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Gone to the Dogs: Inter-Species Bonds and the Building of Bio-Cultural Capital in America, 1835--Present

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Gone to the Dogs:
Inter-Species Bonds and the Building of Bio-Cultural Capital in America,
1835-Present

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In following the rise of *canis lupus familiaris* from America’s pet dog to *dogmestic partner* and ontological metaphor for capital unseen and humanly unseeable this dissertation hopes to reveal the ‘spirit of calculation’ that undergirds the nation’s seemingly disinterested love for their four-legged others and demonstrate how cultural politics affect and are in turn affected by bio-politics and bio-power.

It argues that in response to the deflation of prevalent signifiers of social standing and sexual or matrimonial desirability during the financial and ontological crises of the 1830s, Jacksonians turned to the dog as an incorruptible sign of invisible individual substance. In their seemingly disinterested dedication to another, dependent species, they displayed advanced levels of self-denial, the defeat of the animal within, and sophisticated social skills suggestive of higher (rational) humanity, biological wealth, and natural status. Companion dogs thus became a commodity of distinction that exploited preexisting cultural bias toward less material concepts such as “gentility” and “grace.” Canine companions helped salvage their caregiver’s social position and desirability, better their chances in courtship, and secure the transmission of accumulated biological and cultural assets to the next generation. In transforming into timelessly dependable institutions for safeguarding and increasing embodied human capital, pet dogs became living and breathing “pet banks,” whose perpetuity proved antithetical to President Jackson’s ephemeral “pet bank” scheme.

Canine pet-bank power in capital management, courtship, and propagation not only raised dogs’ desirability but also the stakes and quality of inter-species performances and, most importantly, the specter of “interest.” As canine companions grew more and more numerous, more and more intimate, and more and more impertinent, they became *dogmestic* partners whose economic utility in the building, maintenance, and reproduction of cultural and biological capital was increasingly difficult to deny. In close readings of the works of nine American writers this dissertation traces literary strategies of denial that maximize the accumulation and transmission of capital through “artlessly” altruistic, inter-species companionship, on the one hand, and openly selfish intra-species relations on the other, by separating *dogmestic* and domestic partners, the source and vehicle for power, through time, space, and, most recently, reconceptualized human reproductive units. It is within these key moments, when inter-species intimacy stops to assist and begins to impede human survival, that humanity signifies animality, that the human can be decentered and the human-animal divide overcome.

In delineating heretofore hidden cultural connections, I hope to show that while the *dogmestic* has helped re-etch national, religious, racial, classist, gender and ethnic lines, and assisted in the bio-cultural dispossession of intra-species “Others,” *dogmestic* practices have just as consistently and profitably been performed by members of miscellaneous outgroups to overcome putative bio-genetic differences and challenge the status quo. My analysis suggests that pet dogs or *dogmestics* play a decisive role in the identity formation, sexual selection, and reproduction of Americans and that ours is a world in which ignorance (and the metaphors to which it gives rise) - as much as knowledge - is capital and power.
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Prologue

“There is something I must know,” Mason hoarsely whispers, in the tone of a lover tormented by Doubts, “—Have you a soul, — that is, are you a human Spirit, re-incarnate as a Dog?”

The L.E.D. [Learned English Dog] blinks, shivers, nods in a resign’d way. “You are hardly the first to ask. Travelers return’d from the Japanese Islands to tell of certain religious Puzzles known as Koan, perhaps the most fam’d of which concerns your very Question, — whether a Dog hath the nature of the divine Buddha. A reply given by a certain very wise Master is, ‘Mu!’”

“‘Mu,’” repeats Mason thoughtfully.

“It is necessary for the Seeker to meditate upon the Koan until driven to a state of holy Insanity, — and I would recommend this to you in particular. But please do not come to the Learned English Dog if it’s religious comfort you’re after. I may be preternatural, but I am not supernatural. ‘Tis the Age of Reason, rrrf? There is ever an Explanation at hand, and no such thing as a Talking Dog. — Talking Dogs belong with Dragons and Unicorns. What there are, however, are Provisions for Survival in a World less fantastick.”

Meditation upon the nature of the animal and the essence of the human has driven many a “seeker,” real and imagined, “to a state of holy insanity.” Ts’und-chen Zhao-zhou (778-897), one of four Chinese Ch’an masters during the T’ang Dynasty (618-970 CE), zenned the question of human-animal distinction with ambivalence. Do dogs have Buddha nature? The philosopher’s context-species responses — “y’ou” (有) in the third tone meaning “yes” and “wu” (无) in the second tone meaning “no” — robbed of tonal contours and rendered indistinguishable in Pynchon’s talking dog’s translation (“Mu!”), begin to show how both context and our very limited ability to detect, capture, and convey nonverbal meaning compromise our search for answers.²

² Chinese Ch’an masters are masters of Zen Buddhist meditation. Unlike non-tonal English, Chinese is a tonal language that uses four tones or pitches to distinguish lexical meaning: yi sheng (the first tone), er sheng (the second tone), san sheng (the third tone), and si sheng (the fourth tone). I am indebted to Yanfang Tang, Associate Professor in Chinese Linguistics, Modern Languages and Literatures Department, College of William and Mary
Unlike Chinese Ch’an, which champions the open-ended multiplicity of subjective and often humanly unfathomable realities, much of the continental tradition up until and, arguably, well into the crisis of humanism has attempted to answer with dialectical definitiveness what according to literary theorist Cary Wolfe remains “the central problematic for contemporary culture and theory”: “the animal question.” To be or not to be - human or animal? The question of human-animal difference and identity, or better, of “becoming-human,” is a principal theme in the foundational literatures of the west; most centrally, the Epic of Gilgamesh, composed around 2000 BCE, and the Book of Genesis, written between 1000 and 300 BCE. In their opening paragraphs, Gilgamesh and Genesis identify the moment of becoming human with the gain of two traits: consciousness - the realization that one exists and the associated self-loving drive to thrive and multiply or, as Nietzsche (1844-1900) and Foucault (1926-1984) would put it, the individual’s will to life and power - and conscience - the recognition that in order to live and multiply one must love self-


2 As opposed to Deleuze and Guattari’s “becoming-animal,” a concept that describes the process of becoming part and parcel of a new “pack” or “apparatus of capture” and taking on an identity in compliance with the pack’s or apparatus’s behavioral rules and expectations. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 444. For an insightful discussion of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of ‘becoming’ also see Shukin, Animal Capital, 31-32.
same others. With conscience, the social animal’s urge or affect to do unto self-same kin or “pack” as one would have them do to you was born. Since its very beginnings, then, western human history has equated the point of becoming-human with the gain of calculatingly considerate behavior and the linked loss of what might be called innocently inconsiderate behavior but what is more commonly referred to as “animality.” Traditionally, becoming human presupposes the act of “un-becoming-animal;” or as Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), the founder of modern taxonomy, summarizes: the conceptual transition from “mean thing” or “contempta res,” unaware of its affects, to calculating non-thing, “supra humana’ demands that Homo “Know thyself” (“Nosce te ipsum!”).

This dissertation suggests that listening to our “tailwagging Scheherazades … telling back to [us] the tales of [our] humanity” may be a first step in that direction.8


Human nature in Seneca is identified with the passions. Translation into English, from Latin and German, mine. Also compare “(5) What a despicable thing a human being is if he does not rise above human affairs!” in Harry Morrison Hine, Natural Questions: The Complete Works of Lucious Annaeus Seneca (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 137. In the first edition of Systema Naturae, Linnaeus classified homo in the imperative “Nosce te ipsum” or, “Know Thyself.” Caroli Linnæi, Systema Naturae. Lugduni Batavorum: Haak, 1735.

8 Pynchon, Maxon & Dixon, 21-22, emphasis mine.

Part 1 – Dollars and the Dogmestic:

“... without the intervention of the dog at the precise moment in which he appeared, I should have never become aware of the death’s head, and so never the possessor of the treasure” –


In the industrially, demographically, and financially fluid environment of Jacksonian America, trusted signs of substance and status were – in more than one sense - going to the dogs.10 Industrial growth and mercantile restructuring in the port cities, most centrally New York, encouraged an unprecedented number of young men and women to leave the country and close kinship circles in search of work, opportunity, and perhaps a little bit of adventure in the bustling metropolis.11 Apart from the few, who had the means and extended kin contacts to arrange for a more gradual and sheltered entry into the urban centers, the great majority of them immediately mingled with an ever-increasing number of distant and foreign-born workers in a variety of employment settings that ranged from intimate outworkers’ homes to the fast-paced and often impersonal manufactories of what Sean

11 The manufacturing industry of early nineteenth-century New York City, for example, as Sean Wilentz persuasively demonstrates, predominately invested in “intensified in division of labor” rather than investing in “labor-saving machinery.” See Sean Wilentz, Chants, 107, especially Wilentz’s discussion of “The Bastard Workshop,” 107-144.

Wilentz has called the “bastard artisan system.”¹² Some were privileged, others disadvantaged, but all were in some sense forced to reckon with people, cultures, and circumstances new and “strange.”¹³

City life, while giving the young, inexperienced, and predominately single transplants the freedom from traditional restraints to find and refashion themselves, posed great challenges. After the newness and excitement had abated, many discovered, that their farewell to home and hearth went hand in hand with the loss of social security and comfort that kinship networks – as stifling as they can be - extend to their kind. The newcomers’ need for social networks and their desire for inter-personal bonds and belonging, may have heightened what Walter Benjamin described as the human ability or “gift […] for seeing similarity” in places where there was none, or, at least, comparatively little.¹⁴

The inclination to see and trust the seemingly similar, amplified by the cultural heterogeneity, anonymity, and pace of the antebellum city, left recent arrivals with good

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¹² Wilentz, Chants, 113.
¹³ By 1830, the population of New York reached 202,589. The second largest cities were Baltimore (80,620) and Philadelphia (80,462) followed by Boston (61,392) and New Orleans (46,082). “Population of the ninety urban places: 1830,” U.S. Bureau of the Census, http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab06.txt.
¹⁴ Presumably targeting the transplants’ medium age, device literature addressed adolescents and young adults between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five. See Halttunen, Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 1. Based on the 1840 census, Edward Widmer arrives at an average age of Americans overall of 17.8 years with over twelve of seventeen million people under thirty. Widmer bases his calculations on the 1840 census returns in Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, 1:16-18, Edward Widmer, Young America: The Flowering of Democracy in New York City (New York: Oxford UP, 1999), 4. The need for social networks refers to the basic utility of networks - from finding work by word of mouth to securing support in times of sickness, etc. The desire for inter-personal bonds, however, refers to emotional exchange – from sharing the sorrows of hard work to jovial social relief through banter, for example. With respect to Walter Benjamin, see Wolfgang Bock, “Benjamin’s Criticism of Language and Literature,” in A Companion to the Works of Walter Benjamin, ed. Rolf J. Goebel (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), 28.
intentions blind to "false" appearances and vulnerable to abuse and corruption. Advice manuals and etiquette books, as historian Karen Halttunen has shown, as well as sentimental novels and religious tracts flooded the 1830s market to deter the innocent from becoming the prey of confidence men and painted women. But rather than soothe raw nerves and advance social order, the texts fueled and profited from performance paranoia - not to mention, that they provided the very "strangers" and con men they allegedly sought to unmask with blueprints of the dos and don'ts of proper deception.

What made inter-personal classification, profitable networking and bonding all the more challenging was the increased flow of paper money which further undermined particularities of status and provoked what Herman Melville later problematized as a veritable "masquerade" in *The Confidence Man* (1857).

Especially city manufacturers and merchants, who had little recourse to non-monetary forms of exchange, embraced the tide of paper currency that followed the expansion of banks and the extension of long-term credit as, Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin (1761-1849) quipped, "permanent accommodation." Between 1830 and 1835, the number of banks scattered across the U.S. grew from 330 to 558. And, commensurate with their numbers, the loans they dispensed and paper money they put into circulation rose from $200,451,000 to $365,164,000 and

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17 Herman Melville, *The Confidence Man, His Masquerade* (1857).

$61,324,000 to 103,692,000 respectively. City businesses used their loans to pay for rent, equipment, tools, and a growing number of skilled and unskilled labor. And, although the small workshop- and manufactory owners' artisan republicanism, self-discipline, and sentiments of responsibility toward their work-force eroded over time, the paper notes they did not keep trickled down the social ladder and, buoyed by a competitively priced market, led to the democratization of dress and other class accessories. It cost little “to buy the outward appearance of a woman from a different class” and pass, historian Stephen Mihm summarizes, especially, “when one was paying with counterfeit money.”

Counterfeit bills, akin to “counterfeit” character, were copious and just as easy to bring into circulation, especially at a time when the very devaluation of standard markers of standing helped camouflage the “shovers.” The bills themselves looked increasingly real. They were the product of the latest advances in printing technology and highly skilled

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19 Bray Hammond, “Long and Short Term Credit,” 86.
21 Ibid., 227.
22 By “counterfeit character” I mean identities deliberately assumed to deceive others for personal profit. Identities are performance rather than script-based. It follows that unless they can be identified as consciously changed short term to suit a particular situation, ideas of authenticity or counterfeiting do not apply. Members of the American Numismatic Society cite that approximately 40% of paper bills in circulation were counterfeit. Michael O'Malley, cites this figure in “Specie and Species,” 374, quoted in David Henkin, City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York (New York: Columbia UP, 1998), 145.
23 Henkin, City Reading, 137-165.
Their appearance was further enhanced by the sophisticated use of different varieties of paper and the involuntary aid of "counterfeit detectors," which policed and documented the line between real and fake money as meticulously in their weekly issues as etiquette books did in matters of manners and standing.\(^\text{25}\) As with confidence men and women, whose success in swindling others depended equally on expertise as on their victims' indefinite ideas of what honestly indicated substance, counterfeit copies often passed not only because of their authentic appearance but also because of the unspecified nature of the real and the ideal in the eye of the beholder.

Telling real from fake, however, was not the only issue. The exchange value of authentic notes ranged from being fully redeemable to being as worthless as or, in fact, worth less than a reproduction depending on the state, place, and reputation of the bank of origin.\(^\text{26}\) Banks ranged from solidly solvent, such as Nicholas Biddle's (1786-1844) Bank of the United States (SBUS), to what Scottish-American detective Allan Pinkerton (1819-1884) adroitly described as "shyster institution[s]."\(^\text{27}\) In between, there were banks whose notes, by

\(^{24}\) Stephen Mihm tells the story of the "notorious" Stephen Borroughs in *A Nation of Counterfeiters*, 20-62. With regards to the appearance of notes, see especially pages 53-55, 70-72.


\(^{26}\) O'Malley, "Specie and Species," 374.

\(^{27}\) Much like its predecessor, the *First Bank of the United States*, founded by Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton in 1791 to equip the new nation with universally accepted and stable legal tender, the *Second BUS* (1816-1836) managed the federal government's financial affairs from expenses and loans to tax revenue. Under the careful supervision of Philadelphian Nicholas Biddle (1786-1844), it issued its own promissory notes that could be redeemed in full for gold – that is, "specie," at any state bank. And, by virtue of operating as a creditor rather than debtor to state and privately chartered banks, the *Second BUS* had the power to recall loans, control the money supply, and counter irresponsible banking practices and
virtue of their distance, were only traded at a discount and, most notorious of all, banks as elusive as wild cats - hence, "wildcat banks" – whose notes could only be redeemed by those lucky enough to hunt them down in time.  

Andrew Jackson’s decision to veto the SBUS’s congressional re-charter and subsequently disband it, in 1835, may have been the nail in the coffin of the era’s representational stability.  

The fall of the SBUS and simultaneous rise of the President’s pet banks “end[ed] the coordinated campaign against counterfeiting” and multiplied the number of (questionable) notes in circulation. The credibility of paper bills reached an all time low. Unable to confidently infer from the notes’ stated value to their substantive worth, the anxious Jacksonian American public turned to gold and silver or, in the parlance of the time,
“specie.” The heightened preference for specie contributed to the monetary contraction that precipitated the Panic of 1837. It caused the sudden impoverishment and debasement of Americans across all classes and left the human landscape in much the same representational shambles as its state-issued notes.

From amidst the tumultuous times, Catharine Maria Sedgwick advises, “The exclusive love of riches must abate when their uncertainty is so proven. Men must learn the worth of those acquisitions, those fountains of respectability and happiness that are independent of the fluctuations of the money-market.” In their search for honest and stable or, what Sedgwick called, “eternal” and “illimitable” indicators of substance, status, and power, unmoored in the melee of a free market, Jacksonian society invested in nature,

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31 From specere, to look at, see, or “to behold” in Latin. The etymology of “specie” and “species” is ironic as the terms are signs or ontological metaphors for imagined essences beyond human perception. For a brief discussion on the connection between specere, specie and species, see Donna Haraway, “Species Matters, Humane Advocacy,” in Species Matters, ed. Marianne DeKoven and Michael Lundblad (New York: University of Columbia Press, 2012), 19; also see Haraway, When Species Meet, 17. Jacksonian America’s turn to racial and economic essentialism (species and specie), see Michael O’Malley, “Specie and Species,” 369-395. O’Malley’s argument will be discussed in greater detail below.

32 Along with Jackson’s 1836 Species Circular, which drained the east of its gold and silver reserves by funneling specie westwards, and the European market contraction and British credit crunch that simultaneously lowered the inflow of capital from abroad. For an insightful discussion of the economic effects of the bank war on public investment habits, see Marie E. Sushka, “The Antebellum Money Market and the Economic Impact on of the Bank War,” Journal of Economic History 36, 4 (Dec. 1976): 809-835. Sushka’s essay on antebellum money market figures for the sample periods before and after the Bank War—that is, from 1823-1835 and 1836-1859, convincingly argues that, driven by the desire for safety and security, both the public and commercial banks changed their “liquidity preferences … from bank liabilities to specie” (Sushka, “The Antebellum Money Market,” 833) after 1835.

33 That is, with reputable names that could be worthless or, worse, worth less than the nameless.

"natural facts," and the natural world. 35 People, historian Michael O'Malley argues, most immediately applied the logic and language of economic essentialism to their logic and language of race. The era's pursuit of specie and species, from karats to the one-drop rule, anchored the aggressively liberal idea of the self-made man in "non-negotiable," racial immobility and set the tone for other essence-based discourses of power from nation to religion, class, and sex. 36 Cultural historian Karen Halttunen shows with which ease

Jacksonians transitioned or, better, extrapolated from physical to behavioral indicators of inherited quality. Middle-class culture, she explains, couched its “antirepublican conviction that gentlemen were not in fact made but born” in its turn to norms and fashion as technically inclusive but practically inimitable indicators of intrinsic and, hence, authentic worth, god-given grace, and natural, timeless superiority.\(^\text{37}\) But as quickly as new “honest” indicators of embodied capital in the fields of race, faith, and gentility were identified and used, miscegenation, misconduct, and hypocrisy on the one hand, and the steady increase of commanding challenges to puritan white male middle-class monopolies on the other, exposed the opportunistic calculus that suffused them.\(^\text{38}\) In the search for incorruptible

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\(^{37}\) Halttunen, *Confidence Men*, 118. To what extent these discourses overlapped is neatly illustrated by two quotes Halttunen provides in her chapter on “Hypocrisy and Sincerity in the World of Strangers: “Character is like stock in trade; the more of it a man possesses, the greater are his faculties for making additions to it. Or, it is like an accumulating fund, constantly increasing in value, and daily acquiring to itself fresh accessions of stability and worth.” Joel Hawes, *Lectures Addressed to the Young Men of Hartford and New Haven* (Hartford: Oliver D. Cooke and Co., 1828), 109; and, principle is “a safe, a certain investment. How much is a single unalloyed virtue in the soul of a young man worth? It was founded in secret, and was to outward appearance a small thing. But once founded, the first sum recorded, the principal invested, every year will enhance its value,” Artemus B. Muzzey, *A Young Man’s Friend* (Boston: Munroe, 1838), 40-41, quoted in Halttunen, *Confidence Men*, 47.

authenticators of character, control, and social standing, Jacksonians turned to the natural world and its most "ubiquitous" and most common ambassador as an inconspicuous and safer source of power: the "most favored of all animals" - the dog.  

As historians Keith Thomas, James Turner, Harriet Ritvo, Virginia DeJohn Anderson, and Mark Derr as well as geographers Judy Wolch and Jennifer Emel have illustrated, Anglophone attitudes toward animals had changed significantly by the early eighteen hundreds; namely, from a pre-imperial people who defined themselves against beasts to an imperial people who maintained their superiority by defining themselves against others "acting beastly." Thomas's works on Religion and the Decline of Magic (1971) and Man and the Natural World (1983) as well as Anderson's Creatures of Empire (2004) and Derr's Dog's

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Thomas, Man and the Natural World, 101. According to a common seventeenth-century English proverb, "he cannot be a gentleman who loveth not a dog," (Thomas, Man, 103); and, according to Adam Smith, whom Thomas paraphrases in his work, even the country's poor could easily afford to keep a dog" (Adam Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, ed., R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 243 quoted in Thomas, Man, 105). As I will discuss below, the dog's accessibility to people of all stripes makes it a means in the pursuit of aggressive liberalism.


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History (2004) showcase the use of human-animal relations in the construction – rather than mere simulation – of hierarchies at the onset of empire.41 Turner’s study of the Anglo-American animal protection movement traces the evolution of a new sensibility toward domestic animals in general and companion species in particular that allowed Victorian reformers to make peace with their own “animality” while enabling them to control the unmitigated beastliness of others.42 As Harriet Ritvo’s careful study of the use of animals as a means to domination and control documents, the hidden agenda of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was social privilege. The society’s calling, its chairman reveals, in 1824, is “not only to prevent the exercise of cruelty towards animals, but to spread amongst the lower orders of people … a degree of moral feeling which would compel them to think and act like those of a superior class.”43

With their transformation from pre-industrial subject to modern object and metaphor,44 to use cultural critic John Berger’s words, animals entered not only the British but also the American domus (the house or household in Latin) as a concrete token of a set of


43 RSPCA’s chairman, quoted in Ritvo, Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in Victorian England (Boston: Harvard UP, 1989), 135. The chairman’s revelation reminds of Nietzsche, “We do not regard the animals as moral beings. But do you suppose the animals regard us as moral beings? – An animal which could speak said: ‘Humanity is a prejudice of which we animals at least are free’,” F.W. Nietzsche, Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality (New York: Cambridge UP, 1997), 162.


abstract human qualities or characteristics, or what linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson more closely defined as a metaphor of the “ontological” type. In the sentimental culture, poetry, and advice literature of the 1830s, historian Katherine Grier explains, the domestic animal’s value was no longer calculated in narrowly economic terms such as the products it rendered or the labor power it supplied, but “on more complex grounds.”

Select species, including cats, “bunnies,” song-birds, and, most centrally, dogs became companions, “pets,” or “mess-mates” – a term, Donna Haraway derives from the literal Latin translation of the root word for companion, cum panis, “with bread.” The latter lived in the house, were named, and taboo to eat by virtue of representing members or analogues of the human family, children, and/or friends. Ostensibly useless, pets or mess-mates became markers of the middle classes as “respectable” people, whose high moral purpose, character, or “ethic of kindness” commanded that they dedicate themselves selflessly to the welfare of dependent others. The “(proper) American” or middle class home, literary critic Jennifer Mason summarizes, thus became a space defined “against the aristocratic value system based on wealth, heredity, and appearance [… and] the marketplace”;

and its animal

45 On ontological metaphors, see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors We Live By (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3-6, 25-32.
47 Haraway, When Species Meet, 16-17.
48 The definition of pets as: animals that live in the house, bear a name, and are not eaten first appears in Keith Thomas’s Man and the Natural World, 110-120; it has subsequently been appropriated by scholars across disciplines. Four metaphors for animals, see Grier, Pets, 197-199.
49 Gier, Pets, 161-164. Also see Jennifer Mason, Civilized Creatures: Urban Animals, Sentimental Culture, and American Literature, 1850-1900 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2005), 1, 13-14.
practices figure centrally in “contests for power in the human social order” of mid- to late nineteenth-century America.51

Within the larger Judeo-Christian tradition, the ability to commune with nature, across species lines, has suggested the return to prelapsarian purity, remission for past wrongs, and elevated social standing since Enkidu, Adam, and Eve.52 Communion, oneness or transcendence, dominant antebellum culture maintained, could be won in two ways: First by virtue of sympathy and sensibility, grounded in the impulsive and instinctual yet fleeting powers of the heart.53 And, second, by reason and logic, grounded in the constant - exclusively (white male) human - powers of the mind. While the former granted momentary access to higher states of being at best, only the reason-induced restoration of ties to the natural world, long lost to human self-indulgence, led to controlled, radical, and permanent change. By the mid-eighteen-twenties, the desire and ability to live harmoniously in and with non-human nature - like Natty Bumppo, the hero of James Fenimore Cooper’s

*Leatherstocking Tales* (*The Pioneers*, 1823; *The Last of the Mohicans*, 1826; *The Prairie*, 1827) or his

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51 Mason, *Civilized Creatures*, 1; Rod Preece, *Brute Souls, Happy Beasts, and Evolution: The Historical Status of Animals* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005), 103-233. For a useful collection of essays re-evaluating the concept of domestication, especially with respect to co-domestication and sustainable utilization, which, as my larger argument documents, has changed human-dog relations over time, see Rebecca Cassidy and Molly Mullin, ed., *Where the Wild Things Are Now: Domestication Reconsidered* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 71-100 and 229-248.

52 See chapter four for a review of Enkidu’s engagement with the harlot and subsequent loss of innocence market by inter-species closeness and Adam and Eve’s Fall and expulsion from a paradise in which inter-species struggle for survival is obviated by the lack of sexual reproduction. For an overview of inter-species affinity and “grace” see Stephen H. Webb, *On God and Dogs: A Christian Theology of Compassion for Animals*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. Also see Preece, *Brute Souls*, 1-23, 174-232, and 359-392. A literary example is Henry David Thoreau’s return to the “Holy Land” by virtue of becoming part and parcel of nature (*Walking*).

53 By the 1830s, increasingly, but not exclusively, the dominion of white, middle class women.

legendary, non-fictional contemporary David Crockett (1786-1836) - had come to epitomize rational humanity marked by the enduring will and exclusive power to dominate, deprive, and improve the bodily, or ‘animal,’ self.54

In the fall of 1833, The Southern Rosebud, a Southern periodical based in Savannah, Georgia, for example, published a story that made the connection between inter-species care, metallic money, social standing and reproductive success increasingly clear. The fable, entitled “Poor Fido. From the French” or, simply “Poor Fido,” enjoyed great popularity and was republished by the Ohio Observer in Hudson, Ohio and the Farmer’s Cabinet in Amherst, Massachusetts that very same year.55 The one-page piece relates the rescue of faithful Fido by his owner’s cousin Paulina, a girl “so humane and compassionate towards persons and even animals, when suffering, that every one loved her.”56 While visiting her cousin Emily, Paulina is appalled to witness her relative’s harsh treatment of a pet dog Emily once professed to have

54 Characteristically calm, Natty, experiences “moments when he felt in his turn an impulse, that was nearly resistless […]; but [he would …] recall his tottering prudence […]. The trapper, alone, remained calm and observant,” James Fenimore Cooper, The Prairie: A Tale (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Carey, 1827), 66. Throughout, the trapper is described as “attentive” (76), calm (77), gentle (78), and enduring (84); he is a man of “tempered appetite” (134), who cannot “be a witness and a helper to the waste of killing one [buffalo] daily” (133). Bumppo’s desire and ability to control his appetites facilitates a level familiarity with “the wilds” (135) and his dog Hector against which Dr. Obed Battius’ pursuit of all things other for the supposedly selfless sake of science, learning, and “the benefit of my fellow creatures” (142) appears instinct-ridden, flimsy, and inauthentic. See Chapter Nine, 131-145. For an overview of science vis-à-vis conceptions of masculinity and self-control in early nineteenth century America, see Michael A. Bryson, Visions of the Land: Science, Literature, and the American Environment from the Era of Exploration to the Age of Ecology (Charlottesville: UVA Press, 2002), 16-18. For a discussion of Natty Bumppo as the “sentimental ideal of unconstrained manners … without artificially cultivated refinements,” see Karen Halttunen, Confidence Men, 101. On Cooper as the embodiment of the “republican concept of the natural gentleman, who possessed gentlemanly attributes without artificially cultivated refinements,” see Karen Halttunen, Confidence Men, 101.

55 Eulycel, Ohio Observer, September 1833; Farmer’s Cabinet 10, 31 (November 8, 1833): 1.
loved. Accidentally scalded, disfigured and unsightly, the former pet is left to fend for
himself and about to be turned over to a “half dozen of wicked boys, who would have
tormented him to death” when Paulina interferes. She saves Fido and adds him to her
household-menagerie of disabled animals that include a dog with a broken paw, and earless
cat, a blind squirrel, and a small number of lame birds. In remuneration for her “benevolent
disposition” and good deeds, Paulina not only earns hard specie in the form of increased
“pocket-money,” but also receives “presents,” “marks of gratitude wherever she went” and,
most importantly, the love and respect of her “neighbors, rich and poor.” Unlike her
uncompassionate cousin, who was mistakenly “thought [to have] an excellent heart,”
Paulina’s pet policy is constant and communally recognized as part and parcel of her
“disposition.” With an air of authenticity and artlessness, Paulina’s embodied capital
translates into augmented economic and cultural capital, happiness, ‘marketability,’ and a
better chance at future bio-cultural reproduction and transmission of her accumulated
wealth.

The power of self-denial and return to nature along with its unspoken claim to
rational fame and cultural capital, in other words, was an accomplishment that in the eyes of
many no longer simply rested on the agent’s will and circumstance, but on their biological
predisposition. As such, antebellum America’s burgeoning love of non-human nature quite
literally became ‘a matter’ of the body, “external wealth converted into an integral part of the
person,” or, what Pierre Bourdieu identifies as capital in the embodied state.

57 “Pets” are animals given a name, fed, and invited to live in the house as companions. Fido
is no longer fed nor tolerated around the house.
58 She felt “pure delight” and “was happy herself,” in “Poor Fido,” 19.
Embodyed capital, Bourdieu elaborates, encompasses acquired attitudes, ideas, habits and sensibilities or what he elsewhere more loosely describes as “habitus” or taste. It is the most fundamental of three forms or states of cultural capital that indirectly defines the other two: cultural capital in the objectified and institutionalized state. Objectified capital is capital in objectified or material form (books, paintings etc.), whose symbolic value corresponds to and fluctuates with the embodied capital of its consumers. A Picasso, removed from the purview of the art-historian, or, more properly, the art collector, and given to an average four year-old child, for example, is likely to be assigned the exchange value of a bag of twizzlers. Cultural capital in its institutionalized state, on the other hand, confers “legally guaranteed value with respect to culture” in the form of institutionally recognized qualifications in order to blunt the embodied differences of individual bearers.\(^5^9\) Measured by or against it, embodied wealth plays a pivotal role in the persistence of cultural capital in all three states.

Bourdieu’s understanding of capital as ‘embody-able,’ however, is particularly helpful in the discussion of inter-species practices and the management and propagation of assets, because it blurs the line between nature and nurture, genes and memes, and inherited and acquired properties. The process or “work of acquisition” of cultural capital, to use Bourdieu’s words, “is work on oneself (self-improvement) … with all the privation, renunciation, and sacrifice that it may entail.”\(^6^0\) Its accumulation demands diligence, cultivation, “inculcation and assimilation” at the expense of personal cost, time and energy. The embodiment of capital, then, is as much a matter of motivation as it is one of existing and available resources. It is impressed by chance and limited to the biological appropriating

\(^5^9\) Bourdieu, “Forms,” 248.
\(^6^0\) Ibid., 244.

capacities of its bearers. Bourdieu’s idea of bodily self-improvement proposes that incorporated attitudes and skills so masterly mingle with innate properties that they are ultimately “unrecognized as capital and [mis]recognized as legitimate competence.” Herein, or, more specifically, in its camouflage lies the power of embodied capital as a long-term investment strategy. Rather than appear as the product of egotistical calculation, or a means to an end, assimilated external riches look natural, original, authentic, and, it follows, purpose- and interest-free. They endow their bearers with a higher profile on the matrimonial market, better their chances of sexual and social reproduction, and thereby maximize their transmission in the form of bio-cultural capital and power. As a result, cultural capital in its embodied form represents more than an inconspicuous investment strategy. It is, Bourdieu concludes, the “best hidden form of hereditary transmission of capital” to the next generation there is. The embodiment of capital perpetuates existing social structures when the direct transmission of power through money, property rights, or title, and it proffered a means to secure antebellum America’s “fountains of respectability and happiness” by feeding on, sustaining and nurturing love of nature in general and inter-species affinity in particular as ostensibly non-economic forms of exchange.

In its emphasis on short-term self-restraint for the sake of social status, matrimonial marketability, and bio-cultural reproduction, the sum of which arguably defines long-term self-satisfaction or happiness, Bourdieu’s early 80s model of embodied capital prefigures

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61 Opportunity or lack thereof circumscribed by society, class, race, gender, etc.
63 Ibid., 246.
64 Or, Naturverbundenheit. Generally translated as “love of nature” the German compound noun Naturverbundenheit gives expression to a deep bond with nature or connectedness with the non-human world (Nature = nature, Verbundenheit = connectedness).
Michel Foucault's late 80s thoughts on the technologies or practices of self-formation.65

"Technologies of [and one may add for the] self," Foucault explains,

permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain
number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of
being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness,
purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.66

Both Bourdieu's improving bodies and Foucault's transforming selves turn to alternative
types of capital to secure the smooth and safe transmission of their accumulated wealth to
subsequent generations.67 But while Bourdieu conceives of the pursuit of seemingly
disinterested forms of capital for the purpose of self-preservation as a habit of mis-
"recognition" of which its agents are largely unaware, Foucault suggests intent. His
developmental approach to human self-knowledge considers Homo sapiens cognitively capable
but decidedly unwilling to acknowledge the underlying mechanisms at work in our species' survival. Our denial, he elaborates, is the result of culturally contrived "truth games," a tactically advanced form of self-deception that proves an evolutionary advantage in the struggle for bio-cultural power and 'immortality' at the individual and group level.

65 Historian Engin Isin briefly points to the analogous nature of Bourdieu's notion of embodied capital to Foucault's idea of technologies of self in Being Political, Genealogies of Citizenship (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 39. Thanks to Charles McGovern for this reference.

66 The "technologies of self" along with the technologies of domination, production, and signification represent the four types of technologies of knowledge and power. The four technologies usually function in conjunction, although some may predominate certain periods. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Foucault suggests, technologies of self preponderated. See Martin, Luther, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton, eds., Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 18.

67 See, for example, Beckert's discussion of social capital and kinship networks, Sven Beckert, The Monied Metropolis, 15-45.

Foucault’s dual claim to the conflicting concepts of purity and wisdom (or, in more traditional terms, innocence and knowledge) and the cultural capital and power they carry and confer upon their bearers is not unproblematic. In fact, it jeopardizes the very “assets thus salvaged” from Bourdieu’s “icy waters of egotistical calculation.” The idea of loving across species lines for the sake of intra-species status and survival or practicing selfless love for the love of self, is an oxymoron that ultimately puts “humanity” itself into question. Are we calculating creatures of reason with the will and power to practice future-oriented prudence and inter-species altruism as a means to capital, power, and survival? Or, are we a species innocently ignorant of the fact that our inter-species alliances benefit us long-term? The former confirms us in our Enlightenment-brand, rational “humanity” at the loss of innocence; the latter confers innocence at the loss of (rational) “humanity” itself.

At this cognitive impasse - when artless acts of inter-species love turn recognizably artful, reason becomes the handmaiden of instinct, and self-restraint turns into evident self-satisfaction – embodied capital becomes a handicap that lowers its bearers’ chances of sexual and social reproduction and reduces if not minimizes their transmission of bio-cultural assets and power. Foucault’s contention points to a crucial caveat in the management of embodied capital through seemingly disinterested animal practices: it proffers power that cannot be transmitted directly and demands evermore sophisticated levels of collaborative maintenance.

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68 “It is remarkable,” Bourdieu knowingly observes, “that the practices and assets thus salvaged from the ‘icy waters of egotistical calculation’ (and from science) are the virtual monopoly of the dominant class.” Bourdieu, “The Forms,” 242.
69 That is, at the loss of innocence and the “humane.”
to project the appearance of genuine minds with one leg up on their matter and, thus, their competition.\textsuperscript{70}

Focusing on literary encounters and long-term relations with \textit{canis lupus familiaris}, whose position in the continental imagination as western man’s oldest, “best,” most ubiquitous, most commodified and thus most “significant other” remains unrivaled, this dissertation studies the lived contradictions of an ongoing politics of power and survival in America from the Jacksonian era to the present.\textsuperscript{71} It adopts Donna Haraway’s identification of the pet dog with transposable, “lively capital” or what I call the \textit{dogmestic} to show how human-canine intimacy as a token of human disinterestedness, self-discipline, and innate quality initially feeds but ultimately infringes upon what Michel Foucault introduced as the human animal’s pre-ideological will to the \textit{biological} preservation of self, or “biopower.”

It argues that in response to the deflation of prevalent signifiers of social standing and sexual or matrimonial desirability during the financial and ontological crisis of the 1830s,

\textsuperscript{70} Just a slight edge as too much knowledge suggests calculation and turns positive into negative capital. A discussion of James Welch’s \textit{The Death of Jim Loney} walking said line between knowledge and innocence is the focus of chapter five.

\textsuperscript{71} Keith Thomas, \textit{Man}, 101; Grier, \textit{Pets}, 26-45; Derr, \textit{A Dog’s History}, 73-202. On “lively capital,” see Donna Haraway on “Value-added Dogs and Lively Capital” (Haraway, \textit{When Species Meet}, 45-67); “People and dogs emerge as mutually adapted partners in the naturecultures of lively capital” Haraway concludes and adds encouragingly, “It is time to think harder about encounter value” (Haraway, \textit{When Species Meet}, 62, emphasis mine); Haraway understands “significant otherness” as difference taken seriously: as “non-harmonious agencies and ways of living that are accountable both to their disparate inherited histories and to their barely possible but absolutely necessary joint futures” (D. Haraway, \textit{Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness} (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003), 7. For additional reading on how earthly, commodified animals figure in the making of human identities, please see Donna Haraway, \textit{A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century} (New York: Routledge, 1991), 7-20; \textit{Primate Visions} (1989); \textit{The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness} (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003); and \textit{When Species Meet} (2009); as well as Shukin, \textit{Animal Capital} (2009).
Jacksonians turned to the dog as an incorruptible sign of invisible individual substance. In their seemingly disinterested dedication to another, dependent species, they displayed advanced levels of self-control, the defeat of the animal within, and sophisticated social skills suggestive of “higher humanity,” biological wealth, and natural status. Dogs thus became physical prostheses that exploited preexisting cultural bias toward less material concepts such as “gentility” and “grace.” Commodified or companion dogs helped salvage their caregiver’s reputation, social position, and desirability and, in doing so, bettered “their” chances in courtship and transmission of accumulated biological and cultural assets to the next generation. In this sense, pet dogs became an institution for safeguarding and increasing bio-cultural or embodied human capital. They became living, canine “pet banks” – the very antithesis in stability to President Jackson’s partisan “pet-banks” or the era’s scandalously elusive “wildcat banks.”

Canine pet-bank power not only raised dogs’ desirability but also the quality of interspecies performances and, most importantly, the specter of “interest.” As canine companions grew more and more numerous, more and more intimate, and more and more impertinent, they became dogmestic partners whose economic utility in the building of biocultural capital has been both real and imagined. Through their utilization in the building of bio-cultural capital, dogs have thus come to be interpreted as living, canine “pet banks” – the very antithesis in stability to President Jackson’s partisan “pet-banks” or the era’s scandalously elusive “wildcat banks.”

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72 Americans, in other words, no longer exclusively defined themselves against others “acting beastly” (Wolch and Emel, quoted above) on religious or sentimental grounds. Instead, they established moral hierarchies on hard facts – a logic that, as Michael O’Malley persuasively argues, derived from economic essentialism. With respect to the extrapolation from the logic of economic essences to those of race, see Michael O’Malley, “Specie and Species,” quoted above. Contrary to Michael Lundblad’s recent argument that the “door ... for claiming humane behavior as a marker of difference among human beings” was not opened until “evolutionary thinking challenges the boundaries between human and the animal” (81) around 1900, the ontological metaphor of the dogmestic invokes concrete intrinsic differences and hierarchies as early as 1835. See, Michael Lundblad, “Archaeology of a Humane Society: Animality, Savagery, Blackness,” in Species Matters, 75-102.

73 I am deliberately leaving the antecedent for this pronoun unclear as it is one of the larger goals of my work to show that human selfishness from which dogs have benefited equally may lead to sustainable utilization.
maintenance, and reproduction of bio-cultural capital was increasingly difficult to deny. This study traces literary strategies of denial that maximize the accumulation of cultural capital through “artlessly” altruistic, inter-species companionship, on the one hand, and openly selfish intra-species relations on the other, by separating dogmestic and domestic partners, the source and vehicle for power, through time and/or space.74

Hidden cultural labor or deep consciousness is notoriously difficult to trace especially when it involves the collaboration of a species not conversant in any human language. In order to account for the elusive flow of transposable capital among and between species and map the web of sustained and sustainable utilization, I will use a set methodologies, critical references, and concepts from the humanities and the historical sciences. My view of the world in which trusted signs of substance and status have gone to the dogs, most immediately rests on sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s understanding of culture — including human-animal practices — as “accumulated labor” or a long-term investment in the mind and the body of the bearer (such as dispositions, knowledge, or skills), which, under the right circumstances, easily transforms into economic or social capital.75 Principally motivated by what Marx described as the “worker’s will to self-preservation and propagation,” Bourdieu’s patterns of consumption and self-formation may drive the market but they depend, as Foucault suggests, at least in part, on the guidance, inspiration, and the “help of others” (humans and dogs); or, to use an economic metaphor, they bank on hegemony or the state.76

74 Space in the widest sense, including fictional and non-fictional spaces. Harriet Wilson, for example, uses her semi fictional autobiographical self’s canine connection to benefit the non-fictional reproduction of bio-cultural capital, aka, her son Wilson. See Chapter 2.
75 Bourdieu, “Forms of Capital,” 241; On Marx, see
“Help” comes in the form of cultural capital or its socio-biological equivalent – the meme, which, contrary to Stephen Jay Gould, who dismisses it as a “meaningless metaphor,” is useful not because “it sounds a bit like ‘gene’”, but because its origin (from Greek seme, sign) stresses its metaphoric character and discourages its misinterpretation as innate. 77 Memes or meme-complexes, such as inter-species affinity flow between organisms and the material culture they produce. They can enrich lives and are, at varying degrees of consciousness, appropriated, stored, and disseminated or displayed not for their own sake, as followers of the meme school would have it, but, as inter-disciplinary work in the humanities has shown, in hopes of social power, improved lives, and, by implication, biological advantage. 78 A meme complex’s success, then, is indirectly tied to the survival value individuals ascribe it and it becomes a manipulative trait in direct selection. 79 And without attending to the technicalities of either economics or socio-biology, I will discuss human-canine intimacy as a meme-complex and cultural capital and the dogmestic, the object of said


79 Direct benefit models of sexual selection, for example, show that mate choice may not depend on genotype but “could be determined entirely by environmentally generated differences among males [...] and the good fortune to acquire a resource preferred by the female.” See Göran Arnquist and Locke Rowe, Sexual Conflict (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 27.

intimacy, as a commodity of distinction, canine pet bank, or manipulative indicator trait of fitness, and prosthesis in the most basic, non-cyborgian sense.80

The power of the dog as a sign of hidden substance in American culture, then, rests, in part, on what might be considered a human weakness. Rather than creatures of reason, we remain, first and foremost, creatures of vision. As such, *Homo sapiens*, the ‘wisest’ or perhaps most arrogant of apes, is ill-equipped to perceive and, it follows, think and judge on the molecular level. Operating within the boundaries of our perceptive apparatus, drives, and dreams, our pre-ideological will to biopower targets the abstract in lieu of the concrete.81 Instead of nature and genes, we favor culture and memes, ontological metaphors or visible signs of what we believe to represent inherited scripts or substance.82 Unable to gauge authenticity in the performance of culture other than through ontological consistency, i.e. ritual or custom, we embrace “authentic” replicas of culture, as eagerly as, if not more eagerly than, true genetic relatives. After all, our species tends to select spouses and friends

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80 Katherine Ott, David Serlin, and Stephen Mihm, eds., *Artificial Parts, Practical Lives: Modern Histories of Prosthetics* (New York: NYU Press, 2002). See especially Katherine Ott, who distinguishes the material culture approach of *Artificial Parts* to prostheses from those of post-structuralist scholars such as Donna Haraway, author of *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Re-Invention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1995), who use them as metaphors for other things. See Katherine Ott, “The Sum of Its Parts: An Introduction to Modern Histories of Prosthetics,” in *Artificial Parts*, 1-44. While my argument rests on the metaphoric significance of dogs, I take this metaphor at its simplest, as a trusted indicator of intrinsic worth. As such, it becomes a sign of substance in sexual selection and functions very much along the lines of extended phenotypes. In this it overlaps with the central importance of material prostheses, which, Stephen Mihm contends, are designed first and foremost to restore markers of “character” – gaits, handshakes, etc. (Mihm, “A Limb Which Shall Be Presentable in Polite Society,” *Artificial Parts*, 287). Moreover, the difference between prostheses and assistance dogs, from everyday aid to social lubrication, is minimal.

81 Per Foucault; compare Nietzsche and Marx, quoted above.

82 While my larger argument disproves Dawkins’ idea of the gene as the “fundamental unit of selection,” I find the term meme useful. Dawkins’ 1976 concept of the meme derives from the Greek mimeme and describes “the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation.” Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, 11 and 192.
from among many different genotypes by emphasizing common interests and views. With respect to dominant groups, this quality invites subconscious and conscious imitation and becomes, to those who use it well, a potent tool to systemic inclusion, social standing, and biological survival.

Precisely because the matter of human-human and human-canine intimacy presents a promising, openly accessible, and, most importantly, readily available technology of power, dominant and subdominant writers from Catharine Maria Sedgwick to Cesar Millan have gainfully and prolifically employed it to solidify or challenge the symbolic order from above or, as Althusser once put it, “from below.” In doing so, these men and women have made the maintenance and management of domestic vis-à-vis dogmestic intimacy a principal theme in American literature and culture, since the representational crises of the 1830s encouraged the revival of cultural capital as a cash money alternative and inspired a paradigm shift in American investment strategies.

In telling the ‘less fantastic’ story of how and why canis lupus familiaris became America’s best friend, I support a rather sinister view of the market as placeless suffused by

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83 A mechanism that seems to be rooted in the prevention incest while strengthening larger con-specific bonds.
84 See Judith Shklar, who persuasively defines the struggle for citizenship as “a demand for inclusion in the polity, and effort to break down excusive barriers to recognition [as established by animal-practices for example], rather than an aspiration to civic participation.” J. Shklar, American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion (Boston: Harvard UP, 1995), 3.
85 Contrary to Jennifer Mason’s claim according to which “ideas about connectedness between humans and animals have not worked to the advantage of people of color.” Jennifer Mason, Civilized Creatures, 121.
utility and the "spirit of calculation." As self-preserving and self-serving as this deportment may seem, its beneficiaries are multiform. After all, in identifying kin qualities in other animals and extending its protection and partnership, the human species unwittingly creates space for and protects the unknown and humanly unknowable. In a crucial sense then, interspecies kinship and communication is as much a nostalgic discourse of restoration and redemption as it is one of pragmatic accommodation and shared survival. It is the larger goal of my work to show that the impossibility of reconciling intra-and inter-species intimacy - two separate, at times conflicting, yet strangely complementary strategies of securing survival in the meme and gene-pool - suspends elite and non-elite organisms in "lives that are never settled." In their continual interaction and interdependence, however, lies the promise of political power for the "tailwagging Scheherazade."

As all meme-complexes, this one starts with a sketch. The story of adult Americans' turn to canine stock for reproductive purposes, begins in the city most riveted by the

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88 Haraway, Primate Visions, 135. Shared survival or sustainability or sustainable utilization.

89 Following Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert, who, borrowing from Actor Network Theory (ANT), conceive of agency “not as an innate or static thing which an organism always possesses, but rather in a relational sense which sees agency emerging as a effect generated and performed in configurations of different materials ... This means that anything can potentially have the power to act, whether human or non-human, and the semiotic term ‘actant’ is used to refer to this symmetry of powers,” Philo and Wilbert, Animal Spaces, Beastly Places (New York: Routledge, 2000), 16-17. ANT’s conceptualization of agency as relational echoes Guattari’s and Deleuze’s idea of “rhizomatic interaction,” a concept that reverberates in Derrida. The rhizome, they explain in A Thousand Plateaus (1987), is a series of interdependent systems or ‘plateaus’ comprised of animal, textual, mechanical etc. The rhizome is never one but always a conflation of several system identities or agencies. Rhizomatic interaction Jacques Derrida hoped, would ultimately lead to a “zoosphere, the dream of an absolute hospitality and an infinite appropriation,” see Jacques Derrida, “The animal that therefore I am,” Critical Inquiry 28, 2 (2002): 405.
representational crisis of the 1830s – New York; and it was written by a woman who had removed to the city from New England in the mid-1820s to pursue a writing career that led her to become, Edgar Allen Poe lauded, one “of our literary pioneers.”

Although the sketch I have identified as introducing the nation’s most primitive *domestic* partner only features the inchoate form of a fleshly dog, it insists on the causal separation between interspecies affinity and successful intra-species courtship against the better dictums of plot and sentimental character attachment. For these reasons, I find it useful to start with New York writer Catharine Maria Sedgwick (1789-1867), who published her “most agreeable” novel, *The Linwoods; or Sixty Years Since in America*, in 1835.

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91 As Poe puts it in his 1835 review, “The Linwoods has few – indeed no pretensions to a connected plot of any kind.” “We dislike the death of Kisel – that is, we dislike it occurring so soon – in deed we see no necessity for killing him at all. His end is beautifully managed, but leaves a kind of uneasy and painful impression, which a judicious writer will be chary of exciting.” Edgar Allen Poe, “The Linwoods,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 2 (1835): 57, 58.

92 The editorial board of *The North American Review* lauded *The Linwoods* as more agreeable than preceding pieces, including *A New England Tale* (1822), *Redwood* (1824), *Hope Leslie* (1827), *Clarence* (1830), and *The Twin Lives of Edwin Robbins* (1832). *The North American Review* 42, 90 (Jan 1836): 160. Also see Edgar Allen Poe, “The Linwoods,” 57-59. Interestingly enough, only eight years later, Poe writes the story of impoverished aristocrat William Legrand, who, had it not been for the timely appearance of a Newfoundland named Wolf, “should have never become […] the possessor of the treasure.” Poe, “The Gold Bug,” 22. In Poe, the dog functions as an honest indicator of value. He makes visible the writing on the seemingly blank note that later leads Legrand to the buried treasure. And, upon unearthing the treasure, it is again the dog, whose bark betrays the “real” presence of the boon in the second rather than the first location. For an insightful discussion of Poe’s articulation of the unstable relationship between signs and substance, species (paper money and animal types) and specie (gold), see Marc Shell, *Money, Language, and Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 5-23. Shell notes the dog’s “key role” in footnote #17, but does not elaborate on its significance and/or meaning.
Sedgwick's *Linwoods* debuted Kisel, the faithful servant of her protagonist, Eliot Lee, as a "creatur" with "no brains," instinct-driven, and "[m]ade up of leavings."93 Lacking the crucial capacity to reason and restrain his baser feelings - most notably, joy, fear, and hunger - Kisel is "half a man," "with more characteristics of the brute than the human animal."94 Inarguably, "beyond mankind," Kisel behaves mostly like a dog. He is faithful and dedicated "to be ... [Eliot Lee's] dog, fetch, carry, [and] lay down at his feet" of his master.95 He is dependent, "can't live" with "[h]e [Eliot] gone" and receives food "like a petted dog from his hand".96 Left to his own devices, it is not atypical for Kisel to "zealously perform the office of groom," taking full advantage of the "nimbleness of his tongue," or to waste his time "absorbed in catching flies."97 Graced with "the dog's affection," mien, and occasional supernatural insights, Kisel solely lacks the looks. He awkwardly fills the physical form of a "crooked, ill-made" white man with sandy hair and gray eyes.98 Outwardly human and inwardly dog, Kisel more closely resembles a humanoid dog than a dog-like human and qualifies as the early national period's adult archetypal dogmestic.

Although Kisel was not cute and cuddly enough to secure himself "a very high place in [the] good graces" of all of the novel's contemporary reviewers he endeared himself to Edgar Allen Poe and the editorial board of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, who rejected his

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93 Sedgwick, *The Linwoods*, 59, 97, 57.
94 Ibid., 61, 57.
95 Ibid., 57, 58.
96 Ibid., 58, 156.
97 Ibid., 106, 122. Sedgwick describes Herbert Linwood realistically rendering Kisel's behavior to escape capture by loyalist forces.
98 Ibid., 202, 58 and 107.

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death as premature and unnecessary if not injudicious.\footnote{Who apparently gave the character so little credit that they misspell his name (Kizel instead of Kisel) throughout their review. “Art VII. – The Linwoods,” The North American Review 42, 90 (Jan. 1836): 160-195; Poe, “The Linwoods,” 58.} Seemingly trivial, Kisel plays a pivotal role in the accumulation, definition, display and transmission of the burgeoning nation's embodied capital epitomized by his master, pilgrim progeny Eliot Lee. Lee’s parentage, Sedgwick summarizes,

would not be deemed illustrious, according to any \textit{artificial} code; but graduated by\textit{ nature’s aristocracy}.... And he might claim what is now considered as the peculiar, the purest, the enduring, and in truth the only aristocracy of our own. He was a lineal descendant from one of the renowned pilgrim fathers, whose nobility, stamped in the \textit{principles that are regenerating mankind}, will be \textit{transmitted by their sons} on the Missouri and the Oregon, when the \textit{stars and garters of Europe have perished} and are forgotten.\footnote{Sedgwick, \textit{The Linwoods}, 25.}

But Kisel is not only instrumental in the display of embodied capital as legitimate competence or “nature’s aristocracy,” he is equally responsible for its transmission. After all, it is Kisel whose presence helps facilitate what the \textit{North American Review} calls, “three \textit{well assorted marriages}”: the reproductive partnership of model-Americans Elliot Lee and Isabella Linwood as well as the marriage of Isabella’s reformed brother Herbert to ‘Americanized’ (and, thus, self-improved) Englishwoman Anne Seton and, finally, the \textit{non-reproductive} match of the artificial, self-absorbed, and unmarketable Englishman Jasper Meredith and his equally unappealing, egotistically calculating, and bio-culturally poor Dutchwoman Helen Ruthven.\footnote{“Art VII. – The Linwoods,” 161. Emphasis mine.} Kisel drives the partnering plot. It is Kisel, who saves Eliot’s and Herbert’s lives
on the front; Kisel, who, agreeing to be impersonated, enables Herbert to join Eliot on his errand into the city, where Herbert meets Anne Seton and Eliot encounters Isabella.

Kisel’s presence and peregrinations, which account for the novels disconnected plot, are as intriguing as his absences and untimely demise. He spends just enough time with Eliot Lee to prove himself worthy of Isabella Linwood’s love and respect and just enough time with Isabella to make manifest her embodied wealth and matrimonial eligibility to Eliot. While Jasper Meredith is “amazed that a man of Lee’s common sense should have such an attendant,” Bella “honor[s] him for it.” Likewise it is Bella’s “intervention for my poor boy, Kisel, though God, in much mercy to him, willed it should be bootless” that earns Bella Eliot’s love. Upon fulfilling his function, Kisel disappears from the scene only to resurface when needed as the object of the display of republican virtue / worth. The fact that Kisel is never in the presence of both Eliot and Bella at once, and dies before their engagement, allows our hero and heroine to uphold the self-illusion that their seemingly selfless behavior toward the doglike dependent neither seeks nor results in reproductive reward. Denying Kisel’s utility and thereby asserting his authentic worth, Eliot declares, “Kisel is of course of no use to me.” By blurring Kisel’s exchange value through time, space, and words, Sedgwick is able to endow her republican hero with the bio-cultural capital and standing necessary to succeed on the matrimonial market and successfully transmit his embodied riches to the next generation.

Less than fifteen years later, New Englander Donald Grant Mitchell’s aka Ik Marvel’s best-selling novel Reveries of a Bachelor; or, a Book of the Heart (1850) developed the trope of the

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103 Sedgwick, The Linwoods, 122.
104 Ibid., 322-23.
105 Ibid., 76.
dogmestic into a national bestseller that would go through four editions between 1850 and
1883. MITCHELL’S negotiation of inter-species and intra-species intimacies relies on a series
of Rousseauvian reveries to remove his cultural-capital building bachelor from homely
hearth and his dogmestic partner, Carlo, and pursue the possibilities of reproductive
partnerships in past, present, and future. Balancing dream-state self-indulgence with every-
day disinterested dog ownership, the bachelor not only emerges unscathed from his
escapades, but transforms himself into a reason-reigned, self-disciplined, culturally rich and
befittingly reproductive member of society. MITCHELL, however, expands the possibilities of
the “pet-bank” by illustrating how fictional inter-species performance translates into
practical paper-species liquidity and how character turns into cash. The novel sold well. So
much so, that by 1855, the bachelor’s lucratively displayed embodied capital had earned him
enough money in royalties to marry, purchase a home in the affluent New Haven suburbs,
and turn himself into a “family man.”

Writing from the position of a much less privileged New Englander than MITCHELL,
Harriet E. Wilson’s Our Nig: Sketches from the Life of a Free Black (1859) appropriates and
deploys canine companionship as a provision of bio-cultural privilege and survival in a world
hierarchized by religious and racial rites. Wilson, as conversant in religious logic as she was
cognizant of the scientific findings of her day, used her fictional dogmestic Fido to lay claim to
a degree of intrinsic worth the religious and scientific communities denied her “type.”

Wilson’s self-formation leads to marriage and child. But while her semi-fictional

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106 Republished by popular demand in 1863, 1878, and 1883.
107 Maura D’Amore, “A Man’s Sense of Domesticity”: Donald Grant Mitchell’s Suburban
108 Harriet E. Wilson, Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black, in a Two Story White
House, North. Showing that Slavery’s Shadows Fall Even There. Boston: Rand and Avery, 1859.
autobiography, which appeared within months of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* (1859),
authoritatively challenged popular notions of the cultural deficiency and hereditary inferiority
of blacks, the text did not then fulfill its stated purpose, trade memes for money, and secure
the survival of her only son and heir to her accumulated assets. As unsuccessful as Wilson
may have been in liquefying her capital, save her son, and secure her biological survival, she
triumphed as a progenitor of modern-day memes.

In close readings of Bret Harte’s “Yellow Dog” (1894), Jack London’s *White Fang*
(1906), *Jerry of the Islands* (1915), and *Michael, Brother of Jerry* (1915), and Langston Hughes
“Little Dog” (1934), chapter three discusses the introduction of the “canine timeshare”
within the interlocking hierarchies of race and class as the turn of the century solution to the
dilemma of either dog or damsel. The canine timeshare scheme was the *literatis’* response
to increased selective pressures that demanded the demonstration of ongoing *dogmestic*
relations well into the reproductive stage. In sharing their canine companions,
responsibilities, and cultural rewards concomitantly, consecutively, or cooperatively authors
from Bret Harte to Jack London and Langston Hughes managed to separate inter- and intra-
species duties and maximize the cultural and biological gains individually drawn from both.

This middle stage of human-canine relations for individual genetic and memetic
profit, happiness, and immortality gave way to a deeper detachment of inter-species relations
from bio-genetic reproduction toward the late twentieth century. Driven by the Cold War,
which urged the transcendence of conventional, bio-genetically based forms of affiliation
such as nation, religion, race, and class to initiate individuals of all stripes into capitalist or

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communist culture, cause, and companionate family, American authors such as cult icon Harlan Ellison in “A Boy and His Dog” (1969) and Native American James Welch in The Death of Jim Loney (1979) turned to exclusively asexual or memetic means of reproduction via the exposure of tabula-rasa type heroes to the pedagogical influence of their sagacious dogmestics for the sake of survival at the group level.  

Their work represents the beginning of the most recent chapter of inter-species bonds and bio-political capital in America, namely, the turn to the fundamentally redefined yet fortified idea of the family as a non-nuclear reproductive unit that subsumes the responsibilities of capital accumulation and transmission previously carried out by pairs of two within bodies of four or more. This joint venture between sexually and asexually reproducing parties, illustrated in Louise Erdrich’s The Beet Queen (1986) relies on life-terms of divided labor to maximize the transmission of biological and cultural assets to the next generation, and, in the guise of disinterest, secure the survival of selves indefinitely.

To paint a comprehensive picture of the elusive, at times interrupted, and increasingly clandestine flow of capital within and between species and specie, fiction and reality, and memes and genes, this dissertation is chronologically, geographically, and thematically divided into three parts, each of which features close readings of the dogmestic metaphor in the works of dominant and at least one subdominant author. Part one covers the genesis of the bio-cultural “pet-bank” on the east coast between 1835 and 1859.  

112 In 1835, the federal charter of the SBUS expired. The nation witnessed what Henry William Seward later called the “explosion of the pet bank policy,” see William Henry Seward, quoted in “William Henry Seward,” The American Review 5, 6 (June 1850): 626. The
Collectively, Sedwick, Mitchell, and Wilson demonstrate how the careful and well-timed investment in the figure of the *dogmestic* translates into survival and economic value. Part two first turns to the turn of the century frontier before returning to the east coast of pre WWII America. It shows how authors of different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds maximized their cultural and biological investments by turning to the “timeshare dog.” Part three, focusing on postmodern literatures of the west and mid-west, detects an investment shift away from individual biological reproduction and pools *dogmestic* capital toward propagation at the group level.

Before I begin to tell the hidden and, perhaps, darker story of how *canis lupus familiaris* really became American man’s best friend, a word on terminology. Writing with a more substantial background in the liberal sciences than the laboratory, I use the nomenclature of my field and refer to anything occurring between species as inter-species and anything taking place between members of different species as intra-species rather than inter- and intra-specific respectively.

The adjectives inter- and intra-species most frequently appear in conjunction with concepts expressing intensifying degrees of connectedness, from simple companionship to intimacy and, finally, partnership. While a companion describes anyone who accompanies or associates with another within or across species lines for a set period of time, an intimate is a being with which one shares not only a history but a certain familiarity, affection, and year also saw the British Parliament’s passing of the “Cruelty to Animals Act.” This seminal act consolidated a series of anti animal cruelty laws passed in the late twenties and early thirties. See “Animal Rights History,” accessed August 1, 2011, [http://www.animalrightshistory.org/animal-rights-law/romantic-legislation/1835-uk-act-cruelty-to-animals.htm?zoom_highlight=animal+cruelty+act](http://www.animalrightshistory.org/animal-rights-law/romantic-legislation/1835-uk-act-cruelty-to-animals.htm?zoom_highlight=animal+cruelty+act).
assumed future. Intimacy involves, as cultural critic Lauren Berlant puts it, an "aspiration for a narrative about something shared, a story about oneself and others that will turn out in a particular way ... a desire for 'a life.'" This non-rational and never fully fathomable drive for a shared life and joint future between individuals may lead to more publicly acknowledged forms of partnership that are in many ways equivalent to, but lack the state sanction of, civil unions or marriage. Within our species these relations are called domestic partnerships. Between members of different species, more specifically, between humans and dogs, the subjects of this dissertation, they become, *dogmestic* partnerships.

