Race, Rescue, Rehome: Irish Greyhounds and the Multi-Species Family

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Abstract

This PhD research project examines the everyday practices, emotions, and senses in the circulation of working greyhounds from the racing industry to animal rescue organisations then onwards to pet homes as family members in Ireland. Greyhounds are not 'good' working dogs. In contrast to police dogs or hunting dogs, they have a short working life and work independently from a handler. Nor are they 'good' pets. Adult greyhounds need 'petification' training to adjust to household sounds, learn good manners, and become housetrained. These unique qualities of the greyhound confound their categorisation. Working life can be brutal for these dogs. As exposed in the media, Irish greyhounds are found shot, drowned, or beaten to death, some with their ears cut off to remove their identification tattoos (Swords 2012; Shouldice and Ryan 2019). Each year €500m is generated for the exchequer through the greyhound industry, yet budgetary considerations for the 6,000 racers retiring annually are minimal. Through fine-tuned ethnographic research I document how current and former greyhound trainers describe their lived experience as responsible members of the greyhound community. Irish animal welfare organisations are working to grant animals such as greyhounds the right to a home and retirement - a privilege usually reserved for humans. This thesis firstly explores the concerns and practices of volunteers specialising in greyhound welfare, foster and rehoming and the complex role they have in managing the industry's wastage.

Secondly, the thesis engages with the shifting debate in anthropology to define the 'Irish family'. In Ireland, this is evident through social legislation in hard-fought referendums, for divorce in 1995, marriage equality in 2015 and abortion in 2018, to the degree that the New York Times (Hakim and Dalby 2015) referred to Ireland as the vanguard of social change. At the same time, family practices are changing and the number of Irish households keeping pets has increased to 61%. Nearly all those homes consider their pets as members of the family.

The core focus of this research tracks the series of transformations a racing greyhound undergoes as it moves from revenue generator to retiree. As one node in a chain of actors, I follow its progress from working animal to pet and ethnographically document how relationships change in line with shifts in its social role. I question how the introduction of a greyhound-as-pet transforms the multisensory household, family routines and is generative of novel relationships. This research examines multiple points of the human and canine lifespans. Their respective stage-of-life can significantly impact their ability to adapt to these domestic transformations and reveals the complexity of how family is made. Taking an example of canines in Ireland, this thesis asks have anthropological studies of the Irish family missed a vital ingredient?

Dedication

For my friend K. (1978-2022). A lover of all dogs, most especially sighthounds.

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Glossary

Greyhound: The greyhound is one breed of dog in the sighthound group. There are three types of greyhounds – those bred for track racing and coursing, and separately show dogs. Show dogs are not included in this thesis as they are not bred for racing. Greyhounds are all bred with the intention to pursue prey.

Greyhound Racing Industry: Track racing began in Ireland in 1927. Bord na gCon/Irish Greyhound Board was established in 1958 to promote and develop greyhound racing and betting. As a semi-state body, it is awarded state funding through the Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund, 2001, with the intention to maximise the potential of the industry. The annual fund is split 80% to Horse Racing Ireland and 20% to Greyhound Racing Ireland. From 2001 to 2023, €1.6 billion was paid into the fund. The GRI's allotted amount of €18.2million for 2023 was increased to €19million for the proposed 2024 budget (Doyle 2023). Rebranded in 2020 as Rásaíocht Con Éireann /Greyhound Racing Ireland (GRI) in the aftermath of an exposé on neglect and abuse in the racing industry, it continues as a commercial and self-governing organisation. Through the Welfare of Greyhounds Act, 2011, the GRI's racing and breeding establishments are beyond the remit of the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' welfare inspectors.

Irish Coursing Club (ICC): This organisation is responsible for the 'studbook' which includes registration and tracking of every purebred greyhound until their death or rehoming. They also manage and regulate the legal sport of hare coursing. The ICC prides themselves on their conservation efforts of the Irish hare. They do not receive funding through the Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund.

Lurcher: A lurcher is a term used to describe the cross breeding of any dog where one parent is a sighthound. Greyhounds and collies are a common cross for a lurcher. This is sometimes intentional to increase the dog's stamina or durability.

Non-human: 'Non-human' is used in the West to differentiate humans (or human animals) from everything else including non-human animals, the environment, and inanimate objects. This thesis examines both human and non-human animals. For clarity, I will use 'animals' to indicate non-human animals.

Pet: In popular use, this term can include any species and many types and standards of care. In this thesis, I distinguish pet greyhounds as a privileged sub-group of greyhounds who live in the home rather than the back garden or kennels, have an individual name, and do not generate income for their owner(s).

Protesters: A note on language: I use protesters to mean those against the racing industry. I use counter-protesters to mean those in support of the industry (i.e. pro-racing). The term "anti" (i.e., anti-racing) is used in a derogatory manner by industry supporters (largely male) against those (largely female) against racing.

Rescue: The purpose of animal shelters is to take in unwanted, abandoned, or neglected animals. These organisations can be referred to as rescues, shelters, or pounds. Although there are differences between types of funding, ideological positions, and operational approaches they all aim to help animals. Some of these organisations will assist any domesticated species, others accept only one species, and some rehome only one breed. For this project, I have focused on greyhound-specific rescues.

'Retired' and 'Rescued': These are contested terms within the racing and rescue communities. The racing industry's supporters insist that greyhounds are rehomed at the end of their careers. Therefore, they are not at risk of neglect, abandonment, or euthanasia and do not need to be rescued. They prefer 'retired'. Rescue volunteers and workers, anti-racing activists and veterinarians report improved but still prevalent welfare risks to the industry's greyhounds. Further, they argue that the industry's reliance on rescue organisations to rehome their dogs warrants the use of 'rescued'.

Sighthound: Dogs are classified by breed, but they are more generally categorised by group (or purpose, skill, or characteristics). Sighthounds are a group of dogs that hunt by sight and speed in contrast to scent hounds which hunt by smell and endurance. Sighthounds are identifiable by their pointy, tall, and leggy body shape. They have low body fat compared to other dog breeds. Further, sighthounds will spot, chase, and kill their prey. Other hunting dogs can track and flush or dig out their prey or indicate to the owner through barking or pointing (stand rigidly) that their prey is trapped. This group of nearly thirty breeds includes the Irish wolfhound, saluki, whippets, and greyhounds.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Plate 1 Poster Advertised on Facebook. Photo by author.

Opening Vignette: A Protest and Counter Protest

27 July, 6.25pm

I heard shouting over the hum of the car's air conditioning as I approached the stadium. My stomach clenched. I was not expecting chanting at a 'silent' protest. The poster (above) was shared on a greyhound trainer's Facebook page advertising a peaceful show of support at Shelbourne racetrack. It was an ideal opportunity to access racing supporters.

On my right, I was overwhelmed by bright colours, movement, and noise. About 40 men and women spread across two streets waved placards and held banners. As if in slow motion, I made eye contact with a drag queen holding a sign 'beep if you hate animal abuse'. I could not look away. She waved her sign and pleaded for me to beep. My mind was racing. Is dog racing animal cruelty? I am against cruelty, but am I against racing? If I beep, will the racing supporters speak to me?

I did not beep.

Plate 2 Anti-racing protesters opposite Shelbourne Stadium. Photo by author.

I passed the Shelbourne stadium side to my left, and my stomach clenched tighter. There were fifteen stoic looking older men. Five garda stood along metal barriers. No banners. No movement. Absolutely silent. I realised they were in fact the counter-protesters. They were opposing the anti-racing protesters.

I approached the parking pay station. A woman also paying for parking greeted me warmly and, presuming I was there against the industry, asked was I coming over for the protest. I overexplained why I was there. She told me to be wary of the supporters because they could be aggressive and violent again, like last week. She clarified that a woman in her 30s had been pushed to the ground and a 50-year-old man had been punched.[1] She said it was very intimidating and there were additional garda present at the protest this week. The supporters' 'silent and dignified' show of support was in reaction to the previous week's violence (video clip below).

Plate 3 Video of confrontation between pro-and anti-racing protesters. Video credit to National Animal Rights Association and Irish Council Against Blood Sports

Convinced I should speak to the protesters first, I accepted her invitation to walk over together but with full intention of speaking to both sides. I approached the protesters as they waved their posters 'ban blood sports', 'you bet, they die. Shame on you'. Posters and banners had photos of starved dogs, a pile of dead dogs, and 'sad' looking dogs in muzzles. Others had lettering with drips of 'blood' painted on. I was reminded of the anti-abortion protesters' graphic posters during Ireland's 2018 abortion referendum[2].

Protesters were chanting and an older white man, mid 60s, was speaking through a megaphone[3]. The footpaths in front of the residential housing that faced the stadium were

[1] For a news report on the incident see (McDermott 2019)

[2] The referendum asked Irish voters should the previous ban on abortion be repealed. The voters overwhelmingly voted yes - to allow abortion within certain guidelines.

[3] A smaller protest with the same chanting about 6 weeks later at the same location https://fb.watch/2bfhemAh-W/. Accessed 03/02/2024.

crowded by protesters and placards. Locals sat in their front gardens drinking cans of beer, chatting amongst themselves, and showing little interest in the protest. They did not initiate contact with the demonstrators. Animal welfare activists, I came to understand, had been coming to protest every Saturday for several years. After the RTÉ exposé (2019) on abuses in the greyhound racing industry aired, their weekly participant numbers increased from animal rights groups like the vegan Alliance for Animal Rights (AFAR).

Plate 4 Shelbourne Racetrack and counter -protest (left). Protest against greyhound racing (right). Photo by author

Outside the stadium, there were counter-protesters in support of greyhound racing. In addition to the men in their 50s and 60s, two women in their 40s in heavy makeup and dresses, and two children about eight and fourteen years old had joined them. Two of the five garda had moved over to the protesters' side shortly after my arrival. The supporters' side was quiet. Within 20 minutes of my arrival, more women had joined.

A small orderly queue formed behind the metal barriers for entry into the stadium - a group of six men in their twenties, a few couples, and several families. The protesters began shouting "dogs die here, shame on you", "blood is on YOUR hands", and "shame, shame, shame-on-you". Two young children in the queue, perhaps seven and ten years old, looked at each other alarmed, then moved closer to their parents. The parents looked confused and annoyed as they ushered their children into the stadium. I did not observe anyone leaving the queue despite the targeted and aggressive nature of the protesters' chants.

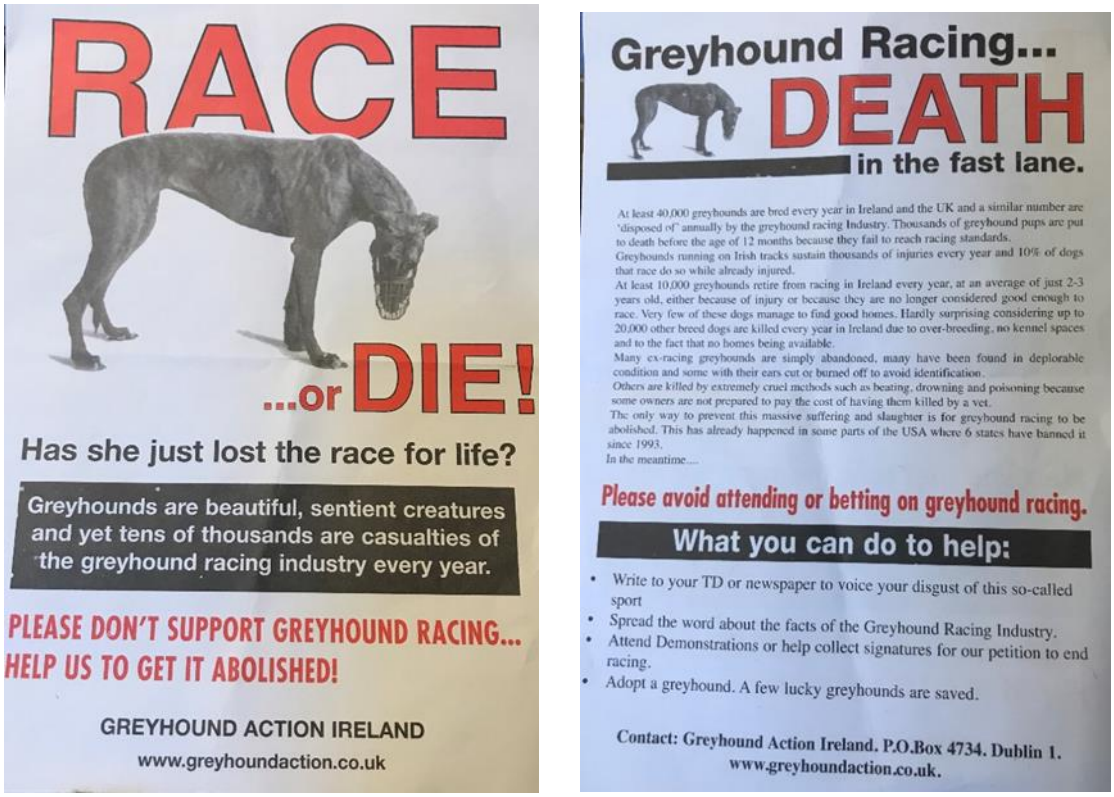


Plate 5 Leaflet (front and back) distributed by protesters. Photos by author.

The protest concluded as the counter-protesters went into the stadium to prepare for their evening of racing. I had not spoken to any of them. Reflecting on the fliers and each side's behaviour on the evening I was present, the industry (pro-racing) was respectful and peaceful. The protesters (anti-racing) were aggressive and inconsiderate. Their disregard for children's wellbeing reflects poorly on their pro-welfare message.

Introductory Context

Until recent decades, using wild and domesticated animals for entertainment was a popular pastime. The practice has increasingly come under scrutiny internationally with, for example the treatment of captive orcas at SeaWorld in California (Cowperthwaite 2013; Fins 2023) and captive elephants in Thailand (Taylor et al. 2020). The Irish government banned the use of wild animals for entertainment in circuses in 2018 in response to 'the general view of the public at large' including petitions from two animal welfare organisations (Hilliard 2017; Calnan 2017).[4] There is demand by animal welfare activists to stop the practice of hare coursing – a pastime in which greyhounds are released to chase wild caught hares (O'Sullivan

[4] See also https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-41944036 and https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2017/1109/918794-wild-animals-in-circuses-banned-in-2018/. Accessed 03/02/2024.

2021). The welfare of domesticated animals in commercial settings like breeding and racing is also of concern. Large scale dog breeding facilities, or 'puppy farms', are known for reproducing and selling multiple breeds of dogs in close quarters with 'horrendous conditions' (Kelleher 2018). Campaigns by welfare organisations to educate potential dog owners on responsible purchasing practices have had some impact with over 60% of dog owners 'taking steps' to ensure their dog has not come from a puppy farm (ibid.). And what was once an open secret within the Irish greyhound racing industry – culling unneeded puppies, doping dogs to speed up, slow down, or run with an injury, and killing or euthanizing greyhounds who were not up to speed – has been exposed in RTÉ's[5] documentary *Greyhounds Running for their Lives* (Shouldice and Ryan 2019). It was met with shock and outrage from both the industry and the viewers but for different reasons.

Greyhounds: Running for their Lives' broadcast '

Greyhounds: Running for their Lives aired in June 2019 on Ireland's public broadcast network RTÉ. The documentary aimed to collate information about the industry's practices of abuse and neglect which was largely available from decades of news reports and social media posts. Undercover footage showed distressing scenes of greyhounds illegally shot in Irish abattoirs and left to suffer before death. Additional footage revealed the mistreatment of Irish greyhounds in nations where the sale of Irish animals was not authorized. It also aimed to clarify points of contention between the industry and animal welfare activists such as the numbers of puppies whelped, trained, raced, and rehomed each year. Information requested by RTÉ from Greyhound Racing Ireland[6] and the Irish Coursing Club[7] under the Freedom of Information Act was withheld. The data was leaked anonymously to RTÉ. The figures revealed that despite claims to record all greyhounds' movements through their lives, there were thousands of dogs unaccounted for each year. The documentary *Greyhounds: Running for their lives* revealed that 16,000 greyhounds are bred each year, 1000% more than are required for racing in Ireland or selling to the UK (Shouldice and Ryan 2019; see also Ryan 2019). Some were shot, euthanized, or sold on to race and breed in countries with poor animal welfare oversight. As recorded in Irish government debates and in RTÉ's 2019 documentary, Irish

[5] Ireland's national television and radio broadcaster
[6] Greyhound Racing Ireland is the self-governing body which runs the racing industry and oversees greyhound welfare. It is funded by the Irish government under the Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund.
[7] Responsible for recording and tracking the life course of every greyhound from birth to rehoming.

greyhounds who are no longer of use to the industry are found shot, drowned, or beaten to death, some with their ears cut off to remove their identification tattoos (D'Arcy 2017; Shouldice and Ryan 2019; Swords 2012). Others were likely rehomed without filing the paperwork. This context served as the catalyst for the protest and counter-protest described above.

Ireland's greyhound racing industry is not alone in its ethically questionable practices. In 2015, there was a similar public exposure of 'animal welfare, oppression and exploitation' problems, specifically animal cruelty and live baiting, in Australia's greyhound racing industry (Groizard 2019). The response of the New South Wales greyhound racing community to these revelations was similar to the Irish greyhound community's reaction – the news was met with 'sadness, shock and animosity' while the community 'felt stigmatised and discriminated against' (Groizard 2019, 133). Unlike in Ireland, the reaction in New South Wales was to ban greyhound racing (and then later reinstate it). While there are increased efforts to rehome greyhounds rather than sell them to racecourses with low welfare standards like the Macau Canidrome (closed in 2018) in China, reports of doping (illegally drugging) to aid betting results continue to be reported. In Australia, a trainer was in court for drugging his greyhound – the favourite to win – with alcohol to slow him down. He then bet against that greyhound in order to bet on his other greyhound who won the race, earning him thousands in the bet (Hogan 2023). One of New Zealand's top trainers repeatedly neglected his dogs and doped them with banned substances including methamphetamine (Star News 2023). In Tasmania, a top greyhound trainer was banned from training for life after the illegal use of a pademelon[8] tail as a lure (James 2023). The article notes it is illegal for greyhounds to be trained with animals or animal parts as quarry, bait, or a lure.

Aftermath of 'Greyhounds: Running for their Lives'

In the aftermath of RTÉ's exposé, protests outside racing stadiums alongside radio, news and social media coverage intensified the call to ban greyhound racing. This exacerbated the 'negative image of the sport' and falling racetrack attendance (Murtagh 2018) and led to significant withdrawal of sponsors and advertising in the tourist sector. While the industry has spent decades asserting that greyhounds are well cared for during their racing careers, they

[8] a type of marsupial

have carefully obfuscated the information about those *not* racing. And this is a key part of the problem. The business of racing requires 'wastage' because most dogs[9] are not fast enough (Leddin 2022a; Government of Ireland 2022). It takes a lot of (expensive) litters to get a champion. This is only made possible because of State funding (Power 2021; Doyle 2023). A Red C poll found only 16% of Irish people supported the government's funding of greyhound racing and politician Holly Cairns has called for a gradual phasing out of the funding by 2025 (Cairns 2020). Despite the considerable welfare concerns documented, Gerard Dollard, former CEO of the Irish Greyhound Board, asserts the industry's motto is 'We love our greyhounds, and we care for them' (Murtagh 2018).

The documentary was heavily criticized by racing industry supporters that it was plagued with inaccuracies and contained out of date information[10]. However, this was to establish the longstanding welfare concerns of which the industry was aware and took little action to correct. A government report on the Irish greyhound racing industry noted the life expectancy of a racing greyhound is three to four years of age, while non-racing life expectancy is 14 years (Joint Committee on Agriculture 2016). The report continues, early deaths were due to injury at the track, euthanasia, abandonment, and surrender to local pounds for euthanasia. Budgetary considerations for ex-racing greyhounds were historically minimal (RTÉ 2020) and additional funds have been allotted since the airing of the RTÉ documentary (Cairns 2020). In the 2016 report, historian and greyhound welfare expert Dr. MJ Fox recommended a five to tenfold increase to the existing €200,000 budget to manage the industry's unneeded greyhounds. Further, she urged the industry to work directly with the voluntary rescue organisations already managing the treatment and rehoming of the industry's greyhounds. The government increased its funding to the greyhound industry in 2021 by €2.4 million to a total of €19.2 million through the Horse and Greyhound Fund as the greyhound industry committed itself to improving regulation of welfare (RTÉ 2020). Racing kennel inspections and budgetary considerations for welfare have increased. The concerns raised by politicians and animal welfare activists over the welfare of working animals is not unique to the Irish racing industry nor even unique to greyhound racing.

[9] A note on language: Within the racing industry and farming communities, 'dogs' refers to male canines and 'bitches' to female. For my purposes here, I use dogs as a gender-neutral term.

[10] The Irish Greyhound Board's complaints were rejected by the Broadcast Authority of Ireland who found the documentary was 'fair, objective and impartial'(Horgan-Jones 2019).

Racing and other animal industries

Ireland is not the only country with an active push to ban greyhound racing. The Green party in Scotland has recommended the 'barbaric' and 'outdated' industry be banned (Paterson 2022). In the USA in 2018, Floridians voted to ban greyhound racing in a 'miracle' landslide (69%) victory (Fins 2023). This is notable for two reasons. First, Republican and Democratic 'leaders who agree on literally nothing else agreed that dogs deserved better' than their treatment as race dogs, according to Carey Theil, co-founder of advocacy group GREY2K USA who organised the campaign (ibid.). Secondly, Florida was a significant and strategic location because 11 out of the USA's 17 greyhound racetracks were in Florida. It was a clear message in support of animal welfare. GREY2K USA believe Florida's ban will influence other states in the USA and countries 'from the UK to New Zealand to follow suit' (ibid). This article notes that politicians from opposing parties were in agreement that animals deserve to be treated humanely, despite persuasive arguments about revenue the industry generates.

In Ireland, horse racing is structured and funded in the same ways as greyhound racing. It is self-governed, state-funded and with a high failure rate of producing winning animals. Similar welfare concerns exist for the horse racing industry's wastage for which there are not enough homes. However, there is an additional complexity to consider when examining animal industries. Highly valued as coursing[11] dogs by the Victorian gentry (Ritvo 1987) and a favoured pet of royals (Branigan 2004), track[12] racing initially attracted an elite crowd when it was introduced in the 1920s. However, it quickly became the domain of the 'common man' (Tanner 2004). Greyhound racing continues to be commonly considered a working class pursuit (Madden 2010, 504). It is looked down upon by those in horse racing as 'a lottery for deadheads who want to recycle their dole money' while horse racing is considered a sophisticated activity for wealthy patrons such as the British royal family (Cassidy 2002, 74). These socioeconomic differences impact the demand for change with the prestige of horse racing less prone to protest and criticism. This critique is not new, as blood sports associated with the working class like bull- and bear-baiting were criticised by 'affluent activists' while

[11] Coursing is a leisure activity in which greyhound pairs are released into a field with a hare. Points are awarded for each dog who manages to 'turn' the hare (get it to change directions). Betting is commonplace.
[12] Track racing uses a mechanical lure on an oval track. This allows spectators to see the entire race clearly and bet accordingly.

ignoring ‘upper-class’ sports like fox hunting in the 1860s UK and US (Peterson 2018; Tester 1991).

Returning to dogs but in relation to the prestigious and competitive world of purebred dog shows, a controversy emerged in the UK with similar themes of protection and tradition contrasted with health. The BBC broadcast *Pedigree Dogs Exposed* examined the intentional inbreeding of purebred dogs to achieve exaggerated qualities[13]. It raised significant concerns over the health and wellbeing of pedigree dogs from veterinarians, but these same concerns were dismissed by breeders, claiming that their dogs were not at any risk. Further, by striving to conform to breed standards, pedigree dog breeders believe they are protecting traditional breed characteristics. The fallout of this exposé was the BBC’s withdrawal of sponsorship from Crufts, the world’s largest international dog show. Chrissie Wanner examined the ideological divergence between veterinary and pedigree breeding practices. The Kennel Club’s ‘official opinion’ is that ‘the significance of health problems in pedigree dogs has been blown out of proportion’ (2017, 18).

Welfare concerns that may be dismissed as disproportionate to risk and secondary to preserving tradition reflects a fundamental difference in ideology and one that is being debated on a public stage. One might argue, as *Blackfish* (Cowperthwaite 2013) did for captive orcas, that for-profit entertainment relying on nonhuman animals inherently exploits their value. Yet an argument continues to be made, with government financial backing, that some animal industries are essential because of their heritage value and the benefit to the economy.

An Overview of the Racing Industry

Greyhound Racing Ireland (formerly the Irish Greyhound Board) is the governing body for the racing industry which promotes racing, breeding, a “fun night out”, and animal welfare (Irish Greyhound Board 2018, 21). They state that greyhound racing is a “deeply rooted aspect of rural life” which is “part of ‘who we are’ in Ireland” (Irish Greyhound Board 2018, 14). Greyhound racing supporters including owners, trainers, and spectators who benefit from the social aspect of a shared hobby and identity. This greyhound community is predominantly middle aged to older Irish men living in rural areas who might otherwise be at risk of social

[13] For example, the flat face of a pug or French bulldog, the rolls of flesh on a bloodhound, or the short legs of the dachshund.

isolation. In addition to these social factors, the industry directly and indirectly supports jobs in both rural and urban areas. In 2001, the Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund was set up to maximise both industries' potential. The government ringfences revenue from betting tax and general taxation each year and holds a parliamentary vote to determine the final figure[14]. Since the fund was established, €1.6 billion has been awarded with an 80/20 split to horses and greyhounds respectively (Doyle 2023).

The industry justifies their state funding by aligning their practices as Irish heritage, identity and way of life and increasing their attention to welfare concerns, yet the industry's poor animal welfare has been of concern since the 1990s (Barnett 1999). Welfare concerns have contributed to a 55% decline in race attendance from 2008 to 2018 (Indecon International Economic Consultants 2019, 4). As mentioned above, a Red C poll found only 16% of respondents supported state funding of the greyhound industry (Dáil Éireann Debate 2020) which alongside decreased race attendance and a decline in Tote betting turnover, suggesting the Irish public do not agree that the racing industry is part of who they are.

Industry trainers, like my 30-year-old participant Eamon, acknowledge that there are some "bad eggs" who dispose of their dogs, but most of them have "been banned from having greyhounds for life". He suggests he is representative of "95-96%" of trainers who treat their dogs well, breed responsibly, rehome them upon retirement and file the appropriate paperwork. There is evidence to support his argument. For example, in New Zealand animal welfare activist Anna de Roo notes that a few trainers are repeated offenders for doping and neglect (Fuseworks Media 2023). Although her point was that the Racing Integrity Board's sanctions are ineffective, and the severity and persistence warrant a ban on greyhound racing, there are many trainers like Eamon who take the welfare of their dogs seriously. There is not unity within the industry regarding appropriate practices, and this was evident in RTÉ's exposé on the Irish greyhound racing industry broadcast in June of 2019. And teasing out these discrepancies within the industry reveals the variety of perspectives of how dogs should be treated in contemporary Ireland.

[14] Australian racing is also government funded but each state determines the amount. The government-funded greyhound racing industry - Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds (greyhoundcoalition.com). Accessed 03/02/2024.

In the rest of this chapter, I will first examine the broader debates in the literature used in this thesis including human-animal relationships, family and kinship, and emotions and senses. Next, I will discuss my methodology and methods for this research and how the Covid-19 pandemic impacted them. Finally, I will outline the chapters included in this thesis.

Key Literature

Originally, this thesis intended to examine the attainment of nonhuman personhood for ex-racing greyhounds who became pets. However, it became clear that while the status of personhood was of interest to me as the researcher, it was not a topic of interest to my participants in those words. In part, I suggest, because human exceptionalism is so central to the way we think in the western world, what fits better with accepted ways of thinking is to say our pets are 'part of our family' or 'like family' to make it clear that the species boundary is maintained. That speculation aside, what my participants spoke endlessly about was their feelings, emotions, and practices. Talking about their everyday practices was the focus of this research, but I did not directly ask about their emotions. Emotions were a common theme across my participants with different uses of 'love' of primary importance. This thesis is principally about the feelings and practices of greyhound care and value and how they shape and are shaped by the relationships they entail. What ties these concepts and perspectives together, or rather what frames their differences, is the western philosophical grounding on which has shaped my participants' thinking and the ontological turn in anthropology.

The Ontological Turn in Anthropology

There are various ontological anthropologies that make up the 'Ontological Turn' in anthropology (Kohn 2015). There are two main yet closely tied branches, namely the 'French' turn in North America which includes Phillippe Descola (2013) and Bruno Latour (2013) and the 'European' turn which has been informed by Viveiros de Castro's (1998, 2014) work to include Marilyn Strathern (1988, 2020) and Roy Wagner (1981). What is important, is that the Ontological Turn addresses the contradictions and conceptual challenges that anthropology faces – specifically the broader shift to consider a more than human world at a time of ecological crisis. The ontological turn is both 'symptomatic' and 'diagnostic' of how humans relate in an 'other than human' world (Povinelli 2015).

There are different definitions of 'ontology'. I follow Kohn to define it as "the study of 'reality'", where 'reality' includes humanly constructed worlds but is not limited to them (2015, 312). Alternative approaches include ontology to mean 'being' while 'ontic' refers to reality (Heidegger 1962) or where ontology means 'becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Ontology can also be examined as frameworks through which different human moral worlds are situated (Zigon 2014). This thesis benefits from an awareness of ontology as 'realities' because it allows a study of the variety of practices of keeping greyhounds as 'real' while leaving an opening for moral and ethical debates and an other-than-human perspective. By its nature, ontology is posthuman in the sense that it explores how humans interact with the world as a part of the world, not as the centre of it.

How then, can the realities of human-animal interactions be approached? First, I turn to the Western philosophical framework in which both the anthropological concept of animism was grounded and my participants' perspectives (i.e. reality) were shaped. Then I look at how some participants' practices challenge those categorical and moral assumptions.

Cartesian Dualism and Its Influence on Early Approaches to Animism

> Anthropology is predicated on the division between the human and the nonhuman.
>
> (Marlovits and Wolf-Meyer 2023, 366)

Human exceptionalism, based in Cartesian dualist philosophy, has informed the ways in which Westerners conceptualise the world from a human-nonhuman dichotomy. These "dualistic oppositions" between "humanity and animality" are parallel to other dichotomies of subject/object, person/thing, mind/body, intentionality/instinct, logic/emotion and, most importantly, culture/nature (Ingold 2000, 41). Further, Descartes proposed that the body of both humans and nonhumans is a machine wholly separate from the mind. The mind and soul are "inseparable", so for Descartes, animals do not possess either a mind or soul (Willerslev 2007, 14) and as part of 'nature' they are not entitled to moral consideration. This means that "personhood as a state of being is not open to non-human animal kinds" (Ingold 2000, 48) – Cartesian categories do not overlap.

In biological taxonomy, for example, these Cartesian notions shaped Carl Linnaeus' approach (Takman 1957) which prevents one organism from occupying multiple categories. Why can't cetaceans (whales and porpoises) be both mammal and fish (Dupre 2006)? Whales are "physiologically and evolutionarily closer to land-mammals than other aquatic creatures", but they cannot also be classed a fish because people believe that "mammals and fish are natural kinds" (Dupre 2006 in Hurn 2012, 81). It is unsurprising, then, that anthropology, as an "intellectual product of Cartesian tradition", has viewed indigenous beliefs in nonhuman personhood as interesting but separate from reality (Willerslev 2007, 15). The resulting treatment of nonhuman animals (henceforth animals) in scientific research, industry, agriculture, and entertainment has been for human benefit with varying degrees of concern for animal welfare.

Animism, introduced by E. B. Tylor in 1871, is one of anthropology's earliest concepts. It is traditionally used to describe a set of beliefs in which animals, objects, nature or spirits are given "intellectual, emotional, and spiritual qualities paralleling those of human persons" (Willerslev 2007, 2). It was often, and to some extent still is, used to contrast non-Western (or "premodern") ideas from Western (or "modern") ones (Hornborg 2011, 21). To Victorian anthropologists, "primitive" people were incapable of understanding the boundaries between human, animal and plant, reality and dreams or fact and fantasy, and animism was largely viewed as intentional deceit, delusion, or, simply, as Frazer claimed, "wrong" (Willerslev 2007, 16).

This foundational concept's universality has long been debated within anthropology. To make sense of the "problem" of animism, anthropologists, such as Bird-David framed the story as a metaphor (Hornborg et al. 1999). The result has been for modern hunter-gatherer ethnographies to 'play along' with indigenous belief that nonhuman entities (not just animals) could be persons and vice versa. This denied the hunter's, or indigenous person's, story as fact. Instead, it framed it as symbolic rather than literal and, thus not a threat to Western categories. Despite the intention to protect indigenous people's intelligence, this approach still prioritises the anthropologist's voice and the "other" as unable to comprehend their "delusions". Academic scholars are increasingly challenging this perspective and participant's accounts of important relationships with animals (as sentient beings) are taken seriously.

These ideas are also reflected in news reports and social media. Increased awareness of animal sentience and the role of biodiversity to maintain healthy ecosystems have contributed to legal recognition of personhood for some nonhuman entities such as rivers (Cano Pecharroman 2018), trees (Harwood and Ruuska 2013), dolphins (Singh 2013), and whales (Lacanivalu 2023). In Pakistan, the Islamabad High Court ruled animals have personhood and acknowledged their 'natural legal rights' which protects them under their constitution (Pallotta 2021). This ruling is significant as the case was about a captive elephant, Kaavan. In other courts, legal personhood has been granted to individual animals such as an orangutan in Argentina (Keim 2014), or to great apes as a whole in Spain (Roberts 2008). But the Islamabad judgement went beyond a decision for one animal to recognise the inherent rights of captive animals. The judge clarified that while this does not equate an animal's status to that of a human's, 'animals, as sentient beings, have a right to an environment in which their physiological, social, and behavioural needs can be met' (Pallotta 2021). This contrasts with laws in the US (and Ireland) which set minimum standards of care to limit 'unnecessary pain and suffering' (Pallotta 2021). This use of 'unnecessary' means there is a loophole that justifies some types of 'necessary' pain and suffering for 'traditional, socially normative, economically advantageous, or personally convenient' reasons (ibid.). However, this type of ruling directly challenges our Cartesian underpinnings that only humans are sentient. Additionally, RTÉ's exposé on the Irish greyhound racing industry (Shouldice and Ryan 2019) has moved animal sentience and welfare to the forefront of a public debate around human responsibility and profit. This moves some animals yet closer to culture (Thomas 1983) and ties them to a moral order (Anderson 1998). An increased inclusion of 'muted groups' such as human-animal interactions can be referred to as the Animal Turn (Hurn 2012, 202).

The Animal Turn and Human-Animal Relationships

The study of humans and non-humans in the co-creation of animistic cultural worlds has been an aspect of anthropology since the foundation of the discipline. But this focus has garnered renewed attention since the turn of the century in which nonhuman agency was taken into consideration (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010). This approach has pushed previously incidental information into the forefront - the plants and animals humans eat, the landscape, insects, and fungi. But more importantly, it recognises that animals do have, feel, and express

emotions – they are sentient. Further, examining these relationships in the intimacy of the home environment can reveal the everyday practices that are most important to participants.

The transdisciplinary exploration of human-animal relationships is the staple of anthrozoology. Preeminent anthrozoologists like John Bradshaw (2017), James Serpell (1996; 2009), and Hal Herzog (1997; 2010; 2019) take a biological/evolutionary/utilitarian approach to measure, rank and quantify benefits to humans and animals. This important type of research integrates other disciplines in order to express the value of human-animal interactions. Others, like Samantha Hurn (2017, 2015, 2012; Hurn and Lewis 2018), Margo DeMello (2016), Anthony Podberscek (2009), Julien Dugnoille (2019, 2018; Dugnoille and Vander Meer 2022) and, Shelly Volsche (2018, 2019; Volsche, Mukherjee, and Rangaswamy 2021) are also animal activists and advocates and their work includes everyday practices and intimacies. My research benefits from these approaches but does not seek to quantify or prove the importance of these relationships.

The questions this thesis poses – how value, emotion and kinship are created through relationships and practices and what it means – are situated in anthropology. Anthropologists like those mentioned in the previous section (Ingold 1994, 1988, 2000; Willerslev 2007; Kohn 2013; Viveiros de Castro 1998) and others like John Knight (2005a; 2005b), Karen Lane (2015), Marianne Elisabeth Lien (2015) and philosopher Donna Haraway (2003; 2008) explore how non-human animals are active participants in these "cross-species intimacies" (Knight 2005a). This (multi-disciplinary) debate extends to the role(s) a pet plays in the home. Are pets kin and part of a multi-species family? Can they be members of the family equivalent to humans (Fudge 2019)? Are they surrogates for human children or do pets have a unique role in the family that does not compete with human roles (Videla 2020)? Does the way in which we keep pets indicate we are in a time of post-human family (Charles 2016)? Do pets have a 'flexible personhood' due to the power imbalance (Shir-Vertesh 2012)? Are a particular human and 'companion species' bonded in 'significant otherness' (Haraway 2008; 2003, 16)? To examine these questions further, we must turn to the anthropological debate(s) on kinship and family.

Kinship and Family

I learned not to take kinship for granted, that relationships worth their salt are made rather than given...

- Janet Carsten (2004, xiii)

Human nature is an interspecies relationship.

- Anna Tsing (in Haraway 2008, 19)

Who, what, and how one can be kin is a long entrenched anthropological debate. Once the staple of ethnographic enquiry, the structural-functionalist model for kinship fell out of favour in the middle of the last century. Schneider (1968) was instrumental in redefining kinship from a rigid set of categories of blood and marriage relations familiar in Western genealogy, to an interpretive approach that provided a tool for cultural analysis. Collier and Yanagisako (1987) credit Schneider and others (Yanagisako 1978, 1985; Schneider and Smith 1973; Strathern 1981) for the assertion that 'kinship is not a discrete, isolable domain of meaning', instead "the meanings attributed to the relations and actions of kin are drawn from a range of cultural domains, including religion, nationality, gender, ethnicity, social class, and the concept of 'person'" (Collier and Yanagisako 1987, 6). Thus, kinship is cultural rather than biological (in the sense that genealogical connections are also culturally constructed) (Sahlins 2013) and where 'person' is usually human.

Kinship can be considered as part of the political economy or as a significant aspect of gendered inequality (Collier and Yanagisako 1987). Both gender and kinship studies have been framed in the Western perspective of 'natural' rights and duties defined by difference. Gender was defined by biological difference between men and women, and kinship was defined by the genealogical map of blood ties. These Western ideologies were "viewed as existing outside of and beyond culture" (Collier and Yanagisako 1987, 29). Beginning in the 1960s, Schneider rejected these long-held assumptions. Even though kinship theorists had long said kinship relationships were understood to be social relationships rather than biological ones, Schneider asserted they still had "biological parenthood in mind" (in Collier and Yanagisako 1987, 31).

However, "human reproduction is never simply a matter of conception and birth"(O'Laughlin 1977); there is a myriad of relationships that are required and developed in the process of

birthing and rearing a child (Collier and Yanagisako 1987). For example, in the Trobriand Islands two parents plus a 'spiritual third' are required for procreation (Godelier and Panoff 1998). Or kinship can be though naming rather than birth (Bodenhorn 2000; Nuttal 2000; Radcliffe-Brown 1924) or kinship terms can change by role where a man can be the mother of his sister's son (Middleton 2000). Similarly the constitution of the family was questioned (Finch 1989). This was reflected in a large literature of studies that looked at reproduction in Melanesia for example, where the transmitting of substance – 'blood, semen, milk, bone, genes, flesh, soul, etc.' – forms kinship relations (Sahlins 2013, 4; Becker 1995). This transmission took many forms including growing produce and feeding, but it also means that a person is a 'composite site' of the kin relations that produced them (Strathern 1988, 13). Kin could also be made through gift giving and exchange (Johansen 1954; Wilson 1950).

Challenging genealogical kinship paved the way for anthropologists to allow their participants' ontology to 'come to' them (Viveiros de Castro in Sahlins 2013, 61). Marshall Sahlins coined 'mutuality of being' to express the creation of kinship through participating 'intrinsically in each other's existence' but the specifics of what that means is culturally shaped (2013, ix). Kinships can also be conceptualised as how relatedness is practiced (Bodenhorn 2000; Carsten 2000, 2013). Rather than a response to biology versus social definitions, it tries to transcend static definitions. People can create relatedness through marriage, feeding and eating together, love and care, living and working together, through adoption and through procreation. Carsten approaches kinship as social to examine contemporary kinship more inclusively as it is practiced – same sex marriage, remarriage, and different types of parenting which could include pets.

Emotions

> I have no difficulty holding both logic and emotion at the same time, and it does not diminish my powers. It expands them.
>
> – Lawyer Barbie in *Barbie* (Gerwig 2023)

Returning briefly to Western Cartesian dualisms, logic and thinking were separated from emotions and feeling. It was suggested that logic was reasonable and stable while emotions

were unpredictable and irrational. This led to an undermining of the importance and value of emotions, feeling and sensations on everyday life.

The fields of anthropology of emotions and human animal relationships are fast expanding and becoming intertwined. There is considerable empirical research conducted on the emotional wellbeing of humans with access to animal companions within psychology (Nieforth, Rodriguez, and O'Haire 2022; King, McGlinn, and Duberstein 2021; Schmitz et al. 2021; Scott and Kirnan 2021; Lisk, Lawson, and Vaduvathiriyan 2020), geography (Fox and Gee 2019; Flockhart and Coe 2018), anthrozoology (Lima, Mateus, and Silva 2022; Carr and Pendry 2022; Tomlinson et al. 2022; Bradshaw 2017; Hurn 2012; Herzog 2010; Serpell 2009; 1996), and human health sciences (Applebaum et al. 2020; Carlisle et al. 2021; Jackson et al. 2021; Shoesmith et al. 2021). Similarly, there is a wide range of ethnographic research on multispecies relationships as hunters (Willerslev 2007), farmers (Lien 2015; Theodossopoulos 2005), family members (Laurent-Simpson 2021, 2017a, b; Volsche, Mukherjee, and Rangaswamy 2021; Volsche 2019, 2018, 2021; Stewart 2018; Hansen 2013; Cormier 2003) and wild animals (Vannini and Vannini 2020; Knight 2005).

It is the practice of emotions within these relationships that is of relevance to this study. Although few and far between, an outstanding volume exists on how animals are (and are not) mourned (DeMello 2016), an auto-ethnography on the final year of a dog's life (Pierce 2012), and a recent article examining elderly West Nepalese women's emotional relationships with their buffalo (Fuller 2021). What I can contribute here is the span of many communities' emotional connection with the same type of dog. In other words, my participants all love their greyhounds (or 'love the game' of racing), but they practice that love in different ways.

Senses

The context for examining the senses comes from the recognition that the home environment and walking can be experienced differently when a pet is introduced. These are the key areas of engagement for my participants and their greyhounds. It is well established anthropologically that domestic boundaries have the potential for flexibility. The discipline has been invested in the discussion of 'domestic space', or 'the home' (Douglas 1991; Cieraad 2006; Birdwell-Pheasant and Lawrence-Zuniga 1999) with a focus on its routines and practices (Chambers 2020), material aspects (such as lifestyle and consumption) (Miller 2001; Garvey

2001) and sensory experiences (Pink 2004; Daniels 2015). Ethnographic works have explored the sense of meaning, identity and emotion in the home (Blunt and Varley 2004) while others challenged the Western notion of 'home' (Vom Bruck 1997; Jackson 1995; Das, Ellen, and Leonard 2008; Empson 2011). Historical, Geographical, and Sociological research has explored the sensory and material impact on the home as co-constructed with a pet (Howard-Smith 2021; Hamlett and Strange 2022; Schuurman and Syrjämaa 2022; Fudge 2008). However, anthropological approaches have largely neglected to focus on these experiences of cohabiting with a pet and the impact on what a contemporary 'home' is in the multispecies context.

Key Literature Conclusion

What emerges from this literature is that there are many ways to think about 'reality', humanity, family and kin, and emotions. In this section I used the ontological turn in anthropology to provide a framework in which the other key debates, literature, and themes I intend to examine in this thesis fit. At its heart, this research is about the variety of relationships humans have with their dogs, how they practice their care, and what this means about everyday family life. I began by grounding this in the philosophy through which Westerners have shaped their fundamental worldviews. I showed how these underpinnings are being challenged ontologically through an examination of human-animal relationships, kinship and family, and emotions and the senses and how these inform domestic practices and routines. Each chapter in the thesis will examine aspects of the literature in more detail, but next I turn to the anthropological methodology and methods I used to conduct this research.

Methodology

Bronislaw Malinowski's ([1922] 1978) contribution to anthropology was to describe the methods used for data collection in order for ethnographic research to be considered scientific. The collection of methods I used, or my 'ethnographic toolkit' included long term participant observation, a good command of the language of 'dog people', and the use of my dog as a research assistant (see Lane 2015). I conducted interviews through Microsoft Teams (hereafter Teams) and in person, interacted through email and social media, and attempted a holistic and culturally contextualised analysis of the experiences and perspectives I intended

to understand. Participants' everyday lives, practices and routines are at the core of ethnographic fieldwork, but the specific methodologies continually shift as new approaches and concepts develop. For Malinowski, fieldwork was conducted in one place for an extended period. It was conventionally conducted away from home (Amit 1999). But by the 1990s, multi-sited ethnography was accepted as a method to obtain different types of information in an increasingly globalised and interconnected world (Marcus 1995). This was essential to my research. While it was conducted solely in the Republic of Ireland, the variety of perspectives between urban and rural rescue organisations and other participants was revealing in part because of the international makeup of volunteers. Further, the legitimisation of ethnography at home allowed for the use of existing networks to snowball participants I might not have reached otherwise.

Fieldwork Methods

My initial (pre-Covid) fieldwork plans were to volunteer in two rescue organisations[15]. One was a multi-species shelter in Dublin with a high proportion of greyhounds to other breeds and the other was greyhound specific in rural County Clare. I chose these in order to expose any differences between potential owners who knew they wanted a greyhound and went to a greyhound rescue and those who were open to multiple breeds and chose a greyhound. This would also offer varying perspectives of the transition processes a racing greyhound and the humans undergo to create a pet, a 'dog person', and a multi-species family. I intended to track particular dogs and recruit their human owners as they were rehomed over an eighteen-month period. I received the recommended anti-tetanus injection and completed the volunteer training session at the multi-species location the week of the first Covid lockdown. I was unable to volunteer at either location for the duration of my ethical approval.

