

*Governing Pet Love:
'Crazy Cat Ladies,' Cultural Discourse,
and the Sociospatial Logics of Interspecies Intimacy*

William L. McKeithen
June 2014

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:
University of Washington
Department of Geography

Committee:
Michael Brown
Kim England

	2
Table of Contents	2
<i>List of Figures</i>	5
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	8
<i>I. Introduction</i>	9
<i>II.a. Rethinking Interspecies Intimacy and its Governance: A Literature Review</i>	12
<i>II.b. Posthumanism: “Companion Species” Theorizations</i>	13
<i>II.c. Pet Geographies: Examining The Where Of Companion Species</i>	14
<i>II.d. Towards Critical Pet Studies</i>	17
<i>II.e. Making Love, Governing Intimacy</i>	19
<i>II.f. Gendering Intimate Spaces: Queer And Feminist Inspirations</i>	21
<i>II.g. Gendered Creatures And The Whom Of Pet Love: (Eco)Feminist Insights</i>	22
<i>II.h. Queer Ecologies And Polymorphous Domesticities</i>	24
<i>II.i. Love, Care, Femininity, Whiteness, The Home, And Intimacy</i>	26
<i>II.j. Research Questions</i>	27
<i>III.a Tracing A Critical Geography Of Interspecies Intimacy: A Methodology</i>	29
<i>III.b. Defining The Research Population</i>	29
<i>III.c. Refining The Research Population: Time-Space Frameworks</i>	32
<i>III.d. Sampling The Units Of Observation</i>	34
<i>III.e. Critical Discourse Analysis</i>	36

	3
<i>III.f. Dynamics Of Analysis</i>	38
<i>III.g. Dynamics: Modes Of Companion Species Entanglement</i>	39
<i>III.g.ii. Dynamics: Sex(ing) And Gender(ing) The ‘Crazy Cat Lady’</i>	41
<i>III.g.iii. Dynamics: Sexuality</i>	43
<i>III.g.iv. Dynamics: Race, Class, Age, Dis/ability</i>	45
<i>III.g.v. Dynamics: Spaces, Places, Geographic Imaginaries, And Scales</i>	46
<i>III.g.vi. Dynamics: Governance And Its Modalities of Power</i>	48
<i>III.h. Limitations: Humanist Methodologies, Posthumanist Anxieties</i>	51
<i>III.i. From Methodologies To Analyses</i>	53
<i>IV.a. Governing The Whom Of Pet Love: Subjectivities And Abjections Of The ‘Crazy Cat Lady’</i>	54
<i>IV.b. Introducing The ‘Crazy Cat Lady’</i>	56
<i>IV.c. Producing, Governing, and Contesting Ab/Normality</i>	61
<i>IV.d. Re-Placing Subjectivity/Abjection Within Their Sociospatial Production</i>	69
<i>IV.e. The Woman-With-Cats Outdoors</i>	69
<i>IV.f. The Crazy Woman-with-Cats</i>	75
<i>IV.g. The Pathological Pet Hoarder</i>	80
<i>IV.h. The Monstrous Woman-with-Cats</i>	83
<i>IV.i. The ‘Crazy Cat Lady’ And Her More-Than-Human Home</i>	86

<i>IV.j. Conclusions: Rethinking Gendered Subjectivity Through Interspecies Intimacy</i>	88
<i>V.a. Governing Interspecies Intimacies: Queering and Contesting The ‘Crazy Cat Lady’</i>	90
<i>V.b. Queering the ‘Crazy Cat Lady’</i>	92
<i>V.c. Norming The Home, Queering Domestic Ecologies</i>	97
<i>V.d. Governing and Queering Motherhood and The (More-Than-Human) Family</i>	107
<i>V.e. Heavy Petting: Governing And Queering Intercorporeal Intimacy</i>	112
<i>V.f. Putting Cats in the Closet</i>	117
<i>V.g. Conclusions: Queering Critical Pet Studies</i>	118
<i>VI.a. Reproducing Intimacy: Normative Pet Love, the Racialization of Interspecies Intimacy, and the Reification of ‘the Intimate’</i>	121
<i>VI.b. The White ‘Crazy Cat Lady’</i>	123
<i>VI.c. Racializing the ‘Crazy Cat Lady’: Pet Hoarding and White Trash</i>	124
<i>VI.d. The Racialization of Interspecies Intimacy</i>	130
<i>VI.e. Conclusions: Race, Gender, Species, Sexuality, and the Reproduction of Intimacy</i>	136
<i>VII.a. Conclusion: The Biopolitics and Futures of Interspecies Intimacy</i>	138
<i>Works Cited</i>	141

List of Figures

Figure 1 – The Crazy Cat Lady Action Figure

The image was sourced from <http://photos-laugh.blogspot.com/2012/06/funny-cat-photos.html> (accessed May 5th, 2014).

Figure 2 – Robert De Niro as a ‘Crazy Cat Lady’

The original SNL skit, from which the still is taken, was titled *Christmas with the Cat Lady* and aired on December 18th, 2004. The still in figure 2 was sourced from <http://barry-effin-gibb.tumblr.com/post/28205702154/robert-de-niro-as-christmas-cat-lady> (accessed on February 12th, 2014).

Figure 3 – The Reclaimed Cat Lady

The image was sourced from <http://annetaintor.com/product/magnets/you-say-crazy-cat-lady-like-its-a-bad-thing> (accessed January 12th, 2014).

Figure 4 – The Victorian ‘Crazy Cat Lady’

The image was sourced from <http://www.someecards.com/usercards/viewcard/MjAxMi1kZjJjNTg1ZDk0YzlmZmNi> (accessed December 10th, 2013).

Figure 5 – Elton John, the Honorary ‘Crazy Cat Lady’

The image was sourced from the referenced article at http://nymag.com/thecut/2013/09/50-most-fabulous-famous-cat-ladies-of-all-time/slideshow/2013/09/23/fabulous_cat_ladies/cat-ladies-12/ (accessed April 10th, 2014).

Figure 6 – The Avatar of @catladyprobl3ms

The image was sourced from <https://twitter.com/catladyprobl3ms> (accessed December 4th, 2014).

Figure 7 – The ‘Cat Lady’/’Crazy Cat Lady’ Divide

The cartoon is part of a series titled *Cat versus Human* by the artist Yasmine Surovec. The image is sourced from <http://www.catversushuman.com/search/label/Cat%20Lady> (accessed March 15th, 2014).

Figure 8 – Debbie Loves Cats

The original video *Debbie Loves Cats* is featured at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTTwcCVajAc> (accessed December 19th, 2013). The included still is sourced from <http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/eharmony-video-bio> (accessed April 15th, 2014).

Figure 9 – Little Edie at Grey Gardens in 1975

The image is sourced from : http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2009/04/sally_quinn_on_buying_grey_gar.html (accessed February 23rd, 2014).

Figure 10 – Lisa Licking Her Cat

The image is sourced from: http://article.wn.com/view/2014/02/03/Woman_Eats_Makeup_On_My_Strange_Addiction_VIDEO/ (accessed December 22nd, 2013).

Figure 11 – Lisa Becomes the Grotesque

The image is sourced from: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2269782/TLC-My-Strange-Addiction-Meet-woman-consumed-3-200-hairballs.html> (accessed December 22nd, 2013).

Figure 12 – Helen Sharp, the Sexual Failure, Becomes a ‘Crazy Cat Lady’

The image is taken from the film *Death Becomes Her* (Zemeckis et al., 1998). The image is sourced from <http://movieclips.com/V9X2t-death-becomes-her-movie-at-home-with-helen/> (accessed March 3rd, 2014).

Figure 13 – The ‘Crazy Cat Lady’ Without a Man

The image is sourced from: http://www.answerbag.com/q_view/2857572 (accessed December 22nd, 2014).

Figure 14 – Jenny with her Feline Bedmates

The image is sourced from: <http://www.brianorndorf.com/2009/11/dvd-review-cat-ladies.html> (accessed April 4th, 2014).

Figure 15 – A Stylish Remaking of the ‘Cat Lady’

The image is sourced from: http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2013/12/19/garden/20131219_CATLADY.html?ref=garden#4 (accessed December 26th, 2013).

Figure 16 – Shelley’s Husband Reshapes the Home for the Cats

The still is a screenshot taken from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLVWeye57cE> (accessed January 13th, 2014).

Figure 17 – Catwoman in a Fur-and-Leather Orgy

The image is sourced from: <http://www.themarysue.com/catwoman-cats-cats-cats/> (Accessed 12/17/14)

Figure 18 – The Crazy Cat Lady Board Game

The image is sourced from: <http://mcphee.com/shop/crazy-cat-lady-board-game.html> (accessed December 26th, 2013).

Figure 19 – The Young White Cool Cat Lady

The image is sourced from: <http://www.catsparella.com/2011/06/one-cool-cat-lady-kristiina-wilson.html> (accessed February 7th, 2014).

Acknowledgments

“[t]he trivial must be attended to precisely because marking it as such may mask or obfuscate its deeper cultural reference” (Puar, 2007: 67)

This thesis has been a project in contesting the bounds of triviality. The triviality of this research and its questions, the triviality of my own pursuits and interests, and the triviality of ‘crazy cat ladies.’ While the above quotation has given me a good deal of strength, my true support has come from those around me. Thus, while I give attention in the ensuing chapters to those thinkers and writers who have inspired and prompted me from the page, I now honor instead those friends and loved ones who have supported me throughout this process. Thank you to Michael Brown, for being a friend and for believing in me as a critical scholar from when I was just a file to this moment at the finish line. Thank you to Kim England for your sharp insights and your ability to articulate what I need when even I had no idea. Thank you to Maria-Elena Garcia for providing a home for academic misfits in which we might nurture one another. Thank you to my fellow graduate students, especially Annie, Lila, and Skye, for your sense of community and for your shoulders of comfort when I had seen just one too many cat videos. Thank you to my blood and chosen families, especially Chris and Katherine, for giving me the assurances to pursue an academic life and the validation that a little crazy is okay. And thank you to those many critters, Jinny, Shadow, and many others, who have sustained me in moments of foolish play and fearful uncertainty. You have all been my companion species.

I.a. Introduction

“To study the intimate is not to turn away from structures of dominance but to relocate their conditions of possibility and relations and forces of production...” – Ann Stoler, 2006: 13-14

“Are you steering clear of black cats? Not the women you’re about to meet. They love cats. Too much. Or, more to the point, they love too many cats. Why do some women, and they are almost always women fill their homes with cats?” – Elizabeth Vargas, 20/20, 2012

The ‘crazy cat lady’ is a recurrent figure of the American cultural toolkit. She emerges repeatedly in pop cultural and everyday discourses, whether explicitly or as a fearsome phantom at the back of the mind. She sits at the nexus of a number of cultural anxieties. The fear of femininity that fails to fulfill ideal imaginations. The fear of women’s departure from expectations of marriage and children. The fear that cats might replace human affection and thereby reverse a species hierarchy. The fear of an inappropriate interspecies intimacy. As the above quote from a *20/20* television special on ‘crazy cat ladies’ exemplifies, these women-with-cats confound and fascinate us, and we demand answers to their bizarre ways of being. The figure says much about the taken-for-granted norms that dominate our imaginations of love and intimacy, both within and across species, and how it is produced, reproduced, and governed.

I have undertaken this thesis to ask questions and to find answers about the ‘crazy cat lady’ that might be different from those posed above. Rather than asking “*why do cat ladies have so many cats?*,” a gesture of horrified fascination that demands the ‘abnormal’ explain and justify itself, I have sought to flip the question, asking “*why don’t more women have cats?*,” and instead interrogating how the figure of the ‘crazy cat lady’ itself aids in reproducing certain modes of pet keeping and love rather than others.

I engage this research through an exploration of the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure and the norms, practices, and governances of interspecies intimacy and love for pets that the figure enables. I

situate this research within a growing field of critical pet studies that seeks to excavate contemporary practices of human-pet relationality for their complex imbrications of power. This thesis seeks to build on current geographic analyses of humans-with-pets that have delimited their scope to questions of interpersonal power and the human/animal divide while largely neglecting multi-scalar forces of power, intersecting valences of social difference, and the importance of both to the sociospatial production, normalization, and governance of these human-pet relationships. To construct these interventions, I draw on the insights of feminist and queer geographies, ecofeminist thought, queer and queer of colors theory, and Foucauldian deconstructions of intimacy. Together, these composites construct analytical optics to examine the ‘crazy cat lady’ and interspecies intimacy from yet unexamined vantages.

Methodologically, I ground this research in a rich empirical field of cultural discourses and practices that surround the ‘crazy cat lady.’ I draw on archives of popular culture and digital cultural productions, employing exploratory strategies of data collection and critical tools of content and discourse analysis to parse apart the ‘crazy cat lady’ and its attendant phenomena.

I organize my analyses around three central themes, exploring in turn how the ‘crazy cat lady’ colludes in the production, normalization, governance, and contestation of: 1) the subjectivities and abjections of ‘crazy cat ladies’; 2) the interhuman and interspecies relationships of ‘crazy cat ladies’; 3) the idealization of intimacy itself. Firstly, the ‘crazy cat lady’ and its variable denigration and legitimization in dominant versus countercultural discourse produce a highly contingent field in which certain formations of the self, structured by configurations of gender, sexuality, race, class, and species, emerge as legible or illegible, livable or unlivable, desirable or unimaginable. Moreover, these subjectivities emerge spatially, coconstituted through places of intimacy like the body, the interpersonal, the home, and the

private. Secondly, the ‘crazy cat lady’ functions as a figure in the governance of intimate relationships themselves, serving to sanction or disrupt normative intimacies – the heteronormative couple, family, and home – while non-normative interspecies intimacies hang in the balance. Finally, the ‘crazy cat lady’ aids in the reification of intimacy itself as a privileged field in which certain ideals are reproduced, including norms of race, class, and property. Together these analyses begin to offer insights into my originary questions.

As I have hinted above, this thesis offers novel encounters between fields of inquiry and future avenues for critical research. By exploring how interspecies intimacy is governed across multiple scales and intersections of social difference, critical pet studies extends current pet geographies and also builds connections between animal geographies and queer, feminist, and critical race geographies that have remained largely unmapped. These bridges provide promising avenues for future research that can continue to explore and explain the immense and complex relations that structure our intimacies not only with other humans but across species lines. Our more-than-human natures demand such curiosities.

But the ‘crazy cat lady’ offers more than intellectual inspiration. As Ann Stoler warns us above, the study of intimacy has immense political stakes. Women-with-cats suffer daily ridicule and policing from a wider culture that devalues their lives and intimacies. Thus, by understanding the complex systems of meaning, feeling, and practice that the ‘crazy cat lady’ animates, I hope that this research can shed greater light on the lives of women-with-cats and prompt a more caring response than the interrogations that began this introduction. In a sociocultural context that neglects the lives of so many women-with-cats and in which millions of cats each year go uncared for and killed in shelters, these questions of how we produce, govern, and delimit intimacies are anything but trivial.

II.a. Rethinking Interspecies Intimacy and its Governance: A Literature Review

While a growing number of posthumanist scholars and animal and pet geographers have considered the intimate co-productions of self and being that emerge within human-nonhuman relationships, fewer have considered the wider normative discourses, structures of feeling, and material realities that govern¹ the *where*, *who*, and *how* of these interspecies intimacies emerge. This research centers on a singular figure of human-animal relationality: the ‘crazy cat lady.’ While the figure indexes a mode of more-than-human relationality that posthumanist and animal geographers have explored for over a decade – the “companion species” (Haraway, 2003a) – the figure also locates the center of an intense set of discourses and counterdiscourses that take as their goal the governance of these companions and their interspecies intimacy. In this research, I bring critical insights from a number of fields to build on current animal and pet geography by exploring these matrices of governance, to ask not merely what happens in the spaces of companion species but to interrogate how these relationalities are produced and governed, informing what interspecies intimacies might come to be at all.

Heidi Nast (2006a) has christened a burgeoning sub-field of “critical pet studies” (CPS), which she argues should “unpack *where* popular pet love is evidenced and why and how...building up a variety of analytical and theoretical tools for questioning and framing this love’s ‘outside’” (2006a: 897). In similar fashion to my above critiques, Nast questions not the internals of pet love, which I conceptualize as an affective expression and configuration of interspecies intimacy, but the wider social productions, exclusions, and consequences of pet love. Nast worries about those *human* bodies that have been biopolitically relegated to the “outside” of

¹ I elaborate my meanings of governance in sub-chapter III.g.v. Briefly, I conceptualize *governance* in its broadest meaning, referring to both state-based and non-state forces that (re)produce social meaning, social worlds, subject-formations, and practices.

pet love, whose lives have been subjugated for the sake of doggie bowls and kitty litter.

Conversely, I follow this same instinct to consider the “outside” of pet love and its biopolitical effects, but I make two alternative moves. Firstly, I ask how bodies and affections are governed not outside but *within* pet love: what happens when you love some pets *too much*? Secondly, I maintain a posthumanist emphasis on relationality, asking how some humans *and* animals, both ‘crazy cat ladies’ and their cats, are governed within pet love.

To do so, I borrow from critical feminist, queer, and animal and pet geographies, ecofeminist philosophies, and queer and queer of color theories of ‘the intimate,’ building on Nast’s insistence that “CPS must also intertwine analytically ‘race’, ‘class’, sexuality, and gender” (*Ibid*: 898), analytics that have largely gone unexplored in pet geographies. This research explores how the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure and its forces of governance are intersectional, spatial, and multi-scalar. Using this critical geographic approach, we can explore the complex spatial orders of pet love and begin to understand not only the intimate internal dynamics of companion species but also the structures of human and interspecies difference, hierarchy, and power that govern these intimacies and their possibilities for becoming.

II.b. Posthumanism: “Companion Species” Theorizations

Poststructuralist and posthumanist scholars have thoroughly demythologized and deconstructed the human/animal binary, upon which the cultural norms of pet love rely (Agamben, 2004; Braun, 2002; Castree et al., 2004; Derrida and Mallett, 2008; Haraway, 1989, 1990, 1997, 2003a, 2003b, 2008; Oliver, 2009). Posthumanism interrogates what Haraway calls “human exceptionalism” (2008: 11) and destabilizes liberalism’s discrete, autonomous, and individual(ized) human subject (see Haraway, 1990; Latour, 1993, 2007; Rasmussen, 2011).

These thinkers and literatures focus instead on the *relational* ontologies that constitute humans and nonhuman subjects copresently (Castree et al., 2004; Haraway, 1990; Whatmore, 2002).

Epitomizing this posthumanist turn, Haraway deconstructs the human/animal binary. Human subjectivity, affect, embodiment, and materiality have always, she argues, been constituted through and with nonhuman animal others (1990, 2003a, 2008). In her early work, Haraway (1990) proffers the “cyborg” as *the* posthumanist embodiment: a messy assemblage of organic/inorganic, human/animal, and human/machine. In more recent works, Haraway shifts her attention to the material, discursive, and affective interconnections between humans and their “companion species.” Humans, she argues, have only *become* in concert with the “significant otherness” of intimate nonhuman others (2003a). The companionate nature of human ontology, embodiment, and (inter)subjectivity discredits any notions of atomized and separate human and nonhuman individuals (see Bear and Eden, 2008; Cloke, 2004; Griffin, 2011; Haraway, 2003a; Holloway and Morris, 2009; Keul, 2013; Panelli, 2010).

II.c. Pet Geographies: Examining The Where Of Companion Species

Though not always explicitly conceptualized within the framework of “companion species,” human-animal relations have been thoroughly incorporated within geographic literatures (Philo and Wilbert, 2000; Urbanik, 2012; Wolch and Emel, 1998). The majority of these animal geographies have focused on human conceptions of “wildness” and interactions with “wildlife” (Emel, 1995; Gullo, Lassiter, and Wolch, 1995; Michel 1995; Treves et al., 2006) and farmed animals (Evans, 2000; Gillespie, 2011a, 2011b, 2013; Morris and Holloway, 2009; Ufkes, 1998). There have, however, been a number of geographic works looking at human-pet relationships, which for many in the current U.S. context embody the most banal, immediate, and lively form of more-than-human relationality (Cudworth, 2011; Fox, 2006; Fox and Walsh,

2011; Fudge, 2008; Grier, 2006; Griffiths, Poulter, & Sibley, 2000; Howell, 2000; Laurier, Whyte, & Buckner, 2002; Nast, 2006a, 2006b; Podberscek, Paul, & Serpell, 2000; Power, 2008, 2012; Srinivasan, 2013; Tuan, 1984).

Echoing Harawayan discussions of intersubjectivity, many pet scholars and geographers² have highlighted the intense connections of meaning, feeling, and embodiment that entangle humans and pet animals (Belk, 1996; Cudworth, 2011; Fox, 2006; Fox and Walsh, 2011; Fudge, 2008; Garber, 1996; Griffiths, Poulter, & Sibley, 2000; Howell, 2000; Instone and Mee, 2011; Tuan, 1984). Importantly, several scholars have focused their attention less on the human-animal relationship and more centrally on the animals themselves, their experiences, and their geographies (Griffiths, Poulter, & Sibley, 2000; Srinivasan, 2013). A few studies note the macro-scalar national and transnational forces that inform these human-pet. Fox and Walsh (2011) discuss transnational migration; Nast (2006a) discusses political economic differences between developed and developing countries; Srinivasan (2013) discusses transnational animal advocacy and welfare discourses between the UK and India.

The majority of pet studies and pet geographies, however, present three interrelated trends which I hope to trouble. Firstly, pet geographies rarely move beyond the micro-scales of inter-species intimacy: the relational human-animal body, the intersubjective companion species relationship, and the more-than-human home (Birke and Brandt, 2009; Fox, 2006; Fox and Walsh, 2011; Instone and Mee, 2011; Podberscek, Paul, & Serpell, 2000; Power, 2008, 2012; Sanders, 1993). For example, Power (2008) examines the daily embodied relations between

² The language of “pet” is used here to encompass *both* those human-animal relationships that occur within the typical structures that produce the “pet” as a category – ownership, selection, affection, domestication, interdependence with humans – *and* those animals that, domesticated or feral, are often thought of under the sign of “pet,” including cats – the focus of this study (for more, see Grier [2006]).

humans and pet dogs that have been folded into the family in ways that rework the unit into a more-than-human phenomenon forged out of both humanness and dogness³. In their predominant focus on the micro-scalar becomings of companion species, these pet geographies fail to critically consider the *multi-scalar* social forces that constitute these relationships. Secondly, as a result of this focus on the micro-scales of human-pet relationships, these studies often overlook wider forces that govern the conditions of possibility for these interspecies intimacies. They focus on the relations of power *between* companion species rather than those that structure the contexts for companion species in the first place. Thirdly, pet geographies often overlook the role that intersectional social structures of human difference, hierarchy, and power like patriarchy, heteronormativity, hegemonic whiteness, classism, ableism, and neoliberal capitalism play in the production of companion species. Indeed, I would argue that some animal geographies have moved towards an overemphasis on species difference and the human/animal binary and have risked eclipsing other axes of social difference and oppression. I offer this research, which takes as its center the importance of a multi-scalar, intersectional study of the governance of

³ As a brief but substantial note, I also offer this study to balance the incredibly disproportionate focus on dogs in all varieties of animal studies and geographies. The vast majority of studies focus on relationships between humans and *canines* (Derr, 2004; Haraway, 2003a, 2008; Instone and Mee; 2011; Katz, 2004; Nast, 2006a, 2006b; Power, 2008, 2012; Rasmussen, 2010a, 2010b; Sanders, 1993; Srinivasan, 2013; Urbanik & Morgan, 2012). Even queer critics of the human-pet relationship have focused solely on “dog love” (Boggs, 2013; Garber, 1996; Kuzniar, 2006, 2008). Griffiths, Poulter, and Sibley’s (2000) and Haraway’s (2008) discussions of *feral* cats name some of the few exceptional studies of felines. Given that in the United States there currently exist *more* owned pet cats than dogs, attention to cats specifically and species specificity more broadly are crucial in galvanizing the conceptual and construct validity of ‘companion species’ and any studies of pet love interspecies intimacy. Moreover, given Donna Haraway’s arguments that companion species relationships are marked by “historical specificity” and “contingent mutability” (2003a: 12), a more balanced attention to species-specificity is necessary in order to strengthen the empirical breadth and content validity of “companion species” analysis and posthumanist and animal studies.

interspecies intimacy, as an attempt to correct these oversights and to broaden our understanding of companion species.

II.d. Towards Critical Pet Studies

Heidi Nast (2006a, 2006b) brings a unique analysis to human-pet relationships that offers inspiration in correcting these gaps currently found in pet geographies. Nast forwards a critical analysis of the phenomenon she names “pet love.” “[S]ince the 1990s,” Nast argues, there has been “a shift from considering pets (especially dogs) as a species apart, to a reconsideration of pets (especially dogs) as profoundly appropriate objects of human affection and love” (2006a: 894). Moreover, Nast moves beyond current pet geographies that center only on the inner workings of companion species by constructing a critical multi-scalar analysis of pet love⁴ that examines the intersections between macro-scalar material forces and their micro-scalar affective and embodied effects. Through this multi-scalar approach, Nast also brings attention to the ways social forces produce and govern bodies. She notes that international political economic trends and social forces of post-modern alienation in post-industrial nations have produced consumptive cultures around pet ownership with deep effects on both humans and pet animals. These concerted forces, Nast argues, have produced a near hegemonic norm of pet love: humans with “no affinity for pets...are today deemed social or psychological misfits” (2006a; 896). While

⁴ Importantly, “pet love” and “companion species” should not be seen as congruent phenomena. While I argue that pet love represents a subset of companion species relationships, interconnections with “significant others” can be marked by a wide range of feelings and practices, not just love. Moreover, while I refer to women-with-cats relations throughout this thesis in the language of pet love, love should not be conflated with care. Therefore, ‘crazy cat lady’ ways of being with cats do not *necessarily* enact what I would name a nonanthropocentric feminist care ethic (see Adams, 2006; Davis, 1995).. Such lived ethics depend on a much wider set of conditions than semiotic positions, identifications, and interpellations. As is possible, I address these complexities in my analysis. However, this tension between pet love and care deserves a richer analysis than I have room for here and thus represents a rich and ethically necessary field for future inquiry.

Nast focuses more on those bodies that are wrapped up in pet love's economic production, she brings attention to how interspecies intimacy is both subject to and a potential agent of governance. Lastly, Nast builds on current oversights in pet geographies by centering complex questions of intersectional social difference. Nast pushes critical pet studies and geographies to "intellectually intertwine "'race', 'class', sexuality, and gender" (*Ibid*: 898); and to this I add questions of dis/ability, age, body size, humanity/animality, and species.

With this first salvo, Nast opens onto an envisioned field she calls "critical pet studies" (CPS), which she argues should "unpack *where* popular pet love is evidenced and why and how...building up a variety of analytical and theoretical tools for questioning and framing this love's 'outside'" (*Ibid*: 897). Nast raises important concerns about the exploited *humans* wrapped up in pet economies, those bodies biopolitically subjugated for the sake of pet love and placed on its "outside." Instead, I turn my attentions to a different "outside" via two divergences from Nast's agenda. Firstly, while I share Nast's concern for the biopolitical exclusions and oppressions of pet love, I maintain a posthumanist focus on companion species. As Haraway states, the human-nonhuman relationship is "the smallest unit of analysis possible" (2003a: 20). Thus, I attend to the biopolitical effects on both humans *and* nonhuman animals. Secondly, I ask how bodies and affections are governed not outside but *within* pet love. While Nast recognizes the social pressures placed on individuals with no affinity for pets, I explore the lives of those misfit 'crazy cat ladies' who love cats *too much*. Indeed, Rebekah Fox (2006) points to this "outside" in her analysis of the intimate "everyday negotiations" of humans and animal pets, explaining that "this intimacy is something that some people may be embarrassed to admit for fear of stigmatization of disgust" (533). Fox stops short, however, of considering the social productions of this stigma, indicating the oversights of pet geographies I detailed above. Thus, I

draw on Nast's call to arms as an inspiration to build on current animal and pet, as well as feminist and queer, geographies, by centering questions of intersectional, multi-scalar, and spatial governance of interspecies intimacy. I do so through the incorporation of multiple literatures: feminist and queer geographies of intimate spaces, feminist geographies and ecofeminist analyses of gender and animality, queer ecological thought, feminist and ecofeminist care ethics, and queer and queer of color critiques of intimacy and its imbrications with race, gender, sexuality, and space.

II.e. Making Love, Governing Intimacy

To map the geographies of pet love, and specifically its manifestations and modalities associated with the figure of the 'crazy cat lady' and women-with-cats, I follow the work of Morrison, Johnston, & Longhurst (2012) who challenge geographers to probe love in its "multisensory, lived, embodied, felt, and contradictory" manifestations and to "unpack the way in which power circulates in love relationships" (p. 505-506). Johnston and Longhurst (2010) argue that bodies feel love in particular spaces and places, indicating the unique insights that geographers might bring to the study of love (but have yet largely shied away from). Morrison, Johnston, & Longhurst build on these avenues to argue that love is "spatial, relational, and political" – the middle term echoing posthumanist insights into the relational constitution of selves. As seen above, pet geographers have thoroughly (but not exhaustively) explored pet love at the micro-scale of lived, sensory, felt embodiment. What remains to be explored is a broader consideration of how "power circulates in love relationships" across species and shapes the geographies of pet love.

In a parallel attempt to politicize and publicize feminized and privatized spatial practices like love, Oswin and Olund (2010) envision a critical multi-scalar geography of *intimacy*, its

production, and its governance. Though love and intimacy are not always coterminous, they often overlap and amplify each other's effects. Oswin and Olund draw on critics of intimacy (Berlant, 1997; Povinelli, 2006) who have revealed how "the intimate is a coproduction with the public" (2010: 60) (see Berlant [1998] on the sociocultural production of 'the intimate' as a normative category). While "proper intimacy" continues to gain its sociocultural purchase through a monopoly on salient spatial constructs – "the body, the self, ideally the home," (Oswin and Olund, 2010: 61) and, I would add, the *interpersonal*, given poststructuralist and posthumanist critiques that the self is always already relational – these critiques have unfixed the scale of intimacy, unmooring its analysis from solely private spaces. These critiques echo feminist geographic analyses of the "global intimate" that consider the multi-scalar productions and dialectics of 'the intimate' and wider public scales (Mountz and Hyndman, 2006; Wright, 2009) I draw on Oswin and Olund's and these other critics' provocations to consider the multi-scalar cultural discourses and affective forces that structure *interspecies* intimacy and pet love. I continue a focus on these salient spaces of intimacy – the body, the interpersonal self, the home – but I add a critical multi-scalar analysis in the spirit of Nast and Oswin and Olund. Moreover, I draw on Oswin and Olund's conceptualization of intimacy as a *dispositif* of governance, defined by Foucault as...

