Abstract
Could the everyday affective relationships that we share with our animal companions inspire us to think, write and even care ‘differently’ in the field of organisation studies? In this paper, I suggest that organisational scholars have plenty to learn from post-qualitative writing and the posthumanist practice of feminist dog-writing. Drawing from literature on posthumanism, humanimal relations and post-qualitative methodology, I first frame feminist dog-writing as a practice that relies on post-qualitative writing and discuss what this framing potentially involves, in concrete terms. Second, I experiment with ‘writing with the bitches’ to illustrate how this kind of writing ‘differently’ – in ways in which the entangled co-becoming of the humanimal is highlighted in its multiplicity – could contribute to discussions of humanimal relations in the field of organisation studies and more disruptive, post-qualitative forms of writing in our scholarly field. Despite the many challenges of anthropocentric language and representation, I argue that feminist dog-writing has the capability to creatively confuse, disrupt, and transform more ‘conventional’, mechanical, and human-centred forms of academic writing. Finally, I suggest that feminist dog-writing invites human animals to engage differently with the sensate, more-than-human life-worlds that human-centred accounts of organisational life have typically sentimentalised, trivialised, or overlooked.

Keywords
Critique, feminist dog-writing, humanimal entanglements, post-humanism, post-qualitative writing, transformation

Beginning with bitches
Bitch [/bɪtʃ/]
[a female dog, wolf, fox, or otter]
[A spiteful or unpleasant woman]
Bitch, a common means of misogyny, humiliation, and denigration,

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no desired subject position in organisational life.

Female forms across species, genders, races
typically stereotyped, written out, or locked into structures of othering.

Complaint. Critique. Disruption.

Who is the subject?

Whose bodies or writings are currently heard?

Power and politics, intersecting.

Experimental writing? Boundary-crossing?

Moving away from the hu-man author-ity
to sense, feel, and seek to express
the nuances of the more-than-human world
differently.

Paying close attention to the animal other,

learning how to respectfully meet – on more equal terms.

How can I change from our meeting?

Writing and thinking with nonhuman animals
for inclusion and multiplicity,
critique and transformation.

Writing humanimal relatedness into organisational scholarship.

As a daily and almost taken-for-granted practice, our academic writing continuously deserves to be ‘explored, investigated, and questioned’ (Cloutier, 2016: 69). Could we, organisational researchers, then, write to critique and disrupt the seemingly rigid norms around ‘standard’ hu-man-centred academic writing – the kind of disembodied, distant, sterile and cleaned-up writing that conforms to a patriarchal discourse (Ahonen et al., 2020; Höpfl, 2000), upholds binaries, and firmly supports human superiority over other living beings in the world (for a critique, see Benozzo et al., 2013; Fotaki and Harding, 2018; McMurray and Pullen, 2020)?

Could we write to decenter hu-man author-ity, write to question the human/animal divide in our field, and write to create further space for the multiple nonhuman animals around us? Could writing ‘differently’ through entanglements with nonhuman animals problematise common assumptions about the subject as ‘always already human’ (Wolfe, 2003: 1) and allow for alternative, interdependent, and more-than-human forms of knowledge to emerge?

Human animals are rarely the only source of sensation, knowledge, and embodied perception in the world, and animality is a feature shared between humans and other living creatures (Baker, 2019; Birke, 2012). Despite humans becoming increasingly aware of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all life, our academic texts have traditionally been predicated upon idea(l)s of human superiority, exclusivity and mastery in the world. Animals continue to be the silenced, dominated, and relatively overlooked agents in our field, and simplistic human/animal dichotomies are typically upheld in much of our field’s scholarly writing (Hamilton and Taylor, 2013, 2017). Scientific writing, the most human of all activities, is expected to be coherent, cognitive, and distant, something humans
have agency and control over (Pullen et al., 2020). In this paper, I turn to the post-qualitative practice of feminist dog-writing to problematise these assumptions further. Specifically, I am concerned with exploring the potential of feminist dog-writing to write ‘differently’ in the field of organisation studies. By recognising the relatedness of humans and nonhuman animals in academic writing practices, I seek novel and creative means to understand and express the complexity of multispecies encounters, relational ethics and humanimal relations in organisational life.

Following Sayers (2016, 2017) and McHugh (2012), I position feminist dog-writing as a form of *écriture féminine* with political, performative and material aims. Originally developed within the field of cultural studies (Haraway, 2003, 2008; McHugh, 2012), feminist dog-writing represents a form of entangled *humanimal* writing that ‘involves playful relational co-constitution with nonhuman Others’ (Sayers, 2016: 11). By embracing the affective, relational and sensual knowledge created by humanimals (and not humans and/or animals as ontologically separate agents), this posthumanist approach to writing emphasises our common worlding with non-human animals (see also Valtonen et al., 2020). Moreover, moving away from hu-*man*-centred writing towards *more-than-human* writing could serve as a means of creatively confusing or disrupting writing (McHugh, 2012). In this sense, feminist dog-writing sounds refreshingly queer (or ill-fitting?) in the neoliberal Business School, where pressures to conduct more accountable, mainstream and quantitative research have only intensified lately (Kallio et al., 2016; Kiriakos and Tienari, 2018; Parker, 2014).

In this paper, I seek inspiration from post-qualitative methodology (Benozzo et al., 2013; Koro-Ljungberg, 2012; St. Pierre, 2018) to experiment with writing through entanglements with female canine companions (i.e. domesticated animals with agency who live in the home). Specifically, I seek to decenter human agency and embrace openness, intra-action and relational co-constitution with companion canines. By doing so, I further problematise an ‘ideology of anthroparchy’ (Clarke and Knights, 2020: 16) that is typically reproduced in much scholarly writing. Furthermore, my hope is that this kind of writing ‘differently’ will also render my companion animals, Labrador retrievers Saga and Selma, more agentic, visible and ethically represented in my writing. By writing through co-constitutions with canines in embedded relationships, I illustrate what post-humanist writing through interspecies encounters and affective becomings could enable us organisational researchers to see, feel and understand differently in our field. By questioning our very assumptions about academic writing practices, knowledge creation and subject formation, I argue that feminist dog-writing invites us to think differently about human-animal relations and the practice of performing research.

