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To my beloved pets and those who love and respect animals.

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1. Introduction

Animal narratives have a long tradition in our culture, dating back to Aesop and his fables at around 600 BC, and particularly in children's literature, animals have always played a special role. Despite their frequent occurrence in literature, animal stories written for adults appear to constitute a somewhat contested field of research, since they are still frequently considered childish. While much has been written on anthropomorphism and the roles of animals in children's and young adult literature, animals as protagonists of biographical texts have not yet been discussed thoroughly, with the notable exception of *Flush: A Biography* by Virginia Woolf. Woolf's book is an example of the genre 'animalography,' i.e. a biographical text recounting the life of an animal (Huff and Haefner 155). Several interesting animalographies which are not aimed at children have been published lately, and it appears to be particularly interesting to analyse the representation of animal perspectives in such texts.

Biographical fiction in general increasingly attracts readers' and writers' interest, but its nature and correlation with its ancestor 'biography' are still in need of further investigation (Lackey, "Narrative Space" 13). Various other terms have been utilised for labelling this genre: 'biographical fiction'/ 'biofiction,' including the 'biographical novel' (Lackey, "Locating and Defining," "Narrative Space;" Latham; Middeke; Mujica; Novak; Parini), 'fictional biography' (Clifford; Lee, *Biography*; Parke; Schabert, "Fictional Biography," *Other Person*), and 'auto/biografiction' (Saunders). Michael Lackey refers to Thomas Mallon arguing "[n]ouns always trump adjectives, and in the phrase 'historical fiction' it is important to remember which of the two words is which" (291) and from Mallon's claim infers that "it would be inappropriate and even inaccurate to refer to biographical novels as fictional biographies, as some scholars do, because this would subordinate the fictional to the biographical" (Lackey, "Narrative Space" 2). However, no categorical distinction can be made out between the uses of the terms 'fictional biography' and 'biographical novel' in the relevant literature; hence, the thesis at hand will not distinguish between biographical novels and fictional biographies. What appears to be crucial, though, is to define the purpose of biographical fictions, i.e. "enact[ing] the commemorative and exemplary functions of life writing, and contribut[ing] to a historical person's 'afterlife'" (Novak 85). "[W]hen narrating the imaginary lives of people who really existed," authors of biographical novels fuse fact and fiction (Latham 355).

This thesis explores the genre of animalographies, which Huff and Haefner define as “narratives ‘by’ and about animals, in which human beings control what animals say” (153). Although the term ‘animalography’ specifically has not gained a wider currency yet, there are indeed popular examples of animal biographies, such as Anna Sewell’s *Black Beauty* (1877), Michael Morpurgo’s *War Horse* (1982), and Paul Auster’s *Timbuktu* (1999). These works, however, do not represent the life of a historical animal, but revolve around fictitious animals. The three selected animalographies for this thesis, by contrast, recount the story of notable writers’ actual pets: Virginia Woolf’s *Flush: A Biography* (1933), Sigrid Nunez’s *Mitz: The Marmoset of Bloomsbury* (1998), and Verlyn Klinkenborg’s *Timothy; or Notes of an Abject Reptile* (2006). Hence, in the context of my project, the genre of animalography is considered a form of biographical fiction, since the authors of the three books under scrutiny represent and partly fictionalise the biographical subject by enjoying a certain amount of the novelist’s freedom, but simultaneously incorporating biographical facts selected from historical material, such as diaries and letters. The chosen primary texts centre on different types of animals who lived at different times and are presented in different ways, which allows for more general conclusions to be drawn about the representations of animals in animalographies than would be possible if the analysis was restricted to texts whose protagonists are of the same species.

As has already been pointed out, scant attention has so far been devoted to this special genre of life writing about non-human lives. Therefore, it is worth examining how life writing, which has generally been dedicated to the lives of human beings, can be dedicated to our animal companions. In the first instance, this thesis endeavours to examine the representation of animal perspectives in *Flush: A Biography*, (hereafter *Flush*), *Mitz: The Marmoset of Bloomsbury*, (hereafter *Mitz*), and *Timothy; or Notes of an Abject Reptile* (hereafter *Timothy*). In order to explore the animals’ vantage points, it seems inevitable to examine the extent to which animals are portrayed as such, rather than humanised. In essence, I thus intend to establish whether the texts reflect an anthropocentric or non-anthropocentric view. Furthermore, the human-animal relationships in the animal biographies under scrutiny will be investigated. Also, given that the selected texts are not based on fictitious persons and animals but on the nonhuman companions of historical figures, my thesis will endeavour to determine how the historical sources, such as the letters of and biographies about the subjects, are utilised in the novels.

The question of anthropomorphism is central to the study of literary works about animals. As a concept, anthropomorphism is not only discussed in the context of fiction but also by ethologists studying animal behaviour, and it will certainly be considered in the examination of the animalographies. In analysing the role of anthropomorphism in the texts, certain questions arise, such as when and why is the technique adopted?; how does the anthropomorphic view contribute to our understanding of animals' behaviour and thoughts?

Investigating the narrative situation of the biographical novels will provide insight into the perspective featured in the texts, whether it is the human or the nonhuman point of view that dominates, which might have an influence on the role the animals serve in the animalographies. Furthermore, the perspective also correlates with the representation of the animals' experiences. The writers' ways of presenting these nonhuman (mental) experiences can be related to the worldview the authors aim to convey, whether it is human- or animal-centred. Likewise, certain incidents happening during the animals' lives are worth discussing in the context of human-animal studies, in order to compare the representation of the biographical figure with scientific research on animal behaviour.

As regards the human-animal relationships displayed in the novels, it is interesting to examine the owners' way of treating their nonhuman companions and how their fellowship is presented from the narrator's perspective. The attitude of the human characters towards their pets influences the representation of the animal, and therefore points to differences in the role of the animals and their portrayal in the novels.

For the analysis of the three selected novels, the thesis at hand will follow the methods of close and wide reading. The close reading, i.e. an in-depth analysis of the literary texts, will comprise the examination of narratological aspects, the representation of nonhuman (sensational) experiences and human-animal relationships, as well as the role of anthropomorphism. Aside from this detailed investigation of the primary literature, my research will also involve wide reading, which takes into account complementary reading for a more profound understanding of a given book's historical and scholarly context. Thus, a comparative reading of factual biographies about the historical figures and the chosen biographical novels will be conducted. With regard to the texts' cultural contexts, the thesis will be concerned with critical theory on human-animal studies.

The first section of this thesis is a review of existing literature discussing critical texts on *Flush*, which constitutes a rare instance of an animalography that has received ample scholarly attention. This chapter shall provide an overview of the various methods literary critics have employed when investigating Woolf's biographical novel. Furthermore, certain approaches of the articles and essays reviewed will be adopted when examining the selected primary texts. The following three sections investigate the chosen animalographies in chronological order. Hence, the second chapter deals with the discussion of *Flush*, the third analyses *Mitz*, and the fourth examines *Timothy*. The final section summarises the main findings of the analysis.

2. Approaching Animalographies - Criticism of Woolf's

Flush: A Biography

Unlike the other two selected animalographies, Virginia Woolf's *Flush* has been discussed and criticised by various scholars. Consulting articles and essays written on this biographical novel reveals that literary critics disagree about the genre and purpose of *Flush*. Before examining the various interpretations of *Flush*, the author's intentions in writing this book shall be discussed. Virginia Woolf's own opinion and remarks on the novel help to shed light on the heated debate sparked by her book, since one of her reasons for composing *Flush* appears to be "to play a joke on Lytton [Strachey]" in order "to parody him," which she notes in a letter to Ottoline Morrell (*Letters* 5 161-162). For Pamela Caughie, this assertion is probably the cause of the animalography's reputation as nonserious fiction (52). However, mocking Strachey cannot be considered the author's sole motivation, according to Caughie (52). Constantly repeating Woolf's own words, namely those defining *Flush* as "silly book" (*Diary* 4 153), she mentions a further intention. By referring to a letter Woolf wrote to her Bloomsbury colleague Vita Sackville-West, in which the former asks the latter for a photograph of Vita's cocker spaniel Henry and also remarks on *The Waves*' failure, Caughie argues that Woolf probably created the novel for financial profit (53). Moreover, Caughie notes that the modernist author had had this motivation even roughly one year before she described her animal biography as a joke (Caughie 53).

Thus, on the one hand, *Flush* can be regarded as "almost excluded from the canon of Woolf's major works" (Smith 359), hence, disregarded by scholars as well as readers¹. On the other hand, Woolf's canine memoir apparently sold well, and her husband, Leonard Woolf, called it "a great success" (144), which appears to be an appropriate designation for *Flush*, owing to the fact that it was a best-seller in England and "an alternative selection of the US Book of the Month Club" (L. Woolf 144). However, even though the author intended *Flush* to be a success, she paradoxically did not want to be praised for it, according to Caughie (54). Consulting Woolf's diary, an

¹ Caughie even claims that *Flush*'s readership is "nearly non-existent," which is, however, open to doubt (49). Furthermore, Hilary Newman highlights the focus on *Flush*, which appears to contradict with readers' expectations, since the two poets' lives can be considered the audience's particular interest (37). However, this view is not necessarily true, given that readers might indeed have been interested in the life of a dog owned by two famous Victorian writers.

entry she made three days before the novel's publication, appears to confirm Caughie's assertion: "Flush will be out on Thursday & I shall be very much depressed, I think, by the kind of praise. They'll say its 'charming' delicate, ladylike. And it will be popular [...] And I shall very much dislike the popular success of Flush" (*Diary 4* 181). Clearly, this entry gives rise to questions, as Caughie states: "Did Woolf fear that if *Flush* were popular, no one would take it seriously? Or did she think *Flush* was too silly to be taken seriously by the populace? Or did she feel the popular use of fiction was a silly use of *Flush*?" (54). The author's former intention, namely producing a best-seller, possibly changed during the writing process and might consequently be considered the reason of Woolf's anxiety of *Flush*'s success (Caughie 54). Taking into account that her final motivation was to parody Strachey, meaning that *Flush* represents a mere joke, then it can be argued that "its popularity could have been embarrassing to a serious writer" (Caughie 54). In view of Woolf's somewhat contradictory, ambiguous goals, Caughie further asserts that "*Flush* is not so much a capricious text as it is a consequence of valuing capriciousness," which seems to contradict with prevalent opinion (Caughie 55).

Given that scholars have read and interpreted Woolf's animalography in various ways, their diverse foci shall now be examined and classified into the following groups: critics who analyse *Flush*'s form, those who focus on the dog's perception, and finally those who discuss the work's historical and political context. Since the animals' viewpoint constitutes a major part of *Flush*'s and the other animalographies' analysis, this review shall serve to provide a brief overview on scholars' assumptions dealing with such an animal-centred reading so as to point to the variety of approaches open to readers of animalographies.

With regard to the book's form, the genre of biography will first be discussed, given that its subtitle reads "A Biography." According to Hilary Newman (30) and Elizabeth Steele (xx), Woolf originally considered *Flush* a biography, and both scholars refer to a diary entry which the modernist author made on 16 August 1931: "It is a good idea I think to write biographies; to make them use my powers of representation reality accuracy; & to use my novels simply to express the general, the poetic. *Flush* is serving this purpose" (*Diary 4* 40). Aside from this first note Woolf wrote on her canine memoir in her diary, Christine Reynier argues that "[a]s a biography, *Flush* belongs to a family tradition," pointing to Woolf's father, Leslie Stephen, who worked as a biographer (187). Furthermore, it cannot be denied that the work is based on a certain amount of research inevitable for producing a biography. Her selected documents are

displayed in the footnotes as well as in the list of authorities, including letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning to her sister, her husband Robert Browning, the former owner of Flush, i.e. Mary Russell Mitford, and the poems Barrett dedicated to Flush (Reynier 196). Apart from these sources, she also consulted a historical work, namely *The Rookeries of London* by Thomas Beames, for writing the Whitechapel chapter, which is about Flush's kidnapping. Reynier notes that the texts mentioned above "give some authenticity to the lives she is writing, [however,] they also show biography is but second-hand knowledge; it relies on written accounts of facts which are necessarily subjective accounts, somewhat distorting facts" (196-197). Moreover, she comments on Woolf's way of utilising her sources and states that one can detect direct as well as indirect quotations (197). Concerning the latter, Reynier points to Barrett Browning's poems, such as "Aurora Leigh" or "A Curse for a nation," which are "inserted within the fabric of the text, echoed or alluded to or commented upon" (Reynier 197). In addition, Reynier asserts that the use of the poems creates intertextuality in Woolf's text (197).

In reading and examining Woolf's text as a biography, it appears to be crucial to take her essays "The New Biography" (1927) and "The Art of Biography" (1939) into account, as critics discussing *Flush*'s genre make reference to both texts. Since Woolf considers the Victorian biographical model unconvincing, she seems to apply her ideas formulated in these critical texts in *Flush*. For instance, Woolf suggests in "The Art of Biography" that observing lives from an unusual perspective would widen the scope of biography ("The Art of Biography" 226). Thus, Newman is certainly correct in saying that Woolf clearly deployed this argument in her biographical novel, in her choice of a dog's vantage point (32). In "The New Biography" Woolf also notes the influence Boswell had on the nineteenth century biography, which "sought painstakingly and devotedly to express not only the outer life of work and activity but the inner life of emotion and thought" ("The New Biography" 230). Indeed, "Flush's inner self is laid bare; the sensations he feels, the soft touch of the earth, the smells he is sensitive to are conjures up in short lyrical passages which interrupt the evocation of facts and events," as Reynier states (195). Moreover, David Herman also discusses "The New Biography," particularly Woolf's remarks on the complex correlation between fiction and truth ("Modernist" 550-554). According to him, Woolf combines the real and the imaginary in *Flush*, which appears to be correct, as, despite the author's focus on a dog's experiences which correlate with the book's fictional elements, she nonetheless provides her readers with factual information (Herman, "Modernist" 552). Herman

also compares Lytton Strachey's and Virginia Woolf's biographical methods and argues that, on the one hand, Woolf "extrapolates from Strachey's methods," but, on the other hand, she "extends [his] methods in another way," since no hedges can be detected (Herman, "Modernist" 550-551). Thus, *Flush* does not conform to "one of the generic markers associated with nonfictional discourse," since the texts "largely lacks these modalizing expressions" (Herman, "Modernist" 551). Moreover, she "recounts Flush's perceptions, memories, and emotions without evidentiary backing, and also without overtly marking these reports as hypothetical or conjectural" (Herman, "Modernist" 551).

This fusion of fiction and nonfiction has given rise to a debate as to whether *Flush* can be regarded a biography or a novel, which Herman addresses as follows: "Is *Flush* a fictional narrative that takes the form of a biography in order to parody the conventions of biography itself, or is it an instance of life writing that interweaves elements of biographical and fictional narration in order to suggest how biographical methods might need to be modified to accommodate nonhuman lives?" ("Modernist" 552). According to Newman, the beginning of *Flush*, in which Woolf portrays the history of spaniels, is "a parody of human biography" (36). For Reynier, the facts that the book is written from a spaniel's perspective is "a humorous and provocative way of questioning the Victorian biographer's bias in favour of aristocrats" (191). Also, she refers to Flush's pedigree as "satire" on Strachey's biographies (Reynier 191). Hence, one can assert that Reynier interprets *Flush* as a parody of biographical conventions. Additionally, the critic notes that Woolf subverts the standards of Victorian biography, pointing to *Flush*'s "political undertones," and that she "subtly denounces the deeply-ingrained values that preside over the writing of Victorian biographies while asserting the political nature of biographical writing" (Reynier 192). Moreover, it is Reynier's belief that Woolf's choice of a dog as "biographical subject" is the definite link between "the subversion of biographical conventions and political subversion" (193). Given that Woolf did not apparently aim to write a pure biography, as Newman (33) may note correctly, it can be argued that the Bloomsbury author created a "new biographical form whose relationship with fiction is re-appraised" (Reynier 189).

In considering *Flush*'s fictional elements, Newman refers to the chapter in which the spaniel is stolen and is certainly right in stating that "if she were writing a straightforward biography, she should have indicated that he was actually stolen three times" (33). Hence, Woolf increases tension by recounting only one of three incidents which reports the abduction of Barrett Browning's dog (Newman 33).

Karalyn Kendall-Morwick assigns *Flush* to a particular genre of fiction, namely the “most humanist of novelistic forms: the *Bildungsroman*” (507-508), even though she previously notes that “[s]trictly speaking, of course, *Flush* is a biography, written as a parody of the new breed of biography” (507, original emphasis). With the help of her canine memoir, Woolf appears to present her “critique of the privileging of male experience that dominates the literary canon in general and the *Bildungsroman* tradition in particular” (Kendall-Morwick 509, original emphasis). Assuming *Flush* to be the subject of Woolf’s biography, one may agree with Kendall-Morwick’s claim that the dog represents the “male *Bildungsheld* who resists the socially sanctioned union of heterosexual marriage” (512, original emphasis). She investigates the dog’s canine *Bildung* and observes that *Flush* achieves a considerable progress in Italy, since he learns from the “mongrel dogs he encounters in the streets of Florence” that his pedigree and aristocracy is of no value anymore (Kendall-Morwick 521). Similarly, Herman briefly mentions *Flush* in the context of the *Bildungsroman*: “Basing her account in part on the Brownings’ correspondence, Woolf uses the coordinate system established by the *Bildungsroman* form [...] to map out the many vicissitudes of this dog’s life” (“Modernist” 548, original emphasis). Relating the book to this genre appears to be an interesting assumption and should not be regarded as inaccurate, given that *Flush* indeed displays certain qualities of the *Bildungsroman*, such as “a biographical narrative, problems of socialization, [and] the influence of mentors and ‘instrumental’ women” (Castle 4 qtd. in Herman, “Modernist” 548).

By taking the biographical as well as the fictional qualities *Flush* inherits into account, it can be established that Woolf appears to parody – at least to a certain extent – both the fictional and nonfictional genres, i.e. in this case the biography and the *Bildungsroman*, owing to the fact that the author chose the view of a cocker spaniel.

The question of the book’s genre appears to be linked to the representation of the nonhuman protagonist’s mind, as Herman points out: “Her intermixing of techniques for mind presentation – techniques associated with both fiction and nonfiction – play a central role in th[e] reframing and recontextualizing of life writing practices” (“Modernist” 560). One can assert that the portrayal of the animal’s perception shapes or even constitutes the genre of animalography. As has already been mentioned at the very beginning of this review, *Flush* can be considered successful due to its sales figures; nevertheless, it has frequently been criticised or neglected by literary critics. This denial might stem from “the disdain of literary critics for adult anthropomorphic fiction” (Ittner npd). Hence, in view of the reception of *Flush*, which “ranges from the

delight and fascination of many readers to the critics' disdain," one can argue that "imagining the world as perceived through animal eyes is a complex and controversial undertaking," as Jutta Ittner points out (npd). Scholars' assumptions regarding the world perceived through *Flush*'s eyes shall only be briefly outlined, since the in-depth analysis of *Flush* and the other two chosen animalographies will address these critical works in greater depth.

The concept of anthropomorphism, i.e. "*the attribution of human mental states (thoughts, feelings, motivations, and beliefs) to nonhumans*" (Serpell, "Anthropomorphism" 122, original emphasis), appears to constitute a significant part of literary animal stories, even though it "has become one of the great anxieties of modern age," as Marian Scholtmeijer writes (89). Indeed, Woolf "was particularly fearful of being dismissed as 'sentimental,'" according to Craig Smith (351), who equates anthropomorphism with sentimentality: "to view nonhuman animal consciousness in human terms is, ipso facto, to sentimentalize it" (351). However, despite this "great anxiety," which seems to be a somewhat overstated expression, Dan Wylie notes that "[f]iction writers nevertheless persist in using the imagination as a viable tool in expressing kinship with non-human beings in ways unavailable to either conventional philosophy or neurological science" (116). Apart from examining "the translation of sensory experience[,] the place of self-consciousness [and] the consciousness of death" in *Flush* and Gowdy's *The White Bone*, Wylie also relates the controversial concept of anthropomorphism to narrative mode (117). The narrative situation in *Flush* is also discussed by Herman, who observes a "nonhuman reflector as focalizing agent" ("Modernist" 555). In addition, he examines the modernist methods Woolf uses and investigates how those affect the text. Such an analysis has a broader aim for Herman, namely, "suggesting how modernist (and other) engagements with nonhuman lives can be investigated from what I refer to elsewhere as a *zoonarratological* perspective" ("Modernist" 560, original emphasis).

Aside from anthropomorphism, scholars seem to be interested in investigating *Flush*'s sensory world. Alison Booth and Anna Feuerstein, for instance, focus on the dog's olfaction in Woolf's text. The former points to the correlation between *Flush*'s scenting ability and his rivalry with Robert Browning (Booth 11) and also observes that the scent evoked by a text exerts an effect on the readership: "The olfactory codes of pleasure arouse readerly recognition of love and loss, but as the reader translates writing on the page, the pleasures are primarily epistemophilic, the texts all the more conspicuously designed. We smell their calculated artistry" (Booth 17). Feuerstein, by

contrast, relates the smell to power and is certainly correct in writing that humans are subordinate to dogs in terms of scent (33).

Unlike various other scholars, Jamie Johnson indicates that his reading of *Flush* was not focused on Elizabeth Barrett Browning's love life in the book but on the dog's subjectivity. According to him,

the language and plot structure remain devoted not to the love story of Miss Barrett and her suitor but to the actual life of a singular dog's inimitable, albeit imagined, life experiences. *Flush's* 'human thoughts' are only human to the extent that they are written by a human for a human audience. *Flush* leads a dog's life with dog-thoughts, exhibiting a social life with not only humans but also other dogs. (Johnson 35)

Moreover, by designating the nonhuman companion as subject, meaning that the human is decentred, it can be argued that a non-anthropocentric world is created (Calarco 64).

