels [saying], "[My dogs are] going to miss me". They don't! They live for now. Are they going to get to sniff another dog's butt and eat food - that's what they are going to do. "Where am I going to find something that's going to make my tummy feel good?" That's it.

Wayde: If you took Kondor from me now, tomorrow he'll work for you, you just do the same as what I'm doing; they're not going to pine and cry - they are not like that.

Wendy: We would like to think that if you die, they will lie on your grave and all that.

Wayde: [But] not working dogs...take a toy out and it's [onto the next person].

Wendy: ...[A person seeing emotions in a dog has] a lot to do with people thinking that...this is what the dog is showing, and somehow the dog is rewarded for displaying that sort of behaviour. "Ah, he looks so scared - it's ok my boy!" (demonstrates patting the dog). You are enforcing it! He will look even more scared, or whatever the case is.

(Wendy & Wayde Linden, pers. com.)

From this discussion it would seem that the realistic perspective of the handler towards the dog is matched with the dog's business-like approach to the handler. This could further confirm the furry mirror concept whereby dogs not only mirror human behaviours but embody their perceptions too. If you treat a dog like a business partner, he will treat you in the same manner. Perhaps if sport dogs were regarded with more emotionality, they would reflect a deeper, more emotionally dependent relationship with the handler. There is a distinct bond between dog and handler; this is undeniable. But the way the relationship has been fostered allows for the flexibility (almost promiscuity) of partnerships discussed here – that the dog will find another, equally satisfying relationship with another human if the same principles of reward and motivation are applied.

#6 Gadgetry

While the coordination of body and mind may be the most important mechanisms in *schutzhund*, there are external gadgets that can be used to aid training, some of which are obligatory. Besides, the body has a restricted capacity for training that is superseded by clever, new gadgets on the market such as magnetized training vests and hidden pockets for toys and food. The human body only has two arms after all, while it feels like some exercises require three or more for an intelligible conversation. Gadgets can, therefore, become a useful extension of the human body. Refer to **Table 4.1** for a taxonomy of the gadgets used in *schutzhund* training to assist the handler and helper.

Table 4.1 A taxonomy of gadgets

GADGET	TAXONOMY
Leads	One-metre lead (leather, nylon, rope, water-resistant rubber), tracking line, long lead
Collars	Flat, martingale, choke-chain (flat-link, small-link), pinch, electric-shock (a.k.a. e-collar), flea and tick
Containment devices	Crate (plastic, wire [silver, brass, small, medium, large]), kennel, vehicle (car, van or pick-up truck), dog trailer
Bite work equipment	Hide, body harness, leather cloths, bite-roll (large, small), whip, baton, leather toys
Obedience equipment	A-frame, one-metre hurdle or jump, wooden dumbbells
Correction devices	Electric-shock collar, pinch collar, garrotte, horse whip
Helper clothing	Scratch pants, bite suit, sleeve (soft, hard), soccer togs
Handler clothing	Training vest, treat bag, gloves, comfortable sports shoes
Miscellaneous	Water buckets, steel bowls, mattresses or comfortable bedding for crates or cages, cooling pads, shoo-fly spray

The collar is an important mechanism of control and prevention, and is used predominantly for the dog's safety. For example, you may have a 4-month old puppy who wants to explore everything from backyard birds, to a ten-ton-truck, an encounter with the latter of which could be detrimental. The collar attached to the lead directs the dog and serves as a precaution in all situations – a busy street, cars, crowds, other dogs, or animals, getting in and



Photo 4.19: Multiple gadgets

This Doberman is sporting a pinch collar attached to a lead, an electric collar, and a bite work harness. The lead is attached to the pinch or the harness depending on the exercise. Here, it is attached to the pinch for added control in bite work (photo taken: February 2014).

out of a car, and so on. The flat-link, choke chain (a.k.a. fur-saver) is a prerequisite for entering any *schutzhund* competition, even though it is often worn for nothing more than decorative purposes – the dogs are trained to perform all exercises off-lead. Sometimes a collar and lead are simply used to block the dog from running off while briefly discussing something on the field with a trainer or fellow handler.

Leads and collars are keenly differentiated by dogs, discernible by both weight and appearance. Some research participants commented on using anti-bark collars versus using an e-collar²⁹ and how the dog could immediately tell the difference in the weight around the neck and acted accordingly. Similarly, as pointed out by one handler, a dog can tell the difference between leashes by the look and feel of them. Hettie's dog, Duke, has learned to differentiate between the lead she takes him out to "do his business" or have free time with, and the one she uses for obedience exercises. Furthermore, these leads are different to the tracking lead or long line used in bite work. These associations can serve as both powerful reinforcers and preparatory devices if administered correctly, and provided that different leads are consistently and exclusively used in specific contexts. Tension or relaxation in the lead also conveys a message to the dog. In bite work the leash must always be held taught, no matter what the dog is doing

²⁹ E-collar: a remote controlled collar that vibrates to a certain electric frequency when correction is needed or when high drive needs to be quieted.

on the other end of it, to activate the dog³⁰ (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). A slack lead will jerk the dog back when the dog lunges forward, which could be interpreted by the dog as a correction and consequently reduces the likelihood of the dog repeating the same action with confidence.

The clothing that both the dog and trainer wears also seems to serve as a tool. Often the way in which the trainer dresses (what they put on and even the process of dressing) communicates certain messages to the dog (K. Wessels, pers. com., 2014). Partial dressing is, therefore, often performed in front of the animal and is accompanied by activating words such as “are you ready?” or “work time!” Thus slipping on the working gloves and putting on the training vest creates drive in the dog as he/she anticipates work and feeding time. Similarly, “dressing the dog” (as Hettie calls it) symbolises anticipation of work. The dog will recognise the different gear that he/she is being dressed with as an indication of what is to come. For example, dressing the dog with a body harness immediately puts the dog into drive for bite work, putting on collars (most trainers have more than one – flat and choke or pinch collars), and normal length leads points to an obedience session, while the slow pace and calming exercise of hooking on the 10-metre tracking line (even the long quiet trip to the grounds), indicates that tracking is ahead.

Such associations with clothing and equipment are not exclusive to *schutzhund* dogs. In scent-detection work the dogs are trained to identify one specific scent and to behave in certain ways when they locate that scent. This is basic operant association and the dog can transfer this association to various other context-bound cues such as a certain collar, training jacket, or harness worn during the search (Lit & Crawford, 2006:278).

Some gadgets are associated with control and compulsion only (e.g. e-collars and garrottes), while others are universally accepted because they are used to expand the range of the human body's natural ability or to prevent injury to the animal (e.g. the leash extends the length of the human arm). To uninformed observers, some devices used by motivational dog trainers may look like devices of compulsion but their action and meaning is reinscribed by the method with which they are applied (Birke, 2007:230). For example, a pinch collar can be used for both education and correction. A handler using compulsion (no food or toys) to teach a dog how to heel might jerk repetitively on the pinch collar until the dog falls into the correct heel position next to the handler,

³⁰ A tense lead communicates resistance which ultimately facilitates the resistance required for the dog to launch and grip the sleeve – this is often referred to as activating the dog's prey drive.

whereas, a motivational trainer will teach the dog to be in the proper position using food. Only once the dog knows the exercise very well, will one quick jerk on the pinch be used to correct a dog who falls out of position. Motivational trainers use the pinch in a “different way”. The meaning of the device (education or correction) is thus inscribed by its user.

When man-made gadgets come into the picture, disputes and concerns arise about the “naturalness” of such human-animal encounters, and about animal welfare, as these gadgets are so often misused (Birke, 2007:228). The gadgets themselves are often not the problem, but if those that have a bad reputation fall into the wrong hands, they can cause serious harm to the dog both physically and psychologically.

Static interference

As with any conversation, there is room for misunderstanding. Beyond the complication of the species divide, dogs and humans can easily misconstrue a message that was perhaps ill-timed, inconsistent, or a result of some sort of internal moral struggle on the human end. It seems that one can place these communicative obstructions into three broad groups: practical problems, mind-sets, and extreme behaviours and attitudes. It is perhaps not so surprising to find that the human element is, more often than not, the source of “static interference” in a dog-human conversation.

1) Practicalities

Inconsistency: This is the greatest issue with human-animal interactions and in training. For a human to be trustworthy, the dog must see them as reliable and consistent – consistently rewarding a consistently offered behaviour, not rewarding a behaviour sometimes and then withholding the reward at other times. Inconsistency produces uncertainty in dogs and this generally results in an unreliable dog – one that “sometimes” sits when you ask it to *setz* because the human “sometimes” rewarded the dog when asked to sit in training. Once again, the dog mirrors the behaviour of the human. When I asked Wendy what she thought the main cause of miscommunication was, her reply was simple: the handlers.

Just not being clear; [handler interference]. Not being black or white that's the miscommunication. There's trainers not being able to do their job and then [there's] being inconsistent. Being black or white, that is the biggest downfall...Like Wayde was saying, you can't allow a dog to hover a centimetre one day and expect him to be deep the next day. And the next day two centimetres and the next day one centimetre. It's this

way or that way, that's it! It's all human...dogs are the perfect ones. [Wayde added: they're not complicated].

Poor timing: If a reward is not administered at the ideal time then the dog could receive a different message to that which the handler intended. For example, I observed a handler training her dog to *fuss* during a seminar, and she rewarded the dog just a moment too late – while the dog had looked away before looking back at her – and the dog interpreted the desired behaviour as looking away before looking back. The picture of the *fuss* was then the dog looking away before looking back every time the handler halted and continued just because of a poorly timed reward.

Timing is critical. It is probably the one thing that we all struggle with...getting the timing right. Obviously the better you get your timing, the better you will get a clearer picture for the dog.

(Wayde Linden, pers. com.)

Poor body coordination: Co-ordination goes hand-in-hand with timing. A handler who cannot manage their body appropriately (movement of limbs, balance, posture, tone of voice) will “create” an uncoordinated, inconsistent dog. Once again, dogs rely on consistency and this includes the general motions of the human body. Mistakes are bound to happen (like tripping over the long lead in bite work or stumbling on difficult terrain when laying a track) and dogs are very forgiving, but if the handler does not improve, much of the conversation can be misinterpreted.

Your ability to walk correctly, your ability to move correctly, that influences good and bad on the dog's ability to succeed. But the most important part is coordination and timing.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

2) Mind sets

Human exceptionalism: It is still largely accepted that language is the prerequisite for any meaningful relationship as it facilitates self-consciousness and empathy. Privileging the spoken word has been used to refute the ability of animals to be minded actors (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:79). Heidegger maintains that humans are the only species capable of meaningful relationships and that animals are machines, governed only by their instincts and are, therefore, incapable of embodiment, or truly encountering other beings (Mazis, 2008:32-33). Human exceptionalism is one major hindrance in successful dog-human conversations. It has been proven that animals are not machines; like humans, they live, respond and have the capacity for grief, cooperation, foresight, and planning (Mazis, 2008:33,38; Merleau-Ponty, 1965; Oele, 2007; Toadvine, 2007a; Toadvine,

2007b). Very often I found that *schutzhund*-to-handler conversations referred to the dogs' abilities and responses as machine-like: with their behaviours resulting from a combination of genetics and operant conditioning. Yet, when asked about personality differences they were insistent upon individuality indicating a direct conflict of ideas. Similarly when asked about the nature of their relationship, they equally highlighted the importance of hierarchy and partnership. From my experiences in the field it would seem that it is only when a human is willing to see an animal as his/her co-worker, and not a subordinate – equal in their ability to make mistakes and do well - that a reciprocal conversation can occur with the hopes of achieving intersubjectivity.

Sentimental anthropomorphism: Humans tend to make a habit of ascribing human feelings and traits to animals (Karlsson, 2012:107). The unrefined cynic may, therefore, dismiss human-animal intersubjectivity as anthropomorphic projection – a flawed line of thought and distancing mechanism that clouds any possibility of intersubjectivity (Alger & Alger, 1999:203). This sort is used by many pet owners and animal rights activists to make sense of animal behaviour (Alger & Alger, 1999:203; Arluke & Sanders, 1996:80). Yet, Karlsson (2012:109) describes anthropomorphism as a compound principle, maintaining that anthropomorphic beliefs allow people to acknowledge animals as embodied beings capable of agency. Moreover, these habits could be seen as a way of grasping otherness (Doniger 2005:33-34). Anthropomorphism could also be seen as a way of using one's own perspectives and emotions to understand the "other" (Doniger 2005:33-34; Serpell, 1986).

"Sentimental anthropomorphism", however, reduces a dog to the state of a child or eternal puppy with little regard for the necessities of the dog as first and foremost, an animal (Greenebaum, 2010:133; Irvine, 2004). Overindulging in such beliefs can produce fanatical behaviours such as humanizing and bejewelling dogs, giving the impression that the animal has a narcissistic interest in their own beauty, being trimmed, adorned and shampooed (Beck & Katcher, 1996:73). Other owners experience such a close bond with their dogs that any threat to the life of the dog is perceived as a threat to their own life. Or is it that the owner is so overwhelmed with the need for their dog to provide them with 'love' and support that letting them go would mean putting an end to self-satisfaction? "Romanticizing" the dog can result in frustration when the dog does not behave in expected ways (Greenebaum, 2010:134). Therefore, motivational trainers advise handlers to avoid sentimental anthropomorphism (Greenebaum, 2010:133).

While this does not appear to be prevalent in *schutzhund* circles in the manner described above, certain sentimental behaviours were observed. The South African trend of reluctance in giving up or swapping a dog out may be linked to a romantic notion of sorts. Handlers often seek recognition and praise for their capacity to bring a difficult dog up to competitive level and display an inability to simply let go of one unbefitting partner in favour of a more suitable one. In addition, it is not common practice for a South African *schutzhund* handler to pass the dog on once it has reached retirement age. It seems to be a “South African thing” to keep a dog to the end (Daniels & Wayde Linden, pers. com., 2014), which could portray difficulty in putting an end to self-satisfaction. The self-satisfaction I refer to here involves the satisfaction of holding onto the success embodied in the dog. Passing the dog on, therefore, could symbolise passing on this success to someone else or simply the end of success. The end of the relationship thus indicates the end of the personal satisfaction that the human took away from the relationship. This reveals that the identity and ego of the handler is deeply connected to the dog.

Narcissistic love: Anthropomorphism and narcissistic love are not unrelated terms. Narcissistic lovers use pet bodies as vehicles for expressing self-love with little regard for the animal's personal identity (Beck & Katcher, 1996:74). They tend to recreate their pet by projecting onto it whatever qualities they wish. Narcissistic love also involves owners controlling their pet's behaviour and movements to ensure their devoted, everlasting company and attention. Pet owners all use their pets to mirror their affection, which the pet does not necessarily feel, to satisfy their own basic need for unconditional love (Beck & Katcher, 1996:75). This is certainly a barrier to mutual learning in a training environment. Regardless of what ideals humans project onto a dog, a dog will always be a dog. The inability to accept and respect the dog for the species it is with a unique skill set will make conversing with them in the sport problematic.

3) Extreme stances

Fanaticism: The general image conveyed about pet-keeping is one of peaceful cohabitation (Fukuda, 1997:6) but extreme behaviours result when people overindulge in faulty beliefs. On the one end of the scale of extremes is fanaticism: pet boutiques with custom-made water beds, gold-plated choke-chains, and animalized leather-covered dining suites (Serpell, 1986:23). Adventurous dogs can choose from a variety of backpacks for hiking, raincoats, dress suits, underwear, and even mink stoles. Upper-

class American dogs can enjoy a vacation in pet hotels with temperature controlled rooms, spa baths, and private porches. Or summer camps with a private cabin, 400-square-foot free space, and elaborate activities and meals (Serpell, 1986:23). Fanaticism is quite common in the dog-showing realm where breed-specific “looks” are attained by professionally designed hair styles and accessories. Other fanatical behaviours include tattooing, piercing, bejewelling dogs, and fur-dyeing, giving the impression that the animal cares about its looks, being trimmed, adorned and shampooed (Beck & Katcher, 1996:73; DeMello, 2011:350).

This type of fanaticism is rarely found in *schutzhund* circles. Another form of fanaticism, however, is. Many handlers arrange every aspect of their lives around the sport: the dog's living, feeding, and travel arrangements, when to track next, what equipment to collect, which country to pack their bags for to go and watch the World Championships, which seminar would be the best to attend, and so on. In addition, the drive to succeed in this sport often pushes humans into unhealthy behaviours and mannerisms that do not place the needs of the dog first. *Schutzhund* dogs are kennelled and crated, which is not a problem unless the belief that utter isolation means success. Some dogs are prevented from enjoying even the simplest of natural pleasures like swimming or going for normal walks around the neighbourhood. Cement walls between kennels are often used to block out any interaction with other dogs, all in the name of sporting success.

Cruelty: Mahatma Ghandi argued that “the greatness of a nation could be judged by the way it treated its animals” (Serpell, 1986:23). The anthropocentric belief that humans are superior to animals permits humans to stay at the psychological distance necessary to guiltlessly exploit animals (Arluke & Sanders, 1996). South African dogs face daily persecution due to human standards of value and aesthetics (Van Stittert & Swart, 2008:2).

I have witnessed cruelty during my research trips, but I am grateful that out of the many interactions observed, I would only label two as cruel. One involved the excessive use of a garrotte to the point where the dog was gulping for air. The other involved a helper who lost his temper and kicked a dog in the ribs. Both incidents had nothing to do with the dog, but everything to do with the human element. Then again, cruelty is a very subjective term. I believe that there are some people who would consider the entire sport of *schutzhund* as cruel and this is plainly acknowledged when a *schutzhund* handler begins discussing their sport with the “average Joe”. Many aspects could be ascertained as cruel: crating a dog for more than 30 minutes at a time, the use of the

pinch collar when the dog becomes too strong, taunting a dog during bite work to bring out certain drives, not allowing a dog to run with other dogs all day, withholding toys from the dog until work time, or even making a dog travel in a dog trailer could be viewed as cruel. Furthermore, the difficulty in observing cruelty is of course that it is so often practised in private and that people do not tend to openly admit being guilty of it. The presence of the researcher then becomes a hindrance as the true extent of certain cruel behaviours are withheld when someone knows that they are being observed.

It's one thing that you must learn about the human race. If a human can watch a child starve, what is so difficult about that human watching a dog starve?...People very often [process] information incorrectly [and this can result in abuse]. Where you say to a person, "make the dog work for his food", and the person spends a month feeding the dog viennas. There's no goodness [in the food] and the dog can't walk and you say,

"What's going on?"

"Well, I'm tracking twice a week and I'm feeding viennas".

"What about the rest of the time?"

"You never told me to feed him!"

So they justify their absolute inability to be human with sheer stupidity. When you [ask], have I seen cruelty? I've seen more cruelty in normal domestic homes, of people having dogs, I've seen more cruelty with so-called check chains of what people use in classical obedience, than I have seen in the sport. Yes, you will have cruelty. Yes, you will have people doing stupid things. But you have it in every [situation]...as long as humans [are] alive, you are going to have this behaviour. It's not something new, and it's not going to go away.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

A moral dilemma: Many participants verbalised their use of notorious devices in training with some difficulty, further indication of the ubiquitous nature of the dog-human relationship. There were several verbal nuances and breaks in sentences during discussions that confirmed this difficulty. This revealed that motivational trainers felt better about their new methods, but that certain aspects remained ethically grey areas fostering uncertainty. I witnessed the use of a garrotte in a training session on Mark's field one evening between a fairly emotionally-charged individual, and a dog in high-drive. The problem was that the dog was in such high-drive that he was unmanageable during protection work. The anguish that develops in handlers when using some of these mechanisms is visibly affecting. The internal, ethical frustration that builds within them is let out on the dog in a moment of poor handling and misuse of the instrument. The vexation then boils over to produce nothing short of an emotional breakdown – frustration with the dog for not responding to the device and being utterly confused, while applying the device incorrectly, and then feeling bad about using the device in the first place. I must insist that many people are advised or instructed by so-called

“proficient trainers” to use such devices without any prior education. And although I feel that every individual has the conscience necessary to make their own moral decisions on such matters, many use the devices under unwise counsel and supervision resulting in ignorant abuse.

The solution to interferences

Miscommunication is bound to happen between dog and human at some point in the conversation because two very different species are attempting to communicate and understand one another. While the combined knowledge of the best *schutzhund* trainers in the world may solve practical problems (like coordination and timing), how does one approach dialogue interrupted by mind-sets and extreme stances?

Irvine (2004) suggests critical anthropomorphism as a means of restoring dialogue. Here the “needs of animals” are respected even when handled by humans with very human tendencies. A fresh consideration of anthropomorphism sees it as a negotiation of the animal's value (Caporael & Heyes, 1997). Arguably, a human's ability to imagine another being's perspective made cultural development possible (Herzog, 2002:363; Tomasello, 1999). Serpell (1986) termed this capacity for humans to place themselves into the skin or mental shoes of another being (human or animal): empathy.

The way one trains an animal says something about one's perception of the animal. Motivational training (using the toolkit discussed herein) makes use of “animal capital”³¹ in that most methods are based on the needs of the dog in the training relationship (Greenebaum, 2010:134). In many ways I found the perception of *schutzhund* handlers towards their dogs to be non-sentimentalist, not romanticized, simple, and essentially pragmatic, thus pointing to critical anthropomorphism. It is by no means sentimentalist to suggest that dogs understand the concept of hierarchies and leadership, dogs learn through reinforcement, or that a dog finds it fulfilling to work for reward (Irvine, 2004:74). These views seem to work for this specific relationship and interspecies context. The dogs do not appear to be unhappy, they seem very excited to work with motivators, and they do understand the human in this context of training (as evidenced by the numerous successes in the sport). This could be attributed to the view of the animal other being

³¹ **Animal capital** refers to all the resources that facilitate meaningful, mutual relationships with animals. This could be knowledge on canine behaviour, breed-specific tendencies, training, animal health and well-being, and any other resource that may enrich the life of the dog. It involves seeking the advice of animal experts such as professional trainers, veterinarians, and canine behaviourists (Irvine, 2004:66).

suitable for the context and purpose of the relationship. One behavioural trend that I saw repeated across the board was that a dog was treated like a dog, not in the derogatory sense of the word, but rather that the dog was respected for the species he is. These trainers notably make good use of “animal capital” to enrich the lives of the dogs and themselves.

Discussion

Conversations with animals are usually context-bound and -dependant. Mark’s field was a prime location to observe numerous diverse conversations that handlers had with their dogs. The majority of interspecies discourse is symbolic. Therefore, in order for these conversations to be successful, handlers not only required adopting the appropriate perspective of the dog, but also the use and appropriate application of certain tools. The mind was highlighted as one of the most important tools in training along with the coordination of the body. The human body and emotional state are always under keen observation by the dog, and must be used by the handler to appropriately excite and calm the dog. A dog cannot be motivated to work without food and toys. These motivators are utilised by humans to instil a “salary system” into the partnership, whereby a dog learns to earn valuable resources through the intensity of the work he performs. Finally, the various gadgets used by trainers were examined to explore their role in the conversation.

Dog-human communication bridges the divide between species by using and adapting various somatic modes of attention (Csordas, 1993; Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013:326). This process entails determining the role and limits of the body in the conversation, how to control and adjust the body, and creating body gestures that work for the conversation. The complexities of interspecies communication are not immediately apparent. It takes time to learn how to communicate with a specific dog, to first learn the basics of dog training cues and canine behaviour, and then to apply these skills to an individual animal. Every interaction is a conversation – on and off of the field. As the journey between dog and handler unfolds, the human learns what body movements matter to the dog, they imagine and incorporate the dog’s perspective, and slowly but surely become more sensitive as they develop a more advanced awareness of their body as a communicative tool (Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013:327).