Covid restrictions required significant changes to my methodology to include digital fieldwork. Rather than recruiting humans through the greyhounds in rescue, I shifted to recruiting humans through greyhound groups on social media. I focused on detailing the industry and rescue landscapes and their connections and contacted them online. This new approach has not diminished the richness of interactions or contributions. In fact, I continued many parts of my Covid-inspired research methods as restrictions were lifted. Anticipating that my

[15] I will use the terms rescue organisation, rescue, and shelter interchangeably.

participants would keep journals from the beginning, I asked for audio, video, or typed updates instead of hard copies. Rather than photographing their homes myself, I asked participants to send videos and photos of their homes, walks and everyday activities. I have relied heavily on social media and used a snowball approach to recruit participants. Social media interactions include Facebook public and private groups, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, Twitter[16], WhatsApp, and Snapchat. Semi-structured interviews continue over the phone, Teams, and email. Some of my most prolific participants were referred to me through a chance encounter with rescue workers or Twitter exchanges.

While following social distancing and government guidelines, three exceptions to this digital fieldwork are 1) 'on the street interactions' in which I spoke to fellow greyhound owners and older men who formerly worked in the industry, 2) during the brief relaxing of restrictions in December 2020, I conducted a day of participant observation at a rescue kennels in the west of Ireland and recruited key long-term participants, 3) three separate homes visited and multiple in person walks when Covid-restrictions allowed.

I had several types of participants. My canine participants were all greyhounds from the racing industry. This means they were registered with the Irish Coursing Club and have ear tattoos. My human participants comprise three distinct but overlapping groups as detailed in the diagram below from the racing industry, rescues, and pet homes. The largest group of participants was pet greyhound owners (25 people). It is a very specific group of people who keep greyhounds as pets in Ireland. They nearly all own a home as most rental properties will not allow dogs. If they do allow dogs, there is likely to be a weight restriction. Greyhounds, at the small end are still over 20kg and on the larger end are over 40kg. This alone limits who can adopt a greyhound, as rescue centres are unlikely to let a dog go to a family that might have to return the dog due to a change in housing conditions. Their size directly impacts the cost of veterinary care as medication is dosed by weight and priced accordingly. This includes monthly flea/worm treatments, anaesthesia for emergency surgery, food and grooming, and a car large enough to accommodate a dog and other family members. An additional category of greyhound professionals provided background and contextual information (five people). This group included dog trainers and groomers, veterinarians and veterinary nurses and

[16] X was known as Twitter during my fieldwork.

authors however, they also owned or had previously owned greyhounds. I categorised participants based on my primary reason for interacting with them. For example, some rescue workers are former racing owner/trainers, and all categories might also have greyhounds as pets.

This research had a total of 89 participants. 31 of them made significant contributions to this research through email, text and social media, Teams video calls, phone calls, and/or in person participant observation. Another 58 participants informally contributed insights, comments, questions, and casual conversation through social media or in public spaces such as housing estates, villages, parks, beaches, mountain walks, and at organised pet related events such as community walks, amateur dog shows and competitions.

My pet greyhound Nessa served as a research assistant in several ways, and I will examine it further in its own section. I was frequently approached in public by other greyhound owners and former now-elderly greyhound trainers. Owning a greyhound also provided enough tacit knowledge of greyhounds to be taken seriously by racing owners but as a pet owner, a reasonable excuse to not know racing terms and to ask basic question. I was awarded social currency in rescue/welfare work for having a greyhound, especially as Nessa was my third. Having owned and fostered greyhounds and other breeds, I was already established in the pet greyhound social circles and the rescue world and was able to recruit participants from my existing network and used a snowball method to recruit additional participants.

Racing Industry Insiders (7 people)	Greyhound Specific Rescue (+1 Multi-breed) (9 people)	Pet Greyhound Owners (25 people)	Other Greyhound Professionals (5 people)
• Racing Greyound owners (current and former) • Racing Greyhound Trainers (current and former) • Former industry employees • Greyhound Racing Ireland and Irish Retired Greyhound Trust declined participation	• Kennel Staff • Kennel Volunteers • Other volunteers (ie fostering, organising, grooming, fundraising, transportation of dogs) • 9 out of 11(at the time) Greyhound specific rescues participated	• Long term participants • Single semi-structured interviews • Casual encounters in the field	• Pet dog trainers • Veterinarian/nurse • Greyhound-related book author and artist

The criteria for participation in this 'pet' portion of my research was to have (1) adopted an ex-racing Irish greyhound (2) within one year from the beginning of my study. Interestingly, those who volunteered were overwhelmingly white Irish women of various ages (20s to 70s).

Most of whom had a third level education. I included any participants in the Irish racing industry who were willing. Except for one in his 30s, the other four were older (50s-80s) and all white Irish men. The criteria for rescue volunteers were having a specialty with or exclusively rehoming Irish greyhounds in Ireland. These volunteers were mostly middle-aged white women born outside of Ireland, but their ages ranged from early 20s to mid-70s. There were two white Irish men. One in his 20s and one in his 60s.

Personal Frame of Reference

It is not by accident that I chose to research the relationships between humans and dogs. The discipline of anthropology has long discussed the importance and awareness of positionality in the field and in writing. The researcher filters their data collection first through their own interests, background, education, age, gender, sexuality, religious, ethnic and national belonging (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011). An acknowledgement of how these positionalities will influence or inform who the researcher has access to and how the interactions with participants might be influenced. My lifelong interest in and aptitude for identifying and observing animals, insects and nature has led me to this research. But so too have my ideas and perspectives been shaped by multiple avenues including my race and nationality as a white midwestern American, religious, moral, and gendered teachings in childhood, and socioeconomic status. Some values like frugality and hard work have served the PhD process.

My gender and age facilitated initial access to many research participants. As a middle-aged woman, I fit in with the typical rescue volunteer. And while the industry is dominated by men, having a network of peers to 'vouch' for me provided access to an otherwise inaccessible population. Further, my ability since childhood to identify dog breeds was a useful, if nonessential, skill which allowed relating to both industry supporters and rescue volunteers. The inability to accurately differentiate a greyhound from a lurcher (see Glossary) is a sticking point between the racing industry and animal welfare activists. Additionally, my volunteer and paid work history in boarding kennels and rescue provided extensive background knowledge of these environments. It served to familiarise me with standards of care in kennels alongside the smells and noise to be expected in such environments.

However, owning a greyhound was arguably most significant. This provided insider knowledge of greyhound quirks and access to the ongoing conversations between industry, rescue, and pet owners. But my outsider status – as an American woman– was made palatable through greyhound ownership. This allowed significant leeway for asking basic and detailed questions that might otherwise be childish. This is to say that my positionality shaped not only who I had access to but what types of information they would reveal to me.

Canine Research Assistant

Using one's dog to assist their research and the dog walk as an ethnographic tool is not new (Lane 2015). In some ways, walking the dog – an everyday occurrence regardless of research – allowed for 'the everyday serendipities that go along with simply being outside' (Davis 2013). But as Karen Lane asks, do dogs merely facilitate spontaneous interactions or do they 'actually foster it'? Lane suggests that often, her Wheaten terrier Torridon would mostly initiate an interaction, but a few times fostered connections. Similarly, my greyhound(s) initiated conversations (Is that a greyhound? Is it a rescue? Was it any good [at racing]?), but sometimes, her presence would elicit stories that I would otherwise not have heard or had access to.

First, Torridon connected Lane with participants as they negotiated the complexities of Belfast's 'telling' or revealing one's religious/political affiliation indirectly through sport/school/name. My greyhound Nessa too, helped bridge the contested space of the pro/anti-racing debate among older Irish men. When older gentlemen (60s and over) indicated they wanted a chat about the dog, they often aligned themselves as 'used to be in the game' which does not directly indicate their current pro or anti racing stance. This could be an example of 'creative ambiguity' in which both parties intentionally use language that sidesteps potential conflict thus 'creating an opportunity to connect' (Lane 2015, 31). Some of them left the industry for other work and have neutral feelings while several left the kennel work because their favourite dogs had to leave the kennels (presumably euthanized given the age of the men). Sidestepping any ethical debates, it opened the door for what they used to do. I heard stories about greyhounds kept in back gardens in my local area, others rented space off a local farmer to keep and run their greyhounds, others were kennel hands for the largest racing greyhound kennel in the area, who also happened to be the local butcher. These

interactions allowed our mutual love or admiration or respect of the greyhound itself – especially watching them run – be at the forefront. Or rather, Nessa was what these interactions were about, not me as the researcher. This is an example of what Donna Haraway describes as 'becoming-with' (Haraway 2008, 16) – the process of human-animal teams developing deep connections (Lane 2015).

Lane's Torridon was friendly, cute, and approachable, but she also considers how a different dog would have shaped her research (2015, 35). What Nessa did particularly well was to show off her calm indifference. People passing on the street would marvel at her quiet demeanour (and her jumpers). Greyhound enthusiasts are unlikely to try to hug a greyhound. These greyhound men knew this and rarely tried to touch her. She responded by either lying in the footpath's grass verge or showed her affection by leaning her full body weight on the man's leg, which he would accept by placing his hand on her back. This is in stark contrast, but equally useful, to Torridon's friendly approach. For Lane, Nessa's laid-back attitude would not have accomplished what Torridon's outgoing nature did. Nessa's approach was appropriate and essential to my participants – and their reaction to her told me a lot about their familiarity with greyhounds – the people who are most familiar with greyhounds are the ones least likely to initiate touch. (Although, this could also indicate that they wanted the social interaction to reminisce about their racing days rather than interact with the dog directly.) Rather, they are happy to be in the greyhound's presence. And Torridon's was essential for Lane's. Torridon's soft full coat and friendly demeanour cast the net wide – most dog lovers would be drawn to her (and as Lane notes, a too-short haircut temporarily halted her admirers). While Nessa's large bony frame, short (but surprisingly soft) coat and unobtrusive nature would mostly attract those who already liked or were somehow connected to greyhounds. She prevented some interactions – she has retreated from several strangers' overly enthusiastic advances (causing them to move on quickly), has barked at several men who barely looked at her and others wearing hats. Returning to Lane's point, our dogs helped shape who our participants were through their way of being (habitus).

As a dog walker, Torridon allowed Lane access to geographical spaces in which she otherwise would have been out of place. Nessa, and her greyhound predecessors Doris and Hattie, more indirectly facilitated access to participants through lived experience. Having had three greyhounds indicated not just an enthusiasm for my first dog, but a settled 'knowing' (or

'becoming with' as Haraway (2008) might suggest) of these dogs. This was important when speaking to greyhound owner/trainers as a criticism of anti-racing advocates is that they do not know enough about greyhounds.

Lastly, as Torridon allowed Lane access to a hillwalking group that allowed dogs, my greyhounds fostered access to online and in person greyhound spaces, walking groups, and clubs.

Research at Home: A Note on Covid Techniques

This fieldwork was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic. As Sarah Pink outlined, research at home allows for comparisons between participants' homes and practices and one's own (2004). Research with pet greyhound owners allowed a deep comparison between their dogs' temperament, their lives, practices, and routines when in familiar surroundings. However, due to Covid restrictions, ethnography *from* home developed the feasibility of already established online and digital ethnography (Góralska 2020). As Daniel Miller asserted at the World Council of Anthropological Associations' Covid-inspired webinar (2020), even for researchers and their participants who have access to the internet, adapting planned in-person research to digital research considerably changes the types of information gathered. Because of the pandemic, participants and I all learned together how to navigate Teams calls, online diary entries and photo sharing. One interesting aspect is that my participants curated the photos of their homes and dogs to show me what was important to them rather than taking the photographs myself. Also, during lockdown participants had more time to talk to me, keep diaries and send photos than they might have had otherwise. While this drastically changed my data collection methods, it provided opportunities that would not have been possible without the use of technology. In particular, I was able to include participants from a larger geographic area and 'see' into the private spaces of homes that I might not otherwise have been shown. Many Irish homes do not have a spare bedroom in which to set up a home office to work from home. This meant that many of my Teams video calls began with a discussion of the spaces from which we were calling.

Plate 6 Photo of my Covid shed-office. Photo by author.

In an effort to work away from the cacophony of my primary school aged children and husband's work calls, he converted our second shed into a Covid workspace. Measuring nearly five by three feet (152.4 cm by 91.4 cm), it was the tiny sanctuary in which my online fieldwork was conducted.

In line with anthropological and university research guidelines, before beginning ethnographic research, I obtained Tier 2 ethical approval by the Maynooth University Social Science Ethics Committee (SRESC-2020-2414253). In accordance with the university requirements, participants were asked to sign a consent and information form prior to interviews and participant observations. Additionally, participants volunteered their time and involvement and were free to withdraw their consent until the time of anonymisation. Names and identifying information of participants and organisations have been anonymised using pseudonyms except for matters of public record such as industry and government reports.

Synopsis of Thesis Chapters

In chapter 2 I ask how do racing owners and trainers describe their experience of the industry? I take 30-year-old Eamon as a primary example of 'small scale' racing kennels and contrast his experience with 70-year-old Bill who recently left the industry. Amidst a shift occurring in the public imaginary between industry and the right to use animals for entertainment and profit, this chapter offers the complicating perspective of the 'small scale' (approximately one to fifteen dogs) trainer and owner. They contrast with the large and influential racing kennels which house and train unlimited numbers of dogs (often fifty to one hundred or more). This chapter attempts to explore the everyday lives of the small-scale owners and trainers who comprise an integral part of the Irish greyhound racing community.

Chapter 3 examines the practices of rescue workers and volunteers and their emotional entanglements with the racing industry. In my analysis, I include all the greyhound-specific rescue organisations that were willing to participate. They had a variety of approaches to housing greyhounds and preparing them for home life, opposing views on racing, and how to best match a greyhound with a family. What unites all of them is having greyhounds' best interest in mind alongside an exhaustion from the burden of emotional labour and social entanglements that caring for these animals demands.

Chapter 4 explores contemporary Irish families and how pets are sometimes included as kin. Considering the immense social change in Ireland as the country becomes more secular, what a family looks like and who can be family has become more inclusive.

In Chapter 5 I step back to consider how each segment of greyhound enthusiasts – the industry, rescue, and pet homes – have greyhounds' best interests at heart. Each group claims to love their greyhounds (or 'the game' of racing) and show it through their care, yet their practices vary greatly.

Chapters 6 and 7 take the senses into consideration. I explore the ways in which the subjective experience of humans is mutually constituted with the pet in the domestic sphere (Chapter 6) and the dog walk (Chapter 7). I expand the idea of home to encompass the pet as a fundamental influencer of the sensory experience of the home and its routines and practices but also, the pet is a key player in how my participants identify ('I've always been a two-dog home'), interpret, enjoy and experience their home. In this way, my human participants consider their pet's preferences and needs in household decisions and while out walking, alongside their own sensory needs and preferences. This allows a focus on the sensory aspects of the social and material space of 'home' and 'the walk' as it is experienced by humans interwoven with a pet's presence.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude provocatively by claiming greyhounds are not 'good' working dogs. Nor are they 'good' pets. And that, as Lévi-Strauss (1963) might say, is what makes them 'good to think'. By this, I mean that animals could be used as a tool to help us to discover what it means to be human. Because animals are, in the global north, so separate from humans the

contrast helps to clarify what humanity is. In this case, because greyhounds do not fit neatly into our criteria of what makes a good dog or pet, they can help us to evaluate how they are different. They help identify 'what is a good dog?' by what they are not. And 'what is a good pet?' by what they do not offer. Greyhounds break the rules of good dogs and good pets. I will show that because these dogs are not 'good' working dogs (they do not need a strong bond with a human to do their work), it makes them easy to dispose of. Because they are not 'good' pets (they pee in the house, snatch food off the counter, bite if woken unexpectedly, and might unceremoniously kill your neighbour's cat), they were not considered suitable for home life after racing. But because of these circumstances, the emotional and physical labour poured into these dogs to shape them into suitable pets creates a ferocious and loyal greyhound community (a greyhound owner will hang out the car window to tell another greyhound owner that they, too, have a greyhound) that 'borders on creepy'.

A robust and inclusive pet greyhound community is not unique to Ireland. Anywhere there are pet greyhounds, a community will emerge as owners will connect and meet in large numbers. The annual Great Global Greyhound Walk had 458 walking groups in 36 countries participate in 2023 to raise awareness of greyhounds and other sighthounds as pets (2023). Other events occur more frequently and on a smaller scale, too. In a local American park, a reporter stumbled upon a birthday celebration for a greyhound organised through the community's WhatsApp group chat (Gathright 2023). Further, new members are ordinarily added in the customary way of approaching fellow greyhound owners walking in public. In this reporter's case, she inadvertently doubled the group chat's membership numbers by tweeting out the existence of the group. As one member of this Washington D.C. greyhound community explained, '…greyhounds are simply not like other dogs and the experience of having one as a pet is unique enough to bond people together' (ibid.). While another owner motioned to the owners and greyhounds laying about, and observed that their personalities are a lot like their greyhounds' - mellow (ibid.).

But more importantly, I will move this discussion beyond 'good to think' to examine how greyhound owners live with these dogs in a practical sense – from racing, to rescue and into pethood. What are the practices that are required to have them as working dogs, the care they need in rescue and the training they need to become a solid house pet. How do their various owners imagine their needs and what is best for them? How can 'in the best interest

of a greyhound' be practiced so drastically differently, hotly contested, and a breeding ground for gossip, accusations, and emotional outbursts? I will examine how one country can have such divergent ideologies and practices across several communities who all have claim to love greyhounds.

More broadly, the question that these debates and protests raise is how should humans relate to and interact with animals? It is weighted uneasily with moral, ethical, and economic tensions which prompt emotional and passionate entrenchment. To what extent do humans have a moral responsibility to respect and protect animal lives? Or is it a human prerogative to exploit resources for human benefit and entertainment? And when pets are included as members of the family, are they best described as a multi-species household or does this indicate a post-human family (Charles 2016)?

In an attempt to tease out these entwined conundrums, this thesis looks anthropologically at everyday practices of how 'greyhound people' live and work with and care for their greyhounds. As noted above, this thesis will examine three broad categories of greyhound enthusiasts: racing greyhound trainers/owners, greyhound rescue volunteers, and pet greyhound owners.

Plate 7 Race programme from Shelbourne greyhound stadium. Photo by author.

‘A Night at the Dogs’

Plate 8 Greyhounds 'paraded' in front of the crowd before their race. Photo by author.

Plate 9 Greyhounds walked to the traps for the start of the race. Photo by author.

To see how a greyhounds’ love of running is visible to race attendees, let us take the example of a race night at Shelbourne Park Greyhound Stadium in Dublin.

My research participant, Fi, and I went to ‘the dogs’ one evening in September 2022. One of the most striking features, immediately clear to Fi, was how quiet it was. As a university student in the early 2000s, Fi had worked the bars at both Shelbourne and Harold’s Cross stadiums in Dublin at the “height of racing” (Power 2021, 24). Driving without impediment into the stadium’s partially filled car park, Fi was struck by the lack of commotion on this evening. Although there was a row of ticket booths, all bar one was closed. There was no queue to have our ticket scanned. The separate entrance for the pre-booked restaurant upstairs which hosts corporate events and Christmas parties was equally deserted. Years ago, Fi explains, racegoers would be jostling for position four-deep at the bar from the hour before

the first race[17]. The smell of fried food and beer would entice newcomers to join the long queue for the restaurant in the Food Hall. The concrete bleachers would be at maximum capacity. Now, however, Fi said the audience was made up of greyhound owners (notable by their serious and barely audible discussions) rather than noisy crowds of punters (gamblers), stag and hens dos, or workmates out on Friday night. She found the Food Hall and bars to be eerily empty (see below).

Plate 10 The bar is on the back left. Note the greyhound print carpet. Photo by author.

Plate 11 Close up of greyhound print carpet. Photo by author.

[17] There is some indication that work and fundraising events are resurging after the pandemic. According to a racegoer, a recent event in the Mullingar greyhound stadium had long queues at the bars and huge demand on food in the restaurant.

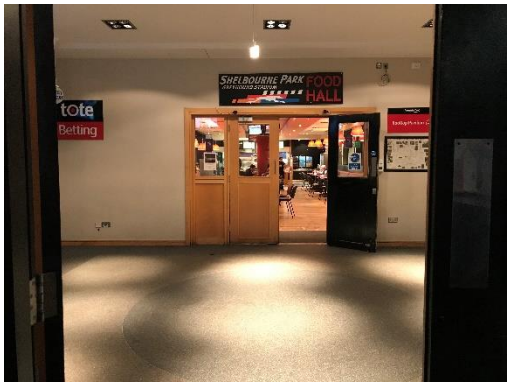


Plate 12 Approaching the restaurant at the end of the corridor. Photo by author.

It was a beautiful sight to see each graceful and athletic greyhound slink up the middle of the track with their handler. In turn, each handler and dog couple paused in front of the participants seated in the concrete bleachers while their names were announced over a tannoy system. Each dog wears a barely visible wire basket muzzle to protect the easily-torn skin of their competitors. Before some races, the dogs were allowed to "empty themselves" (urinate and/or defecate) before being lifted into the holding cage or "trap" in front of us. Occasionally, a dog or two began whining and barking in the minute it took for the trap operator to lift the gates. My participant, Fi, was unnerved by the sound because she interpreted it to be cries of distress. However, to those familiar with greyhounds' giddiness, it appeared to be a familiar sound of over-excitement and anticipation of a run.

A hush descended on the crowd as the gates swung open and six greyhounds bolted onto the sand to chase the mechanical hare (a piece of fake fur or plastic to entice the greyhound to chase). The power and speed of the dogs gliding around the oval track was breathtaking and reflected in the growing tension of the crowd. Number 3 effortlessly gained on the lead dog to a single strained 'go on' from a punter somewhere behind us. The crowd leaned in and together, held our breath as Number 3 maintained first position around the bend and onto the straight for the win in front of the crowd, where the electronic traps had been retracted to the sideline. The greyhounds continued to rush past the finish line, gradually slowing over another quarter of the track to where their owners were now waiting with leads in hand. Each dog happily bounced to their handler with tails wagging as they pranced off the track. A low murmur returned to the crowd.

Plate 13 Spectators in between races. Photo by author.

Plate 14 Spectators in between races. Photo by author.

In the crowd of forty, the eight children in attendance belonged to the greyhound owners. Fi and I were two of the five women. Two of those women later walked their greyhound to the traps. Aside from one man of Southeast Asian heritage and a group of six French men in their thirties, the crowd appeared to be almost exclusively white, Irish men mostly over the age of 50. This aligns with the industry's report that customers at racing events are mostly male (Power 2021, 10).

In contrast to my 2019 visit to Shelbourne Greyhound Stadium discussed in Chapter 1, there were no protesters lining the street on the evening my participant and I attended in 2022. No megaphones, no chanting, no placards, no garda presence or traffic barricade fencing. The Shelbourne Anti-Racing Protesters' Facebook page announced they would be present the following evening, but in 2019, they protested all three nights that the stadium was open. This is perhaps a reflection of the decline in attendance. If only greyhound trainers and owners are attending the race, a protest will do little to discourage them. Arguably, their efforts would be more effective on the night of a Semi-final for the Irish Greyhound Derby

with a higher public attendance. However, Fi and I were given complimentary tickets for the following night's Derby race (racing programme extra) with our already discounted tickets. Shelbourne Stadium was not anticipating a crowd.

This vignette depicted the public face of greyhound racing, but this chapter will examine the complex care and use of greyhounds in commercial contexts and how they move from being disposable to indisposable. It will also question the uniformity of racing industry practices and analyse how the idea of community functions for a collectivity of trainers. This is important because the industry and owner/trainers publicly assert they are united in purpose and practice. However, my participants' practices reveal conflicting perspectives on the everyday care of greyhounds, their suitability as pets after racing, and what it means to be part of the greyhound community. To do this I will provide background information on the Irish greyhound industry. Next, I will look behind the scenes at two greyhound owners/trainers, Eamon and Bill, who have different approaches to training and racing. Although Eamon is decades younger than most of the men in the Irish racing industry, he considers himself to be typical of the owner/trainers regarding numbers of dogs, feeding, exercise, care, routine, and knowledge. This is significant because his daily routine is grueling for what he calls a hobby. This example will show the dedication and responsibility required to produce winning greyhounds and the pride owners/trainers take in belonging to the racing community. Bill, on the other hand, is in the average age range for greyhound owners/trainers. He left the industry on principle after years of fighting against doping. While the owner/trainer of champion racing dogs during his career, he did so without doping. Once his dogs could not compete against doped dogs, he spent years trying to correct this unfair practice from within the industry. He has ceased owning/training greyhounds but remains pro-racing. Bill's example is important because he provides key insights into the industry's priorities and a different approach to training greyhounds than Eamon. I will place their practices into a context of care within livestock farming. More broadly, this will illustrate how the process of commodification can be challenged through greyhounds achieving a status as more than 'just' animals and where value is created through circulation.

Industry Background

> The greyhound industry is an important part of the social and economic fabric of rural Ireland. It supports considerable employment directly and indirectly down through the supply chain, and it is an important 'way of life' for greyhound owners around the country. For stakeholders in the sector, it is an important economic and social activity.
>
> - The Economic & Financial Significance of the Irish Greyhound Industry (Power 2021)

For those who race and train greyhounds, their everyday lives revolve around their dogs' routines. Their activities contribute to the economy and provide a social outlet for Irish greyhound enthusiasts. The industry's website states,

> The hundreds[18] of years of tradition that forms our sport. The generations of families brought together by their love of the dogs. We stand for all that is good about our sport and we are its future. Because THIS RUNS DEEP'.[19]

This prose on tradition, sport, family and love reflects the sentiments of some greyhound owners/trainers in the industry. It also signals a shift in how the industry would like to portray itself.

In Ireland, there are over 6,200 registered racing greyhound owners (Power 2021, 17)[20]. Although there are more women involved than in previous generations, greyhounds are overwhelmingly owned, trained, and raced by men. On the night[21] I attended Shelbourne Stadium, 63% of the owners were male, 24% were syndicates (multiple owners), and 13% were female, while 84% of the trainers on the night were men (Greyhound Racing Ireland 2022e). Customers at racing events are 77% male (Power 2021, 10). The industry continues to be dominated by men living in rural Ireland and provides an important social outlet for this community.

[18] This likely refers to greyhound coursing, which is a much older activity. Track racing was established in 1927.
[19] https://www.grireland.ie/go-greyhound-racing/how-it-all-works/our-people-the-generations/ . Accessed 11/12/2023.
[20] There is little access to the racing industry's records, so I rely on a limited number of sources. The industry's withholding of information available through Freedom of Information requests was also examined in *Greyhounds Running for their Lives* (Shouldice and Ryan 2019).
[21] Greyhound Racing Ireland does not respond to requests for information on owners.

Greyhound Racing Ireland's mission statement is 'To deliver a commercial, well-regulated Greyhound Racing and Breeding Industry whilst enabling the delivery of a customer centered, highly exciting and value led entertainment experience'. It is unapologetically an economic adventure in philosophy and practice. Greyhound Racing Ireland (GRI)/Rásaíocht con Éireann is a semi-state profit-oriented organisation which is responsible for controlling and developing the greyhound industry including welfare of racing greyhounds *during training and racing* in the Republic of Ireland. This emphasis is important because the industry focuses only on the dogs' training and racing career rather than taking responsibility for their lifelong care. This wastage is of concern to both animal rescue workers and the viewers of an exposé (Shouldice and Ryan 2019; see Chapter 1 for a thorough summary) which detailed the long standing welfare concerns in the Irish racing industry since the 1990s (Barnett 1999)

Originally called the Irish Greyhound Board (IGB)/Bord na gCon when the Government established it in 1958, it was rebranded as Greyhound Racing Ireland (GRI)/ Rásaíocht con Éireann in October 2020 in the aftermath of the public broadcaster's exposé. It retains the name Irish Greyhound Board (IGB)/Bord na gCon formally, but GRI has put in great effort to change the image of the organisation to one which considers greyhound welfare a priority (Greyhound Racing Ireland 2022a). The industry increasingly aligns their practices as Irish heritage, identity, and way of life as they increase their attention to welfare concerns. For clarity, I will refer to this organisation as GRI.

GRI licenses 14 tracks in the Republic of Ireland. It owns and control nine, five are privately owned, and a further two privately owned tracks are in Northern Ireland. GRI operates Tote facilities at all greyhound racetracks in the Republic. Tote, short for Totalisator, is a type of betting where customers pay into a pool to bet against each other. This is different to betting with a bookmaker, where the customer's bet is against the bookmaker. All bookmaker's betting in the Republic is subject to an on-course levy. These levies and gate fees 'fund the industry' and allow GRI to upgrade tracks and facilities and to supplement prize money. This is important for the industry to reflect its 'contribution' to the economy. The customer does not pay tax on racecourse bets or winnings (Greyhound Racing Ireland 2022f). This is an incentive for the betting customer and is key to the industry's mission statement to offer customers an exciting event with tax-free earnings. This is the organisation that coordinates racing events for greyhound owners and trainers.

The number of greyhounds in Ireland is difficult to determine because the industry has classified this as 'commercially sensitive' information and declared it outside of the scope of the Freedom of Information Act (Greyhound Racing Ireland 2022c). Some information is provided through the industry's incomplete database, industry reports and Parliamentary Questions. An estimate of 16,640[22] greyhound pups were whelped (born) in 2019 for both Ireland's racing market and international sales primarily to the UK (Power 2021, 19). Greyhounds are registered with the Irish Coursing Club between 12-24 months old when they begin their racing careers. There were 10,475 greyhounds registered from December 2020 to November 2021 (Cairns 2021; Greyhound Racing Ireland 2021b), likely whelped between mid-2019 to early 2020. These registrations do not include puppies under 12 months old or any ex-racing greyhounds being kept as pets at home or abroad. While the data available publicly is incomplete, it is clear there are thousands of puppies that are whelped and never registered. A report commissioned by Greyhound Racing Ireland (the partially state funded organisation responsible for industry oversight) found that some 6,000 greyhound pups were unaccounted for each year due to a lack of traceability (Preferred Results Ltd. 2017, 93).

The Irish Retired Greyhound Trust (the industry's rehoming organisation) partially funded the rehoming of a record number of greyhounds in Ireland and internationally in 2021. An increase of 27% on the previous year, over 2,000 were rehomed in the USA, UK, Italy and Ireland (Irish Retired Greyhound Trust 2022). This does not include the additional unknown number of greyhounds rehomed from tracks privately or through charities who do not claim the IRGT's financial contribution[23]. The data on registered greyhounds available to the public includes all those registered from 1900. There is, however, no consistent data on retirement. My estimate of the number of industry-related dogs in Ireland in any given year is as follows: Pre-racing dogs: 16,000+, active racing dogs: 3,600 (2015 figures, Preferred Results Ltd. 2017, 3) and newly-retired greyhounds: 2000+, making a total of 21,500 industry-related dogs. Additionally, I estimate that there are approximately 20,000 ex-industry Irish-bred

[22] 2,600 litters were whelped in 2019 (Power 2021:18). Records are not kept on numbers of pups per litter. Only those registered for racing are recorded. Full data should be available for 2021 since the launch of the new traceability system but was not yet available at the time of writing. What was released is: 2,185 litters whelped resulting in 13,978 pups. I have used this average of 6.4 pups per litter to estimate 16,640 pups in 2019.

[23] The IRGT will pay for vaccines, a Pet Passport for international rehoming, and €50 toward spay/neutering (neutering in Rural Ireland ~€100, Dublin ~€150).

greyhounds living internationally, though the reader must take the paucity of data available from the industry into consideration.

Despite the social value the racing community offers to its rural participants (again, mostly men), the industry participants are ageing, and participant numbers have been in decline since at least 2005 (Power 2021, 24). Through the Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund, the Irish government continues to increase funding (€88 million for 2022 increased to €91m for 2023) in aid of what it terms an 'indigenous'[24] industry which supports rural communities and employment (Power 2018, 6). Without the greyhound industry's share of funding [€18.2 million for 2023 (Brennan 2022a)], the industry would collapse (Power 2021, 2) leading to a loss of rural jobs. What constitutes a 'job' is, however, unclear. In addition to the 6,200 greyhound owners, there are a further 4,000 people "deriving economic benefit from the greyhound sector" including veterinarians, bartenders, betting agents, and cleaners at the track (Power 2021, 3). Greyhound racing has a country-wide presence and greyhounds are commonly seen being taken for walks on residential streets, country lanes, and in parks. However, racing owners are primarily found in non-urban areas in the province of Munster, reinforcing that racing is a "part of the social and economic fabric of rural Ireland and an important way of life" (Power 2021, 2).

The Irish industry's report found that the greyhound racing industry in Ireland generates income from breeding, not from racing (Preferred Results Ltd. 2017, 93). This is a key difference between the racing industries internationally. It produces breeding in excess of requirements, with many excess puppies sold for less than the cost of production (Preferred Results Ltd. 2017, 3) or culled (slaughtered) when they are not sold (RTÉ Press Pack 2019; Shouldice and Ryan 2019). This encourages greyhound owners in the UK to purchase Irish greyhounds for less than it would cost to breed their own. Approximately 85% of the UK racing greyhound population is made up of Irish bred greyhounds (Power 2021, 20). The Irish taxpayer is therefore indirectly supporting the UK's racing industry.

The Irish Coursing Club (ICC) is responsible for the 'stud book' which holds all records on the breeding, naming, sale, and registration of the country's greyhounds. This is in line with the record keeping required of other types of livestock, rather than the less strenuous registration

[24] While hare coursing could be considered indigenous to Ireland, track racing was first established in the USA in 1919 (Dorchak 2015).

of pedigree pet dogs. However, the ICC does not consistently account for individual pups whelped. Only upon naming at the beginning of their racing career (between 1-2 years old) does a greyhound appear on the system (Leddin 2022b; see a different record of this Parliamentary Question at Greyhound Racing Ireland 2022d). In response to public pressure intensified by the RTÉ documentary *Greyhounds Running for their Lives* (2019), state funding has required more transparent record keeping and a commitment to greyhound welfare.

As part of complying with the Greyhound Racing Act 2019, a more vigorous record system was required (Rásaíocht con Éireann Traceability System) and was launched by GRI in January 2021. Their maintenance of the system would reflect integrity, transparency, and responsible governance. While the GRI's website and Parliamentary Questions stated that the new traceability system was in operation in January 2022, a more recent Parliamentary Question noted the system would be functional in 2022/2023 (Leddin 2022a). Although the traceability system itself will not be made available publicly, the first public report was due in January 2022 (Ó Broin 2021). At the time of writing (February 2024), it is not available online and my written request to the GRI was not responded to or acknowledged.

Further, while a change of ownership (sale or rehoming) or death should have been reflected in the previous traceability system, it was up to greyhound owners to report these changes and the ICC was responsible to update the system. This record keeping was not enforced or overseen, so dogs entered into the system for racing were not reliably tracked when they stopped racing. At the time of writing, the industry has not established a penalty for owners/trainers who fail to accurately record the number of dogs whelped, currently racing, retired, or deceased into the new database.

While the industry prides itself on the traceability of its dogs, the records are not made available, bringing into question any meaningful transparency. The industry may be changing, but it appears to be doing so quite reluctantly. Participants in my research will show that individual owners and trainers have the capacity to change their practices more quickly, as I will illustrate next.

Contested Communities: Eamon and Bill

While race nights are the set pieces of the industry, it is made up of a network of individuals. The industry tends to give the impression of a homogenous entity of welfare-conscious,

record-keeping businessmen in agreement with the standards and practices of the organisation. And this portrayal of the 'community' is useful for both the collective and the government which funds it on grounds of both beneficial to the rural economy and heritage. However, questions such as what holds groups together and what separates them have been central concerns of anthropology since its establishment as a social science discipline.

For much of this history, notions of Community has been discussed in anthropological literature (Redfield 1955; Arensberg and Kimball (1968) [1940]; Frankenberg 1966). Physical location was of primary importance for some researchers (Minar and Greer 1970; Frankenberg 1966). The criteria for social or geographical isolation was rejected by Barth (1969) who instead suggested the creation of community is a social process in which groups identified themselves as distinct from others. Even though group members may change over time, the community's identity remains intact. Further, individuals can claim more than one group identity. Each identity is maintained through a relational process of inclusion and exclusion (for a recent examination of inclusion/exclusion in the Deaf community see Friedner and Kusters 2020, 34). Barth also asserted that some long-term inter-group interactions are important because they maintain relationships between groups. Building on Barth's view of community as a social process, Halperin includes people who engage in everyday practices that link them to an area, past or present (Halperin 1998) or, indeed, to an online space (Wilson and Peterson 2002). Communities can be contentious, layered, and changing but come together as a collective against outsiders to preserve their rights. The racing community, as they refer to themselves, is also a 'collective' because they are working together for the common purpose of preserving the racing industry.

As an analytical concept, this perspective is useful here in the creation of the greyhound racing 'community' because they identify themselves as such, as Barth (1969) and Halperin (1998) suggest communities do. While the concentration of the collective is rural, there is considerable movement between their homes and the urban racetracks where they regularly meet. The racing collective reaches beyond a physical location. Next, despite a decades-long decline in numbers of owners, trainers, and racetrack attendees, and the (relative) influx of women into the industry, the idea of a racing community identity has persevered, as Barth suggested.

This persistence is in part in opposition to animal welfare activists calling for an end to track racing. Even in the USA where greyhound racing is largely defunct[25], the collective still maintains an active presence through social media. This use of social media, like Benedict Anderson (1983) points to print media in his examination of the creation of nationalism, sets a specific space where information is found, shared, and discussed. Liam Dowling, the owner of one of Ireland's largest and most successful racing kennels, pointed to a targeted social media campaign against Irish greyhound and horse racing and beef farming which he claims is funded by American anti-racing advocates (O'Connor 2020). What is of relevance here is that these social media attacks have re-solidified, for Dowling, the unity of the racing 'community' (collective) in opposition to animal welfare activists. He reasserts their racing values – working class, Irish traditions, responsible care in kennels, uniting urban and rural people, making a profit, providing jobs to Irish people, fundraising for charity, and offering race attendees a fun night out (ibid.).

In the case of greyhound racing, the 'community' portrayed by the industry and government in news and social media is one that encompasses rural ideals (although Liam Dowling asserted that the racing community is country wide – both urban and rural), a proud heritage, and carrying on an important and profitable legacy of expert breeding, rearing, and racing. These ideals may tie the 'community' together, but the practices of care, ethics, and integrity within the 'community' are varied, contested, emotional, and fiercely defended as a collective. One greyhound racing YouTube channel[26] and blogger[27] notes, it is the similarity of routines that ties them together,

> All over Ireland, the racing community get up at first light to work with, play with and spend time with their greyhounds. For generations, our families' lives have revolved around our greyhounds and their care.

Here, as Halperin (1998) suggested, these everyday practices of care which dominate most greyhound trainers' lives unites them as the racing 'community'. And certainly, ties to outside 'groups' like the rescue workers who take in unneeded greyhounds, reinforce existing groups but also forge social ties between them. To interrogate this representation of the greyhound

[25] Though legal in several American states, the two remaining tracks are both in the state of West Virginia.
[26] https://www.youtube.com/@racinggreyhoundsofireland464. Accessed 03/02/2024.
[27] https://www.facebook.com/greyhoundsofireland/. Accessed 03/02/2024.

racing 'community', I will introduce two greyhound owner/trainers who participated in my research.

Eamon

Eamon is a greyhound owner and trainer who lives with his female partner on 30 acres of land in the southeast of Ireland. Now in their thirties, they bought their house and land while still in their 20s with the intent to improve the facilities they had for their greyhounds. As a child growing up on the family farm, Eamon got into greyhounds through his father, who used to keep 15 – 20 dogs at any time. Eamon says he "gradually grew into them and once you have one, that's it – they just get a grip on you". This joke crosses over to the greyhound rescue world. It's often said that once you have one, you won't be long getting a second or third. He now owns, breeds, trains, and races his own greyhounds.

Eamon funds the care of his own dogs through their prize winnings and the fees he earns from housing, training, and racing others' greyhounds. He notes only a handful of people in Ireland are successful enough to earn a living through racing. Instead, his full-time employment in IT pays the bills. It does not impinge on his commitment to his dogs whose daily routine begins at 5.30am and ends at 9.30pm.

Eamon is talkative and eager to show me his kennels and routine when Covid pandemic restrictions allow. He prides himself on the care and structure he provides for his dogs and sends follow-up photos, videos, and texts. It is important to him for the non-racing public to understand his commitment and dedication to rehoming each dog at the end of its career. Eamon's day begins at 5am. He goes out to the dogs' kennels about 5.30am to let them out into a fenced yard for half an hour while he cleans the kennels and prepares their breakfast of Weetabix, honey, a sardine, and "a hot drop of milk". They relax after their breakfast while Eamon prepares their main meal. Then he is back out to walk them on the local roads for 2.5 to 3 miles or "gallop" them in his purpose-built run.

"Gallops" are an outdoor purpose-built run for dogs to practice on. This would ordinarily be on the premises of the kennels and require an investment of several hundred to several thousand euro. (According to a greyhound forum, greyhound trainers who might just have one or two dogs would use good gallops of other trainers.) There is lively debate on greyhound community forums about the best fencing and ground materials, distance, width,

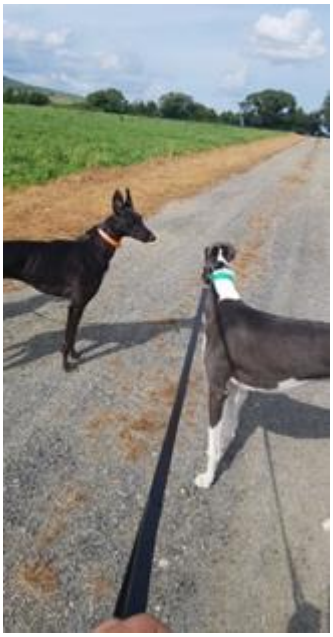
and incline of a gallops. Also hotly debated is the cost of such a structure and the frequency of use. That aside, most gallops are straight for the dogs' safety (while racetracks are oval for ease of the viewers). They are fenced with a mixture of hedging, link fencing, or wood panels and have a grass or sawdust groundcover. They are of a set distance of 300-500 yards. Eamon explains that a trainer would never gallop a dog over 525 yards; that distance is only for a race. The set distance is to have the dog familiar with a consistent racing distance (although it varies from racetrack to racetrack), but also to facilitate those trainers who record their dog's speed.

Eamon familiarizes his dogs with entering, waiting in, and exiting a trap. It is important for them to get used to the sound, feel and smell of the traps so they are not fearful at the track. This sensory recognition has been examined in other type of dog training, such as for police dogs (Smith 2019) and race horses (Cassidy 2002). On the day of my visit to the Shelbourne track, most dogs were simply picked up and placed into the traps. Very few walked in voluntarily. In this way, Eamon's attention to his dog's sensory comfort through training is different to the norm.

Plate 15 Training trap in closed position. Used to train greyhounds how to enter and exit. Photo by Eamon

Plate 16 Training trap in open position. Used to train greyhounds how to enter and exit for racing. Photo by Eamon

For exercise and to keep them in good physical condition, some days the dogs are let off into a fenced field to "do their own thing" and are then lead walked or galloped. A key element of training for working or racing dogs is the belief that the trainer is encouraging natural behaviour and it is 'fun' for the dogs (Smith et al. 2021).



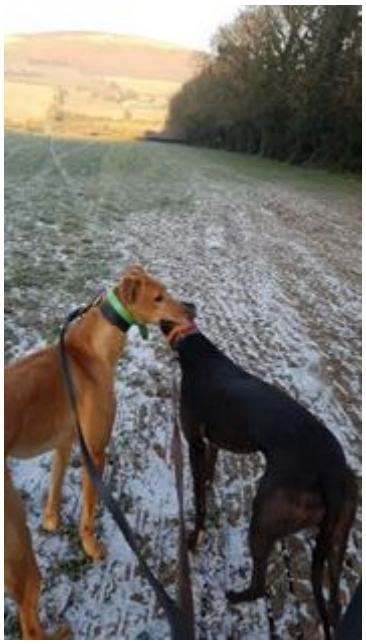


Plate 17 Racing greyhounds are walked daily on a variety of surfaces and in all types of weather. Photos by Eamon

After their exercise, Eamon inspected each dog for any "little injuries". Greyhounds are prone to "taking little knocks and pull muscles" because of their slight frames and small bones. So, each day, he will "rub them down, check them over and make sure they're 100%" because the smallest injury could lead them to underperform. While this task is intended to catch

minor injuries that could affect performance, this attention to care is overlooked by the media. After being checked over, each dog is returned to their kennel to rest at 7.30am. Eamon arrived at his full-time employment at 8am.

Eamon's family home is nearby and still owned by his mother. She runs Eamon's father's old racing kennels as a boarding kennel since he passed away. Either she or Eamon's partner will look after the dogs while he is working. It is this day long commitment involving several family members which suits keeping and training greyhounds in rural locations and as part of a working farm. At 10am, the dogs will be let back out for 10-15 minutes to "clean out" (go to the toilet). Then they are returned to their kennels. At 1pm, they are let back out to "empty themselves" (go to the toilet) for half an hour before being fed their main meal.

Eamon continues, they are fed "a ridiculous amount of good food": one pound of beef mince, filet of haddock, tomatoes ("very good for them to stop cramping"), four slices of brown bread ("good carbohydrates, but boy, you have to be watching because brown bread puts a lot of weight on"), a cup or so full of race nuts (a high protein kibble), apple cider vinegar ("that would keep their blood thinned to stop them cramping"), garlic ("keeps their coat well"), glucose, honey ("keeps their throat all lined and their airways clear, helps them breathe when they're running and stops them clogging up), Karron oil (high omega oil also used for horses) and cod liver oil ("very good for their coat). Their food is mixed in their bowl. The dogs are returned to their kennels, fed, and left to relax.

Eamon returns home from work at 5pm to let them back out into their paddock for an hour "to do their own thing". Then they are returned to their kennels. At 9.30 or 10pm, Eamon lets them back outside for the last time to "empty out", following which they are brought back in when "the jackets do be put on them", and they are "put to bed for the night".

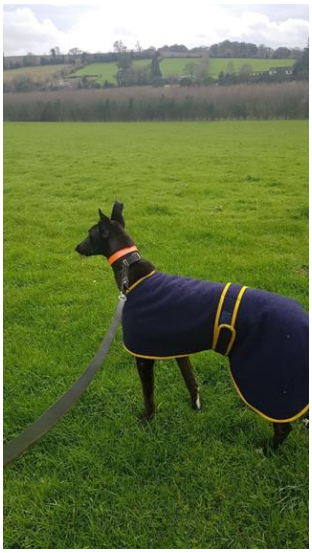


Plate 18 Greyhound wearing its jacket. Photo by Eamon

Each dog has its own kennel of about four feet by four feet. They have "got nice big cushy duvets" to sleep on at the back wall of their kennel. This comfort is not an extravagance. Greyhounds have lower body fat and thin skin compared to other breeds of dogs and can develop sores if they are not provided with sufficient padding.