"a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid" (1980: 194).

This focus on the *dispositif* of intimacy complexifies Morrison, Johnston, & Longhurst's calls to attend to the social dynamics and productions of love, pushing us to examine not only how

“power circulates in love relationships” but also how ‘love’ and what we might call ‘the intimate’ govern bodies, affects, and ways of being. I offer a study of the ‘crazy cat lady’ and her attendant discourses of in/appropriate pet love as one particularly rich and complex point of entry into this intimate governance. I turn now to consider those literatures necessary to build an intersectional, multi-scalar, and critical geographic analysis of pet love, cat love, and the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure and discourse.

II.f. Gendering Intimate Spaces: Queer And Feminist Inspirations

As Morrison, Johnston, & Longhurst (2012), Morrison (2010, 2012a, 2012b), and Oswin and Olund (2010) observe, ‘the private,’ the domestic, and the home all hold privileged ties to formations of love and intimacy. These insights draw firstly on a long history of Marxist and Marxist feminist work that has sought to denaturalize and destabilize the public/private divide and to trouble its role in the governance of women and feminine subjectivity (Bondi, 1998; Brown, 1999; Domosh and Seager, 2001; Dyck, 2005; England, K., 2003; England, M., 2006; Hubbard, 2005; Massey, 1994; Pateman, 1988; Strong-Boag et al, 1999). Queer geographers have expanded these critiques to consider the heteronormativity (as well as patriarchy) of the hegemonic public/private divide (Hubbard, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2005). Given the dominant circumscription of ‘the intimate’ to spaces within the conventional private sphere, such analyses assist in intimacy’s deconstructive analysis. Moreover, a growing number of feminist and queer thinkers and geographers have provided critical analyses of particular spaces and scales of intimacy, including the body (Dyck, 2011; England, K., 2003; England, M., 2006; Shildrick, 2010) and the home (Blunt, 1999, 2005; Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Blunt and Varley, 2004; Brickell, 2012; Domosh, 1998; Dyck, 2005; Dyck, Kontos, Angus, & McKeever, 2005; England, K. and Dyck, 2011; England, M., 2006; Gorman-Murray, 2006, 2007a, 2007b; ; Johnson, 1996;

Johnson and Lloyd, 2004; Mallett; 2004; Massey, 1994). These studies highlight the political, unstable, and contentious meanings and ontologies of the “home” (as Dyck writes, the home is a “process” [2005b: 235]) as well as the significance of the home in the governance of women’s lives, selves, and intimacies.

I draw on these critical feminist and queer analyses to expand upon the few studies that *have* considered the role of the public/private divide and spaces of intimacy in the governance of women, animals, and their interrelations (Howell, 2000) and to bring a more critical analysis to those pet geographies that have considered spaces like the home (Fox and Walsh, 2011; Power, 2008) but not how the home gets enrolled in *dispositifs* of governance (Oswin, 2010).

II.g. Gendered Creatures And The Whom Of Pet Love: (Eco)Feminist Insights

As Birke and Brandt (2009) observe, within geographies of human-animal relationships, “little...has addressed questions of gender, and how gender is performed in relation to animals” (189). (Birke and Brandt cite Lawrence [1985] and Ramirez [2006] as notable exceptions.) This lacuna persists within posthumanist thought more broadly and within pet geographies specifically. On the first count, posthumanist studies have largely focused on questions of species over and above intersecting questions of gender and/or sexuality. For instance, Haraway (2003a) acknowledges that older white women dominate the sport of agility dog training, yet refrains from interrogating this gender dynamic. On the second count, while some scholars have written about the intersections of gender and gendered space with human-animal relations (Howell, 2000, 2002), more often pet geographies have paralleled posthumanist analyses that center species over gender and other social difference (Fox, 2006; Fox and Walsh, 2011; Griffiths, Poulter, & Sibley, 2000; Instone and Mee, 2011; Power, 2008, 2012). Again, these arguments often edge up to a feminist analysis – Power (2008) discusses a woman hiding her

‘embarrassing’ intimacies with her dog from her husband; Griffiths, Poulter, & Sibley (2000: 68) acknowledge that many of the caretakers of feral cats are women but do not explore this phenomenon.

The figure of the “crazy cat *lady*” is a particularly gendered figure. This gendered dynamic, as I will argue in my analysis, proves vital in producing an uneven topography of *whom* can engage in some modes of pet love rather than others. Thus, my analysis has necessarily engaged questions of gender within a more-than-human culture and context. To do so, I have drawn on a growing number of scholars who *are* engaging these intersections (Birke and Brandt, 2009; Carman, 2012; Collard, 2012; Gillespie, 2013). In particular, I draw on Birke and Brandt’s analysis of the more-than-human “communities of practice”⁵ in which “the presence of the [animal] and how humans configure the [animal]” play a significant role in the relational co-production of gender. Like Birke and Brandt, I consider the *embodied* co-production of gender, but I also consider other spaces of intimacy like the home.

These feminist and more-than-human analyses find affinity with the insights of ecofeminist writers, who as a field have laid bare the twinned oppressions that masculinism and speciesism have wrought upon women and nonhuman animals, violences which, as I will argue, continue to be exacted upon ‘crazy cat ladies.’ Ecofeminists have critiqued the Western masculinist epistemologies that conflate women and animals and place them in the devalued realm of Nature/body/nonhuman (Adams, 1990, 1994, 1995; Antonio, 1995; Davis, 1995; Instone, 1998; Kemmerer, 2011; Oliver, 2009; Plumwood, 1991; Warren and Wells-Howe, 1994). Alongside these analyses, other scholars have undertaken more applied studies that consider the gendered relations of practice between humans and animals (Herzog, 2007; Wolch

⁵ This is a term they adopt from Paechter, 2003.

and Zhang, 2007). I am inspired in this project by these (eco)feminist analyses, vital in any analysis that examines the governance of intimacies between women and nonhuman animals, but in this work I seek to bring to them a grounded cultural geographic analysis.

II.h. Queer Ecologies And Polymorphous Domesticities

In her agenda-setting piece *Unnatural passions? Notes toward a queer ecology*, Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands (2005) offers *queer ecology* (QE) as an analytic to understand the naturalization of heteronormativity and the heterosexist production of “natural” spaces. Heteronormativity both reifies itself under the sign of ‘the natural’ and terraforms the world and its Nature space to reflect heterosexual norms. For instance, U.S. national park campsites have been landscaped to resemble suburban culs-de-sac, making space for proper family outings while policing any potential perversity (Mortimer-Sandilands, 2005: 15). QE reveals the imbrications of heteronormative sexual politics and the production of non/human natures and human-animal relations (Mortimer-Sandilands and Erickson, 2010).

A few QE scholars have considered the intimacies, relationalities, and ecologies of human and nonhuman animals, rather than intimacies with holistic ecologies or nonhuman plants and landscapes (see Gandy, 2012; Ingram, 2012; Sandilands, 2002). Colin Carman’s (2012) work on the queer ecologies of Timothy Treadwell provides an instructive example, bringing Morrison, Johnston, & Longhurst’s (2012) questions about the politics of love to the realm of human-nonhuman relationships. Carman explores Treadwell’s queer expressions of love for grizzly bears and argues that such intense expressions by “animal lovers” transgress heteronormative logics. Carman thus reveals how heteronormativity not only structures our engagements with nonhuman environments or ecologies but with nonhuman *animals* themselves. Though not explicitly within the sub-field of QE, other scholars have forged similar analyses of

queer human-animal embodied relationships, often looking at instances of zoophilia and bestiality (Bakke, 2009; Besio, Johnston, & Longhurst, 2008; Brown and Rasmussen, 2010; Rudy, 2012; Singer, 2001). Brown and Rasmussen (2010), however, offer one of the few examinations of human-animal intimacy that directly engage questions of its social and *spatial* normalization and governance. Several scholars have extended this queer lens to human-pet relations (Boggs, 2013; Garber, 1996; Kuzniar, 2006; Nast, 2006a, 2006b). Yet, again these analyses center more on *queerness* as an emergent, micro-scalar resistance that works against the structures of heterosexual norms of monogamous coupling, marriage, and biological reproduction⁶ and that resides in the interminglings among bodies and subjects. While I attend to these micro-scalar embodiments of queer resistance, I also want to give focus to *queerness* as, to borrow from Jasbir Puar, a multi-scalar social normative project that produces “queerness as an optic through which populations are called into control” (2007: xiii).

I borrow from QE’s insights to consider the heteronormalization of human-animal embodied and intimate relations. However, I push beyond QE’s conceptually and empirically circumscribed focus on outdoor spaces of conventionally imagined ‘wild’ Nature and ‘wild’ animals. Instead I focus on the queer ecologies of the home and pets, two constructs often seen as ontologically antithetical to Nature. Thus, QE allows me to bring a queer and more-than-human analytic to both Morrison, Johnston, & Longhurst’s (2012) and Oswin and Olund’s (2010) mandates. As a guiding example, I emulate Juliana Schiesari’s (2012) examination of literary figures, women who live predominantly with animals, that enact what she calls “polymorphous domesticities.” These misfits defy patriarchal norms of the homebound wife (with children and pets in the home) who submits to the dominant heteronuclear family model.

⁶ For a full and foundational deconstruction of heterosexual normativity (“heteronormativity”), see Rubin (1984).

Schiesari's work on queer more-than-human domesticities suggests the sort of cultural norming that echoes through discourses of the 'crazy cat lady.' My research expands upon Schiesari's work empirically, disciplinarily, and analytically, incorporating a critical geographic analysis to consider the wider *dispositifs* of pet love in the contemporary U.S. context that Schiesari gestures to in historical literatures.

II.i. Love, Care, Femininity, Whiteness, The Home, And Intimacy

Lastly, I intersect two disparate literatures to consider the connections between, on the one hand, the feminization of the home as a space of care *and* harm, and on the other, the production of whiteness through its imbrications with pet love, care, and intimacy. Firstly, feminist geographers have thoroughly considered the centrality of the home as a space of feminized care and the gendered burden of care work on women (Badgett and Folbre, 1999; Dyck, 2005; England, 1996; Lawson, 2007), though only tangentially have these analyses considered the relations between feminine subjectivity and the care for *animals*. I intersect these arguments on the feminization of care with poststructuralist and critical race analyses on the racialization of animal treatment (Boggs, 2013; Kim, 2014; Kreilkamp, 2005; Shukin, 2011).

Secondly, I draw on a growing queer and queer of color critique that questions the normativities of love, intimacy, and the home, as can be seen in the reification of the bourgeois home, intimacy, privacy, property, and the public/private divide in recent movements for 'gay marriage' and legalized sodomy, that operate to govern queered and racialized bodies and populations (Berlant, 1998; Eng, 2010; Legg, 2010; Lowe, 2006; Puar, 2007; Shah, 2005; Stoler, 2006). I draw on these literatures, as well as critical whiteness studies (Wray, 2006) to extend these critiques of intimacy into the realm of *interspecies* intimacies that, like idealized heterosexuality, rely upon norms of privacy and intimacy within the idealized bourgeois home.

I approach these two literatures separately but in relation so as to understand how *white bourgeois feminine* subjectivity in particular is produced through discourses of ‘crazy cat lady’ and in/appropriate pet love and companion species.

II.j. Research Questions

In sum, I have argued that current pet geographies have oversimplified the social relations that produce certain companion species and the intimacies among them. Pet geographies tend to focus on the micro-scalar relationships between human and nonhuman bodies rather than the multi-scalar discursive, affective, and material networks of power that govern companion species and their conditions of possibility. As a correction to this oversimplification, I have drawn inspiration from Heidi Nast’s conception of critical pet studies and her call to study the *where* and the “outside” of pet love. To do this, I have turned to critical Foucauldian geographic analyses of love and its spatiality (Morrison, Johnston, and Longhurst, 2012) and intimacy and its governance (Oswin and Olund, 2010). Moreover, to bring a richer complexity and conceptual validity to pet geographies, I have incorporated insights from the intersectional social theories of ecofeminist thought, feminist and queer geography, queer ecology, and queer of color and critical race analyses that examine the spatial production of bodies, subjectivities, and intimacies. By weaving together these interventions, I hope to build an exploratory research direction for critical pet studies that brings a rich attention to questions of multi-scalarity and socially intersectional governance that are currently lacking in pet geographies. Moreover, I hope to build closer connections between current animal/pet and queer feminist geographies that might also infuse questions of the former into research trajectories of the latter. I do this through a study of the ‘crazy cat lady’ and her attendant discourses, practices, affects, and norms of pet love (or perhaps *cat love* is more accurate) as well as their related

formations of femininity, masculinity, sexuality, queerness, race, class, age, embodiment, space, the home, privacy, publicity, property, sociality, animality, and humanity. Specifically, I have posed the following research questions:

- 1) How do the figure of the ‘crazy cat lady’ and its attendant logics of in/appropriate pet love spatially produce particular abjections or subjectivities informed by structures of gender, sexuality, race, class, age, body size, (dis)ability, species, and human-animal relationality?**
- 2) How do the discourses, structures of feeling, and material spaces and practices that surround the ‘crazy cat lady’ serve to govern the intimacies and relationships, both among humans and across species lines, of humans-with-cats?**
- 3) Within the contested field of the ‘crazy cat lady’ and its production or governance, what norms of intimacy itself are reproduced or remade?**

Over the past 50 years, domesticated pets have been increasingly let in to spaces of intimacy historically reserved for human subjects alone: the home, the family, the bed, the erotic embrace of bodies (Power, 2008). Given these growing intimacies between humans and pet animals, it is vital that we interrogate these pet loves, asking deeper questions about these spaces of intimacy, how they are governed across scales, whose bodies occupy them or are excluded.. These research questions offer an avenue for such explorations. By pursuing these questions, this study has worked not only to fill in the gaps of a burgeoning critical pet studies but also to forge new directions in the trajectories of pet/animal, queer, feminist, and critical race geographies.

III.a Tracing A Critical Geography Of Interspecies Intimacy: A Methodology

To explore these research questions and thereby inductively develop a richer understanding of the multi-scalar and intersectional forces that govern both interhuman and interspecies intimacies, I have undertaken a critical cultural geographic analysis of ‘crazy cat ladies,’ both the various figures and those women-with-cats whose lives are informed by such figures. While other companion species formations might offer significant insight into similar questions, I have focused my research population specifically on discourses of women-with-cats (and a smaller set of other human-cat configurations) drawn from the past two decades in the United States context. To capture popular and counterdiscursive cultures, imaginations, and practices of ‘crazy cat ladies’ and pet love, I have focused on textual and visual cultural archives and artifacts, collected using strategies of non-probability purposive and convenience sampling to build my sample and intertextual snowball sampling to continue my sample. I engaged these artifacts through a critical interpretive discourse and content analysis, employing conceptualizations from feminist and queer geographies, ecofeminist thought, and queer and critical race theory in my analysis. While such methodological choices have necessarily induced certain limitations and oversights, which I discuss both in this chapter and at the close of this thesis, this project as a whole serves as a step forward in the inductive development of critical pet studies and its intersection with queer, feminist, and animal geographies.

III.b. Defining The Research Population

This research explores the governance of interspecies intimacy. As discussed in the previous chapter, I have followed the conceptualizations of fellow Foucauldian geographers to question how normative pet love itself serves as a *dispositif* of governance, defined above as “a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms,

regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid” (Foucault, 1980: 194). I operationalize this Foucauldian approach in the conceptualization of my unit(s) of analysis, which I define most broadly as the *dispositif* pet love. In order to capture this system of governance, however, I have focused more specifically on a series of units of analysis, many of which fit into Foucault’s litany – cultural discourses; institutions both formal and informal, like marriage, divorce, family; architectural forms, like the single-family suburban home; regulatory decisions and laws, like animal control; philosophical and moral propositions – while others I have included in line with more current Foucauldian analyses – bodies, both human and feline; and circuits of feeling and affect that cannot be neatly contained within discourses of meaning.

While I attend to these various kinds of units of analysis throughout this research, the bulk of my data and my analysis have been categorized into a schema of several distinct fields. This conceptual schema emerged iteratively during the research process in the effort to more systematically capture a significant range of the discourses and structures of governance that constitute ‘crazy cat ladies’ and pet love. Importantly, these distinctions serve primarily for explanatory clarity. Multiple *dispositifs*, discourses, figures, meanings, and feelings regularly bled into one another through the research process. Nonetheless, these empirical fields maintained relatively bound territories, which I have placed into the following categories:

1) stereotypical constructions of the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure and women-with-cats⁷; 2) a wide

⁷ Briefly, I want to acknowledge the questions of gender and gender bias in the definition of my population and subsequent sampling. While I defined my population to include all human-cat relationships, including those involving cis-gendered and trans men, women, and individuals or all normative and non-normative expressions and identities, the historically salient nature of the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure’s explicit gendering (there is no ‘crazy cat man’ equivalent) has produced a greater empirical emphasis on human-cat relationships involving cis-gendered women. As I will elaborate in later chapters, I argue that this reflects the exclusively cis-gendered,

range of narratives and practices through which individuals and groups constitute themselves and their meanings and practices in relation to the figure; 3) knowledge productions around proper human-pet/cat relationships and ‘responsible’ pet love, ownership, and care; 4) depictions of individuals engaged in what is considered pet hoarding; 5) and various regulations enacted by state and non-state governing bodies surrounding human ways of being with pet animals. I incorporate data from all these categories to examine how these forces function complicitly to inflect my more general unit of analysis: the sociospatial (re)production of the ‘crazy cat lady’ and pet love.

Finally, this research not only explores the governance of interspecies intimacy but also aims to bring a *multi-scalar* analysis to this feat. I have largely focused on the ‘crazy cat lady’ as a field of governance because the figure is so widely known⁸. Therefore, throughout my research I have remained attentive to how particular units of *observation* collected for this project operate at different geographic scales. I have collected a majority of artifacts that can be typified as macro-scalar, circulating either in national cultural or in broad-based public spheres. This has included: cartoons, television programs, films, internet memes, toys, internet-based social networking groups, documentaries, nonexpert and expert productions of knowledge about pets, pet love, pet care, and animal advocacy, and state bodies’ and non-state organizations’ formal and recommended policies around pet care and treatment, feral cat control, and pet hoarding. Simultaneously, I have tracked how other artifacts (and some of these same artifacts that I typify

heteronormative, white, bourgeois imaginations and cultural anxieties of the ‘crazy cat lady.’ I did collect representations of non-cis-woman-cat relationships when I came across them, however, and I will speak in my analysis to the forces of gendering that extend beyond modes of femininity alone. However, I raise this potential concern here in case it has produced oversights and to suggest possible future research agendas.

⁸ As I discuss in my analysis, however, this notoriety is not universal but rather the figure travels in certain circumscribed circuits that are structured by norms of gender, sexuality, race, class, etc.

as *primarily* macro-scalar) infuse themselves into the micro-scalar relationships of interspecies intimacy. This has included: online blogs, documentaries, online social networking communities, and other sources of personal narrative. This scalar classification and operationalization of my units of *observation* harks to the analyses of critical cultural scholars of intimacy (see Laurent Berlant, 1998 on the sociocultural trans-scalar production of ‘the intimate’), feminist geographers of the ‘global intimate’ who forward a trans-scalar analysis of intimacy and intimate spaces (Mountz and Hyndman, 2006; Wright, 2009), and Oswin and Olund’s (2010) originary call to trace the geographic governance of intimacy.

III.c. Refining The Research Population: Time-Space Frameworks

Norms of pet love and human-pet relationships are historically and geographically contingent (Grier, 2006; Haraway, 2008). Pushing against the tendency to generalize human-animal relations, Donna Landry writes that “we need to interrogate the significance of the various ‘social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental contexts’ that have shape to particular relationships between humans and animals” (2008: 130). Therefore, I have followed these critiques in an effort to improve the content validity and empirical specificity of pet/animal geographies and specifically the study of “companion species.” I have delimited my units of analysis and observation to include primarily discourses of the ‘crazy cat lady,’ human-cat relationality, and pet love as they have been (re)produced in the contemporary United States cultural context. Excluding a few telling exceptions, every unit of observation collected for this research occurred or originated within the past two decades, and the vast majority stem from the last five years. I have conceptualized this time span as a largely undifferentiated period, with the necessary but, I would argue, largely insignificant generalizations this risks, and therefore I have operationalized this project as a cross-sectional study of this entire time period.

I have focused on this temporal and geographic nexus both for reasons relating to my own situated position – as a young, digitally-literate, feminist and queer scholar with affinities for pop culture and investments in women’s and animal’s lives and welfare – and also so that I might respond empirically to Nast’s periodization of pet love (2006a, 2006b). Nast argues that post-modern and post-industrial societies have witnessed the greatest upsurge in pet ownership and normative ‘pet love “since the 1990s.” (2006a: 894). I adopt a congruent historical and geographic frame, thereby situating my work within a particular geographic and temporal subset of critical pet studies.

While almost every unit of observation collected for this research *happened* or *is happening* within the recent past and present, it is worth noting the long social histories that are sedimented within these contemporary instances. Cultural stereotypes are iterative and processual discursive-material formations (see Butler, 1993 on citationality), and as such any representations produced in the past two decades will necessarily carry residues of past sociocultural moments. Indeed, as referenced above, Schiesari (2012) suggests historical links between alternative animal domesticities and historically salient, gendered stereotypes of witches that have roots in European medieval cultures. Therefore, in order to understand this historical referentiality, I do reference several instances of older (pre-1990s) cultural artifacts relevant to norms and discourses of ‘crazy cat ladies’ and pet love. In addition, while the majority of my research focused on U.S.-based phenomena, I draw on both theoretical insights and empirical evidence from Anglo cultures with shared genealogies of human-pet cultures. All in all, these conceptual, temporal, and geographic parameters have sculpted a targeted yet broadly relevant research project that seeks to understand the governance of women-with-cats as it has occurred

in recent decades in the United States while also acknowledging and exploring its deeper genealogies and histories.

III.d. Sampling The Units Of Observation

This research offers an exploratory foray into the critical geographic analysis of pet love. Given this exploratory, inductive approach, I have sampled my units of observation using *non-probability* sampling strategies. To begin and build my sample, I employed a *purposive* sampling strategy. Data were collected using the search engine *google.com* to search the terms “crazy cat lady” and “cat lady.” I would then select significant artifacts⁹ on the basis of my own purposive judgment and my knowledge of the research “population, its elements, and the purpose of the study” (Babbie, 2010: 207). Of course, this is an exploratory study and the research population is not predefined or known. There is no registry of ‘crazy cat ladies.’ For this reason, I adopted several filtering logics in my purposive sampling: firstly, I defined my population broadly (see above) so as to include a wide range of artifacts potentially relevant to my research questions even if not explicitly labeled as ‘crazy cat ladies’; secondly, within this broadly defined population, I focused my online searches on the language of “crazy cat lady” and “cat lady,” calling upon my own situated knowledge of the epithets and their cultural commonality; thirdly, over the iterative process of research I refined my purposive sampling so as to focus on those artifacts that were common, popular, and/or significant to the research questions.

In order to build my sample, I also employed a convenience sampling strategy, wherein I selected artifacts based upon my own or my peers’ knowledge of popular discourses and cultural representations of ‘crazy cat ladies’ and women-with-cats. For instance, prior to research I was

⁹ In instances when artifacts were tangible (e.g., a ‘crazy cat lady’ greeting card), they were collected and physically stored in my own research documents. All other artifacts were digitally collected and stored among my personal research files using the cataloguing software Zotero (<https://www.zotero.org/>).

already familiar with the YouTube video “Debbie loves cats” (see chapter IV) and given its millions of views online I included it in my research sample. Of course, in light of this convenience sampling strategy, these samples represent my own positionality as a young white gay male with significant interests in popular culture and media, as well as the positioned and situated knowledges and identities of my peers.

I augmented my sample through a strategy of *intertextual snowball* sampling. Cultural artifacts often included references to other artifacts and representations of women-with-cats and I followed these trails of references to include these artifacts in my overall sample. For example, one blog about a woman’s experience with being called a “crazy cat lady” often included references to cultural stereotypes of ‘crazy cat ladies,’ such as a character on the popular television series *The Simpsons*. At times, these intertextual artifacts were already included in my sample, while at others these references were folded in to my sample. Again, this sampling strategy also included a strategy of purposive selection, employing the same logics and filters detailed above, since I did not necessarily always included every intertextually referenced artifact.

This study is an inductive and exploratory project. Thus, I was not concerned with collecting a probability sample that might accurately represent or prove generalizable to a pre-known research population. Rather, I collected enough artifacts (90 in total) so as to feel that I had exhaustively captured a significant number of artifacts from each of the five aforementioned categories: stereotypical figurations of the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure and women-with-cats; narratives and practices of individual and collective subject-formation and meaning-making in relation to the figure; knowledge productions around proper human-pet/cat relationships; depictions of pet hoarding; and various state and non-state regulations. Moreover, I collected

enough artifacts as I judged sufficient to capture the variety of significant dynamics at play within and between the categories. Finally, I collected a number of artifacts that sufficiently captured both macro-scalar forces (e.g., nationally-circulated films, online boutiques selling commercial products for self-identified ‘crazy cat ladies’) and micro-scalar dynamics (e.g., blogs and personal narratives of daily living with cats). Of course, these methodological choices were limited by constraints of time and other resources, as well.

In sum, I employed purposive, convenience, and intertextual snowball sampling strategies in order to build a substantial but not necessarily representative research sample of artifacts concerning discourses, norms, and practices of women-with-cats. While this sample may not lend explanatory or representative answers, they nonetheless offer a rich empirical field in which to explore the dynamics of my research questions, to inductively development the sub-field of critical pet studies, and to enrich our understanding of interspecies intimacy and its governance.

III.e. Critical Discourse Analysis

To trace the contours of the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure and wider discourses of pet love, I collected data via unobtrusive observations of digital and other cultural archives. All collected artifacts were first precoded according to their associated strata (the five categories of discourse listed above). Subsequently, artifacts were thoroughly read, reread, (re)coded, and analyzed. All coding occurred through the software *TAMS*, a MAC-specific program designed for “identifying themes in texts...[and] for use in ethnographic and discourse research” (<http://tamsys.sourceforge.net/>). Throughout this process of iterative analysis, I built a series of etic and emic codes (detailed below) to track the dynamics relevant to my research questions.

Thereafter, I undertook a critical content and discourse analysis of the sampled and coded artifacts, giving attention to various significant dynamics of social difference, including gender, sexuality, race, class, species, age, embodiment, (dis)ability, humanity, animality, and anthropocentrism and specieism; forces of social power, conceptualized via Foucauldian analyses of normalization, discipline, governmentality and governance, and biopolitics; and geographic dynamics, including geographic imaginaries, meanings of place, and material spaces and environments. I employed the approaches of critical content and discourse analysis because these analytical strategies provide the most effective means of deconstructing and piecing together cultural formations (Babbie, 2010). Importantly, I do not conceptualize nor operationalize content and discourse analysis to focus solely on questions of meaning, but rather I adopt a more complex approach that tracks the ways linguistic and semiotic discourses *materialize* into embodied, spatial, lived experience (Butler, 1993) and felt structures of feeling (Stoler, 2006). Lastly, I selected the approaches of critical content and discourse analysis because they enable the researcher to systematically examine multiple and complicit structures, forces, norms, and assemblages and to see the way they intersect one another, a composite effect that must be grasped in order to understand how the ‘crazy cat lady,’ pet love, and interspecies intimacy are produced and governed.

My analysis has relied heavily upon cultural studies, feminist and queer, and geographic methodologies of reading, feeling, and seeing in archival research. In tracking questions of meaning, I borrowed heavily from Gillian Rose’s (2012) tactics for visual discourse analysis, variably turning my attentions to the three sites of meaning she identifies: sites of production, the visual artifact itself, and sites of audiencing. In my analysis of the ways the ‘crazy cat lady’ and/or pet love were represented, my analysis centers largely on the visual artifact itself,

interpreting what the image means and communicates through my own conceptual lenses that draw on the literatures enumerated above (see previous chapter). Yet, my research also tracks multiple instances in which various individuals absorb, make sense of, embody, redistribute, reproduce, resist, and reinvent the ‘crazy cat lady’ and its discourses and norms of interspecies intimacy. This is not a simple translation of *meaning* from the site of production to the site of audiencing. Rather, meanings travel and loop through circuits that are co-constituted by networks of feeling, what Sara Ahmed calls “affective economies” (2004), and material bodies and spaces that materialize and recirculate these flows of meaning, feeling, and materiality. A woman who sees a cartoon of a ‘crazy cat lady’ does not merely ask what the image means, but she experiences an affective reaction and connection to the image, interpreting its meaning, interpellating herself at the same time, and materializing new embodiments and exterior environments and interactions in response. Thus, while I emulate the styles of cultural geographic studies that center visual methodologies (Rose, 2012), I situate my methodology more centrally within poststructuralist cultural materialist methodologies that center meaning making (du Gay et al., 1997) and, more specifically, a Foucauldian legacy that examines the discourse, affects, and materialities of the *dispositif*.

III.f. Dynamics Of Analysis

Based on the founding literatures from which I drew for this project, I centered my coding and analysis of artifacts on number of dynamics that have proved central to analyses of intimacy. First and foremost, it seems prudent to establish what is meant by “intimacy.” In truth, this ontology provides the contested and political field at the center of this research. Nonetheless, I have begun with Oswin and Olund’s conceptualization, which argues that though “intimacy has

neither fixed geographies not identities...it still has its object, a sense of self in close connection to others” (2010: 60) and from this I bring in other analyses of ‘the intimate’ as relevant.