After having considered various opinions on *Flush's* genre and having offered a brief insight into certain concepts through which critics have approached the question of the dog, critical texts on the canine memoir's historical context shall be reviewed. Anna Snaith conducted a historical reading of *Flush* with a special regard to twentieth century politics. Her findings are presented in her essay "Of Fanciers, Footnotes, and Fascism: Virginia Woolf's *Flush*," which provides a somewhat different focus compared to other scholars' critical texts quoted so far. In the first instance, she points to the issue of the book's misinterpretation and rejection, as is the case with Smith and Herman, for instance, and announces "a re-evaluation of *Flush*" she wants to offer in her text (615). Arguing for the value of *Flush* in regard to its engagement "with the political and social contexts of mid-nineteenth-century London [...] [and] of early 1930s London," Snaith endeavours to demonstrate "that *Flush* needs to be placed more carefully in both the context of Woolf's own critical reception and her fears about the growth of fascism in Britain and Europe" (615). Furthermore, she refers to the "issues of class and gender oppression" Woolf addresses in *Flush* (626), accentuating the Bloomsbury author's "constant concern with the political implications of cultural discourses, her interest in the politics of language and imagery, as well as political events and movements" (616).

With regard to hierarchical structures, Snaith is certainly correct in writing that *Flush* is both privileged and oppressed (621). In London, Barrett Browning's canine companion can be regarded as an aristocrat, due to his excellent pedigree and outer appearance (Snaith 621-622). *Flush's* superiority appears to be linked to or even

mirrors the exclusiveness of Wimpole Street which, in turn, stands in sharp contrast to the rookery in Whitechapel (Snaith 622). Thus, her claim that class hierarchies are investigated “through the social politics of London” appears to be accurate (622). Even though considered a pure-bred cocker spaniel, Flush is nonetheless simultaneously presented as “the obedient servant or the silenced woman writer,” as Snaith points out (621). Another direct comparison of the Victorian poet and her spaniel is mentioned by Reynier, who describes Flush as “a double of his human mistress” (190).

Aside from tackling class and gender issues, Snaith further argues that Woolf certainly wanted to make an indirect allusion to the rise of European fascism in the early 1930s (625). One of the main arguments in favour of this assertion is Flush’s aristocracy, including “the repeated references to breeding, purity, mongrels, and hierarchy of species” (Snaith 629). It seems that Woolf “ostensibly links canine breeding hierarchies to the human class system, [while] purity of aristocracy is linked to racial purity” (Snaith 630). Also, Snaith notes that “Woolf evokes a language of racial superiority reminiscent of fascist ideas concerning anti-Semitism and Nordic superiority” (630). For instance, in comparing the purebred spaniel with mixed-breed dogs, the author employs words denoting “distinct characteristics, and purity of breeding,” such as “mongrel” (*Flush* 23) and “light eyes” (*Flush* 7), which allude to “racial nationalism, eugenics, and anti-alien sentiment that had been prevalent since the late-nineteenth century but which were given new meaning in the fascist context” (Snaith 630). Apart from the spaniel’s superiority, “the use of politically charged locations” constitutes a further point illustrating that Woolf intended to tackle the issue of fascism in *Flush*. Apparently, Pisa and Florence evoke a rather positive association, given that both Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Flush appear to find their freedom in this country. However, it must also be mentioned that the spaniel’s high value vanishes in their new home (Snaith 625-626). Furthermore, Snaith comments on the flea attack which Flush experiences in Italy and asserts that this incident causes the loss of “all the markers of his [Flush’s] aristocracy” (626). Hence, the fleas can be regarded as “symbolic commingling across gender, class and racial lines” (Snaith 626). Moreover, she observes a certain irony in Woolf’s representation of Italy in *Flush*, given that the country is characterised by democracy and freedom (626) by Woolf, although Italy was oppressed by Mussolini during the time of the text’s composition. This portrayal emphasises “Woolf’s notions of contingency,” as Snaith notes (626).

Snaith clearly shows that Woolf’s canine memoir can be read as an “anti-imperialist reading” (632). Furthermore, she emphasises Woolf’s attention and

sensitivity to both gender as well as “racial implications” of fascism (632). Thus, *Flush* reflects the author’s attitude towards fascism, as Snaith concludes: “*Flush* illuminates the ways in which she approached fascism: not as an isolated, anomalous evil, but as an extension or extreme version of other kinds of tyranny” (633).

In conclusion, this discussion has revealed that Virginia Woolf’s *Flush* can be read in various ways and should not be rejected from her oeuvre. As certain diary entries and letters have shown, Woolf probably did not treat this special and contested book with the same deep seriousness she dedicated to other texts. By taking *Flush*’s hybrid form, which particularly mocks the conventions of biography, the nonhuman protagonist, and the political subtext into account, Snaith is certainly correct when she writes that “Woolf celebrates impurity and hybridity in the form and content of the text itself through crossovers of genre, species, class and geography” (631).

The critical texts discussed in this review are not only conducive to the investigation of Woolf’s *Flush*, but also to Nunez’s *Mitz* and Klinkenborg’s *Timothy*, as the critics’ approaches can be adopted to examine other animalographies as well. Moreover, the articles and essays on *Flush* have demonstrated that an analysis of books of this yet unexplored genre is possible by applying different methods. Since the representation of animal perspectives constitutes the primary focus of this thesis, the selected primary texts will not be examined for their political context, like Snaith did. Rather, the investigation of the narrative situation, the role of anthropomorphism, and the human-animal relationships in the biographical novels can be considered those aspects crucial for scrutinising the portrayal of nonhuman (mental) experiences. Additionally, in taking the animalographies’ historical and cultural contexts into account, a direct link to the pet-ownership may be developed. The question of genre that has frequently been discussed by critics who examined *Flush*, as has been shown at the beginning of this review, appears to be valuable for the literary texts’ analysis as regards the authors’ use of fact and fiction for representing the animal protagonist as well as the historical figures.

3. *Flush: A Biography*

Virginia Woolf started writing *Flush* in 1931 and finally published it in 1933. This work is divided into six chapters, which seem to display the defining and critical phases of Flush's life. Before telling the story of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's dog, the author informs her readership about the history of the spaniel as well as its breed standards. Flush, a red purebred cocker spaniel, spends his puppyhood in Three Mile Cross together with other spaniels and his owner Mary Russell Mitford, who lives in humble circumstances and therefore wishes to find the best home for little Flush. Her friend, the invalid Elizabeth Barrett, appears to be the only person qualified for being the animal's new owner. Hence, Miss Mitford takes Flush to London and leaves the puppy behind in the young poet's gloomy bedroom, where he resides most of his time. When the love between Flush and his new owner could not be stronger, Robert Browning, who represents, at first, the dog's greatest rival, walks into their life. After having overcome his jealousy, Flush is kidnapped and imprisoned in the rookery of Whitechapel. The spaniel's captivity lasts five days, until Elizabeth Barrett herself rescues her beloved companion. Shortly after this terrible incident, the poet, Flush and Robert Browning, who will soon become Barrett's husband, leave Wimpole Street 50. They find their new home in Italy, Florence, where the spaniel and his owner tremendously enjoy their freedom. The book ends with the death of the animal protagonist, who falls asleep on the sofa close beside Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

3.1. Transforming a Life à la Virginia Woolf: The Woolfian Use of Sources

It seems that Woolf appears to play with her sources, as she fuses her fictitious elements together with quotations from letters, among others, and eventually creates an emotional – partly thrilling – and “fanciful” (Szladits 218) story about Elizabeth Barrett Browning's cocker spaniel.

Reynier is certainly right in saying that writing a biography includes a “process of selection,” which can be considered an “intrusion of subjectivity” (197). Woolf's choice of sources and particularly her use of the already “subjective accounts” (Reynier 197) are certainly interesting. Unlike conventional biographies, Woolf's appears to put emphasis on space rather than time in narrating Flush's story (Reynier 194). Thus, it

can be established that “Flush’s life is seen as a succession of moves from Three Mile Cross to Wimpole Street, Whitechapel, Pisa and Florence rather than a succession of dates, and the titles of the different chapters are the first signs of this shift,” as Reynier points out (194). With regard to the dates Woolf barely mentions in the animalography, one might gain the impression that the dates are not of considerable relevance for this story and “undermined with doubt” (Reynier 194) if they are mentioned: “All researchers have failed to fix with any certainty the exact year of Flush’s birth, let alone the month or the day; but it is likely that he was born some time early in the year 1842” (*Flush* 9)². One may interpret the lack of dates or their imprecision in *Flush* in the following way: Since dogs, and animals in general, do not perceive time the way humans do (J. McGrath), Woolf may have taken Flush’s different perception of time into consideration. Rather than time, it seems that space is far more important to the dog, given that each place is linked to Flush’s experiences, such as the freedom he enjoyed in Three Mile Cross and Italy, or the horror he suffered in Whitechapel.

In addition, Woolf avoids repetitive incidents with regard to Flush’s kidnapping as well as Elizabeth Barrett’s pregnancy (Newman 33-35). In order to “heighten[] the tension and drama,” Woolf decided to tell only about the spaniel’s third time in captivity, which occurred in 1846, even though Flush was also stolen in 1843 and 1844 (Newman 33). The author seems to apply the same strategy for the Victorian poet’s pregnancies, given the fact that Barrett Browning had suffered two miscarriages before her son was born (Newman 34-35). Besides, she had to undergo two further unsuccessful pregnancies after the birth of her first baby (Newman 35). Thus, “[t]he five events – four miscarriages and the successful birth – are telescoped for dramatic effect into the safe arrival of the baby” (Newman 35). One could certainly argue that these latter incidents are not decisive for Flush’s life, in contrast to the kidnappings. However, Newman is correct in asserting that the dog nonetheless “would surely have

² Apparently, Mary Russell Mitford had given Elizabeth Barrett Flush already in 1840 during her stay in Torquay, as Kate Flint states, who refers to a letter the poet wrote to Miss Mitford in December 1840 (118); hence, she had owned the spaniel even before she returned to London in 1841 (Flint 118; Lubbock 42). Jennifer McDonell (20) as well as Lola Szladits (213) write that Flush came to join the depressive Barrett in 1841 – “during that dreadful spring of 1841,” according to Szladits (213). The one fact on which scholars apparently agree is that the dog was given to his new owner in Torquay (Szladits 213; Newman 35; McDonell 20). Newman notes that introducing Flush to Miss Barrett in her bedroom in Wimpole Street can be considered a “happy accident” though (35).

noticed signs of unusual activity and disturbance in the households at these times, but again Woolf used the facts selectively” (35).

Interestingly, the author did not entirely avoid repetition, since she indeed reports on both the spaniel’s attacks on Robert Browning, which happened in close succession (Newman 35). However, the arrival of the poet’s future husband, which causes Flush’s unbearable jealousy and eventually leads to the great rivalry between the man and the dog, can be regarded as “decisive and dramatic events” (Newman 35), and are consequently treated in a separate chapter (“The Hooded Man”). In view of the significance these incidents have for the spaniel’s life, Woolf might have considered repetition, which seems to reinforce Flush’s anger towards Robert Browning, appropriate.

Additionally, it can be argued that the Bloomsbury author not only attempted to intensify suspense and drama through telescoping several events into one, but also through altering – even if unwittingly – certain facts. The incident of the spaniel’s kidnapping appears to offer such a possibility, since she prevaricates about Browning’s remarks in one of his letters. It is true that Robert Browning’s and the desperate woman’s opinions vary concerning the retrieval of her companion, given that he writes on 2 September 1846, when having heard of Flush’s kidnapping the first time: “But you will recover him, I dare say . . not, perhaps directly, – the delay seems to justify their charge” (*Letters of RB and EBB 2* 1033). Woolf, however, includes a passage from a letter he sent on 3 September, and “significantly omits what might have been noted, in RB’s favour” (Flint 124). Before explaining to Miss Barrett what he would have said to the dog stealer, which is apparently the passage Woolf selected in order to prove that “Mr Browning himself threw all his weight [...] against Flush” (*Flush* 60), Robert Browning writes that he “rejoiced that poor Flush is found again” (*Letters of RB and EBB 2* 1037). Thus, it can be assumed that Browning would not have expressed those thoughts if he had not believed Flush back home. Nonetheless, Woolf uses the specific passage in which he clearly states that he would not have given those criminals any money in order to recover the poet’s beloved dog (*Flush* 60). As a result, the reader probably feels a certain antipathy for Barrett’s future husband and, consequently, sympathises with the spaniel all the more.

With regard to Flush’s death, one can argue that Woolf chose a deeply emotional and dramatic ending of the spaniel’s life, given that he dies in his owner’s presence,

presumably on the sofa beside her³: “Then she looked at Flush again. But he did not look at her. An extraordinary change had come over him. ‘Flush!’ she cried. But he was silent. He had been alive; he was now dead.” (*Flush* 105-106). In her notes, the author writes that “the date and the manner of his death are unknown” (*Flush* 115). However, there is a letter Barrett Browning sent to her sister Arabella Moulton-Barrett on 17-18 June 1854, which says that Flush’s death was certainly dramatic, but he apparently did not die at the poet’s side:

Another thing which has saddened me much these last days is . . . dear Flush – He is gone, Arabel – He died quietly – I am so sorry to say Penini found him, & screamed in anguish – There was no pain, nothing to regret in that way – and our grief for him is the less that his infirmities had become so great that he lost no joy in losing life – He was old you know – though dogs of his kind have lived much longer – and the climate acted unfavourably upon him. He had scarcely a hair on his back – everyone thought it was the mange, and the smell made his presence in the drawingroom a difficult thing. In spite of all, however, it has been quite a shock to me & a sadness – a dear dog he was. (qtd. in Szladits 214-215)

Thus, it can be assumed that Virginia Woolf was indeed not aware of the circumstances and the date of the spaniel’s death. The author consulted Leonard Huxley’s edition *Elizabeth Barrett Browning: Letters to her Sister 1846-1859*, from which Woolf retrieved valuable information concerning Flush, such as the improving relationship between him and her child (*Letters to Sister* 134) or his seasickness (*Letters to Sister* 141), but this collection does not include the letter which Szladits cited. The last letter mentioning Flush in the Huxley edition was sent to Barrett Browning’s sister Henrietta on 26 July 1853, one year before Flush died (*Letters to Sister* 187-191). In this message, the poet informs her sister about her son’s friends and also about Flush’s daily morning swim in “a riotous little river”: “[T]hese baths are doing Flush an infinite deal of good already, besides the pleasure they give to the spectators” (*Letters to Sister* 189). Thus, one can argue that these baths should improve the dog’s health which began to deteriorate with their move to Italy. Flush’s poor condition caused by the warm Italian weather is frequently addressed in Woolf’s animalography, presumably prompting the readership to empathise with the canine protagonist, as is ever so often the case in reading *Flush*.

It seems that recounting Flush’s experiences, rather than the two Victorian poets’ romance, serves as the primary focus in Woolf’s biographical novel. Consequently,

³ It is not explicitly stated that Flush lies on the sofa when he dies, but shortly before he closes his eyes forever, he jumped onto the sofa (*Flush* 105).

Elizabeth Barrett Browning's cocker spaniel can be considered the biographical subject, with whom the readers sympathise throughout the story, whereby feeling antipathy towards Robert Browning. Apart from this, the author cleverly fuses fact and fiction in recounting the dog's life, since she guides the readership through *Flush*'s pleasant and traumatic experiences, on the one hand, without boring the audience by listing a massive amount of raw facts, and, on the other hand, by creating suspense without, however, writing too fancifully. Thus, Woolf appears to adopt a technique typical of a biographical novel, namely "tak[ing] a real person [or animal] and their real history as the subject matter for imaginative exploration, using the novel's techniques for representing subjectivity rather than the objective, evidence-based discourse of biography" (Lodge 8).

3.2. The Human Narrator on the Nonhuman Reflector: *Flush*'s Narrative Situation

Flush's story is not told by himself but by a third-person narrator, with whom Woolf seems to adhere to the book's subtitle as well as to the common type of narrator of a conventional biography. In terms of the three narrative situations defined by Franz K. Stanzel's model⁴, it can be established that *Flush* features a figural narrative situation, given that Woolf's "narrated world is presented from the perspective of a character who is involved in the action, a 'reflector', who functions as a medium or centre of orientation, whose perceptions and internal processes play a central role in determining what is narrated" (A. and V. Nünning 113). As regards the perspective, which "directs the reader's attention to the way in which he perceives the fictional reality" (Stanzel 49), it is the internal perspective that dominates. This perspective "prevails when the point of view from which the narrated world is perceived or represented is located in the main character or in the centre of events," as Stanzel notes (111). In defining *Flush*'s narrative situation with the help of Gérard Genette's terminology, one can say that Woolf employs a heterodiegetic narrator, who "is located outside the narrated world" (A. and V. Nünning 119), and it is the internal focalisation, whose focaliser is "part of the story," that is applied in *Flush* (A. and V. Nünning 122).

⁴ In analysing the selected animalographies' narrative situation, I will mostly refer to Stanzel's terminology.

Stanzel's reflector, who thus corresponds to Genette's focaliser, is Flush the cocker spaniel.

That Flush's perception forms the focus of attention, can be observed in the following passage, in which the spaniel explores his invalid owner's bedroom for the first time:

Very slowly, very dimly, with much sniffing and pawing, Flush by degrees distinguished the outlines of several articles of furniture. That *huge* object by the window was perhaps a wardrobe. Next to it stood, conceivably, a chest of drawers. [...] Suddenly Flush saw staring back at him from a hole in the wall another dog with bright eyes flashing, and tongue lolling! He paused amazed. He advanced in awe. [...] He pursued his investigations, cautiously, nervously, as an explorer in a forest softly advances his foot, uncertain whether that shadow is a lion, or that root a cobra. At last, however, he was aware of *huge* objects in commotion over him; and, unstrung as he was by the experiences of the past hour, he hid himself, trembling behind a screen. The voices ceased. A door shut. For one instant he paused, bewildered, unstrung. Then with a pounce as of clawed tigers memory fell upon him. He felt himself alone – deserted. (*Flush* 16-17, emphasis added)

The narrator appears to describe the dog's perception of the dark room by employing words for elements, such as furniture, window, and wardrobe, which refer to the human world (Herman, "Modernist" 555). However, if such objects were not described by the teller, the reader would not be able to imagine the setting and could not follow the thoughts of the dog. Moreover, the dog's perspective seems to be intensified with the help of the adjective 'huge' for describing the words 'object' and 'objects,' since the reader can visualise the room from Flush's vantage point, who clearly perceives each object's size differently from human beings. Also, the exclamation mark appears to mark the climax of the passage and might act as a sign of Flush's excitement. Due to this agitation, the dog does not notice that Miss Mitford, his beloved breeder, leaves him behind. Interestingly, Woolf could have included a sentence about Miss Mitford bidding Miss Barrett goodbye, but she did not. Instead, the narrator exclusively focuses on Flush's point of view and how he experiences the situation of discovering the dark bedroom.

In analysing this animalography's narrative situation, Herman discusses "two significant issues [which] arise from Woolf's use of internal focalization, or figural narration, in *Flush*: on the one hand, how her use of the technique bears on the generic classification of the text (biography or fiction?); on the other hand, what it means for Woolf to use a nonhuman reflector as focalizing agent" ("Modernist" 555). The first issue is therefore concerned with the book's genre. Herman refers to Woolf's fusion of

fictional and nonfictional elements, from which her hybrid text derives (“Modernist” 555), and designates *Flush* as “a forerunner of the generic experimentation found in the nonfiction novel” (Herman, “Modernist” 556). The narrator’s detailed report on the spaniel’s “mental experience (perceptions, memories, emotions)” can be clearly regarded as one aspect generating such a “mixed generic picture” (Herman, “Modernist” 556). The example below, taken from the Whitechapel chapter, appears to illustrate best all three aspects, i.e. perceptions, memories, and emotions of the dog’s mental experience:

Was it better to be killed or to stay here? Which was worse – this life or that death? The racket, the hunger and the thirst, the reeking smells of the place – and once, Flush remembered, he had detested the scent of eau-de-Cologne – were fast obliterating any clear image, any single desire. Fragments of old memories began turning in his head. Was that the voice of old Dr Mitford shouting in the field? [...] There was a rattling in the room and he thought he heard Miss Mitford tying up a bunch of geraniums. But it was only the wind [...] It was only some drunken voice raving in the gutter. [...] He had been forgotten and deserted. No help was coming. No voice spoke to him. (*Flush* 58-59)

Passages as quoted above seem to “violate the criterion of falsifiability that normatively distinguishes nonfictional genres such as biography from fictional narratives,” given that Woolf does not make use of hedging in recounting Flush’s mental life and perception, which, as opposed to some of the dog’s experiences, are apparently not based on documentary evidence (Herman, “Modernist” 556). Wylie also notes that there is a significant correlation between the text’s form and its narrative mode and that “Woolf balances cannily between taking advantage of the freedom of this fictional mode to hint at an alternative world of sense and sensibility, and reflecting on the limits of its imaginative possibilities” (122). Wylie’s argument appears to link Herman’s two basic concerns, as the first one refers to *Flush*’s generic hybridity, while the second one discusses the author’s intention in selecting a canine focaliser. With regard to the latter, Herman asserts that the choice of a human narrator and a nonhuman focaliser indicates the distinct ways of different creatures’ perception of the world (“Modernist” 557). Indeed, in posing questions such as “Was that the voice of old Dr Mitford shouting in the field?,” the reader might forget about the teller and rather think that it is Flush himself who addresses his audience in despair. However, one has to be aware of the fact that this perception is only feigned, as Esser remarks (180). Moreover, such an impression would not be possible if the narrator was not omniscient, according to Wylie: “It is part of the gift of omniscient narration to deceive us momentarily that we have – just for a moment – perceived as the dog perceives” (12). Thus, Herman might

be right in stating that “*Flush* gives scope to nonhuman ways of experiencing the world,” “by including extensive reports of Flush’s un verbalized thoughts and perceptions” (“Modernist” 557).