Despite the growing interest in human-animal relations in the field of organisation studies (e.g. Hamilton and Taylor, 2017; Labatut et al, 2016; Satama and Huopalainen, 2019; Tallberg et al., 2014), few studies have engaged with post-qualitative writing to tease out humanimal relations as affective possibilities and forms of ethical engagement with animal others, adopted an empirically ‘tangible’ angle regarding the theorisation of humanimal entanglements, or highlighted the consequences of feminist dog-writing for organisation studies’ understanding of writing differently (for an exception, see Sayers, 2016, 2017). The present paper contributes to these discussions. In what follows, I first present theoretical work on posthumanism, humanimal relations and canine-human relations which has inspired me in crafting this paper. Second, I introduce the post-qualitative writing and feminist dog-writing approach that follows from the posthumanist onto-epistemological starting points of the paper and relies firmly on post-qualitative writing. Third, I provide empirical illustrations of my interpretation of feminist dog-writing as co-constructive and entangled humanimal writing. Finally, I outline my contribution and discuss how feminist dog-writing could potentially transform the practice of scholarly writing in the field of organisation studies, more broadly.
On posthumanist thinking, humanimal relations and canine-human relations

‘[w]e need to move beyond anthropocentrism altogether, rather than to extend humanism to the formerly exploited others’ (Braidotti, 2006: 107).

As human organisms, we depend heavily on others and the diversity of the entire biosphere. As indicated by Braidotti (2006) above, this paper has been informed by posthumanist4 theorising and post-qualitative writing that, broadly speaking, encapsulates the non-binary, relational and interdependent understandings of humans and other materialities in the world. Non-human animals, framed either individually, sentimentally, or as a grey mass with a collective identity, have remained strangely familiar yet marginalised, uncanny ‘others’ haunting the shadows of organisational life. After all, animal ‘others’ are those against which ‘civilized humanity’ (sic) continuously measures itself (Baker, 2019). Only recently have organisational scholars begun to more carefully acknowledge how different animals actively co-construct and participate in organisational life (see Clarke and Knights, 2020; e Cunha et al., 2019; Hamilton and Taylor, 2012, 2013, 2017; Labatut et al., 2016; O’Doherty, 2016; Sage et al., 2016; Skoglund and Redmalm, 2017). Meanwhile, the existing approaches to human-animal relations (or ‘humanimal’ to emphasise a posthumanist commitment and entangled worldview) in our field render visible rather different onto-epistemological traditions or theorisations of ‘the animal’. Rather than reproducing human-animal dichotomies, privileging the human at the expense of animal experiences or directing scant attention to the agency of sensate non-human others, I build upon feminist new materialist literature (Alaimo, 2008; Barad, 2003, 2007; Haraway, 2016) and posthuman traditions (Hamilton, 2019; Hamilton and Taylor, 2017; Sayers, 2016, 2017; Staunæs and Raffinsee, 2019; Tallberg et al., 2014) that seek to decenter the human subject in these relations. Specifically, I emphasise everyday ethical encounters with animal life worlds in the more-than-human world. By highlighting the intra-actions (Barad, 2003, 2007) and non-oppositional connections between different bodies and materialities – the multispecies assemblages (Haraway, 2008) – I adopt posthumanist approaches that disturb the taken-for-grantedness of established dualisms (human/animal, nature/culture, self/other) and invite trans-corporeal thinking across bodies (Alaimo, 2008) by emphasising their interconnections.

In terms of onto-epistemological positioning, animals present an ethical challenge to the dominant anthropocentrism and ‘ratio-masculinism’ of organisational life. As human subjects, we inevitably act, move, experience and become with in co-existence with the non-humans (Latour, 2005) and more-than-humans (Braidotti, 2006) around us. We think and breathe in entanglements with others. Our bodies are bodies multiple (Mol, 2002): complicated ecosystems of billions of microbes, hormones, skin, tissue, bones and organs already inhabited by billions of other living beings. By highlighting the interdependencies of different affects, agencies, elements and materialities in the moving world, posthumanist approaches problematise the species division, stability and anthropomorphism of linguistic representation (Baker, 2019; Nimmo, 2019), as well as the reproduction of dominant power relations. By highlighting the non-oppositional connections between different bodies and materialities in multispecies assemblages, I too seek to move beyond anthropocentrism, decenter human agency and rethink the positionality of humans and animals in multispecies assemblages.

On humanimal relations in organisation studies

Drawing from Taylor (2013), I connect how we theorise and write (about) animals with how we conceive of their ‘place’ in our world, more broadly. Animals are varied, living and sentient beings
which are seemingly difficult to define (Birke, 1994, 2012). ‘We are and we are not the same’, Sayers (2017: 166) suggests. Our encounters with different animal bodies bring ethics to the fore (Valtonen et al., 2020). In his Oscars speech in February of 2020, Joaquin Phoenix used his voice for the ‘voiceless’ and vulnerable cow, a production animal that many humans rarely consider in their daily lives. ‘We feel entitled to artificially inseminate a cow and steal her baby, even though her cries of anguish are unmistakable. Then we take her milk that’s intended for her calf and we put it in our coffee and our cereal’, Phoenix aptly reminded us. Troubling ethical concerns are rendered visible here, namely the human tendency to exploit other living beings, regard some animals as more (or less) ‘worthy’ than others, and disconnect from our empathy for exploited animals. While humans devote themselves to certain animals which are ‘useful’ to us, other animals continue to suffer needlessly. In her popular book entitled ‘Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows’ (2010), Melanie Joy further problematises these matters.

