

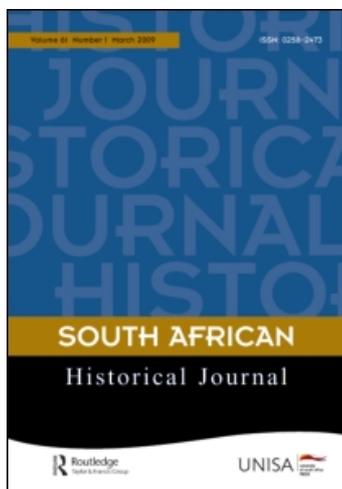
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Canis Familiaris:
A Dog History of South Africa

LANCE VAN SITTERT and SANDRA SWART
University of Cape Town and University of Stellenbosch

For Drifter Swart, 1991-2002 and Davey van Sittert, 1992-2002

Who Let the Dogs Out?

Dogs, like humans, are products both of culture and nature. For the past twelve thousand years they have been entangled with human societies. Dogs connect the wild and the tame. They occupy an ambiguous position, straddling the opposing spheres of nature and culture.¹ They occupy warm *stoeps*, follow their masters at night, track insurgents, patrol borders, sniff out strangers, hunt game, protect homesteads and leave their pawprints all over the archives. Yet equally, they are often scavengers, liminal creatures in only loose association with human society, foraging at the peripheries of homesteads and nomadic groups, spreading disease and polluting civilized streets.

This suite of essays is a first step in recovering *Canis familiaris*'s ubiquitous yet invisible presence in southern African history and, because of its relationship with humans, some of our own species' past as well. What is revealed is in many respects familiar territory, albeit illuminated in an unfamiliar light, but in others it is a *terra incognita* mapped here for the first time. The use of the dog to think about human society has a long scholarly pedigree and the recent animal turn in the humanities has sparked a florescence of canine studies.² These have emphasi-

1. M. Schwartz, *A History of Dogs in the Early Americas* (New Haven, 1997). See the seminal work of E. Leach, 'Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse', in E. Lenneberg, ed., *New Directions in the Study of Language* (Boston, 1964).
2. See, for example, J. Wolch and J. Emel, eds (guest edited issue), 'Bringing the Animals Back In', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 13 (1995), 631-730; J. Wolch and C. Philo, eds (guest edited issue), 'Animals and Geography', *Society and Animals*, 6 (1998), 103-202; J. Wolch and J. Emel, eds, *Animal Geographies: Place, Politics and Identity in the Nature-Culture Borderlands* (London, 1998); C. Philo and C. Wilbert, eds, *Animal Spaces. Beastly Places: New Geographies of Human-Animal Relations* (London, 2000).

sed the relentless persecution of wild and feral canines³ and the concomitant reconstitution of their domesticated cousins in accordance with the human demands of utility and aesthetics.⁴

The two themes of extermination and domestication also animate the dog history of southern Africa, part of a broader process of 'bringing in the wild' first under the superintendence of indigenous Africans and, from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, European settlers.⁵ Each epoch of human-canine interaction produced its own peculiar animal, literally a pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial dog, as well as its dark doppelgänger, the wild 'Kaffir' or stray dog. The following essays show that the cynological world is invested with emotional, intellectual, financial, and political narratives, and that equally the human world can usefully be observed with a canine eye.

Pre-Colonial Dog

It is now generally accepted that the principal ancestor of the domestic dog (*Canis familiaris*) is the wolf (*Canis lupus*).⁶ The first primitive or *urr*-dogs appeared in present-day Germany 14000 years BP.⁷ Dogs appear to have evolved in a number of sites where humans and wolves were sympatric, at the beginning of the Mesolithic period, when settled agriculture began to take hold. Archaeological evidence suggests that this coincided with early pastoralism, and that dogs probably served as guards and herders of livestock, as well as trackers and collaborators in hunting game.⁸ Primitive dogs reveal a great deal of variation in skull shape and body size because of the wide geographic diversity of the initial