This definition of intimacy holds much in common with the concept “companion species,” which provided a foundational dynamic in this study. From pet and animal geographies and posthumanist analyses of “companion species,” I drew a series of etic codes to track the dynamics of women-with-cats and their companion species interspecies intimacies. As discussed in the previous chapter, however, I have found these micro-scalar analyses insufficient to a robust understanding of the intersectional and multi-scalar *governance* of pet love. Therefore, my selection of etic codes were inspired by the series of critical social theories and literatures detailed above. From feminist and ecofeminist literatures, I drew etic codes related to dynamics of sex, gender, gendered subjectivity, and embodiment. From queer geographies, I drew etic codes related to dynamics of sexuality and intimacy. From queer of color and critical race theory, I drew etic codes related to dynamics of race and class. From all these literatures, I also drew etic codes related to dynamics of age, embodiment, and (dis)ability. Moreover, from multiple geographic literatures I drew etic codes related to dynamics of space, place, geographic imaginary, and scale. Lastly, from Foucauldian analyses I drew etic codes related to dynamics of social power and governance. Throughout the process of sampling, coding, and analysis, I added to these etic codes a number of emic codes inspired by the empirics themselves. The combination of these etic and emic codes and dynamics produced a rich set of understandings yet unexplored in critical pet studies.

III.g.i. Dynamics: Modes Of Companion Species Entanglement

Haraway defines “companion species” as those “significant others” with whom we engage in processes of intersubjective and intercorporeal co-constitution and becoming (2003,

2008). To understand the intimacies of the “companion species” relationship that exists between humans, particularly ‘crazy cat ladies,’ and their cats, I have coded artifacts according to their modes of companion species relationality. From Harawayan conceptions of “companion species,” I drew etic codes that examine the discourses and practices of companion species relationality generally, looking at questions of intersubjectivity, interpersonal affect, and intercorporeality. Throughout the research process, however, I crafted more specific emic codes that examined material entanglements like bodily and homely mess and filth, potential impacts on human and feline health, noise and smell¹⁰, interspecies petting and cuddling, representations of interspecies imbrications coded as monstrous or horrifying, and portrayals of humans transgressing the bounds of the human/animal divide, like meowing (for more on the discursive production of humanity and the human/nonhuman species divide, see Agamben, 2004).

In addition, I focused specifically on companion species relationships of care, drawing these etic codes from feminist care theory and ethics (Lawson, 2007) and ecofeminist vegan/non-anthropocentric animal care ethics (Adams, 2006; Davis, 1995). In response to empirical trends, I added emic codes examining how discourses and practices of care intersected modes of *harm*. Specifically, I developed a series of emic codes that examined: fostering of or caring for ‘stray’ or ‘homeless’ cats; spaying or neutering of pet animals, which, though this is currently debated, is often seen by mainstream animal and pet advocacy organizations as an act of care for individuals and overall populations¹¹; practices of harm towards animals, not always but often seen in cases of pet hoarding; and instances in which pet companionship provided emotional care to humans.

¹⁰ The particular focus on smell and noise also drew from Carolan, 2007 and his examination of human responses to animal smells and feces.

¹¹ For more on this debate, see Srinivasan, 2013.

Lastly, I looked specifically at how the relations and spaces of the home were constituted through companion species relationships. These were largely etic codes drawn from pet geographies (Fox and Walsh, 2001; Power, 2008) that examine the ways in which both humans and pets enact and mold the home space through a sort of relational agency. These codes focus on questions of species difference as it is constituted in space. While I drew on these emic codes, they were often elaborated into etic codes through an examination of other social dynamics, including gender, sexuality, race, and class. I detail some of the dynamics and their coding and analysis in the following sections. This mixture of etic and emic codes allowed me to attend to the companion species nature of ‘crazy cat ladies’ while also focusing my attention on the specificity and contingency of women-with-cats relationships, as well as yet unexamined elements of social context, difference, and governance.

III.g.ii. Dynamics: Sex(ing) And Gender(ing) The ‘Crazy Cat Lady’

The forces of gender(ing) within ‘crazy cat lady’ discourses present one of the central questions of this research project. I have conceptualized and operationalized this variable to examine the numerous ways that gender identity, gender expression, social gendering, femininity, and masculinity are enlisted to constitute subjects, intimacies, and social worlds.

Firstly, I engaged in a critical content analysis of data, coding artifacts based on any coded markers of femaleness and maleness, including normative embodiment. Related within the culturally dominant triad of sex-gender-sexuality that determines non/normativity, I next coded artifacts according to any signs of nominal gender identity (e.g. cis/trans man, woman, individual, perhaps tied to particular gender pronouns) that were presented. While these markings of gender were largely formed as etic codes, drawn from both foundational critical gender theory (Butler, 1993, 2006). In addition, however, I developed emic codes to capture the

empirical specificity of gendered markers like “crazy cat lady” or “cat lady” or various elements of subjectivity and/or embodiment related to these identities, like certain modes of dress or affinity with a ‘crazy cat lady’ social group. Nominal gender identity also intersected forces of gendering that marked bodies as non/normatively feminine and/or masculine. Since most bodies and subjects marked by the discourses in this research were cis-women, this coding often focused on formations of non/normative femininity.

To a certain extent, I drew on etic codes of non/normative femininity central to salient texts on gender theory (Butler, 1993, 2006). These definitions of gender non/normativity or success/failure are, of course, socially situated and contextual. Thus, I developed emic codes based on two considerations. Firstly, I examined the larger context of the artifact; for instance, if a depiction portrayed a ‘crazy cat lady’ in a negative light generally, her failure to successfully achieve and perform femininity was inflected by this negative connotation. Secondly, I conceptualized *gender* and *gendering* within Judith Butler’s framework of performativity and citationality (1993), wherein gender(ed) discourses – bifurcated in dominant United States culture into the binary of male/man/masculine and female/woman/feminine – constitute subjects through recited practices that themselves reference historical patterns and hegemonies, even if the practices are to resist or reinvent these inherited gender norms. In short, being a gender failure in the present depends upon gender norms with a long history. Thus, in my determinations of gendering, I considered both the immediate discursive context and the social-historical context of conventional femininity and masculinity, contingent upon other intersections of race, class, (dis)ability, species, age, and sexuality, not to mention their normative geographies and spatializations. This conceptualization expanded the content and construct validity of gender(ing) as a variable in this study.

Additionally, I was inspired by analyses of gendered pet cultures (Grier, 2006; Howell, 2000) to develop a series of emic codes examining gender(ing), femininity, and masculinity as they relate specifically to the questions of pet love and love for cats. Discourses often constructed men/masculinity and women/femininity as particularly fond or inimical to cats, and I coded for these valences of species-specific gender(ing).

III.g.iii. Dynamics: Sexuality

Though not necessarily coterminous, formations of sexuality often ‘overlap’ with those of intimacy (Oswin and Olund, 2010: 61). Therefore, I have also examined norms, forces, structures of sexuality and sexualization. I conceptualized *sexuality* to include conventional ideas of sexual object choice, as well as discourses, feelings, and practices of pleasure, desire, romance, and the erotic. Firstly, I coded artifacts according to their discourses and/or practices of conventionally defined ‘sexual orientation,’ determining when figures were portrayed as or practiced heterosexuality or various modes of nonheterosexuality (same-sex desire, asexuality, bisexuality, pansexuality, etc). Additionally, I determined when portrayals or practices of monogamy, nonmonogamy, and singleness were present. These were largely etic codes drawn from classic sexuality studies and queer theory (Butler, 1993; Rubin, 1993).

Beyond narrow definitions of ‘sexual orientation,’ I was most interested in discourses and practices of *heteronormativity*, which I conceptualize and operationalize within the established frameworks of queer theory: those structures that reinforce ‘good’ sexuality, including heterosexual desire and sex acts, monogamy, formal marriage, and biological reproduction (see Gayle Rubin’s “charmed circle” [1993] for a fuller account of heteronormativity and nonnormative sexuality). Thus, I coded artifacts when discourses recited various facets of heteronormativity, including: singleness, widowhood, divorce, (non)monogamy, (non)coupling

and marriage, and the presence or absence of biologically reproduced children. Schiesari (2012) extends this model of sexual nonnormativity to include those who construct affective, romantic, erotic, or sexual relationships with nonhumans and theorist of “queer ecology” have followed these instincts to examine species and sexuality copresently. To explore the intersections of nonnormative sexuality and in/appropriate pet love, I have built on these etic codes of queer ecology and interspecies queerness to develop a series of emic codes that specifically related to dynamics of non/normative sexuality that were tied to human relationships with cats. I have operationalized this more-than-human framework for nonnormativity sexuality to observe how the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure and those subjects marked as ‘crazy cat ladies’ live within or outside heteronormativity.

While I have thus far used the term ‘non-normative’ to describe these attributes, throughout the rest of this project I generally conceive of these subjects, practices, social forces, and structures through the rubric of *queerness*. I do not conceptualize queerness within identitarian logics, however, which include as “queer” only those individuals identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or trans. Instead, I conceptualize queerness to include those individuals whose life narratives and affective affinities fall outside the heteronormative strictures of heterosexual, reproductive, nuclear family life (see Halberstam, 2011; Rubin, 1993). Moreover, I follow Puar’s (2007) formulation of *queering* as a social process whereby individuals and groups or populations are *queered* for their nonnormative sexuality (or other modes of social difference), placed outside the privileges of heteronormativity, marked as Other, and discursively and materially oppressed. Going one step further, Puar argues that *queering* is not only a social process but also a *biopolitical* one (Foucault, 1990; see section III.g.v. below for definition) whereby some individuals and populations and their lives are discriminately positioned in

relation to forces of love and care or neglect and violence. Thus, *how* individuals and populations are *queered* has important impact for how they are able to live their lives, and, in certain cases, whether they are made or allowed to die. I have operationalized all these conceptualizations of queerness to consider both nonnormative sexuality and the biopolitical impacts of that nonnormativity and othering in my coding and analysis.

III.g.iv. Dynamics: Race, Class, Age, Dis/ability

As queer and queer of color scholars have argued for years, heteronormativity and queerness can never be divorced from dynamics of race, class, age, dis/ability, and numerous other formations of social difference (Crenshaw [1991] approaches this multiplicity and co-constitution through the analytic of “intersectionality”, whereas Puar [2007] prefers a model of “assemblage.”) These dynamics have been sorely missing from past pet geographies and therefore I have coded all data according to these various attributes.

Firstly, I coded all artifacts based on racial discourses or according to the racial identity of the represented figure or living individual. This coding tracked productions of race based on skin color as well as other social formations and material markers indexed to ideologies of race (see Saldanha, 2006). In addition, I have drawn on critical race scholars of animal studies (Kim, 2014) to develop emic codes specifically tied to aforementioned questions of care, harm, and companion species relationality that inflect formations of race. These were also developed in relation to theories of critical whiteness studies that examine constructions of white norms and white Others (Wray, 2006).

Secondly, I coded artifacts based on classed discourses or according to the socioeconomic class of the figure or individual(s). Socioeconomic class was coded according to questions of material wealth, standards of living, quality of clothing, classed notions of aesthetics

and/or fashion, the material state of housing, etc. In addition, I drew on class-attentive animal studies (Boggs, 2013; Kreilkamp, 2005; Shukin, 2011) to consider how classed formations were constructed based on human-animal relationality.

Thirdly, I coded artifacts based on discursive constructions of age or according to the perceived age of the figure or individual(s). These categorizations (young/middle-aged/elderly) were largely based on emic codes drawn from discourses and representations themselves, which largely produced imagination of age based on physical characteristics and normative expectations of subjects in the heteronormative timeline (see Halberstam, 2011).

Lastly, I coded artifacts based on discourses of dis/ability or according to the figure's or individual's physical or mental (dis)ability. While more conventionally recognized physical disabilities were rarely present (likely representing the ableism of popular imaginations), the figure was regularly pathologized. While I noted this and coded pathology generally, I did not interpellate these into any categorized mental or psychological disability unless they were explicitly identified in the artifact or by the person in question, which was extremely rare. Nonetheless, I remained attentive to this question of (dis)ability in my data collection, coding, and analysis. Together these dynamics of race, class, age, and (dis)ability further enriched this study, strengthening its focus on the ways social difference intersects companion species and the governance of interspecies intimacies.

III.g.v. Dynamics: Spaces, Places, Geographic Imaginaries, And Scales

This is a project that explores the *where* of pet love. Thus, throughout my research, coding, and analysis, I attended to the formations of space, place, geographic imaginary, and scale that structured these discourses and practices of interspecies intimacy, including the other dynamics enumerated thus far. At a surface level, this took the form of a spatial content analysis,

determining whether artifacts occurred in particular spaces, including: public versus private spaces, outdoor spaces, residential and housing spaces, commercial spaces, kitchens, living rooms, bedrooms, or virtual spaces. These operationalizations of space and especially place were informed by conceptualizations drawn from feminist and queer geographic theories of the public/private divide, the home, and other spaces of intimacy.

To understand the layers of meaning that produce *place* within these social processes, I also tracked the *geographic imaginaries* (re)produced in these artifacts, discourses, and practices. I have developed *geographic imaginary* as an etic code, conceptualized in accordance with *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, which defines ‘geographic imaginary’ as “a more or less unconscious and unreflective construction” that can refer to the “spatial ordering that is tied either to a *collective object* of a series of [imaginative geographies]...or to their *collective subject*” (Gregory, Johnston, Pratt, Watts, & Whatmore, 2009: 282). To use an example from this research, a geographic imaginary could thus incorporate the ways that ‘the home’ is imagined – a “collective object” produced by various imaginations of the spatial order – or ‘the anthropocentric imagination’ – a set of spatially order imaginations produced by the collective anthropocentric and/or humanist subject.

Lastly, I tracked the scales at which these discourses and practices operated. As I have argued above, pet geographies have often focused on the micro scales of interpersonal, intersubjective companion species and to a lesser degree the scale of the home while devoting little attention to macro-scalar forces of cultural discourse and social governance. To bridge this gap, I have operationalized my analyses of scale according to the conceptualizations of geographers of intimacy (Oswin and Olund, 2010), focusing on the conventional scales of intimacy – the body, the interpersonal, the home – while also attending to the macro-scalar

national (sub)cultural discourses¹². Together, these dual attentions constitute a multi-scalar analysis in the spirit of queer and feminist geographic theories of intimacy and its production.

III.g.vi. Dynamics: Governance And Its Modalities of Power

Lastly, I conceive of all these dynamics circulating within a wider *dispositif* of pet love in which various modes of social power exert their force on formations of interspecies intimacy. Within this *dispositif*, I maintain a focus on the distinct and imbricated natures of these various modes of power, drawing on Foucauldian grids of normalization, discipline, governmentality, and biopolitics, while also tracking their complicities, reinforcements, and dissonances. While I coded for each of these dynamics in particular artifacts, these conceptualizations of power should also be understood as a broader framework for this research and a contextualization for its Foucauldian epistemologies and methodologies.

I have conceptualized *governance* in its broadest sense, referring not merely to the structures and institutions of formal government but to the broad networks of force wherein social worlds are simultaneously produced and delimited. Foucault (2009) defined *governmentality* as the processes by which power, once held predominantly by a central ‘sovereign’ (often the state), diffuses throughout various nodes of social governance, including individual self-regulation, policing, and governance. In sum, it is the conduct of conduct. Within this matrix of governance, Foucault (2004) described *normalization* as the process by which societal structures and forces produce a ‘norm,’ often inflected with moral connotations of ‘the good’ or ‘the natural,’ and around this norm are produced a constellation of subjectivities and

¹² While recent critical geographic analysis has demythologized the social construction and reification of scale (Marston, Jones, & Woodward, 2005), I maintain this taxonomy, both to maintain construct validity within geographies of intimacy and to directly engage conventional popular imaginations of intimacy that maintain associations between ‘the intimate’ and micro-scales of private space.

ways of being that are marked as ‘the abnormal’ and through their hierarchization and denigration the ‘norm’ is buttressed and reproduced. A tool in this system of governmentality, Foucault (2012) delineated *discipline* as a distinct mode of power, wherein various technologies mold the body and the subject to its imperatives. Yet another distinct mode of power, Foucault (1990) explained *biopolitics* as the interplay of power whereby some bodies and lives are made to flourish while others are let to die. While the particular valences of these modalities of power emerge more clearly in subsequent analyses, I detail them here both for the reader’s clarity and so as to understand my coding and analysis as it is informed by Foucault’s theories of power.

Firstly, I coded artifacts according to whether they portrayed ‘crazy cat ladies’ and their modes of pet love with the registers of normality or abnormality. In relation to these forces of ab/normalization, I coded artifacts based on their use of various terms, particular ‘crazy cat lady,’ ‘cat lady,’ ‘crazy cat man,’ and ‘crazy cat people.’ all of which carried different connotations of ab/normalization and served different political purposes. Also, affect and emotion can both serve as forces of normalization and governmentality (i.e., a subject *feels* that being a ‘crazy cat lady’ is morally wrong, socially abnormal, or disgusting) and affect can be subject to governmental forces (see Morrison, Johnston, & Longhurst, 2012; Legg, 2010; Stoler, 2006). Therefore, I coded artifacts according to their dominant or multiple affective aims and how they sought to make the viewer feel, whether disgusted, sad and pitying, angry, happy, sympathetic, etc. Though certainly an interpretive project, these codes were often based on culturally salient indicators, like the use of threatening music and editing to produce feelings of fear or disgust.

Secondly, I coded artifacts based on their presence of disciplinary power and governmentality. I coded instances in which different nodes of social power served to discipline and regulate the bodies and behaviors of women-with-cats. And I coded instances in which

women-with-cats had internalized such regulatory imperatives into their own policing of self. Lastly, I coded instances in which informal policies, like those heralded by pet advocacy organizations, versus state-based government and juridical regulations like laws around pet ownership were present to note whether the forces of governance were diffuse or centralized.

Finally, I coded instances of biopolitical calculation and force. In actuality, every element within the dynamics of interspecies intimacy adds up to a biopolitical maneuver in which some lives are made to flourish while others are neglected or made to die. However, I paid particular attention to express moments in which such consequences became immediate, such as a woman's expressed decision not to get a cat or to get rid of a cat she currently owns. These seemingly mundane moments represent immensely consequential expressions of governance and biopower, suggesting the significance of intimacy in this calculus of life and death.

Above I have enumerated the series of dynamics that drew my attention during the processes of collection, coding, and analysis. These elements were selected based upon the problematic gaps within existing scholarship on pet love and interspecies intimacy. Thus, I incorporated the micro-scalar insights of posthumanist, animal, and pet geographers on the interpersonal becomings of "companion species" while infusing critical questions of multi-scalarity, intersectional social difference, governance, and power. I have detailed these dynamics as largely distinct. This separation should be taken as a largely gestural attempt towards clarity. As will become clear throughout the ensuing chapters, these dynamics are intricately interconnected. Many of the interesting dynamics in this research emerged in the combination of these elements, thereby indicating the insistent need to rethink these formation of interspecies intimacy in rich, intersectional, and complex fashion.

III.h. Limitations: Humanist Methodologies, Posthumanist Anxieties

I wish to highlight some of the tensions and limitations produced by the epistemological and methodological choices discussed above. This research takes as its center of inquiry the multi-scalar production and governance of interspecies intimacy, namely among women-with-cats. Given the centrality of nonhuman animals to these companionships, as well as my own emotional attachments to several animals and intellectual investments in the ‘question of the animal’ writ large, I am wary of how the lives, bodies, and concerns of nonhuman animals surface or are silenced within my research. I boil this tension down to the following question: how can I do justice to the stories and lives of cats in a project informed by human cultural artifacts?

Much as I have tried to center the social worlds of humans *and* animals, this project has leaned towards questions of human social norms and practices. In part, this has been intentional, intending to offer a critical social theoretical intervention into a field of pet geographies that has centered on species difference to the neglect of other social and spatial difference. In addition, this is due to methodological choices and limitations. This research relies on humans’ textual, discursive, and visual representations of humans-with-animals and thus falls far short of considering the animals’ experiences. Those artifacts that *do* give an eye to the lived experiences of cats are nonetheless inevitably mediated by human ways of seeing.

While I cannot wish away these shortcomings and concerns, I briefly note several arguments that reframe these methodological questions. Colleen Boggs argues that “there can be no centering of the human because the human is a relational category that cannot be separated from the animal” (2013: 27). I think this argument gets us somewhere. I often center these questions of human-animal ontological co-constitution in my analysis. But what does this do for

living beings? How am I to speak of those living cats that dart across the scene of multiple documentaries and images discussed in this project? Several scholars (Benson, 2011 and Tortorici, 2014) have argued that we inherent *traces* of animal bodies and lifeworlds in human textual productions; in stories of human-animal relations or even in the animal leather that bounds the texts themselves. Perhaps this gets us closer. In both fictional and experienced representations of ‘crazy cat ladies’ we can see traces of cat bodies and lives: the cat scratches on the wall or the cat that cuddles a woman in bed. Donna Haraway offers what I find the most helpful argument Within companion species relationships, what affects one necessarily affects another. Haraway therefore suggests that any study of companion species *necessarily* involves both humans and nonhumans: the interspecies relation is “the smallest unit of analysis possible” (2003a: 20). Following this logic, if the woman-with-cats forms the “smallest unit of analysis possible,” then in speaking about these ‘crazy cat ladies,’ we cannot *not* talk about the cats. What affects the human will affect the cat(s).

These various arguments are not meant as solutions. These insecurities and pitfalls persist. They must. Anything else would be a false and hubristic transcendence of a species difference that is real and vital. Instead, I offer these arguments for three reasons. First, as a reminder that any story is necessarily more-than-human and no human action fails to impact nonhuman lives. Second, as a source of uneasy assistance in those moments, particularly at the close of my analytical chapters, when I *do* directly engage the question so *what about the cats?* Third, as a necessary acknowledgment of the partiality of this study’s and my own humanism. I keep these caveats close in mind and heart as I move forward in my analysis. I can only hope that I have been able to ameliorate these shortcomings wherever possible. Moreover, these failures also open avenues of possibility for future research wherein analyses of human sociocultural

governance on the one hand and posthumanist analyses of animal lives, experiences, and agencies on the other can exist more cooperatively within the same research agenda. This is a future to hope for.

III.i. From Methodologies To Analyses

In sum, this research undertakes a critical cultural geographic analysis of cultural artifacts involved in the production, depiction, practice, and governance of ‘crazy cat ladies’ over the past two decades within the United States. Artifacts were selected using purposive, convenience, and intertextual snowball sampling strategies and later coded and analyzed using methods of critical content and discourse analysis. All of these decisions were guided by my own positionality, my political and ethical investments, and, more specifically, my priorities as a person and a scholar steeped in feminist, queer, and posthumanist thought and praxis. By following these epistemological and methodological choices, this research has explored one formation of contemporary pet love and the governance of interspecies intimacy. I turn now to detail my findings in this research.

IV.a. Governing The Whom Of Pet Love: Subjectivities And Abjections Of The ‘Crazy Cat Lady’

“what intimacy offers...is subjectification. It is the sphere in which we become who we are, the space in which the self emerges.”

– Oswin and Olund, 2010: 60.

The relations of intimacy among companion species offer a central space in which the self, both human and nonhuman, becomes. Thus, the governance of intimacy and the governance of the self or subject-formation constitute reciprocal processes. In this chapter, I focus on one valence of this assemblage: the constitution, circumscription, and governance of what sorts of subjects can engage in what modes of pet love. Both normative discourses and counterhegemonic resistances of ‘crazy cat ladies’ take as their sites of contestation the bodies and subjectivities of these interspecies intimates, determining whether their selves and intimacies will emerge as legible or illegible, legitimate or illegitimate, normal or abnormal in popular imagination and lived practice. In the multiple representations and resistances that imbricate the ‘crazy cat lady,’ the subjectivity of women-with-cats emerges as a highly variable and contested field of meaning, feeling, and practice. ‘Crazy cat ladies’ were regularly represented as gender failures, antonyms to ideal proper feminine subjectivity, particularly white bourgeois heterosexual femininity. Moreover, several distinct yet interconnected discourses marked the ‘crazy cat lady’ and served as privileged circuits of meaning within this wider sociospatial field. Firstly, normative discourses reified patriarchal and speciesist¹³ imaginaries that contain women-

¹³ In using the language of “speciesism” in this thesis, I refer to sociospatial structures order bodies, beings, and subjects according logics of discrete species and species difference. In this study, as will become apparent in my analysis, this refers specifically to the order of cats (and women-with-cats) to some spaces and dogs (and humans- or men-with-dogs) to others. Speciesism can also refer to an anthropocentric order in which this ordering of species is dominated by logics that privilege members of *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Throughout this analysis, I use “speciesism” to refer to both modes of social ordering and governance. In addition, I also

with-cats to feminized spheres of privacy and domesticity. Secondly, normative discourses taint the ‘crazy cat lady’ body and home with stigmas of pathology, insanity, disability, and emotionality. Lastly, normative discourses other the ‘crazy cat lady’ as a figure of monstrosity and feminized animality, stains of otherness that are written into the bodies and homes of the ‘crazy cat lady’ and her¹⁴ geographic imaginaries.

These maneuvers of normalization sculpt a field of legible and legitimate subjectivity privileged above a realm of illegible, illegitimate, and undesirable abjection. This minefield of subject-formation in turn informs a diverse array of social practices, (re)productions, and resistances, wherein women-with-cats negotiate their subjection. These negotiations of subjectivity occur across a series of scales: norms circulate at macro-scales while individual and collective practices of reproduction and resistance manifest at micro- and meso-scales of intimacy: the body, the interpersonal, the home, and the community. Moreover, these negotiations and productions of subjectivity, and specifically gendered subjectivity, emerge within more-than-human relationships, cultures, and “communities of practice.”

Thus, this chapter explores my first research question: *“how do the figure of the ‘crazy cat lady’ and its attendant logics of in/appropriate pet love spatially produce particular abjections or subjectivities informed by structures of gender, sexuality, race, class, age, body size, (dis)ability, species, and human-animal relationality?”* Yet, as I argue above, subjectivity

use the language of “anthropocentrism” and “human exceptionalism” (see Haraway, 2003a, 2008).

¹⁴ Two notes on gendered language: Firstly, while I argue that norms of the ‘crazy cat lady’ directly and indirectly inform productions of masculinity and affect the lives of humans-with-cats of all gender identities, I often use the language of “women-with-cats.” This is meant to convey the disproportionate burden of the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure on the lives of women and the realities of the empirical field. Secondly, I often refer to the figure of the ‘crazy cat lady’ using feminine gender pronouns. This is for similar reasons and intended to refuse an ungendered analysis.

and intimacy necessarily influence one another. Thus, these governances, negotiations, contestations, and productions of subjectivity also produce certain possibilities and impossibilities for livable interspecies intimacies. In this way, I argue that studying the *whom* of pet love is vital to understanding the *how*, *why*, and *where* of pet love.

IV.b. Introducing The ‘Crazy Cat Lady’

Popular imaginations of the ‘crazy cat lady’ often represent her as abnormal and bizarre, an abject being without access to livable and legible subjectivity within her current configurations of interspecies intimacy. Semiotically coded within dominant discourses as unattractive, undesirable, occasionally large-bodied or fat, often poor, insane, or even monstrous, the ‘crazy cat lady’ and her inappropriate modes of pet love emerge as the oppositional Other to normative white bourgeois heterosexual femininity. Perhaps one of the figure’s most commercially popular representations, the Crazy Cat Lady Action Figure (figure 1) models a middle-aged white woman with unkempt hair, slippers and a robe, seven accessory cat figurines,



(figure 1 – The Crazy Cat Lady Action Figure)

a “wild look in her eye,” and “a tiny house full of feral felines.” A 2004 *Saturday Night Live* sketch mirrors this imagination of a ‘crazy cat lady’ femininity that is abnormal, odd, and a failure against the ideal. In the skit, titled *Christmas with the Cat Lady*, the gritty, masculine Robert De Niro plays gray-haired Margie, who sits in her living room with her half dozen cats (figure 2). Margie spins her companions a Christmas tale, in actuality a poorly veiled autobiography of her own fall from a woman who “had dreams” to her current crazed and lonely state. The narrative of the ‘fallen woman’ and the stark mismatch between Robert De Niro’s grizzled features and his homely ‘crazy cat lady’ drag highlight Margie’s failure to achieve proper femininity.

Such depictions of ‘crazy cat ladies’ produce a semiotics of gender failure via reference to unattained norms of white bourgeois heterosexual femininity, norms that reemerge in representational attempts to reclaim the ‘crazy cat lady’ from its stereotypical vilifications. For



(figure 2 – Robert De Niro as a ‘Crazy Cat Lady’)

instance, the popular commercial designer Anne Taintor produces a “vintage” magnet illustrating a conventionally attractive wealthy white woman of 1950s style and fashion who holds up a single white kitten. The magnet reads “you say ‘crazy cat lady’ like it’s a *bad* thing” (figure 3). The woman’s appearance and clothing harks to an ideal imagination of American white bourgeois heterosexual femininity and proper pet love. While I will return in this chapter to these maneuvers to reclaim and remake the ‘crazy cat lady,’ for now I wish to emphasize how this image references the *ideal* imaginations against which normative representations of ‘crazy cat ladies’ are measured and how the two necessarily depend upon one another: the sense of gender failure only gains purchase through the simultaneous production of gendered ideals. This



(figure 3 – *The Reclaimed Cat Lady*)

production of a mode of femininity that is found wanting can be witnessed in a *someecards.com* Valentine's Day greeting card that pictures a wizened woman in Victorian garb sitting with a cat at her feet. The card mocks the recipient: "Enjoy another Valentine's Day alone, you crazy cat lady!" (figure 4). Such a depiction inscribes the 'crazy cat lady' into a semiotic position of failure wherein she has failed to achieve not only idealized femininity but also interdependent ideals of heterosexuality, whiteness, youth, and class privilege.