What I call a *dogmestic*, it follows, is an inter-species intimate of the canine kind with whom the human has established a close, long-term relation with the acknowledged or unacknowledged objective of a better life, survival, and bio-cultural immortality. The meaning of the *dogmestic*, however, exceeds its fleshly form. In the intellectual and cultural milieu of the 1830s, the figure of the *dogmestic* begins to transform from practical companion into an ontological metaphor of embodied human capital or "intrinsic" worth. By virtue of facilitating the misrecognition of performances, cultural capital, memes, or dishonest indicators of genetic quality as innate capacity or honest indicators of genetic scripts, the *dogmestic* - if handled properly - serves as a relatively safe and stable long-term investment in bio-cultural preservation and propagation. Seemingly useless, the *dogmestic* functions as an

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115 Spanning the vocabularies used across disciplines for the same concept, this dissertation discusses the social sciences in greater depth. See especially the supplement and references provided on the emerging field of human-animal studies. For perspectives from the biological science side, see (sexual conflict) Göran Arnquist and Locke Rowe, *Sexual Conflict* (2005); (meme theory) Kate Distin, *The Selfish Meme* (2005); Susan Blackmore, *The Meme*
asset in human courtship and sexual selection in all likelihood quietly suggesting - to those around - his owner’s ability and willingness to selflessly contribute to the viability of his potential mate; an indicator that allows for quick unconscious judgment on mate search costs and investment hazards involved.116

In the sense of being among the least conspicuous and, hence, best defenders of “intrinsic” or embodied worth, the dogmestic emerges as Jacksonian America’s “Canine pet bank,” the antithesis of era’s partisan “pet-banks” or “Wildcat banks” which, according to Michael O’Malley “live in legend as the worst offenders against ‘genuine’ value.”117

My exploration of the intimate bond between United States Americans and their pet dogs as a vital investment in and cash alternative to openly economic capital and power follows the footsteps of cultural historian Donna Haraway, whose work on “lively capital” reads material animals as commodities of distinction with de facto use and exchange value. In studying the exchange rate of American inter-species and intra-species capital in an

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116 Göran Amquist and Locke Rowe, Sexual Conflict, 26-27; On indicator traits and mate search costs see J.D. Reynolds and M.R. Gross, Costs and Benefits of Female Mate Choice: Is there a Lek Paradox? American Naturalist 136: 230-243, quoted in Amquist and Rowe, Sexual Conflict, 26. After all, the mere presence of a dog can boost the courtship success of an anthrozoologist, measured by the total of phone numbers he received from 240 “randomly selected young women” from 10% to 30%, see Nicolas Gueguen and Serge Ciccotti, “Domestic Dogs as facilitators of social interaction: An evaluation of helping and courtship behaviors,” Anthrozoés 21: 339-349, quoted in Hal Herzog, Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat (New York: Harper, 2010), 67-68. Herein, the dog parallels the function of prostheses, whose success is measured not by function but by the wearer’s ability “to participate in courtship rituals, such as dancing or dating; [of which] the ultimate accomplishment is marriage” and reproduction. Aesthetic demands placed on prostheses often openly conflict with functional benefits. See Katherine Ott, David Serling, and Stephen Mihm, ed., Artificial Parts, 9.

increasingly competitive and placeless market, I hope to answer Haraway’s call for a more rigorous examination of “encounter value.”\textsuperscript{118}

To stay grounded, my discussion of dogmestics as a form of capital, or, short, canine capital, rests immediately on Pierre Bourdieu’s practical notion of the embodiment of biocultural assets as the intermingling of inherited properties, nature, or genes and acquired properties, nurture, or memes for the sake of self-transformation, matrimonial marketability, and survival.\textsuperscript{119} As a result, I make frequent use of the following terms: biological capital to refer to inherited, genotypical assets; cultural capital to designate learned knowledge and skills; and, lastly, bio-cultural or embodied capital, to designate assimilated cultural capital so intricately interwoven with the agent’s biological assets that dissection proves pointless.

The question of intended and, it follows, inauthentic use of non-economic capital for the purpose of self-improvement, bettered social standing, and enhanced marketability and reproduction (of assets) becomes more prominent in Michel Foucault’s theory of the “technologies of self.” While Foucault’s concept of the conscious abuse of illiquid capital is far from unproblematic, his understanding of self-improvement as “self-renunciation” and asceticism as a “condition for salvation” is more uniquely tailored to and, hence, enlightening for the analysis of capital exchange in the Christian or continental tradition.\textsuperscript{120}

Finally, as all questions about culture, capital, and power, the question of canine capital opens opportunity for capital redistribution. As cultural critic Michael Denning

\textsuperscript{118}The “placeless market” is the product of an era in which the “residual boundaries separating market from other forms of exchange were rapidly dissolving,” Jean-Christophe Agnew, \textit{Worlds Apart}, 202, x; On encounter value, see Haraway, \textit{When Species Meet}, 62.

\textsuperscript{119}Richard Dawins’ concept of the meme, coined from the Greek mimeme in 1976, describes the idea of the smallest “unit of cultural transmission, or […] unit of imitation,” Dawkins, \textit{The Selfish Gene}, 192.

\textsuperscript{120}Luther Martin and others, “Technologies of Self,” 18.
reminds us, “cultural forms have no necessary class allegiance;” and dogs, above all, are a readily accessible resource for people of all socio-economic stripes. As dogmestic matters affect an ever-growing number of bodies – that is, the polis, they become political. In calling canine capital “political,” as I begin to do in chapter three, I follow Foucault and “affirm the[re] ubiquity of relations of force and their immanence in the political field.” My task, it follows, is “disentangling […] this indefinite knot” while all the while admitting that “everything derives from the market economy, or from capitalist exploitation, or […] from the rottenness of our society” or, simply, as I propose, from humanity’s fierce animality.

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121 Michael Denning, *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds*, 112.

The Rise of the Canine Pet Bank

"Time and art may tinge and polish the wood, but the texture remains as nature formed it."

Opportunely published one year after “internal improvements” advocate Senator Henry Clay (1777- 1852) had publicly likened President Andrew Jackson to King George III and “the Whigs of the present day” to those who had “wisely” resisted the monarch’s destructive pursuit of money and power that led to the War of Independence, Sedgwick uses the revolutionary setting to condemn Jackson’s executive usurpation and identify the ability and willingness to restore inter-species relations with embodied capital, the patriotic cause, and a national future. Set in the early 1770s and ending with the revolutionary war on November 25th, 1783, The Linwoods follows the lives of four teenage friends from the onset of sexual maturity to marriage. The story centers on Herbert and Isabella Linwood, the children of loyalist patrician colonists living in New York City, who grow and change under the influence of their childhood friends: New England native Bessie Lee and the English-born aristocrat, Jasper Meredith.

Hailing from opposite ends of the “civilized” spectrum, Bessie and Jasper are much more “tinged” and “polished” than their first generation American friends who have yet to shape their own identity. Bessie, the daughter of a respectable New England farmer, “is of

123 Sedgwick, The Linwoods, 19.
124 Roughly two weeks after his April 14, 1834, senate speech, in which Clay compares Jackson to King George, the senator summarizes, “Except an enormous fabric of executive power for himself, the president has built up nothing, constructed nothing, and will leave no enduring monument of his administration. He goes for destruction, universal destruction; and it seems to be his greatest ambition to efface and obliterate every trace of the wisdom of his predecessors.” Jackson speech delivered in the US-Senate on April 30, 1834, in William Jennings Bryan, ed. The World’s Famous Orations (New York: Funk and Wagnallis, 1906), accessed July 1, 2011, http://www.bartleby.com/268/9/6.html; Naturverbundenheit in general and, as the trope develops, a human-canine connection in particular.
the finest mould.” Her “innate,” and hence innocent and authentic love for nature and the immaterial trumps her love of self and leaves her “well-spiced with [a] humanity” grounded in the female powers of the heart. Diametrically opposed to Bessie, Jasper Meredith, is of a baser cut. The product of “early training” in the artificial and elaborate production of an inauthentic British self, Meredith has become a flamboyant idolater of self and all things material, who lacks the self-discipline to forego his animal “tastes.” Suspended between the two extremes of selflessness and selfishness, in friendship and budding romantic attachment, are Herbert and Bella. Albeit “no hero,” Herbert is a “good, honest, natural fellow, compounded of body and spirit”, whose impulsive behavior continually causes trouble. Similar to her sibling, the beautiful Bella appears “born to empire” but lacks perfect self-control. As the heroine of the story who makes apt, long-term investment choices in immaterial capital, she has to improve the self and “learn that the strongest passions are reducible to the greatest obedience.”

The teenage bonds among these four rather different character-types are soon tested. Shortly after Herbert Linwood departs to join the rebel cause, Bella’s love interest, Meredith, selfishly betrays Herbert’s trust, Bella’s love, Bessie’s innocence and his own integrity, when he begins to flirt with Bessie without meaning to “offer serious homage” and a shared future. Bessie, the vulnerable “pet,” mentally succumbs to Jasper’s ambiguous advances; and, before long, her inability to reconcile his purported love for her with his known interest in her best friend, Bella, sends her spiraling into insanity. While Jasper’s elegance, phrases,
and looks appear increasingly studied, hollow, and expressive forms of illegitimate cultural capital deliberately displayed to distract from his “vicious vanity and selfishness”, a new star is rising on the horizon of Bella’s marital market.\textsuperscript{131} Eliot Lee, Bessie’s older brother and Sedgwick’s paragon of republican virtue, enters the scene; first as a dedicated, self-disciplined, and self-supporting student at Harvard and, shortly thereafter, as an American officer under Washington who “contracted for a glorious future, by the sacrifice of all animal and present indulgence.”\textsuperscript{132}

Not personally acquainted with Eliot, Bella learns about his admirable accomplishments and air of humanity primarily through Herbert, who joins Eliot and his caninesque companion Kisel at West Point before mid-winter of late 1779. When George Washington dispatches the “intrepid and prudent” Eliot and his Kisel to an errand into the occupied City of New York, Herbert impersonates Kisel in order to visit his family.\textsuperscript{133} Thanks to Kisel’s collaboration, Herbert succeeds in crossing the border undetected by Eliot and the guards. Revealing his true identity to Eliot only, Herbert as Kisel manages to have Eliot and Bella meet for the first time. His impetuousness, however, raises suspicion and nearly jeopardizes Eliot’s mission.

Thanks to the real Kisel’s faithful pursuit of his master into enemy territory and their successful reunion, Eliot is able to leave New York City unharmed while Herbert, the fake Kisel, becomes a prisoner of war. En route to West Point, Eliot, directs his energy and attention to the rescue of Bella’s aunt and cousins from the hands of marauders. Meanwhile, Herbert is granted daily release from prison to visit his family in the evenings. Transitioning

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 70, 65.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 131.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 104.
back and forth between the penitentiary and his home coincidentally allows Herbert to share intelligence of Kisel’s imprisonment with his sister Bella.134 While Bella’s attempt to affect the release of the imbecile fails, her efforts charm Eliot. Herbert’s partial imprisonment, however, not only allows him to promote the love life of his sister and best friend, but it also introduces him to his future wife Lady Anne Seaton, Jasper’s cousin from England.

As Herbert and Anne and Belle and Eliot are falling in love with each other, Bessie, whose unrequited love for Jasper has long released her childhood chum Herbert from his juvenile attachment to her, is on her way to New York City. Her “light of reason” not “quite extinct”, Bessie reaches the metropolis with the gracious aid of the Marquis de la Fayette, another early national icon of self-discipline and poise.135

Here she confronts Jasper, Belle, and as it happens Eliot, who, having hurried to the city to rescue his sister, arrives just in time to witness the sudden death of Kisel. After bidding farewell to his dogmestic partner, Eliot is able to embrace Bella, his domestic love, in the ensuing scene. As Bessie presents Bella, Eliot and Jasper with tokens of the latter’s love, Bella realizes that she has escaped the “thraldom” (sic) of unreasonable and, hence, unfounded love and stands free and “clear”.136 Training and “trained in the school of exertion, of self-denial, and self-subjection” and “unable to love [much less admit to love] one who did not sway my reason, who was not entitled to the homage of my best faculties”, it takes Bella and Eliot a few more pages to work up the nerve and confess their mutual feelings.137

134 Herein, Sedgwick departs from the British custom to place Continental officers under house arrest rather than imprison them.
135 Sedgwick, The Linwoods, 226.
136 Ibid., 302.
137 Ibid., 321.

Showing less restraint than Bella and Eliot, Herbert and Anne as well as Jasper, cut to the chase to secure the transmission of their bio-memetic riches. Rejected by Bella, Jasper rushes to propose to his economically prosperous cousin Anne, who, unbeknown to Jasper, has already committed herself to Herbert. Doubly disparaged and depreciated, Jasper has to make due with the least desirable mate. He marries the money-greedy and calculatingly egoistical opportunist Helen Ruthven while Herbert escapes prison to marry Anne. After three more years, Belle and Eliot finally enter the bonds of marriage. Belle does so with the “right motives and right feelings” ready to become “a parent, which God grant, … you deserve”, transmit her embodied capital to the next generation of Americans, and gain “happiness” and “immortality” in the process.\(^{138}\)

In the end, young America’s indirect and ‘artless’ investment in human-canine bonds as a visible token of an innate self-control, “the light […] of nature”, or legitimate – that is, embodied capital, trumps the old world’s direct and, hence, artificial investment in outward appearance as a safe means to capital, power, and survival.\(^{139}\) Bella and Elliot, most adept at the use of inter-species bonds for the building of bio-cultural capital, are not only likely to reproduce their internal and internalized riches, but they are also held responsible for the “cause of humanity and the advance of civilization.”\(^{140}\) Herbert and Anne, who cherish the inter-species bonds of others and are involved in nurturing them, promise to produce legitimate heirs. Only the openly ego-driven Jasper Meredith and Helen Ruthven, not only fail to advance but repeatedly reject inter-species bonds, and they are denied marital bliss.

\(^{138}\) Ibid., 360, 354, 360.
\(^{139}\) Ibid., 352.
\(^{140}\) Ibid., 360.
Penniless, prideless, and unhappy, this last "well assorted" couple, returns to England unlikely to reproduce the little they have left, even there.

Despite their drastically different fates, Eliot and Jasper, Bella and Herbert, and Bessie and Anne enter their teenage years on almost equal footing. Both Eliot and Jasper begin as aristocrats with "admirable tempers". Eliot is an aristocrat of nature, genes or "grace," whose disposition is a universally transposable "gift of heaven". Jasper, on the hand, is an aristocrat of culture, whose accumulated capital in the form of metallic money and manners has only limited, local applicability. It is the "result of early training" and inculcation that still stands to demonstrate what Sedgwick calls "sustained effort and generous sacrifice". 141

Before long, Eliot's and Jasper's paths diverge. Equally industrious and ambitious, they differ in their willingness to forego short-term self-satisfaction for the sake of long-term rewards. While Eliot proves perfectly willing to lead an ascetic lifestyle of hard work and rigorous study to finance his Harvard education and secure enduring assets, Jasper chooses a lighter load of "belles letters" at Cambridge that leaves him plenty of time to seize the day. Upon completing their education, Eliot invests in the long-term emotional and material well being of his biological kin. He becomes his mother's and sister's provider, "husband, father, brother, everything". 142 Jasper, on the other hand, remains not only the one provided for, but he also continues to value short-lived, material over enduring, immaterial goods. He celebrates the arrival of his mother's care-package as an "inestimable" box of fashionable knick-knacks, yet casually dismisses the love with which Bessie showers him in his leisure

141 Ibid., 26.
142 Ibid., 30.
time as "soon[-to-]dissipate" adulation. And, when called upon to perform his duty to his country with "no lure" and "no encouragement", Eliot self-sacrificially joins the rebel cause to contribute his share toward a "glorious future" while Jasper embraces immediate gratification and the status quo that sustains it.

But Eliot's willingness and predisposition to dominate, deprive and improve his bodily or animal self, Sedgwick suggests, exceeds even long-term personal reward. Motivated simply by a sense of kinship with or instinctive attraction to "the outward world" that leaves him eager to pour his innermost self into nature of all stripes, Sedgwick proposes, Eliot engages in acts of natural and authentic selflessness. These include, first and foremost, the seemingly disinterested protection of the "creatur" Kisel from the malice of local boys, who mock him for his otherness.

Animal in all but appearance, the helpless Kisel lacks the necessary sense and power to compute the flow of exchanges and repay social debt incurred. His random rather than goal-directed behavior and predominately "monosyllabic" or altogether non-verbal communication bespeak a feeble mind. He leaps, screams, croaks, twitches, grunts and whistles. Even his physical form, albeit human, denies Kisel an essential humanity by contemporary phrenological standards. Derived from the theories of the German and Viennese physicians Johann Spurzheim (1776-1832) and Franz Joseph Gall (1758-1828) and popularized by the Scotsman George Combe (1788-1858) and the New York brothers Orson Squires (1809-1887) and Lorenzo Niles (1811-1896) Fowler in the United States in 1843; Sedgwick, *The Unwoods*, 47.

144 Ibid., 74, 131.
145 As a form of "kindred spirit," he "instinctively infused his own nature into the outward world," 78.
146 Ibid., 57, 106, 270-71.
the 1830s, phrenology or cranioscopy was a pseudoscience that inferred from the structure of the human skull to various intellectual and personality aptitudes and traits. Phrenologists distinguished some thirty-seven faculties or "organs," each of which was marked by a particular bump in a particular place on the human skull. These organs included "amativeness," located on either side of the head near the base of the neck; "philoprogenitiveness," or, the love of offspring, taking up the area above the nape; "alimentiveness," one's appetite for food, the degree of which was discernible in the size and shape of the bone located behind the ears; and "self-esteem," fittingly taking up the area of the human fontanelle or soft spot. While the great majority of what phrenologists categorized as 'baser' organs are located on the back or bottom of the cranium, 'higher' human faculties such as benevolence, imitation, "concentrativeness," or wit were positioned near the top, crown, parietal ridge, temples, and forehead.

Sedgwick, who seems to have dabbled in the popular pseudoscience, describes Kisel as a creature with a "concave face" and a brow reduced "to the narrowest precincts." With much of the forehead, parietal ridge and temples missing and the underlying organs rudimentarily formed at best, Kisel's phrenological image matches his behavioral description. He lacks, among other traits, an understanding of language, tune, time, comparison, and causality. What Kisel wants in wits, he amply compensates for with "the impulse" of "veneration" and the adjacent faculty of "benevolence," an 'organ' that phrenologist George Combe, paraphrasing American physician Benjamin Rush (1745-1813), reflects "is

147 Ibid., 57.
148 Phrenology enjoyed such popularity that Henry Clay in his attack on Jackson was able to sarcastically reference it to express his great "regret that neither of them [Spurzheim or Gall] can examine the head of our illustrious chief magistrate [Andrew Jackson]," from Henry Clay's senate speech, April 30, 1834.
149 George Combe, Lectures on Phrenology (New York: Samuel Coleman, 1839), 194.

often active, too, in idiots” as well as in the lower animals, most notably dogs, horses, and cats.151 Unguided by the higher faculties of comparison, causality, and wit, benevolence, may seem unprofitable, but it also proves, as Rush puts it, “inoffensive.”151 Falling somewhere between idiot and dog, Kisel, who is willing but mentally unable to return Eliot’s favors, lingers in the margin as one who is of no “use to me [Eliot], neither does he give me much trouble.”152

Far from marginal, however, the figure of an intimate innocent canine companion is central to the construction of Eliot and later American heroes and heroines as uniquely selfless and bio-culturally rich precisely because they are ostensibly “go[o]d for nothing”.153 Forever faithful to and intimately acquainted with their human, on the one hand, and purportedly incorruptible and ignorant of symbiotic exchange on the other, they are cast as trustworthy character witnesses. In good times and bad or, as Kisel puts it, “everybody say I good in sickness”, they act as dogmestic partners bespeaking their humans’ humanity and becoming their provision for enduring capital, power, and survival.154

Potent allies in the display of self-control and essential humanity, the emerging dogmestic-partner figure proves equally powerful in illuminating the absence of embodied bio-cultural capital in those who reject or show no compassion for their canine presence. Jasper Meredith’s casual dismissal of Kisel, the “half idiot,” as worthless, for example, is indicative of his passionate “self-love” that makes it impossible for him to take interest in

151 Benjamin Rush, paraphrased and cited by Combe, Lectures on Phrenology, 193.
151 Combe, Lectures on Phrenology, 194.
152 Sedgwick, The Linwoods, 76.
153 Ibid., 59.
154 Symbiotic exchange or the basic rules of social contract a la Hobbes; Sedgwick, The Linwoods, 58. After all, it is Eliot’s willingness to make Kisel his companion and prevent his “withering” “like a vine” that shows that “if there was a virtue that had supremacy in his well-ordered character, it was humanity,” ibid., 59.

anything but that which guarantees “present selfish gratification.” His excessive focus on the immediately material and instant satisfaction are so strong that he is unable to even see past the “odd articles of Kisel’s odd apparel” and misrecognizes Herbert’s impersonation of the creature as Eliot’s weak-witted companion. Blind to Kisel’s actual persona (beyond the immediately material that defines him), Jasper’s recognition of the doglike companion’s transposable value as a token of self-denial, key to Bella’s heart, and means to his bio-cultural reproduction are out of the question. His faculty of reason and, logically, any attempt at self-regulation motivated by long-term goals and investments are overruled by instincts. As a being that mistakes his drives for thought, Jasper cannot comprehend why “a man of Lee’s common sense should have such an attendant.” And, when opportunity presents itself to save Kisel’s life and win Bella’s heart by persuading Sir Henry to facilitate Kisel’s release from jail, he withdraws.

Unlike Eliot, whose self-improved body is the product of supposedly innate assets, and Jasper, whose artificiality is the weightless result of botched early training, Herbert and Isabella Linwood have yet to undergo the arduous process of learning, inculcation, and embodiment of the proper, i.e., long-term, capital resulting from appropriate investment choices. As before, Kisel proves instrumental in the making of these young Americans. The unmatured Herbert Linwood of part one of the two-part novel is a good but undisciplined young man who is convinced that “a man can’t live on self-sacrifice.”

155 Ibid., 43.
156 Ibid., 122.
157 “Meredith who recognized some odd articles of Kisel’s odd apparel – [said] ‘he is a halt-idiot, who from his infancy attached himself to Eliot Lee, and clung to him as you have seen a snarl of drifted seaweed adhere to a rock. I am amazed that a man of Lee’s common sense should have such an attendant,” ibid., 122.
158 Ibid., 109.
introduced as "no hero, ... but a good, honest, natural fellow" with great potential. He is "compounded of body and spirit, each element bearing its due proportion in the composition." And, albeit lacking "the coolness" Americans of Eliot's and George Washington's ilk consider "essential in exigencies" and being "reckless, precipitate, [and] vivacious," he nevertheless proves "kind, ... whole-hearted ... [and] very dear" to his friends, family, and, as we shall see, the nation.\textsuperscript{159}

Even though young Herbert shares with Jasper the view that Eliot's "affection" for Kisel is "insanity," he drastically differs from his childhood friend in his modesty, respect, and tractability. Open to learning something new from one of the simplest of beings, Herbert entrusts Kisel with his life. His faith in Eliot's companion finds ample reward. Not only does Kisel live up to the challenge and, acting as scout, successfully and safely navigates Eliot, Herbert and a small group of volunteers through enemy territory, but he also teaches Herbert to master patiently lives' trials and "sloughs of despond." By the end of the enterprise, Herbert's "volatile blood" has "exhaled its vapor." In his inter-species interaction, Herbert has learned to restrain his emotions to a strong and steady flame, comparable to that of a "burning coal."\textsuperscript{160}

Before long, Herbert again turns to Kisel in matters of life and happiness. "Famishing from the faces and voices of home", Herbert persuades Kisel, who has just been dispatched to accompany Eliot on a secret mission into the city, to trade places with him and go disguised in his stead.\textsuperscript{161} Kisel consents. And, once more Kisel's cooperation leads to lessons in patience and self-discipline bound to improve Herbert's chances at future

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 70, 104, 135.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 102. Smoke, fire, and ashes proved a popular metaphor for male maturity levels in antebellum literature. Also see Ik Marvel's \textit{Reveries of a Bachelor} (1850) below.
\textsuperscript{161} Sedgwick, \textit{The Linwoods}, 109.
reproduction. Dressed as Kisel, Herbert crosses into enemy territory, reunites with his family, and reinstates himself in the good graces of his father. Within days of his return home, Herbert is arrested and imprisoned. However, his imprisonment proves to be a blessing rather than a curse. Confined during the day and free to visit his family at night, prison becomes a training wheel for patience. Herbert's increasingly self-disciplined response within the bounds of jail allows him the opportunity to meet his future wife, to protect Kisel, and to rise to new levels of inter-species selflessness and chivalry – or what Sedgwick seems to deem a uniquely American "insanity."\(^{162}\)

After all, two of America's founding heroes, whom Sedgwick chooses to include in her tale, embody said insanity or 'sense'. Like Eliot, who heavily invests in inter-species bonds with Kisel, the cameo appearances of continental army generals Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834) and Israel Putnam (1718-1790) show selfless compassion for those near or beyond the non-human. Lafayette, for example, altruistically pays for the safe passage into New York of Eliot's helpless and vulnerable "pet" sister, Bessie. Similarly, self-taught Connecticut folk hero, Israel Putnam, who assists Eliot in the rescue and return of Belle's niece from the hands of marauders, ruminates in his requiem of a horse, "Do you believe ... that the souls of these noble critters, that have thought, affection, memory – all that we have, save speech, will perish; and that low villain's live for ever? – I don't."\(^{163}\)

\(^{162}\) Ibid., 102. Jasper Meredith, "Doctor Kissam [...] used to say every man had his insanity. Eliot's appears in his affection for a half-witted follower, one Kisel; the oddest fellow in the world." Sedgwick contrasts the selfish and aristocratic ways of Meredith, the British aristocrat, with the selfless republican etiquette of Eliot Lee, the New England farmer and model American of her novel. Elsewhere, Sedgwick notes, "I have never seen better models and manners than in the home of a New England farmer." Sedgwick, Means and Ends, 149-150, quoted in Persons, Decline of American Gentility (New York: Columbia, 1973), 40, quoted in Halttunen, Confidence Men, 95.

\(^{163}\) Sedgwick, The Linwoods, 177.
Unable to help Kisell directly, Herbert dispatches his sister, for whom the rescue attempt of the “brute”-ish companion proves the last in a series of steps toward attaining absolute self-control and securing her reproductive future. Like Herbert, Isabella Linwood’s journey toward ‘becoming American’ begins with a mind that, albeit “peerless” is not “regularly trained.” She is prejudiced, proud, prone to favor the popular, and, like any other girl, desires to marry a man of “her heart,” who is “beautiful, and [economically] rich, and great” and, of course, English-born. Gradually, Isabella learns to “master her [animal] self.” In Sedgwick’s world, female self-mastery, however, substantially differs from that of males. Whereas Eliot, Jasper, and Herbert are expected to use their minds ostensibly master the selfish drive for and display of power, Isabella Linwood must mentally master the urge not to be the most powerful player but, rather, to partner with the most visibly powerful male (i.e. the beautiful, rich and great). Her task, in other words, is two-fold. First, she has to properly identify artificial and short-lived from authentic and enduring capital. Next, she has to carefully select and invest in the latter. This puts Isabella, whom Sedgwick conservatively categorizes as a “mere woman … [whose] mainspring of her mind’s movements was in her heart”, in a powerful position. She can pick, promote, and reinforce the building of interspecies bonds as a nationally shared, long-term investment strategy in bio-cultural ‘immortality’ and human happiness.

We boldly then advise our young friends … to eschew rich old roué bachelors, looking-out widowers with large fortunes, and idle, ignorant young heirs; and to imitate our heroine in trusting to the honourable resources of virtue and talent, and a joint stock

164 Ibid., 57, 109, 345.
165 Ibid., 16.
166 Ibid., 285.
167 Ibid., 345.
of industry and frugality, in a country that is sure to smile upon these qualities, and reward them.\footnote{Ibid., 360.}

However, learning to establish and trust inter-species bonds as an “honourable resource” of virtue (i.e. cultural or acquired capital) and talent (i.e. biological or innate capital defining the appropriating capacities of its bearer), takes time, effort and exposure. Luckily, much like the readers of Sedgwick’s highly pedagogical novel, Isabella is given ample opportunity to study her rivaling suitors interacting with their dependents from a distance. Not surprisingly, her correspondence course in inter-species bonds and the building of bio-cultural capital features Eliot Lee and Jasper Meredith in interaction with Eliot’s mindless attendant, Kisel, and his sister, Bessie Lee, who, in “her best days … had not the physical or mental power required to make her ‘mistress of herself.’”\footnote{Ibid., 319.}

From the letters she receives from reliable sources - her beloved brother, upright aunt and best friend Bessie - Eliot emerges as the all American hero, ever ready to deny himself for the sake of those less powerful than he is. He accepts the company of his brainless companion to protect him from withering away, uses his body to shield the “helpless animal” from a bayonet, and patiently tolerates his child-like shenanigans in the presence of his superiors.\footnote{Ibid., 134.} He risks his life for the rescue of Isabella’s cousin. And, in the end, he gently and tenderly cares for his sister and “represse[s] the indignation that was ready to burst on Meredith” for her sake.\footnote{Ibid., 302.} Unlike Eliot, who nurtures his relations with the “weak” (for hidden future benefits), Meredith abuses them. He mocks and rejects the “useless” Kisel, toys with Bessie’s feelings and future, and refuses to invest his time, energy,
and clout with the British troops to help his friends in need. Jasper’s hedonistically English attitude throws into sharp relief Eliot’s prototypically American temperance and care. Meredith’s motto—“might makes right”—feeds on the “fancy” that he has “chartered and transmitted right to all the good things” by title, estate, and economic capital, or “grace,” i.e., divine will. Eliot’s claim to fame, power, and “might,” on the other hand, Sedgwick suggests, solidly rests on ‘hard facts,’ or “wood” whose “texture remains as nature formed it”: the righteous bio-cultural predisposition to “works” or socially sustainable ‘self-restrained stewardship.’

As reason and, arguably calculation, begins to prevail over Bella’s immature impulses, Jasper falls in her disfavor. In her enlightened mind, his large fortune, ignorance, and arrogance no longer signal capital-building, -management, and -reproduction skills but ephemera—flashy handicaps in the matrimonial or bio-cultural reproductive market. In response to the lesson learned, Bella turns to Eliot, whose muted assets in the form of inter-species bonds promise a secure, lucrative, and, above all, reasonable long-term investment choice. She finds the “heartfelt constant affection” Eliot receives from “friends in all conditions” in general and from Kisel in particular increasingly elevating, honorable, and, of course, attractive. And, before long, Bella, who has always had a knack for “protecting and

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172 Ibid., 190-191, 191, 19; Isabella recapitulates, “[T]he time is coming when that base dogma [‘might makes right’] will be reversed, and right will make might. ... I simply mean, that the time is at hand when the truth that all men are made in the image of God, and therefore all have equal rights and equal duties, will not only be acknowledged in our prayers and churchyards, but will be the basis of government, and of public as well as of private intercourse,” ibid., 191. The idea of self-restrained stewardship, it seems, is a complicated if not oxymoronic one, akin to what O’ Sullivan would shortly after call “manifest destiny.”

173 Ibid., 122.
serving h[er] fellow beings” begins to emulate Eliot’s ways and nurture her inter-species bonds.\(^{174}\)

The opportunity to demonstrate her like-minded- or American-ness and prove herself worthy of Eliot’s love and accumulated capital arises when Herbert informs his sister of the imprisonment of Eliot’s faithful companion, Kisel. Bella springs into self-controlled action; and, even though her attempt to negotiate Kisel’s freedom in “an errand of mercy” fails, it earns her the recognition and love of Eliot Lee, who “should not love [her] if it [her love of freedom and independence of control] were not blended with all the tenderness and softness of your sex. … Have you thought me insensible to your intervention for my poor boy, Kisel, though God, in much mercy to him, willed it should be bootless?”\(^{175}\)

Isabella’s commonsensical investment choice in inter-species bonds proves fruitful. It leads to the type of marriage that, per Sedgwick, not only ensures “happiness,” but also “immortality” or, put less fantastically, the indefinite reproduction of human bio-cultural capital. Unlike Bella, Bessie’s poor risk management skills and her mindless obsession with Jasper destine her degeneration and doom. Too pure, “too spiritual”, and self-conscious to a fault, Bessie lacks the “self-rectifying power” necessary to “make her ‘mistress of herself’” and identify Jasper’s inauthenticity.\(^{176}\) As a result, she succumbs to his insincere advances. And, after he abandons her, she embarks on a monomaniacal pursuit into enemy territory that takes its mental, emotional, and physical toll, diminishes her embodied capital, and

\(^{174}\) Ibid., 176. Early on in the novel, we learn, that Bella uses the wish her father grants her in reward for her performance in the French classroom, to free her enslaved African American nurse-maid, Rose.

\(^{175}\) Ibid., 176, 322, emphases mine.

\(^{176}\) Ibid., 360, 43, 210, 319.
nearly costs her virginity and life.\textsuperscript{177} What little common sense she has left, she expends on the confession and rationalization of her love. Her confrontation with Jasper leaves Bessie "as weak and helpless as a new born infant, and apparently as unknowing of the world about her. ... Her senses appeared no longer to be the ministers of the mind. ... At times her friends despaired utterly, believing her mind was extinct."\textsuperscript{178} Driven into mental, emotional, and physical ruin by her investment in the wrong stock, Bessie has no reproductive future. Bewailing her lot, "the past, the past is all – there is no present, no future!", she returns, a "vacant casket", to New England to live out the remainder of her days in the care of her mother.\textsuperscript{179}

Naturverbundenheit, albeit a sign of self-restraint, is, as Bessie's destruction makes patently clear, no sure warrant of 'common sense.' In excess, her fate foreshadows, it leads not to the maximization and successful reproduction of bio-cultural capital, but to its depletion. Neither is Naturverbundenheit a prerequisite for the formation of practical judgment, self-discipline and inter-species care as the evolution of Lady Anne Seton from superficial, French-speaking, British urbanite to grounded, English speaking, American country and animal lover shows. Anne, Jasper Meredith's moneyed cousin, who arrives in America late in the novel, initially evinces "no enthusiasm for scenery ... had never lived in the country, [and] never been trained in nature's school".\textsuperscript{180} Endowed with a sound mind, the willingness to share her wealth, and perfectly aware that "fortune alone is perfectly impotent [and does not] secure happiness", Anne, like Bella, makes sober investment

\textsuperscript{177} For more on virginity as a form of bio-cultural capital, see Frado's mother, Meg, in Harriet Wilson's \textit{Our Nig} (1859), discussed in Chapter 2.
\textsuperscript{178} Sedgwick, \textit{The Linwoods}, 318.
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid., 210, 319.
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., 285.
choices. These include Herbert Linwood, who has already demonstrated a decent degree of inter-species compassion, self-restraint, and common sense, as a reproductive mate. Yet Anne not only invests in others, she also invests in and improves her self.

Her self-transformation involves the abandonment of unembodied, short-term capital and the building of long-term bonds through the restoration of inter-species inclinations. She forgoes her title, estate, extended family and, finally, her country when she climactically turns away from the British troops to seek refuge with the rebels in the North American wilderness. (Super)-naturally, her sacrifice is returned in kind as nature embraces and protects her from the hostile followers with wind, lighting, and thunder. However, Anne not only chooses to invest in, promote, and practice Naturverbundenheit in general, but she particularly attends to inter-species bonds. It is no coincidence that Anne’s closing words in the final paragraphs of the novel focus on the two primary sources for the accumulation and transmission of her bio-cultural capital: her husband, Eliot’s horse and Kisel, his former dog-like companion: “I see my husband! – and there, Belle, is Colonel Lee, on the very horse General Putnam gave him. I wish his poor man Kisel, of whom I have so often heard him speak, had lived to amble after him this day. ‘Poor fool!’ Eliot will always have ‘one part of his heart that’s sorry yet for thee’.”

In the end, Kisel not only aids in the accumulation of embodied capital, but, in doing so, also facilitates what the North American Review called three “well-assorted marriages”: First, the match between Sedgwick’s paragons of republican virtue, Eliot Lee and Isabella Linwood, who “deserve” to transmit their bio-cultural capital to the next generation and who would not have earned each other’s love and respect if it hadn’t been for their

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181 Ibid., 391.
182 Ibid., 358.
treatment of Kisel. Second, the slightly less exemplary but nevertheless solid and likely reproductive union of Herbert Linwood and Anne Seaton, who would not have met without Kisel's collaboration. And, third, the decidedly non-reproductive merger between the artificial, self-absorbed, and unmarketable Englishman, Jasper Meredith, and the equally dubious and bio-culturally poor Dutchwoman Helen Ruthven, who failed to rely on Kisel's match-making skills altogether.

Although Kisel is instrumental in the making of all three matches, he never appears in the company of both partners at once. Instead his presence and peregrinations, abrupt absences, and untimely demise are so carefully timed to avoid three-way contact that there seems to be method to the madness. Especially in light of the fact that considerable time, effort, and writing is spent imagining ways in which the cultural capital the hero and heroine carefully accumulate in interaction with the canine companion is properly relayed by a third party observer.

Bella and Eliot acknowledge that their treatment of Kisel is central of their mutual attraction. However, they do not witness their mutually appealing treatment of Kisel first hand even though the "brute" remains, up until his premature death, Eliot's almost constant companion. Coincidentally, Kisel surrenders his place to Herbert en route to a location "just above" Bella's house, only to take it back canis-ex-machina-style, to guarantee Eliot's smooth return only hours after the future couple has met. Again, he disappears abruptly and reemerges in Herbert's cellblock, where, isolated from Eliot, Isabella pays him a visit. Finally,

183 Ibid., 354.
184 After all, Eliot falls in love with Bella precisely because her love of freedom is "blended with the softness of your sex" which, he feels is evident in her bootless "intervention for my poor boy Kisel" (Ibid., 322). Likewise, it is Eliot's seemingly disinterested care for his attendant for which Bella "honor[s] him" (Ibid., 122).
185 Ibid., 110.

on the day of his (seemingly) unwarranted execution, Kisel descries Eliot among the spectators while Bella mourns his loss at home. Kisel dies presumably of exhaustion, moments later, at his baffled and bereft master's feet, the very day Bella and Eliot are reunited and declare their love.

A little less virtuous and, hence, less interested in inter-species intimacy than Bella and Eliot, Herbert spends just enough time with Kisel to improve (not perfect) his bio-cultural capital and get a shot at its transmission. After socializing with the creature for a significant amount of time at West Point, he trades the dogmestic for the domestic setting. With Kisel's aid, he returns home and is ushered into the arms of his future wife, Anne Seton, who will learn to love Kisel from afar. Again, it is the pre-reproductive presence and reproductive absence of the dog-figure that ensures a suitable match and allows for the maximization and successful transmission of bio-cultural capital.

Conversely, it is the pre-reproductive absence of the dog-figure as an agent of socialization, self-improvement and self-transformation that severely limits if not inhibits bio-cultural reproduction per se. Jasper Meredith's rash rejection of Kisel as worthless if not detrimental to the display of self-discipline, common sense, and humanity, causes the loss of his first and second-choice mates. Bella finds his arrogance dishonorable and alienating; and Anne, owing to Jasper's inability to see past surface matter and distinguish Kisel from his impersonation, meets and falls in love with Herbert. As a result of his underestimation of Kisel as a capital-building tool, he is left to marry Helen Ruthven, whose egoistical eye only spies those of immediate economic benefit to her and who believes herself to emerge as "one of the managers, and the prima donna of this drama of appearances."186 Unhappily

186 Ibid., 352.
married and eager to separate from the start, Jasper's and Helen's union shows no promise of bearing bio-cultural fruit.

As far as the building and careful managing of appearances and bio-cultural capital is concerned, however, it is not Helen and Jasper, but Eliot and Isabella, who are second to none. As products of a pen that carefully sequenced their behavior and reward - that is, the practice of inter-species intimacy and intra-species bio-cultural reproduction, to the point of causal disconnection, they emerge not as selfishly calculating creatures of instinct, but self-controlled beings of reason or humans. Difficulties arise when the basic maintenance plan of "humanity," featuring rudimentary forms of spatial and/or chronological separation between dogmestic and domestic partners no longer meets competitive demands. Advanced humanity and greater levels of embodied capital demand advanced exposure to and supposedly selfless interaction with one's canine companion. At the same time excessive investment in inter-species intimacy may reduce the chances of intra-species match-making and bonding and, ultimately, threaten the reproduction of accumulated riches altogether; or, it may expose the inter-species alliance's causal nature and void all accumulated cultural capital before reproduction can occur. It takes, as I have tried to show, greater degrees of 'coincidence' for Sedgwick's model Americans, Bella and Eliot, to maintain the appearance of artless interest in the fate of an "inferior" species, than it does for 'less exceptional' Americans of Herbert and Anne Linwood's (formerly Seton's) caliber.

Capitalizing on the back and forth between human and a dog-like dependent, Sedgwick's *Limwoods* became not only a national bestseller but also a trendsetter. Its subtly strategic use of human-dog relations for the building and management of distinctly national bio-cultural capital and character adumbrated the fleshly pet bank narrative which was
Lucratively appropriated, developed, popularized, and forwarded by a host of American authors to benefit their fictional and non-fictional lives.

A Bachelor’s Pet Bank

Among the first American authors to follow Sedgwick’s footsteps and weigh the transposable capital generated by adult inter-species bonds was Donald Grant Mitchell (1822-1908) aka Ik Marvel. Marvel’s rendition of the dog bank narrative in his best-selling novel, Reveries of a Bachelor; or, a Book of the Heart, not only earned him the respect, and praise of female and male readers across the nation, but also endowed him with the monetary revenue raised by over one million copies sold in no less than seven editions between 1850 and 1900.187 “Young people of that day,” William Dean Howells recollects, read “the gentle and kindly Ik Marvel … with a tender rapture.”188 Female fans commended Marvel for his “fine mind,” “noble heart”189 and for “get[ting] even a blind peep into that corner of my heart which, I thought, was hermetically sealed.”190 Even New England celibate Emily Dickinson, for whom marriage was out of the question, couldn’t help but admit that she found Marvel’s reveries “charming”.191 In fact, she was so enchanted with the narrative that she quite


190 Carrie to Ik Marvel, Urbana, Ohio, 30 Oct. 1851, Mitchell Papers, qtd. in Spiro, “Reading with a Tender Rapture,” 70.


possibly christened the canine companion she acquired within six months of the Reveries’ initial publication in the Southern Literary Messenger, in September of 1849, Carlo rather than Fido or Bello, in honor of the bachelor’s pet dog. Echoing the women, male fans deemed the novel a piece of “perennial power and charm” that proved a book of “my heart – an echo of my own reveries”. Mid-nineteenth women wanted him, and mid-nineteenth century men wanted to be him.

To the modern eye, Marvel’s truly marvelous popularity among his contemporaries is somewhat surprising. The story of a man and his dog, who after reflecting on his past and ruminating upon his present, concludes that the dog “will never do!” and that his imagined, reproducitively successful, and hetero-normative relationship “was real” is, of course, a persuasively didactic way to induce readers into the national narrative of bio-cultural reproduction. As appealing as Marvel’s type of national induction may have been to the average mid-nineteenth century reader, it nevertheless forces its audience to swallow a range of attitudes and actions that defy self-control and embodied capital and play into the negative notion of the bachelor as unquestionably un-American: self-absorbed, misogynistic, and, most importantly, un-reproductive. Much like Meredith Jasper, the villain of Sedgwick’s Linwoods, Marvel’s bachelor is a self-idolater whose excessive masculinity renders

192 Although it is possible that she named the dog after Carlo, the pointer mix belonging to Mr. Rivers of Jane Eyre, I’d like to believe that critics tend to attribute the name-giving to the latter because they underestimate the popularity of the Reveries and the personal impression the book made on Dickinson. Of course, she was most likely influenced by both. See for example Marty Rhodes Figley, “‘Brown Kisses’ and ‘Shaggy Feet’: How Carlo Illuminates Dickinson for Children,” The Emily Dickinson Journal 14, 2 (Fall 2005): 120-127.
193 J. Macdonald Oxley to Donald Grant Mitchell, Ottawa, Canada, 14 May 1886, Mitchell Papers and Dr. J. Holton to Donald Grant Mitchell, Kent, MD, 20 Feb. 1853, Mitchell Papers, quoted in Spiro, “Reading with a Tender Rapture,” 79.
194 For an insightful overview of these traits in early national literature, see Bryce Traister, “The Wandering Bachelor: Irving, Masculinity, and Authorship,” American Literature, 74, 1 (March 2002): 111-137.
him unable to withstand a flirt. He consumes one female after the other, indifferent to or ignorant of their feelings, intentions, or well-being. Simultaneously, his habit of roving the European and American matrimonial marketplace to consume rather than produce or provide, branded him effeminate, at a time when, “men’s productivity was conceptualized as the male counterpart, or compliment to, female domestic consumption,” brands him effeminate. A self-absorbed ego, suspended between the excessively masculine and feminine, and forced to engage in repeated acts of masturbation to satisfy his needs, Marvel’s bachelor neither fits the Victorian description of a good match nor that of a good mentor.195

So, whence the rake’s popularity? I suggest that Marvel’s bachelor draws the very cultural capital and normative power that - if not legitimizes - makes palatable his intra-species demeanor from his intimate bond with nature (Naturverbundenheit) made manifest by his disregard for all things material, his predilection for reveries, and, of course, the civilizing presence of his canine companions, Tray and Carlo.

Altogether, Marvel’s bachelor appears as an unimproved version of Sedgwick’s model American, Eliot Lee. Like Lee, he is instinctively drawn to nature, which not only serves as the background setting for the first and the last of the four reveries on domestic partnerships that make up Marvel’s Book of the Heart, but is also “very present” when he is spatially removed and “far away from” it.196 The opening reverie takes place in front of a


196 In the opening lines of the second reverie the bachelor informs his readers that he is “no longer in the country. The fields, trees, the brooks are far away from me, and yet they are
“little hearth so hot as to warm half the cellar below” in “a quiet farmhouse in the country” where the bachelor is able to “dispose” himself “for an evening of such sober and thoughtful quietude.” Framing the comparatively short, city-based second and third reveries, the last and longest meditation again occurs in nature, “in the quiet noon atmosphere upon that grassy knoll under the oaks”. Like Lee’s “sententious reverie”, which contemplates the odds of Isabella Linwood “mismating” with Jasper Meredith, the bachelor’s reveries ponder the pitfalls of hetero-normative matchmaking and possibilities for the perfect match. Both Lee’s and the bachelor’s spells of hetero-reproductive imaginings end as they begin, in innocence and human alienation – that is, with no one present but a dog. Lee arises to the whistle of his caninesque companion, Kisel. The bachelor awakes, “alone, with only my dog for company” or “whistling for Carlo”. Finally, each individual reverie grants its meditator a moment of instructive transcendence, reminiscent of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* (1782), which, as historian Joseph H. Lane aptly summarizes,

recounts ... those very moments in which the combination of alienation from human society, an openness to the stimuli of the natural world [here, a wood fire, a city grate, a cigar, and sublime nature], and a certain relinquishing of the purposes and the conceptual boundaries that separate our self from the natural world allowed him to recover the form that nature intended for him (and all human beings). In

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197 Mitchell, *Reveries*, 4-5.
198 Ibid., 212.
199 Sedgwick, *The Linwoods*, 152.
200 Sedgwick, *The Linwoods*, 152.
201 Sedgwick, *The Linwoods*, 152.
202 Donald G. Mitchell, *Reveries*, 23; also see, “whistling for Carlo, - as if it had been Tray-, I strolled over the bridge,” Mitchell, *Reveries*, 286.
short, he offers himself as a model of a return to Nature on a deeper level than the merely physical.\textsuperscript{201}

The bachelor's return to nature and 'the form that nature intended for him,' however, lacks Eliot Lee's Puritan poise. More reminiscent of Herbert Linwood than Lee, whom we meet already "trained in the school of exertion, or self-denial, and self-subjection" and who "not now nor ... ever [was] under the dominion of my imagination or my passions", the bachelor very much remains a creature of feeling, writing a book, not from the head but, as he freely admits, \textit{from the heart}.\textsuperscript{202} In between impatiently smashing windows, recklessly kicking holes into walls, and, without second thoughts, starting a fire in the basement of his cottage, he sweet-talks his canine companion, "pat[s] him kindly," and tosses him bones.\textsuperscript{203}

Albeit crude and servant to his animal instincts, the bachelor not only demonstrates an air of innocence, but he also has at his disposal a quite natural, simple, and sustainable sense of reason, self-restraint, and reciprocity that is evident from his intimate inter-species partnership with his dog. Applying his innocence and natural - rather than learned and ascetically practiced - common sense as a form of startup or working capital to his musings on marriage, the mollified reader quickly learns that the bachelor shuns the "duty" of domestic partnerships not for lack of will to share but for the arrangement's all-too-common and disheartening lack of love and reciprocal exchange. Before long, he fears, your wife, who "didn't positively hate you" at the time you got married, will be "talking of her fortune,"

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{201} Joseph H. Lane, "Reverie and the Return to Nature: Rousseau's Experience of Convergence," \textit{The Review of Politics} 68, 3 (Summer 2006): 476.
\item \textsuperscript{202} Sedgwick, \textit{The Linwoods}, 321.
\item \textsuperscript{203} "Carlo, said I, calling up my dog into the light; good fellow Carlo! And I patted him kindly; and he wagged his tail, and laid his nose across my knee, and looked wistfully up in my face; then strode away, turned to look again, and lay down to sleep," Mitchell, \textit{Reveries}, 17; "patting your glossy coat," ibid., 19; "Come to me again, Carlo, said I to my dog, and I patted him fondly once more," ibid., 24.
\end{enumerate}
while “the nurse is getting dinner; you are holding the baby; [and] Peggy is reading Bruyère.” 204

Inequality aside, the bachelor is just as fearful of being taken for the proverbial ride as he is of not being able to contribute his share and meet his mate’s needs. While he is perfectly prepared to care for his canine companion, pet his glossy coat, divide his crust and bring him bones, the loss of work, money, a home, and food, he worries, might cause declining health, sickness, and even the death of a human dependent. “You laugh – you sleep. But with a childless wife clinging to you in love and sorrow – what then?” 205

After all, foresight is better than hindsight, and in order to avoid the nagging question and potential pain, the bachelor carefully weighs the responsibilities and rewards, investment needs and returns of dogmestic alliances against potential domestic partnerships:

It is very little pleasure one takes in fondling brute favorites; but it is a pleasure that when it passes leaves no void. It is only a little alleviating redundance [sic] in your solitary heartlife, which, if lost, another can be supplied. But if your heart – not solitary, not quieting its humors with mere love of chase or dog, not repressing year after year its earnest yearnings after something better and more spiritual – has fairly

204 Ibid., 14, 11; Jean de la Bruyère (1645-96) was a French philosopher and seventeenth-century ‘cultural critic.’ He is famous for his witty and sarcastic aphorisms. Bruyère’s *The Characters, or Manners of the Age, with the Characters of Theophrastus*, published in 1688, criticizes the corrupting influence of cash capital on society and challenges the despotic power of cultural norms. In placing the text in Peggy’s hands, Mitchell accomplishes two goals. He introduces an authoritative fellow critic to his discussion of the cash economy’s demoralizing effects. Furthermore, he highlights the complicit power of social norms that allow the critical text to be read unfazed by its very perpetrators. Mitchell, *Reveries*, 16.

205 “His crust he divides with him and laughs,” ibid., 27, 31.
linked itself by bonds strong as life to another heart ["a second self"], is the casting
off easy then?206

The bachelor's first transcendental glimpse of nature's purported plan for his bio-cultural
future leaves him wavering. He is torn between the conviction that spiritually or intellectually
speaking, "it is not enough ... to like a dog" and the nagging question whether, "seeing him
wakeful and kind [and culturally stimulating], say, 'is it enough?'207 The bachelor's internal
debate is interesting for two reasons. First, it introduces the canine as a social mentor, an
agent of socialization, or a tool/technology of self in interaction with whom the human is
able to accumulate and embody the capital necessary to qualify for "something better" — that
is, hetero-reproductive relations. Second, it emphasizes his heartfelt interest in something or
someone spiritually better rather than sexually more satisfying. In doing so, the bachelor
sterilizes his "yearnings" and suggests that even his feelings and matters of the heart are
ultimately governed not by animal instincts but by his (decidedly human and reasonable)
mind. The use of inter-species bonds, in other words, allows the narrator to lay the
foundation for common sense, self-restraint, and the embodiment of cultural capital as an
enduring investment in his power and survival; assets of which, as James Thompson (1700-
1748), whom Mitchell quotes toward the end of the bachelor's first reverie, puts it, "naught
can me bereave."208

As any acquired trait, self-discipline, he cautions in his second reverie, requires
inculcation, assimilation, and perfection as its nemesis, "quick sensibility," is "a terrible

206 Ibid., 19, 24-25.
207 "Can you pet your dog, and seeing him wakeful and kind, say, 'is it enough?'" Ibid., 17, 31.
208 "Of fancy, reason, virtue, naught can me bereave." James Thompson, The Four Seasons;
Inheritance, and one that a strong man or woman will study to subdue". In the endeavor to perfect one's self-control beyond the building blocks attained in early inter-species interaction, books prove helpful. The bachelor recommends Cowper and Crabbe, Bolingbroke and Rouleufoucauld, as well as Milton and Isaiah. But theory demands practice; and, traits in training require trial and error.

It is precisely because reveries two and three revolve around "the consumption of young vapors," self-indulgence and "hurt[ful]" intra-species excess - that is, negative conditioning rather than patient positive reinforcement of self-controlled action from a faithful pet dog, that neither nature nor dogmestic partners partake. Both are set in the city. Both stimulate the "humors" and the "blood." And while one ends in masturbation, the

209 Ibid., 54.
210 William Cowper (1731-1800), English poet and famous vegetarian, who promoted the humane treatment of animals; George Crabbe (1754-1832), English poet, clergyman, and amateur naturalist whose poetry expresses sympathy for the plight of the hunted: Here his poor Bird, th' inhuman Cocker brings, Arms his hard heel, and clips his golden wings; With spicy food, th' impatient spirit feeds, And shouts and curses as the battle bleeds: Struck through the brain, deprived of both his eyes, The vanquish'd bird must combat till he dies; Must faintly peck at his victorious foe, And real and stagger at each feeble blow; When fall'n, the savage grasps his dabbled plumes, His blood-stain'd arms, for other deaths assumes; And dams the Craven-fowl, that lost his stake, And only bled and perish'd for his sake. Reverend George Crabbe, "The Parish Register," in Poems (London: J. Hatchard, 1807), 44. http://www.animalrightshistory.org/1785-1837-animal-rights/romantic-c/cra-george-crabbe/1807-parish-register.htm, accessed March 6, 2012; Henry of Bolingbroke or Henry the IV of England (1678-1751); Francois de la Rouleufoucauld (1613-1680), French Poet and philosopher; John Milton (1608-1674); the prophet Isaiah, also see Chapter 5.
211 Mitchell, Reveries, 49; "If your feelings are ... hurt, who is the wiser, or the worse, but you only?" Ibid., 55; Other than nature, granting the transcendent vision and, in that sense, being "very present." Ibid., 46.
212 Ibid., 66.
other features three different but equally unsuccessful matrimonial scenarios. Only after the bachelor has been reformed, learned his underlying lesson in self-discipline, and wishes to have gotten "married years ago" does nature signal her approval with the return of her ambassador, the "old hound slumbering on the rug." The improved self, restored to the 'form that nature intended', the text suggests, is a reverent and content human being in search of a 'gentle, beautiful, refined, generous and intelligent' partner. He values "a returning love" above all else and is willing to invest in it long term, "day by day and month by month."

In the fourth and final dream we join the bachelor in reevaluating his and what, in light of previous lessons, may have been "wiser" investment choices. Again, the story begins with the company of an old and noble dog, object of the protagonists' display of virtue and cultural capital-building actant extraordinaire. Tray, a "noble old fellow with shaggy hair and long ears ... and big paws," is a patient mentor to the ten-year-old Paul (the later bachelor) and his seven year-old cousin Isabella. He "never gets angry" and constructively dissuades his human companions' from their inconsiderate actions and lack of self-control toward him - the roughhousing, pulling of "silken ears", and forced rides - by pretending to bite before gently releasing his hold.

213 Ibid., 119.
214 Ibid., 80.
215 Ibid., 123.
216 Ibid., 55.
217 Ibid., 153.

But paradise is lost when Tray dies of a bullet wound. A neighbor falsely accuses Tray of attacking his sheep and shoots the self-composed creature in the shoulder. The children cry, “pat his head,” “sit down together by him on the floor,” “bring a rug for him,” and attempt to feed him milk and cake. Notwithstanding the abundant inter-species care he receives from his wards, which he elementarily trained in the social arts of self-control and concern for others, poor Tray passes on.

The children, however, move on up in the social hierarchy to the next rung of the ladder of cultural capital. Paul, of course, has the privilege to go to school, while Bella, his childhood love, stays behind. Like Sedgwick’s Isabella Linwood before her and Harriet Wilson’s Frado thereafter, Bella hones her skills in the seemingly selfless devotion to the welfare of non-kin in nursing her ailing father. In the meantime, Paul following “pride, self-indulgence, and an iron purpose” explores Europe and its women. In London, he meets the charming Carry. In Italy, he flirts with his landlady’s daughter Enrica. But all the while, he misses and dreams about his one true and abandoned love, Bella. By the time he returns to find her, Bella has died of exhaustion and her unrequited love for him. And, with her death he finds “every hope” of happiness and immortality in the form of offspring, “extinguished.”

As he roams his old neighborhood, he somewhat callously (or perhaps realistically) notices that just like the fruit on the early apple tree, his matrimonial opportunities “had gone by.” The “black-eyed girl, who sat behind the choir” - married; his schoolmates –

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218 Ibid., 153-54.
219 Frado nurses not her biological but her spiritual father, James Bellmont.
220 Mitchell, Reveries, 162.
221 Ibid., 220.
222 Ibid., 227.
married with children; his professors – retired or dead. But by the time he learns his lesson, Paul has indulged himself too long. Bewailing his wifelessness, childlessness, and friendlessness, he, once again, turns to speak to his dog, knowing that “it will never do!” With all hope for the successful reproduction and transmission of his accumulated biocultural capital lost, he vows, “I and my dog, and my books, and my pen – will battle it through bravely and leave enough for a tombstone.”

Ironically, it was the bachelor’s bond with Carlo sustained well into his adult life along with his expressed desire that his reverie of reproductive intra-species partnership be “real” that secured his bio-cultural survival and power not only beyond the tomb but also beyond the bounds of fiction. Similar to Sedgwick’s singles, the bachelor’s embrace of the “pet bank” highlights and builds his “intrinsic” worth and places him on the matrimonial market as a desirable diamond in the rough. Like Sedgwick, Mitchell manages to deny the dogmestic’s use value in courtship and prevent his canine commodity’s depreciation by separating behavior and reward through time and space. But whereas Sedgwick contains the flow of capital from cultural enrichment to biological benefit to the fictional sphere, Mitchell’s cultural investment moves beyond the bounds of material or book culture. The Bachelor earned him the hearts and Valentines of his female readers, a wife (Mary Pringle), in 1853, and enough economic capital to finance a suburban residence near New Haven, in 1855. Remembered as “scrupulously careful” in the transmission of his mores to his

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223 Ibid., 225.
224 Ibid., 254, 255, emphasis mine.
225 “I dreamed pleasant dreams that night; - for I dreamed that my Reverie was real,” ibid., 286.
226 For a detailed analysis of Marvel’s fan mail and Valentines, see Lisa Spiro, “Reading with a tender Rapture,” 57-93.
biological offspring as he was in the dissemination to the public, Mitchell managed to find happiness in cultural as well as biological immortality.227

Mongrels and the Management of “Feeble” Lives

You know what they say about us light-colored, what they write about us. That we’re degenerate, that we’re criminal – and their biggest bare-faced lie, that we can’t propagate our own stock. They hate us more than they do the blacks. For they’re never sure about us, they can’t place us.

Claude McKay, 1932

Deserted by kindred, disabled by failing health, I am forced to some experiment which shall aid me in maintaining myself and child without extinguishing this feeble life.

H.E. Wilson, 1859

In the late summer of 1859, an in all likelihood unassuming, single “light-colored” mother submitted the manuscript of her first and only book to the printing office of George Curtis Rand (1819-1878) and Avery, at No. 3 Cornhill, Boston, Massachusetts. She could have chosen Rand’s printing press as a suitable organ for her “experiment” for a number of reasons. Rand was known for his abolitionist proclivities. He had published the first edition of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) and frequently printed materials for the Boston Methodist Episcopal Church to which the young woman might have belonged. Rand openly maintained amicable relations with William Lloyd Garrison, whose weekly anti-slavery newspaper, *The Liberator*, was issued just a few blocks down the street; or, she might have simply sought Rand’s services because his advertisements promised printing “of every style and variety ... Executed in the most approved manner, at short notice, and on as reasonable terms as at any other place, for cash or approved credit” (see Figure 3.1).

Rand approved, and only eighteen days after the narrative had been copy-righted at the Clerk’s office of the District

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Court of Massachusetts, on August 18th, Harriet E. (Adams) Wilson’s *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black, in a Two Story White House, North. Showing that Slavery’s Shadows Fall even There* was published on September 5th, 1859.231

*Our Nig* thus became the first known autobiographical “novel” published by a “black” woman in the United States. Yet more, along with Maria F. dos Reis’ *Ursula* (1859), it became, as Henry Louis Gates reminds us in the introduction to the work’s 1983 reprint, one of the first two novels published by a black woman in any language (Gates, xiii).232 Notwithstanding the narrative’s seasonable import and the fact that Wilson distributed enough copies of the “modest” edition for one to find its way into William Lloyd Garrison Jr.’s library, her story was not sufficiently received by “the public” including the “colored brethren universally” to whom she so desperately and directly appealed for support to aid her “in maintaining myself and child without extinguishing this feeble life.”233

Harriet E. Wilson’s experiment failed. It did not within the first six months generate the economic capital necessary to retrieve from the Hillsborough County Poor Farm her seven and a half year-old son. At the time of publication, he had been in the state of New Hampshire’s care for three and a half years, costing the township/localities an average of

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231 H. E. Wilson, *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a free Black, in a Two-Story White House, North. Showing that Slavery’s Shadows Fall Even There.* Boston: Rand and Avery, 1859.
233 So far, Eric Gardner has been able to locate forty-two original copies of *Our Nig,* see Eric Gardner, “Of Bottles and Books: Reconsidering the Readers of Harriet Wilson’s *Our Nig,*” in *Harriet Wilson’s New England: Race, Writing, and Region* ed. Jerri Anne Boggis, Eve Allegra Raimona, and Barbara A. White (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2007), 3; in an exchange with Eric Gardner, Russel Maylone of the Northwestern University Library describes *Our Nig* as printed on “poor paper with a modest cloth binding – a plain edition in ever way” (Maylone qtd. in Gardner, “This Attempt,” 231); On Garrison’s library, see ibid., 234; Harriet Wilson, *Our Nig,* preface.
twenty dollars annually. Neither did it enable Wilson to recruit from afar the necessary medical assistance that might have secured her son’s survival; perhaps by isolating him from the approximately 150 inmates who lived on the county farm. On February 15th, 1860, George Mason Wilson, the “only son of H. E. Wilson, aged 7 yrs. and 8 mos.” died from “Fever.” Three and a half years after George’s untimely death and four years after copies of Our Nig had first reached the reading public, the thirty-six year-old widowed writer found herself forced to return to the hated Hillsborough County Farm, where her living presence was recorded one last time on the list of county paupers supported in 1863. Wilson’s readmission to the poor house makes it painfully clear that proceeds from her literary investment never did allow her to “maintain herself” let alone a dependent.

In the eyes of her contemporaries, Wilson’s fate in all likelihood played into the hands of the increasingly popular pseudoscientific notion of the reproductive deficiency and

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236 White, “Our Nig and the She Devil,” 26. In addition to the poor-house records, lists of “Letters remaining in the Post Office, Milford, Oct. 1, 1856” attest to Wilson’s departure from the area earlier on that year. These letters include one addressed to “Harriet Wilson” and one to “Harriet E. Wilson” (Farmer’s Cabinet 55, 11 [October 1856]: 3). They For a more detailed discussion of her whereabouts between February 1856, when Wilson departed from the area, leaving behind her three year-old son in the care of the Goffstown Poor House, and her return in 1863, please see: Henry Louis Gates, who locates one “Wilson, Harriet, widow” on Boston’s east side occupying “house 4 Webster avenue” between 1856 and 1863. The 1860 Federal Census further corroborates Gates’ findings provided Boston’s H.E. Wilson’s age was mistakenly recorded as “53” rather than 33. This error could have occurred during transcription. For a meticulously researched overview of Wilson’s life, see Barbara White, “Our Nig and the She-Devil,” 19-52. For alternative views that situate Wilson marketing hair tonic up until the New Hampshire Peddler Act (June 25, 1858) in the twenty-mile distant Manchester, NH, see Eric Gardner, “Of Bottles and Books,” 3-26. Also see the Foreman-Pitts (2005) edition of Harriet Wilson’s Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black and R.J. Ellis’ judicious response, “What Happened to Harriet E. Wilson, nee Adams? Transition 99 (2008): 162-168.

237 Harriet Wilson, Our Nig, preface.
hereditary inferiority of the “Mulatto or Hybrid as a degenerate, unnatural,” short-lived, and “less prolific” offspring of two distinct types or species [i.e. “Anglo-Saxon” and “Negro”] rather than “varieties” of one family of man; an idea, first discussed in an 1843 article entitled “The Mulatto Hybrid – probable extermination of the two races if the Whites and Blacks are allowed to intermarry,” written by the reputable southern physician, ethnologist, and slaveholder Josiah C. Nott, M.D. (1804-1873).238

While Wilson’s end may have substantiated Nott’s theory, her writing did not. As this chapter hopes to show, Wilson’s clever use of the dogmestic metaphor as both its object and subject within the intersecting hierarchies of race and religion allowed her to lay claim the very bio-cultural capital that Nott – using dogs as a creationist analogue for his strict theory of polygenesis – denied her ‘kind.’ In her hands, the very same species Nott uses to shield the nation from sweeping social changes becomes an aggressively democratic commodity of distinction.239

Born in Columbia, South Carolina, in 1804, Josiah Clark Nott returned to the south in 1833, after he had earned his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania, in 1827, and had spent some years travelling and studying natural history in France. He settled in Mobile, Alabama to practice medicine and study the role of mosquitoes as a vector in the


239 Dain, Hideous Monster, 231.
transmission of malaria and yellow fever prior to turning to matters of polygenesis and becoming one of the founders of the American School of Anthropology.  