3. T.R. Dunlap, *Saving America's Wildlife: Ecology and the American Mind 1850-1990* (Princeton, 1988); V. Fogelman, 'American Attitudes towards Wolves: A History of Misperception', *Environmental Review*, 13 (1989), 63-94; J. Emel, 'Are You Man Enough, Big and Bad Enough? Ecofeminism and Wolf Eradication in the USA', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 13 (1995), 707-34; and R. Paddle, *The Last Tasmanian Tiger: The History and Extinction of the Thylacine* (Cambridge, 2000).
4. See K. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (London, 1984); H. Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge MA, 1987); K. Kete, *The Beast in the Boudoir: Pet-Keeping in Nineteenth Century Paris* (Berkeley, 1994); and P. Howell, 'Flush and the Banditti: Dog-Stealing in Victorian London', in Philo and Wilbert, *Animal Spaces*, 35-56.
5. K. Anderson, 'A Walk on the Wild Side: A Critical Geography of Domestication', *Progress in Human Geography*, 21 (1997), 463-85.
6. Based on studies of morphology, genetics and behaviour, see F.E. Zeuner, *A History of Domesticated Animals* (London, 1963); J. Clutton-Brock, ed., *The Walking Larder: Patterns of Domestication, Pastoralism and Predation* (London, 1989).
7. J. Clutton-Brock, 'Origins of the Dog', in J. Serpell, ed., *The Domestic Dog. Its Evolution, Behaviour and Interactions with People* (Cambridge, 1995), 8-20.
8. J.R.A. Butler, 'The Ecology of Domestic Dogs: *Canis Familiaris* in the Communal Lands of Zimbabwe' (PhD Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1998).

sites of their evolution and the variations in local wolf founder stock.⁹ Early Middle Eastern dogs, for example, were small because their founder was the diminutive Arabian wolf (*Canis lupus arabs*), and North American dogs were significantly larger as they were derived from the substantial timber wolf (*C.l. lycaon*). The first distinct and distinguishable dog 'breeds' date back to 3000 to 4000 BP in North Africa.¹⁰ By 2000 BP there were four breeds in evidence in Egyptian tomb paintings – a greyhound-like hunting dog, a short-legged 'terrier' variety, a larger prick-eared dog and a drooping-eared mastiff type.¹¹ By 2000 BP the Romans had begun to breed particular dog types to serve particular social roles.¹² The ancestry of many modern dog breeds may be traced back to this period.¹³

Canine breeds come into existence in various ways and their origins may be shrouded in obscurity. The genetic plasticity of the dog facilitates the great number of variations of which the species is capable. New breeds are born and old breeds die. Dog breeds are created by artificial election out of the endless diversity of the canine gene pool. 'Breeds' should not be elided with the term 'species', which occur naturally under the influence of natural selection; dog breeds are artificially created under anthropogenic forces, with environmental factors playing a role. Although an estimated 400 man-made dog breeds exist today, primitive dogs – those that have undergone little artificial selection – still occur, especially in the tropics. The most famous is the dingo, transported to Australia by seafarers from south-east Asia 3000- 4000 BP.¹⁴ Dogs showing little evidence of selective breeding are also common in North Africa, the Middle East and western Asia. Today still many live in a loose association with human society, scavenging around homesteads and nomadic groups.

Little is known of the dogs of sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁵ The first recorded reference to indigenous dogs in southern Africa was by the Portuguese explorer Vasco Da Gama in 1497, who noted of a San community at St Helena Bay: 'They have many dogs like those of Portugal, which bark as do these.'¹⁶ Between 1700 and 1800 explorers of the interior recorded dogs among various indigenous

9. J. Clutton-Brock, *A Natural History of Domesticated Mammals* (London, 1989). There are probably 32 subspecies of wolves across the species' Eurasian and North American range, and variations in early domestic dogs reflect those of their founders.
10. Clutton-Brock, 'Origins of the Dog'.
11. P. Wapnish and B. Hesse, 'Pampered Pooches or Plain Pariahs? The Ashkelon Dog Burials', *Biblical Archaeologist*, 56 (1993), 55-80.
12. Clutton-Brock, 'Origins of the Dog'.
13. *Ibid.*
14. L.K. Corbett, *The Dingo in Australia and Asia* (Sydney, 1995).
15. J. Clutton-Brock, 'The Spread of Domestic Animals in Africa', in T. Shaw, P. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, eds, *The Archaeology of African Foods, Metals and Towns* (London, 1993).
16. E.C. Boonzaier, C. Malherbe, P. Berens and A. Smith, *Cape Herders: A History of the Khoikhoi of Southern Africa* (Cape Town, 1996), 54.

groups.¹⁷ Reports tended to focus on the dogs small and unattractive appearance, and their courage and usefulness at hunting.¹⁸ Early ethnographers, like Soga, on the Xhosa, and Bryant, on the Zulu, provided descriptions of the various indigenous dogs and their social roles. Both ethnographers feared that these dogs were threatened with extinction.¹⁹