What is the Anthropological relevance of having conversations with animals? In order for this to be realised one would have to consider the possibility of human-animal interactions bearing cultural markers. Culture is learned (Haviland, 1999:42). Language (spoken, signed or performed) is learned through life experience and is, therefore, expressed as cultural. If conversing with another human is cultural, why would conversations with animals not be seen as bearing cultural markers too? How a person communicates with another being indicates culture – proximity when speaking, body direction, eye contact, hand and other gestures, physical contact, and the lack thereof, all point to specific cultural roots that extend beyond the collective boundaries of body language. Dogs communicate with humans differently from other animals, and vice versa. These methods of communication could point to culture in that they are patterned behaviours learned from close and consistent interaction with the other species.

To attempt to communicate with a dog involves denying at least a part of your human self. To not vocalise every notion, to not be irked when irritations arise, to control all emotion that may disturb the clarity of the communication process, to not respond as you would normally respond, to be, as far as possible, a controlled being. Now perhaps one can understand why some people achieve success in the sport, and why others simply cannot. It is about that special “touch”. In part, human must become slightly animal to understand the animal's perspective and to meet him on his level (wherever that may be). And it is interesting to observe how “human” dogs can become when trying to converse with us. A “third language” starts to emerge – not human, not canine but a midway merging of the two (Brandt, 2004). If successful, the combination of all these variables come together in a flowing dialogue between dog and handler that could illustrate nothing short of poetry in motion.

Chapter 5

INTERSPECIES PARTNERSHIP

"In order to really enjoy a dog, one doesn't merely try to train him to be semi-human. The point of it is to open oneself to the possibility of becoming partly a dog"

- Edward Hoagland

Mark's field served as a site for more than mere conversations, but also as a meeting point for the development of interspecies relationship. The handlers that entered the field were spread fairly equally along the ratio of male to female. A wide variety of dogs frequented the field, from German Shepherds, Dobermans, and Rottweilers, to Belgian Malinois, Boxers, Pit Bulls and Australian Cattle dogs. The majority, however, were German Shepherd Dogs and more males were seen than bitches (excluding the breeding bitches surrounding the field). The coat colours were striking from pitch black, to bi-colour, sable, and the occasional black and tan. All dogs were dressed with some sort of man-made item – whether it was a flea-and-tick collar, chain-link collar, fur-saver, pinch collar, electric collar, training harness, long lead, toggle, or short lead – a dog on the field was never without some sort of equipment.

Handlers arrived in procession on training days. One by one cars, pick-up trucks, and mini-vans rolled into the farm festooned in all manner of canine paraphernalia from external bumper stickers, to entire interiors being converted into professional, canine travel units. Some cars had dog trailers in tow sporting German flags and shepherd-dog silhouettes. Upon arrival handlers would peel out of their vehicles and swing open doors, canopies, and tail gates to allow fresh air in for the dogs who were then watered and toileted before heading off for training. Training sessions usually began with a social gathering at the seating area and then proceeded to a briefing by Mark, some light bantering, and then actual dog training proceeded. The time that handlers and dogs spent on the field together was fairly brief; a training session was at most ten minutes long, and shorter for young puppies, regardless of whether it was comprised of bite work or an obedience training session. Once training on the field was complete, the dogs were packed back into their crates, dog cages, or loading bins, re-watered, some were tethered for extra security, and the humans

went on chattering among themselves while watching each handler-dog team parade their training on the field. The same routine was followed for the next training day, and the next, and so it went on.

Throughout my observations I found myself spending vast amounts of time considering the possibility of true, or “pure”, partnership between man and dog. The possibility seemed bleak in the face of so many routines and contraptions of control and correction. There were many times during my fieldwork when I cast off the idea as the mere precision of tirelessly repeated exercises – where willingness to work was overridden by duty to perform or go hungry. Other times I shrugged it off as a “chance meeting” of two sentient beings – a coincidental, context-bound understanding between two conscious minds.

But then there were moments, clear, and specific, and unblemished by practical or scientific reasoning, where it truly seemed that each species was trying very hard to understand the other; where boundaries blurred and one, in a sense, became a part of the other. This new form seemed to move and breathe as one – two forms co-being and truly comprehending one another through the haze of man-made constraints, equipment, and the raw desire to be the best in a sport where only number one counts. Beyond method, there was always a moment where I separated my head-knowledge from the subjective moment – where all I saw was two sentient beings before me, working towards a common goal and understanding. This is what I had been searching for all along.

The dance

These fragments of co-being provided my study with the impetus to draw conclusions that challenged classical logic. Trainers often refer to this part as “the dance” (Warne, 2014; Wayde Linden, pers. com., 2014). A dance requires two partners: one must lead, but both need to play their part for the picture to be complete. According to Warne (2014) a worthy dance partner leads the movements, but also allows the other to perform on their own. In dog training, it is only when a handler allows the animal to move freely without restraint or aids, that the handler can note which areas of “the dance” need work. It is not a dance when the lead dominates the routine, or has to continually support and affirm the dog. The dog must learn



Photo 5.1: The dance

Dana Voss and Dante sharing a dance.

to hold his own – to stay in the correct position without constantly having to be carried by corrective aids or signals (Warne, 2014). A well-choreographed dance also necessitates preparation, control, and clear objectives. The signals displayed by the lead prepare the partner to execute a certain move in unison. For the signal to be properly interpreted, it must be clear and consistent (Warne, 2014).

Wendy: You've got to learn how to respect the dance

Wayde: The two of you have got to learn how to get into a rhythm together and what works and what doesn't work...you are learning to adapt to how the dog is and what works for that dog. And you learn how to bring the best out of that dog at that time. So it's like a dance...

Wendy: A metaphor is a comparison, a comparison saying "it is". So a partnership is a dance that is led by the handler. You're the male; you're the lead in the dance.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Decent classical riding has upheld an age-old conviction that horse-human relationships, along with the necessary skills to ride, be securely grounded in "horsemanship: an ability to understand what the horse is thinking and feeling and to act accordingly, with sensitivity" (Birke, 2007:219). Likewise, successful *schutzhund* training depends on what I would like to refer to as "dogmanship" (a term loosely applied by Tyler Muto [2013]). Like horsemanship, dogmanship is a tremendously hard-earned skill that only a handful can claim (Birke, 2007:219). It is not only about knowledge, but the accurate application thereof, something professional trainers like to call "the touch" or "feel". Many people can train dogs, but only a select few have that special touch that seems to be a combination of natural talent, body co-ordination, and precise timing. This is why "horsemanship [like dogmanship] is, for certain riders, a partnership with the horse, [yet,] for others, it is an hour of wrestling..." (Warde, 2014).

Wayde: You need feeling. They'll always say, and Mark's one of them, that 90% is handler, 10% [is] dog. And it's true.

Wendy: You've got to be able to read things [in] the moment.

Wayde: Yea...even before that.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Dog-human intersubjectivity and animal personhood

Intersubjectivity is notoriously presumptive (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:79) without the added complication of attempting cross-species understanding. One obstacle is obvious: language. There seems to be a phonocentric emphasis on the faculty of verbal communication for successful intra- and intersubjective experiences (Sanders & Arluke,

1993:378). Even though language has always been a contentious issue in human-animal relations, Arluke and Sanders (1996:79) consider language as overrated.

Seeing dogs as mindless and uncommunicative is a social construct (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:79). Heidegger maintains that animals are machines, 'poor in world', governed only by their instincts and are, therefore, incapable of perception, embodiment, or truly encountering other beings (Mazis, 2008:32-33). In contrast Heidegger, along with Mead (1962), glorifies humans as the only species with the capacity for meaningful relationships and reflective intelligence (Mazis, 2008:33; Mead, 1962). It is still largely accepted that language is the prerequisite for any meaningful relationship or culture as it facilitates self-consciousness and empathy (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:2).

From this anthropocentric perspective, the animal cannot think in other than the most rudimentary ways, does not possess a self-concept, has no sense of time or space, is unable to plan future actions..., cannot differentiate between ends and means, and has no "emotions" in the sense that he or she can not indicate these feelings to the self or to others. Trapped in the here and now, the nonhuman animal habitually or instinctively responds to stimuli presented in the immediate situation.

(Sanders & Arluke, 1993:379)

Such mechanomorphic projections have been criticised as far back as 1979 (Bryant, 1979). Animals are not machines; like humans, they live and respond (Oele, 2007; Merleau-Ponty, 1965; Toadvine, 2007a; Toadvine, 2007b). Heidegger even opposes the idea that animals understand death (Mazis, 2008:33), while Mead argues that animals cannot convey empathy or emotion. Conversely, research has proven that animals are complexly communicative, creative, self-aware beings with a capacity for grief, empathy, cooperation, foresight, and planning (Mazis, 2008:33,38; Sanders & Arluke, 1993:379; Shapiro 1990). "Animals 'understand' anger, love, hostility, and commands, and their reactions are influenced by experience" (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:79). Dogs are able to "take the role of the other" and intentionally choose to behave in ways that convey a deep understanding of their companion's personal experiences (Sanders & Arluke, 1993:380).

Intersubjectivity follows the assumption that multiple subjectivities are not only present, but are sculpted as a result of the partnership (Pederson, 2013:722). In order to propose that intersubjectivity is even possible between man and dog, we must have come to the conclusion that both parties are in possession of subjectivity – the transferal of which would result in **intersubjectivity**. Therefore, the dog has a subjectivity, the presence of a consciousness, and is essentially a person. An animal is granted personhood if they actively

partake in meaning-making in their interactions with humans and other animals (Alger & Alger, 1997; Alger & Alger, 2003; Arluke & Sanders, 1996; Brandt, 2004; Sanders, 1999). It is this personhood status that has become a major source of ambivalence and ambiguity in the dog-human relationship (Greenebaum, 2010:130).

The “constant paradox”

Dog trainers, owners, and handlers of K-9 Officers struggle with the conflicting perception of dogs as both objects designed to serve and protect, and companions with whom we often share intense emotional bonds (Sanders, 2006:148; Sanders, 1999). As described in the previous chapters, this dichotomous perception of dogs has a direct impact on the method one chooses to train a dog: using carrots or sticks (Sanders, 2006:148). Training dogs for police or military work only serves to replicate this enigma (Greenebaum, 2010:130).

Most elementally, our ambivalence about animals derives from seeing them, on the one hand, as objects to be used, [and], on the other hand, as individual beings with whom one may have an authentic social relationship.

(Sanders, 1999:108)

This juggling of perceptions and emotions is more formally referred to as the “constant paradox”, and is an inescapable attribute of human-animal relationships (Herzog, 1993:349; Sanders, 2006:148). This ambivalence is highlighted by the volatile nature with which humans use, tire of, mistreat, or dispose of a dog's company. Humans seem to love a quiet, housebroken dog who walks calmly on-leash, and does not cause embarrassment in any human way (Yin, 2007). Within a few obedience sessions, a dog is expected to comply with every human expectation, the failure of which is met with utter disbelief and flying insults aimed at the “dumb”, “inconvenient”, “nuisance” of an animal. Humans comprehend that child socialization takes years, yet, we have far less patience with the canine process (Yin, 2007).

Ambivalence is evident in the world of sport dogs too. It became apparent during the process of interviewing my human participants that they found it difficult to neatly define their relationship with their dogs.

Candice: So speaking about relationships, how would you describe your relationship with Duke?

Hettie: (Sigh) I don't really know how to answer that...I don't think he's a pet like Tess and the cats are.

Candice: How is it different?

Hettie: I think if he really was a pet dog, he would have been able to be in my house, not bother the cats, lie around and just be chilled.

Candice: What is he then to you?

Hettie: He's not just a dog that I train to do [*schutzhund*], so he's not a sporting tool. I think he's a partner to me...He's a companion actually, but not necessarily a dog that lies on my lap the whole day. I struggle to leave him behind when I go on holiday.

(Hettie Cilliers, pers. com.)

First, Hettie referred to Duke as a pet, then as a partner, and then as a companion. I found that the answer to this question was largely connected to the handler's personal space-sharing arrangements at home, family dynamics, and philosophy³² on the sport. This perspective, in turn, influenced their success in the sport. I found that participants (like Martie and Karen) who had a very relaxed and open relationship with their dogs, also had a relaxed perspective towards the sport and, in actuality, had not gone far in *schutzhund*. This is not intended to be a negative comment on their abilities, but it is simply an observable reality. Whereas participants (like Wendy, Wayde, and Kate) who reported stringent routines and limited interactions by containment, were very serious about the sport and have evidently come very far.

Even though I want to do competition, I still view him as my pet, he's still a house dog...I know they say that with the competition dogs that we're supposed to kennel them and they're not supposed to see you unless they work but I want to enjoy my dog so I keep him with me in the home...I've found I have a better bond with him being in the home. He understands me, I understand him.

(Martie Wessels, pers. com.)

Martie and Hettie's relationships with their dogs are very different. Martie allows Roofus in the house but works him intermittently for *schutzhund* during the week. Duke is kennelled during the day, worked every evening, and then let out at night into the main yard. Martie's relationship with Roofus provided a clear example of the stereotypical South African attitude towards the sport: that a working dog can be both an inside pet and successful on the field. This consequently comments on the standards and expectations of the handlers in the country – it has been proven that kennelling is the most effective method to manage a sport dog, yet many handlers are willing to practice the sport at a sub-standard level in exchange for a deeper relationship with the dog. According to Wayde and Wendy, this is frowned upon as a sympathetic viewpoint by the European *schutzhund* communities who believe that a pet-dog view will have a negative effect on your results in the sport.

But why train to be mediocre by SA standards. Why train to just go out and have fun and do a trial and qualify? Why not put in that little bit more effort, it's going to [take] you the

³² Whether you view and practice the sport as a lifestyle or a light hobby

same amount of time whether you're doing 50% effort or 100%; the time is the same. Why not put in the full on effort. And be kinder to the dog and do yourself and the dog justice and put in 100%... so train to the top and take what you do away from it.

(Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Hettie's ambivalence (as depicted earlier) appeared to surface in her training. I sensed an underlying tension in her perception of her dog, in both the way she battled to define her relationship with him and the way she managed their interactions at home and on the field. Her ambivalent desire to have Duke as a sport dog as well as a companion with whom she could share a deeper, perhaps more aesthetically pleasing relationship, put a strain on her training. The top sportsmen and women in the country, like Wayde, Wendy, Hugh, and Mark, insisted that sport dogs should be kennelled and that having them in the home as a pet as well as a partner in sport would not only make life difficult, but confused the dogs.

Wayde: If a dog is free in the house, to me it won't work. I'm sure there are people who have made it work, but to me it just complicates things too much.

Wendy: The thing is, with the competition dogs, they are not pets... Obviously because you work so closely with them, you do get to know your dogs and read your dogs. They are very different... And that's just because you're working with... an animal, not an object...

Wayde: Their fun is doing [*schutzhund*] and not having fun at home. A lot of people will allow their dogs to run together and take them to the beach and if the dog will enjoy all that it's not going to enjoy [the sport]. So that's the best thing about kennelling your dog, is they are definitely not your pets, that's why we have inside dogs, because otherwise we'd have wanted to go play with [the working dogs] and go spend time with them, and you can't. Until they are finished trialling, then they will become our pets, but until then they can't.

(Wendy & Wayde Linden, pers. com.)

There seems to be, in certain contexts, a very strict categorisation of the dog as a working dog and in other contexts, the definition is indistinct. Furthermore, sometimes there is a clear species divide and at other times, none at all. Hamilton and Taylor (2012:45) observed that this behaviour is largely context and culture driven. For example, while workers in animal shelters or stables enjoy intimacy with animals, strict, clear-cut boundaries are set in place to emphasise segregation and categorisation of species in environments like farms and abattoirs (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:45). This divide is evident in the dialogue and actions of the employees who work there, even the most mundane routines are laced with subtle signifiers of speciesism. Seemingly "meaning-less" practices, therefore, turn out to be vastly "meaning-full" (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:45).

In the context of dog training and sport, this constant paradox troubles the dog-human relationship. Handlers have to develop a strong bond with their dogs to achieve increments of intersubjectivity in training, yet, dogs are the tools humans use to achieve ranking in the

sport. Many *schutzhund* clubs in Europe employ a “product line” method to their training whereby up to thirty dogs are tied to poles in a row, and training is performed one at a time in a neat processional, row – one is clipped off, trained, and then kennelled, and so the trainer goes on (Daniels, pers. com., 2013). There is no one-on-one bond or genuine social interaction, the dogs are products to be trained and sold into the career they are best suited – sport or line of duty. To the contrary, however, the majority of trainers believe that to succeed in the sport means to put all of one’s energy and time into one dog. But what this committed relationship “looks like” differs from one dog-human dyad to another. Some trainers sleep in the same bed as their dogs and welcome them into the family, others (most) insist on kennelling where the dog is set apart from the human dwelling and limited to only having contact with his/her handler during training (no other family members).

With a working dog...[like] in Kondor's eyes it must just be me and then himself and then everyone else below him...Obviously you control the environment. I won't allow him to run loose with [my daughter]. You've got to manage it. The moment he sees other people above him, you are not going to have the power in bite work. So in his eyes the handler must be the highest and even [Wendy, my wife] must mean nothing to him. And vice versa.

(Wayde Linden, pers. com.)

A further paradox is that trainers use separation via kennelling to develop a closer bond with the animal. Kennelling not only limits the dog's interaction with other people, dogs, and the world in general, but with the handler him/herself. The general belief is that if the dog's only excitement for the day is her interaction with her handler at controlled intervals. Not only is the bond between dog and handler then solidified, but the drive to work is far greater as the dog has not been occupied with anything else for the rest of the day. Although seemingly paradoxical, I observed a marked difference in energy level and willingness when comparing the kennelled dogs to the pet-dogs. The dogs that were kennelled like Asco, Kondor, Duke, and Bindi were far more energetic and keener to work during sessions, while the dogs who were kept inside the house like Roofus, Casey, and my own dog Raven had a lower drive to work and were less excited about the job at hand.



Photo 5.2: The Linden kennels

All the working dogs are allocated separate kennels according to their job description and compatibility with their “neighbours”.

The business of training dogs for sport is thus an ambiguous one. The dialogue of handlers is laden with double-meanings, constantly switching between the excusing tactics of "general dog behaviour", genetic makeup, and individual nuances (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:77). In the same conversation dogs are described as behaving like machines according to conditioned, "implanted" responses to reward and punishment, as well as exhibiting distinctive personality traits and reactions (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:77).

Candice: Do dogs have different personalities and temperaments?

Mark: Dogs definitely have personalities.

Candice: How does temperament affect training?

Mark: What is the genetic make-up?...What is the history of the blood line? [In *schutzhund*] the dog has to do obedience. Does he have the ability to listen [and] the ability to work with somebody? Does he have the ability to be motivated to obey and not be stubborn?...[then] we've got your physical factors. Your physical ability to jump, your physical ability to run fast, to run out, pick up the dumbbell, and come back. That is a genetic makeup that he doesn't get too hectic and high that he chews... Does he have a temper? Does he lose his temper? So there are many aspects which are genetic...So when you ask the question how does he do it; it is genetics.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

In their study on horses Maurstad, Davis and Cowles (2013:327) reported that riders see their horses as minded subjects (Bekoff, 2002; Hearne, 2007; Irvine, 2004) and therefore, consider both species-specific instincts (e.g. fight-or-flight responses) and individualities in their dealings with them (Birke, 2008). Likewise, dog trainers ultimately realize that having a constructive relationship with a dog requires of them to "bracket" their behaviourist generalizations and regard dogs as individual persons rather than mere representatives of a species (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:74-75).

What I learned...is to look at the dog's body language and to be sensitive to the dog in itself. And to also teach other people not to treat the dog as a human. To realize that the dog is a dog and you as a human need to try and think like a dog

(Hettie Cilliers, pers. com.)

Finding the person in the dog

Personhood is described as "the state or condition of being a person, especially having those qualities that confer distinct individuality" (Butterfield, 2003). The concept of personhood is also tied to the possession of legal rights, citizenship, equality, privileges, and liberty. Furthermore, various anthropologists and sociologists (such as Beth Conklin, Bruce Knauft, and Jane Goodale) have focused their research on personhood in connection with, and therefore dependent on, social relations. For many years, humans have staked

exclusive claim to personhood, but notions thereof are culturally-determined and thus not universal. We currently live in a world where animal rights are at the forefront of worldwide campaigns. Crusades like veganism and organisations like PETA (although sometimes viewed in a controversial light) have served to usher in new perspectives on meaningful cross-species empathy, animal personhood, and other-than-human rights (Bekoff, 2011).

In terms of individuality, there is a need to investigate whether or not dogs have their own personalities. Do they merely reflect our own identity (and what we *want* to see in them)? As Donna Haraway stated, “We polish an animal mirror to look for ourselves” (Haraway, 1991:21, cited in Mullin, 1999:211). In comparison to other pets, dogs are most described as having a mind that functions in similar ways to ours (Eddy, Gallup, & Povinelli, 1993; Rasmussen, Rajcecki, & Craft, 1993). In the process of “speaking for” dogs and making a conscious effort to understand their bodies, dog owners attempt to “build” the identity of their companion (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:67). The accuracy of this construction depends on our impression of the dog's actions and body (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:79) and, therefore, remains both subjective and debatable. It is also possible that by “speaking for” dogs, humans are basically constructing “dialogues with the self”. This is a reasonable assumption, considering that a dog is, to a major extent, an extension of his or her owner's social self (Belk, 1988; Sanders, 1990) and a symbol of their self-perceptions and -aspirations (Hall, 2003:xx).

I know [Amy] better than she knows herself. Obviously because you work so closely with them, you do get to know your dogs and read your dogs. They are very different and even...like Asco and Kondor, I mean Kondor's new, he's only been here for 4 months. [Wayde] already knows what his personality is like. I know what he's like as well... You've got to understand what makes them tick. And just by going that far you have a good understanding of what they're feeling like or we'd like to think what they're thinking...Like I was telling the group this morning: don't humanize them, they're not humans...[Amy's] only lying here [next to me now] because she thinks she's going to get food from me. It's the only reason. I'd like to think it's more but that's why she's there.

(Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Many owners insist that “dogs are just like people”, which is a presumption that threatens to compromise human exceptionalism or speciesism (Haraway, 2008): a worldview vastly different from the more permeable ontology occupied by animal enthusiasts (Locke, 2012:3). Hence, to those who claim this, their dog must inhabit both states (animality and personhood) concurrently. In Locke's studies on elephants (2012:6), Nepali *hattisare* (i.e. elephant handlers) perceive animal personalities to be self-evident regardless of one's cultural or social background. The handlers in the study explained that an elephant's

memory of past experiences has a direct impact on their actions and attitudes. According to this research, elephants convey their personal preferences effectively to their handlers, are able to solve complex problems, can clearly express fondness and loyalty, and even hold grudges (Locke, 2012:6; Varner, 2008). Are these attributes not similar to humans?

Studies have shown that “dogs are aware of their own personalities” and have a “concept of self” (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:78; Fogle, 1990:ix). Dog trainers become proficient readers of canine “language of action” and use this to gauge the dog's opinion on itself, other beings, expectations, ambitions, and the general goings-on around them (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:76). When a handler signals a certain behaviour, they are both creating an opportunity for the dog to make a choice as well as recognising the ability of the dog to do so (Greenebaum, 2010:139). Carrots (reward and praise) are used to facilitate learning and perseverance, and a skilled handler can tell by reading the dog's body language (eyes, ear position, tail movements, overall posture, etc.) that the dog is thinking through the exercises and figuring them out (Greenebaum, 2010:139).

Being a person means having a mind of your own, the capacity for agency, and the ability to influence others through personal choices (Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013:327). Dogs are mindful and willingly partake in meaning-making with humans and other dogs and animals (Alger & Alger, 1997; Arluke & Sanders, 1996; Brandt, 2004; Sanders, 1999). In one study, Sanders described dogs as using learned gestures (cues) in various symbolic and creative ways – their ability to apply or transfer what they have learned to different contexts demonstrates keen innovation (Sanders & Arluke, 1993:380). It is these abilities that make dogs so suited to the challenges involved in competitive dog sports like agility, retrieving sports, advanced obedience trials, and *schutzhund*.