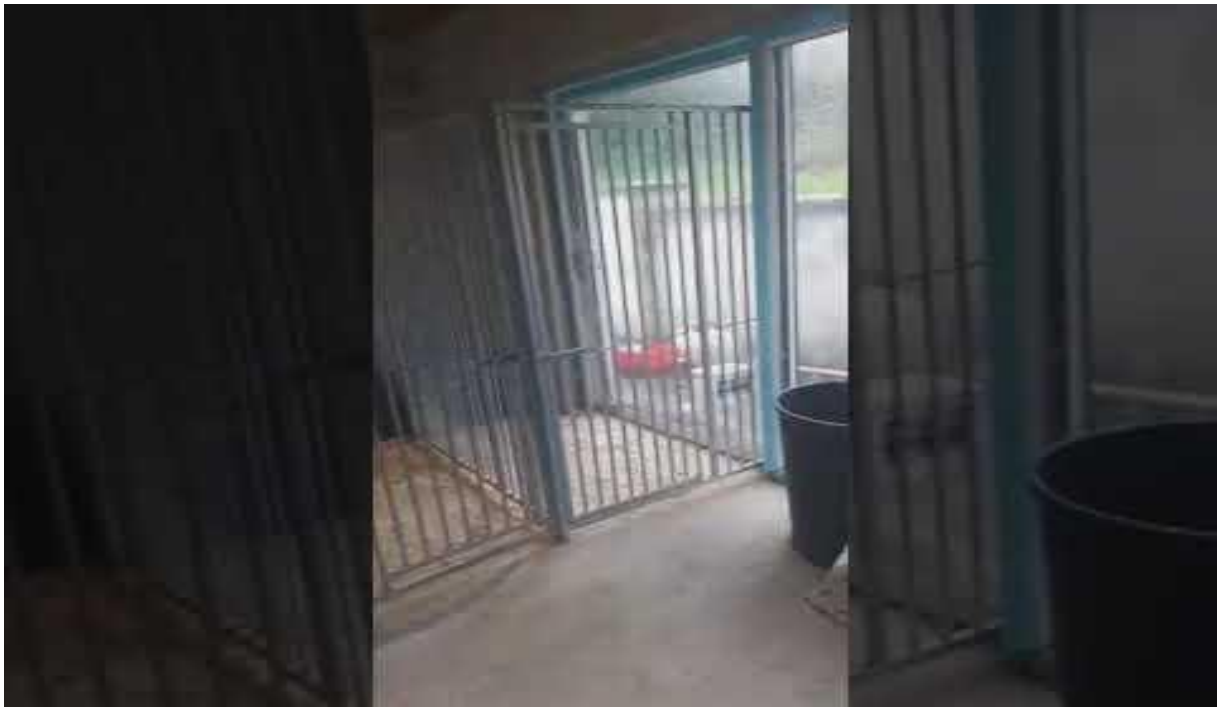


Plate 19 Eamon's racing kennels are modern and spacious. These kennels were purpose built 4 years ago when Eamon bought this property. Video by Eamon.

The 16 to17-hour routine starts again the next day. Eamon says that people think you can "just do this and that" with greyhounds, but "if you want to get results with them, you have

to put in the time and effort with them". In response to the long days and commitment, he says, "some think you'd be mad, but it's like a bug. It's hard not to have them around". As is common for livestock farmers, he does not go away on holidays because it is too much work to find someone to care for the dogs for any length of time. Instead, he prioritises racing as his social outlet and spends two nights a week at local racetracks.

Race Day

Upon arriving at the racetrack, Eamon takes his dogs to queue outside the weigh-in building, as is required before each race. The dog's "race card", a paper document holding their racing and identification details, is checked against their earmark. To race, they must be within three pounds above or below their previous racing weight. This is why it's so important to watch what they eat, he told me, "You can't just throw in handfuls of different sorts of food. You're always monitoring what you're feeding them".

After 'weigh-in', each trainer takes their own dog to its allotted kennel – numbered according to its trap number. The dog waits and relaxes inside the heated kennels until their race time. At race time, Eamon will collect his dog from its kennel, "parade them around and then just give them a little bit of a rub up again to get the muscles warm in them", then put the dog into the traps.

Plate 20 Approaching the holding kennels at a racing stadium. Kennel number correlates to trap number. Photo by Eamon.

Then at this point, "you're at the race, and it's just all down to the dog and a little bit of luck. All the work and all the excitement, just for 29 to 30 seconds".

After the race, Eamon collects his dog and brings it to the washdown facility, or “mall” as he calls it, where after a wash and dry, the dog is taken back to the van and given an electrolyte drink. This is to “bring the dog back around and stop them from dehydrating after the race”. If he has another dog running, Eamon returns to the stadium to wait his turn again to do “the same thing over with the next”. “You’re home then”, he notes, “depending on the race, could be anywhere between 11 and 12 o’clock you’d be home of a race night” and up at 5am the following morning “to repeat all that over again”.

Breeding greyhounds

Plate 21 Greyhound puppies under a heat lamp. Photo by Eamon.

Plate 22 Greyhound puppies eating their breakfast under a heat lamp. Video by Eamon.

Breeding is a key component of the racing industry. Not all owners/trainers breed dogs, but Eamon does. He "whelps down" (breeds) one or two bitches each year because he's "on a small scale" and he doesn't want to "be overrun with too many dogs". In addition to his "7 or 8" racing dogs, at the time of my fieldwork, he had 6 pups. Three 13 ½ week old pups and three 4 ½ month old pups that will all be reared until they are old enough to begin training. As is typical in greyhound racing, as soon as the pups were weaned, they stay out in a paddock with a large, insulated dog box until they reach schooling age (most commonly 15 months for females and 'a bit more' for males). Their meals would be brought to their paddock.

There are a lot of people who have only one race dog, but Eamon feels that greyhounds are pack dogs and do better with company. Mary, the founder of Irish Greyhounds International rehoming charity agrees and argues that it is "fair enough" that people want an only dog, but they must remember that greyhounds grow up with their littermates in a paddock for their first 12 months of life. A greyhound "has got a great sense of self confidence and self-reliance" to be an only dog, and "after cat friendly [they could live with a cat in the house], it's one of the hardest questions to ask of a greyhound". Other kennels do not have this concern over small numbers.

The larger facilities, Eamon asserts, are the ones that make a living at it. They have "three, four, five people employed in their kennels" and "between 30 and 40 greyhounds". What is considered 'big' though is relative. Another racing owner/trainer suggested big kennels have '50, 60, or 70 dogs' (Racing Greyhounds of Ireland 2021). Eamon explains these have an "absolutely amazing set up – the care and everything". These are the kennels that "produce top notch dogs – all the open class [fastest and most valuable] racing dogs". Each employee has responsibility for looking after five or six dogs. These kennels also receive training fees from individuals who own greyhounds but do not have the time or knowledge to train their dog themselves. One of Ireland's most successful trainers, Liam Dowling of Ballymac Kennels is an example of this 'setup'. Dowling has 7 full time employees and 150 dogs (Greyhound Racing Ireland 2020c; Faut Pas Réver 2016). In a passionate interview about the industry, he described his pride of his kennels, of the Irish racing community and its traditions (O'Connor 2020). But not everyone who had champion race dogs kept such large numbers nor are they as supportive of the industry in its current state. I turn to Bill next.

Bill

Bill is in his mid-70s and runs his large farm alongside two of his children. Like his parents before him, Bill spent a lifetime owning, training, and breeding greyhounds on the family farm. Although he did not operate on the large scale of Liam Dowling, he agrees with Eamon that to make any profit from racing one would need to have fifty or more dogs. Speaking to me from his living room sofa, he was familiar with Covid-required video calls. Despite the constant interruptions from family members, workmen, friends, and dogs wandering through the room, Bill was jovial. He briefly reminisced about his racing days but much more

passionately explained the problems of the industry, as he saw them. This mainly centered around doping scandals and the industry's refusal to address it adequately and fairly.

Bill bred, reared, trained, and raced greyhounds as a hobby but his dogs were very successful winning some of the most prestigious races. The fees he earned from rearing [up to 18 months when they left his premises to be 'schooled' (trained for racing) elsewhere] other owners' greyhounds and any prizemoney earned from his own dogs was only enough to offset the cost of keeping his dogs. At the most, he kept 20 dogs at a time at varying stages of their training or racing. However, Bill's approach to rearing and training greyhounds was less intensive than Eamon's routine detailed above. Rather than walking them by hand, Bill would exercise his dogs on a round pole system as used to exercise race horses (for horse racing see Cassidy 2002). Bill found this method efficient as the dogs would exercise themselves while he conducted farm business.

Despite his "love" of the "sport", Bill reluctantly left the industry a decade ago. He explained his dogs could no longer win against dogs who were doped, saying "drugged to speed up, drugged to slow down. For performance, to run through injuries. You can't win without 'em." For years, he and a group of like-minded owners fought the industry from within to improve welfare and fairness by calling out unsportsmanlike behaviours and practices. He finally accepted that the "big lads" had more money and power, so he left "the game". While he no longer keeps any greyhounds, he is still pro-racing. He is against how the industry is run and who is running it.

Not all owner/trainers want their dogs rehomed after racing. Unlike Eamon, Bill never kept any greyhounds past retirement. Avoiding the question about where his dogs went after their careers ended, Bill asserted that they would not be happy as pets because they were working dogs. Like other working dogs, Bill felt they needed too much exercise to be cooped up in a house or apartment, that they would not have their routines maintained to which they were accustomed and, more uniquely to greyhounds, they were not safe around other animals due to their high prey drive. Further, he asserted that they could not be city dogs because the constant noise and activity would distress them. Bill says his concern is for what he considers the wellbeing of the greyhounds and the safety of other animals. Eamon by contrast would disagree with Bill's conclusion. He prided himself in those same routines as key for setting his dogs up for their future as pets. Additionally, Eamon regards the greyhounds' inherent

laziness as a selling point for them as pets. Bill's perspective is not unwarranted as some greyhound lines are highly strung. Plus, because of their racing diet, they can be giddy and excitable. This amount of energy is ideal for an athlete in training but not manageable for most pet homes. Older racing owners might not have been aware that a change in diet can decrease the dog's drive, energy, and reactiveness making them suitable pets. Eamon's perspective may be more representative of current greyhound trainers, indicated by the large number of greyhounds surrendered to rescue shelters with corresponding decrease in euthanasia numbers in the pound[28]. Further, it may show a transition from Bill's generation to Eamon's in how trainers in general view the next stage in a greyhound's life.

This chapter began with an aim to explore greyhound owner/trainers' relationships to and with their greyhounds. Comparing and contrasting Eamon and Bill's approaches to kennel size (i.e. numbers of dogs), training, racing, and rehoming their dogs can offer further insights into the industry's practices. To many in the industry, greyhounds are a working animal with a specific purpose and specialised care which does not make them suitable as pets. The casual observers and animal welfare workers I interviewed disagree with this position. They argue that they are in demand as pets in Ireland and internationally and a concerted effort must be made by the industry to rehome them. In the next section, I turn to the relationships commercial and hobby farmers have with their livestock in Northeast Scotland where Rhoda Wilkie (2005) revealed different relationships, values, practices and ideologies within an community. 'Community' in this sense is often depicted as homogeneous but in terms of practices – as illustrated by Eamon and Bill – is much more contested terrain. The classification of greyhounds as livestock and conceptualized as working dogs by some trainers in the industry is an important point for both understanding how owner/trainers relate to their greyhounds, and to examining conflict between the industry, rescues and concerned citizens.

The 'Social Life' of Greyhounds

Greyhounds hold an unusual space as they are domestic dogs but, as suggested by Justine Groizard in her research on the greyhound racing industry in Australia, 'racing greyhounds are imagined as distinct from other dogs' (2019, 139). In contrast to 'other dogs', there was no demand to keep greyhounds as pets for generations. Further, they are considered farm

[28] This is more complicated than the local pound statistics reveal as is explored further in Chapter 3 and *Greyhound Racing for their Lives (Shouldice and Ryan 2019)*.

animals in Ireland under the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013 due to their use in sport and breeding[29]. This classification is key to understanding the relationships between owner/trainers and their greyhounds, and the conflict between the industry and rescue organisations and concerned citizens. Because of this classification and their perception as high energy and unsafe around other animals, many Irish people within the industry did not consider them suitable as pets and disposed of them after their racing career. There was no moral expectation or legal obligation to keep them beyond their productive/profitable usefulness. The industry's understanding of commodification reinforces human exceptionalism by owning and controlling 'nature' and its processes. However, these practices were challenged as the concept of the greyhounds was blurred as they became 'more than' animals through animal welfare advocacy. The opening of a new avenue for ex-racing greyhounds as pets moved them closer to culture. While GRI maintains its priority as a commercial industry, the practices of individual trainers reveal the complexity of the relationships they have with their dogs and rescue workers.

Sentient commodities

Ethnographic research on human-animal relationships with farm animals has identified the complexity of relationships between farmers and their livestock (Wilkie 2005, 2010, 2017). Farm animals are an economic commodity. However, there is growing recognition that animals have feelings, and some can form attachments with humans. Because of this awareness among her farmer participants, Rhoda Wilkie coined the term 'sentient commodities' to describe those animals with whom a person has 'interacted in a meaningful way' and can be considered to possess an 'ambiguous' status between pet and produce (2005, 219; 2017). This means that they may have an emotional attachment to the animal and treat it differently than other livestock with more gentle care, spoken to, and provided with better veterinary care. For example, lambs and friendly cows become attached to the farmers and their children (as indicated by the lambs and cows following them around) as much as people become attached to the animals. There is an emotional connection which makes sending them to slaughter more difficult. Yet, as businesspeople, they cannot keep animals that are

[29] Section 2(1) of the Animal Health and Welfare Act, 2013 defines 'farm animals' as, among other qualifiers '(b) for use in, or for the purposes of, breeding, sport or the farming of land'. It can be interpreted that greyhounds are both for sport and breeding and are thus farm animals (Dáil Éireann Debate 2021). The Welfare of Greyhounds Act 2019 (2011) provides recommendations for greyhounds' care during their racing career.

not productive (see Clarkson's Farm for a depiction of an unproductive dairy cow becoming a pet 2023). Despite the mutuality of these relationships, the animal remains a saleable commodity. This is contrasted with a farmer's pet dog who they would not sell on even if something was wrong with it – they would keep it until its death (Wilkie 2010, 115) . Here Wilkie shows how farmers' emotional attachment to their livestock can make it difficult to send them to slaughter.

The relationships humans have with farm animals are "complex, ambiguous and dynamic" (Wilkie 2005, 213). While comparing industrialised farming with hobby farming, one might imagine that industrial sized farmers are detached from their animals while hobby farmers have more individual relationships. However, the stage of life in which the farmer specialises may have more effect on the emotional relationship than the number of animals on the farm. Those who breed, milk, rear, or name their animals may have a more personal relationship with individual animals because of the intimacy, frequency, or length of time spent with them. Wilkie notes that even the animals that farmers are not emotionally attached to will live out their lives on the farm and this shapes their relationship differently to those who slaughter the animals and may intentionally maintain a detachment from them. This is important here because of the shift in the post-racing life expectancy of the greyhound. Formerly, there was little option for life after racing, but now there is opportunity for the greyhound to become a pet. This potentially changes the 'stage of life' aspect of the greyhound-trainer relationship. The owner/trainer may no longer have to 'hold back' an emotional connection with their greyhounds because, even though the dog will not become *their* pet, it will become someone's pet.[30]

Greyhounds are now (often) conceptualised differently than they were twenty years ago. While beef cattle are still fulfilling their main purpose after death as food[31], greyhounds now have a purpose beyond racing – they will be retrained, or decommodified, as pets. This makes their time as race dogs contested because they are not 'just' animals. They will continue to circulate into rescue and on to a pet home. Non-racing dog owners expect a lifelong emotional

[30] Wilkie examines a gendered aspect to care and how animal welfare conditions are improving as women increasingly participate in this industry. Eamon also noted this in greyhound racing. He suggests female trainers are getting faster dogs through a different approach to care and training. However, in this research, the clearer gendered division is between the racing industry and rescue volunteers. I will address this in the next chapter.

[31] It is not within the scope of this thesis to examine the important anthropological debates around farming and the role of meat in diets and animal activism.

human-canine closeness (as Dogs Trust advertises: 'Dogs are for life, not just for Christmas') yet greyhounds are routinely discarded after racing (formerly euthanized, now often rehomed). Wilkie's insights are a good start for this discussion about the uncertain conceptual space in which greyhounds-as-farm animals reside. However, it is insufficient for the examination of canines where there is a plausible alternative to euthanasia. My intent here was to emphasise the variable and complex relationships between humans and hounds.

Nature/culture divide

The case of greyhounds is complicated because of their species. In Ireland, the UK, the USA and Australia, dogs hold a different place in the minds of pet owners than say, cattle or sheep. Unlike cattle or sheep, dogs are not eaten, often live in our homes, and may even sleep in our beds. This moves them yet closer to culture (Thomas 1983) and ties them to a moral order (Anderson 1998; Haraway 2008; Sahlins 1976). This is what animal welfare advocates are arguing for – that as a species, dogs should not be used as 'commodities' and there is a moral obligation to care for them for their natural lives. The industry, in turn, repeatedly asserts on their website and in media interviews that they do care for their dogs as their dogs are the most legislated for breed. They imply this means greyhounds are the best protected and cared for, rather than as a reflection of the industry's poor welfare record requiring specific legislation that other breeds do not need. I will explore how the changing practices of the owners/trainers within the industry are blurring the boundaries between nature and culture while the industry seeks to maintain the 'natural' order of owning and racing dogs.

As indicated by the GRI's mission statement, their primary objective is to profit from the breeding and racing of greyhounds while ensuring an adherence to the rules, regulations, and traditions of the industry. The GRI's aim is to 'commercialise' the industry, while maintaining greyhounds' welfare during training and racing through track veterinarians and kennel inspections. It does not include a responsibility for life before their racing career has begun nor after their racing career has ended. It is important to note that culling dogs and cats not needed for sale, breeding, or work was seen as a reasonable (and even a compassionate part of caregiving) course of action by many within the Irish agricultural community (I will return to this topic in Chapter 5). Several participants, including Fi with whom I attended Shelbourne racetrack discussed earlier, note that this would include unwanted litters from farm cats, stray dogs, failed hunting dogs, and working dogs who became too old to work. Greyhounds are

largely owned by those currently farming or from a farming background, so it is unsurprising that excess greyhounds would be managed this way with a type of welfare in mind.

Further, as Bill notes, many in the racing industry believe that greyhounds are working dogs and unsuitable as pets. Their classification as livestock (Crawley 2019) and their oversight through the Department of Agriculture reinforces this notion. It also justifies their practice of euthanizing their dogs after their career, claiming they will not be happy if they are not running either on the track or in fields with their pack. This classification of greyhounds as livestock or working dogs is an important point for both understanding how owner/trainers relate to their greyhounds, and to examining the relational conflict between industry and animal welfare activists. To many in the industry, greyhounds are not suitable as pets, but greyhound rescue volunteers disagree. They argue that greyhounds are in demand as pets here and internationally and it is the industry's responsibility to fund their rehoming and transport. The industry's economic reports do not take the cost of greyhound rehabilitation and rehoming into their economic cost/benefit analysis. Rehabilitating and rehoming greyhounds is 'free' labour from rescue volunteers supported largely through rescue volunteers' fundraising activities.

The industry's annual reports prior to 2014 were limited to financial accounts, but the 2014 Annual report mentions the initiative to promote greyhounds as pets through Retired Greyhound Shows. The GRI and Irish Retired Greyhound Trust (IRGT) teamed up with the Irish Kennel Club and GAIN Pet Foods to run a series of shows in Ireland. Winners qualified for the National Finals as part of the Irish Kennel Clubs national show at the IKC show Centre on St. Patrick's Day (17th March) 2014. Welfare warranted increased space in the reports after 2014. In the 2018 report, there was considerable concern over Brexit because of 'constant traffic of greyhounds between Ireland and England where 85% of racing greyhounds are Irish'. This report also notes the board's commitment to greyhound welfare. Out of 422 kennel inspections and 69 'full welfare investigations', only four offences were served. The board was reassured that welfare was of an appropriate standard. This is plausible, as rescue workers note the dogs come into them in reasonable physical condition despite the fleas and worms (see Chapter 3). The 2019 annual report emphasises improvements to animal welfare while the 2021 report focuses on the detrimental financial effects of Covid-19 on the industry (Indecon International Economic Consultants 2019; Power 2021). This shift to include welfare

matters in annual reports could reflect an improvement in husbandry practices but it also allows the Irish government to continue funding the industry amid welfare concerns.

The regional nature of greyhound racing is a key part of the justification for the Irish government's continued funding of the industry. It supports employment in rural areas. On the evening I attended Shelbourne Park Greyhound Stadium, the top prize was €1750, but nearly every dog who raced earned back their €20 entry fee[32]. Additionally, in the top prize (fastest) race of the night I attended, 4 of the 6 dogs in the race were bred from two top kennels. These kennels also dominated the parentage of the rest of the night's races. This means that these two kennels are more likely to have a dog winning prize money. Prizewinning dogs get higher stud (breeding) fees and thus have value after their racing career. They can earn their owners more money for longer. However, to dominate the sport like this, they must maintain hundreds of dogs, which is also the strategy for top owners in horse racing (Cassidy 2002). This takes up space for kennels, whelping areas, exercise paddocks, gallops (a long, fenced sand or grass run for greyhounds to safely practice running), kitchen facilities, etc. and rural areas are ideal. This is what is meant by the criticism from within the industry, by individuals like Bill and Eamon, that the funding doesn't benefit the 'little guy', it benefits the 'larger outfits'. The prize money goes to the big kennels. However, even though the 'little guy' does not benefit from State funding, he contributes to the local economy through buying dog food, cleaning and grooming supplies, building materials, veterinary and health care treatments, etc. These activities, even if of minimal financial contribution, keep local retailers in business. The pressure to win is intense.

According to both Bill and the RTÉ documentary *Running for their Lives* (2019), the level of doping (illegally drugging) is scandalous. As Bill stated, the greyhounds racing in the top class (fastest) races are doped and those who do not dope their dogs simply cannot compete. The industry does blood testing on greyhounds with results published on their website under "Adverse Analytical Findings" (Greyhound Racing Ireland 2022b). The drug tests have confirmed that drugs are used to speed dogs up, slow them down and to run through pain with stimulants like caffeine, Ritalin and cocaine, performance enhancers like steroids, amphetamines, and anti-spasmodics, pain killers like local anesthetics, anti-inflammatories,

[32] Each place finisher wins at least €20. The entry fee for 10 of the 12 races was €20. Two races (the 'Open Class' or fastest dogs) had a €30 entry fee.

and sedatives. The frequency of an 'adverse finding' is less than one might expect if *everyone* was doing it. However, as noted by an experienced veterinarian active in the industry, the level of competence is advanced. So not only do some owners and trainers have the wherewithal to dope their dogs, but they can also administer other drugs to mask the presence of the illegal substances (RTÉ Press Pack 2019).

Another criticism of the industry is the time it took them to respond to the doping crisis. Their own report states "Irish greyhound racing is clearly suffering on-going reputational damage from widespread distrust in its procedures and standards. This is exacerbated by the perception that the same issues are repeatedly raised over many years, and that progress is at best limited" (Scientialis 2015, 5). For example, sampling of greyhounds' blood and hair at sales had been legislated for in 1996, but did not begin until 2014 (ibid., 6). The blood sampling that was conducted was scheduled with advance notice against the repeated recommendations in industry reports since 2006 (ibid., 3).

The industry is pushing for increased commercialisation of racing kennels with a focus on breeding and through gambling at the track and televised races. However, the industry's real human resource is the greyhound owners and trainers. Increasing the number of dogs per kennel and the numbers of gamblers per race would benefit the industry. Much of the industry's population is made up of the small-scale owner-trainers who take on this hobby at a financial loss or just to break even[33]. Responsible owner/trainers like Eamon are unlikely to produce more dogs than they can manage. The large kennels produce 'wastage' at extraordinary levels to find their champion dogs (for horse racing see Cassidy 2002). This focus on the "singular asset" of race times prevents some in the industry, like Bill, from recognising any potential for these dogs other than to be "abandoned" (Tsing 2015, 6). As the industry reasserts its commercial mission, there is little unity among the owner/trainers unless it is to defend themselves against animal welfare activists. What we see here is the reassertion of the industry's approach to control 'nature' which, in part, is disrupted from within through responsible trainers like Eamon. With the public eye turned toward welfare in the racing industry, the 'wastage' is increasingly disposed of into the voluntary sector of rescue organisations.

[33] Prizemoney is usually tax exempt because it is treated as a hobby by Revenue (the department which oversees Irish taxes). https://grireland.ie/YourKennel/prize-money-payments/. Accessed 14/01/2024.

Circulation

In this way, the rescue organizations are the conduits for excess and allow the circulation of dogs to continue. This aligns with Kevin Hetherington's argument that 'disposal is never final' as one might expect with waste or rubbish (2004, 157). Instead, he suggests that disposal 'involves issues of managing social relationships' and the 'movement, transformation, incompleteness, and return' of the material is represented not linearly but as a series of entanglements (2004, 157, 160). The publicity of the greyhound industry's methods of disposal through euthanasia or abandonment on social media shocked animal welfare activists. While violent practices against greyhounds had been (quietly) acceptable and understandable within the industry, they were no longer tolerated in the public arena of social media. A few 'bad eggs' were scapegoated and said to have been ousted from the racing community, according to several participants. The outcry on social media calling for the end of greyhound racing partially influenced the industry's response to push for dogs to be rehomed instead (see Chapter 3). This move toward more ethical disposal of excess dogs created new (and transformed existing) social relationships between individual owner/trainers and rescue workers, the industry and animal welfare activists, greyhounds and their owner/trainers, greyhounds and their rescue workers, and greyhounds and their pet owners. Rescue organizations continue to rehome the industry's dogs which have obtained new value as pets. Waste is never gone, just placed elsewhere.

What we have seen is that the industry has a different goal than the bulk of its membership – hobbyists like Eamon. Instead, the industry needs more owner/trainers like Liam Dowling who approach this from a commercial mindset. The industry needs the fastest dogs to provide the most exciting entertainment for punters. But many younger trainers value their relationship with both their dogs and the racing 'community'. There is demand for more races in slower speed ranges. According to the GRI website and Dowling's newspaper interview (O'Connor 2020) the industry has responded to calls for more races for slower dogs to extend their racing careers. But evening races have not reflected that. As Bill states, the races available for slower dogs are in the morning when many owners and trainers are at their paid employment. And they are just not offered very often because the races are at the discretion of the stadium manager.

Further, this is a hobby where meeting other owners and trainers is part of the enjoyment. Early morning race meetings do not draw a crowd. Younger owners/trainers want their dogs to win races, but they also take pride in the care and routine they provide their dogs with and take responsibility for facilitating their decommodification. For example, a YouTube channel and pro-racing blogger[34] produced a short documentary series to promote the industry in Ireland. In one film, Fionnuala Moloney of Timaru Kennels explains how she races and rehomes greyhounds, saying 'it's the love of it, the love of the dogs. You'll do anything for them' (Racing Greyhounds of Ireland 2021). For Fionnuala, there is no conflict between nature/culture or industry/pet. She can train and race her dogs then rehome them – a circulation through racing to rescue and into a home, all framed by love (for more on love, see Chapter 5). This process of circulation, either through private rehoming, the industry's rehoming centre, or one of the many greyhound rescue charities, will be addressed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter began with 'a night at the dogs' – the colloquial term for attending a greyhound race. This is the public face of the greyhound industry. However, it was the divergent practices of owner/trainers as members of the greyhound 'community' or collective I wished to highlight. Over the course of 25 years, the industry has gradually improved the welfare of its greyhounds. These changes are, in part, due to shifting beliefs about the use of nonhuman animals as entertainment in racing, circuses, and zoos and their welfare in Ireland and internationally. An acknowledgement of animals' sentience is increasing in the West alongside a legal and conceptual shift in their subjectivity and rights. And my owner/trainer participants indicate that their first choice is for their greyhounds to become pets. They do not want to have their dogs euthanized revealing a recognition of their sentience. However, their kennels operate as a business and they cannot house, feed, and exercise unproductive dogs that are not their pets.

As the concerns about animal welfare have intensified in the media and through protests, race goers have responded by avoiding racetracks. The GRI have received the message from

[34] The YouTube channel is 'Racing Greyhounds of Ireland' - similarly named and not to be confused with Greyhound Racing Ireland, the body responsible for racing.

the decline in racecourse attendance (and the Irish government's threat to withhold funding) that a key point of criticism is the lack of preparation for the greyhound's entire life. The new Code of Practice (Greyhound Racing Ireland 2021a) emphasises the responsibility for owners and trainers to plan for the greyhound's life beyond racing, to maintain daily exercise, to administer treatment for fleas and worms, and to ensure registration of each greyhound's birth, naming, sale, transfer, or rehoming (ibid.). These efforts have been long called for in the national media, social media, animal welfare protests, and parliamentary debates. The results of these efforts set out in the November 2021 Code of Practice are yet to be seen. The first annual report on the new traceability system launched in January 2021 was due in January 2022, but was not yet available at the time of writing. Regardless, the State has rewarded the industry's efforts with an increased allocation to the Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund for 2023 to the sum of €91 million of which €18.2m goes to Greyhound Racing Ireland (Brennan 2022a).

Owners like Eamon and Bill fully support the commodification of greyhounds. They have noticed changes in the industry over the years, although they have each responded differently. Eamon's love of the sport is expressed through the daily routine of exercise, care and feeding his dogs receive while they are with him and their placement into a pet home when they have finished racing. They are cared for from birth, through their racing career and breeding life, and moved into suitable pet homes. Eamon's greyhounds are decommodified as they finish their careers due to his fondness for them, his belief that they make good pets generally, and his confidence that the care and routine that he has for his dogs makes them rehomeable. Bill's love of the sport (rather than the dogs) is expressed through his strong stand against doping and his resentment toward an industry that does not promote fair sportsmanship. For Bill, his respect for their working nature means that these dogs cannot be pets and therefore he is not interested in their rehoming. He does keep other breeds of both large and small dogs as pets in his home, so his belief is not that dogs do not belong indoors. Bill is certain that it would be unfair and unsafe to expect a greyhound to live in an urban environment. Like many hunting, racing, and working dogs, the end of their career means euthanasia.

Despite some responsible owner-trainers, the industry is not yet in line with how many Irish pet owners and animal welfare activists imagine dogs should be treated – with the moral

status of a pet which includes emotional attachment and a lifelong commitment. The next chapter will continue this examination of circulation of greyhounds in the context of rescue and welfare organisations.

Chapter 3: “Stuck in the middle”: The Emotional Lives of Rescue Workers

Plate 23 Ex-racing greyhound surrendered by owner to West Coast Rescue. Photo by author.

I’m that desperate to - my passion is too high - that I want to save that dog from being put to sleep at 2 years old.

- Sarah (52), Manager at West Coast Rescue

Introduction

Each year in Ireland, there are thousands of greyhounds that finish their racing careers. A report commissioned by Greyhound Racing Ireland (the partially state funded organisation responsible for industry oversight) found that some 6,000 greyhound pups were unaccounted for each year due to a lack of traceability (Preferred Results Ltd. 2017, 93). Rescue workers and the Greyhound Rescue Association Ireland calculate nearer 20,000 greyhounds (including puppies) are unaccounted for each year (2016). In industry terms, these dogs are 'wastage' (Leddin 2022a). Previously, if these dogs were not kept as breeding stock, they were euthanized or sold to other countries for breeding or racing. These welfare concerns are not unique to Ireland but indicative of international practices in the greyhound and horse racing industries (Groizard 2019; Cassidy 2002).

In 1998, a German animal welfare group opened the first greyhound sanctuary in Ireland. Since then, many more have been created, disbanded, combined, or renamed. With a few exceptions, they are based in Ireland by women originally from the UK and Europe. There are approximately 12 greyhound specific rescues[35] in the Republic of Ireland with additional ones that are multi-breed (and multispecies) but specialise in rehoming sighthounds (the type of dog that hunts by sight like the greyhound, rather than by scent like a bloodhound). This is an astounding number of organisations to address only one breed of dog and reflects the large number of dogs requiring rehoming. Golden Retrievers, ranked the most popular dog breed in Ireland in 2021 (Murphy 2022), have one rescue and a breed club dedicated to them. Of these 12 greyhound rescues, only the industry-run[36] one is pro-racing[37]. The others are either anti-racing or racing neutral, with one seasoned volunteer saying "I'm not anti-racing. I'm anti prick owners". She clarified that 'prick owners' are the ones who cause welfare concerns for doping, untreated injuries, neglect, abuse, and euthanasia. The politicization of rescue organisations is in keeping with research on pit-bull rescues in the US (Peterson 2018).

[35] A note on terminology – I use the word rescue, as it is how my participants refer to their organisations. I use it interchangeably with shelter. Dog pounds are slightly different. They are run and funded by local county councils (or tendered to an outside organisation) and rely on rescues to take the dogs for rehoming. This has significantly decreased the pounds' euthanasia rates nationally.

[36] I use 'the industry' to refer to the greyhound racing industry.

[37] The Irish Retired Greyhound Trust is the industry's organisation to facilitate rehoming. It primarily assists other greyhound rescues through a partial payment for vaccination and spay/neuter. I have used their real name and the names of some pounds. The names of all participants and their organisations have been changed.

All but one of these rescues in Ireland are run by women with women making up the majority of their volunteer rosters[38]. This is not unique to Ireland as 'women compose the undeniable majority of Korean animal activists' (Dugnoille 2014, 7). Other research on shelter work in Ireland has found the majority of the paid workforce in shelters is female (O'Connor 2021). There are dozens of other multi-breed rescues and county council pounds around the country that also have sighthounds, including ex-racing greyhounds. For reasons of space, noise, sanitation, and access to the greyhounds in need, these organisations are primarily in rural areas.

The purpose of these rescues is to take in unwanted greyhounds and rehabilitate them if needed. This might include physical and emotional trauma or behavioural issues. Most greyhounds leave their racing careers in good health. The care of greyhounds in racing kennels is largely adequate according to rescue workers and is reflected in the results of the industry's kennel inspections. Afterall, as rescue workers, racing owners, and trainers note, greyhounds are less likely to win races if they are not healthy. It is expensive to house and train racing greyhounds and prize money is relied upon to fund the current and next generation of racing dogs. Greyhounds' care in kennels may be of a different standard than pet dog owners are accustomed to. For example, the rescue workers noted that all racing greyhounds come in with fleas, most of them with worms. Each dog will require spay/neutering, vaccination, and treatment for parasites. Many will need expensive dental work. On average, an adoption fee of €150[39] is requested, significantly less than the cost of veterinary care, food, housing, and organizational work.

The inner workings of each Irish rescue are based on their beliefs and experience on how to best transition the dog from racing kennel to home life within their budget. Differences may include kenneling (paid) or fostering (volunteer), encouraging meeting beforehand or expecting an outright commitment. Rescues then match applicants based on the greyhound's personality and energy level and the human's lifestyle. The procedure for rehabilitating and

[38] Two notes on gender: 1) With an awareness that gender goes beyond the male/female binary, my participants presented within this binary. Gender identity was not specifically asked about or discussed with my participants. 2) There is a striking gender dimension to this research between the for-profit racing industry (male) and non-profit animal rescue (female) and the resulting burden of emotional labour. However, I cannot adequately address it here. It is worthy of research in its own right.

[39] The industry's Irish Retired Greyhound Trust does not charge an adoption fee but does charge a fee to return a dog if it does not work out.

rehoming ex-racing greyhounds in Australia is more structured with a formal assessment of their success rate including reasons for failed adoptions (Elliott, Toribio, and Wigney 2010). If the greyhound is to be exported as a pet, the Irish rescue will use their assessments to pair them with the most appropriate international rescue. The goal of the rescue is to ensure commitment from the human adopters for the dog's lifetime. Most rescues prefer to export greyhounds to rescue organisations in other countries. Not only does this mean they can send multiple dogs at one time, but it also relieves the time burden of interacting with potential adopters and offering follow up care. This burden of interaction is a significant contributor to compassion fatigue in rescue workers, and the responsibility is passed on to the receiving organisation.

To gain more insight into the running of greyhound rescues, this chapter will summarise the work of four groups who are representative of the types of shelters in Ireland. Although they are separate organisations with slightly different ideologies, they coordinate their efforts to better match dogs and humans[40]. Further, they cooperate to best use each other's strengths. For example, two have an extensive network of greyhound owner/trainers looking to rehome their dogs. Another has a network of international rescue contacts who are seeking to import greyhounds as pets. The final one specialises in difficult cases (behaviourally and/or medically). Despite their various approaches to rescue and rehoming greyhounds, these rescue workers all came to rescue work during or after a significant change in their life. Further, there is agreement on the emotional burden this work has on them. I will use their examples to illustrate this point beginning with an overview of these four participants and their rescue organisations. This will include working with the racing industry, the resulting 'stuckness' of the circulation of greyhounds, and the emotional labour this involves. Finally, I will examine the lived experience of rescue workers and their emotional lives. This will reflect two ideological differences between the industry and rescue. First, rescue workers consider the role of a dog to be a pet and companion and should not be used for profitable entertainment while most racing owner/trainers support greyhounds as commodities for

[40] My communication with most rescue organisers and volunteers, due to the Covid pandemic, was through phone and email. This was to facilitate the poor internet speed in rural Ireland– the location of most of my participants involved in rescue. And while it did limit my ability to observe them and their surroundings, it provided them with more anonymity that might have otherwise been possible. These emails and phone calls were conducted separately without the participants knowing about each other.

entertainment. Secondly, rescue workers believe a human's commitment to a dog should be for the dog's entire life. The industry's commitment is for the duration of a dog's racing career.

Rescue Workers and Volunteers

Research within the Irish rescue world indicated that it attracts individuals who are, in addition to loving animals, at a turning or crisis point in their lives (O'Connor 2021). O'Connor found that those who choose this occupation arrive through 'multiple pathways, false starts, and changes in the life course' (2016, ii). Most of my participants noted their experience of coming to Ireland from abroad specifically to work with greyhounds at a time when their lives were in upheaval. They were getting divorced, their children had grown and left home, or their career did not go as planned. While these participants are now in their early 50s and 60s, their entry into rescue began decades earlier. They have all remained in Ireland for over 15 years as committed activists to help greyhounds in their time of need.

Approaches to Rescue

Eleanor (55) established Midlands Greyhound Rescue in the early 2000s, shortly after her divorce. She represents one of the few Irish voices I heard, as most greyhound rescue founders are from abroad. Eleanor has developed a working relationship with about 40 local trainers. She has an extensive network of voluntary foster homes to send the dogs to begin their journey to pethood. Eleanor prefers the dogs to become familiar with the routines and noises of home life before they are rehomed. She believes this is the best way for the dogs to decompress and show their true personalities and relies on the foster family's reports to match dogs to their permanent homes.

Sylvia (59) describes coming to Ireland during a 'sort of midlife crisis'. Her only child left for university, and she was ready for a change. She was encouraged by a colleague to move from Denmark to take over an existing rescue, but after a disagreement, she eventually started The Greyhound Refuge on her own around 2004. She developed professional relationships with ten local greyhound trainers and owners. She organises for suitable dogs to be sent abroad to Sweden and the UK but specialises in the difficult dogs who may not be rehomed easily.

Those who are not suitable for rehoming live permanently in outbuildings on her land or in her home as each dog prefers.

Rather than using foster homes, Sylvia prefers her dogs to live in a group setting in her home and adjoining kennels. Her several acres of land allow them to relax at their own pace and grow accustomed to the daily routine of feeding and walks. She believes getting to know each dog individually provides the best outcome for the dog and adoptive family. While she is able to send most of her greyhound rescues abroad, she takes in dogs who are particularly difficult to home and have specific requirements for open space and patience[41]. Because of the dogs' needs, she works alone but has developed a network of supporters who donate supplies and fundraise to pay veterinary bills.

Sarah, a youthful 52-year-old, came from France to train racing greyhounds. She grew disillusioned as she learned they were not rehomed after their careers finished and moved into rescue as a result. She is a paid employee at West Coast Rescue (WCR) where they specialise in rehoming greyhounds. The WCR takes greyhounds almost exclusively from trainers. They have a working relationship with 7 or 8 trainers who regularly drop off their dogs, and an additional 4 trainers who drop dogs a few times a year. The WCR primarily rehomes greyhounds through a charity set up to facilitate the coordination and transfer of Irish greyhounds to other greyhound rescue organisations internationally.

Mary is the founder of Irish Greyhounds International. In her early 60s, she came to Ireland from the UK during a tumultuous divorce. She exports greyhounds as pets through her network of international rescues in Italy, Sweden, England, and Wales where she had existing contacts from her rescue work in the UK. There is not enough demand for greyhounds as pets in Ireland to invest resources (time, energy, emotion, follow up care) here.

Although my participants entered rescue work in similarly turbulent circumstances, they take different approaches in their organisations with clear ideas of how to best rehabilitate, train, and rehome the dogs in their care. These differing opinions on best practice often result in disagreements between individuals and contribute to rescues being dissolved, split, or reformed. Despite their variety of approaches to fulfilling the best interest of their

[41] These greyhounds are often referred to as 'spooks' and likened to autism in children.

greyhounds, all four centres are perpetually at capacity with long waiting lists. Simply, the industry produces and discards greyhounds faster than rescues can fundraise to ship them to available homes. Having briefly explored how rescue workers enter this sector through various types of upheaval, how do greyhounds enter rescues?

The Circulation of Greyhounds

The circulation of greyhounds into, through and out of the industry is central to its smooth functioning and profitability. An increased awareness of animal sentience and a demand for greater responsibility toward the care of ex-racing greyhounds was discussed in the previous chapter. This provided insights into the variety of relationships humans can have with animals as they progress though the industry into rescue then on to pethood (for farming see Wilkie 2017). There are three key aspects to examine the concept of value. First, to broaden the definition of value from 'price' to include 'higher spiritual, material, moral and political values in their social and historical contexts' (Eiss and Pedersen 2002, 286). Secondly and of relevance here, that 'value must be understood from a *circulatory* perspective' to give a fuller picture of the key components and influences (ibid.) such as intentional social action (Graeber 2001). And third, to encompass perspectives beyond Eurocentric capitalism.

I too, 'follow the well-established idea that the Value(s) of objects changes, transforms and expands as they move through space and time' (Daniels 2009, 387; Kopytoff 1986; Appadurai 1986), and thus, we can trace value through circulation (Eiss and Pedersen 2002, 286). Through these phases of circulation, history of revaluations, and accumulation of emotional stickiness lies a compatible concept that examines the role of 'everyday household objects' (I include the 'ordinariness' of the greyhound here) that become so intwined in a person's life that they take on 'extraordinary significance' which might reflect the 'meaning of one's own life' (ibid.). This emotional entanglement with greyhounds reflects the lives of the owner/trainers, the rescue volunteers, and pet owners. As I trace the circulation of greyhound through these stages, the accumulated emotional narrative attached to greyhounds could be reflected as owner/trainers, rescue volunteers, and pet owners' 'surrogate selves' (Hoskins 1998, 7). This intimate identification with the greyhound and all it entails, contributes to the emotional sparks within and between these groups. Building on this and in line with Sara Ahmed, I wish to examine this process from the perspective of how circulation might 'move,

stick, and slide' at various points through these stages to highlight the resulting attachment of value and emotions (2004, 14).

What is a greyhound?

Before addressing the circulation of greyhounds, I will begin a discussion (which will continue throughout this thesis) of what is a greyhound? Is it industry wastage, a gift, a commodity, a pet, a family member, a person? The ambiguous nature of the greyhound creates tension between the industry/rescue/pet owners and is key to understanding the emotionality of these sticking points. I must address the larger question of these dogs as objects and/or subjects. As Wilkie outlines within the law, farm animals are viewed as objects for sale, trade and slaughter. They are sentient which sometimes gives them additional value particularly because they have agency and can form bonds with others (of course there are myriad examples where humans – based on race, ethnicity, age, sexuality, or gender – have been treated as non-sentient saleable objects). However, there is an extensive further debate about the agency of objects and the co-constitution of subjects and objects (Gell 1998; Haraway 2016b; Ingold 1997; Latour 1993; Mauss 2016; Miller 2005; Tsing 2015). This literature provides a useful starting point but does not focus particularly on the significant role human and animal thinking, feeling, and emotions play in the mutuality of these interactions. We saw in the last chapter how greyhounds move from one category to the next is often more blurred and ambiguous than might appear at first.

I suggest that by following the changing value of the greyhound through its circulation, the greyhound can embody multiple identities simultaneously (Kopytoff 1986). These identities shift over time (like the generational shift from euthanizing ex-racing greyhounds to rehoming them and simultaneously, a shift for pet dog owners from rejecting greyhounds as unsuitable pets to seeking them out). One sticking point, therefore, is in the shifting definitions of a greyhound's value – rescue workers might argue that as sentient beings, they inherently have value. The racing industry is not limited by this moral or philosophical or ecological conundrum and places value in economic potential. It is these changing identities, or 'process of becoming' (Kopytoff 1986, 73), alongside *who* is ascribing them, that make the greyhound a particularly good example to follow. Another way of describing these 'layers of histories, events and relationships' is that the greyhound is 'thickly inscribed' with meaning through the

multiple identities, contexts and social relationships attributed to them (Appelgren and Bohlin 2015, 159).

Research into the world of second-hand objects in the Global North is relevant here. They were historically 'associated with poverty and low status' but have since become prevalent in a variety of contexts including vintage and retro online markets. What is relevant here, particularly in the case of sentient beings, is the emphasis not on the commodity itself but its accumulation of or shift in value as it circulates through different social contexts. Separating from Kopytoff, Appelgren and Bohlin suggest that the concept of 'objects-in-motion' can be used more broadly to examine the generation of social value in post-industrial contexts that is 'akin to that of a living organism' (2015, 144 and 162). They suggest that the social biography of objects adds to their value – rather than a biographical list of owners or races won, I suggest it is the emotional, sentimental, or moral aspect that adds value. This aligns with a more recent critique of the linear biography to promote 'object itineraries' in which objects are repurposed over time (Joyce and Gillespie 2015). Informed by this argument, I suggest it can be applied to nonhuman animals while placing them in the changing historical context of the racing industry and pet keeping practices. One feature that is significant here is that how and when a greyhound passes between categories is relational. Although the greyhound is the sole focus in discussions with participants, it was clear that the relationship was shifting and changing, not the greyhound per se.