As this chapter has shown, the analysis of *Flush*’s narrative situation is crucial in examining the animal’s representation, given that Woolf’s selected vantage point strongly affects the text’s portrayal of the nonhuman companion. In the case of *Flush*, a human narrator describes Flush’s inner self by translating the dog’s thoughts into human language and aspires to delve into a cocker spaniel’s world and nature. Thus, it can be established that Flush’s way of encountering the world is foregrounded, and in employing an animal reflector, the audience may gain a better insight into “what it is or may be like to be a dog” (Herman, “Modernist” 558). The translation of the dog’s thoughts and the representation of his perception of the world seems to be linked to the anthropomorphic approach, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

3.3. The Question of the Humanised Cocker Spaniel: Anthropomorphism in *Flush*

Anthropomorphism can be regarded as inevitable when examining various types of animal stories. By taking this concept into account, one has to be aware of the fact that the investigation of literary anthropomorphism appears to be a complex undertaking, as Sandra Mitchell points out: “‘Anthropomorphism’ has long been considered a bad word in science. [...] But anthropomorphism is neither *prima facie* bad or necessarily non-scientific. It can be both, but it need not be either” (100). James Serpell agrees with Mitchell with regard to the concept’s prevailing negative view and states that “[m]ost previous discussions of anthropomorphism in the scientific literature have tended to dwell on its validity (or lack thereof) as a technique for describing and interpreting animal behaviour” (“Anthropomorphism” 123). Smith highlights the reliability of anthropomorphism with respect to the investigation of “animal behaviour and animal consciousness,” on condition that this technique is applied “within carefully maintained critical boundaries” (352). The discussions on this approach probably induced Serpell to provide a different perspective on the issue, as he refuses to examine the concept’s usefulness. Instead, he focuses “on the way in which it explains, in evolutionary terms, both the benefits and the harms of pet ownership” (Serpell, “Anthropomorphism” 123). The analysis of the portrayed animals selected for

this thesis, however, will discuss both the negative as well as the positive critical aspects of anthropomorphism scholars emphasise, given that it is nonetheless a traditional technique the writers of animalographies and other types of animal stories employ in order to present a nonhuman being's life.

It can be argued that animal biographies evoke a feeling of sympathy for the nonhuman protagonist through the humanisation of the subjects (Flegel 91). Furthermore, the anthropomorphic technique can certainly affect the "sentimental mode" of an animalography, as Monica Flegel asserts (91). Without sentimentalism, Erica Fudge notes, generated from anthropomorphisation of the animal, the relationship between humans and animals would simply be "a very distant, and perhaps mechanistic one" (76). Even though Woolf did not want to be associated with sentimentalism (Smith 351), one can clearly observe sympathetic passages, such as the following, in which Flush endures in the dark, filthy room in Whitechapel:

He found himself in chillness and dampness. As his giddiness left him he made out a few shapes in a low dark room – broken chairs, a tumbled mattress. Then he was seized and tied tightly by the leg to some obstacle. [...] Flies buzzed on scraps of old meat that were decaying on the floor. Children crawled out from dark corners and pinched his ears. He whined, and a heavy hand beat him over the head. He cowered down in the few inches of damp brick against the wall. Now he could see that the floor was crowded with animals of different kinds. [...] Their ribs stood out from their coats – they were half famished, dirty, diseased, uncombed, unbrushed; yet all of them, as Flush could see, were dogs of the highest breeding, chained dogs, footmen's dogs, like himself. [...] Thirst was his worst suffering; but one sip of the thick greenish water that stood in a pail near him disgusted him; he would rather die than drink another. (*Flush* 55)

The example clearly shows the nonhuman protagonist as the reflector, with whom the reader sympathises. The terrible situation is "registered by [him] at the moment of perception," and, therefore, Flush "cannot grasp it as a whole" (Stanzel 169). At first, he can only fearfully glance around the room and notice the captured animals that are described. However, when the spaniel's disgust over "the thick greenish water" is expressed, the anthropomorphic technique is foregrounded. The reader empathises with the thirsty dog and imagines how Flush must suffer, since a human being would refuse this water as well. Woolf appears to mock this anthropomorphic view of pets, as illustrated in this passage:

Was Flush dead, or was Flush alive? She did not know. At eight o' clock there was a rap on the door; it was the usual letter from Mr. Browning. But as the door opened to admit the letter, something rushed in also; – Flush. He made straight for his purple jar. It was filled three times over; and he still drank. Miss Barrett watched the dazed, bewildered dirty dog, drinking. 'He was not so enthusiastic

about seeing me as I expected', she remarked. No, there was only one thing in the world he wanted – clean water. (*Flush* 67)

It should be noted that Elizabeth Barrett Browning's reaction to *Flush*'s behaviour was not invented by Woolf: the remark derives from a letter the Victorian poet wrote to Robert Browning in 1846. Still, one can assume that the author deliberately incorporated Barrett's somewhat surprised and disappointed observation. Moreover, Woolf indeed seems to emphasise the dog's natural instinct, i.e. to survive and not to heartily welcome its human owner. Hence, drinking water, after having suffered five days from thirst, constitutes *Flush*'s fundamental need. However, this instinct is not of interest for Elizabeth Barrett, and Smith emphasises the poet's vanity, as follows: "The conventional human expectation of creatures who are created for our pleasure is unmasked here as failure of human empathy" (356). Moreover, by integrating this authentic remark, Woolf seems to disrupt the reader's romanticised expectation of a highly emotional reunion between a beloved pet and its owner stricken with sorrow. In comparing the two passages cited above, it can also be established that the author plays with the anthropomorphic representation of the animal protagonist, since the former presents *Flush* like a person who would never drink such dirty water. However, it is a common fact that puddles occasionally satisfy the majority of a dog's thirst. Thus, a dog suffering from unbearable need of water would probably not refuse even "thick greenish water" (*Flush* 55). The latter example, by contrast, portrays a *Flush* who can be considered more animal than human, given that the spaniel's basic instincts predominate over the rather manlike emotions which Elizabeth Barrett apparently expected from her canine companion.

Serpell not only discusses why the humanisation of a nonhuman companion is beneficial for their owners, but also addresses the negative consequences for the animals ("Anthropomorphism" 128). Serpell mentions a certain 'anthropomorphic selection': "*selection in favor of physical and behavioral traits that facilitate the attribution of human mental states to animals* – [anthropomorphic selection] imposes unusual and unique pressure on the objects of its attentions, in much the same way that the phenomenon of 'female choice' does in sexual selection" ("Anthropomorphism" 128-129, original emphasis). Such anthropomorphic traits or appearances appealing to human society have led to various malformations and disabilities from which all different kinds of animals, particularly dog breeds, have to suffer (Serpell, "Anthropomorphism" 129-130). Even though such an

anthropomorphic selection might not have been as much present in the 1930s as in the twenty-first century, the importance of being a perfect purebred cocker spaniel is frequently emphasised in *Flush* until Elizabeth Barrett Browning's pet learns to value the equality between all dogs. The breed standard is presented as follows:

By that august body it is plainly laid down what constitute the vices of a spaniel, and what constitute its virtues. Light eyes, for example, are undesirable; curled ears are still worse; to be born with a light nose or a topknot is nothing less than fatal. The merits of the spaniel are equally clearly defined. His head must be smooth, rising without a too-decided stoop from the muzzle; the skull must be comparatively rounded and well developed with plenty of room for brain power; the eyes must be full but not gozzled; the general expression must be one of intelligence and gentleness. The spaniel that exhibits theses points is encouraged and bred from; the spaniel who persists in perpetuating topknots and light noses is cut off from the privileges and emoluments of his kind. Thus the judges lay down the law and, laying down the law, impose penalties and privileges which ensure that the law shall be obeyed. (*Flush* 7)

One can argue that Woolf not only ridicules "the laws of the Spaniel Club" (*Flush* 7), but also "the hierarchy between high and low implicit in the Victorian biographers' bias in favour of the noble and famous," for *Flush*, "the biographical subject[,] [...] is both a low creature and an aristocrat" (Reynier 191). In terms of the canine memoir's historical context, Snaith discerns indirect allusions to fascism, as has been discussed in the literature review. This passage of the cocker spaniel's breed standard, the last two sentences in particular, might be such an implicit hint to Hitler's call for racial segregation. However, rather than appreciating or encouraging those laws linked to anthropomorphic selection (people decide on breed standards), Woolf seems to mock them.

The notion of anthropomorphic selection has demonstrated that domesticated animals are transformed in order to satisfy human desires for the perfect 'humanised' pet. In this regard, one can assert that human beings aim at 'saming.' Kari Weil directly links "the problem of 'saming' [, which originates from feminist theory]" to anthropomorphism (*Thinking Animals* 82). Both saming and anthropomorphism "reduce or disallow difference, whether differences between women and men or differences between nonhuman animals and humans" (Weil, *Thinking Animals* 82). However, Weil also notes that both concepts function as "corrective to what Frans de Waal has called 'anthropodenial,' a process that refuses to acknowledge the ways that nonhuman and human animals (or men and women) are alike, the ways certain so-called human characteristics are also characteristic of some nonhumans" (*Thinking Animals* 83). Concerning the use of anthropomorphism in *Flush*, it is Weil's belief that

Woolf does not concentrate on adopting “an objective standpoint from which to judge what is exclusively human or animal,” but rather on focusing “on what is shared by domestic animals (human and nonhuman) as creatures” (*Thinking Animals* 83). This argument clearly contrasts with Daniela Esser’s opinion, who argues that the humanisation of animals, in this case anthropomorphising Flush, serves to emphasise the insuperable difference between animal companions and their human owners (182). Esser even states that this inequality can be considered one of the topics which are apparently explored in *Flush*. Nik Taylor’s assumption regarding the complex concept appears to lie in-between the latter two critic’s opinions towards anthropomorphism. He points out that “[a]nthropomorphism (and its partner in crime, hybridisation), makes murky the previously assumed clear delineations between human and non-human, between human and animal, or even between humans and the broader category of everything that isn’t humanity – nature” (Taylor, “Anthropomorphism” 267-268).

Certainly, one can observe passages where Flush is strongly humanised and takes on manlike traits, particularly during his first months in Wimpole Street:

Thus, before many of these walks were over a new conception had entered his brain. Setting one thing beside another, he had arrived at a conclusion. Where there are flower-beds there are asphalt paths and men in shiny top-hats, dogs must be led on chains. Without being able to decipher a word of the placard at the Gate, he had learnt his lesson – in Regent’s Park dogs must be led on chains. And to this nucleus of knowledge, born from the strange experiences of the summer of 1842, soon adhered another; dogs are not equal, but different. [...] [T]he dogs in London, Flush soon discovered, are strictly divided into different classes. [...] Dogs therefore, Flush began to suspect, differ; some are high, others low. (*Flush* 22-23)

It seems that the spaniel resembles a child discovering its environment that is not yet able to read. Also, the issue of class affiliation can definitely be regarded as a human concern. The knowledge which the dog gains in London derives from the strong relationship between Flush and his invalid owner, as Esser states (182). For his beloved mistress, Flush needs to suppress his instincts and surrenders the freedom he once enjoyed in Three Mile Cross (Esser 182; Weil, *Thinking Animals* 88):

His outdoor education was supplemented by that of the bedroom, and this, to a dog of Flush’s temperament, was the most drastic that could have been invented. His only airings, and these were brief and perfunctory, were taken in the company of Wilson, Miss Barrett’s maid. The rest of the day he kept his station on the sofa at Miss Barrett’s feet. All his natural instincts were thwarted and contradicted. (*Flush* 24)

Considering that not only Flush but also Elizabeth Barrett is clearly oppressed, especially by her father, Weil's assertion that Woolf uses anthropomorphism in order to show what humans and animals have in common as living beings may be correct, at least to a certain extent, given that "*Flush* represents dogs and women alike as victimized creatures of their times" (Weil, *Thinking Animals* 88). Thus, it seems that their destiny as creatures of the Victorian era constitutes one aspect which the Victorian poet and the dog share with each other.

Nonetheless, it shall also be argued that the cocker spaniel is not exclusively represented as a humanised being, since Flush is portrayed as instinct-driven dog, too, especially before his time in London: "[A] smell that ripped across his brain stirring a thousand instincts, releasing a million memories – the smell of hare, the smell of fox. Off he flashed like a fish drawn in a rush through water further and further. He forgot his mistress; he forgot all human kind" (*Flush* 11).

Not only in Three Mile Cross the dog's animality is visible, but also during Flush's time in Italy, the spaniel's natural behaviour and interests are presented, which clearly differ from those of his human owner, and therefore, the antagonism between human and animal appears to be confirmed (Esser 182):

[F]or three and a half hours the banners went by and the people cheered and Mr and Mrs Browning stood with six candles burning on the balcony, waving and waving. For some time, Flush too, stretched between them with his paws over the sill, did his best to *rejoice*. But at last – he could not conceal it – he yawned. [...] A *weariness*, a *doubt*, a *ribaldry* possessed him. What is it all for? he asked himself. Who was this Grand Duke and what had he promised? Why were they all so absurdly excited? [...] And then, as the Grand Duke passed, he became aware that a little dog had stopped at the door. Seizing his chance when Mrs Browning was more than enthusiastic, he slipped down from the balcony and made off [and] [...] followed her. (*Flush* 80, emphasis added)

Even though the dog is not represented as humanised being, as, for instance, when he realises his aristocracy, Woolf nonetheless adopts the anthropomorphic view in the passage above, since she translates the spaniel's mental states into human terms. According to Marc Bekoff, "the purposes, feelings, motivations, and cognition of animals" constitute "the kinds of mental states that anthropomorphisms claim" (*Encyclopedia* 160).

Hence, with the help of the given examples, it can be established that the employed anthropomorphism in *Flush* appears to be linked to the contrary worlds of wilderness and civilisation (Esser 183). Still, one has to note that the canine protagonist is not entirely humanised in Victorian London, as this example demonstrates: "Mr

Taylor promised that he would confer with his ‘Society’ and that the dog would be returned next day. [...] But for Flush things were very different. Flush, Miss Barrett reflected, ‘doesn’t know that we can recover him’; Flush had never mastered the principles of human society” (*Flush* 54). The passage displays a situation in which Flush is wholly dependent on his owner, since he is kidnapped and imprisoned. Hence, Elizabeth Barrett only then recognises that her animal companion lacks human understanding when she is separated from her dog (Esser 182). In writing that “Flush had never mastered the principles of human society,” the author probably emphasises that a dog simply cannot grasp these principles; consequently, Woolf appears to indicate that animals differ from humans.

Rather than presenting the spaniel as a mere humanised being who is a figure of Victorian women, it can be argued that Woolf possibly intended indeed to present the view of a dog and its mental experiences, which can be observed through analysing the portrayal of Flush’s inner life without concentrating on his humanisation. The following example makes the readership aware of the fact that Flush – even though Woolf makes use of the anthropomorphic approach – cannot read and does not see the utility of writing letters:

And then, when she was alone, she read over again last night’s letter. It was the longest she had yet had. There were so many pages, closely covered, darkly blotted, scattered with strange little abrupt hieroglyphics. So much Flush could see, from his station at her feet. But he could make no sense of the words that Miss Barrett was murmuring to herself. [...] Then she took up her pen and passed it rapidly and nervously over sheet after sheet. But what did they mean? – the little words that Miss Barrett wrote? [...] Flush could not read what she was writing with an inch or two above his head. But he knew just as well as if he could read every word, how strangely his mistress was agitated as she wrote. (*Flush* 36-37)

The cocker spaniel may not be able to read, but he nonetheless shows a deep sensitivity in interpreting an alteration of his mistress’ behaviour, which has already been observed by other dogs, according to Wylie: “dogs *appear* (from certain reactions humans have noted, translated, and experimented with) to have an exceptional sensitivity to human emotion” (120, original emphasis). In addition, Herman observes a so-called “superhuman sensitivity to tone of voice,” which allows him to discern “changes in the two poet’s conversations during their courtship” (“Modernist” 558).

This investigation has clearly revealed that Woolf uses anthropomorphism in order to represent Flush and his mind. Even though rejecting sentimentality, which correlates with the anthropomorphic approach, the author includes sympathetic

passages showing the animal somewhat humanised. Woolf also makes use of the controversial technique in order to mock Elizabeth Barrett Browning's attitude towards her pet, namely that she mostly regards her spaniel as a little human pupil, whom she can teach anything that a child could also learn. However, anthropomorphism is not only employed when he is strongly humanised, for instance, when Flush reflects on his aristocracy, but also when he is portrayed as an animal that is instinct-driven and sensible to his owner's emotions. Thus, anthropomorphising does not only signify humanising in the narrow sense, but also includes the translation of feelings and thoughts into human terms.

3.4. A Life Beyond Human Imagination: Flush's Experiences and Senses

In the course of his research on nonhuman minds in various narratives, Herman developed a “continuum of strategies for representing nonhuman experiences” (“Zoonarratology” 97-99), which he summarised in the shape of the following figure:

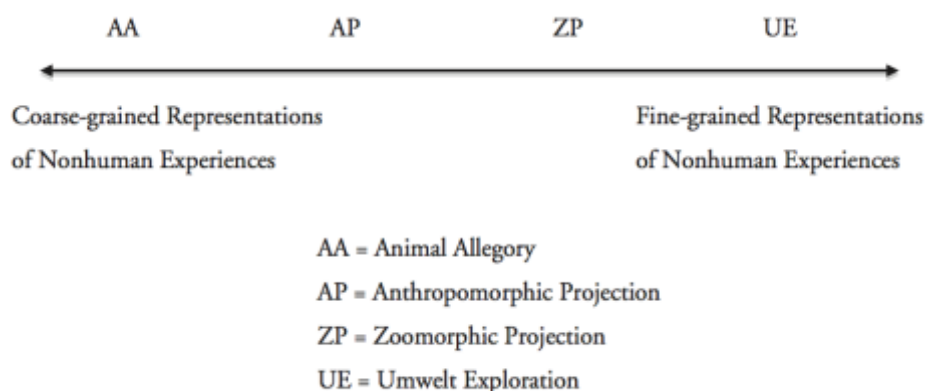


Figure 1. Herman's continuum of strategies for representing nonhuman experiences (Herman, "Zoonarratology" 98)

Herman's model contradicts "forms of Cartesian dualism," given that the former focuses on "a contrast between [...] relatively coarse-grained and relatively fine-grained representations of experiences that arise from the interplay between nonhuman agents and their surrounding environment," whereas the latter "forms set up a dichotomous relationship between the mind in here and the world out there" ("Zoonarratology" 97).

Before discussing the four strategies separately, Herman provides his readership with the basic idea of this continuum, which reads:

As one moves rightward from the left end of this continuum, where the narrative strategies used in *Maus* [Spiegelman's well-known comic] are situated, one finds less and less human-centric ways of figuring nonhuman encounters with the world. Further, the model accommodates shifts of the narrative strategy that can occur *within* individual texts featuring nonhuman agents. A given text may use a range of strategies for figuring agent-environment interactions, presenting those interactions with different degrees of detail – that is, at different levels of granularity – over the course of an unfolding story. (“Zoonarratology” 97-98, original emphasis)

In animal allegories, which can be found in Aesop's fables, or in the comic *Maus*, the nonhuman protagonists act as “virtual stand-ins for humans” (“Zoonarratology” 98). Concerning the anthropomorphic projection, where the focus appears to shift from the human to the nonhuman, “human motivations and practices” still form “the basic template for interpreting nonhuman behaviour,” as is the case with various Disney films featuring animal protagonists, or Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit* and other popular children's books (“Zoonarratology” 98). Texts which can be assigned to the zoomorphic projection also contain a linguistic translation of nonhuman experiences and abilities (“Zoonarratology” 98). However, translating animals' perceptions into human terms serves as “comparison rather than explanation; this narrative strategy shows what it would be like for human characters to take on nonhuman attributes” (“Zoonarratology” 98). Literary examples for this strategy would be Kafka's *Metamorphosis* and the *Animal Man* comic series (“Zoonarratology” 99). Regarding *Umwelt* exploration, whose name is linked to Jakob von Uexküll's concept of *Umwelt*⁵, the focus lies on the animal's “lived, phenomenal world” (“Zoonarratology” 99). Hence, this strategy is concerned with nonhuman beings and their “ways of encountering the world” rather than concentrating on translating nonhuman behaviours into human terms (“Zoonarratology” 99). Also, in dealing with animals' worlds, such texts probably “reshape humans' own modes of encounter” (“Zoonarratology” 99).

Herman's model appears to be of considerable relevance for the analysis of the selected animalographies and their nonhuman protagonists' experiences. As regards *Flush*, there are critics who read it as “a feminist allegory of the subjugation of women

⁵ By coining the term *Umwelt*, Jakob von Uexküll refers to “an animal's environment in the sense of its lived, phenomenal world, the world as it presents itself to that animal thanks to its sensorimotor repertoire” (Thompson 59, qtd. in Herman, “Zoonarratology” 99).

in Victorian England” (Smith 349), and therefore, “primarily associate the dog narrative with human representations such as sexuality, politics, and/or class issues,” as Johnson states (34). Gender can be considered a topic addressed in *Flush*, as Debra Cumberland claims (195). She argues that the spaniel “encapsulates both the male and the female, the subversive and the powerless in Elizabeth Barrett” (Cumberland 195). Thus, Cumberland does not view *Flush* as a dog but as a projection of his owner. According to Susan Squier, *Flush*’s focus of attention “is the [woman writer’s] physical and psychological journey from imprisonment in London to freedom in the foreign cities of Pisa and Florence” (122). However, these interpretations, which correspond to Herman’s strategy of ‘animal allegory’ at the very left end of the continuum, seem to ignore the numerous passages in which *Flush* is indeed portrayed as a dog. Hence, *Flush* should rather be examined as a work which “expose[s] a view of the nonhuman animal for its own sake,” aside from featuring human representations (Johnson 34).

Anthropomorphism in the context of Woolf’s animal biography has already been thoroughly discussed, and it can be argued that Woolf makes use of Herman’s so-called anthropomorphic projection. For instance, the spaniel’s thoughts on aristocracy and classes of dogs, as well as his ability to draw conclusions from certain situations, as when he learns that dogs have to be leashed in Regent’s Park, can be considered the prime examples for this strategy.