Following Schuurman and Leinonen (2012), I work from the assumption that all human-animal relationships encompass embodied, ethical and moral dimensions. As sentient beings with agency, intellect, instincts, and emotions, diverse animals co-construct our more-than-human world. Throughout history, humans have assumed a dominant position of power in relation to other animal(s), and power dynamics continue to shape these relations. Traditionally, humans have objectified animals for exploitative or capitalist purposes (Schwartz, 2020). In contrast to animals treated as production factors, things, or commodities to be exploited (Schwartz, 2020), certain humanised animals – such as canines – have in some cases become loyal companions and close friends who are compassionately cared for. Of course, this does not apply everywhere in the world, and the manner in which companion animals are controlled by humans is far from uncomplicated. Rather, humanimal relations are inherently embedded in difficult relations of ethics, care, domination and violence.

What is it like to be dominated or ‘Othered’? Sayers (2017) critically asks. Clarifying the ethical framework adopted by this paper, I echo a relational and non-oppositional conception of ethics and care (Gherardi and Rodeschini, 2016; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Valtonen et al., 2020) that seeks to reconsider the species boundary through the textures of ongoing caring connections occurring ‘at the borders between different bodies, between words and among sociomaterial settings’ (Gherardi and Rodeschini, 2016: 270). Drawing from Haraway (2016), who positions ethics as ‘response-ability’, this paper views ethics as relational, contextual and inherently ‘messy’ in practice. In other words, ethics invariably entails dimensions of care and violence (Valtonen et al., 2020). The relational understanding of ethics adopted in this paper should not be replaced with the onto-epistemologically different essentialist ethics of care framework (e.g. Gilligan, 1993) that is grounded in psychology, focuses on the human mind, reproduces the mind/body dualism and upholds binaries.

Taking difficult questions of ethics seriously, humans appear to be fascinated by animals that embody identifiable ‘human’ characteristics. We cultivate emotional intimacy and proximity towards certain domesticated, bred and ‘enchanting’ animals such as dogs, cats and horses, wherein domestication entails both (human) control and care. The abovementioned animals have received substantial scholarly (Haraway, 2003, 2008) and popular attention (e.g. Knapp, 1998; Kuzniar, 2006), which resonates with Milton’s (2002) findings: We are likely to craft connectedness to animals with identifiable facial expressions and corporeal bodies. Meanwhile, we disconnect with the ‘unwanted’ animals that eat our clothes in the closet, invade our houses, disturb us with their buzzing sounds, or carry viruses. By attuning towards certain animals that we risk sentimentalising, others are simultaneously overlooked and marginalised. Valtonen (2017: 79) suggests that the academic narratives of animals replicate the popular cultural storytelling: those furry, cute, large or tiny animals with big eyes that we encounter in Disney stories’. This invites particular self-reflexivity from my side, and I will discuss these matters more thoroughly as I address the theorisation of human-canine relations.
Theorising human-canine relations

‘[Dogs] are not a projection, nor the realization of an intention, nor the telos of anything. They are dogs; i.e. a species in obligatory, constitutive, historical, protean relationship with human beings’ (Haraway, 2003: 11–12).

How do participants of any species come to perform relationships, and how can these be understood (Birke, 2012)? Man’s best friend (sic) performs as an immensely popular humanised animal, and human-canine relations have been widely studied (see Durgee, 2008; Greenebaum, 2004; Power, 2008). This paper focuses on humanimal relationships as socio-historically and culturally contextual, and on canine companions as ‘conscious, sentient and intentional agents that interact with humans in an emotionally meaningful way’ (Charles and Davies, 2011; Schuurman, 2017: 209). Within Western consumer culture, the human-canine relation is a gendered construct, sometimes stigmatised or romanticised as a sentimental attachment (e.g. Knapp, 1998; Kuzniar, 2006; McHugh, 2012). Gender(ed) prejudices play out in the feminisation, subordination and devaluation of ‘canine love’. Today, dog ownership in the Western world is largely associated with responsibility, morality, or the ‘Westernisation of sensibilities’ (Nast, 2006: 896). We live in times when increasing more people in the affluent West prefer furry animal partners over humans, and when puppies have replaced human babies as the desired ‘affective objects’ (sic) of many young couples (Vänskä, 2016). We also live in post-industrial societies of global inequalities where inequalities are – by definition – implicated in the ways in which care for pets is made possible (or not) (Nast, 2006).

‘Humanimal’ co-constitutions arise from the embedded everyday situations in which canines, humans and their surrounding environment become entangled. Done and undone through the everyday actions of the involved humanimals, these relations involve embodied, affective, material and emotional elements (Schuurman, 2017). In the affective engagements that co-construct interspecies communication, the interacting senses of smell, touch, hearing, taste and sight are crucial. Building on these insights, I will now turn to feminist dog-writing. Before doing so, I will briefly explicate the characteristics of post-qualitative writing in relation to feminist dog-writing.

On post-qualitative writing and feminist dog-writing

Doing research ‘differently’ (St. Pierre, 1997) requires new ontological positioning and novel methodologies. The post-qualitative movement calls for re-thinking our relationship with the surrounding world and a deconstruction of ‘conventional humanist qualitative methodology’ (St. Pierre, 2011, 2013), which has become standardised, predictable and static. Post-qualitative methodologies, refusing to be fixed, invite us to embrace the unexpected and to problematise dominant assumptions about conducting research (Koro-Ljungberg, 2012), the mechanical uses of language and methods (St. Pierre, 2018), and what counts as ‘data’ (Benozzo and Gherardi, 2020; St. Pierre, 1997, 2018). Reflecting a multifaceted approach to data as performative, moving, non-representational and increasingly nonlinguistic (e.g. Benozzo et al., 2013; Koro-Ljungberg, 2012; St. Pierre, 2011, 2014), post-qualitative approaches inspire us to ‘search for counter-practices of writing’ (Gherardi, 2019: 4), what might be and become (Benozzo and Gherardi, 2020), variations and movements, wondering how data can be affectively sensed, and lived, how data moves across time and space, and what data has the capacity (or not) to produce (Benozzo et al., 2013). By embracing
openness and transcending binaries, post-qualitative writing leaves both researchers and readers with intentionally open-ended traces. This form of non-oppositional, often nonlinguistic and open-ended writing involving the assembling of scenes, uncertainties, emergences, various materialities, more-than-humans and motion allow for alternative means of relating to empirical explorations, research and our research subjects. Building upon these insights and the inspiration that this body of work offers, I will, in what follows, explicate how I frame feminist dog-writing as a practice by clarifying what it actually is, and how we are to tease out what is specific about it.