Moreover, within the United States' culturally dominant gender binary, such productions of femininity necessarily inflect masculinities. The 'crazy cat lady' is always already sexed as female and femininely gendered, and this discursive absence thereby inscribes normative maleness and masculinity as that which is *not* all things 'crazy cat lady,' including her practices of inappropriate pet love. Of the dozens of representations of 'crazy cat ladies' collected



(figure 4 – The Victorian 'Crazy Cat Lady')

throughout this study, only a few striking exceptions incorporated male bodies. For example, the 2013 *New York Magazine* article “The 50 Most Fabulous (And Famous) Cat Ladies of All Time” comprises its list with a cast of almost exclusively cis, white, normatively feminine Hollywood women. The exceptions: three black cis-women and Elton John (figure 5). The inclusion of John, known for his effeminate homosexuality and described by the article as an “honorary lady,” reifies the separation of cat love and human-cat intimacy from legible white male heterosexual subjectivity. These stereotypes have been socially reproduced in popular imaginations and daily practices of governance. For instance, one blog relayed a story wherein a woman’s mother worried that her cats might scare away a prospective boyfriend. Similarly, in a 2005 *SNL* sketch, Rachel Dratch’s character¹⁵ brings Paul Giamatti home at the end of a date, but Giamatti’s



(figure 5 – Elton John, the Honorary ‘Crazy Cat Lady’)

¹⁵ Dratch, a middle-aged white comedian who has received attention in the popular press for her being “too ugly for Hollywood,” has played a ‘crazy cat lady’ both on *SNL* and the popular *NBC* show *30 Rock*. (http://www.slate.com/articles/double_x/doublex/2012/04/is_rachel_dratch_too_ugly_for_hollywood_.html - Accessed May 2nd, 2014.)

character quickly leaves when he can't stand her cat. Such imaginations of hegemonic masculinity's antithesis to cats partner with aforementioned discourses of 'crazy cat lady' femininity to produce multiply gendered imaginations of abnormality and inappropriate interspecies intimacy. These depictions of women-with-cats produce a 'common sense' imagination in which non-normative configurations of interspecies intimacy become inseparable from productions of feminine (and to a lesser degree) masculine abnormality, with significant results for women-with-cats and their geographies of pet love.

IV.c. Producing, Governing, and Contesting Ab/Normality

Michel Foucault describes the historical emergence of *abnormality* as a technology of control and governance that produces power-knowledges modeled around spectrums and hierarchies of ab/normality, "of what is normal or not, correct or not, of what one should or should not do" (2013: 1463). Recalling the representations enumerated above, we can see how normative discourses produce the 'crazy cat lady' and her modes of interspecies intimacy as abnormal and thereby reify ideals of 'normal' gendered subjectivity and pet love¹⁶.

Foucault goes on to enumerate three figures (specific to the European pre-modern and modern eras) that have served to proliferate hierarchies of ab/normality: the human monster, the "masturbator," and the "individual to be corrected" (Foucault et al, 2004). While I will later attend to 'crazy cat lady' associations with both monstrosity and sexual perversion, the figure operates most commonly according to the mechanics of the "individual to be corrected." The 'crazy cat lady' often emerged as a problem to be solved, a woman who had gone off the edge but could be recuperated. Foucault goes on to explain that the "individual to be corrected" is

¹⁶ To clarify, the language of "love" and love for cats emerged throughout representations of women-with-cats, both negative and positive. The political contestation developed over how such love was to be recognized, validated, discouraged, or invisibilized.

“regular in [its] irregularity” (*Ibid*: 59). Similarly, the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure is a regular item in the American cultural toolkit, as seen in the figure’s cultural ubiquity. It is this mundane presence that makes the ‘crazy cat lady’ such a pernicious technology in the governance of intimacies both within and across species boundaries. Anyone could be a cat lady¹⁷. This regular irregularity naturalizes and depoliticizes the figure’s normative deployments.

The “individual to be corrected” is never actually corrected, however. Indeed, the figure *must* stick around, continually serving to delineate the normal from the abnormal. Judith Butler (1993) expands on Foucault’s ideas of ab/normality to consider the production of gendered subjectivity and abjection, the former enveloping those formations of self that are legitimate enough to be recognized as such and the latter encompassing those ways of being that are abnormal, illegible, unlivable, and undesirable. Through normative discourses that other her modes of pet love, the ‘crazy cat lady’ is displaced from the realm of the Normal and instead positioned within “a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet ‘subjects,’ but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject” (Butler, 1993: 3). In this exclusionary matrix one cannot achieve a subject position of idealized femininity *and* be a ‘crazy cat lady.’ As seen above, Margie’s (figure 2) failed femininity enables the production of idealized femininity that might be associated with appropriate pet love or referenced in the Anne Taintor magnet’s resignification of the ‘crazy cat lady’ (figure 3). The ‘crazy cat lady’ and normative figurations of her gendered abjection thus signify which subjectivities are normal and legible. Moreover, given the centrality of pet love to the figure, such productions of subjectivity/abjection in turn inform what sorts of interspecies intimacies might gain legitimacy.

¹⁷ Or at least this is the paranoia that permeates. As I argue throughout, certain bodies that fit within particular parameters of social difference experience the burden of this paranoia more than others.

As seen in the above examples, this exclusionary matrix of subjectivity and abjection depends upon imaginations of human-pet relationality, interspecies intimacy, and pet love that are strongly tied to other valences of social difference like gender, sexuality, race, and class. Thus, as I have argued, within dominant patriarchal and speciesist logics one cannot be a ‘real’ man and love cats. Or a ‘real’ woman *should* love cats but not too much or too many. As Butler explains, these productions of gendered subjectivity and abjection gain their weight through their (re)citation of a “set of codes, prescriptions, or norms” (1993: 232). In their (re)citation, these codes get reproduced as norms are perpetuated or resignified as norms are resisted or remade. “Femininity is thus not the product of a choice, but the forcible citation of a norm, whose complex historicity is indissociable from relations of discipline, regulation...” (*Ibid*: 232). Within the particular exclusionary matrices of subjectivity and abjection that enfold ‘crazy cat ladies,’ these productions of femininity cite a particular patriarchal and speciesist history of pet keeping wherein human subjectivity and the intimacies of human-pet companion species have been mutually constituted.

In the United States and cognate Anglo-European cultures, practices of pet keeping, companionship, and love have long gained their cultural significance through a “set of codes, prescriptions, and norms” heavily informed by structures of patriarchy, class, race, species, and space¹⁸. Within these cultural imaginations, women have been broadly conflated with cats, “making the second sex analogous to the second companion animal” (Rogers, 1997: 168). As Rogers’ quotation hints, binary productions of *both* masculinity and femininity have often gained

¹⁸ While I gesture towards hierarchies and governances of ab/normality tied to formations including age, body size, (dis)ability, and others, this research as a whole focuses most centrally on constructions of gender, sexuality, class, race, and species as they sociospatially relate to intimacy. This reflects both my own and, to a degree, the interests of existing literatures. Future research might, I hope, expand on these disproportionate foci.

purchase through associations with two of the most iconic Anglo-American pets: cats and dogs. Historian Katherine Grier (2006) traces these gendered and species-specific associations. Particularly among white, bourgeois cultures in Europe and the United States from the 19th century on, hunting and laboring dogs have been masculinized through their association with male owners and masculine leisure activities. Such associations prove highly contingent, however, and canines bred as ‘lapdogs’ or ‘fancies’ have been leashed to femininity through their ties to wealthy female owners and the bourgeois home. Meanwhile, among lower socioeconomic classes, *felines* were associated with women through their incorporation into the household as mousers (Howell, 2000). Despite these particular class variations, however, these concatenations of gender and species hierarchies have *generally* mapped dogs onto ideals of masculinity while associating cats with constructions of femininity.

As evidenced in the above examples, these logics of gender and species continue to inform productions of subjectivity and abjection in representations of the ‘crazy cat lady.’ However, these norms also reproduce themselves in the social lives and worlds of women-with-cats. As I argued above, the ‘crazy cat lady’ serves as an “individual to be corrected.” Indeed, the ‘crazy cat lady’ is a figure that “[modern society] has, if not created, at least outfitted and made to proliferate” and that circulates in “a distribution of points of power, hierarchies and placed opposite to one another...proximities that serve as surveillance procedures” (Foucault, 1990: 45-46). This proliferated figure then serves as a disciplinary tool in the scrutiny of subjectivity, the ‘correction’ and governance of women-with-cats who stand at the precipice of abjection, and the circumscription of their interspecies intimacies.

In a 2012 blog titled “Becoming a Cat Lady,” the author describes her desire to get a cat, but she stops herself when she realizes that it “would be the start of [her] crazy cat lady habits.”

Becoming a ‘crazy cat lady,’ she explains, is “one of those irrational fears that women get...that lurks behind at the back of the mind when its gets to depressing times.” By stopping herself from getting a cat, this woman positions herself within legible feminine subjectivity and salvages her Self from ‘crazy cat lady’ abjection. Her self-policing enacts a governmentality of intimacy.

Michel Foucault defined *governmentality* as a system whereby power devolves from the historically centralized sovereign to multiple nodes throughout society (2009). Governmentality problematizes the “individual to be corrected” and seeks to conduct their conduct through a capillary network of power that connects sites of potent force, thereby governing what expressions of self, what subjectivities will come to be. Governmentality operates most illusively and perniciously, however, when its mandates infuse themselves into subjects’ internalized ideas and feelings of self, choice, desire, the ‘natural,’ the healthy, and the morally ‘good.’ In this woman’s self-governance, speciesist and patriarchal logics (women-with-cats are somehow lesser) inform the co-production of both normative and anthropocentric pet love (whether or how she gets a cat) and legible feminine subjectivity (“one of those irrational fears that women get”). Stereotypical yet culturally salient associations between women and cats work to conduct her conduct, to correct the individual that she might become, and thereby to delimit her possibilities to commensurate non-normative interspecies intimacy with feminine subjectivity. Keeping cats stops her from being legibly feminine. Being legibly feminine stops her from keeping cats.

While such governance *reproduces* cultural norms that denigrate women-with-cats, these discourses and norms are constantly contested. Many women (and others) both individually and collectively have reclaimed the ‘crazy cat lady’ through discursive practices of resignification that remake, reinvent, and resignify their modalities of femininity, masculinity, and interspecies intimacy. Within the terrain of ‘crazy cat lady’ discourses and counterdiscourses, numerous

digital and embodied spaces have emerged for collectives to reimagine their ‘crazy cat lady’ ways of being. These include the Twitter hashtag #crazycatladyproblems (figure 6), the online group *The Crazy Cat Ladies Society*, which includes a much smaller *Gentleman’s Auxiliary*, and the Facebook pages *Crazy Cat Ladies Unites*, *Crazy Cat Ladies Community*, and even *The Crazy Cat Man*¹⁹. Indeed, digital cultures in particular seem to offer a rich slate within which women-with-cats might inscribe new meanings onto the ‘crazy cat lady.’

Such reclamations engage a citational rescripting (Butler, 1993), rewriting the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure to make their modes of being, their formations of femininity and masculinity, and their human-animal relationships livable, possible, and intelligible. Most often these counterdiscourses employ tactics of humor and irony and other maneuvers of *disidentification*, which José Esteban Muñoz defines as “the third mode of dealing with dominant ideology, one



(figure 6 – The Avatar of @catladyprobl3ms, a frequent contributor to the Twitter hashtag #catladyproblems)

¹⁹ Based on cursory observations, this webpage appears to see posts predominantly from women, despite its name.

that neither opts to assimilate within such a structure not strictly opposes it; rather, disidentification is a strategy that works on and against dominant ideology” (1999: 11-12). Thus, these ‘crazy cat ladies’ do not fully refuse or reproduce norms but instead they work within the preexisting sets of “codes, prescriptions, and norms.” I have already hinted at this process in the case of the Anne Taintor magnet (figure 3). In this image we can see a reinvention of the figure that necessarily recites but also remakes its preexisting lexicon of meaning. By embracing ‘crazy cat lady’ eccentricities (figure 6), these reinventions of the ‘crazy cat lady’ enact a particularly queer mode of “theatrical” political practice “to the extent that [it] *mimes and renders hyperbolic* the discursive convention that it also reverses” (Butler, 1993: 232).

Thus, the social reproduction of norms should not be seen as necessarily predominant or chronologically inceptive. In actual practice, both social reproduction and reinventive disidentification exist within a contested battleground (Nash, 2006) over different possibilities for legible subjectivity and legitimate interspecies intimacy, particularly a being-with-cats. In both normative and counterdiscourses, we see the reproduction and reimagination of the historical associations and imbrications between gender and species (as well as class, race, body, (dis)ability, age, sexuality) that Rogers (1997) and Grier (2006) indicate.

Such an analysis combines feminist and posthumanist insights to explore the intimate role played by both the figure of animality (e.g., representations of cats and felinity) and nonhuman animals themselves (e.g., the living cats themselves that relationally co-produce a performativities and practices of gendered subject-formation [see figure 6]). As Birke and Brandt (2009) argue, feminist thinkers and geographers have paid little attention to the centrality of animals/animality to productions of gender. While some feminist animal geographers have begun to correct these oversights in the contexts of wild animals like cougars (Collard, 2012), farmed

animals like cows (Gillespie, 2013), and sport animals like horse (Birke and Brandy, 2009), I offer this thesis as an infusion of the imbricated questions of species *and* gender into the field of pet geographies and critical pet studies. Cats both figuratively and materially play a central role in co-producing gendered subjectivity²⁰. Repurposing Birke and Brandt's (2009) study of "horsey" cultures, I argue that "[w]hat is central to how gender is performed in ['crazy cat lady'] worlds is that it is enacted *through* the figure and the body of the [cats]" (190). Women-with-cats thus represent what Birke and Brandt (2009) call a "community of practice" in which the practices and performativities of gendered subjectivity emerge relationally among both human and nonhuman actors. Moreover, I build on Birke and Brandt's work to consider how cats play a relational role in the production of not only gender but also intersecting subjections of sexuality, race, class, and other social difference. I return to these questions of more-than-human sexuality and race in my subsequent chapters. In short, if as Oswin and Olund (2010) argue the realm of intimacy is a privileged site for the emergence of the self, then the subject-formations of interspecies intimacy are necessarily more-than-human.

Thus, in the previous sections, I have built on pet studies and current Foucauldian and Butlerian studies of gendered subjectivity, to explore how gendered subjectivity/abjection and human-animal relationality are co-constitutive and how they co-produce the governance of interspecies intimacy. Next, I elaborate on these findings to explore how these citational contestations of governance operate within particular geographies. Throughout these analyses, I maintain an attention to the interconnections of gender and human-animal relationality in the sociospatial production of subjectivity and abjection.

²⁰ This is to say nothing of the subjectivity of the cats themselves, which, though it certainly emerges co-constitutively alongside the subjectivity of women-with-cats, presents a complex question beyond the scope of this study.

IV.d. Re-Placing Subjectivity/Abjection Within Their Sociospatial Production

I have traced the contours of the ‘crazy cat lady’ as a contested discursive field in order to introduce the reader to the intense, contradictory, and multivalent forces of meaning, feeling, and materiality that affect, produce, and govern women-with-cats, their formations of subjectivity and abjection, and their modes of pet love. Thus far, I have only hinted at the distinctly *spatial* qualities of these discourses. However, the ‘crazy cat lady’ is a markedly geographic phenomenon and the production of ‘crazy cat lady’ subjectivity/abjection, the *whom* of pet love, necessarily intersects the *where* of pet love. The ‘crazy cat lady’ is not merely a figure who transgresses norms of femininity/masculinity or the dominant speciesist order, but she does so via particular spatial registers. Therefore, in the remainder of this chapter, I offer a cultural geographic intervention into Foucauldian and Butlerian analyses of subjectivity and governance to center the *sociospatial* elements of this governance and how subjectivities are co-produced with their geographies. Discourses of ‘crazy cat lady’ ab/normality operate via gendered and speciesist *spatial* dynamics, insinuating themselves into the public/private divide and, within the latter sphere, the intimate scales of the mind/body, interpersonal relationships, and the feminized home. I organize this analysis of sociospatial subjectivity and abjection around a series of salient figures that crystallize the sociospatial contestations over gendered subjectivity/abjection and il/legitimate pet love: the woman-with-cats outdoors, the crazy woman-with-cats, the pathological pet hoarder, the monstrous woman-with-cats, and the crazy cat lady’s more-than-human home.

IV.e. The Woman-With-Cats Outdoors

As detailed above, imaginations of the ‘crazy cat lady’ draw upon a historically gendered, sexualized, raced, classed, and speciesist order. Particularly among United States white

bourgeois cultures of pet keeping, companionship, and love, men have been associated with dogs while women have been associated with cats. More than just a gendered association with certain pets, however, these logics (re)cite a particularly *spatial* relationship between gendered subjectivity/abjection and human-pet relationality. Through the use of some canine breeds in outdoor hunting and sport and the incorporation of cats into the home as mousers, dominant discourses have generally mapped dogs onto ideals of masculinity and the public sphere while stitching cats to geographic imaginaries of “‘proper’ bourgeois women associated with interior spaces, particularly the private sphere of the home and family” (Hubbard, 2005: 324).

Thus, the gendering of human-pet cultures, particularly as they occur among white bourgeois classes, relies upon a public/private divide that serves to govern the lives of both women and women-with-cats. Adding to feminist critiques of this public/private divide, I argue that this spatial demarcation also disciplines popular imaginations of pet love, its proper species-specific practice by feminine and masculine subjects, and its un/sanctioned placement within public versus private spaces. Such dominant logics can be seen throughout normative and counterdiscursive representations of the ‘crazy cat lady.’ The figure was almost exclusively pictured within the home, as seen in the example of De Niro’s Margie or the Crazy Cat Lady action figure’s “tiny house full of feral felines.” In short, these dominant logics perpetuate a patriarchal and speciesist spatial order in which women-with-cats are discursively and materially confined to the home. Thus, ‘crazy cat lady’ subject-formation is intimately tied to its production in certain spaces. ‘Crazy cat lady’ abjection was often co-constituted with a private sphere that is feminized and denigrated within masculinist logics. Given this circumscription to the home, it is unsurprising there women-with-cats are deemed “out of place” (Cresswell, 1996) in public

spaces. The out-of-place-ness of the woman-with-cats outdoors contributes to the sociospatial production of these ‘crazy cat lady’ subjectivities/abjections.

For some women, ‘crazy cat lady’ discourses work to reproduce this hegemonic public/private logic and to relegate women-with-cats to the private home through the sorts of governmentality seen above. In a 2009 *Forbes* piece²¹, contributor Kiri Blakeley – a young, white, straight, cis-woman and self-professed cat lover²² - relates the story of a 23-years-old woman who, after taking in a kitten that had been abandoned in a sack on the roadside, suffers ridicule from her friends and boyfriend. Whereas in the above instance from “Becoming a Cat Lady” where the woman self-governs her conduct, in this case governmentality operates through other nodes of capillary power. Governmental power flows “in the play of relations of conflict and support that exist between the family and the school, workshop” and other socially salient sites of power. (Foucault, 2003: 58). In this case, friends, partners, and communities serve as these sites of governmental power. Indeed, here we see how sanctioned intimates – human boyfriends and friends – serve in the governance of unacceptable interspecies intimacy – the companionship of a rescue cat.

In one notable jibe, they ask the woman “do you take the cat for walks?” Such a specifically spatial comment merits attention. As Hubbard cautions, “examining which of women’s public performances provoke anxiety and which are subject to regulation... sheds much light on the way women are constructed as the feminine Other” (2005: 323). Such lighthearted taunts say much about the *spatial* production of gendered subjectivity and abjection and the ways in which the *whom* and the *where* of pet love are coconstituted and mutually governed.

²¹ Source: <http://www.forbes.com/2009/10/14/crazy-cat-lady-pets-stereotype-forbes-woman-time-felines.html> (Accessed December 15th, 2013).

²² Source: http://thestir.cafemom.com/blogger/112/kiri_blakeley (Accessed December 15th, 2013).

This derisory question gains its abjecting force and potency through its invocation of the patriarchal and speciesist spatial logics of the public/private divide. The entry of the woman-with-cat into the public sphere is laughable. The woman-with-cat undergoes mockery for her feminized care for the stray cat, which in its incorporation into the home already confounds ontological and spatial separations between the home and the ‘feral’ or the ‘wild,’ between private spaces of culture and public spaces of nature (Griffiths, Poulter, & Sibley, 2000: 68). But in addition, she is also disciplined for her transgression of public space *with her cat*. Thus, this spatial production of gender is a markedly more-than-human affair. Though Instone and Mee (2011) focus on the counterpart of this dyad – human-dog spatial relationships in public dog parks – their arguments prove instructive here. Within the knit companion species relationships of humans-with-dog in human-dog spaces like urban dog parks, Instone and Mee argue that any regulation of dogs, such as a leash law, necessarily governs the human companions. I argue that the same can be said of women-with-cats. But whereas dog parks “reinscribe the place of animals as not congruent with human space, at least in public” (2011: 241), I argue that the public/private divide itself reinscribes certain *gendered* human-animal intimacies, namely women-with-cats, as incongruent with dominant imaginations of masculine and canine public space. The spatial order is not merely a speciesist one of human space versus human-dog space, as Instone and Mee discuss, but rather a gendered-speciesist one of man-dog space (the public) versus woman-cat space (the private). Echoing the species-specific nature of this public/private divide, the young woman goes on to bemoan “I don’t know why it’s not like this with women who get a dog.”

Through this concatenation of patriarchal, speciesist, and spatial hierarchies, we can see how the production of the feminine Other and the exclusionary matrix of subjectivity and

abjection envelop not only the transgression of normative femininity or normative pet love but also perceived perversions of a spatial order that is both patriarchal and speciesist. In response to such transgressions, multiple nodes of social governance are mobilized to other the woman-with-cats outdoors, therein working to regulate her formation of self, her inhabitation of interspecies intimacies, and *where* such intimacies are and are not socially permissible.

As seen in the examples above, however, the ‘crazy cat lady’ is a highly contested political field of meaning, feeling, bodies, subjects, lives, and ways of being. This contestation also takes a distinctly spatial configuration, as some women-with-cats are reinscribed into normative spatial orders of public and private space, as seen in Blakely’s story, while others resist and remake these spatial orders. I present here two final examples to illustrate these spatial struggles.

The *Vice* media network produced a 2013 documentary called *The Real Cat People of Minneapolis*. The title and its language of “cat people” suggest a post-gender world wherein cat love is universal. Such a degendered imaginary seems misplaced, however. Though briefly opening with a young white male so-called feline expert’s worries about himself becoming a ‘crazy cat lady,’ the documentary otherwise centers solely on the lives of four young white women and their cats. Among these women-with-cats, however, emerges an array of gendered spatial practices that alternately transgress and reproduce the patriarchal and speciesist public/private divide. On the one hand, we meet Squirrel, a white-furred female cat, and Squirrel’s human companion Vanessa. Distinct from the other women-with-cats in the documentary, Vanessa and Squirrel are only featured outdoors, in their front yard or at a local cat video film festival. Vanessa takes Squirrel everywhere, parading her publicly and showing her

off to Squirrel's adoring fans. Vanessa has even created a Facebook page²³ for Squirrel.

Vanessa's and Squirrel's forays into public space jar conventional imaginations of the private domestic sphere as the de facto space for both felines and their companionate 'crazy cat ladies.' This companion species pair thus transgresses these normative boundaries, opening up new spaces for legible femininity and legitimate interspecies intimacy that can harmoniously inhabit public space²⁴.

In contrast to such spatial disruptions, the documentary closes with the story of Whitney, a young punk rocker with pink hair, and her cat Pax. Whereas Whitney has embraced her non-normative adoration for Pax, conventional masculinist and speciesist imaginations of the public and the private continue to structure Whitney's and Pax's home. Whitney's boyfriend, she explains, finds her affections for Pax a bit strange. Whitney suspects, however, that he is just trying to be "a little tougher" because he "doesn't want to admit how much of a cat person he is." The boyfriend (young, white, and male) drops this performance of ideal white masculinity, however, when he enters the home, becoming immediately more affectionate and playful with

²³ Such a digital presence of cats and women-with-cats echoes similar individual and collective reclamations of the 'crazy cat lady' figure through online spaces, including aforementioned groups like The Crazy Cat Ladies Society. I argue that such online practices that have reclaimed enact a reimagination and reoccupation of public space similar to that undertaken by Squirrel and Vanessa, but they do so outside of Cartesian spatial limits. By carving out counterpublics in digital space, these individuals and communities transgress the relegation of women-with-cats to the private sphere. Such digital counterpublics might even confound the distinction, given the simultaneous occupation of public online forums with discussions and stories of private spaces shared with cats. Moreover, these practices of women-with-cats building social communities with one another, often around shared experiences with cats, disrupt normative discussions of dogs as inducer of sociality between humans, a point of view common in both academic literature (Cudworth, 2011; Instone and Mee, 2011; Urbanik and Morgan, 2102) and several cultural artifacts collected in this research. A rich engagement with these questions of digital public space goes beyond the work of this thesis. However, these online communities offer a rich and interesting site for future collaborations between animal studies and digital geographies.

²⁴ Of course, such spaces are not open for everyone. Access to public space, including its counterhegemonic reoccupations, is limited and unevenly distributed. I address some of these limitations and reproduced normativities in chapter VI.

Pax. The boyfriend's spatially ordered performance reinscribes a regulatory spatial matrix of ideal white masculinity and femininity, wherein allegedly abnormal, feminine, and improper pet love is circumscribed to the private sphere, thus reproducing normative landscapes of gender, race, species, sexuality, affect, and place. In the contrasts between Whitney/Pax and Vanessa/Squirrel, we can see how reclamations of the 'crazy cat lady' figure and her non-normative modes of pet love both reimagine and reproduce conventional logics of gender, species, and space, which in turn inform who can be a 'crazy cat lady,' what possibilities for contested subjectivity and abjection emerge, and whose interspecies intimacies come to be and where.

IV.f. The Crazy Woman-with-Cats

The slandering of the 'crazy cat lady' does not stop, however, at representations of the homebound "frumpy middle-aged woman surrounded by cats"²⁵ or the abnormal woman taking her cat for a stroll outdoors. In addition, normative discourses of the 'crazy cat lady' produce the feminine Other through a set of discourses with particular resonance for women living intimately with nonhuman animals, particularly pets: the pathologization of inappropriate pet love and the feminization of affect and emotion. As seen in the above story of Whitney's boyfriend, emotion is intensely spatially governed within gendered cultures of pet keeping. While feminist and ecofeminist critiques have extensively deconstructed patriarchal and speciesist discourses that pathologize expressions of affection towards animals, I extend and apply these analyses to demonstrate their distinctively spatial quality. In the case of the 'crazy cat lady,' these discourses garner their abjecting force through their application at salient scales of intimacy – the body, the interpersonal, the home – and their appeal to gendered geographic imaginaries of feminine

²⁵ Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/19/garden/cool-for-cats.html?_r=0 (Accessed December 22nd, 2013)

embodiment, relationality, and domesticity. These discourses (re)construct intersectional imaginations of emotionality, affectability, pathology, hysteria, and femininity as they norm women-with-cats (and some men-with-cats) and their non-normative interspecies intimacies.

The lives of ‘abnormal’ women (and others) caring for and cohabitating with an ‘excessive’ number of cats can often only be squared with dominant logics of species hierarchy, human-pet relations, and proper femininity via masculinist, ableist, and anthropocentric rationalizations that pathologize women-with-cats. By definition, the ‘crazy cat lady’ must be *crazy*. These associations with pathology often translated into representations of psychosis, illness, and impurity written onto the ‘crazy cat lady’ body and mind, thereby informing the productions of subjectivity and abjection that mark women-with-cats. For example, the Crazy Cat Lady action figure has ‘a wild look in her eye.’ The crowd-sourced site *urbandictionary.com* defines the ‘crazy cat lady’ as a “woman that has an insane almost addictive love for cats.” Certainly, many women-with-cats have suffered psychic stress. Indeed, several authors of pet love have forwarded psychoanalytic arguments stipulating that pets serve as psychic fetishes and salves for psychic loss (Kuzniar, 2006; Nast, 2006a, 2006b). Determining the true presence of or interrelationship between psychic illness and pet love is not my purpose, however. Instead, I argue that stereotypes of the ‘crazy cat lady’ occlude the *social production* of mental and physical illness, preferring instead to spectacularize and naturalize it onto the ‘crazy cat lady’ body/mind. In so doing, these stereotypes forward a logic that is masculinist, ableist, pathologizing, and anthropocentric: *to love and care for so many cats so much, you must be crazy!*

Indeed, this appeal to pathology runs deep in cultural commentary. Eleanor Abernathy, an elderly white female character who recurs on the cartoon show *The Simpsons*, secludes herself

in her home, hurtles cats at the young Lisa, and mumbles to herself on the street. (Indeed, in this final practice, in her infiltration into public space, Eleanor Abernathy transgresses the aforementioned regulation of women-with-cats in public space.) Even among some of the counterdiscourses that seek to reclaim, at least in part, the figure of the ‘crazy cat lady,’ such reappropriations gain their purchase through a reinscription of pathologized abjection onto other bodies/minds, onto other Others, as in the playful *Cat vs Human* cartoon that distances the prim ‘cat lady’ from the manic ‘crazy cat lady’ (figure 4). In this example, we see how even counterdiscourses (re)produce their own normativities and violences. As Foucault writes, “resistance is never in a position of exteriority to power” (1990: 95). While I will touch briefly on some of these (re)normalizations of resistance within this chapter and the next, I most centrally address this question in my final chapter (VI) on the reproduction of ‘intimacy’ itself.



(figure 7 – The ‘Cat Lady’/‘Crazy Cat Lady’ Divide)

‘Crazy’ as psychotic easily bleeds into ‘crazy’ as excessively emotional. The video *Debbie Loves Cats* went viral on YouTube in 2011. In the clip, Debbie, played by the young white female comedian Cara Hartmann, sits alone in her bed, making her first personal ad for eHarmony (a popular online dating site known for its heterosexuals-only policy). Debbie begins by nervously telling her future suitors about herself – she is a “recent MBA grad from Villanova.” When she mentions her love of cats, however, she quickly dissolves into a profusion of tears and sentiment. “I just love cats,” she wails. “I want to hug all of them...I think about how many of them don’t have a home...and how cute they are” (figure 8). Her love of cats evokes an expression of ‘excessive’ and ‘strange’ emotion, likely off-putting to your typical male online suitor. This performance of the ‘crazy cat lady’ crystallizes normative associations between failed femininity and inappropriate expressions of love for pets. Recalling Heidi Nast’s work on the “outside” of pet love, such imaginations of the ‘crazy cat lady’ demonstrate that



(figure 8 – *Debbie Love Cats*)

those outside pet love are not only “[t]hose with no affinity for pets” but also those with *too much*. Moreover, the hysterical woman-with-cats not only disrupts ideals of proper bourgeois femininity and pet love but also upsets heteronormativity and species hierarchy, two points to which I will return in the following chapter.