A critical aspect of secondhand goods is possessing a history (Appelgren and Bohlin 2015). In the case of racing greyhounds, that history can be complex – a social history of suffering, neglect, abuse, but also of pride, care, attention, and possibly, of glory. For example, a good or valuable dog for the industry is a fast one who will turn a profit or as breeding stock who will produce champions. Once their role is complete, their value to the industry changes negatively to a financial drain. Entering the rescue system changes their value to the emotional and moral value of a living being with the associated financial burden of care. However, it is this 'social entanglement' between industry and rescue which transforms the valueless ex-racer into a Rescue Dog 'thickly inscribed' with a rich narrative history (Appelgren and Bohlin 2015, 162). While second-hand dogs (i.e. rescue dogs) possess a social value within the dog owning public quite separate from the expensive purebred dogs (which come with paperwork to outline their pedigree/parentage). Included in this expensive category are the

recently popular poodle mixes like labradoodles (labrador x poodle) and cavi-poos (cavalier King Charles spaniel x poodle), which a generation ago were just a 'mutt' or 'mongrel' from an accidental breeding. In this way, the social value of owning an elite purebred dog as a display of wealth and status has been tempered by the increased moral status of rehoming a dog in need.

The greyhound is an interesting combination of a purebred dog (and therefore comes not just with a pedigree and parentage, but also an accessible database in which every race time, date, and change of ownership is recorded) and a rescue dog ('saved' from euthanasia and perhaps with a traumatic history). The classic anthropological example of the Kula ring is an interesting analogy here. The circulation and exchange of armbands and necklaces – as an 'article of high value, but of no real use' but having a name and detailed history added prestige (Malinowski 1920, 97, 99). Similarly, famous greyhounds' names, parentage, races won, and prize money earned could be recalled by industry insiders but is of little interest to outsiders. More importantly for the greyhound who needs a home, it comes with the emotional capital of having survived a cruel industry (whether imagined or real). In this way, the greyhound has a rich cultural itinerary in which its circulation from industry worker to pet accrues a social, biographical, and emotional value.

The greyhound racing industry was once a seamless motion of endless breeding, training, racing, and euthanizing. With greater awareness of and resistance to casual euthanasia, animal welfare activists and several politicians have called for ex-racing greyhounds to be rehomed as pets instead. The circuits have become clogged at several points[42] but most noticeably as they leave the industry with nowhere to go. The flow of commodities is often examined in relation to material culture and offers a useful comparison, but this movement is encumbered by matters of human feelings and emotions, concepts of animal sentience and human responsibility, and the gendered dynamic of the male dominated industry and female dominated care within rescue organisations. What matters is revealed because it is saturated with emotion.

[42] Participants within the industry noted that Greyhound Racing Ireland advertises races for slower racing times to keep more greyhounds running for a longer career, however, these races are not often available and are at inconvenient times. Both racing, rescue and pet participants also noted that the tracking system is not kept up to date. It is unclear whether this is due to paperwork not filed or a lack of data entry into the system.

Gifts or Commodities?

Greyhounds are also caught up in a type of circulation between commodity and gift. Greyhound racegoers presumed, if they considered the greyhound at all[43], that greyhounds seamlessly retired into the homes of their owners at the end of their careers. The mass euthanasia of greyhounds facilitated this imagined effortless cycle. Once social media made the distribution of public records more available, the cycle was disrupted. Over the course of two decades, greyhounds' social value changed as potential dog owners began to consider them as a pet. And with this change, the racing industry began to encourage trainers to rehome dogs instead of euthanizing them. Instead of the quiet acceptance from a veterinarian, owners/trainers now had to contact a rescue organisation and possibly face judgement or exasperation. Surrendering a greyhound became the mark of a responsible owner/trainer and many did want their dogs to go to pet homes. There had just not been an avenue for their rehoming until recently (slowly over the last twenty years and increasing steadily in the last five to ten).

Can greyhounds be considered unwanted gifts? This type of gift object is of greater value to the giver rather than the receiver (Daniels 2009). Or rather, it is the practice of giving that creates the social value of the object. In addition to creating clutter and sticking points within the home, a burden of reciprocity (Mauss 2016) ties the giver (the trainer) to the receiver (the rescue volunteer) as an inalienable possession (Weiner 1992). Reciprocity is similar here because there is the expectation of gratitude for surrendering a 'good' or 'valuable' dog. However, this is alongside establishing a longer-term channel to dispose of greyhounds and the greyhound symbolically remains tied to the owner/trainer as s/he moves into rescue (and then remains tied to the rescue as it moves into a home). And in the same way as rejecting a gift or not repaying the generosity, conflict can arise between trainer and volunteer if enough gratitude is not offered or if space is not immediately available to take in a dog. In the same vein, racing greyhound owner/trainers are acting responsibly by giving their unwanted dogs to a rescue, even though it is less convenient than having them euthanized (this practice is legal if a veterinarian does it and disposes of it properly). Rescue workers bristle at the implication by owners/trainers that they are doing the charity a favour by donating a

[43] Sociologist Jes Hooper researched the visitor centre of the Kopi Luwak coffee trade. She discovered that while the animal is central to the coffee-making process, the cat-like creature and its welfare is of little to no interest to participants (2022).

'valuable' dog (i.e., a dog who won prize money). The racing owner/trainer is giving a gift and expects an acknowledgement of gratitude upon the rescue's acceptance. But to the rescue organisation, this dog is an additional burden (emotional, physical, and financial), or an unwanted gift. Here, the greyhound holds multiple identities for the industry - that of wastage, a 'good' dog that won races, and a token of the owner's responsibility to rehome rather than euthanize. This same greyhound has multiple identities for the rescue – an unwanted gift for which there is no space, time, or money, and also a much-valued pet-in-waiting.

Rather than continuing to tease out how the greyhound is an object or subject or how it is a gift or a burden, I return to examine the value of these dogs through their circulation from industry into rescue and on as pets. The handover is an emotional sticking point in the circulation of greyhounds, in part, because of the blurred category of the greyhound as gift/wastage/commodity/pet/person. This lack of clarity on the part of all participants in the exchange creates tension and intense emotion. Despite the rescue workers' desire to help the greyhounds in need, they are in addition to the 'one off' dogs surrendered, and litters of abandoned puppies received. These gift-sentient-objects/subjects become embedded or 'sticky' with the emotion of the exchange which is shaped by social and cultural practices (Ahmed 2004, 11). Within this exchange is the disappointment from rescue workers that the industry owner/trainer has failed to financially and emotionally commit to the life-long care of a dog which 'responsible' (pet) owners should do. In contrast to their disappointment is the owner/trainer who is by industry standards, *doing* the responsible thing to surrender rather than euthanize their dog. Lastly, the greyhound accumulates social and emotional value as a second-hand or rescued resource. Following Eiss and Pedersen, I agree that 'value must be understood from a *circulatory* perspective' (2002, 286). This is necessary in the case of greyhounds as their purpose in industry was never intended to last for their natural lives. As Mosko (2000, 383) suggests, the 'loss of value' is essential 'before it can be recreated in the production of new persons and relations' (in Daniels 2009, 387). So, the monetary value of a 'good dog' must be abandoned before the greyhound can be recommodified into a rescue dog. Even in rescue, the intent is to continue their circulation until they are matched with a home. Then the dog begins a different circuit of value within the home (to be discussed in the

next chapter). But how do different owner/trainers think about value, and how is that different to rescue volunteers?

It might seem straightforward that the fastest greyhound wins the prize money and is the most valuable. However, my participant Bill who has left the industry on principal due to the unfairness of others' doping their dogs, might argue that the value of winning prize money with a doped dog is of less value than when his 'clean' dogs were winning races. So, economically and financially, current race dogs are as successful as his were at the most prestigious races. But Bill places more value on 'clean' dogs than doped dogs. However, Bill's dogs were likely used for breeding for a time afterwards, and then euthanized. Today's (allegedly) doped prizewinners are likely to be rehomed after their racing and breeding life. Does this shift the weight of moral value between the unfairness of doping (not unfairness to the dog, but unfairness to the 'game') and the life of the dog? Additionally animal welfare participants rank the value, not of individual animals, but of the conceptual, moral, and inherent value of sentient beings and their right not to be used for entertainment. My industry participants accept that care and attention to animals is fundamental, but that animals are commodified, and the higher purpose of the industry is for human financial gain and carrying on traditions. These groups are disagreeing over the sentient qualities of animals and human responsibility for their lifelong care. In quantifying and ranking various types of value, it highlights the changing value of greyhounds through different perspectives of what is important and meaningful. In turn, this is what moves people toward action.

Returning to Graeber (2001), he suggests that value is created by what people feel is important through activism. My participants are all activists to some extent – whether that is to speak in defense of the industry, to encourage change within the industry, to leave the industry on principal, to facilitate rehoming dogs from various anti- pro- neutral-racing positions, to protesting and even to quietly rehoming a greyhound. In this way, a generation ago greyhounds had no value after racing, but animal welfare activists created pet-value and sentient-value through protests, news, and social media. The important parts of Graeber's theory are that 'value' reflects what matters to an individual, it is changeable, and that social action is what makes it matter to others. In Chapter 5, I will return to examine how activism can be a practice of love.

Value continues to change as specific items circulate (Lee and LiPuma 2002). They shape and are shaped by social and cultural contexts along the way. This is evident in the case of greyhounds in which they are reshaped for pethood while in rescue and shaped again while in the family home. But the influence or transformation is not unidirectional. Greyhounds also influence the behaviour of rescue workers, their environment, and how their pet owners treat them (see Chapters 5, 6, and 7). Here we see the effect of circulation is relational. The dogs and people are mutually transformed through their interaction, which is in essence based on a circulatory route. On face value, the owners/trainers and rescue workers are oppositional, but in tracing these circulations the ways in which they are dialectically related is revealed. Owners/trainers and rescue volunteers want these dogs to find homes.

Case Study: Changes in Greyhound Welfare from the Rescuers Perspective

Changes in the industry's practices were a common point of conversation among my participants. Largely in agreement they outlined the changes they have seen in greyhound welfare over the last 15 years (i.e. since 2005) in their rural counties in Ireland. One participant's county dog pound euthanized the largest number of greyhounds in the country for years on 'greyhound days', as they were known. Greyhounds no longer needed for racing would be dropped to the pound by the trainers on a Thursday. On Friday morning, the greyhounds would be euthanized. The pound would charge €20 per dog (and later €50 per dog) for this service. However, it cost more to house, euthanize, and dispose of the dogs than what they were charging.

Several years ago, the Irish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPCA) began refusing to accept greyhounds for euthanasia in their pounds. They encouraged other county council pounds (not under their control) to follow suit. While some rescue workers claim their local pounds no longer wanted to facilitate the racing industry by disposing of their unwanted dogs, others disagree. Rather than the more altruistic intentions that some believed, Mary (60s) from Irish Greyhounds International suggests that the industry (Greyhound Racing Ireland) asked the ISPCA to stop allowing greyhounds to be put down in pounds. Beginning in 2010, greyhounds were listed separately from all other dog breeds on the euthanasia statistics in each pound's annual reports (Department of Rural and Community Development). Sarah (52) from WCR and Mary suggest the industry would have driven this new policy to stop using the

pound system because the high rate of greyhounds being euthanized by Irish pounds was publicly available and being shared on social media.

> Mary: Galway pound that year, had something like 447 greyhounds put to sleep. And the public were starting to see this. Clare was high. Kerry was horrendous, Cork wasn't great…The public was starting to say, well, hang on here. What's going on with these dogs?"
> Sarah: So really, it was done to hide the amount of deaths, not to improve welfare. These dogs were now just killed behind closed doors where they weren't recorded.

As public awareness grew of the greyhound industry's euthanasia of dogs, it became clear that abandoned greyhounds could be traced[44].

> Sarah: The other difference we're seeing in the last 5-6 maybe 7 years, is that we're seeing a lot less being turfed out into the streets. It still happens, but nothing like it was. And that's because of social media. The dogs can be traced, and it can do a lot of damage to the trainer's reputation.

This change in behaviour is echoed by Eamon, an owner/trainer now in his 30s (see Chapter 2) who prides himself on rehoming all his dogs either locally or through the Irish Retired Greyhound Trust. Eamon skirts the question asked about his dad's former race dogs, saying,

> It's all sort of changed in the last few years now. Rehoming has become a much bigger thing. A small minority were just leaving their dogs off, let them out of the van and let them roam the roads in all. It was actually terrible. That small minority have gone out of the game now.

Pounds no longer accept greyhounds for euthanasia but instead steer owners to rescue or a veterinarian. Fifteen years ago, there were not many greyhounds at rescue kennels or available for adoption in Ireland generally. Although Greyhound Racing Ireland (at the time called the Irish Greyhound Board) denied any problem with welfare, rescue workers always knew that the figures didn't add up. Mary knew there were 20,000 dogs a year going missing. She explains,

> Clare pound – 27 went in and 27 got put down on that day. Mullingar, not *that* long ago, maybe 5 years, had 24 go in one day. You used to drive past Dundalk on a Friday evening, Dundalk pound at 4 o'clock, and there'd be a line of greyhounds waiting to be put down [after having raced poorly at the stadium].

[44] This change is also due to the Microchipping of Dogs Regulations 2015. All dogs are required to be microchipped by the time they are 12 weeks old.

> And the Waterford pound had a sign on the door saying, 'greyhounds before 10am'. They would just be put to sleep before anybody could take them.

Two points are illustrated in a newspaper article below which shows a photograph of seven greyhounds in one kennel in the Ennis pound waiting for euthanasia, while a smaller dog gets its own kennel as it waits to be rehomed (Swords 2012). Further, the article notes that greyhounds can be dropped off at the pound between nine to ten am to be 'humanely destroyed'.

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ISPCA admits most greyhounds will be 'put to sleep'

Discarded dogs given just one hour to live in shelter

CAGED PUP: A smaller breed is sheltered in a kennel of its own

RACERS: The animals in the Ennis pound before being put down

By Warren Swords

HEALTHY greyhounds who are unfit for racing are being put down within an hour of arriving at a dog pound, the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has admitted.

The anti-cruelty body confirmed that it has been forced to destroy the animals as 'Irish people just have not embraced greyhounds as pets'.

'Dogs' ears cut off before animals are dumped'

The revelation comes after a photograph emerged of nine greyhounds crammed into a single kennel at the dog pound in Ennis, operated by Clare County Council with the ISPCA.

'There is a one-hour window when greyhound owners can deliver those dogs that they want humanely destroyed.

'The dogs are then held in a kennel for that hour,' an ISPCA spokeswoman said.

The grim process happens every Friday between 9am and 10am when a vet puts the dogs to sleep.

The ISPCA said: 'Greyhounds were bred for hunting and that instinct is strong in many of the breed. They do not necessarily distinguish between a rabbit and a cat or a small dog. It would be reckless and irresponsible to house a number of greyhounds whose temperaments are unknown with a small dog.'

Owners who breed the dogs for races or hare coursing can drop their dogs into the pound and, for a fee of €20, the ISPCA will destroy them. In most cases, no effort is made to find a new home.

The ISPCA said its policy of destroying healthy greyhounds is in response to callous owners who abandon their dogs.

Greyhounds are identified through markings on their ears, but some owners cut the dogs' ears off before dumping them.

'This policy was an attempt to avoid this sort of situation by offering those with unwanted greyhounds the option of bringing the dogs to the pound when the vet would be in attendance so they can be humanely put to sleep. This policy is not limited to Clare or ISPCA pounds,' said the spokeswoman.

The ISPCA denied that it makes no attempt to rehome greyhounds, but a spokesman for Clare County Council said: 'Greyhound owners only come to the Ennis shelter with their dogs when they have decided they want to put them to sleep.'

The ISPCA said people need to ask why there are so many unwanted greyhounds – and 'why an industry so heavily-subsidised with taxpayers' money is not investing more heavily in trying to alleviate the situation'.

Last year it emerged that ISPCA shelters put down more dogs than any other dog-controlling agency, with a Donegal shelter putting down over 80 per cent of its dogs.

County Clare also has one of the biggest problems with unwanted dogs in the country.

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Plate 24 Newspaper article of greyhounds waiting for euthanasia. Photo courtesy of participant.

The rescue workers who had not had contact with pounds did not understand the extent of the problem. Around 2015, dog pound staff began turning away greyhounds for euthanasia and instead provided contact details of rescue workers. This was a complication for the owners who now had to find an alternative method of disposal and were stuck with them for longer than they had planned. When trainers began contacting rescues to rehome their dogs, rescue workers realised they would have to establish an outlet for greyhounds. The prospects of homing a dog in Ireland was poor as they were seen as vicious working dogs. Over the course of a decade[45], the WCR had only homed 3 or 4 greyhounds in Ireland. Any greyhounds

[45] Approximately 2010-2020

to be rehomed would need to travel internationally and it took some years to establish this network.

Developing relationships between rescue workers and local trainers took time and has significantly improved the outcome for greyhounds leaving the industry. And while it allows owners/trainers an alternative to euthanasia, it also adds to the emotional burden of rescue workers' work. Rescue workers get calls outside of business hours with urgent requests for kennel space. The rescue workers noted that they must maintain an air of professionalism with these trainers, with whom they fundamentally disagree, for the welfare of the dogs. If the relationship between trainer and rescue worker breaks down, it is the life of the dog at stake. Sarah added, "back then, there were no relationships between trainers and the likes of us in rescue. The gap was just too huge". This process of change took extensive networking. It began between trainers and the pounds.

Despite these inroads, Sarah continues to have concerns about some trainers who have very large numbers of dogs in their kennels. One trainer "whose name you would know, a very big name", has surrendered 30 dogs to Sarah's rescue over the last year. She said no one should be able to give her than many dogs. It is a 'red flag' that there is overbreeding or that they are discarding all but the open class (fastest) racing dogs. But she cannot report this to the GRI because she fears these dogs would 'just disappear' (be euthanized) instead of coming to her for rehoming.

Racing industry supporters[46] only began to directly confront decades of criticisms raised in media reports and by welfare activists after the 2019 release of the RTÉ documentary *Greyhounds Running for their Lives* (Shouldice and Ryan). They acknowledged there was a problem of euthanasia, abandonment, neglect, and sale to countries with poor animal welfare legislation, but insist it was now resolved because the 'few bad eggs' have left the industry. The industry continues to assert that greyhounds are the most traced animal in Ireland and the traceability system accounts for every greyhound. They neglect to add, as former industry insiders agree, that the system has the potential to account for every greyhound at every stage of life, but the records are not maintained (perhaps intentionally) nor are they publicly

[46] This included the board of directors, individual trainers and owners, and patrons.

accessible. This withholding and misdirection of data prevents accurate assessment and planning for greyhounds leaving the industry.

Ideally, there would be a continuous flow of greyhounds from the industry, into rescue, then on to their pet home. However, there are several sticking points throughout this journey from industry to rescue to pethood. Each owner/trainer decides which greyhounds will exit the industry and where they will go. But rescues are not privy to the details of when or how many dogs will require rehoming, nor is there adequate funding to provide medical care, housing, training, and international transport fees[47]. Further, some trainer/owners continue to be resistant to rehoming their dogs. Additionally, there is concern within rescue that the image of the lazy and laidback greyhound of ten years ago is no longer applicable as younger, not-yet-institutionalised dogs (read still boisterous and unmannerly) are rehomed rather than culled.

Sticking Points

As mentioned previously, there was no outlet for the industry's ex-racing greyhounds (or wastage) in Ireland until 20 years ago. Greyhounds no longer fast enough for racing and those not fast enough to be worth training were culled or sold on to other countries. This was facilitated by the Irish pounds, veterinarians[48] who are "knowledgeable of the ways of industry", owners themselves, and less commonly knackeries[49] who euthanized greyhounds. These avenues would not ask questions about why a young healthy animal was being euthanized. The public was unconcerned with these dogs as 'Irish people just have not embraced greyhounds as pets' (Swords 2012).

However, as campaigns from greyhound rescue organisations gained momentum, championing greyhounds as great pets, there was increased demand for change. Greyhound specific rescues were created to rehome these dogs internationally, but their access to kennels, volunteers, transport and funds limits the number of dogs that can be accepted.

[47] The industry proudly announced its funding of 50% airline costs to transport greyhounds to the US in 2019 in the aftermath of the RTÉ expose (Shouldice and Ryan 2019). They reached their 2022 budget after several months and ceased operations indefinitely (Brennan 2022b).

[48] Rescue workers point out a regular vet would charge €70-80 for euthanasia, so many would go to a greyhound vet instead. Many owners refuse to rehome their dogs even though their €50 could go either to the greyhound veterinarian for euthanasia or to the shelter for rehoming.

[49] An abattoir for the slaughter of food animals.

Without an accurate number of greyhounds expected to exit the industry, there is no organised planning or streamlining. Additionally, while individual rescues cooperate between each other, there is no centralized communication between the industry and rescue. The consequence is that there are more greyhounds requiring rehoming than there are rescue spaces or homes.

Many racing owners, who are intending to care for their greyhound responsibly, are forced to pay for their dogs' kenneling who are no longer making money. For individuals outside of the racing industry and rescue organisations, this seems reasonable as, Dogs Trust's slogan claims, 'Dogs are for Life, Not just for Christmas' (DogsTrust 2014 [2001]). This means that rather than seeing a dog as an object to be discarded at will, they are a lifelong responsibility. The industry's goal, however, is to generate an income which is not compatible with lifelong commitment, financial or otherwise.

In this way, there is financial pressure for owner/trainers to clear their kennels of unnecessary greyhounds. Many are happy to wait a few weeks for rescue space to become available, particularly those who race their dogs as a hobby (for an examination of different relationships between commercial livestock and hobby farmers see Wilkie 2005, 2017). Others choose euthanasia for efficiency. Other owners fear their dog will win prize money for someone else. For example, a few years ago, as veterinarians began to question their role in euthanizing healthy animals, it became common for greyhounds left in for euthanasia to be rehomed instead. Several rescue workers tell of a greyhound who was rehomed, and the new owner raced the dog, winning several races. Sylvia suspects the story to be true but not common, saying some owners "don't want to take the chance" for someone to profit from their (former) dog and still prefer to have their dogs euthanized.

Sylvia also notes that the trainers *she* works with preferred to have their dogs go to a home, even though it still cost €50 to give them to the rescue. It is not a compassionate or financial concern for all owners; however, she knows there are over 100 greyhound owners in the area she works that "never come near a rescue". She asks, "where do their dogs go? They can't all go to the IRGT [the industry's organisation to rehome greyhounds]. The numbers don't add up". This criticism of traceability was examined in the previous chapter, but here, it is relevant

because this lack of accountability adds to the emotional labour of rescue workers. The financial burden of taking the industry's greyhounds is a constant concern.

Once a greyhound owner/trainer surrenders their greyhound to a rescue, they are no longer responsible for the dog. How is the greyhound's care paid for? Most of the charities are organised by one or two volunteers with a larger group of volunteers who foster, answer emails, collect and drop dogs, etc. Animal welfare charities work mostly through volunteer labour, fundraising, and donations. But utilities, veterinary care, dog food, pet supplies, and transportation costs including international travel and pet passports[50] are expensive. There are limited avenues for funding. An owner/trainer may contribute a fee (i.e. €50) when surrendering their greyhound. Another option is for the rescue to apply for the Vaccination Assistance Scheme and Neutering Assistance Scheme through the Irish Retired Greyhound Trust (IRGT). They will contribute up to €50 for neutering and up to €50 for vaccinations per dog.[51] According to Dogs Trust, the average cost of neutering and vaccinations is €450.[52] Veterinarians may work at a discounted rate or volunteer their time for charities, but these services will cost more than the Vaccination and Neutering Assistance Scheme provides. The rescue pays the balance if the owner/trainer surrenders the greyhound to them[53]. Finally, the Irish Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine provides funding to animal rescue charities through an application process. Two greyhound specific charities were awarded this funding in the 2024 budget for a total of €47,400 of the €6 million available (Department of Agriculture 2023). The cost of rehabilitating and rehoming greyhounds, on the back of rescue volunteers free labour, is not considered when calculations of economic contributions to the Irish economy are reported by the racing industry. In addition to financial concerns, another sticking point in the rehoming of greyhounds is that some trainers believe it is not safe to keep greyhounds as pets.

Bill, a former owner/trainer in his 70s who left the industry due to his anti-doping stance (see Chapter 3), does not believe it is in a greyhound's best interest to be rehomed as a pet. He

[50] A pet passport is documentation from the veterinarian to confirm vaccination and other details required for international travel/rehoming.
[51] The IRGT is funded through 2% of racing prize money and matched by GRI. https://www.grireland.ie/go-greyhound-racing/our-stadiums/galway-greyhound-stadium/plan-your-night/fundraising--benefit-nights/. Accessed 14/01/2024.
[52] Cost of dog ownership | Dogs Trust. Accessed 14/01/2024.
[53] The owner/trainer pays the balance before the IRGT will accept the greyhound for rehoming.

believes they would not be happy in the noise and busyness of a city or suburb. Further, he does not believe other animals would be safe near a greyhound. When asked where his former race dogs went at the end of their careers, he changed the subject. It can be presumed that his dogs were euthanized.

While Bill's opinion might be misinformed or of its time, it is also possible that his race dogs had a stronger drive to work than other greyhounds. Mary's expertise is key here, saying there are predictable temperament patterns in breed lines. Her rescue refuses to take the offspring of two specific sires, describing them as, "nut jobs. They are lovely lovely lovely dogs, but they're all nut jobs. They are *hard.* They're hard work, manic". These are dogs who have unusually high energy and a high prey drive. They want to chase and kill small animals and are fast enough to do it. This does not suit most pet homes.

Another point of concern in the circulation of greyhounds is the age at which they are rehomed. The move toward rehoming greyhounds, rather than culling them, has had unintended consequences in the variety of greyhounds available. Greyhound rescuers are concerned that the "general public has been towed the line that greyhounds make great pets". This perspective came from the UK and was true 20 years ago when the only greyhounds that were available were ex-racing track dogs.

> They were institutionalised. They were very shut down, very switched off, they would just take whatever life brought their way. They were robots. That made them great pets because they were just used to compartmentalising whatever was going on and they thought, 'well, this is my life now. I can live with that' type of thing.

This made them easy to walk, quiet, and old enough not to shred their bedding. The trend in the last 5-7 years is 'saplings' (under 2 years old) coming into rescue. These failed race dogs would have previously been culled in huge numbers. Sarah emphasises, "these dogs are *not* ex-racers and they're not institutionalised because they're not done training them yet. They're wild. They bang you in the face when you open the door, they have no manners whatsoever". So, it is of utmost importance to ensure people are knowledgeable when adopting these younger greyhounds. Younger dogs can be more difficult to manage and take more time to match with a family that has realistic expectations and a toleration for these quirks. Despite their best efforts to educate their potential adopters that a one-year-old

unraced greyhound is not the same as a four-year-old ex-racer, many greyhounds are returned for that reason. This creates additional emotional (and organisational) labour for rescue workers to find kennel/foster space a second time.

In this way, the circulation of greyhounds between rescue organisations and pet homes is inalienable in a literal, symbolic and sentimental sense. If the greyhound-human pair does not work, the greyhound contractually must be returned to the rescue from which it came. But so, too, the greyhound will always 'be from' a particular rescue. It is a frequent topic of conversation among participants – where they adopted their dog from and there is a camaraderie among those who adopted from the same organisation. One of the side effects of these circulatory routes is sentiment. Volunteers experience disappointment that their efforts to match the human and dog failed, frustration that the adopters did not listen or understand, and an emotional exhaustion of never-ending need. These circulations are saturated with sentiment. Next, I will turn to the toll of emotional labour that my rescue participants spoke about.

The Emotional Lives of Rescue Workers

Emotions are shaped by social and cultural practices (Ahmed 2004). One such practice is the circulation of sentient beings such as the greyhound. Ahmed suggests that objects accumulate meaning as they move in and out of different contexts. So, at 'sites of personal and social tension', for example where a dog is handed from owner to rescue worker, the object (greyhound in this instance) becomes 'sticky' with affect from the exchange (Ahmed 2004, 11). In the case study below, my participant Sarah clarifies this emotional stickiness by contrasting the repetitive and manipulative nature of surrendering greyhounds with the 'one off mistakes' made by owners of family pets. This creates social tension and the uncomfortable feelings rescue workers describe.

While the racing industry and rescue both appear to have the dogs' best interest at heart, what constitutes their best interest differs. The identity ascribed to the greyhound indicates, in part, how 'best interest' is performed. As discussed in Chapter 2, a racing dog is kept in good enough physical condition to win races through diet, exercise, grooming, and appropriate kennel bedding to prevent skin injuries. These dogs are valuable economic commodities. While rescues vary, as discussed above, some use kennels and others rely on

home fostering. For those kept in rescue kennels, their experience may be familiar. What differs is where attention is focused. For rescue staff, attention is given to treating parasites as these dogs will become house pets. A second difference is the commitment expected for pet dogs. The industry's dogs, however, were only intended to be kept until they finished racing or breeding. The end of racing or breeding life resulted in the end of the owner's commitment. Dogs unfit to train to race were culled as wastage. As discussed regarding anti-racing protests in Chapter 1, these two different approaches to care and commitment can trigger a moral and emotional response. Here, I will turn my attention to rescue workers' experience specifically.

Although no owners/trainers who spoke to me knew, or would admit, that euthanasia is still common practice, Sarah from West Coast Rescue knows the routine and tells me of another recent experience.

> [The owner] had rang me about this greyhound. I said, "can you wait?". Then Covid hit and he went out of my mind, to be honest. Then 6 weeks had passed, and I had a missed call that morning.

It is significant to note here that the owner patiently fed and housed the dog for six weeks at this stage waiting for a rescue space to open up.

> I was out on the afternoon walking the greyhounds in a group down the road when I saw it. And something told me to ring him. This is quarter past 2 in the afternoon. So, I rang him "oh, lovely Sarah, how's things? Blah de blah." He says "Look, I was hoping you could take that dog in." Now he'd only phoned me that morning.

Here, Sarah emphasises that only a few hours had passed since the morning's phone call. She'd been busy running her rescue and her tone suggested annoyance at the owner's request. She asks him to wait a few more days.

> He says, "You're grand, he's sorted". So that sends alarm bells off. That one line always sends alarm bells. And I was like, "where is he sorted?". He said, "he's going to the vets at quarter past 4". And I said, "for what?". He said, "I'm having him put to sleep, Sarah".

Sarah begins to panic at this stage, feeling she has failed this dog. She was aware that she had forgotten about this request, but part of her job is constantly sifting through and prioritizing

the most urgent cases. If she chose not to take this dog, she was choosing for him to be euthanized. She was angry that the owner would not keep the dog for a bit longer.

> Just a two-year-old, the most beautiful, gentlest, well, it doesn't really matter what sort of dog he was. But I was like, "please don't do that". The part I *hate* about myself comes into play "don't do that, I'll take him". I'm that desperate to - my passion is too high - that I want to save that dog from being put to sleep at 2 years old.

At this point in the story, Sarah is emotional remembering the conflicting feelings. She does not have the space for this dog, yet she feels responsible for letting it down. So, she or a volunteer will likely take this dog home for the night. Additionally, she's angry at the owner for being impatient.

> "That's fine! I'll meet you in the car park in [local town]". And that's where we met. Him there patting him on the head. Saying "I'm delighted now, that's great". Yeah, but he would have put him to sleep if I hadn't returned his call. And no one would have known that dog existed.

Sarah addresses the issue of poor traceability within the industry (see Chapter 2 for a more thorough discussion). While the industry claims all dogs are traced through all stages of life, records evaluated by RTÉ (Shouldice and Ryan 2019) and the industry's own report (Preferred Results Ltd. 2017, 93) tell a different story. But most importantly, this story illustrates what Sarah calls 'emotional blackmail'. She describes it as the manipulation of rescue worker's emotions by threatening to euthanize a dog if it is not given rescue space. Sarah knows too well that this is not an idle threat. Mary concludes the story by adding, "the reason was because he had another dog coming down that evening and he needed its kennel"[54]. Her statement emphasized the importance of profitability, the disregard for sentient life, and a hint of despondency.

This is all to say that rescue work can be exhausting and has the potential to negatively impact mental health. The physical labour of feeding, walking, cleaning and maintenance, the assaults on the body of smell (pus, feces, urine, 'dog' smell) (O'Connor 2021), injuries (scratches and bites), and sound (barking dogs) can all become difficult. The emotional labour and strain are what my participants repeatedly identify as the most difficult part. But many

[54] This is also the storyline in Michael Morpurgo's book about racing greyhounds *Born to Run* (2007).

individuals turn to the care of animals during a time of personal upheaval, stress, or change to 'do something that matters' (O'Connor 2021, 160). A significant change in life circumstances 'creates an emotional space in which animals can fill' (ibid.).

Emotional Labour

Irish researchers found shelter workers derive a sense of 'compassion satisfaction' from successful rescue, rehabilitation, and rehoming but are also at risk for burnout (Murphy and Daly 2020). This voluntary work entails early mornings, late nights, interrupted weekends all year around and in all weather. But this work is rewarding when an animals' health improves, or they begin to initiate interactions. Further, matching a dog-human pair is exciting and deeply fulfilling. Similarly, Anne O'Connor found that her participants, contrary to research conducted in the US on shelter workers (Arluke 2006), did not commonly experience burnout or 'occupational stress' (2021, 162). O'Connor suggests that this difference is due to her participants' work in 'no-kill' shelters rather than Irish and American pounds where staff would be exposed to euthanasia. She may have had similar conclusions if her research had been in Irish pounds where euthanasia is more common.

However, my participants in Irish rescue work do express burnout, compassion fatigue, emotional distress and anxiety. I suggest this is due to three differences in our participants. First, all but two of my participants were volunteers rather than employees. Secondly, their positionality as the 'middleman' between the industry and pet homes places a greater emotional burden on them. Their position of feeling 'stuck in the middle' increases the human-human interactions with owners/trainers who value greyhounds differently. Lastly, greyhound rescue workers encounter high numbers of greyhounds from the industry who are at risk of euthanasia which places them centrally to preventing euthanasia. This is in contrast to the one-off pet surrenders that multi-species shelters would more often experience.

Ongoing research in psychology and medicine has found long term stress from being exposed to distressed, neglected, or needy animals can cause a more significant mental health concern called compassion fatigue (Jacobs and Reese 2021; Levitt and Gezinski 2020). Others clarify that compassion fatigue is a response to trauma and burnout together and is particularly understudied in the context of animal rescue (Signal, Casey, and Taylor 2022, 5; Dunn et al.

2022). Animal welfare and rescue workers who participated in these studies have expressed emotional turmoil beyond work related stress. A myriad of symptoms associated with compassion fatigue include stress, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation and suicide (Murphy and Daly 2020; Signal, Casey, and Taylor 2022; Dunn et al. 2022; Andrukonis and Protopopova 2020). Here, rather than teasing out these psychological or physiological states or their treatment, I use it to reflect the types of feelings and emotions experienced by my participants. I follow Sara Ahmed's (2004) approach whereby emotions are understood as a social and cultural practice and how this impacts emotional labour. Ahmed asserts that our emotions are influenced by how we (as intersectional selves) interact with an object or image within social and cultural norms.

The seminal work on emotional labour[55] by Arlie Russell Hochschild (2012[1983]) examined the practice of commoditization in the service industry where the emotional investment of the worker was part of the service. Her work importantly suggests that emotional labour requires intentional effort and hard work just like physical labour. An overinvestment or an overwhelming demand for emotional attention to the social relationships a service role entails can lead to a detachment from feelings and concern. In particular, it is the conflicting feelings of performative emotional labour that many workers find troubling – consider the airline stewardess' smile which might mask a myriad of other feelings such as fear, resentment, boredom alongside a willingness to serve (Hochschild 2012[1983], 8). She notes that American labour unions link emotional labour to burnout and call for financial compensation. Importantly, she links emotional labour to gender as women make up most of the service industry and

> …more women at all class levels do unpaid labor of a highly interpersonal sort. They nurture, manage, and befriend children. More 'adaptive' and 'cooperative,' they address themselves better to the needs of those who are not yet able to adapt and cooperate much themselves…The world turns to women for mothering, and this fact silently attaches itself to many a job description (Hochschild 2012[1983], 115).

These are key observations for rescue organisations. Rescue work is dominated by women of various classes to look after and advocate for those (greyhounds) who cannot speak for

[55] In the preface to the 2013 edition, Hochschild further distinguishes between paid emotional labour and unpaid emotional work but does not discuss significant theoretical differences.

themselves. Their emotional labour is unseen in both the unpaid nature of the work and that it is an unspoken requirement of the work. My rescue volunteer participants are not only middle-aged women, but many of them have also immigrated to Ireland for this care work from other EU countries and the UK amidst their own tumultuous personal lives. Their circumstances could be described as emotionally draining. As I mentioned above, several were divorced, one described herself as having a midlife crisis, another was at odds with her career. Interestingly, at a time of crisis in their personal lives, they turned to care or service work which requires a high degree of emotional labour.

An interesting contrast to increasing emotional work is the Las Vegas gamblers adeptly described by Natasha Schüll (2012). Some of her participants sought to switch off from the demands of emotional labour through impersonal machine gambling and addiction (2012). But what we have here, are middle aged women in crisis or turmoil who are seeking out volunteer positions or paid employment which demand long and endless working hours alongside a significant amount of emotional labour at a time when they have, arguably, the least emotional energy to give. Emotional labour can include hearing upsetting stories of abused and neglected dogs or of humans having to rehome beloved pets because they are in crisis or facing homelessness. On top of these stresses, some of them have to maintain professional relationships with greyhound owner/trainers and their endless supply of dogs when they personally believe these dogs should not be used as commodities. How are these women's personal experiences colouring their reactions to these animals in transition?

An alternative perspective for this charitable work is a sense of purpose and an emotional fulfillment but also a way to fill time that might otherwise be lonely or isolating. One factor is their age, as ethnographic research on ageing populations have found, it is 'important to be useful and helpful to others through volunteering in the community or grandparenting' (Walton 2021, 23). My participants were either not yet grandparents or it did not play a significant role in their life. However, these women felt their work was useful and helpful. They turn to this work when their lives are not turning out as imagined. Sylvia's empty nest and 'mid-life crisis' led her to open a rescue charity. At this time, perhaps feeling her mothering work had finished, she funneled that energy into rescue. Sarah's horror at the euthanasia rate of greyhounds led her to rescue work. Relationship breakdowns pushed

others to find meaningful friendships through their volunteer work. This is physical work which can also be emotionally and financially exhausting – Sylvia's Facebook posts are a litany of cleaning and maintenance work she is doing, heartbreak over an unwell dog or pressure to make space for another dog, car breakdowns, veterinary bills, dog-related sofa catastrophes, and cord-chewing induced internet outages. But she begins most days with a photo of the sunrise on her property, or of a new flower blooming, a funny thing a new greyhound did, or the joyous occasion of a van full of dogs leaving for the airport on their way to their new homes. Her comments section is full of her supporters championing her work, giving updates about the dogs she rehomed and how those dogs have improved their lives, and they cannot thank her enough for connecting them. Her life is full of purpose and small rewards.

But what of those rescue workers who sought fulfillment and purpose and do not achieve it? Or the balance is skewed so they too often feel overwhelmed, under supported emotionally and financially, physically exhausted, and on top of that have their time wasted? To protect the lives of greyhounds they must maintain cordial relationships with racing owners/trainers. But their personal beliefs about how a dog should be treated do not align with the industry's practices.

Managing the demands of emotional labour can lead to burnout. Sarah describes burnout as feeling 'fed up', crying excessively, worrying that helping greyhounds is inadvertently supporting the industry, angry at the industry and individual trainers, and thinking about leaving rescue work. Those workers who are particularly idealistic, intensely devoted, and 'want to make a difference' can grow impatient, irritable, hopeless and angry as compassion fatigue intensifies (Coles 2017, 10-11). Poor self-care, social isolation, withdrawal from hobbies, and guilt can be other indicators of burnout and compassion fatigue (Coles 2017, 12). When my participants are already in emotional turmoil when coming to rescue work, it is possible that this negatively impacts their ability to keep their volunteer work in perspective. In line with researchers, my participants particularly note the unending numbers of greyhounds needing homes and continual exposure to their neglect and abuse (Hill et al., 2020; Rank et al., 2009). The following long excerpt from an interview with Sarah and Mary illustrates many of the symptoms above and the emotional pull rescue workers experience in both human-human interactions and human-animal ones.

Case Study: 'Stuck in the Middle'

Sarah initially bristles at the trainer's obliviousness to the work that rehoming a dog entails and how dogs are valued outside of the industry.

> Sarah: "The trainers will ring up and say 'oh, I've got a dog for ya', like they're doing us a favour. 'You're getting a great dog here, Sarah', they'll say. But what they mean by a good dog is that it won a lot of races. That's no good to us here.

Sarah is aware the potential adopters do not care if their dog has won races. In rescue and pet homes, dogs have inherent value. Off the racetrack, their focus of attention shifts to temperament and trainability. And Mary continues, annoyed that trainers imply they care about the dog.

> Mary: These dogs are only a commodity to them. They say 'oh, I'll be sorry to see this one go', but no, you fucking won't. Don't lie. They're sad to see the money go. Big big Derby winners. Big names.

And here is the disconnect between the financial pull of the industry and the moral responsibility of rescue. Rescue workers must negotiate between the extremes of capitalism and an ideology.

> Sarah: But I'm in it for the dogs. It's the one part of my job that makes me want to give up because
>
> [Mary interjects] because we're facilitating them.
> [Sarah adds] and I'm part of the problem. [Sarah's voice starts to sound thick like she's holding back tears] I chat, and I smile, and I take the dog off them, but it makes me feel like [laughing] I won't swear, but it makes me feel, it makes me not like myself because I'm not being true to what I believe in. Because I'm playing a game by welcoming them here. [To Mary] Don't I always call you after? Because I'm welcoming them here. They'd all say, 'Sarah's a great girl' 'she's lovely with the dogs' and 'she's a lovely lady', but that's because I'm a 'Yes woman'. But that's it. That's what kills me. I am their yes woman and that kills me.".

Sarah emphasises that she feels torn. She needs to play three parts. She has to welcome the trainers to establish an ongoing relationship to get their dogs. She has to present as racing neutral within her rescue work as a representative of her rescue without badmouthing the industry to potential adopters. Third, she has her personal life in which she is anti-racing yet cannot voice it publicly in fear of repercussions in her professional life. It is emotionally painful for rescue workers to maintain a false sense of joy while in the company of owners/trainers

without feeling that they are betraying themselves or losing a sense of one's 'true self' (Hochschild 2012[1983], 94). Hochschild advises that a separation between one's 'real' self and one's 'acted' work-self prevents feeling fused. In this way, one can perform their paid employment to a satisfactory degree without betraying their real or personal self. This hyper-identification or fusing of the rescue worker or volunteer with their real self is what Sarah and other volunteers struggle with.

> [Both Mary and Sarah talk over each other]: But where does it stop?! We're stuck in the middle.
> Sarah: We're under no obligation to take these dogs. But when you're there with the dog in front of you. How do you walk away? It's an emotional blackmail. That's what makes me want to walk away. That's the only thing that would make me walk away. Because these people make me hate myself when I'm at home. You'd see me out the window and think 'God, they're great friends', but we're not.
> Mary: And we're not unique in this. Any rescue, any good rescue, is faced with this challenge. This social side of this is never portrayed because we can't portray it. Because if we portray it, then they won't bring the dogs to us. Then those dogs are lost.

They repeat this key stressor – feeling stuck between the industry, their public persona as rescue workers, and the dogs' welfare. But it is also the frequency of greyhounds being surrendered by the same people that upsets them.

> Sarah: The collies don't bother me. The shih tzu's don't bother me. Because their owners only come once. They made a mistake and will learn from it and won't do it again. Doesn't matter- does it not match the curtains, they're allergic, whether it's bitten… it's *once.* I'm dealing with these men *all* the time.
> We've another trainer, he grates on my nerves, tells me not to be giving out. I tell him I need a donation. He's never once given one. We've another trainer, he's a brilliant trainer – he's trained some of the biggest names that you'd know. It would leave you speechless. We've taken 30-odd this year? He has too many greyhounds. He shouldn't be able to give us that many dogs in such a short space of time.

Here Sarah explains the unrelenting nature of the greyhound industry. She contrasts an individual surrendering 30 dogs he made a profit from with the one-off mistakes of a family pet. She feels a family will learn to make a different choice with their next pet. The industry is designed to churn out dogs.

> Sarah: We know there's a problem there, but what can we do about it? We can't go to the IGB [GRI] about it because next thing the doors would be shut, and we won't get their dogs. And he won't give his dogs to anybody but me. This man is a very big

> name. Why is the IGB [GRI] not doing their job? Why are they not in there? These dogs were coming out *filthy.* Now this one guy is the exception.

Sarah emphasises that most greyhounds are well fed but one trainer is unable to look after the number of dogs he has. She repeats that they are stuck. She knows that if she reports a trainer for either too many dogs or neglect, word will spread through the local owner/trainers and these dogs will be euthanized instead. This is a constant threat to her mental health. Sarah says she frequently has racing owners ring her to take a dog. She'll phone them back a few weeks later as soon as she has kennel space.

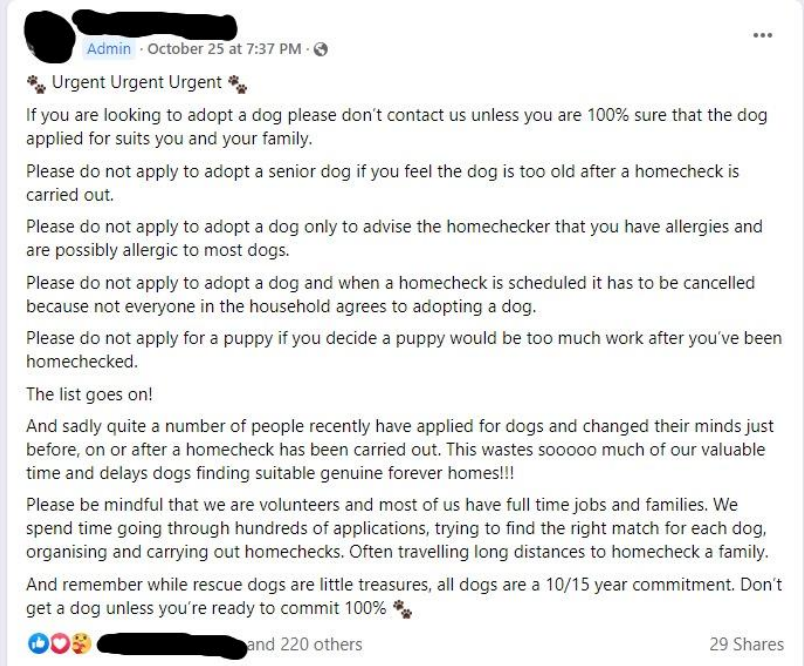
> I'll phone and they won't answer, and then I'll text, but they won't answer. I'm like 'oh, no. I've lost that dog'. Has it gone to a killing field, has it been thrown out, has it been sold?