On feminist dog-writing

‘feminist dog-writing’ ways can be found to co-constitute human and nonhuman species in academic writing practices’ (Sayers, 2016: 1)

Drawing from Sayers (2016, 2017) and McHugh (2012), I position feminist dog-writing as an experimental form of humanimal writing that seeks to represent affectual humanimal intra-actions and co-constitutions rather than exclusively human subjectivity or agency in the world. This approach calls into question how we relate to, re-present and write animal others. Thinking and writing with animals decentralises the human subject and emphasises our common worlding as well as the non-oppositional interconnections between humans and animals. By seeking to write the narrativity of ‘humanimals’ without sentimentalising, glorifying, or objectifying the animal, feminist dog-writing extends agency to more-than-human assemblages while seeking to respectfully learn from the animal’s significant ‘otherness’ (Haraway, 2008). In so doing, feminist dog-writing problematises questions of subjectivity (who and what is the writer?), what counts as writing (is writing a human or more-than-human practice?), and whose writings, agencies and bodies we include or exclude in the field of organisation studies. In this manner, feminist dog-writing invites further ethical reflection on how we co-construct the ‘animal’ or the ‘human’ in humanimal relations, how humans and animals intra-act relationally, and who humanimals become through these multispecies assemblages. Feminist dog-writing also critiques the conventional species division that is predicated on both linguistic and material violence.

I approach my dogs as ‘fellow creatures’ (Valtonen et al., 2020) with whom I think, write and undertake research. Nevertheless, ‘choosing animals to write with might be seen as perverse’, as Sayers (2017: 167) aptly reminds us. Whereas animals are fundamental for some to live, think and write with, powerful gendered stereotypes advocate that there is perhaps something ‘strange, perverse or wasteful’ (Serpell, 1996: xiv) about displaying affection for animals in the first place. As writing represents the most human of all scholarly practices, dog-writing risks undermining one’s seriousness as an academic. By entering this territory of moral ambiguity, embodied struggle, and potential shame, I too acknowledge that my gendered animal-writing risks being degraded or questioned by others. Simultaneously, writing (about) relating to canines or other species – with non-exploitative intentions inclusive of other-than-human perspectives – is rarely shameful in my opinion.

More broadly, feminist scholars have long pointed towards the liberatory and affective possibilities of writing ‘differently’ (Beavan, 2019; Fotaki and Harding, 2018; Pullen, 2018; Pullen et al., 2020) as a political practice, striving to ‘break free’ from the simplistic dichotomies between subject and object, human and animal, mind and body, and agency and structure that more conventional academic writing tends to (re)produce. Writing to confuse the phallogocentric order has engaged critical organisational scholars over the years. Skilled writers have introduced alternatives to the hegemonic norm, such as dirty writing (Pullen and Rhodes, 2008), embodied writing (Boncori and Smith, 2019; Fotaki and Harding, 2018; Katila, 2019), vulnerable dream writing
Different to these creative and liberatory approaches, feminist dog-writing goes further in critiquing the human-centredness of scholarly writing and the dominant silencing of other animals in our field. While the existing approaches to ‘writing differently’ remain largely human-centred (for exceptions, see Sayers, 2016, 2017), the inclusion of animals and animal-writing is particularly relevant here.

The feminist in dog-writing suggests that gender is (still) relevant to writing, as gendered prejudices still prevent many of us from producing queer, vulnerable, or ‘alternative’ writings in our field. The ‘feminist’ in dog-writing invites critical reflection and change: rethinking our relations with animals on more sustainable, ethical and equal terms, as well as addressing the widespread violence against women, queers and animals in the world. Echoing Sayers (2017), I argue that feminist dog-writing invites careful thinking about our ethical relations to all kinds of animals in organisational life, not limiting our scope to those animals we think we ‘know’ better (like our dogs). Here, I need to discuss how I justify writing through entanglements with my canines – large, privileged and humanised animals so thoroughly loved and cared for. What implications does this choice of focusing on the ‘furry cute dogs’ have for our ways of writing and understanding human-animal relations, not least in comparison to focusing on the relations with animals that do not want contact with humans, or animals who are in contact with humans but not in ways we enjoy? How are we to take seriously the ethical point made by Valtonen (2017; see also Valtonen et al., 2020) regarding what we can or cannot say, reveal, or question with feminist dog-writing?

Humananimals are always embedded in difficult, earthy, messy and complex relationships of care, violence, domination and potential abuse. While writing always ‘places’ the subject (Özkazanç-Pan, 2020), writing always violates and excludes as well. Feminist dog-writing cannot escape the act of violence. Different to ‘out-of-place’ animals or the tiniest creatures that we barely notice, my retrievers, with watchful brown eyes, represent the world’s most popular dog breed, physically and emotionally proximate to humans (Schuurman, 2017). They embody affective charisma (Lorimer, 2015) and invite care, cuddles and touches. The ethico-political act of writing gives voice and agency to some bodies, while silencing others. This practice brings to the surface difficult questions concerning ethics, hierarchies between species, how to decentralise humans in encounters with other species, and how to voice, treat, and include different animal ‘others’ from a human position of power. Feminist dog-writing urges us to rethink human centrality in scholarly writing, as well as revisit how we construct and treat different animals in the more-than-human world. For example, who becomes a ‘troublesome’, monstrous or loved animal body (or not)? Who ‘deserves’ (sic) to be voiced or cared for (and who does not)?

