



Shared Spaces, Practices And Mobilities: Pet-Human Life in Modern Finnish Homes

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NORA SCHUURMAN AND TAINA SYRJÄMAA SHARED SPACES, PRACTICES AND MOBILITIES: PET- HUMAN LIFE IN MODERN FINNISH HOMES

ABSTRACT In this interdisciplinary article, we examine multispecies homes in modernizing Finnish society. We focus on two illustrative phases of pet culture: cats and dogs in bourgeois and rural homes from the late 19th century to the early 20th century as well as international dog rescue in the early 21st century. We make visible and analyze the continuities in pet–human relationality and petness by focusing on everyday practices, spaces and mobilities. The article draws from recent discussions on human–animal relationality at the intersections of the fields

of animal history, animal geography and animal studies. Our analysis shows that the pets we have studied have not been passive objects or simply obeyed rules set by humans. Instead, pet–human co-living involves shared human–animal agency and situational practices that take into account the individual animal and the human and the creative ways in which they shape the shared space.

KEYWORDS: human–animal relations, animal history, pets, space, home, mobility

INTRODUCTION



Mundane practices often remain invisible, although they are fundamental for the creation and maintenance of relations that constitute the time-space of daily life (Holmberg 2019).

This is a central feature of the co-living between pets and humans in the home – and a challenge for its study.

In this article, we examine multispecies homes in modernizing Finnish society since the late 19th century. We investigate how cats, dogs and humans have co-constructed a shared home. We focus on two illustrative phases of pet culture: firstly, cats and dogs in bourgeois and rural homes from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, which coincides with the international boom of modern pet culture, and secondly, transnational dog rescue in the early 21st century. We analyze the continuities in pet–human relationality and petness in Finnish society by focusing on everyday practices, spaces and mobilities, in both of the cases examined. We identify similarities in how humans and pets have lived together and shared their home.

We approach the concept of “a home” with an emphasis on the spatial (Douglas 1991), as the site of the human–pet relationship, the place where humans and animals cohabit and co-create the multispecies family (Power 2012; Holmberg 2015; Schuurman 2019). Despite temporal changes regarding the type, size and equipping of homes and their environments, we see the interspecies spatiality of homeness as resilient and continuous throughout the time period examined in this essay.

Historical studies show that sharing a home with pets is not a new phenomenon (Ritvo 1987; Kete 1994; Grier 2006; Howell 2018). In previous studies, the early history of petness has often been studied in the context of affluent urban middle-class culture. In this aspect, Finland is an interesting case. Whilst it is currently among the wealthiest nations of the Global North, in the late 19th century, it was a predominantly agricultural society with small farms (Ojala *et al.* 2006).

Industrialization and commercialization, however, accelerated since the 1870s. The rate of urbanization remained slow until the mid-20th century, and Finland still continues to be much more sparsely populated than most European countries.

Theoretically, the article draws from recent discussions on human–animal relationality, with a special focus on spatiality, agency and practice, at the intersections of the fields of animal history, animal geography and animal studies (see, e.g., Wolch and Emel 1998; Philo and Wilbert 2000a; Baratay 2012; Nance 2015; Nyman and Schuurman 2016; Räsänen and Syrjämaa 2017; Bull *et al.* 2018; Rutherford and Wilcox 2018). The disciplinary focus reflects our own backgrounds: one of us is a historian, the other one a geographer. We look at the space of the home and its vicinity as the places where the pet–human relationship is created and lived. We thus explore animal mobility in different spatial contexts: the arrival—even from notable distances crossing state boundaries—and movements in and outside the home. We are interested in how pets exercise agency, how this has affected their own position in relation to humans and how they have co-constructed practices in the multispecies home they live in. Our target is to examine how these spaces have been and continue to be created through interspecific daily practices. We will have a glimpse at how pets themselves have expressed their feelings and experiences of arriving and settling into life in the human home.

We begin with a theoretical discussion on animal–human spaces and practices and a description of the methods and sources we have used. In the two empirical sections that follow, we present our analysis of who the pets were, where they came from and how the shared homes were co-constructed.

PET–HUMAN RELATIONALITY AND SPATIAL PRACTICES

We have chosen to use the term “pet” for animals that share their lives with humans in close companionship (Charles and Aull Davies 2008). According to the definition by Keith Thomas (1983, pp. 112–115), a pet is given a human name, shares the home with a human and is not used for human consumption. Pets are often understood by their owners as conscious and sentient subjects and agents who interact with humans and share everyday life with humans in meaningful ways (Arluke and Sanders 1996, p. 43). We use “petness” as an analytical tool with which we refer to a non-exclusive category based on shared multispecies practices and co-living.