However, Herman explicitly states that one text can comprise more than one strategy, which appears to be the case with *Flush*. Woolf describes typical situations of a human being’s life, such as going shopping, from the dog’s vantage point in *Flush*, which offers a somewhat unusual perspective of such events. The first shopping trip to Oxford Street with Miss Barrett and her sister, for instance, appears to be an exciting day for the puppy:

He leapt into the carriage by her side. Couched on her lap, the whole pomp of London at its most splendid burst on his astonished eyes. They drove along Oxford Street. [...] The carriage stopped. He entered mysterious arcades filmed with clouds and webs of tinted gauze. A million airs from China, from Arabia, wafted their frail incense into the remotest fibres of his senses. Swiftly over the counters flashed yards of gleaming silk; more darkly, more slowly rolled the ponderous bombazine. Scissors snipped; coins sparkled. Paper was folded; string tied. What with nodding plumes, waving streamers, tossing horses, yellow liveries, passing faces, leaping, dancing, up, down, *Flush*, satiated with the multiplicity of his sensations, slept, drowsed, dreamt and knew no more until he was lifted out of the carriage and the door of Wimpole Street shut on him again. (*Flush* 20-21)

It seems that Flush experiences the sensations of this adventure much more intensively than humans, given that we would not take notice of snipping scissors or sparkling coins. In addition, this passage points towards the importance of Flush's senses, particularly his olfaction. The description of the spaniel's perceptions of scents run like a common thread through the whole text, and one might argue that "smells are more important than things seen" in *Flush* (Newman 33), as the following example, in which Flush arrives at his new home in Wimpole Street, shows:

But as Flush trotted up behind Miss Mitford, who was behind the butler, he was more astonished by what he smelt than by what he saw. Up the funnel of the staircase came warm whiffs of joints roasting, of fowls basting of soups simmering – ravishing almost as food itself to nostrils used to the meagre savour of Kerenhappock's penurious fries and hashes. Mixing with the smell of food were further smells – smells of cedarwood and sandalwood and mahogany; scents of male bodies and female bodies; of men servants and maid servants; of coats and trousers; of crinolines and mantles, of curtains of tapestry, of curtains of plush; of coal dust and fog; of wine and cigars. (*Flush* 15)

Hence, Mr Barrett's huge house is presented through a cocker spaniel's perception, which is dominated by his sense of smell. With regard to describing such sensory experiences, Newman emphasises Woolf's capability of linking her talent of writing as well as her knowledge of dog behaviour (36). Catherine Parke is certainly correct in writing that "[f]or him [Flush], life is lived chiefly through the sense of smell" (73). In fact, olfaction appears to be connected with all experiences Flush gains during his life, since it is his prime way of perceiving the world. Hence, the cocker spaniel seems to rely entirely on his predominant sense in order to explore and understand his *Umwelt*. Thus, it can be argued that Woolf's animalography also adopts the strategy of *Umwelt* exploration.

Not only his olfactory sense is used to guide the readership through Flush's phenomenal world, but also his other observations are conducive to perceiving the dog's environment. On his last day on Earth, Flush leaves Casa Guidi for watching once more the people and animals in the streets of Florence:

It was a blazing hot afternoon. [...] The sun seemed droning in the sky. Keeping to the shady side of the street, Flush trotted along the well-known ways to the market-place. The whole square was brilliant with awnings and stalls and bright umbrellas. The market women were sitting beside baskets of fruit; pigeons were fluttering, bells were pealing, whips were cracking. The many-coloured mongrels of Florence were running in and out sniffing and pawing. All was as brisk as a bee-hive and as hot as an oven. Flush sought the shade. He flung himself down beside his friend Catterina, under the shadow of her great basket. [...] Flush lay there in the cool, watching the young dogs busy with their own affairs. [...] He had

found the world a pleasant place to live in. He had no quarrel with it now. (*Flush* 102-103)

The cocker spaniel is an old dog now, and instead of playing with the puppies or “stealing a grape” (*Flush* 103), he enjoys being a spectator, since he has finally found his peace. Readers might infer from this passage that *Flush* is pleased, even though Woolf does not employ an adjective defining his feelings in this example. Thus, the popular opinion regarding the representation of nonhuman mental experiences is that writers cannot translate animal senses and thoughts, as Catriona Sandilands points out:

The drive toward coherent human representations of human/animal conversation is at least partially authoritarian because all such representations fail to represent the language of the animal, because they fail to acknowledge the language produced from human/animal interaction, and because they deny the impact of the nonhuman actor on the human. Human language about nonhuman nature can never be complete; only by acknowledging its limits is the space opened for otherworldly conversations. (185)

Woolf seems to be aware of the fact that a human being cannot express directly what *Flush* thought, smelt or felt (Armbruster 26). This can be observed in the following passage in which the narrator refers to the dog’s superior olfaction:

Where Mrs Browning saw, he smelt; where she wrote, he snuffed. Here, then, the biographer must perforce come to a pause. Where two or three thousand words are insufficient for what we see – [...] there are no more than two words and one-half for what we smell. The human nose is practically non-existent. [...] The infinite gradations that lie between are unrecorded. Yet it was the world of smell that *Flush* mostly lived. (*Flush* 85-86)

It might be true that writers cannot achieve an entirely accurate representation of an animal’s mind, and Virginia Woolf admits to this limitation, as has been shown above. However, one can nevertheless argue that she attempted to create a vivid picture of *Flush*, enabling her readers to imagine what it would be like to be the nonhuman companion of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

One can assert that Woolf predominantly generated fine-grained representations of nonhuman experiences, which means that the implemented strategies mostly do not reflect an anthropocentric position, which represents humans as the only creatures capable of judging over all other living beings which do not belong to the moral community (Taylor, *Humans* 11; Goralnik and Nelson 145, 150). Instead, it seems that the author developed an opposing way of displaying the canine protagonist’s perception of the world, namely a zoocentric approach, according to which animals do

not have an instrumental value, as assumed by the anthropocentric view, but “have moral status” (Verhoog 151). In considering *Flush* as book which a) features an animal protagonist who is also accepted as subject and b) provides an insight into nonhuman experiences, it can be said that “her [Woolf’s] narrative [can] be read as non- or anti-anthropocentric,” as Herman states (“Modernist” 557). This interpretation agrees with Smith’s reading of *Flush*, which he also describes as a dog memoir (349). A further critic designating *Flush* as an example featuring a non-anthropocentric view would be Derek Ryan, who argues that “it is precisely the anomalous status of Woolf’s canine protagonist that enables us to explore a more fluid and non-anthropocentric relation between the species” (163-164). In discussing the canine-centric view of Woolf’s book, Ryan coined the term ‘Animalous Society,’ which is already presented in the title of his essay “From Spaniel Club to Animalous Society: Virginia Woolf’s *Flush*.” His neologism derives from the word ‘anomalous’ which he quoted from Snaith, who focuses on the work’s historical context. Snaith’s claim that the “anomalousness” of Woolf’s canine memoir affects its reading (615) appears to be Ryan’s reason for transforming the word ‘anomalous’ into ‘animalous,’ with which he aims to make his readers aware of “the question of the animal” (163). Ryan also refers to the so-called “Outsiders’ Society,” i.e. the mongrel dogs in Italy standing in contrast with the Spaniel Club, and states that the spaniel appears to prefer this Outsiders’ Society (Ryan 163), which is viewed from a canine-centric view: “*Flush* offers a specifically nonanthropocentric vision of such an Outsider’s Society – what I term in my title an ‘Animalous Society’” (Ryan 163).

The analysis of *Flush*’s experiences, carried out with the help of Herman’s model, has shown that Woolf pursues two strategies of representing the canine protagonist’s experiences: the anthropomorphic projection, prevailing in the part in which *Flush* lives in Wimpole Street, and the *Umwelt* exploration, primarily present in passages rendering *Flush*’s world of senses with a special regard to his olfactory sense. Since the dog can be considered the biographical subject as well as reflector, whose (mental) experiences are the focus of attention, Woolf’s animalography seems to be canine-centred rather than human-centred. Therefore, Virginia Woolf not only succeeded in giving Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s spaniel a voice, but she has also made a convincing attempt at providing an insight into *Flush*’s psyche as well as the way he perceives the Victorian tyranny in England and the contrary world in Italy. In regarding *Flush* and *Flush*’s story as mere allegory of Victorian women’s oppression, by contrast, or as a narrative framework of Barrett’s and Browning’s love story, the text adopts an

anthropocentric position (Smith 349; Esser 184). Such a reading of the book is, however, reductive, neglecting the aspects of Woolf's representation of animal consciousness that veer towards the zoocentric approach, as discussed above.

3.5. The Canine Aristocrat and His Beloved Mistress: The Human-Animal Relationship in *Flush*

‘Oh, Flush!’ said Miss Barrett. For the first time she looked him in the face. For the first time Flush looked at the lady lying on the sofa. Each was surprised. Heavy curls hung down on either side of Miss Barrett’s face; large bright eyes shone out; a large mouth smiled. Heavy ears hung down on either side of Flush’s face; his eyes, too, were large and bright: his mouth was wide. There was a likeness between them. As they gazed at each other each felt: Here am I – and then each felt: But how different! Hers was the pale worn face of an invalid, cut off from air, light, freedom. His was the warm ruddy face of a young animal; instinct with health and energy. Broken asunder, yet made in the same mould, could it be that each completed what was dormant in the other? She might have been – all that; and he – But no. Between them lay the widest gulf that can separate one being from another. She spoke. He was dumb. She was woman; he was dog. Thus closely united, thus immensely divided, they gazed at each other. Then with one bound Flush sprang on to the sofa and laid himself where he was to lie for ever after – on the rug at Miss Barrett’s feet. (*Flush* 18-19)

This passage shows the spaniel’s and the poet’s first close encounter in the woman’s bedroom. At first sight, Woolf appears to compare them by utilising the same syntactical structure as well as selecting a similar word choice in describing Barrett’s and Flush’s face. However, their likeness, as Woolf defines it, is then immediately disrupted, since the author emphasises the differences between human and animal, between mistress and domesticated companion animal. Flush appears to embody the pet as portrayed by John Berger: “The pet is either sterilized or sexually isolated, extremely limited in its exercise, deprived of almost all other animal contact and fed with artificial foods” (24). In London, Barrett Browning’s cocker spaniel is indeed barely walked and, for the most part, he is also denied direct contact with any other dogs or other animals by all accounts. By contrast, this was not the case in Three Mile Cross, since he played with his siblings and did have contact to other dogs – “Flush was a father” there (*Flush* 12) – and rushed across the fields. In Italy, he regains all the pleasures he had to forego in London and which he had once enjoyed in Three Mile Cross. With regard to artificial food, it may be said that this is a rather modern

phenomenon and does not pertain to Flush, given that he frequently eats the dishes prepared for his owner:

Wilson was at the door with Miss Barrett's dinner on a tray. But [...] Miss Barrett was too tired to eat. [...] So long as Wilson was in the room, she fiddled about with her knife and fork. But directly the door was shut and they were alone, she made a sign. She held up her fork. A whole chicken's wing was impaled upon it. Flush advanced. Miss Barrett nodded. Very gently, very cleverly, without spilling a crumb, Flush removed the wing; swallowed it down and left no trace behind. (*Flush* 30)

Moreover, Berger writes that the characteristics of a pet, which have been listed above, lead to "the material process which lies behind the truism that pets come to resemble their masters or mistresses. They are creatures of their owner's way of life" (24-25). This assumption appears to be applicable to the examined cocker spaniel, since Flush soon knows that his instincts are no longer of importance:

Between them, Flush felt more and more strongly, as the weeks wore on, was a bond, an uncomfortable yet thrilling tightness; so that if his pleasure was her pain, then his pleasure was pleasure no longer but three parts pain. The truth of this was proved every day. Somebody opened the door and whistled him to come. Why should he not go out? He longed for air and exercise; his limbs were cramped with lying on the sofa. [...] But no – though the door stood open, he would not leave Miss Barrett. He hesitated half-way to the door and then went back to the sofa. (*Flush* 25)

Thus, the canine companion prefers staying with his invalid mistress instead of taking a walk in the park where he would probably encounter other dogs. Due to his intense loyalty to Miss Barrett, Flush can be described as the perfect pet. Ittner appears to agree with this designation of the spaniel and she praises not only his absolute obedience, but also mentions "the representation of a rising middle class that defines its identity by creating strictly separated breeds," which constitutes a prominent role of "the perfect nineteenth-century pet" (npd). Hence, Flush clearly represents the "loyal species" which humans have created "through the process of domestication" (Harel 51).

Certainly, the Victorian poet is aware of the fact that her dog loves her deeply, which Woolf underlines by quoting one of her letters: "'Flushie,' wrote Miss Barrett, 'is my friend – my companion – and loves me better than he loves the sunshine without'" (*Flush* 25-26). The spaniel's complete commitment induces Barrett Browning to forgive any of her dog's misbehaviour, such as the attacks on her future husband:

She could not deny that 'expression of quite despair on his face'. She could not but relent. 'At last I said, 'If you are good, Flush, you may come and say that you

are sorry', on which he dashed across the room and, trembling all over, kissed first one of my hands and then another, and put up his paws to be shaken, and looked into my face with such beseeching eyes that you would certainly have forgiven him just as I did.' (*Flush* 43-44)

Also, when Flush is kidnapped, the invalid woman “refused to take the advice of her father, brothers and Browning that the right thing to do was to face down the extortionists, and insisted that Flush’s life mattered more than an abstract principle” (McDonell 26). Barrett therefore takes her canine companion’s fate in her hands and bravely decides to “go down to-morrow morning, in order to bring Flush back with [her]” (*Flush* 60), “even if she went down into the jaws of Whitechapel to fetch him, even if Robert Browning despised her for doing so,” since “[h]er duty was to him” (*Flush* 62). Indeed, this undertaking seems to prove that it is not only Flush who would do anything to please her, even if this requires him, for instance, to share his mistress with Robert Browning, but also his owner would give anything to have him by her side. Apparently, she is even willing to risk her life in order to rescue her beloved cocker spaniel. Due to this latter proof of love, the education he receives in the bedroom, as well as the dog’s pamperedness regarding food and his sleeping place, i.e. at Barrett’s feet on the sofa, it can be argued that Flush is, at least to some extent, treated like a child. In this respect, Barrett’s spaniel was no exception, as such an infantilisation seems to have been prevalent in Victorian middle- and upper class society (McDonell 31).

In Italy, the situation changes, since the now married woman and her canine companion are no longer confined to her dark bedroom: “[H]er relations with Flush were far less emotional now than in the old days; she no longer needed his red fur and his bright eyes to give her what her own experience lacked; [...] Flush was independent now. [...] He was his own master now” (*Flush* 78). In reading this passage, the spaniel does not seem to be the domesticated and humanised pet anymore that he once embodied in Wimpole Street. However, the fact that the spaniel regains his canine animality and freedom in Florence does not signify a breakdown of their relationship: “It cannot be doubted that Mrs Browning and Flush were reaching different conclusions in their voyages of discovery – she a Grand Duke, he a spotted spaniel; – and yet the tie which bound them together was undeniably still binding” (*Flush* 81). Still, in Italy, Flush realises that he does not always need his human guardian, which proves Barbara Smuts’ remark that “most dogs are perfectly capable of negotiating and managing many aspects of their world without us” (124).

With regard to the domesticated Flush in Victorian London, Yi-Fu Tuan's definition of domestication appears to be appropriate, equalling domestication with "domination: the two words have the same root sense of mastery over another being – of bringing it into one's house or domain" (143). Clearly, the spaniel is dominated, given that he has to obey his mistress, who also acts as his teacher (*Flush* 25). Hence, Flush is the student of the bedroom school, from which he learned "[t]o resign, to control, [and] to suppress the most violent instincts of his nature" (*Flush* 25). Apart from Miss Barrett, the spaniel must follow the rules of Victorian society, which, for instance, stipulate that dogs have to be led on chains. Interestingly, Woolf does not employ the words 'collar' or 'lead,' but the somewhat negatively connoted 'chain,' with which the author appears to emphasise the domination of Victorian pets (Feuerstein 33). The chain, however, turns out to be a protective measure for the aristocratic dogs in London, as Flush realises after having been kidnapped.

Furthermore, Flush appears to regard his owner as mistress, which constitutes the desired result of the process of domestication. Aside from accepting his human guardian as leader, a further aim of domestication appears to be addressed in *Flush*, namely a dog's preference for human beings: "True domestication requires the animals to remain beholden to humans" (Thurston 7). Jeanne Dubino is correct in saying that "this is certainly true for Flush when he is at his most domesticated," i.e. in London, as mentioned earlier (155). Additionally, the "high-spirited, yet reflective" canine companion (*Flush* 32) learns that he must accept new people in his owner's life, i.e. Robert Browning and their baby, and also to share her joy in loving them too; otherwise, he would hurt his owner, given that "[i]f he bit Mr Browning he bit her too" (*Flush* 47). Thus, the reader might get the impression that Flush loves Barrett Browning unconditionally. However, Donna Haraway rejects the assumption that dog love can be unconditional love and defines this belief as "pernicious" (33). The ethologist admits that love is an emotion frequently experienced by a pet, and she also notes that, "[b]eing a pet seems to me to be a demanding job for a dog, requiring self-control and canine emotional and cognitive skills matching those of good working dogs" (38). Indeed, this appears to be the case with Flush, who reluctantly learns to control himself after having attacked Robert Browning and is "highly sensitive to human emotions" (*Flush* 32). Thus, the spaniel is clearly exposed to stress, at least to a certain extent, in loving his mistress (Dubino 155). The affection for his mistress is granted and also returned by Miss Barrett: "She loved Flush, and Flush was worthy of her love" (*Flush* 33). The invalid woman even dares to ignore the advice of her

oppressive male family members and her future husband, in order to liberate her canine friend (Dubino 154).

At the end of the book, the author appears to evoke again the profound emotions between human and animal, which are primarily displayed in the days before Robert Browning. When the spaniel enters the drawing room, “leap[s] on to the sofa and thrust[s] his face into hers [Barrett Browning’s]” for the very last time, the author cleverly includes Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s poem “Flush or Faunus” at a fairly emotional and dramatic moment, given that Flush’s last minutes on Earth have come. By integrating this lyric poem, which Barrett Browning wrote years ago in London (*Flush* 105), the narrator reminds the audience of an unhappy woman, whose dog is the only being consoling her before Robert Browning enters her life:

Till thought on thought drew downward tear on tear,
When from the pillow, where wet-cheeked I lay,
A head has hairy as Faunus, thrust its way
Right sudden against my face, – two golden-clear
Great eyes astonished mine, – a drooping ear
Did flap me on either cheek to dry the spray! (3-8, qtd. in *Flush* 105)

According to Kevin Morrison, Barrett Browning’s poems about Flush reflect “largely commonplace ideas of a dog’s unconditional love, loyalty, and steadfastness to its owner” (94). Furthermore, despite the impression of Flush’s infantilisation that the reader probably receives, the poet seems to be nonetheless aware that her Flush is a nonhuman being, which she also expresses in “Flush or Faunus,” when labelling him as one of those “low creatures” (14). In considering the final words of her poem, namely that Flush “leads to heights of love” (14), it can undoubtedly be concluded that love nurtures this human-animal relationship.

In considering all the aspects in the context of the bond between Flush and the Victorian poet, it can be established that Woolf portrays a strong human-animal relationship in *Flush*. Barrett Browning’s spaniel appears to embody the typical Victorian pet, which might not always be treated as dog. The bond between Flush and his human guardian never breaks, not even when they are no longer locked up in the woman’s bedroom.

3.6. Mirror, Mirror on the Wall. Who's the Most Aristocratic of Them All?: *Flush* and Canine Self-Awareness

It is Ittner's belief that "Woolf enters the animal field cautiously, taking small steps and never really venturing out into the unknown" (npd). However, this view is open to doubt, since she indeed dares to address certain ethological issues contested among scientists in *Flush*.

There are several passages in *Flush* showing the spaniel standing in front of a mirror, which can be linked to a central aspect of animal behaviour studies, namely the animal self. In *Animals and Society*, the sociologist Margo DeMello writes that aside from dolphins and apes, only a few animals "are thought to have self-awareness," meaning that they are capable of perceiving themselves as an object (370). She also notes that this capability was originally attributed exclusively to human beings (DeMello, *Animals and Society* 370). In order to detect whether animals have self-awareness or not, one can test them with the help of certain research techniques, for instance the mirror test (DeMello, *Animals and Society* 370).

Woolf's narrator observes three situations where the cocker spaniel looks into a mirror. Shortly after his arrival in Wimpole Street, he seeks to ascertain whether he belongs to the class of high or low dogs: "No sooner had Flush got home than he examined himself carefully in the looking-glass. Heaven be praised, he was a dog of birth and breeding!" (*Flush* 23). Hence, it can be argued that Woolf represents a dog that can recognise himself in the mirror, and sees himself therefore as an object.

When the bond between Flush and the poet has significantly developed and appears to be infrangible, Woolf includes a passage displaying a situation documented in the historical letters of the Victorian writer in which Miss Barrett "would make him [Flush] stand with her in front of the looking-glass and ask him why he barked and trembled" (*Flush* 32). As regards Woolf's Flush, one can say that he is concerned with "the problem of reality" and reconsiders if it is really him reflected in the mirror: "Was not the little brown dog opposite himself? But what is 'oneself'? Is it the thing people see? Or is it the thing one is?" (*Flush* 32). Concerning the historical Flush, Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote in her letter – to which Woolf relates her imaginary situation – "he [Flush] can't bear me to look into a glass, because he thinks there is a little brown dog inside every looking glass, and he is jealous of its being so close to *me*. He used to tremble and bark at it, but now he is *silently* jealous, and contents himself with

squeezing close, close to me and kissing me expressively” (*Letters of EBB* 1 107; to H.S. Boyd, 22 June 1842, original emphasis). In the letter, the dog’s kiss appears to demonstrate Flush’s jealousy. In *Flush*, however, the kiss symbolises and reflects reality: “So Flush pondered that question too, and unable to solve the problem of reality, pressed closer to Miss Barrett and kissed her ‘expressively’. *That* was real at any rate” (32, original emphasis). Thus, in the poet’s writing, the spaniel “misrecognises himself in [the] mirror” (McDonell 23), whereas in Woolf’s animalography, it is a “high spirited, yet reflective” Flush feeling somewhat confused by the question of reality and existence, but finally finding certainty in kissing his mistress.