Temperament: The dog's individual character

He is driving [me] nuts, but..."Of course, they have to be like that if you're going to do anything with them." 'Doing anything' here means obedience and agility; that courage and 'overflowing temperament' are needed for the higher accomplishments in obedience seems like a paradox only in a culture in which work at liberty is largely invisible, reads either as magic or else as coercion.

(Hearne, 1995:449)

Many trainers agree that a sign of a highly trainable (i.e. malleable) dog is that they “drive you nuts” – i.e. high drive. Trainers like to refer to the unique personalities of dogs as temperaments, which have a direct impact on the trainability of the dog as well as the type of relationship the dog will have with their human. In dogdom, a dog is rarely referred to as

an “it”; they are almost always addressed in the third person pronoun (“he” or “she”) inferring individual characters who deserve individual treatment. Animals of the same species are different from one another in many ways such as speed, intelligence, physical strength, mental development, emotional strength, tendencies, willingness to please, and responses to experiences, just like humans (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:75; Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:328). These unique attributes must shape training interactions – each dog must be seen for who he or she is and not rushed in any particular way during training (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:75; Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:328).

Wayde: it's important to know the temperament and the bloodlines, it's obvious [that] different bloodlines have different temperaments. You pretty much train around that, so...Some bloodlines might have a false or chewing grip – it's important to know that, so [that] you can start working on those, make sure they don't pop up.

Wendy: Like [the] Canto [line], they tend to be very local

Wayde: They get hectic

Wendy: You've [then] got Lord [lines], [which are] then...that very serious side. I mean if a buffoon had to get hold of Kondor to train him, he would be put in hospital on the first day...because he will...

Wayde: He'll just retaliate, he's not a vicious dog but as soon as you start applying pain to him, he wants to obviously stop it, and his way of stopping it is to bite whatever it is.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

A trainer knows that a dog's behaviour results from both individual temperament and past experiences (training in particular) (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:75). This holistic understanding of the dog as an individual can then be used to shape the training relationship and develop ways of interaction that are not only *meaningful* to the dog, but are also effective in achieving training goals (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:78). Therefore, handlers must tailor their body language, mental approach, and training techniques to suit the individual animal (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:78; Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:328).

Training for every dog might be a little bit different. You can't enforce the same type of things...We both do the training (pointing to Martie) and it's totally different types of dogs. The way she does it, I normally cannot do it. The way I do it, won't work for her dog.

(Karen Wessels, pers. com.)

Just when you think you've got it and you're on top...then you get your new dog and it's totally different to your other dog and then you're doing it all over again. And that for me, I enjoy the challenge. I enjoy finding success on a dog...by having a [training] group and literally telling them how to track every day, how to do [obedience, etc.] is actually teaching me because now instead of just training one dog, I'm training 7 dogs and they're all different. And through them getting success, by me telling them what to do...I am [learning]. So they stand on the side all chatting...I'm the one that's actually gaining the experience because my next dog is going to fall into one of those categories and then I'll have the answer.

(Wayde Linden, pers. com.)

“Perceiving of the other as an individual is instrumental in building...relationships” (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:329). Interviewees insisted on the importance of realising that every single dog is different. This was confirmed by those who had owned and trained several dogs before. Each time they started with a new dog, the training technique remained the same, but the application and understanding thereof on the dog's side, was always different. Some dogs are quick to pick up on one technique, while others could take months. Some dogs are stubborn or manipulative, others are naturally willing and obedient. And all these individualities are taken into consideration during training, making each experience different, and new.

You've definitely got to have the right dog for the right handler. I'm too hard for Asco, Kondor's more my type of dog, I can lose my temper and get cross, he won't take it as the end of the world, Asco does. As soon as I get into a bad mood, he picks up the body language and shuts down. Each person has an ideal dog, but it's finding that dog. It's not to say that you [have to] go through ten dogs before you find the right dog, every dog is going to have problems, every dog is going to have something – it's just a matter of working through it.

(Wayde Linden, pers. com.)

Dogs are broadly categorised as “hard” dogs or “soft” dogs (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:76). This elemental categorization determines how the trainer will address and interact with the dog. “Soft” dogs are those considered to be sensitive or malleable, while “hard” dogs are apparently headstrong and difficult to manage, yet, confident and fearless (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:76).

A lot of people say “my dog is so hard”. Now...a hard dog [is] a dog that can take physical punishment, a dog that [makes it] hard to penetrate his [obstinate] skull. Now what we are looking for in a sport dog is...a dog that is extremely compliant in his ability to learn, and the other factor in his learning must be his retention; his ability to remember the lessons that we've taught him. So if you take a dog and you say to him, here is the lesson, and you've taught him correctly, and he takes that lesson to be either a joke or punishment, and he doesn't learn, you're not achieving a lot [this is a hard dog]. You want her to be so willing that [she] learns and retains...willing to give you her time, her effort and her energy. [This is a soft dog]. So it doesn't help to have a dog that is what they call 'hard'. Hard is stubborn.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

It is important for a handler to learn to work with a certain personality instead of trying to change a dog to suit their own personality (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:328); we cannot expect dogs to change who they are, just as we cannot be expected to change who we are. We can certainly change how they respond to something through training, but we cannot change who they are essentially.

Wayde: If you want to be a good handler, you must be able to adapt.

Wendy: You have to adapt.

Wayde: So you mustn't be "that's your way of doing it" [and never change]...I think you've definitely got to adapt to how the dog is, how sensitive the dog is. Going from...Asco to Kondor. With Asco, I had to encourage him with my body language and build drive and keep him happy. Whereas, with Kondor, it's...the opposite.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Embodiment

Embodiment encapsulates "the lived experience of the body" (White, 2006), the way in which the body becomes a vehicle of consciousness, delineates self from other (Liu, 2013), and serves as a prerequisite for intersubjectivity (Von Wolputte, 2004:259, cited in Mascia-Lees, 2011:2). Csordas (1990:5) established the term embodiment as central to culture as bodies cannot be separated from their lived experiences. If the notion of the body as a vehicle of knowing and experiencing the world was extended to the dog and its body, what story would it tell?

A dog has the capacity to embody human ideals and the human self (Beck & Katcher, 1996:63). Animals are often studied as a window into human thoughts and desires (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:3). Similarly, studying interspecies interaction offers a "window to the animal mind" (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:81). Consider why people tend to choose dogs that match their temperament, thereby identifying with their pet (Beck & Katcher, 1996:63). A human can love a dog as themselves, and by so doing, can make the animal part of the self (Beck & Katcher, 1996:65). In Balinese culture, men identify deeply with the birds that they use in cockfighting, to the extent that their personalities, social structures, and reputations are embodied in their birds (Geertz, 1972). And so dogs, when in close relationship with their humans, are breathing mirrors that help people to define themselves, teach them about their sociality, reveal how they create meaning, and even disclose their genuine opinions toward other people (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:4; Beck & Katcher, 1996:77).

During one of my training visits to Mark's farm, I remember encountering a helper whom I did not particularly like. The man was broad shouldered, short in comparison to other helpers, and clearly involved in body building. He had a short, mean, impatient temper which I witnessed him losing one particular time with a Black Russian Terrier during bite work. I was expected to train with him, as it is the nature of *schutzhund* to work with different helpers. Bindi must have sensed my dislike of him as, in spite of her young age, she wanted to grab a mouth-full of his scratch pants on my way off of the field – something she had never done before when we trained with Mark or any other helper.

So, the body of a dog has many stories to tell of its lived experiences, but it is the accurate transferal of this information that is both problematic and inaccurate when interpreted by a human body equipped with human senses and cognition. Shapiro (1990) suggests “kinaesthetic empathy”: using a combination of the animal’s unique past experiences and social constructions to inform “empathetic” interpretations of behaviour (kinesics) and space dynamics (proxemics).

"[Such empathy] is not limited to an access to affective life, nor to some perceptible surface of the other being beneath which lurks an inner life only suggested. [Such empathy is also not anthropomorphizing or projecting] since humans share with animals an awareness and intelligence based on respective bodily movement, giving humans and nonhuman animals an 'embodied consciousness' regarding our shared ways of knowing the world through movement"

(Shapiro, 1990:32)

In the excerpt to follow, Kate draws conclusions on Logan's behaviour by reasoning why he is possessive of the ball and why he did not like people in or around the space of the car or Kate's body, based on his past experiences. She tries to understand the dog's perspective and then manages him the way she feels is best suited to the dog using “kinaesthetic empathy” through a shared understanding of the world with the dog.

Logan was very much onto a ball, but he wouldn't give me the ball back. This was a huge problem. Because he was so possessive of everything he also had an aggression problem with anyone that came to close to me...Bad things happened to Logan before I had him but...we trained quite successfully, although the pressure of competition was too much for him. Eventually I just retired him because he never got to grips with having people around him, dogs barking at him. Everything used to pressurise him and it was better if he was just left...[to relax] in the garden at home.

(Kate Brown, pers. com.)

Maurstad, Davis and Cowles (2013:322) explore this concept in their study on horse-human relations, which we have come to understand bears great similarities to dog-human relationships. Horses and humans co-create behaviours (Birke, Bryld, & Lykke, 2004) involving intricate “somatic modes of attention”, attachment, perception, and emotion (Csodas, 2002; Csodas, 1994; Despret, 2004). Horses become not only soul mates to humans, but body mates too, and their bond influences and defines both beings (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:322).

Learning a third language

It is through a constant negotiation of bodies that a “third language” starts to develop (Brandt, 2004); a language co-created by dog and human. Dogs, like horses, are partners that “communicate their subjectivity to their human partners” by developing this language (Brandt, 2004:307; Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013:326). Using the term “partners” would imply equality, yet, some may object that the human decides on the type of communication and what signs and signals to use in the conversation. The signals are, however, adapted from ideas about what comes naturally to the dog but the signals still have to be learned (Birke, Bryld, & Lykke, 2004). None of this is possible without the dog’s cooperation (Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013:326).

As discussed in chapter 4, partnership requires reciprocal bodily responses – one body cannot have a conversation without the response of the other (Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013:326). Body posture, tension on the lead, inclination of the body, speed of motion, and hand signals are only a few tools a human body can use to communicate their desires to a dog. The signals and body language that make up this third language are also unique for every partnership, because each dog-human relationship is different. Here, I compare the bodily conversation between a member of Wendy’s training group and his dog Denn, to Hettie’s communication with Duke.

With old man Dick, who trains with us, [he] needs to show Denn a very tight body language. We see it! As soon as he walks onto the field, with his hands open, and his arms do this (*slumped or relaxed*)...then we just know, (Wayde interjected: dog’s doing its own thing) as soon as he goes (*breathe in and presents a more rigid posture*) and takes control of himself, the dog responds immediately: “I’m going to work with this dude – he’s got good things coming”.

(Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

[Duke] gets so excited that he’s the kind of dog that you cannot cuddle...I’ve realised that I cannot be very energetic with him. I need to stay calm and relaxed...because as soon as I get excited, it’s from 0 to 100 in one second.

(Hettie Cilliers, pers. com.)

Schutzhund is then about embodiment and using “somatic modes of attention: culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one’s body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others” (Csordas, 2002:7–8). Csordas (1994:4) refers to bodies as actors within the world and each body has its own history and culture. Embodiment is, therefore, highly relevant to *schutzhund* as it involves dog and human bodies that are in constant, close contact.

Evans and Franklin (2010:180) describe certain animal-human interactions as rhythmic harmonisations “which takes them beyond their individual selves”. Training, therefore, becomes a collaborative practice of embodied synchronisation. The dog must play its part as a social animal which has the scope to form and enjoy a cooperative alliance with a human (Argent, 2012).

The perfect partnership is if I get [Duke] into drive and he looks at me and he works with me all the time – not looking around for a bitch or a human that he knows. To get the dog into perfect harmony with me, so that when people see this, they see perfect harmony between the human and the dog, where both enjoy what they are doing.

(Hettie Cilliers, pers. com.)



Photo 5.3: A moment of synchrony

Hettie emphasises that the moments of synchrony between her and Duke may be fleeting but they are nevertheless real.

Co-being and lasting impressions

Co-being is described as moments of embodied mutuality; an “anthropo-zoo-genetic practice” where two agentic beings domesticate each other by spending lots of time together (Despret, 2004:131; Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:322). This “withness” constitutes acknowledging that animals have diverse personalities and doing one’s best to respect or accommodate these distinctions (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:329).

Co-being is also referred to as *intra-acting*, a term coined by quantum physicist Barad (2007:33). Intra-acting is when humans and animals meet and are changed by that meeting, in contrast to **interacting** where parties meet and leave unchanged (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:322-323). Eva Hayward (2010), in her ethnography of cup coral encounters introduced the idea of species being “impressions” which carry around traces of individuals they have shared intimacies with — these traces can be physical, behavioural, and/or perceptual (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010:564). As Haraway (2003:7) puts it, “partners do not precede their relating”. Through various intra-actions dog and human are formed, and two seemingly dissimilar species “become” together: ‘human-with-animal’, and ‘animal-with-human’ (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:323; 329). The human-with category hints at the ways in which animals affect and change us (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:329).

When I work with him, I totally switch off. When I come home and I've had a rough day and I take him [out] and I train him a bit, I can feel how I change because I just focus on him and teaching him something [new]. And he makes me laugh. He does very quirky [things].

(Hettie Cilliers, pers. com.)

Intra-action and co-being seemed evident in dog-handler relations that I observed because these engagements met all the conditions listed by Maurstad, Davis, and Cowles (2013:324):

- Dog handlers express the feeling of being in sync with the dog during instants of mutuality
- Dog handlers experience their relationship with dogs as continuous interactions between two beings who both have agency. E.g. addressing the dog as an individual and self-aware partner, and considering the needs of the dog during interactions by controlling human movements and the body
- Accepting that dogs and humans co-shape and co-domesticate each other through their intra-actions – i.e. becoming dog and human

“Becoming with”

Locke (2012:4) found, in the relationship between Nepalese handlers and their elephants, that the personhood of an elephant is based on the initiation of a close, mutual bond through an on-going process of “becoming with”. “Becoming with” is a naturalcultural³³ practice that translates into a routine where spending time together is prioritised, and each species becomes proficient at “interactive bodily comportment” (Locke, 2012:4; Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:323). Developing a dialogue with an animal using language that they understand is strongly advocated by trainers and ethologists, even if this means imitating animal gestures and sounds during interactions. Various pioneering researchers stress the prominence of speaking and behaving appropriately when in the company of animals, with due consideration given to their specific values and expectations (Sanders & Arluke, 1993:383). Hettie explained her typical training routine to me – a daily, prioritised portion of her time spent interacting with Duke. One can clearly identify that Duke understands the expectations of the routine as Hettie uses signals that Duke understands.

³³ **Naturalcultural practices:** where mental and bodily performances are noted as prominent in the process of interspecies communication (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:325). The notion ‘natureculture’ indicates a shift from seeing nature and culture as opponents, to viewing them as mutually co-operative (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:323).

When I [arrive] home...he [has been] in his kennel the whole day [so] I let him run, do his business, be a dog a bit. [Then] when I'm ready for training...I first put him in his crate. I [then] take out his collars...when he hears them, he starts to get very excited...[When I take him out of the crate] he'll sit – I don't even have to tell him to sit. I'll hold the chain and I have to be very, very quick and then the second collar – he can't wait for that, then back in his crate. Then, I go inside [and] I prepare the food, put on my [training] jacket...shorts and t-shirt, go out, put on my gloves – that's his [final] cue; when he hears the Velcro [he knows] there's something coming. Then I take the [lead], open the crate, he comes out, he's learned to come and sit next to me so that I can hook on, [and] then we'll start with whatever I [planned] to do that day. I normally work between 5 and 10 minutes with him [but] it depends on what I'm working on and what happens [in that particular session]. So it can be 2 minutes; it can be 10 minutes - it depends on what I'm working on. As soon as I have [achieved the goal for the day], I stop...I have a routine [for] when I'm [finished] training [too]. He sits and I take off his collars, and then into his crate and he gets his food... So in technical terms he works for his supper.

A deep bond plays an important role in the dog training equation. Haraway (2003: 228) claims that this attachment between handler and dog is, however, not unconditional but rather a “naturalcultural practice that has redone us molecule by molecule”. Dog training is body and brain work for both species. Exercises are demanding because one must not only be physically robust, but mentally alert too – a constant effort to make oneself consciously comprehensible and available to the dog. Training is a process of figuring each other out. It, therefore, involves one being becoming coherent to the other, and vice versa: “becoming with” (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:325).

Becoming dog and human – merged identities

If we appreciate the foolishness of human exceptionalism, then we know that becoming is always becoming with—in a contact zone where the outcome, where who is in the world, is at stake.

(Haraway, 2008:244)

Maurstad, David and Cowles (2013:332) point out that there is far more to the dog-human relationship than attachment or “love” – dog and human co-construct each other. The relationship grows stronger with each intra-action, and both change, accommodate, and attune themselves to the other so that future communications and engagements are better and more meaningful. Via subtle somatic attunements, the conversation reaches a point where animal and human begin to know one another's bodies in increasingly nuanced ways. Horse-human intra-actions, like dog-human intra-actions, have tangible effects on those involved: effects on bodies, effects on well-being, and effects on identity (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:332).

One obvious effect on both the human and dog body is muscular – through repeated, correct exercises, these bodies develop muscular memory and the ability to cope with the demands of the sport. A somewhat surprising effect on the human body is injury. Accidental injury to the dog is possible and commonly related to misguided training. The most injured body of all is the helper's body and secondarily that of the handler, as limbs often come into contact with the business end of the dog accidentally or on purpose.

Candice: Are there a lot of injuries?

Wayde: Haha, the helper – their bodies are broken. Just because you do the sport does not mean [that] you are going to lose weight – it gets you out of the house [though]. Let's say you're teaching the recall and the dog runs between your legs, he could take your knee out. There can definitely be injuries in it but normally there should not be.

Wendy: I was approached at work when I started training with Zack – he was hectic. I was called aside by one of my colleagues to find out if everything was ok because she was worried I might be in an abusive relationship because of [all] the cuts and bruises. He was insane! I started off with the food and thimbles, plasters, and leather gloves and duct tape – still going through it. And if you happen to just move when you've got the toy, [he would] grab at the wrong part [which happened to be my hand].

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers com.)

Beyond the literal changes to the body, dog handlers learn very quickly that their bodies are "talking bodies" and with time also learn how to speak to dogs using them. A dog handler's body, therefore, functions differently to a non-dog handler's body in society. In the process of learning to speak dog, the gestures of the human body transform to create a body that is consciously controlled in its talking (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:332).

While handlers derive great satisfaction from partnering with a dog for sport, they also have something meaningful to offer the animal. The dog's role in the partnership is indispensable and therefore, his/her mental well-being must be nurtured by the human counterpart. Some dogs are timid and lack the confidence to perform certain *schutzhund* duties. However, through co-being, a timid dog can transform into a more self-assured animal if the performance of the human is equally confident. "Bodies are materially engaged in somatic attunements that are not always sensed consciously...These nuanced ways ('pre-linguistic sensations') that characterise the relationships between [animal] and human are important and sensed by [humans] in ways that are difficult to express using words" (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:332).

Slowly but surely dog and human give new meaning to what "being" truly is. Humans-with-dogs are not the same as humans-without. All handlers who were interviewed remarked on how dog training had changed who they are. The nature of *schutzhund* is such that requires being coached (usually publicly) which develops confidence and assertiveness in a

handler. Also, interacting regularly with a dog requires becoming balanced, emotionally neutral, and fair; all of this translates into a handler's relationships with other humans (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:333). In her research on family dogs, Tannen (2004:417) demonstrates that interactions with pets serve to strengthen the bonds between humans living together by solidifying the identity of the family. So it seems that handlers learn a lot more about being-human by being-with dogs (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:333). For some handlers, changes were evident mostly in their day-to-day lifestyles, while others felt more deeply affected.

Wayde: You can't just go away for a few days if you do not have someone to look after your dogs, so it definitely [produces] responsibility. That's the biggest one.

Wendy: I think it's improved [our lives] – we don't go out jolling, and this is even before [our child] came along, there was no jolling, there was no late sleeping, you get up, get off your arse and do your thing. To me, it has enriched my life.

Wayde: It has kept us active...[and it] makes your life more complicated but you can manage it – you've just got to put more thought into it. [Socially speaking] I wouldn't say it's changed [things] a lot [but] it's like having a child.

Wendy: And you never know – you could find your husband on the training field! It does have its benefits. If it's one thing I walk away from this with, it's a husband.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

[Training has changed me a lot as a person] Even spiritually! I am...an introvert, and would [initially just] watch but never ask questions. But when I realised [that] this [was] the talent given to me, the bug bit me. I started feeling that even if the whole world came to an end while I'm working with the dogs, I would not even notice...As I became more knowledgeable, I became more confident and it even influenced my job [performance]. I started to be more assertive. When I go to the shop, I don't care if I'm covered in dog hair, whereas previously I would first go home and clean up. I don't know if it's because I've aged as well. With strangers, I will now go and speak to them because I have a common subject, in contrast to [before]. I also reach out to people who I notice are where I was...[So], it has changed me a lot...I am opinionated now...I don't care what you think. [I mean], I won't hurt your feelings, I'm just confident to voice my opinion or feelings [now].

[What I've learned from Duke is] the absolute enjoyment of every second of his life! He adores everything he does and finds even [something as insignificant as] a leaf interesting. Dogs live for now and get 100% from each moment; people should learn from them. If you bring the dog up correctly, unlike humans, they don't have issues. He's always ready and eager to go. He energises me and stops me from stagnating. I love being outdoors and he draws me there. In winter, before I had the dog, I would only be interested in being warm indoors. Now I have a responsibility towards him and this compels me to do something with him to stimulate his intelligence. So I dress warmly and go and work with him, even if it's freezing or raining – we go and track. Without him I would never have done this as it's against my nature to get cold - and I get cold quickly - and I don't like getting wet. [He] has changed me...

(Hettie Cilliers, pers. com.)

Dogs are in full control of their natureculture. This is evident in that dogs communicate very differently with humans than they do with other dogs. Regular intra-action with humans allows the animal time to familiarise him- or herself with the rules of engagement involved in “dog-with-human”. Therefore, a relationship of constant intra-action further allows the dog to apply these acquired skills to conversations with other humans. Interspecies understanding depends on how fluent each species can become at being dog-with-human and human-with-dog (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:334).

A working partnership

Co-being, becoming with, and becoming, as suggested by Maurstad, Davis, and Cowles (2013:327), are all evident to a degree in the relationship between dogs and handlers doing *schutzhund*, but it seems that these moments of intense mutuality are fleeting. Although these flashes of mutuality are genuine and intense experiences, they are also partial and fragmented and cannot solely be used as a working definition that captures the essence of this dog-human relationship in its entirety. “Riders are not centaurs (“one being”) in all their horse-related activities – the in-sync experiences are moments, highly appreciated when experienced, but they also tell of co-being as a connection that both joins and separates” (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:327).

There is a need to distinguish this relationship from other dog-human relationships since the elements of the sport are unique and thus the relationship must be equally matchless. These dogs and handlers have trained for countless hours and on many different fields. They share space, accommodations, vehicles, time, food, and finances. They travel thousands of kilometres together, in rain, sun, and sludge and over varying terrains, in pursuit of suitable tracking grounds and the best protection helpers in the country. The dogs must be kept healthy and fit, while the handlers must juggle multiple responsibilities beyond training, as they strive for their place on the podium (Landau, 2013). It is, therefore, clear that this dog-with-human relationship is vastly different from the scenario where the dog cuddles with his owner on the couch at home and is simply expected to “sit” for his supper. The former is a partner, while the latter is a pet.