Nott's interest in separate creation was catalyzed by a slew of scientific and sociological questions raised in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* in October of 1842. These questions pertained to the high mortality of “Mulattoes” and longevity of Africans and Caucasians of “unmixed extraction” in areas where “unfavorable social causes [did] not operate against them” and the social and legislative implications of these findings for Americans. After several months of study and observation, Nott speculated,

1st. That the mulattoes are intermediate in intelligence between the whites and blacks.
2d. That they are less capable of endurance and are shorter lived than the whites or blacks.
3d. That the mulatto women are particularly delicate – are subject to many chronic diseases, and especially derangement of the catamenia, prolapsus uteri, leucorrhoea, and other diseases peculiar to females.
4th. That the women are bad breeders and bad nurses – many of them do not conceive at all – most are subject to abortions, and a large portion of their children die at an early age.
5th. That the two sexes when they intermarry are less prolific, than when crossed on one of the parent stocks.
6th. That the above facts apply with more force to the Terceroons and Quarteroons than to Mulattoes.
7th. That during the severe epidemics of Yellow fever in Mobile in the years 1837, '39, and '42, I did not see a single individual attacked with this disease, who was in the remotest degree allied to the Negro race – I heard, however, of one or two cases in the practice of others.

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242 I.e. irregular menses, prolapsed uterus and what is better known as “the whites.”

243 J.C. Nott, “The Mulatto Hybrid,” 253-54. In *Types of Mankind* (1854), Nott recapitulates his statements with slight modifications as follows: 1. That mulattoes are the shortest lived of any class of the human race. 2. That mulattoes are intermediate in intelligence between the

Nott, however, was unable to scientifically substantiate his theory of the separate creation of distinct human types until he came upon the dog.244 Throughout the 1830s and 40s, canine competitions of miscellaneous sorts had been informally held in pubs, backyards and the country with ever-growing enthusiasm all over England and parts of the United States.245

Ideas of certain breed standards, although they were not formalized until Richard Brailsford’s Birmingham dog show, in 1859, were beginning to crystallize in the 1840s and prompted the heated search for origins. French anti-evolutionists Henri Marie Ducrotay de Blainville (1777-1850) and naturalist Samuel George Morton (1799-1851) incorporated thoughts on the origin and history of the dog in their works. Their research, however, was eclipsed by the meticulous effort of William Charles Linnaeus Martin (1798-1864), former curator of the Zoological Society of London, whose book-length study on The History of the Dog: Its Origin, Physical and Moral Characteristics and its Principal Varieties appeared, in 1845.246

blacks and the whites. 3. That they are less capable of undergoing fatigue and hardship than either the blacks or whites. 4. That the mulatto-women are particularly delicate, and subject to a variety of chronic diseases. That they are bad breeders, bad nurses, liable to abortions, and that their children generally die young. 5. That, when mulattoes intermarry they are less prolific than when crossed on the parent stocks. 6. That, when a Negro man married a white woman, the offspring partook more largely of the Negro type than when the reverse connection had effect. 7. That mulattoes, like Negroes, although unacclimated, enjoy extraordinary exemption from yellow-fever when brought to Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, or New Orleans” (Nott, Types, 373).

244 On Nott’s theory Dain, Hideous Monster, 233; on coming upon the dog, see J.C. Nott and George R. Gliddon, Types of Mankind: or, ethnological researches based upon the ancient monuments, paintings, sculptures and crania of races and upon their natural, geographical, and biblical history (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1854), 386.

245 Including bull-baiting, declared illegal by the British Animal Cruelty Act of 1835, sheep-herding and the hunt.


Inspired by H. M. D. de Blainville, S. G. Morton and, most fundamentally – at least with respect to the dogs – W.C.L. Martin, Josiah C. Nott along with G. R. Gliddon, published a revised and scientifically substantiated version of “The Mulatto Hybrid,” as part of their seminal work: The Types of Mankind; Or, Ethnological Researches, in 1854. Under the chapter title, “The Hybridity of Animals, Viewed in Connection with the Natural History of Mankind” (Chapter 12), Nott deploys dogs to decisively prove polygenesis or the plurality of mankind’s origin, mulatto hybridity, and a distinct hierarchy that even accommodates perfect inter-species prolificness. Canidae, he argues, are particularly suitable for the comparison between human and animal hybrids because, “zoologically speaking [they] occupy precisely the same position” as mankind.247 Dogs populate every continent and have been “loved by … honest men with their prattling children, universally since the Flood.”248 But more importantly, the essay elaborates, like the races of man different “primordial organic types”249 of dogs - ranging from Greyhounds, Mastiffs (C. Laniarius), and Turnspits (C. Vertagus) to Fox-dogs, Persian wild dogs, and African blood-hounds, Bulldogs (C. Molossus) – have been around more or less unchanged since well before Bishop Usher’s deluge – that is, since well before 2348 BCE.250 Without signs of evolution and climatic adaptation, Nott concludes with French zoologist Honoré Jacquinot (1815-1887) it is, “indubitable que les variétés du chien

222 page-study distinguished the Greyhound group, the Calabrian and Newfoundland group, the Spaniel races, the Hounds, the Mastiff race, and Terriers. It provided the majority of dog portraits used in Nott’s 1854 chapter.
247 Nott, Types, 392, 386.
248 Ibid., 381.
249 Ibid., 393.
250 Ibid., 389.
appartiennent à plusieurs types primitifs” (unquestionable that the different varieties of dogs belong to several primitive / primordial types).  

These types, when crossed, Nott continues, result either in “degenerate or deformed” mongrel hybrids, such as pugs and spaniels, or perfectly viable and prolific varieties depending on the parent generation’s degree of “affinity” and “repulsion”. In this distinction lay the key to maintaining all seven propositions made regarding the viability and prolificness of human hybrids in his 1843 article and, at the same time, accommodating news of the longevity and fecundity of mulatto hybrids in the South. “[P]rolificacy between two races of animals is no test of specific affiliation; and it therefore follows, as a corollary, that prolificacy among the different races of men carries with it no evidence of common origin.” While all species of men are what he calls ‘proximate’ – that is, able to produce fertile offspring inter se, only those similar in appearance, or, with an affinity toward each other can do so “perfectly.” Those whose distinct qualities give rise to repulsion, on the other hand, can only reproduce “imperfectly” and have the “tendency to become extinct when their hybrids are bred together”. The South, predominately settled by Europe’s ‘dark-skinned’ races (the French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese), Nott recapitulated, blended fruitfully with their black affinity type. The North, home to America’s more “widely separated” Anglo-Saxon stock, on the other hand, reproduced poorly with “the Negro” generating partially prolific stock at best. Extrapolating from mutts to Mulattoes, then, Nott managed to uphold the idea of separate creation and a distinct rather than shared humanity.

251 Jacquinot quoted in Nott, *Types*, 394, translation mine.
252 Nott, *Types*, 373, 394.
253 Ibid., 397.
254 Ibid.
Nott and Glidden's *Types of Mankind*, as Reverend John Bachman, one of its critics quips, "induced" readers "to take some notice of the above work, not so much from its intrinsic merits, as from the parade with which it has been ushered before the public, and the names of distinguished scientific men who have contributed papers to swell its importance." Nott and Glidden's work, which featured contributions from the late naturalists Samuel George Morton and Henry Stuart Patterson (? – 1853), the Swiss-American geologist Louis Agassiz (1807-1873), and William Usher, certainly was widely received, reviewed, discussed, and, of course, purchased. In fact, the book was reissued nine times within the following fifteen years to satisfy market demand.

While it has been duly noted that the first male African American intellectual to be "induced to take notice" and publicly respond to *Types* was no other than slavery fugitive and writer Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), Harriet E. Wilson's semi-autobiographical case study has not yet been critically linked to Nott and Gliddon's 738-page tome or the debate surrounding the origin of human species and mulatto hybridity. To a degree, this oversight is due to timing. After all, Douglass delivered his address, "The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered," before the literary society of Western Reserve College.

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256 The essence of Agassiz's seventeen pages had been, John Bachman nonchalantly illuminated his readers, not only published nine years prior, but had also found better expression since, in Agassiz's school book, "Principles of Zoology," (Bachman, *A Notice of the Types of Mankind*, 4); see for example the book-length response by John Bachman, D. D., *A Notice of the Types of Mankind with an Examination of the Charges Contained in the Biography of Dr. Morton, Published by Nott and Gliddon* (Charleston: James Williams and Gitsinger, 1854), accessed April 20, 2011, [http://www.archive.org/stream/noticeoftypesofm00bach#page/n0/mode/2up](http://www.archive.org/stream/noticeoftypesofm00bach#page/n0/mode/2up). The ninth edition of *Types*, printed in London by Trübner in "Royal 8 vo, cloth," appeared in 1868. Per Trübner's *American and Oriental Literary Record, A Monthly Register* (London: Trübner, August 31, 1868), 258.
immediately after the publication of *Types*, in July of 1854.\(^{257}\) Wilson’s book-length response, on the other hand, took five and a half years to complete. In part, it can be attributed to the absence of contemporary reviews that might elicit a connection between *Types* and *Our Nig*. And, lastly, it is sensible to assume that Wilson, in order to make her narrative commercially successful, would have worked with well-established, literary forms such as the sentimental novel or the captivity narrative.\(^{258}\) But, as Henry Louis Gates emphasizes elsewhere, it is useful to “allow the black tradition to speak for itself about its nature and various functions, rather than to read it, or analyze it, in terms of literary theories borrowed whole from other traditions, appropriated from without.”\(^{259}\) Although the construction of the *domestic* as an ontological metaphor for innate worth begins fifteen years earlier, I do not see Wilson as a ‘borrower’ or one who ‘merely’ appropriates an alternative capital-building investment strategy. Instead, she is one of the meme-complex’s foundational and most resourceful

\(^{257}\) Douglass’ “The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered,” attends to the assertion that blacks and whites are not only of distinct origin, but represent distinct species and, by implication, distinct humanities. Human dissimilarity, he maintains, comparing first the sundry tribes of Africa and, last, the Negro and the Irish, does not stem from diverse origins but originates in differences of “climate and habit” of which each individual is a product. Although Douglass’ opening paragraphs repeatedly assert that the “Negro is a Man” as powerful as any other, his closing words cautiously if not meekly appeal to his audience’s sense of self-disciplined compassion for the powerless for help. Reminiscent of nineteenth-century English social reformer Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), who defended the rights of animals by asking: “The question is not, ‘Can they reason?’ nor, ‘Can they talk?’ but ‘Can they suffer?’”, Douglass inquires: even if this were not so, “Does it follow that the Negro should be held in contempt? Does it follow, that to enslave and imbrute him is either just or wise? I think not. Human rights stand upon a common basis; and by all the reason that they are supported, maintained and defended for one variety of the human family, they are supported, maintained and defended for all the human family; because all mankind have the same wants, arising out of common nature. A diverse origin does not disprove common nature, nor does it disprove a united destiny. The essential characteristics of humanity are everywhere the same” (Douglass, “The Claims of the Negro,” 296, emphasis mine).


figures: the first female African American novelist to use companion dogs as aides in the accumulation and transmission of bio-political capital.

Wilson’s skilled combination of the emerging dog trope, popular science, and religion demonstrates keen scientific insight and great cultural sensitivity. Contrary to Nott, who made use of dogs to substantiate his belief in the disunity of the human species, Wilson deliberately uses them not only to show a humanity shared by black and white alike, but also to elucidate species unity. Wilson’s narrative or semi-autobiographical case study of the life of an abandoned “Mulatta,” daughter of an Anglo-Saxon mother and an African-American father, can be divided into two parts. Part one introduces the six-year old Alfrado as the dog-like object of the display of virtue through which her older host-siblings James, John and Jane Bellmont gain the social and symbolic capital and higher profile necessary to ready them for marriage and reproduction. Part two establishes Alfrado aka Frado, as the subject of the display of virtue who, in self-disciplined if not self-sacrificial interaction with the ‘objects’ in her care - from her dog, Fido, to her host-siblings and their spouses - accumulates the necessary cultural, social, and biological capital to ready herself for marriage, motherhood, and the reproduction of memes and genes to the next generation.

Frado’s increasingly virtuous and mutually profitable interplay with Fido, James, John, and Jane, is set against the backdrop of her statically abusive relationship with her

\[\text{\textsuperscript{260}}\text{As Frederick Douglass’ 1854 speech makes patently clear, shared humanity does not presupposed species unity: “A diverse origin does not disprove a common nature, nor does it disprove a united destiny. The essential characteristics of humanity are everywhere the same” (Douglass, “The Claims of the Negro,” 296). See discussion of Wilson’s chapter on “Varieties” of one species below. In doing so, Wilson lays claim to an equally powerful humanity; not one that depends on the recognition and compassion of a self-disciplined and hence physically, mentally, and morally superior (white) human being – from without, but one whose humanity arises from the innate ability to practice ascetic brotherly love – from within.}\]
female guardian, Mrs. B(ellmont), and "Mrs. B's" idolized teenage daughter and mirror image, Mary. Over the course of twelve years, the period of Frado's indenture, neither Mrs. B. nor Mary socially evolve or accumulate any non-economic capital. Instead, they are entrapped in a state of timeless and narcissistic immaturity that precludes the building of bonds with anything other than their bio-cultural self-same. Their focus on material riches - both biological (race) and economic-, in turn, leaves them without hope for long-term reproduction. Consequently, Mary is the only of the five Bellmont children not to marry and, true to her biblical namesake, remains a virgin for the remainder of her short life. When Mary finally does take leave of the Bellmont home in her early twenties, it is to move in with her older brother with whom she spends a year before succumbing to sudden illness. Mrs. B. is, in a sense, an equally poor reproducer or, long-term investor. Her focus on material riches, first and foremost hard capital (gold, specie, land), not only makes for an unhappy marriage with John Bellmont, Sr., but also 'costs' her two of her sons and both of her daughters - James and Mary die; John and Jane abandon her and her "riches." Only the eldest Bellmont heir remains biologically and culturally close to his mother and father.

While it takes James, John, and Jane time to acquire and embody the necessary cultural and symbolic capital to ready them for hereditary and cultural transmission, Frado's growth from object to subject is disproportionately longer and markedly more arduous. The difference can partially be attributed to the actors' ages. "The work of acquisition" and embodiment of capital, Bourdieu explains, "is work on oneself (self-improvement), and effort that presupposes a personal cost [...], an investment, above all of time, but also of that socially constituted form of libido ... with all the privation, renunciation, and sacrifice that it

may entail."261 James, John, and Jane being at least ten years Frado’s senior and have invested considerable time and effort into the process of self-improvement prior to her arrival. The embodiment of capital, however, is tied to more than time and dedication. Bourdieu is careful to clarify that cultural capital “cannot be accumulated beyond the appropriating capacities of an individual agent. . . . It thus manages to combine the prestige of innate property with the merits of acquisition.”262 In order to prove her prestige and show that the “appropriating capacities” of her autobiographical self equal if not surpass those of her Caucasian counterparts, Wilson systematically rebuts Nott’s seven observations regarding the physical and intellectual inferiority of the mulatto hybrid. With each biological rebuttal [and exhibition of her “innate property”], the heroine gains access to ever-greater capacities of cultural and spiritual learning [or “merits of acquisition”], moral perfection and immortality.263 Her moral progress with its emphasis on the practical duties of Christian life, in turn, closely parallels the Letters of John (quoted in the epilogue) in spirit, and the Epistle of his older brother, James, in structure. James and John, the ‘sons of thunder’ (Mark 3:17), were not only Jesus’ closest disciples, but also the most adamant proponents of the doctrine of justification by works rather than by faith alone. Advocating the use of signs of brotherly love as a means to weed out “false prophets,” James and John’s gospel was uniquely suited for Wilson’s purposes. Namely, the indictment of self-proclaimed professors of religion and abolitionists in two story white houses, North, for blatant hypocrisy. And given her use of

262 Ibid., 245.
263 These strategies are reminiscent of what Foucault describes as ‘technologies of self’, tools that “permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality,” see Martin, Gutman and Hutton, Technologies of the self, 18.
the apostles’ epistles as models for her autobiography, it comes to no surprise that the
names, James and John aka “Jack,” reappear in her cast of characters.

Despite the cultural riches she so carefully accrued and managed for the sake of bio-
cultural reproduction, her investments fail to benefit her son. Perhaps political power eluded
her because cultural capital in its embodied state, Bourdieu maintains, cannot instantaneously
be transformed into economic capital. Perhaps her appeal fell on dead ears because Wilson
laid claim to more power than her contemporaries were willing to grant a light-colored,
widowed woman. Or, her endeavor might have been unsuccessful precisely because she was
economically poor and unable to care for her dying “stock;” a condition that might have
frightened potential supporters because it seemed to confirm the belief in the bio-cultural
inferiority of free ‘mulattoes.’

In taking a closer look at dogs as clandestine agents in the public and, hence political
management of bio-cultural capital in Our Nig, this chapter hopes to illuminate the fictional
elements of Wilson’s scientifically and biblically inspired case study. My analysis may raise as
many questions as it answers: Did Wilson imagine an Anglo-Saxon mother for Frado in
order to disprove circulating hybridity theories? And, if so, could Foreman and Pitts be
correct in identifying her own mother as the black twenty-seven year-old Margaret Ann
Smith, who died after an argument with her black lover in Portsmouth, NH in March of
1830? Alternatively, is a name given to suggest a northern European heritage a reliable clue
to Wilson’s mother’s ethnic background? My reading of Our Nig as semi-autobiographical
may take away from the text’s value as a rare eyewitness account of the life of a mid-
nineteenth-century free black woman in New England. In doing so, however, I point to its
complexity as exceptional piece of antebellum scientific and popular fiction, written by the
first African American female willing and able to engage in the scientific debate surrounding the origin of species. And, it begins to show how the doings of one dog-show planning “dog-breaker” participating in the larger development of canine companion capital from thousands of miles away, might have affected the life of one such unassuming, light-colored widow as Harriet E. Adams Wilson.

From Object to Subject – Unbecoming Animal

How many pure, innocent children not only inherit a wicked heart of their own, claiming life-long scrutiny and restraint, but are heirs also of parental disgrace and calumny, from which only long years of patient endurance in paths of rectitude can disencumber them. 264

The building of bio-political capital and social identity never starts from scratch; least of all, when revolutionary changes challenge natural hierarchies - such as those that attended the market revolution - most make one want to believe that it does. 265 As my opening chapter discussing Sedgwick’s turn to inter-species affinity as an ontological metaphor for innate capital, talent and self-restraint Mitchell’s tenacious embrace of fleshly dogs has tried to show, “[T]he more the official transmission of capital is prevented or hindered, the more the effects of the clandestine circulation of capital in the form of cultural capital become determinant in the reproduction of social structure.” 266 And, the more critical the ‘clandestine circulation of capital’ in the individuals’ struggle for survival becomes, the further its historical reach and the more careful its construction.

264 Wilson, Our Nig, 6-7.
265 A unique exception to this rule is James Welch’s The Death of Jim Loney (1979), discussed in Chapter Five. Welch deliberately strips his protagonist of all economic, social, and cultural capital to allow for a new, indoctrination-free beginning.
266 Bourdieu, “Forms of Capital,” 254.
Harriet E. Wilson begins her autobiographical ‘investment portfolio’ with an assiduous assessment of her parental assets or bio-cultural heritage. Unlike the overwhelming majority of “ordinary mulattoes” – the progeny of white, yet “dark-skinned,” southern European fathers and “Negresses,” her narrative self (Alfrado) is “the offspring of a Negro man and a white woman,” a connection “so rare, in this country,” Nott admits in 1854, “that I have never personally encountered an example.” 267 But just as Frado is no ordinary Mulatta, her mother is no ordinary “white” woman. As her name implies and her appearance confirms, Mag Smith, fair-skinned and straight-haired, is of pure Anglo-Saxon stock. As such, she belongs, as far as Nott and his supporters are concerned, to the very class of whites who should be ‘imperfectly prolific’ with members of the black “species” of men; the type of mankind that best describes Alfrado’s future father, the dark skinned “African,” Jim. 268

Against Nott’s odds, the couple, whose blood types should be ‘repulsed’ by, rather than ‘attracted’ to, readily mingle with each other, and conceive two healthy children, one of each sex. 269 The siblings’ nascence, disposition, and appearance radically challenges three of Nott’s seven propositions regarding the biological inferiority of the mulatto “hybrid” from the very beginning. 270 According to Wilson’s autobiographical word, Anglo-African mulattoes are not, as Nott claims under ‘proposition 1’, the “shortest-lived of any class of the human race.” Both, boy and girl, outlive Mag Smith’s first child, the illegitimate daughter of an Anglo-Saxon union, who dies in its infancy. Neither is Frado, the female Mulatta of

267 Nott, Types, 402, 374, 401.
268 Ibid., 397; Wilson, Our Nig, 9-11.
269 See Nott’s discussion of “affinity” vs. “repulsion” among the races of men, “which caused their blood to mingle more or less perfectly” (Nott, Types, 373).
270 That is, any offspring of Anglo Saxon and African parents.

“particularly delicate” disposition, as Nott suggests under ‘Proposition 4.’ On the contrary, Frado, much like her brother, is full of vigor and ‘infantile pranks’.271 She emerges as a “wild, frolicky thing,” “a hard” and hardheaded one, who does “jest as she’s a mind to.”272 Lastly, their appearance does not partake “more largely of the Negro type” as Nott surmises, is the case when “a Negro man married a white woman” (see Proposition 6). Frado is a “beautiful mulatto, with long, curly black hair, [“thin, ruby lips”] and handsome, roguish eyes, sparkling with exuberance and spirit almost beyond restraint.”273 Along with her “yeller” skin, her overall appearance more closely resembles what Nott would describe as “intermediate character” between black and white.274

Having started to chip away at the total negative value of her biological assets, Wilson extrapolates from her biological to her bio-cultural heritage. If black and white blood types, far from engaging in internecine warfare, harmoniously mingle if not thrive within bodies, she contends, they can do so without or, rather, in-between bodies. To illustrate this assertion and further undermine ethnological claims regarding the physical, moral and intellectual inferiority of ‘hybrids,’ Wilson uses the very comforts of her inter-racial family’s existence, disposition, and nurtured appearance. Healthy, harmonious and happy, Frado’s family, reminiscent of Stowe’s George and Eliza, is a living contradiction to what French anthropologist Eugene Bodichon, M.D. (1810-1885), Morton, and Nott considered the

271 Wilson, Our Nig, 14.
272 Ibid., 18-19.
273 Ibid., 126, 17.
274 Wilson, Our Nig, 21.
African race's mortal destiny. Reflecting on the reasons for the destruction of the human races in general and the African race in particular, Bodichon writes,

It is because their social state is a perpetual strife against humanity. [...] They maintain polygamy, slavery, and submit women to labor incompatible with female organization. In the eyes of theology they are lost men; in the eyes of morality vicious men; in the eyes of humanitarian economy they are non-producers. From their origin they have not recognized, and they still refuse to recognize, a supreme law imposed by the Almighty; viz.: the obligation of labor.

Untrue to the supposed bio-cultural calling of his race, Frado's father, Jim, devotedly maintains a monogamous relationship with Mag, his beloved, white wife. He toils to provide her with "a comfortable dwelling, diet, and apparel" and goes to great lengths to shelter her from menial labor and the associated suffering. Driven by love for and good-will toward one 'not of his race' on the one hand, and an ascetic work-ethic on the other, Jim generates

276 Parce que leur etat social est un attentat perpetuel contre l'humanite. [...] Ils maintiennent la polygamie, l'esclavage et soumettent la femme a des travaux que ne comporte pas son organization. Aux yeux de la theologie, ils sont des hommes dechus; aux yeux de la morale, des hommes vicieux; aux yeux de l'economie humanitaire, des improducteurs. Parce qu'en outré, d'apres leur origine, ils ont meconnu et refusent encore de reconnaître une loi supreme imposée par Dieu, savoir, l'obligation du travail." Bodichon, *Etudes sur L'Algerie*, 148.
278 Conditions that, per consensus of the mid-nineteenth century Boston medical community, prolonged life. See for example John Bell, M.D., *On Regimen and Longevity, comprising materials alimentaris, national dietetic usages, and the influence of civilization on health and the duration of life* (Philadelphia: Haswell and Johnson, 1842), 8 vols. 420 pages. Also see Josiah Gilbert Holland, whom Wilson quotes in the epigraph to *Our Nig*. Among other works, Holland aka Timothy Titcombe penned an advice manual *To Young People, Single and Married* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1858) in which he gives "brotherly counsel ... upon subjects [such as diet, dress and behavioral etiquette] which have immediate practical bearing upon their life and destiny" (vii).
the necessary economic capital for "her sustenance long after he was able to do so" and, after prolonged illness, succumbs to consumption.279

Jim's self-sacrificial dedication to – or laborious, long-term investment in - the welfare of his white wife and mulatto children, however, transmutes into a great deal more than the money he makes as a hooper of barrels. Jim is a producer in all aspects of what Morton calls the 'humanitary economy' - a term that might describe the sum of efforts geared toward the economic, cultural, and social enrichment of human lives. He willingly works for money, on improving himself, and on chivalrously extending what historian Gail Bederman has identified as "Victorian manliness" to kindred bodies across the color line.280

In doing so, the figure of Jim begins to dissolve the preconceived connection between black blood and selfish lust and white blood and reasonable restraint. He lays claim to greater, biocultural capital. And, he introduces the possibility of environmental causes for the "African race's mortal destiny" – an idea that not only drives the remainder of the novel, but that is also corroborated by none other than Charles Darwin, who would reiterate it in the first edition of *Origin of Species* (November, 1859), published two months after *Our Nig* (September, 1859).

Much more subtle than the vindication of her father's biological assets and 'merits of acquisition' is Wilson's use of the Epistles of James and John as blueprints for the building and management of parental and later personal bio-cultural capital in her formation narrative. The Epistles of James and John were written by the sons of Zebedee between 40-50 CE and 80-100 CE respectively. Like their father, James and his younger brother John

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279 Wilson, *Our Nig*, 15.

were fishermen - first of fish and, later, of people. The brothers, who are always mentioned together, were among Jesus' first and most loyal recruits. Persistent if not truculent in the pursuit of the word, logos, or Jesus, they are said to have earned the epithet Sons of Thunder (Boanerges, Mark 3:17) during their lifetime and the seats to the right and left of Jesus after death. The letters of James and John are unique in their emphasis on works or the everyday display of virtue over faith without visible signs. But while James composedly addresses the twelve tribes in general and provides his readers with practical advice on how to build and maintain brotherly love and social capital, John specifically exhorts those (Gnostics) who, feeling blessed with divine grace and knowledge, believe themselves superior to the rest. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ," thunders John using a vocabulary that, due to its simplicity has been likened to that of a child, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.


282 John identifies Jesus with the word seeing him as the one closest to the Christian God and, logically, the one who can interpret him most accurately; Matt 2:21 ff. "She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom."

283 That is those, who "have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (John 2:20).

284 See Kurt Hennig, trans., Jersalemer Bibellexicon (Neuhausen: Haenssler, 1990), 428. English edition by Geoffrey Wigoder and Shimon Gibson, eds, The Illustrated Dictionary and Concordance of the Bible (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Publishing House, 1986). Like the Letter of John, Wilson's style is simple yet deep. Although Wilson kept her narrative stylistically simple, her intended audience was not necessarily restricted to children; although most of
Even before Wilson first introduces the reader to her beloved indenture-brothers, the gentle but resolute James and John Bellmont, in chapter three, the literary influence of their biblical namesakes becomes clear. Like the Epistle of James which begins with a brief salutation to the twelve tribes by one who has embraced “divers temptations,” met and risen above them with patience, faith and divinely inspired wisdom (James 1:2-8), the narrator of Our Nig introduces herself to the “public”-including her “colored brethren universally”- as the “pure, innocent” heir of “a wicked heart [ ... ,] parental disgrace and calumny, from which only long years of patient endurance in paths of rectitude [could] disencumber” her.285

Having demonstrated that hope is justified and survival through hard cultural labor, patient self-restraint, and faith possible, both, epistle and narrative, explain who could be the subject of said trials and temptations and at what cost. Everyone from her of “low degree” (James 1: 9) to the “rich man” (James 1:11-12), the Apostle James alerts, may succumb to temptation. And, he forewarns, “when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1: 15). Likewise, Frado’s mother, the economically poor “Mag Smith” surrenders the “priceless gem” of virginity to a rich, arrogant, and deceiving upper class “trophy”-hunter. The fruits of her fall are literal (biological) and social death: “Her offspring “came unwelcomed, and before its nativity numbered weeks, it passed from earth, ascending to a purer, better life.” In addition to experiencing her child’s demise, Mag is ostracized. She tries to escape her former friends’ hostility and disdain by “seeking asylum among strangers.”286 But word of her fall follows

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285 Wilson, Our Nig, 6-7.
286 Ibid., 6.
her footsteps and she is forced to return home. To escape the “foul tongues” of those whose “religion is vain”, Mag withdraws into the wilderness.\(^{287}\) She moves into a hovel outside “Singleton” (most likely Milford, NH, as Barbara White as convincingly demonstrated) and maintains minimal contact with locals in her capacity as a washer-woman.\(^ {288}\)

What follows is a warning to those who pass judgment on the fallen. James insists, “my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (James 1: 19-20); and, echoing her beloved disciple, Wilson admonishes,

> Alas, how fearful are we to be the first in extending a helping hand to those who stagger in the mires of infamy; to speak the first words of hope and warning to those emerging into the sunlight of morality! Who can tell what numbers, advancing just far enough to hear a cold welcome and join in the reserved converse of professed reformers, disappointed, disheartened, have chosen to dwell in unclean places, rather than encounter these ‘holier-than-thou’ of the great brotherhood of man!\(^{289}\)

Among those who fulfill the “royal law” of loving “thy neighbor as thyself” (James 2: 8) is Frado’s future father, Jim – also a variant of James. The “kind-hearted African” altruistically visits the lonely and increasingly melancholy Mag in her hermitage to check on her health and need of fuel on a regular basis. Jim epitomizes the “doer of the work” (James 1: 25) who “visit[s] the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and […] who keep[s] himself unspotted

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\(^{287}\) Wilson, *Our Nig*, 7 followed by a quote from James: “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain” (James 1: 26).


\(^{289}\) Wilson, *Our Nig*, 7.
from the world” (James 1: 27). He is the one who, unlike Mag’s white kin, recognizes a “sister ... naked and destitute of daily food” (James 2:15) and, upon marriage, goes on to provide her with a “comfortable dwelling, diet and apparel”.\(^{291}\) As his indiscriminate love across the color line makes patently clear, he has no “respect to persons” (James 2: 9). And, in the end, Jim gives his life to ensure the survival of Mag and their children. Jim’s boundless love and self-sacrifice are not only what the Epistle of James identifies as forms of faith and justification, but they are also timeless signs of self-restraint that translate into (western) cultural capital and - within the paradigm of white asceticism and black lust - “whiteness.”

“I’s black outside, I know, but I’s got a white heart inside. Which you rather have, a black heart in a white skin, or a white heart in a black one?” Jim asks of Mag as he proposes to get married. Mag’s choice like that of her biblical model Rahab the harlot, whom James uses to illustrate “justification by works” at the end of chapter 2 of his epistle (James 2:25), is fraught with tragedy.\(^{291}\) She can embrace the foreign “messenger,” prove her brotherly love and faith and secure her long-term survival but lose the few existing social ties and capital; after all, Rahab’s house was spared by invading troops because she betrayed her kin. Or, she can reject the messenger, secure immediate survival by strengthening existing social ties, and perish in economic poverty shortly after. Mag chooses long-term survival at the loss of group membership. In doing so, she “descended another step down the ladder of infamy.”\(^{292}\)

Wilson’s careful construction of parental bio-cultural capital blurs the biological divide and facilitates focus on environmental influences. Frado’s father’s biological assets,

\(^{290}\) Ibid., 14.
\(^{291}\) The tragic hero or heroine becomes innocently guilty, “schuldllos schuldig werden,” a condition that Robert Heilman has perhaps better defined as experiencing “defeat in victory and victory in defeat.” In other words, the concept describes a state in which “guilt and innocence coexist” (Heilman quoted in Sollors, *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both*, 243).
\(^{292}\) Wilson, *Our Nig*, 13.
negligible if not negative in the eyes of her contemporaries as they may have been, are not only partially vindicated by his knack for self-restraint but also amply compensated for by his enduring will to acquire cultural wealth. Frado’s mother, on the other hand, albeit biologically rich, has exhausted her cultural capital and, along with it, her social standing and connections. Driven into utmost poverty and unable to think and act beyond economic necessity, Mag is unable to uphold the illusion of disinterestedness in any realm of life. As a result, she is forever barred from recouping other forms of capital long lost.

Heir to all assets of this legal yet unpopular union between a virtuous black father and a fallen white mother, Frado emerges with more than “a wicked heart” and “parental disgrace and calumny”. Albeit deserted by her mother Mag in “A New Home for Me” with nothing but the dress on her body, Frado’s story begins with a six-year old Mulatta with substantial bio-cultural potential. “[R]eal handsome and bright, and not very black, either”, Frado embarks on a twelve-year journey that will take her from what Mrs. B. perceives as an animal object utterly “incapable of elevation” to a human subject feeling herself quite “capable of elevation”.

During the first half of her journey toward personhood and power, subject of chapters three through five, Frado appears as the dog-like object of a series of life-lessons in vicious and virtuous behaviors echoing the “dos” and “don’ts” of the Epistle of James. Her teachers in matters of vice are the “self-willed, haughty, undisciplined, arbitrary and severe ... scold,” Mrs. B. and her idolized daughter Mary, who “resembled her [mother] in

293 Biological appropriating capacities.
294 Wilson, Our Nig, 6.
295 Ibid., 25, 30, 124.
disposition and manners". Models in matters of virtue, on the other hand, are the
Bellmont sons, the ethereal James and his more grounded, younger brother “John, or Jack,
as he was familiarly called”, their “invalid daughter”, Jane, and the local school-teacher, Miss
Marsh. Suspended in between vice and virtue are the kind and humane but disempowered
Mr. Bellmont and his spinster sister Abby. Often unwilling to assert themselves against the
despotic Mrs. B., they fail to consistently follow the most central dictum of applied
Christianity per James and John; namely, selfless/self-controlled devotion to the welfare of
others. Together the Bellmonts and Miss Marsh illustrate the ethical lessons of the Epistle of
James from the Sins of the Tongue (3:1-12) to Wisdom from Above and Below (3:13-18) and
Friendship with the World equals Enmity with God (4:1-10). In the process, James, Jack, and
Jane (and, by implication, Miss Marsh although Wilson does not follow her story further)
accrue the cultural or symbolic capital necessary for state-sanctioned partnership and the
transmission or reproduction of embodied riches of the genetic and memetic kind. Their
wicked sister Mary, on the other hand, “self-willed, domineering […] mad” and thus a
stranger to reasonable, self-directing behavior, lacks the control and cultural capital required
for reproduction and, albeit at marriageable age, remains companionless.

Shortly after Frado’s surrender into the care of the Bellmonts, residents of a “two
story white house, North,” it is quickly determined that the six year-old was “intentionally

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296 Wilson, Our Nig, 25.
297 Ibid.
298 Sectional division of the Epistle of James per Kurt Henning / Geoffrey Wigoder,
Jerusalemer Bibel Lexicon, 386.
299 Wilson, Our Nig, 33; Mary has “just glided into her teens” (27) when the six-year old
Frado arrives at the Bellmont home. By the end of chapter five, Frado is 14, which makes
Mary 21.
thrust upon their family” by her mother.\textsuperscript{301} The child’s abandonment elicits a range of conflicting responses: from Mr. B’s silent sympathy to Jack’s open embrace; and, from Jane’s apparent indifference to Mary’s vociferous rejection of one “I don’t want ... near me.”\textsuperscript{301} In the end, it is the matriarch’s calculated acceptance that determines the ward’s future.

Reminiscent of the way in which Harriet Beecher Stowe’s devout Christian Miss Ophelia approaches “that thing” Topsy as one would “a black spider” less the “benevolent designs toward it”, Mrs. B. assigns the child to kennel-like quarters, an “unfinished chamber over the kitchen” so dark and small, Jack jibes, that “the child would soon outgrow” it.\textsuperscript{302} With words that threaten to have Frado live outdoors instead - “When she does, she’ll outgrow the house” - Mrs. B. coldly dismisses Jack’s remark and begins to think of ways in which she can utilize the new addition to the household to do her bidding.\textsuperscript{303} At the tender age of six, Frado takes on the workload of a full-grown woman. She is to feed the chickens, drive the cows, wash the dishes, and carry wood under the punishment of “whipping” and at the reward of a daily “bowl of skimmed milk, with brown bread crusts”.\textsuperscript{304} The little she is fed, she is forced to devour standing like a dog, in the kitchen, and in less than ten minutes time.\textsuperscript{305}

\textsuperscript{300} Wilson, Our Nig, 26.
\textsuperscript{301} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{302} Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin (New York: Norton, 1994): 207-208; Wilson, Our Nig, 27.
\textsuperscript{303} Ibid., 28.
\textsuperscript{304} Ibid., 29.
As if Mrs. B’s dehumanizing treatment of Frado as a dog would not suffice to show that the professed professor of religion “hath not works” (James 2:17) and, per James, lacks faith, Wilson makes the biblical parallel all the more explicit by having Mrs. B. pepper her frequent whippings, “blows”, and applications of the “rawhide” to the child’s body, with “words that burn.” The image of burning words, or the burning tongue, again, appears in the Epistle of James in a section scholars have identified as Sins of the Tongue (James 3:1-12):

“Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things,” James 3: 5 insists,

“Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!” The Epistle of James continues,

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. ... the tongue can no man tame; it is unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Therewith we bless God, ... and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. (James 3:1-10).

In comparing Mrs. B’s tongue to one that is unbridled, “untamed” and, logically, uncivilized, Wilson accomplishes several things. She challenges B.’s cultural capital or status as a refined and superior being in “perfect” (James 3:2) control of her animal drives. She threatens the sanctity of the social group or body of which she is a member and which condones if not supports her hypocritical behavior. And she begins to empower the object of her curses,

Press, 2003), 429. Jennifer Mason echoes Cole’s sentiments as she briefly points to Frado’s friendship with Fido as anticipating Chestnutt’s use of “the dog’s indifference to [...] racial hierarchy” (130) in “The Bouquet” (1899) as a sign of canine moral superiority to racist humans.

Wilson, Our Nig, 30.
Frado, who, the quote insinuates to those familiar with its context, is “made after the similitude of God” (James 3:9).

As the story of the beatings, blows, burning words, and vice continues, Frado is given first glimpses of life-lessons in virtuous behavior or Wisdom from Above (along with those from) Below (James 3:13-18), reverberating in the treatment she receives from Jack, to a lesser degree from the invalid Jane, on occasion, Mr. B., and during her years of schooling, from Miss Marsh. Frado has lived with the Bellmonts for over a year, given up all hope of reunification with her mother, been made a “permanent member of the family,” and has had her “labors ... multiplied”, when the subject of her educational future arises. Naturally, Mrs. B. and her idolized daughter, Mary, disbelieve in the “utility of attempting to educate people of color.”

Jack and Jane, on the other hand, are in favor of sending Frado, who, at this point, has become “Our Nig,” to school. To everyone’s surprise and Mary’s violent objection, Mr. B, traditionally more of a follower than a decider, determines that Frado will attend school for a period of three years.

Much to Mary’s delight, her classmates ridicule, ostracize, and “lower” Nig on the first day of school. “‘See that nigger,’ shouted one. ‘Look! look!’ cried another. ‘I won’t play with her,’ said one little girl. ‘Nor I neither,’ replied another.” Her teacher, the kind Miss Marsh, rescues Frado from further denigration through her white peers. Similar to Jack, who demonstrated his brotherly love by taking the orphaned child by the hand to guide her into her bedroom, Miss Marsh’s holding hands with Frado as she leads her into the classroom is

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307 Ibid.
308 Or, as the Epistle of James puts it, a friend of the world. See discussion below.
309 Wilson, Our Nig, 31.
meant to be read as a gesture of “works” and faith; a sign of what the Epistle of James calls “wisdom that is from above.”

Who is a wise man endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom [...] the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. (James 3: 13, 17-18)

True to the biblical model Wilson appropriated for the purposes of the novel, Miss Marsh follows up with a “good conversation” – a lesson in ethics so close to the original in spirit that it is worth quoting it in full:

She reminded them [the students] of their duties to the poor and friendless; their cowardice in attacking a young innocent child; referred them to one who looks not on outward appearances, but on the heart. ‘She looks like a good girl’; I think I shall love her, so lay aside all prejudice, and vie with each other in shewing kindness and good-will to one who seems different from you,’ were the closing remarks of the kind lady. Those kind words! The most agreeable sounds which ever meets the ear of sorrowing, grieving childhood. Example rendered her words efficacious.310

Beloved and given the opportunity of an equal that simply “seems different”, Frado thrives culturally and socially. She learns to read and write. And, she gains valuable social capital by her “winning ways and yielding points of controversy” that bespeak her growing self-control in interaction with her classmates.311

310 Ibid., 32.
311 Ibid., 33.
Jealous of Frado's social success, the "self-willed" and, logically, poorly connected Mary, seeks to settle the score by using "physical force 'to subdue her,' to 'keep her down.'" Passion-induced force, much like "bitter envying and strife in your hearts" the Epistle of James relates, is "wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (James 3:14-16). Again, James' claims ring true in the novel where Mary's jealousy, use of force, and unmanaged anger engender confusion and abuse. One day after school, Mary attempts to force Frado into the river. In the ensuing struggle, Mary slips and nearly drowns before she is rescued by one of the older students who happened to stand nearby. Upon her return home, Mary misrepresents the sequence of events and accuses Frado of initiating the push. Mary's word stands against Frado's. Unwilling to "hear that black nigger call Mary a liar," Mrs. B. and her daughter cruelly and "inhumanely" beat the child, gag her with a piece of wood, and lock her in a dark room without dinner.

It takes hours before Jack returns home to verify Frado's version, free her from the room and ropes, and relieve her pain and hunger. His subsequent confrontation with his father "who seemed untouched" by Jack's account of the very punishment Mr. B. could have thwarted, "till a glance at Jack exposed a tearful eye", initiates the third ethical lesson imparted in the third chapter of the Epistle of James: Friendship with the World is Enmity with God (James 4: 1-10). "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4: 4). Although Mr. B. is a humane, "sensible man" who "would not
wrong a dog”, his lack of integrity and civic courage enables those around him to do so in his stead.\textsuperscript{316} When he feels “inclined to succor” Frado his fear of his “whirlwind” wife prevents him.\textsuperscript{317} When he refuses to punish Frado his escape from the “tempest [that] threatened to envelop him” permits her abuse.\textsuperscript{318} And when he sees fit for Frado to pursue religion, “if it is a comfort to her”, his amenability to his unprincipled wife allows for church attendance to be forbidden.\textsuperscript{319}

The lack of civic courage driven by the fear of personal inconvenience also feeds the avoidance of Mr. B’s spinster sister, Abby. In private, Abby gladly sneaks Nig pieces of pie and cake, listens to her woes, and even attempts to persuade Mr. B that he should “rule [his] own house”. However, Abby will not openly challenge Mrs. B’s authority as any intent to “shelter her [Frado], in Mrs. Bellmont’s presence, would only bring reserved wrath on her [Abby’s] defenceless head”.\textsuperscript{320}

Albeit for bodily reasons rather than character flaws, Jane, too, does not pose much of an obstacle in her mother’s path. Physically feeble and helpless, she simply cannot afford to stand up to the matriarch and her minion, Mary, and seek satisfaction, fulfillment and capital in a non-normative type of brotherly love that threatens worldly (short-term) isolation/conflict but promises heavenly (long-term) rewards.\textsuperscript{321} Despite her weakness, Jane covertly does what she can to make Frado feel loved. “The invalid, Jane, would gladly

\textsuperscript{316} Wilson, \textit{Our Nig}, 36.
\textsuperscript{317} Ibid., 24.
\textsuperscript{318} Ibid., 34.
\textsuperscript{319} Ibid., 89.
\textsuperscript{320} Ibid., 44-45.
\textsuperscript{321} James marries a Baltimorean who “was not unlike his sister Jane, who had a social, gentle, loving nature, rather too yielding, her brother thought. Susan had a firmness which Jane needed to complete her character, but which her ill health may in a measure have failed to produce,” ibid., 55.

befriend her; but she had not the strength to brave the iron will of her mother. Kind words and affectionate glances were the only expressions of sympathy she could safely indulge in. 322

Much less a friend of the world in general and his mother and sister in particular is Jack, who regardless of the short-term repercussions, consistently and openly supports Nig and gains higher profile by making her the object of his display of virtue. He readily takes her by the hand to guide her to her room, searches for her mother the night of her abandon, and consoles her when he realizes that her kin will not return. He accompanies Frado to the field, advocates for her schooling, frees her from her shackles, feeds and comforts her. In fact, in confronting his father with her abuse, Jack’s public demonstrations of brotherly love only fall short of challenging his mother directly. This undertaking reserved for his older brother James, whom Jack had “written faithfully of all the merits of his colored protégé, and hinted plainly that mother did not always treat her just right.” 323

While James will eventually return, rise to the occasion, become “her shelter” and openly oppose and prevail over his mother to improve Nig’s condition, Jack’s colored protégé initially functions first and foremost as an object for James’ display of virtue and growing cultural capital. 324 James’ visit, the first in over three years, follows an unprecedentedly cruel kicking of Frado earlier that day that compels the nine-year old child to run away. James and Jack set out to locate and retrieve the “little creature”, who “was an

322 Ibid., 37; also see, Jane “would gladly have concealed her in her own chamber, and ministered to her wants; but she was dependent on Mary and her mother for care, and any displeasure caused by attention to Nig, was seriously felt,” ibid., 46.
323 The expression, “hinted plainly” is an oxymoron that in many ways encapsulates the hypocrisy surrounding the treatment of Frado, ibid., 42, emphasis mine.
324 Ibid., 67; Not only in matters of diet and table etiquette but also in insisting that Frado be allowed to attend religious meetings, ibid., 68, 84.
Frado is found and safely returned to the house where the spiritual “yet decidedly serious, [but] not stern” James promises her to prevent future whippings. Thanks to his winning ways, “kindness”, and protection, Frado “become[s] greatly attached to him” by the end of his visit. Frado, posing no threat to the transmission of “white” bio-cultural capital – as Wilson makes patently clear – sincerely “hoped he would”. 328 James marries a rich Baltimorean named Susan whom he chose as a partner, not because of her economic but because of her embodied capital. Biologically and culturally fit, Susan, as “social, gentle, loving [in] nature” as his sister Jane, was able to develop a “firmness of character” that Jane’s “ill-health … failed to produce”. 329

Not quite the complete package, the sickly but gentle Jane has amassed sufficient capital to make her seem a “treasure as a wife” to two very different suitors: The “sinister” Henry Reed, a moneyed man who is in pursuit of her patrimony, and the culturally refined, socially rich, but economically poor, George Means, who loves her for her non-economic riches, or, put less transparently and perhaps more romantically/euphemistically, for who she is. 330 As a person of high moral standing compelled to maintain an air of disinterest, Jane naturally prefers the non-quantifiable capital embodied by the “sensible, plain looking,
agreeable, and talented,” George Means. “Jane was more pleased with him each day, and silently wished Henry possessed more refinement, and the polished manners of George.”

Although her culturally unrefined and money hungry mother commands her to marry Henry Reed, the only heir of acres and acres “[s]he had counted”, Jane, empowered by her father, chooses George.

With Jane’s marriage and subsequent removal to Vermont, “another light disappeared from Nig’s horizon.” But Jane is not the last to leave. Culturally and socially refined and ready for reproduction yet economically dependent, James’s younger brother, Jack, sets out to round off his assets by making a living on his own out West. In due time, the eligible bachelor attracts and marries a propertyless woman, economically poor yet “worth a million dollars.”

Having successfully enabled all but one (the recalcitrant Mary) of the resident Bellmont children to maximize their cultural and social capital in interaction with the young Mulatta and get a head-start in the national struggle for power and survival, Frado’s role as a dog-like object begins to change. She no longer acts as her peers’ pet engaging in random “pranks” and “antics” for entertainment purposes only. Only on occasion will she “utter some funny thing for Jack’s benefit” or perform for the amusement of the hired men who “constantly nurtured the inclination” with positive reinforcement. In the majority of cases, however, Frado imbues her so-called ‘pranks’ with instructive value. Her lesson to the “willful sheep”, for example, albeit highly amusing to secret observers, not only reforms a

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331 Ibid., 57.
332 Ibid., 56.
333 Ibid., 61.
334 Ibid., 112.
335 Ibid., 38, 53.
self-centered ovine by turning his attack on his herding human against himself, but also demonstrates great skill, control command, and care in the process. Frado’s ‘punishment’ neither involves physical force nor inflicts physical harm. It requires wit and motor skills. And, perhaps most importantly, it meets the crime.

Frado practices these skills in daily interaction with her new best friend, constant companion and “entire confidant”, a little dog, named Fido. A present from Jack given to the nine year-old within a year of his departure, Fido is to protect Frado from Mary and his mother. Far from representing a guard dog, however, Fra’s faithful canine companion safeguards her by becoming the object of her display of virtue, a creature that helps guide Frado along the path toward person and subject-hood. In interaction with Fido, Frado has the opportunity to apply the biblical lessons learned and demonstrate the burgeoning self-discipline, love and patience that, per bio-scientific consensus, define the human (animal). All in all, Frado treats Fido “as though he were human.” She shares with him her joys and sorrows. She takes him to the field and village. And, whenever possible, she patiently and lovingly teaches him the “feat[s] of dog-agility”. Under Frado’s auspices, Fido grows to become a loyal and “very knowing” companion that proves to Jack that his “gift answer[ed] his intentions.”

Marked by the patience, clarity, and kindness that generate love, understanding, and loyalty, Frado’s teaching methods of the animals in her care differ drastically from those of her “owner.” B’s training is impetuous, imprecise, and brutal. In a typical exercise, she will

336 Ibid., 54.
337 Ibid., 42, 41; “He resolved to do what he could to protect her from Mary and his mother. He bought her a dog, which became a great favorite with both,” ibid., 37.
338 For example, as expressed in the “Epistle of James” and Types of Mankind, Wilson, Our Nig, 42.
angrily order that Frado get her “some little wood,” reject Frado’s offering of “the smallest she could find” with a “box on her ear” and reiterate rather than clarify the command. The larger pieces Frado retrieves for Mrs. B., prove equally unacceptable and earn her an encounter with the raw-hide. Not knowing how to please her mistress, Frado gathers whatever sticks she can and is repeatedly and violently kicked in return.

All in all, Mrs. B’s lessons are not designed to convey knowledge and sustain uplift; rather, they are oppressive and enforce social form and hierarchy. “She shall learn her place” B. thunders and does whatever it takes to counter the social advancement of her slave. She deliberately darkens Frado’s skin by exposing her to the sun unshielded with hopes of intensifying the contrast between Mary and the Mulatta, who “was not many shades darker than Mary, now”. She devalues Frado’s biological beauty by shearing off her “handsome” curls. And, ultimately, she sells the source of much of Frado’s growing cultural capital, the ‘object’ of her display of virtue, her “companion and pet [...], the dog Fido”, who only under much effort by Mr. B. is re-obtained.

By the time Frado’s five year-old Fido, whom Wilson describes as “a more valuable presence than the human beings who surrounded her”, is removed and returned, the fourteen year-old Frado has accrued sufficient symbolic capital to end her journey of unbecoming animal and begin her path toward becoming human. Throughout chapters one through five, Wilson carefully and consistently injected evidence contrary to Nott’s claims on hybridity, disunity, and a natural hierarchy to broaden Nig’s capacity to accumulate

339 Ibid., 43.
340 Ibid., 47.
341 Ibid., 39.
342 Ibid., 70.
343 Ibid., 61, emphasis mine.
344 Ibid., 62.
capital and power.345 Having thus constructed Frado's equality, the teen emerges, as the title of chapter six announces, as one of several "VARIETIES" of the human species. Varieties, per Prichard's natural history, quoted in Nott and Gliddon's *Types of Mankind*, "are such diversities in individuals and their progeny as are observed to take place within the limits of species".346 And to illustrate just how varied individual members of the human species can be, Wilson first compares and contrasts Frado and Mary in isolation and then proceeds to illuminate the disparities between Mrs. B. and her older son, James. The result of these juxtapositions further refutes Nott and his followers and inculcates the next and, perhaps most central, lesson of the Epistle of James: "Judging a Brother" (James 4:11-12).347

A simple comparison between Frado and the unsupervised Mary during Mr. and Mrs. Bellmont's visit with James inverts a number of popular preconceived notions regarding the different races of man, including Nott's idea that hybrids are "less capable of undergoing fatigue and hardship than either the blacks or whites".348 Left to their own devices, Mary, supposedly driven by the protestant work ethic characteristic of her race, only nominally functions as the "housekeeper" while Nig, the "lazy jade" is the "only moving power in the house".349 But not only is Nig the only person in the house who is hard-working, she is also the only person who has acquired the cultural capital that makes her knowledgeable and qualified for the job. Even when Frado falls ill, she continues to labor

345 Beginning with Frado's health and appearance and ending in her intelligence and disposition.
346 Nott, *Types*, 81.
347 "Speak not evil of one another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another? (James 4:11-12).
348 Nott, *Types*, 373.
349 Wilson, *Our Nig*, 64, 62.
“attempt[ing] to drag her weary limbs along, using the broom as support”. Rather than meet compassion, support, and brotherly love from an Anglo-Saxon and supposedly self-directing and enlightened human being, Mary loses her temper, hurls “a large carving knife ... at the defenceless [sic] girl”, and, subsequently, threatens to follow suit and kill Frado should she reveal the facts of her fit and attempted fratricide to anyone.

The return of the Bellmont elders does not alleviate Frado’s hardships. Mrs. B., the chapter recapitulates, perpetually overworks the child, leaves her ill-equipped to the elements, continues the poor diet Frado must eat under dehumanizing conditions, and subjects the young Mulatta to an ongoing barrage of physical abuse and verbal threats. Only after the return of James, who, despite leading a sheltered life is “feeble [and] lame from his disease”, does Frado receive the kindness and compassion she has earned. Her diet, dress, and daily routine change to include nourishment for body and soul: “food as we eat” as we eat it and exposure to religion, which, Mrs. B. maintains, “was not meant for niggers”.

In having Mary and her mother behave in the self-indulgent ways traditionally attributed to blackness, and giving Frado and James ascetic personalities commonly identified with whiteness, “Varieties” deliberately disassociates character and color. Mary and her mother emerge as “ardent, passionate, unrestrained”, and black. Frado, on the other hand, comes to embody a personality, very much cast as white. She has a “kind, affectionate heart, [...] wit, and common sense”; traits also manifest in her white, spiritual mentor, James. With character types palpable within and across the color line Wilson manages to

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50 Ibid., 64.
551 Ibid.
552 Ibid., 67-68.
553 Ibid., 63.
554 Ibid., 69.
underscore the influence of nurture—or lack thereof—in the becoming of beings or the making of men.

Belaboring the point so close to her heart, Wilson closes this chapter of the book and the first chapter of Frado’s life as a dog-like object with Fra’s final act of “impudence” brought on not by her nature but Mrs. B’s ‘nurture.’ Sometime after James has changed the table discipline to ensure that the hard-working Frado “is going to sit down here, and eat such food as we eat,” the fourteen year-old seats herself in her mistress’ chair to eat dessert. As she reaches for a clean plate, Mrs. B. commands that she use not the clean but her dirty plate instead. Responding in anger to Mrs. B’s deliberately disagreeable if not dehumanizing test of her ward’s obedience, submissiveness, and patience, Frado turns tables on the woman who has so long objectified her as a dog. Rather than lick Mrs. B.’s plate, she has her dog Fido lick it off for her, “which he did to the best of his ability.” In doing so, Frado kills two birds with one stone. She relegates Mrs. B. to the bottom rung of the household’s hierarchy by making it patently clear that she prefers eating after a dog to eating after a creature so repulsive that only a fleshly dog would eat after it; and, she concomitantly rejects her role as the canine object (of the display of virtue and vice) in the house.

Frado’s victory, however, is bitter-sweet. In giving in to her desire for humiliation, punishment, and revenge, she surrenders to her self-indulgent and atavistic animal instincts. Her dog-like performance earns her a silver half-dollar from Jack, thrown “at her” in appreciation of a spectacle “worth paying for” and the disappointment of her mentor, James, who, unable and unwilling to “excuse or palliate” Frado’s lack of self-restraint, nevertheless

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355 Ibid., 68.
356 Ibid., 71.
insists on its extrinsic motivation. “You have not treated her, mother, as to gain her trust; she is only exhibiting your remissness in this matter.” 357

“Varieties,” in other words, gives its readers – including those of the ethnologist ilk - two good reasons not to speak evil of, judge, or demote others to the lower ranks of humanity and thus disregard the dictums of James the Disciple and his namesake, James Bellmont: First, a person is the product of the sum of their experiences to which no other person is privy. 358 Second, speaking evil of and judging others signifies self-indulgence and the loss of self-control, humanity, and power. In order to demonstrate ever-greater appropriating capacities and continue her journey toward becoming human, proving species unity, and corroborating her variety status, in short, Frado is left to pursue and perfect her ability to restrain her (animal) ‘self’ patiently. Each (publicly shared) demonstration of greater “merits of acquisition” – such as the ability to control, improve, and devote her self to the welfare of others – the chapter foreshadows, further secures the appreciation of her “innate property.” The enhancement of her bio-capital, in turn, holds hopes of boosting her cultural possibilities and power and augurs an increased chance of survival. Put less formally, in the

357 The scene reminds of the “grotesque negro cripple [...] cut down to the statue of a Newfoundland dog” aboard Herman Melville’s 1857 ship of fools, “Thus far not very many pennies had been given him [...] when suddenly the negro more than revived their first interest by an expedient which, whether by chance or design, was a singular temptation at once to diversion and charity, though, even more than his crippled limbs, it put him on a canine footing. In short, as in appearance he seemed a dog, so now, in a merry way, like a dog he began to be treated. [...] now and then he would raise, throwing back his head and opening his mouth like an elephant for tossed apples at a menagerie; when, making a space before him, people would have a bout at a strange sort of pitch-penny game, the cripple’s mouth being at once target and purse [...] To be the subject of alms-giving is trying and to feel in duty bound to appear cheerfully grateful under the trial, must be still more so; but whatever his secret emotions, he swallowed them,” see, Herman Melville, The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade, in Herman Melville, Pierre, Israel Potter, The Confidence-Man, Tales and Billy Budd (New York: Penguin, 1984), 849-850; Wilson, Our Nig, 72.

358 Unless, of course, they are related to others through (semi-)autobiographical case studies such as Our Nig.
long run, habitual acts of altruism promise to hive her a leg up on her economically rich but unrestrained and, thus, culturally poor competition.

Subject-hood – Becoming Human

Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. (James 5:1-3)

Unlike Mary and Mrs. B., whose monotonously monomaniacal pursuit of readily quantifiable riches threatens decline, death, and dispersion, Nig emerges from the trials and tribulations of the first half of her journey as a subject all the more prepared to invest in assets not immediately convertible into money. She focuses on building cultural capital and cultivating her “spiritual condition” as her self-restrained, if not self-sacrificial recognition of social debt strengthens her alliance across the color line. Together, her efforts rebut Nott’s core claims, vindicate her biological capital, and raise her appropriating capacities to heretofore-unseen heights.

Having lived with the Bellmont family for over eight years and enjoyed the companionship of Fido no less than five, Frado has had ample opportunity to demonstrate her “qualities” and prove to James and Abby that “no one has a kinder heart, one capable of loving more devotedly”. Frado’s ability to feel and suffer is no longer under question.

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59 The passage fittingly continues, Behold the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord. (James 5:4)

60 Wilson, Our Nig, 73.

61 Frado does not own Fido, as Wilson makes painfully clear. First Mrs. B. sells Fido. When Frado turns free, Fido remains with his owners, the Bellmonts. Wilson, Our Nig, 73, 74.

62 At least not as far as James and Susan, Jane and George, Jack and Jenny, and Mr. B. and Aunt Abby are concerned. Mary and her mother continue to doubt her ability to suffer.

Her “finer feelings” - that is, her faculty of reason, discourse and, one might add, abstract spiritual thought, that would lift her once and for all above what Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) has called the “insuperable line”, however, have yet to be affirmed.⁶³ Again, Fido, her canine companion, bears witness to her cultural capital, progress, and power. While the fourteen year-old seems unable to prove to James and Abby that she indeed “is thoughtful” in “confidential” discussions of public opinions regarding the supposed inferiority of her race, she effortlessly attests to her ability to reason and verbalize her thoughts in an age-appropriate arena.⁶⁴ In private talks with Fido, she bewails the “loneliness of her complexion” grounded in the fact that her work and efforts are neither recognized nor returned.⁶⁵ “No one cares for me only to get my work … and then it is You lazy nigger … - all because I am black”.⁶⁶ Simplistic as this may sound, it problematizes complex ideas of group membership and mutual exchange. As Bourdieu puts it, “Exchange transforms the things exchanged into signs of recognition and, through mutual recognition and the

“... The day has been, I am sad to say in many places it is not yet past, in which the greater part of the species, under the denomination of slaves, have been treated by the law exactly upon the same footing, as, in England for example, the inferior races of animals are still. The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withheld from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may one day come to be recognised that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the os sacrum are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason or perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog, is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day or a week or even a month, old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?” Bentham, Jeremy, An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, 1907. Library of Economics and Liberty accessed March 21, 2011. http://www.econlib.org/library/Bentham/bnthPML18.html.

⁶³ Wilson, Our Nig, 74; Jeremy Bentham, quoted above.
⁶⁴ Wilson, Our Nig, 74, 73.
⁶⁵ Ibid., 74.
⁶⁶ Ibid., 75.
recognition of group membership which it implies, re-produces the group”. At the same time, the deliberate lack of recognition, as consistently performed by Mrs. B. and Mary, can be utilized to deny group membership and equality altogether. Unlike his racist mother and younger sister Mary, James, the epitome of brotherly love, chooses to recognize and return Frado’s deeds. In offering to “take her home with me, whether mother was willing or not”, he includes her as a contributing member of his group, supports mutual exchange and secures the social debt of one who “insisted ... to show her love for one who had been such a friend to her”.

In return for James’ friendship and inclusion in his group, Frado sacrifices her health and jeopardizes her life to secure his well-being.

Day by day the quiet of the sick man’s room was increased. He was helpless and nervous; and often wished change of position, thereby hoping to gain momentary relief. The calls upon Frado were consequently more frequent, her nights less tranquil. Her health was impaired by lifting the sick man, and by drudgery in the kitchen. Her ill health she endeavored to conceal from James, fearing he might have less repose if there should be a change of attendants; and Mrs. Bellmont, she well knew, would have no sympathy for her. She was at last so much reduced as to be unable to stand erect for any great length of time.

While Frado’s love and loyalty for her mentor enables extraordinary feats of asceticism, James is not the only Bellmont who becomes the object of her gratitude, virtue and affection. Against Mrs. Bellmont’s will and, perhaps, her better judgment, Frado informs

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368 Wilson, Our Nig, 76-77.
369 Ibid., 81-82.
Aunt Abby of James' wish to see her in the sick room. Again, her effort at crossing the line by exchanging favors is harshly punished by border-police woman Mrs. B.

Fear of bodily abuse by the raw-hide, wooden wedges between her teeth, kicks, blows, and food deprivation, however, figures less and less as a deterrent for Frado's ongoing efforts of building social capital across the color line. The final object of her aid is no other than Jack's poor but "worthy wife" Jenny, who is left in the 'care' of Mrs. B, while Jack is away doing business with his brother. Manipulative, cold, and money-hungry, Mrs. B. attempts to rid her family of the economically poor and, hence, disgraceful match by spreading rumors of mutual emotional unfaithfulness. Jenny, Mrs. B. suggests is "deserting her covenant vows" and Jack "did not marry her untrammeled". Ultimately, it is Frado who saves the couple's matrimonial bliss by consistently consoling Jenny and keeping open unsupervised channels of communication between the two.

The cause of Frado's steadily declining fear of abuse of her physical form is the growing and increasingly manifest influence of her mind over matter. "[H]er countenance bore marks of solicitude unseen before; and though she said nothing of her inward contest, they all observed a change". Governed by a mind and conscience that have been "awakened", "deeply exercised", "stirring ... of thoughts", and "busy" for "days and nights" on end, Frado is able to patiently endure physical oppression (James 5: 7) and affliction (James 5:10). She bears Mrs. B.'s random eruptions of "dangerous passion" and "unrestrained malice" with "the hope of a martyr" awaiting death and salvation. She quietly copes with James' death as well as Jane's, Jack's and Jenny's departure. And, in the

370 Ibid., 112-113.
371 Ibid., 85.
372 Ibid., 94, 105, 108.
373 Ibid., 82-83.
end, she is “restrained by an overruling Providence” and resolves to remain in the Bellmont home throughout her period of service. 374

Culturally rich and socially connected, Frado surpasses the stagnantly primitive Mary and her mother in merits of acquisition and proves that mulattoes are not innately “intermediate in intelligence between the whites and blacks” as Nott had claimed. Neither are they by nature more delicate and “less capable of endurance and ... shorter lived than the whites and blacks” as Frado’s relentless work-ethic under the hardship of poor shelter, diet, and treatment make patently clear. “Just think how much profit she was to us last summer. We had no work hired out; she did the work of two girls — “And got the whippings for two with it!” 375 Well-endowed with cultural, social and biological assets, and constantly “striving to enrich her mind”, Frado merges into womanhood, bids her canine companion farewell, and readies for the state-sanctioned transmission of her accumulated bio-cultural capital to the next generation. 376

In stark contrast to Nig’s successful building and management of her bio-cultural assets, Mary and her mother have made poor investment choices. Unrestrained, haughty, and unhelpful as ever, Mary has failed to accumulate the cultural capital necessary to make her an eligible bachelorette. She has had no suitors by the time she reaches her early twenties and, “not at all needed in the sick room; ...[nor]... useful in the kitchen, and ... fully determined to go”, she jumps on the opportunity to leave the house - not with a prospective husband - but with her older brother, Lewis. 377 After a year of city exposure, the unmarketable child

374 Ibid., 109.
375 Ibid., 90.
376 Ibid., 105-125.
377 Ibid., 79.
remains, without love interest, a virgin and, shortly after, Mary meets her untimely but arguably well-deserved death.