While humans typically acknowledge certain animals proximate to us, we frequently fail to recognise the presence and agency of multiple others. Following Hamilton and Taylor (2013), I believe that power dimensions, hierarchies, and differences serve as important opportunities for greater ethical awareness and reflection. I seek to convey the communicative intercorporeality beyond language with a relatively familiar species through the interpretation of gestures, expressions and bodily comportment (Nimmo, 2016). Relating to my dogs triggers me to think critically about species hierarchies, power relations and relational agency. Dogs invite me to establish kin relations (Haraway, 2016) with other bodies and species. Through dog-writing, I might discover how to think critically about other multispecies encounters, how to express these through writing, and how I might appreciate the relatedness of all earthly creatures (Valtonen et al., 2020). As a more-than-human activity of living, being and thinking with others, research builds on relatedness and willingness to engage with different life-worlds (Fotaki and Harding, 2018). Affective intensities and non-linguistic practices always reflect these relationships.

Since 2012, my human life has been intertwined with canine lives. Saga (b. 2012) and Selma (b. 2016) are not extended selves, objects, or status symbols (Hirschman, 1994). They are dogs, family...
members of different species. Negotiated in the mundane rhythms of a sensory more-than-human life (Stewart, 2007), humanimal relations fundamentally affect and ‘spill over’ to my scholarly writing. As humanised animals, my dogs have their own blue animal EU passports, carry microchips in their necks, and regularly get vaccinated. Paradoxically, they are treated for ticks and parasites, those ‘unwanted’ animals largely defined as pests. My domesticated but not so disciplined canines and I share daily rituals across domestic spaces, streets, parks, forests and wooded areas; they make me feel ‘grounded’ every day. Actively co-constructing our mutual relationship, these ‘beings, with their own needs, claims and actions’ (Alaimo, 2008: 238) are most likely more intelligent than I know; they challenge my human agency and, in a sense, discipline me ‘into acceptance of their own ‘beastly ways’ and practices’ (Fox, 2018: 72). Humans approach my black Saga differently to yellow Selma, easily stereotyped as a friendly and ‘goofy’ Lab. Saga’s blackness and muscular appearance often others her, which often surprises and saddens me as a dog-owner. She is often feared or even met with hostility, not the form of neutrality or empathy I would hope for.

As a linguacentric form of engagement with the world, writing is human-driven, (re)producing incomplete understandings of the more-than-human world. Multiple methodological difficulties arise in re-writing feminist politics as queer and trans-species (McHugh, 2012), and I can hardly escape the problem of representation. Although love, care and affection are embedded within the human-canine relationship, everyday life is by no means always harmonious and happy. Conflicts, tensions, insecurities, power intensities, human guilt and worry shape our co-existence. I continuously reflect on how boundaries are constructed, upheld, or dismantled between us. The ‘significant otherness’ (Haraway, 2008) of dogs crosses species boundaries; dog fur, drool and paw marks on my clothes extend dog materiality to human. Sudden loud barks over Zoom meetings in the time of COVID-19 signify animal agency beyond human control. In what follows, I provide examples of my interpretations of feminist dog-writing and how undermining my human sense of authority as a writer (Marvin and McHugh, 2014) allows me to think more carefully about relational ethics ‘across bodies’ (Alaimo, 2008: 238). Feminist dog-writing urges me to listen to, include and find ways to respectfully meet other species in a manner that will hopefully allow novel possibilities in the field of organisation studies.

**Approaching you (interwoven with me)**

The smell of paws; buttery popcorn mixed with freshly cut grass.

Four legs provide more stability and grounding than two.

What do you (want to) smell and touch in the world – where do you want to go?

Understanding species beyond narcissistic identification

as embedded relationships (Birke, 2012).

Posthuman bodies as *lived* bodies.

‘Completely familiar and completely other’? (Sayers, 2016)

How do we express

interwoven interspecies agencies,

shared affective experiences,

humanimal continuums?

Appreciating our relatedness and common worlding.
Seeking to explore the vibrant more-than-human world through ‘co-constitution, finitude, impurity and complexity’ (Haraway, 2003: 302)

The dog walk – a mundane event of movement, rhythm, and embeddedness in time and space

the rhythmic pacing of four feet and two (Ingold and Vergunst, 2008)

Companions and conflicting agencies –
When do you suddenly bark, jump, or ‘misbehave’ (according to human standards)? Are we in place, in sync, momentarily in conflict or out of place in the spaces we co-produce?

Shifting between a slack and a tighter lead –
dogwalkshumanwalksdogwalkshuman
removing the leash,
You run after birds, squirrels, rabbits, and ducks;
it sometimes worries me.
‘Please don’t scare, harm, or attack anyone’.
Writing to confuse boundaries between the self and other, the human and animal life-worlds, proximity and otherness.
Can your closeness enable me to see your otherness?
Moving in-between the positions of humanimal difference and similarity, Listening closely.
Sensing your moods.
Writing to confuse, blur, transcend binaries, disrupt binaries!

DIS-RUPT binaries – that is the promise of post-qualitative writing.