In this essay, we discuss cats and dogs as pets, although in which situation an individual animal has been considered a pet has varied significantly. In Finland, for instance, the status of a pet has occasionally been given to farm animals such as cows as well as wild animals and birds such as crows (Schuurman 2020). The category of pet is thus not fixed. It can be understood as liminal, crossing several categorical

boundaries, not only the one between companion and food production, but also wild and tame, friend and stranger and, ultimately, culture and nature (Holmberg 2019; Schuurman and Redmalm 2019). As Erica Fudge (2008, p. 10) notes, however, pets “are linked to the concept of domestic stability.”

The spaces of pet–human co-living can be understood as relational, epitomizing the ontological relationships between humans and animals, co-constituting each other through time (Rutherford and Wilcox 2018) and “situated within entangled histories” (van Dooren *et al.* 2016:1). In this context, the concept of relational space is best depicted as “relations and spaces between and among individuals, groups and objects” (Morrison *et al.* 2013, 513). As Philo and Wilbert (2000b, 5) note, with humans and animals, “the spaces and places involved make a difference to the very constitution of the relations in play.” A relational approach assumes that the relationships themselves are co-produced by animals and humans in material encounters and interactions (Birke *et al.* 2004). Such interactions can be understood as mutual becomings in which animals and humans shape each other (Haraway 2008). Relationality also takes into account animal agency, animals as subjects of life with their own experiences and intentions, as actors interacting with humans and other animals and co-constructing their own lives in ways that are meaningful for themselves (McFarland and Hediger 2009).

The actions shared by animals and humans in the home are to some extent structured as iterative routines, patterns of spatial rhythms that are important to multispecies life (Holmberg 2019). They are interwoven with time and mobility both in and around the home and further. Here, we approach nonhuman mobilities with a focus on the ways in which pets share their spaces with humans, follow them and are translocated by them, as part of mobilities, on different scales, that change in time (Sheller and Urry 2006). Space is, however, not simply where animals are situated—instead, relationality implies that spaces are “created by and through relationships” (Hall 2019, pp. 772–773). This applies to the multispecies home, co-created and shaped by humans and animals through mutual becoming over time (Haraway 2008). Following Fox (2018) we may thus ask: how do animals produce space—and compromise human space?

Mutual encounters, actions and interactions are often situated in the context of practices through which animal and human–animal spaces are produced. With the concept of practice, we refer to gradually evolving, dynamic patterns of action which include creativity and variation as historian Michel de Certeau delineates in his theory of everyday life. De Certeau’s concepts of strategies and tactics highlight how one and the same space comprises divergent but coexisting ways to live. Those who do not possess official power do not simply succumb to the regulations and aspirations (strategies) of those who rule—or in our case, own—the space, but are active and creative (with their

tactics) in finding their own space inside this framework: “[t]he space of a tactic is the space of the other” (De Certeau (1984) 2008, p. 37). This does not automatically mean opposition or rebellion, an attempt to overrule the existing order. Instead, it refers to establishing one’s own living as fundamentally different from and yet concurrent with the prevailing system or order (De Certeau (1984) 2008, p. 29–42).

De Certeau developed his pluralistic theory in regard to human society, but as it highlights the agency of those who do not possess an official position of power, we see it as a functional tool in analyzing multiple and diffuse agencies in multispecies societies. Human–pet relations are, indeed, highly unbalanced in terms of power as, ultimately, the human has the power to abandon or kill the pet (Shir-Vertesh 2012). Yet, animals are subjects and agents who act and influence others, including humans. In fact, De Certeau’s tactic is “an art of the weak” (De Certeau (1984) 2008, p. 37). De Certeau’s theory can be applied to multispecies homes where creatures of different sensory and communicative logics co-live. It opens a view to complex interaction beyond a simplistic presentation of human attempts to control and animal resignation or refusal—in other words, the victimization of the animal. Rather, it acknowledges the flexibility of animals living with humans, their creativity and ability to surprise their human companions (Birke and Thompson 2018).

Culturally, actions that have a visible, concrete outcome are usually more highly valued than those which do not lead to a clear end result. De Certeau argues that because of this bias, many actors and their ordinary, daily activities have gone unnoticed. By concentrating on practices, that is, on processes and actions, on “tireless but quiet activity” (De Certeau (1984) 2008, p. 31) instead of end results, a more variegated and vivid panorama opens, revealing countless actors and operations. In our view, it aids in shedding light on continuous daily activities of care and extends the concept of agency from humans to nonhuman animals and their sharing and co-constructing the temporal and spatial dimensions of daily life at home.