In dressage [with horses], they want to see what they call poetry in motion. They want to see a ballet of the...horse and the rider. They want to see the ability of the two to work together. So in other words, it is a partnership. There's no side of this that is not a partnership. You can't have a relationship with a dog that is not a working relationship. If the dog is so under your control that he is fearful of you, he is not working with you, he's working for you. You need the dog to work WITH you. And that's where the terminology

comes in that the dog is driving you. He's driving you to perform more, to perform better, to give more from himself than to...be fearful of you. You can never have a relationship where the dog is working in that way. You want him to willingly work for you...it's a very important factor.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Co-working partners

The concept of partnership brings various connotations to mind: marriage, friendship, dancing, law enforcement, business. Regardless of the frame of reference a partner can loosely be described as someone with whom one is on an equal footing, and with whom one is working towards a common goal or vision.

It has to be a partnership – both parties need to get reward from what you are doing. It's not an owner-dog relationship [or] "If you don't listen to me you gonna get it!" I'm past that way of thinking, I have to feel that I have enjoyed the training session, as much as he shows me that he has enjoyed it...If one of the two don't [pull their weight] there's gonna be conflict. There needs to be an equal partnership and that's where you need to be careful to not be dominant in certain things and lenient in other things. You need to [strike] a balance, which is difficult.

(Hettie Cillier, pers. com.)

All the human research participants I interviewed described their relationship with their dogs as a partnership – dogs were not described by serious competitors as companions, pets, family, or friends but partners. The word "partnership" infers the use of economic terminology with matching implications for all involved.

Firstly, business is described as a person's **profession**, or occupation. This is distinctly the case with handlers and dogs in *schutzhund* as it takes up so much time that it becomes the trade of both species; an existential requirement. The regular reference to "work" in this context also serves to accentuate this finding.

Of course, every business runs on a **salary** system where employees are paid for the work that they produce. As discussed in chapter 4, the dog worked through motivation works for a salary. This "economy" starts off as payment in the form of commission and then, once the dog is ready, he/she is promoted to compensation in the form of a constant salary. While this concept appears to instantly boost the human to the position of CEO in this strange "company", one must take into account that the human also works for a salary. These earnings will loop back into the upkeep of the dog (paying for his/her training, kennelling, equipment, food, veterinary bills, and travel expenses). Is this not a

fair exchange? This analogy substantiates the idea of animal as person as well as partner – if humans must earn a salary, should dogs not be expected to earn a salary too?

Partners in a business have clear, common **goals**; *schutzhund* is no different. The goal of the sport is very clear – acquire the highest score possible. There are 300 points available over three phases whereby deductions are made for not complying with the expectations of each phase. E.g. the dog misses an article indication in tracking, the dog is asked to *platz* in the obedience phase but *setz* instead, or the dog is asked to *aus* (let go of the helper's sleeve) in bite work, but continues to grip. The expectations of the sport are communicated to the dog through rigorous training exercises and repetitions. Most dog-handler interactions are dictated by these goals. Where the dog sleeps at night, how much food is given, who interacts with the dog, and so on, are all dictated by the desired outcome: perfection in the sport. The human must, of course, also comply. The dog is not the only one in training; the human must be mentored by a knowledgeable trainer who constantly reiterates these goals through the exercises that the handler guides the dog through. Both partners need to be certain of the goals involved in the sport as uncertainty, whether in the process of training human or dog, could lead to miscommunications and point deductions.

Wayde: [My relationship with my dog is] still quite new so, with Kondor and myself, we are still finding our way around each other. It's hard, but you just keep [staying positive].

Wendy: He's there to do a job.

Wayde: He's not a cuddly dog, he's not looking for affection, he's here to work and that's what he knows. So long as you show him clearly what must be done, he will do more than what's expected of him. It's a new bond, with time it will get better.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Real partners **know each other** well. Handlers must learn to read each dog for unique character traits and deal with each one on his or her own terms. Through this process, the handler learns about their own behaviour as they are reflected in the dog. Handler and dog are both subjects who share experiences, try to figure each other out, read each other and actions are shaped as a result of this reading. One such reading involves perceiving whether or not the animal is enjoying him/herself (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:328). The intersubjective, shared world of dog and handler is partial because while a human can attempt to know the dog as subject, it is one that they do not completely understand; reading the dog, therefore, involves guesswork (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:328). The choice of food used in training, for example, is one way that handlers try to demonstrate the dog's personal preferences. Another example is the way that the dog is physically praised through gestures of patting and stroking. Dog-handlers often

refer to the dog as particularly enjoying a scratch in a certain area like behind the ear, on the chest or the stomach. This is largely guesswork as a result of perceived enjoyment on the part of the dog. The dog could very well enjoy a scratch anywhere on the body, but the human has perceived particular reactions as an indication of their preference. Nevertheless, such perceptions are used in this training relationship to reward and motivate the dog.

Partnership is impossible without **teamwork** and **trust**. The overall performance of the team is related to, and dependent on, the equal efforts of both dog and handler (Haverbeke, Laporte, Depiereux, Giffroy, & Diederich, 2008:121). Trust plays a major role in developing a close working bond and is considered a prerequisite for productive intra-actions (Wipper, 2000). Locke (2012:5) states that trust and respect for the disposition of the other is essential for an elephant to allow a human to ride or care for him or her.

Wayde: [We're] like a team...competing together

Wendy: Taking down the bad guy.

Wayde: That's the only thing about tracking - tracking is more just the dog out there, you've got a bit of feeling on the line, you can try and influence the dog as much as possible, but obedience and bite work is definitely a team effort which is always nice.

Candice: So if one didn't [at least] bring something to the table there wouldn't be anything anyway?

Wendy: Exactly.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Building and nurturing trust is an on-going practice between dog and handler where trust needs to be established and then consistently affirmed during interactions. Each new interspecies partnership is a new world – a brand new meeting between dog and man where rules of engagement need to be established (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:333). One study proved that team members using aversive stimuli increased the dog's distraction and, therefore, decreased the quality of their performance while those who used toys and food obtained better results (Haverbeke, Laporte, Depiereux, Giffroy, & Diederich, 2008:119). Thus it would seem that reward-based training develops more dog-with-human trust than aversive methods.

Wendy: With Asco and me, he's very attached to Wayde because that's who he has known for the last 5 years, [but] he works for me. He's hardwired to work for reward and works for me – he obviously trusts me because Wayde can be there at the field but he will still work and Wayde can still talk. There are times when he will run off to Wayde and that really hurts my heart, but if I call him he will come. That's no fault of the dog. He loves to cuddle, he loves affection – he's a big softy.

Wayde: You've got to have a [strong connection] with your dog. And with time and training you achieve a bond.

Wendy: Especially with bite work. I found with Amy, after a few sessions, even the first one of bite work, there was this bond. This connection is exactly the same with Asco and me – so that certainly helps.

(Wendy & Wayde, Linden, pers. com.)

Thus the two beings are not only partners, but co-workers – colleagues in the profession of *schutzhund*, working towards a common goal together as a team, being compensated for their efforts, and learning about and from one another in the process.

Co-habitation and “strange” kinship

In many instances training is the first official collaboration with humans that socialises the dog into the family (Greenebaum, 2010:135). Alternatively, training socialises the dog into the role of *schutzhund* – a role that continues to be vaguely packaged and is vastly dependent on how serious the partners are about the sport. Therefore, the process of training serves to assist dog and handler in negotiating social roles (Greenebaum, 2010:135).

Haraway (2008) hypothesizes that the identities and kinships of creatures materialize when they encounter others. Although kinship is best interpreted in context, it is still broadly acknowledged as the affinal and consanguineal ties existing between humans. It can, however, be described as not only the systematic, social organisation of people, but also the ability to bond with social creatures beyond the scope of biologically and sexually determined networks (Liu, 2013). Carsten (2000:4-5) uses kinship synonymously with 'relatedness', making it possible for humans and non-humans to share fraternal ties, and defying our traditional interpretation of kinship (Fellenz, 2011:33; Merleau-Ponty, 1965). Further research states the importance of denaturalizing kinship in order to understand other forms and representations of kinship or household (Yates-Doerr, 2011:292). Merleau-Ponty described this 'strange kinship' as aspiring to create balance by acknowledging each other's' natural individuality (Oliver, 2009:16).

Charles, Davies, and Harris maintain that every family is a “family of choice” and that kinship is chosen and engineered (2008:226). Thus, “one can incorporate friends, lovers, or children into one's family by rearranging ideologies of love and choice” (Weston, 1991). This framework is useful for considering interspecies families as it can be extended to include dogs as family members. This subjective choice to include companion animals is a response to the emotions that the animal rouses in the family (Shir-Vertesh, 2012:424).

Wayde: I think we love [our dogs] like children...You obviously have to have boundaries, like [with the indoor dogs], they don't sleep on the beds with us [and] when you do have guests around, they must know their place...and obviously with children – we never leave our dogs unsupervised with kids. You don't know what happens...I suppose it's like bringing up kids - each person has got their own way of doing things...We might not agree with how other people do it

Wendy: But even the working dogs, they are part of our family. How can they not be when they take up so much of your time and money? When they retire, they will not be shipped off to other homes, and that might be stupid in other's opinions. [As long as] they can manage to fit into the household, like [Amy who has] managed quite well; Zack didn't. He just couldn't be trusted. Not in a nasty way, he was just...I mean he'd be on the table! He just didn't know how to adapt. There's so much time [taken up] and emotions do get involved – they are our family.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com)

Kinship ties often determine space-sharing, household dynamics, hierarchy and sleeping arrangements. Hierarchies are often employed to regulate social interaction (Sapolsky, 2004:393) and the introduction of the dog into the household undoubtedly has an influence on family dynamics. Contemporary shifts in attitude and cultural practices have rendered the “pet as family” (Miller, 2011:91). It is, therefore, becoming an increasingly popular trend to include one's pet in all family traditions from Christmas gifts, holidays, and scheduled play dates, to lifting the pet to canine camp and “doggy daycare” (Miller, 2011:91).

Having a pet can therefore be seen as a way to enlarge the family, to love and feel loved, without the difficulties associated with having a child such as pregnancy, the interruption of schooling or a career, and high expense. This choice could indicate an unwillingness to relinquish or postpone some of the inherent advantages of parenthood and to exhibit interest in parenting and the ability to accomplish it at some future time. [Therefore], “semiparenting” or “preparenting” is achieved with the help of animals... as animals provide an emotional outlet, a new form of bond, and ways to practice or rehearse other relationships.

(Shir-Vertesh, 2012:423;428)

There are two sides to the dog-as-family coin, however. Companion animals are “flexible humans” or “emotional commodities” who can be adored family members one moment, and demoted to the outdoors or someone else's family the next as they epitomize options (Shir-Vertesh, 2012:420). Owing to this status, dogs can be included or excluded at any point in the relationship. This tension between the dog as person and “other” within the interspecies household is, therefore, reinforced by various practices of inclusion and exclusion (Shir-Vertesh, 2012:425). The very notion of kinship is ambiguous in a household where a *schutzhund* is kept and it is largely a culturally-determined perspective. Proximal intimacy through inclusion is complicated by the demands of the sport (i.e. exclusion by

kennelling and crating) which immediately affects the ability of handlers to accept their sport dogs as family members. This exclusion, however, seems to be balanced out with certain allowances – inclusions and allowances of behaviour that would not be made in the case of a pet in the home.

Wayde: With the working dogs you...go into the kennel, the dog jumps on you [and] you allow it because you don't want to correct a dog for being excitable [or you'll kill the drive]. Whereas with your pet dog it's obviously different where you start putting rules in, whereas with the working dogs we allow them to be really unruly until we say, "fuss" then its work. When you're off the field they can do whatever they want. If you allow them to run free in your house and bring a shoe, you can't smack them for that. Whereas with a pet, you [must] put in boundaries. That's why we kennel the working dogs so they cannot go and destroy the house. You can't put discipline in for that.

Wendy: You've got to remember when you are with the dog 24/7 you are training 24/7. So with these dogs we are expecting them to give us 100% on the training field so that means on the competition field it's a 100%. They don't know that they are on the couch now and the competition field [later] – it's 100% [all the time], there's no distinction between them. Whereas, with a pet, you are not going to expect the same thing from them.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Wendy and Wayde's Asco, whom they took to the WUSV World championships in 2013, was sadly diagnosed with cancer in 2014 and the dog was immediately retired – from the kennel to the couch in the matter of one day. The constant paradox resurfaces. It is as if there is a yearning inside many sport-dog handlers to include their dogs in family occasions, and spaces, or to simply treat them as a pet (because they are such balanced, well-rounded animals). Yet, they have to restrict these interactions (exclusion) if they want the best results for *schutzhund*.

[At] high level, world championship, you don't want the dog interfered with by too many people...Why we want the dogs restricted in the environment is that the dog...doesn't have bad experiences [by being] interfered with by many.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Wayde: [You must] kennel the dog

Candice: Is it kennelling all day? Basically when the dog is not with you [he/she] in the kennel or crate?

Wendy: [Yes], it only comes out to toilet or to work

Wayde: You obviously can't keep your dog kennelled or crated for a week and not do anything with it. [**Wendy:** they need mental stimulation] If you are crating or kennelling, you've got to work the dog every day. It's very cruel to leave the dog just cooking for a week. The same just goes to having a puppy, they are obviously going to go and pick up something to chew. The moment you start disciplining the dog for it, you start losing the little bit that you could be getting out...in your bite work or your obedience...You [must] manage the environment.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Clicks

Much of a partnership is beyond language and cognition: some dogs just 'click' with specific handlers (Irvine, 2004). This points to something beyond kinetic or verbal communication – it is an intuitive connection that one is not easily able to put into words.

I remember the day...it's as if I could never figure him out when he was a puppy. Because he was all over the place. And then one day, it was after he...took the tumble dryer from one part of the garage to another part of the garage and he chewed off the lead. [I scolded him for being naughty and] he sat back on his haunches and looked at me...I looked back and I said to him, "now I get you". It was just a moment we [shared]. [In] that instant I could feel a connection between me and him. And he is besotted with me.

(Hettie Cilliers, pers. com.)

[Zac] was amazing – you could really hammer him, wouldn't do a thing, he would just bounce straight back and say OK and try so hard and I'm so sorry I never gave him the right chance [*emotional moment*]...he is the reason why I started clicker training. They are the reason why you go where you go. If there had been another dog, I certainly wouldn't know as much as I do...because of him. It's just frustrating [because if he had] come along now, because I'm now training my third dog for [schutzhund], maybe now I might begin to understand. [He] was a lot like Kondor. You saw Wayde work now - energy level like tops. Of course I didn't understand the drives correctly so [Zac] was very hectic. We managed to get a lot out of him, I mean he was KUSA National [schutzhund] champion, he was in Meisterchaft two years ago, he was at nationals a few years running. So yea...

(Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

[Many people say that they had "this one dog" they really had a connection with]. Have they not had that...connection with a human? That one human you were really bonded to and you really liked that person and...you didn't even have to phone them...you just thought of them and they just picked up the phone. All of that is on a psychic level. But [there's] no proof.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Each dog-human relationship is different. Handlers do not only interact with dogs that they 'click' with as dogs behave differently around different people. Some dog-human dyads never get on with each other and this could simply be explained as a personality clash (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:329).

You DO find special partnerships. How many people do you know that you get on well with? Do you get on well with everybody?...It's the same with dogs. There are many people who have personality clashes with [their] dogs and they say "I can't get it right with this dog". South Africa is the worst country in the world [in this regard]. Canada, everywhere in the world, people will buy and sell and swop dogs. Berry, Hugh got from a guy who had actually taken other dogs to the top but he couldn't get it right with the dog. There was just something...there was a personality clash, he didn't enjoy Berry. Hugh

bought the dog and he's made national champion. So if you look at all the different personalities in the world and the different characters in the world etc. there have to be personality clashes. There has to be a certain amount of people that cannot get on [with each other]. On the other hand, there has to be a good percentage of dogs that really bond with people [where] they really, really get on.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Dogs have a personality as well. Each one [is] an individual. So it depends on what type of dog-personality you [match] with what type of human-personality. There might be clashes, and then you're going to struggle, whether it's a bitch or a dog it doesn't matter.

(Karen Wessels, pers. com.)

Personality clashes, however, do not immediately disqualify dog-human partnerships from being successful.

[A personality clash] can have a negative influence [on the relationship], but some people take a dog and work the dog and get to the top and they say "I actually didn't really enjoy that dog".

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

An alternative explanation is that 'clicking' with a dog depends on the human and dog being paired up according to gender. The role of gender in teamwork came up in various discussions that I had with my informants. Some believe that opposite-sex partners are more effective such as dog-to-woman or bitch-to-man partners, while others disagree entirely and say that gender has nothing to do with it – what matters is the "click".

Wendy: [Thinking about] partnership with male and female between handler and dog – oh my word, male dogs are much easier to train.

Wayde: oh, ja.

Wendy: Oh my word. Females are so manipulative, so good luck with Bindi.

Wayde: They test you more, where males are quite happy to [obey]

Wendy: A male is just dah-dah dah-da da-da. [With] a female, it's obviously hormones coming into play. Amy's given me a rough going and I would say you do get some good female dogs. I mean if you look at the three winners – podium placements for [worlds] last year – all, first three were females with female handlers. Which is something, but generally [speaking], if you look at worlds and the podium, it's male dogs with male handlers.

(Wendy & Wayde Linden, pers. com.)

Back to the stick: Control and power

Controlling the dog

The animal trainers of ancient societies were seen as magicians, extraordinary people with the "powers" to lord over mighty animals like elephants. Moreover, many such trainers used

to conceal their methods in order to maintain this “supernatural” status in society (Young, 2002:174). Although times have changed along with human philosophies on animal training, humans are still fascinated with the “powers” some people have over animals – their almost supernatural ability to control them and coax them to do their bidding. Or perhaps humans are just preoccupied with the idea of power itself. Even though power in dog-human relations is inevitably in the hands of the human, this does not have to predispose domination.

Our relationships with them are necessarily unequal. They depend on us to give them food, water, and even to allow them to relieve themselves. In addition, the guardian...will exert power over the animal in training, vaccinating, sterilizing. He or she will also exert power in the many daily instances in which the dog or cat wants to do something—go outside, come inside, bark at the mail carrier, scratch at the upholstery—and the guardian must control the animal's behavior. Much of this control is for the safety of the animals and, in any case, is an unavoidable aspect of the relationship.

(Irvine, 2004:26)

All participants emphasised the importance and necessity of control in *schutzhund*. Serious handlers are working with dogs bred for high prey and fight drives. Training them for protection work only serves to agitate the protective nature of the dog in the presence of their handler.

Especially [when] teaching a dog to bite, you've got to have total control of that dog. You can't teach them to be a monster and then not be able to control it...You must have control. If Kondor for a second thinks that he's in control, I'll lose everything. So even before I get on the field, I've got to make sure that he's listening. Same as the obedience, I've got to learn that before I go on that he's calm. I can't just take him and go straight onto the field, it will be too much. I must now go 5 minutes before, *platz* him, wait for him to be correct, sit him, wait for him to get rid of all that energy, and realise that with him whining and getting high into drive, I'm not going to go...I'm going to go when I'm going to go. You've got to definitely...be able to adjust to it and to what your dog is.

(Wayde Linden, pers. com.)

There are various ways to control a dog. Many humans establish boundaries with dogs by managing their access to resources like sleeping areas, toys, and especially food (Young, 2002:178). Motivational dog trainers make use of this philosophy not only to develop a trusting relationship with a dog but to foster the idea of working for one's keep: giving the dog an occupation and a salary. Controlling an animal's resources can, however, be seen as manipulation which, in itself, is a subtle, yet, powerful form of control. It may not be as overtly negative as smacking a dog or using a pinch collar, but it is an application of the

same principle: gaining control of the animal. Here again we find evidence of the inescapable need and desire for human control in potentially uncontrollable situations.

To dominant trainers, however, controlling a dog's resources is not as visibly effectual as physical aggression (Young, 2002:178). Humans often believe that absolute control over an animal is necessary and this can only be achieved by getting physical (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:331). Physical domination (using the body) often requires the added assistance of certain gadgets or devices – devices used to punish rather than to correct (a.k.a. sticks). Most top handlers can tell many stories about “what can be seen behind the scenes” when handlers become frustrated with their dog. In *schutzhund* there are various mechanisms of control that are frowned upon, some of which are very necessary. For example, in protection work, if a dog does not want to let go of the helper and the handler has attempted everything he/she can to *aus* the sleeve in an unobtrusive way, the need for an e-collar becomes imperative. If this situation was translated into reality, a dog holding onto a real human arm or leg and refusing to let go could have serious implications for both owner and dog and this is why control is necessary. As much as dogs are persons, they should be respected for the species they are: dogs with a drive to protect and hunt. These instincts are natural and useful, but when a dog lives with humans, their drives need to be practised appropriately or human society will do away with them. Unfortunately, we do not live in a forgiving society where dog bites are taken lightly and animals have many second chances. Dogs deemed dangerous by authorities or those who have bitten a human are usually sentenced to death. All in all, if the only thing standing between a dog and a kill shelter is the use of a shock collar, then perhaps its use by a knowledgeable trainer is justifiable – thus inscribing new meaning to a previously negated device.

I had a hard time with e-collars at first. I always said I will never put an e-collar on my dog...[now I believe that] if say for instance you've got to do bite work and the dog is so high that is doesn't listen...then I do agree with the [e-collar] because it's the single most [effective] way of stopping the dog doing [something undesirable or dangerous]. And getting through to the dog that that is not necessary: “If you do this, then you won't get that”.

(Kate Brown, pers. com.)

Synthesised mechanisms of control have been a part of dogdom since its inception. While some are agreeably severe (especially when placed in inexperienced hands), people generally try to find ways to gain control by gentler means such as using or withholding food to control body movements (Birke, 2007:230). But there are handlers who would blatantly prefer sticks to carrots, matching the size of the stick with the hardness of the dog.

A lot of people can't deal with [using food]...They'd rather put a pinch collar on them and use compulsion than withhold food. That's quite ridiculous as well because the collar has got to come off. It's not control if the collar's got to come off. Whereas, if you teach the food, to work for food, it never leaves them.

(Kate Brown, pers. com.)



Photo 5.4: Perceived control

Here Kate brown has Bryn on a garrotte with no intention of using it.

During my observations of many obedience and bite-work routines, I noticed that dogs were oftentimes dressed with control devices even though they were never used. This could imply that the dog is so used to the collar being on that he/she cannot work without it or perhaps the handler is complying with the expected norms of the context. Alternatively, this behaviour could indicate that the idea of a mechanism of control is more powerful than the mechanism itself. Perhaps in the human's mind, if the pinch or the garrotte is on the dog, around the dog's neck, the handler feels more in control and, therefore, is in control. Thus perceived control and the resultant confidence which it instils in a handler may be more powerful than physical control. As we have established, dogs mirror the human state of mind.

For me, personally, I used a pinch because he was so strong...he was too much dog for me. The pinch for him makes him higher. I never had to use an e-collar on [my border collie] because she was never that much dog. Whereas, now I've got a dog that, if he doesn't listen on a bite work field, it could be dangerous for the helper.

(Kate Brown, pers. com.)

It is worth evaluating why humans want to work with and ultimately control dangerous animals or train them in order to have the power to do physical harm. Is this possibly an indication of human-exceptionalism – the desire to be very near to danger, wanting to be in the space of the uncontrollable and having found a way to control it, and then being able to walk away and say that “I can control the vicious and dangerous”? There may be something to be said about the arrogance of that portion of human society which adopts this perspective. What's more, they appear to be willing to risk injury to gain this status.

There are always moments in the interspecies partnership where the human fears that the animal will overpower him/her or resist the interaction, especially when working with large animals that have the size and power to kill a human. This clearly indicates a limit to co-

being – the hyphen joins but also separates. Co-being is ephemeral and tenuous; it is moments of fractional mutuality between two very different persons. Just because two beings are paired up does not mean that the two will always work together towards a common goal. A dog is not always going to act the way that a handler wants him/her to and there is always room for the dog's expectations of the human to be disappointed by inconsistency (Maurstad, Davis & Cowles, 2013:330).

Human-animal relationships are thus regulated by power negotiations. Power is intangible; therefore, ethnographers can only observe it in the behaviour and discourse of people and how they engage in their routines with animals (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:45). Fear is central to aspects of power and control and I noticed that it was the answer to many questions trainers asked handlers about their dogs. Very often a trainer would ask a handler a question to ascertain the reasoning behind their actions, and it was interesting to note how often “being afraid” was part of the answer.