In Italy, when the cocker spaniel’s fur needs to be cut off due to fleas, he immediately afterwards glances in the looking glass and asks himself

What am I now? [...] And the glass replied with the brutal sincerity of glasses, ‘You are nothing’. He was nobody. Certainly he was no longer a cocker spaniel. [...] He looked again. [...] To be nothing – is that not, after all, the most satisfactorily state in the whole world? [...] [H]e was free from fleas. He shook his ruff. He danced in this nude, attenuated legs. His spirits rose. (*Flush* 89-90)

This passage clearly shows that Woolf’s Flush knows that the mirrored creature he sees is himself. Consequently, it can be argued that Woolf’s canine protagonist does not lack self-awareness. However, in portraying a dog examining himself in the mirror after having lost his aristocratic traits, Woolf could not resist mocking this situation by making the looking glass come alive and speak. This fantastic element is not only humorous, but also reminds readers of the fact that *Flush* is not a biography like one of Lytton Strachey’s, which Virginia Woolf criticises and which probably encouraged her to write this biographical novel.

The mirror exposure is, according to DeMello, “best known research technique” for studying animal self-awareness (*Animals and Society* 370). Nonetheless, she also states that this testing method can also be considered “controversial [...] because it is entirely focused on vision” (DeMello, *Animals and Society* 371)⁶. Hence, various animals, like dogs, do not recognise themselves in the mirror, as they “rely more heavily on the other senses such as the sense of smell” (DeMello, *Animals and Society* 371). Woolf’s nonhuman protagonist, however, knows that the mirrored creature is himself, as the first and third example have demonstrated. Thus, the author provides

⁶ Marc Bekoff agrees with DeMello, as he also doubts the validity of the mirror test (*Encyclopedia* 4 1299).

Flush with self-recognition. Woolf represents this self-awareness with the help of the anthropomorphic view, given that she translates the spaniel's thoughts, which, considering Flush's vanity, appear to resemble those of humans.

4. *Mitz: The Marmoset of Bloomsbury*

Mitz: The Marmoset of Bloomsbury was written by the New York author Sigrid Nunez and published in 1998. As the title already reveals, the story is based on a little marmoset named Mitz, who is purchased by Victor Rothschild in an English junk shop. The book opens on a summer evening, which Virginia Woolf and her husband Leonard spend together with their friends Barbara and Victor Rothschild, who have invited them to their house in Cambridge. During their dinner, the two London writers take notice of the small monkey Mitz, who immediately falls in love with Leonard. Shortly after their first encounter, the Woolfs look after the marmoset while the Rothschilds are on vacation. Mitz will, however, not return to her former owners, as she stays with Virginia, Leonard, and their cocker spaniel Pinka, with whom the little creature soon becomes friends. The marmoset is Leonard Woolf's constant companion, who always attracts attention, wherever they go. The night before the Woolfs and Mitz return from their trip to Rome in May 1935, Pinka, who was left behind in London, passed away. The dog's successor, Sally, is tolerated by Mitz, but the bitch never finds a friend in the marmoset. After living with the Bloomsbury writers for four and a half years, Mitz finally dies on Christmas Day in 1938.

4.1. As If *Mitz's* World Were a Question⁷: Nunez's Use of Woolfian Memoirs

Consulting Leonard Woolf's autobiography of the years 1919 to 1938, *Downhill All the Way*, Virginia Woolf's letters and diaries she wrote between 1934 and 1938, one can establish that Mitz is not mentioned very often in their memoirs. Virginia Woolf referred to the monkey only occasionally, and when she did, it was a rather short note on the "sickly pathetic marmoset," as she described the animal after their first encounter at the Rothschild's on 21 July 1934 (*Diary* 4 227). She gave account of the animal's favourite food, i.e. worms, which the Woolfs collected for the monkey (*Letters* 5 326; *Letters* 6 75) and recounted how the little creature fascinated other people, since

⁷ On 28 December 1934, Virginia Woolf wrote in her diary, "I'm talking to Leonard who is mending an electric lamp, and the marmoset crosses from him to me, always with the same look, as if the world were a question" (*Diary* 5 358). Nunez used the phrase "as if the world were a question" for describing Mitz's behaviour after Pinka's death (80).

the monkey attracted attention everywhere (*Diary 4* 279, 309, 311; *Letters 5* 390, 392). Unlike Virginia, Leonard Woolf dedicated several pages to Mitz in *Downhill All the Way*, in which the readership is informed about the dinner at the Rothschild's, the monkey's character and state of health, as well as their trip to Rome which provided the actual occasion for telling about the "marmoset [that] made it quite unnecessary for [him] to use Bismarck's letter to protect [him] from the Nazis' anti-Semitism" (L. Woolf 186). Hence, it is conceivable Nunez primarily based her story on this brief recount of the monkey's life, and the following quotation taken from *Downhill All the Way*, functioning as epigraph, must have inspired her, too: "At that time I had a marmoset called Mitz which accompanied me almost everywhere, sitting on my shoulder or inside my waistcoat" (L. Woolf 186).

Furthermore, the author arranges the real-life incidents, which she selected from Virginia Woolf's diaries, among others, chronologically (Esser 209). These events, which occurred between July 1934 and December 1938 in the Woolf household, are apparently embellished, as is the case with biographical fiction (Esser 209). The author therefore "combines [this] documented biographical material with invented details and dialogue," which she also mentions in her acknowledgements (Latham 363). The reader is subjected to "the enthralling power of the 'two masters' and the constant wrestling between fact and fiction" (Latham 363). The picture of Mitz and Pinka illustrated in the Soft Skull Press edition (2007) "creates an effect of reality within the mockiography," as Monica Latham points out, and, based on this "iconographic piece of documented evidence," the author "invents an amusing relationship between the two animals" (363). In view of Leonard's, Virginia's and Mitz's "comical triangular relationship" (Latham 363), the biographical novelist serves the master of fiction, since the somewhat absurd situations between the three characters, when Virginia provokes Mitz and dances around Leonard, for instance, are mostly fictitious. However, the amusing passage in which Mitz does not come down the lime tree until Leonard kisses his wife (Nunez 32) is not invented, as Nunez only embellishes the event with some dialogue and further details. Indeed, Leonard Woolf recounted this incident similarly in *Downhill All the Way* (188). Given that Virginia's provoking behaviour appears to be as absurd as Mitz's jealousy, one can argue that Nunez created a text from which it is difficult to distinguish between fact and fiction. Hence, the fictional elements built around these events and facts have been added for the chief purpose of amusement, as is the case with Woolf's canine memoir.

Like Woolf and biographical novelist Barbara Mujica, who recounts her own experiences about writing biofiction in her article “Going for the Subjective: One way to Write Biographical Fiction,” Nunez does not “include every detail, but rather [...] focus[es] on the *story*,” which “requires detachment, a willingness to sacrifice (callously!) historical completeness (but not historical accuracy) for effective narrative” (Mujica 15, original emphasis). For example, the author decided to include only one journey, i.e. the trip to Rome the Woolfs made together with their little companion animal. In fact, Virginia and Leonard Woolf often went on holiday, and Mitz, “who was always [their] introduction to humanity,” accompanied them, such as when they “*toured Western France by car as far south as Albi*” in May 1937, two years after having travelled through Nazi Germany (*Diary* 5 87, original emphasis). Nunez presumably chose the latter, for it might have been their most exciting tour. Moreover, Germany, fascism and war are repeatedly addressed in *Mitz*, which explains Nunez’s choice all the more.

Flush probably inspired Nunez to write her animalography, even though *Mitz* would also have been conceivable without *Flush* acting as pre-text, given that Nunez based her story primarily on actual incidents, as Esser points out (213). Both novelists write about a notable writer’s animal companion and recount the life they spend together, which appears to be the basic idea of both texts. Thus, it cannot be denied that the two biographical novels share certain similarities. Nonetheless, the investigation of *Mitz* will show that the monkey seems not to represent the true protagonist of Nunez’s novel, which appears to be the significant difference between *Mitz* and *Flush*.

In brief, the “ubiquitous” (*Diary* 5 81) and “extremely jealous” marmoset (L. Woolf 187), much disliked at Charleston (Lee, *Virginia* 654) but “a certain magnet to strangers” (*Diary* 5 81), forms the basis for Nunez’s biographical novel. As regards the author’s selection of sources, Tai Moses emphasises Nunez’s extensive research and writes that “[t]he author has combed through voluminous heaps of Bloomsbury lore, the countless biographies, memoirs, diaries and letter collections (Virginia Woolf left nearly 4,000 letters and a 30-volume diary) and culled her facts and quotations carefully, adding invented conversation and shaping her book with a jeweler’s eye for precision” (par. 5). Apart from this, “the main purpose of such a novel is to offer the reader an ingenious fictional reconstruction, a slice of life built in the spirit of Virginia Woolf by borrowing from her real life and by imitating her imaginative tools” (Latham 365).

4.2. Mitz, alias the little *thing*

Given that the alleged protagonist is not considered a popular pet, compared with the cocker spaniel Flush, it is evident that Mitz provokes somewhat mixed reactions when people see the little monkey. Esser points out that Mitz acts as a magnet to strangers (190), which, however, does not imply that she is loved by everyone: “Among the Woolf’s friends and relations, Mitz was more tolerated than loved. ‘Ugly,’ ‘horrid,’ ‘hideous,’ she was called” (Nunez 56). Others, by contrast, view her as “sweet little thing,” (Nunez 59), “*das kleine liebe Ding*” (Nunez 70, 73) or as a “poor thing” (Nunez 48, original emphasis). Such “reactions to Mitz often irked Leonard” (Nunez 48), who “had always disliked the silliness Mitz seemed to bring out in people, the stupid questions and comments the sight of her invariably provoked” (Nunez 73).

Even though the monkey is frequently seen as a peculiar object rather than an animal which should be treated respectfully (Esser 191), Nunez does not present Mitz as would probably be expected from a story about a little marmoset, as strongly humanised and wearing baby clothes that is. Instead, the author mostly complies with the Woolfs’ point of view in the novel, as well as their handling of animal companions. Virginia and Leonard Woolf reject the anthropomorphic view, which the author accentuates after the couple has been informed about Pinka’s death:

As much as they liked animals the Woolfs disliked people who were sentimental about them or who cherished them to the point of fetishism. Though neither of them would have ever wanted to live without a dog, they frowned when Ottoline planted kiss after kiss on the snub nose of her Socrates. They did not like toy breeds in general. They knew that there was a way to care for animals without treating them like humans, and they were wary of champions of animal rights. (Nunez 77-78)

The passage also reveals Virginia’s fear of sentimentalism, which has already been addressed in the analysis of *Flush*. On 31 May 1935, she wrote in her diary, “the intensity of death – even for a dog – how odd – our feeling of her character, & the grotesqueness – something pathetic, & the depression, & I suppose fear of sentimentality & so on” (*Diary 4* 317).

The monkey’s extraordinariness as a pet will be thoroughly discussed in the context of human-animal relationships in *Mitz*. Furthermore, the influence of *Mitz*’s human characters in the novel will also be examined in the following chapters.

4.3. Two Woolves⁸, Two Spaniels, and One Marmoset: Changes in Perspective and Narrative Situation in *Mitz*

According to Naama Harel, “[o]ne of the most basic means to reduce the anthropomorphism of nonhuman animals in prose is the third-person narration mode, in which the narrator is not a character of any kind within the story being told” (49). Hence, in choosing a third person narrator, which presumably leads to a reduction of the animal’s anthropomorphisation, Nunez seems to display the Woolfian attitude towards animals, which has already been mentioned earlier. Interestingly, except for employing a teller who does not take an active part in the story, *Mitz*’s narrative situation differs from the one Woolf selected for *Flush*. While the latter clearly features a narrator remaining omniscient throughout the novel, as well as a canine reflector, whose perspective is foregrounded, Nunez did not choose such a straightforward narrative mode.

With regard to the basic mediacy of narration, Nunez developed an authorial narrative situation rather than a figural narrative situation present in *Flush*, since Nunez’s narrator directly addresses the reader, passes comments, and acts as “concrete, tangible speaker” (A. and V. Nünning 112), as the following examples illustrate:

And how could anyone ever repay such a gift? *If you are Virginia Woolf*, it might be with a book: *Orlando*, a novel inspired by Vita and about Vita and dedicated to her. (Nunez 38, emphasis added)

She [Mitz] could make noise, too *you know*. (Nunez 82, emphasis added)

Aside from the authorial narrator, who corresponds with Genette’s extradiegetic narrator, the passages clearly show that “the narrator is outside the world of the characters” (Stanzel 5); consequently, “[t]he narrator’s world exists on a different level of being from that of the characters” (Stanzel 5).

It seems worth examining the perspective adopted in *Mitz*, which is, beside ‘person’ and ‘mode,’ one out of three constitutive elements forming the narrative situation (Stanzel). *Mitz*’s story is presented from an external perspective, which distinguishes Nunez’s from Woolf’s animal memoir, since the latter author chose the

⁸ Nunez notes that the Woolfs “were more commonly known” as Woolves (12).

internal perspective. In the following passage, the prevailing external perspective can be observed:

How small she [Mitz] was! A mere scrap of monkey. You could have balanced her on your palm, like a fur apple. A head no bigger than a walnut, two black pips for eyes, and the tiniest nostrils – mere pinpricks. Her fur was mostly gray – squirrel gray – but tufts or lighter fur grew out from the sides and the back of her head (a rather clownish effect, it must be said). Seizing a strawberry in both paws, she crammed it into her mouth. She ate far too quickly to enjoy it, with quick glances left and right, as if she feared some other creature would appear out of the grass to snatch it from her. Now she had cream all over her face. Still chewing, she picked up another berry and began to cram it into her mouth. While the others laughed, Virginia looked away. (Nunez 10)

The example is taken from the beginning of the novel, when the Woolfs encounter Mitz for the first time. The marmoset is introduced to the readers, who are provided with a description of Mitz's outer appearance. After the monkey's presentation, the situation seems to be observed "at the periphery of events," from an external perspective (Stanzel 112). Hence, Esser is correct in writing that Nunez's narrator can be compared with an observer (209).

In functioning as an observer, the narrator appears not to make use of his privilege of omniscience. However, Stanzel points out that "there are hardly any novels in which such omniscience [of an "Olympian authorial narrator" (126)] is used throughout and for all characters, connections, causes, and so on" (126). Indeed, Nunez's narrator also provides readers with an omniscient view:

She [Virginia] was a snob, he [Leonard] didn't mind telling her. Well, she believed in the virtues of aristocracy, if that's what he meant. But when asked to say what those virtues were, she was as helpless as Tom Eliot when asked (as he often was asked, by Virginia, who enjoyed teasing him about his religion) to define God. She blathered something about ancient land and ancient blood and centuries of breeding and tradition. But could she say in what way the aristocracy was or had ever been a force for social justice or good? She could not. (Nunez 50)

As has briefly been mentioned at the beginning of *Mitz's* analysis, Latham refers to the so-called two masters, i.e. "reality and imagination" (363). In her essay, Latham investigates four biographical novels, which "have resurrected the figure of Woolf, used her own narrative tools and style to portray her, and put into practice her own theory of 'new biography,' which serves two 'masters,' fact and fiction" (354). Nunez's omniscient narrator can be considered "[t]he first master, [...] [who] is didactic and informative in adopting the dry and factual voice of a biographer" (Latham 364). The following passage shall illustrate this first master, who represents the real world:

Virginia was also writing a book, a new novel for which she had not yet settled on a title. By this time, Virginia had published ten books of fiction, including her masterpieces *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*. Her reputation was secure. In our own day the eminent critic Harold Bloom would find a place for her in his canon, between D.H. Lawrence and James Joyce (about both of whom Virginia herself had her doubts). Canonization would not have surprised her; she knew her work would endure. (Nunez 46)

The second master, standing for fiction, appears to be “Mitz’s fanciful point of view and its imagined voice” (Latham 364).⁹ However, the narrative is not actually presented from Mitz’s perspective, as demonstrated above. With Esser I would argue that the monkey’s vantage point is in fact rather neglected (205, 209, 212, 213). Admittedly, one can observe a number of individual passages presenting the monkey’s point of view, for instance, when Mitz functions as witness of political meetings or when the reader is told the story of Mitz’s voyage to England. Yet, these passages are rare and rather short:

Mitz observed them [Leonard and Virginia] of an evening, Leonard in his chair and Virginia in hers, turning pages, slowly at first, then faster and faster. From time to time one or the other would cry out loud – *Absolutely rubbish!* – *Utterly insane!* – *To the WC!* – and hurl the pages across the room. Mitz thought they had at last found themselves a game. (Nunez 88, original emphasis)

The last sentence offers an insight into the marmoset’s thoughts, which are scarcely present in Nunez’s novel. The insufficiently presented perspective of the eponymous marmoset constitutes one of the weak points of *Mitz* (Esser). Instead of providing her readers with the monkey’s point of view, when, for instance, the problem of limited conversation between human and animal is addressed, Nunez employs the human perspective: “Berries devoured, every last trace of cream licked away, Mitz uttered a string of cries – a shrill, gibbering monkey-sentence that rose at the end, like a question. As no one could interpret, no one could answer” (Nunez 12).

However, passages in which Virginia Woolf’s consciousness is laid bare occur frequently:

Virginia looked long upon Mitz very often. She wondered about Mitz as she had wondered about the cats and dogs she had known all her life. What was it like to be an animal? How did the world look through the dog’s eyes? What did cats think of us? Without such wonder, it is doubtful Virginia ever would have

⁹ Latham does not explicitly state who the second master is, but it can be assumed that she considers the monkey’s perspective as the master of fiction, since after having discussed the first master, she writes: “On the other hand, Mitz’s fanciful point of view and its imagined voice give a humorous portrait of Woolf and her circle [...]” (364).

written *Flush*. [...] Did marmosets dream? Did they remember? Did they regret? What did marmosets want? (Nunez 59-60)

Interestingly, it is mostly Virginia, “for [whom] this habit of musing and ‘making up’ came as naturally as breathing” (Nunez 62), rather than the biographer of Nunez’s novel who scrutinises and seeks to understand the marmoset and her behaviour, as Esser states (252).

Aside from the somewhat dominant narrator, who frequently acts as external observer, the audience is provided with Mitz’s and Virginia Woolf’s perspective. The readers also perceive – even though seldom – the world through Pinka’s (Nunez 23, 66), Sally’s (Nunez 123) and Leonard Woolf’s (Nunez 116) eyes. Thus, *Mitz* features frequent changes in perspective, which hints at the question of the novel’s true protagonist, as Virginia Woolf’s viewpoint is more often adopted than the monkey’s.

4.4. About the Marmoset’s Experiences

Heretofore, the analysis has revealed the following aspects causing the scarcity of Mitz’s point of view: the regular change in perspective and the largely dominating authorial narrator (Esser 252-253).

I will now specifically look at the way in which various incidents occurring during Mitz’s life in the Woolf household are recounted. Mitz’s experiences are mainly the authorial narrator from an external perspective, which is reflected in the heading of this chapter. Due to the involvement of a considerable amount of facts, the diegetic *telling* dominates rather than the mimetic *showing*, which is why the novel neither reaches a dramatic climax nor creates any other suspense developed within the plot (Esser 209). In *Flush*, by contrast, a significant climax can be identified, which is reached with the spaniel’s kidnapping and captivity in Whitechapel.

Hence, in view of our lack of insight into Mitz’s perception of the world, it is rather problematic to apply Herman’s model of representing nonhuman experiences to *Mitz*, although it has proved to be particularly valuable when analysing *Flush*. Nevertheless, passages which adopt the monkey’s perspective shall be investigated with the help of Herman’s continuum.

Mitz is frequently taken to the various meetings of the Bloomsbury Memoir Club or political meetings. On Leonard’s shoulder, the little monkey hears people discussing and also recognises certain words, which are constantly repeated:

She heard the virtues of socialism extolled, the evils of fascism and communism deplored, arguments for saving the League of Nations, proposals for the prevention of war. *War* – she heard this word repeated often, by Leonard and by others, and *Hitler* and *Germany* and *war* again. *War, war, war* – like Sally barking. And whatever it was all about, Mitz knew it was something immense, causing Leonard’s heart to race, the veins in his neck to bulge and throb, his voice to quiver, and his hands to shake uncontrollably. (Nunez 89, original emphasis)

Apparently, the monkey does not understand the content of people’s discussions, but she certainly feels Leonard Woolf’s excitement while arguing about war (Esser 201). A similar example has already been provided in the previous analysis, in which Flush wonders about the considerable impact of reading or writing a letter as he notices that letters can alter Barrett Browning’s emotional state.

As regards the anthropomorphic approach, it can be asserted that Mitz is mostly represented as non-humanised animal in Nunez’s book, but one of the few exceptions, in which the author portrays her as an anthropomorphised creature can be observed at the end, when the marmoset’s dreadful journey to England is recounted:

By canoe and by horseback they came, or by foot, hacking their way through the bush: men with machetes, men with nets. Different stories were passed from tree to tree about the monkeys that disappeared with them. They would be eaten, went one story. They would live happily ever after, went another: pampered and cherished, they would be carried about on the heads and shoulders of men, who only wanted them for friends. Mitz believed the first story. (Nunez 128-129)

This passage not only presents Mitz as a child believing in fanciful stories rather than as a wild animal, but it also displays a writing style reminiscent of a children’s story, which Nunez temporarily adopts in the novel (Esser 211; Barkway 70). Interestingly, Nunez said in an interview in 2011 that children’s literature and fairy tales, among others, had inspired her to become a writer:

I was very very very excited about fairy tales when I was a little kid, much more than your typical children’s book; but children’s literature is what inspired me, and, in fact, there was, for quite a while, I assumed that when I grew up, I would be, that’s what I would be doing, writing children’s books, writing for children. (BU Libraries Film Team)

Furthermore, in comparing Mitz with Virginia, the former is anthropomorphised, too: “Too many soirées frayed her [Mitz’s] nerves and gave her a headache, and no matter how much fun she’d had she was always glad to be home, for really there was nothing dearer to her than those simple book-filled rooms, her own cozy birdcage, her

own fire” (Nunez 90). Thus, it can be established that Nunez’s animalography also partly consists of passages displaying an anthropomorphic projection.