‘To know a dog is to be interested in what it is like to be a dog’, Horowitz (2016: 2) suggests, and I completely agree. The physiology of canine corporeality affects how my dogs perceive, move and re-act in the world. Olfaction is fundamental to my long-nosed retrievers’ experience of the world (Horowitz, 2016). As my canines are attuned to motion and retrieving, a busy street, a skateboarder, or a squirrel carries different meanings to them than me. Above, I seek not to project what my dogs might be thinking into human language, but rather to decenter human centrality and write relatedness and common worlding, and by so doing, express trans-species intercorporeality and humanimal relationality. In this sense, dog-writing involves transitioning between the positions of humanimal
difference and similarity, thus prompting ethical questions about how to respectfully meditate on the dog’s otherness, sameness and possible muteness, as well as the affective ties between us. Precisely as Kuzniar (2006) notes, these ties involve compassion, care, intimacy, sadness and shame, topics relatively rarely addressed in our scholarly field. While approaching animal subjectivity through incomplete human meaning-making processes, I acknowledge the difficulties involved in re-presenting humanimal becoming through language. ‘What makes the fragments above forms of dog-writing? Is there something special about the poetic style, or is the content important too? How do these fragments overcome phallogocentrism?’ my reviewers ask.

By turning to feminist dog-writing, I seek to express empathetic appreciation and care for animal life worlds via affective attunement. In my attempt to write ‘differently’, I believe that touch, proximity and voice matter. Style, form and content matter. Through the experimental structuring of my text in fragments, I seek to show that writing does not have to be limited by the constraints of the masculine genre. By shifting attention towards canines, I seek to integrate more-than-human agency and interspecies perspectives into my scholarly writing. Following Sayers (2016, 2017), I position interspecies connection, affective empathy, and mutual ‘becoming’ at the very heart of feminist dog-writing. These aspects are central in writing the animal ‘other’, given that we communicate intracorporeally and largely non-verbally. To Hemmings (2012: 148), feminist work ‘highlights the importance of feeling for others as a way of transforming ourselves and the world, and thus renders affect as a way of moving across ontology and epistemology’. Höpfl (2000) suggests that we write from the affective position of love to respectfully acknowledge Otherness, thereby challenging the anthropocentric masculinism that continues to dominate our academic writing (see also Fotaki and Harding, 2018; Phillips et al., 2014).

Attentive to the wellbeing of my dogs, I continuously observe their behaviours, movements and subtle gestures. These close observations activate my entire human sensory framework, crafting interspecies empathy and care (Sayers, 2016). Interpreting subtle cues and non-verbal communication, I rely on my affective registers to make assumptions about my dogs. By cultivating connectedness and acting in empathic ways towards Saga and Selma, my responsibility is to extensively care for them – in a sense, to enable them (Phillips et al., 2014) – and also to get to know them individually (Schuurman, 2017), so that I can respond to them and recognise their needs. Needless to say, I do feel insufficient in our relation, feeling the anxieties of caring in my body each day. By expressing affective empathy and genuine interest for my dogs’ subjective experiences and animal perspectives, my hope is to challenge phallogocentrism. Meanwhile, animal rights philosopher Tom Regan warns that ‘the sensibilities of empathy for animals’ (Kuzniar, 2006: 4) are insufficient for enacting change in the world.

Crafting affective proximity,

feeling, sensing, and responding to you.

Mimetic resonance.

The complexity of intersubjectivity between species.

Do I recognise and attend to your needs? I certainly fail, I fail to do so, too.

Having a sense of place together.

Sharing an evening on the sofa, a furious run, a stroll, a walk in the woods

moving in a moving–more–than–human world

dogsleashcollarshumansharedpathsoutdoorsrubbershoeswetgrassthescentofraincoat
Becoming one with trees, waves, water, chilly wind, raindrops.

Belongingness.

Data that doesn’t fit into expected or neat categories.

smelly treat crumbles in my pocket.

Escaping that incomprehensible EU funding application that stole way too much time.

Escaping the burdens of motherhood, the chaos and noise at home, to encounter different worlds.

Nurturing posthumanist relations of care, Feeling what novelist Elizabeth von Arnim refers to as recueillement, ‘The regathering of one’s self in peace and quietude’

Carving out space and time away from other duties

Moving with you to breathe, to feel, to be us.

What does it mean for one’s experience of the world – to have the capacity to detect hormones, pheromones, or cancers?

To smell the uniqueness of different bodies with distinct histories, traces, and memories, who just moved through a room, a passage, in the street before us?

What does it mean for one’s affective experience of the world – to deconstruct an odor before it’s even fully smelled?

Take me on your soundwalks and scent walks, to sniff, smell, and deconstruct rich and detailed pictures of the world.

Let your cold moist nose tip guide us You get to choose our path, based on your interests and preferences, while not being directed by me.

To express care through writing without sentimentalising, romanticising, or constructing a binary remains difficult. Caring relationships are complex, compassionate, relational and difficult. The
compassionate dare and willingness to care – so often repressed and neglected in writing – creates different forms of knowledge in the world.

Writing humanimal co-being

Posthumanist research has stressed the affective engagement of the researcher in becoming-with-data (Bispo and Gherardi, 2019). By affectively attuning to my dogs, I regularly notice them pay close attention, attend and attune towards me as well (compare Schuurman and Franklin, 2018; Staunæs and Raffnsæ, 2019). Feminist dog-writing has the capacity to integrate affective language with the embedded intimacy of entangled humanimal lives, and the richness of subtle, non-verbal communication across bodies and species (Alaimo, 2008). In this final section, I write about experiencing trans-corporeal co-being with Saga, as I describe a particular moment when the canine and I became one assemblage of classed-gendered-raced-humanimality, rather than remaining separate agents. On November 3, 2014, in Helsinki, I inhabit the post-childbirth body of a new mother preparing to take her newborn son out for a very first stroller walk. Paradoxically, my partner has to be at work, and perhaps it is foolishly bold of me to consider taking Saga, my strong retriever with us. After all, her animal strength is beyond my control, and I have not even pushed a stroller before. Our relationship is made and remade through connections and disconnections, where our meetings with each other or other animals are not always harmonious or peaceful.