All of these rescue workers are managing – they're tired, angry and showing some of the signs of burn out and compassion fatigue and a loss of sense of their true self. But consider these posts illustrating compassion fatigue through impatience, anger, and an unreasonably idealistic view of commitment.

Plate 25 Facebook screenshot by author.

In addition to venting their anger about dogs being surrendered because they have become inconvenient, this rescue also criticises potential adopters' researching the needs of a dog and responsibly deciding against adopting. These would-be adopters are then lambasted for wasting the rescue volunteer's time.

This next post from a different rescue shares the sentiment of the previous one. The comment section was turned off and all comments were deleted by the rescue due to public comments questioning the short tempered and irritable nature of the post.


[redacted] Admin · October 25 at 7:37 PM ·

🐾 Urgent Urgent Urgent 🐾

If you are looking to adopt a dog please don't contact us unless you are 100% sure that the dog applied for suits you and your family.

Please do not apply to adopt a senior dog if you feel the dog is too old after a homecheck is carried out.

Please do not apply to adopt a dog only to advise the homechecker that you have allergies and are possibly allergic to most dogs.

Please do not apply to adopt a dog and when a homecheck is scheduled it has to be cancelled because not everyone in the household agrees to adopting a dog.

Please do not apply for a puppy if you decide a puppy would be too much work after you've been homechecked.

The list goes on!

And sadly quite a number of people recently have applied for dogs and changed their minds just before, on or after a homecheck has been carried out. This wastes sooooo much of our valuable time and delays dogs finding suitable genuine forever homes!!!

Please be mindful that we are volunteers and most of us have full time jobs and families. We spend time going through hundreds of applications, trying to find the right match for each dog, organising and carrying out homechecks. Often travelling long distances to homecheck a family.

And remember while rescue dogs are little treasures, all dogs are a 10/15 year commitment. Don't get a dog unless you're ready to commit 100% 🐾

[redacted] and 220 others 29 Shares

Plate 26 Facebook screenshot by author.

Many commented that the role of the rescue is to educate potential owners. That no one can be '100%' sure that they are ready for a dog nor that a particular dog will be a '100%' fit for their family until they have lived with it for some time. Note, however, the contradictory last sentence in which the poster pivots to advise the public not to adopt a dog until they're 'ready to commit 100%'. Further, this post received an unusually high number of 'likes', 'loves', 'cares' and shares. There appears to be agreement with the sentiment of 'time wasters'. It is, however, the loss of hope that is most distressing. Rescue workers face an unending stream of requests to assist in rehoming.

[redacted]
October 21 at 3:50 PM ·

There are days in rescue when you just want to put your hands over your ears and block out the sound of the phone ringing....

block all incoming texts and messages.....

The days where you woke up feeling beyond your limit..... but things just keep coming at you....

Today is one of those...

Saying no is never the easy option for us... yet we find ourselves having to say it time and time again...

And when the call came in this afternoon about "some abandoned kittens" ...
We again ran through all the possibilities of how to make it work in our head... and came to the same conclusion
We have no space,
We have no time,
we are already running on empty....
Our homes are over run....

But even as we tried to rationalise why we had to say no..... this very sinking feeling kept creeping up....no wasn't an option this time....

Having just arrived home from vets runs and errands our volunteer then turned round and headed back into the city to figure out what the situation was....

Plate 27 Facebook screenshot by author.

This post explains the relentless nature of a multispecies animal rescue, and the unmanageability of long-term exhaustion. The author says they have 'no space, no time, we are already running on empty', yet they keep going as a 'sinking feeling kept creeping up'. These volunteers are burnt out and 'beyond' their 'limit'. Sarah shared similar feelings during her interview. Signal et al.'s participants echo it saying "…I am exhausted, broken" and another says they're "…mentally and emotionally drained" (2022, 5). Yet another says "there's no clocking off at 5pm, it follows you 24/7" (ibid.).

While these examples have been from multibreed rescues, the endless demand for support is equally exhausting for greyhound rescues. The requests are from those who do not have the moral high ground, or 'legitimate' reasons to surrender their animal.

The literature on rescue workers takes the threat of compassion fatigue seriously and with good reason. The social practices expected of rescue workers are unsustainable for some. Two recent tragedies in the Irish rescue community demonstrate the reality and long reaching effects a loss can have. A welfare advocate in her 50s with a particular interest in anti-racing protests, wife and mother of two, passed in her own home by suicide. An outpouring of tributes to her caring nature and 'always putting others first' followed (Phelan 2022). Friends and fellow activists noted that she 'was driven even beyond her own fatigue for animals and dogs…dogs were her everything' (Cullen 2022). Two months later Sharon, a much-loved rescue volunteer in her 40s, former groomer and new mother, was also found dead in her

home by suicide. Newspapers reported both community members and those in the rescue world said she was always available to take in a stray, offer support and advice, often via voice memo.

After years of supporting various rescue organisations, with a particular love of sighthounds, Sharon has touched hundreds of people's lives. Approximately 50 of those human friends came together with their dogs to remember Sharon in her favourite park on an autumn afternoon.

Plate 28 Photo from Remembering Sharon walk organised by and for the sighthound community. Photo by author.

Plate 29 Photo from Remembering Sharon walk organised by and for the sighthound community. Photo by author.

Donations have been made in Sharon's honour to the rescues she worked with most often. A bandana was sold in aid of two rescues raising over €600 (personal correspondence) and designed in her favourite yellow. Many of the dogs were sporting these bandanas on the day of the remembrance walk (photo below).

Plate 30 Charity fundraising bandana for animal rescue. Photo by author.

It is the outpouring of fond memories and sense of utter loss in the face of this tragedy that reinforces this online and in person community. Countless Facebook posts in sighthound groups told of Sharon's support to anyone in need day and night offering advice on grooming, minor injury treatment, diet, exercise, and behaviour. Multiple posts championed her ability to match humans and dogs successfully. Others recalled her quirkiness – always dressed in bright colours with four to six dogs strapped to her walking belt. 'You'd hear her before you saw her', another person posted. Her 'laugh was unmistakable', said another.

Others, however, more privately reflected upon her impulsiveness, irritability, and reactivity. One woman from a national rescue, noted how Sharon, on separate occasions, adopted a 'problem' dog from her and eventually returned them for starting fights within her existing pack. A former grooming client told me about the time she took her hairy lurcher (think small Irish Wolfhound) for a wash, dry, and nail trim. The dog was returned to her shaved. When the woman objected, Sharon dismissively told her the fur would grow back. These stories were told in a light-hearted wasn't-Sharon-something-else sort of way.

Sharon is a huge loss to the rescue community in a practical sense but also as a colleague and a friend to many. She championed sighthounds as pets and supported humans in the adjustment phase developing friendships along the way. Her legacy will be in those who knew her who continue to rehome sighthounds, wear bright colours, and enjoy walking their dogs with others in the park.

Conclusion

This chapter attempted to do several things which are intertwined. It began with providing the context of who greyhound rescue volunteers are and how they do and think about their work. I tentatively explore how the circumstances in which rescue workers begin their voluntary roles may impact their responses to everyday frustrations in rescue. It became clear through their insights that their work is heavily influenced by how the racing industry works and the relationships they established with individuals are sticking points – they want to save the greyhounds but are resentful that they have to save so many greyhounds on top of the more traditional pet dogs who also need help. Next, I followed the circulation of greyhounds from the industry into rescue and towards homes where the accumulation of feelings and meaning greyhounds accrue while they move through commodification gives them an emotional 'stickiness' (Ahmed 2004) and value. This revealed places of opposition and agreement – I will return to this point in the final paragraph of this section. While the industry is comfortable with using animals as entertainment and profit, animal welfare activists believe animals have inherent worth and sentience which should preclude them from commodification. It also revealed that owners/trainers and rescue workers want greyhounds in pet homes. I also examined the nature of greyhound specific rescue organisations in Ireland including their establishment by non-Irish born women often at a point of transition in their personal lives. I asked how did rescue and care work attract women at these points in their lives?

The increased availability of rescue space combined with efforts to publicly trace abandoned greyhounds' owners contributed to a change in the industry's practices. Now, rather than euthanizing failed greyhounds and those at the end of their careers, they are more often rehomed. Because of this, the young greyhounds being rehomed today have not finished their training and are not the easy and institutionalised dogs of ten years ago. This is changing the reality of what a greyhound is like to live with and making it more challenging to match them with families. This puts additional pressure on the voluntary[56] rescue workers who rehabilitate and rehome hundreds of greyhounds a year. There are thousands more that slip through the cracks. And this increases the urgency of helping every dog they can and a sense

[56] Only one participant was a paid employee of a rescue organisation, but she was also a volunteer.

of failure when they cannot. Yet there is an insinuation that rescue volunteers should be proud of the owner for doing the right thing and the rescue should be grateful for getting a 'good' dog. They are stuck in the middle of the dogs' welfare and inadvertently supporting the industry by taking its wastage. This can leave rescue workers feeling conflicted like they have lost their true self.

Sometimes 'people and the things they valued were so complexly intertwined that they could not be disentangled'(Hoskins 1998, 2) such the emotional process of accepting, rehabilitating, and rehoming surrendered dogs for rescue workers. The contributing factors to compassion fatigue must be part of this discussion – perhaps most significantly, that of putting animals' needs above one's own (Gorski, Lopresti-Goodman, and Rising 2019, 371) as is common practice in welfare work. These behaviours associated with compassion fatigue - anger, impatience, anxiety, depression, tiredness, suicidal ideation - can be a warning system (Coles 2017). But instead, these emotions are shaped through the cultural practices within rescue work, the invisibility of emotional labour, and possibly by the people this care work attracts - mid-life, in-transition, wanting to feel useful or purposeful. Volunteers are praised for putting others first, being available to help at all hours, and pushing themselves beyond exhaustion. The qualities of the dedicated rescue worker (or the 'good' mother) are normalized socially through repetition. Through visiting rescues' Facebook posts and speaking to my key participants in rescue, volunteers are often struggling. I tied these factors to the circulation of greyhounds and the interactions between the owners/trainers and rescue workers.

Here, I wish to take this a step further by linking the stuck-ness and emotional work of rescue workers with the emotional work of the owner/trainers. They too are in transition. The 'game' of greyhound racing is a key part of their identity – as an intense full-time hobby, their social community, a sense of purpose and achievement and caregiving. And it is changing. The business of previous generations of greyhound owner/trainers had largely been out of the public eye. With the explosion of social media alongside a shifting concept of animal sentience came criticism of standard industry practice. These criticisms of practice were not just about greyhound racing but of the use of animals for entertainment more generally. These factors threaten the existence of the industry. The industry has responded with claims to heritage and tradition, benefits to the rural economy, and a defense of their love and care of

greyhounds. So, when rescue workers discuss the social and emotional tension during the handover of a greyhound, it is likely to be felt by both human parties.

In the next chapter, I turn to greyhounds as pets in the family home. Over the next two chapters, I suggest that the ways in which these owners incorporate greyhounds into the home is a type of parenting.

Chapter 4: Pets as Kin: The Everyday Lives of Pet Parents

A greyhound considers himself an equal member of the family.

- Cynthia Branigan (2004, 24)

There is perhaps no more complex human/animal social relationship than that between humans and dogs.

- Raymond Madden (2010, 503)

Plate 31 Barbie the greyhound at home. Photo by Imogen.

Introduction: On Pets as Family

> They're very much part of the family. And they have a place. And you know, that place has to be respected. I mean, I know if I'm sitting on Cú's place on the couch, he will come and stare at me, and then proceeds to climb on top of me so I'm going to get out of the way. I've got like, photos of them sleeping, obviously. The joke is that, you know, as I have no photos of myself or my family but 100 in the last 10 days of my dog.
>
> - Joanne, 36, Galway

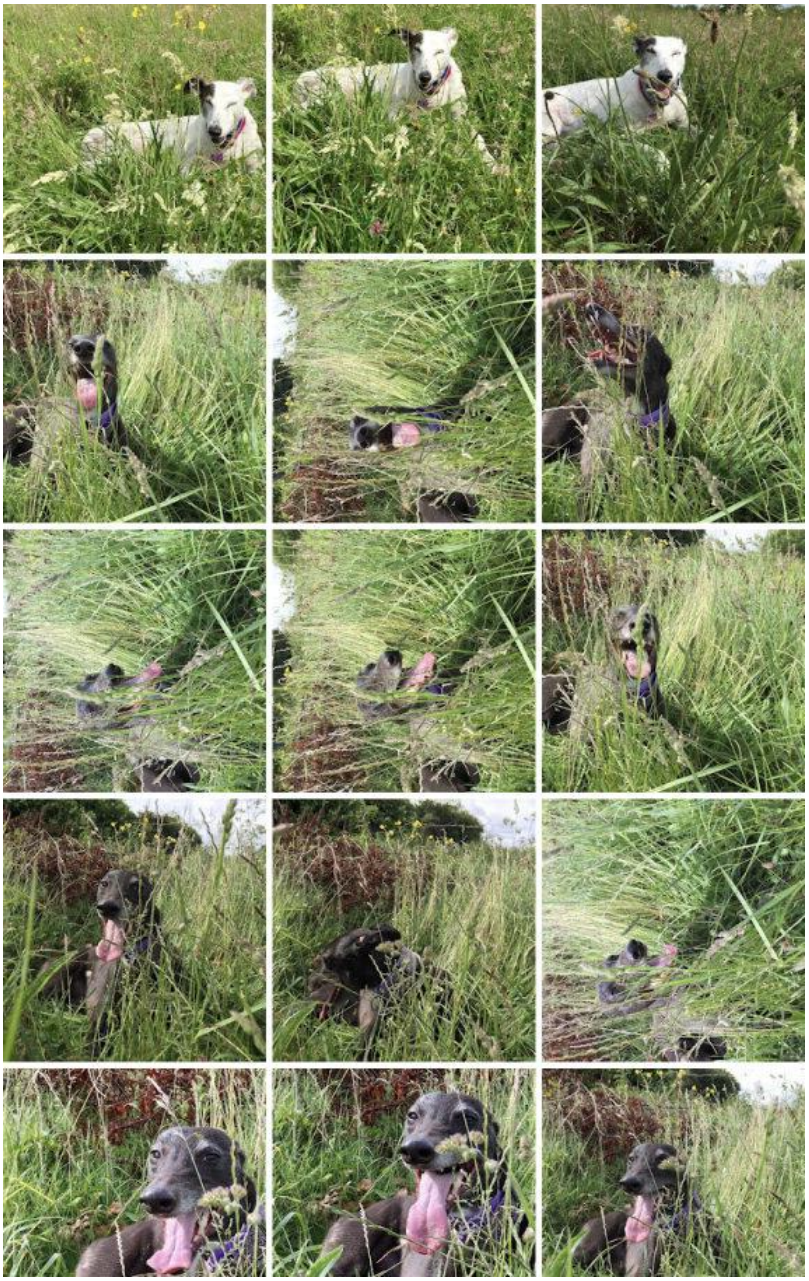


Plate 32 Example of camera roll full of Joanne's dogs Cú and Jazz. Photo by Joanne.

Joanne is a 36-year-old part-time secondary school teacher and mother of a thirteen-year-old child. With their greyhounds, they live in a small village near her parents. Despite loving her human family, she notes with good humour that her camera is full of photos of her dogs (who she both includes and excludes as 'family' in the above quote). She speaks of her dog having a place in the home both figuratively and literally – a place in the family, but also a physical ownership of his favourite spot on the sofa. This inclusion and respect as a recognised part of the family and the home is different to expectations of a pet who is kept outdoors (Volsche 2019).

Her love of greyhounds started as a child while passing a local greyhound trainer's paddock where she watched 'the most beautiful animals' run. Later, her connection to greyhounds was cemented through a teacher's comment:

> And when I was in fourth class, I would have been, I don't know, maybe 10. Nine. And our teacher went around, and he told everybody in the class what type of dog they would be if they were a dog. And he told me that I would be a greyhound. And to this day, it is the highest compliment, in my opinion, that I have ever received. I'll never forget this. You know, I was animal obsessed as a child, obsessed. And yeah, when he said I'd be a greyhound. I just you know, I loved him. I just thought they were so beautiful. Beautiful.

Joanne was 18 years old when she rescued her first greyhound, Penelope. Her parents fell in love with the dog and welcomed her into their home for visits. Joanne brought Penelope everywhere with her and integrated her into everyday life saying, 'I was quite young. I used to bring her to the pub - she used to get barred from our local pub and all. She was a character really, really was. Everybody knew her.' But Penelope came into her own when Joanne's son was born.

> She was so brilliant with him from the day he came home from the hospital. For a dog that could move very fast and used to jump off [bark] a lot and that kind of stuff, she never did with my son. She was gentle and calm and quiet. And she was always very good and patient, you know, you could be poking around in the eye or pulling her ears and she'd just be happy with the attention.

Joanne trusted Penelope with her son from infancy because Penelope behaved differently around him than her usual high-strung way of being. Penelope remained unfailingly gentle with him.

> She wasn't fazed by the addition of baby equipment. No, not at all. To her this was just something extra she could lie on. 'Oh, there's a mat on the ground. It must be for me;

> I'll lie in it'. Oh, and then when he was starting to learn how to sit and you place cushions around the place? 'Oh, those cushions must be for me. I'll be on those, and he can lean up against me'. And so, you know, she was fantastic.

Joanne firmly places her dogs within the family and as integral to everyday activities. This includes narration of the dog's thoughts. As is typical of my participants, she speaks on behalf of her dog by inferring what they are thinking through their demeanor and behaviour[57].

As basic needs like safe housing and access to healthcare became reliable, this translated into more time, money, and energy to fulfil other goals or to pursue interests that bring pleasure. David Blouin (2013) asserts that these changes led to many individuals keeping pets to complement the role of the child which Shelly Volsche (2019) calls pet parenting. Joanne's example explores the creation and practice of family in which her son was integrated into an already established multispecies dynamic. This example is interesting for three reasons. First, it indicates that her dogs are an important part of how she defines 'family'. Traditional anthropological models of kinship prioritized a Western concept of biological kinship and the nuclear family as standard. More contemporary approaches to kinship have been guided by concepts of relatedness and a challenge to biological or social binaries (who the participants say is family) (Carsten 2014) or by the practices and doing of family (Neale 2000; Smart and Silva 1999; Morgan 1996).

The second reason Joanne's example is interesting is that it speaks to the reality of the ways families raise children – often outside of the nuclear family. While this can mean delaying having children until later in life to pursue career goals, or living in a home with multiple generations, Joanne had her son at the relatively young age of 23. Although Joanne was a single parent, this was not a significant theme when examining her role with her dogs and son as a family. She mentioned former partners to provide context but not as a missing piece to their everyday lives. This indicates a significant shift in the expectations of what 'family' life means and how it is practiced. From the 1960s, key patterns of social changes such as access to birth control and challenging gendered division of labour in the home and workplace (Lesthaeghe and van de Kaa 1986) have been noted alongside the decreased role the Catholic church has played in the Irish family home (Corcoran, Gray, and Peillon 2010). These social

[57] Penelope lived until she was nearly 17 years old. And when Joanne and her son were ready, they adopted two new greyhounds (photo above) and see Chapter 7.

upheavals brought more inclusive public acceptance for who can be considered a family like childfree couples, single, divorced, remarried, LGBTQ+ and co-habiting parents. The planned referendum on 8th March 2024 which suggests changing the Irish constitutional definition of family demonstrates the impact of these changes. Currently, a 'family' is a married man and woman with children, so children from nonmarital families are not recognised constitutionally[58]. Challenging the language of the constitution is a further step toward a 'more inclusive Ireland' (Kiernan and O'Connell 2024).

Third, Joanne describes the importance of dogs in her daily life since childhood and how she approaches their care now – as a parent. The relationships between humans and other animals have become a focus of anthropological research in recent decades with debates about what the inclusion of pets as family means, and I will explore this in the next section. These relationships are examined beyond the ownership of working and utilitarian animals as commodities to include emotional and mutually rewarding partnerships. Joanne discusses the everyday practices for her dogs that parallel the parenting role of her son. She had already had her dog for five years before her son's arrival, but Joanne describes similar attention to care practices for both. Shelly Volsche (2019) approaches 'pet parenting' as a valid form of bonding and distinguishes pet 'parents' from pet 'owners' by their time, emotional, and financial investment.

This chapter will examine the everyday practices of pet greyhound ownership as a type of parenting and the relational qualities in the creation of family. This focus is part of a long standing trend in Ireland. A 2016 pet industry survey concluded that Ireland has undergone a 'pet revolution' with 91% cared for as 'core members of the family' (Independent.ie 2016). The global pet care market was worth USD207.90 billion in 2020 and continues to increase annually (Fortune Business Insights 2021). Irish pet owners are spending on their pets in step with other pet-loving nations (McMahon 2019). Their status as a family member could be read as reflected in the household's financial commitment to a pet's health and emotional wellbeing. Although, a Huffington Post author claims that the pet industry is manipulating and exploiting pet owners into spending too much money on their pets rather than spending being a reflection of pet owners' feelings and practices (Kurlander 2015).

[58] This has legal and financial consequences, for example, for access to a widow/er's pension if the other parent dies.

To frame this process, I will begin with relevant anthropological literature on kinship to show how the concept of family has changed over time. Then I will briefly examine how social change in Ireland and internationally has influenced the concept of family. Next, I will look at the key literature in human-animal studies to frame the everyday pet keeping practices of pet parents. I will use case studies to provide examples of how the boundaries of the Irish family are being extended to include nonhuman animals and how everyday practices in pet keeping indicate a type of parenting. I then briefly explore the literature to ask if this indicates a time of post-human families. I conclude that these pet keeping practices blur the human-animal divide but do not equalize them, and as such these are multispecies families rather than post-human ones.

Anthropological Approaches to the Family

Family (Kinship)

What is family? As outlined in Chapter 1, Western notions of family followed biological, blood and marriage relations rather than social ones. Challenging the universality of this biological perspective and the emphasis on the nuclear family, Carsten, in an attempt to 'sidestep the biological/social dichotomy' instead, uses the term 'relatedness' (2013, 249). This also allowed her to take the lead from what her participants were doing and saying and move beyond the constraints of a Euro-American understanding. "Ideas about relatedness in Langkawi show how culturally specific is the separation of the 'social' from the 'biological' and the latter to sexual reproduction. In Langkawi relatedness is derived both from acts of procreation and from living and eating together" (Carsten 1995, 236). Carsten emphasises the importance of both biological relatedness and also participating in and experiencing everyday activities together – in other words, kinship can be negotiated.

In her more recent research exploring kinship in England, one vignette explores the lack of connection between an adopted child meeting their birth mother for the first time. Despite the anticipation of an emotional reunion, the encounter was disappointing. There was no immediate or automatic connection, even in the West where biological relations are often considered natural and given priority. This reaffirms her assertion that kin can be "made rather than given" (Carsten 2004, xiii) and outsiders can be welcomed in (Carsten 1995). In this way, I understand that the powerfulness of kinship emerges through the ordinary activities of

everyday life in the home over time (Carsten 2013). Carsten's approach allows for nuance – while biological ties connect Euro-Americans as 'related', it does not always make them 'family'. This means that including someone as family is a powerful statement about the importance, longevity, and intimacy of that relationship.

I hesitate to include longevity because that alone does not qualify one as an intimate family member, although it can contribute to the power and nostalgia of a relationship. The intimacy of family can take time and be generated in various ways. There are anthropological examples of kinship created and sustained through food and feeding (Becker 1995; Cassidy and El Tom 2016; Sahlins 2013; Strathern 1988). For example, on the island of Langkawi in Malaysia the combination of sharing food, space, and care in the home (or domestic space) creates family rather than the family provides those things (Carsten 2004). And here, my participants might agree that as their greyhound settles in over time, their relationship changes. It moves from the idealised potential of intimacy and kinship where the burden of care is from human to canine, to a more balanced acceptance as greyhound and owner mutually shape each other's practices.

Contributing to the discussion of who and how one can be included in a family group, Bren Neale (2000) following David Morgan (1996), defines family practices as "how people 'do' partnerships, parenthood and kinship" (Neale 2000, 9). She asserts that the adult makeup of the household is variable – married or cohabiting, same sex or heterosexual, co-parenting, or single parent. Indeed parenthood is often used as a descriptive term rather than an analytical one, where there are many ways of becoming a parent beyond bearing a child (McKenzie 2022). Like Carsten, it is of little concern if the adult-child relationship is based on blood or social ties. Where Neale departs from Carsten is that Neale's 'family' does not require living in the same home. The importance lies in the way the relationships are practiced, managed, and supported on a routine basis. This approach allows different types of relationships to attain equal value and validity. For example, friendships, not usually afforded equal status to family relationships, could then be included (Allan 1996; Bell and Coleman 1999; Desai and Killick 2010). A broader definition of kin relationships can shift the power balance in which children no longer passively receive care and socialisation from their parents but become active agents "as moral and social practitioners of family life" (Neale 2000, 9). This changes the debate from defining a family by the individuals in it, to defining a family by what a family

does (Smart and Silva 1999). This perspective moves the family away from the *institution* of family and towards the practice of it. Further, Neale suggests, this may quiet the ongoing debate on the decline of the institution of family (Neale 2000, 10).

For human interactions, there is leeway to include those outside of the home as family, as Neale suggests, but to include multispecies relationships as family, I suggest that living in the home is an essential component. Living in the home does two things. It reflects a shift in the status of nonhuman animals which were commonly kept as outdoor pets a generation ago in Ireland. And secondly, it allows the pet increased agency within the family home to influence and be influenced by everyday activities. This, as Neale (ibid.) suggested for children, makes pets active participants in family life rather than recipients of it. What this means is that family and kinship have the potential to be a flexible practice, made rather than given, in which domesticity is central (Carsten 2004). While this may appear to reaffirm the human-animal divide, I suggest instead that it blurs this boundary of who and how one can participate as family. I will return to the topic of multispecies homes, but first I will examine how social change has also contributed to the shifting concept of family in Ireland.

Changes to the Family in Ireland

In Ireland, changes to the family have been in progress for some time. Although contraception was legalised in 1985, to the dismay of the Catholic church, the distribution of contraception was restricted until the 1990s (McGowan 2017). An important factor for Ireland's increased inclusivity, flexibility and diversity has been the reduced involvement of the Catholic church in the Irish family home since the 1980s (Corcoran, Gray, and Peillon 2010).

Irish people lost confidence in the Catholic church resulting in declining weekly mass attendance numbers and a decreased tolerance of religious ideology (ibid.). In particular, gendered roles, sexual morality and rigid marital practices came into question. This contributed to the legalisation of divorce in 1995. In 1998, after the European Union's intervention, women were permitted to work in the public service after marriage[59]. Even with increased family income, birth rates are dropping (Central Statistics Office 2019) as individuals are choosing to have fewer children. In further distancing from Catholic ideology, the Marriage Equality Referendum was passed in 2015 allowing for those in the LGBTQ+ community to

[59] Irish women had been allowed to work in the public service since the 1970s.

marry and receive associated tax benefits. Finally, the Irish voters passed the Abortion Referendum in 2018 allowing women[60] to obtain an abortion in Ireland.

The way Irish people are practicing family is changing. Economic fluctuations, a reduction of religious stronghold, and changes in social policy has contributed to the flexibility in family practices and ideals in Ireland (Corcoran, Gray, and Peillon 2010; See also Lesthaeghe 2014; Irvine and Cilia 2017). These social upheavals brought more inclusive public acceptance for who can be considered family, for example childfree couples, single, divorced, remarried, LGBTQ+ and co-habiting parents. Parallel to these changes, how are pet keeping practices changing in Ireland?

Pets (Human-Animal Interactions)

> Pets occupy not so much a no-man's-land between person and possession as a unique space of their own in the complex tapestry that is human society.
>
> (Bradshaw 2017b, 150)

Some types of human-animal interactions have largely been ignored in the anthropological literature until recently (Hurn 2015). Important contributions of close relationships such as "Evans-Pritchard's study of the Sudanese Nuer's "bovine idiom", or Rappaport's observations of Tsembaga Maring "pig love" are few and far between" (Hurn 2015, 180). The bond between humans and animals has been an area of anthropological research since the 1980s (Bradshaw 2017b, xi). Internationally, there is increased recognition of and interest in the intensity, value and mutuality of human-animal relationships in everyday life, for example between buffalo and their elderly Nepalese caregivers (Fuller 2021). Physical and emotional closeness to pets offer insights into feelings and attitudes (Pierce 2012; Serpell 1996), health (Lima, Mateus, and Silva 2022), humanity (Bradshaw 2017a) and everyday routines and mourning a pet's loss (Pierce 2012). The importance of these relationships is clear as pets are increasingly considered members of the family in the U.S., Australia, Japan, Brazil, India and Europe (Stewart 2018; Hansen 2013; Cormier 2003; Laurent-Simpson 2021; Volsche, Mukherjee, and Rangaswamy 2021). Only recently has it gained traction in Irish media (McMahon 2019).

[60] Also nonbinary people and transgender men

Anthropologists are yet to investigate how we 'do' these relationships from an Irish perspective.

This chapter moves from the breeders and rescue/rehabilitation volunteers to the households and with that change comes a change in category. Before exploring the contexts in which Irish people include pets as members of the family, it could be useful to define what I mean by a pet. One way to define a pet is to determine an animal's value by its place in human society (Arluke and Sanders 1996). Those animals with a higher ranking were considered a pet and a member of the family rather than as food, a source of income or a subject for animal testing (ibid.). Moving beyond categorisation, the practice of giving an animal an individual name and allowing it in the house were indicators of pethood (Irvine and Cilia 2017). With this definition, the greyhounds in the chapter are now pets as they have individual names and live in the home, but they were not pets when they were racing. My racing industry participants agree that their working greyhounds are not pets.

How do humans include pets as members of the family? Bradshaw (2017a) explains that while 80-90% of UK pet owners will agree that their pet is a member of the family, if individuals are asked, more generally, to discuss their close family relationships, only 8% will immediately list their pet. He suggests this is due to an individual's uncertainty about the legitimacy of their close emotional bond with their pet. While these same individuals would not include their estranged parent or sibling (a clear blood relation), they may include their friend (no blood relation) with whom they frequently swap childcare. The boundaries of kinship with other humans may be more flexible and shifting. Through an examination of fictive kinship and fictive friendship, Daniel Miller suggests friends and family are conflated through a move towards relatedness (through Carsten) which avoids the 'simple dualism' of kin or not kin (2017, 378). Miller notes that these clear delineations between kin and friend are not reflected in practice. However, Miller's participants continue to distinguish between friends and relatives, saying friends are by choice and relatives are through obligation (which is complicated by the obligatory Facebook 'friending' of relatives). What is of interest here is that while pets are chosen, the language my participants use is rarely about their pets as friends (and equals) but rather as family (and an obligation to them as dependents). My participants say their dogs are family, not like family indicating 'real' kin rather than fictive.

Bradshaw noticed participants can be unsure of the seriousness with which interviewers will take their claim to pets as kin. He also noted both a gendered and an urban/rural divide among those who considered their pet as family in the UK. Women are more likely than men, and urban dwellers are more likely than rural dwellers to consider their pet a family member (Bradshaw 2017a).

Case Study 1: Lisa, Darren and Marsh

In 2019, newlyweds Lisa (30) a software programmer and Darren (31) a doctor of engineering bought their first home in Galway. Their semi-detached home was spacious and immaculate. It was decorated in neutral tones with a mix of plush carpeting and tile floors. Darren and Lisa imagined their future family would include dogs and children, as they were both raised in homes with dogs. Working long hours and frequent travelling had prevented them from committing to a dog. It was important to them to be able to provide sufficient care and attention. Until they were able to expand their family, they were satisfied with minding their extended family's dogs.

The Covid pandemic abruptly changed their lifestyle. In order to work from home comfortably, they converted two of their three bedrooms into offices. When their employers confirmed they would work remotely permanently, they enthusiastically researched dog breeds suitable for their lifestyle. They met and adopted their greyhound Marsh (2) shortly thereafter. Marsh became reliably toilet trained, learned to use the stairs, and play with toys within the first three months. Rescue organisations recommend that greyhounds are initially walked with a muzzle on while they encounter their first cats, wildlife, and non-greyhound dogs. Lisa and Darren were able to secure online sessions with a dog trainer which helped the settling-in process. Marsh was quickly allowed to walk muzzle-free because he showed no interest in other animals.

Plate 33 Lisa comforting greyhound Marsh. Photo by author.

Plate 34 Darren playing with Marsh in their kitchen. Photo by author.

Lisa and Darren both show their care through fussing over their greyhound, Marsh, and through their knowledge of his preferences. Having spent many hours interacting with Lisa, I was able to observe the change in her demeanor in the following incident. We were in her kitchen together while Marsh wandered around and pawed his bed. He laid down and got back up immediately. Lisa's body slumped and her face tightened in concern when Marsh would not settle on his air-filled bed. She explained his favourite bed was drying after washing. She called him back to his bed to reassure him it was safe and gave him a toy to

chew on. As she sat beside him, Lisa described her actions in terms of love. She paid attention to his preferences and knew his favourite bed as an expression of her love for him.

As we headed out for a walk, they show me the selection of collars, harnesses, coats, and leads they have bought in order to find a combination that works for all of them in Ireland's changeable weather. It was beginning to rain but not too cold, so Darren chose Marsh's light raincoat with a harness that closely fit over it. Checking for spare poo bags and house keys, we started walking. We stopped and started as Marsh sniffed and urinated, while Lisa and Darren took turns narrating where they often see other dog walkers, Marsh's favourite neighbourhood children, and the various routes they take. The route may vary for several reasons. Sometimes it is for Marsh's mental stimulation to experience something new, other times it is because he pulls in a particular direction. They abandoned a particular walk through the village because broken glass was a frequent hazard to Marsh's paws. This attention to Marsh's comfort, preferences, and safety are Lisa and Darren's expressions of love for Marsh.

The flow of the house and arrangement of furniture was influenced by Marsh's presence. Originally, Marsh's bed was located in a spacious spot under the open staircase. A large luxury dog bed, cuddly toys and blanket made it look cozy with the intention for it to feel safe. It was enclosed by the door to the kitchen on one end and a baby gate on the other. Two months later, without any toileting accidents, Lisa removed the baby gate to allow Marsh to have more freedom. A few weeks later, Lisa and Darren noticed Marsh was increasingly interested in being near them. Marsh moved his body near them and made more eye contact. He slowly wagged his tail when he saw them enter a room. Lisa responded by moving Marsh's dog bed to the upstairs landing during the day. For lunchtime and evening use, Lisa added a second bed in the kitchen. Marsh spends his days near Darren's and Lisa's home offices on the landing in his bed. Three months after his adoption, he slept there at night, too. Marsh was not allowed to be in the rooms upstairs, despite his best efforts to sneak in.

In industrial societies people are having fewer children (Central Statistics Office 2019; Madden 2010). To understand why this might be, there is a large inter-disciplinary literature that focuses on ideas of intimacy that animals-as-pets purportedly provide. For example, Raymond Madden suggests, humans are more removed from some types of animals, such as those for food and work, but increasingly in contact with other types, such as companion animals. In agreement with Franklin (1999), Madden points to this emotional intimacy and

companionship as the impetus for keeping pets in the time of industrialisation in addition to, and in agreement with Watson (2018), individuals increasingly living alone or having fewer children (Madden 2010, 504). While Madden and Franklin point to industrialisation and the removal of humans from working and utility animals for the increase in companion pet keeping, Bradshaw points to affluence and instinct as the key aspects. The importance of this research is not to justify petkeeping as a way of diverting nurturing or caring instincts, but rather the diversity and level of research interest petkeeping generates inter-disciplinarily.

As illustrated by Lisa and Darren's example, some owners' responsible, nurturing and committed approach to their dog is an outlet for those who remain childless (intentionally or otherwise), before they have children, or after children are grown (Klein 2019; Laurent-Simpson 2017a; Lowry 2016). Scholars have argued elsewhere that pets can meet the societal expectation for a 'complete' family more often met with (multiple) human children (Laurent-Simpson 2017a). Pet parenting can be practiced by using nicknames, using parent-child signifiers, and paying close attention to the pet's preferences. Additionally, pet parents will perform inconvenient or tiresome tasks like cleaning up after toileting accidents, treating wounds, and comforting sick pets at night. They will also take financial and organisational responsibility seriously for medical care, exercise, diet, and supervision while working long hours or on holiday (i.e., kennelling or pet sitting). Even when their family practices aligned with pet parenting, not all my participants embraced the label. There was similarity of practices and feelings in the creation of family in Ireland whether my participants identified as owners, parents, or co-habitants. Next, I will turn to the type of mutual interactions humans and dogs have in the family home.

Pet parenting

There is an increasingly common way in which pet owners keep their pets. This style is more attentive, intensive, expensive and time consuming and more closely aligned to parenting than ownership. The complexity of these human-pet relationships is reflected in the breadth of research including building a family (Stewart 2018), the use of parent-child naming conventions (Bradshaw 2017a), childfree pet parenting practices (Volsche 2021, 2018, 2019), the creation of a parenting identity (Owens and Grauerholz 2019), parenting styles (Volsche and Gray 2016), and cross cultural comparison (Volsche, Mukherjee, and Rangaswamy 2021). These practices are not without criticism and debate. An opinion piece in Huffington Post

called pet parenting ‘upsetting’, ‘really stupid’ and ‘misguided’ (Kurlander 2015). In opposition, one academic researcher has argued for equal legal status as provided to human parents (Stewart 2018).

My participants spoke for, to, through and with their pets and many used kinship terms to describe their relationships. Take Joanne from the opening vignette, for example. She narrated the thoughts she imagined her greyhound would have about the baby furniture and cushions based on her behaviour. By saying ‘oh, this cushion is for me’, she spoke out loud what she imagined Penelope was thinking. Frank and Lillian, in their 50s, both enthusiastically talked about their greyhound Rowan as being part of their family. Lillian spoke ‘for’ Rowan about what he thought his ‘dad’ (i.e. Frank) should do. After our walk, Lillian said to Rowan ‘isn’t it time for Dad to feed you?’. Then Lillian looked at Frank to check that he heard Rowan’s request for dinner. This use of kinship terminology in multispecies homes is a common way greyhound owners include them in the practice of family. Lastly, Imogen, a 22-year-old university student, included her greyhound Cecil in all correspondence and on our Covid-restricted video conversations. She would speak directly to him as if to confirm her statements.

This way of talking is commonly portrayed on social media accounts such as Instagram and TikTok, blogs, and newspaper columns. Under the newspaper column titled *Can you tell what your dog’s thinking? A ‘mother’s guide to Dog Speak* a commenter posted ‘Pet parents always know what their fur babies are thinking’ (Perel 2023). While the use of ‘fur babies’ may be cringeworthy, it illustrates the intense connection some pet parents have with their dogs. In this column, the author addressed reading her dogs’ body language, talked to them in the way mothers speak to their children, and narrated their parts of ‘conversation’ as she imagined it, just as Joanne did above. I suggest these practices incorporate the dog into the ordinary routines and playfulness of the household alongside feeding, walking, and grooming. (I explore how communication with pets facilitates relationships with humans and between humans (Lane 2015) as part of a multisensory experience in Chapter 6 and the dog walk in Chapter 7.)

Other research asserts ‘what we’re doing with pets is mainly an anthropomorphic arrangement’ (Bradshaw in Worrall 2017). Our minds imagine that our pets have “thoughts and intentions rather like ours”, but they just cannot express them to us very well (ibid.). But

for my participants, this is beside the point. The purpose of communication between my participants and their greyhounds is to create enjoyment, a sense of fun, connection, and emotional closeness. The 'reality' of the dog's thoughts and intentions are less important than the realness of the relationships and feelings this communication builds.

As we see in the case-studies, pets are a member of the family because they are included in everyday family practices in the home, and the family says they are. However, not all members of the family are equal regardless of species. In line with a 'family is as family does' approach taken by Smart and Silva (1999) and others, it is worth exploring the ways in which Irish families perform 'family'. Their behaviours and practices indicate their greyhounds are members of the family and they are 'pet parents'. While it is relevant to distinguish the difference between various types of pet keeping, and therefore of use to separate between pet parents and pet owners, it is important to emphasise the degrees of difference on a continuum rather than a binary. Further, there appears to be a difference among owners who playfully refer to each other as their dog's mom or dad and those who identify as a pet parent, even if, in practice, they treat their pets the same. Volsche's (2019) definition of a pet parent would include many of my participants. While they would agree with the sentiment and certainly put in the time, money, and emotional energy to qualify, most simply would not use those words. I use pet parent to describe the level of dedication my participants make to these relationships and to examine how they are practiced in daily life.

Negotiated Domesticity

What we see here is that the greyhound and the person can influence the use and placement of furniture within the home. Sensory elements, such as the decoration of the home, are negotiated to facilitate how one lives alongside what works in their home. So, redecorating a house is not just replicating the owner's taste and preference *on* the new space but a negotiation of the owner's preferences *with* their knowledge of what belongs in the home (Miller 2001). In this case, Lisa and Darren were negotiating the home and accessories not just to their own preferences, but with consideration to their pet's preferences. They noted this was their intentional process for changing furniture, dog beds, food, locations of water bowls, leads etc. as their understanding of their new greyhound grew. What they thought was a nice bed, perhaps did not feel quite right under Marsh's feet. Or perhaps the sound of the Velcro fastenings startled their dog, so they bought a different coat with clasps instead. Or,

as Lisa described, she moved the dog bed in response to where Marsh wanted to spend his time. This equipment is negotiated over time between the home, the human, and the dog, and is a key component to pet parenting practices where the dog's preferences are taken into account.

This is interesting because the mutuality of the practices and routines contributed to the success of this family. Marsh actively engaged with Lisa and Darren by initiating play and affection. He learned to indicate his need for toileting and to wait until he was outside to do so. In response, Marsh was given more freedom in the home, he was given additional beds and they bought toys they thought he might like. The expansion of their family was successful as they adapted to their and Marsh's needs through establishing a predictable routine as a type of parenting.

Lisa and Darren agree they cannot imagine their lives without Marsh but also that their transition to pet parents was challenging. Unlike most adult dogs, greyhounds must be slowly and gently taught how to be pets – or undergo a process of 'petification' (Perez 1986). This may include learning how to be clean in the house, tolerate household noises, climb stairs, and manage the visual and auditory stimulation of other-than-greyhound animals, children, bicycles, and traffic. An emotional bond can be created and strengthened between the greyhound and human through patient guiding and teaching. As a type of pet ownership, pet parents express their love through including the dog as a member of the family (Laurent-Simpson 2017b, 2021; Volsche 2018, 2019; Volsche, Mukherjee, and Rangaswamy 2021). This parenting role is not specific to pet greyhound owners. However, the skills these sensitive dogs need to learn as adults are unique and take patience, time, and attention. This makes successful pet greyhound owners particularly adept at the role of pet parent.

Case Study 2: Imogen and Cecil

Plate 35 Example of Cecil's breakfast. Photo by Imogen.

Plate 36 Example of Cecil's dinner. Photo by Imogen.

Plate 37 Imogen makes Cecil's meals in batches. Photo by Imogen.

Imogen is an enthusiastic and organised 22-year-old university student in Galway studying environmental science. Originally from the Midlands, she lives in the apartment that was bought for her by her mother and stepfather as an investment property. It has an enclosed high-walled courtyard for the residents. Although she did not have a dog when she chose the apartment, it was a key reason she was allowed to adopt Cecil the greyhound at only 19 years old. She takes great care of and pride in her home. Her daily journals describe her cooking and cleaning routines. She 'deep cleans' in preparation for foster dogs and she cleans again after they leave. She is incredibly responsible. She does not live alone. She and Cecil live together as a family. All correspondence is from 'Imogen and Cecil'.

Imogen refers to herself and Cecil as 'we', for example when she says, "*we're* fostering a dog", she means she and Cecil. And it is very much a team effort. She relies on Cecil to assist in teaching the new dog how to become a pet. Cecil leads by example showing the new dog where to go to the toilet, where and when to rest, when to get excited for a walk and how to behave when out and about. His calm and confident nature puts new dogs at ease. Imogen cleans up the toilet accidents ("all part of learning the ropes"), ensures the foster dog remains on a diet of kibble (so the new owners are not obligated to feed raw food like she does), and continually assesses and shapes the dog's behaviour. She looks for signs of protecting food or toys (commonly called resource guarding within dog training), progress on stairs (can they walk up and down them) and around windows (do they understand they cannot walk through them), level of prey drive around local cats, wildlife, and other dogs (are they uninterested, interested, afraid, or want to kill), and friendliness and confidence with strangers. Here, Cecil leads the way as a model canine citizen. He is happy to greet all dogs and humans alike.

Imogen takes excellent care of Cecil including his diet and exercise. Food and eating together is a key part of what families do together. And while Imogen may not eat with Cecil in a literal sense, the time investment, attention to nutrition and visual presentation indicate that Imogen takes Cecil's health and enjoyment of food as seriously as she takes her own. Imogen makes Cecil's extraordinarily beautiful meals from scratch with raw meat and supplements. She walks him twice a day and ensures he socialises with his 'friends' and 'cousins' (her closest friends' dogs). Imogen works part time to pay for Cecil's exceptional standard of living which includes various coats, collars, leads, beds, toys, and veterinary care. Additionally, Imogen is aware of how long Cecil has been home without company. She ensures that after four hours,

either she or a friend is there to let him out for a toilet break. Imogen would not go out with friends after work or college unless Cecil could accompany them, or she had someone to sit with him for company. In this way, Imogen's care for Cecil aligns with pet parenting. Pet owners' commitment of money, emotion, and time into these relationships as an expression of their love and devotion.

Plate 38 Cecil in his winning outfit for 'Campest Dog' of Pride. Photo by Imogen.