SOURCES AND METHODS

The methodological challenge of human–animal studies is animal otherness, something that underlies all discussions on animal agency (see eg. Birke *et al.* 2004; McFarland and Hediger 2009; Brantz 2010; Carter and Charles 2013; Despret 2013). Empirical sources have been created and analyzed by humans, and understandings of animals, the nature and purpose of their actions and their agency are subject to interpretation, based on different conceptualizations and schools of thought. This applies to those who observe animal action as well as to those who explore these observations. Yet, it is possible for human-made historical sources to contain glimpses of actual animal actions, not mere human conceptions of potential animal agency

(Baratay 2012, p. 43–56; Pearson 2013; Nance 2013; Nance 2015; Syrjämaa 2017; Syrjämaa 2020).

We explore multispecies homemaking by empirically focusing on two temporal settings and by contextualizing the studied phenomena nationally and internationally. It is obvious that many kinds of changes have occurred during the long time span which has evidenced large-scale societal transformations such as urbanization, intensification of industrialization and consequent transfer to post-industrialism, the boom of consumer culture as well as wars and ecological crises. Yet, as we will show in this essay, there are similarities and continuities in human–pet relations, the care of pets, their spaces and mobilities and how animal action has been responded to, enabled and restricted.

The challenge of historical sources is their fragmentary character. Therefore it is necessary to use many kinds of sources, textual and visual, originally created for a variety of purposes and shedding light on different aspects of human–pet co-living. The case with contemporary materials, on the other hand, is that due to their variety and abundance, the researcher has to choose from several possible alternatives, each of them providing accessible data, but with a limited focus. This article builds upon empirical work done previously in two separate research projects during which large amounts of sources were examined (Schuurman 2019; Syrjämaa 2017; Syrjämaa 2019). In this article, we pinpoint only the most illustrative examples in the references.

For the historical analysis such sources as oral history collections, photographs, show catalogues, media material and administrative documentation have been perused as part of a larger research project on animal agency and petness. Potential sources have been widely mapped and a core section of evidence has been selected for close reading, informed by the theoretical framework. For this article, a collection of memories of living with cats is especially significant (FLS, cat narratives). The written recollections were gathered in 1980 and their temporal scope stretches back in time to the previous turn of the century. Another important cluster of sources is constituted by photographs ranging from studio portraits to amateur photos. The finna.fi -portal, bringing together digitized collections of Finnish archives, libraries and museums, has been used to map the available visual sources. In addition, a non-digitized collection of multispecies portraits, held by the Uusikaupunki museum, has been examined.

The blogs analyzed, kept by rescue dog owners, were published in Finnish during the 2010s. To explore the co-creation of the multispecies home as a temporal process, only narrative descriptions of rehoming a rescue dog were selected for analysis. In all blogs, the dogs in question were rehomed to Finland from abroad, typically from Romania, Spain and Russia. Six blogs were used for the analysis in this article, and they were analyzed thematically.

We have structured the analysis according to two major themes, pets arriving to or acquiring a new home and settling together in the life in the multispecies home. These two themes will be discussed in the contexts of the two temporal settings throughout the essay. We have chosen this approach in order to enhance the interdisciplinary nature of the analysis and to highlight the similarities and continuities of multispecies co-living.

THE NEW HOME

Rehoming a pet is an act in which human agency is accentuated and which can lead to a fundamental change in the pet's living circumstances. Whilst historically many pets have been born in the home or rehomed nearby, some have moved over long distances. Such a change has not only entailed new humans with whom to live with, but a different kind of society with its cultural practices related to animals, as well as natural and climatic conditions. This has often been the case with dogs, first especially with purebred ones and recently also with rescue dogs.

As many cats have moved more independently than dogs, they have also been able to make decisions of their own on where to settle down. People have recalled how previously unknown cats have not only popped in the garden for brief visits but have moved in with determination. For example, a man recalled how a vagabond cat had appeared in a country house in the early 20th century. Instead of going away, the newcomer had settled down in the cowshed. Gradually, when the cat and the humans learned to know each other better, the cat had begun to enter the house and eventually took a nap every now and then, lying on the farmer's chest. The cat then rose in the hierarchy, simultaneously moving closer to the family nucleus: first from a stranger to an acquaintance, to a kind of semi-domestic animal, allowed to "work" in the premises catching mice and rats and, eventually, making their way to the very center of the home, the farmhouse living room, and conquering a place in the family (Einar Palmunen, FLS, Cat narratives). This could be interpreted as domesticating a cat, but it is something more, an example of multispecies interaction and the "domestication" of humans by animals. It was not a one-sided process with the cat as the object of human action but instead, the cat was an active agent who took the initiative, collaborated with and had a notable impact on humans—or to put it in de Certeau's manner: had their own tactic in the space ruled and owned by others (humans).