At home, I sense Saga’s calmness around me and the baby, observing how she orients around this tiniest being. It is as if Saga’s gaze, gestures, and entire being pay close attention to my gestures and emotions, and how to meet in our moment-to-moment interactions. ‘Don’t worry, we got this’, is my interpretation of Saga’s nonverbal communication, and I could not imagine going out without her anyway. Saga is my rock, and we are in this novel life stage together. We get dressed; I carefully place the little one in his sleeping bag. ‘Is he warm and comfortable? Am I doing alright?’ The insecurities of a new mother. Soon, sore hormonal body, sleeping tiny infant, and canine slowly move through the front door. Tram number 10 stops outside the front door. We make a stop to observe the people rushing in and out of the tram, disappearing into the nearby shops, cafés and artisanal bakery as all these people keep moving through their daily lives. We make a right turn towards the Observatory Hill Park. The humanimal-infant-stroller assemblage moves along. Insecure steps in the sore body of a new mother. Human hand firmly gripping the stroller, the other connecting to Saga’s leash. Calm and reliable as a guide dog, Saga walks perfectly on the leash next to the stroller, unbothered by any distractions, be it other dogs or humans passing by. What a champion, like she has always done this. Saga knows exactly what we are doing, where we are going, possibly also what is in front of us. I loosen the leash, attuned to Saga’s relaxed posture. Saga takes regular eye contact with me, as if she wanted to check up on the insecure, confused maternal body I inhabit. I am subject to her animal gaze, not vice versa. Canine carefully attuned to human insecurity. Where are you? Are you alright? If I move at this rather slow pace, will you be able to follow? (compare Birke, 2017) Saga produces this encounter and leads us safely to the Observatory park. Humanimal mutuality and the affective ties beyond words – and not so much the physical leather leash – form a special meeting place; here and now, in this companionship on a street in Helsinki in gloomy November, we walk into unknown, new motherhood together.

Discussion and conclusions

Could feminist dog-writing inspire us to open up the senses, to be affected,
vulnerable,

and ‘response-able’ (Staunæs and Raffnsøe, 2019)?

Research is a form of entanglement with specific scenes, research subjects, nonhuman animals, artefacts and other materialities we enter into ethical relations with while undertaking the research. Echoing a philosophical, theoretical and empirical interest in the posthumanist tradition that emphasises mutual connectedness with animal life worlds in a more-than-human world (Haraway, 2008; Maurstad et al., 2013; Staunæs and Raffnsøe, 2019), I have experimented with writing through entanglements with sensate, flesh-and-blood bitches. Doing so allowed me to more thoroughly – and also concretely – engage with posthumanist thinking, writing and caring (Gherardi and Rodeschini, 2016) in the field of organisation studies. This paper has discussed the potential of feminist dog-writing for writing ‘differently’ in the field of organisation studies, especially by creating novel openings for multispecies encounters and theorisations of humanimal relations in the field of OS, as well as by developing post-qualitative and less human-centred approaches to writing ‘differently’.

With some notable exceptions, the anthropocentrism of science still (partly) explains why organisational scholars have thought relatively little about humanimal relations and how these could matter to organisational life. To a field that has not truly found language (sic) to convey the complexity, multiplicity and affectivity of humanimal relations, this paper develops co-constructive feminist dog-writing that can (hopefully) enable us to more carefully acknowledge – and also complicate – how we write animals and their life worlds, chuckers, chatters, barks, purrs, paws, clucks, grunts and roars in(to) organisational scholarship. By provoking, queering and raising questions across species and bodies, feminist dog-writing troubles the practices and politics of scholar writing, who and what counts as the writer, and what is acceptable (or not) to address in our scholarly community. This paper has highlighted how writing through the relational and affectual becoming of humanimals might inspire human writers to write and care ‘differently’ in our field. In what follows, I outline how this paper contributes to (1) the empirical execution of feminist dog-writing, (2) theorisations of humanimal relations, as well as (3) more disruptive forms of writing in the field of organisation studies.

This paper develops the existing literature on feminist dog-writing (Haraway, 2008; McHugh, 2012; Sayers, 2016, 2017) by illustrating the empirical execution of feminist dog-writing, that is, how feminist dog-writing could be conducted in practice. Thus far, feminist dog-writers – aside from Haraway (2008) – have mostly written about dog-writing by outlining the frameworks for such writing to take place (e.g. McHugh, 2012; Sayers, 2016, 2017). Fewer writers have ‘demonstrated’ this difficult practice by deviating from people-writing towards expressing ‘more-than-human’ writing (Hamilton and Taylor, 2013) in practice. By highlighting connectedness in embedded humanimal relationships through poetic fragments and snapshots of scenes in motion, I have illustrated the complexity of humanimal co-constitution empirically, or how humans and canines come to meet, connect and change as a result of their meeting (Maurstad et al., 2013). Empirically, I have aimed to ‘flesh out’ feminist dog-writing without cleansing the sensibilities and struggles element of writing through entanglements with other species. In this way, the open-ended, sentient and relational post-qualitative ‘more-than-human-writing’ has disrupted the human/animal binary.

Second, this paper develops an empirically ‘tangible’ angle on the theorisation of humanimal relations in the field of organisation studies. I have approached posthumanism not as abstract, technocentric, ‘sense-less’, or detached philosophy, but as embodied interspecies co-being embedded in the affective dynamics of an ordinary life (Stewart, 2007). Focusing on interspecies interactions as a two-way relationship, I developed the reciprocal ‘becoming together’ (Haraway, 2008:
emphasising multispecies encounters and interspecies communication. Developing the careful ‘listening to’ animals and recognising their subjectivity (Dashper, 2016) is still relatively new to our field, wherein human-animal relations have traditionally been theorised through the lens of human control, exploitation and distance. By approaching the concepts of agency and ethics as inherently ‘messy’, relational, and interdependent, feminist dog-writing invites more focus on how we theorise and co-construct ethical relations with Others, and how we articulate these relations through scholarly writing. By teasing out humanimal relations as affective possibilities and transcorporeal forms of ethical engagement with the animal ‘Other’, I argue for the transformative possibilities of feminist dog-writing to problematise further how we theorise, express, and change how we relate to other animals in the world.