Mrs. B.’s focus on short term riches with an emphasis on “beat[ing] the money out of” Frado and jeopardizing the connubial happiness of Jane and Jack have come at the alienation of her relations and cost her valuable long-term investments in the form of social and biological capital. \[378\] Mary and the faithful and forgiving James, who would have honored consanguinity with their mother, recognized her investment, and returned it in kind, are dead. Her surviving offspring, with the exception of her oldest son, the Baltimorean, Lewis, on the other hand, have cut all social ties and removed west. Jane, “became disgusted, weary, and perplexed, an decided that, though her mother might suffer, she could not endure her home”; Jack finds himself “angry, wounded, and forever alienated from his early home and his mother”. \[379\] Socially dead to her reproducing children, B. has lost the opportunity to shape her bio-cultural progeny and future. \[380\]

Despite Frado’s successful transformation from irresponsibly-owned pet to responsible pet-owner rich in embodied cultural capital and in possession of reliable social connections, it takes the autodidact three years upon her release from her period of service to establish herself as a trusted member of a small New Hampshire village and gain financial independence as a seamstress. \[381\] Her progress is persistently interrupted by the aftereffects of twelve years of exposure to beyond unfavorable conditions that continue to compromise

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\[378\] Ibid., 90.
\[379\] Ibid., 109, 115.
\[380\] Or, put in contemporary terms, to secure the survival of her memes or exert influence over and shape her surviving genes.
\[381\] An ongoing exchange of social debt “endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed” (Bourdieu, “Forms of Capital,” 250) between James, Jack, Jane and Frado secures her social capital long term. After managing to save Jack and Jenny’s marriage from Mrs. B.’s invidious remarks, Jane “begged her to follow” them out West; see Wilson, Our Nig, 109.

her biological vigor and, albeit not for biological but environmental reasons, leave her exactly as Nott had predicted: “delicate,” “feeble” and lame. As physically invalid as Frado may have become, her inner fitness attracts the attention of a professed fugitive slave, her future husband and father of her only child, who, within a year of their baby boy’s birth, succumbs to yellow fever in New Orleans.

In its closing chapter, then, Wilson’s autobiographical case study manages to undermine the two heretofore-uncontested claims of Josiah C. Nott’s “Mulatto Hybrid” theory. The idea that the hybrid offspring of an Anglo-Saxon mother and an African father is only “imperfectly” prolific and unable to reproduce to the second filial generation; and, the belief that blacks “enjoy extraordinary exemption from yellow-fever.” In doing so, the story of a little colored girl’s unbecoming animal and coming of being human not only succeeds in systematically rebutting all seven signs of biological difference that distinguish the “hybrid” from the “varietal,” but it also invalidates the sum of Nott’s ethnological evidence for separate creation and species disunity.

Frado’s rise to humanity and power is made possible by Wilson’s apt use of increasingly intricate inter-species bonds as a key to embodied riches. In the first part of the


383 Presumably in the yellow fever epidemic that struck New Orleans in 1853 and in which Josiah Nott lost four of his children.

384 Our Nig describes Samuel not as a ‘mulatto’ but a “dark brother,” a “fine, straight Negro” (Wilson, Our Nig, 126-127), who had never seen the south. Were Samuel ‘all’ black and biologically representative of the “pure” parent rather than the “mixed” filial generation, production with Frado would, per Nott, be “less imperfect” and the argument against Nott less powerful. As the novel does not distinguish between different degrees of blackness (other than Frado’s description as “yeller”), Samuel could be a representative of either ethnicity.
novel, Frado functions as both canine catalyst and inhibitor. She helps usher the (seemingly) selfless James, John, and Jane into the mature and reproductive stage of citizenship while suspending the selfish Mary and mother B. in a bio-culturally poor and non-reproductive state. Over time, Frado herself begins to change. Closely following the curriculum of the Epistle of James, Frado, first alone and soon with the aid of her fuzzy friend Fido, sufficiently self-improves to throw into doubt the biological limits imposed upon her “type” by the ethological theories of Josiah C. Nott and George Gliddon.385

Wilson’s skillfully orchestrated interplay of mid-nineteenth century popular (dog trope), religious, and scientific culture, suggests that more important aspects of her story may have been fabricated than heretofore assumed. Harriet E. Wilson may not, like her semi-autobiographical self, have had an Anglo-Saxon mother and an African father. Instead, she could have been the daughter of a northern black woman and a white male; perhaps even the illegitimate daughter of a male member of the Hayward family itself.386 Harriet may not have had the loving support of her host or perhaps even step brothers, James (George Milton Hayward) and John (Nehemiah Peabody Hayward). She may not have owned a dog. Finally, her husband, one Thomas Wilson, may not have been a victim of yellow fever. Perhaps he died from something else altogether or simply decided to desert his wife and their newborn son.

We do know with certainty that Wilson’s experiment to convert knowledge into the economic or even political power necessary to maintain herself “and child without

385 Between the ages of six and nine, she is the lonely dog-like object. From nine to eighteen, she maintains an intimate friendship with her invaluable dog, Fido.
386 Illegitimacy may account for the harsh treatment she received from Rebecca S. Hutchinson (Mrs. Bellmont), the wife of Nehemiah Hayward (Jr.) (Mr. John Bellmont). For more information on the Bellmont family, see Barbara White, “Our Nig and the She-Devil,” 19-52.
extinguishing this feeble life” (preface) failed.\textsuperscript{387} Less than six months after the publication of *Our Nig*, George Mason Wilson died an untimely death at seven years and eight months at the Hillsborough County Poor House to which Wilson herself returned as a “County Pauper,” in 1863.\textsuperscript{388} In part, her failure can be attributed to her lack of funds. Wilson simply could not afford to pay Rand for the publication of a large number of copies even though a larger edition may have been well-received by what historian William Gilmore has identified as “landlocked rural residents in areas such as the Upper Valley [who] kept up with many recent intellectual trends in the North Atlantic Republic of Letters.”\textsuperscript{389} Despite what must have been a comparatively small edition, Wilson, as Garrison’s library records evince, managed to strategically distribute her work to influential abolitionists who would have been able to promote the text. Blunt as her delivery may have been, it does not differ that drastically from the moral certitude expressed in Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative* (1845), the violence described in Isabella von Wagener (aka Sojourner Truth)’s *Narrative of a Northern Slave* (1850), or the inter-racial love detailed in Gustave de Beaumont’s *Marie* (1831).\textsuperscript{390}

\textsuperscript{387} Which she had successfully preserved in its objectified state in book form.

\textsuperscript{388} Death certificate, cited in Henry Louis Gates’ introduction to the 1983 edition differs from the age listed in the obituary, published in the *Farmer’s Cabinet* of February 15, 1860. Also see Barbara White, “Our Nig and the She-Devil,” 26. After 1863, all conclusive evidence of her biological survival, White documents, is lost. The Hillsborough County Farm itself was destroyed in a fire in 1866. Survivors were temporarily housed at buildings belonging to the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company in and near Manchester, NH. The textile manufacturer recruited laborers from around the world up until the turn of the century and is possible that Wilson found employment there.


\textsuperscript{390} Did Beaumont’s work serve as an inspiration for Wilson’s Bellmonts? Beaumont’s *Marie* was not translated into English into 1958. However, given the great influx of French Canadian immigrant workers into the Manchester area in the 1840s and 50s, it is perfectly possible that Wilson was well aware of Beaumont’s popular novel and gave her protagonists the same surname. Gustave de Beaumont, *Marie; or, Slavery in the United States: A Novel of*
Neither does it outdo the sardonic treatment of northern double standards in other works of
great popularity and political capital such as David Walker's *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of
the World* (1829), Harriet Beecher's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), and William Lloyd Garrison's
*Park Street Address* (1829). "[P]rejudice at the North," as the black reformer William J.
Watkins, succinctly summarized, "is much more virulent than at the South."³⁹¹

Unlike Beecher, Douglass, Wagener, Walker, Watkins or Garrison, Wilson chose the
format of the semi-autobiographical case study to *directly* challenge the scientific dictums of
her day. After all both Beecher and Jacobs very much operated within the rhetorical realm of
the sentimental to persuade their white readers to extend a helping hand to their
disadvantaged brethren of a darker color. Even Douglass, who, most likely because of his
sex, was able to challenge ethnological conclusions, did not contradict the theory of
polygenesis itself. Wilson's "experiment," on the other hand, appropriated scientific
discourses, laid claim to the faculty of reason theretofore (and thereafter) denied to members
of her gender and race, and breached, if not affronted, the foundations of white male
power.³⁹²

Although familiarity with the figures that inspired Wilson's fictional personae may
have played a role in the book's oversight locally, the author's confident claim to equality
may have been most compromised by the very motive of her writing. Wilson was socio-

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³⁹¹ See Ophelia and Topsy. William Lloyd Garrison, *Park Street Address*, July 4, 1829,
³⁹² One has to bear in mind that scientific discourses at that time included religious texts. The
second half of *Types of Mankind* uses biblical excerpts to corroborate the theory of
polygenesis. Among biblical texts, the Epistle of James stands out for its advocacy of
mindful action and reason-based self-restraint.
economically unable to provide for herself and child. Afraid to have unequal opportunity be mistaken for unequal condition and be viewed as a “light-colored ... [person who] can’t propagate our own stock”, Wilson pleaded for the return of social debt in the form of communal charity or “patronage”. Neither cultural nor social capital, however, can be converted into cash capital on cue. Both depend on the passing of considerable time for the “transmutation” of an act into an act of disinterest or “of a pure and simple debt into that recognition of nonspecific indebtedness which is called gratitude” to take place. Without time to spare, Wilson had to give to live, calling into question the purity of her self-restraint and essence of her claim to power and survival itself. But while her visionary investment in inter-species bonds may not have secured her survival then, it succeeds in granting her symbolic capital and immortality one-hundred and fifty years later.

393 See Richard B. Latner’s discussion of the unstable distinction between “equality of opportunity” and “equality of condition” in Jacksonian America – an indistinctness that did not end with Jackson: “Preserving ‘The Natural Equality of Rank and Influence,’” 189-230; Claude McKay, “Near White,” 85-96; Wilson, Our Nig, preface.


Part II – The Turn of the Dog: Proportioned Property, Productions, and Provisional Power

I am not versed in dog-lore, and it may be that my love for the animal makes me an ill judge of the importance of the following story; but a friend vouches for its truth, and to my mind it has its importance, not from its display of jealousy, but from the dog’s deliberate acceptance of the undoubtedly changed condition, and the clearly metaphysical character of his motive.

The story is this. A young man had owned for some years a dog who was his constant companion. Recently the young man married, and moved with his bride and his dog into a house on the opposite side of the street from his father’s house, his own former home. The dog was not happy, for the time and attention which had formerly been his was now given to the young wife. In many ways he showed his unhappiness and displeasure, in spite of the fact that the master tried to reconcile him and the bride to win him. One day when the master came home, his wife sat on his knee, while Jack was lying by the fire. He rose from his place, came over to the couple, and expressed his disapproval. "Why, Jack," said the master, "this is all right, she’s a good girl," and as he spoke, he patted her arm. Jack looked up at him, turned away, and left the room. In a moment they heard a noise, and going into the hall, they found Jack dragging his bed downstairs. When he reached the front door, he whined to be let out, and when the door was opened, he dragged his bed down the steps, across the street to his old home, where he scratched for admittance. Since then he has never been back to his master, refusing all overtures.395

Chas. Morris Addison, December 12, 1891

Addison’s anecdote of the “Jealousy of a Dog,” one of many dog-stories selected from the correspondence columns of the popular British weekly The Spectator (1828-present) by John St. Stratchey and republished in book form for his American audience by MacMillan, New York, in 1895, addressed what, by the turn of the century, had become an all too familiar phenomenon: dogmestic and domestic partners shared irreconcilable differences. For nearly a century, America’s four-legged Hectors, Kisels, Carlos, Trays, Bruces, and Fidos had

functioned as synecdochial ambassadors of nature. They proffered their paws in friendship. And, in forming an allegedly unconditional alliance across species lines, they gave an ever-growing number of ‘fallen’ American men and women the opportunity to restore their prelapsarian innocence, put on display their selfless devotion to everything and everyone “other,” and regain the cultural capital and clout long-lost. Empowered by their canine connection in the world of letters and beyond, many a Linwood, Wilson, and Marvel improved their socio-economic standing and increased their chances at genetic and memetic reproduction.

As reliable and low-maintenance markers of republican virtue, capital, and status in an increasingly competitive matrimonial or bio-cultural investment market, pet dogs quickly gained popularity and power. This trend was accelerated by the rise of the American SPCA and its meticulous marketing of inter-species etiquette between “humane” humans and “harmless” animals in general and *canis lupus familiaris* in particular. In 1867, one year after Henry Bergh (1813-1888) had founded the *American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals* (ASPCA), in 1866, the state of New York passed the “Act for the more effectual prevention of cruelty to animals,” which, next to outlawing the inhumane treatment of animals at and after work as well as during transport, made the fighting of dogs, bulls and cocks a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment and fines. In 1868, George T. Angell (1823-1909), President of the *Massachusetts SPCA* (MASCPA, 1868-), joined Henry Bergh in

396 Albeit outwardly human, Sedgwick’s Kisel appears to use more than two legs to move more than once.
397 For a full version of the statute, please see Michigan State University’s College of Law’s “Animal Legal & Historical Center’s” website, [http://www.animallaw.info/historical/statutes/sthusny1867.htm](http://www.animallaw.info/historical/statutes/sthusny1867.htm); imprisonment of up to a year and fines of up to $250.
his rally for the rights of those “who cannot speak for themselves,” with the publication of the MASPCA’s monthly magazine Our Dumb Animals.398

Principally dealing with dogs and horses, the widespread periodical proved a guide to the do’s and don’ts of animal treatment. Our Dumb Animals (ODA) targeted educators and children with reports, anecdotes, and literature that ranged from police statements to tales of canine valor and recommended readings, from eyewitness accounts of cruelty to graphic instructions on how to “mercifully kill horses, dogs, and other animals” by shooting them “through the brain into or toward the neck.”399 Its stories, tales and testimonials, however, not only sought to amend and advance anti-cruelty legislation. Perhaps more importantly, the periodical steadily provided its readers with the tools, training, and technologies to transform themselves and others into ‘pure and perfect’, reproductively successful, and, therefore, bio-culturally ‘immortal’ selves.400

In order to increase the monthly’s normative influence, Angell aggressively recruited “the most eminent men and women, not only of Massachusetts, but of the world” to become members and promoters of the periodical-affiliated Parent American Band of Mercy. Founded alongside the journal in 1868, the Parent Band of Mercy was a society dedicated to “try to be

400 See Foucault’s Technologies of Self, discussed in the opening chapter.
kind to all harmless living creatures, and try to protect them from cruel usage." It encouraged its members to police their surroundings, report behaviors deemed inhumane to authorities, and publish detailed accounts of abuse in Our Dumb Animals itself.

Considerably owing to the concerted efforts of Bergh, Angell and associates advertised in and fortified through their public organ, Our Dumb Animals, the protection and power of pets soon strengthened. And, by the time Bergh’s body was laid to rest in 1888, by a small Spitz dog and a parade of prominent Americans from the venerable Supreme Court Judge Noah Davis (1818-1902) to businessman Phineas Taylor Barnum (1810-1891), six states had adopted animal cruelty legislation, some thirty (of 42-44) states sustained local SPCA offices, and across the nation over 5,800 branches of Parent American Bands of Mercy with an estimated 400,000 members had formed.

With the legislative and jurisdictional innovations of the late nineteenth century that accompanied the increasingly popular anti-cruelty movement the relationship between man and man’s best friend changed. Pet dogs as dependable icons of transposable virtue and

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401 “Pledge” of the “Parent American Band of Mercy,” in Our Dumb Animals, 21, 2 (July 1888): 15. The pledge can be found in the opening pages of each issue. Emphasis mine.
capital became more desirable and, since most men managed to maintain at least a mutt, more numerous in the process. But dogs not only increased in numbers. They became *constant* companions and *intimate* allies, who progressively drew closer to and lingered longer in the lives of their inter-species ‘mates’.

During the first half of the nineteenth-century, American bachelors’ and bachelorettes’ intermittent embrace and defense of domesticated dogs living outside the home sufficed as a proper credential for their purity and matrimonial eligibility. Cooper’s all-American folk hero Natty Bumppo and his canine companion Hector, for example, travel along similar paths but never share the intimate setting and connection of a permanent dwelling. Like Natty and Hector, the repeatedly intersecting lives of Puritan progeny Eliot Lee and his caninesque companion Kisel as well as of Kisel and Lee’s prospective wife Isabella Linwood remain notably nomadic and somewhat secondary or detached.

By 1850, however, mere bouts of benevolence toward one’s inter-species ally no longer answered the need for public recognition. In order to lay claim to competitive levels of self-control and demonstrate superior fitness and humanity, inter-species intimacy and understanding had to be intensified. As a result a growing number of fleshly dogs in the literature of the day crossed the threshold into the domestic. Carlo, the canine, for example, graces Marvel’s bachelor’s intimate surroundings with his perpetual presence. Akin to Carlo, Fido, as we have seen in Wilson’s semi-autobiographical novel, “was the constant attendant of Frado”- indoors and out. And, Jack, the young marriageable man’s “constant

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403 Including the anti-vivisection movement supported by Mark Twain with his *A Dog’s Tale* (1904) and the anti-tumor or anti-performance movement defended by Jack London in *Michael, Brother of Jerry* (1915).

404 Wilson, *Our Nig*, 42; Addison’s dog is the “constant companion” of his master (Addison “Canine Jealousy,” 113-114.)
companion” of several years, featured in Addison’s opening anecdote, jealously inhabits his master’s abode. Vying for their human’s “time and attention” with potential intra-species suitors, post-1850 canine companions came to more closely resemble room-mates or long-term, dogmestic partners than pets.

As monogamous partners of single social alliance, pet dogs, by design, proved increasingly reluctant to make room for reproductive relations through sudden death or departure. Unlike Kisel, who ushers Eliot Lee into the promisingly procreative arms of Isabella Linwood, later generations of pet dogs stayed until temporarily or permanently abandoned. In adhering to their human companions, they enabled the continued accumulation and maximization of embodied capital, at times, up until the point of transmission. Grant Mitchell aka Ik Marvel’s bachelor, as I have shown above, for example, manages to moderate his immature intra-species demeanor by embedding his hetero-sexual exploits in fleeting reveries, solidly anchored in the civilizing surrounding of home, hearth, and, most importantly, hound. Wilson’s Frado finds herself forced to leave behind her faithful friend Fido at the onset of womanhood, the end of indenture, and within pages of intra-species engagement. Finally, Addison’s Jack takes it a step further. Emotionally forsaken by his newly wed human, he takes matters in his own paws and relocates to his former home only after the intra-species union has been consummated.

\footnote{Both cultural and biological capital as the boundary here is increasingly fluid. The cultural is often interpreted and deployed as biological. At the same time, cultural capital, by virtue of being transposable, often enhances the biological. Cultural capital provides better access to economic capital, which, as the bachelor discusses in his reveries, eases stress, prolongs life, enhances beauty, etc. (Mitchell, Reveries, 123).}

\footnote{“Frado had merged into womanhood” (Wilson, Our Nig, 115). “The approaching spring would close the term of years which Mrs. B claimed as the period of her servitude” (116). “Poor little Fido! She shed more tears over him than over all beside” (117). A “professed fugitive … appeared in the new home of Frado; and as people of color were rare there, was it strange … that they should marry?” (126).}
At the close of the century, competitive investors in canine capital as a means to biocultural fitness were able to maintain their inter-species bonds well into the courtship and mating stage. As much as inter-species partnerships could be prolonged and differences between dogmestic and domestic partners denied, they ultimately ended in divorce - either from the dog or the human - or in death. In the great majority of cases, as in Addison’s anecdote, of course, it was the dog that left once the accumulation of biocultural capital had been exhausted and the best possible (intra-species) match been made. Southern author Augusta Evans’ (1835-1909) most popular novel, St. Elmo (1867), for example, relegates Ali, the “large, gaunt, wolfish, gray dog” to the sidelines after his master and male protagonist, St. Elmo Murray, has come to consider his dog-loving mate, Edna Earl, “worthy and competent to guide him; ... to make her children ornaments to their nation, and a crown of glory to their race”. Likewise, Margaret Marshall Saunders’ Beautiful Joe (1893) lives to see his compassionate mistress’ marriage to Harry Gray. But by the time the couple turns to its bio-cultural reproduction, it is safe to say, Joe is thirteen years old, on his last leg, and unlikely to interfere.

In the event of a non-reproductive mis-match or, what short-story writer William Sidney Porter (1862-1910), better known as O. Henry, calls, a “matrimonial mishap”, on the other hand, the persistent presence of the dog that “refused to leave” commanded the

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407 Kierkegaard’s 1843 philosophical treatise Enten – Eller (Either/Or) distinguishes two diametrically opposed life-styles: one can Either follow the dictums of hedonism, Or lead a responsibly altruistic life.
409 The Canadian writer’s novel is based on true events and set in Maine.
abandonment or disappearance of the domestic partner. Laura Lean Jibbey’s husband, the unsung “henpecked” hero of O. Henry’s “Memoirs of a Yellow Dog” (1905), leaves his wife because of a cur; in this case, an “anonymous yellow cur looking like a cross between an Angora cat and a box of lemons.”

Born a “yellow pup; date, locality, pedigree, and weight unknown,” the narrator is purchased between Broadway and Twenty-third street by Laura Lean, a 200-pound, middle-aged New York woman, whose name befits her appearance about as little as her character suits the companionship of a dog. A sad testament to reckless self-indulgence, Laura Lean Libbey, the story suggests, does not deserve the cultural capital imputed to her by the presence of her mutt, whom she adds to her apartment along with other commodities, including a parlor set, a rubber plant, and a “husband.” Rather than diligently tending to household chores while her husband is at work, Laura Lean eats, chats, and spies on her neighbors. It is the dog, who calls her “bluff” and concludes, “If men knew how women pass the time when they are alone they’d never marry.”

Following the calling of his cur, Laura Lean’s husband drowns his frustration in “Nature’s Own Remedy.”

At a quiet place on a safe street I [the yellow pup] tightened the line of my custodian in front of an attractive, refined saloon. I made a dead-ahead scramble for the doors, whining like a dog in the press despatches that lets the family know that little girl is bogged while gathering lilies in the brook. “Why darn my eyes,” says the old man, with a grin; “darn my eyes if the saffron-colored son of a seltzer lemonade ain’t asking me in to take a drink.”

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It takes only a few drinks for the dog’s dream to escape “the missis[... who] is the cruel uncle after you ... and me ... and be pards [partners or companions] forever more,” to come true. Freed and asked to leave for his own good, the dog refuses and enthusiastically attaches himself to the self-disciplined, hard-working, and honorable husband with “no string.” The inter-species couple heads for the ferry and, after crossing to the Jersey side, the renegade husband happily announces, “Me and my doggie, we are bound for the Rocky Mountains.”

Another formidable but decidedly more dreadful example of ‘either man or mutt’ is Victorian writer Lucas Malet’s The Carissima. By virtue of being British, this late-gothic piece of fiction, originally named The Power of the Dog (1896), unfortunately falls outside the scope of this dissertation. Suffice it to say, the novel features an unhappily married wife, the Carissima, who deliberately fortifies her husband Constantine’s belief in the presence of an imaginary, “non-existent but truly diabolic” dog to “get rid of” him.411 Seeing suicide as “the only way to meet the difficulty ... [and be] delivered, at last, and for ever, from the power of the dog” Constantine Leversedge, who loves his wife “very much,” chooses to drown himself not in alcohol but the local lake.412

In some cases, the premature death of a parent, usually the mother, obviated the surviving party’s otherwise obligatory choice between either intra- or inter-species partners; a scenario that, counter-intuitively, represented the reproductive version of getting the cake

412 Ibid., 163-64, 156.
and eating it, too.\textsuperscript{413} Having already succeeded in transmitting their bio-genetic capital to the next generation, the surviving, dog-loving parent is in the position to maximize his cultural-memetic assets through (what appears to be all the more) disinterested relations with his \textit{dogmestic}.\textsuperscript{414} The parent's "dog test of morality," Bierce lampoons and thus confirms the widespread currency of this (mis)conception in \textit{A Fiend's Delight}, in 1873, is "A Certain Popular Fallacy." "The world makes few graver mistakes," he elaborates, "than in supposing a man must necessarily possess \textit{all the cardinal virtues because he has a big dog and some dirty children} that he manages to maintain despite a "dead wife."\textsuperscript{415}

But "Bitter" Bierce not only dismisses post-reproductive dependence on the inter-species companion as the primary safeguard of one's bio-cultural capital, power, and survival on ideological grounds. He also finds it impractical. In "The Child's Provider," a vignette of the same collection, Bierce sardonically suggests that excessive reliance one's inter-species companion as provider of transposable capital, precipitates bio-cultural ruin. The sketch features a father by the name of Mr. Goboffle with "a \textit{small child, no wife, a large dog, and a house}." Too economically poor to "afford the expense of a nurse," Mr. Goboffle "was accustomed to leave the child in the care of the dog," who readily took on his \textit{dogmestic} duties. But when the father and provider of bio-genetic and economic capital chokes on a potato, the dog goes rogue. Goboffle's sudden death releases his canine from the reciprocal obligations of their reputedly unconditional alliance: care, company, cultural capital and

\textsuperscript{413} Whereas the death of father would not have been feasible without transgressing traditional nineteenth-century gender roles at the loss of cultural capital, modern works, such as Erdrich's \textit{Beet Queen} (see chapter 6) feature stay behind moms, who, with the help an extended kinship network manage to nurture bio-genetic and cultural-memetic capital or investments in the form of offspring and dogs.

\textsuperscript{414} Here, ulterior motives, albeit present, are expertly hidden.

\textsuperscript{415} Ambrose Bierce, \textit{A Fiend's Delight} (New York: A. L. Lyuster, 1873), 83. Emphases are mine.
power in exchange for less than minimum wage by way of food, shelter, and survival. And, rather than sustain the child and Goboffle's long-term investment, the dog secures his own bio-cultural future. He selfishly consumes the child's body leaving nothing but the "beautiful" face. The face, in turn, he selflessly showers with kisses and bread from a nearby baker. In the end, Mr. Goboffle's exclusive, albeit post-productive, investment in his dogmestic proves just as (bio-genetically) unprofitable as that of the fictional Bachelor.

In order to maximize the transmission and maintenance of bio-cultural capital, the increasingly competitive investment market demanded: first, that intimate dogmestic and domestic partnerships remain parallel past the point of reproduction; and, second, that nurture of each occur without acknowledgement, if not without awareness, of the correlation between restored inter-species intimacy on the one hand and matrimonial success, biocultural profitability, power, and survival on the other.

In adaptation to changing market pressures, American authors active around the turn of the century devised and deployed the 'timeshare (pet) dog'. Timeshare canine companions were an asset or a form of property partly owned or "leased" by multiple parties to be maintained and exploited either concomitantly (fractionally), consecutively (for fixed time periods), or, cooperatively (rotating or flexible increments), in different, often gender-specific, capacities and spheres. By virtue of recasting intimate inter-species relations as a

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416 The latter form of timeshare management is particularly interesting. Langston Hughes exploits separate sphere ideology (the separation of private/home and public/work spheres along genders lines) to endow his black, basement-bound janitor with the dominant masculinity and the power necessary to climb the rungs of society (and literally the ladder to Mrs. Briggs apartment) as the immediate and public provider of Mrs. Briggs' little white dog, Flips. While Mrs. Briggs publicly earns the necessary economic capital to privately pay for Flips’ fare, it is Joe, who responsibly and regularly provides the meat. Fifty years later, Louise Erdrich's *The Beet Queen* (see Chapter 6) makes use of time-shared dog trope to denaturalize separate sphere and gender norms. Her characters Wallace Pfef and Mary Adare, a feminine

part-time job or privilege that only required each care-giver’s, provider’s, or master’s energy, attention, and (self)-discipline for limited periods at a time – that is, while on duty or in the public sphere - off duty activities set in the private sphere, behind closed doors, could fully focus on the building and maintenance of intra-species relations. The increasingly clear, temporal (work/leisure) and spatial (public/private) boundaries between the two types of intimacies not only improved the overall quality of both inter-species and intra-species kinship, but, most importantly, they circumvented absolutes and the tragic choice between either/or. In compromise and carefully timed separation of seemingly self-disciplined and disinterested (public) affinity from self-serving (private) consanguinity, in short, lay the turn of the century solution to the maximization of illiquid, bio-cultural capital and power. 417

Concomitant Canine Timeshares

Perhaps the first canonized writer to invest in timeshare dogs as a powerful means to embodied assets and survival was frontier poet Francis Bret Harte (1836-1902). Harte’s 1894 story, “A Yellow Dog,” tells the tale of a California “yaller” cur, who, by virtue of being fractionally owned, helps his multiple shareholders accumulate the necessary cultural assets

homosexual male and a masculine homosexual female, take on the twin role of material and emotional providers for their intimate canine companions of the opposite sex, the white bitch and ‘Little Dickie.’ Wallace does so out of the privacy of his home. Mary proceeds to provide for her pet publicly, that is, from work (she owns a butcher shop). Unlike Erdrich’s iconoclastic appropriation of pet dogs, contemporary canine time-share culture both blurs and bolsters separate sphere ideology. On the one hand, dog training shows such as Cesar Millan’s *Dog Whisperer* and Victoria Caldwell’s *It’s Me or the Dog* make private dog care a public issue with which the professional trainers deal on a daily basis (work). At the same time, Millan and Caldwell subscribe to normative gender training. While Millan uses “calm assertiveness” and discipline, Cadlwell exclusively applies positive reinforcement stereotypical of a compassionate and sensitive woman (see conclusion).

417 At the time, that is. We will see in the following chapters that maximization of bio-cultural capital beyond this compromise, albeit necessary, is tricky.

to boost both their status and reproductive options. Individually putting on display their self-improvement in interaction with their percentage share of the dog, the camp’s collective illiquid income elevates their (poor) public standing and grants the bunch of mining bachelors access to the “prettiest girls” of the region. Fractional privileges and profits peak with the miners’ repeated admission to the dwelling of “the sweetest” and most desirable “girl in the county: Pinkey Preston – daughter of the county judge and hopelessly beloved by all Rattlers Ridge.” His accomplishments notwithstanding, the yellow cur, who finagles the feat of arranging a series of seemingly impossible trysts between male commoners and female members of the elite, is, it appears, far less attractive than the average dog. True to the tradition of causal denial, the narrator introduces him as the community’s “acme” of the abject.

I never knew why in the Western States of America a yellow dog should be proverbially considered the acme of canine degradation and incompetency, nor why the possession of one should seriously affect the social standing of its possessor. But the fact being established, I think we accepted it at Rattler’s Ridge without question. The matter of ownership was more difficult to settle; and although the dog I have in mind at the present writing attached himself impartially and equally to everyone in camp, no one ventured to exclusively claim him; while, after the perpetration of any canine atrocity, everybody repudiated him with indecent haste. Ostensibly useless as generations of dogmestic partners before him, the cur called Bones or, “in our rare moments of endearment,” Bonesy, is instrumental in the camp’s collective

419 Ibid., 120.
420 Ibid.
accumulation of bio-cultural capital in the form of a treasure-trove of shared memories of inter-species intimacy well before the arrival of Pinkey Preston. Unclaimed, with “no preference for any particular individual in camp,” and, therefore, moving freely in between fractional or - “temporary master[s]” depending on incentive, Bonsey lives a full and fruitful life. Seizing each day as if it were his last, he is notorious for crossing canyons on six inch-wide planks, falling into ravines 1000 feet deep, being forgotten in snowdrifts, playing poker, and for openly demonstrating his resentment for out of town politicians. Most importantly, Bones’ habit of roving from one inter-species encounter to the next leaves him intimately known to and knowledgeable of the community at large and gives license to the production of bio-cultural capital. He is deemed sagacious, insightful, intelligent, athletic, “active, tireless, ... bold,” and agile and known to be “fond of wading in” “slumgullion” – the common fare of Rattlers Ridge. Conversely, as the object of the communal display of virtue, Bones exposes or rather produces the hidden humanity at the heart of each of the outwardly hardened miners. Their treatment of the inter-species companion who “[b]elongs to them” exhibits their gentle, civilized, dog-loving, and deeply ‘disinterested’ nature. The men of Rattlers Ridge give Bones shelter from the elements; he “hasn’t been near our shanty in weeks” but “was last seen comin’ out of your cabin.” They regularly bathe him. They routinely cover him with blankets. They decorate him with ink before the habit is dismissed due to its detrimental effects on pant legs and the aforementioned blankets. They sympathize with the loss of his tail and disapprove of the docking as an act of “gratuitous effrontery.” They prospect with him, hunt with him, and teasingly train him to be alert at all times.

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421 Ibid., 127.
422 Ibid.
423 Ibid., 121.
Finally, when Bones, out of “kindred sympathy,” temporarily turns to tail the town drunkard, the camp protects its communal interest and investment in their canine humanity-meter by enforcing a “compulsory divorce.”424 They dispose of the drunk and keep the dog.

Bones’ accomplishments in the rehabilitation of working-class (miner) humanity notwithstanding, the camp does not hail him as a useful or “Good dog” (also his epitaph) until after he validates their bio-cultural riches in the presence of sweet Pinkey Preston, a most desirable, asset-laden member of the opposite sex: “We held our breath as she approached him.425 Would Bones evade her as he did us at such moments, or would he save our reputation, and consent, for the moment, to accept her”? Bones accepts Pinkey’s overtures and thereby affirms Rattler’s Ridge’s capacity to act disinterestedly or benignly toward other species. “For the first time a local pride in Bones sprang up in our hearts.”426

This “new pride” in the dog as an extended signifier of the camp’s cultural capital and appropriating capacities and valuable asset in the matrimonial market is further fueled by the continual opposite-sex encounters it commissions. To begin with, Pinkey Preston, to whom the dog most recently attached himself, asks the camp’s shop-keeper to send “some of your boys to come over here to Sacramento” to retrieve Bones. Acting “in a body” when it comes to Bones, the settlement discusses and readily dispatches a “deputation” for the distressed damsel’s relief.427 Subsequently, the “mysterious importance” with which Bones the “mascot,” credits the camp, prompts the invitation of several of its young men to Sunday service at the newly built, crossroads church.428 Looking “sufficiently picturesque and

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424 Ibid., 123.
425 Epitaph, ibid., 129.
426 Ibid., 124-125.
427 Ibid., 127.
428 Ibid., 126.
distinctive as ‘honest miners’ to be shown off in one of the front pews [they were s]eated
near the prettiest girls, who offered us their hymn books”. Finally, Judge Preston himself
entreats the camp to allow Bones to live with him and his daughter indefinitely, “without
yielding up their valuable PROPERTY in him” and with an open invitation to all “members of
the camp” to come and “visit their old favorite whenever they desired, to assure themselves
that he was well cared for” in their private home. The “bait” – that is, the offer to trade the
timeshare dog for reproductive promise, or at least matrimonial opportunity with Pinkey,
“thus ingeniously thrown out had a good deal to do with our ultimate yielding,” the narrator
confesses. 429

What is more, Harte’s timeshare dog not only increases the quantity of bio-culturally
competitive individuals and the frequency of their encounters with the opposite sex; he also
enhances the quality of their intra-species meetings. Each of the miners’ forays into the
world of reproductive promise occurs off duty, off site, and after hours. The miners’ visits of
Pinkey Preston, first to retrieve and later to check on Bones, take them well beyond the
boundaries of their public work camp to the private residence of Judge Preston in Sacramento
on a leisurely trip that lasts several days and nights for which they often dress in “store
clothes.” Similarly, their rendezvous with the “prettiest girls” at the regional church service
leads them in fancily dressed, out of the camp, straight to the private house of God, on the
designated day of rest. 430 Spatially and temporally separated from the world of work and
duty, off duty zones of intra-species intimacy can accommodate the dog’s presence without
proving disruptive to or distracting from the “private” prerogative of reproductive courtship.
Sanctioned to concentrate on the reproductive task at hand, the dog is simply relegated to

429 Ibid., 128.
430 Such as “white ducks, straw hats, and flannel blouses,” ibid., 126.
the margin; be it the doormat in front of Pinkey’s room or the chancel and, ultimately, “down the aisle” and out, at church.

Harte’s turn of the century tale of a timeshare dog does not end in marriage, biocultural reproduction and a trans-species ‘they lived happily ever after.’ Nonetheless, it features a dog whose presence precipitates the forming of reproductive and, if follows, profitable inter-species matches. One year after moving in with the Prestons, Bones, having grown “fat and unwieldy,” dies and is found “coiled up and stiff on the mat outside Miss Pinkey’s door.” Miss Pinkey still lives with her parents. And the miners of Rattler’s Ridge, it appears, are still single. While Bones may not live to see his multiple owners into the reproductive stage, the story of his time-shared care prefigures a new way in which the two types of, otherwise conflicting, intimacies can fruitfully and reciprocally coexist. Bones’ part-time and yet perpetual presence as “[q]uite a local institution” not only helps putting the camp in a “prosperous condition,” but also facilitates the flow of miners who “called upon the judge” and Bones in order to see Pinkey. 431 Given the frequency and carefully constructed caliber of ‘gentle’-men callers at the Preston residence, it is only a matter of time before an intra-species match is made and the reproduction of bio-cultural capital commences.

As painfully obvious as Bones’ instrumentality in the camp’s collective pursuit of embodied assets, power, and opportunity for reproduction is in the end, “the matter of ownership” makes it impossible to convict any particular inter-species investor of selfish intent. After all, with timeshared responsibilities and rewards in the form of resources incommensurately allotted for private use, reciprocal returns are not guaranteed. And,

431 Ibid., 127.
without promise of personal profit, timeshares exploited concomitantly repudiate the possibility of egotistical calculation. Benefitting some more than others in sometimes less and sometimes more distinct ways, Bones is communally known and remembered as an asset with no particular use value. He is neither a ‘good hunting dog,’ nor a good retriever; neither a good swimmer nor, one might add, a good matchmaker or a remarkable status symbol. In the end, Bones, while acting as an aid to capital, power, and immortality, can safely and collectively be embraced with disinterest as neither use- nor harmful but simply a more or less “Good Dog!”

*Consecutive Canine Timeshares*

More popular, powerful, and particular than the fractional exploitation of enduring, illiquid capital from intimate timeshared relations with *canis lupus familiaris* was an investment strategy pioneered and perfected by Jack London. Using what conceptionally compares to the modern day fixed period or consecutive lease strategy, London began to mine and extract canine capital on a part time basis with his seminal novel, *White Fang*, in 1906. The consecutive canine lease strategy gives successive users the opportunity to prove themselves worthy of pet property in a limited period of time. Unworthy or unable to care for the canine companion, the dog passes or is passed on to the next contender in the struggle for extended signs of bio-cultural fitness until it has found its perfect and permanent match. Either moving, like Fang and Jerry, from good to bad to best or, like Michael, from the best to the worst to ideal living conditions, frequent references to future possibilities or the final

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432 Harte alludes to Bones’ vague individual utility in detail: “the theory of his being a hunting dog was abandoned ... his qualities as a retriever were for a long time accepted ... his aquatic reputation faded also,” ibid., 122.
human family allow the latter to incrementally accumulate bio-cultural capital in their physical absence, off duty, and, most importantly, while engulfed in intra-species affairs. In fact, as is the case in White Fang and the first of London’s two-part narrative of Irish terriers Jerry of the Islands and Michael, Brother of Jerry, the building of bio-cultural capital commences even before the ultimate owners – all committed couples past or at the cusp of bio-cultural reproduction - enter the scene. As such, the consecutive timeshare strategy facilitates the simultaneous investment in bio-genetic and cultural-memetic bonds, enables individuals to more efficiently accumulate and transmit illiquid capital, and presents the heretofore safest and most powerful use of dogs as a means to capital, power, and survival.

White Fang, the story of an affluent white “chap,” “who got people an’ money,” and who “comes a-buttin’ round the God-forsaken ends of the earth” to earn his bio-cultural salvation and survival through the restoration and continued maintenance of loving and intimate inter-species relations with a wolf-hybrid, begins, five years prior, with the birth of White Fang, son of One Eye and Kiche, the she wolf. The “fiercest” and only survivor of his litter, Fang soon embarks upon his trying journey toward “fearless companionship with man that was ultimately to be his.” In order to fully appreciate the degree of self-improvement, diligence, and deprivation the extension of loving companionship to another species demands, however, Fang first has to fall into the hands of lesser and less loving “gods.”

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433 Bill, the dog-musher, notes in the opening dialogue: “We ain’t got people an’ money an’ all the rest, like him .... What gets me, Henry, is what a chap like this, that’s a lord or something in his own country, and that’s never had to bother about grub or blankets, why he comes a-buttin’ round the God-forsaken ends of the earth – that’s what I can’t exactly see,” Jack London, The Call of the Wild and White Fang (Toronto: Bantam Pathfinder Editions, 1963), 109, emphases mine.
434 London, Call, 149, 171.

The first of Fang’s three consecutive owners is Native American Gray Beaver, a “strong” and “most savage” god, whose relationship with Fang proves “no soil for kindness and affection to blossom in.” Beaver’s lease on Fang is strictly reciprocal. “For the possession of a flesh-and-blood god, he [Fang] exchanged his own liberty. Food and fire, protection and companionship, were some of the things he received from the god. In return he guarded the god’s property, defended his body, worked for him, and obeyed him.” Compliance with the terms of covenant is paid in kind not kindness. Fang toils sledding and receives food, shelter, and protection. He scares away thieves and earns his keep. And when he invests extra effort to protect Gray Beaver’s son from the cowardly attack of a motley bunch of boys, Fang earns extra, i.e. “much meat”, in return. Conversely, defiance of the unwritten contract is punished with blows. Over time, Gray Beaver’s callus but consistent ways teach Fang to serve out of “duty and awe but not love.” Love and gratitude the currency of ‘more disciplined’ and, London suggests, more mature and ‘higher’ gods, given in exchange for (seemingly) selfless acts, is still a thing of Fang’s far future. Gray Beaver, the simple and savage “child-god among … white-skinned ones”, lacks the cultural capital and appropriating capacities needed to have “sounded the deeps of White Fang’s nature and brought up to the surface all manner of kindly qualities.” Having sufficiently established Gray Beaver as bio-culturally inferior to the “the heaven a man’s hand might contain for him”, it is time for Fang to move on (up).

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435 Ibid., 188-189, 198.
436 Ibid., 201.
437 Ibid., 200-201.
439 Ibid., 198.
Albeit white and, the narrative suggests, more mature and powerful than Gray Beaver, Fang’s second owner, Beauty Smith, ranks poorly on the bio-cultural capital score. Biologically speaking, Beauty is decidedly “unbeautiful”: Short, skinny, egg-headed, and wall-eyed, with an atavistic jaw and an apish posture, nature bestowed her bio-genetic riches “niggardly” and parsimoniously on him at best. But contrary to his name, Beauty not only lacks inherited assets, but he is also remarkably unimproved. Fearful, feeble, covetous, and cruel, Beauty has little to no cultural capital to show for himself. An evil, hated, and downright “mad god”, with little to no self-discipline, Beauty is a coward who indulges in the suffering of “creatures weaker than he.” Using his unimproved inter-species relations as an extended signifier of his animality, Beauty becomes, “not a man [but] a beast.” And it is from a “beast[‘s]” white but bio-culturally inferior hands that Weedon Scott delivers “the mangled sled dog” in a decidedly human, rational or “sane rage” to become his third and final owner and “love master.”

Owing to the (avowed) biological and bio-cultural unworthiness of his timeshare predecessors and frequent foreshadowing to the heavenly and fearless companionship of the love god that was, one day, to be Fang’s, Weedon Scott arrives on scene bio-culturally loaded. Tall, smooth-shaven, and vigorous, with alert, “metallic” eyes and reasonably enraged about Beauty’s selfish abuse of Fang for economic, that is, instantaneous and tangible, profit, Scott instantly emerges as the magnanimous epitome of rational or selfless humanity. Weedon Scott lives up to the high bio-cultural credit score deriving from a

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440 Ibid., 219.
441 Ibid.
442 Ibid., 218.
443 “A man’s got his rights. But you’re not a man. You’re a beast,” ibid., 240; 237, 247.
444 Ibid., 237.
mixture of instant timeshare profit and first impression. Determined to “redeem[…] White Fang – or rather, [to] redeem[…] mankind from the wrong it had done”, Scott begins to shower the wolf-hybrid with “human kindness.” As he restores intimate inter-species relations, Scott proves himself willing and able to control his animal self and emerges as master of disinterested love and reason. He is honorable – that is, he strictly and in self-controlled fashion adheres to a code of ethics. He is predictable and master of his emotions. And finally, he is forthright, never changing from a “soft, confidence-inspiring voice … into a roar of wrath”. Under the auspices of one whose embodied capital makes him human, the harrowed hybrid heals physically and emotionally: “This was a god indeed, a love-god, a warm and radiant god, in whose light White Fang’s nature expanded as a flower expands in the sun.”

But White Fang’s human love-god is not, as London leads us to believe an uncommitted bachelor free to invest all his time and energy in the building of inter-species bonds. In fact, it is not until the closing chapters, that London reluctantly reveals that Weedon Scott meets Fang far away from his (private) “domain” and not free of intra-species attachment and responsibilities. Having headed north early on in the short arctic summer to spend the season in the wilderness of Alaska prospecting for gold and, it soon turns out, illiquid (bio-cultural) capital, Scott has left behind his family, his father and mother, his

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445 Following the logical progression of growing capital from what London depicts as bioculturally compromised “child-god” to culturally unimproved “mad-god” to “love god.” Ibid., 252, 243.
446 Ibid., 250.
447 Ibid., 254.
448 An interpretation carried to the end in Disney’s 1991 movie version directed by Randal Kleiser, starring Ethan Hawke and Klaus Maria Brandauer. Here, it is Brandauer, who returns south to take on his reproductive responsibilities while Kleiser’s American Adam, Hawke, reunites with his inter-species mate, Fang in the Klondike wilderness.
siblings, and also, a wife and two young children. The narrator casually and unexpectedly illuminates,

There were many persons to be considered. There was Judge Scott, and there was his wife. There were the master's two sisters, Beth and Mary. There was his wife, Alice, and then there were his children, Weedon and Maude, toddlers of four and six.

There was no way for anybody to tell him about these people, and of blood-ties and relationships he knew nothing whatever and never would be capable of knowing.\footnote{As late as chapter twenty-three of twenty-five, London describes the private domain of Fang's love god as one in which many "denizens" have to be considered. These include, his parents, sisters, and last and perhaps least, his wife and children. Ibid., 272.}

The conflict of interest between seemingly selfless inter-species bonds and self-reproductive blood-ties, to which Scott, the narrator rationalizes, does not confess until forced, begins five to six years earlier, with the coinciding but far from coincidental births of Weedon, Fang, and Maude. Born within months of each other – Weedon is six, Fang between five and six, and Maude four years old – Scott's disparate investments in his biological and cultural capital and future begin to gather assets around the same time. Absolved from immediate input by the stipulations of the fixed period or consecutive canine timeshare stratagem, Scott is able to accumulate inter-species capital while off duty and absorbed in inter-species or private affairs. Only after he has bio-genetically reproduced, secured his investment, and laid the foundations for the transmission of acquired capital, does Scott take temporary leave from his private responsibility to perfect his socio-economic and embodied resources. In compensating for Fang's abuse and restoring and "redeeming" the ruined wolf-hybrid and
humankind in a matter of months, Scott reaps the instant rewards of years of inter-species investment.451

Scott, however, not only manages to combine accumulated inter- and intra-species revenue to improve his present assets and standing, but he also uses his inter-species connection to protect his future. After all, it is White Fang, who saves the lives of Scott, his wife Alice, and their two children from the murderous, if misinformed452 intentions of the criminal Jim Hall. As obvious as the causal connection between man-saves-dog and dog-saves-man in return may be, the narrative systematically denies Weedon Scott’s deliberate investment in and deployment of Fang as what Pynchon so candidly called “a provision of survival in a world less fantastick.”

White Fang, like Harte’s story of “A Yellow Dog,” recycles the timeshare strategy to continue the spatial and temporal separation of inter-species investments from direct intra-species returns and maintain the illusion of its protagonist’s disinterested devotion to the welfare of his canine/lupine ward. Having successfully mined the Yukon’s liquid and illiquid resources, Scott Weedon retires from work and returns home. Rather than maintain existing timeshare boundaries and leave his dogmestic partner in exchange for his domestic one, he decides to introduce canis lupus familiaris to his family. What follows is the clash of disparate and rivaling public and private intimacies in territory and time. Fang feels “terrors ... lurk under the traproof of the dwelling.”453 Alice fears Fang and when he “turned to the love-master’s wife. She screamed with fright.”454 And, Scott’s mother, threatened by a bite in

451 “Weedon had set himself the task of redeeming White Fang,” ibid., 252.
452 By virtue of being innocent and without natural enemies, Weedon has no reason to keep a pet other than for the pet’s sake and, it follows, out of genuine disinterest.
453 Ibid., 270.
454 Ibid., 284.
In order to accommodate both intimacies and the associated assets time and space boundaries have to be redrawn. While Weedon first insists that it is Fang, “that’ll have to come inside,” he soon makes him an outdoor dog to whom he attends away from his domestic duties, such as on his daily property patrols on horseback.456 “White Fang was not a house dog, nor was he permitted to sleep in the house.” 457 With his timeshare duties remapped and meticulously maintained and the causal connection between canine capital and bio-cultural survival superficially severed, it has to be another party who enables the former to benefit the latter. Sure enough, it is between him [Fang] and Alice, the master’s wife, there existed a secret. Each night, after Sierra Vista had gone to be [and retired from public duty], she arose and let in White Fang to sleep in the big hall. . . . [And] each morning, early she slipped down and let him out before the family was awake.458

On a night like this, White Fang detects, attacks, and kills Jim Hall before he can level his misguided revenge and eliminate Scott’s clan, dissolve his embodied riches, and vanquish his bio-cultural future. As much as Scott’s intimate inter-species companion and companion capital directly benefits his life and power, any attempt to charge him with the deliberate deployment of the dog in his interest – or anything but disinterest - must fail. After all, our primary investor in bio-cultural capital does not authorize Fang’s presence in the house. In

455 Ibid., 266.
456 Ibid., 270.
457 Ibid., 288. Note that it is a secret not between Fang and his mistress but the more distant ‘master’s wife’.
458 Ibid., 288.

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fact, Scott’s rigorous adherence to timeshare rules specifically prohibits the dog’s personal, private, off duty use. In Scott’s ignorance and Alice’s secret, then, lies the compromise that salvages his inter-species bond from the realm of egotistical calculation and prevents the loss or deflation of the god’s embodied capital.459

Property Protection, Brand Identity and Citizenship

Upon its completion in October of 1905, London sold White Fang to Outing Magazine for $7,419.20 (ten cents per word). The author’s earnings more than doubled when London began to receive royalties from the Macmillan edition, published one year later, in 1906.460 Confirmed and encouraged in his laborious use of man’s best friend as a technology of self, social belonging, and source of bio-cultural capital and survival by popular demand, London’s writing takes a decidedly political turn. Minimally elaborating on the dos of animal treatment as an extended signifier of his humanity, he further complicates the don’ts of inter-species interaction as an extended signifier of animality and race and inhumanity and class. London’s last novels, Jerry of the Islands and Michael, Brother of Jerry, - backdrop this attempt to “constitute [him]self simultaneously with and against others as an agent capable of judgment about what is just and unjust” by judging what is real and unreal, authentic and counterfeit (or staged) embodied capital.461

461 Jerry and Michael were written in 1915 and posthumously published in 1917. Engin F. Isin’s definition of “being political” is helpful here. Isin suggests that “Being Political is not about politics. It is about citizenship and otherness as conditions of politics. It assumes an ontological difference between politics and the political. Being political, among all other ways of being, means to constitute oneself simultaneously with and against others as an
As much as the story of *White Fang* the wolf is about Scott Weedon’s self-transformation into a bio-culturally rich and reproductive human being, *Jerry of the Islands,* ostensibly the story of an Irish Terrier’s South Pacific odyssey and deliverance into the loving arms of Villa and Harley Kennan, is about the Kennans’ and, arguably, Jack and Charmian London’s, timeshared accumulation of illiquid capital for the sake of social standing and survival. As in Fang, Jerry’s journey takes him through a series of short-term or fixed-period owners in search of the ‘real thing’ – that is, embodied and naturally disinterested or authentic capital. Each of his owners or temporary *dogmestic* partners is, true to the dictums of the timeshare trope, pre-reproductive, single, widowed, or post-reproductive, and, it follows, without intra-species attachment, ‘on duty,’ and able to dedicate themselves to the best of their (‘biologically limited’) ability to their inter-species companion. In the end, the cumulative interest of Jerry’s past cultural-memetic bonds is harvested by (the ‘racially superior’) Villa and Harley Kennan, a globe-trotting couple whose intimately nurtured bio-genetic interests are saved and capital, power, and survival secured through their seemingly disinterested inter-species alliance.

Whereas *White Fang* only rudimentarily associates just and unjust animal treatment with authentic and inauthentic capital, appropriating capacities, and “race,” Jerry riggs up inter-species don’ts as an extended signifier of timeless animality.462 Set up like a case study, the novel introduces us to five consecutive canine time-sharers from one location, the South Pacific islands. The subjects vary in age, socio-economic status, and bio-cultural riches and agent capable of judgment about what is just and unjust. Citizenship and otherness are then really not two different conditions, but two aspects of the ontological condition that makes politics possible,” Isin, *Being Political,* x.

462 While Gray Beaver may only be capable of reciprocal self-restraint, it is Anglo-American Beauty Smith, whose bio-cultural lack of self-restraint and ‘beauty’ casts him as an absolute animal. See London, *The Call,* 240-245.
range from children to geriatrics, from slaves to chieftains, and from infantile simpletons to mature intellectuals. Seemingly spanning the spectrum of New Hebrides or Vanuatu existence, the novel, under the guise of objectivity, observes inter-species behavior under time-share formatted conditions. Each of Jerry's five consecutive black owners, having either completed or not yet embarked on intra-species affairs, are placed 'on duty' and given the opportunity to demonstrate their bio-cultural riches, humanity, and equality in bouts of intense inter-species intimacy.

Throughout the novel their capacities are compared to and contrasted with Jerry's initial, white owners: the Haggins and Captain Van Horn. Despite a gradual increase in their ability to embody capital, the gamut of black ambassadors and, the novel implies, the black "race" as a whole, falls short of demonstrating the degree of self-improvement necessary to go "unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate competence." As a result, their embodied capital, rather than appear artless and authentic, remains the artful and inauthentic product of egotistical calculation, that is, the apex of mere animality. Lacking the cunning to uphold the illusion of disinterested recruitment of allies across species lines, they ultimately fail to hold on to their dog as the key to immortality. Unable to make economically and, it follows, ecologically sustainable decisions, the boon of reproduction falls on Harley and Villa Kennan, a nomadic white couple, whose economic and bio-cultural affluence puts them beyond the categorical calls of (inter-species) "duty" and (intra-species) leisure. In no need to prove themselves and "no hurry" to settle down and reproduce, their seemingly disinterested inter-species attachment secures their humanity and preserves their lives.

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Setting the stage and standard for London’s observations on the authenticity of black bio-cultural capital and humanity (or alleged lack thereof) is Jerry’s first official owner, the New Yorker Van Horn, Captain on the Arangi, a sixty foot “recruiting” vessel that transports contracted and returning “cannibal” laborers between the Islands and the U.S. south.465 One of two white men on board the 79-soul schooner, Van Horn, albeit dressed like a black, stands out. He is a “handsome man and a striking man” with the outward appearance of “a Holland Dutchman [who] stepped out of a Rembrandt frame”.466 Of course, Van Horn’s looks betray inner beauty and bio-cultural capital. He treats Jerry like a son, “listen to your father,” vocally praises him, “snuggled him closer in his arm with a caress of his free hand,” engages in “veritable [inter-species] love feast[s], and vows to “always be good to you and love you for ever and for ever.”467

True to his vow, while conscious and master of his mind and animality, Van Horn succumbs to unimproved, selfish, intra-species needs only when under the spell of malaria-induced deliria. He then withdraws from public duty, retreats to his private quarters below deck, and “babbl[ing] maniacally” not only “brushe[s] away” his inter-species companion, but flings “him violently against the side of the bunk,” reminiscing on his long-lost intra-species and reproductive past.468 He fantasizes about his wife and “lovely daughter”, who unexpectedly died in a streetcar accident in Harlem.469 “Both dead,” he sobs before he regains consciousness, “recogniz[es]” Jerry, and again allows him to intimately nestle in his

465 Ibid., 9.
466 Ibid., 13.
467 Ibid., 29, 12, 31.
468 Ibid., 53-54.
469 Ibid., 54.

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armpit. Van Horn’s unconscious intra-species reveries have a dual purpose. On the one hand, they illuminate his ability to harness his reproductive self-interest whenever conscious. On the other hand, they seem to show, once again, that with sufficient self-control the total separation of disinterested public and interested private spheres is humanly possible.

Unlike the disease-stricken and physiologically compromised Van Horn, blacks, beginning with the returning, single youth Lerumie, are, even with fully functioning faculties, unable engage disinterestedly in inter-species relations. Powerless against Van Horn and the white regime he represents, Lerumie, who “regarded Jerry in terms of food and vengeance that were identical”, attempts to take revenge by proxy. As a viable means to hurt Van Horn, he kicks the dog, laughs at his pain, throws him over board and finally punts him, full of uncontrolled “pent rage and hatred”, over the rail and into the sea.471

After both Van Horn and Lerumie die in Bashti’s tribe’s treacherous attack on the Arangi, Jerry falls into the hands of Lamai, another twelve year-old boy. Lamai, albeit unimproved and barely straddling the line between animal and human, shows bio-cultural promise. He belongs to the most menial families in the tribe and lives like a “litter of puppies” in “an animal lair” that he shares with a “spawn of four younger brothers and sisters”.472 A product of his environment, Lamai cannot help but treat Jerry inconsiderately. Following his inner call for company and immature drive for immediate satisfaction, he asserts his ownership over the dog with a forceful blow to the head rather than diplomacy.

470 Ibid., 55.
471 Ibid., 60, 87.
472 Ibid., 94.
Similarly, it is selfish “want” not selfless devotion to the dog’s welfare that prompts him to steal Jerry from the chief cannibal’s live pantry shortly after.\textsuperscript{473}

As bio-culturally disadvantaged as lowly Lamai may be, under the socializing influence of the dog he learns and improves. Smothering the dog with love, Lamai is oblivious to Jerry’s most immediate needs. Only after dehydration causes the canine to “flounder[…] and f[all]” does Lamai “tentatively guess[…]” his want for water and provides.\textsuperscript{474} It does not take long before “[i]deas beget ideas. Lamai had learned how astonishingly thirsty Jerry had been. This engendered the idea that he might be equally hungry.”\textsuperscript{475}

Lamai’s development, however, is arrested by his “worthless” parents.\textsuperscript{476} Lamai’s mother is “against him [Jerry]” and, it follows, unable to conceptualize that the cultural capital the inter-species camaraderie bestows upon her son may outweigh the dog’s cash cost. Lamai’s father, on the other hand, is simply too lazy to care and work to better the bio-cultural future of his own and his offspring.\textsuperscript{477} Before long, Lamai’s mother surrenders her son’s temporary dog and, with it, his means to self-improvement. As a direct result of his parents’ bio-cultural poverty and inability to invest long-term, London suggests, Lamai is determined to remain “no Skipper, no Mister Haggin [but …] that inferior man-creature, a nigger.”\textsuperscript{478}

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{473} Ibid., 93.
\item\textsuperscript{474} Ibid., 95.
\item\textsuperscript{475} Ibid., 96.
\item\textsuperscript{476} “In the end, after an harangue upon the worthlessness of Lamai’s father, she [Lamai’s mother] went back to sleep,” ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{477} London, \textit{Jerry}, 95, 94.
\item\textsuperscript{478} Ibid., 98.
\end{itemize}

Save the racial component, the fate of Lamai closely echoes that of Stephen Crane’s working class child in his 1901 short story, “A Dark Brown Dog.”479 Like Lamai, Crane’s child’s short-lived ownership of the little dark brown dog begins with “a blow upon the head.”480 Initially “an unimportant dog, with no value” Crane’s canine soon becomes a “valuable thing” in the child’s eyes and, like Jerry, is taken prisoner or “captive.”481 Again the child’s recognition of the dog’s immaterial value to himself defines the toddler as decidedly more precocious than its parents. The family makes “a great row,” holds “council,” and after the father concludes against the will of his wife “that it would amaze and anger everybody if such a dog were allowed to remain, he decided that it should be so.”482 In the presence of his canine companion, the child, much like Lamai, thrives culturally. It establishes a “notable degree of intimacy”, grows into a “guardian and friend,” and later “a knight” that “protects” his ward from injustice and inhumanity.483 With the child, “the dog prospered.”484 Their progress, however, is again abruptly arrested by the depravity of a parent. Intoxicated and impaired, the child’s father thinks it “a fine thing to throw the dog out of the window” of the fifth story flat.485 His savage act dashes not only the child’s dreams of, but also his own unrecognized opportunity for, bio-cultural betterment.

Whereas the ability to recognize and authentically appropriate capital beyond the material varies from individual to individual independent of their economic standing or class...

480 Crane, “A Dark-Brown Dog,” 481.
481 Ibid., 482.
482 Ibid., 483.
483 “He [the dog] did not achieve any notable degree of intimacy with the other members of the family. He had no confidence in them,” ibid., 484, 486.
484 Ibid., 484.
485 Ibid., 486.
in Crane and, as I shall show below, London, the latter's idea of race is much less permeable. Able to embrace the dog for immediately apparent, selfish reasons, only inter-species relations in Jerry of the Islands function as tokens of interested, inauthentic, and illegitimate embodied capital and extended signifiers of an inescapable and ultimately detrimental animality.

The third of Jerry's five fixed-period owners is Ango, the tribe's high priest and a powerful member of the community. Like his pre-reproductive predecessors Lerumie and Lamai, Ango, albeit at a reproductive age, is, by virtue of his profession, single. Unattached and affluent, Ango, in theory, is able to dedicate his time and considerable resources to the nurture of his canine property. In praxis, however, he fails to see past Jerry's immediate use and nutritional value. He first exploits the dog as pawn in his effort to recruit another novitiate and gain power over Lamai. After that, Jerry becomes Ango's "kai-kai"—that is, something he is bound to eat. But, his attempt to consume the dog is thwarted by Bashti, "the first in power", and Jerry's fourth temporary owner.

True to timeshare tradition, Bashti, too, is single. Having, lived so long, and so luckily, that he had watched the waning to extinction of all the vigorous appetites and desires. He had known wives and children, and the keen-edge of youthful hunger. He had seen his children grow to manhood and womanhood and become fathers and grandfathers, mothers and grandmothers. But having known woman, and love, and fatherhood, and the belly-delights of eating, he had passed on beyond.

Food? Scarcely did he know its meaning, so little did he eat. Hunger, that bit him like

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486 London fully detaches economic from bio-cultural capital. During the travels of Michael, Brother of Jerry, he identifies various types of inhumane men staging their inauthentic capital for economic profit in high places.

487 London, Jerry, 103, 106.

a spur when he was young and lusty, had long since ceased to stir and prod him. He ate out of a sense of necessity and duty, and cared little for what he ate.\textsuperscript{488}

Having stilled and exhausted his selfish reproductive drives, appetites and desires, Bashti, unlike his predominately non-human predecessors, is in the unique position to further his bio-cultural capital by acting disinterestedly toward his inter-species acquisition. But even under presumably perfect environmental circumstances, Bashti is unable to see in Jerry anything but an instrument to capital, power, and survival. Eager to improve the courage and strength of Somo dogs, and, by implication, the reproductive quality and rate of his kin in his “experiment[…] in primitive eugenics”, he schemes to use Jerry as a “seed dog.”\textsuperscript{489} It is for this purpose that he protects his life by making him “taboo.”

But Bashti underestimates Ango’s selfish will to power. Determined to have his dog and eat it, too, Ango, who “had no softness for Jerry”, plots to have the dog killed in spite of the taboo.\textsuperscript{490} He plays taboo against taboo, has Jerry eat sacred eggs, and almost succeeds in his endeavor. Again, Bashti interferes. Instead of agreeing to sacrifice the dog, the chief senses revenge and passes the dog into the hands of his fifth and final black owner: Nalasu, a lame and blind sixty-year old Somo resident.

