Introduction

Humans and Horses in the Relational Arena

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> Agencies are visible only if grasped in the right key.
>
> —BRUNO LATOUR

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We start here, as a point of reference and departure, with a tale of the bond between expansionist warrior, Alexander the Great, and his named horse-companion, Bucephalus. Bucephalus was an impressive but fierce young black stallion, seemingly untamable prior to meeting the teenaged Alexander. The young king's comprehension that the horse was not intractable, but merely fearful, allowed the two to become devoted companions and partners. They fought together on Alexander's campaigns until the horse's last battle in 326 BCE, when Bucephalus sustained multiple fatal spear wounds. Bucephalus did not die on that battlefield, however. He had one last task to accomplish for the human who understood him: before succumbing to his injuries Bucephalus returned Alexander to the safety of his own troops.

> But though at the point of death, and almost drained of blood, he turned, carried the king with a bold dash from the very midst of the foe, and then and there fell down, breathing his last tranquilly now that his master was safe, and as comforted by it as if he had had the feelings of a human being.
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> Morgan, in XENOPHON, 2002 [1894], p. 105

The crucial points about this tale are neither its veracity nor the question of its perhaps misguided anthropomorphic emotional appeal. Other historians note that Bucephalus died of old age, and those who have known enough horses will recognize instances in which horses have gone above and beyond the call to care for their riders, instances which in themselves raise this horse's

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stated actions above anthropomorphic projections.[1] Rather, this tale is relevant to what follows in this chapter and volume in that it was written by and told to people who *believed* that horses have the capacity to comprehend what is required in a situation, and the ability to act pro-socially, with courage and altruism. Packed tightly within Morgan's one sentence lie the assumptions that horses inherently possess intelligence, agency, loyalty, and an ethical sense of responsibility to those within their interspecies interpersonal spheres. Behind the equine actions recounted (or imagined) in this enduring anecdote lie an historically particular set of beliefs about the motives of this one horse, and horses in general. In this story, Bucephalus is a "who"; Bucephalus and Alexander are a "we."

In the more than 2000 years since Bucephalus was said to have saved his person, humans have transformed their relationships with horses in several ways. First, the horse's place in EuroAmerican societies has shifted from beasts of burden, and war and travelling partners to a new set of uses encompassing sport, leisure, entertainment and, more recently, equine-assisted therapies. Second, the EuroAmerican metanarratives to which we today subscribe—beliefs that are so deeply entrenched within shared cultural understandings as often to be invisible—have changed. This has affected the relationships between horses and humans at all of these new interspecies intersections. In this latter regard, the intervening millennia have not been so generous to Bucephalus and his kind. The development of humanistic, anthropocentric and scientific epistemologies created a set of principles that categorically divided up the living world. Central to our work here, the metanarratives created from these broad intellectual movements have served both to diminish horses in the collective human imagination as singular, unique, thoughtful individual subjects, to demote the status of horses from "who" to "what," and in the process to minimize their perceived capacity to participate in the human-horse "we" with agential intent. This is particularly important because the narratives which we hold as true about the capabilities of horses—both academic and popular—legitimize, allow and delimit where the horse is situated within human intellectual, cultural, economic, and political spheres. Moreover, these beliefs both reflect and influence how we perceive (and study) our relationships with horses, the work we ask of them, and the ways in which they are treated as they carry out that work.

1 People who have known enough horses understand that "the movie that depicts a horse's resourceful concern for the well-being of its injured master is, for a change, quite accurate" (Ainslee and Ledbetter 1980: 64). This is because they have received such benevolent attention.

In what follows, we provide foundational scaffolding upon which the volume is structured and the following chapters draw. We discuss the aims and scope of this volume; provide theoretical grounding; locate this anthology within, and problematize, human-equine studies; and define and situate its chapters within several broad key themes and threads.

1 Aims and Scope of This Volume

Horses exist within complex matrices of interaction with humans, serving various subjectified and objectified roles simultaneously or consecutively during their lifespans. Because of this, studies of the human-horse interface (hereafter, "human-equine studies"[2]) present as a rich area of inquiry, and one that has flourished in the past decade (Adelman & Knijnik, 2013; Adelman & Thompson, 2017; Birke & Thompson, 2018; Bornemark et al., 2019; Dashper, 2016; Davis & Maurstad, 2016; Weil, 2020). Arguably this type of work deals with human-equine *relationships* at various levels of scale, and by definition relationships are bidirectional. However, in large degree human-equine studies' attempts to include horses' lived experience and perspectives lag behind the more-full elaboration of the humans' contributions to the relationships under study. The bulk of human-equine studies—which are centered within the social sciences and thus constrained by the focus upon the human—appear to have either found getting at the horses' side of things an intimidating task, or intentionally left out the horses' perspectives within these relationships.