It is important for some pet parents to include their pets in their everyday lives as a reflection of the pet's status as family member. Imogen participates in a variety of types of events and activities, from entering Cecil into the pre-Covid Pride dog show (winning Campest Dog) to giving radio interviews on greyhound rescue. She fosters greyhounds for a few different charities, she campaigns and protests against greyhound racing with a local group. Much like parents of human children, all of these activities either incorporate Cecil into family life or are for Cecil's benefit. But this is not the only type of community in which pet parents participate. The group dog walks will be discussed further in Chapter 7, however, there are also dedicated Facebook pages and WhatsApp groups for caravanning with greyhounds, sighthound[61] grooming, sighthound boarding/kennelling, home-sitting, minding, walking and various meet ups. These groups also lend each other equipment to try out, recommend services and companies who make specialised coats, jumpers, hats, bandanas, collars, leads for the dogs

[61] 'Sighthound' is the broader category for the type of dog that hunts by sight rather than by smell. This includes greyhounds, salukis, Afghan hounds, Irish wolfhounds, etc. It is also the way groups indicate they are inclusive of sighthound mixed breeds (called lurchers).

and assorted merchandise for the humans including shirts, scarves, mugs, stickers, keyrings, jewellery, etc. There are also pet friendly businesses discussion groups which either allow pets on the premises or have special treats for dogs (photo below).

Plate 39 Cecil receives a regular treat from this cafe. Photo by Imogen.

Plate 40 Cecil playing at a dog park. Photo by Imogen.

Dog parks are a place for both dog and human social interactions. Many greyhounds are not suitable for dog parks due to their play style of intense chasing. Further, their thin skin is prone to tearing from a tooth or nail during ordinary play resulting in significant injury requiring sutures. A gentler game of 'bitey face', as Imogen calls it, is pictured above with Cecil in his coat.

In line with other childless dog owners Imogen was attuned to Cecil's particular needs and wants. Lisa and Darren displayed similar attentiveness to Marsh's preferences, and both

households were ‘acutely aware’ that their dogs were not a child (Volsche 2018, 374). Volsche asserts that like parents of children, pet parents enjoy describing their dog’s everyday lives in detail – from toileting and sleeping habits to meeting ‘friends’ on their walk and meal preferences. In both households here, my participants reveled in the everyday minutiae of family life.

Post-Human Families?

This chapter has examined the many practices of everyday family life and the seriousness with which pet parents take on this role in a multispecies household, but does this suggest a period of post-human families (cf Charles 2016)? While there is an increased prevalence in pets becoming, not just mere members of the family, but akin to a human child, there are distinct differences. The ways in which pets are acquired and discarded is the overriding concern for researchers (Haraway 2003; Charles 2016; Bradshaw 2017b). While often harmless, expectations of pets’ behaviour can be unrealistic, and can lead to problems when they do not meet the mark. A key feature of wanting a pet is to ‘culture’ it like one might a child - in this way, owners might overestimate the ability of a pet to behave in a particular way. Bradshaw questions if owners’ close relationships with companion animals is a “careless blurring of the human and animal categories” (2017b, 127) rather than an indication of post-humanism.

Firstly, one question depends on how post-human is defined. One might argue that the ‘companionate’ inclusion of pets in the family home points to an increased importance of human-animal relationships and a fracture of the species barrier as post-human (Franklin 2006). Alternatively, post-human could mean the conduction of household relationships that are not based on dominance and submission where the needs of both species are met (Smith 2003). Franklin and Smith both argue this is a time of post-humanism.

Rebekah Fox (2006) argues for a posthuman family when posthuman is defined as a breaking of the human-animal binary while still respecting their animality. She suggests that those with a deep understanding of their pets value their ‘individual subjectivity and personhood’ rather than their ‘similarity to humans’ (Fox 2006, 525). She suggests pet dogs can challenge these boundaries, but humanity remains intact.

Arguing the human-animal boundary has broken down, Donna Haraway still rejects posthumanism because of the 'risk of abandonment' (2016a). She argues that it is 'the status of pet' that makes dogs vulnerable for three reasons 1) humans may lose interest in the dog 2) the dog requires more work than is convenient and 3) the dog does not 'deliver on the fantasy of unconditional love' (2016a, 129). She contrasts the pet dog with the working dog who is valued for the job she does rather than for loving her owner. However, in the context of this research on working greyhounds, safety is conditional on a job well done.

Nicki Charles, in agreement with Haraway, identifies 'unequal power relations' as preventing dogs and other companion animals from being equal to humans (2016; see also Bradshaw 2017b). Charles argues that while post-human practices are observable in multispecies homes, so too are practices that reaffirm those boundaries. A pet's physical, emotional, and cognitive needs are taken seriously with their species in mind. And while they are included in the home as family members, they are as Bradshaw (2017b) noted, in a conceptually (and in practice) liminal space between person and possession. When using Charles' definition of post-humanism, I suggest that multi-species homes blur the human-animal divide but do not equalize or break it.

What appears to be neglected in these debates is the role of domestic practices and the place of home as part of this transition from working dog to pet. Many pets are integrated into a multispecies home as part of the family, and these relationships are taken seriously and invested with time, energy, emotion, and financial commitment, but this is not the era of the post-human family. This was evident in my participant's recollection from 'years ago'. Now in her mid-50s, Barbara recalls having to rehome her first greyhound. Her three children were between the ages of ten to fifteen. She had asked her middle child's friend not to touch the dog while he was asleep on his bed as he suffered from sleep startle (i.e., he would jump awake frightened and bite). Later, the child approached the sleeping dog and was bitten in the face. Even though it was a minor injury, the child and Barbara 'got an awful fright'. It was decided the dog was not suitable for family life with children in the home and went to live in an adult-only home. What these complex practices indicate is the flexibility in the social relationships between kin, family, and pets.

However, while these more abstract ideas of multispecies or post-human families are relevant to academic debates, my participants are interested in everyday life and moving their pet into

the home as part of the process of becoming a pet and family member. The domestic space is where it happens and how it is happening. Returning to my participants in this chapter – Joanne, Cú and Jazz, Lisa, Darren and Marsh, and Imogen and Cecil – they are focused on the care, love and domestic practices that create their family.

Conclusion

This chapter offers a contribution to the anthropological literature on the Irish family and the human-animal bond. I began with kinship and family studies in anthropology developed by Carsten (2014) in which suggests 'relatedness' as a description of kinship rather than being bound by the biological/social binary. This allows for observation of the variety of interactions within families to determine how they 'do' family and to acknowledge who they say is family. Social change has allowed a more accepting and accurate reflection of how families are arranged and practiced in contemporary Ireland.

I then discussed various ways of understanding pet keeping, noting the lack of anthropological literature on human-animal interactions despite their frequency and importance cross-culturally (Hurn 2015). Broadening the definition of family to include non-blood related relationships, combined with the increased interest in relationships with nonhuman animals, allows for the legitimate exploration of pets as family. Further, research on social change has suggested the increase in women's autonomy and participation in the workforce has led to couples delaying and/or reducing the number of children they have. Caretaking is instead diverted to their pets – to the dismay of the Pope who asserted this is a selfish practice (see Chapter 5) (Mulgrew 2022; Holy See 2022).

I explored the everyday practices of my participants which reflects how they embrace and include their greyhounds as members of the family. These practices can be understood as a type of parenting (Volsche 2019), particularly when parenting is understood as a descriptive term rather than an analytical one (McKenzie 2022). This is a useful approach as it reflects a more intense and responsible style to pet keeping than one might expect from the term 'pet'. We began this chapter with Joanne's example of her first dog Penelope who actively participated in being a 'cushion' for Joanne's infant to rest on. As is common among my participants, she verbally 'spoke' what she imagined her dog was thinking and had a smartphone full of photos of her dogs, rather than of her human family members. Next, Lisa

and Darren patiently attended to Marsh's 'petification' process, were attuned to his bed and food and walk preferences and integrated him into their local community (Perez 1986). Imogen included Cecil in her everyday activities of visiting cafes and protests but also shaped her routine around Cecil's social, dietary and exercise requirements. These examples have illustrated the variety of practices current greyhound owners exhibit and the importance of the home as the location of these practices.

Finally, I asked do the ways in which my participants 'do family' indicate we are in a period of post-human families? I concluded that the practices of pet parents push the boundaries of what was once considered appropriate emotional, financial, and time commitments only to other humans. But the continued power dynamic in which a pet may be abandoned or rehomed for any number of reasons means that they are still of less value than humans keeping us firmly in a humanist era. This concept was not of interest to my participants, however, as they were focused on the practices which made their family. A key part of making a family is the emotion invested in those practices. This will be explored in the following chapter along with how love is expressed by racing owner/trainers and in the rescue community.

Chapter 5: The Many Practices of Love

I promise to love and cherish you as much as I do our dogs.

- My friend Muireann's wedding vows

Plate 41 Pictured circa 1980: the author, Grandpa Lamar and sister Sherry. Photo by Kathy Skelton.

Introduction

Born in 1911, my paternal grandfather was a brash and unlikable man to most. However, he let me follow him as he filled the many bird feeders in his rural Michigan yard. His final English setter, in a long line of identical dogs all named 'Silk', had died of old age. Indulging my curiosity as we tended to his tomato plants and dahlia flowers, he gruffly replied he wouldn't get another dog because he couldn't stand to lose another one. His grief would be too great. At eight years old, it was my first exposure to the real bond one can have with a dog.

My mother recalls the dog was in 'so much pain that he would circle and circle and circle until he'd collapse down to rest'. My father suggested that it was time for the vet to put Silk to sleep. My grandfather 'flew off the handle in a rage, asking "is that what you'll do with us when we get old?"'. This stern and grumpy elderly man equated the treatment of his dog to that of human life. There is nothing frivolous about the relationships we have with or mourning the loss of our pets. As anthropologist Sara Ahmed (2004) suggests, the interactions between people, others and objects shape and are shaped by emotions. My grandfather's

grief and anger, fear and love established a connection to, or space for, the realness of human-pet relationships which in turn shaped mine.

The objective of this chapter is to examine how and why 'love' is a key organising concept for my participants, but one that is used in very different ways in their everyday lives. Although discussion of love is ubiquitous, on closer examination it refers to diverse practices for the three main groups I spent time with: trainers, rescue volunteers and householders with greyhounds as pets. Further, while each group uses the word 'love', they interpret what it should mean and how it should be practiced differently. In what follows I will show how love is not understood in abstract terms but is incorporated into everyday practices within these three communities/collectives. Using love as an analytical framework, I will show how these contradictory definitions and practices cause frustration and tension between the groups when they each think their interpretation of love applies to the other.

The way humans practice and value their relationships with each other, animals, the environment, ideas, and objects are rich and varied. Emotion is inherent to the way humans interact but the expression of emotion itself is shaped by many factors including culture, socioeconomic background, gender and urban/agricultural lifestyle. In previous chapters, I identified three distinct segments of greyhound enthusiasts while also noting these groups overlap and are contested within and between. They are the racing greyhound owners/industry, greyhound specific rescue organisations, and pet greyhound owners. This chapter will explore how companionate, as opposed to romantic, love is practiced within different parts of the greyhound community. First, I will outline how emotion has been addressed within anthropology generally and continue with how the focus has moved from romantic to companionate, or non-romantic, love. Importantly, different types of love and relationships are considered valuable parts of human life and worthy of consideration. I take love as the overarching concept in this chapter as it is one emotion that each of the three sections of greyhound enthusiasts name as a key motivating factor in their relationship with greyhounds.

Love, I argue, is an emotion that can be expressed through practice. The sets of practices are contested within and between groups of greyhound enthusiasts who each claim their approach is in the best interest of the greyhound. What types of practices 'entitle' someone to claim their love of something is left open to debate. Significantly, the industry's 'motto' is that they love their dogs, but the greyhound owners I spoke to do not say they love their dogs but 'the game'. I will illustrate how the racing community shows that love for 'the game' through their dogs as physical caregiving (and how this is critiqued by welfare activists as not-good-enough). Next, I will outline the ways the rescue community prides itself on their love as their commitment to saving[62] greyhounds and also their welfare activism, and I will finish with a discussion of how pet owners' love is *akin* to family. Examining how love is practiced and shaped by participants' experiences and social circle in their various greyhound communities in Ireland will provide insights into the complexity of these meaningful relationships. Further, it will contribute to broader discussions within anthropology to illustrate how emotions (love), family (kin), and ideologies (including politics) are relational and transformative.

Anthropological Approaches to Emotion

The discipline of anthropology has used emotions to examine, illustrate, frame, think about, or reflect other aspects of a culture but they were not considered to be of inherent significance. This was in part because emotions were considered biologically universal, messy, complicated, and nuanced. The apparent irrationality of emotions made them unworthy of serious scientific research and the Western concept of emotions considered them 'beneath' the faculties of thought and reason (Ahmed 2004, 3; Lutz 1988).

In the 1970s psychological anthropology and other disciplines moved away from a biologically universalist view (Hoogenraad and Dundon 2021; Lutz and White 1986; Allard 2016; Beatty 2014). They began to favour an in-depth examination of cultural influences for the understanding and expression of emotions (Lutz and White 1986; Rosaldo 1984). Regardless of emotions' 'ontological status as cultural invention, biological states, or constructed social

[62] There is potential research here for rescue work as care through illness narratives. This was beyond the scope of this project.

roles' (Beatty 2014, 559), they are experiences, and it is an anthropologist's aim to convey the experience and its importance in everyday life (Beatty 2010, 430-431; Briggs 1970; Rosaldo 1989). One approach to convey the experience of emotions was through narrative as it can incorporate 'how emotions are entangled in personal histories' (Beatty 2010, 430).

Another alternative to emotions as a psychological state is to consider them variable, interesting, and accessible socially and culturally shaped practices (Collins 1990; Hochschild 2012; Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990; Katz 1999; Kemper 1978; Rosaldo 1984; White 1993; Williams 2001; Ahmed 2004). Like manners (Mead 1943), experiencing emotion may be universal, but how, when and where they are expressed will vary by who you are and where you are in the world (Ahmed 2004). Then, the practices of love can be examined through a variety of ways including as everyday caregiving activities (Mattingly 2010, 2014), as activism (Wright 2016; for value and activism see Graeber 2001), as a 'public virtue' or 'moral force' (Rapport 2017) or as family. In this way, rather than asking what emotions are, I will follow Ahmed's (2004) approach to ask what emotions *do* and how they are practiced. For my sets of participants, their love can be examined through practices of caregiving which can also communicate moral/ethical positions (Black 2015). I will examine these arguments in more detail below, but I will briefly explore how romantic love has been addressed in anthropology and the move towards acknowledging the importance of non-romantic love.

Love: A Shift from Romantic to Companionate Love

> Love is a social practice and as such will be reinvented as society changes. The question is not *whether* love will be reinvented, but *how,* and *who* will have a say in its design.
>
> - Sadler 2018, 17

Love was taken seriously as a topic of anthropological research in the 1980s (Hoogenraad and Dundon 2021)[63]. Researchers favoured romantic love because it appeared to be valued over other types of love in the West (Hoogenraad and Dundon 2021; Brake 2012; Sadler 2018). In contrast, in diverse societies such as among the Umeda in Papua New Guinea, romantic love

[63] Goode called for it in sociology decades earlier (1959).

is not a consideration for arranged marriage nor reproduction (Gell 2011 [1996]). While romantic love is not given preferential status in all human societies, social control is influenced locally and globally (Hoogenraad and Dundon 2021) and practiced differently depending on variables such as community, religion, gender, and class and personal biography (Beatty 2010). Love is a useful tool for social analysis because it provides insight into the entanglements between the 'cultural, economic, interpersonal, and emotional realms of experience' (Padilla et al. 2007, ix).

There is a move to recognise other types of love as equally meaningful (Cutas 2018; Sadler 2018). In addition to romantic love, love between friends and family, parent and child, and between species significantly contribute to everyday life. 'Companionship or attachment love' are increasingly recognised as central to humans' lives (Hoogenraad and Dundon 2021, 222). It can describe marital relationships that have moved from a romantic nature to one of mutual and deep caring (Hirsch and Wardlow 2006). Other approaches include reframing and reinterpreting 'ideologies of love' (Mody 2022, 273) to examine relationships with power inequalities entwined with individuality, intimacy, and care (Härkönen 2018). Caregiving can be considered in a number of ways for example, as an expression of emotion, as performance, as a reflection of moral and ethical leanings, as healing (Black 2018).

Importantly, caregiving can be considered a communication of meaning and intent which is used to position oneself with or opposed to others and what one should do (ibid.). I will examine how my participants communicate their moral/ethical positions through their care of greyhounds and consider how love and care in relationships with unequal power is particularly relevant in the context of human-canine relationships. While dogs can have considerable agency in their day to day lives, the human does have ultimate control over routine, diet, health care, and decisions about life and death. I suggest these criteria for companionate love are key components of many of the relationships in my research so is particularly apt in the case of multispecies bonds.

At this point, I will recap. Anthropologists have taken emotions seriously as a social and cultural practice. Love has been included in research, but romantic love was prioritized in the West. However, there has been a push to include other types of love that are also, and possibly equally, important. My friend Muireann's wedding vows in the opening quote, hold her love for her dogs as the highest attainment or quality of love and that she commits that intensity

of affection, care, and responsibility to him, too. This was not a surprise to the wedding guests who, laughing kindly, murmured their agreement that it was fitting – she does love her dogs as much as her husband. Nonetheless, one aspect of research on companionate love was regarding a mutual love that has an element of a power imbalance as can be examined in multispecies relationships. Next, I will bring these threads together to move onto case studies to illustrate the various ways love is practiced in three groups of greyhound enthusiasts – industry trainers, rescue volunteers and pet owners.

Love and Human-Animal Relationships

As mentioned earlier, love is shaped by a variety of social and cultural experiences and can be expressed through practices. Because love is so central to intimate relationships it provides insight into these interpersonal and emotional contexts (Padilla et al. 2007). An analysis of love can provide understanding into how different types of relationships are introduced, welcomed, nurtured, and ended. I add to this Fuller's claim that 'the human-animal relationship [is] a key relationship of value' and 'that intimacy and becoming are multispecies affairs' (2021, 289). Therefore, using a framework of love to examine the value and practice of multispecies relationships is relevant because of the consistency, frequency, and vehemence with which the term 'love' is used by my participants in relation to their dogs. From the racing industry (but not individual trainers) to rescue workers to pet owners, they all say they love their dogs. However, how that love is practiced varies widely – and not all love is to be advertised even if the practices align with it. The everyday practices of love as care and intimacy are the key to understanding the many types of relationships and how my participants feel, understand, experience, and practice the love they have for their greyhounds. Love is relational and depends on the roles and relationships of the people or dogs involved. This builds on the previous chapters which attempt to show how none of these practices can be understood in isolation.

Love in Practice

Emotions are understood as a social and cultural practice rather than as psychological states (Ahmed 2004). Ahmed asserts that our emotions are influenced by how we (as intersectional selves) interact with an object or image within social and cultural norms. She continues, emotions are political because they align individuals within a particular community or set of

communities and exclude them from others. In this way, the emotion of love can be explored by what it does in different communities – it entails a particular set of practices and everyday tasks which gives them value. I suggest this is particularly relevant to the care of pets as my participants explicitly link their love of their dogs to their care practices. This aligns them with or excludes them from particular communities. The following greyhound communities, again, are overlapping. Greyhound trainers have a set of practices that are socially and culturally shaped within their community (or collective, as I explored in Chapter 2) and is evident in their attention to their greyhounds' care. The love rescue workers have for greyhounds is practiced in a different way, and pet owners' love for their dogs is practiced in another way. How one practices love is political in that it aligns us with one community's social norms rather than another. I will explore this next.

My participants expressed love as a core part of lifelong interactions with dogs. Pet owners spoke of the initial excitement of meeting a new greyhound, frustration and anger about their previous treatment, frustration and irritation over behavioural problems and nuisances during settling in or long-term, developing a bond, intimacy, and love for their dog. They also spoke about their grief and guilt when it did not work out, and the grief and sadness at losing a dog through accident, illness, or old age – because they loved their dog. Rescue workers spoke passionately with anger and frustration about the condition of the dogs they take in, the quantity of dogs some racing owners surrender, and the 'emotional blackmail' through threats of euthanasia if they cannot immediately admit a dog. They tolerate these difficult emotions because of their love of dogs. Racing owners express the fondness (the industry calls it love) they have for their dogs which they show by providing comfortable kennels, appropriate exercise and training, and an excellent diet.

While my participants did express a range of emotions, love was the predominant one across the segments or communities of the greyhound world. How this love was practiced varied widely. To address how one word can mean such drastically different things, I turn to anthropologist Chrissie Wanner's (2017) examination of how ethics, responsibility and care differ between the world of pedigree show dogs and veterinary medicine. She examines how the use of 'ordinary language' between the two cohorts creates conflict because of their different meanings. The meaning of 'healthy' and 'responsible' for example, is contested and causes tension between breeders and veterinarians. What is 'healthy' in the show ring may

perfectly conform to breed standards. This would confirm good and responsible breeding within show circles. A veterinarian's interpretation of 'healthy' is an assessment of the soundness of the dog and its ability to perform the everyday tasks of breathing, eating, playing, running, and reproducing. The veterinarian may conclude the same 'healthy' body by breed standards is unreasonably unhealthy by standards of professional ethics and responsibility. Yet both breeder and veterinarian are assessing health. This 'divergence of common language' creates tension because the breeder and the veterinarian have different approaches to care. The breeder is selecting for the health of the breed standard. Veterinarians are assessing health for the comfort of the individual dog. The veterinarian must overlook ethical standards in order to have a functional relationship with the dog breeder. Thus, Wanner's analysis goes beyond this shared language to expose different approaches to and criteria for responsible and ethical care and good health. But what do breeders say about love?

'Love and money do not mix' proclaims a dog show participant (Wanner 2017, 114). In the competitive world of pedigree breeding and showing, the difference between 'good' and 'bad' breeders is money and love. 'Good' breeders do not breed for profit but for 'the good of the breed', they 'breed dogs out of love and responsibility to their breeds' while ''bad' breeders breed dogs to make money' (ibid.). Eamon made a similar observation between himself and the 'bad eggs' in the racing industry. Asserting he was 'small scale' and only made enough in prize money to fund his hobby, he contrasted his practices with those of the large kennels with hundreds of dogs and full-time paid kennel staff. Eamon ensures he only breeds as many dogs as he can both manage day to day and find suitable pet homes for afterwards. The larger kennels may not take these matters into consideration. Similar to Wanner's participant who suggested that 'good breeding practices cause breeders to lose, rather than make, money' (2017, 115), Eamon's individual attention to his dog's welfare is time consuming and costly. He does not make a profit like the professional kennels who win the top prize money.

The Racing Industry's Love as Care-giving

The racing industry has a similarly tumultuous relationship between language, caregiving, and ethical responsibility as the dog breeding world. The purpose of any industry is to generate

income, and the greyhound racing industry is no different (Greyhound Racing Ireland 2022a). Part of generating income is to produce the fastest greyhounds and implement a practice of caregiving to maximise each greyhound's potential. This informs how health, care and responsibility is interpreted and prioritised to fit within financial goals. Individuals who breed, train and race greyhounds must make decisions to further the potential of an individual greyhound and their own reputation. In the greyhound racing industry's YouTube videos, this drive to produce the fastest dogs is for the love of the breed (Greyhound Racing Ireland 2020a; Racing Greyhounds of Ireland 2021). Focusing one's physical, professional, and financial efforts to improve the quality of the breed may require culling[64] surplus, unhealthy or not-good-enough animals. This exclusion of care could be considered part of caregiving (cf Denham 2017). This is not unique to greyhound racing.

Culling unneeded or sick animals runs the gamut of animal husbandry internationally from farms to show breeding to horse and greyhound racing (Cassidy 2002; Holloway et al. 2011; Wanner 2017). 'Choosing some animals and discarding others' is a necessary part of rearing livestock regardless if the decision is made for reasons of care or economy (Holloway et al. 2011, 535) or as a 'good' moral position (Rapport 2017). As Wanner (2017) argues, for those breeding pedigree dogs, their higher purpose is to breed for an ideal form whether that's the fastest, the flattest face, the most wrinkles, etc. So breeding is not about the individual dog, or sheep or cow but about bettering the breed as a whole. This requires preventing imperfect individuals from joining the gene pool and it allows the breeder to spend their energy on the best candidates to progress the breed. Culling was standard practice in pedigree dog breeding in 1970s Britain (ibid., 168-9). A 'quick death' was considered kinder than an uncertain future such as suffering neglect or abandonment when no 'good' homes were available (ibid., 169).

Culling unwanted pedigree dogs has traditionally been accepted as 'good care' in the USA (Kavin 2016) and UK (Wanner 2017). But it extends to other animal industries such as sheep and cattle breeding (Holloway et al. 2011) and horse racing in the UK (Cassidy 2002). In Ireland, culling was considered a part of routine industry 'wastage', even if excessive (Preferred Results Ltd. 2017). Other animals such as unwanted kittens were culled by farmers in The Netherlands

[64] While culling is killing the animal, it is with the intent to protect the animal from suffering a life of neglect and/or to prevent diverting necessary resources away from 'better' candidates. This was particularly common when there was no demand for ordinary puppies and kittens – they had no value and nowhere to be rehomed (Wanner 2017, 165).

(Swabe 2005, 108-109), by my participant's[65] father in an agricultural area of Ireland in the 1990s (as mentioned in Chapter 2), and immortalised in Seamus Heaney's poem *The Early Purges* with the opening line, 'I was six when I first saw kittens drown' (2013).

This was common practice, necessary for 'quiet disposal' (Wanner 2017, 168) and an 'open secret' in the words of several of my participants. While this was an open secret within the industry, it was tightly kept from outsiders. As with Alfred Gell's participants whose secret knowledge was a matter of life and death, the greyhound industry's secret disposals, which were acceptable as long as they were not publicly acknowledged, have contributed to the industry's decline. The definition of 'good care' is changing[66].

This shift in behaviour may indicate a change in breeders' awareness of and sensitivity to nonhuman sentience from social media, an increase in disposable income allowing payment for the service rather than having to kill them themselves, or merely an attempt to avoid scandal and public criticism (Wanner 2017, 165). In The Netherlands, for example, a litter of unwanted kittens was euthanized by a veterinarian rather than drowned by the farmer (Swabe 2005). The pedigree show dog breeding world (as opposed to puppy farms who breed for financial gain rather than for betterment of the breed) has been forced to breed fewer litters in order to rehome all unwanted puppies (Wanner 2017, 168). Wanner's participants suggested it was initially to avoid scandal, but that having less breeding stock increased emotional connection[67]. In Chapter 3, Sarah from West Coast Rescue and Mary from Irish Greyhounds International identified the role of social media in exposing the numbers of greyhounds euthanized in Irish pounds. In that chapter, they suggested the social media exposure prompted a series of events to protect the racing industry's image. Disallowing the euthanasia of racing greyhounds in the local pounds was not to improve welfare outcomes, they said, but to encourage less publicly traceable alternatives.

The Irish greyhound racing industry has suffered financially due, in part, to 'adverse publicity in relation to welfare and other practices within the industry' (Power 2021, 2) which is to say, culling both puppies and too-slow race dogs. This 'adverse publicity' was a reaction through

[65] Fi is the participant and was the former employee at Shelbourne Park with whom I attended the greyhound race in Ch 2.
[66] There continues to be a fierce debate in animal rescue work about compassionate euthanasia versus 'no-kill' shelters in which an un-rehomeable animal might live out its natural life in kennels.
[67]For an excellent analysis of small scale farming and sentient commodities see (Wilkie 2017).

social media and messaging platforms, protests, visual, audio and print media, and Dáil (government) debates after the national broadcaster's exposé on the greyhound industry aired (RTÉ Press Pack 2019). It decreased footfall at racing stadiums and prompted several sponsors to withdraw. Significantly, the Irish Tourism Board stopped promoting racing as an activity to do while visiting. The part of the disagreement that remains is what Wanner (2017) asserted, what constitutes ethical or 'good' practices and behaviour? The industry argues that they love their greyhounds and their practices are in the greyhound's best interest (i.e., practices that allow the greyhound to excel at what they are born to do – running). Critics claim greyhounds are not kept to pet-keeping standards and therefore are not loved and cared for in the way they should be. In this context of antagonism between industry supporters and animal activists racing greyhound owners and trainers felt under attack and were hesitant to participate in research (for discussion of the protests see Chapter 1). A very particular section of the greyhound racing community was willing to speak to me - those who care for their dogs in a manner that is palatable to pet owners, animal welfare activists, and rescue workers.

'We love our greyhounds, and we care for them' is the 'motto' for the industry according to the CEO of the Irish Greyhound Board[68], Gerard Dollard (Murtagh 2018). The theme of love is expressed by men and women throughout their videos (Greyhound Racing Ireland 2018), for example, 'We Love Our Greyhounds' is the title a YouTube channel post (Greyhound Racing Ireland 2020b) alongside 'For the Love of the Dogs' (Racing Greyhounds of Ireland 2021). And in a promotional video to highlight up and coming female breeders and trainers, Deirdre Barry immediately professes her love of dogs (Greyhound Racing Ireland 2020a). But crucially, this is where the industry and its videos diverge from my individual male greyhound trainers.

The greyhound trainers I have examined in this thesis have not said they love their greyhounds. Instead, they vouch for the respectability of racing industry people and the responsible care they provide for their dogs. Bill (76), a former greyhound owner and trainer said he and '90% of the people that are involved in greyhound racing'… [are] 'honest decent people'…[who] 'love the sport for what it is' as a hobby and a night out. Note that he emphasised the love of the sport, not greyhounds. Although Bill may not have used the term 'love' and was cagey about euthanasia, could his strongly-held belief that greyhounds do not

[68] The Irish Greyhound Board has changed its name to Greyhound Racing Ireland.

make good pets be interpreted as, if not 'love', then as a 'good' moral position (Rapport 2017)? His intent was to prevent them from having an unfulfilled life of non-running, urban-dwelling misery. Could Bill's strong stance against doping be considered as love as a public virtue (ibid.)? As discussed extensively in Chapter 2, Eamon (30), a third-generation greyhound owner and trainer was heavily invested in the training practices and routines for his dogs. He was happy to discuss their improved facilities, the intricacies of their strict feeding and exercise regime, and how each dog was rehomed as they retired. However, he went to great lengths to avoid saying he loved his dogs. Instead, he said 'you just gradually grow into them', 'you just get really attached to them', 'once you get one, that's it!', 'they get a grip on you', 'you get a sort of taste for them'. It is a similar sentiment as a dog show breeder, 'once you fall in love with this breed, you can't imagine being without them' (Wanner 2017, 303). For Eamon, these might all be euphemisms for love in a male dominated industry in which one cannot express loving an animal. And following Gell, keeping his love a secret from the rest of his social circle might prevent a social death. Or Eamon might not love his greyhounds.

It is of interest to note that no current greyhound owners I spoke to knew of anyone who did not care for their dogs to the highest standard and rehome them at the end of their careers.[69] When owners/trainers passionately describe their dogs' care and routine, they are expressing their investment of time, energy, and resources into these chosen individuals. These greyhounds were selected and reared with commitment to fulfilling their potential. This is how they practice their attachment, and what could be interpreted as a practice of love as caregiving.

Rescue Organisations' Love as Commitment to Saving Greyhounds and Activism

> A dog is for life, not just for Christmas®.
>
> - (DogsTrust 2014 [2001])

The purpose of greyhound specific rescues is to take in, rehabilitate and rehome greyhounds from the racing industry and raise awareness of their suitability as pets (as activism). In Chapter 3, I examined the emotional lives of rescue workers from the perspective of circulation and sticking points, value, and burnout. Here, I will focus on a particular sticking

[69] Owners who have left the industry cite overbreeding and drugging dogs, and rescue workers note 'all' greyhounds come in with worms and fleas. These concerns were addressed in Chapters 3 and 4.

point – the interactions between the racing industry and rescue organisations and their respective use of 'love'. I return to Chrissie Wanner's (2017) examination of how ethics, responsibility and care differ between the world of pedigree show dogs and veterinary medicine. But here, I use it to examine how the use of the 'ordinary language' of love between the racing industry and rescue creates conflict over what it should mean. For the industry, love as caregiving is to provide adequate routines of feeding, exercise and other physical care while rescue volunteers care through healing of injuries, rehabilitation, medication and training the greyhound for their future pethood.

Many animal rescuers and activists firmly believe that loving a dog means the commitment to it should last for the dog's lifetime, like the slogan above from Dogs Trust. No matter the consequences, rescuers say, a human is responsible to provide their dog love for life which includes a home and care. However, animal industries such as greyhound racing rarely intend to keep an animal for their natural life. Owners commit to the adequate care of the greyhound while training and racing and then the dog is used for breeding, rehomed, or euthanized. This is a fundamental ideological difference in what 'love' means for rescue workers and what it means for racing owners. 'Love' is contested and causes tension between them.

Sarah (50s) from West Coast Rescue (introduced in Chapter 3) came to Ireland as a racing trainer but shifted to rescue work after witnessing the inner workings of the industry. She, alongside my other participants, spoke passionately with anger and frustration about the racing industry's claim to love and care for their dogs yet sending their dogs for rehoming in poor (compared to pet standards) condition. This act alone – rehoming – is divergent to what love means to rescue workers. While rescue workers agreed that most greyhounds come in to their premises adequately fed, they 'all have fleas' and most have worms. Further, they are not vaccinated or desexed and most require dental treatment. This basic medical care is part of a rescue worker's definition of love but is not part of the industry's criteria.

The quantity of dogs some racing owners surrender is excessive according to Sarah. As noted in Chapter 3 she was concerned about one famous (in greyhound circles) owner in particular who was able to surrender over thirty greyhounds in less than a year. Here, Sarah recognised the talent of this trainer, but points to the breeding and ruthless abandonment of so many dogs to produce one successful racer. This is the antithesis of love to her. The industry is built on these trainers who can focus on their job rather than become attached to their dogs. What

is interesting here is the sheer numbers of dogs this trainer has may prevent an emotional attachment. As Wanner's (2017) pedigree dog breeder and dog show exhibitor noted in the previous section, having fewer dogs can increase emotional attachment. Although additionally, Wilkie (2005, 2010, 2017) suggested it was the role and stage of life that influenced emotional investment (i.e. dairy cows kept long term versus beef cattle raised for slaughter). On this note, Sarah says 'I love all my dogs here [in the rescue kennels]. But I love them more [pointing to her own dogs running in the paddock]'. Sarah often takes home dogs that need medical supervision or who are struggling in kennels. But she distinguishes the 'fosters' from her 'forever' dogs. The fosters and kennel dogs will eventually be rehomed, but her own dogs will be kept for life.

Ideological differences between industry and rescue are evident here. If there is no kennel/foster space to admit a dog, it is the owner/trainer's threat of euthanasia that causes rescue workers to question greyhound owners' love of their dogs. Of course, for greyhound owners, lifelong commitment is not part of their practice of love. The willingness for greyhound owners to get their dogs 'sorted', as one owner referred to euthanasia, does not challenge their love and commitment to the dog while it was racing. But their relationship ends when the greyhound can no longer be productive. For rescue workers, productivity or income generation or purpose is not a condition of their love. So far in this section, I have examined how the racing industry understands and practices love as care and how this contrasts with rescue organisations practice of love as commitment and activism through saving greyhounds. Finally, I turn to owners of pet greyhounds and how they practice their love.

Pet Owners' Love as Pet Parenting

My participants with pet greyhounds say they love their dogs, their dogs love them, and their relationships are mutually deep and meaningful. This is a key difference between what pet owners mean by love and what rescue organisations mean. For many pet owners, it is the mutuality of their love that makes a relationship and in turn cements the commitment, not purely a commitment out of obligation as might be understood in animal rescue. However, in

this section, I will examine the literature on how pet owners love their dogs in the practice of pet parenting.

Pet parenting can be defined as 'the investment of money, emotion, and time in companion animals' (Volsche, Mukherjee, and Rangaswamy 2021, 1). In line with the second demographic transition (Lesthaeghe 2014), Volsche et al. (2021) note that increases in pet parenting are observed in cultures that have high urban populations, where fertility rates are in decline, and reproduction is not the sole criteria for partnerships. Research on pet parenting has increased over the past decade (Laurent-Simpson 2021, 2017a, b; Stoeckel et al. 2014; Volsche 2019; Volsche and Gray 2016) as a case where pet parenting mirrors parenting of biological children (Volsche 2018). Pet owners, or pet parents, embody a combination of love, intimacy, care, and responsibility. With an increased awareness of nonhuman sentience, greater attention is being paid to the wellbeing and agency of our companion animals. This can only benefit the mutual affection and intimacy in human animal relationships and lead to greater awareness of the value and meaning of these bonds. My hesitation to use the term 'pet parenting' is due to the infrequency of my participants using the term unprompted. When asked directly, some agree that they are pet parents. Even more employ the practices that pet parenting entails while rejecting the title of 'pet parent'. Further, even those who are *not* pet parents often use the kinship terms, even if tongue in cheek, of family relationships such as 'mam', 'dad', 'brother', and 'sister', even 'cousin' and 'aunt'. I use this concept of parenting as a descriptive term and analytical framework for the type and variety of care my participants describe and perform, even if they do not use these terms.

Pet parenting research and social commentary is ongoing globally. Shelly Volsche et al. (Volsche, Mukherjee, and Rangaswamy 2021) examine the changes in practice towards dogs in India compared to the USA, but other countries include Australia (Power 2008), the Netherlands (Van Herwijnen et al. 2018), the UK (Finka et al. 2019) and the USA (Laurent-Simpson 2021, 2017a, b; Owens and Grauerholz 2019; Stewart 2018). Heather Stewart (2018) goes a step further to claim that pet parents should have equal status to parents of human children. She argues, and I agree, that parenting pets and human children entail similar 'rights, responsibilities, rewards, and challenges' and mutual feelings of love (Stewart 2018, 239). Further, I agree that these feelings of devotion and attachment can be strong between human-human and multispecies relationships. However, I remain unconvinced that pet parenting is

of equal status primarily due to 1) expected commitment to and longevity of a dog 2) responsibility of raising a socially productive and independent human citizen, 3) responsibility to provide constant supervision over human children (i.e., you cannot confine them to a crate), and 4) social and legal penalties for neglect, abuse or abandonment of human children are more severe than for nonhumans. Regardless, her suggestion is relevant and timely because of the Pope's recent outcry against the 'selfishness' of not wanting to birth or adopt human children (Holy See 2022, 2). He claims the 'denial of fatherhood or motherhood diminishes us, it takes away our humanity...civilization becomes aged and without humanity' when the younger generation chooses to parent pets rather than children (ibid.). The combination of Stewart's argument and the Pope's criticism speak to Sadler's (2018) assertion that women are no longer uncritically accepting social pressure to become wives and mothers. These roles have historically been a source of free and licit sexual and domestic labour to the detriment of women's own careers and civic advancement (Sadler 2018; for a full analysis on this from the perspective of queer feminism see Ahmed 2004; 2023). Is it any wonder, she asks, why more women are delaying or withdrawing from these social practices?

Some pet owners practice love in a similar manner to parenting human children (Volsche 2018). As we saw in the preceding chapter, twenty-two-year-old Irish student, Imogen and her greyhound, Cecil, have a mutually close bond. Imogen makes Cecil's visually beautiful meals by hand with raw meat and supplements. She walks him twice a day and ensures he socialises with his 'friends' and 'cousins'. Imogen works part time to pay for Cecil's exceptional standard of living which includes various coats, collars, leads, beds, toys, and veterinary care. Additionally, Imogen ensures that either she or a friend is there to let him out for a toilet break every four hours. Further, socialising after work must include Cecil or Imogen would find someone to sit with him for company. In this way, Imogen's care for Cecil aligns with pet parenting. Pet owners' commitment of money, emotion, and time into these relationships as an expression of their love and devotion.

From this chapter's exploration of love in three different contexts – the industry, rescue, and pet homes – it might appear that these are different types of love. But rather than categorising types of love further than contrasting romantic and companionate love, it is more useful to note the similarly immense commitment of time, energy, emotion, and financial resources

across my participants. I suggest that the variety of ways my participants practice love reflects how their different communities and their roles, expectations, and ideologies within it, shape them. As examined in Chapter 2, communities can be created through a 'social process of exclusion and incorporation' (Barth 1969, 9) by contrasting themselves to others and by including some members with multiple group identities. Identity is maintained through a relational process of inclusion and exclusion.

How they practice love is shaped by those group identities. When my owner/trainer participants say they love the game without professing love of the dogs (despite the industry saying owners/trainers love their dogs), they continue to direct that love as a practice of caregiving. They pay particular attention to diet and exercise and assure that each dog will be rehomed after its racing career. There is no expectation that they will keep their race dogs permanently. In the context of the racing industry, it is acceptable to say they love participating in racing. It may be less acceptable for them to say they love their dogs – instead, their feelings can be expressed as 'fondness' or that they 'get a grip on you'. Rescue volunteers freely say they love their rescue dogs (but they love their 'forever' dogs more) and this is reflected in their ideology that the commitment to one's pet should be life long, but also that their work is purposeful activism. Their beliefs and practices are reinforced through their role and exposure to an endless stream of dogs needing homes and interactions their peers who are doing similar volunteer work. Pet owners similarly practice their love through a long-term commitment and response to their dog's individual preferences.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined how three cohorts of greyhound enthusiasts express their love through a variety of care practices, some of which were contradictory. I began with a brief exploration of the anthropological literature on emotion, then love, and human animal relationships. I teased out the divergence in the use of 'love' and how it is practiced as caregiving. An analogy in the pedigree dog breeding world of 'good' and 'bad' breeders, where good breeders breed dogs for the good/improvement of the breed, which bad breeders breed for profit. A similar analogy could be made in the racing industry. Racing owner/trainers may do it for the love of the sport/greyhounds. 'Good' kennels invest time, energy, and emotion into their dogs. They are often one-person-operations. Larger racing kennels have kennel staff to do much of the caretaking. But the kennel owner may not be emotionally involved. And

this lack of emotion when surrendering a dog is of critical importance to rescue volunteers. More broadly, welfare activists and pet owners similarly argue that loving a dog is only in the manner of pet keeping – in the home with an intimate knowledge of each dog's preferences and quirks and lifelong commitment.

Wanner's (2017) analysis of the divergent use of common language offers insight into how 'love' in some contexts is *not* interpreted as 'love' in another. When farmers or working dog owners claim they love their dogs (or refuse to label their emotion as love), they show this love in the caregiving practices appropriate to their social environment. These practices differ from how love is shown in other contexts and communities. Some owners might not 'love' their dogs but may look after them in a way that reflects what *others* might interpret as love, such as racing greyhound owner Eamon. However, this is a different social expectation and practice than in the pet dog community. The pet dog and rescue communities have different criteria for how love is practiced – and the emotional bond goes beyond physical care to include how the dog is used and a lifelong commitment. The more the racing owners assert that they 'love' their dogs, the more pet and rescue activists retort 'you don't love them the right way, therefore you don't love them'.

We saw in Chapter 3 how value is relational and shaped by practices as greyhounds circulate over time. The definition of value can be broadened from 'price' to include 'higher spiritual, material, moral and political values in their social and historical contexts' (Eiss and Pedersen 2002, 286). In a similar vein, the primacy of romantic love in Western research has been broadened to include other types of love. In this chapter, we saw that love shapes and is shaped by social and cultural practices and expectations. And rather than focusing on psychological aspects or physical sensations of love, this chapter examined how love is expressed through a variety of practices as they are contextually appropriate. What love means to those in the racing industry is different to what it means to other greyhound enthusiasts – there are conceptual even ontological differences about how animals should be used and cared for. What 'loving' a greyhound means is relational and changes as they circulate from industry into rescue and into pet homes.

Although pet-parenting, rights, and responsibilities are addressed quite directly by many participants, what connects them all is their claim for loving their dogs and explaining that how they love them is through their practice of care. Although not universal, there were

significant similarities among the groups mentioned above. Greyhound racing owners show their love through their physical care – diet, exercise, training, shelter, and rehoming rather than euthanasia as their racing careers end. They actively separate themselves from the 'few bad eggs' in the industry. Rescue centres promote a 'forever' commitment as their ideal practice of love. They have seen owners surrender dogs to the shelter for a variety of reasons – some of them reasonable. The lack of commitment to see minor behavioural issues through can be exhausting to rescue staff. Finally, pet owners offer financial and emotional commitment to their dogs. They devote time to walking, training, and being with their dogs to build mutual trust and respect. They show their love through parenting.

This chapter aimed to examine how love is incorporated into everyday care practices within these distinct groups. Using love as a social practice alongside the use of common language with divergent meanings, it was my intention to highlight how these contradictory definitions and practices cause frustration and conflict between the groups when they each think their interpretation of love applies to the other. Exploring how each group practices their love has teased out some of the complexity of the debates in the broader greyhound community.

Chapter 6: The Everyday Life of Pet Greyhounds and the Multisensory Home

I find it's lovely having somebody - a buddy asleep on the couch. My daughter took them [the dogs] the weekend. And she took them Friday afternoon, until Sunday and myself, and the students [lodgers] that are here are all saying, we really missed them. We really missed them. It's just presence of being in in the house, and he's kind of there most of the time, except when he goes for walks. Yeah, so he's kind of reliable he's always there, you know. Oh, so yeah I really missed him so it just shows you like how much of a presence they are. Yes. You know, he's got such a quiet way. So much personality and presence but it's not through barking or movement, it's just sort of through being.

- Carmel, 60s, Cork

I was lost without him [her greyhound] for those few months. I mean, I have a son. And at the time, I had a partner as well living with me. It wasn't the same, wasn't the same. It was not the same company and different connection, I suppose that you'd have with an animal, and especially when he's still active around the house or whatever. And also, like going for a walk. It was the strangest thing going outside for a walk without your dog with you.

- Joanne, 36, Galway

During the first [Covid] lock down we went from two dogs to no dogs in a matter of weeks. We didn't just want to go off and head to the shop and get a new tv when the old tv broke, but the house felt very empty. We looked at different breeds and we thought about getting another spitz [a medium sized, thick coated, pointy eared white dog], but we didn't want to go the puppy route a second time. Puppies are hard work – cleaning up after them and their energy. We researched a lot of different breeds and we've two kids. The boys are nine and seven. They can handle most dogs but not jumping up - we didn't want something knocking them over. So something relatively gentle but still up for going for a walk. But also not needing 3 or 4 hours of exercise a day! My wife's sister has a saluki. He's nice but he seems a bit more mental compared to greyhounds. They spring around and are nuts. Endless energy. So we contacted East Coast Rescue and first got Lilo. He settled in really well but was clingy. So then we got Maverick. And they get on really well. The spitz and greyhounds temperament wise are quite similar around the kids and around the house, they just potter. They're friendly and playful when they want to be and then they sleep for a lot of the rest of the time.