Nalasu is a “strange old” hermit, who “lived by himself, … had no friends …[and] no visitors.”\textsuperscript{491} Like Lerumie, Lamai, Ango, and Bashti, he is single. More specifically, he is a post-reproductive and widowed single without surviving offspring. “His wife was long since

\textsuperscript{488} Emphases mine. It is important to note that Bashti does not conquer his animal instincts by ways of will power and self-control. Instead, they fade away from use. London, \textit{Jerry}, 108.
\textsuperscript{489} Ibid., 137, 104.
\textsuperscript{490} Ibid., 106.
\textsuperscript{491} Ibid., 124.
dead, and his three sons, not yet married, ... had lost their heads” in the bush. 492 Surpassing his predecessors, Nalasu invests resources and time in his only companion. He satisfies Jerry’s basic needs and provides him with food, water, and shelter. Furthermore, he proves a “rigid disciplinarian who insisted on training Jerry for long hours.” 493 And yet, he does so in a self-controlled and kind fashion never issuing but the “gentlest of chidings”. 494 Nalasu’s “kindness” earns him the “absolute faithfulness and loyalty” of Jerry. 495 And yet, it is not of disinterested inter-species love that Nalasu maintains Jerry. It is, we are quick to find out, “[f]or his own special purpose he had need of a dog.” 496

Nalasu trains his dog for combat. Old, blind, and without intra-species alliance, he relies on his canine companion for physical protection from the Anno clan. The Annos, upper village dwellers, who seek to collect a blood-debt incurred when Nalasu’s oldest son took the life of one of theirs, are now after his. With concerted effort, Jerry succeeds in securing the old man’s immediate biological survival. But in the all too pressing presence of a “special purpose” motivating Nalasu’s inter-species kindness, and the obvious absence of authentic or disinterested love on his part, none can be reaped in return. “Love him [Nalasu] he [Jerry] did not and could not.” 497 And without Jerry’s love as a token of Nalasu’s enduring accumulated cultural capital, neither memetic nor bio-genetic survival can be guaranteed. This privilege of memetic immortality and power London reserves for the “great white
gos' who, because of their capacity to (seemingly) unconditional inter-species love, continue to live on in a canine mind that could "not forget". 498

Bashti, however, recognizes Nalasu's embodied capital and comparative matrimonial fitness within the tribe. And, in lieu of a free matrimonial market, he arranges for the arrival of brides to facilitate his reproduction and "make the tribe strong."

Of what worth are your courage and cunning, when you have no seed to make your courage and cunning live again? ... You must marry so that your courage and cunning live after you. 499

The day that hails the arrival of intra-species intimates, the fulfillment of Bashti's reproductive scheme, and the end of Nalasu's intimate "on duty" ownership also marks the revenge of the Arangi. In the man-of-war's attack on the black village Nalasu is killed, Bashti's "experiments in primitive eugenics" forever frustrated, and Jerry freed to find his final and permanent home. 500

For the first time it is Jerry's turn to choose an owner rather than being tied and transferred, as a perpetual prisoner. The choice is limited but obvious. Pulled aboard the schooner Ariel and saved from drowning, Jerry "elect[s] to belong, ... to love and serve" the yacht's captain and his wife, "Husband-man" and "Wife-woman" Harley and Villa Kennan. 501 The Kennans, unlike Jerry's prior, on-duty timeshare holders, have spent the previous years off-duty and in "no hurry," "leisurely" trotting the globe in their private yacht and only investing in their intra-species bonds and marriage. 502 As one-sided as their

498 Ibid., 127.
499 Ibid., 130.
500 Ibid., 137.
501 Ibid., 146, 143. Jack London nicknamed Charmian "Mate-Woman."
502 Ibid., 148-49.
investment in bio-genetic rather than cultural-memetic capital has heretofore been, as preferred shareholders, they are instantly entitled to years of inter-species capital accumulated by their predecessors in their absence.

Blissfully ignorant of the dog’s value and skills, Villa and Harley are able to embrace him, not as an asset or tool, but, London suggests, unconditionally, and, it follows, authentically. To the Kennans, Jerry becomes “Sing Song Silly.” Jerry’s nickname accentuates the dog’s ostensible uselessness and the couple’s displayed disinterest. Loved disinterestedly, Jerry is able to reciprocate their “love.” In returning love for love, the dog operates, singularly, as an extended signifier of the Kennans’ embodied capital, humanity, and race. The narrator insists that Jerry does not offer his allegiance for food or shelter. Instead, “[h]e lived for love … [and] would … have died gladly for love.”503

Already a powerful, if unacknowledged, agent and tool in the promotion of the Kennans’ bio-cultural interest, Jerry takes it a step further. He saves their lives and secures transmission and future of embodied Kennan capital. In doing so, the companion canine turns from a ‘mere’ metaphor into a practical lifeline. When Villa and Harley withdraw into the wilderness of the Malaitan bush to commit the “dark deed” of self-interested, bio-genetic reproduction, Jerry prevents their murder at the hands of the criminal Makawao, a “bad fella boy any amount.”504 Sing Song Silly’s transition from unacknowledged capital investment to full-fledged life insurance earns him the title of useful or “Good boy” and allows him to join the ranks of fictional aides and abettors in the human struggle for bio-cultural survival.505

503 Ibid., 148.
504 Ibid., 156, 161.
505 Ibid., 158.
Gone to the Dogs: Interspecies Bonds and the Building of Bio-Cultural Capital in America, 1835 –
Present.

Sadly, London’s use of Jerry as a dog, timeshared with a series of self-serving black
owners, ossifies imagined bio-cultural limits and denies the embodiment of authentic canine
capital by color wholesale. While London acknowledges different degrees of self-discipline in
the ‘objects’ of his pseudo-anthropological/fictional case study, he identifies them either
with levels of exhaustion or of calculatingly egoistical “cunning.” Ultimately, black
engagement with pet dogs, he maintains, serves to enable and satisfy an uncontrollable
animal self – be it short or long term as in Lerumie’s thirst for revenge or Nalasu’s provision
for protection, respectively. Without the biogenetic capacity to gain absolute control over the
youthful or aged animal within, he conveys, they lack the unadulterated and, ‘logically,’
incorruptible self-discipline that makes us human.

In identifying black inter-species intimacy with inauthenticity motivated by animality
and white inter-species intimacy with untainted disinterest driven by humanity, London
restricts ethnic minority access to the canine timeshare as an increasingly popular and
commanding tool to capital and power and brands it as a white “provision for survival in a
world less fantastick.” London’s method, as egoistical as it may be, proves gainful. It
enhances the value of canine capital by limiting shareholder profits to a select number of
investors. At the same time, it effectively eliminates otherwise able competitors from the
race for bio-cultural and bio-political fitness, by constructing a “natural” deficiency.

To tighten his white, working class hold on the cutting edge product and prevent its
depreciation, however, London had to make its authentic acquisition possible across class
lines while safeguarding it from knock offs. London did not waste any time. Six months after
writing Jerry of the Islands, he completed his last novel, Michael, Brother of Jerry to protect his	imeshared product and the capital and power it generated. Michael follows the familiar
format. Separated from his original owner, Michael passes through the hands of several single, fixed period or consecutive timeshare holders en route to the Kennans, whose survival he secures. As before, his canine timeshare strategy fomented by recurring references to ideal past and future owners, facilitates the Kennans’ dual/simultaneous investment in and maximization of intra-species and inter-species intimacy and capital by proxy and guarantees its reproductive future. Whereas Jerry of the Islands focuses on animal use and abuse as a mark of bio-cultural inauthenticity, animality and race, Michael problematizes the travesty of staged inter-species bliss in early twentieth-century animal-turns and training for economic ends as a sign of runaway inhumanity across class lines. Up the economic and down the socio-cultural latter, Michael’s exploration of U.S. strata insists that counterfeit bio-cultural capital cloaking mankind’s will to power and survival in inter-species intimacy lurks everywhere, especially in the realm of supposedly disinterested science. This time around, however, London does not identify the drive with animality. Instead, he calls it - “controlled intelligence,” a form of calculatingly considerate behavior that is simply too and, therefore, in – human. In the end, it is precisely by situating the ideal (humanity) between lack (animality) and excess (inhumanity) – or inauthenticity by inability and inauthenticity by skill – that London opens opportunity for the successful acquisition of bio-cultural capital to all members of the mean.

506 He also passes through the hands of married animal trainers who only pretend to be on inter-species duty but dedicate their lives to the pursuit of economic capital and intra-species intimates.
507 In attacking clinical science and reason, London echoes Mark Twain, whose 1904 A Dog’s Tale condemns vivisection as the calculatingly egoistical abuse of man’s best friend in the guise of reason.
508 London, Michael, 127-128. For a discussion of the phrases calculatingly considerate and innocently inconsiderate, please see introduction.
Michael's odyssey through the socio-economic and moral hierarchies of white U.S. society begins, like his brother's, with his sale and subsequent theft. After Mr. Haggins sells the terrier to Captain Kellar on the Eugenie, Michael falls into the thieving hands of Steward Dag Doughtry. Doughtry, who steals the dog for its cash value, "he was a valuable dog ... worth twenty pounds," quickly finds himself 'ennobled' by his four-legged asset. 509 Predisposed to self-disciplined disinterest and, logically, easily improved, the perpetually poor, working class steward responds well to the dog's uplifting influence: "[b]y nature there was no cruelty in him," and, before long, the "ennoblement ... Michael had worked" causes Dag to love "out of sheer-heart love that could recognize no price too great to pay." 510

Dag's ostensibly natural and unpremeditated investment in animals and people and, by implication, cultural capital, power, and survival, of course, proves profitable long term. With Michael in tow, he joins an ancient mariner on the Mary Turner, a vessel chartered by three "money sharks" for the purpose of treasure hunting. 511 As "men whose souls know only money ... [who] live and breathe for money", the lives of Grimshaw, the wheat famer, Simon Nishikanta, the Armenian Jew, and one Captain Doane are cut short. 512 After the undisciplined Simon shoots and kills an "unoffending" whale calf in a "violent rage" nature selects the short-term investors aboard the Mary Turner for destruction. 513 Mother whale attacks, the ship sinks, and only Dag and his "Ark", filled with a cat, two dogs, a cockatoo, a

509 London, Michael, 12.
510 Ibid., 12-13, 62.
511 Ibid., 83.
512 Ibid., 84.
513 Ibid., 97, 79.
“Chinaman,” a “kinky-haired [leprous] black” by the name of Kwaque, the ancient mariner, and Dag himself survive.  

To support his dependents and, perhaps, his habit – Dag is interested only in beer not treasures – the steward begins to use Michael for twenty-minute animal turns. It is on stage that Michael catches the covetous eyes of the “passionately selfish” Dr. Walter Emeritt Emory and the controlled, intelligent, and cruel animal trainer Percival Grunsky aka Harry Del Mar. In the eyes of the latter, Dag’s inter-species spectacle signifies liquid cash. He had visions that were golden. They took on the semblance of yellow, twenty-dollar gold pieces, of yellow-backed paper bills of the government stamping of the United States, of bank books, and of rich coupons ripe for the clipping – and all shot through the flashings of the form of a rough-coated Irish terrier, on a galaxy of brilliantly-lighted-stages, mouth open, nose upward to the drops, singing, ever singing, as no dog had ever been known to sing in the world before.  

In order to own Michael, Emory selfishly sacrifices the naïve Dag and Kwaque, his ward, and sends them to the pest house. His ownership, however, is cut short by the equally avaricious and “two-faced” Del Mar, who steals the dog the same day out of Emory’s barn. En route to his mentor, the “scientific and antiseptic” dog trainer Harris Collins, who “reigned in an animal hell which he had created and made lucrative”, Del Mar, like other

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514 Ibid., 113.  
515 Ibid., 59, 126.  
516 Under Del Mar’s “unfalteringly cherubicness of expression [Dag sensed] a steelness of cruelty that was abysmal in that it was of controlled intelligence,” ibid., 127-28.  
517 Ibid., 139.
short-term investors, dies an untimely death.\textsuperscript{518} Michael falls into the hands of Collins, who, unable to establish an inter-species bond, fails to find out what the dog can do and extract his worth. Embittered, Collins sells Michael to one Wilton Davis, his sixth consecutive owner, for twenty dollars cash.\textsuperscript{519} “[N]otorious among trained-animal men for his cruelty to dogs”, Davis returns the dog after inflicting considerable cruelty because he “sings too much.”\textsuperscript{520} With his cash value revealed, Collins resells the dog to Jacob Henderson, another, more “neutral sort of creature”, for $2000.\textsuperscript{521} Michael remains Henderson’s “prisoner” until the latter falls ill.\textsuperscript{522} For the duration of Henderson’s illness, the dog spends with the “puny man-creature” Mulchacy, the epitome of calculated cruelty.\textsuperscript{523} After three months, Michael returns to the stage with Henderson and is spotted by Harley and Villa Kennan. They purchase the dog for an undisclosed price, and return home to reunite him with his brother. Shortly upon his arrival at the ranch, Michael manages to save Harley from the murderous hands of a robber and secures the couple’s bio-cultural future.

Again, London uses the familiar canine time-share format to enable the Kennans’ simultaneous accumulation of bio-genetic and cultural-memetic capital. Albeit off duty and engulfed in intra-species affairs, the Kennans ultimately reap years of inter-species credit by virtue of direct association with a “world” of authentic bio-cultural capital and unconditional inter-species intimacy. This world of timeshared innocence and bliss is composed of the upper-class plantation-owner and dog-breeder, Mister Haggin of Meringue, the middle-class

\textsuperscript{518} Ibid., 155, 167, 157.
\textsuperscript{519} Haggin, Kellar, Doughtry, Emory, Del Mar, Collins, Davis, Henderson, Mulchacy, Kennan.
\textsuperscript{520} London, \textit{Michael}, 208, 220.
\textsuperscript{521} Ibid., 222.
\textsuperscript{522} Ibid., 224.
\textsuperscript{523} Ibid., 230. “Listen to reason [in the form of cutting off claws flush with flesh, knocking out teeth, and ripping animals’ noses], won’t you?” Ibid., 237.

Captain Kellar of the *Eugenie*, and, finally, its lowest-standing and bio-culturally richest member, a steward by the name of Dag Doughtry. Of course, all three are on inter-species duty and either of uncertain marital status or single. Mr. Haggin’s wife, if he has one goes unmentioned. Captain Kellar is unattached and Dag Doughtry has, “No wife or family.”

While Haggin’s and Kellar’s terms of inter-species duty and investment are short, Dag aka *Steward* spends (as his name foretells) considerable time and effort nurturing his inter-species affairs and bio-cultural assets. Benign “[b]y nature” his knack for self-restraint reverberates in his seemingly selfless devotion to the unrelated black Kwaque, a seventeen year-old “e stray” or domesticated animal strayed from his owner, who seemed “more unlike all other men than most men are unlike one another ... [and] had all the seeming of a big-bellied black spider.” To financially support his habit of giving across color and, London insinuates, species lines, Dag seduces Michael “with all the base intent of betrayal.” It quickly becomes clear, however, that Dag does not intend to use the dog for immediately apparent selfish gains. Instead, he gainfully employs him as a trick dog with whose assistance he is able to sustain an ever-growing number of bio-genetically unrelated dependents or, what he calls, “expensive luxuries.” After salvaging three more members from the short-lived remains of the treasure-hunting vessel, *Mary Turner*, Dag’s “Ark” comprises not only a leprous, “kinky-

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524 Ibid., 57.
526 Ibid., 13.
527 Ibid., 116.
528 Ibid., 124.
haired black” and a singing dog, but a “Chinaman,” an Ancient Mariner, and a white cockatoo.529

In Dag’s case, the more not only equals the merrier but also the bio-culturally richer. The more cash he earns in collaboration with his canine companion, the more profit he can selflessly pass on to the growing number of animal and human representatives he has taken into his “Abrahamic bosom”.530 And, the more individuals he can support, the more satisfied, self-improved, and rich he appears. Because Steward’s illustrious display of embodied assets and “ennoblement” depend on his dog’s financial aid, Michael becomes invaluable and “ain’t for sale at any price.”531

Despite the overwhelming evidence in favor of calculatingly considerate disinterest with hopes of improved standing and a better chance of sexual reproduction, Steward has to be cleared from blame. He is not only too old and “grizzled” to invest in his dog with the purpose of reproduction, but too simple and sick.532 With senses less keen than the Chinese cook’s, whose “slant eyes had long since noticed it,” Steward misses the fact that he, like Kwaque, has fallen terminally ill with leprosy.533 Not only that, his incapacity to properly read others, detect and, the narrative implies, practice advanced maneuvers of deception renders him ill-equipped for London’s ‘dog-eat-dog’ world. Before long, Steward’s gullibility, good will, and self-restrained humanity render him dog-less, relegate him in the pest-house and, finally, exile him to a pest-colony in the Marquesas. As a definite stranger to egotistical human cunning and devoted to the welfare of his inter-species menagerie until the end of his

529 Ibid., 113. For whom he cares until Ah Moy is deported by U.S. immigration service officials.
530 Ibid., 116.
531 Ibid., 62, 127.
532 Ibid., 133.
533 Ibid., 95.
sexually un-reproductive days, Steward’s embodied assets and inter-species performance prove transparent, sincere, and authentic. He has enough sense to control his animality but lacks the preternatural cunning to deliberately disguise his selfish drives as disinterested and strategically deploy them for personal profit. Suspended between reason and innocence, harnessed animality and untouched in-humanity, Steward practices sustainable utilization and represents an ideal humanity.

In stark contrast to the humane world of Mr. Haggin, Captain Kellar, and Steward, the world of staged inter-species spectacle to which it gives way, is marked and marred by a degree of unsustainable, calculatingly clinical intelligence indicative of in-humanity. Its agents do not simply use dogs to survive and thereby betray an openly selfish animality such as Gray Beaver, Lerumie, Lamai, Ango, Bashti, or Nalasu. Nor do they benefit from their dogmestic partners’ bio-culturally, as an inadvertent side effect of their generous inter-species investment and humanity like Scott, Skipper, and Steward. Instead, the likes of animal trainers Del Mar, Collins, Davis, Henderson and Mulchacy, motivated by their metallic and bio-cultural profit monomania, minimize the ‘loss’ of time, attention, and energy by force. In other words, they coerce the canine and artificially produce the spectacle of “human kindness”.

“Now my boy, times have changed ... I’m going to make an actor out of you, and teach you what’s what.” With these words, Percival Grunsky aka Harry Del Mar, a former juvenile delinquent turned traveling trainer, introduces Michael to the world of animal turns that celebrates inter-species intimacy in the open and condemns the animal other to pain,

534 “Yet here, tonight, we have seen them doing highly trained feats together, ... Human kindness! The power of human kindness!” “The lion and the lamb,” ibid., 225.
535 Ibid., 153.
suffering, and separation behind closed curtains. In separating publicly displayed interspecies intimacy from private dog-detachment, work and duty from leisure and indulgence, Del Mar and his more affluent successors, do not seem to drastically depart from the canine time share method as a means to bio-cultural capital accumulation. After all, Del Mar et al reap their riches from the carefully-timed separation of seemingly self-disciplined (public) affinity from self-serving (private) consanguinity. In public, the trainers and their trainee play and sing together to the tunes of “Marching through Georgia,” “Georgia Camp Meeting,” “Old Kentucky Home” and shower the “Dog Caruso” with “feigned caresses and endearments.” In private and at night, dog friends turn fiends. The ladies-men or “sentimental and doting husband[s] and father[s]” isolate, torture and mutilate Michael at times in the presence of their “menacing” wives - all to cut cost and maximize lucre and power. What distinguishes the new villains from the foes of old, such as the “beast” Beauty Smith and Ango the greedy animal, is not their cold-bloodedness per se, but their “cold blooded insincerity” and consciously “two-faced, two-mannered” conduct. This generation of anti-heroes unmistakably uses their “controlled intelligence” to stage and exploit inter-species altruism as a direct means to capital, power, and survival. On the one hand, their artful acts confirm them in their Kantian humanity as creatures of reason, capable of caging the inner beast. But as reason itself has become the handmaiden of instinct and tool to indulging the inner self, the power conferred by their ability to reason is stripped from them with the loss of their innocence. Disempowered, unfit, and unmarketable,

536 Ibid., 154, 220, 155.
537 Ibid., 157; “The dogs say on their chairs in abject silence with Davis and his wife menacing them to remain silent,” Ibid., 213.
538 London, Call, 240; London, Michael, 155.
539 Ibid., 127.
London forewarns his readers, Grimshaw, Nishikanta, Doane, Del Mar, Collins, Davis, Henderson, Mulchacy and their ilk face a sterile future. The treasure hunters of the Mary Turner as well as Del Mar, whom grammar school girls once called “brownie,” die prematurely.\footnote{Ibid., 155.} Collins is “afraid of his wife”.\footnote{Ibid., 164.} Davis and his wife have little cultural capital to pass on to potential heirs. Henderson remains a perpetual bourgeois bachelor, and Mulchacy, the most scientific of all, emerges as nothing but a “puny man-creature” with little to no bio-cultural capital to transmit.\footnote{Ibid., 230.}

From the “youth god automaton” to the blue-collar worker; from the white-collar business-man to the bourgeois bachelor; and, up the social ladder to the large scale entrepreneur and man of animal science Mulchacy, representatives of ever layer of U.S. society mass-market low-investment knock-offs of precious inter-species capital to uncritical consumers.\footnote{Ibid., 168.} The negative capital they generate collectively threatens the nation’s bio-cultural ruin; or, as London puts it, prompts the disappearance of authentic, embodied riches in a “mysterious Nothingness” or what Virginia Wolf introduced as the “weightlessness” of modernity.\footnote{“All this cruelty he sense without knowing. And he accepted it as a way of life ... as he accepted ... the equally mysterious Nothingness into which had vanished Meringe Plantation and ships and oceans and men and Steward,” ibid., 227.}

But just when Michael begins to accept the world of in(authentic)-humanity as “a way of life,” disinterested inter-species intimacy returns to him in the physical form of Harley and Villa Kennan.\footnote{Ibid., 227.}

Michael jumped from the chair and ran to the woman. He smelled her hand, and smelled her as she patted him. Then, as he recognized her, he went wild. ... No one understood, not even Villa Kennan. But Michael understood. He was looking for that vanished world which had rushed back upon him at sound of his old-time name. If his name could come to him out of Nothingness, as this woman had ... then could all the other things of Tulagi and the Nothingness come to him. ... so might Captain Kellar, and Mister Haggin, and Jerry be there.546

As Michael associates the couple with a “world” of authentic inter-species intimacy, Villa and Harley Kennan become instant beneficiaries of bio-cultural assets that took years to accumulate. What is more important, however, is that their proclaimed failure to understand the scene’s import allows the couple to appropriate said wealth authentically and fully. Avowedly ignorant of the dog’s value as a prosthetic sign of their humanity, they can spend their financial fortune on saving him without seeming to seek profit and, it follows, disinterestedly and innocently. To all outward appearance, they purchase Michael out of selfless love not love of self. In doing so, the Kennans successfully complement their intra-species savings, accumulated in Michael’s absence, with the proper dose of time-shared inter-species capital. Human but not too human, they emerge as ideal specimen: innocent, unwise and, thus, bio-memetically perfect and, as time will tell, immortal.547

But as London carefully recapitulates, in order to acquire and wield authentic embodied capital and power and secure survival long-term, one does not have to be

546 Ibid., 227; A real world that is referred to consistently throughout the novel. See ibid., 21, 155, 209, 227, 242.
547 Compare with Martin et al, Technologies of Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault, 18, discussed in Chapter 1, 5-6. As noted in italics, I maintain that Foucault’s attempt to combine both purity (i.e. innocence) and wisdom in the transformed self is incongruous.
“abominably wealthy” – neither economically nor bio-culturally. In fact, while one’s economic standing does not seem to matter at all, sound appropriating capacities dulled by a certain level of naiveté, unconsciousness, or mental minimalism, seem a preferable if not advantageous trait in the pursuit of bio-cultural perfection and happiness. Steward and the Kennans come from polar opposites of the class spectrum. Steward is poor, uneducated, and relatively unrefined but compensates for his lack of culture or acquired self-restraint with compassion or inborn self-restraint. The Kennans, on the other hand, are affluent and academically cultured globetrotters, whose latent racism (albeit indulged by London) ultimately stands in the way of absolute acquired self-control, innocence, and perfection. Both are beloved by Michael, the four-legged meter of authentic humanity and embodied wealth. But while Michael bears a “wild passion of love” for the perpetually poor, blissfully ignorant, and single Steward, he is unable to develop more than a “great, sober love” for the rich, capital conscious but not openly capital-driven Kennan couple. In the eyes of London’s dog and, it is safe to assume, (London’s) nature in general, Steward outdoes his upper class contestants in the acquisition of authentic companion capital and bio-political fitness.

Companion capital, appropriated by those unconscious of its import, in other words, can become a cutting edge tool to power, improved social standing, and survival regardless.

548 “I’ve been sitting here feeling very grateful for one particular thing .... It is that we are so abominably wealthy,” she concluded,” and implies, wealthy enough to purchase Michael at any cost, London, Michael, 240.
549 Absolute innocence demands disinterest in power. As racism expresses the desire for power and increased survival through demonstrable hierarchies, it is, a form of self-interest and incompatible with innocence.
550 London, Michael, 248. For the capital conscious but not recognizably capital-driven Kennans. It is interesting to note that London does not suggest reproductive intent. As with any potentially reproductive couple, at least semi-conscious self-interest has to be assumed. The Kennan’s, however, do have the children of others under their “aegis,” but they prefer to make a trans-species “quartette” consisting of two humans and their two saved dogs. Ibid., 261-63.
of class and/or origin.\footnote{Steward hails from New York City, the Kennans from the California countryside.} This power of the dog, London insists in the closing chapters of his very last novel, can unite 'humans' beyond state bounds on what he perceived to be his side of the color line. Invested proper, canine companion capital instantly induces the socially marginalized to core values of American identity and culture. Having once more, unexpectedly but no less successfully secured Harley Kennan's power and survival, Jerry and Michael almost die in the attempt to apprehend his attacker, a convicted murderer. Jerry breaks a leg and falls behind. Michael is about to be strangled when an Italian immigrant intervenes. Enrico Piccolomini is a simple man, who, in 'instinctively' siding with the dog, takes the step toward ideal humanity and American group member- and citizen-ship that "gave him wealth as well as material for conversation to the end of his days."\footnote{That is, in supposedly heeding cultural capital that is already embodied and, hence, instinctive, natural and authentic or biological capital. London, \textit{Michael}, 259.} In overpowering the fugitive and befriending the dog, "I am his friend and am tying the man," Enrico establishes inter-species relations that earn him $3000 cash and access to the American dream.\footnote{Ibid., 261.}

So I do not work for Mister Kennan any more. I am a rich man. Three thousand dollars, all mine, from the Government [...]. \textit{Just because I kicked the man in the head who was like a mountain lion! It is fortune. It is America. And I am glad that I have left Italy and come to chop wood on Mister Kennan's ranch. And I start this hotel in Glen Ellen with the three thousand dollars. I know there is large money in the hotel business. When I was a little boy, did not my father have a hotel in Napoli? I have now two daughters in high school. Also I own an automobile.}\footnote{Ibid., 263.}
Not because he kicks a man in the head, but because he taps into *dogmestic* partnership as a trusted indicator of innate or biological quality, kinship, and belonging, does subaltern Enrico Piccolomini then, as dog whisperer Cesar Millan now, gain the necessary embodied capital to qualify for group membership, socio-economic support, life, and reproduction.\(^{555}\) In siding with the canine ambassador of nature, he unconsciously demonstrates his rational humanity, willingness, and power to dominate the animal self and transforms himself into a “rich” man. His unconscious compliance with American core values renders short and long-term rewards. He instantly earns 3,000 dollars in liquid cash from the state. Moreover, his behavior merits long-term recognition and support from the social group at large. As a group member he is able to gain financial independence, open a business, and transmit his embodied capital to two daughters, whose cultural assets he is able to enhance over time by sending them to school. In the end, Enrico Piccolomini is a re-made man, whose persistent socio-economic success, epitomized by his ownership of an automobile, is spawned by an accidental encounter with, or accidental access to, a consecutive timeshare dog.

Precisely because the canine timeshare proved such a potent tool for the propulsion of subaltern selves from the margin into the center of power, London’s imagined, white monopoly was short-lived. To begin with, the use of inter-species intimacy as a nationally backed liability substantially rested on a tradition that, as chapters one and two have shown, is as profoundly white as it is black. Not to mention, it ultimately revolves around a key-player, whose known color-blindness makes possible the authentic acquisition and display of embodied capital for improved standing, survival, and reproduction by all of mankind as

\(^{555}\) And inter-species alliances more generally.

long as they manage to keep inter- and intra-species intimacies ‘real’ - that is, causally disconnected.

Sixteen years after London's attempt to chart America's class and color lines and secure his white, working class privilege by removing authentic inter-species intimacy from the investment portfolios of those who lacked and those who exceeded his expectations of self-control, African American author and activist Langston Hughes (1902-67) reclaimed the canine timeshare. In 1934, Hughes published The Ways of White Folks, a collection of fourteen short stories that included a vignette entitled “Little Dog.” “Little Dog,” written and copyrighted in the fall of 1933, uses a slightly modified version of the canine timeshare that allows Hughes to endow his black working class protagonist with the necessary self-restraint, rational humanity, matrimonial marketability, and reproductive power to challenge white predominance from within.

Cooperative Canine Timeshares

“...she was aware a long time of his feet approaching.

Coming up, up, up bringing bones for her dog.”

Less than a year after literary critic Sterling A. Brown (1901-89) and sociologist Edward Franklin Frazier (1894-1962) added new kindling to the case against the salient belief in black biological inferiority and the ensuing stereotype “that white blood means asceticism [that is, bio-culturally improved humanity] and Negro blood means unbridled lust [that is,

556 The former marked by animality and race, the latter by inhumanity regardless of class lines.

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un-improvable non-rational animality," Hughes recruited man’s best friend as a rotating or cooperative timeshare to bespeak the bio-cultural fitness of ‘black folks’. Unlike the fractional or consecutive canine timeshares of earlier works, Hughes’ rotating or cooperative canine timeshare gives each shareholder equal opportunity access to prime times, equivalent responsibilities, and identical rewards in their interaction with the canine companion. As such, an inter-species companion cared for on a cooperative, contractual basis illuminates in greater detail the flow of transposable capital, allows for direct comparison, and offers greater accountability than the canine investment versions heretofore discussed. It does not, as Harte’s yellow dog, augment the collective assets of a group while giving select subsidiaries greater chances at the spoils. After all, not every miner of Rattler’s Ridge gets to visit Pinkey Preston in her private home. Nor does it give individuals the opportunity to amass in bulk bio-cultural capital incongruous with their physical presence and input, such as Weedon Scott, Harley and Villa Kennan, or Enrico Piccolomini. The cooperative canine timeshare system is more even-handed. It gradually builds individual, bio-cultural capital on a reciprocal basis. In giving quid pro quo, the rotating or cooperative canine timeshare eliminates what, no pun intended, might be called the white noise surrounding inter-species transactions – that is, strategies used to mask the calculatingly egotistical ‘ways of white folks.’ Rendering clean and crisp transcripts of the investment process, the cooperative canine

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558 Please see Edward Franklin Frazier, “Children in Black Mulatto Families,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 39, 1 (July 1933): 12-29. Frazier uses census data taken over the course of ten years (1910-20) of over 13,000 black families in three southern cities and rural counties to disprove the belief in black biological inferiority. He scientifically links socio-economic differences to cultural constructions and causes. On the stereotype of white asceticism and black lust, see Sterling A. Brown, “Negro Character as seen by White Authors,” *Journal of Negro Education* 2, 2 (April 1933): 196; as well as the linked belief in “the Negro’s three-fold inferiority: physically (except for his adaptability to cotton fields and rice swamps), mentally, and morally,” Brown, “Negro Character,” 181.
timeshare thus allows Hughes to audit his fictional investors and report how inter- and intra-species intimacies or on-duty and off-duty responsibilities are individually managed and maintained. Documented mismanagement and forgery, Hughes’ inquest predicts, will lead to the loss of bio-cultural capital and ruin.

First and foremost a story about forms of capital and capital investment strategies, Langston Hughes’ “Little Dog” fittingly features a single, white female bookkeeper by the name of Miss Clara Briggs, who, at age forty-five, decides to invest in a canine companion called Flips. Miss Briggs, in the tradition of many a hermit, spends the best years of her life ascetically nurturing her cultural and economic capital at the cost of social or intra-species relations.559 “As a young girl she had studied very hard in business school. She never had much time to go out.”560 Clara’s focus on denying her bodily self the pleasure of social interaction to assimilate and inculcate cultural capital and cultivate her spiritual self continues into adulthood. Upon graduation, she stays at home to care for her chronically ill mother “instead of going out to the theatre or to parties.”561 After her mother’s death, she spends her days as an “efficient” and indispensable accountant who works “too hard,” and her nights at the Women’s Civics Club or attending lectures of the American Theosophical Society, a New York group formed, in 1875, that among other things, sought to promote a “Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour” and

559 Perhaps not coincidentally named Briggs – i.e. brig or brigantine, after a vessel navigating life’s challenges on the one hand, and a guardhouse or room of isolation and detention on the other.
560 Hughes, “Little Dog.” 162.
561 Ibid.
explore the "psychic powers latent in man." After twenty-one years of physical self-denial and "very few indulgences", Clara emerges as a "genteel", economically affluent and matrimonially competitive mate, whom "[m]en'll have a hard time getting", yet whose singular investment in cultural capital leaves her unspeakably lonely and longing for intra-species or reproductive love and warmth. Clara Briggs, the opening paragraphs convey, is: "all alone" pensively monitoring "kids" and "lovers" across the street; "alone" eating her dinners; with "no man in view to marry;" "without connections ... [with] nobody at all. Nobody;" living in an "empty flat;" with "loneliness really com[ing] down on her" observing "couple by couple, arms locked" while she "knew no one" and remains "husbandless."

Determined to reverse the effects of her mid-life investment crisis and return to the competitive ranks of the matrimonial market, Clara Briggs buys dogmestic stock in the form of Flips. The passage's explicit causal connection between the dog's signifying value, matrimonial success, and improved probability of bio-cultural reproduction, arguably unknown to Clara, is so obvious that it is worth quoting in full.

"Folks will have to amount to something before Clara takes up with them," old Mrs. Briggs always said. "Men'll have a hard time getting Clara."

Men did. Now, with no especial attractions to make them keep trying, Miss Briggs, tall and rail-like, found herself left husbandless at an age when youth had gone.

So, in her forty-fifth year, ... Miss Briggs bought herself a little white dog.\[65\]


\[563\] Hughes, "Little Dog," 164, 162. "Most of them would want her for her money now, at her age anyway," Hughes, "Little Dog," 163; ibid., 165.

\[564\] Hughes, "Little Dog." 161-65.

\[565\] Ibid., 165; emphases mine.

Clara Briggs succeeds in concealing her ulterior motive for the acquisition of her “especial attraction” or extended signifier of her humanity for a period of two years, within which her inter-species investment seems to conform to the rules and regulations of bio-cultural capital building and management. Clara demonstrates superior self-control in gradually building bonds with her *dogmestic* by taking “care of Flips with great seriousness.”[^566] Her day-to-day routine includes rigorous exercise and a balanced diet in keeping with the latest scientific dictums on pet dogs’ nutritional needs. After work, she takes Flips to the park. After the park, she feeds him dinner - alternating between bones, the ‘pre-modern’ fare, and biscuits, which, as cultural anthropologist Molly Mullin has documented, began to be advertized as the supplement-filled product of modern scientific studies, in the early 1930s.[^567] After dinner, Clara Briggs goes above and beyond the call of duty and pampers Flips with a saucer of milk. And, after administering the milky treat, she goes to bed.

More importantly, Clara’s expert management of her inter-species affair promises constant bio-cultural returns in the form of unvarying disinterest. While she welcomes a “friendly smile” from one dog owner to another in acknowledgement of her rational humanity and appreciates “the way dogs made things friendly,” her distrust of other humans enables her to keep inter- and intra-species intimacies completely separate and putatively pure.[^568] In other words, she does not appear to abuse restored inter-species relations with Flips to attract members of the opposite sex. “Whenever (as seldom happened) someone in

[^566]: Ibid., 166-67.
[^568]: Hughes, “Little Dog,” 166.
the park, dog or no dog, tried to draw her into conversation, Miss Briggs would move as quickly as she could without being rude.”

After two years of ostensible disinterested inter-species attachment, the tides change. With the arrival of a new janitor, a desirable mate enters the world of Miss Clara Briggs. Joe is not only fertile, “beautiful,” “tall” and “rich” in bio-cultural assets but also “kind,” confident and of a compatible age. “Surrounded by children, a tall broad-shouldered Negro of perhaps forty, gentle of face and a little stooped, came to the door.” Agreeable enough, Clara, who is able to financially provide for Flips’ food but is on duty past meat store hours, offers Joe a contingent of her canine companion as a cooperative investment in bio-cultural capital. “I’d like some bones for my little dog .... Can you get him some?” To cover his expenses and provide for his intra-species investment, that is, his wife and family, Joe agrees.

While Joe conscientiously separates the public, inter-species duties of his cooperative timeshare contract from his private, intra-species responsibilities at great bio-cultural profit, Clara’s ardent desire for Joe quickly gets the better of her managerial skills. Joe demonstrates his inter-species dedication, self-discipline, and humanity by bringing Flips bones every evening. Not only does he deliver on time, he exceeds the stipulations of the contractual time-share agreement by dispensing it in person, rather than risk its loss to stray dogs by depositing it at the back door. Finally, Joe “care[s]” enough about the well being of the dog, to share his concern about Flips’ monotonously carnivorous and unscientific diet with his

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569 Ibid., 166.
570 Ibid., 168. “[H]e was awfully big and brown and kind looking. So sort of sure about life,” ibid., 169.
571 Ibid., 168.
572 Ibid.

wife. 573 “I ought to tell her [Miss Briggs] it ain’t good to feed a dog so much meat.” 574 Over time, Joe’s well-managed inter-species investment in a dog that expresses his approval and companionate acceptance of his caretaker with a “friendly mien,” allows him to demonstrate a degree of embodied capital that facilitates his ascent from the basement to the fourth floor and, by implication, “up, up, up” the moral and socio-economic ladder. 575

Unlike Joe, Clara is unable to maintain the causal disconnect between disinterested inter-species intimacy and intra-species desire. Smitten by Joe’s humanity, she begins to use the dog as an instrument to increased intra-species contact. First she fails to specify the number of delivery days. Later, “she did not stop him or limit him to three nights per week” at the cost of the dog’s balanced diet and overall well-being. 576 Clara develops a jealous dislike for the janitor’s wife and, before long, she finds “herself waiting for the dog meat to arrive with more anxiety than Flips himself.” 577 Her want for the “beautifully heavy body finding the rhythm of the steps” gradually consumes her controlled self. Joe is on her mind in private and, more and more, in public. 578 She makes mistakes at work and finally confesses her consuming reproductive desire by way of a Freudian slip, “‘Oh, Flips,’ she said, ‘I’m so hungry.’ She meant to say, ‘You’re so hungry.’” 579

In a desperate attempt to avert temptation, protect her embodied capital, and prevent Joe’s well-warranted socio-economic ascent, Clara moves and, thereby, removes Flips, the source of Joe’s rehabilitation and power: “[S]he could not bear to have this janitor

573 “What do you care, long as she wants to?” asked his wife,” ibid., 171.
574 Ibid., 171.
575 Ibid., 168; 174.
576 Ibid., 169.
577 Ibid., 171.
578 Ibid., 172.
579 Ibid.

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come upstairs with a package of bones for Flips again. . . . Let him stay in the basement, then, where he belonged.\footnote{Ibid., 174.} Her flight may be a feasible alternative to falling in love with a married black man and losing her social standing in the process. As sensible as her decision may seem, it makes one thing patently clear: rather than level the playing field and grant universal access to inter-species intimates as a means to display embodied riches based on merit, Clara withholds canine company from the subaltern to assert personal privilege by force. Clara’s claim to control of self, it transpires, boils down to the strategic manipulation of her environment at best.

Hughes, however, adds another caveat to his critique. Unlike Joe, who pursues a more diversified and, arguably modest, investment portfolio that features bio-genetic reproduction as a vehicle for the transmission of memes, Clara waits too long for the perfect mate. As a result of their investment choices, Joe secures the hereditary transmission of his embodied capital into the gene and meme pool over time. Clara, on the other hand, fails to secure her genetic survival. Without a carrier for her accumulated capital, she quickly fades from the collective memory. “For a few days,” after her move, “the walkers in the park beside the lake wondered where a rather gaunt middle-aged woman who used to come out at night with a little white dog had gone. But in a very short while the neighborhood had completely forgotten her.”\footnote{Ibid., 175.}

In the end, Clara’s attempt to keep abreast of the increasingly competitive investment market precipitates her bio-cultural ruin. Her herculean effort at demonstrating superior appropriating capacities and self-discipline end in isolation and bio-genetic death. At the same time, her subconscious surrender to her desires with hopes of bio-genetic

\footnote{Ibid., 174.} \footnote{Ibid., 175.}
reproduction upsets a lifetime of cultural-memetic achievement and renders her utterly powerless. Clara’s tragic choice encapsulates the bio-cultural investment dilemma of twenty-first century America. Unable to turn from inter- to intra-species intimates without losing their credibility, authenticity, and power in the process, twenty-first century generations of Americans found themselves forced to look for more innovative ways of maximizing the transmission of bio-cultural capital than the canine timeshare. *Canis lupus familiaris* remained a key player in the accumulation and maintenance of cultural capital. And yet, embodied assets depended less and less on individual biological replication as a vehicle for their transmission. Instead, cultural capital was increasingly used to secure not the survival of the bio-genetic self but that of larger collectives or imagined selves, as my discussions of Harlan Ellison’s *A Boy and His Dog* (Chapter 4) and James Welch’s *Death of Jim Loney* (Chapter 5) hope to show. This development further eroded the connection between genes and memes, between embodiment and authenticity, and allowed as illustrated in my discussion of Erdrich’s *Beet Queen* (Chapter 6) for heretofore-unseen reproductive units and concepts of kin.
Part III – Dogmestics in ‘Complicated Houses’

“And remember, whatever else you forget, you must remember:

VIC NEVER TOUCHES THE MEAT!” Harlan Ellison (1934 -)

The meat, to which US science-fiction author and screenwriter Harlan Ellison refers and which, he urges us to remember, remains untouched by a boy called Vic, is human; no ordinary human’s, to be sure. The human meat the adolescent hero of Ellison’s best-selling novella *A Boy and His Dog* (1969) and its motion picture adaptation (1975) refuses to consume is not the flesh of an enemy or stranger, nor that of a criminal or competitor. On the contrary, it is remains of Vic’s opposite sex partner, young Quilla June Holmes from Topeka, down-under, whom Vic kills, quarters, and feeds to his dog within minutes of their arrival on the radioactive surface of Ellison’s post-apocalyptic North America.

Then as now, Quilla’s unforeseen but not unforeseeable death at the hands of her human partner and beloved both repels and attracts. On the one hand, the impromptu killing of biogenetic kin for the sake of survival disagrees with the social animal in us. It violates our ethics (from ethos, Greek for custom, habit, or character) in the simple sense that it upsets our customs, habits, and predictability. Vic’s drastic deed overturns our species’ belief in reciprocity, threatens our sense of secured survival and order, and portends anarchy. On the other hand, the utopian triumph of love and loyalty beyond biological bounds – that

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583 *A Boy and His Dog* (1975), based on Harlan Ellison’s novella “A Boy and His Dog” (1969). Directed by actor and screenwriter L.Q. Jones, the film starred Don Johnson as Vic and Berger-Picard Tiger as Blood.

584 Unless codified in religious ritual such as the metaphoric consumption of the body of Christ in form of the Eucharist in Christian religions.
is, beyond readily apparent self-interest – appeals to what might best be described as any social organism’s desire for unconditional inclusion, forgiveness, and equal opportunity.

Individuals suspended between taboo and ideal, madness and genius, instinct and reason, nature and culture, or uncontained ‘animality’ and self-controlled ‘humanity,’ as this dissertation on trans-species intimacy and companion capital has highlighted, populate every nook and cranny of US-literature. As much as the discursive contexts of our struggle to define ourselves as reasonable, cultured, or “human” and secure our bio-political fitness and survival has followed larger shifts, American dogs have consistently acted as bona fide and increasingly skilled arbiters if not administrators of US- ‘progress,’ humanity, and, ultimately, life.

As tailwagging Scheherazades, canine companions have been singing the songs of young America’s humanity since the early eighteen hundreds. They hailed U.S. civic courage, authenticity, and pragmatism, when national identity and ‘difference’ depended on the perfection of core Judea-Christian beliefs. They bespoke their human companions’ ethic of kindness and skilled stewardship when religion, ‘race’, and class dominated the discussion of inclusion into the larger social imaginary. Domestic mutts stressed America’s undying will to reason marked by man’s burgeoning, but, nevertheless, anthropocentric awareness of environmental interdependence over science when the deployment of atomic bombs

585 As man perceives of his struggle for survival as part and parcel of continually expanding groups, growing, as concentric circles, from nations to races to evangelical/proselytizing religions to species, and, ultimately, to our planet as one to-be-sustained organism (population control by means of controlled sexuality and chosen families). As the circles of kinship expand, the dog moves closer and closer.

586 Our progress in the art of self-deception, of convincing ourselves and others that our ostensible self-control and altruism is anything but a means to symbolic capital, power and life.

587 See Catherine Grier, *Pets in America* (2005). I use the term race as opposed to ethnicity to emphasize the stark distinction by phenotype or outward appearance.
threatened to blur the line between humanity marked by rational intellect and inhumanity marked by M.A.D-ness. Dogs backed claims to US-selflessness in transition to a more deeply ecological understanding of the human, propelled by the modern environmental movement that climaxed in the late 70s. In the 1980s and 90s, Canis lupus familiaris served to vouch for system/capital-sustaining US-identities that centered on chosen gender, sexuality, and family. Among the most recent beneficiaries of canine companion capital is “calm-assertive” pack-leader and Übermensch Cesar Millan, whose careful integration of inter- and intra-species intimacy has facilitated his ‘humanization’ and ‘naturalization’ and catapulted him from the margin to the citizens’ center of US-bio-political fitness, capital and power.

As abiding agents of socialization and extended signifiers of an ever-narrowing humanity suspended in a multi-dimensional web of performance based, context specific identities ranging from nation to religion, from race to class, and from family to sex and gender, domestic mutts and pure-breds from Catherine Sedgwick’s dog-hybrid Kisel to Cesar Millan’s late American Staffordshire Terrier ‘Daddy’ have brought out the fashionably human in the human-animal, increased its socio-political capital and power, and augmented its bio-genetic fitness and chances of reproduction. Of course, this arrangement has been mutually beneficial. In helping imbue human-canine intimacy with survival value canine companions have consolidated their niche as inter-species aides in the management and transmission of US bio-political capital since the ontological and financial crises of the 1830s led to the loss of accredited markers of social standing.

588 M.A.D. is the acronym for Mutual Assured Destruction.
589 The number of canine companions has grown from 15 million, in 1940, to 77 million, in 2010.

Over time, the power of the dog grew and, with it, its niche approached mass-market proportions. In the early years, political capital in the form of ‘humanity’ could be amassed through the maintenance of intimate inter-species relations with a canine companion during the hero’s or heroine’s formative years.\textsuperscript{590} The students’ successful completion of basic companionate training within the life-span of a dog (less than fifteen years on average) not only promised ‘humanity’ for life, but also conveniently waived the archetypical catch-22 between either inter- or intra-species intimacy and kinship at the onset of sexual and reproductive maturity. Instead of having to choose shared genes over shared memes, “Fall,” and diminish the political capital carefully accrued in years of self-disciplined interaction with another species, pet dogs spared their human partners by perishing prematurely, dying of old age, or turning to reproduction themselves. Sedgwick’s Kisel dies from a “maddened [...] brain”.\textsuperscript{591} Mitchell’s childhood friend, Tray, expires at old age. Wilson’s Fido must remain with his legal owner after Frado departs at the onset of “womanhood”.\textsuperscript{592} In the dogs’ opportune but ostensibly unwelcome withdrawal from the inter-species bond, in other words, lay the secret to their owners’ unmitigated transposition of cultural to biological capital. Bedazzling prospective mates with relentless interspecies loyalty suggestive of superior self-control until the death of their partner, their flawless veneer of selflessness

\textsuperscript{590} I use the term intimacy as Lauren Berlant, who understands it as signifying shared experiences and goals that facilitate communication. Berlant writes, “To intimate is to communicate with the sparsest signs and gestures, and at its root intimacy has the quality of eloquence and brevity. But intimacy also involves an aspiration for a narrative about something shared, a story about both oneself and others that will turn out in a particular way” (Berlant, Intimacy: A Special Issue, 1). In a sense, then, intimacy between species suggests shared understanding and goals at the conscious (communication and immediate goals) and unconscious (long-term goals – i.e. survival) level.

\textsuperscript{591} Sedgwick, The Linwoods, 282.

\textsuperscript{592} Wilson, Our Nig, 115.
attracts conspecific mates, increases the chance of survivorship, and satisfies the individual’s selfish drive to life and power.  

By the turn of the century, the intensifying struggle for bio-political power advanced the inflation of canine capital acquired in childhood and demanded the prolongation of inter-species partnerships well into the reproductive stage. Tailing the canine timeshare system that granted regular updates on an Enlightenment brand humanity at risk of expiration, an ever-growing number of canine companions were invited to linger in the lives of literary and literal Americans. As public tokens of persistent self-control, consistency and reason, they balanced the private pursuit of intra-species indulgence and love.  

The cold war exacerbated the assumed tension between political capital in the form of disinterested humanity, derived from inter-species ‘altruism’, and biogenetic capital rooted in intra-species reproduction and, aided by the women’s rights movement, affected the deferral of intra-species reproduction.  

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593 The skilled appropriation of cultural capital itself presupposes knowledge/familiarity/capital. Mitchell’s Bachelor serves as a prime example of the improper investment of canine capital.  

594 The number of pet dogs in the U.S., as mentioned above, rose from roughly 14 million in 1940 to over 77 million in 2010. At the same time, the average child-breeing age rose from the early to the late twenties and early thirties. See Tomas Frejka and Gerard Calot, Cohort Child-Bearing age patterns in low-fertility countries in the late 20th century: Is the postponement of births an inherent element? Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, April 2001, www.demogr.mpg.de/Papers/Working/wp-2001-009.pdf. Frejka summarizes the results of his 2001 demographic study, “Major shifts occurred among the cohorts born during the 1950s. These women incurred considerable fertility deficits when young and compensated, at least in part if not totally, with surpluses when they reached their upper twenties and thirties. Many of the postponed births were made up. The decline in fertility among young women continues in the cohorts born during the 1960s and 1970s” (Tomas Frejka, “Cohort childbearing age patterns in low fertility countries in the late 20th century: is the postponement of births an inherent element? Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research Working Paper WP 2001-009 (April 2001), 1). As intra-species reproduction was deferred, the number of inter-species intimates grew rapidly. By 1940, US families shared their homes with between 13 and 15 million dogs, 500,000 of which were
the omnipresent fear of nuclear catastrophe, Harlan Ellison’s Vic, akin to the great majority of his speculative-fictional contemporaries, wavers between two extremes: the intellect-driven ability to harness and nurture nature within and without and the non-rational release of the inhuman beast one has become or created. In this regard, Vic’s mind-numbing desire for Quilla, the symbol of sexual reproduction, resembles the fictional nuclear scientist Dr. Armand Levin, *The Atom Age Vampire* (1960), who gradually loses his self-control and humanity over the love for a girl he can’t cure of a disfiguring flaw; or, of Dr. Robert Morgan aka Dr. Robert Neville in the *Last Man on Earth* (1964) and its remake *I am Legend* (2007), whose “luxury of anger” robs them of their canine companions and brings them one step closer to reestablishing intra-species intimacy and becoming yet another home-made, post-apocalyptic mutant suffering from a dehumanizing infection of the brain.

Despite its rampant popularity, continuing cult status, and, adept cultural commentary, Ellison’s novella and its motion picture adaptation have received little to no critical attention. Instead, Vic’s choice for his dog and against his biogenetic kin has hastily if not derisively been dismissed as non-rational, sub-human, animalistic or, simply, misogynist.

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596 The theme of obsession with a mark of distinction echoes Nathaniel Hawthorne’s nineteenth-century classic “The Birth-Mark,” in *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846). In Hawthorne, it is the philosopher / scientist Aylmer’s post-wedlock obsession with his wife Georgiana’s birthmark that leads to his madness and her death. Neville and Morgan loose their canine companions - a female black poodle in *The Last Man* and a female German Shepherd in *I Am Legend* - when they loose control.

Categorized as a mutated miscreant or sociopathic savant of the atomic age, an evolutionary throwback or “wild beast” acting on the “most ferocious instincts”, Vic’s deed can safely and comfortably be dismissed as subhuman and our sense of human order and security be restored. To make matters worse, Vic himself, albeit for good reason, seems to confirm said judgments as he appears unconscious of his motive. But, Vic does not kill Quilla out of ferocious appetite. The opposite is the case. Vic’s decision to sacrifice his biogenetic kin and capital for the sake of canine companionship, political capital, reason and ‘unconditional’ love is Ellison’s avant-garde response to a culture that demanded the day-to-day demonstration of inter-species intimacy for the sake of political capital and power. Far from being a novel about “how to feed your girlfriend to your dog and live happily ever after,” as speculative fiction writer and feminist critic Joanna Russ sardonically summarizes the novella’s premise, A Boy and His Dog is a novel that highlights the supreme survival value of canine capital. It is, most centrally then, a novel about “how to feed your girlfriend to your dog and live [...]”

In stressing life and survival over eradication, “A Boy and His Dog” (unlike its 1980 sequel) exemplifies what atomic bomb cinema film specialist Jerome Shapiro has called a “manifestation of the ancient apocalyptic tradition of continuance”. In its rational transcendence of bio-genetically based kinship bonds and restoration of prelapsarian harmony, however, Ellison’s novella defies not only the Manichaean rhetoric Shapiro

597 A line from the 1962 classic, Atom Age Vampire which features nuclear scientist Armand Levin, who repeatedly transforms himself into a murdering “Gorilla” using the radioactive potion “Derm 25.”
598 Joanna Russ is most famous for her speculative fiction Picnic on Paradise (1968), And Chaos Died (1970), and The Female Man (1975) as well as non-fictional pieces such as How to Suppress Women’s Writing (1983) and, most recently, The Country you Have Never Seen (2007).
identifies in contemporary criticism from historian Paul Boyer to philosopher Jonathan Schnell, but also the humanist dyads that find their way into Shapiro’s thought. Far from pursuing continued existence either in self-knowledge, which, as Shapiro explains, is stereotypical for atomic culture of the west, or in the “restoration of balance and harmony,” which he argues, is a prominent theme in Japanese atomic popular culture, Ellison’s piece seeks survival in a synthesis of both: self-knowledge that inspires the necessary self-discipline to return to socially and, with it, environmentally sustainable utilization. 690

Of Mutts and Men: Intimate Animals and Atomic Pop Culture

The post-apocalyptic novella, which sketches a human-canine duo’s errand into the radio-active north-American wilderness in search of the political capital promised by the “city over the hill,” first appeared as part of a collection of short stories entitled The Beast that Shouted Love at the Heart of the World, in 1969. It was published among growing global and increasingly visible domestic tensions. Four and a half years into the Vietnam War, fourteen months away from Seymour Martin Hersh’s My Lai report and the Kent State University protests, and within days of NYC’s Stonewall Riot that marked the beginning of the modern gay rights movement, that Ellison’s piece of speculative fiction addressed an audience increasingly disenchanted with the actualization of the nation’s nominally embraced humanitarian tenets and fearful of losing its status as world power. “Has the American Dream become the American damnation, a formula for selfishness rather than equality and

690 Shapiro attempts to overcome the very binary of a knowing and rational west and a spiritual east that his argument ultimately reinforces as he defines the west’s self-knowledge and wisdom as “mythical” (Shapiro, “Atomic Bomb Cinema,” 139). Due to the destructive power of nuclear weapons, Cold War culture intricately connected social and environmental sustainability.
excellence?” - the editors of a twenty-page supplement printed by *Time Magazine* on January 24th, 1969, inquired before concluding that “the daunting task of the American President in 1969 is nothing less than to heal a nation [or at least to provide] a fundamental reassessment of its peril as well as its progress[,] . . . link them constructively to the unique character of the ‘Citty upon a Hill’", and restore faith in American exceptionality.601

Rising to the occasion, Harlan Ellison’s award-winning story uses Blood, the telepathic Shepherd-Puli mix, to bespeak his American Adam’s (Vic’s) unflagging innocence and reassure his fearful cold-war readers that the city “over” the hill, the restoration of peace and prevention of nuclear holocaust, is just within reach. For this purpose, Ellison elaborates on the perhaps most fundamental theme of western culture: the turn from an existence of innocent inter-species bliss to a sexually reproductive lifestyle marked by the openly opportunistic struggle for survival.602

The novel’s plot is simple. Set in 2024, it is narrated by fifteen year-old Vic, only months after World War IV has leveled the world to “radiation and rubble.”603 Survivors are few. The majority of women have died. Reproduction has come to a standstill, as most of the babies born into the radioactive environment are neither male nor female. Roving this post-nuclear no-man’s land in search of food, females, and the “City over the Hill,” fifteen year-old nomad Vic is accompanied by his buddy Blood, a highly educated and telepathically

602 Enkidu, the “savage” hero of the Gilgamesh Epic, written around 2000 BCE, learns that once “he murmurs love to you [the prostitute] the wild beasts that shared his life in the hills will reject him” (Gilgamesh part 1). Roughly one millennium later, Adam’s fall for a sexually reproductive lifestyle with Eve results in the loss of inter-species innocence.  
talkative canine. In their peregrinations they encounter an attractive, young female in male disguise from an underground colony. Vic captures and repeatedly rapes the increasingly cooperative girl, who introduces herself as Quilla June Holmes. Their tryst is interrupted by the sudden attack of a group of young men, who, like Vic, have identified Quilla as female. Quilla escapes in the aftermath of the ensuing gunfight but purposely leaves behind an access key to one of the gates that connect Vic’s world with the down-under. Vic pursues Quilla, abandoning his canine companion in hopes of a better future. But, his hopes are sorely disappointed. Upon his arrival, Vic is arrested. Quilla, he learns, was a decoy, dispatched by the infertile town elders to lure him underground and secure the biological survival of their kind. As luck would have it, the first female Vic is to impregnate is no other than Quilla June Holmes. Reunited, the two escape. It is after their return to the surface and a famished Blood, who had been awaiting Vic’s return, that the boy faces his epic choice between his love for his political or imagined and his biogenetic kin. Upon realizing that

604 “[F]or wee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our god in this worke wee have undertaken and soe cause him to withdrawe his present help from us, wee shall be made a story and a by-word through the world, wee shall open the mouthes of enemies to speake evill of the ways of god and all professours for Gods sake; wee shall shame the faces of many of gods worthy servants, and cause there prayers to be turned into Curses upon us till we be consumed out of the good land whether wee are goinge: And to Shut upp this discourse with that exhortation of Moses that faithfull servant of the Lord in his last farewell to Israell Deut. 30. Beloved there is now sett before us life, and good, deathe and evill in that wee are Commanded this day to love the Lord our God, and to love one another to walke in his wayes and to kepe his [234] Commandements and his Ordinance, and his lawes, and the Articles of our Covenant with him that wee may live and be multiplied, and that the Lord our God may blesse us in the land whether wee goe to possess it; But if our heartes shall turne away soe that wee will not obey, but shall be seduced and worshipp other Gods our pleasures, and proffitts, and serve them; it is propounded unto us this day, wee shall surely perishe out of the good Land whether wee passe over this vast Sea to possess it; Therefore lett us choose life./that wee, and our Seede,/may live; by obeyeing his/ voyce,/ and cleavinge to him,/ for hee is our life, and/ our prosperity.” Winthrop, John. A Modell of Christian Charity. In The Heath Anthology of American Literature (Volume One. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1994), 233-234. Emphases added.

‘love’ is little more than an investment strategy in life, and that his life depends on his continued allegiance to political or cultural ‘blood’ represented by his canine companion Blood over actual, biological blood in the physical form of Quilla June, he concedes: “do you know what love is?” “Sure I know. A boy loves his dog.”

Much like his less experienced and arguably less tactically evolved predecessors the Gilgamesh epic’s Enkidu and the Bible’s Adam, Ellison’s Vic has to choose between two fundamental forms or strategies of survival represented by two very differing types of intimacy: survival through the asexual reproduction of memes on the one hand and the sexual production of genes on the other. While memetic and genetic survivorship are mutually constitutive – certain memes have high survival value and may promote the reproduction of genes and vice versa – they continue to be constructed as disconnected opposites in the liberal and historical sciences alike. Memes, because of their hidden economy, fluctuating exchange value, and deferred returns, become a form of transposable capital that we can selflessly share beyond biological bonds. Their management and

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605 Ellison, Vic and Blood, 104.
606 Evolved in the ways of tactical self-deception involving our canine companions. Intimacy per Lauren Berlant who understands the term as signifying shared experiences and goals that facilitate communication. “To intimate is to communicate with the sparsest signs and gestures, and at its root intimacy has the quality of eloquence and brevity. But intimacy also involves an aspiration for a narrative about something shared, a story about both oneself and others that will turn out in a particular way,” see Berlant, Intimacy: A Special Issue, 1.
607 Sociologically speaking, memes and genes become cultural and biological capital, the core components of an individual’s social identity. Identity, as French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu so insightfully adduced it in his 1983 essay on “The Forms of Capital,” is “accumulated history” or labor and, therefore, capital. It comprises capital in its “materialized … or … embodied form” sets the parameters for the individuals’ appropriation of immaterial or living labor, and thus determines their social status and power. In its ceaseless appropriation and transformation of immaterial to material capital and material to immaterial capital, the idea of identity eludes continental dichotomization into nature and nurture or, as Bourdieu recapitulates, into inherited traits (ta patroa) and acquired traits (epikteta). In Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” 241, 245.
transmission, then, dominates the realm of seemingly disinterested inter-species intimacy and “inclusive fitness.” Memes are our better half. They are our taboos, our super-egos, our education, and our humanity.\(^6\) They are, anything but the “selfish gene.” Genes, homo sapiens’ inferior matter that makes up the id or instinct-driven animal, in contrast, rely on intra-species intimacy or individuals’ narcissistic love for their self-same.

Unlike his Judeo-Christian forerunners, Vic appears to have the opportunity to make a somewhat educated and, as his name forebodes, victorious choice between the two archetypical forms of capital, represented by Blood and Quilla, whose intense rivalry – over the course of the novella both attempt to persuade Vic to abandon their opponent several times – makes apparent the conflicting means to survival in the meme and gene pool they symbolize.

Ellison introduces Blood, the “noble creature” and avatar of Kantian reason and self-discipline, as Vic’s inter-species sidekick and memetic kin.\(^6\) Vic’s intimate alliance with his ascetic dog, who himself explains - “I don’t drink. I don’t use dope. I have sworn a vow of sexual abstinence” - is simple and relatively carefree.\(^6\) In exchange for food, Blood, “pleasant and polite, wise and witty, well read and well bred” like the Persian princess, acts as Vic’s intellectual Scheherazade and teaches him the means to manage and maximize political capital and ‘humanity.’\(^6\) Blood’s strategy includes the facilitation of transient sexual encounters between his adolescent human companion and the few surviving females.


\(^6\) Ellison, *Vic and Blood*, 25. By naming his inter-species ally Blood, Ellison suggests early on that memetic kin is, or at least should be, the new blood / biogenetic kin. See below.

\(^6\) The quote continues, “One of us has to be pure, so we can hope to stay alive,” Ellison, *Vic and Blood*, 25.

roaming the post-apocalyptic west as an unemotional outlet for sexual tension that helps redirect the boy’s attention to the study of language, history and logic.

Vic and Blood’s relationship, we are quick to find out, holds great survival value. Unlike the rather ruthless “roverpacks,” motley crews of men and boys who rove the radioactive surface in search of canned food and arms, and whose mindless aggression - they are simply “too messed in the mind to come soft” - results in frequent, internecine clashes, Vic and Blood’s intimate bond of three years is marked by reason-inspired, symbiotic “softness.” Blood, of course, is the brains and power, Vic the force of the operation.