The example above shows the complexity of agency and power. As Kenneth E. Boulding argues, not only power based on threat and physical strength or economic influence matters. What he calls "integrative power of the weak," based on affects such as love and fondness, opens the way for the otherwise vulnerable subjects to get what they want and to conquer those who seem to be stronger. (Boulding 1989,

pp. 109–123.) Power is relational and, in light of integrative power, instead as victims, pets may situationally become “stubborn agents in the ritual dance of everyday life” (Holmberg 2019, p. 30).

The agency of cats in selecting their own space is accentuated in humans’ futile attempts to make them stay at home. Finnish folklore acknowledges how difficult it has been for humans to convince a cat of their belonging to a new household. Cats have been (in)famous for leaving the new home and heading back to the old one. Sensible as the solutions used may have been for humans, they have been very different to the way a cat relates to the world and, therefore, probably not efficient. For example, the cat’s head has been covered to prevent them from seeing the itinerary when being carried to the new home, the idea being that the cat would lose their sense of direction. (Entry “cat,” Card file on animal folklore, FLS; Olga Hirvonen, Inkeri Koski, Toini Paasonen, Taimi Pitkämäki, FLS, Cat narratives). As research of feline cognition and sensory abilities shows, however, cats navigate differently from humans, who would trust their sight. Other human attempts to influence the cat were even more anthropocentric such as the use of magic, as in hiding some of the cat’s fur in the wall.

For dogs, the situation is somewhat different. The movements of dogs have been controlled to a greater extent than those of cats, sometimes due to the economic value of the individual animal. When the popularity of pets grew in the late 19th century well-to-do Finnish homes, foreign models were important in dog breeding. A national Kennel Club was tailored according to the British model in 1889, and nationwide dog shows were arranged since 1891. Individuals of internationally renowned breeds were imported to Finland from big British or German kennels. Interesting dog individuals were also bought from single dog owners in a number of neighbouring countries. Their foreignness and transnationality were much admired, but simultaneously, due to nationalistic aspirations, Finnishness was an appreciated canine quality and, consequently, efforts were made to develop national Finnish dog breeds. In practice, this meant looking for suitable dog individuals, with no official pedigree, in the countryside, even quite remote areas such as Finnish and Swedish Lapland (Syrjämäa 2017).

Ad hoc breed denominations such as Anglo-Swedish-Augustenburgian or German-Finnish, used in the early dog shows, give another hint of canine mobility. They do not explicitly reveal the mobility of one individual but indicate various transfers during several generations. The popularity of dogs—and cats—of no established breed is visible in a collection of studio photographs, taken in a small Finnish port town at the turn of the century. The photos document how the doors of well-to-do homes were open to dogs and cats of no specific breed. Although there were social differences between families and living conditions, the pets could look precisely the same in a modest rural household and in a wealthy urban home in the late 19th and early 20th century (Augusta Olsson’s portrait collection, Uusikaupunki museum).

The popularity of purebred dogs increased during the latter half of the 20th century and became mainstream, whereas crossbreed dogs came to be seen as “lower cast.” With cats, the development has not been as intensive, as purebred cats have not become a dominant trend. Toward the end of the century, hereditary health problems linked to breeding became well known, leading to an increasing interest in cross-bred dogs. In the beginning of the 21st century, the situation was exacerbated as so-called puppy mills entered the dog market. At the same time, practices of rescuing and rehoming animals were expanded to other countries and since then, importing homeless dogs and cats to Finland has become increasingly popular. Even if most rescue animals are imported from countries within the EU, the NGOs responsible for the practices have to be registered with the Finnish Food Authority and follow the rules concerning vaccination in order to prevent the spread of zoonoses such as rabies (Finnish Food Authority, [n.d.](#)). The popularity of transnational animal rescue is common in other Western countries as well, such as for example the UK. Common to these practices is that rehoming a rescue animal with the help of an NGO is seen as a good deed.