Third, I would like to highlight the consequences of feminist dog-writing in relation to organisation studies’ understanding of writing ‘differently’. As an alternative, queer, and species-inclusive approach to writing, feminist dog-writing raises questions about the burdens of humanism, the limitations and possibilities of human language, as well as the gendered power relations that construct our scholarly practices. Feminist dog-writing invites philosophical, affective and aesthetic reflection to cultivate our ability to sense and perceive the world in sync and in co-being with other animals through interacting senses, affective registers and mutual embodied encounters (compare Staunæs and Raffnsøe, 2019). By so doing, feminist dog-writing enables less human-centred means of writing and co-being, fundamentally calling into question how we construct and re-present ‘Others’. By stressing affective engagement and co-becoming with nonhuman animals, feminist dog-writing presents a threat – and a creative possibility – to established ways of writing, knowing and creating (scientific) knowledge. By writing beyond human scope, centrality and interest, we might more carefully rethink our current ways of interacting with others. By writing ‘differently’, we might better sense how the various sensate beings around us take ‘an active part in the common worlding’ (Valtonen et al., 2020: 7).

Finally, why would it be important for organisational scholars to write, relate and care ‘differently’ in the world? Rethinking how we relate to and re-present other life worlds is an urgent global matter. The deeply troubling, unethical and unsustainable ways in which humans have interacted with other animals, ecosystems, and entire biospheres, both institutionally and individually, have constructed major catalysts behind the current COVID-19 pandemic and behind climate change. We need to care about the more-than-human world differently, re-negotiate existing interspecies relations, and re-consider the place of the human in relation to nature and other animals not to destroy our planet. We also need to relate differently to animals in our academic texts (rather than simply in our personal lives among our animal companions) to envision more inclusive, ethical, sustainable and just futures. Our writing has the ethical capability to transform, develop theorising around more-than-human relations, and transition to greater inclusion and co-constitution. It is this prescription for change that allows for alternative, affective, and sensate paths to knowledge creation, as well as novel and surprising possibilities for re-thinking and re-writing organisations (see also Ergene et al., 2018). Our writing can challenge simplistic and stereotypical assumptions about animals in the field of organisation studies. We need to create more space for queer, transgender, feminist, non-binary writing in our field. After all, it is the radically disruptive, unexplored, and overlooked that disturbs, challenges, and changes the status quo.

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Professor Raza Mir, the Editor, and the three reviewers for their encouraging, positive and helpful comments that helped me improve and develop the article. Thanks also to Linda Tallberg and my
colleagues at ÅAU for your feedback. Finally I would like to thank my friends and colleagues in academia for writing ‘differently,’ changing writing and writing for change. You are an endless inspiration.

**Funding**

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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**Notes**

1. Any description of what ‘standard’ or conventional scientific writing entails is a tricky business. My aim is not to dismiss scientific rigour or critique all ‘conventional’ academic writing. Of course, not all conventional scientific writing is necessarily ‘human-centred’, ‘masculinist’ and therefore bad. Rather, my project is to think inclusively about writing as a more-than-human matter of relational ethics beyond (merely) human scope and human centrality, and in this way, critique the conventions around human-centred academic writing that so often prevent us from writing ‘differently’.

2. Here, *écriture féminine* is understood as an umbrella term for different forms of embodied writing, feminine writing (Vachhani, 2015) or writing through the body. *Écriture féminine* is associated particularly with the writings of Hélène Cixous (1976), Julia Kristeva and Lucy Irigaray. The political, performative and material aims refer to rethinking what actually counts as scholarly writing, re-visiting what scholarly writing means in a material and mundane sense, as well as writing ‘differently’ to the norm in order to change or disrupt established conventions.

3. By anthroparchy, I refer to the ‘social system of attitudes, practices, and institutions through which the natural world is dominated to the benefit of humans’ (Cudworth, 2005).

4. As a broad and varied philosophical -ism, posthumanism carries diverse and varied meanings (Clarke and Knights, 2020) across the arts, humanities and social sciences. By posthumanism, I here understand a deconstruction of the discursive, material and symbolic arrangements that reproduce the notion of the ‘human’ as a distinctly unique, rational and superior (masculinist) character at the very centre of the organised world (e.g. Hamilton, 2019; Nimmo, 2019; Pedersen, 2011). Spanning multiple theoretical perspectives such as feminist new materialism, STS, cultural studies and animal studies, posthumanist approaches seek to question human exceptionalism, highlight the activity of nonhuman materialities, as well as critique disembodied, masculinist and anthropocentric superiorities and rationalities (e.g. Braidotti, 2002, 2006, 2013; Haraway, 2008).

5. The ethics of care theory builds upon the dichotomy of mind-body, human-animal, self-other etc. Even though it is a relational theory it arguably gives scant attention to the agency of non-human entities in our becoming. This theory also gives a rather gendered reading of our abilities to care, where women are seen inherently more compassionate and empathetic than men. This theory is also based on the division where the one caring acts in response to the perceived need of the cared-for.

6. Given that women and queers perform the ‘central purveyors of the languages and institutions of ‘pet love’ (Nast, 2006: 898), these forms of care are still largely diminished and devalued. For example, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) associate ‘elderly woman’ with ‘a little house dog’. Haraway (2008: 30) publicly calls out this kind of ‘display of misogyny, fear of ageing, incuriosity about animals, and horror at the ordinariness of flesh’.

7. ‘Pets’ or ‘companion animals’ remains a contested linguistic choice (Nast, 2006).

8. Valtonen’s (2017) study on mosquitos and ethics resonates with Santaoja’s (2015) study on affects and amateur entomologists. Specifically, Santaoja (2015) displays the affective enthusiasm and reflective empathy that entomologists exhibit towards insects, ‘monstrous’ out-of-place animals that we rarely think of as cuddly, charismatic or worthy of our scholarly attention.
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