Table 5.1: Excerpts from trainer-handler discourses highlight the verbalisation of fear

QUESTION	COMMON ANSWER
<i>Why don't you let go of the leash (or toggle) and let the dog move freely?</i>	Because I'm afraid that the dog will run away and not come back.
<i>Why didn't you keep your hand in the correct heel position?</i>	Because I was scared that the dog would grab the food out of my hand.
<i>Why did you tighten the leash when you approached that dog?</i>	Because I was afraid my dog would bite the other dog.

The truth is that a dog is a better person without the leash (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). So what are we humans really afraid of? Yes, we are afraid to lose control and maybe, given special circumstances, we fear for our lives. Many people are afraid to just let the dog be a dog. Or perhaps we are fearful of accepting and viewing a dog as a person, because once we have crossed that line of similarity, we have to introspectively acknowledge that part of us is similarly ruthless, instinctual, and wild. The unknown is the source of many fears and there is so much that humans do not know about animals. We have not yet “figured them out” as it were, we cannot always anticipate their reasoning and consequent actions, we do not have all the answers, and this scares us. The idea that another animal has knowledge that is inaccessible to the human endangers our sense of superiority and possibly even our humanity. We are very unwilling to let go of our conceptualisation of the “natural

order of things" – the man is superior to the beast; beast must submit to human; beast must work to serve human ideology – but who decided that this was natural? The notion of equality frightens humans because it tests our perceptual and conceptual boundaries and places us in a zone so far beyond our personal comforts that we would have to give up notions of human-exceptionalism and ultimately relinquish all forms of control.

"Fear comes from difference (ignorance). Where difference exists, the desire for possession (control) becomes manifest in order to destroy fear"

(Eastern proverb, anonymous)

Controlling the human

An unexpected theme of control emerged during my fieldwork. Unlike the anticipated notion of human exceptionalism discussed above, the theme of control over human emotion, speech, and behaviour surfaced frequently in interviews and observations of dog-human partnerships. This form of control indicated a human strength – the ability to submit one's humanity for the benefit of canine understanding.

Wayde: In practice or training you've got to [be controlled]

Wendy: Even if you've got a dog that needs such a severe hiding, whatever he may be doing, it's got to be controlled. It's got to be like we said yesterday...You have got to be like Jekyll and Hyde, and the moment the dog goes "whoa, ok, now you're ready to have a conversation. Let's go!" You can't lose it. You are going to do yourself no favours

Wayde: You can make the dog think that you are extremely cross with your whole presence, but...not [do it] emotionally

Wendy: [being in control of your emotions and body] helps

Wayde: If...[Kondor is] whining, and wants to go, then you also get worked up and it just makes the situation worse – just sit there and wait, then he realises that getting mad is not going to get me to go. Being calm, being still gets me to go. You've just got to keep your cool. When I was doing my obedience, he was out there in front of me, he was just trying to get on to doing it. The minute that people start panicking and start falling apart, it just gets worse and worse. You've just got to, in the moment [be] calm...also what Hugh and them always tell us is...They watched Joanne [at the world championships]. She had two dogs where the one cocked it up six-love and it did not phase her. She took out her next dog went onto the field and did brilliantly.

Wendy: [Self-control is] very important

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

The true test of control, therefore, seems to lie in the response of the human when things do not go as planned – when faced with impending failure. The attitude towards the dog and the work at hand must always be positively controlled. When training is not successful, the handler tends to diagnose themselves or the dog as incompetent, which is an inappropriate response to failures in *schutzhund* or other dog-related disciplines (Hearne, 1995:451-2).

Rather do something incorrectly in a positive manner than start to back off. I see it a lot of the time as well, rather than confidently doing a mistake you hesitate and the dog then feeds off of you...[he] feeds off of your whole body language, your whole demeanour. Your dog then says "hey, what's up? [What's wrong here?]" So, you know, if you're going to do something just do it.

(Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Silent commodities

The tension of inclusion and exclusion within a family setting (mentioned earlier) gives rise to a prominent issue: if the dog is not functioning as the handler desires in the sport, or if the partners are not 'clicking', is it permissible for the dog to be passed on and replaced by a more effective dog? According to several of my informants, South Africans have a tendency to stick it out with a dog who is potentially wanting or difficult because of the bond that the two share, and perhaps due to the guilt and stigma attached to casting an animal off. In Europe, the attitude is different – if a dog does not match the handler, it is sold on.

It's only in South Africa that people say...a dog is for life and they keep it. Everybody is happy to come up with the stupid statement that you shouldn't sell the dog. Once you've got a dog, you've got to look after it for life. But I've got a dog there, he came in at 7.5 years old – it is good that I bought him, but then it would be bad that the guy sold him. Hugh got a dog in, Wayde got a dog in, all of these different dogs they obtained and they bought because they were sold. They couldn't have been bought if they were not sold. They couldn't have been [acquired] if they were not given away. So it's only in South Africa that we have a situation where people say – "no, I can't get rid of this dog, who's ever going to look after him as well as I've looked after him". Absolutely stupid...Every dog's got a price.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Dogs can be regarded as emotional commodities (Shir-Vertesh, 2012:428). The dog's "value" is to a large extent based on emotional attachment thus making their worth marginal and inconsistent. From a functional perspective, therefore, Mark may be right. If a dog is not suited to you or is genetically incapable, the partnership may be difficult and possibly even unsuccessful no matter how much training or money has been invested in the cause. Despite the obvious set-backs involved in keeping a dog that is unsuitable, it appeared to me that South African *schutzhund* handlers have adopted an admirable culture of compassion and commitment towards dogs. As the dog changes hands, in a cultural sense, from Europeans to South Africans, this new dog is viewed as a dog for life as opposed to the European view of the dog as disposable when found faulty.

Wayde: [To European trainers] we see our dogs as pets. I can't sell my dog even though it might have a problem or whatever. I'll probably just keep it and get another dog. It's different there. If the dog's too strong for you, and you can't handle it, you'll sell it on because that's how it is. Whereas over here, we get too attached to our dogs. But that's good for us because that's how we end up with the good dogs

Wendy: As soon as they come across one small problem that's fixable, [it's] "goodbye"

Wayde: They're not willing to put a year into fixing a problem

Wendy: Then we see this [as an opportunity], and thank goodness we have access to world class trainers [willing to help us] scratch around and figure it out.

Wayde: Yea, [we take the time to] get it sorted out

Wendy: A dog like Amy [for example], failed BH in Germany. And [now I've got a *schutzhund 2* on her]

Wayde: You never really know the reasons why they go out for sale. But it's a lot easier to get your hands on a two year old dog that you can see the drives, that you can know the dog is healthy. Where here, you've got to get a pup and you haven't got a clue how it's going to turn out or how its hips are going to be; it's hell.

(Wayde & Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

A dog 'owned' by a human is fully dependent on its 'owner' for survival. This ultimately coerces the animal to submit to human will (Serpell, 1986:5). There are several disadvantages to living with and working for humans, including breeding disorders, cruel and futile body modifications to impress breed standards, and animal abuse (Serpell, 1986:14-15). South African dogs face daily persecution due to human standards of value and aesthetics (Van Stittert & Swart, 2008:2). Haraway (cited in Miller, 2011:95) described companion dogs as possessing a precarious status in society: when human affection fades, convenience trumps responsibility, or the dog dissatisfies the human illusion of unconditional love, the risk of desertion is imminent.

Your true fanatical sportsman, the one that wants to strive for 300 points. A person who wants to stand on the podium, he would have to live his life as a fanatical sport-person...If you want to be at the top, you would have to treat the dog as a business partner and basically in the line of a commodity. If you had a horse and that horse was a show jumper...[but] the horse wasn't enough for you to get to the top, and your drive was to go to the top. What would you do? Get another one! What's the difference between a dog and a horse? People's emotions.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

PROPERTY, OWNERSHIP, AND BODY MODIFICATION

Since animals were first domesticated, humans have been changing their bodies. The predominant reason why people modify animal bodies is to include them into human culture as property and not persons. Animal bodies are ultimately not theirs to control and are generally seen as objects fit to be owned, controlled, patented, manipulated, bred, bought, and sold. Each and every animal is owned by someone or something. Body

modification can, therefore, be used as a method of control to inscribe animal bodies with symbols of human power (DeMello, 2011:346). Marks of property and ownership are common (DeMello, 2011:350): hot-iron branding (oldest form), freeze brands, ear tags, tattoos, and microchips.

When a farmer tags his sheep, he is performing a physical demonstration of belonging. “Animals, more generally, carry the stamp or the imprint of the human culture that has ‘marked them out’” (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:45). As per the requirements of the GSDFA, all registered German shepherds in South Africa, are tattooed in the right ear (preferably before the age of 8 weeks). The tattoo itself is a code that consists of three letters (indicating the breeding kennel) and three numbers (a unique, sequential number for each dog usually indicative of the order in which it was born at that specific kennel). The ordeal itself is non-consensual, done with no anaesthetic, and fairly traumatic albeit brief. One person holds the puppy tight against their chest while the tattooist places spiked prongs around the puppy’s right ear and clamps down hard for a few seconds while the puppy wails in distress from being restricted by the other human. The tattooist then takes a wad of ink and rubs it directly over the raw, imprinted area. Breeders say that the benefits outweigh the fleeting discomfort of the yelping puppy. First and foremost this tattoo provides positive proof of ownership of a dog by a human. The tattoo must be checked and logged at every show or *schutzhund* competition to verify this ownership. Second, the tattoo is entered into a national database which then helps to reunite dogs with their owners in the event of their being lost. Lastly, the tattoo number is matched to various breed-improvement schemes such as x-ray results for hip and elbow dysplasia. The end does not necessarily justify the means, however, as humans continue to mark animals with symbols of ownership.

There is much to be said about body modification in dog breeding circles, and the German Shepherd Dog community is no exception. Briefly explained, it all starts at conception where said dog is matched to said bitch, both chosen for each other by humans on the basis of desirable genotypic and phenotypic features. These features are deemed desirable by various GSDFA judges within a set system and this opinion is largely subjective. If the dog cannot mate successfully with the bitch, she will be artificially inseminated with these chosen characteristics. If she cannot deliver the puppies, she will be cut open. If she has a reproductive problem, she will be sterilised. If a puppy has a deformity he will be neutralised. If any of the offspring show signs of floppy ears past a certain age, they will either undergo corrective surgery or they will have moulds inserted into their ears to correct and conceal the human error in breeding. And the list goes on. In the showing realm, far more

modifications are applied because externals are of prime importance. Crop length, hind angulation, and shoulder height, are all measured to ascertain breed perfection. But what they invest in externals, they are willing to sacrifice in essentials like temperament, functionality, and longevity. It is preferable for a dog to have low sloping hindquarters and drive from behind in the show ring to show a pretty picture to the audience watching, but at home he cannot turn quickly on his hind quarters or even jump as high as one metre. It would be acceptable to dismiss subtle signs of aggression in exchange for a beautiful head, deep colouring, and an exceptional show stance. Concealing an ear clipping will only lead to more ear deformities in future puppies, which will in turn also be secreted in a snowball effect of defects. If the hip-grading is dependent on two good hips, the one bad hip might be broken so that a veterinary certificate can be issued to account for the bad hip being “accidental” rather than genetic.

Consequently, the horror of the show ring is only apparent to those who wish to see it for what it really is: an outlet for human control and supremacy. Once again, we could justify this form of control: if dogs were left to be dogs, their natural sex drive would lead to overpopulation and more homeless dogs. But the lengths that some breeders go to in the name of perfection end up harming and causing the decline of “man’s best friend” instead of improving the essentials of the breed. Furthermore, power emerges in the silences and voids in discourse - in humanist writing, the result is that the animal becomes a “textualized non-person” by exclusion (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:48). By not talking about the serious implications of breeding circles or the reality of certain partnerships, the dog is ultimately silenced.

Leadership

Where, then, is the balance? It is commonly accepted that animals need guidance when co-existing with humans and it is only fair to provide them with time to adjust to another’s world, lifestyle, methods of communication, and terms of engagement. So about midway along the gamut between control and absolute lenience we find leadership. The challenges with leadership lie in personality clashes – humans are all different and maintain different levels of leadership. Certain dogs need a particular type of leader, and if you happen to have such a dog you need to work at your personality: it is simply insufficient to be a personality. Indecisiveness and uncertainty in the human handler will be reflected in the behaviour of the dog, so one has to work on practicing body language that conveys the correct energy and message of confidence to the dog. This exchange of power means

nothing of course without trust. It is the human's responsibility, in times of stress, to shift their subjectivity by letting go of any anxieties they may have and to replace these with confidence and mastery, and in so doing subduing the stress levels of other bodies (Hearne, 2007). With this ability comes the obligation to understand dogs as dogs. Dogs, however, have responsibilities in the partnership too (Hearne, 2007). The rules of engagement are different between different species or partners and obedience is an essential portion of the dog-human relationship.

[Trust] plays a mega role. If the dog can't trust you to be able to believe what you are saying, and if you as the handler can't trust the dog to do what you want, [it's a big problem]. To be able to trust your dog to know [that when] you walk up to the [tracking] pole, [he will] put his head down, you say "such" and he's going to go forward, is an integral part of the training. If you're going to walk out there shifting yourself every time you put the lead on and you never know what the dog's going to do, how are you going to do it? If the dog's going to walk out [and] the [one] day you kick him, the next day you love him, the next day you give him sweeties, the next day you hit him with a whip...how [does that work?]...he has got to trust that what you are doing with him is honest, above board, and with integrity.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Reward-based training can be used to guide the exchange of power between human and dog during training (Greenebaum, 2010:133). A human leader is someone who has clear boundaries and communicates them to the dog appropriately by rewarding desirable behaviours and removing rewards for bad behaviour (Yin, 2007:417). With the passage of time, desirable behaviour will become a habit if the leader is consistent in providing rewards. It comes down to leadership without force.

[Say for example] you think the dog is doing something wrong in tracking, let's say it's tracking and it does a corner and it's on the right track and you correct the dog – [meaning the dog] is correct and you're making a mistake, you lose that trust with the dog [in] tracking. So like tracking on grass now, you've got to trust your dog, you have to trust that he is doing right. If you don't trust the dog, you are not going to get anywhere.

(Wayde Linden, pers. com.)

The willingness to surrender control and exchange roles (and essentially) requires patience and respect for the agency of the dog (Greenebaum, 2010:133). Leadership implies relinquishing control and thus allowing an exchange of power; arriving at the realisation and accepting that the dog is in control too.

Discussion

The partnership between dog and human in *schutzhund* can be equated to a dance whereby each partner plays a vital role and has their own set of responsibilities. The human must lead the dog with mutual integrity and on the basis of an acknowledgement that dogs have personhood. Humans must take into account each dog's individuality in the training relationship by adjusting their body language and controlling their emotions accordingly. Dogs have the responsibility to be willing and pliable in training, to accurately read their partner, and to actively apply themselves to the learning process. Dog and human must work together, side-by-side, in a working partnership. Only then is the possibility of intersubjectivity, co-being, and learning the third language realized between animal and human.

This relationship is difficult to define and is also clouded by a constant paradox of multiple perspectives. Each family that a *schutzhund* enters into contains a different cultural setting with different family dynamics, rules of engagement, and value systems, thus making the category hazy and flexible (Shir-Vertesh, 2012:428). Are these dogs just commodities to be bought, used, and resold, or are they definitive members of the family? South Africans share a culture of compassion in comparison to European trainers in that they develop strong bonds with their dogs. Handlers are, therefore, unwilling to swop their partners out even when they are found to be unsuitably matched. This would then imply that the value of the dog is predominantly gauged by the emotional value that the handler attaches to the dog. Emotions are, however, unstable. And herein lies the problem; if we treat dogs as objects, then they are likely to become disposable (Greenebaum, 2010:140).

The role of the dog in society, however, is far more prominent than that of a sporting tool, family member, or emotional commodity. Dogs are not just objects but agents too. Animals have participated in and contributed towards historical events, cultural developments, and the general day-to-day lifestyles of human societies across the globe for centuries. Beyond that, the individualities and similarities among dogs could signify that dogs have cultural tendencies of their own. Various social norms are prevalent and practised on the training field, which could point to the realisation of an emerging interspecies culture: *schutzhund* people.

Chapter 6

CANINE CULTURE

"The world was conquered through the understanding of dogs; the world exists through the understanding of dogs".

- Friedrich Nietzsche

Small as it may be on earth-size scale, Mark's farm was a world of its own; a colony within the greater expanse of dogdom. It was a canine pilgrimage site: both a geographical location for dog training and a safe space for like-minded individuals to gather, share, and openly express a common interest that seemed very close to the heart. The types of humans that frequented the field were from all walks of life – from doctors, lawyers, nurses, and veterinarians to life-coaches, martial artists, and pensioners. The majority were white, middle- to upper-class members of South African society with a fair representation of Indians and foreign nationals. Most of the helpers were white with the exception of one Asian and one black helper. It was not a common occurrence to bring the family or children along unless they were intended to handle the dog during a session. These humans would assemble and arrange themselves in noticeable niches to discuss their dogs and personal lives until Mark arrived. Once he had arrived, Mark conducted most conversations while hobbling about the frontlines of the field as his expertise in the sport was sought just as much on the field as off. Mark was a philosophical man and as such had many followers and an equal amount of enemies. Those who revered and respected him participated in a trend – they brought wicker baskets laden with generous food offerings always accompanied by strong coffee (especially when the colony had to track in the early hours of the morning). Women were the main contributors to this custom and some seemed to butt heads over who could provide the best goods, while others set up a rotational feeding schedule. It is important to note that these offerings were all intended for Mark's enjoyment, and no one else's. This is one of many other unique behaviour patterns that both defined and confined Mark's field. This unique world, a little piece of dogdom, seemed to be governed by its own value system, social organisation, politics, currency, and dress code and its function and "fit" within the larger world of reality proved problematic. Thus, the

status of the dog is elevated from participant in culture to agent of culture as the dog is identified as the key component on the *schutzhund* field.

Although our interactions with animals are often a source of conflict, animal-human exchanges are vital to the quotidian flow of modern social life (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:78). Not only are animals culturally relevant to us now, but have been so ever since we first crossed paths. Companion animals do not appear to serve any valuable, practical purpose, neither are they economically viable (Serpell, 1986:12). South Africans initially benefited from dogs guarding and herding livestock, in addition to their ability to track and hunt game (Van Stittert & Swart, 2008:2). While the Xhosa used dogs to ward off the *tokoloshe*, early Boer travellers considered a 'good pack of dogs...a very necessary part of the equipment' (Van Stittert & Swart, 2008:6-7). Dogs were also used to preserve the black-white racial divide and many more were trained to protect property (Van Stittert & Swart, 2008:27, 29). All these roles exemplify the life of an outside dog. However, today, many middle-class, South African dog-owners, with the exception of some dog communities, share the Western ideology of "pet as family". The dog's emotional position in the family home wavers between child, parent, and even spouse, and the dog is often compelled to adopt these roles interchangeably (Beck & Katcher, 1996:68; Miller, 2011:94). As such, we give them human names, mourn their loss, share our troubles, beds, and couches with them, and cuddle, adore, play with, exercise, sport, vet, and socialise them enough to ensure optimum longevity (Miller, 2011:94; Serpell, 1986:12).

Agents of empire

To whatever extent humans may exploit the importance of the role that animals play in their lives, their significance reaches far beyond the couch or kennel. Animals have inadvertently initiated substantial shifts in human perception and, therefore, human history (Fudge, 2006). They may not be entirely cognizant of the scope of their influence or the changes that they initiate, but that does not make these alterations any less real. Animals are not merely property but rather "*living property—agents as well as objects*" (Anderson, 2006:89). They were not merely a manifestation of human civilisation, but animals changed the landscape in ways that had a direct influence on human life, thus making animals the unsuspecting "agents of empire" (Anderson, 2006:32,211).

A documentary on Yellowstone National Park called *How Wolves Change Rivers* reported that the reintroduction of wolves into the park after a 70-year absence resulted in astounding changes³⁴ in the terrain (Monbiot, 2014). The presence of the wolves physically altered the environment by radically changing the behaviour of the deer that they preyed on. This resulted in a chain reaction of events including the regeneration of forests, vegetation, bird species, rabbits, mice, bears, and beavers. Most significantly, however, the behaviour of the rivers changed in response to the wolves. The regenerating forests and reduction in erosion caused the river banks to stabilise so that they became more fixed in their course, meandered less, and developed more drinking pools. It may, therefore, be argued that a species' removal from, or addition to, a particular ecosystem has the power to drastically alter a landscape, natural ecologies, and environmental stability. But what about culture? Does the presence of a dog have the power to inspire and alter human cultures? And does a dog have a culture of his own?

Owing to the various challenges related to accessing the inner lives of animals, limited attempts have been made to explain the cultural significance of animals in organizations (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:44). Workplaces where animals are present (abattoirs, stables, dog shelters, veterinary clinics) establish their culture upon very different value systems and dialogues when compared to organizations where animals are absent. This suggests that animals contribute significantly to orientating human identity and culture (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:44). Observing how humans connect with animals in diverse ways unifies two disparate notions of culture: culture as groups of people and culture as the practice of tending other species (Williams, 1985:87). Evidence can be found in the study of bee culture (Tsing, 1995), zoo culture (Mullan & Marvin, 1999), and equine culture. This unification is, however, also present in milieus where creatures are commodified – viewed as products around which people build and plan societies, identity groups, discourses, and activities (Mullin, 1999:215). Milieus much like those found in dogdom. Hence, animals can be viewed as the unsuspecting carriers of human culture (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:45). And yet, animals participate in human culture just as much as the humans themselves (Rothfels, 2002).

Rothfels (2002) insists that animals play an imperative role in creating cultural meaning. Animals are not blank pages onto which humans write meaning: they are not passive,

³⁴ Referred to in the video as a “trophic cascade”. Wolves effect the food chain both positively and negatively by not only taking the lives of various prey but giving life to many others (Monbiot, 2014).

mechanical presences in the active and thoughtful lives of humans (Fudge, 2006). Rather, Rothfels' research traces the many ways in which humans construct, *and are constructed by*, animals in the past. Attention paid to why animals have been excluded from, or included in, former research, might unearth certain silent assumptions about animals, their relationship to humans, and their part in a cultural history to which they also belong. "The actors are not all 'us.' If the world exists for us as 'nature,' this designates a kind of relationship, an achievement among many actors, not all of them human...nature is made, but not entirely by humans; it is a co-construction among humans and non-humans" (Haraway, 1992:297).

Canine culture

Dog clubs: culture in clusters

Culture changes on account of animals do not only occur in the workplace. Similar to the cultural shift in equestrianism (Birke, 2007:235), dog training schools across the world have traded in the "old-style choke chain" method for food, toys, and other rewards indicating a major cultural shift in dogdom (Marshall-Pescini, Passalacqua, Barnard, Valsecchi, & Prato-Previde, 2009:417). This shift is evident in the way that new, positive techniques are advertised and how regular arguments are formed against traditional methods among in-group members (Birke, 2007:235). A spinoff of this cultural change is the shift in perspective of dog owners towards the acceptance of animal personhood and agency (Irvine, 2004:332). Positive methods have drawn an increasingly large number of dog owners to enrol in dog schools or clubs, signifying that training and understanding animals is becoming an increasingly important aspect of dog owners' lives (Marshall-Pescini, Passalacqua, Barnard, Valsecchi, & Prato-Previde, 2009:417).

Clubs (not excluding those associated with dogs) are similar to organisations in that they can be described as spaces where people with diverse identities, beliefs, backgrounds, and values meet with a common purpose, often producing friction and political disputes (Brannan, 2005; Cooper & Law, 1995; Clegg, Kornberger, & Rhodes, 2005). Yet, something keeps these clubs going in spite of this convolution – more often than not, this proves to be culture.