Once again, pets are imported from abroad, but in a new context: not for purebred breeding, but in an attempt to create a dog–human relationship outside the purebred world. It is visible in the blogs of rescue dog owners, however, that the practices of accommodating a rescue dog in the home include similarities to earlier practices of importing purebred dogs. Whilst in the late 19th century, breeding was thriving, now it is being questioned. On the surface, the difference may seem to be huge between importing precious breed specimens or rescuing strays, but there are continuities in animal mobility, from the perspective of pets as well as humans. People are willing to arrange the transfer of an individual pet from far away, and animal individuals are faced with drastic changes in their daily life. In both contexts, creating the practices has been important for the production of the dog–human relationship in a new way, one that has been considered attractive and necessary.

Some of the reactions to these changes by the animals themselves can be traced in the blogs. In an example where a dog rehomed from Romania has just arrived in the new home, the dog and his new multispecies family learn to know each other. The author of the blog has tried to prepare the home for the arrival, but in the end the newcomer and the older dog negotiate the space between themselves. The new dog, scared of the older one, finds a hiding place that the human has not come to think of: in the bedroom, under the bed. The rest of the family have to adapt: “Because there was nothing to be done about the situation, we decided that Kaneli would sleep on the living room sofa with my husband and me in the bedroom with Remu” (ingafilippa, blog). Here, the human attempt at controlling the situation for the benefit of the new arrival has failed as the dog acts

to find his own space, using his tactic in the sense suggested by De Certeau ((1984) 2008).

In the example above, the way the newcomer perceives the spaces in the home and takes possession of them leads to a rearrangement in the spatial practices of the home, affecting dogs as well as humans. This is especially visible in descriptions of hiding as a way of finding safety in the space of the home, often mentioned in the blogs. One of the hiding places, the sofa, is a space that carries significance in the multispecies home in terms of affect and control. This is seen later in the same blog, when the only space the newcomer has access to is under the sofa, as the rest of the living room is controlled by the older dog. In another case, a newly arrived dog disappears and is finally spotted hiding under the sofa cushions. Newly arrived rescue dogs are not aware of the established practices and rules of using the home space, which is visible in several accounts of dogs helping themselves to food left on tables or even climbing on tables. The “inappropriate” use of space and its creative reshaping by the dogs indicate how pet–human relationships are spatially mediated through the materiality of the home and the related practices, epitomizing how animals, by their own actions, “destabilize, transgress or even resist our human orderings” (Philo and Wilbert 2000b, 5).

The story of the dog Rehvi, from the late 19th century, illustrates not only “how animals have been spaced by humans” but also how their “own lived geographies and experiences” (Hodgetts and Lorimer 2020) evolve when they are transferred and start dwelling in a new place. Circa three-year-old Rehvi was transported by an itinerant merchant from the Russian Kola peninsula, from Northern wilderness in the vicinity of the Arctic Ocean, to a wealthy manor house, surrounded by lakes and conifer forests, in Southern Finland. Rehvi was regarded as a valuable specimen of a national breed “under construction,” the Finnish barking bird dog (later known as the Finnish Spitz). Eventually, he was transferred because of human interest in dog breeding and nationalistic ideals of Finnish nature and society, at a time of intensifying nation building.

Spaces and practices of the new household and home region were all new to Rehvi: not only the manor house, but also forests with their flora and fauna where he followed his new owner, a university student, for sports hunting. Rehvi adjusted to his new life in Southern Finland and took possession of his new home. He was said to have spotted three favorite places in the garden of the estate where he loudly guarded his new territory. He also turned the nearby forests into his playground by eagerly barking at squirrels whilst his human companion would have preferred them to focus together on hunting birds. Rehvi was described as a “most amusing and original” companion who was always in a good mood ([von Konow] 1894, p. 84–85). The affectionate tone with which his human companion described him and his life evidence a mutual bond.

As Susan Nance (2013, p. 10) notes, humans and animals live in kind of parallel worlds: human institutions as such may not be meaningful to animals, but they do affect their lives and, vice versa, animals affect human lives and institutions. Inside this framework, animals live, experience, and learn creating their own lived space, shared with their human companions.

The efforts at creating national dog breeds can be interpreted in light of the concept of banal nationalism coined by Michael Billig (1995, p. 6), referring to “the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced.” In the case of animals, such nationalism appears in the form of eco-nationalism, the merging of ecological aspirations with discourses of nationality (Franklin 2006) and, in the case of breeds, in the discursive interlinkages of nation, nature and nativity (Schuurman 2017; Schuurman 2019). Similarly, the pursuit for rescuing and rehoming homeless animals can be understood in relation to eco-nationalist thinking, in this case in the form of rejecting the idea of purchasing purebred animals as pets. International animal rescue practices have also been controversial, again reflecting attempts at defining animals as belonging to their country of origin (Franklin 2006). The context is new, however, and so are the justifications: rescue animals may carry diseases such as rabies and are portrayed as dangerous and unreliable because of their previous life in the street (Yle 2019). Although rescue organizations have recently combined their efforts to meet the official requirements by testing all dogs prior to arriving in the country, their public image is slow to change.