Such imaginations of the crazed, psychotic woman echo a historical pathologization and abjection of female bodies under the medical and psychological gaze (*Foucault, 2003*). In Foucault’s *History of Sexuality, Volume I* (1990), the ‘hysterical woman’ provided a central figure in 19th century productions of sexuality. Female bodies have historically been marked as psychotic in the extreme (e.g., Eleanor Abernathy) and overly emotional in the banal (e.g., Debbie) and these markings have proved historically salient in the patriarchal productions of gender difference and inequality (Adams and Donovan, 1995; Plumwood, 1991). Indeed, echoing Butler’s exclusionary matrix, the production of the white, male, liberal, rational subject depends upon the production of “affectable others” (da Silva, 2007), including women, nonhuman animals, and other others (Butler, 1993; Plumwood, 1991). These depictions of the ‘crazy cat lady’ mind/body as excessively emotional inscribe her as an illiberal abjection, reproducing the idealized norm of the rational, male dog owner. Moreover, I argue that these masculinist and speciesist depictions of pathology and emotionality, which circulate within macro-scalar flows of public national and transnational internet culture, produce legible subjectivity and illegible abjection through their affectively potent application at the micro-scales of intimacy. Pathology has been written onto the ‘crazy cat lady’ body, infused into her ‘wild’ eyes and her effusive tears, while excessive affection marks as bizarre her interpersonal, interspecies companionate relationships. And these pathologizations of ‘crazy cat lady’ intimacy

in turn pathologize the ‘crazy cat lady’ herself, reinforcing the sociospatial production of her abjection.

IV.g. The Pathological Pet Hoarder

Discourses of pathology also taint the ‘crazy cat lady’ home. Indeed, it seems unsurprising that Hartmann’s depiction of the excessively emotional cat lover is filmed in her bedroom, invoking imaginations of both the unfulfilled marriage bed and the crazed homely recluse. Such representations of the pathologized home proved most striking, however, in those popular imaginations of ‘crazy cat ladies’ that conflate the figure with imaginaries of pet hoarding. Epitomizing this metonymy, another *urbandictionary.com* describes the ‘crazy cat lady’ as a woman who “keeps dozens or more pet cats...in a small house and refuses to give away or sell them even for the sake of the safety of the cats or herself.” In this manifestation as pet hoarder, the ‘crazy cat lady’ and inappropriate (even harmful) pet love are seen to materialize psychosis into the very spaces of the material domestic environment. “The home becomes a conduit in these horror stories” (England, M., 359). The *Animal Planet* documentary *Confessions: Pet Hoarding* centers on the home of the pet hoarder, giving the voyeur an eye into derelict domestic spaces strewn with animal feces and waste. Such depictions co-constitutively pathologize the humans and animals *and* the home space itself. By the end of the show’s interventions, the pet hoarder and the pet hoarder’s home are cleansed, cured, renewed, and “the boundaries are reified and re-normed, reinscribing patriarchal gender codings of space” (England, M., 2006: 353). Thus, the home space becomes a particularly potent site in the spatial production of subjectivity and abjection discourses of pathology.

Though *Confessions: Pet Hoarding* features male and female bodies, the discursive slippage between the pet hoarder and the ‘crazy cat lady’ insinuates a complicit pathologization

that marks both figures. In short, I argue that though the pet hoarder is not necessarily a female or feminized figure, the same discourses reproduced in imaginations of pet hoarding reflect back onto the ‘crazy cat lady.’ Indeed, discourses of the pathologized home become most feverish when in *direct* relation to perceived failures of white heterosexual bourgeois feminine domesticity. Edith Bouvier Beale, a second cousin of Jackie Onassis, lived with her mother in their dilapidated East Hampton mansion from ages 35 to 60²⁶. The two lived together in their slowly disintegrating palace, along with dozens of cats, raccoons, and opossums (figure 9). The 1975 documentary *Grey Gardens*²⁷ centers on the lives of these two women and the ruins in



(figure 9 – Little Edie at Grey Gardens in 1975)

²⁶ Little Edie died in 2002 at the age of 84 alone in her Bal Harbour, Florida apartment. With a wink and a jibe, the closing line of her *New York Times* obituary assures the reader that Edith “had not owned a cat in five years.” (<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/01/25/nyregion/edith-bouvier-beale-84-little-edie-dies.html> - Accessed March 3rd, 2014.)

²⁷ The film and Little Edie herself have become gay cult icons, indicating the queer appeal of the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure living outside societal norms. I read this queerness in closer detail in the following chapter.

which they built their unseemly lives. Here we see an alternate mode of pathologization deployed that is neither coterminous with nor separable from the pathologization of mental illness and emotionality: the pathology of material impurity. The film often focuses on the state of filth and lack of hygiene that tainted the home, as well as its female human and animal inhabitants. Cats and raccoons burrow through the walls and roof. A pyramid of cat food tins fills the dining room. Fleas swarm the floor. Such discourses and representations of materialized pathology produce a scalar transferal of abjection from the feminized body of the ‘crazy cat lady,’ as well as the abject bodies of the cats themselves, to the feminized home. In one striking scene, Edith’s mother (known as “Big Edie”) sits in bed while the camera crew catches one cat urinating in the corner. Big Edie does not attempt to stop the cat or clean the mess. She simply lets out a belting laugh, striking the viewer as variably bizarre or insane. Within these abject spaces, “[b]oundaries dissolve” between bodies, species, interiority and exteriority, and the sacred and profane, “resulting in confusion of categories and apprehension as comfort levels are breached” (*Ibid*, 2006: 355-359).

This abjection and confusion invoke affects of disgust that other ‘crazy cat ladies.’ The 2009 documentary *Cat Ladies* (Callan-Jones), which centers on the lives of four white women who live with cats, was featured on an episode of ABC’s *20/20*. In the special, the host Elizabeth Vargas repeatedly expresses confusion, aversion, and disgust at the women’s ways of being. Her horror, however, often focuses less on the lives of the cats or the women, whom she comments have “gone off the deep end,” and more on their homes, which she condemns as “unbelievable.” These representations and discourses collude in the reproduction of a certain structure of feeling, a norm of affect that orients and governs not only how ‘crazy cat ladies’ should feel about their cats but also how popular imaginations should feel about ‘crazy cat ladies.’ These feelings

among human and feline bodies and subjects circulate in an “affective economy” (Ahmed, 2004) wherein we are oriented towards love or hate, towards embrace or recoil. These circuits of feeling reinforce the sociospatial production of ‘crazy cat lady’ abjection and the normative possibilities for women-with-cats and their formations of self. Lost within these orientations, however, is how one should feel towards the cats themselves. The lives of the cats barely emerge as a concern for Vargas. In this silence, we are left to wonder how the horror for women-with-cats (constructed as the pathological pet hoarder) affects our orientations towards cats themselves.

IV.h. The Monstrous Woman-with-Cats

These stains and stigmas of pathologized ‘crazy cat lady’ abjection and her intimate spaces – the body, the interpersonal, the home – often emerge in parallel with discourses that seek to dehumanize the women-with-cats, through associations with animality and/or monstrosity. Ecofeminists have archived the ways humanist and patriarchal logics not only pathologize and emotionalize female bodies and feminine subjectivity, as discussed above, but also conflate women and nonhuman animals so as to malign both and displace them from the privileged realm of liberal subjectivity (Adams, 1990, 1994; Gillespie, 2013). The conflation of women with cats in particular continues a long history of female felinity (Rogers, 1997). More specifically, however, I argue that depictions of ‘crazy cat ladies’ serve to animalize and monsterize the figure through her intimate relationships with cats. Normative discourses of the ‘crazy cat lady’ thus center on spaces and scales of ‘the intimate’ so as to animalize and dehumanize the figure and her transgressions of the human/animal divide. Therefore, I argue that women are not just like cats but rather women-with-cats and ‘crazy cat ladies’ are produced as animals or even monsters, something other than human altogether.

The ‘crazy cat lady’ body and the ‘wild look in her eye’ animate fears of not only the psychotic woman but also the monstrous beast. Returning to Foucault’s genealogy of the historical emergence of ‘abnormality’ as a governing project, the ‘crazy cat lady’ here embodies not only the “individual to be corrected” but also the human monster and its transgressions of the coherent human body (2004). Popular representations further these imaginations of feminine and animal monstrosity. In one episode, the *TLC* show *My Strange Addiction* centers on the habits of Lisa, a 43-years-old white woman in Detroit, who in her words is “addicted to eating [her cat’s] hair” (figure 10). Lisa eats the hair off of her couch or she will lick the hair directly off her cat. We are told in a voiceover that Lisa began eating cat hair “as a way to feel close to her pets.”



(figure 10 – Lisa Licking Her Cat)

While the show plays between light-hearted and anxious tones, the footage repeatedly zooms in on Lisa's lips as she masticates on her hairballs. These fleshy and furry close-ups produce Lisa as an image of the grotesque (figure 11). "The grotesque image," Bakhtin explains, "ignore[s] the closed, smooth, and impenetrable surface of the body and retains only its excrescences...and orifices, only that which leads beyond the body's limited space or into the body's depths" (1968: 317-318) Lisa's "strange addiction" thus transgresses the bounds of the human body, pushing the historically association of women with cats from one of felinity (Rogers, 1997) to one of monstrosity.

Enlisting similar logics of pathology, animality, and monstrosity, recent articles have speculated on the parasitic origins of 'crazy cat lady syndrome,' arguing that the organism *Toxoplasmosis gondii* might be the cause. Such conjectures animalize the 'crazy cat lady' body, arguing that the parasite makes women-with-cats like rats (a mammal in which *T. gondii* is



(figure 11 – Lisa Becomes the Grotesque)

found) and “alter[s their brains and] their behavior in a way that – among other things – may leave them more likely to be eaten by cats.” I argue that such discourses compound other cultural forces that other the “monstrous woman” (Creed, 1993) by intersecting phobias of the grotesque and “leaky female body (see Shildrick, 2010) with fears of the animal body and the animalized human body to shore up the fantasy of the discrete Human. In the intercorporeal, intersubjective becomings of companion species like women-with-cats, such messy mutuality easily bleeds into pathologization of, to use Derrida’s (1983) term, the pharmakon, which is neither and both. Given the centrality of relational embodiment to interspecies intimacy and pet love, such productions of monstrosity should give pause as we consider how some embodied intimacies, and the bodies that take part, are displaced into realms of abjection and impossibility.

IV.i. The ‘Crazy Cat Lady’ And Her More-Than-Human Home

Similarly, the animalization and dehumanization of the home serves as a conduit for anxieties over bodies, subjectivities, ontologies, and spatial orders. As seen in the boundary transgressions of the Beales and their raccoon and feline messmates, such depictions of abjection often gain their force through the invocation of humanist anxieties over animals “out of place” in the home and the dissolution of the spatial and ontological boundary between human and animal (Cresswell, 1996). The “invasive presence of Others” in the home invites intense anxieties (Sobchack, 1996: 145, quoted in England, M., 2006). Pets, however, occupy a particularly ambiguous ontology in their invasion. Over the past 50 years, pets have been incorporated into the home (Power, 2008) and “[t]he designation ‘pet’ generally indicates belonging: a placing in the home” (Griffiths, Poulter, & Sibley, 2000: 58). Yet, pets maintain codings of both animality and Nature, which is seen as “abject and inimical to domesticity” (*Ibid*: 68) and

incommensurable with human(ized) space (Philo: 1995). Thus, as pets have entered the home, intense material and discursive measures have been taken to order their place.

For instance, dog or cat flaps represent a “breach in the domestic boundary,” intended as entry for one’s sanctioned pet but also potentially a wild animal, a flexible thief, or other “polluters of domestic space” (Griffiths, Poulter, & Sibley, 2000: 58). Pets themselves can become “polluters.” Unless intensely managed, their bodily waste and odors risk the contamination of the human(ized) home and its moral order (Carolan, 2007). As one woman tweeted on #catladyprobl3ms, “[t]here's nothing like coming home after a long day to a cat taking a dump #catladyproblems #mylife.” The commercial pet industry capitalizes on these anxieties through multi-million dollar economies that sell pet cleaning products, lint rollers, carpet cleaners, and other remedies. For instance, in a feature titled “the De-Stinkifier that every Cat Lady *MUST* own,” the cat lover website *mousebreath.com* peddles this technology by simultaneously invoking both fear of and affinity for the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure. These anxieties over material purity intersect with fears over ontological security, since the failure to manage such beastly violations might lead to the inversion of the humanist hierarchy of the home, the maintenance of the home as a space made primarily for humans. Following Griffiths, Poulter, and Sibley (2000), I argue that cats in particular, given their perceived retention of ‘wildness’ even when domesticated²⁸, animate these anxieties over the home more intensely than pet dogs. Cats and their ‘crazy cat ladies’ pervert the sanctity of the human(ized) home. For instance, depictions of women-with-cats like those on *Confessions* and the *20/20* special regularly focus on the transformation of other human spaces, like bedrooms and living rooms, into mass litter boxes. And as several friends and family members of people-with-cats on *Confessions* protested,

²⁸ For a detailed analysis of the discourses and geographic logics of domestication, see Anderson (1997).

the cats “took over” the house and “that’s not how the way it’s supposed to be.” Thus, we can see how constructions of abjection and subjectivity, legitimacy and unliveability emerge out of spatially produced associations of monstrosity, animality, and, more specifically, the transgression of humanist and speciesist spatial orders. Yet again this highlights how the governance of the companions of companion species co-emerges with the governance of interspecies intimacies themselves.

IV.j. Conclusions: Rethinking Gendered Subjectivity Through Interspecies Intimacy

Through these analyses of the spatial production, circumscription, and governance of ‘crazy cat lady’ subjectivity and abjection, particularly as they are contested around ideals of white bourgeois feminine subjectivity and proper pet love, I have offered insights into my first research question. These normative discourses and counterhegemonic practices of white bourgeois femininity, pathology, emotionality, animality, monstrosity, and human-pet relationality (re)produce a spatial order in which certain formations of self are governed. Moreover, this field of il/legible ‘crazy cat lady’ subjectivity and abjection is co-constituted with certain places and geographic imaginaries, including those that envelop the intimate spaces of the home, the interpersonal, and the body. I offer this chapter as an extension of current pet geographies that have considered the production of human subjectivity in human-pet relationships (Power, 2008) but have left largely unquestioned other axes of social difference like gender, sexuality, race, and class, among others. Moreover, this analysis of subjectivity brings the insights of ecofeminist and feminist animal studies to the field of critical pet studies, asking how confluences of femininity and animality, women and nonhuman animals continue to operate in the mundane settings of pet love, producing gender within a more-than-human “community of practice” (Birke and Brandt, 2009) comprised of both women and cats, the latter including both

symbolic figurations and material bodies. In addition, I have framed these analyses of subjectivity within larger questions of the governance of intimacy, asking not merely how some formations of self emerge rather than others but also how these formations of self exist in an iterative relationship with the production and regulation of interspecies intimacy. Thus, I situate this work within multi-scalar feminist and Foucauldian analyses of intimacy, illuminating how pet love circulates as a *dispositif*, jumping from nationally distributed cultural artifacts to daily embodied practices of self-governance, and how subject-formations serve as one technology in that governing assemblage. But more specifically, I offer these arguments in answer to Heidi Nast's call to study the "outside" of pet love. As I have stated before, this is an inquiry not into those who fail to love pets enough but into those who love them too much. Thus, we can see how the intimacies of pet love and the subjectivities/abjections of the pet lover mutually produce one another. In the following chapter, I turn to question not simply how the subjectivity of the pet lover is produced, but in addition how the relationships of pet love (and other modes of love as well) are themselves produced, normed, contested, and governed.

V.a. Governing Interspecies Intimacies: Queering and Contesting The ‘Crazy Cat Lady’

“the ideals of intersubjective relations...effectively unsettle habits of mind that otherwise render intimacies within and across other species insignificant... [f]amiliar household pets like cats and dogs serve on the front lines of people’s everyday attempts to work out these problems”
 – Susan McHugh, 2011: 161.

Pet love implies the existence of intimate, romantic, and perhaps even erotic or sexual bonds often associated with wider imaginations of love. When these bonds extend across the fabricated chasm between human and animal, however, this love raises immense anxieties about norms of sexuality and species, as well as their interconnections with gender, race, and class. While in the previous chapter, I explored productions of subjectivity and abjection and the ways these circumscriptions of the self inform wider governances of pet love, I turn now to explore how these companion species intimacies are themselves governed. Just as the ‘crazy cat lady’ operates as a patriarchal and speciesist technology to govern the possibilities of il/legitimate subject-formation for women-with-cats (and other human-pet animal formations), so too the figure animates speciesist and heteronormative logics to produce a sexual-species governmentality that regulates both interhuman and interspecies intimacies. Whereas in the previous chapter, the question was the *whom* of pet love, here I turn to the relationships of pet love themselves.

As Colin Carman observes, the term “animal lover” has a “dually queer and ecological resonance” (2012: 509). Alice Kuzniar (2008) celebrates the queer liberatory possibilities of pet love (though she focuses specifically on dogs). Other scholars (Boggs, 2013; Haraway, 2003a, 2008) have highlighted the queer kinships that emerge between humans and pet animals. I turn to these queer interminglings throughout my analysis, often framed in the contest of queer

resistances or failures. However, I wish to balance these foci on micro-scalar queer practices with an exploration of their macro-scalar production, normalization, and governance. Thus, I examine how normative cultural discourses produce queerness as means of normalization, “as an optic through which populations are called into control” (Puar, 2007: xiii) and certain bodies and intimacies gain greater favor than others. As I argued above, the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure operates as a figure of *proximity*²⁹, necessarily displaced so as to produce a gap between normality and abnormality, between subjectivity and abjection, a gap within which bodies, lives, beings, and relations can be governed. Thus, the ‘crazy cat lady’ also emerges as a sexual figure to govern interspecies intimacies. As Oswin and Olund (2010) clarify, however, sexuality and intimacy are “overlapping...but they are not coterminous” (61). Thus, though I focus here on how the ‘crazy cat lady’ serves in the surveillance and spatial regulation of non-normative *sexualities*, these sexual spaces necessarily inform spatial practices of intimacy that may or may not be sexual in nature.

Thus, this chapter explores my second research question: “*how do the discourses, structures of feeling, and material spaces and practices that surround the ‘crazy cat lady’ serve to govern the intimacies and relationships, both among humans and across species lines, of humans-with-cats?*” I argue that ‘crazy cat ladies’ garner multiple stigmas of queerness through their transgressions of both the heteronormative mandate *and* the human/animal divide. I detail how the ‘crazy cat lady’ is queered both for her failure to achieve heterosexual marriage, children, and family – those privileged institutions of intimacy to which “[p]eople consent to trust their desire for ‘a life’ (Berlant, 1998: 281) – and for her perceived perverse preference for

²⁹ Whereas before the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure echoed Foucault’s genealogy of the “individual to be corrected” or the “monster,” here we see resonances with the figure of the “masturbator,” a figure that served to produce and discipline sexuality.

cat love. These queer failures are also necessarily inflected by constructions of gender, race, and class. Additionally, these productions of queerness adopt a spatial register, enlisting macro-scalar cultural discourses to regulate the micro-scalar intimate spaces and relationships. Thus, I focus on how this queerness is spatially produced. Firstly, ‘crazy cat ladies’ and their homes are queered for their transgressions of both heteronormative and humanist ideals, crafting what I call a queer domestic ecology in which sexual and species hierarchies are turned topsy-turvy. Secondly, I return to the interpersonal relationships that fill the home, exploring how the ‘crazy cat lady’ queers norms of motherhood and the family, expanding its Human bounds into a more-than-human bestiary. Thirdly, I interrogate representations of the ‘crazy cat lady’ body and her intercorporeality with cats, asking how the lines between sanctioned pet love and taboo bestiality are maneuvered in the project to govern non-normative interspecies intimacies. Finally, I briefly return to the spatial ordering of the public/private divide, indicating how sexual-species hierarchies inscribe themselves into not only private but also public spaces. These normative and counterdiscourses produce a biopolitical field in which hierarchies of sexuality and intimacy are contested, producing some modes of pet love as more or less inhabitable.

V.b. Queering the ‘Crazy Cat Lady’

The ‘crazy cat lady’ animates anxieties over the normative intimacies of the idealized white bourgeois heteronormative couple. These tensions surfaced in numerous depictions of the figure’s singleness, nonmonogamy, widowhood, loneliness, and spinsterhood. Indeed, the ‘crazy cat lady’ figures many of the fears and anxieties that have plagued many non-monogamous and unmarried white women since the production of the spinster figure during the end of the 19th century (Jeffreys, 1997). Like the pet hoarder, the spinster serves as another metonymic figure

that haunts all imaginations of the ‘crazy cat lady.’³⁰ Indeed, these semiotic likenesses can be seen in the aforementioned illustrations of a ‘crazy cat lady’ in garb of the Victorian-era (figure 4), the time period associated with the rise of the spinster imagination.

Distinct from the spinster, however, ‘crazy cat lady’ queerness emerges not out of a complete lack of affectionate entanglement but rather out of inappropriate attachments to nonhuman animals. Normative imaginations of pet love provide a response to social anxieties over ‘crazy cat lady’ queer interspecies intimacies that with varying intensities threaten heteronormativity, ‘good’ pet ownership, human exceptionalism, and the binary divides of both sexuality and species. The site *urbandictionary.com* defines the ‘crazy cat lady’ as “an elderly suburban widow who lives alone,” “a woman, usually middle-aged or older, who lives with no husband or boyfriend and fills the empty lonely void in her life with...cats,” and an “old lady...that has over a dozen cats named after each of her exboyfriends that have done her wrong.” In the campy 1992 gay³¹ cult classic film *Death Becomes Her*, the homely protagonist Helen Sharp loses her husband to a sultry rival, played by Meryl Streep. Beset by this failure, Sharp quickly unravels. She gorges herself on cake frosting and soap operas, gains a significant amount of weight, and shares a tiny apartment with a few dozen cats (figure 12). It is only once she is hauled off by the police to an asylum, loses her weight, and ditches her cats that Sharp regains her femininity and heterosexual prowess. Narratives like those of *Death Becomes Her*

³⁰ Heather Love (2007, 2009) has written about the spinster as a queer figure who was socially excluded for her nonnormative sexuality. She argues that the spinster and the lesbian share a “historical sisterhood,” to which I would add the ‘crazy cat lady.’ Indeed, the easy slippage between these figures is evidenced in another *someecards.com* greeting card that states “I’m done with men. I’ve decided to become a lesbian or a crazy cat lady and I’m not even that fond of cats.” (<http://www.someecards.com/usercards/viewcard/MjAxMy1lYjBIMGY0N2FkMjA5MTFi> - Accessed March, 5th, 2014).

³¹ As in the above example of *Grey Gardens*, we see again an association between figurations of women-with-cats and gay male subculture. This represents an affinity between multiple queer cultures as much as it also represents my own positionality as a young white gay male.



(figure 12 – Helen Sharp, *the Sexual Failure*, Becomes a ‘Crazy Cat Lady’)

echo the cultural and spatial productions of feminine subjectivity and abjection witnessed in the previous chapter, in examples like Robert De Niro’s Margie character, through semiotics of old age, pathology, and fatness. As Hubbard writes, the idealized citizen is defined “in both gendered and aged terms” (2005: 327). In addition, however, the storyline of Helen Sharp illustrates how abject femininity in the ‘crazy cat lady’ is coupled with discourses of heterosexual failure. In the case of *Death Becomes Her*, the woman-with-cats is queered through a *desexualization* tied to singleness, fatness, and old-age. At other times, the ‘crazy cat lady’ is queered through a discourse of *perverse sexualization*, as in the case of Jenny, one of the four women featured in the documentary *Cat Ladies*. In the aforementioned *20/20* special covering the documentary, Jenny’s pet love is problematized from the start as a barrier to her heterosexual success. Jenny’s plight becomes all the more tragic in light of her sexualization and possibility. She *could* have a

husband and children³². She is pictured putting on makeup. She is described as successful. She is young, white, and slim. Instead she cuddles her cats and not some phantom husband. Whereas Helen Sharp is queered through a discursive desexualization and her inappropriate pet love *follows* from a failure of heteronormativity, Jenny is queered for her *misguided sexualization* and her perverse intimate orientations *towards nonhuman animals* that directly displace heteronormative ideals. She offends both heteronormative and humanist ideals in her perceived replacement of heterosexuality with pet love.

Cats are often made the culprit in the disruption of successful heterosexuality and the heteronormative home, revealing the species hierarchies that subtend these sexual norms. The *WikiHow* article “How to Have Cats Without Being a Crazy Cat Lady” encourages its readers, presumably women-with-cats who are on the edge, to “ditch him [the cat] for a hot date.”³³ Such discourses of the ‘crazy cat lady’ and in/appropriate pet love (re)produce an antagonism between heteronormativity and ‘crazy cat lady’ pet love. The woman-with-cats is thus queered for her failure to achieve ideal sexual success and her perceived preference for pet love.

Just as the ‘crazy cat lady’ governs the possibilities for subject-formation for women-with-cats (and other human-pet animal formations), so too these discourses of heteronormativity operate coterminously with speciesist logics to produce a sexual-species governmentality that regulates both interhuman and interspecies intimacies. In one 2012 blog, the author begins by clarifying that she has a great deal of respect for “the time honoured tradition” of the ‘crazy cat lady’ and might even become one herself some day. But after reading an article about an Israeli

³² This discourse of young white female potentiality serves as the flipside to Margie’s narrative of the ‘fallen’ women. Together, the pair represent the before and after of the ‘crazy cat lady.’

³³ Notably, the cat is masculinized as a stand-in for the phantom boyfriend that awaits ever on the horizon. This gendering of the animal indicates how, within the sexualized relations between humans and animals, the production of sexual subjectivity “depends on sexualized animal bodies and affective pet relations” (Boggs, 30).

woman whose husband divorced her over her 550 cats, she admits trepidation. “I must confess that it made me pause and re-evaluate my plans of crazycatladydom in my twilight years,” she states. The Israeli woman’s narrative and this woman’s reaction center divorce as the problem and thereby (re)produce marriage as a prized heteronormative benchmark and a bulwark against the perversions of “crazycatladydom.” The cats are “homewreckers,” to use the words of the woman in her blog, who invokes the geographic location of ideal romance. Heteronormative imperatives³⁴ (love and marriage) and speciesist hierarchies (human love before pet love) collude to circumscribe the woman’s possibilities for intimacies in the home, both within and across species lines.

The *20/20* Special on *Cat Ladies* expresses these same governmental forces. The host Elizabeth Vargas pities Jenny’s lack of a husband. Echoing the discursive antagonisms between human heterosexual love and cat love seen above, Vargas blames the cats for Jenny’s failure to achieve the ideal home life, saying “16 feline friends aren’t making it any easier for her to find a man.” The director Callan-Jones, for all her good intentions, corroborates this heteronormative imperative, stating plainly that Jenny wants “what every woman wants; a husband, children, what have you.” In this discursive tug-of-war, it is not only heteronormativity that wins out but also the hegemonies of human exceptionalism and anthropocentrism. Following Callan-Jones, Vargas replies exasperatedly “why does she hang on to [the cats]?” Under the pressure to achieve the privileged institutions of intimacy and “the life” they promise (Berlant, 1998), the

³⁴ Strikingly, not a single reference to the ‘crazy cat lady’ imagined her within non-heterosexual relations. Not one positioned the figure in a lesbian, bisexual, or otherwise nonheterosexual subjectivity or relationship. While I would argue nonetheless that the figures of both the spinster and the lesbian serve as absent presences, this compulsory heterosexuality indicates the sexual ambiguity of the figure: the desire of dominant discourse to neither legitimate nor totally discard the figure, but rather to maintain her ambiguity as a resource of governance.

cats become merely an obstacle to be cast aside. Jenny internalizes these same oppositions between her sexual success and her cats. She repeatedly assures the filmmaker that she will not get any more cats, because *then* she would be the “crazy cat lady.” Thus, we can see here how these norms of intimacy produce a biopolitical calculus in which the lives of both women-with-cats and cats themselves are either validated and made to flourish or relegated to neglect, an animal sacrifice for the sake of ‘good’ love.

V.c. Norming The Home, Queering Domestic Ecologies

These narratives enlist inappropriate pet love to produce not just heterosexual failure, however, but failed white female heterosexual *domesticity*. ‘Crazy cat lady’ queerness emerges *spatially* within a geographic imaginary of the reified heteronormative white bourgeois home. Helen Sharp does not just lose her husband; she loses the good bourgeois single-family home as well. The suburban widow lives alone, suggesting a queer invasion of the stereotypical suburban bungalow. Jenny bemoans her underwhelming love life from the space of her unfulfilled bedroom. One internet meme epitomizes this imagination of failed white female heterosexual domesticity: a middle-aged butch white woman sits at her kitchen table, surrounded by dozens of cats, boxed in by the words “HUSBAND? SCREW MEN! I HAVE 100 CATS” (figure 13). The ‘crazy cat lady’ populates her home not with a husband and children, but with colonies of cats. Such transgressions are not merely sexual. They are both spatial and interspecies, played out across and within the scales of conventional intimacy: the self, the body, the interpersonal, and the home.