One of the many possible reasons for this is found in the concept of culture, the collective acts of meaning making which stabilize and cement human relations...

(Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:43)

Club members “club together” for the sake of *communitas* – to have an outlet and support system for a shared interest, such as dog training or simply a passion for dogs or a specific breed in general. In the club, the dog is symbolically meaningful to its members because the breed not only represents the club's values – “embodying the ethos that brings people to [the club] and keeps them coming back” (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012:44).

Why do people go to...clubs? Shared interests. It's to socialise, something to do, there's a million [reasons]...debate clubs, stamp collecting clubs, whatever it may be people need to interact and associate with each other.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

For me it's the same type of person, so it's nice for me to go [to the dog club] and talk to people who feel the same way about dogs as I do.

(Karen Wessels, pers. com)

Serious leisure and a culture of commitment

As alluring as membership of the colony may be to some people, several respondents in my research confirmed that, just like any other sport, “*schutzhund* is not for everyone”. Rainey calls it “the dog sport of masochists” (2012). It is rough, tough, and requires a conversion of lifestyle that many are unwilling to commit to: this is “serious leisure” (Stebbins, 1982). “If you want to do *schutzhund*, you cannot go around and be a bunny-hugger, a tree-hugger a big softy...you can, but you'll never get anywhere” (Wendy Linden, pers. com., 2014). Gillespie, Leffler, and Lerner's article *If it weren't for my hobby, I'd have a life* (2002) highlights some valuable findings on individuals who partake in competitive dog sport. The article provides insights into how the sport becomes a lifestyle, and how this lifestyle causes friction and boundary negotiations in one's personal life. *Schutzhund* handlers were discovered to have an obsessive attitude towards the sport.

To be successful, you have to be obsessive [and have] that fanatical attitude. It's an obsessive compulsive change of lifestyle...your *schutzhund* routines, your *schutzhund* way of life. It becomes a religion. It becomes a lifestyle no questions asked.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

If you have no interest in actually going and standing on the podium, in my opinion, you are [wasting your time]...[you're] putting in so much time and effort; like [we] said it's a lifestyle. [With *schutzhund*] you've got to eat, sleep, breath dogs.

(Wendy Linden, pers. com.)

Dogdom is a fabricated social world with its own norms, organizational structure, and ethos (Gillespie, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002:286). Those who are uninvolved do not know the scope or reach of the realm of "serious" dog sport and the occasional broadcasts of dog shows and competitions on television do dogdom no justice (Gillespie, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002:287). Serious dog leisure can be anything from *schutzhund*, dog sledding, herding, hunting trials, tracking, and professional obedience, to ring sport, search and rescue, or thera-pet work. Since many dog enthusiasts are unable to make a "real world" career out of their passion, these sports are part-time and costly. Serious leisure partakers are highly committed to their sport and this aspect of their life is very often not understood or respected by non-participants (Gillespie, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002:287). Wendy mentioned that when Wayde made the world championship team, his colleagues at the office did not support or congratulate him as wholeheartedly as they would when other sporting successes were achieved. This could possibly be because the layman does not understand the sport, how much effort and time it takes, and therefore, what an achievement it truly is to make the Worlds team. Wendy perceived this lack of appreciation as general society not taking the sport as seriously as other more familiar sports.

A rigorous pursuit such as training dogs for *schutzhund* shapes the human identity in addition to, and often in discord with, the identity that one derives from the work place, home environment, or religious involvements (Gillespie, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002:286). This extreme form of leisure, therefore, acts as a space where power relations are simultaneously repelled and reproduced. *Schutzhund*, like other serious leisure realms³⁵, generates a 'culture of commitment' among partakers whereby members reserve the right to determine the club's exclusivity (Gillespie, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002:287; Tomlinson,1993:7). Commitments to the sport compete with obligations at home and work causing significant interpersonal conflict (Gillespie, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002:287). How do these participants navigate the powerful demands of "real life" and the alternate world of *schutzhund*?

Wendy reported that at the 2013 National Championships, her and Amy (her dog) had just given birth on the same day a few weeks prior. Nevertheless, there they were on the field at Nationals only a month afterwards. Wendy and Wayde's daughter now goes everywhere with them to training, and they commented that she has to, as *schutzhund*

³⁵ Ice skating, snowboarding, fishing, stamp or antique collecting, mountain climbing or biking, long distance running, hunting, and so on.

is their chosen lifestyle and she must adjust to it. She seemed to enjoy the adventures out to the tracking fields and all the attention she rallied from club members, but one cannot deny the deep impact the sport has, and will continue to have, on the life of the family. All social events (especially on weekends) are planned around the dogs. Wayde mentioned that he would even take Asco to work with him when the dog was younger and work him during his lunch and tea breaks.

Wendy: [People tend to lack the] commitment and drive [in the sport to be serious competitors].

Candice: Or maybe it's just a hobby to some, so it's just for leisure?

Wayde: Exactly, "Oh, on the weekend we'll go and do a bit of training". [No, you can't]...if you want to do it properly, it's training 3 times a day [every day].

(Wendy & Wayde Linden, pers. com.)

Leisure, much like work, is bound by the constraints of time and location (Gillespie, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002:288). Yet this utopian world of dogdom cannot really compete with real life obligations and this causes a near constant internal struggle for participants (Gillespie, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002:287). Although the skills acquired by hobbyists may be accredited and utilised by the real world, serious *schutzhund* handlers know that their lifestyle is deviant. Furthermore, the world that the hobbyist creates for him/herself may have a greater impact on their well-being than any of the other social worlds that they traverse (Gillespie, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002:288). Putting a dog down, for example, may be perceived as far more emotionally traumatic than interpersonal troubles with another human such as divorce or marital strife. Therefore, the values are sometimes so vastly different in the utopia of dogdom that relationships in real-life are compromised.

Often the strain which the sport places on the lifestyle of the handler results in isolation. Families are often dragged along to events unwillingly, or fights break out about how the members of the family treat the dog and how carefully instructions must be followed. Many, therefore, use the sport as an escape from the pressures of life.

The younger generation doesn't exist [in the sport] anymore because you find a lot of the younger generation becoming extremely frustrated with the behaviour of the parents. Parents go to dog shows [for] the whole weekend; sitting there in the blazing sun; all [their] parents' attention is on the dogs. It's an extremely egotistical, self-centred game. And if you're doing the sport as an individual, whether you're involved in a family or not...it's time-consuming and it's called budgeting. You have to budget your time. You have to [plan to] say "this weekend, or [the next] 4 or 5 days, I'm spending with the dog [and then stick to it]. I will give x amount of other weekends and other time to the family but [this is dog time]. If you can't [do this, then you won't succeed]...For a lot of [handlers] it's

escapism. People escape out of their family problems into the dog game. Or into whatever other [sport they like], golf tennis, etc. That is an escapist attitude.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

All of this, over and above any natural talent that one might possess to train dogs, results in a drastic lifestyle change that is absolutely necessary, and often heavily inconvenient, to be the best or to take a dog to the top. Moreover, all these changes are centred on the dog. The presence and partnership with the dog changes how the handlers spend their money and time, how they use their bodies to communicate, how they interact with other people, who they associate with, what language they use, which areas they routinely visit, and how they go about their daily routine. Therefore, the far-reaching impact of *schutzhund* on the lives of the handlers serves to shape the meaning that these people attribute to their lives (Gillespie, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002:285).

How many people ride bicycles? Thousands. How many people win the Tour de France? One. How many people play golf? How many Tiger Woods are there? So if you say that ten thousand people can do [*schutzhund*], [then] there can only be one world champion, that is the essence of the sport.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Dogdom and “the schutzhund people”

“*Schutzhund* people”, by implication, can be described as socially exclusive. Similar exclusivity is found in the equestrian world (Birke, 2007:224), the animal-showing arena, and various other serious, animal-focused vocations. *Schutzhund* people lure you in with their fancy dog gear, training vests, shiny collars, tracking lines, and decked-out dog-mobles with crates that you become convinced that you will not survive the day without (Rainey, 2012). The virus will slowly set in until you find yourself thoroughly pleased with your dog’s faultless 6a.m. track, fighting the urge to slip under the covers for a deeper sleep when the alarm rings two hours before. This is the controversial element of *schutzhund*: “if you want to play protection dog, you’re going to have to be willing to bleed” (Rainey, 2012).

I suppose we can be called dog people. And those people who are in the [*schutzhund*] clubs are called fanatics by the breed people, and the breed people are called fanatics by the sport people.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Dogdom could be viewed as all the communities of *schutzhund* people across the globe, each small cluster or club organised into separate colonies by geographical

location. Each colony is made up of *schutzhund* people and belongs to dogdom but is also distinct in terms of who leads the colony, and the particular way it practises and teaches *schutzhund*, both of which are largely determined by location. *Schutzhund* people could, therefore, be considered their own subculture³⁶ – various observations attest to it. These people have a culture set apart from any other in the dog community, and its members bear specific cultural markers. One could refer to them as a multispecies culture with their own currency, dialect, body language, cultural dress, symbolic communication, training philosophy, and value system which qualify them as members of the subculture. The colony shares a common interest, set of goals, and purpose, and much time is spent discussing the different methods and mechanisms used to achieve this common purpose – something they like to call “correctness”. To the untrained eye, *schutzhund* people seem completely out of their wits, often forgoing personal comforts and copious amounts of resources to develop both a well-rounded, resilient dog and their personal handling skills. A typical member can be found getting “work done” out in the pouring rain, blistering heat, lightning storms, or even snow. Come rain or shine, competent handlers believe in creating all-weather dogs. Handlers, whether seriously or casually involved in *schutzhund*, adjust their lifestyles according to their dogs.

DISCOURSE

Topics of conversation as well as associations within a colony are much different when compared to average society. A *schutzhund* handler will spend a lot of time associating with other *schutzhund* people, talking about similarities, challenges, ways to improve, the latest equipment, and all sorts of aspects relating to the sport, their dogs, and all involved in dogdom. The dialect used is context-specific. Out of context, no one would understand concepts such as “fuss”, “putting the dog into drive”, “pinch”, “tickle the lead”, or even “compulsion”.

Schutzhund people become accustomed to using very specific gestures, body movements, and postures to communicate³⁷ with one another in ways that would mean absolutely nothing to anyone outside of dogdom. Thus human-with-dog bodies function very differently from humans-without, in society. Their bodies are controlled and used with directed purpose. Hand motions, hand and leg positions, and changes in tone of

³⁶ A subculture can be defined as a portion of larger society that operates by a distinct pattern of behaviours, standards, folkways, and values that sets them apart from other groupings (Haviland, 1999:38).

³⁷ As discussed in copious detail in chapter 4.

voice are all of the utmost importance. Even the slightest tilt of the head could communicate something to the dog. Handlers become so aware of their bodies that this body language becomes a habit by muscle memory as handlers resume this control over their off-the-field behaviours.

CULTURAL DRESS



Photo 6.1: Cultural dress

Wayde Linden sporting the typical *schutzhund* attire: training jacket, gloves, wide-brimmed hat and gym pants.

Schutzhund people adorn themselves with gear that could be described as a combination of typical sporting gear and hiking gear. Clothing must be flexible, durable, and designed to withstand all forms of weather. Generally speaking, in South Africa, the common outfit is tracksuit pants or jeans, a loose-fitting t-shirt, and a pair of durable sport shoes. Shoes must have grip for bite work and obedience, and water resistance for tracking. Therefore, gumboots or

MuckBoots are ideal for tracking. The most common garment is the training jacket which is an off-sleeve, collared, zip-up jacket that slightly resembles a fishing jacket, albeit with deeper pockets that wrap around and behind the body. Depending on design, the jacket also has various clips to attach the lead and hidden pockets to hide food and toys all over the body. Gloves are worn during bite work to protect the hands against rope burns and sometimes in obedience when working with food and a dog that grabs at the food with his or her teeth. Peak and wide-brim hats are also suggested to protect the head and face from sun exposure.

Some clubs develop their own colour-coded brand of t-shirts and caps. But overall, the most noticeable observation is the preference for wearing clothes with foreign labels. Very often clothing is associated with



Photo 6.2: Club t-shirts

Hettie, Martie and I all wearing the red club t-shirt designed by the GSD Bloemfontein club.

perception and can determine how we view ourselves or how others treat us. For example, if one dresses professionally and neatly for work, others may develop the impression that you are professional in your day-to-day dealings. Likewise, handlers often wear labels associated with the standards maintained by the subculture in order to be “taken seriously” or perceived as capable. Many European brands have appeared in recent years receiving world acclaim for their quality, and South Africans seem to love their foreign gear. Therefore, there is a labelling approach to the desire to do well in the sport through the wearing of labels like GAPPAY and EuroJo which are associated with proficiency and expertise in *schutzhund*. The association of South African handlers with European equipment and clothing possibly brings them closer to the standards and ideals of the sport as played out by the country that founded it (Germany).

The equipment coming from Europe is awesome...GAPPAY is Chec, EuroJoe is Belgian. Overseas equipment is better than local, that is the impression. Every time I've been to a big trial overseas, everybody is buying the same leads, they're buying the same chains, they're buying the same everything. “Why [are] you buying it, you've got four at home?” “Yea, but I have to buy [one on] every trip”.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

There is also the consideration of pressure from other members of the colony to fit in. This provides a possible reason why *schutzhund* people tend to replicate each other in behaviour and appeal, beyond the expected norms of this subculture, in order to avoid being labelled or seen as an outsider. Furthermore, there are some overseas judges that come to judge the National championships in South Africa that insist upon a no-jeans policy at the event. As dictated by European culture, these judges view *schutzhund* as a serious sport and they believe that the way one chooses to dress for it portrays one's opinion of it.

Beyond material attire, it is common for *schutzhund* people to bear tribal markings in the form of battle scars. Battle scars are shown off regularly and compared among the handlers with somewhat pride and jest. Standard markings include bruises, scratches, and other abrasions as well as rope-burns and calluses on the hands.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

Hierarchies commonly exist within colonies. Mark's colony, which gathers frequently at his farm, could be considered as a type of bureaucracy. It meets the standards of the definition since government is based on a hierarchy of authority and there is a distinct division of labour. At Mark's farm, Mark is the lead authority who has both physical

labourers and unpaid subordinates. His physical labourers work in the kennels and on the field and their duties include feeding and grooming dogs, cleaning the area, assisting in making dried and green tripe for the dogs, and occasionally one of these workers will assist Mark on the field as an additional helper. The unpaid subordinates are his clients and friends who come to the farm for training. Their position in the hierarchy is lowered by their financial and emotional dependence on Mark. Mark mentors many young helpers and handlers free-of-charge too, but they are still on a lower standing than him in terms of intellectual property. Owing to his vast knowledge, trainers are commonly reminded that you do not question him or his methods, you simply listen and follow through.

Schutzhund people within a colony (and who came under specific leadership) generally viewed themselves as family members. Mark mentioned, however, that there were those in the colony who were part of “the family” (more than just paying customers) and those who were distinctly excluded (just paying customers). “You either do it for the money, or the soul journey” (Daniels, pers. com., 2014). The family enjoys special privileges like connections with good quality trainers, seminar and event information, travel arrangements, accommodation with other family members across the country, and access to foreign equipment through Mark when he goes overseas.

VALUE SYSTEMS AND DEVIANT BEHAVIOURS

Bureaucracies are also run by rules and regulations. Each colony maintains certain values and standards that determine proper versus improper behaviour. Such values serve as criteria for assessing the actions of others in the same colony. Mark’s field has rules – norms and standards of behaviour that guide conduct on and off of the field. From my observations I was able to conclude that some of the rules were as follows:

- Clean up your own dog's mess and never leave it behind (there were various poop-scoops along the side of the field for this purpose)
- Always close a gate behind you when you enter or exit an area
- Do not interfere with a dog that is working on the field
- Do not approach or touch another handler’s dog unless instructed to do so
- Do not praise your dog during bite-work
- No loose leads allowed on the bite work field – all leads must be held taut
- Photos to be taken and posted on social media sites by permission only
- Listen, follow through, and do not “yes, but” (i.e. argue)

- Younger dogs are to be worked before older dogs
- Dogs are to be contained while waiting to be worked
- No talking during tracking
- E-collars are only to be used by experienced trainers who have the assistance of an outside eye

If the rules were not abided by an individual (i.e. deviant behaviour resulted when the standards of conduct or expectations of the colony were violated), they were first tactfully reminded of the rule and every violation thereafter was publicly criticised or became an uncomfortable joke among members.

The value system of the colony explains a variety of in-group behaviours such as why *schutzhund* people socialise in small niche groups a distance away from the field, why no one speaks during tracking, why Mark may get angry if a gate is left open, or why no one touches each other's dogs. These values are considered common knowledge to *schutzhund* people while outsiders may find them difficult to adjust to.

Money seems to have an influence on the value system. With so much invested in the sport, one can understand why some handlers go to such great lengths to ensure the best training and the best outcomes. Sometimes these methods are outwardly cruel to the dog. When so much is riding on the success of the animal, frustration often results in emotional break downs and the use of very harsh tools to get the dog to listen and obey every command correctly and perfectly. There is a constant ethical conflict in handlers, because this drive for perfection must be at the core of every handler that wants to go to the top, but the methods necessary to get there are sometimes controversial.

TERRITORY

Schutzhund people are also found in groupings in specific geographic locations. On "usual tracking days" they can be found huddled together making footprints in the mud for their dogs to follow. With the right connections, family members can travel to other friendly colonies for extended help with handler skills and training grounds. Conflict often develops about space-sharing and leadership, however. Therefore, a territorial approach to a handler's space, dog, equipment, and talent is common. Competition is the name of the game, and is often the reason why young trainers with real, natural talent for the sport are marginalised. Many who are very successful do not want to share their techniques in fear of the younger generation beating them to the podium.

CURRENCY

The currency of the colony is predominantly time, money, and food in that order. The financial investment made bears an equally proportionate return: skills and success. Bartering (using food) and exchanging of gifts is also common, however.

Time: Time is the overruling factor. When *schutzhund* becomes serious leisure, time is needed to spend training the dog. It becomes a lifestyle. All serious handlers train every day, as the dog needs to eat and the only way their dog can eat is to work. No matter the weather, trainers have to rise in the early hours of the morning to travel great distances to appropriate tracking fields (plough or grass). Weekends, or after-hours in the evening on weekdays, are usually taken up with dog-training activities as these times are usually the most appropriate for all *schutzhund* people to attend. Training at clubs or with professionals can also occur up to five times a week in cities where the facilities and trainers are available. A significant amount of time is spent observing the dog to ensure that no-one (including family members) influences the dog unnecessarily. Handlers are almost always vigilant of how other people treat the dog so as not to produce bad habits on the field. When in heat, females need extra protection to nullify chances of accidental covering. All this time is taken away from other real-life obligations: the family, social exploits, personal chores, religious activities, and work. Furthermore, relaxation is often spent researching more appropriate techniques, watching the successes of others, or training videos.

Money: Copious amounts of money must be budgeted for the dog's specific needs beyond what one might call the normal day-to-day running costs of a dog (food, vaccines, and occasional medical attention). Therefore, while the income bracket of handlers varied, most were wealthy – one would have to be wealthy or determined to pay R100 for five to ten minutes of training at a time. There is no doubt that top dogs are usually fed the best, imported brands of dog food on the market to ensure longevity. Healthy joint and bone development is also essential for dogs to handle the impact of protection work on the spine and neck, as well as jumping over one metre jumps, climbing over A-frames, and carrying weighted dumbbells. If a handler is serious about the sport, they will go to great lengths to find the best specimen for the job – a dog from the best breeding stock with exceptional bloodlines, one with the genetic physique, ability, and temperament to perform the various exercises necessary to succeed. This of course costs a lot of money, especially when one is talking about imported dogs or

imported bloodlines³⁸. Once the dog is acquired, he or she will need the ideal environment, which is believed by most to be a kennel. Kennels of various designs are available and need to be dog-proofed and carefully positioned so as not to allow any unnecessary stimulation. All *schutzhund* people make use of crates (wire, fold-up or strong plastic crates). Not only are crates important for teaching the dogs containment, and providing a resting place at home or at events, but they are often necessary for travelling. *Schutzhund* seems to produce a life of travelling. The dog needs to be transported to various training environments for all three phases, and, therefore, the appropriate vehicle for the dog becomes a key factor in the handler's choice of vehicle for themselves. Common questions when considering a car include: will the dog be able to fit in the car safely? Will the crate fit in the car? If not, are the seats possibly removable to fit the crate in? Is a pick-up a better option so that one could build cages into the loading area? Is the car hardy enough to handle rough terrain (because training activities often take handler and dog into strange and rough environments)? If using a normal car, one has to buy protective covering for the interior or safety barriers for between the seats and attached to the windows. It is often necessary to transport the dog across long distances for special training seminars and then a well-ventilated crate becomes necessary. Air-travel crates are compulsory when flying overseas to the World Championships. Training seminars in themselves cost a lot, especially when the presenting trainer is from abroad. Specialists are paid large amounts to travel to South Africa to train groups of *schutzhund* people. Furthermore, *schutzhund* requires the use of specialised equipment: tracking leads, bite work harnesses, pinch collars, leads of varying lengths, toggles, unique toys, wooden dumbbells, training jackets, imported gloves (because ordinary gloves are not hardy enough), gumboots, and so on. The list of financial sacrifices could go on and on and on.

Food: As already discussed, food is the dog's salary and therefore, forms the basis of the bond between human and dog as well as serving as a powerful motivator for work. However, food plays an important role among humans in the colony too. Mark is often given gifts of food to thank him for his efforts in training and different members are often designated to certain food duties (see *the koekie bak club* in "Judging the bitch" pg. 175 for more details).

³⁸ Either the sire or the dam is imported.

RITUALS AND RITES

Rituals are very important to *schutzhund* people as even the most unassuming routine or preparatory action sets the atmosphere for the work session ahead. A simple routine like walking a dog up to the tracking pole could influence the working attitude of the dog to the extent that it could mean success or failure. Other rituals include greetings, transport to and from training fields, dressing the handler and dog for work, and then naturally the training routine itself is a ritual in its own right. Routines, such as grooming and feeding, also facilitate and bolster strong bonds between dog and handler. Success in the *schutzhund* competition is often dependent on this bond. The relationship and co-being is developed through routine on and off of the field. A ritualistic attitude to working the dog thus becomes important (see pg. 130 for the description of Hettie's training ritual).

The culture of dogs

It may be argued, though, that the dog has nothing to do with these behaviours or cultural patterns. Yet if one had to remove the dog, what would be left? None of these lifestyle changes would be implemented unless the object of attention was present. The presence of the dog produces a unique lifestyle (i.e. a subculture) that other societies have no part in. Dogs are divided from, but joined to, the *schutzhund* people at intervals. It is often found that the dogs do the waiting³⁹, while the humans do the talking. The dogs also engage in what I like to call dog rites – they attend various cultural and social events that typify the lives of *schutzhund* people. *Schutzhund* trials, breed shows, BH tests, Saturday club training sessions, tracking expeditions, and week-long seminars are all set up by the humans, and the dogs are expected to attend and behave appropriately. Each event attended, calls for a specific protocol, behavioural norms, and level of social decorum. The dog's behaviour and participation at a breed show is vastly different from that of an obedience trial, for example. Dogs are expected to be resplendent at breed shows. They must have their fur neatly groomed and conditioned and wait patiently to be “set up” in the show stance for the examination of the judge who also scrutinizes the tattoo in the ear and checks the dog's teeth. The dog must then prance around the ring in an extended trot with the human show-assistant galloping along behind them and the owner (also called the double-handler) squeaking a toy, dangling a bone, or screaming the dog's name to attract their attention from the side-lines. The owner then proceeds to run from post to post while maintaining this

³⁹ Waiting is not an empty exercise, however, as it often serves as a period of preparation or information retention.

performance as the dog passes by to make sure that his/her head is upright for the judge to have a good look at the dog's expression and movement. Thus the dog's social life is largely dictated by the human. This does not, however, eradicate the fact that these dogs do indeed have a social life, fabricated or not.