This minimization or rejection of the horse's perspective within human-equine studies is a lacuna this volume seeks to explore through three primary aims. First, we focus on human-equine relationships. In this we follow Lynda Birke and Jo Hockenhull's 2012 (p. 5) call in *Crossing Boundaries: Investigating Human-Animal Relationships*, where the principal question posed was: "How can researchers work most effectively to investigate how relationships are forged?" This volume aims to critically extend this project by investigating some of the innumerable relationships between and among horses and humans. It also seeks to extend that scope beyond how those relationships are forged, to the question: How are human-equine relationships communicated, enacted, understood, encouraged, and restricted?

2 To clarify, we envision "human-equine studies" as distinct from "equine studies," which is seen in some undergraduate courses of study in higher education and concerns the science of equitation and/or horse care. We conceive of human-equine studies, rather, as a scholarly endeavor situated within the multi- and trans-disciplinary field of human-animal studies.

The second aim of this volume is to intentionally highlight horses' contributions to these relationships in order to allow better understanding and more equitable representation of their lived experiences and interests within human-equine studies. The chapters in this volume showcase established and emerging scholars from an international author base whose varied disciplinary methods emphasize comprehending horses not solely in terms of their functional or symbolic uses by humans, but also as situated within impactful relationships to which members of both species can be seen to contribute—more or less—equally. We recognize this "more or less" not as an aside, but as key factor driving this endeavor. By situating the human-horse interface as relational, we decenter the human. Yet the goal is not to exclude examination of the ways in which humans construct understandings of horses within various contexts. This is because the human-horse dynamic is fraught with complex issues of privilege, power and responsibility involving the unequal requisition of bodies and the ability to exercise choice. Therefore, as a whole this volume interrogates a full range of the conditions of relational engagement between humans and horses. Many chapters consider the agencies of horses as impactful on human lives, while others explore constraints to the horse against expressing those agencies. Some of the relationships explored are predicated on the hierarchical exercise of power; others explicitly challenge those hierarchies—for better or for worse. In this way, attention to relationships foregrounds horses as more or less active participants, informed observers, and critical co-producers of these relations, where the "more or less" concerns the question: How do humans allow or constrain horses' capacities to participate fully within the relational contexts under study?

The third goal of this volume concerns the question: How might we begin to build a more equitable human-equine studies in ways that better include the "who" of the horse in the "we" of human-equine relationships? In the quest to include the "animal's point of view," Birke and Hockenhull (2012, p. 11) suggest that "in particular, we need to think outside of disciplinary bounds, to bring together quite different methodologies, with sometimes differing epistemologies." Toward this end, the essays collected here draw theoretical and methodological grounding from a range of disciplinary traditions within the sciences, social sciences and humanities—ethology, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, archaeology, psychology, psychiatry, communication studies, phenomenology, literary criticism, feminist studies, religious studies, American studies, and indigenous studies. By presenting a diverse set of theoretical and pragmatic case studies that cover a range of geographical, cultural, and historical contexts, the chapters aim to provide examples of, and test, fresh

theoretical and methodological avenues that can be used to forward human-equine studies.

2 Theoretical Grounding

The study of the human-animal interface, philosopher Vinciane Despret charges, is built on a "badly founded" concept, "because it seems again that it's animal on one side and human on the other" (Buchanan et al., 2015, p. 172). It is an issue. Scholars investigating human-animal dealings make regular efforts to get beyond this binary, with varying success. We human investigators lean heavily on the brave, puny little hyphen between "human" and "animal," so small in comparison to the words it joins together. Yet the hyphen also invites what Garry Marvin and Susan McHugh (2014, p. 8) define as "third-way engagements with otherwise stalemated, binary deadlocks." For us, the "third way" we pursue concerns a focus on the relationships in and through which humans and horses engage—the *point of* the hyphen itself.