(figure 13 – The ‘Crazy Cat Lady’ Without a Man)

The idealized bourgeois single-family home and its material architectures play a significant role in the reification of heteronormativity. As Andrew-Gorman Murray writes about the Australian home, “[a] range of discursive structures and material practices has imbricated the detached suburban dwelling with the heterosexual nuclear family norm, consequently idealizing the [home] as a heterosexual space” (2007a: 195). These same heteronormative spatial logics have written themselves into the spaces of the American home as well. The idealized bourgeois single-family home itself emerged within Anglo-colonial societies, the United States among them, out of a desire to make space for the increasingly sentimentalized heteronuclear family (Fishman, 1987), which from the mid-19th century onward came complete with patriarchal imaginations of the ideal housewife and feminized private home (Johnson & Lloyd, 2004). These discourses of ‘crazy cat ladies’ as queer failures of domesticity thus collude with this project of architecting the heteronormative home and, in turn, governing the intimacies therein. As in the other exclusionary matrices I have detailed above, the abject exclusion reifies the idealized

inclusion. The queer(ed) ‘crazy cat lady’ works to discursively shore up the ideal, revealing how the home is “not naturally authentically ‘straight’ but rather actively produced and (hetero)sexualized” (Binnie, 1997: 223).

Yet, as seen in the above antagonisms between cats and boyfriends and the perceived replacement of human love with pet love, women-with-cats queer the home not only by transgressing heteronormative ideals of the home and intimacy but also by perverting their speciesist hierarchies. Thus, I build on the insights of Gorman-Murray and other geographers of sexuality (Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Johnson, 2000; Morrison, 2012b) to examine how the heterosexualization of the home becomes a *more-than-human* production in the spaces of pet love, to see how the home is simultaneously structured by sexuality and species. I argue that we must see the home not only as a space of heteronormalization but also as a space in which nonhuman animals and our conceptions of animality and Nature have played a significant role in the inscription of these sexual norms. These interventions also build upon current pet geographies which have left untouched vital questions of sexuality both within and across species lines.

To construct this optic I borrow from Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and her theories of queer ecology, which assert that “we can see that many modern formations of natural space...are organized by prevalent assumptions about sexuality, and especially a move to institutionalize heterosexuality” (2005: 7). Mortimer-Sandilands and scholars of queer ecology writ large, however, have largely focused on the inscription of heterosexual norms onto conventionally imagined spaces of nature like national parks and wilderness spaces, and they have largely ignored domestic spaces like the home. This lacuna is unsurprising given the predominant placement of “nature as abject and inimical to domesticity” (Griffiths, Poulter, & Sibley, 2000:

68). The home-with-pets is certainly a troubling space in this question of “natural space.” Pets occupy an ambiguous space in the dichotomy between Nature and Culture, animalization and humanization. They are often stuck somewhere in between, neither one nor the other but both. Indeed, as seen in the fearsome imaginations of the ‘crazy cat lady’ and her more-than-human home detailed in the previous chapter, the continued connections of pets to Nature and animality require persistent policing in order to maintain the home as a Human space. Therefore, though we should maintain an attention to the discursive hybridity³⁵ of pets, I nonetheless argue that we must see the home-with-pets as a space of Nature. And like other spaces of Nature, the home and its more-than-human natures have been “organized by prevalent assumptions about sexuality.” In the case of pets in the home, then, I argue that we see imbrications of both humanist and heteronormative structures. To borrow the language of Susan McHugh (2011: 161), “[f]amiliar household pets like cats and dogs serve on the front lines of people’s everyday attempts to work out these problems” of heteronormalizing the intimacies of the home.

With this optic of queer *domestic* ecology we can see how normative discourses of pet love police the possibilities for pet love to queer both human relationships, reorienting bodies away from compulsory marriage and heteronuclear family, and the human/animal divide, reorienting sexuality away from the human altogether. As Alice Kuzniar writes, “one of the major repercussions of pet love is that it reorients companionship and kinship away from the normative strictures of heterosexual coupling and the traditional family” (2008: 207). While I share Kuzniar’s analysis that pet love *can* queer our orientations, I echo Colleen Boggs’s critique that this is not a deterministic truth. *Normative* pet love has proved an important disciplinary tool in the sexual-species-spatial project to reproduce the ideal family and proper interspecies

³⁵ Donna Haraway (2008) often uses the hybridized language of “natureculture” to refer to such ontologies that exist outside binary oppositions.

intimacy (Boggs, 2013). Such governmental projects are not new. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the rise of pet keeping among wealthy bourgeois Anglo women in both Europe and North America was seen as a potential risk of inappropriate maternalism and eroticism between wealthy women and their lap dogs (Cudworth, 2011: 145). These anxieties continue in normative stereotypes of ‘crazy cat ladies’ and these representations operate to discursively and affectively (re)produce the home as a heteronormalized *and* humanist space in which sexual and species norms of intimacy abide. With this optic of queer domestic ecology in focus, I turn now to consider how these norms are spatially reproduced and contested.

The concatenations of heteronormativity and humanism produce a heterosexualized home wherein heteronormative and speciesist hierarchies order spaces and bodies. Unsurprisingly then, ‘crazy cat ladies’ often (re)occupy the home as a site to negotiate these norms of in/appropriate pet love, il/legible feminine subjectivity and abjection, and interspecies intimacy. The home becomes an uncertain and contested space. As Isabel Dyck observes, the home is a “process” in which women’s practices³⁶ often play a central part (2005). As Gorman-Murray details in his analysis of lesbian and gay male domesticities, queering the home occurs via two main avenues: “First, through certain uses of home – activities taking place within domestic space. Second, through changes to the materiality of domestic space itself” (2007a: 195). Women-with-cats, as well as the cats themselves, practice both these strategies, reinventing the home into a queer ecology of “polymorphous domesticit[ies]” (Schiesari, 2013). I detail these spatial-sexual-species contestations through an examination of several spaces in the home often overdetermined by heteronormative, patriarchal, and speciesist logics.

³⁶ Dyck here focuses primarily on practices of care. While I certainly acknowledge that many of women-with-cats’ daily cohabitations with cats include practices of intimate and vital care, I see these practices of care as just a subset of the wider set of women-with-cats’ practices that processually produce the home.

The kitchen space has been structured in its very architecture to discipline female bodies and to materialize practices of normative femininity, wifedom, and motherhood (Johnson, 2006; Johnson and Lloyd, 2004). The kitchen has been for many women, particularly white, suburban, bourgeois women, a place to feed their families, oversee and police their children, and practice feminine domesticity (Johnson, 2006). Moreover, the kitchen, already a space of uncertain boundaries between bodies (Carolan, 2008), holds an important place in the (re)production of humanist hierarchies within the home. Recall from the previous chapter the woman whose friends taunted her over whether she might take her rescue cat on public walks. They followed this taunt by questioning her: “are you gonna let him eat at the kitchen table with you?” While Hubbard (2005) warns that we should keep a close eye to which women’s entries into public space raise alarm, it is also vital to consider what practices *in the private* elicit similar anxiety. In this woman’s cohabitations with a feral cat, anxieties emerge over just how such domestic cohabitations should take place, literally.

‘Crazy cat ladies’ transgress this heteropatriarchal and humanist geography in their uses of the kitchen, enacting Gorman-Murray’s first mode of domestic queering. In the documentary *Cat Ladies*, we meet Sigi, a middle-aged white woman who keeps dozens of cats in her home, many of whom she takes in off the streets. For Sigi the kitchen serves as an important space in the care of and cohabitation with her cats. Cooking gallons of cat food every day in her unapologetically sullied nightgown, Sigi resculpts her kitchen into a queer and more-than-human space. Indeed, the very contestation of these practices can be seen in aforementioned internet meme (figure 13), where the captions of the image and its use on the message board attempt to (re)normalize what might otherwise be seen a space of queer possibility. Through these

reoccupations and queer contestations of space, the kitchen becomes a more-than-human queer ecology.

Perhaps even more potently than the kitchen, the architectures of heteronormativity and humanism have structured the space of the bedroom (Fishman, 1987). In his *History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, Foucault (1990) traces how the parental bedroom of the white bourgeois heteronuclear home has become laden with imperatives of heterosexuality, adulthood, parenthood, and the surveillance of children. The heteronormative sexual anxieties of the bedroom persist, but in homes with domesticated pets there also exists a more-than-human micro-politics of the bedroom and bed space. In Power's (2008) study, the bedroom emerged as one of the most ambiguous and contentious spaces into which pets (she focuses on dogs) have been incorporated over the past half-century. This ambiguity also marks the domesticities of 'crazy cat ladies,' eliciting social anxieties and, in turn, intense surveillance and governance. Jenny of *Cat Ladies* is often pictured in her bed with cats (figure 14). Vargas' comments and Jenny's own sentiments often reproduce the bedroom as a space in which heteropatriarchal pressures manifest into felt experience and practice. Yet, Jenny's daily cohabitations of her bedroom *with her cats* belie the more-than-human nature of the space and the centrality of cats to the reproduction and disruption of the bedroom's sexual and species norms. She spends much of her time in her bed (and other spaces of the home) petting her beloved companions. Indeed, this embodied practice of petting in the bedroom represents what Morrison (2012b) describes as the centrality of touch, a sensory embodiment, to the larger-scale practice of homemaking. Through these cohabitations, the bedroom seems to offer at least a little room for reimagining the space and its sexual expectations. Jenny's petting of her cats in bed inscribes, even if only for the moment, the bedroom as a queer ecology in which heteronormativity and anthropocentrism fail.



(figure 14 – Jenny with her Feline Bedmates)

While these reoccupations of the kitchen and bedroom represent Gorman-Murray’s first avenue – queer uses of the home – we can also see women-with-cats queering the home through the second tactic of materially reworking the built environment. I highlight these queer practices through two examples, both with markedly different social codings. Kate Benjamin, a white woman in her 40s, and her website *Hauspanther* were featured in a 2013 *New York Times Home and Garden* article titled “Cool for Cats”³⁷ (figure 15). Benjamin, her cats, and their spatial practices attempt to rewrite the ‘crazy cat lady’ into a domain of legible subjectivity and legitimate intimacy. As the article explains, she “upend[s] the old stereotype of the frumpy, middle-aged woman surrounded by cats.” She and her cats do this by redesigning and respatializing their material space. Benjamin contours her apartment with cat-friendly furniture, rethinking the domestic space as one built for both humans and cats. Through these changes of

³⁷ Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/19/garden/cool-for-cats.html?_r=1& (Accessed December 22nd, 2013).



(figure 15 – A Stylish Remaking of the ‘Cat Lady’)

material domestic space, Benjamin respatializes and resignifies the “cat woman’s lair,” to borrow the article’s phrasing.

Animating a very different cultural reception, the show *Confessions: Pet Hoarding* centers one episode on the lives of Shelley, her husband, and their 65 cats, whom they call their “children.” Much of the show’s narrative follows how these humans-with-cats resculpt their domestic space to fit the lives of their cats. For instance, the humans sleep on a pull-out couch in their living room, while the other three rooms in the house, including the master bedroom, have been redesigned for the primary use of the cats. Shelley’s husband even cuts holes in the walls to enrich the cats’ environment (figure 16). In both these practices, the cats themselves play a forceful role, through their production of feces and waste, through their intentional movements in and around the space, and through their daily lifeworlds. Thus, I borrow from the argument of



(figure 16 – Shelley’s Husband Reshapes the Home for the Cats)

Birke and Brandt (2009), who argue that gender is a more-than-human “community of practice,” to extend this point and demonstrate how ‘crazy cat lady’ sexuality, or certainly queerness, is a more-than-human “community of practice” in which humans and cats relationally co-produce these practices of sexuality and intimacy. We cannot understand Shelley and her husband’s sexuality without understanding the centrality of the cats to their sexual lives, both semiotically and materially.

Both Benjamin and Shelley queer their homes by upending both heteronormative and speciesist hierarchies. Benjamin lives as a single woman with cats. Shelley and her husband³⁸ sacrifice the master bedroom for the sake of their feline children. But whereas Benjamin’s work, accomplished through the purchase of expensive furniture, is coded as modern, humane, and cool, Shelley and her husband are seen to have gone too far, to have capitulated their human

³⁸ Echoing the constructions of normative masculinity as antithetical to cat love seen in the previous chapter, one online message board about the show describes Shelley’s husband as “wussy” (Source: <http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/topic/3196941-confessions-animal-hoarding/page-6> - Accessed April 15th, 2014).

primacy in the home, to have let the cats take over. “They’re living in a house that belongs to the cats and they’re just living there instead of it being the other way around,” worries Shelley’s sister on the show. I argue that this disparity in social coding indicates how the boundary policing of the Human(ized) home is very real yet floating tool of governance. Moreover, this disparity indicates the social intersectionality and uneven distribution of this governance. Both Benjamin, a wealthy white woman, and Shelley and her husband, lower-class and brown-skinned, could be said to enact queer and more-than-human homes. Yet, it is only Shelley and her husband who *are queered* for their practices.

V.d. Governing and Queering Motherhood and The (More-Than-Human) Family

‘Crazy cat ladies’ queer the ideal bourgeois home through their perversion of its idealized institutions: not only the heteronormative couple, as seen above in the case of Helen Sharp, but also the ideal heteronuclear family. Not only does the ‘crazy cat lady’ have “no husband or boyfriend,” but she also fails to become a mother, to biologically reproduce³⁹. She perverts the human family by substituting human children with a furrier brood. In the aforementioned *SNL* sketch (figure 2), De Niro coos to his cats, calling them all his/her “children.” Similarly, in the Dratch-Giamatti *SNL* sketch, Dratch wants Giamatti to meet her “baby.” “Oh, you’ve got a kid?”, Giamatti squirms. Dratch assures the fearful Giamatti that she doesn’t have a kid, but she is “a mommy”...to her cat Franklin. The date quickly goes south from there⁴⁰. Similarly, the blog “How to Have Cats Without Being A Cat Lady” states that “a cat lady will [often] refer to her

³⁹ Lee Edelman (2004) shortens this imperative to the ideology of “heteroreproductivity.”

⁴⁰ “Since the 18th century, white European and American representations of human-pet intimacies as substitutes for human ones has indicated the ambiguity and anxiety over the proximity of pets to spaces and ontologies of human intimacy, family, and kinship” (Brown, 2010: 66-67; quoted in Boggs, 2013: 174).

cats as her ‘children.’” The ‘crazy cat lady’ thus devolves into a beastly mother, a perversion of heteroreproductivity.

While originally framed as workers or collectible commodities with only tenuous symbolic and material placement within the family, pet animals have over the past half-century been folded into the United States family imaginary (Nast, 2006b). In her study of domesticated pets in Australia over the past 50 years, Emma Power (2008) writes that pet animals have been gradually incorporated into the family and the home. Whereas in the 1950s suburban pets were predominantly kept outside (Grier, 2006), today the majority of households allow their pets into spaces traditionally reserved for human family members: the living room, bedroom, etc. Power argues that the familial enfolding of pets (again, her focus is dogs) has altered the more-than-human family in three central ways: pets are seen as “furry children” deserving care; pets’ animal alterity transfigures the family into a human-animal pack; and pets exert agency to shape the family home. By examining the lived and embodied practices of pets and their more-than-human families, Power argues that within these furry families “belonging is not definitively contingent on human status.”

Though Power acknowledges that in some contexts pets were “brought ‘within’ human expectations of appropriate family and home behaviour” (2008: 552), Power does not thoroughly examine the historically contingent norms of race, class, gender, nation, sexuality, and speciesism and anthropocentrism that structure just what kind of family might be permissible in the first place. Indeed, I echo Colleen Boggs’ hesitancy to embrace overly optimistic analyses of the queerness of pet love, given how pet love has often been “deeply inscribed as [the traditional family’s] core” (2013: 32). Power does not give attention to those individuals whose furry families might *exceed* the bounds of social acceptability altogether. I argue that the kinships of

many ‘crazy cat ladies’ overreach the bounds of legible rewriting; they queer the family to such a degree that their furry affinities cannot be read as livable or lovable. Moreover, given Power’s focus on dogs, I offer the stories of ‘crazy cat ladies’ to provide a species-specific counterbalance, to consider how such more-than-human families operate differently when enfolding felines instead of pups.

Especially contentious within the literature of pet studies and pet geographies has been the question of whether pets are like or unlike children (see Haraway, 2003a). Nast (2006a) argues that pets, though not the same as children, do offer replacements for children, providing more mobile fetishes in a postmodern and psychically melancholic world. Power, on the other hand, argues that the lived encounters and cohabitations between humans and dogs relations “challenge popular depictions of dogs as child substitutes” (2008: 552). I hold a great deal of sympathy for Power’s argument. Indeed, Cudworth’s study of pet keepers indicates that some humans do infantilize their pets and call them their children while others respect species difference and treat their pets *as nonhuman animals* (2011: 164). Power (2008) centers on these micro-scalar embodiments of difference to discount academic arguments and popular sentiment that have counted pets as children (see Hickrod and Schmitt, 1982).

I do not offer this thesis as a foray into this debate over whether cats are or are not like children. Rather, I am interested in how discourses that relate children and pets, be it to conflate or separate them, operate a technologies in the governance of interspecies intimacy. Though the normative discourses of the ‘crazy cat lady’ do refer to women-with-cats confusing their pets for children, I do not see these discourses as concerns over equivalence necessarily. Rather, I argue these discourses invoke equivalence so as to reinscribe difference-as-hierarchy. As Power (2008) points to, the presence of pets in the home engenders a great deal of ontological ambiguity and

therefore such presences require significant boundary policing. Within dominant configurations of the family, family pets, and canines and felines in particular, are humanized (and often infantilized) into a status of being almost-but-not-quite-a-child (Cudworth, 2011). Pets are stuck between a recognition of their importance as nonhuman kin and the constraints of a species hierarchy that must reserve the family as a human relationship. Normative discourses of the ‘crazy cat lady’ edge up to equating children and pets, but they actively sidestep this equation by reinscribing difference as hierarchy. While ‘crazy cat ladies’ are seen to attempt an analogic relationship between human children and feline pets, and indeed this equivalence may be seen to privilege cats over children, dominant discourses securitize this perversion of the (more-than-human) family through the production of analogic *failure* between cats and children. In short, pets are brought into ambiguous balance with human children just enough so as to then reinscribe their inferior difference. Comparative ambiguity in fact reinscribes boundaries. The status of ‘almost but not quite’ reproduces hierarchy. Thus, such representations of ‘crazy cat ladies’ not only reify heteronormative motherhood but also reproduce a humanist hierarchical taxonomy of ‘pets’ and ‘children.’ The normalization of the ‘crazy cat lady’ serves as a containment strategy to reaffirm humanist ontologies of the family at the very moment that nonhuman animals have been precariously folded into the family.

As with all other spaces and relationships of interspecies intimacy, however, the (more-than-human) family also serves as a site to contest these norms. Many women-with-cats use the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure to reinterpret their modes of kinship and family. Corroborating Cudworth’s findings (2011), many women-with-cats in this study referred to their cats in the language of parenthood. One woman writes on her blog that she feels “like a brand new parent,”

showing off photos of her cats⁴¹. One tweet from the *#catladyprobl3ms* thread wrote “I wonder what the cat is getting me for #MothersDay” while another tweeted “and by kids I mean cats because they are my children.” This more-than-human motherhood also manifested in the lives of women-with-cats seen as pet hoarders. The episode of *Confessions* featuring Shelley and her husband opens in a now conventional confessional-style clip of Shelley⁴² face-on to the camera. “I love my family,” she says, and “I would do anything for them. All 65 of them.” Both Shelley and her husband refer to their cats as their “kids.” The show also interviews Shelley’s human relatives, who also use the language of family to refer to the cats, however laced with umbrage and uncertainty it might be. These women have forged multi-species “chosen families” (Weston, 1997) as a means to resist or simply and queerly fail norms of heteroreproductivity, motherhood, and the Human family.

Thus, while dominant discourse animates anxieties over equivalence so as to reinscribe norms of heteroreproductivity and speciesist hierarchy onto women’s intimacies, these women’s language of “children,” these rhetorics of equivalence serve as a tactic to queer the family and to validate more-than-human modes of kinship. However, these equivalences may or not have negative effects for the cats themselves. Shelley repeatedly infantilizes her “babies.” She rejoices in the birth of a new litter. Indeed, she seems so emotionally invested in the figure of the baby/Kitten that she fosters their reproduction by intentionally not having them sterilized; a sort of breeding by neglect. This reproduction, fixed as it is within the space of their modest house, leads to an ‘overpopulation’ that has the potential to threaten the cats’ health and wellbeing.

⁴¹ The family photo operates as a salient technology in the proof and reproduction of heteronormative intimacy. Thus, the presence of animals in photography reminiscent of the family portrait emerged as a tense site in the contestation and il/legitimization of women-with-cats and human or more-than-human kinship.

⁴² Though Shelley is not white-skinned, the inherited norms of white bourgeois femininity and femininity more broadly still impact her normalization.

Thus, this queer ecology should not be thought of as somehow purely liberatory or resistant. Queer resistance or queer failure (Halberstam, 2011) may not necessarily sit cleanly with an ethics of nonanthropocentric care. As Foucault reminds us, “resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (1990: 95). Indeed, this imagination of equivalence and this infantilization might serve as *both* a tactic of queer resistance *and* a technology of anthropocentric neglect or violence. These co-productions of resistance on the one hand with violence on the other require further investigation in future critical pet studies. I point to these complicities, however, to interrogate how this particular mode of interspecies queerness functions within more-than-human intimacies.

V.e. Heavy Petting: Governing And Queering Intercorporeal Intimacy

As seen in the previous chapter, the ‘crazy cat lady’ monstrous or more-than-human body serves as a potent site in the production of subjectivity and abjection. Here, I argue that the *relational* bodies of women-with-cats, particularly as related to questions of sexuality, embrace, pleasure, the erotic, and (inter)corporeal affection, provide a similar space to inscribe, contest, and govern interspecies intimacy. Dominant discourses of the ‘crazy cat lady’ often invoke anxieties over the bodily entanglements and bestial intimacies of pet love. In a telling cartoon (figure 17), Catwoman, the epitome of sexualized femininity – not to mention its conflation with felinity – lies on the couch, cloaked in her leather catsuit, consumed in a melee of cuddling cats. Meanwhile, Batman stands to the side bewildered and aghast, the third wheel to this fur-and-leather orgy. The ‘excess’ of cats in this space displaces the heterosexual relationship, both its imaginations and its bodies; Batman stands to the side after all. In this cartoon, we can see the ways heteronormativity and humanist hierarchies settle upon the bodies of women-with-cats to govern im/proper sexual, intimate, and erotic practice. Through their bodily intimacies,



(figure 17 – *Catwoman in a Fur-and-Leather Orgy*)

Catwoman and her cats pervert not only the heterosexual mandate but also the sexual division of species, hereafter referred to as the sexual-species hierarchy, that undergirds heteronormativity and its injunctions against bestiality.

United States law, as well as that of other European nations and settler colonies, has long conflated bestiality and homosexuality within cognate logics of perversion that queer these acts as ‘crimes against nature’ (Rydstrom, 2000, 2003). While the legalization of sodomy in the United States and the extension of formal political subjecthood to non-heterosexuals have legally decoupled homosexuality from bestiality, the cultural horrors of bestiality persist (Brown and Rasmussen, 2010). The ‘crazy cat lady’ resurrects these queer terrors. As seen above, discourses of the ‘crazy cat lady’ regularly stoke fears over the inversion of the species hierarchy and the replacement of human love with cat love, and this often took very embodied forms. The ‘crazy cat lady’ was often pictured cuddling or petting her cats. The *20/20* special on the film *Cat*

Ladies repeatedly features Jenny lying in bed, intimately petting her cats while in the same breath bemoaning her sexual frustrations and lack of a male partner. “I’d be happy with conjugal visits at this point,” she exclaims. “I’d kick the cats out of the room.” While Jenny’s comments enact a discursive removal of cats from the (hetero)sexualized space of the bedroom, her continued petting belies deeper tensions over the place pets have in human bodily pleasure, sexuality, eroticism, and intimacy and how we police the sexual dynamics of the human/animal divide. Bestiality raises such intense fears because it breaks the species boundary between humans and animals and acts of bestiality with *domesticated* animals in particular exacerbate this transgression by violating not only the divide between human/animal but also Nature/Culture (Brown and Rasmussen, 2010). The injunction against bestiality fulfills our speciesist “desire to differentiate ourselves, erotically and in every other way, from animals” (Singer, 2001)⁴³.

Popular imaginations of ‘bestiality’ often involve the presence of interspecies sex acts or copulation, most often depicted or documented as penile penetration, most often by a male human of an animal (Tortorici, 2012) but at times vice versa (Brown and Rasmussen, 2010). Most popular panics and scholarly accounts of bestiality have remained within such imaginations. Alternatively, sexologist Richard von Kraft-Ebbing coined the term ‘zoophilia’ in 1894 to refer to a wide range of interspecies affective and occasionally embodied relations (Boggs, 2013: 31; see also Beetz, 2005: 99-100). Kathy Rudy (2012) has taken up the term ‘zoophilia’ to unsettle our taken for granted conceptions of what counts as bestiality. This reconceptualization moves away from a genital-centric ontology of sex, sexual orientation, and sexuality, which since the studies of Kinsey have all been defined “in terms of sexual arousal –

⁴³ Bestiality also aids in the production of ‘crazy cat lady’ abjection, as discussed in the previous chapter. As Boggs argues, bestiality “extend[s] beyond human interaction with the animal body; it also produce[s] an animalization of human bodies” (2013: 34).

usually orgasm – rather than...terms such as *affection, marriage or relationship*” (Fausto-Sterling, 2000: 9).

I argue that in Rudy’s efforts to reimagine interspecies sexuality we can see Foucault’s arguments about sex/uality taken to their logical conclusion. Foucault asserts that sex does not determine sexuality but rather the reverse; sexuality provides a discourse that materializes sex as such, compiling together a number of erotic embodied practices under the naturalized sign of ‘sex’ (1990: 154). If Foucault applies this queer logic to human sexuality, then why should we maintain a singular imagination of “bestiality,” “zoophilia,” or any interspecies intimacy? Following this line of thought, Colleen Boggs (2013) argues that bestiality does not exist as a given or discrete category. Indeed, Boggs argues that bestiality has adopted new and complex meanings as certain human cultures have grown more accustomed to the possibilities of intersubjective intimate relationships between humans and *some* animals. As pets have taken on new places in human relationships, we have had to rethink bestiality. Thus, at least in part, taboo bestiality been translated into the socially acceptable practices of pet love, or to use her words “puppy love.”⁴⁴ Bestiality and pet love maintain a messy relationship, however, and this boundary is not static. Thus, Boggs insists that “we need to examine the complex cultural negotiations by which differentiations between bestiality and ‘pet love’ operate” (2013: 31). Indeed, the distinction between ‘bestiality’ and ‘pet love’ is a highly contested biopolitical technology, serving to mark some interspecies intimacies as illegitimate and others as harmless affection.

In light of these arguments, I stake two claims. Firstly, by expanding our imaginations of sexuality and bestiality beyond the “terms of sexual arousal,” this in fact builds the trans-scalar

⁴⁴ Yet again, we fail to find an equivalent for the feline. What about “kitty love”? This seems to be the love that dare not speak its name.

connections between the spaces of intimacy that I have followed throughout this analysis: the body, the interpersonal, and the home. By interrogating the distinction between bestiality and pet love, between sexuality and intimacy, between the erotics of the body and the intimacies of the home, we can thus also question how these separations reify distinctions between scales. Instead of being distinct, we can see how these scales mutually constitute one another, though they may become associated with ‘sexuality’ at some moments and ‘love’ or ‘intimacy’ at others.

Secondly, given the extreme abnormalization of ‘crazy cat lady’ pet love even when direct sex acts rarely appear in representations of the figure, I argue that the ‘crazy cat lady’ represents a potent moment in the cultural negotiation of this biopolitical line between ‘bestiality’ and ‘pet love.’ Normative discourses of the ‘crazy cat lady’ take advantage of the mobility of this boundary to bleed the horrors of bestiality into imaginations of queer pet love. They summon the stigma of the former to govern the latter. Such attention to the moments when bestiality and pet love are semiotically brought together or pushed apart brings attention to how these imaginations do not govern evenly but rather serve in the governance of particular bodies, subjectivities, and intimacies.

As seen throughout these arguments, the relational body of companion species also gained prominence as sites of contested intimacy. While I hesitate to say any women-with-cats intentionally enacted practices of what we might normatively call ‘bestiality’ to resist their normalization, many women-with-cats employed the *relational* human-feline body more generally as a site of resistance and counterhegemonic reinvention. The popular *Twitter* hashtag *#catladyproblems* provides users, predominantly young, white, women, with a digital space for shared self-narrative, communion, humor, and support. While the digital space itself provides a site of counterhegemonic communion and solidarity, these resistances begin first in the meetings

between human and feline bodies. Many women discussed their particular embodied ways of being with cats, narrating their interspecies nuzzles as political resistance to norms of femininity, feminized domestic space, female heterosexuality, the body. One woman tweeted jubilantly, “#happyfriday – bring on the yoga pants, chocolate, and cat snuggles.” This woman’s tongue-in-cheek remark resists normative expectations of her to be typically feminine, to be a certain kind of homemaker, or in the words of the aforementioned “How To...” article to ditch the cat for a hot date. In fact, many women used the hashtag to lampoon heterosexual expectations, with tweets like “Who needs a relationship when you have a cat #catladyproblems” or “#IWishICould go home and cuddle with my cat...#CatLadyProblems.” Flirting with sexual taboo and the line between bestiality and zoophilic intimacy, another woman explains that “my cat is always the little spoon.” Many of the lived practices of women-with-cats that I have detailed in previous chapters, from Lisa’s licks (figure 11) to Jenny’s bedroom snuggles (figure 14), though subject to intense normalization, also enact similar bodily contestations. These embraces of interspecies embodiment position the bodies of women-with-cats as micro-scalar sites to resist and reinvent dominant discourses of ‘crazy cat ladies’ and to validate their modes of femininity, home-making, sexuality and interspecies intimacy.