The dog, therefore, does not only hold one position in this colony, but rather adopts an interchangeable role: partner, symbol, companion, object of fanaticism, mutual interest, topic of debate, source of frustration, and financial burden. Whether this role is enforced or develops naturally differs vastly from one colony to another. Nevertheless, regardless of human ego, the dog is, no doubt, the lynchpin of each colony in dogdom. Without the dog, no colony would exist and the humans would be reduced to a bunch of nattering lunatics because the natterings would have no purpose, direction or place. Without the dog, the movements and gestures would have no meaning as they would be directed at nothing; they would be empty wavings at the air to no effect. Without the dog, the food would have no value with nothing to feed and no one to "pay" for work done. Thus, the dog becomes the obsequious instigator of, and partaker in, a multi-species culture.

Can a dog have a culture of his own though – a canine culture with distinctive traits only relevant to those of his kind? Premack and Premack (1994) do not believe that animals have the capacity for culture or history.

While a vast number of histories have been written about human beings, one could not write a history of the chimpanzee, nor of any other animal. One could perhaps write a history of how humans have treated the chimpanzee, beaver, pigeon [and so on]...but not one of the animal itself...To have history, a group must act on the world so as to change it [and] in so doing, change itself...Non-human animals lack culture not only because they do not propagate their traditions by imitation or pedagogy, but also because they are without foundations on which cultural belief depends – [language and] the categorical distinctions that are the principal prerequisites for theory-building.

(Premack & Premack, 1994:350-351,362)

Culture can be seen as the lens through which people view the world (White, 2013a). Haviland (1999:36) describes culture as "not observable behaviour but, rather, the shared ideals, values, and beliefs people use to interpret experience and generate behaviour and that are reflected by their behaviour". In previous chapters I have expressed that the mind of a dog is beyond human reach, therefore, we cannot be certain, as humans with our human interpretation of "reality," that an animal lacks the ability to draw the categorical distinctions necessary for theory-building, and ultimately

lacks culture. This also emphasises the importance of dog behaviour in the human attempt to interpret the inner workings of a dog. Hence, while the study by Premack and Premack (1994) makes several valid points, I would like to explore the possibility of dogs not only being partakers in human culture, but displaying elements of their own canine culture, albeit at a basic level. One definition of culture pronounces it to be “the total way of life, including how people think, feel, and behave – an integrated system of learned behaviour patterns that are characteristic of any given society or group” (White, 2013a). One’s lifestyle involves weekly to daily routines, how one invests one’s time, who one associates with, and generally how one goes about things on a day-to-day basis, and it is from this perspective that I loosely apply the concept of culture to dogs.

The word tradition means giving something over to someone else, implying that traditional behaviour requires social learning (Galef, 1992:159). Some behaviourists see culture and tradition as synonymous making it easy to say that animals are cultural beings, as they have the capacity to hand over various skills and messages to one another. This view is, however, problematic as it violates the essence of culture. Human cultures depend on teaching and learning by imitation (Galef, 1992:160). Simply put, Haviland (1999:36-46) describes the characteristics of culture as learned, shared, based on symbols, and integrated. If one would apply some of these elements to the context of *schutzhund* with a view to canine culture, one could broadly validate the argument that dogs bear cultural traits.

- Dogs learn and share certain behaviours from and with one another. For example, one dog who begins to dig can cause a joint effort to dig for the same purpose such as escaping from an enclosure.
- Dogs regularly make use of symbols by means of kinesics, proxemics, body orientation, gaze and different vocalisations to communicate with humans and other dogs.

In addition, just as human culture is subdivided on the basis of a variety of elements such as nationality, race, tradition, language, geography, and so on, dog culture could be dependent on breed. Each breed of dog seems to have their own unique mannerisms which are most prominent during dog-to-dog play. It may appear to be simplistic or uncivilised to apply culture in this way but it is indeed the outworking of culture as White’s definition puts forward: a total way of life of the dog which includes their social interactions with other dogs. The way that dogs socialise with

other canines, and how they go about their general routines and daily business differs from one breed to another. These aspects are largely influenced by genetics, but are lifestyle differences nonetheless. For example, a German Shepherd Dog is known to use her paws and mouth when engaging socially with other dogs; a trademark of the Shepherd's method of play. This is known as "typical" Shepherd behaviour. It has also been observed that likeness enjoys likeness in this breed's case. German Shepherds enjoy the company of other German Shepherds far more than any other dog breed, so much so that if they are not introduced to other breeds early on, and by association taught how to interact with them culturally (i.e. learn the acceptable terms of engagement with other breeds) then they will almost always contend with other dogs – large or small. They are known to prefer their own kind.

You'll find that dogs will get on better with [their own breed]. The [Doberman] puppy that we hand raised was grown by a shepherd...she cleaned him and mothered him, and we fed him. As he was growing, he showed a complete behaviour tendency towards shepherds and not the [Dobermans]. Now he thinks he's a shepherd, but he accepts everybody. He doesn't show any particular aggression to anybody and he doesn't show any particular incorrect behaviour to race etc. he just [prefers shepherds].

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

The counter argument here would then be that because humans and dogs are completely different species, one cannot simply apply the attributes of one to the other (i.e. applying the characteristics of human culture to dogs would be like comparing apples with pears). But what makes humans so different from dogs? "The dividing line between animal and human culture is vague and arbitrary" (Bain, 1929:555 cited in Sanders, 2006). In the West humans are seen as "more than" just animals – special, unique, set apart (DeMello, 2011:340). Yet, the divide is neither universally discovered nor universally agreed upon. Animals have played an important role in human kinship systems all over the world (DeMello, 2011:340). African, Native American, and Australian cultures make use of animal totems to trace their ancestry (DeMello, 2011:340). Furthermore, the exceedingly controversial topic of xenotransplantation (a.k.a. animal transplants) challenges the human-animal border where animals can and are used as "spare parts" for humans. When those animal parts are put into human bodies, the rigid divide between human and animal begins to crumble. Therefore, the grey area between dog and human needs to be examined because if animals are found to be more similar to humans than different from them, why would we be concerned about applying human theories to animals?

Nationality and heritage

During my fieldwork I was confronted with the question of animal nationality. Can a German Shepherd, for example, really be German? All sport dogs in South Africa are descendants of German ancestors – German mothers, fathers, or grandparents. We train them in German and some handlers go so far as to learn this foreign language so that they can attend international seminars and overseas trials with the intention of better understanding the judge's remarks. One, therefore, cannot say that there is nothing German about a German Shepherd, but this could all be excused by human fanaticism.

There is nothing essentially German about a German Shepherd other than what humans create them to be. Germany and being German is essentially a social construct created by humans at some point or another. To speak German to the dog and command the dog to do things in German can, however, be seen as a call to the German heritage and the genetic roots of the dog – these aspects, however, were co-created by humans. The importance of bloodlines was emphasised time and again by Mark during our discussions, as he attributed many explanations with regards to temperament and working ability to the working heritage of the dog.

[If you ask whether people owning a] German Shepherd dog are...going to start following a bit of a German heritage and culture, I haven't seen that at all. If a person's got a Bouvier they don't start becoming Belgian...or a Dutch shepherd, they don't start following that [culture]. What you might find in the show fraternity is a person who has a St Bernard who is going to show the dog in Swiss type attire or their adverts will be Swiss inclined. But no, not with the German Shepherd Dog and the sport people. One or two people have tried to learn the language but that is to try to understand when they're speaking to people from overseas or when we go to the world championships (and the Bunda Ziga Untprufing) that you can understand [the dialect]. But they don't take [on the culture]...“Oh but now we've got to work on German because we've got a German shepherd?”. That I haven't seen.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

The animal anthropologist

Whether or not dogs have their own culture and nationality may be inconclusive but what one could conclude is that animals are anthropologists in their own right. Humans are constantly observing animals. Some dog owners do this almost neurotically, some with deep knowledge of ethology and others with pure fascination, but what we often take for granted is that animals watch us constantly too. Animals act as anthropologists that study human behaviours via the interspecies rituals we engage in with them, such

as feeding, breeding, grooming, and general care routines (Paxson, 2010). A study on zoos revealed that captive primates become familiar with the personalities and hierarchical organisations of their human caretakers. It was reported that they grew to know and distinguish between the keepers' characters as well as they knew their own group members. Some zoo caretakers have even shared their medication with captive primates such as anti-anxiety pills and vitamins (Braitman 2010).

Schutzhund dogs keenly observe their handlers and read various aspects of their personalities that include mood, emotions, self-confidence, and well-being. The effect of emotion and clarity of mind while working with a *schutzhund* is profound and this impact can only actualise if the dog knows the human. Hettie explained that Duke knows her well; he knows how she usually works with him in their day-to-day routines. If she is particularly stressed or emotional one day, Duke will certainly act out. She realised that this was the case when she noticed a pattern of inconsistent behaviour only when she herself was out of sorts. The role of the dog as an anthropologist, therefore, has a significant effect on the relationship between man and dog in *schutzhund* as well as the ultimate outcome in the sport.



Photo 6.3: The animal anthropologist

One dog watches and waits for her next duty. Dogs are always watching humans.

Pride and prejudice

Judging the bitch

Men are generally harder on dogs than women (Schilder & Van der Borg, 2004:333). It is unclear whether this is due to their physical presence being more dominant or their openness to the use of punitive devices in training. 75% of animal caretakers in the United States alone are female (American Veterinary Medical Association, 2007:9). Of all the demographic considerations gender produces the most considerable differences in canine care (American Veterinary Medical Association, 2007:9). Both men and women tend to relate to animals in similar ways: equal amounts of males and females live with

pets, grieve their loss, and visit animal sanctuaries (Herzog, 2007:7). Yet, there are vast gender-related differences in other realms of human-animal interaction (Herzog, 2007:7). Women are more inclined to display positive behaviours and attitudes toward the use of animals and their rights (activism), but they tend to hoard animals more than men (Herzog, 2007:7). In contrast, men outnumber women in supporting animal research, yet they display a more negative attitude overall towards animal well-being by ranking higher in hunting, animal abuse and bestiality (Herzog, 2007:7). It is important to note, however, that these statistics are blurred by the ambiguity surrounding the definition of cruelty, gross under-reporting and the over-representation of men as sexual deviants (Herzog, 2007:13-15). When asked about the difference between male and female handlers, the response was varied.

Wendy: We are emotional beings. Women tend to be more emotional and not disciplined enough, to when the dog does need compulsion, to say right: this is a working dog – we need to sort out the problem that needs to be extreme right now, once, over, done. Not like: “Oh my baby, don't do that!!” [sweet tone spoken softly]... Men are cold-hearted bastards. Women bring all the flowers to life.

Wayde: Guys don't put much thought into things...It's like Hugh keeps saying, probably the worst person to do sport is a professor. They want to analyse everything and try to understand everything. There's not really anything to do. Dogs are simple they are not complicated...[Also] the more people that have done sports in growing up, tend to do better at dog sport than those that haven't. More from not just being emotional with the dog but just being taught and being open to instructions...whether it's a male or female. It's just obvious that we see a lot more females than males [on the field]. I think the females do get a lot more emotionally involved with the dogs than the males. Like Wendy was saying [they're like], “Ag, my baby – don't do that.” I haven't seen many guys doing that.

(Wendy & Wayde Linden, pers. com.)

Participants reported that most *schutzhund* handlers in South Africa are female and Wayde mentioned a strength in female handlers that surpasses physical ability.

Obviously strength helps. The [men] do have a bit more of an advantage with the bite work and are able to be more assertive. But you can do it mentally as well, you don't always have to use force – physical force, you can always use mental [strength].

(Wayde Linden, pers. com.)

Dog keeping and training is, therefore, a vital and commonly undertheorized aspect of feminist concern (McHugh, 2012:618). Haraway (2007:213-214 cited in McHugh, 2012:627-628) notes that a woman is faced with formidable challenges in dogdom: “For a middle-aged or older woman, learning a new competitive [dog] sport played seriously with a member of another species provokes strong and unexpected emotions and

preconceptions, breaking thinking". The majority of women involved in the sport of *schutzhund* are middle-aged or at retirement age and very often funded by their husbands. There are young women (under 30 years old), like myself, who enjoy the sport, but we are few and far between. In the course of my interactions with national *schutzhund* handlers, I could only identify four avid young sportswomen, myself included. One of the four is over 30 and the other has only just begun her training this year. I believe that this is largely due to the costliness of the sport, but I discovered an ethical aspect to this deficit too.

Many young women have "what it takes to get to the top" in South Africa but simply back out because the training is too gruelling or perhaps because it often requires the use of aversive equipment. One of the experts in the field mentioned off-hand that the only women who had made it to the top, on an international level, were very militant, heavy-handed, "butch" individuals (Daniels & Wayde Linden, pers. com., 2014). He could not, though, provide sound reasoning for this phenomenon. We (young women) are also very often ridiculed and slandered by not only the older sportsmen but the older women, and this can have a negative effect on commitment and enjoyment. The middle-aged women tend to take on a territorial approach to the sport and it was very interesting for me to observe how this territoriality extended to helpers and trainers. The helper suddenly became "my helper" and very obvious field etiquette (such as not letting your own dog out until the previous dog is securely put away) was reiterated in direct or harsh terms to the so-called "rookies". All of this can be explained by a cultural phenomenon the *schutzhund* sportspeople in Johannesburg like to call "the koekie-bak club". This club consists of middle-aged women who can attend any training session at any time in the week (husbands in tow or not) and they come bearing edible gifts. There was not one training session that I attended where Mark was not supplied with a satisfactory stream of coffee and "koekies".

I once experienced a direct snub from the "koekie-bak club" on the tracking field. It is common knowledge that handlers with younger dogs must be afforded the opportunity to track first and close to one's car as the pup is still in preliminary training and easily distracted. The two older women who had arrived first made me walk so far to lay my track that my trainer had to drive his car to meet me there. It did not surprise me that there would be competition in this specialized sport, but I did expect a degree of civility and camaraderie – an expectation that has fallen at the wayside more than once on my training journeys. Perhaps I was mistakenly reaching for and expecting some form of

female camaraderie, but it does not apply in this realm. It seems to be each “woman” for herself in a dog-eat-dog sport.

There also seemed to be an underlying need to defend one's identity as a capable, strong woman who could control a large animal in a sport where male handlers were generally more successful. I know that I myself have fought to uphold this identity by often refusing the help of a male to hold the dog during bite work, in spite of my intense struggles to keep the dog under control with my small frame. Society often applies the “rich-bitch” stereotype to the majority of women-dog relationships (McHugh, 2012:618). This aristocratic position is occupied by externally-concerned women who carry about or co-exist with equally well-groomed “purse pooches” or lap dogs (McHugh, 2012:621). The contrast to *schutzhund* is blatant – women here do everything short of roll in the mud with their dogs and if you happen to manicure your nails, you are not disappointed by their being ruined. The only similarity, however, may be in the source of the money to fund these enterprises – a rich husband.

Dog training is above all else an interspecies exchange. Dogs, like those mentioned above, are often gendered by terms such as “purse pooches” or by commodities such as dog carriers in the shape of lady's hand-bags (McHugh, 2012:621). And there is an equally reproachful pattern that links this type of dog with women all over the world (McHugh, 2012:621). The interspecies co-operation manufactured by competitive dog-training contexts helps to set new coordinates for kinship, partnership, and “species in defiance of heteronormative cultural norms” (McHugh, 2012:628). Central to this exchange are woman-dog teams viewed in “explicit defiance of ‘dog-moms’ with corresponding ‘athletic toddlers in fur coats’” (Haraway, 2007:225). Alternatively, the members of these partnerships are consenting adults who are serious competitors in a male-inclined dog sport (McHugh, 2012:628).

Judging the “bitch” is not an exclusively human experience. Humans usually have a reason for choosing a dog or a bitch to partner with in *schutzhund*. Some gender preferences are entirely superficial such as the physical appeal of a dog in comparison to a bitch. Others provide more practical motives: the dog's genetic disposition to have greater muscle density than the bitch gives him the upper hand during the protection phase as the sheer power of a dog is remarkable. On the other hand, an oversized male is slow and sluggish while a small bitch has the speed to impress. Bitches are known to be “easier” to handle in the sense that their size is more manageable than males – this is

often why first-time handlers are paired with bitches. From a biological perspective, a bitch is more difficult to deal with for a few reasons. She comes into season twice a year for twenty-one days (if she is regular) making kennelling an issue as she needs to be carefully protected from males for the duration of her heat. If she so happens to be entered into a trial while in season, she is banished from the premises until all other dogs have completed the competition. She then re-enters the field alone to do the obedience and protection phase back-to-back at the end of the trial (observation, GSDF Nationals 2014). Another consideration is that pregnant bitches are out of action for a significant portion of the training year. If a breeding bitch is covered twice a year, she can be out of action for up to six months a year altogether. She is also not expected to achieve the same qualification as a dog with regard to breeding. A dog needs a SchH3 while a bitch only needs a SchH1 to qualify for breeding. This could, of course, be due to her MIA⁴⁰ status when pregnant. But why can bitches not be put on the same footing as dogs on the competitive field? It would appear that bitches are put in the proverbial doghouse based purely on their biology.

Say you have many bitches, they come in season one after the other, so you have all these gaps in between with the training. 65-day pregnancy. With the puppies for 5-6 weeks. It accumulates. You get her just into the training again and then the whole story starts all over again.

(Hettie Cilliers, pers. com.)

Beyond biology, however, I sensed a general preference for male dogs over bitches owing to their power during work and eagerness to please.

Lydia: I've only ever had bitches...I prefer girls

Martie: I personally feel that bitches have a lot of mood swings. The dogs seems to be a little bit more the same every day. I don't know. I prefer a dog.

Lydia: And you're only going to see if you've done about 5 or 6 dogs of gender to actually say...temperament or personality is right you know

Hettie: I had two bitches, then I had Zander, he was a male, Diesel and Duke. If I take my experience, that's why I prefer a dog, the bitches tend to be...if they don't want to do it today, stuff you, I won't. They've got that attitude, where[as] the males they tend to want to please you. They want to work, they want to do whatever you want just to please, they'll do it for you... [with bitches it's] "If I want to bark, I will bark, and look at you and still bark". Where when I tell Duke "done" that's it. But with her she will keep on. It doesn't matter what you do, it won't stop.

Lydia: So girls push the boundaries a bit more maybe?

Hettie: Yes, they do push the boundaries more. And they get away with it as well because they just decide, listen if I don't want to do I'm not going to do it. You can't make me.

⁴⁰ Missing In Action

Whereas with the males they say: listen, please, I will do it!...I asked that question to the girls at the seminar...[one lady said] that she also prefers males because they want to work with you.

Karen: Do you think there might be a difference if you take a bitch and a male human? Might that...?

Hettie: I don't think so, I think the bitches...they will push the human's buttons

Karen: There's a reason why they call them bitches

(Female responses during focus group discussion)

When one begins to peel away at the personal preference of humans and the general discourse that surrounds bitches, the possibility of a deeper, subconscious, gender-based issue becomes prevalent and this discrimination stretches beyond the body.

Perhaps more than any other word in the English language today, "bitch" is an exceptionally gendered epithet, a noun that at once denigrates female bodily forms across species and renders monstrous ideas about the performance of femininity. More powerfully than other terms that simultaneously animalize and gender humans actions—"bitch" as a verb marks an activity that effectively questions the status quo. "To bitch" means to complain or, more productively, to critique and so to wield what can be a powerful tool for leveraging social change...For it is never simply the fact of gendered differences that is registered in the word "bitch," but a precise intersection between species, a crossing that, however beloved by the principals, inspires patronizing disdain in some observers, and even angry resentment in others.

(McHugh, 2012:618-619)

Amy didn't want to work, she failed her BH in Germany. Wendy will tell you this. She failed her BH – she didn't want to retrieve, she didn't want to jump, she was a real bitch – bitch of a bitch.

(Kate brown, pers. com.)

In spite of the various accounts of blatant discrimination against the bitch, she is still agreeably just as intelligent and capable in the sport as the male.

[There's a general preference for a dog] because he doesn't come into season, because to sterilise, you take off the edge, so you don't want to sterilise [her]. [When] you run a bitch, she is physically not as impressive. She's physically not as strong, she comes into season theoretically every 6 months for a month which knocks out a lot of your training. If you're going to breed her, you knock out 4-5 months. And so people are not that willing to work with a bitch. There's a guy in Denmark, he ONLY handles bitches. He's at the worlds nearly every year with bitches, only. And he's breeding a lot of puppies. And all of his work is coming off of bitches...himself and his wife are both working and handling top level bitches. So there is absolutely no doubt that the bitch has the ability and the bitch, with [good] handling, can be as good. No question about that.

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

It is, however, nice to find an excerpt singing her the praises she is due.

"It is not breed, size, or any of the other ordinary ways of discriminating among dogs that matter to him so much as gender: [A] bitch is more faithful than a [male] dog, the intricacies of her mind are finer, richer, and more complex than his, and her intelligence is generally greater. I have known very many dogs and can say with firm conviction that of all of the creatures the one nearest to man in the fineness of its perception and in its capacity to render true friendship is a bitch."

(Lorenz, 1981:85)

Dogs in politics

After an early start on the tracking fields, we were ordered back to the training grounds for more bite work and possibly some obedience. Having been delayed, I entered the area to find it scattered with cars, people, and dogs. As I walked over to the field I noticed Mark standing in front of the field speaking to everyone who seemed to be enjoying the conversation, in spite of appearing to be spoken "at" instead of "with". The topic was one I had become familiar with from these visits – Federation politics.

Political discussions among the *schutzhund* people were common – the source of which is made known to the majority who engage in the sport at Mark's farm. There is a great divide between two complementary yet conflicting interests within German Shepherd Dog clubs across South Africa (and essentially the GSDFA): the show-line and the sport-line German Shepherd Dog enthusiasts; creating a divided state as it were. Each grouping has their own philosophy about the breed, and what it should look like and achieve. Each side also judges these two different bloodlines (namely show and sport) according to two different breeding standards even though they belong to the same breed.

Dog sport thus becomes the mouthpiece through which handlers and trainer voice their political concerns in this regard, and Mark's field provides a safe space for *schutzhund* people to gossip about the "show people". Johannesburg seemed to be the hub of politics within dogdom, therefore, those training with Mark felt the effects of politics more keenly than *schutzhund* people in more remote towns.

The show people call the *schutzhund* people "fuss fuss" and *schutzhund* people call show people "hop-hop" both terms associated with the core of each one's beliefs about the position and role of a German Shepherd Dog in society – on the training field or in the show ring. The contention between these two sides is exasperated by the dictatorship present within the GSDFA. The president, as confirmed by many participants, seemed to have the final say no matter what concerned those lower down

in the chain of command. This has led to a common concern among the *schutzhund* people that the federation is trying to nullify the sport in South Africa as a whole by grading sport dogs unfairly – by lowering the standards of entry into the competitive arena so that more show dogs can perform the sport in spite of their lack of genuine working heritage⁴¹. The amount of clubs dedicated to show-line Shepherds alone vastly outnumber the *schutzhund* clubs across the country and the breeding pool is even smaller. Mark and Wayde discuss their experiences with politics in and around dog sport, while Wendy offers an interesting tactic to deal with politics.

In South Africa the sport people [have] been fighting the breeders for the concept of the sport. The breeders are saying that it is a hundred percent, that the breed test is not a sport, the sport is unnecessary and not allowing the correct development. World-wide you've got your sport-line and you've got your show-line. Those are the facts of life. So when we talk about sport-line and...the direction that we went in, it was never done with the so-called blessings of the "shepherd-people" - the breeders in the country. It's always [been] done with [reluctance].

(Mark Daniels, pers. com.)