When Mitz occasionally observes Virginia, she is filled with wonder; in the following example, it is not only Mitz who wonders about the Woolfs, since for once, Mitz’s and Pinka’s viewpoints are presented parallel:

The two sounds most often heard in that household were: the scratching of pen upon paper, the rustle of pages being turned. To Pinka and Mitz these were reassuring sounds, signifying that all was well, like the faintly clayey smells of books and ink, also comforting and familiar. Both Tavistock Square and Monk’s House were overflowing with books. Guests came and went, bearing books with them, bearing books away. Understood: for Leonard and Virginia and their friends, books were a kind of food. But was it not strange, to have no games – no Fetch the Ball, no Scare the Char? Never to run! Never to climb! Never to dig! And there were other mysteries. Why did it require the ring of a bell to let the Woolfs know someone was at the door? Why did they wonder *who* was at the door when it was obviously Ottoline, reeking of perfume and pug? Here they were asking what was for lunch – as if they had never smelled sausage and eggs before! (Nunez 63-64, original emphasis)

It can be argued that Nunez imitates Woolf’s *Flush* in this passage, for the latter frequently describes the spaniel’s sensory experiences, particularly his olfactory ones (Esser 208-209). The animals’ sense of smell is also reflected in the example above. Esser is certainly correct when she writes that Nunez does not, however, strive after displaying the nonhuman sensory impression, like Woolf attempted to show in *Flush* (209). Nevertheless, the former example is not the only passage featuring the animal perspective in this way, as one further situation, in which the marmoset uses her olfactory sense for perceiving her *Umwelt*, can be detected:

One night, after they had gone to bed, Mitz discovered that someone had left the back door open. She sat on the doorstep, her heart wild. The world beckoned. Out she went, moving swiftly over the ground, where she did not feel safe at all, until she reached the great fig tree. In a flash she had scaled it. A breeze tossed the tree-top, and from time to time a bigger breeze blew from a different direction and rocked the whole tree. Mitz clung to her branch and was tossed and rocked. She breathed the rich smells that had baked in the earth all the hot long day and were now being released. She heard the owl and the cuckoo. The moon brightened. The statues in the garden gleamed. (Nunez 83-84)

While both examples constitute rare shifts to the animal perspective, a certain difference between them can still be observed, namely Mitz’s shift of focus. It is the life in captivity standing in direct contrast to nature, since the former passage shows astonished companion animals while observing their human guardians’ behaviour, whereas the latter presents a monkey who is exclusively focused on listening to the sounds and smelling the scents of nature. Additionally, the latter example also reveals

an animal which takes advantage of the open door and follows the call for freedom, as Flush does, too, when being off-leash on the fields (Esser 210). Thus, in view of these two passages showing Mitz's way of encountering her environment, it can be argued that Nunez makes use of an animal-centred strategy of Herman's continuum, namely *Umwelt* exploration.

Still, the monkey's mental experiences and behaviour are primarily interpreted from the human vantage point, for example, when Pinka dies and the marmoset's behaviour seems to alter, as Esser notes (201). Nunez implicitly alludes to the picture of a mourning animal missing its friend: "[S]he was rather listless and kept more to her birdcage than usual. [...] Sometimes, it was true, Mitz would wander about the room, investigating every corner, peering under furniture, as if searching for something she had lost" (Nunez 80). At first, it is the narrator, who acts as observer, telling the readership about Mitz's strange behaviour. However, within the situation described, one can detect a shift in perspective, since the Woolfs' viewpoint is expressed, which becomes evident in the interpretation of the monkey's feelings: "what she [Mitz] felt now was inscrutable" (Nunez 80-81). This phrase therefore presents the conclusion the Woolfs have drawn from observing Mitz. Likewise, it also reflects the non-anthropomorphic view the Woolfs hold. Hence, the constant change of vantage points somewhat complicates the investigation of the nonhuman representation the novel features.

Even though the monkey's perspective is often ignored, which is, according to Esser (211), caused by simple descriptions of Mitz's experiences and her behaviour, for instance, when the marmoset grooms Pinka and herself (Nunez 41), the text does not apply the strategy of animal allegory, since neither Mitz, Pinka nor Sally represent mere "stand-ins for humans" (Herman, "Zoonarratology" 98). On the contrary, the preponderant descriptive parts of *Mitz* appear to signify that the marmoset is not the protagonist of Nunez's novel. While it is a fact that the text is based on the years Mitz spent at the side of Virginia and Leonard Woolf until her death, the representation of the author's daily life and the character Virginia herself are foregrounded, as Esser points out (205). Consequently, she is correct in writing that the book under scrutiny functions as a biofiction about Virginia and Leonard Woolf disguised as animal biography (212), which might also be considered Nunez's reason behind the seldom shift to the animal perspective.

In brief, the human protagonist Virginia Woolf consequently gives rise to the predominant human perspective rather than the vantage point of the marmoset.

However, when Mitz acts as witness of various meetings (Nunez 87), for instance, the monkey's perspective is briefly foregrounded (Esser 201). The animal viewpoint is nevertheless scarcely adopted in *Mitz*, as opposed to *Flush*, in which the story is mainly narrated through the dog's eyes. Still, one can detect some passages featuring the strategy of *Umwelt* exploration, since readers gain an insight into the monkey's sensory world. Apart from this, the narrator occasionally adopts the anthropomorphic technique in order to portray the marmoset's experiences. Therefore, the readers do not learn more about the way Mitz presumably perceives the world and the absurdity of its human inhabitants (Esser 213).

4.5. The Grieving Marmoset: Animal Emotions in *Mitz*

The issue of animal emotions has already been raised in the previous chapter when addressing the marmoset's behaviour after Pinka's death. While the viewpoint adopted in this particular situation has previously been the focus of attention, it is now the monkey's emotions that will constitute the centre of interest. As the self-awareness of various species is still doubted, emotions in animals are also considered a contentious issue (Alderton 4). There is solely evidence for some animals experiencing emotions which humans feel as well (Skutch; Poole, *Coming of Age*, "An Exploration;" Panksepp; Archer; Cabanac; Bekoff, "Animal Emotions," "Smile of Dolphin"). Marc Bekoff lists several emotions that are likely experienced by nonhuman beings: "fear, joy, happiness, shame, embarrassment, resentment, jealousy, rage, anger, love, pleasure, compassion, respect, relief, disgust, sadness, despair, and grief" ("Animal Emotions" 861). Even though several of these feelings can be linked to the marmoset in Nunez's animalography, the feeling of grief, which Mitz presumably shows, is worth examining more closely.

According to Nicky McGrath et al., "[i]t is difficult to know for certain whether a non-human animal has a conscious emotional experience of grief similar to that of a human" (33). John Bowlby provides a definition of grief that seems to be rather related to humans: "A peculiar amalgam of anxiety, anger, and despair following the experience of what is feared to be an irretrievable loss" (qtd. in N. McGrath et al. 33). Hence, David Alderton is correct in considering grief as "a complex emotion, operating on different levels" (18). He adverts to the difference between the terms 'grief,' i.e. "the reaction to death," and 'bereavement,' which "is used to describe the actual state of

loss” (Alderton 18). John Bowlby distinguishes grief from separation anxiety, which he describes as “[a]nxiety [that] is experienced when the loss is believed to be retrievable and hope remains” (qtd. in N. McGrath et al. 33). John Archer also refers to the behaviour indicative of grief that animals display as separation distress and states that Charles Darwin discussed this complex issue in his writings on comparative psychology in 1872 (6, 54). While

the nature of [the psychological aspects of grief] cannot be definitely known or inferred in animals [,] [...] [t]here is ample literature providing evidence that cows (*Bos spp*), pigs (*Sus scrofa domesticus*), sheep (*Ovis aries*), goats (*Capra hircus*), horses (*Equus caballus*) and chickens (*Gallus domesticus*) experience separation distress as a result of maternal separation and temporary or chronic isolation. (N. McGrath et al. 33-34)

In their article “Public Attitudes towards Grief in Animals” published in 2013, N. McGrath et al. present their survey conducted in 2011, which “showed that there was a strong public belief that animals can experience grief,” held by 90 % of the subjects¹⁰ (35). Furthermore, 98% of the respondents believed that dogs are capable of experiencing grief, a figure closely followed by the chimpanzees, with 97% saying that these primates could grieve (N. McGrath et al. 35). While “[t]here is an enormous amount of literature supporting the occurrence of grief in primates¹¹,” according to N. McGrath et al. (37), Barbara King argues that some but not all monkeys mourn, “at least in a way visible to us” (76).

According to Alderton, “the most evident aspect of grieving, as far as animals are concerned, is a change in their reactions. This can be seen particularly in the case of companion animals, since they can be observed closely in domestic surroundings, and their regular behaviour is usually well-known, making deviation from it more obvious” (20). As regards Mitz, her reactions indeed alter after the death of her canine friend, for she is unusually calm and apathetic (Nunez 80). Then, however, it seems that she restlessly searches the house for something – or rather someone – and “cross[es] back and forth between Leonard’s chair and Virginia’s chair, looking from one to the other as if to ask something” (Nunez 80). King writes about a similar behaviour a family member’s dog named Sydney showed when his Maltese friend Angel died: “For the

¹⁰ N. McGrath et al. provided the people surveyed with the following definition of human grief: “An emotional reaction to loss, including sorrow, distress, sadness, anxiety and depression, which causes behavioural, emotional, mental, physical and social symptoms” (Archer; Granek, qtd. in N. McGrath et al. 35).

¹¹ N. McGrath et al. (37) mention, among others, a study about marmosets showing distress vocalisation (Norcross and Newman).

next three weeks, Sydney searched the house for her” (26). Also, Sydney recognised Angel’s unwashed bed in the laundry room, or rather smelt her scent left on the bed: “Sydney had pushed the bed over, apparently looking for Angel” (King 26).

Interestingly, Nunez’s narrator tells the reader about the monkey sitting one evening “for a very long time very still on the spot where Pinka’s basket had been but was no more (Pinka had been buried in it)” (Nunez 80). The Woolfs refuse to define Mitz’s feelings explicitly and only interpret her behaviour cautiously: “But Leonard thought this [Mitz’s listlessness] might be only travel fatigue or something like the malaise Virginia often experienced after a holiday” (Nunez 80). This wariness towards construing Mitz’s feelings from her reactions can be ascribed to their attitude about animal husbandry, including the rejection of being sentimental about nonhuman companions (Nunez 77, 80). However, they nonetheless wonder about whether the marmoset misses the spaniel, and Leonard can imagine that Mitz “had forgotten Pinka ever existed” (Nunez 81). An argument against this view of animal grief can be found in Alderton, who tells about “[p]erhaps the most dramatic and moving account of grieving in a gorilla” (57). Michael, a silverback, whose “mother was killed in Cameroon[,] [...] described the death of his mother at the hands of poachers, using this new method of communication, revealing that her neck was cut, and the distress and grief that he felt.” (Alderton 57-58). Since *Mitz* is set in the 1930’s, Leonard’s reflection should not be considered absurd, for hardly any research on emotions in animals had been done by that time. In view of Michael’s case and other studies investigating animal mourning, however, it is rather unlikely that the historical Mitz would not have been able to remember Pinka.

Nunez integrates a further behaviour commonly displayed by grieving animals in her novel, namely the “lack of interest in social contacts” (Archer 54). Despite tolerating each other, the marmoset and Sally never become friends (Nunez 83). “[E]ven on the chilliest nights, she [Mitz] did not seek refuge in that black-and-white fur” (Nunez 83). Alderton mentions a similar case in which a stallion lost his feline companion. After the cat’s death, “the horse developed an instinctive dislike of all other cats, which remained very apparent right up until his own death in 1753. Perhaps this anger was a sign of grief?” (Alderton 71).

In dealing with this complex issue “we must always keep in mind the possibility that some animal love or grief will look quite different from our own love or grief,” as King points out (10). The difference between human and animal grief is also reflected in *Mitz*. Even though Virginia and Leonard are “melancholy” and “heartbroken,” they

would never weep and wail (Nunez 78). Instead, they decide to go back to work right after having heard “Percy’s [their gardener] story” about Pinka (Nunez 78). Mitz, however, behaves strangely and cannot love the new dog as Virginia and Leonard do.

It has been shown that, like Woolf’s *Flush*, Nunez’s animalography can be related to animal behaviour studies. Mitz’s reactions portrayed in the novel are indeed imaginable, as a similar behaviour from research on this subject has demonstrated. Finally, a definition of grief applying to animals – including the marmoset in *Mitz* – shall now conclude this chapter: “Grief can be said to occur when a survivor animal acts in ways that are visibly distressed or altered from the usual routine, in the aftermath of the death of a companion animal who had mattered emotionally to him or her” (King 163).

4.6. Mitz between Heaven and Hell: Companion Animal and Victim of Avarice

It is the Woolfs who finally provide a home for Mitz where she is treated respectfully and where the morbid monkey receives medical attention. Within a short space of time, Virginia, Leonard and Mitz develop an extraordinary – and amusing – “triangular relationship,” which “constitutes the very core of Nunez’s novel,” according to Latham (363). Certainly, the centre of their relationship is Leonard Woolf (Esser 195, 198), who is attentive to his two “*ladies*” (Nunez 42, original emphasis).

Even though Leonard Woolf’s intensive care for Mitz and their companionship are reminiscent of the relationship between Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Flush (Esser 212) that Virginia Woolf depicted, a considerable difference between the animals can be detected. Unlike Flush, a pure pedigree cocker spaniel whose destiny has always been certain, namely serving as a pet, Mitz once lived in the jungle, sans contact to human beings, before her kidnapping to Europe. Thus, it appears to be debatable whether the marmoset can directly be referred to as a pet without any closer examination.

Juliet Clutton-Brock distinguishes between a tamed and a domesticated animal and defines the latter “as one that has been bred in captivity, for purposes of subsistence or profit, in a human community that maintains complete mastery over its breeding, organization of territory, and food supply” (26). However, this distinction is not drawn in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, since it states that a pet is “any animal

that is domesticated or tamed and kept as a favourite, or treated with indulgence and fondness” (qtd. in Serpell and Paul 129). Fudge provides a similar description for this “class of creature”: “A pet, simply put, is an animal who enters our (human) domestic space. It is different from other – non-tame or wild – animals, because it lives with us in our homes. [...] They are both human and animals; they live with us, but are not us; they have names like us, but cannot call us by our names” (28). Thus, although Mitz does not conform with the traditional pet (Esser 192), as she is only tamed but not domesticated in the narrow sense, the marmoset is no longer wild, either, and might therefore be designated as pet.

It has already been pointed out that Nunez’s Woolfs denounce people treating their animal companions as humans. Hence, it is not surprising when the readers are told that “[t]he Woolfs knew perfectly well that dogs do not make better friends than people and would have been appalled at the suggestion that Pinka or any other pet could replace the child they had not been able to have” (Nunez 78). In view of Mitz’s need of intensive care, however, she appears to resemble a small child. As regards *Flush*, the relationship between Barrett Browning and her spaniel has been described as a parent-child relationship by Ittner (npd). Indeed, such a fellowship is not unusual, as there are a “number of different components the owner-pet and parent-child relationships share in common” (Serpell, *Company* 78). According to Alan Beck and Aaron Katcher, not only children but also

[t]he animal must be continually cared for: fed and watered, kept from eating dangerous foods and objects, bathed, groomed, protected against the elements [...] Like children, pets are petted, stroked and touched at the will of the owner [...] However, the acts that critically defines a pet as a child is our willingness to put up with the excrement of cats and dogs: to handle it, permit it in the house, to accept it in the streets. (60)

The Woolfs apparently cope with the latter issue mentioned above, since Mitz is not naturally house trained. However, the couple accepts the marmoset’s uncleanliness:

You can teach a monkey to do many things, but alas not the one thing most desirable. Leonard knew this and did not even try. Living with Mitz meant constantly cleaning up after her – nothing else to be done. Virginia took this admirably in her stride, but the chars complained about muck on their freshly mopped floors or even more unseemly places. (Nunez 55-56)

This passage also clearly shows the difference between Mitz, an exotic pet¹², and Flush or other traditional pets, such as cats, who are mostly house trained after their puppyhood.

The function that the animals in *Flush* and *Mitz* have for their human guardians is noteworthy, too. Barrett Browning does not only provide Flush with a home in order to aid her friend Miss Mitford, but the dog is primarily there comfort her. By contrast, the Woolfs do not to keep Mitz for their own sake but for the animal's. Thus, Leonard and Virginia do not expect anything from their pet-ownership. Their intention in acquiring the monkey can therefore be regarded as non-anthropocentric, whereby focusing on "the putative benefits that humans derive from living or interacting with their animal companions" is considered anthropocentric (Serpell and Paul 140). Nonetheless, the Woolfs once benefit from Mitz, namely during their three-day stay in Germany, when the monkey saves the couple from the Nazis. Thus, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who had suffered from severe depression before she acquired her dog, as well as Virginia and Leonard Woolf owe their life to their pets and vice versa, since Flush is rescued from captivity in Whitechapel and Mitz's serious wounds are healed by Leonard Woolf.

Considering the marmoset of the novel as an exotic pet, not only her jealousy and amusing behaviour characterise Mitz, but also the cruel treatment she once received – before Victor Rothschild rescued her – constitutes a distinct part of her life. Consequently, the monkey represents a victim of avarice and imperialism¹³, as Mitz is viewed as commodity, as the criminals consider the kidnapping of Flush as lucrative business (Esser 211). Not until the end of the novel do readers learn of the marmoset's horrid past. Her taming can be regarded as humbling and violent, and, in the context of Nunez's work, the domestication does not only serve to "create" a companion (Esser

¹² Bekoff notes that

[s]ome scientists reserve the terms 'exotic,' 'alien,' 'nonnative,' and so on for species whose dispersal took place relatively recently – that is, in the modern period of European exploration and migration, beginning about 1450. For the Americas, the dividing line is the arrival of Christoph Columbus in 1492. Species inhabiting these continents in the pre-Columbian period are considered native and indigenous; those that arrived after 1492 are nonnative, alien, and exotic. (*Encyclopedia* 1 349)

¹³ Esser states that in *Mitz*, the dependency between human and animal stands for imperialism, whereas it is the antagonism between rich and poor as well as Victorian conventionality that is revealed in *Flush* (210).

210), but also “impl[ies] conquering the wildness in the animal” (Birke 19). In this context, Lynda Birke points out that

[i]n transforming animals from ‘wild’ to ‘tame’, humans reconstruct the boundary between the animal and ourselves. No longer symbolic or representative of recalcitrant nature, ‘taming’ recasts the animal, bringing it closer to our idea of humanity. It also brings us closer to nature, but to a nature more amenable to our control, thus blurring, a little, the human/animal boundaries. (19)

It can therefore be established that humans’ “absolute dominion over the natural world,” as well as anthropocentrism, which represents this notion of full control (Fudge 14), are criticised in *Mitz*. Consequently, the text appears to adopt a rather non-anthropocentric view.

Even though defined as pet, Mitz is still an exotic animal, kidnapped from a rainforest in South America. Unlike Flush, she is not a typical domesticated companion. Despite this difference, one can detect a similarity between the two animals, for the relationship between Leonard Woolf and the marmoset resembles Barrett Browning’s attachment to Flush in Woolf’s canine memoir. In view of Nunez’s critique of human’s avarice, the author’s view can be considered non-anthropocentric, even though the animal perspective is rather neglected.

5. *Timothy; or Notes of an Abject Reptile*

Timothy; or Notes of an Abject Reptile (2006), the third and final biographical novel examined in this thesis, was written by the American author and *New York Times* columnist Verlyn Klinkenborg. His story is about Timothy, a female tortoise from Cilicia, a part of today's Turkey, who recounts her life in Selborne, a small village in South East England. In 1740, the reptile is captured by sailors, who bring Timothy to England. There, the vicar of Ringmer, Henry Snooke, acquires the animal. Unlike Mr Snooke, his wife, Rebecca Snooke, and his 20-year old nephew, Gilbert White, are keenly interested in the tortoise. Forty years have passed when Mrs Snooke dies and Timothy is taken to Selborne by Gilbert White, a curator and naturalist. In her new home, the tortoise tells readers about her curious owner and his experiments, the villagers, and about Selborne's plants and animals. In 1793, fifty-three years after Timothy's kidnapping, Gilbert White dies. It is also the tortoise's last year on Earth, as she never awakes from her hibernation.

5.1. Klinkenborg's "True" Story about a Naturalist's Tortoise

Like *Flush* and *Mitz*, *Timothy* recounts the life of an animal that lived long ago and was owned by an English writer. Klinkenborg included a historical note, in which he briefly writes about the tortoise's origins, Gilbert White and his major work *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* (1789), which Klinkenborg used, among other historical sources, in order "to make this portrait of Selborne and the life around it as accurate as possible" (Klinkenborg 159). Hence, the author's detailed research and the integrated historical material in the biographical novel are reminiscent of the approach Woolf and Nunez adopted for writing *Flush* and *Mitz*.

There is, however, one significant difference between *Timothy* and the previously examined texts, which arises from the narrative situation. Given that a nonhuman narrator, Timothy herself that is, recounts her story, one may define Klinkenborg's animalography as a "work of intense imagination" (Weil, "True Story" 305). Throughout the book, the author used his imagination in order to portray the reptile's way of encountering the world. It shall be noted, however, that Woolf also used a large amount of imagination for describing *Flush*'s experiences despite her third-person

narrator. Ryan Hediger states that this “imagined perspective [functions] as an estrangement device to investigate *Homo sapiens*” (43, original emphasis).