To do this, the works within this volume are seated within the scope and theory of the interdisciplinary field of human-animal studies (HAS)[3], two tenets of which bracket the chapters that follow. The first HAS principle we apply is the field's focus on human-animal relationships, which are considered implicitly and explicitly as co-constituted. As clarified by HAS scholar Ken Shapiro (2020, p. 4), "Relationships occupy a space between two entities. While anchored in and co-constituted by two distinct entities which it, in turn, modifies, a relationship is a distinct phenomenon." For our purposes here, we conceive of relationship as the bidirectional, mutually influential, interactive, context-driven process through which humans and horses engage together to co-create, share, and replicate overlapping identities, realities and worlds. We here mention but a few of the innumerable channels of interspecies touch points that are open for relational investigation. Such relationships can be separately or concurrently interpersonal-relational, phenomenological-corporeal, and/or social-ideological, each space with different and potentially conflicting logics (see, Davis et al., 2016). The interspecific interactions and understandings that take place within these coinciding contexts transpire and are understood at various levels of scale on a spectrum ranging from few to many—from

3 It is not our intention to iterate the "animal turn" which led to the field's creation, its development and general premises, or to differentiate this field from others. These issues have been nicely elucidated elsewhere (see, DeMello, 2012; Kalof 2017; Shapiro, 2020; Weil, 2012).

the interspecies dyadic to the intersocial and intercultural, where groups of humans and horses converge.

All of these various interspecific relationship spaces are defined—again, more or less—by human hierarchical structures, hegemonies, and imbalances of power (see, Birke & Thompson, 2018; Bornemark et al., 2019). Some of these spaces are also seated within a set of interconnected inequalities related to gender, race, ability, and class for the humans who share worlds with horses (e.g., Adelman & Knijnik, 2015; Adams & Gruen, 2014; Butler, 2013; Coulter, 2013; Wadham, 2020). Therefore, to say that horse-human relationships are co-created—or indeed, bidirectional, mutually influential, or co-anything—belies the fact that domestic horses' relational contributions are constrained today, as Lynda Birke and Kirrilly Thompson note, by their "captive umwelt" (Warkentin, 2009, regarding whales, as cited in Birke & Thompson, 2018, p. 30). Within this captivity it is difficult, if not impossible, to consider horses acting with anything but degrees of suppressed autonomy, given the predominantly instrumentalized roles they are assigned within present-day EuroAmerican horse cultures. This point is magnified by the human lack of understanding—or worse, understanding but not acknowledgement—of horses' capabilities, desires and needs.

This brings us to the second theoretical point guiding the chapters within the volume, Shapiro's seminal and defining endeavor for HAS research: the quest to bring animals into our studies "as such, as they live and experience the world independently of our constructions of them" (2008, p. 9; also 2020). This perspective allows scholars to reach beyond the anthropocentrism and human exceptionalism entrenched within Western scholarship that have focused solely or primarily on human conceptions of other animals based upon their mere functional, symbolic, and material importance to human lives. It calls on us to include within our work the animal "in itself … both as an experiencing individual and as a species-typical way of living in the world … as a more or less equal partner in a relationship" (Shapiro, 2008, pp. 13–14). This shift in approach, critical psychologist Matthew Adams notes, deals with reciprocal and interactive encounters, interactions and communication, and "involves not just a consideration of 'how we interact with and relate to animals' but how, why, and when they interact with and relate to *us*" (Adams, 2018. p. 3, *emphasis in original*). We take this "as such" allowance—indeed, we believe, requirement—as highly significant to both the multidisciplinary work presented here and to the future of human-equine studies.

The two tenets of HAS present logical frameworks that have opened the door for academic investigations to present animal subjectivities, agencies, and selves in deeper and more complete ways. The pieces in this volume seek to ask

careful questions about many different kinds of relationships that humans and equines negotiate—and different ways to be found to answer them. Some of the following chapters explicitly bring horses' intrinsic or individual ways of being more fully into the discourse; others bring attentiveness to the relational possibilities exposed within a multitude of encounters; still others assess the power dynamics that operate within those relationships, serving to delimit the horses' actions, and thus contributions.

Before introducing the chapters, we would like to flag our conscious shift away from the conventional objectifying pronoun "it" to "he" or "she," and from "that" to "who" in reference to horses. We do this in awareness of the connotative power inherent in language that perpetuates the objectification of animal others, minimizing their import, and in an effort here to more fully include horses as significant beings.