SETTLING TOGETHER

In numerous photographs, taken by an enthusiastic amateur photographer Edith Södergran—better known as a modernist poet—tabbies and tuxedo cats have been immortalized during ordinary days in the family villa and its garden in the 1910s. The photos show cats eating, sleeping and playing. In a number of photos Edith’s mother or the housekeeper—or Edith herself—is holding robust cats and hugging them with the obvious acceptance and gratification of the cats. (Södergran’s archive, SLSA, finna.fi). Such creativity of practices (de Certeau (1984) 2008) become visible for example, in photos of cats lazing on mattresses to be aired in the garden. The cats have followed with curiosity humans’ daily toils and have taken the opportunity to enjoy the unusual placing of the mattresses. The photo evidences a moment of feline initiative, innovativeness and appropriation as well as human consent, thus emphasizing relational, shared agency.

The photographs of close daily co-living also make visible interspecies attachment and mutual bonds. Cats are eager to be stroked and ready for a play to catch a twig wiggled by a trusted human as well as peacefully take a nap despite humans fussing around. Although

dogs have been more expensive to purchase and socially esteemed activities such as sports have been connected to them (Ritvo 1987), cats have also been beloved members of multispecies households.



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In the history of pets, the bourgeoisie or upper class social context is overwhelming (e.g., Ritvo 1987, Kete 1994). These groups were highly influential for the development of modern pet culture and the intensity of the phenomenon is well caught in the expression “the Victorian cult of pets” (Ritvo 1987, p. 86). They also considered their relationship with animals to be better and fairer than that of less well-off and less educated people. Although in Finland, the number of urban bourgeoisie was limited, pet culture with its international trends such as multispecies family studio photographs, was evident in late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, the analysis of oral history sources as well as photographs taken in rural districts reveals close, affectionate companionships in less affluent circumstances. They evidence yet another, quite a different kind of social context for petness enlarging the phenomenon beyond middle class modernity. For example, a photograph taken in the 1920s of an extremely modest home, a chimneyless cottage (by then a rare sight even in the poorest regions in North-East Finland), shows a big tabby relaxed in a little girl's arms (<https://finna.fi/Record/musketti.M012:KK1482:312>). Apparently the situation is familiar and comfortable to all involved.



Ahti Rytkönen 1920s, National Board of Antiquities

To take another example, again from the 1920s, a tailor recalled how, in his youth, a cat came every morning at 4 am to wake him up by licking his hair. When he had to move to a nearby town for work,

he heard that the cat had been sitting at the window for three days, presumably waiting for his return. And when he eventually came back home, the cat immediately jumped down from the nicely warm and peaceful spot above the stove and hurried to greet him (Onni Kilankoski, FLS, Cat narratives). In domestic life, these cats had their own tactics to confidently occupy space and select their favorite humans with whom to interact. No human could force a cat to drowsily loll on a child's lap nor to lick someone's hair. De Certeau's emphasis on the importance of actions which do not produce any concrete end results is essential here. It is these mundane little practices that constitute home life and make visible cats' agency as well as their preferences regarding spaces, objects, daily rhythms and people. They reveal domestic practices which took shape over time, in a life shared between individuals of different species, based on mutual trust, acceptance and fondness. The common understanding that cats are more attached to places than people has been questioned by the experiential knowledge of those who have lived together with cats (FLS, Cat narratives). Recently, cats' socio-cognitive abilities have also been reassessed and recognized in ethological research (Vitale *et al.* 2019).

For the rescue dogs of the 2000s, spending time in the same space with humans, often in bodily contact with them, is a similarly pleasant experience. Such encounters typically involve the dog asking for and enjoying petting by the human, and they take place, for example, on the sofa or the bed. Sometimes a space such as the sofa is restricted for human use only. In one such example, the human moves to the floor in order to be with the dog:

Sometimes the critter jumps on my lap when I'm sitting on the sofa. But because the sofa is a place for humans, I don't let Mancho come there. I rather go on the floor and Mancho pushes his butt on my lap and stretches his muzzle up towards the ceiling, enjoying the petting. (nenna, blog)

Here, following the dog's initiative, the dog and the human collectively shape their encounter to adapt to and adjust the spatial rules of the home. In Fudge's words, the dogs "world-train" (Fudge 2008, p. 10) the humans, inviting them to learn about their "worlds." Such events make visible the numerous daily practices of sharing space and time co-created by individuals of different species.