Thus, on the one hand, *Timothy* can certainly be described as a work of “high imagination” (Kleffel npd); on the other hand, Klinkenborg’s animalography is characteristic of a considerable use of historical sources and the glossary of “historical terms, [...] relevant to Gilbert White and the book’s moment in the eighteenth century” (Hediger 43). In view of *Timothy*’s genre, Klinkenborg himself says:

People are starting to talk about it as if it were fiction, and to me it’s actually a work of scholarship. It arose on the foundation of scholarship, learning as much as I could about Gilbert White’s world, about tortoises, about the world Timothy came from in Turkey, and really getting a feel for the pattern of that life Timothy would have been imbedded in in that garden. (qtd. in Chenoweth 35)

Even though designated as novel on the cover, the author writes in his historical note that “[t]his is a true story” (Klinkenborg 159). Indeed, one would be tempted to argue that his animalography constitutes the true story of Timothy’s life, as the author used all the information he extracted from Gilbert White’s letters and journals in order to display the reptile’s life accurately. The naturalist’s memoirs did not only provide the basis for *Timothy*, but also helped Klinkenborg to imagine what the tortoise possibly felt in certain situations, as, for instance, when Gilbert White writes about the day he took Timothy to Selborne, on 17 March 1780: “Brought away Mrs. Snooke’s old tortoise, Timothy, which she has valued much, and had treated kindly for near 40 years. When dug out of its hybernaculum it resented the Insult by hissing” (Holt-White 42). Also, these personal writings seem to give insight into Gilbert White’s and his aunt’s character traits as well as their relationship to Timothy¹⁴. Still, notwithstanding Klinkenborg’s reliance on historical source material, Timothy’s thoughts, or “the organizing consciousness [...] [are] fictive” (Chenoweth 305).

Klinkenborg transformed “Timothy [...] the subject of many experiments” into a wry, humorous animal narrator, recounting her experiences¹⁵ with the help of the

¹⁴ The fact that Gilbert White interrupted Timothy’s hibernation shows his ignorant behaviour towards the reptile. It has to be noted, however, that the naturalist was not always ignorant, since he also genuinely cared for the tortoise and protected her: “Mr. and Mrs. Richardson are here, and three young Wykehamists, for whose sake Timothy is locked safe in the stable” (Holt-White 84). This caring side of the reptile’s owner is also reflected in Klinkenborg’s book, to be further discussed when examining the human-animal relationship in *Timothy*.

¹⁵ Interestingly, Klinkenborg was not the first one who gave the tortoise a voice, for Gilbert White wrote a letter to Hecky Mulso in Timothy’s name on 31 August 1784 (Holt-White 126-129).

naturalist's journal entries and letters. Without these constant recordings, *Timothy* would presumably have never been written, as the author admits: "If I'd set out to write a novel in which a tortoise tells the story, I wouldn't have been able to do it" (qtd. in Chenoweth 35). However, "to write a work of scholarship and imagination and, I hope, poetry that tried to be as true and as good be [sic] and was accidentally fiction . . . well, that's a different story" (qtd. in Chenoweth 35).

5.2. The Narrating Tortoise Timothy: *Timothy's* Narrative Situation

Unlike Woolf and Nunez, Klinkenborg opted for a first-person narrative, in which Timothy functions as mediator, whose world is "completely identical" to the world of the characters (Stanzel 4). A first-person narrator like Timothy, who "narrates [...] her own life story," is considered, according to Genette's taxonomy, an autodiegetic narrator (A. and V. Nünning 119). Hence, as opposed to *Flush* and *Mitz*, *Timothy* is consistently told by a nonhuman narrator. Furthermore, while Woolf's and Nunez's narrators are considered reliable, a first-person narrator like Klinkenborg's is mostly limited in his perception and knowledge (Stanzel 89). Hence, this kind of narrator "can have only a subjective and hence only conditionally valid view of the narrated events" (Stanzel 89). Indeed, the tortoise particularly expresses her somewhat subjective view when, for instance, discussing human behaviour: "Mrs. Henry White stares into her hand-mirror as though it were a fraud upon her intelligence. As showing her the wrong reflection. A woman older and somehow coarser than she expects to find. Not at all the woman within" (Klinkenborg 59). Mostly, Timothy has a limited perception and knowledge, like a first-person narrator usually has, but there are passages, as the previous example, for instance, where the tortoise "veer[s] into an omniscient voice" (Packard npd), since her role as narrator enables her to see and hear through walls.

As has already been mentioned, Timothy "belongs to the represented reality," which is evident in her "physical and existential presence in the fictional world" (Stanzel 90). According to Stanzel, this "corporeality" is typical of "the quasi-autobiographical narrator" (90). Right at the beginning, Timothy's physical and existential presence is emphasised:

Thomas catches me up in his hands with sickening haste. I weigh six pounds thirteen ounces. He lifts me as though I weigh nothing at all. Ground breaks away. May wind shivers in my ears. My legs churn the sky on their own. I look

down on bean-tops. Down on the blunt ends of sheep-bitten grasses. Over one field, into the next, into the hop-garden beyond. Past thatch and tiles, past maypole, past gilded cock on the church tower. All in my eye. So far to see. (Klinkenborg 5)

This example clearly shows the tortoise's "experiencing as well as the narrating self," which are connected with the represented corporeality, and it seems that what Stanzel calls "the embodiment of the experiencing self" dominates this passage (Stanzel 91). As regards the narrating self, one can argue that it is more prominent when Timothy talks about the villagers: "Humans of Selborne wake all winter. Above ground, eating and eating, breathing and shitting, talking and talking. Fanning the ashes. Guarding the spark. Never a lasting silence for them. Never more than a one-night rest. When they go down in the ground, they go down in boxes, for good, and only with the help of others standing round" (Klinkenborg 8).

In functioning as an omniscient sayer¹⁶, the reptile recounts the content of Gilbert White's correspondence and also adds an ironic comment:

That evening, Mr. Gilbert White takes up the pen to Miss Molly White. To summarize *why* [Timothy escaped]. Timothy, he writes, 'had conceived a notion of much satisfaction to be found in the range of the meadow, and Baker's Hill; [...] But having wandered 'til he was tired, and having met with nothing but weeds, and coarse grass, and solitude, he was glad to return to the poppies, and lettuces, and the other luxuries of the garden.' *He* indeed. (Klinkenborg 136, original emphasis)

Klinkenborg's use of italics clearly emphasises Timothy's ironic reaction to White's letter. The tortoise mocks not only White's ignorance about her actual sex, but also the reason he gives for Timothy's escape from the garden, which is certainly not the real reason, as the reader has already found out. The former emphasis ("*why*") seems to introduce the naturalist's wrong interpretation. Italics are also employed when the animal is angry and indignant at White's attempt to weigh her:

I peer at Ringmer through a slit between the basket-ribs. Down the hill toward the village center. Through a door. Bell jangles overhead. Mr. Gilbert White opens the basket. Before I can glance about me, he lifts me into the pan of a shop-scale. Hanging over a wooden counter. High above the stone floor. I step out of the pan and onto the counter. Mr. Gilbert White catches me and sets me in the pan again. But this time – *on my back!* (Klinkenborg 79, original emphasis)

¹⁶ Synonym for the 'narrating self' (Stanzel 113).

The above passage further demonstrates the novel's internal perspective, as "the point of view from which the narrated world is perceived [and] represented is located in the main character" (Stanzel 111).

In brief, the first-person narrative situation in *Timothy* features the perspective of the nonhuman protagonist throughout the text, apart from her occasional diversions to quasi-omniscient narration when Timothy knows more than she actually can. This has neither been the case with *Flush* nor *Mitz*, as they only temporarily – the former more, the latter less often – shift to the animal's vantage point. In selecting Timothy as narrator, Klinkenborg's animalography somehow contains "an established element of folklore and children's stories, fairy tales and fantasy" (Babb 81). Hence, the talking tortoise telling her story certainly raises the issue of anthropomorphism.

5.3. Disney's Timothy, the Talking Reptile?

According to Harel, an animal narrator like Timothy is "necessarily anthropomorphized" (49). Like Harel, David Gessner also points to the "risk" of humanising the narrating tortoise: "To attempt to render nonhuman consciousness in human language is to enter into the raging debate over animal intelligence and to risk anthropomorphizing, or worse, Disneyfying" (npd). It has already been stated that the anthropomorphic approach often correlates with sentimentalism (Flegel 91, Fudge 76), which might be the reason why talking animals in literature and film are commonly regarded as "a childhood phenomenon," as Steven Baker points out: "Received wisdom has it that the tendency to like, to care for and to identify with animals is essentially a childhood phenomenon, or, as it might often be more condescendingly expressed, a childish thing" (123). Baker notes that consequently,

[t]he animal is the sign of all that is taken not-very-seriously in contemporary culture; the sign of that which doesn't really matter. The animal may be other things beside this, but this is certainly one of its frequent roles in representation. Terms such as stereotyping and trivialization are a little too imprecise to describe quite what is going on here: I propose instead to speak of it as the *disnification* of the animal. [...] This is not a cheap gibe aimed simply or specifically at the image of the animal in Disney productions (at the animal's deliberate 'Disneyfication', in other words). What I have in mind has more to do with the connotations of trivialization and belittlement which are a central and intentional part of the everyday adjectival use of terms like 'Disney' and 'Micky Mouse' – quite the contrary of what Walt Disney would have wanted. [...] Disnification [...] is the condition under which we ordinarily make sense of animal representations. (Baker 174-177, original emphasis)

The phenomenon of disnification, as Baker terms it, might therefore lead to nonhuman protagonists not being represented as ‘animal’ but rather “treated as the transparent signifier of something quite different” (Baker 136).

However, Klinkenborg seems to break away from the popular, often negative stereotype about animal narrators, and animal stories in general, as Weil notes: “there is nothing childish about this talking tortoise. On the contrary, we become as children before her, willing to befriend her, willing to smile at how we humans look to her, and willing to accept her view of the world as a necessary corrective to our own” (“The Story” 305). Rick Kleffel writes that Klinkenborg “never ever comes close to cuteness” (npd). This becomes evident, for instance, when the tortoise talks about her first winter in England:

Winter of human year 1740. My first at Mrs. Rebecca Snooke’s. It came entirely unexpected. A stronger prompting to dig than I had ever known. Calling for a haste I did not have. Half-buried in that mired bed was as deep as I got. Half-numbed before half-buried. Mud congealing around me. Shell bare to the winds tumbling over the courtyard wall. Not the warm, dry northerlies of home. [...] As though my blood had drained away and frozen beneath me. No rest in it. Sleep – if sleep it was – was a bare clinging to life. (Klinkenborg 111)

Hence, one can argue that the author does neither disneyfy Timothy, present her in a cartoonish way that is, nor does he disnify his animal narrator, in the sense of trivialising her.

The assumption that the tortoise of Klinkenborg’s novel signifies an animal rather than a stand-in for a human being does not, however, resolve the issue of anthropomorphism, as the latter approach cannot be equated with Baker’s concept of disnification. In a narrow sense, the author indeed anthropomorphises Timothy, since it cannot be denied that the tortoise makes use of human language in order to describe her life and recount events and relations (Crist 29). This technique is often considered naïve, as Eileen Crist states: “Anthropomorphism is presumed to be a naive view, an illusion generated through superficial analogies between human and animal behaviour, a deluded projection of the wealth of human experience onto a world that is putatively less rich” (152). However, one can assert that Timothy’s world is not presented as “less rich” at all. On the contrary, the tortoise narrator emphasises the power of nature and animals. She also reveals humans’ weaknesses, absurdities and limitations. In this way, Klinkenborg arouses the reader’s desire to comprehend the animal protagonist. Therefore, the anthropomorphic view in *Timothy* presumably aims at preventing humans from largely ignoring the world of nature and animals (see

also Fudge 76). In that sense, “[a]nimal narratives, at their imaginative best, are not invitations to anthropomorphic sentimentality, but rather literary extensions of natural history and a potentially potent ethical force” (Burns 350), which is also true of *Timothy*.

Thus, while both ‘Disneyfication’ and ‘disnification’ are certainly not beneficial for the image of the animal, it has been shown that anthropomorphism can be viewed as a “powerful view of animal life,” which awakes the human desire of understanding animal minds. As regards *Timothy*, one can assert that the nonhuman protagonist is neither trivialised nor represented as human being, but the reptile is nonetheless given human language for expressing her point of view.

5.4. Notes of a Talkative Reptile: Life and Opinions

Harel claims that “[w]hile an authentic representation of nonhuman experience in literature is challenging, it becomes *necessarily unachievable* in first-person narrative mode, in which the nonhuman protagonist is also the story narrator” (49, emphasis added). Tess Cosslett, by contrast, argues that animal autobiographical writing, like *Timothy*, “invites human readers to ‘change situations’ with the animal protagonist, and imagine its feelings” (63). If nonhuman experiences are inevitably inauthentic, as Harel alleges, why do readers then sympathise with the animal protagonist, be “besotted by the sentient tortoise” (Shattuck npd), or shed “[t]ears of joy, tears of sadness” (Kleffel npd)? According to Baker, “most people’s sympathy for them and pleasurable experiences of them is grounded entirely in these ‘inauthentic’ representations” (150-151). In fact, the discussion of authentic vs. inauthentic nonhuman representation appears to have no prospect of successful resolution, since humans cannot – and will probably never be able to – read animal minds. Thus, describing the portrayal of animal experiences as ‘authentic’ seems to be as debatable as denoting it ‘inauthentic.’ Rather than focusing on the question of authenticity, the tortoise’s experiences in *Timothy*, which clearly evoke readers’ sympathy for the reptile, shall now be the centre of interest.

After the death of Gilbert White’s aunt, the naturalist takes Timothy to his village, Selborne. Since the reptile has already started her hibernation, he must dig her out, much to the dismay of Timothy: “I hiss at him for his disrespect, his unseasonableness” (Klinkenborg 47). Instead of returning to the Mediterranean coast, “to [her] antique

city” (Klinkenborg 48), the reptile finds herself in another English village similar to Ringmer. She describes the latter as follows: “Arrived at a clot of houses on the shoulder of the downs, almost within scent of the sea. Humans all about, a fearsome many” (Klinkenborg 36). When arriving in Selborne, it is again the houses and the people immediately catching Timothy’s eye: “And so on not to the sea but to another clot of houses. Another fearsome lot of humans, though less forbidding after forty years among them. To this place, to Selborne. A town not high on the chalk downs, like Ringmer, but lodged in a crevice between the hills” (Klinkenborg 48). However, the likeness between the two villages vanishes when the tortoise continues describing her surroundings:

Arrived at last. Surrendered into a garden beneath the brow of the Hanger. Just as spring begins. Forty years after first being carried into this damp woolen country. Suddenly a sweet, green season. [...] Peaches and nectarines bloom on the only wall in sight. [...] Living borders of shrubs and flowers instead of the mute red walls of my former courtyard. [...] Cascades of scent, blossom, and pollen. [...] Frogs croak as I come fully awake. [...] Early swallows flutter. Bees above the cucumber frames, waiting for Mr. Gilbert White to open the lights. (Klinkenborg 48-49)

Timothy makes use of all her senses in order to perceive her environment. She appears to be captivated by what she sees, smells and hears in her new home. Also, the blooming plants and the sounds of nature seem to comfort her. Apart from this, the passage possibly reminds the reader of Flush’s first time in Wimpole Street 50, and of Mitz’s night in the fig tree, as these events are viewed from the animals’ vantage point and emphasise their phenomenal world, too. Thus, one can argue that Klinkenborg adopts Herman’s strategy of *Umwelt* exploration, like Woolf does in *Flush* and Nunez in *Mitz*. This mode appears to dominate *Timothy*, as the representation of the tortoise’s perceptions forms the basis for the novel.

However, given the reptile’s use of human language, Klinkenborg’s animalography also features anthropomorphic projection, which is evident, for example, in the nonhuman protagonist’s knowledge of human practices like social conventions:

‘Good morning, Timothy!’ for forty years.

‘Good evening, Timothy!’

Good evening Mrs. Snooke!

[...] Trials in early days, over my palate. Seed-cake, cat’s-meat, chicken liver, raw egg, calf’s-foot jelly. Unspeakable delicacies carried from her plate to the border where I lie.

‘Timothy!’ she cries. ‘Try some!’

At last the delicacies ended or I would have wasted away to a cavity.
(Klinkenborg 40)

Timothy perfectly understands what her owner says, and it seems that she mocks Rebecca Snooke's habit of greeting her, since the woman always wishes the reptile a good day, although she never receives a reply from the tortoise. The author also makes use of anthropomorphic projection when his animal narrator discusses the question of sex as well as the personal pronouns defining male and female. The tortoise is aware of the fact that 'Timothy' constitutes a name which is given to male living beings:

But when he writes about swallows, Mr. Gilbert White worries what sex to *say* they have. Despite the fact. 'I *had* used the pronoun personal feminine to my swallows,' he tells his Gibraltar brother, now dead. 'But somebody objected, so I put *it* in its place; but I think you are right, and shall replace *she* and *her*; though there is this objection, that in a *pair* a male is implied, as well as a female; and yet *he* would sound awkward for a bird.' Small wonder then that he has mistaken my sex. Perhaps *she* would sound awkward for a tortoise. For the *Timothy* that Mr. Henry Snooke bestowed upon me so long ago on Chichester. A foolish assumption, a giving in to alliteration. [...] *Timothy* I have been this half century and more. *Timothy* I shall be forever after, thanks to Mr. Gilbert White's scribbling. And yet not wholly, never wholly, *Timothy*. (Klinkenborg 110, original emphasis)

Like in the former passage, it is the animal narrator's "dry humour" that amuses the reader (Kleffel npd). The tortoise frequently comments wryly on humans', and particularly on Gilbert White's, assumptions about (animal) life. The example also reveals Timothy's poetic and philosophical vein. Interestingly, her language appears to change slightly when the strategy of anthropomorphic projection is employed, since in the passage above, her utterances are mostly complete English sentences.

However, it is the "clipped, curt language" which dominates the novel, which for Hediger clearly distinguishes Timothy from human narrators (42). André Bernard writes that the events "and more, everything that happens in and around a small rural eighteenth century English village, is observed by Timothy, and recounted in short-of-breath turtle-like (use your imagination) cadences" (8). Wingate Packard also considers the style Klinkenborg developed "well suited to the tortoise: short, mostly incomplete sentences" (npd). Apart from the passage in which Timothy describes her first impression of Selborne and Ringmer, "the plodding effect, [which] evok[es] the slow, place- and temperature-attuned life of a reptile" (Hediger 42), can also be observed when the tortoise describes her experience of the voyage to England:

Thrust into a heavy bag by hand unseen. Laid in the bottom of a caique, I suppose from the wet that began to pool around me, to sap the cloth. Sounds

indistinguishable, human muttering, sharply silenced with a rasping bark. Slap of waves against wood, creak of pitch-seam and oarlock. Audible bulk of a much larger vessel suddenly looming nearby. Heaved, swung upward, and dropped. Shot out of the bag among naked human feet and into a tangle of netting. Stowed in darkness. Forgotten. [...] We lay by for how long. [...] Months perhaps, many days and weeks certainly. Falling and falling, tumbling away from my terra-cotta city. (Klinkenborg 34-35)

Even though Hediger might be correct when he writes that “[t]he sentence fragments sound like language barely possible,” his claim that “tagging or labelling is all that can be achievable” is doubtful as Timothy conveys far more than a mere list of nouns strung together or incomplete sentences. She seems to possess the gift to create a vivid image in the head of the reader without proper syntax and without describing her experiences in detail.

Moreover, the presentation of Timothy’s consciousness and the “inside view” can be regarded as an “effective means of controlling the reader’s sympathy, because they can influence the reader subliminally in favour of a character in the story,” as Stanzel points out (127-128). Concerning the presentation of the tortoise’s thoughts, Weil writes that

[t]hough his [Klinkenborg’s] translation of Timothy’s thoughts gives little sense that a tortoise might think or write or reason differently from a human – or, at least, from a Western, educated, human who writes in a rather particular style that prefers adjectives and nouns to verbs and descriptions to plot – it gives us a glimpse into how time and space may be experienced differently from the horizontal, with four legs and a shell to carry. (“The Story” 306)

However, it is not only the nonhuman protagonist’s different conception of time and space into which the reader gains insight, but also into Timothy’s opinions about human behaviour:

Agility, dexterity, these are not enough for humans. Not enough to be able to see most of one’s body at a glance. Necessary also to witness one’s very own face. To know it in the glass, the shop-window, the knife-blade, the pond. [...] To offer oneself the compliment of a sly, urbane glance. [...] A metaphysical dexterity exceeding all the rest of creation. In what are humans stranger than this? To live in a world peopled by their own reflections. [...] Miss Molly White’s only affection is quoting Latin. Yet she tries to behold her backside while standing beside the parlor window. Judging the effect of a newly turned ribbon. The glass refuses to show the hind side to her. [...] In all my life, I have never seen either of my hind feet. I surmise their shape from my front feet and from the feel of being in them. From encounters with my own kind long ago. Much less have I seen the ridge-line of my carapace or the mottling of my under-tiles. I only intuit that my tail is there. (Klinkenborg 57-59)

It can be argued that, as opposed to *Mitz*, *Timothy* presents nonhuman experiences from the animal's viewpoint and also reveals absurdities of the human world, the tortoise thus functioning as an alienating device.

In view of the novel's permanent insight into the tortoise's mind, *Timothy* might be considered an example of Herman's concept of 'zoonarratology,' i.e. "an approach to narrative study that explores how storytelling practices (and strategies for narrative interpretation) relate to broader assumptions concerning the nature, experiences, and status of animals" ("Zoonarratology" 95). The predominant strategy of *Umwelt* exploration in Klinkenborg's animalography and other texts featuring "an increasingly detailed engagement with the lived texture or ecology of nonhuman experiences" do not necessarily "result in diminished narrativity," as Herman notes ("Zoonarratology" 100). On the contrary, "in stories figuring the moment-by-moment experiences of nonhuman animals, narrativity emerges from the attempt to imagine how a different kind of intelligent agent constitutes the world – and from using this imaginative engagement to prompt, in turn, a rethinking of the relationship between human and nonhuman experience" (Herman, "Zoonarratology" 100).