Blood descends from a long and prestigious line of highly intelligent scout dogs with genetically enhanced communication skills. In preparation for WWIII, Blood’s genetically engineered and crossbred ancestors were injected with concentrated dolphin spinal fluid, which enabled them to telepathically communicate their sense-impressions to their human handlers. In the process of becoming telepathic and providing life-sustaining information to others, the dogs lost their ability to provide for themselves.613

True to his heritage, Blood is unable to hunt his own food. He relies on Vic, his inter-species partner, to meet his nutritional needs. Vic is first and foremost a non-violent and low-investment (low energy, low risk) gatherer of provisions. He collects and trades bottled and canned goods including Sweet Betsy Pike fruit wine, salt beef and cherries, Oscar

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613 Ellison, *Vic and Blood*, 84.
Meyer Philadelphia Scrapple, a “tin of sardines,” and beets, and, thus manages to feed Blood, as he puts it, “pretty good”.614

As any well-synchronized partnership (inter-species or intra-species), each party carefully manages their “softness” or altruistic acts to ensure reciprocity, balance, personal utility and survival. In exchange for special favors such as the protection from post-nuclear predators and the location of the occasional female, Vic ups the ante and hunts, kills, and shares with his canine companion small game such as water rats or the occasional “manicured poodle”.615 Reciprocal altruism or softness, however, has its self-preserving limits. Unreasonable, or, rather, non-utilitarian requests are, albeit diplomatically, denied. This includes Blood’s childishly selfish insistence on consuming popcorn at the movies after his nutritional needs have been met. In few words, Vic acknowledges his indebtedness to Blood, apologizes, and appeals to the dog’s compassion while outlining the limits of their social contract, “I’m tapped out. You can live without popcorn”.616

Having mastered the management of basic resources and capital across species lines to mutual satisfaction, Blood focuses on improving Vic’s verbal skills to round off his self-disciplined, diplomatic, and “human” appearance. Blood’s linguistic lessons consist first and foremost of setting an example. Blood, who telepathically communicates with Vic throughout “A Boy and His Dog” and narrates both the 1977 prequel and 1980 sequel to the novella, is a cultured, well-read, and intelligent dog with a large vocabulary. His English is flawless. He rarely resorts to curses to express his feelings, and, whenever possible, introduces Vic to new words and concepts such as the term “rote” for oral history or

614 In fact, it is not until the appearance of the prequel “Eggsucker” (1977) that Vic kills a rover in the process of “hustling for food” (Ellison, Vic and Blood, 21, 23, 71, 74); ibid., 70. 615 Ibid. 616 Ibid., 72.

“history straight from Blood, ... [something] you got word-for-word”. However, the canine companion does not hesitate to correct Vic’s grammar and pronunciation if necessary: “'He ain't a mutt.' ‘Isn't a mutt,' I [Blood] pathed”, “For shame, Albert. After all I've taught you. Not 'I ain't kidding.' 'I'm not kidding”'; and, it is “Harangue, not hanger me.” In helping Vic improve his language skills, Blood not only assists him in asserting his self-controlled, deliberate, and “human” side, but he also provides him with the necessary communication tools to handle conflict diplomatically, in a cool and collected fashion.

Like Blood’s lessons in linguistics, his tutorials in US-history, which gain prominence in the novella’s prequel, Eggsucker, inculcate in Vic a sense of reason, relativity and strategy – core ideas of atomic age discourse that sought to rationalize and control even chance (see Theory of Games). Eggsucker skillfully interweaves Blood’s drills in historical consciousness and reflexivity— that is, U.S.-presidential history from 1953 to 1977 -with lessons on the importance of communication and memetic— that is, cultural rather than genetic, kinship. Vic’s attempts to name all U.S.-presidents since F.D.R. (he continues to forget Ford), the piece suggests, are as immature as his effort to act responsibly and communicate in a calm and authoritative manner. As a result, misunderstandings escalate into hostility. The prequel

617 Ibid., 74.
618 Ibid., 26, 70, 89.
621 In this, Blood’s approach echoes the communitarian critique of liberalism voiced by Charles Taylor and Michael Walzer. Taylor and Walzer emphasize the importance of dialogical relations with others for the formation of a morally conscious self and a meaningful, communal identity. See David Bromwich, “Culturalism, the Euthanasia of Liberalism,” Dissent 42, 1 (1995): 89-102.
thus serves to illustrate the very George Santayana quote Ellison strategically places half-way through the 1977 text: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." 622

Published eight years prior its prequel and preoccupied first and foremost with domestic rather than international disunion, *A Boy and His Dog* focuses less on "all the stuff that happened before now" than the present and a sustainable future that emphasizes political or memetic over biogenetic kinship and capital. 623 From the very beginning, the conflicting yet mutually constitutive nature of the two forms of capital is made clear. In order for Vic to be able to mind Blood's lessons in self-discipline, reason and humanity, the dog has to sporadically facilitate transient (non-reproductive) sexual encounters with human females. Canine controlled hetero-normative sex acts not only prove a regulated outlet for the release of Vic's sexual energy and fulfillment of unconscious and otherwise uncontrollable drives, but they also allow for the display of a masculinity that will ensure the transposition of political into biogenetic capital and secure Vic's bio-political future.

Needless to say, Blood refuses to assist Vic in finding a female unless absolutely necessary; namely, not until Vic has "reached the edge of [his] patience". Even then, the dog does so reluctantly, "sullenly" and "slouching". 624

As unsettling and selfish as Vic's non-reproductive sex acts may appear to the "civilized" eye, they do not threaten his intimate bond with Blood nor the political capital accrued in years of seemingly disinterested inter-species love. It is only at the arrival of Quilla, named after the Incan goddess of marriage and fertility, that Blood begins to fear that

623 Ibid., 74.
624 Ibid., 71, 75.
“this one” because she “hung on like no other,” was “going to make trouble.”625 And indeed, following into the footsteps of the archetypical temptress (most notably Gilgamesh’s prostitute and Genesis’ Eve), Quilla is destined to disrupt Vic’s peaceful co-existence with nature represented by Blood, with her presence. Dispatched by a malevolent third party – Gilgamesh, the snake, or Ellison’s sterile businessmen – she “lures” Vic away from Blood and seeks to enthrall him by changing clothes on the vaulting horse of an abandoned YMCA building.626

Quilla strongly appeals to Vic’s unconscious, bodily will to biological survival. Unlike the aggressive “big chicks” and “scumbags” that make up the remainder of female survivors above ground – infertile carriers of venereal diseases and parasites who are likely “cut off your meat with a razor blade once they let you get in” - Quilla appears interested, attractive, and fertile.627 Her body is “all soft and pretty” and sensual, with “[b]ig eyes ... fine features, a wide mouth, little nose, cheekbones just like mine [Vic’s], real high and prominent, and a dimple in her right cheek”.628 Quilla’s body, in short, promises biogenetic survival. She is physically fit, fertile and well-suited for genetic reproduction as Vic’s assessment of her lips, hips, muscles, and breasts indicates. She has “nice tits and kind of skinny legs;” and Vic gets “a real big kick out of seeing the way her waist fell inward and her hips fell outward, the way the muscles at the side of her tits pulled up when she reached to the top of her head.”629

625 Ibid., 86.
626 Ibid., 95.
627 Radioactive pollution, the narrator explains, has put an end to procreation amongst humans inhabiting the North American surface as the majority of children are born neither male nor female and, therefore, killed upon birth. Ibid., 76.
628 Ibid., 79, 86, 78.
629 Ibid., 77.

Naturally, Quilla, much like her pre-biblical and biblical predecessors, is not only well-endowed but she is also determined and willing to employ her charms to set Vic onto the path of intra-species survival. With a voice that is invitingly “soft, and … furry, like it came up through her throat … lined with fur,” she begins to flirt with Vic, readily rids herself of excess clothing such as bra and panties when prompted, and, before long, engages him in repeated acts of sex. Quilla offers little to no resistance: “[S]he was half asleep, and weak, and I don’t think she wanted to fight me anyhow… her eyes were closed, and she was relaxed-looking. And happy. I could tell.” In the end, she admits, “I didn’t mind. I like doing it. Want to do it again?”

With every step Vic takes toward Quilla and immediate survival, he grows increasingly naïve to external threats and indifferent to an interdependent and sustainable future. So much so that he jeopardizes peaceful relations with one of the most influential gangs in the area for more sex with Quilla. It is up to Blood, representative of intra-species intimacy and collaborative or ‘inclusive fitness,’ to alert his human mentee to the imminent danger and redirect him to the path of reason, disinterested self-control, and memetic capital and survival.

The thematic struggle between mind and matter, Blood and Quilla, reverberates in the sequence of scenes. Just as the already enthralled Vic readies to rape Quilla for the first time, Blood “Right at that moment … came crashing in from the outside … til he got to us.” “Blood stared at her and then ignored her. He started to say something but the girl

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630 Ibid., 78.
631 Ibid., 84.
632 Ibid., 85.
633 Ibid., 79.

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interrupted him." To capture Vic’s attention, Blood bluntly asks, “You going to listen to her all night, or do you want to hear why I came in?” With these words, Blood succeeds in temporarily separating the couple physically, but he fails to bring Vic to his senses.

Notwithstanding the imminent approach of a hostile gang of “rovers” and Blood’s verbal plea to abandon the girl and escape the threat, Vic stays put - drawn to Quilla like Odysseus to the Sirens. By the time Ellison’s hormone-stricken human listens to his talking dog, the band has closed in. But rather than practice forethought, surrender, and secure safe passage and continued good standing for himself and Blood, Vic risks their lives and well-being for the safety of the female and genetic reproduction.

With the loss of forethought, the novella suggests, comes the loss of inter-species interest and reciprocal altruism. While the dog of reason lives up to their inter-species alliance, risks his life, and sustains severe injuries in the protection of his human partner, Vic ignores Blood’s plight. He offers neither care nor consolation and dedicates himself to the self-indulgent gratification of his bodily needs instead. Blood has to endure the couples’ “copulation” for several hours before he is able to somewhat successfully intervene and call on Vic’s enduring obligations to him as an inter-species partner, “I am not going to pretend I’m asleep. I’m hungry. And I’m hurt.”

The voice of reason tries thrice to return the youth to the path of self-disciplined inter-species relations. Blood’s second attempt seems slightly more successful. At least, it throws Vic into doubt. I “tossed her off me – she was on top of me this time – and examined him”. But Blood barely has sufficient time to communicate his disapproval of

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634 Ibid., 80.
635 Ibid.
636 Ibid., 85.

Vic’s “coitusing his brains out” and behaving “very shitty”, before Quilla returns for more. “She wanted to make it again. I said I didn’t want to; Blood had brought me down. I was bugged. And I didn’t know which one to be pissed off at.”

In his final appeal to Vic’s humanity or reason, the dog reminds the increasingly unreasonable adolescent to mind their memetic bond and live up to their pact of reciprocity. Blood calls on Vic’s “responsibility to me,” reminds him that it used to be “fifty-fifty” between the two, and exhorts him to not “go[…] dumb on me.” But, drives trump discipline. Unable to convince the youth that Quilla “can’t go with us,” the ‘wild beast that shared his life in the hills, rejects his human companion,’ terminates their “arrangement” and watches Vic take leave in pursuit of a life of intra-species intimacy underground.

Vic’s hopes of intra-species bliss are quickly disappointed. Rather than join a free and ‘civilized’ society, defined by self-disciplined love and ‘inclusive fitness,’ Quilla’s home, the town of Topeka, offers anything “except freedom.” It is populated by 22,860 “squares of the worst kind [who] didn’t want any progress … [or] any dissent”. Said squares are ruled or rather tyrannized by a small group of capitalist town elders who, in the guise of “better businessmen,” eagerly arrange marriages and prostitute their children to secure the genetic survival of their kind short term. As Lew, Quilla June’s father and board members so

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637 Ibid., 85-86.
638 Ibid., 89.
639 Ibid., 88-89.
640 Ibid., 93.
641 Ibid., 87.
642 Ellison not only suggests that capitalism and evolutionist notions of “survival of the fittest” conflict, but, echoing primitivists George Boas and Arthur Lovejoy, he draws a sharp line between science – as practiced by the zealous, overdomesticated and weakened undergrounders – and natural reason.

succinctly reveals Topekan hypocrisy: “We can’t tolerate violence down here, but I s’pose [sixteen year-old] Quilla June’s as good a place to start [force-mating] as any.”  

Against this group of nominally disinterested individuals with narrowly genetic interest, Vic, with his indirect genetic interest (memetic interest with genetic survival value) in his dog, emerges as uncouth yet disinterested and, surprisingly, “human.” Even though he is deceived, forcefully contained, and prostituted, Vic reacts with verbal rather than physical violence. He defends his assaulted masculinity by bombarding members of the bureau with all sorts of sexual insults ranging from “Suck wind asshole” to “I hope all your fuckin’ children are hare-lipped!” and “How’d you like the barrel of a rifle jammed up your ass, bitch?” Yet, his disillusion and anger do not translate into random aggression. Rather than letting go of his self, he exercises discipline and proceeds logically. Vic wishes to return a life of symbiosis with his inter-species companion and locates the way out and the weapons necessary to facilitate his flight.

The protagonist’s dynamic development from hormone-driven “wetbrain” with a penchant for instant gratification to a self-controlled social being with the ability to think ahead is heightened by Quilla’s concurrent regression. Seemingly driven by forethought and self-disciplined devotion to the welfare of her kin, Quilla, we are quick to find out, uses her


644 Much like bourgeois reproduction and exchange persist in the realm of disinterest by defining themselves against narrowly economic interests, memetic reproduction ultimately relies on its openly self-interested genetic other to maintain the appearance of disinterest. Bourdieu reminds us, “If economics deals only with practices that have narrowly economic interest as their principle and only with goods that are directly and immediately convertible into money (which makes them quantifiable), then the universe of bourgeois production and exchange becomes an exception and can see itself and resent itself as a realm of disinterestedness,” (Bourdieu “The Forms,” 242).

limited wits for the deception of others and the promotion of self. Having become complicit in the stunning of her father and his friend, Quilla initially reacts with disgust. She vomits and cries. Within a matter of minutes, however, the distressed damsel transforms into a keen killer. Quilla situates herself hitman-style on the second floor of a nearby building, shooting members of her community with a 45 automatic: “Sighting into that mob and snapping off shots like maybe Wild Bill Elliott in a ‘40s Republic flick ... she’d pick one of those boobs out of the pack her little tongue tip would peel out of the corner of her mouth, and her eyes would get all slick and wet and wham! down the boob would go. ... She was really into it.”

But Quilla not only enjoys killing communal kin, she also feels little obligation to preserve the life of her most immediate, familial kin. Her next victim is no other than her “scrawny mother”. She aims the gun and only fails in attempted matricide because Vic “slam[s] the back of her head, and she missed the shot.” Vic’s interference infuriates Quilla, who whirls around at Vic with “kill in her eyes.” “You made me miss” she jars with a voice that gives Vic “a chill.”

“But do you know what love is?” Quilla June Holmes repeatedly asks. But as the story advances, we learn that the only love Quilla knows is her love of self. She remorselessly kills humans on the municipal, and familial level. Her inability to feel or reason herself into a sense of obligation to Others renders her incapable of reciprocity. Quilla pursues procreative sex and the prospect of genetic replication. And it is for her narcissism and inability to altruistically or even reciprocally “love” others that Quilla June and her ilk are doomed.
Pressed to pick between his seemingly selfless and, logically, progressive partnership with Blood, imperiled by the deceptively sweet but power-hungry Quilla, Vic makes an innovative choice. He sacrifices his biological for his cultural kin and feeds the former to the latter. Rather than read the final scene as an affirmation of our ability to love beyond biological ties, Vic’s decision to sacrifice Quilla to save his dog has commonly been interpreted as an act of misogyny. This interpretation is not unfounded. In making Quilla a predominately physical being controlled by rather than in control of her body, Ellison relegates her to the margins of humanity and facilitates her consumption. As Donna Haraway explains, “the body is properly the subject of control and the object of appropriation. Women and animals are set up as body with depressing regularity in the working of the mind/body binarism in story fields, including scientific ones.”

In attributing powers of the mind to the talking dog and casting Quilla as an equally commanding bodily force, *A Boy and His Dog* becomes more than a misogynistic novel about “how to feed your girlfriend to your dog and live happily ever after.” It is an affirmation of the will to love beyond phenotypical ties that challenges the core principle of kinship, the idea that ‘Blood is Thicker Than Water,’ a decade before anthropologists officially pronounced the popular system dead. In Vic’s exceptional world and, by implication, the healing nation or City upon a Hill, water/memes can be thicker than blood/genes. Here, intimacy based on the mind and shared understanding and cause or, as Ellison’s dog-named

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Blood suggests, with cultural rather than actual Blood, transcends biological differences and supersedes intimacy of bodies and genes.\textsuperscript{653}

In choosing Blood, his animal helpmeet, over Quilla, the post-apocalyptic Eve, Vic chooses reason and memetic survival over instinct and narrowly genetic reproduction. His choice for immaterial life and deferred material profit enables him to maintain the illusion of selflessness and thwart his fall from innocence. In continued collaboration with Blood, in short, Vic is able to restore his compromised image and uphold the idea of the US-American Adam, who, as John Winthrop demanded aboard the \textit{Arabella} (1630), “shall deale” rightly with creation. His choice not only fortifies the construction of the United States as a superior social imaginary, a “City upon or [as Ellison puts it] over a Hill” that consistently practices universal and ostensibly disinterested love, but, more importantly, it holds out the right to “live and be multiplied” rather than “perish out of the good Land.”\textsuperscript{654}

To those embracing 1960s ‘counterculture’ and others disillusioned with an ailing nation that, they felt, needed to nourish its memetic kin-connections and capital to ‘heal’ and persist, Quilla’s unforeseen but not unforeseeable death had tremendous appeal. At once, it represented the rejection of marriage or “unfree love,” biogenetic reproduction, and blood-based bonds; and, in doing so, it promised prelapsarian peace, the prevention of nuclear holocaust and raised hopes for a biological future in ‘balance and harmony’ - beliefs that (at least nominally) united the various branches of the larger movement from civil rights to the new left and from feminism to gay liberation.

\textsuperscript{653} This theme will be further developed in Chapter 6.
\textsuperscript{654} Emphasis on cultural over biological kinship proved Ellison’s answer to the racial and political turbulences of the 1960s. John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity,” 234.

No matter how self-disciplined, reasonable and “counter-cultural” Vic’s decision against immediate biogenetic reproduction may appear, its ulterior motive, as the youth’s inner monologue betrays, is the timeless, self-loving wish to secure survival long-term.

We knew we couldn’t go back, and with Blood in that condition we couldn’t go forward. And I knew, good as I was solo, I couldn’t make it without him. And there wasn’t anything out there to eat. He had to have food at once, and some medical care. I had to do something. Something good, something fast. 655

Far from innocent and innocuous, then, Vic’s calculating maintenance of his canine capital is simply a more sophisticated strategy of survival – a competitively cloaked version of humankind’s stalwart will to life and power with which Ellison’s American Adam hopes to “make it.”

655 Ellison, Vic and Blood, 103.
Red Power, Human–Animal Practices and the ‘Centrification’ of Borderland Identities

"Oh, you’re so lucky to have two sets of ancestors. Just think, you can be Indian one day and white the next. Whichever suits you."

[Jim Loney] was considered an Indian. He never felt Indian. . .

'She had said he was lucky to have two sets of ancestors. In truth he had none.'

Social identity and standing, as the preceding chapters have demonstrated, is a long-term investment process. It cannot be donned nonchalantly or doffed to suit the individual or the situation. Neither can it be reduced to the sum of immutable stimulus-response patterns or essences that structure the interaction of generic automata in their respective social worlds.

Instead, social identity, as Bourdieu observed, is accumulated history. It comprises capital in its embodied form, sets the parameters for the individuals’ assimilation of immaterial, living labor, and thus determines their degree of social membership and power. In its ceaseless appropriation and transformation of immaterial to material capital and material to immaterial capital, the idea of identity eludes continental dichotomization into nature and nurture or, as Bourdieu recapitulates, into inherited traits (ta patroa) and acquired traits (epikteta).

The fluid embodiment of inherited and acquired properties in each member of the social group both enables and regulates communal behavior and life. Simply put, it makes life predictable by stipulating that members invest in their social identity long term. It inculcates intra-communal accountability and firmly establishes seemingly disinterested action within the group as profitable. Ironically, the greatest strength of accumulated labor, the constancy and safety its inertia extends to practicing members of the group, is also its

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657 Ibid., 102.

greatest weakness. Sluggish and slow to change, communities routinely deny newcomers cultural capital and power and relegate them to the margin.

It is from the margin that Jim Loney, the thirty-five year old ‘mixedblood’ protagonist of James Welch’s second novel, The Death of Jim Loney (1979), assesses his identity, accumulated capital and power: “In truth” he concludes, “he had none.” Indeed, Loney’s judgment is not unfounded. He lacks capital in all its guises: economic, cultural, and social. Unmotivated to “get a real job”, Loney works just enough hours as a seasonal farm-aid to maintain a small apartment, a ramshackle Chevy, and a deaf dog in Harlem, Montana. The cash capital alternatives at his disposal match his pocketbook.

Notwithstanding his predilection for learning and self-improvement enhanced by physical fitness and opportunity - Loney is “the smart one” who “lived in that proper boarding house” and, boosted by a basketball-sponsored college-career, is on his way to “become the solid citizen” – he passes up the prevailing path to cultural capital and power, rejects continued, public education, and enlists in the army.

Unfortunately, Loney is unable to counterbalance his lack of cultural capital in the form of academic qualifications with private, parental, familial, or communal assets. His parents chose not to invest in him past the point of bio-genetic reproduction. His full-blooded Gros Ventre mother abandoned him at age one. His white alcoholic father, whom he accosts “as a stranger [would] a stranger,” “never instructed him in anything.” Similarly, his sister, a tenured teacher of Native American culture, with whom he passively engages in sporadic contact at best, is too geographically removed to share her accumulated cultural

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659 Welch, Death, 102.
660 Ibid., 7.
661 Ibid., 82.
662 Ibid., 146, 212.
wealth with him. Echoing his immediate kin connections, Loney maintains no profitable associations within the larger Gros Ventre or whites communities. He admits, “I never really had friends.” And, it appears, that he never really had any long-term lovers or mutually instructive intra-species relations either. Loney seeks sexual satisfaction in “act[s] of love” tantamount to mere moments of “quick coming together” at best. In mid-life, then, we find Jim Loney desperately deracinated: poor, degreeless, culturally barren, and socially isolated.

Unlike Welch’s life-affirming and popular “Red Power” novel, Winter in the Blood (1974), James Loney’s situation only seems to worsen as the Bildungsthoranesque narrative advances. Loney’s growing “desire to isolate himself” from other humans ostensibly ends his assimilation of cultural capital in the form of oral tradition. Furthermore, it gradually estranges him from his potentially reproductive partner, Rhea Davis, a young and educated white Texan. In the end, his will to solitude forecloses the possibility of transmitting biogenetically to the next generation the little bio-cultural capital he has amassed.

In lieu of intra-species contact, Loney turns to drink, canine companionship, and nightly visions of an imaginary black bird as the plot progresses. He only interrupts his

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663 Ibid., 154.
664 Ibid., 154-55.
665 Sean Kicummah Teuton, Red Land, Red Power: Grounding Knowledge in the American Indian Novel (Durham: Duke UP, 2008), 79-118. In the Epilogue of Welch’s red power novel, Winter in the Blood, the narrator turns to the future and survivorship as he ponders marriage to his Cree girlfriend Agnes. The Death of Jim Loney is a novel of Bildung or formation of a coherent cultural identity. For a brief discussion of the use of the European Bildungsroman in native writing as a novel of formation and Red Power, see Sean Kicummah Teuton, Red Power, 34. Welch himself explained that he found it necessary to appropriate “Western forms in order to make the experience immediate and accessible, not only to other Indian groups, but to the society at large” (Welch, “Interview, March 23, 1992,” Poetics and Politics, 10 and 18).
666 Welch, Death, 25.
existence of “more absolute isolation” for a spell of hunting with his childhood chum Pretty Weasel. Rather than use the opportunity to reestablish amicable intra-species relations, Loney kills Weasel, subsequently shoots his father, and, ultimately, stages his own death at the hands of full-blooded reservation police officer Quinton Doore. The Death of Jim Loney thus ends not only with the ‘mixedblood’ protagonist’s biological death, but also leaves the critical reader struggling for life-affirming, cultural-memetic traits to emulate. As a result, Loney’s annihilation at the level of genes and memes seems, as Louis Owens mournfully reflects, “complete and irresistible … offer[ing] no path that would lead to survival”. Owens elaborates, quoting from Bakhtin’s The Dialogic Imagination:

By choosing to die “like a warrior,” Loney adopts the stance of the Indian as tragic hero, that inauthentic, gothic imposition of European America upon the Native American. Loney enacts the fate of the epic Vanishing American: ‘Outside his destiny, the epic and tragic hero is nothing; he is, therefore, a function of the plot fate assigns him; he cannot become the hero of another destiny or another plot.”

Despite Owens’ devastating review, Native American novelists and critics including Paula Gunn Allen, Catherine Rainwater, John Purdy as well as feminist theologian Kathleen Sands, and literary scholar Robert Nelson have sought to authenticate Loney’s experience as Native and mobilize it to strengthen Indian identity as non-vanishing.}

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667 Ibid., 112.
example, understands Welch’s novels within the context of the Plains Indians vision ritual. She identifies Loney’s “desire to isolate himself” with a vision questor’s wish to “seek[…] his vision alone and far from the community.” Uncompromised by physical needs or cognitive limits (such as time/space), or, as Allen puts it in the same breath, “Poverty-stricken in mind, body and heart[,] … he obtains a vision that becomes the guiding force in his life and his death." Because Loney is able to determine the time, place, and mode of his demise, Allen maintains, he emerges a “warrior”; a failed warrior, perhaps, as Louis Owens insists but, nevertheless, a warrior.

Echoing Allen, Catherine Rainwater, William Thackeray, and John Purdy attempt to salvage Loney’s staged suicide by interpreting it as a moment of empowerment rather than victimization. His death, Rainwater posits, represents a point of “radical healing” in which Loney abandons the material world dominated by white culture in order to be united with “the spirits of ancestors.” Similarly, Thackeray views Loney’s terminal rejection of white, material culture as “sanctifying” because it attests to a sense of Native superiority. And Purdy, in a bout of essentialism, hails Loney’s death as a “creative” and “deliberate” yet

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671 Welch, *Death*, 25.

672 Allen, *Sacred Hoop*, 93.

673 For a brief discussion of Paul Gunn Allen’s analysis of Jim Loney also see Louis Owens, *Other Destinies*, 155-56.

674 This as well as the previous quote, see Rainwater, “Dreams,” 106.

“instinctive” response “to the forces that are told of in Gros Ventre literature.” The fundamental problem of these dichotomy-ridden approaches to *The Death of Jim Loney*, as Louis Owens correctly identifies early on, remains the underlying equation of whiteness with inglorious survival and Indianness with glorious death. The *white man’s Indian*, in other words, still vanishes, but now, he does so in style. Even Kathleen Sands’ astute in-depth analysis of Gros Ventre tribal tradition – and, indirectly, bio-cultural capital - in *Jim Loney* concludes that the narrative

makes no confirmation of survival, provides no way to heal. It is very much a terminal novel.

If there is renewal, it is solely spiritual, the soaring of the spirit/bird, a final ambiguity in a complex work. Loney is undeniably a *novel of alienation*, but not a novel of emptiness and despair. Loney’s death is not a futile act of annihilation but an appropriate and satisfying conclusion to a painful and solitary detachment from life.

More recent criticism, building on post-colonial or post-modern scholarship of the late 80s and 90s to blur boundaries and fates, has established the former ‘mixedbloods’ as borderland-identities or hybrids marked by what Homi Bhabha has called an in-betweenness that endows them with exceptional cultural intelligence. Able to assess cultures from “the

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678 Sands, “Indian or Not,” 8, emphases mine.
edge looking into the center,” as Welch puts it in his 1992 interview with Larry Evers, borderland identities are in the unique position to translate and negotiate difference. Perhaps more important, by virtue of embodying “a dynamic confluence” of cultural capital from dissimilar sources, they defy essentialist notions of cultural identity.680

In stark contrast to positive post-modern re-readings of sub-dominant literature, The Death of Jim Loney remains untouched, a monument to post-imperial Native American deracination. This chapter examines the dog trope to challenge the dichotomous reception of Loney as the imperviously indigenous vanishing Indian, who chases a short-lived humanity in the form of inter-species intimacy at the loss of reproductive relations and long-term biogenetic survival. In doing so, I deconstruct the ancillary claim that continental culture is fundamentally less ecological, that is, less humane, if not narcissistically set on biological self-preservation or biopower. I propose that Jim Loney creatively articulates a coherent cultural identity from the seemingly “hopelessly tangled” fragments of his mixed cultural heritage by skillfully synthesizing western animal fetishism and native ecology or totemism employing canis lupus familiaris or omitaa as fetish and “literary totem.”681 The novel’s deliberate deployment of seemingly disinterested animal practices and allied totemic practices as a cross-cultural

681 Loney, Death, 21. Western animal fetishism with specific emphasis on canis lupus familiaris, close companion and powerful totem and thus a commanding sign in both native and non-native cultures. My definition of totem rests on Gerald Vizenor’s understanding of totem as a “native metaphor, a literary connection with creation, shamanic visions, and natural reason. Social science theories have reduced native myths, metaphors, and creation to the categorical representations of human development and comparative culture; these objective simulations have served dominance, not native survivance, and the perverse distinctions of savagism and civilization” (Vizenor, Fugitive Poses, 123). Also see Glen Elder et al, “Le Pratique Sauvage,” 72-90. Omitaa in the Pikanii and Siksika dialects of the Blackfeet language and imitáá in the Kainai dialect. See Donald G. Frantz and Norma Jean Russell. The Blackfoot Dictionary of Stems, Roots and Affixes, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995. Vizenor discusses the dog as “literary totem” or animosh (dog in Ojibwe) in Fugitive Poses, 124-126.
signifier of Jim Loney's humanity (Native and white), social capital, and power situates his protagonist firmly outside the “gothic imposition of European America upon the Native American” and at the center of both continental and native identity or group membership.682 Seen in this light, Loney’s conception of a coherent cultural identity on the basis of mutual (or mutually recognized) animal practices, then, is nothing less than “survivance”, the “alchemy of consecration” or the mixing of a potent elixir of life that secures the bio-cultural survival of hybrid identities within the dominant social group long-term.683

To effectively communicate the story of Jim Loney’s self-transformation of undisciplined animal other to self-disciplined human self-same, Welch adapts a genre literary historian Sean Kicummah Teuton recently termed the Red Power novel. The Red Power novel, Teuton asserts, should not be dismissed as a “literary form caught between

682 Owens, Other Destinies, 155. Put another way, Welch identifies and deploys the dog as a shared sign of recognition. “Mutual recognition and the recognition of group membership which it implies,” as Bourdieu reminds us, “re-produces the group” (Bourdieu, “The Forms,” 250). Facilitated by cultural border-custodian Jim Loney, however, mutual recognition not only re-produces the group, but also modifies its limits to include the marginalized Native. In augmenting the network of “constitutive exchange” (Bourdieu, “The Forms,” p. 250) Loney transforms on a trans-cultural scale “social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term ... into relationships that are at once necessary and elective, implying durable obligations subjectively felt ... or institutionally guaranteed (rights)” (Bourdieu, “The Forms,” 249-50). Simply put, The Death of Jim Loney utilizes shared animal practices to gain enduring obligations for the marginalized Native. In this sense, the novel, as other native stories, becomes, as literary critic and novelist Gerland Vizenor words it, “a literary giveaway. The debt is a lasting, moral obligation to the nation” (Vizenor, Fugitive Poses, 56) – Native and white. In making human animal intimacy as sign of recognition to a larger number of people, Welch increases the practice’s use and exchange value.

683 With a little help from Welch, who brings the cultural capital to the table that his protagonist sorely lacks. Vizenor uses the term survivance “in the sense of native survivance, [a]s more than survival, more than endurance or mere response; the stories of survivance are an active presence. ... [S]urvivance is an active repudiation of dominance, tragedy, and victimry” (Vizenor, Fugitive Poses, 15). “Alchemy of consecration” see Bourdieu, “The Forms,” 250.
cultures." Instead, it represents an appropriation of the German Bildungsroman—literally a novel of formation or becoming. In the process of appropriation, the Bildungsroman, which is traditionally linear and monovocal, is infused with a "Native" voice.

In its pure form, the Bildungsroman, commonly known in English as the "coming-of-age" novel, but, given its roots, more accurately translated as apprenticeship novel, "recounts the youth and young adulthood of a sensitive protagonist [here Loney] who is attempting to learn the nature of the world, discover its meaning and pattern ["something that would tell him who he was"], and [usually initiated by a spiritual crisis] acquire a philosophy of life and 'the art of living'.” It is generally divided into three periods: the years of youth (Jugendjahre), a time of roaming and discovery, learning and inculcation (Wanderjahre), and a stage of embodiment or perfection (Meisterjahre) in which, as M.H. Abrams explains, the characters have attained a level of mastery and rounded understanding of their "identity and role in the world". Set on socialization and inclusion of the individual, the Bildungsroman is generally didactic and rarely ends in death.

The Death of Jim Loney, unquestionably borrows from the Bildungsroman tradition. It proceeds chronologically through the stages of unbecoming, roaming and becoming, and the

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684 Teuton, Red Land, 34.
685 The word appropriation is used by post-colonial theorists to describe the process of taking a language "'that is not one's own [to convey] the spirit that is one's own.' Language is a adopted as a tool and utilized in various ways to express widely differing cultural experiences," (Raja Rao, Kanthapura [New York: New Directions, 1928], vii, quoted in Ashcroft, Empire, 39). What Teuton calls the Native voice is often identified with discontinuous poly-vocality, the trademark of an oral tradition.
masterful appropriation and display of insider skills and capital. In the process of self-transformation, the protagonist develops a coherent identity and (authentic) transposable cultural capital and power within both groups. Rather than strictly follow the Red Power formula, and animate continental forms with 'purely' Native ideas, Welch, it strikes me, invests a voice that, if not readily coherent, is decidedly hybrid from the start. In fact, Welch uses two mutually complementary signs, one Biblical and one totemic, to structure his sensitive protagonist's transformation from a selfish sinner estranged from creation and in need of repentance to a restored and balanced soul/spirit that co-exists seemingly selflessly, in sustained (prelapsarian) harmony, with other species. The biblical sign, or cluster of signs, Welch selects, stems from the opening chapters of the prophetic book of Isaiah, written in the 8th century BCE: "Turn away from man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he." The source, which has several authors and spans a large amount of time, chronicles God's castigation of the rebellious tribe of Israel. To punish the fallen nation for their sins, God allows them to be conquered by the Assyrians with whom they subsequently intermix. To use Isaiah's translated words: they are "overthrown by strangers" (Isa 1.7), "from the east" (Isa 2:6), and "please themselves in the children of strangers" (Isa 2.6).

Obvious allusions to the European invasion of North America "from the east" and subsequent intermixture between whites and Natives aside, the quote Welch chooses to frame his narrative is exceptionally well-suited to pave the way for the articulation of a coherent cultural identity – that is, cultural currency and power accepted in both signifying

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688 Part I, comprising pages 1 to 59; part II, consisting of pages 60 to 122; and, Part III, made up of pages 123 to 179 of this edition.

689 Per King James: “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?” Isaiah 2:22 quoted in Welch, Death, 1, emphases mine to highlight the economic nature attributed to intra-species relations by translators early on.
systems, for the following reasons: first, it recapitulates the perhaps most fundamental theme of western continental culture, namely, the turn from an innocent asexual to a sinful and reproductive lifestyle. Second, it suggests that the way to restore innocence and wholeness and accomplish salvation lies in the abandonment of intra-species intimates and sexual (bio-genetic) reproduction, and the re-initiation of inter-species intimacy and asexual (cultural-memetic) reproduction. Redemption and restoration, the prophet exhorts, lie in the reestablishment of what late French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss called *totemism*.

*Totemism*, derives from the Anishinaabe word “ototeman” which Levi-Strauss loosely translates as “he is a relative of mine”. The term describes the individual’s attempt “by means of physical trials to reconcile himself with a natural category”. Totemism, Levi-Strauss concludes, is an “artificial unity” that “civilized man, in the vain hope of escaping from himself as well as from nature itself, concocts from the ‘primitive’ or ‘archaic’ stages of his own development.” Totemism, put simply, is the dominant group’s way to acknowledge and accommodate continuity between the ‘lower’ animals, out-groups, and subaltern others and still emerge as distinctly different and human.

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690 This thematic is analogous to the body and soul dichotomy which Cotton Mather addresses in his discussion of Isa. 2:22, “It is a prophecy,” he reflects, “That in those Dayes, (of the Messiah,) the Doctrine preached, shall be that, Mat. 10.28. Fear not them which can kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul. Etc. The Text thus mentioned, is not only a Citation from this of Isaiah, but an Accomplishment of it.” Cotton Mather, *Biblia Americana*, Isa. 2:22. I am indebted to Reiner Smolinski for this reference. Reiner Smolinski, e-mail message to author, May 13, 2012. However, passages from Isaiah one and two have also been interpreted, paraphrased and used to encourage positive inter-species behavior. As historian Rob Preece argues, the early Christian abbot Moses, for example, exhorted, “A man ought to do no harm to any” (as derived from Isaiah 11:9: “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain?”) From “The Sayings of the Fathers,” in Waddell, ed. and trans., *The Desert Fathers*, 160, quoted in Rod Preece, *Brute Souls*, 10.


692 Ibid., 17.

693 Ibid., 6.
While animal kinship with emphasis on human animality or beastliness has been used to conceptualize and maintain social difference, animal signs have also operated as what Canadian literary critic Nicole Shukin calls, "potent discursive alibis of power." Properly deployed inter-species kinship signifies the mastering of the human-animal's self-serving drive for biological reproduction and survival. It suggests that the practitioner has acquired the ability to discipline and control the selfish animal within. Masters of their drives, real humans are able to act disinterestedly toward other species and, all the more so, toward their own. The demonstration of disinterest, and restored humanity, in turn, represents labor on the self, cultural capital and power.

Seen in this light, Isaiah’s open rejection of intra-species intimacy as worthless and embrace of inter-species intimates as empowering and uplifting is one of the earliest western identifications of animal intimacy with transposable capital. It proved a potent means to power and represented the subalterns' key to resisting and overturning existing hierarchies. On the day of judgment, the book reads, “a man [having turned away from man] shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, ... to the moles and to the bats; To go into the tops of the ragged rocks" (Isa 2:20-21) in order to be saved and to become the “base [who “shall behave proudly”] against the honourable [sic]” (Isa 3: 4-5) whose “doings are against the Lord” (Isa 3:8). As early as the eight-century BCE, then, the continental tradition subtly proposes renewed interspecies intimacy and animal kinship as a path to power, revolution, salvation, and immortality.


695 For a more detailed overview of the “symbiotic prophecies of Isaiah II” see Preece, *Brute Souls,* 292, 109-112.
Indeed, Isaiah's subtle proposal appears as a white blueprint for the Red Power novel. It relates the story of a tribe conquered "from the east" and subject to intermixture. It demands repentance and isolation from the fallen: Loney weeps "I have no one. It's a celebration." It urges fraternization with the animal kingdom: Loney turns to Swipsey and the dark bird. Finally, it promises salvation culminating in the rise from the "craggy perch" of mission canyon and the rule over the supposedly "righteous" (Isa 3:10).

Welch's *Death of Jim Loney* not only signifies within the continental Christian tradition. On the contrary, it is multivalent or, to use the proper linguistic term, polysemous. As Kathleen Sands and John Purdy's insightful readings of the novel's 'Indianness' have convincingly demonstrated, it can equally comfortably be read as vision quest replete of Gros Ventre and Blackfeet signifiers. These, as Sands and Purdy have established, range from the seeker's age, Loney is thirty-five and has reached "full manhood" to his "fasting, crying, smoking tobacco, and watchful waiting." From seeing "spirits in waking visions as well as dreams, spirits that appeared as real people" to "publicly announcing that he was about to die."

White or Red - to the average reader integrated or deracinated, familiar with or foreign to communal signifiers, neither the droning "bible phrase" that reverberates in our

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696 Welch, *Death*, 23.
697 Ibid., 176.
698 "Polysemy is a technical word for the way in which a particular signifier always has more than one meaning (depending on the receivers), because 'meaning' is an effect of differences within a larger system" (During Simon, *The Cultural Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2007), 6.
699 Inferring from Luke 3:23, most biblical chronologies also arrive at 33-37 as the approximate age of Christ at the moment of crucifixion; Sands, "Indian or Not," 7; Purdy, "Bha's," 69.

ears, nor the dumb animals appearing in “crazy visions” will be more than what Loney considers “puzzles.” In isolation, they lack purpose. Yet in union, (western) word and (native) sign reveal a shared goal and, by implication, a stable meaning. Collaboratively, they urge Loney to practice inter-species intimacy for the sake of joint-capital accumulation, power, and the right to continued existence (cultural-memetic in fiction and bio-genetic in non-fiction). The revelation of a shared goal along with the steps necessary to guarantee it, in turn, creates coherence and comfort from what Louise Erdrich once described as “a strange feeling this dual citizenship.” By means of morphing dual into hybrid hopes and desires, Welch’s *The Death of Jim Loney*, which I would define as a distinctly hybrid power-novel, speculates, “I might survive. Oh God, we might survive together, and what a laugh!”

*Stage I - Unbecoming …*

Be it dog or animosh-assisted, the construction of hybrid humanities for the sake of survival resembles the production of the relatively homogenous humanities discussed above.

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701 This and preceding quotes, see Welch, *Death*, 105.
702 The sound image as western signifier and the visual (image) as Native signifier. See Derrida on Différence (cross between être different, to differ, and differer, to postpone). Différence is the space between signifier and signified that allows for a multiplicity of meanings. It is this multiplicity of meanings that makes the creation of a coherent identity out of bi-cultural chaos and contradiction challenging. Welch creatively overcomes it in finding a shared goal, a stable meaning / “signified.”
703 Be that in the western form of restoration of prelapsarian wholeness or innocence, a state in which humans were able to communicate with animals (snake etc.) on the one hand, and Native sustainability or what Mary Lupton refers to as the Sioux concept of “mitakuye oyasin (‘all are related’)” on the other (Mary Lupton, *James Welch: A Critical Companion* [Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004], 66). The Sioux or Ogala Lakota concept of Mitakye (all creation) Oyasin (the burning desire to know) can also be interpreted as “the burning desire to know” “what it means to be a human being” in relation to all else (see Jeff Lambe, “Indigenous Education, Mainstream Education, and Native Studies,” *AIQ* 27, 1&2 (Winter Spring 2003): 309.
704 Erdrich quoted in Owens, *Other Destinies*, 194.
705 Welch, *Death*, 167.
First and foremost, it demands the detachment of dogmestic from domestic partners to uphold the illusion of an unconditional alliance by means of concealing the causal connection between inter-species intimacy and intra-species popularity, power, and reproductive success. But Welch faces yet another caveat. He has to create and continue said air of non-economic, and hence, authentic disinterestedness in two signifying systems at the same time. 706

Writing in the tradition of Sedgwick, Marvel, Wilson, Bierce, Harte, London, and, most recently, Ellison, Welch proceeds with a perpetual paradox: he founds his protagonist’s burgeoning humanity, social identity, and group- or tribe membership on intra-species alienation. His step-by-step turn away from man and return to increasingly intimate animal practices signifies appreciating reason and reliability as well as the depreciation and ultimate denial of the affect-driven. Lest Loney lose his recent gains and turn in-human at the cusp of his humanity, however, Welch has to grapple with the pitfalls of the non-linear or dynamic development of reason, as best illuminated in London’s Michael, Brother of Jerry (1917).

The ratio between reason and cultural capital and power is, as London’s animal trainers have made patently clear, non-linear. Put another way, logos’ sway over the lower drives does not progress from non-reason signifying animality to reason signifying humanity to incomparable acumen signifying the über- or super-human. Instead, its evolution can more fittingly be described as dynamic. Non-rational animality develops into rational humanity, which, devolves into inhumanity suggestive of deception, depreciation, and asset loss. The process of unbecoming-innocent animal and becoming-knowledgeable human, then, cannot be taken too far. While Loney may accumulate cultural capital in the form of seemingly

706 The perhaps most central difference here is the position of the dog in both cultures. In continental culture, the dog has come to be an ambassador or synchdoche of nature. In the great majority of native cultures, the dog or animosh (an Ojibwa term) is man’s most social and thus most accessible totem, a gateway animal to the natural world.
disinterested animal practices, it is imperative for the hero’s innocent image not to deploy his
dogmestic deliberately. In order to maximize his capital gains and secure his future, Loney
must walk the line between animality and unconsciousness, humanity and partial
consciousness, and inhumanity and total consciousness. Perfectly suspended between
unconsciousness and consciousness, love of life and love of death, Part I of Welch’s tripartite
hybrid power novel, it follows, establishes Loney as lucratively “lost” and lonely.\textsuperscript{707}

Mulling over the meaning of the message of Isaiah, we meet James Loney in absent-
mined attendance of an event that, ordinarily unites Americans of all stripes in communal
zeal for their favorite team: a game of American football. In stark contrast to the social
swarm that surrounds him, Loney is lonely indeed, lacking social connections on the
national, municipal, and familial level. He attends a football match between his hometown,
Harlem, and a team from Alberta, but shows no partisanship and freely admits that “he didn’t
mind” his nation’s loss.\textsuperscript{708} His Harlem kinsmen and -women no more than “glance[...] at him”
in “indifference.”\textsuperscript{709} None talk to him, but, Loney apathetically concludes, “that was all
right.”\textsuperscript{710} Even the locals that know him individually, such as Russell, the bartender, harbor
nothing but dislike. Russell “didn’t like Loney ... [he] had never liked him and he could not
say why.”\textsuperscript{711}

Russell and Loney’s antipathy for one another rests on competition. They are,
“adversaries ... wishing the other ... survival until next time”.\textsuperscript{712} Struggling to secure their
survival, however, the two rivals have chosen very different paths. Russell pursues intra-

\textsuperscript{707} Welch, \textit{Death}, 58.
\textsuperscript{708} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{709} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{710} Ibid., 1, emphasis mine.
\textsuperscript{711} Ibid., 5.
\textsuperscript{712} Ibid., 7.
species mates with hopes of individual bio-genetic reproduction. Loney, on the other hand, longs for an alternative means to secure a future, something “greater” that allows him to “rise above his life”. With respect to the means of reproduction, Russell reflects, the point of conflict had never been a woman. ... The only time a woman had been involved Russell had won. He took the woman home and *fucked her*. But even then he felt that he had been given her, that Loney hadn’t cared one way or another. And maybe that was what he hated in Loney, the fact that *he didn’t seem to care*. Russell, in his victory, had been *made foolish*. Not only indifferent to but somewhat aloof from if not displeased by the openly selfish reproductive strategies pursued by his peers, Loney seeks isolation from friends, females and, even, his father, Ike Loney, whom he fears to encounter at the local bar: “he wanted whiskey ... but his father might be there”. As weary of intra-species company as Loney may be, the path “away from man” and toward alternative long-term investments in the form of inter-species relations seems barred. Loney is acutely aware of his natural surroundings. He is attracted to “the shadowy trees, the glistening sidewalk, the dark cat ... [and] the wood smoke” and describes them caringly. He observes the “tender field”, feels the warm rain, and gets intoxicated or “drowsy” from the smoke of wood and smell of “wet leaves in the gutter”. Able to see, feel, and smell nature, Loney, much like the fallen Enkidu and Adam, is unable to hear, let alone, 

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713 Ibid., 165. 
714 Ibid., 5, emphases mine. 
715 Ibid., 3. 
716 Ibid., 3. 
717 Ibid., 4.
communicate with the natural world: “he saw and smelled these things and his head felt light, and he thought, I hear nothing, it is as quiet as death, and he did not hear the rain.”

As generations of fallen fictional heroes before him, Loney finds himself suspended between the selfish will to biological reproduction and the seemingly selfless desire to restore prelapsarian innocence and secure his immaterial immortality. In order to help his archetypical Adam, apprentice, and vision questor, to make an educated decision between intra- and inter-species intimates and short or long-term survival, Loney is given a guide to each. His intra-species or domestic guide is the “resolutely human”-feeling Rhea Davis. Rhea, whose mythological namesake, Titaness daughter of Uranus and Gaea, is the mother of Greek gods, is a young and attractive southern belle with a degree in education. Well-situated and, reminiscent of Harlan Ellison’s Quilla June Holmes, endowed with nice breasts and wide hips, she represents the mothering, fertile, “safe and civilized side of society”. Namely, her body most immediately promises direct returns for short-term investments. To Rhea, Loney is “on his way to some purpose. And it was up to her to give him that purpose” and return him to reproductive inter-species intimacy. Rivaling Rhea’s effort to permanently recruit Loney into a reproductive lifestyle, is his inter-species guide, the “very old and deaf” dogmestic Swipsey, who “understand[s] everything about life.”

It quickly becomes apparent that domestic and dogmestic and the conflicting cosmologies and means to capital and immortality they represent are irreconcilable. On a

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718 Ibid.
719 Ibid., 7.
720 Ibid., 100. “She wasn’t much in the tits department and he [Painter] was a tit man. If you were an ass man or a leg man, she would drive you crazy. From the waist down she was stacked,” ibid., 131, 162.
721 Ibid., 29.
722 Ibid., 12, 18.
sunny Saturday afternoon, Rhea visits Loney in his apartment. Her hopes that he will be “in shape today” and “feeling the possibility of spirit again, an anticipation of something about to happen” are not disappointed. Upon careful inspection of home, hearth, and, mate, “did you bathe?”, evocative of coupling rituals performed by female wrens or corkwing wrasses, she approvingly settles next to him and initiates a kiss. But, Rhea’s hope of heterosexual bliss is quickly dampened by the arresting presence of Swipsey the dog, who “lay between them and slept”.723

Adapting her conquest strategy, Rhea absentmindedly “patted his [Swipsey’s] head and they were silent for a few minutes” before she continues to banter: “You’re so damned lovely sometimes. Sometimes I think I would just like to take a bite of you.” Loney soon surrenders to her courtship, “We could go inside.” “Going inside” and transitioning from the public sphere of disinterested duty into the private sphere of self-indulgence, however, does not sufficiently remove Loney from the influence of Rhea’s dogmestic rival.724 In order to eliminate her competition, Rhea suggests to take a day of intra-species isolation and head to the mountains, “Let’s feed old Swipsey here and then we’ll go to Buttrey’s and pick out some cheese and then we’ll get a nice bottle of white wine. You go put your jacket on. I’ll feed Swipsey. I know how. Tomato soup, right? ... For just one day she wanted it all.”725

While Rhea truly wants “it all,” she most certainly wants “it” — that is, the promise of intra-species intimacy and reproduction, for more than a day. Rhea’s only attraction to lure Loney into an instinct-driven procreative partnership is “warmth and sex”.726 Initially, “[h]e

723 Ibid., 11-12, emphases mine.
724 Ibid.
725 Ibid., 13, emphases mine.
726 Ibid., 22.
had settled for that."727 After repeated reason-inspired glimpses of higher levels of knowledge and learning, transcendence, or, to use a different linguistic register, the early stages of his vision quest, however, Loney begins to turn away from Rhea and toward his dog and animal fetish, Swipsey.728 Indicative of a fetish or totem, Loney regards his dog as the embodiment of superior wisdom.

I think you understand everything about life. ... You live clean and you never abuse yourself. You're an example to me Swipsey. I just wish I was [sic] as smart as you. I used to be. I was as smart as anybody ... that was before I realized that I didn't know anything. Not one damn thing that was worth knowing.729

But, Swips the dogmestic is more than a guide to things worth knowing. He is more than an embodiment of hidden truths, and he exceeds the role of continental animal fetish. Swips is a link between worlds, signifying systems, and tool to trans-cultural authenticity. In the language of the Anishinaabeg, whose culture is closely related to that of the Blackfeet, the dog or "animosh," as Gerald Vizenor explains, is a "literary totem, much closer to humans than any other animal".730 As a "creature of duality" being ascribed human and animal traits in Native as well as Non-Native culture, Swips is in the unique position to function as a cross-cultural guide and signifier. He is able to lead both Natives and Non-Natives toward

727 Ibid.
728 For a discussion of animal fetishization, please see Nicole Shukin's introduction to Animal Capital (2009).
729 Welch, Death, 18.
730 James Welch considers himself "Blackfeet on my father's side and Gros Ventre on my mother's side. A little bit of Cherokee on my father's side and Irish from both sides (laugh), so I've got quite a mixture in me. But I mainly write about Blackfeet Indians, although my first two novels, Winter in the Blood and The Death of Jim Loney, were set on the Fort Belnap Reservation. The Indians there are the Gros Ventre and the Assiniboins. I think of myself as Blackfeet" (Welch, Death, 2). On the animosh, see Vizenor, Fugitive Poses, 124.
disinterested animal practices, symbolic capital and memetic survival and, in the process, help Loney mold his mixed cultural capital into coherence.

By virtue of being both, dogmestic and intimate animosh, Swips sets Loney on the path toward inter-species intimacy and kinship and readies him for the visitation of the second, less domestic and decidedly more distant, of three animal signs: a dark bird.\textsuperscript{731} “It was a large bird and dark. It was neither graceful nor clumsy, and yet it was both ... as though the bird had lost its natural ability and was destined to eventually lose air”.\textsuperscript{732} Loney later identifies the bird as a vision “sent by my mother’s people. I must interpret it, but I don’t know how.”\textsuperscript{733} Although Loney has not returned to a level of inter-species intimacy that would enable him to communicate with nature – in fact, the bird remains “soundless” until the end – his growing inter-species inclination effectively undermines his intra-species relationship. Shortly after the bird’s first appearance, Loney reflects, “they [him and Rhea] were lovers and he was blowing it. And he didn’t know why.”\textsuperscript{734}

The re-appearance of the “real” yet “elusive” dark bird prompts Loney to more deeply inquire into the overall use and survival value of his intra-species bonds in another vision.\textsuperscript{735} Surrounded by his most intimate intra-species kin - his father, his sister, and his potential mate and promising progenitor, Rhea – he weighs whether life without intra-species intimates in the form of a human “family” is cause for “celebration” or for

\textsuperscript{731} One cannot help but think of Dickins’ three ghosts, past, present, and future, who collaborate to reform Ebenezer Scrooge and return him to the “right” path: disinterested / humane behavior toward his human kin.
\textsuperscript{732} Welch, \textit{Death}, 20-21.
\textsuperscript{733} Ibid., 105.
\textsuperscript{734} Ibid., 112, 22.
\textsuperscript{735} Ibid., 21.
Unable to see beyond themselves, Loney’s white father and girlfriend conclude that Loney’s tears are tears of sorrow, documenting the loss of a bio-genetic past and future epitomized by parent and lover: “He’s crying for me. I’m his family and he pities me”, his father claims. Rhea adds, “Anybody can tell he misses me already; he uses his tears to good purpose”, that is, to win her back and ensure his biological future. Quite unlike the self-absorbed father and lover, Loney’s single, hybrid sister Kate, on the other hand, welcomes the loss of intra-species intimacy as an opportunity to abandon selfish drives and find cultural capital, power, and a future in rational humanity marked by the ability to “think.”

“Can’t you see the man wants only to be left alone, to think?”

Left in limbo between intra- and inter-species desire, Loney finds solace in the hopelessness to accommodate both. He is “not alone” and weeps for “no one. I weep only to myself. It’s a simplicity I have learned.” Loney’s tears, he claims, are free of interest. Neither mourning loss, nor celebrating gain, nor using them to regain Rhea’s good graces, the tears and the man who sheds them, fall outside the realm of exchange. They are, as Kate is careful to reiterate, “not selfish at all.” Instead, they document feelings akin to the cathartic recognition and release of overwhelming tension. Again, Kate explains, “He just hurts.”

Far from signifying closure, catharsis opens opportunity for a new beginning and greater levels of consciousness. However conscious of his options Loney may be, in his

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736 Ibid., 23, 22.
737 Ibid., 23.
738 Ibid., 24, emphases mine.
739 Ibid.
740 Ibid.
741 Ibid.
mind “people and events were [still] as hopelessly tangled as a bird’s nest.”\textsuperscript{742} It takes two additional visions to make the irreconcilable nature of intra- and inter-species intimacies and their respective reproduction strategies patently clear. During his penultimate sexual encounter with Rhea Davis, Loney suddenly spots the “graceful” bird moving “slowly up and down just above the flames.”\textsuperscript{743} Loney is not only unable to share his inter-species vision with his physical intra-species lover. More importantly, he fails to simultaneously entertain both. As Rhea’s material presence waxes that of the immaterial bird wanes. After Rhea entreats him to be “very gentle” with her, “He watched the bird getting smaller and smaller and he felt bad. He had wanted to share this moment”.\textsuperscript{744}

The bird appears a second time to more carefully illuminate the specific survival value of inter-species bonds and the immaterial capital they engender. On the surface, Loney’s dream is about a “mother who is no longer a mother” in search of her son who “will not allow himself to be found”.\textsuperscript{745} On a deeper level, the dream deals with a son abandoning his material existence based on procreative intra-species intimacy, in order to exist, more powerfully, on a cultural-memetic or immaterial level. The dream features Loney looking down at his own grave. He determines that the reason the long lost son cannot be found is total (biological) termination: “He’s here”.\textsuperscript{746} But Loney’s mother objects to her son’s limited understanding of capital and survival in purely biological terms. She “turned and made a sweeping gesture out across the dark prairies behind them. ‘My son is out there,’

\textsuperscript{742} Ibid., 21.
\textsuperscript{743} Ibid., 30.
\textsuperscript{744} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{745} Ibid., 34.
\textsuperscript{746} Ibid.
she said", suggesting that Loney's bio-genetic death signals his cultural-memetic immortality.\textsuperscript{747}

The more Loney cognitively controls his biological urge to live, the more he begins to understand that the choice between the predominately material and predominately immaterial preservation of self is inevitable.\textsuperscript{748} With didactic brilliance, Welch makes it absolutely clear that the decision to control one's underlying will to biological survival and biopower and "turn away from man" for the sake of cultural-memetic survival is not only counterintuitive but next to impossible: "The more he thought about himself, his life, his family, the more he shut her out. Until he needed her. And yet he could not admit to himself that he did need her ... he loved those times, but always afterward, he feared them."\textsuperscript{749}

Despite a lingering, primal attachment to his domestic mate, Swipsey his real life dogmestic and the elusive aquiline escort that frequents Loney's visions have sufficiently alienated the young hetero-reproductive couple. Lying on the bed in Rhea's apartment, "Their bodies touched on the narrow bed, but they did not touch each other."\textsuperscript{750} Rhea's intra-species spell has been broken. Loney is alone to think. And, having successfully ushered his apprentice one step closer to the realm of rationally sustainable inter-species

\textsuperscript{747} Ibid. When Loney finally "wipes the slate clean" even though it "didn't occur to him," he no longer misse[s] Swipsey at all, ... he never thought of him as being dead. Just as he didn't think of Sandra as being dead. Or Kate as being gone for good. Or Rhea as leaving for good," ibid., 108.

\textsuperscript{748} Genetic reproduction is predominately material but, brings with it the preservation of certain behaviors or cultural units / memes. Memetic reproduction that is the preservation of symbolic capital, on the other hand, is transposable and can be embodied / become materially manifest. There is no clear line only predominance along a continuum.

\textsuperscript{749} Welch, \textit{Death}, 37.

\textsuperscript{750} Ibid., 43.
relations, animosh, the canine-human hybrid, departs the material world. He leaves behind a student endowed with the cultural capital required to choose freely, that is, without the trammels of impulse, proceed to the next stage of self(trans)formation, and put his renewed humanity to the test.

Stage II – Roaming and Becoming …

Loney does not have to roam far to discover that there is no authentic, “no real love in his life” – that is, no disinterested dedication that would win or warrant his continued obligation to his intra-species kin. On the contrary, his intra-species relations with Rhea, his sister Kate, his father Ike, and mother Eletra are tantamount to negative capital, fraught with love of self and the concomitant desire to promote the self-same in the other. Rhea, who seeks to remove Loney to Seattle to settle in a reproductive relationship without animal interference, openly admits: “I’m not doing this out of any need for charity or social work. I’m doing it for myself, which I suppose raises another question”. Namely, whether disinterested self-denial and humanity are impossible to conjoin.

As far as Kate, Ike, and Eletra are concerned, it is not. Taking a closer look at the seemingly selfless love of his sister, Loney learns, that Kate loves him for love of self. Despite her good looks and desirability Kate never married. Instead, she nurtures an incestuous love for her immediate kin, so socially unacceptable that “she had gotten used to hiding that

751 Although Swips frequently reappears, post-mortem, in immaterial form. For example, Loney “hear[s] Swipsey moan in the kitchen but the dog had been dead since Thanksgiving,” ibid., 108; “Swipsey growled and Loney whirled around, but there was no dog,” ibid; “He looked out into the backyard toward the garage and saw Swipsey sniffing the base of a cottonwood tree. He whistled and the dog looked up. For an instant it seemed to recognize Loney. Then it took off, disappearing beyond the garage,” ibid., 109.
752 Ibid., 134.
753 Ibid., 86.
754 Ibid., 91.
feeling."\textsuperscript{755} Her reproductive interest in her brother, in turn, puts her in direct competition with Rhea. In fact, they “were in competition .... And what a \textit{funny} competition, the prize being her brother.”\textsuperscript{756} As much as Kate struggles to “pretend[...]” to be a “good sister” who disinterestedly cares about her sibling, her “love for her brother was that of a lover \textit{seeking a perfect love}.”\textsuperscript{757}

What makes a sister’s love for her brother outwardly unconditional and perfect is the absence of openly selfish reproductive strategies. In loving Loney, Kate is able to protect, preserve, and promote her bio-cultural self-same in another without sex and, it follows, without visible trace. She manages to reproduce, in other words, “without a trace of desire or lust or whatever”\textsuperscript{758} Needless to say, when Kate comprehends that her human drive to survive and/or preserve the self-same ad infinitum is, part and parcel of her perfect love, she is “crushed as a rejected lover \textit{might be}.”\textsuperscript{759}

Like Kate, Loney’s parents struggle and fail to find perfect love: his father Ike in the pursuit of his mother Eletra Calf Looking, “as good a goddamn woman as the good lord ever put on this earth” and Eletra first in the pursuit of Ike and, later, in “all the men in the world”.\textsuperscript{760} Their blissful bubble bursts at the birth of their offspring, Kate and James. Rather than represent the product of a perfect love, the children attest to their selfishness, taint their affection, force upon them obligations they are ill-equipped to handle and, ultimately, drive them apart.

\textsuperscript{755} Ibid., 63.
\textsuperscript{756} Ibid., 68-69.
\textsuperscript{757} Ibid., 89.
\textsuperscript{758} Ibid., 65.
\textsuperscript{759} Ibid., 89, emphases mine.
\textsuperscript{760} Ibid., 143, 175.
Ike first flees into a short-lived relationship with social worker Sandra and, shortly after, alcoholism. Eletra seeks short-term refuge in the arms of Yellow Eyes's father before she, too, turns to drink. In sequencing their will to biological life an power by first reproducing and, subsequently, practicing a love less (self)interested, Ike gains “everything! You have no children. You’re the best father imaginable”... Eletra, who seems less of an expert at active forgetting her acts of interest, becomes “a mother who is no longer a mother [who] had given up her son to be free that freedom haunted her. All the drinks, all the men in the world could never make her free.”... Loney’s second look at the lives and lessons of his parents confirms that intra-species intimacy and perfect love do not match, at least, Loney reckons, “not on this earth.”... The only person empowered to approach perfection and practice, which Loney’s family is not “familiar with”, namely, “a love ... without obligation, without pretense. An unpretentious love”, is Sandra the social worker. Long-deceased and unrelated, Sandra loved and cared for Loney on cultural-memetic grounds. As a social worker, Sandra heeded the higher calling of her profession over her inner calling for bio-genetic reproduction. Her love was that of an unconnected adult female for an impressionable asexual child. And, because Sandra’s love for Loney was as close to disinterested and perfect as love could ever be, she remains “the woman he had tried hardest to love” back. he remembered as a child he had run his fingers through Sandra’s hair and had felt like a man. But he hadn’t been a man. His father had been a man and had ‘poured

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761 Ibid., 23.
762 Ibid., 175.
763 Ibid.
764 Ibid., 106.
765 Ibid., 89.
the coals to her.' That ability was what made a man. Loney felt a kind of distant shame for having thought up until now that he had been a kind of lover to Sandra.

He had deluded himself all these years.\textsuperscript{766}

The purity of their reciprocal love, however, rests on its innocence and the participants’ inability to sexually or biologically bond. Disillusioned with his childhood dream of the perfect, unconditional or disinterested intra-species love, Loney closes the penultimate chapter of his life and lesson in becoming. He abandons the fallacious belief in perfect love between lover and intra-species beloved and concludes that the potential for perfection resides not \textit{within} but in the purely platonic and presumably interest-free love \textit{between} species lines.

\textit{Stage III – Unbecoming, Becoming, On-Top and In-Between}

“He had wiped the slate clean, but \textit{it didn’t occur to him.}”\textsuperscript{767}

Loney’s \textit{unconscious} decision to cut remaining intra-species ties and rebuild long lost inter-species bonds crystallizes in the perhaps most controversial event of the novel: the hunt. Loney’s partner in \textit{crime} is his high-school pal and “solid citizen” Pretty Weasel.\textsuperscript{768} A university-educated Native rancher, schooled by “bigger operators, the white men down from the valley”, and intent on nourishing civilization for monetary profit, Pretty Weasel epitomizes the fallen Indian pursuing a lifestyle indifferent, if not dramatically opposed to inter-species intimacy and a sustainable future.\textsuperscript{769} He invades nature in his brand-“new

\textsuperscript{766} Ibid., 145, emphases mine.
\textsuperscript{767} Ibid., 108, emphases mine.
\textsuperscript{768} Ibid., 82.
\textsuperscript{769} Ibid., 80.
pickup”, curses the sun as a “[d]irty bastard”, and loves to talk about American football, the very sport whose function as an artificial forum for intra-species bonds had sparked Loney’s to turn away from man in the first place. In Pretty Weasel’s presence and his jarring laughter, nature retreats, the black bird “turns gray”, and Loney falls silent. Silently, he tunes out Weasel and turns to appreciate nature and “felt nothing but the warmth of the wine and a mild regard for the country they passed”.