3 Introduction to the Chapters

The following chapters engage critically with questions concerning the primary themes of communication, agency, exploitation, and personhood within equine-human relationships. Placement of the chapters within their sections, though not arbitrary, suggests particular shared aims, but there is extensive overlap in concerns represented in other chapters and parts.

3.1 *Relationships, Communication and Connection*

This volume's first section, (four chapters), establishes the knowing of equine selves—at both species and individual levels of scales—as possible, accessible, and worthy of study. These chapters take up ways of knowing horses through behavioral observation and communicative action in order to bring them into the relational discussion. They explore equine dominance hierarchies; shared knowledge, empathy and communication; and embodied interaction, using methods, theories, and findings from the realms of ethology, communication studies, phenomenology, psychology and psychiatry.

Communication concerns the process of sharing meanings with others. Communication is said to be "relational" in that it involves both dimensions of content, that which deals with specific behavioral responses expected, and of relationship, which concerns how the communication is carried out and the relationships are maintained (Gamble & Gamble, 2013, p. 21). That is, relationships are formed and grow through communication. Through bi-directional and reciprocal interactions, connections, and impacts, individuals dynamically co-create and co-define themselves through communication with others. Of

course, "in making sense of human–animal relations as multidirectional, we cannot readily presume ready access to a shared system of language or other forms of symbolization" (Adams, 2018. p.6). This means that the obligation is on us to attempt to work with and explain horses' primarily nonverbal ways of engaging (e.g., Argent, 2012; Brandt, 2004; Dashper, 2017).

These communicative endeavors take place within contexts that rely to varying degrees on human dominance and equine submission, by far the prevailing paradigm through which human-equine relationships have been viewed and explored. This idea tracks to understandings of the human-domestic animal relationship. The concept of domestication has been shaded since at least the 18–19th century with the view of "domestication as domination," prompted by European colonial conquest, and keyed to constructs of submission and improvement. (Bogaard, et al., 2021, p. 4–5; see also Tuan, 1984; but see, Fudge & Palmer, 2014). This was a shift from the notion of domestic animals as those proximate to human habitation and significant in human lives seen in the Middle Ages—and arguably prior, as Bucephalus' story tells us.

Relatedly, dominance also factors into the human-horse dealings through human framings of equine ontologies, where the paradigm of of vertically structured, pecking-order dominance hierarchies often seen in domesticated horses were interpreted as the innate way in which equine social stuctures were organized. In believing that horses' intraspecific social lives are governed by dominance hierarchies, humans have designed widely used training regimes such as "natural horsemanship," popularized in the late 20th century. These schemes assert they are following the "natural" (dominance hierarchy-based) way horses understand the world. From this premise, humans are told to insert themselves into this perceived linear hierarchy *above* the horse—often using aggressive methods—because the horse will understand and respect the human as the "alpha" or lead individual.

"Natural horsemanship" has been marketed as much more humane than earlier horse-training methods which "broke" the horse, and certainly it is that. However, the precept upon which it rests is incorrect. In chapter 1, equine ethologist Lucy Rees challenges as faulty the hierarchical dominance paradigm that has been used to explain horses' way of being in the world with each other. Rees explores how groups of wild and feral horses she has observed communicate and behave socially, where social agency, power and even cognition can be seen not as hierarchical, but rather as cooperative; not as individual, but rather as distributed. She compares these behaviors with those of captive domesticated horses where, because food resources are not plentiful as in the wild, horses do develop hierarchical social structures over those limited resources. Accepting Rees' proposition should cause a radical reframing

of how we conceive of equine ontologies, and our dealings with horses. This understanding of horses' innate social and communicative structures should move us away from dominance-based training schemes that may confuse the horse, create in them learned helplessness, and even lead to abuse, toward more cooperative, prosocial approaches.

Chapter 2, by communication studies and interpretive archaeology scholar Gala Argent, uses a multidisciplinary approach to interrogate one particular instance of voluntary, spontaneous, intuitive interaction between a stallion and a group of children. To do this, she investigates the communicative capabilities horses bring to their encounters with humans, and interpets some of horses' communicative attempts as rhetorical. She then proposes that the outcome of our lack of attunement to horses' bids to communicate their wants, needs, and desires to us might be as psychologically damaging to them as we know it is to humans. Through this case study, she also provides a model for how we might begin to study trans-species communication.