The investigation of the representation of nonhuman experiences in *Timothy* has shown that more than one strategy of Herman's continuum is adopted, as with *Flush* and *Mitz*. If a nonhuman protagonist's thoughts are expressed in human language – a language that, in the case of *Timothy*, is somewhat unusual, characterised by short and mostly incomplete sentences – one will easily assume that the animal is "radically anthropomorphized," as Harel claims (49). Nonetheless, it is the technique of *Umwelt* exploration rather than anthropomorphic projection that dominates Klinkenborg's animalography: the tortoise's way of encountering the world is clearly foregrounded.

5.5. Teasing Is a Sign of Affection: The Ironic Tortoise and the Curious Naturalist

In fact, *Timothy* recounts a story which she would not have been able to tell if she had not been captured by humans. Hence, readers not only owe *Timothy* to Verlyn Klinkenborg, who decided to give the reptile a voice, but they also "owe" the novel to brutal, ruthless sailors, who found the historical tortoise somewhere on the Mediterranean coast and unhesitatingly brought her to their ship. The reptile's story is therefore reminiscent of the little primate of Nunez's novel. As with *Mitz*, *Timothy* once

lived without any human influence and cannot be directly compared with Flush, the cocker spaniel who is “*purpose-bred*” (DeMello, *Animals and Society* 149, original emphasis). Despite the monkey’s origins, it has previously been argued that the marmoset can be defined as pet, an exotic pet, as well as a companion animal, since Mitz always accompanies Leonard and Virginia Woolf. Timothy possibly belongs to those animals that “are not domesticated at all and in fact are still wild animals.” However, since she “ha[s] been moved into a domestic environment,” Timothy can be defined as an exotic pet, like Mitz¹⁷ (DeMello, *Animals and Society* 148). Unlike Mitz and Flush, the tortoise seems not to be a companion animal though. Hal Herzog illustrates this distinction with an example, a friend whose favourite pet was a crawfish “that lived in a bowl next to his bed” (Herzog 74). The fish is indeed a pet but not a companion, as Herzog points out (74). Like fish living in an aquarium, Timothy lives first in the Snookes’ courtyard and then in Gilbert White’s garden, which the tortoise never leaves with his owners, except when Gilbert White weighs the reptile. Hence, the reptile does not accompany his owners on voyages or shopping trips as Mitz and Flush do.

Rebecca Snooke, “[f]irst Englishwoman, first human, of my close acquaintance,” and her nephew Gilbert White appear to be the only two people to whom Timothy develops a relationship (Klinkenborg 39). Given that the nonhuman protagonist primarily narrates her life in Selborne, it is the relationship to Gilbert White that is foregrounded in the animalography. At first, when the tortoise is owned by Mr and Mrs Snooke and the young naturalist “appears once or twice in autumn and spring,” Timothy describes Gilbert White as “[s]lender, knobby, compared to the plush vicar Ringmer. Dry, deliberate manner in the pulpit. [...] But a warmth, a somehow precise playfulness in the family. Hive of questions, always buzzing. Monster of interrogation. Always felt his eye fixed upon me. Curiosity amok” (Klinkenborg 41). The man’s curiosity results in various experiments and observations, such as the weighing twice a year, which appear to annoy the tortoise: “I blame Mrs. Rebecca Snooke for allowing the weighing. But I blame Mr. Gilbert White for the project. Insatiable curiosity. Extravagant wonder. [...] And I blame him, far worse, for laying me on my back. [...] Suspended on my back in the scales above the counter. Like a cheese indifferent to up

¹⁷ Apart from turtles and primates, DeMello designates snakes, frogs, hedgehogs, and spiders as exotic pets, “caught and sold through (the often) exotic pet industry” (*Animals and Society* 148-149).

or down” (Klinkenborg 80-81). Eventually, Gilbert White gains his pet’s trust, and Timothy appreciates the good care she receives from her owner: “No soup, no slip. Only the greatest care in handling me. In thirteen years I have never been dropped among the boys’ swift feet. Never kicked head over tail. Never rolled through the village along my equator” (Klinkenborg 82). Hence, one can certainly detect a bond between the “well-meaning – but often ignorant – keeper” and the tortoise (Weil, “The Story” 305). As regards Timothy’s and Gilbert White’s relationship, Klinkenborg says in an interview that

though the tortoise watches Gilbert White closely and judges his behavior, he is by far the most tolerant, the most understanding of humans when it comes to nature and the lives of the animals around him. His science may seem intrusive, clumsy, and, at times, downright destructive. But it is the basis for a feeling for nature, in him, that is surprisingly rich. These are feelings that Timothy takes for granted, a sense of kinship that comes naturally. Mr. White has to work at it over the years to acquire that sensitivity to the natural world. He has to rationalize it before he can really feel it. But there were very few men or women in England in the 18th century who could match his feel for the subtleties of the natural world around him. (“Author Q&A” npd)

The growing bond between the human and the animal in Klinkenborg’s novel, cannot be compared, however, with the pet-owner relationships displayed in *Flush* and *Mitz*, as Timothy neither lives in the house nor accompanies her guardian. Moreover, while Nunez and Woolf frequently display the affection the animals feel for their owners, Klinkenborg rather focuses on Timothy’s detached observations of the naturalist and of human beings in general. In this respect, *Timothy* considerably differs from *Flush* and *Mitz*, as the latter two do not discuss human supremacy like Klinkenborg does in his novel.

5.6. The Most Abject Reptile¹⁸ versus the Ignorant Two-Legged Tottering Beasts¹⁹: Human Supremacy or Human Fallibility?

“Thousands of pairs of eyes in this garden. Few of them able to make a human feel looked at. Strangely impervious to the level gaze of a swallow or a bumble bee. No natural predators. Unaware of the menace in a hedgehog’s glare. Blind to the query in a bantam’s eye” (Klinkenborg 74). As this passage shows, human ignorance is sharply criticised in *Timothy*. Hence, an animal narrator is indeed able to “raise significant questions about nonhuman existence and its relationship with human existence,” even though he or she is “pronouncedly anthropomorphized,” as Harel points out (49). Timothy doubts the supremacy of mankind which is, however, taken for granted by us and shapes our worldview that has always dominated and will presumably endure until the end of human life on Earth. Bernard Rollin shows that this superiority is apparently relative and surely not an objective quality:

Of course, since man creates the ratings, he can do as he chooses, but what is the criterion of superiority? Surely it is not longevity, adaptability, and reproductive success, else turtles, cockroaches, and rats would be at the top. Is it intelligence? But why does intelligence score highest? Ultimately, perhaps, because intelligence allows us to control, vanquish, dominate, and destroy all other creatures. If this is the case, it is power that puts us on top of the pyramid. But if power provides grounds for including or excluding creatures from the scope of moral concern, we have [...] done away with all morality together. (8)

The difference between humans and animals, which the former creatures emphasise persistently, appears to strengthen the belief in human dominance: “The hierarchical regime of higher-to-lower is ready-made and often unquestioned, and, in setting humans apart from the animals, it has fueled our self-importance and propped our thoughtless and destructive relationship with the natural world” (Crist 222). Verlyn Klinkenborg addresses the issue of separation not only in *Timothy*, but also when being interviewed and says that humans are “not separate at all, not in any way. Humans are animals and are subject to the fundamental environmental and population constraints that all other species on this planet are subject to. What sets us apart is that we love to believe we’re not subject to those constraints” (“Author Q&A”

¹⁸ “Thus not only ‘the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib,’ but the most abject reptile and torpid of beings distinguishes the hand that feeds it, and is touched with the feelings of gratitude!” (White 149).

¹⁹ One of Timothy’s several ways to describe human beings: “Great soft tottering beasts” (Klinkenborg 7).

npd). One might argue that this statement constitutes the message which the author endeavours to convey in his animalography and which therefore also displays the worldview he endorses, a non-anthropocentric view, that is. Gessner is correct in writing that Klinkenborg and Timothy “have a biocentric, not anthropocentric, view of the world, one in which humans are just another animal” (npd), biocentrism being “the view or belief that the rights and needs of humans are not more important than those of other living things” (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

The belief that man is “the single and sole living creature with the capacity for language” has long been encouraged by anthropocentrists (Calarco 51). The eighteenth-century tortoise realises this pride in human language and notes dryly:

He [Gilbert White] translates birdsongs. [...] He is happier translating a language he doesn't know. Happier believing, despite himself, that the language of the brute creation is no language at all. That true speech is human and the rest inarticulate metaphor. Yelling of cats, braying of asses, grunting and whistling of bucks in autumn. (Klinkenborg 24)

Hence, Klinkenborg appears to criticise humans' ignorance about other species' languages as well as ridicules human's omniscience and overestimation concerning their knowledge of animal language. In observing people, Timothy echoes their opinion on nonhuman language, i.e. an “inarticulate metaphor.” However, as the example of the grieving silverback has previously shown, some animals are indeed able to “communicate with humans in human languages” (DeMello, “Introduction” 6).

Apart from language, intelligence can also be considered an aspect commonly vindicating humanity's dominion over animals. In *Timothy*, the nonhuman protagonist appears to be somewhat wise and highly intelligent. In developing this clever character, Klinkenborg seeks to counteract the prevailing underestimation of animals:

I've noticed that science is constantly discovering that animals are smarter than we think they are. I don't recall ever seeing a study that said, for instance, that animals are stupider than we think they are. Perhaps that suggests that we've always underestimated them – or perhaps that we've always overestimated ourselves. As for Timothy's intelligence, I decided that the reader has already crossed that threshold the moment he or she accepts that this is a book in which a tortoise is talking. Once the reader accepts that, it's no harder to accept a highly intelligent tortoise than it would be to accept one that isn't half as bright. I think a reader has vastly more to learn from a Timothy who can see around the corners of human behavior than from one who can't. (“Author Q&A” npd)

When the tortoise recognizes Mrs Snooke, Gilbert White is surprised at her behaviour:

[H]ow these humans differ in appearance, compared to the resemblance of tortoises one to another, kin or no kin. Mr. Gilbert White was always struck by the fact that I recognized Mrs. Rebecca Snooke. She comes into the courtyard waving a lettuce-leaf. Calling from on high, '*Timothy! Timothy!*' [...] Was Mr. Gilbert White never struck by the fact that Mrs. Rebecca Snooke recognized me? If another of my kind had walked up to her on that pebbled path, could she have told the difference? Or would that tortoise have been *Timothy* too? She knew little enough about me in the end. 'I was much taken,' Mr. Gilbert White wrote of me, 'with its sagacity in discerning those that do it kind offices: for, as soon as the good old lady comes in sight who has waited on it for more than thirty years, it hobbles towards its benefactress with awkward alacrity; but remains inattentive to strangers [...].' (Klinkenborg 42-43, original emphasis)

Timothy wonders about Gilbert White's astonishment about the tortoise's ability to distinguish between her owner and other people, which, however, is hardly remarkable, since Mrs Snooke is one of only few people entering the courtyard, as Timothy ironically notes (Klinkenborg 42). Rather, the reptile doubts her owner's intelligence, for the woman might well fail to recognise her tortoise, if there were more than one of Timothy's kind in the garden.

Thus, Klinkenborg adverts, on the one hand, to a tendency in humans to overestimate their own capabilities, and, on the other hand, to underestimate animals, which is "quietly satirize[d]," as Hediger states (43). For instance, the reptile complains about humans' misjudgement concerning her shell: "Humans confuse the matter of shell and tortoise. Container for the thing contained. Talk as though they were two and not one. As though the part of the tortoise that is not shell were as stout as the carapace itself" (Klinkenborg 60). Hence, human beings misjudge attributes which they do not possess themselves. Finally, it can be said that Timothy is highly critical of humans' ignorance and also observes certain differences between her, other animals and humans, particularly in terms of behaviour. However, the fact that some human capacities differ from animals' capacities, whereby it has to be noted that the latter are not inferior to the former, does not infer that humans are Earth's superior creatures.

6. Conclusion

The main concern of this thesis was to analyse animal perspectives in biographical novels. Three animalographies have been investigated not only by carrying out a literary analysis in the form of a close reading but also by including human-animal studies, historical sources and factual biographies in order to examine the primary texts from various perspectives and to develop a deeper understanding of the books' historical and cultural context.

The analysis of the primary texts has revealed similarities as well as differences regarding the fictionalisation of animal lives. In view of the historical material that the authors included in their biographical novels, it has been shown that the authors chose not to repeat similar events that occurred repeatedly during the historical animals' lives, unless an incident is of considerable significance for the pets, such as Flush's attacks on Robert Browning, who once was the dog's greatest rival, Timothy's annual weighing she detests, or the several situations displaying Mitz's intense jealousy when Virginia Woolf touches her husband. Hence, rather than meticulously following historical data, they are more concerned with the dramatic arc of their narratives. Apart from their avoidance of repetition, which implies that the authors used their sources selectively, the representation of time seems not to be of crucial importance, as Woolf put emphasis on space, while Nunez skipped some years in recounting Mitz's story, and Klinkenborg made use of anachronic narration, including frequent flashbacks, for instance. With regard to *Flush* and *Timothy*, it can be argued that the authors attempted to convey the animals' different perception of time. Nunez's narrator, by contrast, occasionally indicates the year dates or the number of weeks and months that have passed between the chapters and also recounts the events chronologically, except at the end of the book when Mitz's voyage to England is narrated.

The investigation of the texts' narrative perspectives can certainly be considered valuable in analysing nonhuman viewpoints. Since each of the three selected animalographies presents a different narrative situation, the effects of the authors' approaches were compared with each other. The examination has detected variations in the representation of animal perspectives, as the narrative situation sheds light on the respective insight into the animal mind: While *Mitz*'s authorial narrative situation and the frequent change in perspective provoke the somewhat neglected animal

viewpoint in Nunez's text, the figural narration in *Flush* and the first-person narration in *Timothy* allow for frequent (*Flush*) or permanent (*Timothy*) insights into the nonhuman protagonists' minds, as these two animals constitute the reflector-characters of the biographical novels.

The examination of nonhuman experiences has been conducted with the help of Herman's continuum, which proved to be highly useful. The findings suggest that his model, which Herman developed for graphic narratives, is indeed applicable to animalographies. It has been shown that all three primary texts feature more than one strategy for portraying the animals' (mental) experiences, i.e. anthropomorphic projection and *Umwelt* exploration. The latter, which describes the sensory world of animals, is frequently adopted in *Flush* and *Timothy*, whereas only a few passages can be detected in *Mitz* in which readers catch a glimpse into the (grieving) monkey's phenomenal world. The rare use of the strategy 'Umwelt exploration' in Nunez's novel is presumably caused by the hidden human protagonist, Virginia Woolf, since it is her perspective that is foregrounded in the novel. The representation of *Flush*'s and *Timothy*'s sensational experiences enables readers to imagine the animal perspective and what it must be like for animals to live in a human-centred world. This is particularly the case with *Timothy*, whose protagonist emphasises humans' underestimation of animals and overestimation of themselves and criticises their assumed supremacy. It is also the only text which recounts the nonhuman experiences exclusively from the animal's viewpoint. Hence, Allan Burns' assertion that "[t]he experiences of individual minds in the act of thinking, perceiving, and feeling are of paramount importance to all the writers of animal stories" (345) cannot be wholly supported, as his claim only applies to Woolf and Klinkenborg.

As regards the use of anthropomorphism, it was found that this controversial approach not only correlates with the portrayal of nonhuman experiences, as Herman's term 'anthropomorphic projection' implies, but anthropomorphism is also linked to the narrative situation and the depiction of human-animal relationships in the animalographies. For instance, even though the first-person narrative situation in Klinkenborg's book clearly amounts to anthropomorphism, since the tortoise makes use of human language in narrating her story, she is not necessarily humanised in the strict sense, as *Timothy* mocks and criticises human behaviour and attitudes rather than imitating them. Thus, anthropomorphising should not always be equated with humanising. Of course, there are passages in which the animals are represented as humans rather than animals, such as when the self-reflective cocker spaniel realises

that he belongs to the canine aristocracy, or when Mitz's behaviour is compared to Virginia's. The authors also adopted the contested technique in order to describe the animals' thoughts, perceptions and feelings, which often results in sympathetic passages. Further, the thesis has demonstrated that the anthropomorphic approach is not only used in children's literature and animal comics, but also in biographical novels, which has – despite the negative evaluation this concept seems to imply – certainly contributed to representing animal perspectives.

The discussion of human-animal relationships in the selected biographical novels has also provided an interesting insight into the writers' ways of representing nonhuman perspectives. The authors mostly reflected the attitudes of the pets' owners in portraying the animals, for instance, when Flush is humanised by Barrett *and* Woolf during his time in London. However, when the dog is stolen, the Victorian poet realises that Flush does not understand what has happened to him and that Elizabeth Barrett would do anything to free him, which demonstrates that Flush is not a little human, even though the Victorian poet mostly treats him like one. Nunez's authorial narrator, by contrast, observes the small monkey's behaviour rather than interpreting and looking inside her mind. This mode of presentation establishes Virginia and Leonard Woolf's attitude towards animals and their rejection of animals' humanisation. In view of its first-person narrative situation, *Timothy* can be considered an exception, as there is no figural or authorial narrator describing her or commenting on her behaviour from an external perspective, for she recounts her own story. What can be said, though, is that the tortoise directly expresses her opinion on Gilbert White and his experiments, whereas Flush's and Mitz's feelings towards their owners are displayed in their behaviour. Unlike Flush and Mitz, who are true companion animals, Timothy, who neither lives in Gilbert White's house nor accompanies her owner, does not have a close relationship with her human guardian. This is not to say, however, that the tortoise and the naturalist have never developed a bond at all. It has therefore been shown that the human characters treat their pets differently, which varies from the animals' infantilisation, to their use for experiments, to the rejection of being sentimental about them. These human-animal relations are then, in case the animals are more or less anthropomorphised, reflected in the animals' portrayal in the animalographies.

Karla Armbruster argues that accuracy in animal stories “should not become a dominant concern,” as “[a]fter all, literature will never be the best way to learn about animal lives or minds” (23). Indeed, it might not be the most accurate and realistic way to represent nonhuman perspectives; however, literature, particularly texts like

Timothy, possibly make people think about the animal world. Hence, Hediger is correct in stating that questions, such as “Can we perfectly represent elephant or tortoise minds?,” should be replaced by questions like “How can texts representing nonhuman animals be useful to us and to them? How might such texts affect the actual worldly situations of those animals? How can they help us, however imperfectly, to understand other lives?” (Hediger 35). We should therefore “acknowledge the limitations of our own perspective, but simultaneously accept that what we can achieve with those limitations is important and worthwhile, even if it is only the best that we can do,” as Fudge points out (159). All three selected animalographies can be considered useful to understanding the animals and their world, at least to a certain extent. Also, Woolf, Nunez, and Klinkenborg reflect a non-anthropocentric worldview in their works, which is clearly to the benefit of animals, and this might also shape readers’ ways of seeing the world and rethinking human treatment of animals. I hope that my research will be beneficial for future studies on animalographies, a fascinating genre of life writing, which awaits further exploration.

7. References

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8. Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Arbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Darstellung von Tierperspektiven in *animalographies*, eine, mit Ausnahme von Virginia Woolfs *Flush: A Biography*, noch kaum erforschte Form der Biofiktion. Für die Analyse werden die folgenden drei Werke ausgewählt: *Flush: A Biography* von Virginia Woolf (1933), *Mitz: The Marmoset of Bloomsbury* von Sigrid Nunez (1998), und *Timothy; or Notes of an Abject Reptile* von Verlyn Klinkenborg (2006). Ebenso wie in Biofiktionen, welche die Vereinigung von Fakt und Fiktion anstrebt und deren Geschichte von historischen Persönlichkeiten handelt, erzählen die ausgewählten *animalographies* das Leben von echten Tieren, die an der Seite von berühmten englischen Personen gelebt haben. Um zu untersuchen wie die AutorInnen die Tierperspektive in ihrem Werk darstellen, wird nicht nur eine Literaturanalyse vorgenommen, sondern auch ein Vergleich mit den Biographien, Briefen und Tagebüchern der historischen Personen. Des Weiteren werden die Primärwerke mithilfe von *human-animal studies* untersucht.

Die Analyse hat gezeigt, dass die Autoren die Fakten, die aus historischen Quellen hervorgehen, selektiv eingesetzt haben, da sie, unter anderem, Geschehnisse und Erlebnisse nur dann wiederholt haben, wenn sie bedeutsam für das Leben der Tiere sind. Die Untersuchung der Erzählsituation war ein wichtiger Bestandteil der Literaturanalyse, und hat ergeben, dass der auktoriale Erzähler in *Flush* und der Ich-Erzähler in *Timothy* einen umfassenden Einblick in die tierische Perspektive gewähren, während der figurale Erzähler in *Mitz* kaum die Sichtweise des kleinen Affen beschreibt. Die Arbeit befasst sich ebenfalls mit dem Erlebten der Vierbeiner und es kann festgestellt werden, dass insbesondere in *Flush* und *Timothy* die Sinneswelt der Tiere beschrieben wird, und sich die Leser somit vorstellen können, wie die Vierbeiner ihre Umwelt wahrnehmen. Das umstrittene Konzept „Anthropomorphismus“ wird ebenfalls in allen drei Biofiktionen angewendet, um das Verhalten und die Gefühle der Tiere zu beschreiben. Die Methode wird allerdings nicht (bloß) eingesetzt um die Vierbeiner zu vermenschlichen, sondern vielmehr um dem Leser einen Einblick in die Welt des Tieres zu ermöglichen. Zuletzt soll nicht unerwähnt bleiben, dass keine der drei *animalographies* ein anthropozentrisches Weltbild vermittelt.