- Zach, 32, Kildare

Introduction

Pet keeping is a common practice in Europe, North America, and Australia and increasing in Asia, according to pet product market research (ReportLinker 2023). Just over half of UK (53%) (YouGov 2023) and Irish (52%) households own a pet (Central Statistics Office 2021; an earlier survey noted 61% Independent 2016), while most homes in the USA (66%) (Megna and Valentine 2024) and Australia (69%) (Newgate Research 2022) do. My participants all discussed the value of their greyhound's presence in some way whether that was as company, providing a purpose, a sense of loss at their passing, as entertainment, as comfort, for assisting social connections, as an impetus for change, and so on. This was reflected in the Irish Central Statistics Office's survey where 87% of pet owners said their pet had 'a positive impact on their mental health and well-being' (2021, Table 1.7 and Figure 1.17). Valuing a dog's presence is not unique to Ireland. Considerable attention has been paid to the health and emotional wellbeing the presence of pets and therapy animals afford in care homes in the USA, UK and Europe with their presence contributing to a 'less institutional' feel (for an overview of the studies in care homes see Orr et al. 2023). More than just a tool to wellbeing, pets are increasingly cared for as kin in Ireland (Independent 2016), Australia (Power 2008; Franklin 2006), the USA and India, (Volsche, Mukherjee, and Rangaswamy 2021), Japan (Hansen 2013) and the UK (Charles and Davies 2008; Charles 2016).

Part of pets' inclusion as kin has been their move indoors where 'home' becomes co-created between pet and person. Since the 1950s, pets have increasingly been kept inside American homes (Franklin 2006; Grier 2006). Their active, rather than passive, ability to shape the home has been recognised (Tuan 1984; Franklin 2006; Smith 2003; Power 2008) as they feature in the storytelling of 'domestic drama' (Sayers, Forrest, and Pearson 2023). Spending on pets through 'pet-related industries and services' parallels this move into the home (Power 2008) both in Ireland (McMahon 2019) and internationally (Fortune Business Insights 2021). Yet little attention has been paid to what pet owners say is important about pet keeping.

What all of these aspects to pet keeping have in common is their sensory component. The presence of a pet is an emotional experience (see Chapter 5), but the sensory experiences pet owners have with their pets contribute to what 'home' feels like. Interestingly, the benefits the presence of a pet affords 'social contact…sensory experiences and meaningful engagement' which may not be 'picked up by outcome tools' relied on in healthcare research

(Orr et al. 2023, 170). These sensory experiences are key areas of discussion for my participants in positive, negative, and neutral ways. As a source of enjoyment or as an instigation of actions (i.e. flatulence as an indicator that the dog's diet needs to be changed). In this chapter, I will first examine the senses that contribute to the frequently used but vague description of 'dog presence' my participants discuss. To do this, I will examine an anthropological debate on how the senses are perceived, shaped, and expressed.

Anthropological Approaches to the Senses

The study of the senses within anthropology is rigorously debated. Topics of contention include how the senses are perceived and how they inform learning but also how the senses are or should be categorised and to what extent should research be interdisciplinary (Pink and Howes 2010; Ingold, Howes, and Pink 2011). There is some debate. First, the West has prioritised vision as the primary sense through which humans learn and observe the world and considered the 'most reifying of all' (Levin 1988, 65). However, there is disagreement that vision forms reality (Ingold 2000) as Paul Stoller's participants in Niger did not privilege the sense of sight over taste, smell or hearing (1989). Ingold asserts sensory anthropology should be examined as part of an anthropology which 'understands learning and knowing as situated in embodied practice and movement' as the senses are not experienced as separate or isolated but interconnected (2000, 286-287). Sarah Pink (2009) and Paul Stoller (1989) agree that vision is part of an interwoven multisensory experience rather than the primary focus.

The senses are shaped culturally, according to David Howes' (2011) foundational approach to Anthropology of the Senses, where there is a complex interplay between them alongside symbolic, religious or aesthetic meaning. He focused on categorising and comparing the senses cross culturally to gain insights. Similar to Howes, Sarah Pink (2009) and Paul Stoller (1989) consider the perception of the senses to be shaped by personal and cultural discourse and understandings. In contrast, Tim Ingold (2000) suggests a universality of sensory experiences. However, Pink offers an important critique of Howes' approach to suggest it might overlook indigenous perspectives and the interaction between the senses themselves (Pink and Howes 2010).

Another approach other than cross cultural comparison is to examine the interplay between key senses. The senses should not be examined in isolation, Nadia Seremetakis emphasized,

in recounting childhood memories of 'tactility of smells' such as fresh bread covered in white cloths (1994, 218). Recalling a sensory experience may put forward only one sense (such as smell), but this is a metaphor rather than a literal isolated sense, and the senses must be examined as interconnected (Pink 2004). Research on traditional Irish music, suggests the 'senses combine and mutually influence one another' where movement and sound together become more than the individual elements alone (Coleman 2010, 24). Similarly observed among his gardening participants, Christopher Tilley described the combination of colours, smells, movement and texture offering an overall synesthetic experience (2006). Informed by these debates, I will take a multisensory approach. I will identify the individual senses as my participants discuss them with the awareness that other senses are informing and shaping the sense at the forefront.

In this way, I can consider their narration as a combination of factors (of which culture is one) rather than generalising it as their culturally uniform response. The propensity to categorise, separate or compare things is not in question – whether those things are animals, intelligence, the value of objects, feelings, the senses, etc. But *how* it is done is of great concern and depends on the intersections of our cultural and educational training, backgrounds, and personal preferences. This is useful as a starting point to clarify what is being examined and not in small part to indicate which ontological perspective one was shaped by, in this case various Western approaches to the senses. Anthropologists must go beyond categorising, comparing and ranking the senses in order to expand how the senses are imagined, understood, or explored (Pink 2004). Following my participants, they connect the dots between individual senses and the cumulative – even exponential - effect on the home and the overall presence of their dog.

I turn now from a more general discussion of the senses to those specifically in the domestic sphere. As I outlined in Chapter 1, the home environment can be experienced in a variety of ways. It is well established anthropologically that domestic boundaries have the potential for flexibility and other disciplines have explored the sensory and material impact on the home as co-constructed with a pet (e.g. Fudge 2008; Hamlett and Strange 2022; Howard-Smith 2021; Schuurman and Syrjämaa 2022). However, anthropological approaches have largely neglected to focus on these experiences of cohabiting with a pet and the impact on the contemporary home. In this chapter I explore the ways in which the subjective experience of

humans is mutually constituted with the pet in the domestic sphere. I expand the idea of home to encompass the pet as a co-creator of the sensory experience of the home and its routines and practices but also, the pet is a key player in how my participants identify (i.e. as dog person), interpret, enjoy, and experience their home. In this way, my human participants consider their pet's preferences and needs in household decisions alongside their own sensory needs and preferences. This chapter, then, will focus on the sensory aspects of the social and material space of 'home' as it is experienced by humans interwoven with a pet's presence. Far from the pet as an 'addition' to the stand-alone home, in creating a key sensory dimension, the pet and household co-create home.

A Pet's Presence in the Home

My participants note missing the presence of their pets in their absence – it did not feel like home without them. Irish pet owners are not unique in appreciating their pets' presence. Researchers in the UK have compared the experiences of the general dog owning populations in Brazil and Britain regarding dog-related activities using qualitative methods (Corrêa, Barcelos, and Mills 2021). They discovered similar themes cross culturally that were most often reported as having a positive effect on the human's wellbeing. The two most common themes were 'playing with dog' and 'dog presence'. In a different study, the general dog owning population in Britain was compared with autistic dog owners in the UK. Adults with autism more frequently have mental health problems and are at higher risk for suicide than the general population (Barcelos et al. 2020). It was found that the same positive effects found among Brazilian and British dog owners were instrumental in preventing suicide among autistic adults in the UK, namely cuddling, walking with dogs and the 'dog's presence' (Barcelos et al. 2020; see also Solomon 2012). In a systematic review of the literature on animals and residents in care homes (Orr et al. 2023), it was concluded that the interactions between them facilitated patients to feel 'at home' there. Further, these interactions were found to provide comfort and pleasure to the residents and a way for some to 'express their identities' and 'maintain a sense of self' in the care home setting. These key features of the smells, sounds and textures of 'home' include a pet for many people – and pet ownership may be part of their identity expressed in their home.

When senses in the home are discussed, it is often to manage and eradicate smells and dirt or to evoke a particular mood with sound. In the garden, however, the senses are to be

enjoyed and indulged with and alongside the living plants, insects, birds and other creatures. In this way, I was intrigued by Christopher Tilley's assertion that 'unlike virtually any other artifact in contemporary Western culture, [the garden] is *commonly* acknowledged to have multidimensional sensorial qualities that overlap and are intertwined and affect the gardener' (2006, 312). I suggest a dog in the home, like Tilley's gardens, has this living multidimensional sensorial quality that affect the owner, and this is what the dog's presence is that participants value. However, managing the smell and dirt from the dog may be necessary to foreground preferred sensory contributions like breathing and walking sounds or touch and warmth. Taking inspiration from Tilley's approach, I will examine the combinations of senses that my participants discussed most in relation to their dog.

Case study 1: Vera

> Homes are powerfully defined by smells, sounds, textures and objects, all of which reflect how people live their everyday lives…about who we are, how we relate to others and who we want to be.
>
> - Sarah Pink (2004, 172).

Vera is an intelligent and sociable single woman in her 60s and childfree by choice. Her 3-bedroom home in Dublin is eclectically decorated with comfortable seating alongside antique tables stacked with books and papers. An avid photographer, her walls are adorned with her photographs of her dogs and international travel. Despite the visual clutter, her home is clean. Vera was academically and career driven until her Multiple Sclerosis symptoms worsened requiring early retirement from nursing. The associated pain and decreased mobility make bending and walking difficult, but this does not prevent her from maintaining hobbies and visiting friends and family.

Vera has 'always been a two-dog-home'. For decades she bred and kept Pekinese dogs. She had nursed her middle-aged dog through cancer treatments until his death in late 2019 then lost her female to old age in the first week of the Covid pandemic. Vera recalled her mother's suggestion, years earlier, to rescue a greyhound from the racing industry. In conversation with a rescue organisation, Vera outlined her physical and energy limitations and was paired with

Sally, a skittish six-year-old greyhound who was ‘ready to be rehomed’ but was unable to tolerate a collar and lead. This meant that Vera and Sally were well matched – neither could go for a walk. Vera’s lifelong experience with dogs meant she knew she needed an older, low energy dog and her years of dog training bolstered her confidence to be able to manage a smooth and patient introduction to her home routines. Vera imagined a companionable dog to sit beside her on the sofa in the evening or to greet her guests at the door as her previous dogs had done.

Vera quickly discovered that Sally was not house trained, nor did she indicate when she needed to go outside to the toilet. To complicate matters, Sally often refused to go out to the back garden, or when she was out, she could refuse to come back in. Then, when Vera would eventually get Sally back inside, she would relieve herself on the kitchen floor as she had not done so while outside. Because Sally would not move with a collar or lead on her, Vera was unable to guide her in or out of the door. Due to Vera’s disability, she was unable to physically move Sally. And Sally did not respond to verbal cues – she did not approach Vera when spoken to. Sally was not affectionate and did not want to be touched. Initially, Vera took this in her stride. She was committed to the time-intensive training process, to keeping Sally, and was willing to wait patiently for Sally to initiate affection.

Two months after Sally’s arrival, Vera was depressed. She still struggled to get Sally to go outside to relieve herself and was unable to clean up her accidents quickly. She worried her home now smelled of urine. It did. Previously, her home had an inoffensive smell of mild citrus cleansers. Now, a strongly unpleasant bleach and stale urine smell hung at the front door. She had stopped inviting friends and family around to her home because she was embarrassed about the smell and lack of training progress. Despite her attempts to recruit a dog trainer, the Covid restrictions had prevented movement up the waiting list. Further, she’d been back in contact with the rescue organisation only to discover that Sally was only two years old and not six, that ‘ready to rehome’ did not mean housetrained. Further, she was told that greyhounds with Sally’s fearful or ’spook’ temperament did not often improve nor was Sally likely to become more affectionate. Vera felt the rescue organisation had taken advantage of her. She believed they did not take her needs into account and ‘dumped’ Sally on her. Vera felt a failure for being unable to train Sally successfully. She was isolated from friends and family more than ever.

The sensorial qualities in the home reflect the owner's everyday life, ambitions and identities, and shape our interactions with others (Pink 2004). Vera felt this keenly. She welcomed others into her home when she felt confident in its cleanliness and presentability. This reflected her identity as a responsible dog person which included her ability to manage her pets and home. When the smell of urine and 'dog' became overwhelming and unmanageable, it reflected a home in turmoil and to which guests were not invited. What we see here is a clear example of how the home is a place of 'belonging or alienation that is intimately tied to sense of self' (Blunt and Varley 2004, 3). Vera and her previous dogs had a mutual sense of comfort together. Vera could manage their exercise, grooming, and toileting. Her home was clean enough and smelled fresh enough for her guests. Sally's inclusion in Vera's home had initially been to reinforce Vera's identity as a dog parent in a comfortable, welcoming, and mobility friendly domestic space – a place of belonging. She intended the addition of Sally to reinforce her social bonds with family and friends while still reflecting her ability to independently keep her home in order. The newly unpleasant smell in her home did not indicate a competent, independent, and sociable family. Instead, Vera became isolated and separated from this identity, from her clean-enough home, and from her social circle.

Further, her ability to be a good dog parent was shaken. Her understanding of the needs of a newly adopted greyhound were realistic for an average greyhound, but because of her dog training experience, she was given a particularly difficult case. This was not communicated to her in a way she understood. Greyhound rescue organisations, local pounds and the Irish greyhound racing industry are motivated to rehome as many greyhounds as possible within Ireland and internationally. My participants are presented with the idea of greyhound as a perfect pet that will merely need a few adjustments to fit in. But in some cases, like Vera's, the challenges are underplayed in order to get dogs into homes. I will now turn to Anita from North Dublin to explore contrasting lived experiences with different dog breeds.

Plate 42 Jacinta (greyhound) and Lucy. Photo by Anita.

For fear of adopting a dog with behavioural problems, many prospective dog owners want to buy a puppy. A puppy bought from a breeder has certain appeal of uncomplicated newness. However, even puppies are not blank slates, as Anita explains.

> I was dead set on *wanting* an older dog, and they're [friends and family] like, 'the risk of a rescue is that you don't know their nature'. But we got Lucy [a Labrador-pit bull mix] as a puppy and she's got mad behavioural problems. They're two totally insane breeds. And we had her from brand new and she's crazy. That's just who she is. She was abandoned from her mother at six weeks old. That's the root of her problems. Whereas Jacinta [a greyhound] is like by anyone's standards the ideal dog. And we got her when she was an adult. People don't want a rescue dog [because of potential behaviour problems], but they're being fostered and they're being vetted. It's like a one in a million story that goes wrong.
>
> \- Anita, 40s, North Dublin

In order to understand more what Anita means by her greyhound being the 'ideal dog', we will follow some of the sensory inputs in my participants' homes. I question what sensory contributions do greyhounds (not) make to homes that differentiate them from other dogs. How do the senses mediate or constitute the experience of home?

As the multisensory home is co-created with pet dogs, different dogs and temperaments will contribute a variety of levels of sensory inputs. As Anita asserts, there are no guarantees that getting a puppy will prevent behaviour problems in the home as she experienced with her 'crazy' puppy. The traits Anita interprets as 'mad' and 'insane' are what some other dog owners seek. As one casual participant quipped about greyhounds, 'they've no personality'. By this, she meant they were not excitable. The group of greyhounds standing patiently while their owners chatted were not enthusiastically seeking interaction or affection, were not interested in playing with balls or barking. While greyhound owners might revel in their laid-back way of being or easy presence, other dog owners may find it lacking. This variety in sensory preferences is not unusual, as Tilley (2006) discovered in his comparison of Swedish and English gardeners. Some participants might consider a bold or large coloured flower garish, while others would find delight in it. Interestingly, he noted a socioeconomic class (and gendered) aspect to these preferences (ibid., 319-20). Smaller flowers with muted colours were considered more refined and of 'good taste' by women from a higher socioeconomic class. Large and brightly coloured flowers were preferred by women of lower socioeconomic backgrounds and some men (other men were indifferent). There is some indication in my research that there is a socioeconomic component to pet greyhound ownership. My participants were largely middle class and preferred the restrained temperament of the greyhound. Many expressed a distaste for 'popular' or 'mad' dogs bought from unscrupulous breeders (for a discussion on breeding practices see Chapter 5).

What greyhounds offer through a combination of their age, energy levels, and having been 'fostered' and 'vetted' is that they are safe. Greyhounds are not typical dogs, and they are 'marketed' for their particularities. While they are not hypoallergenic, they do not shed as much as popular types like retrievers, spaniels, and terriers. Therefore, one's furniture, clothes and floor may only have small amounts of fur rather than large amounts. They do not have a typical 'doggy' smell. This is a selling point for many would-be owners who do not want their visitors to be met at the door with musty air. Sound is another selling point for greyhounds as pets as they (mostly) bark less than other breeds[70]. While sensory inputs are described

[70] This of course is not useful in homes that would like a guard dog but was not a concern to my participants. 'Do they make good guard dogs?' is a surprisingly frequent question from casual interactions with strangers on walks.

individually, the combination of multiple or competing senses at once can provoke different experiences and intensities.

What is of interest here, is the importance of those qualities individually and interwoven. That is to say, one sense might be primarily of interest, but the other senses contribute to the overall essence. While Tilley's (2006) participants discussed this in relation to a particular plant's colour (garish or bold or bright), fragrance (pungent or pleasant) or texture (inviting to touch or wear gloves) as it contributes to the overall feel of the garden, my participants discussed their dog's traits and their overall contribution to the feel of the home. While some may not like the angular athleticism of the greyhound, the dog's other attributes outweigh the visual aesthetic. Important qualities often noted by participants of their greyhounds was *not* a doggy smell, *not* barking, *not* a lot of movement, but when they did run, it was a thing of beauty for a short duration. My participants often suggested the sounds they do make are endearing rather than ear splitting (in the case of 'yappy' little dogs) or worrisome (the laboured breathing of brachycephalic dogs like pugs). The visual is often prioritised over other senses, but my participants in their homes with greyhounds were no more concerned with the visual presentation than they were about other sensory aspects.

Plate 43 Cú and Jazz resting. Photo by Joanne.

Their physical shape was often admired but unimportant visual imperfections (scars, missing limbs, mangled ears, odd teeth) were not mentioned as off putting and sometimes described as endearing[71]. Coat colour and texture can sometimes be a preference, it is often in reference to the quite literal wearing of one's dog's stray hairs that

[71] Further research on care and rehabilitation of greyhounds as a way to create social value could be examined through illness narratives.

coat colour is discussed, or in the fur-tumbleweeds rolling across the floor. Even this, however, is relative. Perhaps more shedding in comparison to a poodle or Bichon Frise which requires grooming, a greyhound sheds considerably less than a terrier or retriever. While taste can be discarded for pet dogs, touch is of importance. A dog's wet nose, soft coat, velvety ears are one aspect of touch. But so too is the greyhound lean (the equivalent of a hug) or a head in one's lap while lounging on the sofa or during a mid-walk rest (see Plate 43 above), or the jumpiness of a high-strung dog that prefers not to be disturbed while sleeping. So, while some of my participants preferred the (typical) greyhound temperament to be relaxing and calming, it could be boring for others.

Case Study 2: Zach

Zach (32), from the opening quote, is a university graduate who works as software engineer and worked from home since lockdown. His company had no plans to return to the office until the end of 2021. During our Teams conversations, he used a high-quality head set and microphone which provided excellent sound and clarity. He preferred to keep an artificial background on to 'hide the mess' of his multiuse room which functioned both as his office and his children's toy storage. In contrast, Zach was carefully groomed. His hair was cut short on the sides and styled long on top. His full and tidy beard nearly reached the bottom of his polo shirt buttons. He lived with his wife, two sons and two greyhounds. Zach first emphasised that losing his previous dogs so close together left the house feeling empty particularly alongside the changes with Covid restrictions. So, while they initiated the adoption process within months of losing their dogs, they were not 'replacing' them as one would replace a broken appliance. Instead, it was because a crucial part of their sense of 'home' was missing – the presence of a dog. They were careful to match the energy of their home with the right breed of dog and further narrowed the specific dog with the volunteer from East Coast Rescue. The settling in process went well and within a month, they introduced a second greyhound to complete their family. Instead of focusing on the differences between spitzs and greyhounds, Zach was more interested in their similarities – their laid-back temperament and how they fit into their home's busy routines.

Returning to our first case study, in contrast to Zach's home, Vera later realised that she did not need a dog with a laid-back temperament. After much deliberation between herself, friends, and the rescue organisation, she decided to return Sally to the rescue as neither Vera

nor Sally were thriving[72]. Vera had been on a waiting list at another rescue organisation and a month after rehoming Sally, two small active dogs became available. Again, due to Vera's experience with dog training and of previously having had two dogs, she was an ideal placement for these dogs. On a virtual meeting due to Covid restrictions, Vera's demeanour had completely changed since our previous visit. She laughed as they jumped into her lap and licked her face. She proudly held them each to the camera and showed me the tricks she had taught them. Friends and family would be welcome in her home again as lockdown lifted. For Vera, the quietness and lack of interaction with a greyhound did not suit her when it was alongside the burden of cleaning, isolation, and embarrassment.

The Senses

Smell

In a similar way to the co-creation of home, the relationships between humans and animals are co-produced, or are mutual becomings where humans and animals shape each other (Haraway 2008). Haraway's assertion that the relationships between human and nonhuman is not one of humans dominating and controlling the other but of a shared influence on becoming something more together. My participants describe how they (human and greyhound) become 'with' each other in the home. This is evident throughout the home and routine, but my participants linked this explicitly to smells in their home and their dog's diet and flatulence. In this way, their dog's smells were not just an influence on the home to be tolerated but an indication that action was needed – a considered and cooperative change in diet was in order.

Identifying and managing smell, as dirt or 'matter out of place', is an important aspect of the home (Douglas [1966] 2003, 36) as it is treated as an 'index of its cleanliness' (Pink 2004, 1). For example, Pink's participant's dog was contained in the utility room to sleep to manage hair and odour, and she chose a scent of air fresheners to be used near the dog. Therefore, if one's home smells of animals, it is dirty. And this comes with associated moral values of cleanliness (Douglas 1991)- repulsion of the human/animal boundary of dirt/cleanliness and the associated moral assumptions of laziness. Many dog owners do not want their home smelling 'of dog'. Instead of dogs as animals (with associated smells and as matter out of place), in the

[72] Sally now lives happily with two other greyhounds on a hobby farm. To Vera's delight and reassurance, the new owners occasionally send her video updates.

home, these measures of cleanliness treat them more like people (I will discuss in Chapter 7 where dogs are left to their innate dog-ness). Some dogs have more 'smell' than others – the smell can be left on one's hands and clothes after an encounter. The smell permeates the soft furnishings in the home and the floor while nose-prints on the windows and drool-spattered walls leave a visual and olfactory residue. Anita from North Dublin describes visiting a friend with a St. Bernard as 'shocking – the hair, slobber. I stunk leaving the place. The dog's a dote, but no. I couldn't [have that type of dog]'. She continued that the smell of dog 'met me at the door'. Greyhounds do have less 'dog' smell than other breeds as Anita further compares her greyhound to her Labrador-pit bull mix's 'doggier' smell. Part of 'home' is 'bringing some space under control' (Douglas 1991, 289) which for Anita, included minimising the smell of dog.

However, more than dog body odour, participants all discussed their dog's flatulence. While an unexpected topic of conversation, it was clearly important to my participants. Not only was it an offensive smell in their home, one older participant saying 'Jaysus, her farts clear the room', but they were also concerned about their dog's discomfort and the inconvenience of having to pick up loose faeces. Lisa, a 30-year-old newlywed in Galway introduced in Chapter 4, approached the subject with humour, as Marsh frequently demonstrated while I was visiting their home. She said 'he farts every time he jumps up on the sofa. It's hilarious. You can hear it from the other room!'. However, this also makes dogs an acceptable scapegoat for any accidental human contributions and a source of intergenerational humour as Frank (58, County Louth) observed between his mother and stepdaughter.

After Lisa laughed about Marsh's flatulence she noted with concern, 'God love him, when we first got him, the change in diet did a number on him'. She had contacted the rescue organisers in the first weeks after adopting him asking for recommendations on diet. It was the treats, they discovered, that were upsetting Marsh's digestive process, as she had kept his kibble the same as the rescue had fed him. Others have gone to great lengths to manage their greyhound's sensitive digestive system, as I will describe next.

Managing smell through diet

Food is usually associated with smell, taste, and texture during preparation or eating (for a sensory exploration of food in urban spaces see Rhys-Taylor 2017), but greyhound owners may come from the perspective of their dog's dietary tolerance and the resulting smell. While

some owners discussed their dog's food because their dog refused a particular kibble or raw food, most were attuned to their dog's ability to digest the food – and the unpleasant consequences when it went wrong. Some put in incredible effort to feed their dogs and took great pride in the making and documenting of their work. Pictured below are meals from five households. The first photo is of Lisa in the utility room pouring the kibble as Marsh waits. She mixed two varieties of kibble that suit Marsh's needs, so she does not worry that he will get bored of 'just the one' flavour. Rowan (pictured eating) also receives two types of kibble.

Plate 44 Lisa preparing Marsh's dinner. Photo by author.

Plate 45 Rowan eating his dinner. Photo by author.

The next photo from Carmel (60s, Cork) shows the combination of human grade tinned fish, soup, potatoes and kibble that work for her greyhound, Lander. She cooks potatoes every few days for her dogs to ensure they are fresh. This has improved her dogs' bowel movements and she finds it much easier to clean up after them on the patio and on walks.

Plate 46 Lander's food. Photo by Carmel.

Imogen, 22 and a student in Galway sent several photos. The pink bowl is the food of the dog she is minding. The owner provided kibble. Imogen added some cooked vegetables and porridge to it.

Plate 47 Imogen added fresh food to the kibble the owner sent. Photo by Imogen.

This is in contrast to the next two photos (as shown in Chapter 4) which is what Imogen prepares for her greyhound, Cecil. She prides herself on her weekly trips to the butchers and

vegetable markets and spends several hours on food preparation which she stores in a specially bought freezer.

Plate 48 Monthly food prep for Cecil. Photo by Imogen.

Plate 49 Everyday meal for Cecil. Photo by Imogen.

My participants spent differing amounts of time on food preparation, but all were cognisant of the effect it had on their greyhounds. While each of my participants ensured their dog ate food it enjoyed and was tolerable to their sensitive digestive systems (read prone to flatulence and diarrhoea, irritability, and reactivity), most believed the dog's taste must be balanced with the owner's preferences to texture, smell, convenience, etc. (kibble/tinned food/raw food). In particular, very expensive food or difficult or inconvenient to obtain/store/prepare garners significance as good quality or of better taste than food available in the supermarket. But good taste in food, like Imogen and Carmel demonstrate, goes further to include ethical standards (organic, fair trade) and added value to the dog – freshness for safety and gut health. The expense of this food indicates a level of socioeconomic stability. Bridget (65) (who will be

introduced in Chapter 7) directly contrasts this with the pet dogs of her working-class childhood. Her dogs were kept outdoors and fed table scraps and the supermarket brand of dog food. Although the kibble was considered extravagant at the time, there was no consideration of the dog's preference or to the effect on the inside of the home.

So far, this chapter has examined how owners experience their dog's presence through the sense of smell. From neutral to unpleasant smells in the home, this affects the humans' ability to enjoy their home and guests. I have also examined how some owners manage their dogs' sensitive digestive systems through diet. Next, I turn to touch and sound in affection, comfort, and play. These senses all combine to facilitate communication as the final section of this chapter.

Touch

> They're very much part of the family. And they have a place. And you know, that place has to be respected. I mean, I know if I'm sitting on Cú's place on the couch, he will come and stare at me, and then proceeds to climb on top of me so I'm going to get out of the way.
>
> - Joanne, 36, Galway

My participants had different experiences of how tactile their dogs were both in how much their dog initiated contact and how much affection their dog would enjoy. In the following photograph from a working dog show in 2021, for instance, several interactions are occurring. In the front centre, there are two greyhounds. One is jumping up for attention while the other is standing independently. The owner's casual stance indicates she is not surprised by the interaction and welcomes it. To the right is a man with a greyhound who pushed himself

between the man's legs. Again, the owner is standing casually, indicating that this is not unusual behaviour. The dogs and owners appear to enjoy these interactions.

Plate 50 Working Dog Show. Photo by author.

Most dog owners similarly enjoy touching their pets and being touched by them. Anita says 'I love coming home to them' as they wait at the door. She describes their 'happy faces' and 'bumping' her legs in excitement. A dog greeting its owner at the door and initiating affection is a source of great pleasure for many dog owners. Interestingly, for those with particularly independent dogs who may not greet them at the door upon returning home, the owner may feel neglected. Lisa describes coming home to Marsh, still in his bed, and contrasts it to the enthusiastic 'bum wiggles' that her partner Darren gets from Marsh on his return home (see Plate 34). However, Imogen sees this lack of enthusiasm as a job well done. She walks Cecil before she goes to class and is satisfied to return home to his 'big stretch' and 'tail thump' that indicate he was sleeping in her absence. She will join him on the sofa where he will rest his 'big head' in her lap for 'cuddles'.

Frank and his wife Lillian demonstrated how they 'play' with greyhound Rowan. They excitedly squeaked and threw the ball for him, which he ignored. They laughed together at their prank at my expense. They knew he would not chase the ball. Rowan then pottered over to lean on Frank's leg as though he could not support his own weight. Lillian tells me this is 'the greyhound lean' and is akin to a hug. When, where, and how much people like to touch and be touched by their dogs varies widely. Those bred as companion dogs are more likely to be clingy – seeking some sort of touch much of the time. This clinginess in Lilo did not suit Zach

or his family. But adding a second greyhound eased Lilo's anxiety and the family is content with their two dogs. Greyhounds typically like to be with or near their owners but not necessarily on them most of the time. Like touch, the amount of sound one can tolerate in the home is a consideration when adding a pet to the home.

Sound

While intentional use of sound in the home can be used to influence mood or to 'inspire particular activities' such as cleaning or relaxing (Pink 2004, 2), unintentional sound in the home can be overwhelming. 'I love all dogs, but I don't think I could live with a very noisy little terrier', says Carmel (60s) from Cork. She, her adult children, and her student lodgers all value the quiet presence of her greyhound and would find a vocal dog distressing. My participants also indicated the importance of the sound of their walking around their house (see Prendergast 2021) and breathing beside them on the sofa. 'His little grunts and sighs' while sleeping were particularly comforting to Galway student Imogen (20s), particularly after a 'playdate' with fellow dog walkers. This means that my participants are aware of their pet's presence and gain enjoyment from their casual wanderings around the home. Their pet's comfortable way of being meant the owner was doing a good job with their routine and care.

In this final section, I will explore communication which participants indicate is an important aspect of owning a pet.

Communication as multisensory

Until the 1980s in the west, human-animal communication was the realm of psychologists who attempted to teach animals like chimps, bonobos, parrots and dolphins to speak like humans. This was an attempt to 'discover something about cognition and human language'(Kulick 2017) and to quantify the intelligence of various species. This approach reinforced human exceptionalism and intelligence because dolphins, for example, are not able to speak like humans. More sensibly, it does not mean they are failed humans, just different to humans (Ingold 1988). A variety of non-western insights into human-animal communication have emerged since then. Anthropologists like Eduardo Kohn (2013) and Viveiros de Castro (1998) have examined Amerindian perspectivism is which animals can communicate as humans through dreams and in particular ritualized settings. From a different perspective, Rane Willerslev (2007) explored humans communicating with elk through

mimicking their movements through a 'vicarious understanding of the animals' experience' (2007, 107). To illustrate his meaning, Willerslev uses an example of a blind person learning to navigate their environment through a combination of sensory information - through clicks and the sounds of the cane (Nagel 1997). Nagel suggests that this bodily practice might allow a blind person to roughly imagine what it is like to be a bat. Willerslev uses this example to explain how through embodying the movements, sounds, and skin of an elk, the hunter can communicate with the elk as an elk. The ability to communicate in these non-western manners might blur the boundary between human and animals. However, in this context of dogs and humans in Ireland, my participants assert that their pets have feelings, wants, and needs and they intentionally communicate them. The point is not to make them 'persons' necessarily but members of the household. My participants communicate with their greyhounds through a combination of observing visual cues, body tension, movement, and sound.

'Reciprocal communication' between species is an 'essential element' in human-pet relationships (Perez 1986, 20). Although many examples were noted, it is the explicit intention and reciprocity of communication which makes it meaningful whether it is through human words, pet sounds, and/or body language. When one's pet actively engages through vocalisations, touch, or eye contact, and there is mutual understanding, the shared intimacy can feel satisfying. The attention and response to each other's attempts at communication can deepen the relationship. Perez's participant's cat would look straight into its owner's eyes before going to the door and meow to be let out. Perez's dog owning participants had similar daily exchanges of communication with their dogs through barking and body movement about walks, going out to the garden, dinner time, fresh water, etc. Another cat owner described how her cat would 'put his paws in her lap and purr' in response to her speaking about and expressing emotional states (ibid.). This 'reciprocal communication' is important for human-pet relationships, but pets also facilitate communication between humans.

Karen Lane (2015) found her dog was a successful intermediary when researching sensitive topics in Northern Ireland. Her friendly dog-cum-research assistant provided a legitimate reason (walking the dog) for her to be in areas of Belfast where she did not 'belong'. As the focus of adoration, Torridon the Wheaten Terrier provided the opportunity for Lane to broach

her research on the guarded topics of politics and religion. Torridon initiated introductions, but she may have elicited stories that would otherwise not have been told.

Two of my participants discussed how communication was improved in their homes between humans with the dog as the intermediary. Carmel, a single mother to now adult children in her mid-60s, found Lander the greyhound was useful for communication in two instances. First, Carmel found having Lander as a topic of conversation for herself and her student lodgers, particularly during the pandemic, allowed for a distraction from study and work. Second, her son who lived alone was quite lonely and wanted to 'borrow' him, but Carmel and her lodgers also 'needed' Lander's company. Instead, her son phoned 'to check in on Lander' which was a way to make a social connection with Carmel. Another participant, Clare, reminisced about when her children were teenagers. Max the greyhound (now deceased) acted as a safe character to participate in conversation when life in general was too much for them to talk about. They would have fictitious 'conversations' about the sassy or rude things she was 'saying'. Max often commented (through her teenage daughter) about Clare's clothes or quality of dinner. They would imagine what type of hair style Max would have if she were human – 'definitely an old lady bun' and would ask for Max's opinion to strengthen their argument (did Max think she should be allowed to stay up late?).

A third participant Margot, however, discusses how she and her greyhound have a dialogue together at particular parts of the day which use both verbal and nonverbal communication.

> My favourite is near dinner time. He comes – I hear him coming- to tell me it's time 'awooo' he says to me. And I say 'oh, are you hungry?' and he does a little stomp dance thing until I follow him to the kitchen.

Margot clarifies it is not a bark, it is 'talking'. She also describes a snorting or huff with batting his paw that means 'come to pet me'. And as I visited participants homes, they would narrate to me what their dog was 'saying'. Imogen already described how Cecil would huff and stretch to welcome her home and look for a rub. Rowan will give Frank 'doe eyes' (see photo below) and escalate to 'talking' or 'batting [him] with his paw' when he wants something and 'you have to follow him'. For example, when Frank's mother moved in while on hospice care, Rowan began to spend a lot of time with her. The bedroom door had to be kept closed to keep the cats out, but Rowan would 'tell' Frank that he wanted to go in by the methods above.

Greyhound owners find their dogs want to communicate with them and that it is a process of getting to know what the dog is 'saying'. Here we see how people negotiate the delicate and shifting boundary between 'pet' or member of the household.

Plate 51 An example of 'doe eyes'. Photo by Margot.

In fact, this 'attunement' is explored in dog training methods in the UK among pet dogs (Fox et al. 2022) and police dogs (Smith et al. 2021). They discovered that by focusing on the dog's attempts to communicate, using the trainer as an interpreter, they could 'capture something of the animal's point of view' (Fox et al. 2022, 16). Attention to the embodied multi-sensorial nature of interspecies communication de-centered the human in the relationship and was key to understanding the dog's temperament and character. Smith et al (2021) concluded that greater attention to the dog's agency in training and working improved bonding as 'shared knowing' between handler and dog and allowed for a longer working relationship. Similarly, Jon Hindmarsh and Alison Pilnick (2007) studied nonverbal interactions between the members of a medical team in a teaching hospital. The team established 'intercorporeal knowing', or a way of knowing and working together where 'the sights, sounds, and feel of colleagues are used to sense, anticipate, appreciate and respond to emerging tasks and activities' (2007, 1413). In this way, both professionals (medical staff and police dog handlers) are able to indicate what is required for the patient or public safety without explicit verbal instructions but through body language, glances, and gestures.

In this section, I intended to illustrate how dog's communication is multisensory in that it entails multiple senses. Pet owners express emotional closeness to those animals with whom they can communicate and with those who facilitate communication.

Conclusion

This chapter began with three participants emphasising the importance of their dog's presence in the home. The dog's presence was missed as 'other' than the presence of their child or partner. The dog's dependability in being there contributed to the sensory experiences, but participants spoke of a range of senses that improved and disimproved their everyday lives. It was about balancing what kind of 'hard work' one can manage – that of a puppy or a 'springy' and 'nuts' high energy dog or a 'clingy' greyhound – and finding the balance with two greyhounds who 'potter'. Research on care homes and pet owners found that the dog's presence contributed to the feel of 'home', a sense of wellbeing and a sense of identity (Orr et al. 2023; Corrêa, Barcelos, and Mills 2021). However, there was not a specific emotion or sense or behaviour in isolation that any participant was able to articulate that provided this all important 'presence'.

While smell, touch and sound "gave moments of 'extra pleasure' when going round the garden" (Tilley 2006, 326), this combination of the senses similarly give pleasure to pet owners (with notable exceptions in the case of smells). And while the literature on dogs in the home focus on health benefits to humans or the material culture of dog 'stuff' (Howard-Smith 2021), less attention has been paid to what owners say is important about keeping a pet. Owners talk about their pet's presence in the home, how they feel when they are around the pet, what they find relaxing, comforting, energising, annoying. These are the key elements to living with someone else and will point to a successful pairing. Senses are layered and cumulative. As my participants have mentioned, it is when walking in the door, they do not just smell their home, nor do they just see their dog approaching. They also heard their dog jump off the sofa, nails clicking on the ground, maybe giving an 'awoo' in greeting. They may press their cold wet nose in their face, or lick them, bump them with their body or jump up.

The 'sensory experiences always mingle and overlap. The multidimensional and synesthetic sensory experiences… become part and parcel of the entire process' (Tilley 2006, 328). So too is the experience of pets in the home a multidimensional and synesthetic sensory experience. Living with a dog is a full body experience, multisensory and overlapping. The whole home is affected by the presence of the dog and the home affects the dog. The home is co-created. While each element of sound, smell, touch, movement can be individually assessed or examined, the combination of these components is more than the sum of its parts. In this way,

when participants describe what they appreciate about having a pet, they do not first say they enjoy their dog's smell, vocalisations, clicking nails, breathing, communication, looks, or body heat. They say they like the presence of their dog which is a combination of the mentioned sensory experiences. The analysis of the senses can be considered as the 'process of bringing together a series of things in ways that make them mutually meaningful' (Pink 2009, 120). This chapter examined the multiple senses that participants discussed as important and meaningful in their everyday lives. In this way, the presence of a dog in the home is a layering and intensification of multiple senses and as a whole is what makes the 'presence' of a dog so significant. But what was discussed most often by my participants is the importance of the dog walk and greyhound community.

In the next chapter, I will examine how walking is a powerful multisensorial experience of everyday life and this particular type of social interaction can bond people together because of its full body engagement (Ingold and Vergunst 2008). Tilley found that gardeners were 'heavily influenced' by belonging to and participation in societies, clubs or other social networks (2006). Indeed, my participants were similarly influenced as they joined (or avoided) the greyhound community whether indirectly by simply walking a greyhound in public, or intentionally through greyhound walking groups or social media accounts. My participants focused on the walk itself and secondly how these interactions shaped and were shaped by the act of walking their dogs.

Chapter 7: The Social and Multisensory Entanglements of Dog Walking

Plate 52 A weekly social meetup – Penelope (right, in her younger years) and friend. Photo by Joanne.

Introduction

Joanne: On dog walking in Galway

Joanne, a part-time secondary school teacher in her thirties, explains the relationships she has with the local dog walkers and how they interacted with her as they watched Penelope, her elderly greyhound deteriorate over the course of a year. After Penelope's passing, Joanne walked alone for some time and was approached by many of her fellow dog walkers to give their condolences. Others only mentioned Penelope's passing after Joanne began walking her two new greyhounds.

> Yes. Oh, God. Yeah, people were stopping me. And they'd been looking at her [over her last months]- they were afraid to ask [where she was] because they knew how old she was, you know? And, they did. They stopped to ask about her. Absolutely.
>
> After Pen passed. Yeah, it was strange [to walk on my own]. I mean, I know you often give out about 'Well, I'm not really walking. I'm stopping and starting and stopping starting.' And they're sniffing and smelling and they don't want to go where you want to go. And you think, 'Oh, it's a nuisance to set off from your front door and do your walk.' But without stopping and starting you actually realize this [walk] is really boring.
>
> And then for people who I didn't meet maybe for a number of months, when they met me with the two new dogs. They looked at me and they said, when did Penelope become two dogs? You know? And, so people knew. I mean, that's, that's how I know most of the people in my area. They're people who have dogs and who you'd meet out walking and stuff to talk to.

Joanne describes a snapshot in time during the transition between walking Penelope the elderly greyhound until her passing, then walking alone, and finally reengaging with the local dog walking community with two new dogs. Joanne wept as she recalled this emotional time and the sympathy she received from her fellow dog walkers and their acknowledgement of her need to mourn Penelope's loss. They had also adored Penelope and many had their own experience of a dog passing away. The death of her decade-long companion was difficult, but so too was the realisation that her purpose for walking had changed alongside the types of social interactions she might have with others. While local walkers initially noticed that she was walking alone, she quickly lost her public identity as a dog walker. For a brief period, she no longer felt part of the local dog walking community.

Walking the dog is not as straightforward as it seems. What may appear to be a mundane or inconvenient chore, or an enjoyable hobby is a multisensory experience full of social, physical,

and environmental entanglements and negotiations. Even if the routine is scheduled daily at the same time(s) the experience, as Joanne's example above describes, is variable.

Plate 53 A participant cancelled our scheduled walk due to poor weather. Photo by author.

Walking is both sensorial and emotional. Various contexts will shape these experiences including location, other people and pets, weather (see text message above), darkness/safety in winter, time constraints, during human sickness or times of stresses, and dog personalities, the dog's and human's energy and pace, how easily the dog walks on/off lead, or an encounter with wild animals. Over time, as the dog walker or their dog ages or a new dog or human is added, the interactions also change.

It is a space in which the physical and social space of the footpath or park must be negotiated. And this negotiating is a source of annoyance, mistakes and accidents which makes it interesting (Storer 2004). Jo Lee Vergunst examines 'how mishaps are linked to the emotions of a walk, and thus how emotions become part of our environment' (2008, 120). As my participants describe, an accident with their dog will stay in their mind and will become part of the place imbued with emotion and sensory memory and storytelling. And so, we must 'look in more detail at how everyday walking actually takes place, paying particular attention to some of the slip, trips and mistakes that can happen' (ibid., 108).

The social aspect of walking is a surprise to many new greyhound owners. While most public interactions only require an acknowledgement of another's presence, dogs can facilitate more extended interactions (Robins, Sanders, and Cahill 1991). The 'social archaeology' of the dog walking community is created as 'layers of repeated meetings build, over time, into friendships

or remain as they are – tiny intimacies or nodding [and sniffing] acquaintanceships' (Davis 2013 in Lane 2015, 28). My participants noted several instances of unexpected sociality such as strangers hanging out of car windows to greet fellow greyhound owners and a crossing of typical Irish cultural norms in which an older man may approach a younger woman to chat about greyhounds (to mixed reception). Lane notes these types of interactions also happened to her because of her dog's breed, but on social interactions while dog walking more generally – 'the unwritten, unspoken rules on personal space are relaxed' (ibid., 28). But so too were there many examples, like Joanne's, of building relationships through everyday encounters with fellow dog walkers. Separately, small scale weekly to large scale annual greyhound meet ups are often organised.

This social/community aspect of greyhound ownership in neighbourhoods or meet ups for dogs and humans can seem idyllic but it can also be fraught with difficult negotiation. The experience of the walk itself is complex with many variables which influence its enjoyability throughout a walk and over time and can be an integral part of dog ownership. By design, each home visit with my participants included walking the dog (or a conversation about it when Covid restrictions prevented meeting in person). In this chapter, I will examine the everyday routine of the walk as a multisensory experience and as a social activity in the dog walking community. First, I will note my use of 'community' in this chapter. Then, I will briefly remind the reader of the concepts of the senses from Chapter 6 before I examine the literature on walking specifically.

Community

In Chapter 2, I explored various ways to define a community. While the racing community identifies itself as such, it was better described as a collective for the purpose of this thesis as they are working together to preserve their industry. In this chapter, I use 'community' in two ways. First, I use 'the dog walking community' loosely in the sense that it is a group of people who share everyday practices of care that link them to a local area (Halperin 1998). This is how Joanne describes it above – the people in her local area who meet and know each other through walking their dogs of various breeds and are emotionally invested in each other's lives and dogs' lives. Secondly, and throughout this chapter, I refer to the pet greyhound

community[73] in a more structured way. They identify themselves interchangeably as a club, society, group, and community. They join private online groups to share photos and stories, and to seek information on training, feeding, grooming, exercise, minor injury treatment, and greyhound-specific pet products, boarding, minding, and walking services. They organise in person dog-walking meetups but more broadly, anyone walking a greyhound is included in the 'community'.

Senses

In many Western societies, vision was traditionally privileged as the primary sense through which knowledge was gained and was considered the most objective sense as it can be done from a distance and is evidence of proof (i.e., one has to see it to believe it) (Levin 1988). More contemporary research, however, has questioned this universality and points to groups in which the senses are treated differently or equally as important as vision (Howes 2011; Pink 2009; Stoller 1989). Although vigorous debate continues, many anthropologists have leaned toward a multisensory experience in which the senses layer or influence each other rather than understand the senses to be perceived in isolation of any other (Pink 2009; Seremetakis 1994; Stoller 1989). Walking is a nearly universal[74] human activity that includes multiple sensory and emotional and social experiences and way of learning. This makes it an appropriate, accessible, useful, and interesting part of life to explore in the context of how humans and canines build a relationship.