Some spaces shared by humans and dogs in their daily routine are perceived by the dogs as safer than others. The problematic ones include the liminal spaces between the home and the outdoors. The following quote illustrates how the "feel" of a space appears for the dogs, according to their criteria of a "secure" space: "Passing through gates and doors is scary and the stairs in the staircase are nasty. The lift is ok as it is a secure box" (ingafilippa, blog). These places are marked by the dogs as troubled spaces, spaces that are best avoided.

In the home, one of the scary spaces is often the bathroom where the dogs are bathed, an experience that is described as “exciting” but manageable, even “enjoyable” (Hirsikangas, blog). Another challenge comes from the daily rhythms of the family, including humans leaving home for work. Staying home requires training, to make the dog understand the time-space routine:

I started by stepping out for a few seconds, then for a minute, half an hour and finally for a couple of hours. So Papi learned immediately that the opening and closing of the front door does not automatically mean abandonment and also that the human will always come back:) (Naakka, blog)

By training and learning, the human and the dog co-construct practices that are meant to be part of their daily routine, designed by the human but with the aim of making life in the home manageable for the dog. There are situations, however, where the animal’s actions pose challenges to the human, for instance when the rescue dog has not yet learned the daily rhythm of sleeping at night and being active in the daytime. In one example, the rescue dog is first nervous about sounds from outdoors and reacts by panting and barking. After he has finally relaxed, the dog starts playing with the other dog in the family: “At some stage, the boys were in the habit of always starting to play at around half past three at night, and the whole flat rattled” (Ida Jemina, blog). The process of creating routines and practices in a multispecies home is thus not simply anthropocentric, but instead, the initiative and the power to define the space alternate between the human and the animal.

Historically dogs and cats have had more liberty of independent movement than they have today. Human–animal co-living can be peaceful outdoors, but often there are tensions, collisions and clashes as despite human intentions and strategies, cats and dogs have moved for their own purposes and aspirations. Announcements of lost dogs published in a small town newspaper highlight canine agency but also the human conception of a shared home. For example, in December 1902 the mayor of Uusikaupunki missed Mille, a small dog with erect ears, who “had left her home” (Koirat! *Uudenkaupungin Sanomat* 18.12.1902). There is no negative reference to escaping or running away from the owner’s house or garden, but the phrasing neutrally recognizes what the dog had done: she had left. Furthermore, it highlights the understanding that the place was a home not just for the humans but also for the dog.

Currently in Finland, dogs are supposed to be kept on leash, with only a few exceptions. For a rescue dog with no previous experience of walking with humans, this can be difficult. In such situations, controlling the dog requires that the human takes into account the needs of the dog and is able to make the space safe for the dog. This is evident

in the blog where the dog Remu is initially afraid of walking too close to the human:

Walking is done with two 4,5m leashes, one attached to the harness and the other one to the collar, to minimize the risk of running away. As long as we proceed at an even pace and the collar leash does not tighten, Remu is an ideal walker [...] This thin smokescreen of apparently relaxed going reveals a somewhat anxious fellow at the point when we should stop, for instance at traffic lights. Then I'm suddenly walking a horse that spins around me in an even circle, with both leashes tight, the more alarmed the tighter the leash. It is really scary to be too close to a human who stays still, only when I am at about three metres from him and walking, Remu thinks I am ok. So from now on, we will choose our walks so that we won't have to stop. (ingafilippa, blog)

The situation is controlled by the human who keeps the distance and pace required by the dog. It is up to the human to adapt to the needs and consequent actions of the dog, in order to manage the space so that it can be shared between the two—on human terms, including the leash. The leash, however, also allows them to produce a common rhythm and, gradually, develop a mutual bond (Holmberg 2019).