V.f. Putting Cats in the Closet

Lastly, I’d like to briefly acknowledge how normative representations of the ‘crazy cat lady’ reproduce not only the heterosexualization of private and intimate spaces like the body, the interpersonal, and the home, but also inscribe a particularly speciesist mode of heteronormativity onto *public* spaces as well. As *urbandictionary.com* explained, a ‘crazy cat lady’ is “[a] woman who has 5 or more cats that she constantly tells story's about to random strangers.” The online article “How to Have Cats Without Being a Cat Lady” clarifies: moderate cat love or thinking of

your cat as “children” is “a trait shared by many pet lovers.” Recall the regularity of irregularity that marks the “individual to be corrected.” Here we see how this regularity breeds intense management and boundary policing, determining the ‘good’ cat lovers from the ‘crazy cat ladies.’ The article continues, adding that because of this regularity of feeling, “[w]hat probably matters most is *how* you demonstrate this affection for your cats when talking to other people.” What distinguishes pet love is *where* you show pet love. Inappropriate cat love must remain a private affair, while appropriate cat love can venture into public space and polite conversation as long as the woman-with-cats in question “[e]xamine[s] your own behavior and the signals you’re giving out” and refrains from referring to her cats as children *too much* or publicly displaying *too many* photos of them. This logic reproduces a public/private divide across which proper and improper affections are ordered. These discourses infuse affective governmentalities wherein individuals police public emotion and affection. In a 2012 post on *feministlegaltheory.blogspot.com*, Kaila explains how she repeatedly checks herself in public. Wary not to be too vocal about her adored feline Lilly, she closets her furry affections⁴⁵. These discourses thus repurpose the heteronormativity of the public/private divide (see Hubbard, 2001) to spatialize normative and queer *pet* love. If they must love cats so queerly, they’re told, just don’t do it in public.

V.g. Conclusions: Queering Critical Pet Studies

Pet love is a queer affair. As several scholars of human-pet relationships and cultures have argued, pet love holds immense queer potential. I have offered the above arguments, however, as a balance to these exultations that often focus on the micro-scales of companion species. Pet love, in fact, is a queered affair and these biopolitical formations that work to

⁴⁵ In her discussion of representations of dog love, Boggs (2013) writes that the pet dog has often functioned as a “figure for closeted love” (185).

abnormalize, other, denigrate, delimit, and affectively and materially punish women-with-cats who live outside the bounds of proper heterosexuality and species hierarchy should not be overlooked. Thus, I have offered these analyses as a contribution to the fields of pet geographies and critical pet studies in an effort to infuse questions of sexual norms and difference into current analyses of interspecies intimacy. I have argued that these scales, spaces, and place of intimacy – the relational body, the interpersonal relationships of the heterosexual couple, motherhood, and the family, and the home itself – serve as richly contested sites in the battles for intimacy and legitimacy. I have brought together the insights of animal and queer geographies to assert that we cannot see these spaces through the distanced lenses of sexuality and species anymore. The ‘crazy cat lady’ home encompasses a queer ecology in which sexual politics and speciesist hierarchies mutually reinforce one another. The debates over women-with-cats ‘substituting’ the idealized husband and children with cats serve not to discover some truth but instead as governing discourses in and of themselves that work to reproduce hierarchical thinking that is both heteronormative and human exceptionalist. The bodies of women and cats themselves become contested sites in the ontological securitization of sexual and species hierarchy and of intimacy versus sexuality, proper pet love versus improper bestiality. I offer these insights as an extension and an uneasy but necessary synthesis of animal geographies, posthumanist thought, and queer geographies and theory.

Finally, these discourses and resistances struggle in a contest over what sorts of intimacy will become and whose intimacies will come to be seen as legitimate. Within these contestations, however, I briefly wish to highlight the uncertain biopolitical outcomes for the cats themselves. While, I return to these questions and their necessitations of future research in my final conclusions, we have already begun to see hints of these stakes: women and men who decide not

to get a cat; women who manipulate feline bodies and lives out of a space of queer failure and resistance; the sort of biopolitical calculus that emerges in negotiating the line between a 'cat lady' and a 'crazy cat lady.' A rich exploration of these biopolitical realities is beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, I raise these questions here and now as a reminder that, as Ann Stoler states, "[t]o study the intimate is not to turn away from structures of dominance." (2006: 13-14).

VI.a. Reproducing Intimacy: Normative Pet Love, the Racialization of Interspecies Intimacy, and the Reification of ‘the Intimate’

“The failure to also account for sexualization and racialization as mutually constituted processes is a short-coming that cannot but render queer geographical analyses unduly partial” – Oswin, 2008: 95.

While in the previous chapters I have addressed the production, normalization, and governance of the subjectivities of interspecies intimacy and the relationships of intimacy themselves, in this chapter I turn to question what Lauren Berlant calls ‘the intimate,’ that privileged ideal of what intimacy might mean in the first place, and how it is reproduced in discourses of ‘crazy cat ladies.’ Thus, I explore here my third and final research question: *“within the contested field of the ‘crazy cat lady’ and its production or governance, what norms of intimacy itself are reproduced or remade?”* In particular, I argue that both normative discourses and resistances of the ‘crazy cat lady’ reproduce and reify an imagination of ‘the intimate’ that depends upon a conflation of intimacy and whiteness. I forward this argument through two avenues of related racial discourse.

Firstly, while I have argued throughout this analysis that the ‘crazy cat lady’ enacts imaginations of *white bourgeois* heterosexual femininity through her queer failures of femininity, domesticity, and female heterosexuality, the figure also produces whiteness through her human-pet relationships. I argue that the ‘crazy cat lady’ and her conflation with the pet hoarder colludes with normative white liberal pedagogies of animal treatment to racialize the ‘crazy cat lady’ cum pet hoarder as a white Other, as “not quite white” (Wray, 2006) for her perceived *harm* to animals. This racial project amplifies gendered pressures that have historically burdened femininity with practices of care, especially within the feminized space of the home (Dyck, 2005; Lawson, 2007), while also denigrating those very same practices.

Next, I turn to recent queer of color analyses that have critiqued the (hetero)normalization of intimacy, for its reification of whiteness, the home, the idealized bourgeois family, and liberal ideologies of property. Given the recent historical rise in pet keeping and thus of interspecies intimacies within the home, I argue that the ‘crazy cat lady’ as a failure of normative intimacy relocates these racial anxieties to the realm of pet love. She is not only a failure of intimacy but also a failure of *whiteness as intimacy*, and thus the ‘crazy cat lady’ is produced as a white Other through her perceived perversion of idealized intimacy, both with other humans and with cats.. Given the conflation of normative intimacy with whiteness, what Eng (2010) calls the “racialization of intimacy,” it seems unsurprising that the majority of those women reclaiming the figure, who are able to do so in ways aesthetically and culturally pleasing to bourgeois sensibilities, are white. Thus, as hinted in my previous analysis, I close with a consideration of these normativities that have gone largely unconsidered in pet geographies. With these arguments I hope to build yet unmapped bridges between critical whiteness studies, pet geographies, and queer of color critique.

As Oswin notes above, the sexualization of any body necessarily entails the racialization of that body as well. Extending this argument, then any consideration of the politics of pet love and interspecies intimacy must include an eye towards racial forces. This is not to say that race is the only salient formation in (re)productions and reifications of ‘the intimate.’⁴⁶ Rather, this attention to race reflects current directions in geographies of intimacy, my own interests as researcher, and the empirical field of pet love and ‘crazy cat ladies,’ in which whiteness appeared as a glaring pattern. Indeed, this imperative to attend to the racialization of pet love could be seen through multiple optics. Animalization is necessarily a gendered and racial project (Boggs, 2013;

⁴⁶ See Brown, 2012.

Claire Jean Kim; 2014). Feminization is necessarily a racial project (Crenshaw, 1991). And, as a growing number of queer and queer of color scholars have argued, intimacy itself is necessarily a racial project (Eng, 2010; Legg, 2010; Lowe, 2006; Puar, 2007; Shah, 2005; Stoler, 2006). Thus, I offer this chapter as an addition to current pet geographies and critical pet studies that have largely unquestioned the racialization of the bodies of pet love⁴⁷ and as an infusion of ‘the question of the animal’ into current geographies that consider the racial and sexual politics of intimacy.

VI.b. The White ‘Crazy Cat Lady’

Throughout both normative representations of the ‘crazy cat lady’ *and* counterdiscursive resistances by individual and collective ‘crazy cat ladies,’ the human body involved was almost exclusively white. In normative figurations of the ‘crazy cat lady,’ only one representation featured a black body. In counterdiscursive *representations* that reclaimed the figure, only three women-with-cats were black: the three Hollywood actresses included in the aforementioned 2013 New York Magazine article *The 50 Most Fabulous (And Famous) Cat Ladies of All Time*. And while I cannot account for the racialization or racial identity of every author of every blog or every member of every online ‘cat lady’ community, the vast majority of major contributors and creators were white. The creator of @catladyprobl3ms (figure 6), the founder of the website Catsparella, the women of *Real Cat People of Minneapolis*, Lisa of *My Strange Addiction*, the face of *catster.com*’s “Ask A Cat Lady” series, the spokesperson for Alley Cat Allies, all four

⁴⁷ While Nast (2006a, 2006b) considers the disproportionate burden of the commodified pet industry on the labor of black and brown bodies, she does not consider the racialization of pet lovers themselves.



(figure 18 – *The Crazy Cat Lady Board Game*)

women featured in promotions for the Crazy Cat Lady board game (figure 18), and Kiri Blakely, who wrote the story about the woman mocked for taking in a stray cat; all of these women were young and white.

VI.c. Racializing the ‘Crazy Cat Lady’: Pet Hoarding and White Trash

As I have argued above, normative imaginations of monstrosity and pathology produce a metonymic slip between the ‘crazy cat lady’ and the pet hoarder. The site *urbandictionary.com* describes the ‘crazy cat lady’ as a woman who “keeps dozens or more pet cats...in a small house and refuses to give away or sell them even for the sake of the safety of the cats or herself.” In light of the overwhelming whiteness of the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure, such connotations with pet hoarding also collude with racialized and classed ideologies of animal and pet treatment to mark

the ‘crazy cat lady’ as a failure of *white* liberal subjecthood. Since the 17th century writings of Western liberal political thinker John Locke, dominant discourse has “made kindness to animals crucial for the formation of the liberal subject” (Boggs, 2013: 35). Elaborated in Locke’s *Thoughts on Education* (1693), such pedagogies were especially important for the education and inculcation of illiberal children into liberal subjecthood. Locke’s pedagogy “suggested that we gain our humanity by performing acts of kindness to animals and located subject formation in the relationship between different species” (Boggs, 2013: 35). In lived sociohistorical contexts, however, such requisites for human ontology have been constitutive of not just human but *liberal, white, bourgeois* human subjectivity. Victorian-era pet-keeping and anti-animal cruelty campaigns (Kreilkamp, 2005) and contemporary petting zoos (Shukin, 2011) have all served as technologies to nurture a certain civility towards nonhuman animals, a distinctly “bourgeois faculty of feeling” (Shukin, 2011: 21). These spaces of human-animal encounter operate as a technology of affective governance to demarcate civility from savagery, white bourgeois liberal subjectivity from abjection. As Boggs argues, “affect is historically produced and regulated, and this affective ambivalence is central to the process by which subject formation occurs in the biopolitical state” (2013: 11). I extend Boggs’ argument to argue that normative pet love and intimacy mark another mode of human-pet treatment in which white liberal subjectivity is inculcated and reified.

Notably, this is not a case in which symbolic animality marks the racialized body but rather the body is racialized through its relationships with actual animals. Indeed, norms of ‘good’ animal treatment, care, and even love have regularly been used in the racialization and othering of non-white populations. This project can be witnessed in the racialized criminalization of NFL quarterback Michael Vick over his dog fighting rings (Kim, 2014; Tarver, 2013), the

bans by multiple U.S. cities against Santeria religious animal killings (Elder, Wolch, & Emel, 1998), the anti-whaling campaigns against the Makah native tribe (Kim, 2014); or white suburban ire over the slaughter of cattle by black South Africans in previously segregated neighborhoods (Ballard, 2010). As Heidi Nast argues, powerful groups have “used the rights of animals to ‘other’ those cultural groups that have different sensibilities about the animal world” (2006b: 303).

Human-pet relationality presents a rich biopolitical field in which normative pet love assists in the production of white liberal subjectivity, abjection, and humanity. Whereas the animalization of the body serves to produce the inhuman, such depictions of cruelty towards animals mark the body as *inhumane*, producing similar effects but couched in language of idealized liberal ethics and pedagogy. Whereas all of the above examples track the racialization of non-whiteness onto black and brown bodies via ideologies of animal treatment, instead I consider these representations of the ‘crazy cat lady’/pet hoarder as a project in the production of normative and failed whiteness, of producing the *white* Other. The ‘crazy cat lady’ was predominantly featured as white and in the conflation with the pet hoarder this whiteness becomes associated with ideologically ‘unwhite’ ways of treating animals. Borrowing from Matt Wray, I argue that like the epithet “white trash” the term ‘crazy cat lady’ serves as a “boundary ter[m] that ha[s] not only marked out a despised and stigmatized white other but enabled the articulation and rearticulation of white as a bounded cultural identity” (Wray, 2006: 135). In her manifestation as a pet hoarder who treats pets in a manner inappropriate with her expected racial status, the ‘crazy cat lady’ becomes “not quite white.”

By displacing the ‘crazy cat lady’/pet hoarder from the realm of legible white subjectivity, such discourses produce the normative white ‘good’ pet owner, be it the white male bourgeois dog owner of conventional imaginations or the predominantly white women who

produce blogs and pet-based social networking and consumption sites. Indeed, the vast majority of counterdiscourses collected in this research came from white women, often younger. The creator of @catladyprobl3ms, the founder of Catsparella, the face of *catster.com*'s "Ask A Cat Lady" series, the spokesperson for Alley Cat Allies, Kiri Blakely, and Kristiina Wilson, a young white female photographer features in a *catsparella.com* article titled "One Cool Cat Lady" (figure 19); all of these women are white.

These productions of the good 'crazy cat lady' reinscribe and amplify the abjection of the pet hoarder. Recall the ways Shelley and her husband were queered for their failure of bourgeois family norms in contrast to the idolization of Kate Benjamin. The pet hoarder often served as the wastebin of racialized and illiberal abjection, a safely monstrous and unintelligible body against



(figure 19 – The Young White Cool 'Cat Lady')

which any reclamation might foil itself. The Crazy Cat Lady Society quickly clarifies in its opening page that it “completely condemn[s] hoarding animals.”⁴⁸ Such exclusions do not necessarily only come from white bodies, however. Liberal subjectivity has granted whiteness upon certain proper non-white bodies, including those who practice proper pet relationality and Lockean pedagogy. As Boggs (2013) cites in her analysis, proper dog ownership played a central role in the instantiation of president Barack Obama and the first family as proper liberal subjects. As Obama stated during his first meeting with their new dog Bo, “We want to make sure that we’re responsible dog owners, and we hope everyone is, too” (quoted in Boggs, 2013: 2).

While I do not wish to in any way diminish the intense violences visited upon animal bodies by some people we might call pet hoarders, the racialized, classed, sexualized, and gendered legacies of such discourses give me pause. Indeed, I worry that the current discourses of pet hoarding put forward by animal advocacy organizations focus largely on questions of pathology or criminality while failing to engage the sociospatial production and gendered burden of pet hoarding. As of 1999, roughly 76% of all individuals reported hoarding animals were women (Patronek, 1999). Moreover, cats are the most commonly hoarded animal. Within the wider *dispositif* of pet love that conflates the ‘crazy cat lady’ and pet hoarding, such depoliticizing condemnations fail to consider the gendered burden of pet hoarding and therefore they risk reproducing the very discourses that might play some part in the production of pet hoarding. Given the historical reification of bourgeois whiteness through such liberal pedagogies, these discourses of normative pet treatment and even loving care might say as much about anxieties over social difference as they do about genuine concern for nonhuman animals.

⁴⁸ The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals defines animal hoarding as an “[i]nability to provide even minimal standards of nutrition, sanitation, shelter and veterinary care, with this neglect often resulting in starvation, illness and death.”

Moreover, these reproduced ideologies of normative treatment might prevent some humans from caring for cats when that care would exceed the bounds of acceptability.

Lastly, I want to emphasize the distinctly *placed* nature of these anxieties as they occur within the feminized space of the home. Thus, I extend these critical race and critical whiteness arguments to their geographic application in the study of pet love's *where* and how spatial settings serve in the reproduction of normative intimacy. Given the overwhelming predominance of home-placed geographic imaginaries of the 'crazy cat lady,' such ab/normalizations of her pet love, care, and harm cannot be seen aspatially. As I have argued above, anxieties over the 'crazy cat lady' and pet hoarder garner their greatest intensity when seen as failures of white bourgeois feminine domesticity. Such fears invoke historical associations of pet love and care with white bourgeois women *in the home* (Grier, 2006). The feminized home has often been reified (and simultaneously denigrated) as a space of caregiving by women (Dyck 2005; Lawson, 2007). As I have argued about all normative imaginations of the 'crazy cat lady' and pet hoarder, these discourses gain their abjecting force through their placement in geographic imaginaries of ideal feminine domesticity in the home. The idealized home becomes both a backdrop and a metric for white bourgeois feminine subjectivity. Thus, these discourses of normative, 'responsible,' or even 'caring' pet love racialize 'crazy cat ladies' as "not quite white" through liberal ideologies of pet treatment that gain extra weight through the recitation of the home as a space expectant of women's care. In this way, these discourses produce a double bind in which women-with-cats are both expected to uphold ideals of care in the home while also being othered if they enact these practices of care in excess of appropriate bounds. Throughout these discourses, we see the continual emergence of whiteness as a standard of proper pet love and intimacy, animated in these cases through a focus on the proper care and treatment of pets.

VI.d. The Racialization of Interspecies Intimacy

These discourses function to racialize the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure for her failure to embody white bourgeois subjectivity through liberal ideologies and pedagogies of proper animal treatment. By failing to enact the proper “faculty of feeling” expected of white bourgeois femininity, by practicing an improper form of love, the ‘crazy cat lady’ is placed into a category of subordinate whiteness. While this racialization functions in one valence through this pedagogy of proper animal treatment, I argue that this production of white Otherness is amplified by norms of ‘the intimate’ itself as it is particularly tied to whiteness, property, and the home. In this argument, I briefly review queer and queer of color critiques of intimacy. Next, I draw on a number of arguments and evidence that I have raised throughout my analyses but that I use here to consider how they uphold certain racial and class norms of intimacy.

In his deconstruction of the 2003 *Lawrence v. Texas* Supreme Court decision that decriminalized sodomy, queer and critical race theorist David Eng (2010) critiques the ruling for its liberal moves that reify the public/private divide and in turn its complicities with structures of patriarchy, heteronormativity, and white privilege. The majority opinion of justice Kennedy couched its ruling in the language of sanctioned “consensual sexual intimacy” and “intimate sexual conduct” (quoted in Eng, 2010: 42), thus giving its sanction not to the queer right to fuck but to “couples in the private domain of the monogamous bedroom” (*Ibid*, 42). Within this assimilationist approach, the valorization of queer ways of being depends not on an acknowledgment of queer difference but instead upon a discourse of rights that reifies intimacy as an idealized, depoliticized, and privatized sphere. Moreover, the court’s veneration of intimacy neglected the interracial love triangle that sat at the center of the case, preferring to focus instead on a deracialized, colorblind emphasis on two-partner intimacy and love. “In this

genealogy,” Eng argues,” intimacy is indexed to a notion of privacy, insistently figured as relations of family and kinship in the space of the bourgeois home, as opposed to the public realm of work, civil society, and the state” (2010: 43). Eng extends this present-day reification of intimacy to its historical imbrications with ideologies of property. European liberal philosophy locates intimacy and privacy among the privileged ideological possessions of the liberal subject. “[T]he European man established his right to self-possession” through property, first through the possession of “body, interiority, mind, and spirit” and later through relations of property “in its more complex political form – in marriage, family, civil society, and the state” (2010: 44). As Lisa Lowe elaborates, “the ‘intimacy’ within the family was the property of the individual becoming ‘free’” (2006: 201). Thus, the possession of intimacy within the private realm – the “right to privacy” – stood as the defining property right of the modern liberal subject. Meanwhile, all those who have historically fallen outside of liberal subjecthood have had neither the material nor ideological access to intimacy⁴⁹.

Eng expands on Lowe’s critiques of the ‘outside’ of intimacy to argue that “intimacy might be regarded as a type of racialized property right” that is biopolitically distributed only to those “able to afford the comforts of bourgeois domesticity” (2010: 45). Within current moves to codify and reify intimacy as a moral ‘good’ and right, as in the movements for gay marriage equality that Eng critiques, this privilege largely remains the purview of white subjects and whiteness more generally. Eng builds on Cheryl I. Harris’ foundational article “Whiteness as Property” (1993), in which Harris argues that legal codifications of property have “settled expectations of relative white privilege as a legitimate and natural baseline” (1714-1721). Given

⁴⁹ This argument begins to resonate with Heidi Nast’s (2006a, 2006b) arguments about the racialized human labor left on the “outside” of pet love, though this presents a rich and yet unexamined research field. Shukin’s (2011) study on the racialized labor of the meat industry begins to touch on similar questions.

the status of intimacy as a property right itself, Eng argues that intimacy functions as a privileged property right of whiteness. One must attain whiteness in order to possess property, including the possessions of intimacy and privacy. Eng calls this the “racialization of intimacy.” This perpetuation of intimacy, property, and whiteness as co-constitutive metrics of subjectivity also reproduces the racialized, patriarchal, and heteronormative public/private divide, wherein only certain privileged bodies can access the private sphere, particularly the idealized bourgeois home that serves as its iconic pinnacle. This uneven field reproduces idealized intimacy as such.

I build on Eng’s arguments and the insights of queer and queer of color critiques of intimacy and its governance to ask how the ‘crazy cat lady’ figure transgresses ideals of intimacy through her queer pet love and how the figure operates as a technology to reproduce these norms of property, whiteness, and intimacy via discourses of human-pet relationality. Why does the ‘crazy cat lady,’ depicted in constant violation of the bourgeois home and its ideals of intimacy and femininity, consistently appear as white? As I have already argued, this is in part because of her illiberal violation of proper animal treatment. I would also argue, however, that she is racially queered for her failure to uphold idealized intimacy, for her failure to attain proper intimacy in the configurations of marriage and family, for her transgressions of the bourgeois home, and for her failure to maintain the proper relationship to pets as property. Her whiteness makes such failures all the more stinging. She has the racial privilege of property, but in her failure she is yet “not quite white” and becomes the white Other.

I have already explored several of these transgressions of intimacy. As I argued in the previous chapter, the ‘crazy cat lady’ queers white bourgeois heteronormative ideals of heterosexual coupling, motherhood, relational embodiment, and the home. Moreover, these transgressions of intimacy take a particularly racial and classed tone in representations of the

‘crazy cat lady.’ In these representations, the ‘crazy cat lady’ repeatedly fails to properly possess multiple ideals of property ownership, the prized ideological possessions of liberal subjectivity. She fails to possess intimacy properly, as we have seen. But the ‘crazy cat lady’ is also pictured as failing to maintain proper ownership over those *material* possessions that serve as icons of intimacy: material wealth and the white bourgeois home. If intimacy is only accessible to those “able to afford the comforts of bourgeois domesticity” (Eng, 2010: 45), then normative discourses put the ‘crazy cat lady’ in the red. One *urbandictionary.com* entry defines the figure as “white trash” and other illustrations picture her in derelict homes (e.g. a “trailer”) and drab clothing (e.g. Helen Sharp in *Death Becomes Her*)⁵⁰. These failures to properly possess material property (e.g. the material house) index other failures to possess immaterial property (e.g. the intimacy of the home and its idealized relationships).

But I would also argue that these transgressions of idealized intimacy gain extra weight through their transgressions of another proprietary relationship: the ownership of nonhuman animals. While Eng enumerates a series of fundamental and complex property relations that subtend liberal subjectivity, he does not include the property of animal bodies. Pets are intensely commodified forms of private property, however (Cudworth, 2011: 71; Nast, 2006b; Srinivasan, 2013). Thus, an intimate relationship with what is formerly meant to be property transgresses binaries between subject/object and human/animal. For this reason, acts of bestiality have been given the status not only of a crime against nature or society, but also a crime against property (Rydstrom, 2003). Pets, however, are a particularly messy form of property. Pets often fail to obey ontologies and territorialities of property, rummaging in a neighbor’s yard or running off

⁵⁰ In actuality, the largely unsubsidized and privatized care of pets creates an immense financial burden on women who care for a large number of cats. The materiality and political economy of this is beyond the scope of this study, but it should be noted that poverty and other material realities can be a very real deterrents against those who might otherwise care for cats.

altogether (Howell, 2000). Indeed, cats and especially feral cats, due to their status as semi-domesticated, epitomize this ambiguity, holding an unclear place between public and private, wildness and property, wildness and domestication (Griffiths, Poulter, & Sibley, 2000). Thus, in her interspecies intimacies, the ‘crazy cat lady’ not only transgresses the white relationship of heteronormative intimacy. But in queering this intimacy with a pet, with a body that is meant to be property itself, the ‘crazy cat lady’ doubly transgresses the triumvirate of whiteness-property-intimacy. And for these transgressions, the ‘crazy cat lady’ is produced as the white Other, thus reinforcing ideal whiteness and ideal white intimacy.

These transgressions do not come without their cost. These failures to properly possess intimacy serve to racialize the ‘crazy cat lady,’ placing her in a space of abject whiteness. Indeed these abnormalizations of ‘crazy cat lady’ intimacy support queer of color analyses that “queerness [is] a process of racialization” (Puar, 2007: xi). Following the analyses of critical whiteness studies, I argue that such depictions of failed intimacy, alongside the unwavering imagination of the ‘crazy cat lady’ as white, indicates another valence of racialization through which the figure becomes “not quite white” or, to use the language of popular discourse, “white trash.”⁵¹ These failures of whiteness become all the more acute because these ‘crazy cat ladies’ *could* achieve ideal white bourgeois intimacy and subjectivity.

⁵¹ As a bit of anecdotal evidence, a friend of mine who lives in Philadelphia, piqued by the sound of my research, recently told me a story that indicates the racial project of the ‘crazy cat lady.’ She lives in a mixed-ethnicity working class neighborhood. She herself is from a middle/upper class background. Allegedly, while walking down her street one day, she spied a middle-aged woman down the street from her sitting on her porch. As she came closer to the woman, she noticed the woman was suckling a cat at her breast. Aghast and horrified, she quickly spread the story among her friends. When I asked her about the woman’s race, she responded blatantly “white trash.” The inclusion of trash echoes the necessity to reinscribe not racial similarity but racial proximity, difference, and hierarchy.

These failures of whiteness produce felt costs, as well. As Eng explains, intimacy is only afforded to those who are “able to afford the comforts of bourgeois domesticity” (2010: 45). I briefly want to note, however, how this intimacy is revoked from certain ‘crazy cat ladies’ and pet hoarders. While the proper housewife with husband and pets maintains her right to privacy and her possession of intimacy, the pet hoarder no longer affords such rights. This can be seen in the invasions and house arrests of many pet hoarders. In fictional portrayals, this revocation of privacy comes to Helen Sharp when she is evicted from her squalid apartment and institutionalized in an asylum. In the lived experiences of women-with-cats these invasions come in the form of both informal and formal authority. Shelley and her husband are visited by both the *Confessions* camera crew and a male veterinarian who instructs them in the ways of responsible pet ownership and sterilization. Sigi of *Cat Ladies* is subjected to the authority of a male animal control officer. Lloyd, a young man of color also featured on *Confessions*, receives a letter from animal control requiring him to capture and sterilize the stray cats that live under his house, indicating the attempts by state authority to herd the ambiguous category of the feral back inside the bounds of private property⁵². And in the 2005 case of Ruth Kneuve, 82, of Fairfax County, Virginia, she faced similar discipline by animal control officers and juridical prosecution.

Importantly, such actions often work for the health and wellbeing of the nonhuman animals in question. Indeed, such invasions of human privacy could be seen as counteractions against the invasions of animal privacy and bodily autonomy. However, these arguments are beyond the scope of this study. Instead, I wish to simply point to the conflicts of human intimacy and privacy at play. For it is worth noting that most often, and as in the case of Ruth Kneuve,

⁵² For more on the legal, discursive, and spatial governance of ‘stray’ animals, see Srinivasan (2013).

the impetus for police action does not come from direct contact with animal abuse, but rather from the violation of the *neighbor's* intimate and private space, often in the form of smell or noise. Thus, I argue that, at least in part, these revocations of non-normative intimacy function as a tool of securitization against the violations of normative intimacy that such intense cohabitations of humans and cats risk. With these final examples, we can see the interconnections between productions of whiteness through liberal pedagogies of animal treatment that I detailed above on the one hand and productions of whiteness through failures of proper intimacy on the other.

By considering, in the language of Eng, the “racialization of intimacy” but extending this analysis to contexts of *interspecies* intimacies like the keeping or even hoarding of cats, I argue that pet love operates as a conduit for racial, classed, gendered, speciesist, and sexual anxieties. As Eng argues, “to borrow from Wahneema Lubiano, ‘race no longer talks about race,’ but is sublated into normative discourses of privacy, intimacy, bourgeois domesticity, marriage, family, and kinship.” In a cultural context in which cats exist in intense intimacies of family, kinship, and the home, I extend this argument to suggest that “race no longer talks about race,” but instead it barks and meows about the lives of humans and pets.

VI.e. Conclusions: Race, Gender, Species, Sexuality, and the Reproduction of Intimacy

In this chapter, I have explored my final research question, asking how the ‘crazy cat lady’ and serves in the reproduction and reification of ‘the intimate’ as such. I have focused this exploration on how intimacy intersects racial formations, in particular detailing how race and whiteness informs ideals of intimacy as proper pet treatment and ideals of intimacy as a proper ideological possession of liberal subjectivity. I offer this final analysis to build current literatures of critical race theory and whiteness studies, pet geographies and critical pet studies, and queer

and queer of color critiques of intimacy. In this analysis of the white Other of intimacy, I hope to craft a more nuanced if perhaps messier analysis that bring together Lisa Lowe's (2006) call to consider the outside of intimacy and Heidi Nast's (2006a) call to study the outside of pet love. The 'crazy cat lady' constitutes the outside of both, transgressing norms of humaneness and humanity, femininity and sexuality, whiteness, property, and intimacy.