Wayde: We are lucky [to be] out of the big towns where the big politics takes place, like Cape Town is the big Mafia of politics. But here, there are some other small groups, but we stay out of each other's way as much as possible. It's not easy as there is always going to be politics. The year before last, with Asco, I missed the world team by 1 point. I know of guys who have gone to World's - they have failed their tracks and still made it on to the Worlds team. There's always politics and you try and stay out of it as much as possible, but eventually it's going to influence you somewhere along the line...But we do as much as possible to stay out of it. I'd rather pour all that energy into training my dog. Rather than fighting...

Wendy: Because it's such a difficult sport and because things go so badly wrong so often, [show people] are looking to blame somebody else, instead of blaming their training, lack of commitment and lack of dedication and lack of training knowledge – they are looking to blame anything else. So there's always a little scapegoat. Everyone enjoys a good chin wag...but then have a little skinner and get on with the dogs. You've got to respect people's love for...if you go into politics of breed vs. working, respect it...You've got to respect people for [their passions]. Don't shun them because they want to go hop hop around the ring at liberty. So if it's their passion, let them, enjoy it. But where the problems come in is where they start to try and get in at the working levels.

Wayde: ...to try get qualifications

Wendy: The German Shepherd has been bred to work and not walk around like a frog, with the back end that doesn't even belong to the front end of its body. It's designed to work. Have your breed dogs and enjoy going around [the ring], by all means! But don't try and make it [do the work of a sport dog and] vice versa. They have made it so that the breed dogs can get the working dog qualifications, SchH1, 2, and 3s, at a very low level,

⁴¹ Show dogs were bred for exactly that, showing, while sport dogs were bred directly for use and success in the sport.

but they have not done vice versa. [They have not] made it possible for our dogs who can do the work to get the breed gradings, so that they can have on their pedigrees. They can say SchH3, but it won't say that it was done at a C level, with a hamburger on the track.

(Wendy & Wayde Linden, pers. com)

Discussion

Schutzhund people were identified as a sub-culture within dogdom – a group of *schutzhund* enthusiasts that made use of Mark's field as a canine pilgrimage site to train their dogs, express their passion, and gossip about federation politics. *Schutzhund* people engage in serious leisure which implies that the expectations and requirements of their avocation often conflict the expectations and responsibilities in other areas of their lives.

This chapter also explored the possibility of canine culture. A stance of ethnorelativism would be required in order to be open to the possibility of animal culture thus implying no absolutes or exclusions. The grey area within the species divide, however, needs to be examined so as to possibly allow the application of human theories of culture to animals. Whether one is willing to explore the possibility of animal culture or not, animals were discovered to be partakers and instigators of culture (i.e. agents of empire).

Judging the bitch was identified as a significant practice within *schutzhund* circles. Not only were human females discriminated against by men, but other sportswomen too. The bitch herself was also noted as being the brunt of jokes and in so doing was denigrated in status when compared to the dog.

Finally, while political debates are uniform among *schutzhund* people, the arguments seemed to have little to do with the dogs themselves, but instead, had everything to do with the human dictators of the sport. Politics is an ever-present factor in most human groupings where two or more gather for the purpose of common interest, yet there are methods that people can employ to avoid political conflict – one being: employing an attitude of mutual respect for others' interests.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

“We give dogs time we can spare, space we can share, and love we can spare. And in return, dogs give us their all. It's the best deal man has ever made”.

- M. Facklam

Have you ever watched a dog lying at the front entrance of a home? His forepaws are draped over the threshold, back feet stretched out side-long, every effort of concentration focused on the periphery of the property while his ears twitch back and forth at the slightest unfamiliar sound. He holds all the appearance of an astute surveyor of “the land” – looking into the distance, seeming to ponder life, watching for movement, and keeping guard. Is there more to be said by a dog than what we say for them? Yet, to assume that we could ever understand him fully would presuppose a level of mutuality that escapes our grasp. The aim of this dissertation was not to read the mind of the dog, to put words into his mouth, or to give him a voice that did not suit him. It was designed to not only include him but to bring the role of the dog in a man-made social grouping into the limelight where it belongs via the channel of dog training.

Findings

This dissertation explored the culture (i.e. lived experiences) of *schutzhund* people and their working dogs. The sport of *schutzhund* was used as a lens through which the various complex entanglements of interspecies partnership were captured and examined. *Schutzhund* is a deeply demanding sport that weighs heavily on the bodies, emotions, mental states, and pockets of its participants. Dogs and handlers devote their lives to each other and the score board as the lifeworlds of two very different species collide on a field of ever-changing dynamics.

This interspecies study has resolved that animals have gained prominence across multiple disciplines in the social sciences. Animals are no longer just windows and mirrors through which we endeavour to study human behaviour, but they themselves, and the relations they have with humans, contribute to society in various significant ways. When animals are

accepted as sentient beings with the capacity for agency, humans begin to notice and acknowledge their role in the provocation of human culture. Furthermore, this perspective has a direct influence on the training philosophy a handler chooses to adopt on the field. Three primary training philosophies were identified: compulsion or dominant training, positive reinforcement, and motivational theory. Handlers who believed in employing animal capital tended towards carrots (dog-centric, motivational methods), whereas handlers who vied for human exceptionalism preferred using sticks (human-centric, dominant techniques). Control and willing compliance, therefore, become issues of central concern. Once the aim of a human is to utterly control an animal, there is no place for partnership and trust, two important pillars of a successful working relationship in the sport of *schutzhund*. Control was not only found to exist in its overt form in this study, but versions of internal control were also revealed. All *schutzhund* handlers emphasised the importance of controlling the human body, emotions, and mind for the benefit of the dog and ultimate outcome of the sport. Handlers who were able to control their bodies appropriately around their dogs experienced more success and enjoyment during training sessions. Therefore, it was found that dog training was as much, if not more, about training the human as it was about training the dog.

Schutzhund involves on-going interspecies communication. In order for dog and human to have an intelligible conversation, both species have to play a role in co-creating a third language; a language that is only comprehensible to that specific dog-handler partnership. As most interspecies dialogues are symbolic, this third language requires the use of a toolkit which includes food, toys, tone of voice, mindfulness, gadgets, and kinesics. Bodies were found to speak to one another making the body the primary device used during *schutzhund* conversations. This form of communication also highlighted the dog's ability to create meaning, adapt to situations, understand symbolic interaction, and engage in training exercises as a minded actor (Greenebaum, 2010:140).

It was also found that *schutzhund* necessitates interspecies co-operation through partnership. While sporadic incidents of co-being were witnessed, for the most part this relationship seemed more comfortable in the economic paradigm being referred to as a co-working partnership. Thus business discourse was used to explain the nuances of the relationship such as salary, commission, work, business partner, goals, animal capital, and commodification. Nevertheless, like most human-animal interactions it was evident that this dog-human relationship was agitated by ambiguity. All handlers battled to define their relationships with their dogs clearly, and the ones that managed to package it nicely, still

expressed underlying guilt in regards to the stringent treatment of their sport dogs. Furthermore, the necessity to use aversives in the sport to maintain control presented a moral dilemma. Most interviewees expressed an understanding of the importance of tools like the e-collar but simultaneously expressed difficulty in personally applying the tool. The role of ubiquity in the dog-human relationship was further accentuated by the contrasting themes of control and fear. While control of the “dangerous animal” was of utmost importance to handlers, and all outward appearance of this control was “put on”, many dialogues were laced with interjections of fear. This fear was found to be mostly attributed to human arrogance and the fear of being made to look the fool in front of a group of spectators, especially Mark Daniels (the field “ring master”). The human ego was thus discovered to be both the founder and the fall of the sport. Although pointed incidents of cruelty were observed during fieldwork, the majority of interactions portrayed at the very least an attempt at interspecies understanding.

The findings pertaining to culture in this study were significant. *Schutzhund* as a sport can be viewed as serious leisure. This fosters a culture of commitment that is in direct conflict with the demands of “real-life” such as work, family time, relaxation, attending religious activities, and various financial obligations. It became apparent early on that *schutzhund* was a lifestyle – some went as far as to call it their religion. As *schutzhund* infiltrates every area of the handler and dog's life, a multispecies culture emerges: I called them the “*schutzhund* people”. This grouping was found to possess its own unique type of discourse, cultural dress, social organisation, territory, currency, rituals, and value system. The members of this unique sub-culture gathered together at various canine pilgrimage sites across the country to practice these customs, share their passion for the sport, and engage in various political debates about dogdom. It was discovered that serious leisure is a highly politicised affair that has very little to do with the dogs, and far more to do with the human ego. Discrimination and gender issues were also present, mostly surrounding the “bitch” – both human and dog. The bitch was often judged as the lesser animal in comparison to the brute strength and physical versatility displayed by the dog. In addition, female handlers competed with one another for territory and training rights. Women fought for their precarious identity in *schutzhund* where men seemed to be esteemed as the victors because they were able to get a better grip on the lead. Beyond the body, the word “bitch” was applied profusely and very comfortably by the *schutzhund* people and was often used to administer context-relevant jibes at each other.

A culture of empathy also emerged through the research process. South African handlers were highlighted as empathetic towards their dogs and dog ownership in general by their trend to keep a dog passed the age of so-called usefulness in the sport (i.e. retirement age: when the dog's body could no longer withstand the demands of the sport). Europeans are of the habit of trading dogs and selling retired dogs to other homes, while South Africans believe in sticking it out with the dog that they have, no matter the difficulty level, hardness or age of the dog.

Beyond the human element, the dogs were found to not only be the instigators of human cultures, but also indicated ownership of their own culture at a very basic level: canine culture. The question of whether or not animals are capable of culture is pertinent and contended. Many researchers believe that culture necessitates language (Mead, 1962). However, the flexibility of the concept of culture and its many variations allowed the mannerisms and collective lifestyle of dogs to find a place on its amenable scale. Dog breeds are inclined to enjoy the company of their own kind and can develop dislikes for other breeds or personality types. The mannerisms of each breed vary significantly, creating social organisations and sub-cultures within the broader concept of canine culture. Play was identified as an important window through which to observe the outworking of this canine culture. Furthermore, the heritage and lineage of working dogs is imperative in the sport as dogs' characters and working ability were always traced according to their ancestors. Preferences in dogs were largely based on socialisation (as confirmed by the participants) and such preferences as breed and look could be transferred to humans. Very often a dog would be described as being "ever so slightly racist" during protection work and this marked dislike of another race was influenced by the dog's association to that particular race, along with the racial tension on the other end of the leash (i.e. handler).

A personal journey

I set out on this research journey hoping, almost convinced, that I would find co-being. Yet, I found that a multispecies setting involving the daily confrontation of two species, mostly out of necessity and sometimes out of survival, did not presuppose harmony. It seemed to be more of a negotiation (sometimes even imposing) of wills rather than the synchronisation I sought out. What I initially assumed to find in harmony, was replaced with an education in mechanical conditioning, hard physical work, and symphony upon symphony of repetitions. It is a sport, after all, and "for the love of the game" practice must make perfect.

At times when the mechanical efforts of dog and handler seemed to override the acknowledgement of living materials, I felt that my research began to lose direction. Many routines that I observed only seemed to reproduce the same cycle of dominance that was set in motion many years ago by traditionalists; the cycle that motivational dog trainers have worked so hard to uproot and improve. In these cases, the poetry in motion I had witnessed at the *schutzhund* Nationals in 2013 was a concept very far removed from the reality on the ground. Sometimes the partnerships I observed felt like rehearsed power plays, while others depicted every aspect of co-being. Once again this pointed to the ubiquitous relationship shared between man and dog – ambivalence was even present in my perception of various partnerships.

Haviland (1999:46) proposes that while a modicum of harmony is required for culture to function properly, complete harmony is not necessary. No two beings experience life or the process of enculturation in an identical way. Therefore, there is a need to rather speak of an effort to find cultural consistencies as opposed to the search for absolute harmony.

I found that wherever there is variance, there is room for argument, frustration, misunderstanding, and head-butting, but there is equal opportunity for bridging the divide, mutualism, transcendence, and kindness. Conflict is bound to occur when the difference between two beings is defined by the vast chasm of the species divide. In the more mature, well-seasoned, and tolerant handler you may find a strong sense of self-control which leads to harmony with a dog, but this comes from a place of patience, reserve, and years of experience. There were perhaps a handful of the partnerships I witnessed that bore resemblance to co-being and dogmanship. These were a unique few and even then, power seemed to be an ever-looming presence, tempting even the most calm and experienced persona. The sport at large is a major indicator that animal commodification is still occurring and may even be on the rise; this is a distressing, yet, unsurprising finding. Where human intervention is, there one is likely to find many forms of cruelty.

I am often intrigued to know how it is that people justify hurting animals continually to get what they want out of them. Using a tool meant for accuracy repetitively and inappropriately; choking an animal to get the position you want and knowing that the only bond the animal has with you is a fear for its very life. And, yet, the dog comes out on top even in these situations. The dog is the bigger person for wagging her tail in greeting at a handler, knowing what will most likely lie ahead in a training session. How could negative training ever be perceived as better for the animal? It astonishes me that some humans

refuse to grow out of a certain mentality and expand their perspective to include what would be better for the animal; to rather focus on educating the animal motivators that they enjoy and to then only use certain devices to correct learned behaviours at a later stage. This situation speaks to our current situation in South Africa and if this is any indication of the treatment of animals, how does this translate to our mentality and actions towards other humans?

Strengths and implications

Multispecies ethnography, within the broader scope of Human Animal Studies, calls for an interdisciplinary approach. One notable strength is, therefore, that this research bears cross-disciplinary relevance. As the appropriate adage by Max Webber goes, "I am not a donkey; I do not have a field". Therefore, this research will illustrate the pervasive importance of dogs as not only metaphors but as living subjects for the understanding and categorizing of South African society. Yet another allied strength of this research lies in its historical importance. There is a distinct gap of anthropological contributions in this regard in South Africa. A thorough literature search produced insufficient results on the documentation of the emergence of *schutzhund* in South Africa. Although a multitude of credible sources are available on the topic of show shepherds and police dogs, little to none document the training philosophies, techniques, lifestyle, and culture of *schutzhund* people in this country.

However, exploring interspecies relations has the potential to move far beyond simply expanding the corpus of anthropological theory and method (Sanders & Arluke, 1993:386). Investigating human-dog connections can produce symbolic implications for various other animals that we share our lives with (Wilkie, 2013:10). Writing dogs in to Anthropology is, therefore, essential. The animal other lives with us and, whether humans are willing to accept it or not, they are agents of empire who co-create social and cultural meaning with humans. Their relationship with humans as subjects, as opposed to their role in society as objects, was investigated in this study, making the findings valuable to the field of Anthropology. Furthermore, this research highlights the concepts of heritage, lineage, kinship, and culture as they apply to the canine community; these concepts are just as relevant to animals as they are to humans. The strength of this research lies in the duality of its purpose: to investigate the enmeshed lifeworlds of both human and dog.

Consequently, my hope is that the deductions drawn from this study will not only contribute to present developments in the field of animal studies but also instigate possible future avenues of research into canine-human relations, politics, and culture. A perhaps disparate design for this research would be to promote humane dog training methods by portraying dogs as mindful, active agents in the communication process with humans (Greenebaum, 2010:140). In addition, the implication would be to encourage South Africans to move beyond dominant theories in their outlook, treatment, and training of animals by providing them with presidents and the underlying reasons why positive, motivational theory is effective in our country. Interspecies relations involve knowing, connecting to, moulding interactions with, and reacting to the body and ways of the animal-other (Arluke & Sanders, 1996:81). If anthropologists continue to move animals into "anthropological visibility" by investigating the "zoological connection", the field can only be enriched and theoretical boundaries will be extended (Sanders, 2006). Interspecies co-operation is a contemporary issue hence accentuating the importance of understanding the position of dogs in South African society with renewed zoological focus.

Bumps in the road

The research process was equally as rewarding as it was challenging. Besides the various animal-related avenues I explored before settling on this topic, I was confronted with the difficulty of fitting a dog-related matter into the mould of Anthropology. Upon completion, however, I no longer regard this as a weakness, but rather a strength as the study has the potential to be useful in fields within the social sciences across the board.

I also experienced it as problematic to write a paper worthy of being called a multispecies ethnography. As this is still a fairly experimental endeavour, I found the supply of published works limited. Robinson (2011:70-71) adds that no practical guidelines are available in the way of applying ethical standards in multispecies settings. This made it difficult for me to model my research after any exceptional examples and those that I discovered, I read with a censorious eye, finding fault with many applications. My criticism of other research was a hindrance, however, as my initial expectations (of both my own work and the work of others) were found to be far too idealistic. My design was to provide the dog's direct perspective and to allow the animal to fully participate in my research project as a participant. Having spent a few weeks in the field, my expectations were tainted by the reality that being a human had a direct effect on one's interpretations of otherness. The deeper I went, the more progressively difficult it became to represent the animal

perspective, and the clearer it became that this representation may be impossible after all. Although I believe that my attempt at representing the dog was commendable, I did not achieve the equality I aimed for between human and animal as I was still presenting a human perspective of the animal and not the animal in their personal entirety. This was, unfortunately, only something that could be learned in retrospect and will be a lesson I can apply to my future research endeavours.

To a lesser degree, Chapter 3 involved various difficult terms and arcane abbreviations that could have been interpreted as tedious. This, however, could not have been avoided on account of its necessity for a deeper understanding of the dissertation as a whole and its relevance to dogdom. Politics is an inescapable aspect of life and in order to better understand the emergence and function of *schutzhund* in South African society, one has to explore every human facility pertaining to those driving the process (Engel, 2013:11).

Lastly, one of my key informants intended to contribute to this research withdrew; an acclaimed behaviourist in the country. I made several attempts to set a date and time to interview her and even drove all the way to Johannesburg for an appointment we had agreed upon, and she unfortunately did not arrive for this appointment. All attempts at communication failed. I believe that personal circumstances must have had a direct influence in this regard. Although I drew information from our previous interactions together over the years, I felt that this was a significant loss as she has accumulated many years of experience in the field of dog psychology and training.

The end is also the beginning

It is at this point that I turn back to reflect on the black speck that started it all; the serendipitous moment where my passion and direction of study was actualised. This journey has not only marked an adventure of interspecies findings, but personal findings too. I found myself constantly questioning my motives for being involved, asking myself hard questions about animal treatment, stewardship, commodification, and abuse. Am I not also buying into the game? Am I perhaps feeding a vicious cycle of animal use? But it was also a personal journey of understanding otherness – otherness in myself; otherness in my dogs. My aim is to eventually find that meeting point where both my dog and I can take something away from our interactions together. Although this is not the current reality, if I make a conscious effort in this direction each day during training then perhaps someday it will not be about what I can receive, but what I can give. This is, after all, the attitude of a dog.

I have reached the personal conclusion that it is we humans who fail dogs. "We fail to communicate properly with them, we fail to live up to our commitments, roles, and responsibilities as their leaders" (Greenebaum, 2010:140). We fail to meet their expectations of consistency, predictability, and clarity. And we often fail to realise the importance of their role as instigators of change in our past and present society. Human exceptionalism has far too long excluded others, like dogs, from claiming ownership of the prominent part that they play in society and culture. Whether we are willing to acknowledge her presence and influence on our daily lives or not, the dog will remain where she always has been: by our side.

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Appendix A: Table of German commands used in *schutzhund* training

German (or derivative)	English translation	Behaviour and technique described
OBEDIENCE		
Fuss (pronounced: "Fooss" – emphasis is on extending the "o's")	Heel	When asked to <i>fuss</i> the dog must drive the handler powerfully on his/her left hand side – the dog's body must be in line with the human's hip, legs extended straight in front, head tilted upwards and looking into the face of the handler; the dog must drive from the hind quarters. Dogs must be trained not to crowd the handler (push so hard against them that they come right in front preventing the human from walking correctly) or to lag behind the correct position. The intense physical demands of this exercise alone requires months of preparation for muscle conditioning especially in the hind quarters of the dog. <i>Fuss</i> is not only requested with the dog already at the human's side, but also from a distance away from the dog (a call to heel) which requires the dog to come directly into the heel position, sitting straight at the left side of the handler, looking up into his/her face, in line with their hip. The best comments a handler can get about <i>fuss</i> in a competition is: "powerful"; "dog was attentive to handler" ; "dog was joyful".
Setz ("Sitz" rhymes with "fits")	Sit	The dog must sit straight directly where commanded, whether right next to the handler, behind them or far away from them. The correct mechanics and muscle memory trains the dog to fold its rear in during the sit, and not to sit backwards.
Platz (pronounced: "Plotz")	Lie down	The dog must lie down quickly wherever he/she is. The correct technique is for the dog to pop its rear out backwards, and to lie completely straight with hind legs tucked next to the flanks and forearms straight

		out in front. The backside may not flop from one side to the other during the <i>platz</i> .
Steh (pronounced: "Shhtay")	Stand	The dog must stand in the exact place commanded and may not take any further steps even if the handler moves away from the dog. The mechanics of this exercise requires the dog to perform a stand from the <i>setz</i> where the dog is trained to pop his hind legs back into the <i>steh</i> (stand).
Bleib (pronounced: "Bly'b")	Stay	Not used in <i>schutzhund</i> as when a dog is trained properly to <i>setz</i> , <i>platz</i> , or <i>shteh</i> the dog is expected to stay in the instructed position until released by the handler. <i>Schutzhund</i> considers "sit-stay" and "down-stay" to be a double command, which is not permitted in a trial. http://www.gsscc.ca/schutzhund/commandstranlation.aspx
Hier (pronounced: "Hee er" - hang on the "e" sound slightly longer than usual)	Come (also called the recall)	The dog must run as fast as it can and sit directly in front of the handler (straight, not skew)
Bring ("Brrring" - roll the "r")	Retrieve/fetch	The dog must run as fast as it can to the dumbbell thrown by the handler, pick it up, keep a firm hold on it in transit, and present it to the handler directly in front of him/her - without being skew or chewing on the dumbbell. Retrieves are performed on the flat, over a hurdle, and over an A-frame.
Hopp (pronounced: "Hup")	Jump	The dog must jump over a 1-metre hurdle without touching it. This command is also used for going over the A-frame - the best technique is for the dog to leap up on the A-frame climb over and leap to the ground to retrieve the dumbbell by launching from the second divet and not from the top of the A-frame as this is dangerous for the joints.
Voraus ("For owss" - rhymes with "for house")	Go out (also called the send away)	On this command the dog must run as fast as it can away from the handler in a fairly straight line without looking back at the handler, and must "platz" on command several metres away.

TRACKING		
Such (pronounced "zoog" or "suuk")	Search or seek	The dog must put his/her nose to the ground and follow the track laid by the handler or another person and indicate articles dropped along the track.
BITE WORK		
Voran (Pronounced: "Voron")	Blind search	Some handlers use <i>voran</i> while others use <i>revier</i> . The dog is to run around the hide to search it for the helper. This command is given while walking the mid-line of the field and always accompanies an arm and hand indication towards the hide that the dog must check (there are six hides). In training either command is also used to cue the dog from a <i>fuss</i> , <i>setz</i> or <i>platz</i> position straight towards the helper into a hold and bark. Once a handler has decided on one command, he/she must stick with it.
Revier (pronounced: "Reeh veer")	Hunt	
Packen or Fass or Stell (pronounced: "Puck")	Bite/attack	This is the command for the dog to attack or bite the helper until the command for <i>aus</i> is given. The correct <i>puk</i> is a firm, deep, full-mouthed grip on the middle of the sleeve – not too close to the elbow and not too close to the hand.
Aus ("Owwss" – rhymes with "house")	Out/let go	The dog must let go of the helper's arm immediately.
<i>Bleiben Ruhig</i> or <i>Steht Noch</i>	Helper stand still or step back	This is a command given to the helper by the handler once the dog has ascertained the helper and the handler needs to place the dog close to themselves again.
NOTE: The disciplines overlap and words are used interchangeably depending on the desired outcome. E.g. if the dog is required to wait his turn at the tracking field while another dog returns, his handler may ask him to <i>platz</i> a safe distance away. Also, advanced bite work requires a fair amount of obedience – the dog is asked to <i>fuss</i> , <i>setz</i> or <i>platz</i> at certain times before being allowed to <i>packen</i> on the helper.		