Even if the rescue dogs of the 2000s cannot roam freely and leave their home as they like, they do get to enjoy time outdoors. Mostly they accompany their owners on walks on-leash, in the woods or fields. When the human and the dog have learned to know each other well enough to develop mutual trust, the dog may also get some time off-leash, providing they stay close enough. One author tells how her dog “always rather runs in the fields than on the road and digs through the bottom of every ditch and through every barn” (Elina, blog). This quote reveals a harmonious sharing of outdoor space, but the following one from the same blog illustrates the importance of trust in the development of a human–animal relationship over time (Despret 2004)—not only the animal trusting the human, but also the human trusting the animal to collaborate. When breaching the trust endangers the dog's safety, the leash easily reappears:

On walks Nala has now been on-leash part of the way, because she has lately had a bit too much distance to me. She roams in other people's gardens and can stay far behind, not coming when called. (Elina, blog)

Humans regulate animal mobility in many ways and expect animals to respect rules that are meaningful to humans but hardly so to animals. An extreme example of human-made—and potentially fast-changing—boundaries is linked to emergency situations such as epidemics.

In fear of rabies, measures for controlling the free movement of dogs by the use of the muzzle and the leash were enacted in London in the 1860s (Howell 2012). During acute crises, freely roaming cats and dogs could also be killed in Finnish small towns in the 19th and early 20th centuries. If pets, pampered at home, happened to venture outside the domestic sphere, they would end up in a townscape which had become a perilous place for a lonely animal, due to human fears as well as official ordinances of local authorities. What humans saw was not a pet but a potentially lethal creature carrying the disease and, consequently, animals could get killed in places where they had previously passed with no major hindrance or threat. There were no metropolitan massacres, but the clash between human and animal understanding and use of urban space was dramatic (Syrjämaa 2019, p. 166–167).

What is especially interesting in the practices involving the movements of pets at home is the way they cross the boundary between indoors and outdoors. Dogs are typically expected to go out several times a day, and many blog authors write about the dog spending time in the garden, surrounded by a fence. The purpose of the fence is to restrict the movements of the dog, but it cannot stop them sensing—hearing, seeing, smelling—and reacting to the goings-on on the other side, becoming interested and wanting to go out. The dog may also cross the boundary in another way, by communicating with the humans in the house, extending their social sphere beyond physical barriers:

Nika does enjoy being in the garden enclosure, exploring scents and pawing at the ground a bit. He found that he can also try to talk with the people inside when the little window is open: D He was raking with us today and wanted very much to take part in working the garden. (Hirsikangas, blog)

The relationship between human and dog includes shared routines in and around the home such as garden work, albeit not necessarily in the way planned by the human. The example epitomizes how the relationality of the home is extended beyond the tangible boundaries of the physical space and how this is achieved through interspecies interaction. Humans and animals sharing domestic space expose it to shifting meanings and varying routines, in sometimes surprising ways. This is the story of human–animal co-living; it is not something new but rather, it is a recognition of the ways in which multispecies homes are reshaped by their residents, leaving traces of animal agency and their perception of the world.

CONCLUSIONS

In this essay we have examined homes as spaces co-produced between humans and animals. Our focus has been on shared everyday life as

relational space (Hall 2019), with a focus on interspecies relationships. Space has been used by pets and humans for control and care, and for co-constructing a home. Animals have thus not been passive objects or simply obeyed or resisted rules set by humans. Instead, co-living involves shared human–animal agency and situational practices with which individuals of different species together shape the space they share. Our analysis of Finnish multispecies homes at different stages of modernity shows how, through creative use of indoor and outdoor space, pets have adjusted and rearranged the spatial practices of the home, thus shaping their relationships with humans. These practices include the embodied routines that produce the timespaces of everyday living (Holmberg 2019). The ways in which pet–human relationships are shaped and spaces are shared and moved in, evidence animal agency, adapted to prevailing circumstances in time and space.

Focusing on practices, as suggested by Michel de Certeau, makes visible ordinary daily living which consists of equivocal processes, instead of a series of milestones or clear-cut outcomes. The dynamism and variation of practices highlight the agency of those who do not seem to be in a position of power and who, nevertheless, do act and have influence on others. Further, the Finnish case broadens the understanding of petness in the Global North. While circulating practices, knowledges and ideas, such as dog breeding and rescue, as well as animals and humans who move across borders, create a cultural hybrid, ultimately the ways of relating to animals and living with them differ contextually. The affectionate cat–human relations in rural households, for example, show that petness is not only linked with international modern bourgeois pet culture.

In this article we have shown how applying an interdisciplinary focus on the study of the shared life of pets and humans, with insight, theories and methods from the disciplines of history and geography, provides tools for exploring both the historical and spatial features of human–pet relations. Following Rutherford and Wilcox (2018, p. 3) in promoting “a spatial-temporal approach to animal studies,” we have thus made visible interspecies simultaneities and continuities in human–animal coexistence.

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