In chapter 3, education scholar Stephen Smith uses phenomenological method to query the inherent affectivity and energetics of the embodied connections between an exuberant stallion being made malleable to ride. He conceptualizes the disciplinary *power-over* inherent in training regimes, through which "tacking up potentially dulls down the very life that draws us to horses and the liveliness for which we presume to care." Smith offers a self-critique of his use of conventional classical horse training methods, exploring how we might move toward a joint *power-with* where attunement and affectivity might play more important roles.

Psychiatrist Joseph Lancia considers how to conceive of horse-human partnerships using the theoretical tools of psychiatry as guides in chapter 4. He describes the role of ritual and ceremony within human-horse encounters in the present moment—meeting each other, feeding, riding, grooming, and therapeutic encounters—as fostering a transspecies interpenetration of minds. He extends psychoanalytic theories, particularly the field of transpersonal relationships, to a consideration of connection and numinous experiences within horse-human relationships in ways that further our understanding of our relationships with horses—and theirs with us.

3.2 *Attributions of Equine Agency*

The second section (three chapters) explores the ways in which humans experience and study horses as agential beings, and the implications of those models. Agency is a concept that contravenes disciplinary boundaries in the social sciences and humanities and because of this is difficult to define. Questions of the nature of agency and how it sits within the social stem from the practice

theories of Pierre Bourdieu (1997) and Anthony Giddens (1979) where the opposition is seen as between agency, as seated within the individual, and structure, through which societal constructs both enable and constrain the expression of that agency. Agency is also more recently conceptualized not as a naturalized capacity that precedes the social, but rather as a relational and interdependent outcome of social action (Passoth et al., 2012, p. 2; see also, Knappett & Malafouris, 2010; McFarland & Hediger, 2009; Räsänen & Syrjämaa, 2017; on social agency in horses, see Birke & Thompson, 2018).

For our purposes, we recognize both of the above distinctions. For horses in the wild—the horses observed by ethologists—agency can be seen as a seated within the intraspecific social and the individual "based on subjective experience and autonomous intention" (Despret, 2013, p. 29). For horses living under human control those equine agencies are thwarted, constrained or forbidden by the various human hegemonics inherent in different (human) socio-temporal contexts (also, Birke & Thompson, 2018). Because of this, the manner in which humans *attribute* agency to horses provides the basis for how those agencies are both interpreted and allowed to be enacted.

Under the relational ontological approach we apply here, agency is strongly acknowledged; the junctures between needs, thought, action, and interaction are primary. However, we do not consider agency in all of its potentialities as for humans. We focus, rather, on agency as specific to horses. "Being an intentional agent," writes equine scholar Pia Lucidi, "means to be able to communicate needs and to act on the surroundings in order to have those needs satisfied" (2016, n.p.). Put another way, agency is goal directed and control-based. It concerns the capacity to have an impact upon the environment, to include the ability to choose (unconsciously or purposefully) the behaviors needed to attempt to accomplish goals. The next four chapters explore how we can begin to understand equine agencies, using four very distinct methodologies.

In chapter 5, interpretive archaeologist Kristin Armstrong Oma investigates the types of agencies attributed to horses in the Scandinavian Iron Age through both archaeological material and Norse sagas and poems. Analyzing the material culture of horse bodies and equipment within sacrificial graves, she argues that horse gear is co-authored by humans and horses together and serves to perform aspects of the relationships and bonds between the two. This keen analysis shows a reproduction of equine ontological statuses—as companions, best friends, and magical beings—wherein horses are attributed the ability to act, emote and perform magic. This reading of a human society outside of present Western belief systems highlights the fluidity of the attribution of equine agencies.

Dona Lee Davis, Anita Maurstad, and Sarah Dean provide in chapter 6 a unique and amusing ethnography which explores through playful "barn banter" how human roles are attributed to horses based on their personalities. Barn banter, as a kind of insiders' knowledge, is not only a playful way of minding animals, but also, in practice, develops horses' potentials as actors and partners with their humans to form an elaborated and highly intimate sense of co-being or shared identity for horse and rider that situates them as a pair within the wider barn community.

Anthropologist Rebecca Richart interrogates, in chapter 7, the relationships between racehorses and workers on the "backside" of the Thoroughbred racetrack. In probing the familial dimensions of these relationships through ethnography, Richart argues that the task of "checking" the horses relies on skills and knowledge embedded in the intersubjective relationships between these humans and horses. She traces the affective skills equine workers use to care for horses, where subtle deviations individual horse's behavior are met with equally nuanced and reciprocal responses to the horse.