In tune with nature rather than attuned to attack it, Loney is distracted from the hunt. Rather than become one with his weapon, he awkwardly and uncomfortably handles his rifle. Rather than focus on his prey, he thinks about travelling, his sister’s love, his step-brother’s death, and things as commonplace as the “cold”. In fact, Loney finds himself so absorbed in thinking about things remote that he is unable to properly focus on and identify things immediate. Believing to have caught a glimpse of a bear, “He wanted to ask why that was a bear,” before he reflects, “There were no bears anymore. They had been driven out of the valley years ago by settlers and hunters”.

Even before he becomes conscious of it, Loney turns tables on the settlers and hunters to side with the ultimate inter-species kin and totem, the bear:

he heard the brittle crashing of the dry stalks and he saw the darkness of it, its immense darkness in that dazzling day, and he thrust the gun to his cheek and he felt the recoil and he saw the astonished on Pretty Weasel’s face as he stumbled two

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770 Ibid., 112, 113.
771 Ibid., 112, 113.
772 Ibid., 117.
773 Ibid.

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steps back and sat down in the crackling cattails ... He lay fifteen feet away but

Loney could smell the blood, faintly metallic, in the crystal air.\(^{774}\)

James Loney shoots and kills the hunter not the hunted. In doing so and, more importantly, in doing so *accidentally*, Loney effectively accomplishes two things: first, he fully severs his intra-species bonds and restores the long-lost, prelapsarian or totemic inter-species ties. Second, he readily deploys the renewed connection as a cross-cultural signifier of his humanity, capital, and power, creating a coherent identity in the process. Not coincidentally, the catalyst for this crucial moment of becoming is the imagined bear, the very symbol of “presence and transcendence,” Gerald Vizenor describes as “the mighty healer of human separation in a [Native] narrative”.\(^{775}\)

As we have learned from London, interspecies practices do not develop linearly and, it follows, do not unconditionally signify disinterested love, humanity, cultural capital, and power. If deployed strategically – that is, consciously, for the selfish purpose of furthering memetic life and power, interspecies love becomes what might best be described as calculatingly considerate behavior or *in-humanity*. Reason wrecked in self-serving calculation, in other words, loses its innocence and, with it, its positive capital, productive power, and allure.

In order to maximize the power of his memes and secure his cultural survival, Loney must blur rather than identify the point of “becoming” and “unbecoming” by simultaneously embodying both: calculation and disinterest, knowledge and innocence, and humanity and animality. Welch accomplishes this by consistently highlighting Loney’s innocent animality throughout the first two stages of his journey toward the mastery of

\(^{774}\) Ibid., 120.

\(^{775}\) Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*, 136.

disinterested inter-species kinship. Rhea calls him “a beast” that reminds her of “a dark greyhound”. Kate considers his face “wolfish” with an expression that was “hungry and shy” and reflects, “There is something about that face like a wolf so canny and innocent, that is attractive”. Even his seemingly superficial class-mate Pretty Weasel, falls “in love right on the spot” with “that quick animal glance, always alert, yet seeming to see nothing. . . . Sometimes when you saw him just right, his face was exactly that of a mongrel, hungry and unpredictable, yet funny-looking”. From the fruitful interplay of instinct and cunning, nature and culture, Loney emerges, his intra-species cohort concludes, as an all around “human being.”

In the third and final part of Loney’s Bildungs-novel, Loney comes of signifying maturity and masters and maintains his position of humanity and power by means of controlled oblivion. He claims, “his consciousness had dimmed in the past couple of months, along with his thinking”. In deliberately denying the capacity to rational thought and calculation or pleading temporary animality, if you will, Loney makes it impossible for the reader to determine whether Pretty Weasel’s death was involuntary manslaughter or inhuman murder. Did Loney shoot a fellow man he “thought […] was a bear”, or did he “kill[…] him on purpose” to assert his inter-species bonds and authenticate his memetic assets at the expense of another being’s life. It is precisely Loney’s amnesia, that frustrates any attempt at classifying his action as either animalistic or inhuman and situates him firmly in-between both.

776 Welch, Death, 12.
777 On a separate occasion, Kate also calls him a “beast,” ibid., 69. Ibid., 63, 66.
778 Ibid., 81-82.
779 Ibid., 85.
780 Ibid., 129.
781 Ibid., 147, 148.
Jim Loney thus follows his bi-cultural calling for self-sacrifice at the cusp of humanity. On the day of his judgment he withdraws into the “tops of the ragged rocks” (Isa 2:21), a “craggy perch ... a couple of hundred yards from the road and about a hundred feet up”. He has mastered the human animal’s self preserving drive for biological reproduction, has “turn[ed] away from man in whose nostrils is breath” (Isa 2:22), and is about to fully restore prelapsarian inter-species relations by merging with his “dark bird as it climbed to a distant place”. Loney departs knowing that reproductive intra-species intimacy is “of no account” yet innocent of the enduring value and power conferred by the disinterested practice of inter-species intimacy. His informed innocence affords Loney the deployment of disinterested animal practices and allied totemic practices as a cross-cultural signifier of his humanity and return, redeemed and empowered, to the center of the western social imagination – that is, on top and in-between.

While James Loney can be absolved from the strategic deployment of interspecies intimacy for the sake of transposable capital, power, and survival, James Welch cannot. On the contrary, the author skillfully and knowingly uses his embodied capital to appropriate living cross-cultural labor and invest it long-term in the memetic empowerment of a marginalized people. Welch rejects genetic reproduction as a short-term and short-sighted investment strategy that leaves Natives “resigned to survival on the level of existence they were born to” and lets them “drink [them]selves to death”. Instead, he creatively crafts a persona that makes “the attempt to rise above his life”, not a hero, but someone potentially more real, inspiring, and valuable to the cause of Native American survivance: a human being

782 Ibid., 176.
783 Ibid., 179.
784 Ibid., 165, 149.
with the dream of overcoming his animality in an inter-species alliance that is mutually sustainable.\textsuperscript{785}

Relying, once again, on the tailwagging Scheherazade to act as a provision of sustainable utilization and survival by virtue of telling back to us the tales of our humanity, Loney “turned to the dog. ‘You tell Amos that Jim Loney passed through town while he was dreaming. Don’t tell him you saw him with a bottle and a gun. Give him dreams. Tell him you saw me carrying a dog and that I was taking that dog to a higher ground. He will know’.\textsuperscript{786} The Death of Jim Loney, then, is a dream of survival without biological reproduction. It is living labor or cultural capital that contributes to the powerful construction of the “ecological Indian” as a coherent hybrid identity based on shared animal practices. This dream, appropriated and transformed from immaterial to material capital, has helped boost the political and, ultimately, biological fitness of a dispossessed people. As such it is an oxymoron. It affirms life by denying it, documents our undying will to life and power, and showcases the complexity of a species with limited vision - a “dying-to-be-human” – animal.

\textsuperscript{785} Ibid., 165.
\textsuperscript{786} Ibid., 167, emphases mine.
The sign on the store window reads: “Closed so employees can be with their families for the holiday.” I stand outside in a light drizzle, wondering whether the rainy season will come early this year and pondering the assumption conveyed in that handwritten note: surely all employees must have families. A hackneyed image of “the older homosexual” comes to mind, alienated from relatives and living out his or her last years alone in some garret. The stereotyped tragedy of “gay life” revolves around this presumed isolation, the absence of kin and stable relationships. Walking paradoxes in a land of marriage vows and blood ties, lesbians and gay men are popularly supposed to incarnate this most sexual and least social of beings. Where does the store owner think his lesbian and gay employees go for Thanksgiving?787

Mary Adare: “I did not choose solitude. Who would? It came to me like a kind of vocation, demanding an effort that married women can’t picture. Sometimes, even now, I look on the married girls the way a wild dog might look through the window at tame ones, envying the regularity of their lives but also despising the low pleasure they get from the master’s touch. I was only tempted once, but that was to romance. Marriage would not have been a comfort ...”788

Wallace Pfef: “I have never married, but I do have a girlfriend referred to by the people of Argus as ‘Pfef’s poor dead sweetheart.’ She is a long gray face behind glass. ... To tell the truth, I don’t know the woman in the picture. ... Because of the poor dead sweetheart, I’ve never had to marry.”789

Karl Adare: “But no love and marriage for me,” I [Karl Adare] told him [Wallace Pfef]. He was fascinated. ... “Screw the management!” I laughed at his maidenly face. ... I pushed past the crowd and fell into the tank with Wallace. I went down on my knees, ... I dragged him close, and the right words came back. “Screw the management,” I said.790

Celestine James: “I don’t want to get married”. ... “I’m married.” “It’s your funeral,” he [Russel Kashpaw] answered. Those were the last words they had spoken.791

Russell Kashpaw: “Whoever she is ... I know one thing. ... I’m not going to marry her.”792

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789 Ibid., 159.
790 Karl Adare to his lover Wallace Pfef, ibid., 106, 323.
791 Ibid., 136, 156.
792 Ibid., 74.

Louise Erdrich, whose iconoclastic treatment of established and state-maintained gender roles and patterns of intimacy has made her the perhaps most popular contemporary female Native American fiction writer, published her second novel, *The Beet Queen*, in the fall of 1986. Accelerated by the successes of subsequently published works – *Tracks* (1988), *Bingo Palace* (1994), *Tales of Burning Love* (1996), and *The Antelope Wife* (1998) to name a few – *The Beet Queen* quickly found its way into the hearts and minds of a wide spectrum of specialists, Native and non-Native alike, who have employed it toward the construction of an American Indian identity that is vitally “nonconventional” – i.e. non-Western and progressively democratic.793 By using her American Indian roots to resist “the management,” critics concur, Louise Erdrich’s characters not only survive, but, more importantly, they contribute to the creation of a less normative and, presumably, more “livable” present and joint-future.794

Literary scholar Louise Flavin, for example, reads matters of family dissolution and interrupted oedipalization in *The Beet Queen* as galvanized by Erdrich’s Anishinaabe experience and “the breakdown of tribal life on the reservation”.795 Freed from tradition and convention, Flavin contends, the novel’s protagonists (Celestine, Karl, and Mary) manage to muster and mobilize a “creative spirit that unites the best of the feminine and masculine”.796

The reconfiguration of gender, in turn, facilitates the formation of the very extended kin-

support network necessary to thrive and survive. Echoing Flavin, fellow literary critic Julie Barack posits that Erdrich’s novels “recreat[e] a gender role available to her through her Native American background” that makes possible the persistence and well-being of the community.  

Taking a slightly more essentialist approach, Tara Prince Hughes’s piece on the presence of “two-spirits” in The Beet Queen deems Erdrich’s alternative gender people “survivors” not of a ‘re-creative’ and, by implication, performative practice but of a profoundly “stable” American Indian spiritual and cultural tradition.  

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97 Julie Barack, “Blurs, Blends, Berdaches: Gender Mixing in the Novels of Louise Erdrich,” SAIL 8, 3 (1996): 51. In accordance with anthropologists Charles Callender and Lee M. Kochems, Barack calls this “gender-mixed” character the “berdache,” a term cultural anthropologist Serena Nanda has more illuminatingly defined elsewhere as “people who partly or completely take on aspects of the culturally defined role of the other sex and who are classified as neither women or men, but as genders of their own. . . . [B]erdache thus refers to gender variant roles, rather than a complete crossing over to an opposite gender role. . . . American Indian cultures included three or four genders: men, women male variants, female variants” (Serena Nanda, Gender Diversity: Crosscultural Variations. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 2000, 12-13 quoted in J. Iovannone, “Mix-Ups, Messes, Confinements and Double-Dealings: Transgendered Performances in Three Novels by Louise Erdrich,” SAIL 21, 1 (Spring 2009): 39. The term “berdache” is gradually falling out of use due to its controversial etymological origins. For a more detailed discussion of the etymological origins and debates surrounding the term, please see J. Iovannone, “Mix-Ups,” 40-41 as well as Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang, eds. Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1997), 4. In its stead, the scholarly community has been using the word “two-spirit,” which, albeit more politically correct, is far from ideal as it reduces the concept of gender performance to western dualisms. See Serena Nanda, Gender Diversity: Crosscultural Variations (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 2000), 12-13 quoted in Iovannone, “Mix-Ups,” 41; Charles Callender and Lee M. Kochems, “The North American Berdache,” Current Anthropology 24.4 (1983): 443-70. Over the course of time, the etymologically problematic and thus increasingly controversial word “berdache” was replaced by the more popular and equally empowering notion of the “two-spirit.”  

98 Tara Prince Hughes, “Worlds in and out of Balance: Alternative Genders and Gayness in The Almanac of the Dead and The Beet Queen,” Literature and Homosexuality, ed. Michael J. Meyer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000): 9. Prince Hughes goes as far as to insist that although “the constructionist perspective has had a liberating affect on many European-American thinkers, its foundation in Western philosophies limits its applicability to non-Western  

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intuits, prove not only vital to a "healthy" and balanced community but of "value to American culture as a whole."\textsuperscript{799}

Even cultural critic J. James Iovannone, whose recent reading of Erdrich’s later fiction strives to overcome western binaries in fluidity and multiplicity of culture, gender, and sexualities, inadvertently slips into reiterations of the familiar as he divides Erdrich’s characters into two groups: a) the culturally conventional, whose rigid adherence to dominant norms and values limits their success and survival; and, b) culturally non-conventional, "transgender" characters with the ability to "better [...] navigate, survive, and lead meaningful lives in a world that is highly gender stratified".\textsuperscript{800} Unlike the former, Iovannone maintains, the latter function as "critical sites of resistance to dominant, oppressive, and regulatory ideologies".\textsuperscript{801} Be it in the form of dualisms, "berdaches," two-spirits or transgender identities, in short, readers have consistently recognized and lauded Erdrich’s alternative patterns of gender performance and intimacy as auxiliary if not indispensable to the survival and power of the community and, ultimately, the state.

The often-indiscriminate identification of gender difference as a source rather than a sign of political power, capital and survival strikes me as an oxymoron that clouds Erdrich’s accomplishments and veils her failures. After all, in this context difference traditionally spells cultural groups. For Native Americans in particular, who are fighting to restore tribal traditions after centuries of genocide, a theory of identity that celebrates fragmentation and discontinuity might not have much appeal or relevance," Hughes, "Worlds in and Out of Balance," 16-17.

\textsuperscript{799} Ibid., 9.


\textsuperscript{801} Iovannone, "Mix-Ups," 43, emphasis mine.

dehumanization and disenfranchisement not emancipation; unless, of course, “the demand to be recognized,” as feminist historian Judith Butler cautions, leads to “new and invidious forms of hierarchy, […] and to new ways of supporting and extending state power”.

This chapter uses the dog trope to re-evaluate Erdrich’s acclaimed Indian-American inspired challenge to established gender roles and intimacies. It reads *The Beet Queen* as a sophisticated, timely, and highly political but not consistently critical contribution to the gay family or gay marriage debate of the 1980s. Even though the denaturalization of heteronormative marriage and introduction of alternative units of kinship remains *The Beet Queen’s* most central theme, it does not follow in the footsteps of non-conventional, system-dissenting gay rights activists who sought to “undercut procreation’s status as a master term imagined to provide all possible kinship relations”. Instead, the novel successfully ruptures what feminist historian Judith Stacey refers to as the “modern family script”, undermines the cultural organization of gender said script endorses, and extends social legitimacy to non-normative patterns of gender performance precisely by demonstrating their superior reproductive success. Erdrich’s extension of the reproductive family unit to “a complicated house” that includes individuals responsible for the replication of bio-genetic capital as well as those in charge of the reproduction of cultural-memetic capital, allows her to come close to reconciling intra- and inter-species intimacy, the two mutually exclusive

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802 For an in depth discussion of “becoming political” as a process of compromise that requires the abandonment of the “unthinkable” or “pure resistance, … site[s] of uncoopted normativity” and appropriation of the recognizable, universal or “thinkable” in order to be heard, see Judith Butler, “Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?” *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 13.1 (2002), 17-23. Ibid., 26.

803 Weston, *Families We Choose*, 213.

804 The “intact nuclear household unit composed of male breadwinner, his full-time homemaker wife, and their dependent children,” see Stacey, *Brave New Families*, 5. If you can’t beat them, join them. Rather than decline the ‘game’, Erdrich embraces it and enters a series of superior players. This strategy may be empowering, but it is not liberating.
strategies of survival in the gene and meme pool and fundamental forms of western state legitimization (capital/power), whose attempts at negotiation this dissertation has undertaken to explore. As Erdrich so beautifully and simply puts it in one of the novel's central metaphors: beets and, by implication Dot Adare, the Beet Queen, "are the perfect marriage between nature and technology." Like crude oil, the beet needs refining, and that means refinery. That spells local industry. Everyone benefits.

Indeed, Erdrich's reconceptualization of reproduction as a bio-technological or biocultural process sanctions heretofore-unrecognized regenerative kinship units along with the multifarious gender roles these non-nuclear units enable. As such, it represents an invaluable democratic opportunity from which "everyone benefits." But even in Erdrich's brave new world, not everyone benefits equally. On the one hand, the author's attempt to maintain Dot's cultural benefactors' disinterested innocence and power while making them interested in the perpetuation of the self-same in Dot suspends Mary Adare and Wallace Pfeef in a perpetual state of 'becoming-human' (calculatingly considerate) and 'unbecoming-animal' (innocently inconsiderate) that is profoundly disempowering. On the other hand, the subtle but persistent delegitimation, if not pathologization of Karl Adare's non-monogamous intimacies as gay male promiscuity, that is, "sexual compulsion resulting from fear of intimacy" fulfills state desire (for sedentary monogamy) and further forecloses the sexual

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805 Erdrich, Beet Queen, 176.
806 I.e. between biological capital provided by Celestine and Karl, and cultural capital provided by Mary and Wallace.
807 Erdrich, Beet Queen, 160, emphases mine.
808 The delegitimation of non-monogamous intimacies promotes the popular assumption that gay men, as Kath Weston puts it, are the "most sexual and least social of beings" (Weston, Families, 2). On "sexual compulsion resulting from fear of intimacy" see Douglas Crimp, "How to Have Promiscuity in an Epidemic," October 43 (Winter 1987): 253 qtd. in Lauren Berlant, Intimacy, 325.
field at the very moment Karl appears to “screw the management” the most. As much as Erdrich strives to permanently dethrone bio-genetic symbolism as the end-all be-all of kinship, and put it on par with the reproduction of cultural capital, then, *The Beet Queen* ultimately re-etches the line between sex and technology and thus not only succumbs to but unexpectedly strengthens existing “western” conventions, hierarchies, and *sexual* taboos.

I grew up in the 1980s, born to a generation whose everyday social relations, intimacies, and child rearing practices made it impossible not to see kinship as a social category or construct rather than biological fact rooted in heterosexual reproduction. The legitimate daughter of tenured parents in higher education, I reaped the material, cultural and emotional benefits of marriage as a state-sanctioned kinship arrangement and its implicit gender order during my mother’s three-year maternity leave. After that, I moved from child care to what might best be described as my German grand-mother’s “what-doesn’t-kill-you-makes-you-stronger” kin-care, before I found refuge in the arms of our gay neighbors, Werner and Valdemar, whose flexible work schedule permitted me to play in their apartment for hours on end. In the meantime, my father involved himself in an extra-marital affair that resulted in two illegitimate children, both of whom were lovingly raised and supported by their legal father. In the end, no one divorced and what appeared unconnected and state-sanctioned on paper resulted in an intricately connected and highly complex kinship network of one ‘father’ with non-biological children, one with extra-marital kin, three close yet legally unconnected step-siblings, and a scholar who, to this day, feels more closely related to her gay neighbors than her maternal grandmother.

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810 Nature and nurture, biology and culture, genes and memes etc. Sadly, I believe it is Erdrich’s heretofore unrevealed and certainly unconscious promotion of dominant culture, capital, and power that fuels her popularity among trained and general audiences alike.

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Around the same time, my husband was born into state-sanctioned marriage on the other side of the Atlantic. After several extra-marital affairs, his parents divorced and his father left to marry another woman and raise her children as his own. Without support from the biological father, maternal “family” by marriage vows and blood ties as well as a number of unrelated “aunts” stepped up to help raise him and his sister both of whom have moved on to hetero-normative marriages.

The formation of “complicated houses” or “chosen families” among members of the western middle class, abnormal as it may have been, was by no means unusual and gradually leveled the way for an extension of the concept of family and kinship beyond the genealogical – that is, beyond relations of blood and marriage. By the mid-eighties, kinship as a social category, was, as Rayna Rapp puts is, overtly politicized. Boston City Councilman David Scondras used his position to fight for an “extended concept of family”. Jesse Jackson, candidate for the democratic presidential nomination, in 1984, readied to advance legal rights for gay families. And at the closing of the decade New York City Judge Vito Titone ruled, “It is the totality of the relationship ... As evidenced by the dedication, caring and self-sacrifice of the parties which should, in the final analysis, control” the definition of family.

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813 David Scondras qtd. in Weston, Families We Choose, 1.

814 These names and events are listed in Kath Weston’s opening paragraphs, ibid.

815 Judge Vito Titone, NYC court ruling, July 1989, ibid.

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Academic views mirrored popular developments. In 1984, anthropologist David Schneider published a critical analysis of the idea of kinship and the family which, in dismantling its core creed “the assumption that ‘Blood is Thicker Than Water’”, led to what fellow anthropologist Sarah Franklin has more recently paraphrased as the “death of kinship.” Schneider summarized the anthropological state of the arts, is considered a privileged system that results from sexual reproduction and the biological bonds and ties “biological closeness” creates. At the same time, it represents a cultural adaptation to “scientifically demonstrable facts of reproduction.” Kinship thus emerges as the beginning and end of human reproduction, an “essentially undefined and vacuous” construct that does little to explain the “complicated houses” we tend to build as we adopt, divorce, abandon, and/or artificially inseminate.

In the attempt to fill the vacuum and illuminate the forms and ultimately nature of human reproduction and kinship, social and cultural anthropologists Annette Weiner and Pierre Bourdieu broadened their definition of reproduction to include the transmission of transposable capital (symbolic and economic), “social relations ... and material resources.” “Many different kinds of social relationships are called upon” Annette Weiner summarized, “to contribute to the production of a new human being, including sexual relationships, exchange relationships, affinal relationships, conjugal relationships, and relationships among

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817 Schneider, *A Critique*, 188.
818 Ibid., 95.
819 Ibid., 185. Or, as Erdrich puts it, “weave.”
In drawing on these larger kin-networks, as Judith Stacey's 1984 case study of divorce-extended "families" in the Silicon Valley and Carol Stacks investigation of kinship networks as *Strategies for Survival in a Black Community* in the mid-west have illustrated, caregivers (consciously or unconsciously) maximize the transmission of material or symbolic interest/capital to the next generation.\(^{822}\)

The gradual disposal of the belief in biological reproduction facilitated by the nuclear family as the real (natural), ideal and only means of regeneration and survival profoundly challenged western conceptions of gender hierarchies and "normal" sexualities. Women, feminist cultural anthropologists S. J. Yanagisako and Carol Delaney collaboratively assert, could no longer "be defined by and confined to their reproductive role" nor could men's contributions be "abstracted and generalized as creativity, productivity, [and] genius".\(^{823}\) But the dethroning of procreation as the nexus of kinship not only ate away at firmly established gender dichotomies, it also validated relationships based on non-reproductive sexualities and boosted the campaign for gay or, as feminist anthropologist Kath Weston put it, "chosen families." "In displacing rather than disallowing biogenetic symbolism," Weston concluded, "discourse on gay families moves obliquely toward the future, responding to hegemonic...

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forms of kinship not with a defensive countermove, but by deftly stepping aside to evade the paradigmic blow.\textsuperscript{824}

In a way, this diplomatic maneuver has increased gay or chosen family "livability." It successfully appeased hegemonic fears of gay claims to reproductive power and confounded visions of the gradual decrease of heterosexual offspring that would lead to group extinction. In doing so, it engendered a type of acceptance hegemony reserves for the "negligible" and prepared the path toward the legalization of same-sex marriage, presently institutionalized in eight states: New York, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, Washington and the District of Columbia as well as the Coquille and the Suquamish Indian tribes located in Oregon and Washington respectively.

In "displacing rather than" confronting or conquering biogenetic symbolism, however, the guarded demand for recognition of homo-sexual or chosen kin-relations foreclosed state-sanctioned rights to filiation.\textsuperscript{825} As feminist historian Judith Butler reminds us, "gay marriage legislative proposals often exclude rights to adoption or reproductive technologies as one of the assumed entitlements of marriage."\textsuperscript{826} To seize both, the right to chosen and biological families, same-sex kinship and filiation, Louise Erdrich diverges from the popular discourse of gay families: \textit{The Beet Queen} represents much less a defensive than a decisively offensive countermove to the dictums of her time.\textsuperscript{827}

Instead of promoting marriage, gay or otherwise, \textit{The Beet Queen} questions the usefulness of the blessed, state-sanctioned arrangement altogether. Erdrich's narrative

\textsuperscript{824} Weston, \textit{Families}, 231.

\textsuperscript{825} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{826} See Judith Butler, "Is Kinship,"15-16. Or, for a more in-depth discussion of chosen families and assisted conception, see Sarah Franklin, \textit{Embodied Progress} (1997).

\textsuperscript{827} Here, same-sex does not equal homo-sexual. Erdrich advocates same-sex kinship without categorizing as lesbians Mary and Celestine, the novel's same-sex couple.
suggests that the nuclear family through the excessive gender norms and expectations it promulgates, hinders rather than promotes reproduction in both the bio-genetic and cultural-memetic sense: it demands the wasteful investment of valuable time and resources in the artificial inflation of appearance and gender-appropriate performance as well as the accumulation of material “things” as extended phenotypes.\textsuperscript{828} Put in less biological lingo, the nuclear family form requires that the individual engages in what Thorstein Veblen has called conspicuous consumption, the lavish and highly competitive display of cultural or material capital to assert social power.\textsuperscript{829} In emphasizing competition, the nuclear family form, Erdrich suggests, not only devalues but also neglects authentic socio-cultural capital and power derived from communal collaboration, but, more importantly, renders its adherents inauthentic and weak. Normative couples, Erdrich continues, are mere copies of an unattainable extreme who have long lost their individuality, personality, and, in the end, humanity.\textsuperscript{830} As much as Sita Kozka, the epitome of nuclear femininity and the archetypically masculine Russel Kashpaw struggle to demonstrate their supposedly superior, self-controlled humanity by channeling their instinctual animality into acceptable forms, they emerge as barren, literally voiceless, and disempowered animals or mechanical automata, caged in their own bodies.

\textsuperscript{828} An extreme form of biologist Amotz Zahavi’s handicap principle – characters in the novel inflate the value of appearance and material goods as extended phenotypes to the point of counter-productivity.

\textsuperscript{829} See Thorstein Veblen, \textit{Theory of the Leisure Class}, 1898.

\textsuperscript{830} In Erdrich this inhumanity takes the form of the mechanical. Per Erdrich, humanity signifies freedom of choice based on empathy. Emotion prevents members of the human family to become “mechanical people,” Mary’s “favorite” subject, see \textit{Beet Queen}, 111.
Nuclear Reproductive Units and Unbecoming Human

In contrast, the extended kinship arrangement or "complicated house" Celestine James, Wallace Pfeef, and Karl and Mary Adare choose to build around Dot helps lift inhibiting gender strictures and allows each of them to nurture and apply heretofore sublimated strengths. The unrepressed use of assets based on merit rather than sex, in turn, enables the group to better compensate for each other's weaknesses. In an interesting twist then, The Beet Queen proposes that less rigorous self-discipline augments not only individual personality and bio-cultural capital in the form of perceived humanity, but also maximizes the targeted collaborative transmission of embodied capital to the next generation.

Despite their vastly different backgrounds, Sita Kozka, the product of Euro-American parents and a nuclear family setting, and Russell Kashpaw, of Indian American parentage raised by extended kin (sister, cousin, aunt and step-father), are equally wedded to the ideal of the nuclear family and the competitive cultural constructions of gender it commands. From an early age, Sita, named after Sita or Seeta the Hindu embodiment of wifely virtue, dreams to enlarge her bio-cultural capital and power by perfecting her physical appearance, manners and "charm."

831 State-sanctioned by marriage for Sita and non-sanctioned for Russell but no less heteronormative.
832 The Ramayana, the Sanskrit story of Rama (the 7th incarnation of Vishnu), written in the 3rd century BCE, tells the tale of Sita, Rama's wife, who sacrificed civilization's comforts and connections to follow her husband into the wilderness. In exile, Sita is abducted by and subjected to the exploits of another king (Ravana). Upon her return, she demonstrates her unwavering chastity, purity, and faithfulness to Rama by walking on burning coals. While Sita temporarily regains Rama's favor, he soon thereafter ousts her as reputedly tainted by another man. Sita's loyalty, feminine virtue, and sacrifice leave her unhappy and unfulfilled. Death releases her from her tribulations. Sita's selfless devotion to the welfare of her husband has made her the epitome of virtuous femininity in Hindu cultures and, as Erdrich's name practices make patently clear, beyond.

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She imagined she would ... meet a young rising professional. They would marry. He would buy her a house near the county courthouse, on the street of railroad mansions not far from Island Park. Every winter she would walk down the hill to skate. She would wear powder blue tights and a short dress with puffs of rabbit fur at the sleeves, collar, and all around a flared hem that would lift her as she twirled. ... [This] was her dream.833

In order to realize her dream of greater class, cultural capital and power, Sita invests in her appearance, schools her taste, and consumes conspicuously. She cuts contact with “all” “beneath her” and moves to Fargo to model in style shows, killing time while awaiting the arrival of “Mr. Right”.834 She maintains Vivien Leigh’s waist (22 1/2), treats her skin with concoctions of pulverized apricot and white vinegar, religiously attends “refresher courses at The Dorothy Ludlow Evening School of Charm”, and is desperate to buy stylish dresses she simply cannot afford.835

The tag was beneath the sleeve and I didn’t have enough money along with me to meet the price. I could have written a draft on my bank account, but the amount was simply too high. I was way out of line. I stood there in my slip, so unnerved I could hardly think straight. I read the numbers over and over, as if I could change them by force of will. But they stayed the same.836

Despite the time and labor she spends accruing the necessary cultural capital to move up and become “off limits” to the small-town type, Sita continues to attract suitors who fail to appreciate or even “acknowledge the improvements to culture and charm I had made in

833 Erdrich, Beet Queen, 76.
834 Ibid., 76, 121, 84.
835 Ibid., 84, 83.
836 Ibid., 91.
myself." Their ignorance is profoundly disempowering. Surrounded by people of "low class", blind or indifferent to the symbolic value of her competitive display of self-disciplined behaviors, Sita cannot rise. At the same time, in strictly adhering to a gender script that equates femininity with damsel-like dependence, she deliberately denies herself the economic means to actively escape. Stuck between a rock and a hard place, Sita "surrender[s,]" marries ill-mannered Jimmy Bohl, and goes "back to being Sita Kozka, daughter of Pete the butcher. Or just about."

Far from a reproductive arrangement of heterosexual bliss, Sita’s first marriage is simply a means to passively escape the perceived confines of an uncultivated existence. After three years of an un-reproductive marriage, Sita files for divorce and uses her share of the settlement to open a high-end French restaurant: “Chez Sita, Home of the Flambéed Shrimp.” Economically speaking, the business is far from profitable. Nobody can properly pronounce its name – Mary "says Chez to rhyme with Pez." Nobody can read the French menu. To make matters worse, on opening night, the cook falls ill with food poisoning; an event that effectively scares off prospective patrons. What “Chez Sita” lacks in economic value, however, the business offsets with its inherent cultural or transposable capital. And it is the establishment’s cultural capital that, albeit through a series of seemingly unfortunate events, summons and attracts to Sita Louis Tappe, state health inspector and "extension agent" extraordinaire.

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837 Ibid., 72, 86.
838 Ibid., 115.
839 Ibid., 97, 86.
840 Ibid., 115.
841 Ibid., 147.

Louis not only embodies compatible quantities of cultural capital and power in the form of knowledge, he also is state-licensed and, it follows, authorized to deploy his embodied technologies to cultivate his unrestrained environs. His specialty: Louis identifies “area pests and local helpers” and runs trials on how to properly modify the environment to extinguish the former and promote the latter.\textsuperscript{842} As a proponent of norms and normative capital, Louis represents Sita’s long-desired mate; the self-disciplined and disciplining “scientific husband” who came to appreciate, improve and “take care of me [Sita.]”\textsuperscript{843}

Sita’s extension-agent assisted self-improvement, however, comes at considerable cost. On the one hand, she has to “be strong”, “relying only on Louis” and herself, and perfect the control of her bodily needs for the sake of status and power.\textsuperscript{844} On the other hand, Sita has to act meek. Living and feeding the expectations of an incongruous (gender) system, exacerbated by a “scientific husband” who secretly places her under constant surveillance, Sita struggles with the emotional stress until it turns psychosomatic. When Sita loses her voice after seven years of marriage - Louis not only commits her to the state mental hospital to have her “return[…] to […] normal”, but he also makes public a series of notebooks he has “kept over the years” meticulously documenting Sita’s abnormal “episodes.”\textsuperscript{845} “The notebooks had seemed as private between them as their own embraces. It was a shock to see them stacked on the doctor’s desk. And Sita was frightened now.”\textsuperscript{846}

\textsuperscript{842} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{843} Ibid., 141, 144.
\textsuperscript{844} “[R]elying only on Louis and myself for answers and assistance,” ibid., 144.
\textsuperscript{845} Ibid., 205.
\textsuperscript{846} Ibid., 205-06.
Isolated from her kin and sent into psychiatric exile by a husband who promotes the marriage paradox by prioritizing appearance and performance over ‘naturalness’ and authenticity, Sita breaks down, emotionally and physically.

Sita sat, peering at us through the cast iron leaves of the banister rail. I’d noticed her from the corner of my eye for some time now, drawn to us wearily but helplessly, like a starved deer. She resembled one. Her cheeks were hollow, her eyes were stark, and her ribs were caved in. She melted back from our attention into the shadows of the upper landing.847

Fearful of human contact and physically “ill”, Sita’s decline demonstrates the detrimental effects of years of competitive self-discipline and self-denial on spirit and body. Tortured by technologies of self, she devolves from human to disempowered animal and from voiceless animal to powerless machine.848 By the time Celestine and Mary come to help their ailing friend and stepsister, respectively, she has become Mary’s worst nightmare, a “mechanical” person or robot “without feelings”.849 Without physical or emotional capital, in the form of “mercy” or empathy, Sita is as good as dead.850

Far from a selective advantage for survival, then, nuclear kinship and the extreme forms of femininity it engenders represent a handicap. They accelerate the loss of biological

847 Ibid., 248.
848 Ibid., 245. Although none of the characters explicitly identify Sita as “an animal,” Erdrich suggests that Sita’s loss of control and increase of fear are, in a sense, animalistic (see below). Erdrich, Beet Queen, 111. Aggravated by her long-term pill habit, Sita’s senses are deadened, her movements cumbersome and automated. She is indifferent to, if not “more comfortable” (283) with, the loss of “the use of her left arm and must hold it crimped up at my ribs like the wing of a chicken” (283). Retrieving pills from the hiding place “takes every ounce of [...] control” (285). And preparing for the Beet Festival requires “immense” concentration and “strict will” (289). Sita dies of an overdose, with “pills blocking her nerve pathways” (287), “standing upright” and looking “impatient” (290) as usual.
850 Ibid., 111.
fitness and embodied capital – Sita goes "downhill".\(^{851}\) They limit the couple’s ability to reproduce – "We’ve missed out on them with no children of our own".\(^{852}\) Finally, they thwart even the cultural-memetic transmission of capital by driving individuals to invest in "things" rather than people – "Sita is the reason all those things are there, and when she goes they will still be there. They will outlast her as they have already outlasted her husband. They will outlast me. Common things … so indestructible, while Sita, for all her desperation of a lifetime, must die."\(^{853}\)

Conspicuous consumption - as the fast track to social capital and status, power and survival, however - not only tempts and ultimately fails females of eastern-European heritage raised within the nuclear, working-class family setting such as Sita. More or less immediate returns equally appeal to marginalized members of the larger social imaginary such as full-blooded Indian American, Russell Kashpaw, who was raised within the extensive kinship network of the Kashpaw-Puyat clan.\(^{854}\) As the object of his unrequited love, Sita, Russell’s\(^{855}\) prolonged pursuit of cultural capital and power through perfected gender performance turns out to be profoundly disabling.

Moderately masculine in appearance and performance, Russell starts off as a “bull-chested boy with the soft voice, teasing eyes, […] and] shaggy hair".\(^{856}\) He engages in his first

\(^{851}\) Ibid., 245.
\(^{852}\) Ibid., 242.
\(^{853}\) Ibid., 278.
\(^{854}\) That is returns received within the lifetime of the individual and not, accumulated and transmitted over generations.
\(^{855}\) From old French Rousel – the red one. Erdrich is careful to incorporate name symbolism from cultures across the globe. From the Hindu Sita, to the Old French Russel and from The northern Germanic Karl (husband, man) to the heavenly Celestine, and from the literal virgin, Mary, to Wallace, the Welch term for foreigner, naming the only person in Erdrich’s ‘complicated house’ that is not biologically related.
\(^{856}\) Erdrich, *Beet Queen*, 70.
competitive display of state-approved masculinity and fitness, by going, like Jim Loney, "through high school as a football star". Having earned communal approval for his playful, low risk exploits, Russell decides to up the ante. He joins the war and returns, decorated with scars and medals, a "hero". Again, his investment seems to pay off.

"[S]cars [that] stretched up his cheeks like clam marks, angry and long, even running up his temples and parting his hair crooked", give him an "unsettling dark grandeur" as well as the opportunity to accept a "good bank-clerk job [that] Argus National had offered him as a returning home-town hero, even though he was an Indian".

Uplifted, empowered, and eager to add Sita to his list of conquests, Russell returns to the front for more, abandoning what Mary early on perceptively identifies as a "procession of veined green marble, brass, and velvet ropes that led to his cage". This time, however, his efforts do not earn him the anticipated reverence and transposable, social capital. On the contrary, while active duty earns him the title of "North Dakota's most decorated hero", the reward is merely nominal. To make matters worse, in his absence his window for biogenetic reproduction blows shut. He not only loses Sita to Jimmy Bohl, and his biological sister Celestine to Karl, but his older Isabel, who having married a Sioux man, dies a violent death.

But Russell's dispossession does not stop there. Stripped of cultural capital in the form of experience and connections as well as biogenetic capital shared with his immediate kin, his physical fitness and embodied capital erodes. He is "[l]imping, creased head to foot".

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857 Ibid.
858 Ibid.
859 Ibid., emphases mine.
860 Ibid., emphases mine.
861 Ibid., 111.
with new scars and stripes that almost look like the markings of an animal".\textsuperscript{862} According to Mary, his external appearance increasingly matches internal reality. He acts, she concludes, as an animal, on non-reason and unfettered instinct. “I think it’s stupid, that this getting shot apart is what he’s lived for all his life”.\textsuperscript{863} The more members of his social group dehumanize his physical form and behavior, the more Russell withdraws. He “stays in the bars all night, or mopes around the house with his toolbox” and finally seeks more absolute isolation in his remote fishing shack where he “could avoid her [Celestine] a little longer”.\textsuperscript{864} In the end, Russell is unable to cope with the absurdity of a system that demands yet punishes unwavering commitment to its constructions of gender. Reminiscent of his unrequited love, Sita, he has a stroke that leaves him paralyzed and voiceless; an “active mind” caged in a body that has been warped into reproductive dysfunction.\textsuperscript{865}

Needless to say, \textit{The Beet Queen} no longer depicts marriage and its auxiliary gender constructions as what Victorian epidemiologist William Farr (1807-83) described as “a healthy estate” in his mid-nineteenth century study of the “conjugal condition”.\textsuperscript{866} On the contrary, marriage here becomes the root cause of high levels of stress, dehumanization, premature deaths, and the breakdown of the successful reproduction and transmission of multiple forms of capital.

\textsuperscript{862} Ibid., 112.
\textsuperscript{863} Ibid., 111, emphases mine.
\textsuperscript{864} Ibid., 112, 155.
\textsuperscript{865} Ibid., 196.

Much less hazardous to human health than marriage and a prudent investment in bio-cultural capital, survival, and power Erdrich suggests, is the formation of a “complicated house,” an extended kinship network that allows each member forego dishonest display costs and to directly invest their regenerative energy, strengths, and skills in the genetic and memetic reproduction of self.867

Non-Nuclear Reproductive Units and Unbecoming Animal

One night Dot slept past her feeding time and Celestine woke in the half-light of dawn with full breasts. The baby clung like a sloth, heavy with sleep, and latched on in hunger, without waking. She drew milk down silently in one long inhalation. It was then that Celestine noticed, in the fine moonlit floss of her baby’s hair, a tiny white spider making its nest. It was a delicate thing, close to transparent, with long sheer legs. It moved so quickly that it seemed to vibrate, throwing out invisible strings and catching them, weaving its own tensile strand. Celestine watched as it began to happen. A web was forming, a complicated house, that Celestine could not bring herself to destroy.868

In The Beet Queen, this complicated house consists of the following four characters: Karl Adare the wandering sales-man and lousy provider, named after the Old Norse Karl meaning “man” or “free man.”869 Celestine James, the well-socialized and as her name suggests, heavenly, but materially “strong and imposing” Indian American, who is “eager to take control” but continues to depend on her friend Mary Adare for employment.870 Mary Adare, the “ruthless” and lonesome virgin and provider, who looks and acts so much like a man that “if you didn’t know she was a woman you would never know it.”871 Finally, there is Wallace Pfef, after ‘le waleis’, Old French meaning “foreigner or stranger.” Wallace, albeit

867 Real or ideal – that is, by genotype, phenotype, or simply, by ideal.
868 Erdrich, Beet Queen, 176.
869 Karl, is also closely related to the German word “Kerl,” ironically describing what Karl is mostly certainly not, a masculine, brawny, male.
870 Erdrich, Beet Queen, 125.
871 Ibid., 161. Isabel Kashpaw describes her as “She’s all we have, and she takes care of us by holding down jobs with farmers, cooking, and sometimes even threshing right along with men.” Ibid., 43, 214.
being “queer”, is the social networker of the community. His personality disproves the then widely held notion that homosexuals are, as Kath Weston has put it, “most sexual” and “least social of beings”. Wallace is a stable provider of social capital in the form of favors and connections. He is not sexually active until seduced by Karl. And, as his name suggests, Wallace remains the only person in the reproductive rectangle that is not related to anyone by blood.

Karl, Celestine, Mary and Wallace invest in Dot, the ‘gift of god’, as their self-same and, as Karl puts it toward the end of the novel, “their future”. In doing so, all four share the same goal: the selfish reproduction of the self-same in another. Yet their investment strategies differ by skill. Reproductive modes range from predominately biological to biocultural, from bio-cultural to cultural-biological, and from cultural-biological to exclusively cultural. Karl Adare reproduces first and foremost biologically, making a one-time investment of sperm. Accordingly, Dot resembles Karl principally in looks. “I did not think that Dot resembled Karl, but I was wrong. For there he lounged, suddenly, half in shadow, with the light behind him on the white woodwork … I turned my head, slapped my hands to my temples, but it was no use. Karl was still there”. Behavioral similarities between the two can most readily be interpreted as the marks of fatherly absence. Dot, Sita judges, shares “her father’s same bad manners” and Wallace identifies a shared

872 Ibid., 161; Contrary to the stereotype Kath Weston addressed in the opening quotes to this chapter, “lesbians and gay men are supposed to incarnate this most sexual and least social of beings” (Weston, Families, 2). Erdrich’s careful naming practices (discussed above), her trilingual heritage (French, Ojibwe, German), and her educational background in creative writing, suggest sufficient knowledge of Old French to make this choice deliberate.
873 Weston, Families, 2.
874 Per Dorthy from the Greek doro thea, gift of god. Erdrich, Beet Queen, 317.
875 Ibid., 238.
“lack of responsibility”. 876 Karl himself admits, “he could have influenced her taste in music if he’d been around more”. 877

Unlike Karl, Celestine has made her biological daughter, in whose life she represents a “steady but unexciting” influence, an ongoing bio-cultural investment. Dot embodies her mother primarily biologically – that is, in appearance, “I [Celestine] saw too much of myself in Dot. I know how it is. I was too big for all the boys”. 878 As we get to know Dot, however, cultural similarities between mother and daughter emerge. Dot shares more than “Celestine’s occasional cruelties”. 879 They are both weaker and better socialized than Mary, stronger and less social than Wallace, and less selfish than Karl. In fact, they share an intimacy, and therefore I would suggest, a level of self-sameness that far exceeds anyone else’s as the final scene of the novel begins to suggest. Awaiting the rain, symbol of change and renewal in adjacent rooms, both “breathe it [the smell of rain] in, and I think of her lying in the next room, her covers thrown back too, eyes wide open, waiting”. 880 Vulnerable, alert, yet tranquilly optimistic both mother, like daughter, await the future.

As Karl’s biological sister, Mary Adare’s reproductive interest in Dot is at least in part biological. It is nevertheless Mary’s material-cultural investment in her niece that exceeds and ultimately secures the transmission of genetic capital already invested by proxy. Dot, Mary believes, “positively resembled me. Pale, broad, and solid”. 881 More importantly, Dot and Mary share a “mental connection”, a “one-track mind and double-fists” that

876 Ibid., 288, 233.
877 Ibid., 259.
878 Ibid., 220, 215.
879 Ibid., 233.
880 Ibid., 338.
881 Ibid., 181.
motivates Mary to “indulge[...] the girl royally”. As much as Celestine attempts to relegate Mary to the “sideline” and act the aunt, her efforts are, as Mary is quick to admit, “hopeless”. Rather than participate from the margin, Mary takes a more central stage in Dot’s upbringing contributing much needed material and cultural capital as mother-in-law by birth not marriage.

Unlike Karl, Celestine and Mary, Wallace, the ‘outsider’ and Dot’s “male sponsor” has no biological connection to the child. In other words, Wallace’s reproductive interest in Dot is purely cultural. In taking a purely cultural interest in his lover’s offspring, Wallace is able to deploy his cultural capital seemingly “selflessly,” untarnished, and at full force to benefit the reproduction of his ideal rather than his real (i.e. biological) self in Dot. Dot, he reflects, “had one trait that always drew me back. She feared nothing”. Dot is “tough” and “selfish”, the ideal opposite of the overwhelmingly selfless and weak Wallace Pfef.

As the reproductive unit concertedly expands from the nuclear family to a non-nuclear superfecta, individual members are no longer forced to reconcile openly selfish forms of bio-genetic reproduction with seemingly selfless means of cultural or memetic regeneration. As part and parcel of a larger reproductive unit, the biological parents can unreservedly dedicate themselves to and perfect the transmission of bio-capital while the ‘cultural parents’ prioritize the targeted transmission of accumulated social capital. In collaborating toward the shared goal of bio-cultural reproduction, in other words, larger kinship units, Erdrich suggests, can overcome the most central paradox of continued human

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882 Ibid., 180, 182.
883 Ibid., 182.
884 Ibid., 172.
885 Ibid., 233.
886 Ibid., 233, 181.
existence. They are able to contain more or less unmitigated the two mutually exclusive strategies of survival and fundamental forms of state legitimation and capital.

Domestics, Dogmestics and Complicated Housing

Writing in the tradition of Catherine Sedgwick, I. k Marvel, Harriet Wilson, Bret Harte, Jack London, Langston Hughes, Harlan Ellison, and James Welch to name only a few who reconnoitered, recruited, and dispatched man's best friend for the purpose of capital perpetuation, Erdrich deploys dogs to let the degree of inter-species intimacy bespeak her characters' preferred mode of reproduction. The greater the individual's dislike of dogs, the greater their desire for intra-species intimacy. The greater their desire for intra-species intimacy, the greater their will to direct bio-sexual survival. And, the greater their will to direct bio-sexual survival, the hotter their pursuit of short-term investments, bio-capital, and tangible returns. At the same time, individuals that embrace dogs as inter-species intimates reject bio-genetic reproduction and the pursuit of short-term investments in favor of long-term investment strategies and intangible memetic capital, power, and survival.

Karl Adare, the Beet Queen's most sexual of characters is also the most fearful of canines and long-term social investments. Karl's reproductive choice – the turn toward casual sexual encounters at instant satisfaction and away from canine and social capital – crystallizes in the opening scene, on "a cold spring morning", in an event evocative of the 'Fall.'

In search of their future home, the house of maternal aunt Fritzie and her husband

887 Ibid., 1. Please note the multiple layers of metaphors Erdrich uses to identify Karl's choice between bio-genetic and cultural-memetic survival as one of the earliest and most fundamental decisions the human-animal faces. Like the biblical Adam, who gives in to bio-genetic temptation in the opening pages of genesis, falls, and thus estranges himself from creation, Karl is tempted in the opening pages of the novel, on "a cold morning" (beginning of the day) in the spring (beginning of the year), by the sweet scent of an Argus apple tree.

Pete of Argus, Minnesota, Karl and Mary Adare, orphaned and abandoned, despondently follow main-street.\textsuperscript{888} When suddenly, the monotony of “houses, weathered gray or peeling gray paint, with dogs tied to their porch railings” is broken by temptation:

\begin{quote}
one tree, weak, a scratch of light against the gray of everything else, tossed in a film of blossoms. Mary trudged solidly forward, hardly glancing at it, but Karl stopped. The tree drew him with its delicate perfume. His cheeks went pink, he stretched his arms out like a sleepwalker, and in one long transfixed motion he floated to the tree and buried his face in the white petals. Turning to look for Karl, Mary was frightened by how far back he had fallen and how still he was, his face pressed in the flowers. She shouted, but he did not seem to hear her and only stood, strange and stock-still among the branches [of the Argus apple tree.] He did not move even when the dog in the yard lunged against its rope and bawled. […] Large and anxious it flew forward in great bounds. And then, either to protect himself or to seize the blooms, Karl reached out and tore a branch from the tree. […] [W]hen the dog jumped for Karl, he struck out with the branch and the petals dropped around the dog’s fierce outstretched body in a sudden snow. Then he yelled, ‘Run!’ and Mary ran east, toward aunt Fritzie. But Karl ran back to the boxcar and the train.\textsuperscript{889}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{888} The narrative begins in the depression years. As we learn later, German wheat farmer, Mr. Ober, who, smothered in a grain-loading accident, leaves behind not only a wife, but also his illegitimate kin, Adelaide Adare and their three children, Karl, Mary, and, soon to be born son, Jude. As the product of a familial culture and gender order that makes her economically dependent on Mr. Ober (German: waiter or server), the illegitimate patriarch’s death leaves Adelaide absolutely helpless. She pawns her valuables, abandons her children, and, in dependent distressed-damsel fashion, seeks refuge in the masculine arms of bootlegging stunt pilot Omar, the Great. Her abandonment leaves Mary and Karl Adare in search of a new home, identity, and purpose.

\textsuperscript{889} Erdrich, \textit{Beet Queen}, 2, emphases mine. Said tree, Erdrich later specifies, is an apple tree, ibid. 49.
Similar to the biblical scenario, Erdrich’s modern-day version of the Fall features a sexually uninitiated or “whole” couple of opposite sexes tempted by the apple tree and its forbidden fruit. Karl succumbs to the apple tree’s intoxicatingly “delicate perfume”. In surrendering to his senses or unconscious drives, he takes the first of two steps toward becoming human and unbecoming animal. He gains partial knowledge or awareness of his bio-genetic reproductive desire and, in the process, estranges himself from the rest of the animal kingdom or, synecdochically, the dog. As Mary so plainly puts it, he ‘falls’ far back.

In order for Karl’s self-transformation to be complete, however, he has to consummate his intra-species desire. Opportunity to do so presents itself in the form of leathery vagrant Giles St. Ambrose who boards Karl’s boxcar “not ten miles out of Argus”. Giles St. Ambrose, as the name suggests, has a penchant for the vulnerable virgin. His namesakes are the Greek hermit Saint Giles (ca 650-710 CE), patron of “cripples, beggars, and lepers,” and the German-born St. Ambrose or Aurelius Ambrosius (339-397 CE), lover of virgins. Giles St. Ambrose, whose name is “no joke”, helps Karl complete his journey toward unbecoming, becoming, or simply, coming. “Do you know what you are doing?” Giles asks, before he “pinned him deep into the hay [...] kissed Karl on the throat and began to touch him in a new way, all over, roughly but also carefully, until Karl’s body tightened unbearably and then let loose, abruptly, in a long dark pulse”.

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890 Ibid., 2.
891 Ibid., 22.
892 St. Ambrose was a prolific writer who, among other accomplishments, is famous for his tracts on virgins: De virginibus (On Virgins), De virginitate (On Virginity), Exhortatio virginitatis (Exhortation to Virginity), and De institutione virginis et sanctae Mariae virginitate perpetua ad Eusebium (On the Birth of the Virgin and the Perpetual Virginity of Mary).
893 Erdrich, Beet Queen, 23, 25.

It is only after Karl has finalized his choice and gotten a taste of the rewards that he begins to fathom “the depth of his loss”. Mulling over already withering apple-tree “branch, still faintly good to smell” Karl senses the ephemeral nature of a reproductive mode that favors intra-species intimacy, instant gratification, and tangible but ephemeral gains over inter-species intimacy, delayed returns, and lasting, transposable capital. Within moments, he comes to terms with his ultimate weightlessness and does not “vomit or scream”. Neither does he “want to cry”. Instead, Karl accepts his credo of living life in the moment and runs “straight out of the door of the moving boxcar.”

For the remainder of his short life, Karl conforms to the rules of strictly bio-genetic reproduction. He makes no long-term investments - neither financial nor inter-personal nor inter-species - and, correspondingly, accrues no social or companion capital. As he succinctly summarizes his existence: “I give nothing, take nothing, mean nothing, hold nothing”. Befitting his reproductive choice, Karl becomes a wandering salesman. He “travel[s] light” all his life selling low-quality, short-lived products that “don’t work” to gullible consumers. He is hard-pressed to hang on to a car for more than “fifteen payments”, habitually discards old clothes, records, and books, and makes it a point that his possessions (however few he holds) be “portable”.

What’s more, Karl Adare is as superficially attractive and transient as his goods. In order to better market himself to sexual partners and continue his seminarian habit of “rendezvous[ing] with thin hard hoboes who had slept in the bushes” - “between the lines of

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894 This an the above quotes in this paragraph, ibid., 26, emphases mine.
895 In light of the fact that Erdrich’s novels, much like Faulkner’s, span generations of Kashpaws, Morrisey’s and Nanapush’s, tracing back to the mid-19th century (Tracks), Karl’s overall insignificance becomes all the more clear.
896 Erdrich, Beet Queen, 318.
897 Ibid., 236, 317, 316.
sacred texts”, he stays physically and mentally fit.  
898 He “lifted weights, swam laps, or ran an occasional mile even when I was on the road. I took care of myself mentally too”.  
899 His efforts pay off. Karl customarily meets “men in blind alleys, [and] truck beds,” men with partners or those without, and men who, “like Wallace Pfef, [had] never [had] anyone before”  
900 for quick sexual encounters. Just like his “bum kni[ves]”, however, Karl’s presence in the lives of others remains meaning and value-less. He is, as Wallace Pfef concludes, “worse than a bum”.  
901 He “never makes himself useful”.  
902 He is too “careless” and “selfish” to maintain a “family” of humans or companionship with dogs.  
903 Karl, to use Wallace Pfef’s final assessment, is “a nothing … he kicked my dog”.  
904  
As a nothing, void of cultural, social, and economic capital, Karl is unable to shape or share the biological future his monomaniacal pursuit of bio-capital and tangible returns has created. “I really wanted […] their future. I wanted their children”, he laments after fourteen years of nomadism.  
905 But having openly demonstrated his selfish will to life through biological reproduction, Karl has no transposable capital left to give. He is a “disreputable, unshaven, unwashed, […] hungry, […] bleary old bum […] in a cheap blue suit” who lacks the means to invest in and empower his offspring beyond the bio-genetic.  
906  
In the position to socially and economically invest in Dot, uplift and empower her, is Mary Adare, Karl’s biological sister, who resists temptation in the above-quoted scene. In
“trudg[ing] solidly forward” when Karl stops and surrenders to seduction, Mary takes the first of two steps toward permanently preserving her virginity and, with it, the appearance of purity, wholeness and disinterest. Rather than invest short-term into bio-genetic reproduction, in other words, Mary chooses the opposite, cultural-memetic route. She opts for long-term investments – of financial, inter-personal, and inter-species nature – to gain and regenerate cultural, social and economic capital. “I planned to be essential to them all, so depended upon that they could never send me off. I did this on purpose, because I soon found out that I had nothing else to offer”.

Like Karl, Mary is uniquely equipped to fulfill her calling. She is marked by “differentness”, most centrally, by a sense of “perspective” and foresightedness that borders on clairvoyance. Her ability to see beyond the immediate and past appearance allows her to invest in quality long term – both in products and in people. She is thus able to make sound decisions that safeguard her economic and social capital at competitive times and establish herself as the person who “put us on the map […]. She’s all we have, and she takes

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907 Ibid., 2.
908 Literally, “Mary ran east, toward aunt Fritzie. But Karl ran back to the boxcar and the train” to travel west. Ibid.
909 Ibid., 19.
910 Ibid., 66. Mary is an avid reader of palms, keeps a taro pack “beneath her mattress to absorb her dream’s vibrations” (142), voraciously reads books by self-proclaimed clairvoyant William John Warner or Cheiro (1866-1936) presumably Language of the Hand, Cheiro’s Guide to the Hand, or You and Your Hand (214), owns a Ouija board, reads egg yolks, predicts the circumstances of Sita’s death (73), and vicariously experiences Dot’s conception in a dream-vision. Ibid., 142-143.
911 Mary strongly disapproves of low-quality products offered by her main competitor and nemesis: Dotzenrud’s Super Valu. “She leaned close to the ham, inspecting it, then grabbed a knife from the top of the stove and, before I could move to stop her, cut a wedge right out of the center, ruining my pineapple and cherry design. I stared in shock as she popped the bit of ham into her mouth and chewed, narrowing her eyes critically. “It’s cured with cheap chemicals,” she said at last, “not wood. And the water content. I bet you I could squeeze two gallons out.” Ibid., 246.
care of us by holding down jobs with farmers, cooking, and sometimes even threshing right along with men. 'Girls have been canonized for less'". 912

It is Mary’s discerning nature that prevents her from giving into temptation “to romance” the second time around.913 When Mary finds herself “in love with the half brother of my best friend, Celestine. Or at least I am in love with his scars and the rubber can on his finger”, she immediately recognizes the superficial nature of her desire and, rather than act impulsively, decides to “get to know Russell” over dinner.914 As soon as she realizes that her budding investment will be unrequited - Russell is in love with and “looked at Sita, in a way that I was meant to see” – she stops the pursuit of intra-species reproduction. “One thought was clear. I would never go out of my way for romance again. Romance would have to go out of its way for me”. 915

Instead of going out of her way for romance, Mary settles on investing long-term in her inter-species companion: her male dogmestic partner, “Little Dickie.” While Mary’s day-to-day interaction with Dickie and her other dogs does not become a prominent part of the story, Dickie’s constant presence in her life is, nevertheless, more than apparent. In the evenings, the narrator explains, “Mary usually called her dogs in and fell asleep reading”.916 During the day, Dickie the “house dog”, dwells in the butcher shop, where “gets spoiled”

912 Ibid., 43.
913 Ibid., 69. Although Mary considers this her first temptation, “I was only tempted once,” ibid. I would suggest that the apple tree scene is the first and Russell the second of two temptations to the path of bio-genetic reproduction and tangible capital and power.
914 Ibid., 71.
915 Ibid., 72, 75.
916 Ibid., 142.
and “yaps at strangers”. And on their travels, “Little Dickie strains and yaps from the safety of Mary’s arms” or Mary has “the dog in her lap”.

In continually nurturing her inter-species relations or companion capital and abstaining from direct reproduction, Mary demonstrates a sense of selflessness that whitewashes her indirect efforts at managing her bio-cultural self embodied by Dot. “[F]ive years after her winter birth, I [Mary] began to wonder how I ‘d ever kept my distance from Dot”. After discerning a set of cultural and potentially biological similarities indicated above, Mary decides to invest in the girl. She uses her time and social capital – her air of innocence and power over the economically dependent Celestine – to become close to the girl and reinforce traits and behaviors she recognizes as familiar and self-same. As disinterested as her support of Dot may seem, closer scrutiny reveals it as motivated by the selfish will to reproduce culturally and, albeit vicariously through her brother, biologically. Mary’s presumed and canine-assisted disinterest, in short, is merely a more palatable path to her power and survival.

Mirroring Mary’s dual interest in Dot as a corpus of cultural as well as genetic regenerative opportunity, Celestine’s mixed mode of reproduction demands that she balance intra- and inter-species intimacies. Unlike, Mary, who “like a kind of vocation” puts dogs first and rejects intra-species intimacy altogether, Celestine prioritizes people and merely surrenders to Karl’s sexual advances. In her innocently ignorant surrender to rather ardent pursuit of sex, lies Celestine’s key to the maintenance of close yet detached relations with

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917 Ibid., 274, 267.
918 Ibid., 266, 268.
919 Ibid., 179.
920 Ibid., 69.
both, her biological daughter Dot and, albeit to a lesser degree, Mary’s “Dickie” Wallace’s “bitch.”

Celestine does not desire intra-species intimacy. She is an avid reader of romance novels but recognizes that she is “too much like them [men], too strong or imposing when I square my shoulders, too eager to take control” to seek out “these pleasures I have read about in books, the sort of feelings I might experience? It has never happened yet, although I have known men”.921

When Celestine finally does have sex, the incident is not only uninvited, but also beyond uninspiring. “This is what you want”, Karl markets his approach.922 “What I want.’ I repeat stupidly. Love stories always end here. I never had a mother to tell me what came next”.923 What comes next is not the sweet merging of spirits she imagined. Instead, Celestine’s first time of sexual intercourse resembles what James Welch so fittingly described as an impersonal if not apathetic “quick coming together”:924

I could throw him to the side, I know, but I grow curious. There is the smell of corn mash, something Mary has dropped this morning. That’s what I notice even when it happens and we are together, rolling over, clasped, bumping into the legs of the table. I move by instinct, lurching under him, my mind held up like a glass in which I see my own face, amused, embarrassed, and relieved. It is not so complicated, not even as painful as I feared and it doesn’t last long either.925

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921 Ibid., 125.
922 Ibid., 128.
923 Ibid.
924 Welch, Death, 154-55.
925 Erdrich, Beet Queen, 128, emphases mine.
Throughout her supposedly intimate intra-species encounter, Celestine remains deeply detached. She is not driven by desire but by controlled curiosity. She is not consumed by ardor but continues to focus on her surroundings. She lurches by instinct rather than will. And, in the end, she is able to assess her actions with a sense of amusement, embarrassment, and relief. "I'm like some kind of animal," I say, when it is over. "What kind?" he asks, lazy. [...] 'A big stupid heifer.' Celestine's separation of mind from matter, of the human from the animal, allows her to invest in the biological reproduction of self without fully losing control. In maintaining a sense of self-discipline, in turn, she preserves an air of altruism, kindness or mercy that draws the presence of and lets her benefit from the companion capital of dogs.

Dogs are all around Celestine. Little Dickie frequents the butcher shop where she works with Mary. Dogs surround her when she visits her brothers Russell and Eli on their farm. Dickie accompanies her and Mary on their trip to Sita and a female stray pays frequent visits to her house, "Hey," said Celestine, 'that dog's over here again"'. Most crucially, a stray female saves the lives of Celestine and her unborn daughter by alerting Wallace to their presence outside his house during a blizzard.

Despite the dogs' omnipresence in Celestine's everyday life, she neither touches nor is emotionally touched by any of the canines. Celestine does not pet Dickie. She denies Mary the wish to buy a puppy for Dot, "I thought of giving her a dog, but I knew that Celestine had refused dogs from Mary". And, albeit "intent on luring the dog [Wallace's

\[926\] Ibid., 136.
\[927\] Ibid., 168.
\[928\] Ibid., 241.
stray female] to her", she fails to gain her trust and access to a higher realm of canine-assisted capital and power.  

As much as the absolute absence and delimited presence of dogs in the lives of Karl Adare and Celestine James life bespeaks their preference for bio-genetic reproduction, the sustained presence of Mary’s male and Wallace’s female domestics partner documents their predilection for long-term investment strategies and intangible capital. Wallace Pfef, especially, dedicates his life to the establishment and nurture of networks and social capital – a trend that reverberates in his increasingly intimate inter-species relation with his “nasty female dog”.

Wallace is “the stability, the surprise in the family”, a social butterfly who “need[s] to belong”. He habitually escorts Argussian wives and widows to companionable dinners. He maintains membership in a host of associations from the Chamber of Commerce to the “Sugar Beet Promoters, Optimists, Knights of Columbus, park board and other organizations too numerous to mention”; and, he has joined several fraternal orders including the Eagles, Moose, Kiwanis, and Elk - mostly because, he has discovered that “[w]ithin the fraternal orders lies power”.