VII.a. Conclusions? The Biopolitics of Pet Love, the Future of Pet Geographies

“These discourses produce a normative imagination of ‘the intimate’ that operates “not only [as] the sphere of individual subjectification, but also [as] a site for ordering populations”
 - Oswin and Olund, 2010: 62.

The micro-scalar inner workings of companion species are complex and immensely political, to be sure. In this thesis, however, I have attempted to refocus our attentions on the interconnected forces that structure these interspecies intimacies across multiple scales, spaces, places, and axes of social difference. I have argued that the ‘crazy cat lady’ sculpts a highly contingent field in which the subjectivities, relationships, and even the ontologies of intimacy are (re)produced, contested, and governed.

In chapter IV, I argued that discourses of the feminine Other gain their abjecting force through their invocation of a series of spatial logics also structured by norms of gender, sexuality, race, and class. These crystallize in the figures of the woman-with-cats outdoors, the crazy, excessively emotional and pathological ‘crazy cat lady’ body and home, the monstrous woman-with-cats body, and the anxiety inducing more-than-human home. These figures, however, are negotiated by women-with-cats who variably reproduce and resist these norms, often unevenly in ways that produce their own (re)normalizations. I have offered chapter IV as a geographically grounded study of the more-than-human production of subjectivity that infuses questions of gender difference into current pet geographies and critical pet studies.

In chapter V, I argued that discourses of normative pet love serve as technologies to regulate the relationships of both interhuman and interspecies intimacy. ‘Crazy cat ladies’ are queered for their transgressions of the heteronormalization of intimacy and intimate spaces,

including the body, the interpersonal, the home, and the public/private divide. I drew on the insights of queer ecology to combine analyses of sexuality and species and to see how these various spaces host contestations over not just sexual normativities but also species hierarchies. I have offered chapter V as a queer intervention into current analyses of pet love that have not considered the indissociable entanglements of intimacy and sexuality.

Lastly, in chapter VI, I argued that ‘the intimate’ itself, as a privileged and normed realm of interpersonal relations, is reproduced and reified in normative discourses and counterdiscursive reclamations of the ‘crazy cat lady.’ Intimacy itself has become attached to conflated norms of whiteness, property, and ideal liberal subjectivity constructed through proper relationships with and treatment of nonhuman animals and pets. Through her production as the white Other, the ‘crazy cat lady’ shores up these norms of intimacy as a vital site in the reproduction of privileged whiteness.

With these arguments, I have explored my originary research questions. Moreover, I have sought to provide both corrections to past oversights and possibilities for future research directions. Thus, I offer the entirety of this thesis as a step forward in critical pet studies, in understanding the “outside” of pet love, in the collaboration between animal, feminist, queer, and critical race geographies, and in the critical study of intimacy as a whole.

In closing, I wish to raise a number of questions to which this research has attempted to speak but whose rich and full engagement deserves future research. As I have hinted throughout this thesis, intimacy represents a biopolitical force and field in which some intimacies and some lives are made to flourish while others are neglected, punished, or made uninhabitable and unimaginable in the first place. As Oswin and Olund argue above, the *dispositif* of intimacy serves as a biopolitical tool in the ordering of bodies and populations. We have seen the

beginnings of such ordering in this research: in Jenny's insistence that she will not get any more cats; in Shelley's breeding of her cats out of her infantilizing love; in the persistent discursive positioning of cats and pet love in opposition to other modes of intimacy, love, and care.

While this research has attempted to catalogue those humans and nonhuman ordered and often left "outside" of normative pet love, I suggest that critical pet studies and critical geographies more generally might consider how these "outsides" intersect others. Indeed, I wonder about the biopolitical prospects of pet populations in shelters. When proper intimacy seems to be the only acceptable context for the care of pets, what are the biopolitical possibilities and consequences for so many neglected domesticated animals who exist outside the realms of intimate and familial love? Moreover, I wonder about those nonhuman animals whose ontologies of animality prevent them from ever entering the privileged realm of normative intimacy. As an example, the Copenhagen zoo recently executed a two-year-old giraffe, Marius, because they did not possess sufficiently relevant genes. In response to public outcry, the zoo director responded in an interview, "[a] giraffe is not a pet; it's not like a dog or cat that becomes part of the family." Such a statement reifies the family, even the more-than-human family, as the privileged site of intimacy. And in this statement intimacy becomes a biopolitical space of safety.

I raise these two examples – neglected pet animals in shelters and zoo animals beyond the pail of the family pet – to highlight future avenues of inquiry at the center of interspecies intimacy, its governance, and its own biopolitical power. These questions of the biopolitics of pet love deserve rich investigation and offer opportunities for future research. While this thesis has sought to explore one "outside" of pet love and interspecies intimacy – those who love too much, future research might explore these other outsides, analyzing the complex and intersecting inclusions and exclusions that comprise the *dispositif* of intimacy.

VIII. Works Cited

- Adams, C. J. (1990). *The sexual politics of meat: a feminist-vegetarian critical theory*. New York: Continuum.
- (1994). *Neither man nor beast: feminism and the defense of animals*. New York: Continuum.
- Adams, C. J., & Donovan, J. (1995). *Animals and women: feminist theoretical explorations*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Agamben, G. (2004). *The open: man and animal*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Ahmed, S. (2004). Affective Economies. *Social Text*, 22(2).
- Anderson, K. (1995). Culture and Nature at the Adelaide Zoo: At the Frontiers of “Human” Geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 20(3), 275–294.
- (1997). A walk on the wild side: a critical geography of domestication. *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(4), 463–485.
- Antonio, D. (1995). Of Wolves and Women. *Animals and women: feminist theoretical explorations* (pp. 213–230). Durham: Duke University Press.
- Bakke, M. (2009). The Predicament of Zoopleasures: Human-Nonhuman Libidinal Relations. *Animal Encounters* (pp. 221–242). Leiden; Boston: Brill.
- Babbie, E. R. (2010). *The Basics of Social Research* (5th ed.). Wadsworth Publishing.
- Badgett, M. V., & Folbre, N. (1999). Assigning care: Gender norms and economic outcomes. *International Labour Review*, 138(3), 311–326.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail (1968) Rabelais and his World, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press).
- Ballard, R. (2010). “Slaughter in the suburbs”: livestock slaughter and race in post-apartheid cities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33(6), 1069–1087.
- Bear, C., and Eden, Sally (2008). Making space for fish: the regional, network and fluid spaces of fisheries certification. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 9(5), 487–504.
- Beetz, A. M. (2005). “New insights into bestiality and zoophilia.” in Beetz and Podberscek, eds., *Bestiality and zoophilia: sexual relations with animals*, 98–119.
- Belk, R. W. (1996). Metaphor Relationships with Pets. *Society and Animals*, (4), 121–146.

- Benson, E. (2011). *Animal Writes: Historiography, Disciplinarity, and the Animal Trace. Making Animal Meaning*. Ann Arbor: Michigan State University Press.
- Berlant, L. G. (1997). *The queen of America goes to Washington City: Essays on sex and citizenship*. Duke University Press.
- (1998). Intimacy: A Special Issue. *Critical Inquiry*, 24(2), 281–288.
- Besio, K., Johnston, L., & Longhurst, R. (2008). Sexy beasts and devoted mums: narrating nature through dolphin tourism. *Environment and Planning A*, 40(5), 1219.
- Binnie, J. (1997). Coming out of Geography: towards a queer epistemology? *Environment and planning. D, Society & space.*, 15(2), 223.
- Birke, L., and Brandt, K. (2009). Mutual corporeality: Gender and human/horse relationships. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 32(3), 189–197.
- Blunt, A. (1999). Imperial Geographies of Home: British Domesticity in India, 1886-1925. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 24(4), 421–440.
- (2005). Cultural geography: cultural geographies of home. *Progress in Human Geography*, 29(4).
- Blunt, A., and Dowling, R. M. (2006). *Home*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Blunt, A., & Varley, A. (2004). Geographies of home. *Cultural Geographies*, 11(1), 3–6.
- Braun, B. (2002). *The intemperate rainforest: nature, culture, and power on Canada's west coast*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Brickell, K. (2012). "Mapping" and "doing" critical geographies of home. *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(2), 225–244.
- Boggs, C. G. (2013). *Animalia Americana: animal representations and biopolitical subjectivity*. Critical perspectives on animals: theory, culture, science, and law. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bondi, L. (1998). On the Contours of Public Space: A Tale of Three Women. *Antipode*, 30(3), 270.
- Brown, L. (2010). *Homeless dogs & melancholy apes: humans and other animals in the modern literary imagination*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
- Brown, M. (2012). Gender and sexuality I Intersectional anxieties. *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(4), 541–550.
- Brown, M., and Rasmussen, C. (2010). Bestiality and the queering of the human animal. *Environment and planning. D, Society & space.*, 28(1), 158–177.

- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of "sex."* New York: Routledge.
- (2003). *Precarious life: the powers of mourning and violence.* London; New York: Verso.
 - (2006). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1st ed.). Routledge.
 - (2009). *Frames of war: when is life grievable?* London; New York: Verso.
- Callan-Jones, C., Loakman, J., Cat Ladies Production, & Chocolate Box Entertainment. (2009). *Cat ladies.* Toronto, Ontario: Chocolate Box Entertainment.
- Carman, C. (2012). Grizzly Love: The Queer Ecology of Timothy Treadwell. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 18(4), 507–528.
- Carolan, M. (2007). Making Scents out of Changing Spatial Geographies: A Closer Look at the Animal–Human–Faecal Relationship. *Local Environment*, 12(4), 397–407.
- Castree, N., and Braun, B. (2001). *Social nature: theory, practice, and politics.* Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.
- (2003). Environmental issues: relational ontologies and hybrid politics. *Progress in Human Geography*, 27(2).
 - (2009). *A companion to environmental geography.* Chichester, U.K.; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Castree, N., Nash, C., Badmington, N., Braun, B., Murdoch, J., & Whatmore, S. (2004). Mapping posthumanism: an exchange. *Environ. Plann. A Environment and Planning A*, 36(8), 1341–1363.
- Cloke, P., and Jones, Owain. (2004). Turning in the graveyard: trees and the hybrid geographies of dwelling, monitoring and resistance in a Bristol cemetery. *Cultural Geographies*, 11(3), 313–341.
- Collard, R.C. (2012). Cougar figures, gender, and the performances of predation. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 19(4), 518–540.
- Creed, Barbara (1993) *The Monstrous-feminine: Film, feminism, psychoanalysis* (London, Routledge).
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford law review*, 1241–1299.
- Cresswell, Tim (1996) *In Place/Out of Place* (Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press).
- Cudworth, E. (2011). *Social Lives with Other Animals: Tales of Sex, Death and Love.* Palgrave Macmillan.

- Davis, K. (1995). *Thinking Like A Chicken: Farm Animals and the Feminine Connection. Animals and women: feminist theoretical explorations*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Derr, M. (2004). *Dog's Best Friend: Annals of the Dog-Human Relationship* (1st ed.). Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.
- Derrida, J. (1983) *Dissemination*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Derrida, J., and Mallet, M.-L. (2008). *The animal that therefore I am*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Domosh, M. (1998). Geography and gender: home, again? *Progress in Human Geography*, 22(2).
- Domosh, M., & Seager, J. (2001). *Putting women in place: feminist geographers make sense of the world*. New York: Guilford Press.
- du Gay, P., Hall, S., Janes, J., McKay, H. and Negus, K., eds, 1997: *Doing cultural studies*. London: Sage.
- Dyck, I. (2005) Feminist geography, the 'everyday', and local-global relations: hidden spaces of place-making. *The Canadian Geographer*, 49(3): 233-243.
 - (2011) *Embodied Life*. In: V. Del Casino, M. Thomas, P. Cloke and R. Panelli (eds) *A Companion to Social Geography*, Blackwell. **(fix citation – pgs?)**
- Dyck, I., Kontos, P., Angus, J., & McKeever, P. (2005). The home as a site for long-term care: meanings and management of bodies and spaces. *Health & Place*, 11(2), 173–185.
- Edelman, L. (2004). *No future queer theory and the death drive*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Elder, G., Wolch, J. R., & Emel, J. (1998). Le Pratique Sauvage: Race, Place, and the Human-Animal Divide. *Animal Geographies: Place, Politics, and Identity in the Nature-Culture Borderlands* (pp. 72–90). London; New York: Verso.
- Emel, J. (1995). Are you man enough, big and bad enough? Ecofeminism and wolf eradication in the USA. *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space*, 13(6).
- Eng, D. L. (2010). *The feeling of kinship: queer liberalism and the racialization of intimacy*. Durham [NC]: Duke University Press.
- England, K. (1996). *Who will mind the baby?: geographies of child care and working mothers*. London; New York: Routledge.
 - (2003). Towards a feminist political geography? *Political Geography*, 22(6), 611–616.

- England, M. (2006). Breached Bodies and Home Invasions: Horrific representations of the feminized body and home. *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 13(4), 353–363.
- Evans, R. Y. (2000). Taking stock of farm animals and rurality. *Animals Spaces, Beastly Places: New Geographies of Human-Animal Relations* (pp. 99–116). London; New York: Routledge.
- Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000). *Sexing the body: gender politics and the construction of sexuality*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Fishman, R. (1987). *Bourgeois utopias: the rise and fall of suburbia*. New York: Basic Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* Ed. C Gordon (Pantheon, New York)
- (1990). *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*. (R. Hurley, Trans.) (Fifth or Later ed.). Vintage.
 - (2003). *The birth of the clinic*. Psychology Press.
 - (2012). *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage.
 - (2013). *Dits et Ecrits, tome 1: 1954-1975*. Paris: French & European Pubns.
- Foucault, M., Marchetti, V., Salomoni, A., & Davidson, A. I. (2004). *Abnormal: lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-1975*. New York: Picador.
- Foucault, M., Ewald, F., Fontana, A., & Davidson, A. I. I. (2009). *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977--1978*. (G. Burchell, Trans.) (1st ed.). Picador.
- Fox, R. (2006). Animal behaviours, post-human lives: everyday negotiations of the animal-human divide in pet-keeping. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 7(4), 525–537.
- Fox, R., and Walsh, K. (2011). Furry belongings; pets, migration, and home. *Animal Movements-Moving Animals* (pp. 97–117). Uppsala: University Printers.
- Fudge, E. (2008). *Pets*. Stocksfield [U.K.]: Acumen.
- Gandy, M. (2012). Queer ecology: nature, sexuality, and heterotopic alliances. *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space*, 30(4).
- Garber, M. B. (1996). *Dog love*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

- Gillespie, K. (2011a). "How Happy is Your Meat? Confronting (Dis)connectedness in the Alternative Meat Industry." Brock University: *The Brock Review*
- (2011b). "Killing with Kindness? Institutionalized Violence in 'Humane' Slaughter." In *Nonkilling Geography*, Eds. James Tyner and Joshua Inwood. Honolulu Hawai'i, Center for Global Nonkilling
 - (2013). Sexualized violence and the gendered commodification of the animal body in Pacific Northwest US dairy production. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 1–17.
- Gorman-Murray, A. (2006). Queering home or domesticating deviance? *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 9(2), 227–247.
- (2007a). Contesting Domestic Ideals: queering the Australian home. *Australian Geographer*, 38(2).
 - (2007b). New Perspectives on the Public Power and Political Significance of Home. *Australian Geographer*, 38(1).
- Gregory, D., Johnston, R., Pratt, G., Watts, M., & Whatmore, S. (2009). *The dictionary of human geography*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Grier, K. C. (2006). *Pets in America: a history*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Griffin, C. J. (2011). Between companionship and antipathy: animal maiming in the nineteenth-century English countryside. *Animal Movements-Moving Animals* (pp. 41–55). Uppsala: University Printers.
- Griffin, D. R. (1992). *Animal minds*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Griffiths, H., Poulter, I., & Sibley, D. (2000). Feral cats in the city. *Animal spaces, beastly places*, 56–70.
- Gullo, A., Lassiter, U., & Wolch, J. R. (1998). The Cougar's Tale. *Animal Geographies: Place, Politics, and Identity in the Nature-Culture Borderlands* (pp. 139–161). London; New York: Verso.
- Halberstam, J. (2011). *The Queer Art of Failure*. Duke University Press Books.
- Haraway, D. J. (1989). *Primate visions: gender, race, and nature in the world of modern science*. New York: Routledge.
- (1990). *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (First ed.). Routledge.
 - (1997). *ModestWitness@SecondMillennium.FemaleManMeetsOncoMouse: feminism and technoscience*. New York: Routledge.
 - (2003a). *The companion species manifesto: dogs, people, and significant otherness*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.
 - (2003b). *The Haraway reader*. New York: Routledge.
 - (2008). *When species meet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Harris, C. I. (1993). Whiteness as Property. *harvardlawreview Harvard Law Review*, 106(8), 1707–1791.
- Herzog, H. (2007). Gender differences in human–animal interactions: A review. *Anthrozoos*, 20, 7–21.
- Hickrod, L.J.H. and Schmitt, R.L. (1982). A naturalistic study of interaction and frame: the pet as ‘family member’, *Urban Life* 11(1): 55–77.
- Holloway, L. and C. Morris (2009). Genetic technologies and the transformation of the geographies of UK livestock agriculture: a research agenda. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33(3), 313–333.
- Howell, P. (2000). Flush and the Banditti. *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places* (pp. 35–55). Routledge.
- (2002). A place for the animal dead: pets, pet cemeteries and animal ethics in late Victorian Britain. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 5(1), 5–22.
- Hubbard, P. (2000). Desire/disgust: mapping the moral contours of heterosexuality. *Progress in Human Geography*, 24(2), 191–217.
- (2001). Sex Zones: Intimacy, Citizenship and Public Space. *Sexualities*, 4(1), 51–71.
 - (2004). Cleansing the metropolis: sex work and the politics of zero tolerance. *Urban Studies*, 41(9), 1687–1702.
 - (2005). Women outdoors: Destabilizing the public/private dichotomy. *A companion to feminist geography*, 322–333.
- Ingram, G. B. (2012). From queer spaces to queerer ecologies. *European Journal of Ecopsychology*, 3, 53–80.
- Instone, L. (1998). The coyote’s at the door: revisioning human-environment relations in the Australian context. *Ecumene*, 5(4), 452.
- Instone, L., and Mee, K. (2011). Companion acts and companion species: boundary transgressions and the place of dogs in urban public space. In Bull, Jacob (Ed.), *Animal Movements-Moving Animals* (pp. 229–250). Uppsala: University Printers.
- Jeffreys, S. (1997). *The Spinster and Her Enemies*. Spinifex Press.
- Johnson, L. (1996). ‘As housewives we are worms’: Women, modernity and the home question. *Cultural Studies*, 10(3), 449–463.
- (2000) *Placebound: Australian feminist geographies*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne.
 - (2006). Browsing the Modern Kitchen—a feast of gender, place and culture (Part 1). *Gender, Place & Culture*, 13(2), 123–132.

- Johnson, L., and Lloyd, J. (2004). *Sentenced to everyday life: feminism and the housewife*. Oxford; New York: Berg.
- Johnston, L., & Longhurst, R. (2009). *Space, place, and sex: Geographies of sexualities*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Katz, J. (2004). *The New Work of Dogs: Tending to Life, Love, and Family*. Random House Trade Paperbacks.
- Kemmerer, L. (2011). *Sister species: women, animals, and social justice*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Keul, A. (2013). Embodied encounters between humans and gators. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 14(8), 930–953.
- Kim, C. J. (2014, May 2). *Dangerous Crossings: Race, Species, and Nature in a Multicultural Age*.
- Kreilkamp, I. (2005). Petted things: Wuthering heights and the animal. *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 18(1), 87–110.
- Kuzniar, A. A. (2006). *Melancholia's dog*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
 - (2008). "I Married My Dog": On Queer Canine Literature. *Queering the Non/Human*, 205–26.
- Landry, D. (2008). *Noble brutes: how eastern horses transformed English culture*. JHU Press.
- Latour, B. (1993). *We have never been modern*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
 - (2007). *Reassembling the social: an introduction to actor-network-theory*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Laurier, E., Whyte, A., & Buckner, K. (2002). Neighbouring as an Occasioned Activity "Finding a Lost Cat." *Space and Culture*, 5(4), 346–367.
- Lawrence, E. A. (1985). *Hoofbeats and society*. Indiana University Press.
- Lawson, V. (2007). : Geographies of Care and Responsibility. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 97(1), 1–11.
- Legg, S. (2010). An intimate and imperial feminism: Meliscent Shephard and the regulation of prostitution in colonial India. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28(1), 68 – 94.
- Love, H. (2007). *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
 - (2009). Gyn/Apology: Sarah Orne Jewett's Spinster Aesthetics. *ESQ*, 55(3), 305–334.

- Lowe, L. (2006). The Intimacies of Four Continents. *Haunted by empire: geographies of intimacy in North American history*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Mallett, S. (2004). Understanding home: a critical review of the literature. *The Sociological Review*, 52(1), 62–89.
- Marston, S. A., Jones, J. P., & Woodward, K. (2005). Human geography without scale. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30(4), 416–432.
- Massey, D. B. (1994). *Space, place, and gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- McHugh, S. (2009). Queer (and) Animal Theories. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 15(1), 153–169. doi:10.1215/10642684-2008-022
- (2011). *Animal Stories: narrating across species lines*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Michel, S. M. (1998). Golden Eagles and the Environmental Politics of Care. *Animal Geographies: Place, Politics, and Identity in the Nature-Culture Borderlands* (pp. 162–190). London; New York: Verso.
- Milligan, T. (2010). *Beyond animal rights: food, pets and ethics*. London; New York: Continuum.
- Morrison, C.-A. (2010). “Home is where the heart is”: everyday geographies of young heterosexual couples’ love in and of homes. University of Waikato. Retrieved from <http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/4797>
- (2012a). Solicited diaries and the everyday geographies of heterosexual love and home: reflections on methodological process and practice. *Area*, 44(1), 68–75.
- (2012b). Heterosexuality and home: Intimacies of space and spaces of touch. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 5(1), 10–18.
- Morrison, C.-A., Johnston, L., & Longhurst, R. (2012). Critical geographies of love as spatial, relational and political. *Progress in Human Geography*.
- Mortimer-Sandilands, C. (2005). Unnatural passions? Notes toward a queer ecology. *Invisible Culture. An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture*,
- Mortimer-Sandilands, C., and Erickson, B. (2010). *Queer ecologies: sex, nature, politics, desire*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.
- Mountz, A., & Hyndman, J. (2006). Feminist Approaches to the Global Intimate. *WOMENS STUDIES QUARTERLY*, 34(1/2), 446–463.
- Muñoz, J. E. (1999). *Disidentifications: queers of color and the performance of politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Nash, C.J. (2006). Toronto's gay village (1969–1982): plotting the politics of gay identity. *The Canadian Geographer* 50, 1–16.
- Nast, H. (2006a). Critical Pet Studies? *Antipode*, 38(5), 894–906.
 - (2006b). Loving...Whatever: Alienation, Neoliberalism and Pet-Love in the Twenty-First Century. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 5(2), 300–327.
- Oliver, K. (2009). *Animal lessons: how they teach us to be human*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Oswin, N. (2008). Critical geographies and the uses of sexuality: deconstructing queer space. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(1), 89–103.
 - (2010). Sexual tensions in modernizing Singapore: the postcolonial and the intimate. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28(1), 128 – 141.
- Oswin, N., & Olund, E. (2010). Governing intimacy. *Environment and planning. D, Society and space*, 28(1), 60.
- Paechter, C. (2003). Masculinities and Femininities as Communities of Practice. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 26(1).
- Panelli, R. (2010). More-than-human social geographies: posthuman and other possibilities. *Progress in Human Geography*, 34(1), 79–87.
- Pateman, C. (1988). *The sexual contract*. Stanford University Press.
- Patronek, G. J. (1999). Hoarding of animals: an under-recognized public health problem in a difficult-to-study population. *Public Health Reports*, 114(1), 81.
- Philo, C. (1995). Animals, geography, and the city: Notes on inclusions and exclusions. *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space*, 13(6).
- Philo, C., and Wilbert, C. (2000). *Animal spaces, beastly places: new geographies of human-animal relations*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Plumwood, V. (1991). Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy and the Critique of Rationalism. In M. Zimmerman (ed.) *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 284-309.
 - (2002). *Environmental culture: the ecological crisis of reason*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Podberscek, A. L., Paul, E. S., & Serpell, J. (2000). *Companion animals and us: exploring the relationships between people and pets*. Cambridge University Press.
- Povinelli, E. A. (2006). *The empire of love: Toward a theory of intimacy, genealogy, and carnality*. Duke University Press.

- Power, E. (2008). Furry families: making a human–dog family through home. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 9(5), 535–555.
- (2012). Domestication and the dog: embodying home. *Area*, 44(3), 371–378.
- Puar, J. K. (2007). *Terrorist assemblages: homonationalism in queer times*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ramirez, M. (2006). “My Dog’s Just Like Me”: Dog Ownership as a Gender Display. *Symbolic Interaction*, 29(3), 373–391.
- Rasmussen, C. E. (2011). *The Autonomous Animal: Self-Governance and the Modern Subject*. University Of Minnesota Press.
- Rogers, K. M. (1997). *The cat and the human imagination: feline images from Bast to Garfield*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Rose, G. (2012). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual materials*. Sage.
- Rubin, G. S. (1993). Thinking Sex: Notes for a radical theory of the politics of sexuality. In H. Ablove, M. A. Barale, & D. M. Halperin (Eds.), . New York: Routledge.
- Rudy, K. (2012). LGBTQ... Z? *Hypatia*, 27(3), 601–615.
- Rydstrom J. (2000) “‘Sodomitical sins are threefold’: typologies of bestiality, masturbation, and homosexuality in Sweden, 1880-1950” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, (9), 240-276.
- (2003). *Sinners and citizens: bestiality and homosexuality in Sweden, 1880-1950*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Saldanha, A. (2006). Reontologising race: the machinic geography of phenotype. *Environment and Planning D*, 24(1), 9.
- Sanders, C. R. (1993). Understanding Dogs: Caretakers’ Attributions of Mindedness in Canine-Human Relationships. *Journal of contemporary ethnography.*, 22(2), 205.
- Schiesari, J. (2012). *Polymorphous domesticities: pets, bodies, and desire in four modern writers*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Seager, J. (2003). Pepperoni or Broccoli? On the Cutting Wedge of Feminist Environmentalism. *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 10(2), 167–174.
- Shah, N. (2005). Policing Privacy, Migrants, and the Limits of Freedom. *Social Text*, 23(3/4).

Shildrick, M. (1997). *Leaky bodies and boundaries: feminism, postmodernism and (bio)ethics*. London; New York: Routledge.

- (2002). *Embodying the Monster: Encounters with the Vulnerable Self* (1st ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Shukin, N. (2011). "Transfections of Animal Touch, Techniques of Biosecurity." *Social Semiotics*. Special Issue on Touch. Eds. Anne Cranny-Francis and Cathy Hawkins. Vol. 21, Issue 4. (483-501). (Citations taken from author copy; pagination 1-33.)

Singer, P. (2001). Heavy Petting. *Nerve*. Retrieved from www.utilitarian.net/singer/by/2001----.htm.

Sobchack, Vivian (1996) Bringing it all back home: Family, economy and generic exchange, in: Barry Keith Grant (Ed.) *Dread of Difference: Gender and the horror film*, pp. 143–63 (Austin, TX, University of Texas Press).

Somerville, S. (1997). Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body. In R. N. Lancaster & M. di Leonardo (Eds.), *The Gender/Sexuality Reader* (pp. 37–52). New York: Routledge.

Sontag, S. (2004). Regarding the torture of others. *New York Times*, 23(05), 04.

Srinivasan, K. (2013). The biopolitics of animal being and welfare: dog control and care in the UK and India. *TRAN Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38(1), 106–119.

Stoler, A. L. (2006). *Haunted by empire: geographies of intimacy in North American history*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Strong-Boag, V., Dyck, I., England, K., & Johnson, L. (1999). What women's spaces? Women in Australian, British, Canadian and US suburbs. *Changing suburbs: Foundation, form and function*, 24, 168.

Tarver, E. C. (2013). The Dangerous Individual(s) Dog: Race, Criminality and the Pit Bull. *Culture, Theory and Critique*, (2), 1–13.

Tortorici, Z. (2012). Against Nature: Sodomy and Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America. *History Compass*, 10(2), 161–178.

- (2014). *Archives and Animalicity*.

Treves, A., Wallace, R., Naughton-Treves, L. and A. Morales. 2006. "Co-managing human-wildlife conflicts: A review." *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*. 11(6): 383 – 396.

Tuan, Y. (1984). *Dominance & affection: the making of pets*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ufkes, F. M. (1998). Building a Better Pig: Fat Profits in Lean Meat. *Animal Geographies: Place, Politics, and Identity in the Nature-Culture Borderlands*. London; New York: Verso.

- Urbanik, J. (2012). *Placing animals: an introduction to the geography of human-animal relations*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Urbanik, J., & Morgan, M. (2012). A tale of tails: The place of dog parks in the urban imaginary. *Geoforum*.
- Warren, K., and Wells-Howe, B. (1994). *Ecological feminism*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Weston, K. (1997). *Families we choose: Lesbians, gays, kinship*. Columbia University Press.
- Whatmore, S. (2002). *Hybrid geographies: natures, cultures, spaces*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications.
- Wolch, J. R., and Emel, J. (1998). *Animal geographies: place, politics, and identity in the nature-culture borderlands*. London; New York: Verso.
- Wolch, J., & Zhang, J. (2007). Siren Songs: Gendered Discourses of Concern for Sea Creatures. In L. Nelson & J. Seager (Eds.), *A Companion to Feminist Geography* (pp. 458–485). Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Wolfe, C. (2003). *Animal rites: American culture, the discourse of species, and posthumanist theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wray, M. (2006). *Not quite white: white trash and the boundaries of whiteness*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Wright, M. (2009). Gender and geography: knowledge and activism across the intimately global. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33(3), 379–386.
- Zemeckis, R., Donovan, M., Koepp, D., Starkey, S., Hawn, G., Willis, B., Streep, M., et al. (1998). *Death becomes her*. Universal City, CA: Universal Home Video.