3.3 *Sex, Gender and Exploitation*

The third section's three chapters are joined through their intersectionality—the exploration of linked oppressions—and a commitment to critical assessment of explicit and implicit hierarchies that cross species boundaries. Each poses a challenge to various overlapping binary divisions between and among species that have been used as tools for controlling both humans and horses. This section of the volume takes Despret's (Buchanan et al., 2015, p. 172) critiques of the binaries that operate within animal studies seriously, and examines the narrowness of the enduring post-Enlightenment commitment to "universal humanism," which so often erects and maintains binary divisions (between human/nonhuman, male/female, and so forth) along strict hierarchies. In order to become relevant beyond the EuroAmerican and academic world, animal studies need to recognize, as Black literary theorist Zakiyyah Iman Jackson reminds us, that "much of the world does not adhere to a worldview guided by human-animal binarism" (Jackson, 2020, p. 33). This reminder makes it all the more troubling that EuroAmerican cultures persist in doing so, to the direct detriment of human and nonhuman beings. Interrogating the construction and maintenance of binary human/animal divisions through the lens of gender offers a path towards restoring the complexity of multispecies relationships and countering oppressions that depend on the demarcations of hierarchical divisions. Recent and ongoing scholarship across multiple disciplines is foregrounding gender, sex, and sexuality as they intersect with other forms of power in multispecies relationships. While not all of these studies are

about human-equine relationships specifically, studies such as these inform a more just and complex path for both human-animal studies and human-animal relationships themselves. See, for example, social scientists such as Adelman & Knijnik (2013), Alex Blanchette (2020), Claire Jean Kim (2015), and Kim Tallbear (2015, 2017); literary theorist Susan McHugh (2011, 2019); agricultural historians Emily Pawley (2020) and Gabriel Rosenberg (2017); and American studies scholar Jeannette Vaught (2018).

With horses, as with many of their nonhuman domestic partners, humans are extremely frequent managers of equine sexualities, reproductive activities, and familial structures. Anthropologist Alex Blanchette, in positing that "human sexualities are inseparable from histories of managing nonhuman sexualities" (Blanchette, 2020, p. 255), offers a potent framework for examining the role of human-equine relationships in constructing and maintaining gendered ideas, expectations, and practices that extend into both human and equine lives. The four chapters that follow explore how horses have been complex partners in the banal day-to-day work of gender hierarchy management without reducing either horses or humans to one-dimensional subjects.

Religious studies scholar Julia Johnson, in chapter 8, examines various examples of veterinary advice, product marketing, and common barn- and horse-culture language tropes that reveal how mares are systemically maligned within the horse world. Johnson unearths the everyday tools of misogyny that contribute to harms experienced by both humans and horses.

In chapter 9, American studies scholar Jeannette Vaught discusses how human intervention and technology in modern horse breeding practices have naturalized human participation in equine reproduction and equine sex. In exploring the rise of veterinarian-assisted equine reproduction techniques, Vaught analyzes the new set of intimate, familial, and sexual relationships between humans and horses that allow for this technologized reproduction to take place.

Chapter 10 brings comparative literature scholar Angela Hofstetter's analytical approach to bear on how animal stories, in this case Sewell's *Black Beauty*, offer critically important spaces to name and process gendered and sexual trauma that is otherwise firmly walled off from public, cultural, and medical discourses. In exploring the presence of testimony and belief about abuse suffered by equines in fiction, Hofstetter examines how the gendered dynamics of expertise contributed to the systemic silencing of human sufferers who have instead found their voice most accurately represented in animal fictions.

3.4 *Personhood, Property and the Interspecies Family*

The concept of animal personhood is seated within several practical and disciplinary realms. It has been extensively explored philosophically and within legal and animal rights domains, where the attribution of personhood within Western legal schemes differentiates a person from property (see, e.g., Francione, 2018; Fudge, 2018; Gigliotti, 2009; Rosenberg, 2017). "Person" is also a term used synonymously with "human," implying aspects of mind such as rationality, personal identity and self-awareness. Here we are interested in personhood as the reciprocal qualities of relational beings. Primatologist Barbara Smuts (1999, p. 118, emphasis in original) puts it this way:

> [R]elating to other beings as persons has nothing to do with whether or not we attribute human characteristics to them. It has to do, instead, with recognizing that they are social subjects, like us, whose idiosyncratic, subjective experience of us plays the same role in their relation with us that our subjective experience of them plays in our relations with them. If they relate to us as individuals, and we relate to them as individuals, it is possible for us to have a *personal* relationship.