As multifarious as Wallace’s associations may be, they are strictly platonic. In fact, up until the day Karl Adare seduces him in a Minneapolis hotel room, Wallace Pfef, the male virgin of the story, “never knew” that he “was queer”. Rather than explore his sexuality, Wallace sublimates and takes to mourning a young woman unknown to him, whose portrait

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929 Ibid., 168.
930 Ibid., 266.
931 Ibid., 161.
932 Ibid., 160.
933 Ibid., 161.
he acquired at an auction and who now “keeps discreet watch over my living room”; it was “[b]ecause of the poor dead sweetheart I’ve never had to marry”.934

In successfully avoiding bio-genetic reproduction, first by conceiving of and being faithful to a prematurely deceased hetero-normative partner, and, later by sporadically engaging in a monogamous, non-reproductive same-sex affair, Wallace is able to turn to, cultivate, and ultimately restore intimate inter-species relations. He begins the process of inter-species fraternization by feeding a white female dog, a grumpy stray with tattered white hair and a tail kinked and as thin as a rat’s. It lived around the edges of the yard, fading in and out of the tall brush and sugar beets, hunting cottontails. Sometimes it came directly to the glass door and I’d feel its dull cold stare. I’d turn just in time to see its starved haunches whirl. Then it would vanish, having eaten what I’d set out. Sometimes I think the dog was a kind of quisling.935

It is no coincidence, that this first offering of food to the quisling, across species lines, is made possible by the lack of a resource-consuming same-species partner. Wallace feeds the dog a piece of leftover meatloaf he had prepared for Karl because he “seemed to like” it.936 When Karl fails to return, Wallace is able to distribute the remainder as a gesture of inter-species altruism. His favor gradually establishes trust, empathy, and a sense of inter-species attachment and intimacy.937

934 Ibid., 159.
935 Ibid., 165.
936 Ibid.
937 As is true for Mary, Wallace’s female dog is his constant attendant. “I sat at my desk and typed up my inspirations while the dog snored at my feet” (305); “The dog curled in the chair across from me [Wallace], dozing in the complacent way she’d learned.” Ibid., 172.
The dog came back one day, gaunt as before, and I fed her a can of smoked salmon. She moved with less caution around me, and one day as I banked and mulched a Silver Maple I hoped would take hold, she came near and put her head to my leg. She let me pet her. She had a dry silky coat, surprisingly clean, and when I touched her I felt, quite suddenly, all my sadness breaking out. I put my face to her neck. She smelled of grass, dust, rain, and faintly underneath, skunk. She had borne far worse than I, most certainly, in her dog's life. Still, she stood quietly and did not move away.

It quickly becomes apparent that Wallace's long-term investment in canine companionship not only benefits himself. Similar to Welch's Loney, whose fictional death helped raise the cultural capital necessary for the biological future of Native American tribes, Wallace's interspecies collaboration and capital saves the biological lives of Dot and Celestine. After all, it is the dog's keen sense that alerts Wallace to the presence of Celestine.

The dog slept at the foot of my bed now, which was lucky, for had it not been for her whines and her troubled barking there is not telling what would have happened to Celestine, who had taken advantage of a lull in the growing storm to set out for the hospital.

Inter-species capital, once again, protects and promotes the power and survival of intra-species kin. In doing so, cultural capital derived from inter-species symbiosis makes possible if not guarantees the successful reproduction of bio-capital and vice versa.

Erdrich's extension of the nuclear family to the bi-nuclear if not tri-nuclear family, consisting of Celestine and Karl, Mary and Dickie, and Wallace and his female stray, lets her amalgamate intra-species and inter-species intimacy within one reproductive parental unit rather than resort to various forms of sequenced partnerships as the authors discussed.

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938 Ibid., 168, emphases mine.
939 Ibid., 169.

above. This complicated amalgamation suspends the cultural organization of gender and allows each member to contribute toward the reproduction of the self-same as they see and feel fit. Celestine, healthy, easygoing and “steady but unexciting”, is too “tough”, “too big”, “too much like” and “built ...” like men, and decidedly “not pretty” enough to attract the attention of a hetero-normative male. Her appearance however does appeal to Karl Adare, who “handsome in an overly pretty, disturbing way”, is interested in Celestine precisely because he “had always found their [normative women’s] touch unbearable, a source of nameless panic”. Neither of the two are assertive, “creative or productive” enough to be fully independent. Celestine is too empathetic. Karl, the physically fit but selfish and greedy “noodle”, on the other hand, has too little empathy to become a thoughtful provider. He inundates Dot with impractical presents and “never makes himself useful”. Compensating for their shortcomings, cat-eyed Mary Adare emerges as Dot’s provider and “protector” who, in recurrently “ruthless” fashion, puts (her) people “on the map”, provides employment, a steady income, and financial security. Good business sense, however demands a certain degree of insensitivity to the needs of ‘outsiders.’ But whomever Mary manages to ostracize, Wallace Pfef with his self-sacrificial knack for social networking, is sure to rope back in. Be it by incapacitating Mary with alcohol or by

940 Constance Ahrons has coined this term bi-nuclear family to describe the interconnectedness of divorce-extended / remarried families. While Erdrich’s extended kinship unit is by no means divorce extended, its structure is similar and the term fitting. Ahrons, Constance, “Family Ties After Divorce: Long-Term Implications for Children,” Family Process 46, 1 (March 2007): 53-65.
942 Ibid., 145, 106.
943 Yanagisako and Delaney, Naturalizing Power, 9.
944 Erdrich, Beet Queen, 143, 130.
945 Ibid., 134.
946 Ibid., 72, 186, 161, 43.

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organizing the Beet Queen contest, as Dot’s “male sponsor” Wallace grants social security and capital.\textsuperscript{947} Collaboratively then, the bi-nuclear family’s incongruous gender performances maximize the reproduction of biological and cultural capital, genes and memes, force and power: “we gave her [Wallacette aka Dot James] all we had”.\textsuperscript{948} In giving all to more successfully reproduce and transmit accumulated capital to the next generation than the novel’s nuclear families, the superfecta socially (and ultimately state) sanctions the existence and utility of variant or non-normative gender roles.

\textit{Disparities in Paradise}

While Erdrich’s community-based approach to bio-cultural reproduction indeed benefits \textit{everyone} - including Mary and Wallace’s dogmestic partners - not everyone benefits equally. Of course, the individual’s ability to act freely, rather than perform in concert with state-sanctioned gender norms, represents a truly democratic opportunity. Erdrich’s bi-nuclear reproductive unit tolerates individual imperfections and promotes personal fitness. It facilitates the unleashed transmission of biological or cultural aspects of the self-same to the next generation. And, it proves a better vehicle for unlimited individualism than the “free” market. Nevertheless, even Erdrich’s brave new world of communally enabled freedom of transmission features distinct inequalities, familiar hierarchies, and flaws.

As much as Erdrich’s bio-cultural reproductive scheme seeks to present its participants as different but equal in theory, some seem a little more equal than others in

\textsuperscript{947} Ibid., 172. Wallace Pfef strives to boost Dot’s social capital: “Wallacette Darlene must think well of herself, have a fantasy come true for once, be perfect, on top. This would change her whole view of the world against her. Give her confidence. Inspire her,” ibid., 304.

\textsuperscript{948} Notably, Dot derives from the name Dorothea (Greek, gift of the gods). Erdrich, \textit{Beet Queen}, 301.
practice. Arguably unwittingly, *The Beet Queen* suspends its culturally reproducing interspecies-intimates, virgin Mary Adare and quasi-virgin Wallace Pfeif, in an in-between state of innocence and infantilism that can be deeply disempowering. After all, in western culture canine companionship remains a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it betokens inter-species altruism and self-restraint, invokes the image of Edenic coexistence, and raises hopes for the successful restoration of humanity’s long-lost innocence and wholeness. On the other, the intimate exchange of resources with members of other species rather than our own continues to suggest a lack of self-awareness symptomatic of an uninitiated consciousness and conscience.\(^{949}\) Coincidentally, then, canine companionship is critical transmitter of positive as well as negative capital.\(^{950}\) It holds the power to restore innocence by emphasizing ignorance, absolving guilt, and slowing the slip from humanity to inhumanity. Innocence in the extreme, however, represents a powerful tool to infantilize if not dehumanize those deemed *innocently or ignorantly inconsiderate*.

Unable to identify long-term investments as calculatingly considerate behavior without voiding their transposable value and turning inhuman, Erdrich adopts the ambivalent concept unaltered. It follows that Mary’s and Wallace’s calculatingly considerate and decidedly human investment in their self-same appears innocently inconsiderate and, often, infantile. Far from emerging as prudent planners, the pair remains immature and powerless, unable to control their emotions, most prominently, their sense of empathy and fear.

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\(^{949}\) That is, the realization that one exists and the associated self-loving drive to thrive and multiply (consciousness) and the recognition that in order to live and multiply one must love ‘self-like’ (selfsame) others (conscience). Again, it is crucial to differentiate between short-term vs. long-term investments to gauge the transposable, self-sustaining value of an action.\(^{950}\) Which is normally the case unless the person has also demonstrated if not succeeded in their will to bio-reproduction.

Mary Adare is neither empathetic nor fearful enough to fully un-become animal and transform into a woman. She is “stubborn” and “abrupt”\(^{951}\). She “butts into […] others’ business” and is constantly “acting girlish with Dot”.\(^{952}\) Mary, Celestine summarizes, simply “will not obey. … That is why I’m so depressed since Mary has been around. It is like having two unruly daughters who won’t listen or mind me. I am outnumbered, the only grown-up”.\(^{953}\)

Gravitating toward the opposite extreme, Wallace Pfeff is too empathetic and too fearful to do become a full-fledged man. To begin with, Wallace is a weak-looking fellow, neither “strong or muscular”, who “didn’t have the nerve to please himself”.\(^{954}\) What’s more, he hides his sexual orientation “deep away”, is homosocially “awkward” and quickly overcome by “nervousness”.\(^{955}\) Toward the end of the novel, Wallace, like Mary, more closely resembles an innocent child than a sagacious adult, “he rested […] heavy as a sleeping child”.\(^{956}\)

Despite their social contacts, economic independence, and embodied capital, Mary and Wallace are not in charge of their emotions. Their inability to fully control their impulses, in turn, leaves them infantilized, dehumanized, and disempowered. Unlike the biologically reproductive humans that surround them, Mary and Wallace, are, in one important sense, substantially lacking. Suspended in-between states of animality and inhumanity, the objects of their dogmestics’ perpetual socialization, they wait, two of a kind, yet utterly “alone”.\(^{957}\)

\(^{951}\) Erdrich, Beet Queen, 233.

\(^{952}\) Ibid., 219, 15.

\(^{953}\) Ibid., 215-16.

\(^{954}\) Ibid., 103-04, 319.

\(^{955}\) Ibid., 161, 104.

\(^{956}\) Ibid., 323.

\(^{957}\) “Mary is alone.” Ibid., 219; Wallace is “a man alone.” Ibid., 237.
Ominously, it appears to be Erdrich’s inability to rise above the very core creed she so vigorously attacks, the western assumption that ‘blood is thicker than water’, that ultimately foils her effort at consistent reconceptualization of reproduction as a bio-cultural or bio-technological process. Anticlimactically, her arguably involuntary aggrandizement of biological reproduction and concomitant depreciation of cultural reproduction as innocently inconsiderate behavior (rather than a series of long-term calculatingly considerate acts) not only re-etches the line between biological and cultural regeneration, but also affirms existing hierarchies.

The Beet Queen, however, does more than fulfill state-sanctioned desires and affirm existing hierarchies by subtly separating biological from cultural reproduction. The novel also supports institutionalized sexuality by pathologizing non-monogamous homosexual intimacies as a form of sexual compulsion driven by fear of loss. Karl Adare, the story suggests, psychologically suffers from adolescent abandonment by his single mother. Unable to conquer his chronic fears of being left and hurt, he constantly seeks physical contact while maintaining emotional distance. Karl’s life, in Dot’s words, is marked by “flight.”

His paradoxical need for and fear of intimacy takes curious, self-destructive forms. Drawn to yet fearful of falling in love with Giles St. Ambrose, Karl tries to escape. He

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958 The narrative begins in the depression years, with the suspected suicide of Karl’s father, German wheat farmer Mr. Ober, who, smothered in a grain-loading accident, leaves behind not only a wife, but also his illegitimate kin, Adelaide Adare and their three children, Karl, Mary, and, soon to be borne son, Jude. As the product of a familial culture and gender order that makes her economically dependent on Mr. Ober (German: waiter or server), the illegitimate patriarch’s death leaves Adelaide absolutely helpless. She pawns her valuables, abandons her children, and, in dependent distressed-damsel fashion, seeks refuge in the masculine arms of bootlegging stunt pilot Omar, the Great.

959 Erdrich, Beet Queen, 335.

"leaped forward and ran straight out the door of the moving boxcar". Although Karl has managed to remove himself, his removal results in fractured ankles and extended immobilization. His second fear-inspired flight replicates the former sequence of events. Terrified to fall in love with Wallace and to "stop myself from falling," Karl "jumped" off the bed in a somersault. Again, he commits himself to a state of "immobility" and spends several weeks in in-patient care, recovering from extensive back injuries. Incapable, yet deeply desirous of long-term inter-personal intimacy, then, Karl seeks solace in physical mutilation to combat his fears. Karl, his nurse explains, "was mentally unbalanced, he enjoyed his confinement so".

Interestingly, it is the "sweetness" of a potential "future" and survival, a sweetness Karl connects with Dot, that helps him overcome his neurosis. "I held my breath. And in that darkened, bleak, smothering moment, something overcame me. One thing. Not an object, not a plan, not even the nagging words of a song, but a sweetness [...] I linked her [Dot] with that moment of sweetness." Interpersonal intimacy, Erdrich suggests, signifies life. And, it is Karl's heretofore-discussed strong will to biopower that motivates him to forego a lifestyle of 'sexual compulsion,' return to arms of Argussian Wallace Pfef. Rather than represent an act of rebellion in which Karl "screw[s] the management", the prodigal son's return to a monogamous (albeit homo-sexual) relationship with Wallace demonstrates conformity.

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960 Ibid., 26.
961 Ibid., 162.
962 Ibid., 162.
963 "I really wanted [...] their future. I wanted their children," ibid., 317.
964 Ibid., 318.
965 Ibid., 323.

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With Mary and Wallace subtly yet successfully demoted to the realm of the innocently inconsiderate, affect-driven, and somewhat sub-human and Karl classified as "mentally unbalanced", it is Celestine James, who emerges as the most rounded, most human, and logically, most powerful being of the novel. Celestine, from the Latin *Caelesinus* (masculine), the "heavenly" daughter of Regina Puyat Kashpaw and Dutchman Dutch James, is the only member of the bio-cultural reproductive unit with Indian American (Ojibwa) and possibly African American heritage. Celestine's superiority and bio-cultural survival represents an interesting twist to a conventional theme. Namely, the depiction of the ethnic hybrid as emotionally superior but rationally inferior side-kick to the Euro-American survivor. *The Beet Queen* features a member of an ethnic minority of variant gender as the rational, *calculatingly considerate* matriarch supported an enabled by a motley group of Euro-American kin.

Erdrich's extension of the reproductive family from the nuclear unit to a motley cohort of four accomplishes two things: First, it facilitates the co-existence of bio-genetic and cultural-memetic means of human reproduction unmitigated by canine timeshares and takes the maximization of capital transmitted to the next generation to heretofore unseen degrees. Second, it demonstrates the survival value of non-nuclear units and their variant gender identities and lends them legitimacy, livability, and power.

Co-existence, however, does not guarantee equality. In order to bring on par bio-genetic and cultural-memetic modes of reproduction, Erdrich consciously 'thins the blood and thickens the water.' Whereas heretofore intra-species or bio-genetic transmission of

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966 Ibid., 162.
capital counted as exclusively *calculatingly considerate* behavior and the transmission of transposable capital via canine companionship as *innocently inconsiderate* means of reproduction, Erdrich blurs the bounds.\(^{968}\) On the one hand, she carefully infuses the calculatingly considerate with innocence, "'You [Celestine]'re the stupidest woman I ever met.' [...] 'Here you're knocked up,' he [Karl] says suddenly, 'and you don't even know it'"\(^{969}\) On the other hand, she invests the innocently inconsiderate with reproductive intent, "'I [Mary] saw myself in Dot [...] I indulged her royally'".\(^{970}\)

While a touch of innocence only aids and empowers the *calculatingly considerate* by keeping it grounded in restoration and wholeness, the infusion of reputedly *innocently inconsiderate* behavior with intent proves profoundly disempowering. After all, innocently inconsiderate behavior draws its transposable capital and power precisely from the assumption that it is useless, artless, and authentic. In the end, the power of innocence and the cultural capital it carries, in other words, depends on the belief that it is simply not 'human.'

Be it for their sub-human lack of knowledge and intent or for their in-human (treacherous if not beastly) abuse of it (if intent can be proven), actors choosing canine-assisted reproduction of transposable capital are divested of their 'humanity.' Erdrich, much like her literary predecessors, cannot transcend this bio-cultural catch-22. Trapping her culturally reproductive characters, Mary Adare and Wallace Pef, in a state of unbecoming animal and becoming human, just below the imperfect but nevertheless human Karl Adare

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\(^{968}\) Calculatingly considerate behavior signifying selfishness/self-interest and delivering quick and tangible returns. Innocently inconsiderate behavior signifying selflessness/disinterest through causal detachment in time and space and delivering transposable returns over time.

\(^{969}\) Erdrich, *Beet Queen*, 138.

\(^{970}\) Ibid., 182.
and Celestine James, she strengthens existing hierarchies and buttresses the primacy of biological reproduction for the survival of humankind.

Louise Erdrich’s *The Beet Queen*, in other words, does not screw the management. But while she may not be able to modify the human animal’s uncontrollable will to life and power, she successfully harnesses it to challenge the symbolic order from below. In the process, Erdrich sanctions and promotes non-normative gender performances and firmly establishes Celestine James, a well-rounded and reproductive American Indian identity, at the top of the hierarchy. Erdrich’s creative connection of domestic and *dogmestic* partners in a single reproductive unit is revolutionary in that it answers selective pressures in the sum of its parts. It foregoes traditional attempts to reconcile opposites, accomplish perfection, and maximize profits within the individual by accumulating capital in the sequenced setting of the time-share. Instead, the joint-accumulation and short/long-term investment of biocultural capital disperses demands around the reproductive group and encourages specialization within. Mere months away from the 100-year anniversary of the passing of the Dawes Act (February 1887), then, Erdrich manages to endow her “Indian,” as Henry Dawes desired, with the necessary bio-technological capital to make them “self-supporting citizen[s] of the United States.”

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971 Uncontrollable or per Foucault, pre-ideological, if you will.
972 Henry Dawes quoted in Fergus Bordewich, *Killing the White Man’s Indian*, 120.
Epilogue

In the dog days of 2009, after I had studied inter-species intimacy as form and facilitator of bio-cultural capital in theory and fiction for nearly three years, I had my first practical lesson. Undoubtedly, if unconsciously, motivated in part by my will to secure the sum of bio-cultural investments I had made as a ‘non-resident alien’ over the course of ten years, I sought state-sanctioned admission to, and shareholder status in, my chosen social group in the form of permanent residency: a Greencard. With nothing to hide and everything to gain, my intra-species partner of five years and I entered the scene of an immigration-interview that can best be described as a perfect disaster. Ironically, the question that sent me over the edge was the one I most expected. “So,” the immigration officer, a discerning female in her mid-forties, asked, “how’s the marriage?” – “The marriage?!” Compelled by an oath that somehow prompted the Prussian in me to treat the interview like an audit of accounts truly, I began to dissect our loving relationship and divulge innermost issues in a most morbid manner. The officer’s brow first furrowed then frowned. My husband, completely caught off guard, expressed his bewilderment and distress with a sideways look that begged me to stop talking. I fell silent and, listening to my mate’s comforting voice without following his words, began to embrace the idea of rejection and capital loss.

When I snapped out of my daze, the subject matter had shifted from intra-species relations to rescue dogs. My spouse and I had been fostering rescued Doberman-Pinschers and Pinscher mixes for nearly three years. Private photographs of our wards were readily available on the laptop we had brought in for the public perusal and approval of our lives. The dog folder was not part of the sets of documents selected to support the authenticity of our cause. But in between “Dissertation Mats” and “Docs for the Wedding,” a file entitled
“Doberman Rescue” had caught the officer’s eye. As she studied our pictures, the interrogation-savvy, ceaselessly-suspicious agent transformed into a compassionate, fellow rescuer not of Doberman-Pinschers but Greyhounds. We chatted, laughed, and shared foster stories. Before long, she shut our file, informed me with a wink and handshake that only “picture-perfects” raise red flags, and recommended that we join our cash capital and get a shared bank account prior to the completion of the two-year conditional permanent residency period that was to follow her approval. Then she wished us farewell, officially ending the longest twenty minutes of my life.

The dogs we saved didn’t save my life. What they did do was provide me, an acculturated and well-integrated alien who had lived, loved, worked, and contributed to the community as a non-resident for nearly ten years, with the necessary transposable capital to help secure my past investments and our joint-future at the state-sanctioned level. As insignificant if not amusing as my experience may seem, it does not stand alone. In the west, canine inter-species intimates or dogmestic partners have successfully facilitated intra-species intimacy and the bio-cultural survival of their human symbionts since the early eighteen-hundreds. The most recent and perhaps most illustrious example of the dog-assisted, fast-track transformation from out-group villain to in-group role model is Cesar Millan, “El Perrero,” more commonly known as America’s “Dog Whisperer.” Millan, a native of Culiacán, Mexico, who entered the United States illegally with “only the clothes on his back”, in 1990, has successfully tapped into all facets of the developing dog-trope to fashion himself into a rationally disinterested, “calm and assertive,” human being, U.S. citizen, and

Much like the heroic hermits who withdrew into the wilderness of the antebellum American imagination, Millan began the process of unbecoming animal and becoming human, or what he calls the “Honoring Our Inner Human,” by turning away from man and restoring a level of inter-species intimacy and understanding long lost. He writes,

When I was a boy in Mexico, I couldn’t identify with people. I felt different from them.

Instead of trying to find closeness, I gravitated toward dogs. I felt free with them, I wasn’t judged by them, and I could become a very important part of their group. This became part of my identity, and I became extremely antisocial. I stopped trusting people. I shut them out. I totally gave up on them. For a long time I lived this way, pouring all of my emotional, spiritual, and instinctual energies into dogs. ... You can’t turn your back on your own kind without in some way turning on yourself. ... Then I met my wife Illusion. ... My wife turned on the lights for me. She reminded me how important it is to have relationships with humans.

Like Sedgwick’s Lee, Marvel’s Bachelor, Wilson’s Frado, London’s Scott, Ellison’s Vic, Welch’s Jim, and perhaps Erdrich’s Mary Adare, Millan and Peltier’s autobiographical Cesar seeks out nature and intra-species isolation for cultural capital in the form of inter-species inspiration. In the process he drains his instinctual energies and drives, albeit more successfully than London’s South-Sea Islanders. Millan becomes free – that is, free of the

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tethers of non-reason. But, like Ellison’s Vic, Cesar soon realizes that turning away from one’s kind, while granting cultural-memetic power, denies one bio-genetic survival. He sees the light (of reason) and returns, culturally enriched, into the welcoming arms of intra-species civilization, epitomized by his future partner, Mexican-American Illusion Millan.

Millan’s self-transformation did not stop there. Over the course of two decades, the dog trainer worked diligently to catapult himself from the margin into the center of the American social imaginary, that is, from illegal, non-English speaking immigrant into Cesar Millan the bi- if not tri-lingual Dog-Whisperer, “a cultural icon, a Latino man who commands respect wherever he goes.” Millan, much like Harriet Wilson 150 years before him, started with little recognized bio-cultural capital. With the help of his faithful dogmestic, late Pitbull Daddy, Millan trained dogs, door to door, for $10 per session to support a family of four. Money was tight and diapers short, but Millan was on the right track. Echoing the turn-of-the-century canine timeshare format, he built inter-species capital, rehabilitating dogs in public, while nurturing his intra-species, reproductive assets in private. Before long, the trainer’s honed skills and “stable energy,” Millan’s version of self-disciplined disinterest he displayed in interaction with dogs, attracted the attention of aspiring actress Jada Pinkett Smith, who helped Millan network in the entertainment industry. In 2004, National Geographic began airing twenty-six thirty-minute episodes of Millan’s public persona in interaction with inter-species intimates. The following year, the show moved to prime time. And, in 2009, in sold to Fox at the prospect of reaching nearly half of America’s households with a marketable message or meme that held out the promise of maximizing inter-species and intra-species profits.

The message sold, as it has from its inception, and Millan’s private consultation rates soared from $10 to $10,000 and from $10,000 to $100,000. For that kind of money, the dogman quips, his customers “really pay attention.” But Millan’s successful management of mutts, men, and money has not only built his bank account. In demonstrating the capacity to superior self-control and poise in inter-species sessions that demand that the leader “must invest 100%” of rational disinterest, Millan has heightened his cultural as much as his biological humanity. Bio-memetically at par with members of the in-group, Millan qualified for, and ultimately gained U.S. citizenship, in 2009. His expert embodiment of talent and skill, however, not only promoted him and his immediate kin, a wife and two children, from alien other to the ranks of the ‘human,’ but it also worked toward the bio-cultural uplift and inclusion of Latin and other resident and non-resident subalterns more generally.

Today, Millan not only balances inter-species intimacy on TV and at work with causally detached intra-species intimacy off TV and at home, but he provides other dominant and subdominant humans with the necessary knowledge, training, and tools to do the same. Millan, in other words, trades insider identities and easy access to the American Dream. He sells the key to maximizing one’s bio-cultural capital, power, and survival; a hot seller among American citizens and denizens of all stripes especially those whose heedless pursuit of cultural capital causes intra-species conflict, such as the couple, whose “pit bulls, hell-bent on killing each other, forced them to live apart;” and others, who “hadn’t slept in the same bed for months because their Yorkies wouldn’t allow it.”

Appealing to the human animal’s most primal drives, it comes to no surprise that Millan’s market extends beyond the boundaries of the United States, well into the contemporary west. The show itself, not only earned the TV Variety Best Reality Show, in 2008, as well as the People’s Choice Award in 2008 and 2010, but was successfully dubbed into German airing as Der Hundeflüsterer on National Geographic Germany. Millan’s books have been international bestsellers. The company’s website, cesarsway.com, attracted one million unique visitors over a period of one month in early 2012. Cesar has over 1.7 million active Facebook fans, who subscribe to his daily updates, advice, and product recommendations. And, over 380,000 follow his Twitter feed. Netting seven figures annually, Cesar Millan Inc. may be worth 100 million dollars in cash capital alone.

Millan’s business thrives on America’s will to bio-power. But neither Millan, the Dog Whisperer of today, nor the generations of intimate inter-species whisperers heretofore discussed, are the only ones or, better, the only species that has benefitted from the dogmestic partners’ role as assets and allies in the human struggle for bio-cultural capital. Dogs, in being exploited as witnesses of our humanity, have profited from the arrangement at the individual and group level. In stark contrast to their undomesticated cousins, the grey (Canis lupus) and red wolf (Canis rufus), whose numbers have dropped to less than 5,000 and 100 individuals respectively in the contiguous United States, Canis lupus familiaris boasts a healthy

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981 According to World Cat, Cesar Millan’s books have been translated into nine European languages as well as into Hebrew, Japanese, and Korean.
982 “Cesar’s Way Team,” email message from media@cesarsway.com to me, Feb. 16, 2012.

population of approximately 78.2 million. Pet dogs populate thirty-nine percent of US-households who, the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association estimated for 2011, spent an average of $248 per dog on veterinary care and nearly $2,000 on food, treats and toys.984

America’s inter-species alliance and the symbolic or non-economic capital it generates, these numbers imply, has its material price.985 Albeit steep, it is a price some 120 million U.S. pet owners are willing to pay in what the media markets as selfless support of a companion species that has little more responsibility than to love and respect their human partners for the simple fact that they ‘make sense.’986

In following the rise of America’s dogmestics as an ontological metaphor for capital unseen and humanly unseeable this dissertation has hoped reveal the ‘spirit of calculation’ that undergirds the nation’s seemingly disinterested love for their four-legged others and demonstrate how cultural politics affect and are in turn affected by bio-politics and bio-power.

My analysis of the building and management of inter- and intra-species intimacies adds texture to the revisionist notion that nineteenth- and twentieth US-literature and culture fundamentally rests not on speciesist but on anti-speciesist ideologies that take the form of inter-species alliances to animalize disempower, and bio-culturally dispossess, intra-species

986 Hence, dog-whisperer Cesar Millan’s slogan, “I rehabilitate dogs and train humans” to be, he explains, “calm and assertive” or maintain “a calm and assertive energy,” i.e. non-erratic, sensible and, per Enlightenment logic, human.
American authors have and continue to profitably use anti-speciesist practices to maintain the symbolic order and re-etch national, religious, race, class, sex, and gender lines. However, anti-speciesist performances have just as authentically and thus profitably been appropriated by members of miscellaneous out-groups to challenge the status quo. The fact that consistent cultural labor has allowed individuals from Frado, Joe the Janitor, Enrico Piccolomini, to the Adares and Cesar Millan to challenge and overcome putative bio-genetic differences, indicates that memes play a more decisive role in the identity formation, sexual selection, and reproduction of Americans and their companion species than commonly assumed. And, it suggests that ours is a world in which ignorance - as much as knowledge - is capital and power.


988 After all, the readiness to embrace and include signs over substance, memes over genes (within and between species), equating affinity with consanguinity, disempowers what Richard Dawkins has called the “selfish gene.” It follows, that as much as we may be genetically predisposed to wanting to save our-selves, our perceptive apparatus denies us and, by implication, the (selfish) genes within, the freedom to control at what level.

989 That is, human ignorance and the metaphors to which it gives rise as well as the ignorance or lack of deliberation commonly attributed to our companion species.

Supplement

Introduction to Human-Animal Studies

In their chase to identify the point of becoming where “species meet” and synthesize the essence of the human, continental social and emerging natural sciences systematically narrowed the supposed human-animal divide. Focusing their search for “objective Truth” on the preternatural or “geistlichen” qualities of humankind, metaphysicians from Aristotle (384-322 BCE) and Plato (429-347 BCE), to Kant (1724-1804) and Hegel (1770-1831) endowed humanity with language, reason, morals, self-discipline, and subjectivity; properties they believed the innocently impulsive animal-other to lack.990 Others looked to resolve the human-animal dualism and isolate humanity by concentrating on the living body and the

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traits they understood the animal-other to share. Yet another, alternative approach to dissolving the dichotomy was appropriated by an ever-growing number of intellectuals, including evolutionary theorist and philosopher James Burnett, better known as Lord Monboddo (1714-1799), German biologist and philosopher Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919), and Charles Darwin (1809-1882), who sought to reconcile the seemingly opposed disciplines by reconceptualizing said “supernatural gifts” and markers of humanity against animality as the outcome if not pinnacle of natural selection.

Because “the animal” continues to function as “the ultimate other” for an ever-changing definition of “the human,” the human-animal dualism remains a dominant theme within post-humanist theory today.

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991 In an email message to H-Animal on June 24, 2009, Anita Guerrini explained that classical as well as Latin and non-Latin anatomical studies published between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries often refer to human and animals together as “animalia” and to animals alone as “bruti.” In 1675, Guerrini illustrates, the French anatomist Guillaume Lamy (1644-1683) calls man “l'homme ou les autres animaux.” For detailed and critical discussions on the on the construction of humanity against animality in the Western tradition, see Agamben, The Open, 23-27 as well as Robert Boddice, A History of Attitudes and Behaviours towards Animals in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth Century Britain: Anthropocentrism and the Emergence of Animals (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Press, 2009). Similarly, Charles Darwin asserts in 1871, “there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties,” Charles Darwin, The Descent of Man (New York: Penguin, 2007), 110. Twenty-one years later, humanitarian reformer Henry Salt (1851-1939), echoing Darwinian sentiment, proclaims, “Even the term ‘animals,’ as applied to the lower races, is incorrect, and not wholly unobjectionable, since it ignores the fact that MAN is an animal no less than they” (Salt quoted in Robert Boddice and Boria Sax, A History of Attitudes and Behaviours Toward Animals in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Britain: Anthropocentrism and the Emergence of Animals. Lampeter, U.K.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009), 341-43.

992 Haeckel developed the recapitulation theory according to which an organism's phylogeny represents its evolutionary history. See Ernst Haeckel, Generelle Morphologie der Organismen: Allgemeine Grundzüge der Formenwissenschaft, Mechanisch begründet durch die von Charles Darwin reformierte Descendenz-Theorie. Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1866.

993 The animal was first described as the ultimate other in Jennifer Wolch and Jody Emel, "Bringing the Animals Back in," Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 13 (1995): 632; Glen Elder, Jennifer Wolch, and Jody Emel, "Le Pratique

(1889-1976), for example, as Matthew Calarco’s sensitive discussion of the philosopher’s Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik (1929-30) has shown, rejects the definition of humanity as “life plus something else.” Nevertheless, Heidegger’s understanding of the human rests on the distinction of the passive, “poor in the world” (“weltarmen”) animal from the active, world-forming or world-shaping (“weltbildenden”) man. His philosophy thus anthropocentrically retraces the line (or the “abyss”) between an animality that exists and reacts (much like the Cartesian automaton) and a humanity that exists in, responds to, and shapes the world— with hand and word. Inadvertently, the meaningless presence of the Heideggerian animal continues to set into relief the meaningful presence of an essentialized humanity or Dasein.


994 Heidegger quoted in Giorgio Agamben, The Open, 50.
996 For additional discussions on Heidegger’s engagement with the human-animal distinction, see Agamben, The Open, 49-92; Wolfe, Animal Rites, 44-96 and Wolfe, Zoontologies, 1-58; Calarco, Zoographies, 15-54; Shukin, Animal Capital, 33-35.

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"human experience," albeit not "superior to that of animals" as "first and foremost." Feminist scholar Patricia Huntington discerns in Julia Kristeva's reliance on Freudian drive theory the return to "biodeterminism." Historian Donna Haraway disapproves of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's dichotomy-ridden approach as a "symptomatic morass for how not to take earthly animals – wild or domestic – seriously." Feminist critic Judith Butler identifies Jacques Lacan's "morphological scheme" as the "basis for an anthropocentric ... epistemological imperialism". Stanley Cavell's work, literary theorist Cary Wolfe argues, "a palpable nostalgia for the human, returns through the back door."

Even Jacques Derrida, the founder of deconstruction, to whom "the question of the living and the living animal ... will always have been the most important and decisive question" has prompted Canadian scholar Nicole Shukin to question whether Derrida's "animal specter" (the conflation of animality and spectrality) functions as "a site where the transcendent foundations that deconstruction challenges are reconstituted in the immanent form of animal gods." In simplified terms, the animal specter with its "paradoxical corporeality," Shukin fears, may in fact be doubly disempowered as it is reduced to an essentialized animality and robbed of its historical substance or earthly materiality at the same time.

999 Haraway, When Species Meet, 29.
1000 Judith Butler, Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex (New York: Routledge, 1993), 73.
1001 Wolfe, Zoontologies, 6.
Whether or not Shukin’s criticism of Derrida as unwittingly dualistic is warranted, it points to a problem Derrida’s approach to the animal question shares with Kristeva’s “other scene,” Giorgio Agamben’s “bare life,” or arguably anthropologist Michael Taussig’s “Mimesis and Alterity.” It situates the synthesis of nature and nurture, self and other, in an invisible third space. Derrida reflects that signs of convergence, when reactions signify responses, are “coming from the other within us.” Similarly, Kristeva’s “other scene,” where drives and logic meet, is “irreducible to conscious linguistic communication.”

Agamben’s “bare life,” a life that “is neither animal life nor a human life, but only a life that is separated and excluded from itself – a bare life,” ultimately focuses on nature in a vacuum, untouched by or bereft of culture. Finally, Taussig’s understanding of man’s “ability to mime” as the “capacity to Other” seems to synthesize only superficially for the sake of


\[^{1006}\] Consider, for example, this following passage from *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt* in which Kristeva suggests that the human-animal dualism is overcome in the unconscious: “Instead of psychoanalysis as a matheme of the signifier, or a theory of ‘the mind,’ or the transaction of organs and drives, I will try to show that the originality of the Freudian discovery resides in this: psychoanalysis is a clinic and a theory of the copresence of the development of thought and sexuality. This two-sided (thought/sexuality) approach to the speaking being, which I see at the heart of the analytical experience, is an original variant of the age-old notion of dualism, and far from biologizing the essence of man, it centers the study of the psychical apparatus, its deployment, and its obstacles, in the biunivocal dependency of thought-sexuality/sexuality-thought. As language is the domain of this interaction, it is here that Freud found the ‘other scene,’ that of the unconscious, with its components (representatives of the drive) and its logic (primary processes) irreducible to conscious linguistic communication,” Julia Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt*, trans., Jeanine Herman (New York: Columbia UP, 2001), 94-95.

\[^{1007}\] Agamben, *The Open*, 38.

maintaining original opposites. Between phantoms, the unconscious, bare lives, and mimesis over hybridity, Homo’s hope to ‘know thyself’ and what it means to be ‘human’ remains elusive to the senses and difficult to comprehend.

A perhaps more tangible if not unconditionally promising path toward Aufhebung or invalidation of the human-animal distinction and dissolution of “humanity” within a performance rather than-essence based, multi-dimensional web of context-species identities, has been pointed up by the emerging interdisciplinary field of Human-Animal Studies (HAS). As Kenneth Shapiro, Co-Executive Director of Animals & Society and Institute Editor of Society and Animals, has described it, HAS is defined through its subject matter, not by any single methodological approach. The field is primarily devoted to examining, understanding, and critically evaluating the myriad of complex and multi-dimensional relationships between human and other animals. What are the various ways in which nonhuman animals figure in our lives and we in theirs? The relationships can be real or symbolic, factual or fictional, historical or contemporary, and, most important in the context of policy-making, beneficial or detrimental to one or both parties. The key term in this definition is ‘relationship.’

Human Animal Studies is the only field that directly investigates relationships between humans and nonhuman animals.

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1008 Taussig, Mimesis and Alterity, 19, see 1-32. I would like to point out that Taussig’s argument rests on a misinterpretation of Walter Benjamin’s Das Mimetische Vermögen (1933), which does not address, as Taussig claims, the “compulsion of persons to ‘become and behave like something else,’” (ibid., 19) but as Wolfgang Bock accurately translates, “the compulsion to become similar and behave in a similar way.” Namely, “Die Gabe, Ähnlichkeit zu sehen, die er besitzt, ist nichts als ein Rudiment des ehemals gewaltigen Zwanges, ähnlich zu werden und sich zu verhalten.” Wolfgang Bock, “Benjamin’s Criticism of Language and Literature,” in A Companion to the Works of Walter Benjamin, ed. Rolf J. Goebel (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), 28.

1009 Most recently restated by Matthew Calarco, whose expressed purpose throughout his book-length study it is to defend that “the human-animal distinction can no longer and ought no longer to be maintained” (Calarco, Zoographies, 3).
human and non-human animals and their environment – the amazingly variable forms of bonds, attachments, interactions, and communications.

Approaching the human-animal question deductively rather than inductively, HAS has hoped to circumvent anthropocentric bias. The field conceives of the human as one of many animals and seeks to record how and, as Haraway puts it, when species meet in order to more objectively determine where. In mapping bonds, identifying sites of attachment, preserving interactions, and interpreting communications, the field has more or less explicitly traced many a theoretical trait of “animality” – such as non-reason, impulsiveness, self-interest, or better, “innocent inconsideration,” and Weltarmut – across species lines. Human Animal Studies has thus contributed to the destabilization of the human-animal divide by dismantling humanity as the often innocently inconsiderate pursuit of life and power cloaked in self-control and disinterest.

Among the first social scientists who answered the general departure from consensus history with more self-conscious analyses of human-animal relations were anthropologist

1010 Kenneth Shapiro, email message to H-Animal Studies Network, February 2, 2007, emphases mine. For additional definitions see Calarco, Zoographies, 1-3.
1011 Haraway, When Species Meet (2009).
1012 Our species intuitively rebels against the identification of selfish with “innocently inconsiderate” behavior because it suggests the loss of awareness and control. Being in-human (classist, racist, sexist), in short, becomes preferable to being an innocent and powerless animal. To be weltarm or poor in the world (as opposed to weliformend or world shaping) strikes me as similar to the idea of being innocently inconsiderate. Weltarmut signifies unawareness of the dynamics of the world paired with the inability to shape or change them. For an alternative interpretation of the primary tenets of HAS, see Calarco’s introduction to Animal Studies. Herein, Calarco identifies “animality” and the “human-animal distinction” as fundamental but separate concerns of the field, while treating the study of human animal relations as negligible (Calarco, Zoographies, 1-3). Just like essentialized determinations of humanity, however, essentialized determinations of animality constitute the human-animal divide. Therefore, I find it unnecessary to distinguish the two.
Clifford Geertz and historian Keith Thomas. Geertz's pathbreaking study of "Deep Play: notes on the Balinese cockfight," read the cockfight as a "simulation of the [human] social matrix" that mirrored the social hierarchy among Balinese villagers. Following Geertz, British historian Keith Thomas published *Man and the Natural World* (1983), a book-length study on Britain's changing attitudes toward other species between 1500 and 1800 that builds on his earlier discussion of *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971). In the course of three hundred years, Thomas contends, the English gradually abandoned their anthropocentric worldview in favor of one less self-righteously exploitative of the natural world. Although Thomas endorses rather than deconstructs anthropocentric assumptions of (English) humanity as altruistic and in control of its animalistic drives, his work merits attention for two reasons: it was one of the first texts to constructively respond to John Berger's plea to "look at animals" and illustrate the effects of capitalism on animals' transformation from pre-industrial subject to modern object and metaphor. More importantly, in doing so, Keith comprehensively (albeit perhaps unwittingly) documents the discursive use of human-animal relations in the construction - rather than the mere simulation - of hierarchies at the onset of empire and shows the shift from a pre-imperial people who define themselves against beasts to an imperial people who maintain their superiority by defining themselves against others "acting beastly."

*Man and the Natural World* gave rise to more subtle identity studies that reveal the central importance of animal bodies and animal signs in the making and maintenance of

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1016 See Glen Elder, Jennifer Wolch and Jody Emel, "Le Pratique Sauvage," 82.
empire as well as categories of class, gender, sexuality, race, and nation. Domesticated animals, as Virginia DeJohn Anderson's carefully researched study on the role of livestock in the extension of empire and Mark Derr's less academic text on canine contributions to continental culture's expansion across the Americas show, powered colonization from the very beginning. Be it as scouts, squatters, pack animals, carriers of disease, nourishment, or active agents in the pursuit of competitors for resources, pigs, horses, cattle, and dogs became "creatures of empire" or "conquerors" as much as the humans who claimed to own them.\(^\text{1017}\) Animals' actual and discursive deployment helped legitimize and fortify imperial expansion.

Focusing on the discursive deployment as a means to the fabrication and fossilization of class lines, James Turner's study of the Anglo-American animal protection movement (1600-1900) shows how the development of and adherence to a new "ethic of kindness" or sensibility toward animals allowed Victorian reformers to make peace with their own "animality" while enabling them to control the unmitigated animality of others.\(^\text{1018}\)

Historian Harriet Ritvo's thoughtful analysis of animal-keeping and breeding practices in nineteenth-century England delves more deeply into the insidious workings of self-same love and power as guiding forces behind the kind treatment of animals. One "oblique way to enact a project of domination" at home and abroad, Ritvo explains in


Animal Estate, was by establishing one’s socio-economic identity through one’s treatment, breeding, and keeping of animals, especially dogs, horses, and cows. As early as 1824, Ritvo illustrates, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals’ chairman betrays the hidden agenda behind his organization’s advocacy for the prevention of cruelty to animals. The RSPCA’s calling, he asserts is “not only to prevent the exercise of cruelty towards animals, but to spread amongst the lower orders of people ... a degree of moral feeling which would compel them to think and act like those of a superior class.”

Extending the analysis of human-animal relations from Victorian Anglophone culture to continental Europe, Kathleen Kete’s work on the bourgeois’ use of pets to create class in late-nineteenth century Paris conveys that a similar logic structured social categorization there. The trend toward the more “humane” treatment of visible animals (as opposed to “invisible” species that were spatially segregated for meat production), in other words, was ancillary to the promotion of power and social betterment of the middle class.

In Katherine Grier’s nineteenth-century America, as in Kete’s Paris, human-animal relations, marked by rational disinterest, served as signs of “respectable folk.” Although Katherine Grier falls short of teasing out the opportunism that undergirds the evolution of an “ethic of kindness,” her survey of American pet-keeping shows how human-animal relationships grew out of existing, homogenized, and legitimized class and gender

1019 Harriet Ritvo, Animal Estate, 5-6.
1020 Ibid., 135. The chairman’s revelation reminds of Nietzsche, “We do not regard the animals as moral beings. But do you suppose the animals regard us as moral beings? – An animal which could speak said: ‘Humanity is a prejudice of which we animals at least are free’,” F.W. Nietzsche, Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality (New York: Cambridge UP, 1997), 162.

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categories.\textsuperscript{1022} True to an ideology of domesticity, or separate spheres, the private home, as literary historian Jennifer Mason has shown, became the realm of the compassionate female who was able to control her animality with empathy and love, practice stewardship over her human and animal dependents, and assert her respectability and power.\textsuperscript{1023} The public hunting grounds, on the other hand, became the realm of the rational, self-disciplined male, who managed to maintain emotionally detached, rational relations with the animals he killed to live.\textsuperscript{1024} Intimate knowledge and proper, “non-beastly,” performance of these gender identities secured ones’ position in the larger hierarchy as much as the inability or unwillingness to conform to them led to alienation from the group and loss of power and, on occasion, the loss of life.\textsuperscript{1025}

\textsuperscript{1022} Katherine Grier, \textit{Pets in America}, 160-299, 324.
\textsuperscript{1025} Meaning \textit{non-sustainable intimacy} with animals – that is, intimacy that inhibits successful procreation (impedes fertility strategies) such as male compassion with prey necessary for survival or female compassion that puts the well-being of the animal ahead of that of her offspring. Also includes \textit{non-sustainable indifference} – that is, reckless killing of earthly animals that threatens future food supplies or willingness to tolerate violence and torture that questions disinterest, social standing, and power. Having violated normative gender relations with surrounding livestock by “making their Neighbours Sheep dance in an uncommon Manner, and with causing Hogs to speak, and sing Psalms, &c.” for example, Benjamin Franklin quips in a brief report on the Mount Holly Witch Trials of October 12, 1730, several “wizards” and “witches” - like many before them who had maintained all-too-intimate relations with their familiars - were killed in the futile attempt to prove their innocence by outweighing the books of Moses or struggling to swim with hands and feet bound. See Benjamin Franklin, “Witch Trial at Mount Holly,” \textit{Pennsylvania Gazette}, October 22, 1730.
Far from outdated, the use and abuse of animals in the binary constructions of gender as detached male humanity, controlled and defined by reason, and compassionate female humanity, guided and defined by emotion are of enduring quality in the presentation of human-animal relationships in U.S. culture. Their persistence has been documented by Donna Haraway’s astute analysis of the Akeley’s hunting and representational practices in Primate Visions (1989), Daniel Justin Herman’s investigation of Hunting as an Ur-American tradition in the American Imagination (2001), and Gail Bederman’s exceptional discussion of Theodore Roosevelt as a “virile frontiersman” marked by “intelligence, altruism and morality.”

The theme of gender-appropriate animal practices for the sake of power resurfaces in Jennifer Wolch’s, Alec Brownlow, and Unna Lassiter’s case study of twenty-first-century human-animal relations among African-American inner city females. Finally, gender appropriate inter-species performances fundamentally inform capital investment.

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1026 Gail Bederman, Manliness and Civilization, 185. Like Bederman, I understand gender as not as an essence but an ongoing performative process, a recasting of existing practices. But I would take it a step further and argue that performative practices can be profitably reinvented if they improve the species’ reproductive success.

1027 Jennifer Wolch, Alec Brownlow, and Unna Lassiter, “Constructing the Animal Worlds of Inner City Los Angeles,” in Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: New Geographies of Human-Animal Relations, ed. Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert (New York/London: Routledge, 2000), 1-97. Disconcerting to the taste-trained eye, but by no means detrimental to the argument for a shared “humanity / animality,” or better “humanimality,” the compassionate female and the detached male have undergone an interesting modification in the field of contemporary amateur “trophy shots.” As Nigel Rothfels has shown, amateur trophy shots, openly available in the advertisement section of most online hunting clubs, on occasion feature unreservedly laughing, non-detached males and equally excited and uncompassionate females in front of grotesquely displayed (and often listed as endangered) earthy prey (Nigel Rothfels, “Taxidermy and Taxonomy” [paper presented at Finding Animals: Toward a Comparative History & Theory of Animals, State College, PA, April 30-May 1, 2009]). While these hunters’ gender performances conflict with old paradigms of male humanity as self-disciplined and female humanity as compassionate, they merely differ in form rather than motif or immediate result; again, the species-sustaining agenda transpires. See Safari Club International at http://www.safariclub.org/ or visit the club’s facebook fan page for an even larger number of uncensored images.
strategies and immigrant identities from detached “calm and assertive” cult icon, Cesar Millan, better known as the Dog Whisperer, to compassionate British dog “Supernanny” Victoria Stilwell on the popular TV show “It’s Me or the Dog.”

The association of dominant groups with the disinterested nurture of pets and sub-dominant groups with the selfish torture and/or slaughter of cows, chickens, turkeys, and pigs, exacerbated by spatial segregation, has been one of many ways in which animals have “become tools of a cultural imperialism designed to delegitimize subjectivity and citizenship of immigrants under time-space conditions of postmodernity and social relations of postcoloniality.” As early as 1855, as Chris Philo has shown, London’s inner-city live meat-market, Smithfield, was forced by act of parliament to relocate to Copenhagen Fields, Islington. With the market’s removal from the city limits and the departure of its debased workers along with the beasts, “respectable” citizens expected to see an improvement in “language … fighting … disturbances … [and overall] state of morals” in the area. Similar cultural beliefs informed the placement of Chicago’s Union Stock Yard, which conveniently situated both the meatpacking and immigrant meat-packers outside the “civilized” city.

Unfortunately, “At a Slaughterhouse, Some Things Never Die,” as Charlie LeDuff’s study of employment and animal-processing practices at the world’s largest pork production plant, Smithfield & Co in North Carolina, reveals. Then as now, the “dirty jobs” – the killing, gutting, and cleaning - go to the subaltern: Blacks, American Indians, Latinos (many of whom lack legal paperwork) and the occasional white ex-convict work the floors at $7.70

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1028 Elder, Wolch and Emel, Animal Geographies, 73.

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an hour.\textsuperscript{1030} In these minimum-wage melting pots of “otherness,” as Steve Striffler has more recently documented in \textit{Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America’s Favorite Food} (2005), subtle identities of class, gender, race and national belonging blur.\textsuperscript{1031} And as these constructions become increasingly hollow, the crucial importance of human-animal relations in the maintenance of selfsame power once again comes to the fore.

Complementing HAS’s social-science branch’s efforts toward invalidation of the human-animal distinction, the field’s life-science branch matches the heretofore-discussed demotion of humanity with the promotion of animality. It does so by attempting to discern capacities commonly associated with the mind and, therefore, the human, in non-human species.\textsuperscript{1032} Typically, this approach does not, as one may expect, take the form of identifying behavioral patters or learned skills that increase the organism’s chances of survival and would signify a certain degree of power and control.\textsuperscript{1033} Instead, the field seems to unwittingly have taken a decidedly anthropocentric approach to adorning the animal with less developed versions of the seemingly human.

\textsuperscript{1032} Especially the ‘white male human’ as Donna Haraway has repeatedly pointed out.
\textsuperscript{1033} While the life sciences (HAS and beyond) frequently discuss behavioral patterns that increase the organism’s chances of survival they often classify them as accidental or “instinctual.” Relegated to the realm of the accidental or the “instinctual” – that is, outside the organism’s conscious control, they no longer function as signs of subjectivity and power. In contrast, science often sees human behaviors as consciously controlled. Recent exceptions are Larry Young, “Love: Neuroscience reveals all,” \textit{Nature} 457, 8 (2009): 148.
Science has spared no effort to show that consciousness, culture, human language, as well as empathy and love are traits we share with – rather than traits that distinguish us from other animals. "Can Animals Think?" Eugene Linden asks in an article published in *Time Magazine* in 1999. Ten years and numerous experiments later, few people doubt that animals are capable of thought and future-oriented, problem-solving behavior. Enter orangutans who make escapes and return before harmful measures can be taken by the guards and elephants who visit graveyards to mourn their dead; Chilean mutts who drag their injured companions out of harm's way and monkeys who consume intoxicating plants in order to prepare for battle. As a distinguishing characteristic of humanity from animality, *thought and planning*, we may say, are ‘for the birds.’ And yet, even fewer people doubt that human animals can think and solve problems better (more controlled) than non-human animals. We can escape from high-security prisons such as Alcatraz, routinely take the train or drive a car to visit deceased relatives at their last resting grounds, save the imperiled with a credit card number at the click of a mouse, and invest billions of dollars in the long-term production and testing of weapons of war.

Proving the presence of less visible "human" qualities as part and parcel of animality has been more difficult. After all, concepts as consciousness, culture, language and love

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elude even our perceptive apparatus. Still, we seem to have met the challenge. Leading biologists, ecologists, and psychologists have documented self-awareness, heretofore seen as limited to humans and apes, in dolphins and elephants. They have done so by testing the dolphins’ and elephants’ capacity for Mirror Self Recognition (MSR), an “exceedingly rare” ability “considered an indicator of self-awareness ... [and] thought to correlate with higher forms of empathy and altruistic behavior ... [imperative] for complex sociality and cooperation.” In the experiments animals’ bodies are marked without their knowledge in an area they cannot see. Subsequently, the animal is placed in front a large mirror. Animals that possess MSR demonstrate: “social response,” followed by “physical inspection” of the mirror and “repetitive mirror-testing behavior” (interaction with mirror image), and ending in the “realization of seeing themselves” evidenced by the touching of the mark or, in aquatic mammals, by repeating “mark-revealing movements.” Evincing MSR, participating bottlenose dolphins and Asian elephants have thus successfully demonstrated that they, too – but again ‘less’ so than us - are exceptional creatures on planet earth. 

Even the common claim that “humans are biologically adapted for culture in ways that other primates are not” has been amended. Recent findings suggest that not only the

1036 Beyond language as a verbal system as defined by French linguist Ferdinand DeSaussure.
1037 At the Yerkes National Primate Research Center at Emory, Atlanta, Osborn Laboratories in Brooklyn, New York, and Columbia University.

Bonobo nut-cracking, chimpanzee hand-clasping, and Capuchin stone-banging behaviors are socially-learned skills, or the songs of male rock hyraxes show syntax, but that human language, the prime carrier of our culture, has been independently passed on from one generation of chimpanzees to another.1042 Washoe, the first known chimpanzee to "communicate with human beings by means of a human language," taught her adopted son Loulis his first sign at ten months.1043 Reared by R.A. and B.T. Gardener "as if she were a deaf human child," Washoe actively used approximately 150 signs (nouns, verbs, modifiers, and negatives) of Amslan (American Sign Language), with an added recognition or recall vocabulary that far exceeded said 150 by the time she reached maturity. This is an impressive number, considering that the verbal environment of American pre-schoolers, depending on their socio-economic background, comprises a recall vocabulary of anywhere from 620 to 2,150.1044

In the world of apes, Washoe and Loulis are no exceptions. In fact, their intellectual accomplishments have been dwarfed by their Gorilla cousin Koko, whom cultural theorist Lisa Uddin has hailed the "poster-child" of inter-species communication.1045 Koko, Uddin summarizes, is capable of returning the human gaze, has appeared on the cover of The

1044 "Professional pre-schoolers," Flynn summarizes, “are exposed to a vocabulary of 2,150 words, working-class children to 1,250, and welfare children to 620," James R. Flynn, Where Have All the Liberals Gone? Race, Class, and Ideals in America (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 102.
National Geographic Magazine, interacted with the members of Mr. Roger's Neighborhood (1998), and 'owns' a meticulously maintained website that gives her fans the opportunity to directly connect with Koko and Koko's World. When it comes to numbers, Koko possesses a vocabulary that exceeds that of Washoe and Loulis. As developmental psychologists Francine Patterson and Wendy Gordon report in their "Case for the Personhood of Gorillas," Koko has a working vocabulary of over five hundred signs, a passive (previously used) lexicon of about one thousand signs, and possesses a "receptive vocabulary in English ... several times that."

Most critically, Koko is coherently creative. She has designed compound signs such as "bottle match" (cigarette lighter), "white tiger" (zebra), or "bottle necklace" (soda can holder) to describe the unfamiliar, and she is able to talk about "love" and verbalize empathy. "Love" like "eye" - per Koko - is something she shares with research assistant Maureen Sheehan. Pain and sorrow Koko "feels" for fellow gorilla Michael, who, trapped in the adjacent room, is audibly crying. She expresses her concern signing, "Feel sorry out."

Koko's signing, as Lisa Uddin's thoughtful analysis of Francine Patterson's interspecies bond has documented, is not always readily accessible. Rather than direct

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1049 Patterson and Gordon, “The Case,” 73.
communication, it often resembles a “project of endless and frenzied interpretation.”\textsuperscript{1052} The endeavor to communicate across species lines, Uddin observes, casts Patterson (much like Pynchon’s Mason) in the light of a lover who unknowingly reproduces the human-animal divide by inscribing the other with desire and loving her precisely for what she is not. In loving the ideal rather than the real gorilla, in turn, the primatologist, Uddin’s piece posits, facilitates the disempowerment and eventual disappearance of their “beloved animal subjects-turned-objects.”\textsuperscript{1053} Patterson’s bond with Koko and, principally, any human attempt toward intimate inter-species kinship, may give room to misinterpretation and accentuate species difference. The fabrication of animal alterity, I would caution, does not effect the loss of power and/or life by default. On the contrary, inter-species intimacy or kinship, it strikes me, both weakens and strengthens the human–animal divide and balances power-relations.

In the most palpable sense, the recognition of kin or kin-like qualities (such as abstract thought and emotion) in the animal-other denaturalizes the species-line by blurring the categories of humanity and animality. At the same time, species kinship is a cultural discourse or signifying practice that presupposes difference and thus consolidates the divide. It expresses the deep-seated desire for the restoration of prelapsarian wholeness and the return to a long lost innocence (or perhaps, an ‘innocently inconsiderate’ animality).\textsuperscript{1054}

\textsuperscript{1052} Ibid., 111, 113-114.
\textsuperscript{1053} Ibid., 116. In this respect, Uddin’s argument, informed by Barthes and Berger and reminiscent of Michael Taussig’s \textit{Mimesis and Alterity}, echoes humanist paradigms.
Paradoxically, inter-species love\textsuperscript{1055} consolidates and destabilizes the human-animal divide on yet another, less palpable level. In fetishizing the animal other by infusing it with human traits (reason, emotion, language etc.) we demonstrate our inability to love true otherness and consequently deepen the divide.\textsuperscript{1056} To interpret our vain attempts to love the absolute other for what it is as an agent's deliberate creation of alterity, however, rewrites the metaphysical idea of a essentialized, world-shaping humanity or Dasein.\textsuperscript{1057} Rather than attest to man's power to know and shape the world, I would reason, the fetishized animal documents the human organism's utter lack of such control.\textsuperscript{1058}

Humanity's infusion of the other with kin-qualities, especially language and love, then, becomes our species' narcissistic attempt to preserve the self-same in order to secure power and survival through seemingly disinterested animal practices.\textsuperscript{1059} Seen in this light, we become social animals endowed with the power to love within and across species lines for

\textsuperscript{1055} Or the “animal fetish” as Donna Haraway has repeatedly called it.

\textsuperscript{1056} In this, I drastically depart from Barthes and Uddin who, consistent with metaphysical thought, endow the human with the power to shape the world and deliberately create alterity or Derridean unsubstitutable singularity. Rather than reading the human's penchant to find the familiar in the other as the deliberate creation of the absolute other, then, I see it as his inability to love and promote that, which is not self-same.

\textsuperscript{1057} Or what Derrida has called “unsubstitutable singularity.”

\textsuperscript{1058} As Helen Leach so artlessly puts it in her description of domestication: “However it is defined, domestication was a process initiated by people who had not the slightest idea that its alliance with agriculture would change the face of their planet almost as drastically as an ice age, lead to nearly as many extinctions as an asteroid impact, revolutionize the lives of all subsequent human generations, and cause a demographic explosion in the elite group of organisms caught up in the process. Such unforeseen consequences are seldom discussed in the literature of domestication, perhaps because it is not in the nature of the species that started the process to admit that it isn't in control.” Helen Leach qtd. in Sarah Franklin, \textit{Dolly Mixtures: The Remaking of Genealogy} (Durham, Duke UP, 2007), 31, emphasis mine. Also see Helen Leach, “Selection and the Unforeseen Consequences of Domestication, in \textit{Where the Wild Things Are Now: Domestication Reconsidered}, ed. Rebecca Cassidy and Molly Mullin (New York: Berg, 2007), 71.

\textsuperscript{1059} Reminiscent of Jacques Derrida's attempt to redefine the relation of Same-Other.
the sake of survival but bound to love, preserve, and perpetually promote the self-same.\footnote{1060}

Free to love and fear but unfree to choose the objects of our ardor and animosity we are as species powerful and powerless at once. As an organism that is ultimately unable to identify the forces that move it, that \textit{simply} exists and reacts, \textit{homo - nosce te ipsum} emerges, once gain, as one of many animals, “poor in the world” or, to use Bataille’s words, “like water in water.”\footnote{1061}

As unsatisfactory to scholars and detrimental to non-elite organisms as our ultimately self-preserving and self-serving deportment may seem, its beneficiaries are multiform. After all, in identifying kin qualities in other animals and extending its protection and partnership, the human species unwittingly creates space for and protects the unknown and humanly unknowable. In a crucial sense then, inter-species kinship and communication is as much a nostalgic discourse of restoration and redemption as it is one of pragmatic accommodation and \textit{shared} survival.\footnote{1062} Or, to revisit Pynchon’s terms, inter-species intimacy is a “provision[...] of survival in a world less fantastick”\footnote{1063} and certainly more materialistic:

\begin{quote}
Viz. – Once, the only reason Men kept Dogs was for food. Noting that among Men no crime was quite so abhor’d as eating the flesh of another human, Dog quickly learn’d to act as human as possible, - and to pass this Ability on from Parents to Pups. So we know how to evoke from you, Man, one day at a time, at least enough Mercy for one day more of Life. Nonetheless, \textit{however accomplish’d, our Lives are never settled, -- we go on as tailwagging Scheherazades, ever a step away from the dread Palm Leaf,}
\end{quote}

\footnote{1060} And even this ability is not uniquely human. Other primates as well as \textit{canae, psittacidae (parrots), felidae, cetacea and elephantidae} have demonstrated similar behaviors.\footnote{1061}


\footnote{1063} Haraway, \textit{Primate Visions}, 135. Or sustainability.\footnote{1063}

\footnote{1063} Pynchon, \textit{Mason \& Dixon}, 21-22.
Animal fetishism as a process of 'self'-preservation and accommodation, Pynchon’s Learned English Dog suggests, is, albeit open-ended, circumscribed by all participants’ will to life. On the one hand, animals, especially domesticated species that ‘sing us songs of our humanity’ including dogs, horses, cats and birds, as scholars from Virginia DeJohn Anderson to Cary Wolfe have evinced, have become indispensable in Western identity construction, the masking of our animality as humanity, and the management of bio-cultural and bio-political fitness. Animals’ and animal practices’ power to improve and prolong the lives of members of the western imaginaries and increase the individuals’ marketability, chances of survival, and persistence in the gene and meme pools, however, comes at a price. In immoderation, they threaten to harness if not inhibit Homo sapiens’ reproduction and the transmission of accumulated bio-cultural assets. After all, in the most basic sense anything metaphysical or immaterial rests on something physical and material for its transmission. And although inter-species intimacy yields substantial immaterial interest and most intricately interconnects with intra-species reproduction, it cannot spark biological life. Consequently, I propose, it is in the close study of personal human-animal relationships, when inter-species intimacy stops to assist and begins to impede human survival, that humanity signifies animality, that the human can be decentered, and the human-animal divide overcome.

\[1064\] By this, I do not mean to infer from structure to capacity, biological make-up to cultural types, or from gene to meme. Instead, I’d like to think of memes as free-flowing and able to attach themselves, short or long term, to material stripes of all sorts.

Illustrations

Figure 3.1, Rand and Avery Advertisement in the Boston City Directory, 1849.

Figure 3.2, “Deaths” Farmer’s Cabinet 58, 31 (February 1860), 3.

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TO MERCIFULLY KILL HORSES, DOGS, AND OTHER ANIMALS.

THE HORSE.

Shooting.—Place the pistol muzzle within a few inches of the head, and shoot at the dot, aiming toward the centre of the head.

Be careful not to shoot too low.

THE DOG.

Shooting.—Place the pistol muzzle near the head, aiming a little one side of the centre of the top of the skull, and shoot downward at the dot, so that the bullet shall go through the brain into or toward the neck.

Do not shoot too low, or directly in the middle, because of thick bones.

After much consultation with veterinary surgeons and experts, no better or more merciful method of killing cats has been found than to put with a long-handled wooden spoon, about half a teaspoonful of pure cyanide of potassium on the cat's tongue, as near the throat as possible. The suffering is only for a few seconds. Great care must be used to get pure cyanide of potassium, and to keep it tightly corked.

Figure 4.1, "To Mercifully Kill Horses, Dogs, and Other Animals."

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