Walking

Walking has long been a topic of ethnographic interest. 'Habitus' or the bodily way of being, was first introduced by Marcel Mauss in a 1934 lecture (1979). Mauss' Durkheimian approach examined walking as a systematic expression of societal norms. Walking can also be considered a 'situated social practice' (Shove and Pantzar 2005). In this way, walking can be useful as an ethnographic method as it combines the mind, body, and environment in 'doing' an everyday multisensory experience (Pink 2009; Lee and Ingold 2006). Walking encourages a sensory connection to the environment through physical movement, narration and sharing

[73] This community includes sighthounds more generally, but my participants had greyhounds.
[74] In this chapter, all of my participants were able to walk without walking aids or a wheelchair. Further research including the use of mobility aids while walking a dog could provide rich and interesting insights into social interactions, age, and accessibility on footpaths and at parks.

the space with others (Ingold and Vergunst 2008). These negotiations with the ground and surroundings, and other people can reveal the variety of learning and knowing needed for walking. These practices vary and are influenced by, as listed above, their location, purpose, pace, time constraints, weather, social interactions, etc. Walking is fluid and changeable rather than static and predictable, even when a particular walk is routine. An anticipation of new and routine experiences is what makes walking a useful activity to explore (ibid.).

Walking has been explored in a myriad of ways – by location or environment, in groups, and individually, as a method to learn or belong or remember, but walking with animals provides a particularly rich vein of research. Different animals influence different kinds of walking, socialising, narrating, learning and being, whether that is following slow moving buffalo across country, or herding quick footed sheep or goats or navigating a walk with the dog. Kenneth Olwig (2008) examines getting a feel for the land and becoming part of the land through sheep herding. In order to manage a flock of sheep, he suggests pastoralists see the landscape through the sheep's eyes by paying attention to their grazing patterns and moods. Pernille Gooch (2008) takes a comparative approach. As a goat herder in Sweden, she became the head goat in the goats' eyes. In order to keep the flock together, she had to anticipate their restlessness and move them on before they began to wander. She contrasts goats with buffalo who you cannot take on a walk, they are in charge and know the way to the seasonal land. As the family follow the buffalo, they change the length of their stride to match the pace of the buffalo and tell stories about the locations they pass. These ways of walking are threads to explore in the dog walk because not only is walking an ethnographic method, it is also an integral part of dog ownership.

One way to think about walking practices, Lye Tuck-Po suggests, is as 'a set of culturally developed adjustments to constraints of climate, environment, and geography'(2008, 22), but that this approach suggests that 'culture' is needed to overtake 'nature' where nature is a stable and unchanging state (ibid.). It does not take into account that there is more to walking than 'the monotonous tread of feet' (Ingold and Vergunst 2008, 10). Instead, following Tilley (1994), Lye focuses on the creation of paths through the forest. These paths are not 'just' for walking – they are a multisensory journey of thinking, looking, stopping, touching, and smelling, gossiping, foraging, hunting. And this, too, is the walk for a dog. The sensorial nature of walking makes these practices complex and requires a negotiation between the person and

dog (Fletcher and Platt 2018). Most dogs do not want to merely plod along at their owner's side. They want to stop and sniff the 'gossip' of other animals' scents, speed up, slow down, spot a bird or cat, find a discarded chicken bone.

Learning how to walk competently in an unfamiliar environment or context takes practice and many mistakes and can be taught in different ways. Lye describes learning how and where to place her feet on the narrow forest trail, to keep her arms near her body to avoid thorny branches. Amusingly, Lye was unhelpfully laughed at for falling while the Batek children could easily follow these dense trails and 'skip gracefully down a steep slope' (2008, 28). This was due to the Batek's approach to teaching their children how to walk in the ever-changing tropical forest. Learning through doing while adults observed from a distance was a more appropriate method than through overt teaching and supervision or tethered to a leash as can be seen in Ireland to teach toddlers how to walk safely beside traffic.

The Batek urged Lye to keep near the front so they could keep an eye on her, as they did with their children. It was also their way of pacing the group to the weakest, so they were not left behind. She felt vulnerable 'leading' the group when she did not know where or how to go because she learned how to walk safely in a different way to the Batek. Rescue organisations and the community greyhound walk provide a similar teaching experience as new greyhound owners are taken under the wing of more experienced owners. Concerns about behaviour, diet, temperament, and quirks can all be discussed while walking. Corrections can be made in the moment – experienced owners can say 'look' your greyhound is high prey drive because they spotted something in the distance which means the lead needs to be kept short to prevent a burst of running. For Lye, she found staying in the middle of the pack allowed her to mimic those in front of her and hear the calls of caution more clearly than at the front of the line. So too can dog walkers learn from watching and listening to those around them. And so too, do mistakes and missteps provide opportunities for learning.

Similarly, new greyhound owners must learn how to walk their dogs. In contrast to walking a puppy who an adult can more easily control, greyhounds as adults can range from 23-45kg. Depending on the training the greyhound received, it may or may not be good on the lead[75].

[75] One rescue worker noted that most greyhounds come lead trained as they are walked for exercise but the one notorious trainer 'just hooshed them along' between paddocks.

Further, human agency and dog agency is negotiated and can be observed "between the pacing of two feet and of four" where the tension of the lead is an indicator of human-dog agreement on the purpose of the walk (Ingold and Vergunst 2008, 12). A loose lead shows that they are in sync. Alternating between the dog pulling ahead of the human/human pulling ahead of the dog can reflect "different views of how the walk should be conducted" (ibid.)

Dog walking

Walking with animals can be unpredictable and lead to accidents even for experienced people (Gooch 2008; Vergunst 2008). Buffalo herders in the Indian Himalayan mountains, for example, migrate seasonally. The everyday practice of walking with animals may be disrupted by a slip resulting in injury. However, this is then woven into the narration of place for future trips – walking changes the experience of place. The occasion of a young buffalo running away, the pursuit to retrieve it and the resulting fall will be remembered and retold next time that particular part of the road was passed (Gooch 2008). I will return to this point below as many of my participants retold of falls, scares, and surprises during our walks.

The buffaloes of the Van Gujjar are different to other types of buffalo. They are 'agents and companions in the walk, not objects to be moved' (Gooch 2008, 72). Gooch observes the Van Gujjar way of life is critically linked to 'the strong, personal relationships that develop between particular animals and their human guardians, and which are evident from the ways the animals are treated' (Gooch 2008, 72). The ways greyhounds are treated as pets is similarly evidenced by the close relationships developed between human and canine. And through the rhythm and process of migration 'close friendships may evolve between them [the bullocks] and people during the walks' (Gooch 2008, 74). Walking can establish, facilitate, and strengthen relationships.

The dog walk is a useful space to explore the impact of walking on our relationships with our dogs and others (Fletcher and Platt 2018). Much of the existing research on dog walking focuses on the health benefits to owners (Donoghue 2019; Christian et al. 2013). However, Donoghue notes that findings are contradictory ranging from a positive to neutral to negative effect on 'physical and mental health and wellbeing' (2019, 1). Her 2019 longitudinal study of Irish people fifty years and over found 45% owned pets. 38% of the dog owners walked their dogs every day and this correlates to lower BMI. It was concluded that better 'physical or

behavioural' health was from walking the dog rather than dog ownership alone. While walking the dog may be important for physical and behavioural health, social scientists take a different approach. Some research on dog walking suggests it is more than just walking and point to it as a welcomed social activity (Graham and Glover, 2014; Westgarth et al., 2014). Others add that it is a "highly sensual and complex activity" which can provide insights into human-animal relationships (Fletcher and Platt 2018, 213).

There are additional perspectives on the novelty or enjoyment of dog walking – that it can be a mundane everyday activity (Middleton 2010). Similarly, Westgarth et al (2021) explored the routine of walking the dog as either recreational or functional. They defined 'recreational' as pleasant for owner and dog in good weather and in less urban environments. 'Functional' walks were described as obligatory, exercise focused, and under time constraint. While comparing the purpose of a walk can be useful, restricting it to a binary does not capture the nuance my participants explain. For example, when Jimmy (67) takes his dogs for their daily walk without his wife Bridget (65), he delights in the attention his friendly dogs attract. Often found chatting on the footpath with neighbours, Jimmy's walks are largely social despite being in the mundane environment of a housing estate. This environment would exclude it as a recreational walk by Westgarth et al.'s criteria (2021), but Jimmy gets immense pleasure from this hobby. However, if Bridget walks with him, they do not stop to chat to others regardless of the weather or time available. They walk efficiently and allow the dogs to sniff occasionally. Depending on several variables, any walk may be both functional (because it is routine and in unexceptional surroundings) and recreational (because it is enjoyable and relaxed).

A more useful approach to routines, when explored as an everyday practice, is that they are not mundane but an organised engagement of social interactions (Pink 2004, 10). Routines are not often rigid but fluid, more of an indication of order, responsibility, or intent. Care of the dog as physical and mental exercise is expected, necessary and not as simplistic as enjoyable or chore. Dog walking can be romanticised as time in nature with one's dog trotting along happily. For some, it can also be dreaded – a task to be ticked off the 'To Do' list. But when explored specifically, rarely is a dog walk uneventful – there are many missteps, irritations, accidents and near misses in the everyday walk. What I intend to examine next are the social aspects of the walk.

Being a 'dog-person'

Walking a dog in public and the resulting social interactions embed the dog walker into the local community to establish a public identity as a "dog person" - one who "choose[s] to be associated with and like dogs" (Mitchell and Ellis 2013, 3). Research shows a primary benefit of dogs is their ability to facilitate social connectedness in a variety of situations such as during counselling (Chandler 2018). Walking a dog can provide access to socially contested spaces and topics such as politics and religion in Belfast (Lane 2015) but ageing dog walkers in Ireland particularly benefit from making social connections (Donoghue 2019, 23-24). Different styles of walking can provide 'possibilities of making dis/connections with human and non-human worlds that sustain a personal sense of order' (Waitt et al. 2008).

While many dog walkers embrace social interactions, Fletcher and Platt (2018) found many participants valued the silence of walking alone with their dogs and might actively avoid interactions with others. One morning Bridget (65) was irritably telling me she could 'never get any walking done' when she walked her two dogs because 'everyone' kept stopping her to chat. Her pre-retirement routine had required that she walk her dogs during the early morning between six and seven-thirty when all the other nine to five workers walked their dogs. These early morning walkers might nod or wave in recognition, but there would be no further interaction. Bridget notes that anyone out in the morning is keeping to a schedule whether they're walking a dog or on their own. She notes that dog walkers are 'always walking to a schedule'. 'If I'm going out in the morning [to meet friends], I'm out early to get them walked. I'd never leave them without their walk. All the dog walkers are the same. They have to get the job done'. So, Bridget provides extra context to times of day and purpose of the walk; a slow walker might welcome a chat, a purposeful walk with headphones will indicate a different type of walk that might actively discourage interruption and delay. Bridget does not want to use her dogs as a social catalyst even though her dogs love the attention from others. But she is physically unable to manage her dogs pulling and jumping to greet others, so she hurries them along rather than 'listening' to them and allowing them to determine their interactions.

In contrast to Fletcher and Platt's (2018) findings that it is other dog walkers who stop to chat to each other, Bridget stated it was individuals without dogs who initiated conversation. What Bridget did not expect was for the late morning non-dog-walkers to have a different pace and

approach to walking. Living near a church and a primary school, Bridget learned that the 'mass crowd' wanted to socialise and the post-school-drop-off adults gathered to chat on the paths. Not only was she annoyed to have to talk to 'the religious', but she also had to weave her way through groups of adults, toddlers, and small fluffy dogs on extendable leads. She believes that people 'think you're approachable, friendly, if you have a dog', even though she is not. Bridget had a long and hard recovery from her hospitalisation. She was not in the humour to chat, nor was she physically strong enough to manoeuvre her dogs around the overly friendly dogs and toddlers approaching her unhindered by adult supervision. She was constrained physically, but more significantly, she was constrained by time, patience, energy, and limited footpath space. The time of day she was walking and having dogs with her symbolically signalled to others that she was available for social interaction. As a consequence, Bridget changed her routine. While Bridget is an outlier in that she does not want to spend her time while walking the dog to socialise with other dogs or humans, she is typical in that she will change her route and routine to work around her preferences. The rhythms and routes of walks are entirely negotiable, in many cases, as my participants are keen to discuss.

Although walking dogs is integral to all three communities that I have explored in this thesis (racing, rescue, and pet homes), I wish to focus here specifically on walking pet greyhounds. In the final sections, I will give examples of key elements of walks. First, I will examine some of the sensory elements of routine walks and how they are negotiated. I consider two households to explore these themes. Secondly, I will examine the sensory and social aspects of organised group walks for the greyhound pet community where I discuss an example of a weekly small group walk and a larger annual walk.

Case Studies

In the following case studies, my participants take me on an everyday walk. However, while walking, I discover that these walks are anything but mundane. Locations of interest are pointed out along with routes not taken. Through walking, my participants narrate previous missteps and accidents, they describe other animals and people and negotiate the roadways and footpaths.

Plate 54 Frank and Rowan lead the walk. Photo by author.

Frank, Lillian, and Rowan

Frank, Lillian, Sara, Anna, Margaret, Rowan, and Roosevelt lived together in a large, detached bungalow in the Midlands. Their household could fit many descriptions: blended family, extended family, multispecies family. Married in 2019, this is a second marriage for both Frank and Lillian. Now in their 40s, they each have one daughter (both at university), from their previous marriages. Anna, Frank's daughter, lives with her mother during the week and with them at the weekend. Sara, Lillian's daughter, lived with them full time until Frank's mother Margaret moved into her bedroom during hospice care. As this was during the Covid pandemic, Sara and her boyfriend moved into Margaret's home in a wealthy area of Dublin to protect her from additional exposure to the virus.

They have had Rowan since early 2020. He is Frank's third greyhound and Lillian's second, but their first greyhound adopted together. Their decision to adopt another greyhound was, in part, as a 'safer' option than another cat. They lost four cats to car accidents in recent years due to an increase in the amount and speed of traffic. They believe it is Google maps that has changed the route people use. To access their road, there is an unusually sharp turn off the main road. It is not signposted as a through road to the larger town and motorway. While the distance is the same, it is faster because it avoids local and school traffic. Drivers 'boot up the road' with little regard for pedestrians or pets. They knew Rowan would be kept secure in the garden or on a lead for his walks. He is never let off lead where he would have access to the road while the cat Roosevelt is allowed to roam. When it was time to walk Rowan, Frank collected three hi vis jackets for the humans and a hi vis bandana for Rowan for added safety on the narrow footpath-less roads.

Rowan remained calm as Lillian expertly attached his harness and lead. They remarked that he only gets overexcited if it has been a few days since he was walked, due to poor weather and dangerous road conditions. Rowan trotted alongside Frank, occasionally gazing up at him. Walking can highlight power dynamics between dog and human (Fletcher and Platt 2018). With no tension on the lead, Frank and Rowan are in balance. Walking out onto the narrow country road, Frank and Rowan walked slightly ahead as Lillian narrated a tour of the local dogs they routinely encounter on their walks. Rowan gently pulled to sniff here and there. Frank waited. They moved on together. "There's an aggressive 'puggle' [pug and beagle cross] and slightly friendlier Jack Russell in that house", Lillian told me. The next had a collie that would often rush out of the driveway. However, they could tell by the collie's whining that he was locked in the back garden this evening. Rowan stopped occasionally to wee, and Frank waited patiently. A few houses down, we approached another house where I was warned the collie would often jump the low front wall. But that evening, there were three adults walking a small white Maltese type dog. Rowan glanced over but remained relaxed, he did not stiffen his body, bark, or stop. The white dog was 'taking on' the collie by barking back and charging the gate. As two of the humans and white dog moved on, the last woman was seen to stick her hand in through the gate to stroke the dog. Lillian called out, 'you've made up then?'. The woman replied that yes, they had 'sorted their differences' long ago. As we moved past, Lillian told me that this woman used to be terrified of this particular dog and would shout at it. She was happy to see the woman and the collie's relationship had shifted from antagonistic to pleasant.

Plate 55 A farmer's wider than usual grass verge to facilitate local dog walkers. Photo by author.

As we approached a field, Frank told me it was managed by a farmer with the local dog walkers in mind. He maintained a wider than average grass verge all along his field to facilitate them. This was where Frank walked Rowan most frequently when it was just the two of them. Rowan was always kept on lead because 'he'll just run off after anything' like a bird or hare. He had a daily off lead run in figures of eight in the garden. They would walk the edge of the field, cut through the gap into the next field kitty corner, walk the perimeter, then finish the circuit of the first field before heading home. This was most often their routine in the summer when the fields are not too mucky, and the weather was not too warm for Rowan. Lillian, however, preferred to stay on the road. We took her route.

Frank and Lillian waved at each passing car. Partially, Frank says, because that was 'the country way', but also because it helps to prevent cars from 'running us off the road', despite the hi vis. I was shown the section of hedging where Lillian's daughter 'flipped the car into the ditch'. She was coming home from university one morning and bent to retrieve her phone from the floor. In that split second, she drove into the eight-foot ditch. Due to her steel toed boots, she was able to kick her way out of the car and run home. They were grateful for her survival, saying 'she should have died. The car never would have been found in time'. Frank and Lillian drove up and down the section of road looking for the car. It was not until later when they looked from the field that they could see one tyre peeking above the ditch. The car was completely obscured. Frank gestured for me to look at the ditch as we passed a driveway. Although dry that day, there could be several feet of water during wetter weather. A car falling

in could be submerged in water and a few locals have drowned over the years. This trauma was remembered and retold on this dog walk and tour of the area, but Rowan and Lillian both think of it every time they pass the location.

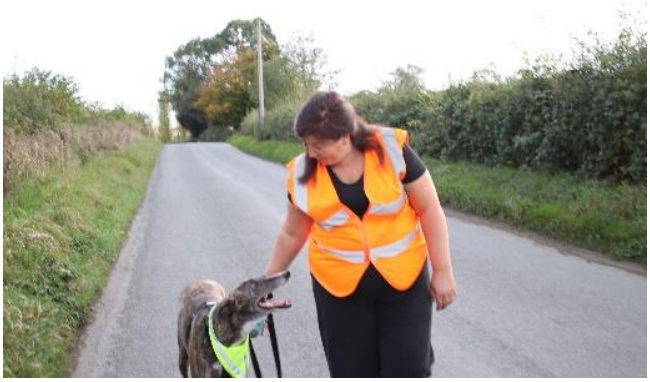


Plate 56 Rowan gazing at Lillian, both in hi vis. Photo by author.

We turned down a narrower road lined with just-out-of-season blackberry brambles. Rowan was visibly tired at this point. He had slowed down and he was panting gently. Frank was still full of energy. As we reached a particular tree, Frank announced that this was their turnaround point. He handed the lead over to Lillian for the slower paced walk. They discussed their different approaches to walking. Frank liked to walk at a faster pace for exercise. Lillian liked to walk more slowly, allowing Rowan to stop and sniff as he pleased. Lillian joked that Rowan was giving her the adoring look (photo above) that was usually reserved for Frank on walks. While Lillian implied jealousy over Frank being Rowan's favourite person, Lillian's daughter later told me that Rowan sticks to Lillian like Velcro. Wherever Lillian goes, Rowan will follow. This includes the bathroom.

Plate 57 Local riding club where Rowan refused to run. Photo by author.

We stopped at the local riding club where they allow dogs to be walked (above). Their previous greyhound would run here. He would crawl under the bottom of the fence. However, Rowan would not crawl under or walk through. They had to lift him over the fence. He did not like it and made it known by the 'greyhound scream of death'. Greyhounds can dramatically react to the most minor injuries or inconvenience with yelping and crying at an alarming volume. This is in contrast to actual injuries, which they can stoically endure in silence. No participants offered an explanation for this, but those who had experienced it all nodded knowingly. For example, another participant sent the photo below of her dog, Cecil, 'stuck' in brambles which prompted his 'scream of death'. He was not injured.

Plate 58 Cecil 'stuck' in brambles. Photo by Imogen.

It was after several such incidents that Frank abandoned the location that required lifting Rowan and started walking in the other field.

Carmel and Lander

In contrast to passing only one dog walking group with Frank and family, there was a constant stream of walkers on the university campus - some with dogs and some without. Carmel (58),

a secondary school teacher and mother of two grown children, enjoyed these routine walks because the experience changed as the seasons passed. The autumn colours, leaves underfoot, and brisk air were a stark change from the lush green and warmth of summer a few weeks earlier. The campus was the usual location for Lander's walks at the moment. She recalls several previous incidents while learning how to walk a greyhound.

> After only about three weeks I had him. And I was in one of the estates that has a big green. So, I was walking with him and my daughter's dog. And I was just on the phone, actually. So, it was kind of like holding them loosely. He saw a cat right across in the houses like really far away. And he yanked himself off the lead. Just because I wasn't holding tight enough myself. It was my fault that way. Well, he chased that poor cat. And it was kind of like a sick cat there, the neighbour told me it was a stray cat that was a bit sick, you know, roaming around looking a bit raggedy… I was so sad and crying.

The neighbour was able to collect the cat's body which Carmel later collected and dropped to the local veterinary clinic. She paid for the cat's disposal as she felt it was the responsible thing to do.

After years of daily morning walks along the river, Lander started refusing to walk there by firmly planting his feet. Although he had had 'a fright two Halloweens ago' when a stray dog attacked him, he continued walking there for another year before refusing. Carmel was unsure why he would not go, but in response to his protests she changed their route. She missed seeing the early morning river dog walkers with whom she had built rapport over the years. Although there were regular dog walkers on campus, she walked at different times of the day to fit her part-time work schedule. This prevented her from seeing the same faces each day. While there was a polite nod or hello from each dog walker we passed on campus, Carmel said it was not the same depth of connection as 'knowing' the dog walkers on the river.

We walked at a leisurely pace as we talked which allowed Lander to sniff and wee to his heart's content (or perhaps Lander's need to sniff is the primary purpose and I merely followed their lead). As we passed a young-looking university student, Carmel recalled another incident from a few years earlier. Her teenage neighbour, Andrew, would walk Lander twice a week as a study break during sixth year (final year of secondary school). One day, about halfway through their usual walk, Lander stopped on the busy shopping street, planted his feet, and refused to move. Lander "really is strong and Andrew is really gentle and lovely". Passers-by had asked if they were ok. Andrew eventually phoned Carmel who phoned the local taxi. The company did not allow dogs in their cars for safety reasons, but the receptionist asked the boss who

agreed to take the fare. The taxi pulled up and Lander “hopped into the back of the car, no problem”. She laughs now, but at the time it was not an extra cost she could easily afford.

The walk is a sensory learning experience (Ingold 2010) in which multispecies relationships and environmental entanglements are created, negotiated and shaped. Further, routines are space through which social interactions are created and organised (Pink 2004) and the everyday walk is one such example. The connections between the senses, emotions, and environment while walking are integral to these participants’ experiences. Each walk is negotiated between humans, canine, and the environment.

Unusual incidents are retold while passing the location of interest and used as explanation for a change in walking route, as Gooch (2008) described during routine seasonal migrations with buffalo. For Frank and Lillian, several places were of interest, notably where their daughter had crashed her car on their dog walking route. But so too were sites mentioned where there were farmers who welcomed the local dog walking community, homes with friendly or aggressive dogs, sites of previously enjoyable walks that Rowan, unlike his predecessor, refused. For Carmel, she changed her walking route several times as Lander refused his river walks for an uncertain reason.

Unusual incidents are also used as cautionary tales for new owners to learn how to walk differently, more carefully. And Lye (2008) describes learning how to walk in the forest, one must look at and feel the terrain differently, keep one’s arms close to the body. Greyhound owners must learn to pay attention to their dog and surroundings and to hold the lead tightly, as Carmel discovered when her dog chased and killed a cat. These slips and accidents are makes walking interesting (Storer 2004) and also embed emotion into the walk and our environment (Vergunst 2008).

In negotiating a walking route, length, and pace, both the human and canine have agency and may experience the walk differently. In both cases, dog walking routines were changed to suit the dog’s behaviour. For Rowan, it was because he did not like being lifted above a gate. For Lander, it was for the protection of the local cats, and to avoid the river which he had become afraid of, while still meeting his need to run. Although the person has more control of the direction and pace of the walk because the dog is on a lead, the walk is mostly for the dog, Here we see how the dog’s agency, or their inherent dog-ness, is more pronounced on a walk.

The walk is an opportunity for the dog to do 'dog' things while the home is a co-produced space of family membership.

In the next case studies, I will examine the social and sensory aspects of dog walking meetups as a space for learning.

Case Study: Fiona and Sam

Plate 59 Fiona with her greyhound Sam (black) and the author's greyhound Nessa at a park entrance. Photo by author.

Fiona (67) is a retired chef who has owned her own semi-detached home in west Dublin since her divorce twenty years ago. Since retirement, she has more time to engage with friends, politics, and art exhibitions. Fiona asserts, "I waited until I retired to get a dog. We're retiring together". The process of learning about retirement together is important for Fiona. Fiona suggests there is a similar transition to freedom from working to retirement as many dogs do as they move from the racetrack to a home. Sam has settled into retired life and integrated into the family. Fiona's three sisters, her two sons and their partners have all come to meet Sam and to walk with them.

Fiona sought out social connections through Sam. She was frequently stopped on her walks for passersby to admire Sam – adults and children alike. As is typical behaviour within the pet greyhound community, Fiona approached me while walking my greyhound. She mentioned

that she had been on the lookout for a fellow greyhound owner as a walking companion and to learn more about life with a greyhound.

When Fiona first adopted Sam, she walked her on an ordinary four-foot-long (1.2 meters) fabric lead three times a day. The frequency provided structure and routine for both as they adjusted to retired life together and familiarised themselves with local dog walkers. The short lead ensured Fiona maintained control of Sam's speed. Through gentle exposure, these walks taught Sam to walk calmly near human, canine, and vehicular traffic. Fiona was concerned about Sam's mental stimulation, so she bought a long lead to give Sam more freedom to sniff further in the bushes.

Plate 60 Fiona demonstrating how to use a long lead with Sam. Photo by author.

Plate 61 Sam at the end of the long lead. Photo by author.

Fiona demonstrates how the long lead (20 meters) can be looped over the arm to increase and decrease the lead's length. At the beginning of the walk, I told Fiona about an experience I had with my first greyhound, Doris. I was at a local park with her attached to a long lead when a dog appeared on the other side of a fence. They initiated a play chase. Doris quickly came to the end of the lead, ripped the handle off my wrist, and yanked me to the ground.

Slightly winded, my thumb was in pain, but I was also laughing at the absurdity of falling over as an adult. A trip to the emergency room proved unwarranted as I was only bruised. However, such a fall and wrenching of the body could cause significant harm in different circumstances. Particularly because Fiona had only just recovered from an appendectomy.

Plate 62 Sam rolling in the grass. Video by author.

In the video above, Sam rolled on her back. This activity often precedes a burst of zoomies (frantic running, often in a big circle). After rolling for another few seconds after I stopped this video, Sam decided it was finally time to play. Sam reared up, and with a crazed look in her eyes, bolted away from Fiona. Unfortunately, my greyhound added to Sam's excitement by barking because she wanted to chase Sam. However, the long lead gave Fiona some rope burn. As she was looking at her hand, I could see that Sam's distance increasing and the lead's slack shortening. I called for Fiona to drop the lead. Fortunately, she removed her wrist from the handle just in time. Sam ran another few meters then, in typical greyhound fashion, stopped short for a rest. Had Fiona not dropped the lead, the speed with which the lead would have pulled Fiona's wrist could have broken it or pulled her over.

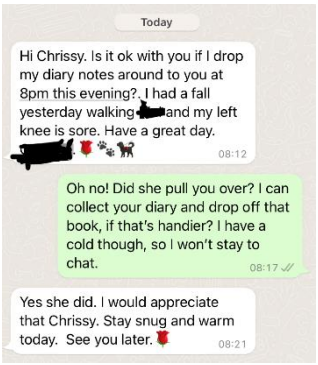


Plate 63 A text message from Fiona. Photo by author.

While long leads are fantastic tools for training recall and giving some freedom to a dog who may not be trustworthy off lead (Fox 2015), Sam taught Fiona that they should be used attentively more than my cautionary tale had done. Yet two weeks later, Sam pulled Fiona over on a walk and Fiona injured her knee and hip (see text message above). For several weeks after, she was only able to walk Sam for short distances and she missed seeing her fellow dogwalkers. Walking a dog can be *for* the dog, but it facilitates social interactions for both human and canine.

Social Interactions

According to Lisa, an accountant in her late twenties, she and husband Darren exercised exclusively at their home before adopting their greyhound, Marsh. They did not know anyone locally, despite owning their Galway home for several years. Two months post-adoption, a fellow dog walker in their local park kindly exclaimed that Marsh was now walking muzzle-free (using a muzzle is a common practice for new greyhound owners as they learn how their dog responds to small animals). On her afternoon walk, Marsh is a celebrity among the local school children. They flock to pet her as they walk home from school. In this clip of Marsh's daily morning walk, Lisa talks directly to Marsh about sniffing the grass. As we hear a dog barking from inside a house, Lisa comments that they see this dog every day. This familiar walking routine builds confidence in the newly adopted dog, but Darren, Lisa and Marsh also become a part of the landscape in other locals' routines. They enjoy these interactions with neighbours and have inadvertently become identifiable as dog people to the other established dog walkers and local children.

Plate 64 Lisa narrates Marsh's sniffing the grass and that they see the barking dog every day. Video by Lisa.

As Joanne mentioned in the introductory vignette, walking the dog can be frustrating when they do not want to go the same way or pace we want. In this way, the dog shapes the walk even if the human pulls the dog to force it to comply. For many greyhound owners, the greyhound's agency is integral to the walking experience. The walk is often for their dog's enjoyment, not just to provide adequate exercise. The dog walk has many purposes for both dogs and humans (mental and physical health, social encounters), but canine research is revealing that being allowed to sniff on walks, rather than being pulled away at each pause, is tremendously beneficial to a dog's wellbeing (Duranton and Horowitz 2019). Imogen, a university student in her early 20s, called this type of walk a 'Sniffari' as she imagined it to be a sniffing safari for her greyhound Cecil.

Plate 65 A regular anti-racing meetup a participant attends. Photo by participant.

Imogen also revels in meeting up with large groups of other greyhound owners for the dogs and humans to socialise together. Her groups are occasionally fundraisers and protests against greyhound racing, but primarily they meet to walk their dogs together.

Plate 66 An annual group walk (warm day - no coats). Photo by author.

Plate 67 Weekly group walk (cold day - coats) Photo by author.

This willingness to meet up with others who own the same breed of dog is seen in a handful of other breeds like golden retrievers, pugs, and wolf hounds. But greyhound owners meet up frequently all over Ireland. While many groups are uncomplicated, one participant of a long-established weekly walking group in Dublin noted that one woman's greyhound was often 'having a go' at another woman's greyhound. When playing off lead one day, the aggressor bit through the other dog's coat requiring stitches. The weekly group split up after the incident because the aggressor's owner refused to help pay for veterinary care. Various group members took sides. It continued into a very public disagreement on a (private) Facebook group which contributed to the end of the group some months later. These uncomfortable social interactions add to the sensory and emotional complexities of walking.

What separates greyhound owners from other dog owners is the lengths they will go to connect. They have been known to approach strangers in parks for a chat, connect on social media and even, as noted above, joyfully shout out car windows. There are dedicated Facebook groups for rehoming greyhounds, others for meeting up for group walks, and others

still for advice and support. In person meetups to walk dogs together are organised regularly (some weekly or monthly others annually) with a few greyhounds to several hundred in attendance all over Ireland. These walks provide social, sensory, and emotional exchanges for humans and canines alike.

Conclusion

This chapter examined multispecies relationships through the social and routine aspects of walking and the importance of place where the greyhound had agency to be a dog. I began with Joanne's vignette which described the social and emotional support she received from her local dog walking community during and after her elderly greyhound passed away. She discussed how she was previously annoyed about not getting to walk because of the start-stop pattern of walking with a dog, but after Penelope's death, she found it boring to walk unimpeded. Penelope's agency during the walk is what made it unpredictable and memorable.

Next, Frank and Lillian's narration of their routine walk with Rowan highlighted the social, sensory, emotional, and negotiated aspects of walking a dog. Throughout the walk, they explained deteriorating road safety and how it shaped their walk by wearing hi vis. Walking and talking, as Lye Tuck-Po (2008) asserted, are often intertwined. Frank and Lillian pointed out sound and visual stimuli of barking and rushing dogs. They considered the community aspect of a farmer allowing for dog walkers to use his field. Rowan's refusal to run in the same area as their previous greyhound also shaped their walk. Although it was frustrating, they good naturedly encouraged him to run in their garden at home instead. Again, Rowan's dog-agency shaped their walks. In the space of their home, and as a member of the family, he was offered an acceptable alternative that was available because of their rural home – he was discouraged from running in the house.

As other researchers have noted and shown through Fiona's example, missteps and accidents makes walking interesting (Storer 2004; Vergunst 2008). Fiona's retirement allowed her to adopt a retired greyhound which meant they could learn about retirement together. Fiona was keen to not only provide a needy animal a home but provide a good routine for her. Further, she wanted to benefit from the social interactions a dog will facilitate. But through

being pulled over by her own greyhound, she found it difficult to keep up with her own routine. She had to become more flexible while she was recovering.

Finally, I examined the most social aspect of greyhound ownership. I addressed two uses of 'community'. One as a general 'dog walking community' where local dog walkers acknowledge each other and may develop various levels of intimacy over time. There is also the 'greyhound community' who communicate through various social media platforms, approach each other in public, and organise group meet ups. The prevalence and frequency of these gatherings is beyond any other breed specific walk. They are organised informally in twos and threes and more formally by rescue organisation, social club, or fundraising organisation. These meetups are largely pleasant and uneventful, but squabbles, misunderstandings and disagreements do occur. Greyhounds facilitate sociality, in part because of the dedication it takes to co-create their status as a member of the family. This dedication helps to connect pet greyhound owners to each other.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Plate 68 Shelbourne Greyhound Racetrack and Counter-Protesters supporting racing (left). Protesters against racing (right). Photo by author.

In the introductory chapter, I examined the main anthropological debates that inform this thesis including varying perspectives on kinship, the emotions, and the senses. In this conclusion, I wish to summarise the specific literature from each chapter to emphasize how it contributes to these debates and guided by my fieldwork, how it shaped my argument. I will conclude with areas for further discussion and research that I was unable to examine in this project.

I began this thesis with a vignette about a protest and counter-protest outside of Shelbourne Greyhound Racing Stadium. This protest gave a visual depiction of what could be considered two opposing sides – the white Irish 50-year-old-plus male dominated racing supporters versus an eclectic mix of white women and a few men from teenagers to their 80s against racing. Although protesters had met outside Shelbourne Racetrack twice weekly for years, this particular protest was unusual. Tensions were high from an altercation the previous week which had been instigated by the RTÉ exposé *Greyhounds Running for their Lives* (Shouldice and Ryan 2019). The racing supporters earlier violence had prompted their peaceful counter-protest on this occasion. I placed the protest within the context of the contested space of greyhound racing in Ireland. More broadly, I placed the protest within the Animal Turn in anthropology. This example revealed the complexity of these 'sides' where they both make moral claims about what is in the best interest of the greyhound and the Irish people. Racing

owners and trainers say greyhounds love to run and they are well cared for. Animal welfare activists assert that greyhounds should not be used for human entertainment and profit. The racing industry argues that it is part of Irish heritage, and it contributes to the rural economy. Rescue volunteers struggle to rehome the industry's 'wastage' with inadequate funding. Yet there is overlap in commitment to a greyhound's wellbeing between small hobbyist trainers, rescue workers and pet homes.

Although my main interest was greyhounds in pet homes, what became clear was the need to also examine how racing and rescue's seemingly dichotomous views and practices of care are more complicated in practice. The circulation of greyhounds from industry into rescue and then into pet homes necessitates a series of relationships (Appelgren and Bohlin 2015). These relationships create different values for the greyhound and generate emotions about them. I illustrated these points through Sarah's expression of feeling 'stuck in the middle'. I explored how the greyhound racing community (which I called a collective) was united in their efforts to preserve the racing industry and to stand against animal welfare activists – although most owner/trainers have also been influenced by the call to rehome rather than euthanize. In this way, the practices of activism and action also create value (Graeber 2001). Value (and emotion) may be created through protests, through fostering, rehabilitating, and rehoming greyhounds, or through adopting a greyhound in the rescue and pet greyhound communities.

Then I focused on the emotion of love (Ahmed 2004; Rapport 2017) to explore how racing, rescue, and pet homes practice their care differently while maintaining that they have the greyhound's best interest at heart (see Volsche, Mukherjee, and Rangaswamy 2021; Wanner 2017). Love was the emotion most often expressed – as a feeling but also as a reason for their care practices. This revealed that owner/trainers are not conflicted by the use of greyhounds for profit, but for many of them, their first choice is to have their greyhounds live as pets after their racing career. The competing demands of time, money, and kennel space make this practice difficult when trying to make a profit (or more likely, to break even). There has been a recent shift in the industry's practices from immediately euthanizing greyhounds to keeping them for weeks until space is available in a rescue organisation.

This increased effort to rehome greyhounds has impacted the rescue volunteers as they struggle to fund and care for them; it has taken an emotional toll (Murphy and Daly 2020; O'Connor 2021). They are conflicted about their involvement with the industry where

greyhounds are profit-generating commodities. They do not believe animals should be used for entertainment or profit. Yet they want to help greyhounds find homes. In addition to the regular 'one off' family pet dogs who still need rehoming, the industry is increasing rescue volunteers' workload by giving them more greyhounds (which are still difficult to rehome in Ireland). Welfare advocates' demands for the industry to breed fewer greyhounds has been ignored as the industry relies on breeding large numbers to obtain the fastest dogs and to generate revenue through international sales to the UK (and abroad). Having stopped/decreased euthanizing puppies who do not chase, there are now younger dogs who are not the typical institutionalised racer who are up for adoption. The rescues are overwhelmed, and volunteers also feel like they are facilitating the industry's reckless breeding programmes.

Pet owners expressed their love for their greyhound through practices of pet parenting (Volsche 2019), but they also expressed the comfort their pet's presence afforded them. These pet parenting practices were attention to and responsibility for their greyhound's specific preferences for food, exercise, toys, bedding, people, communication, and affection. But these practices were flexible and in negotiation with their own preferences and routines. I spent several chapters examining the everyday lives and relationships of people with pet greyhounds as they co-created both a multispecies household (Charles 2016; Hamlett and Strange 2022; Haraway 2003; Schuurman and Syrjämaa 2022) and a multisensory home (Douglas [1966] 2003; Fudge 2008; Pink 2004; Stoller 1989).

To some extent, the success of these relationships depended on their mutuality and an acknowledgement of the greyhound as an active participant. The greyhound's sensory contributions to the home needed to be managed or negotiated by the people for mutual human-dog comfort. This was highlighted by Vera's example where their pairing did not work out because of uncontrolled urine smells and little positive interaction. In comparison, examples such as Lisa, Darren, and Marsh, and Imogen and Cecil reflected successful pairings where human and canine co-created their home. This was done through careful attention to the dog's needs and wants in cooperation with the person's preferences. In contrast to the home as a negotiated space for family, the walk – although still negotiated – was considered an acceptable space for the dog to do dog-things.

Dog walking warranted its own chapter, though tied to the previous chapter through its sensory nature, because of the importance to the human-canine relationship and also to the wider pet greyhound community (Fletcher and Platt 2018; on walking see Ingold and Vergunst 2008; Lye 2008; Tilley 1994). Through examples of dog walkers like Bridget who liked to walk along contrasted with others like Fiona and Joanne who sought out local dog walkers, I illustrated how dogs facilitate wanted (or unwanted) social engagements. Yet others, like Imogen, preferred the sociality of larger meet ups. As Lisa, Darren, and Marsh and Lillian, Frank, and Rowan narrated their walks, we saw how walking and emotions are entwined through the patterns and mishaps of everyday life. On the walk, the dog was allowed more time to be a dog, but also facilitated other types of social interactions between dog walkers and members of the public. Next, I will summarise my argument before suggesting further research.

Greyhounds confound categories. They are not 'good' as working dogs, nor are the 'good' as pets. By this, I mean greyhounds are only 'good' at running, but most of them will not do it in the way that will make their owners/trainers money. They often do not take direction well, are easily injured and have a short working life. But no other dog is as good at racing as a greyhound. As pets, they are not cute, cuddly, or particularly interactive nor do they come from the track housebroken or used to non-greyhound animals. Their 'petification' takes time, effort, and patience. And they might kill a neighbourhood cat. But no other dog is as perfect as a pet as they are for those who adopt a greyhound *for* their quirks and laid-back way of being. Their categorical awkwardness is useful because their transformation highlights how value is created and relational, how circulation builds various relationships, and how multispecies homes are co-created. Greyhounds may not be good working dogs, but they are good to love.

Greyhounds evoke emotion, passion, commitment, and loyalty from contested and deeply held perspectives like few other animals. These dogs have a greyhound racing community (collective), an activist/rescue community, and a greyhound pet community all asserting their various approaches to love as in the best interest of the greyhound. Is there a correct approach? We know that the racing industry, owners ,and trainers are comfortable with using animals for entertainment and profit. This Cartesian perspective has been argued for through philosophy and religion for hundreds of years. They provide adequate care for dogs as outlined

in greyhound welfare legislation. But the debate has moved on in the area of animal welfare and pet ownership.

The changing value of the greyhound means several things for social, relational and kinship practices in Ireland. It reveals how the Western understanding of culture/nature and human/animal as definitive binaries are being challenged through these changing values and practices in industry, rescue and in pet homes. These dualisms are not broken, but they are shifting. There is no indication of species confusion which indicates that these categories remain intact while the boundaries of kinship and the home are flexible. In some cases of 'significant otherness' where there is a particularly close bond between a human and their pet, the boundary of personhood may be blurred. There is scope for further research in Ireland but also more broadly in the realm of human-animal intimacies.

Suggestions for Further Research

First, there is space to examine the changes in dog ownership and what it means to be a responsible owner since the pandemic. Dog ownership increased during the Covid lockdowns and as rescue organisations warned at the time, there has been a knock-on crisis of dog abandonment since people have returned to work. Additionally, there is a generation of dogs who were not exposed to everyday activities, noises, children, and other animals because of Covid restrictions who do not know how to behave as good canine citizens. This has led to increased complaints about off-lead dogs approaching park goers uninvited, dog fouling in estates, parks and beaches (Flynn 2023). According to Gillian Bird, head of education at the Dublin Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the problem of dogs running out of control and off lead has increased in line with dog ownership during the pandemic (ibid.). She gave specific instructions that dogs should be allowed to sniff and urine mark on their walks because 'bringing them for a walk is as much about the mental stimulation' as the physical exercise, so 'don't be pulling them on' (ibid.).

Next, the Traveller community is a frequent scapegoat for mistreating and abandoning greyhounds and lurchers in both the racing and rescue/sighthound community (also horses). Although I cannot assert that this does not happen, my contact with two members of the greyhound racing community who also belong to the Traveller community did not conduct themselves in line with this commonly held belief. Further, in speaking with others in the

Traveller community, there was a strong gendered aspect to which type of animals could be cared for – specifically, greyhounds were cared for by men (outdoors) and small terriers and chihuahuas were cared for by women as house pets. (Although one of my participants was an exception to this 'rule'.) The research I would suggest here would be from within the Traveller community and could explore the ethnic, socio-economic, and gendered dynamics of animal care practices and interactions with the broader Irish community.

A third area of research is to ask if pets are not a luxury but an essential part of some people's lives. As I have established throughout this thesis, the majority of households in the USA, Ireland and the UK own a pet and most of those homes consider their pet to be a member of the family. Although research has noted that pet keeping populations are physically healthier, it is debated whether these health benefits are caused by pet keeping or correlated with it (i.e. does good health allow people to keep a pet). Keeping in mind these contradictory physical health claims, but putting participants' voices to the forefront, they tell researchers that their pets are a net benefit to their emotional and social health.

Is it time, as Jane Desmond (2023) suggests, to explore pet ownership from the perspective of social justice rather than from that of a luxury commodity? If pets are members of the family, does that entitle them to healthcare? Desmond approaches this reframing from the American privatised healthcare system which compounds economic and racial inequalities. The expense of medical care extends to veterinary care. Veterinary medicine has taught a generation of veterinarians to provide expensive 'gold standard care' with high-tech equipment and testing. Out of reach of many pet owners, they are left with the option of no medical care or compassionate euthanasia. Veterinarians are now asking is there another way? They are considering a 'spectrum of care' to provide less expensive (albeit potentially less effective) treatment. As yet, the only low/no cost veterinary care in the US is charity based and sporadically available to targeted communities. Further, she asks, should this endeavour be publicly funded like primary schooling for children because it is for the public good?

The inability to afford veterinary care in Ireland has led to 'medical surrenders' where individuals would prefer to keep their pet but must either give the dog to a shelter or euthanize him/her. Although low-cost veterinary care in offered through charities like the DSPCA and Blue Cross, it is means-tested to ensure social welfare recipients will benefit. This could exclude populations which do not have access or the ability to fill out forms such as non-

English speaking, non-readers, or homeless people. But it also excludes those in lower and middle incomes who do not qualify for social welfare but are unable to stretch their finances to include a pet or elderly populations who could benefit from the companionship and social interaction walking a dog facilitates. This could be a rich area for research in Ireland and elsewhere.

Finally, this research revealed a strong gendered component in the racing and rescue communities. In a footnote in Chapter 2 in the section called Sentient Commodities, I mentioned that greyhound owner/trainer Eamon discussed the benefits of women joining the racing community. That their standards of care and prize-winning success reflects the benefits of their practices. Rhoda Wilkie noted similar findings among her hobby farmers in Scotland (Wilkie 2010, 2005, 2017). Greyhound racing in New South Wales, Australia has announced its first 'all-female steward panel' (NSW Gov 2023). The role of the steward is to ensure adherence to racing and welfare rules including drug testing and 'imposing penalties for non-compliance'. The article notes that 'record numbers' of women have become involved in racing, while the NSW Minister for Gaming and Racing asserts that 'the future of this industry is in great hands with women on board' (ibid.). It is important that in a welfare crisis, the greyhound industry is recruiting and encouraging female participation in the traditionally male dominated industry. Does this reinforce gendered aspects of care and responsibility and echo the female dominated welfare and rescue sphere? What does the increased numbers of women in the racing industry mean for greyhound welfare and the future of the industry? There is scope for future research in the changing gender balance in animal industry.

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