It is clear that horses perceive specific humans as "persons" relevant in their lifeworlds. They recognize different humans as individuals (Stone, 2010), and have emotions tied to these recognitions, (Trösch et al., 2019). They think about and treat us differently based on who we are to them, relationally. Yet due to the unique, instrumentalized roles played by the horse within Western equine cultures as livestock, workers, and entertainment vehicles with performative expectations, the same always cannot be said in the other direction—horses are often, here, fungible. Again, as with agency, this concerns not whether or not horses *have* personhood—all relational beings already possess it *as* relational beings. It rather concerns the degree to which humans *attribute* it to them. Failing to grant personhood to animal others, according to Smuts, serves not to diminishes those animal others. Rather, "when a human being relates to an individual nonhuman being as an anonymous object rather than as a being with [his or her] own subjectivity, it is the human and not the other animal who relinquishes personhood" (Smuts, 1999, p. 118).

The three chapters in this section consider how relationships are shaped by diverse understandings of equine personhood, partnerships, and family, including Anglo-American, Mongolian, and North American Indigenous perspectives. They explore how the power distributions implicit within the notion of work and ownership factor into human responsibilities toward horses, and

how horses are variously considered as subjects, objects, and as both and more, simultaneously.

In chapter 11, psychology academic Rachel Hogg considers how human perceptions of equine agency and personhood within elite equestrian sport—horse-rider dyads listed on the elite squad for their respective country in international competition—interplay with the unequal power dynamics inherent between members of the two species involved. These human competitors experienced their horses as authentic, empathic, reciprocating social actors and partners, enabling them to manage but not completely resolve the cognitive dissonance that accompanied their horses' participation within what is essentially a commodified use.

Social anthropologist Robin Irvine, in chapter 12, problematizes the exploration of equine subjectivity through an assessment of the multifaceted factors—individual, social, cosmological, equine types and traits—that play into Mongolians' understandings of horses. His analysis enlightens the way contemporary Mongolians manage to negotiate seemingly contradictory multiple kinds of knowledge about individual horses and equine bodies in ways that lead to a particular understanding of how histories, humans and horses are constantly (re)imagined in and through practice.

In chapter 13, Ariahn Matamonasa-Bennett, who is a cross-culturally trained psychologist from a Native American cultural healing tradition, presents the American Indian philosophical understanding of animals as "relatives," potential teachers, and healers. Here, non-Western, indigenous paradigms can provide a philosophical foundation for understanding the nature of human-animal relationships, particularly horses' role as teachers and healers within equine-assisted therapies, as well as provide ethical principles to protect and respect them in those scenarios where the focus is most often on the human subject.

4 Conclusion and Implications

In sum, we believe that while the focus on human-equine relationships is a most worthy cause, we cannot fully address the "what" of those relationships without taking both sides of the equation into account. This requires a fuller teasing out of the "who" of the horse. Under the delineation of "relationship" we have set out here, it is precisely the horses' perspective we wish to interrogate because if we do not, then we cannot see the relationships under study as at all dialogic.

Human-horse relationships challenge prevailing narratives about the potentials and disallowance of non-human agents to participate in interspecies meanings and actions within the confines of the present-day commodified uses to which horses are put. They also challenge scholars to find better and fresh ways to bring horses into human-equine studies as more visible and present. As a means to move human-equine studies forward, we seek in this anthology not to define, but rather to complicate, issues of communication, agency, exploitation, and personhood among and between horses and humans.

The chapters that follow show that human conceptions of the capabilities of horses are neither static, panhuman, nor confined to our latest understandings. Equine agencies and subjectivities are indeed present, and held within horses, themselves. It is within the minds of those who hold them captive that they are not fixed but are, rather, granted. With this in mind, we look forward to a time when—as with Bucephalus and Alexander—the future scholarship of human-equine relationships might find ways to better convey, define and explain what we already know: there is indeed a "who" there with whom we share these relationships. To return to this chapter's epigraph, there is much work to be done to find the "right key" through which to make these agential equine subjects visible.

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