It is probable that the ancestors of these dogs were introduced into southern Africa 2000 BP by Bantu-speaking agriculturalists and/or Khoikhoi pastoralists.²⁰ Dog skeletal remains, for example, suggest the presence of dogs on several Iron Age and a few Stone Age sites. Plug argues that the earliest conclusive evidence dates to 570 AD.²¹ Hall notes that this site belongs to the Kutama Tradition, which spread from the tropical forest belt into southern Africa. Although earliest sites associated with Nguni and Sotho people have not revealed dog remains, it is hypothesised that dogs could have accompanied these communities via East Africa into the southern Africa. Hall contends that the earlier western stream immigrants introduced both a small spitz-type dog from the equatorial environment (similar to the present-day Basenji, found in the Congo) and a more slender hound, like those typical of arid North Africa (like the modern saluki) into southern Africa. San rock paintings display both morphological types and both varieties have been yielded by Iron Age sites dating to c.1 000 BP.²² Later paintings by traveller artists, like Baines, give more visual evidence, which corresponds with these two types of dogs. Khoisan sites have not yielded dog remains, except possibly at a Cape Francis site, dated to c.1200 BP.²³ Certainly active trade networks did exist with Iron Age farmers and they could have acquired their dogs in this manner. However, there may yet be evidence that Khoisan groups introduced the dog into southern Africa independently of Iron Age farmers.²⁴

17. V.S. Forbes, *Pioneer Travellers of South Africa* (Cape Town, 1965).
18. J. Stuart and D.M. Malcolm, *The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn* (Pietermaritzburg, 1986).
19. J.H. Soga, *The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs* (London, 1905) and A.T. Bryant, *The Zulu People as They were Before the White Man Came* (Pietermaritzburg, 1967).
20. S. Hall, 'Indigenous Domesticated Dogs of Southern Africa: An Introduction', in R.M. Blench and K.C. MacDonald, eds, *The Origins and Development of African Livestock: Archaeology, Genetics, Linguistics and Ethnography* (London, 2000), and Corbett, *The Dingo*. There are no wolves in the southern African sub-continent and dogs were thus introduced from elsewhere. There is an alternative, but less widely supported theory, suggested by Corbett: that dogs arrived 1000 - 2000BP via Madagascar, transported by the Melanesian seafarers that introduced the dingo to Australia. He bases his theory on the Basenji, a hunting breed from the Congo, which resembles the dingo in its inability to bark and its annual (rather than biannual) reproductive cycle.
21. Quoted in Hall, 'Indigenous Domesticated Dogs', 302.
22. I. Plug and E.A. Voigt, 'Archaeozoological Studies of Iron Age Communities in Southern Africa', *Advances in World Archaeology*, 4 (1985), 189-238.
23. E.A. Voigt, *Mapungubwe: An Archaeozoological Interpretation of an Iron Age Community* (Pretoria, 1983).
24. Hall, 'Indigenous Domesticated Dogs', 303.

It is arguable that some dogs were introduced via the east coast between 900 and 1400 AD as part of the Islamic trading network. Islamic traders were accompanied by dogs in the vessels, as guard dogs and vermin controllers.²⁵ Epstein even argues for a strong genetic presence in the dogs left by Islamic and Portuguese traders from 1500 AD, arguing that the indigenous dogs reflected characteristics of Portuguese and middle eastern gazehounds (although these dogs would in any event have shared a common ancestor, which could explain their similar appearance).²⁶

San rock paintings indicate the importance of dogs in their society. Hall hypothesises that dogs altered the subsistence pattern and therefore social institutions of other groups too, impacting heavily on the environment itself.²⁷ While dogs were initially probably used to control vermin – as evinced by the co-occurrence of dog remains with that of the earliest evidence of the house rat (*Rattus rattus*) on the eighth century site of Ndondonwane – their role in hunting impacted most heavily on social rituals. With dogs a new hunting strategy was developed. Prey formerly hunted with bow and arrow could be more efficiently tracked and hunted with dogs, utilising clubs and spears. This was particularly influential, Hall notes, for groups like the Zulu, who developed this hunting practice further into the cattle-horn formation utilised in combat, and which they were to use in their wars against European colonial settlement. The importance of the canine revolution can also be seen in Xhosa culture, where ‘dogs’ were believed to ward off the *thikoloshe*, and became a general term for ‘commoners’. In one recollection, Nongqawuse urged the Xhosa ‘slaughter your cattle but save the dogs, for plenty of game is coming’.²⁸

Colonial Dog

Canis familiaris was also an integral member of the ‘portmanteau biota’ that accompanied European settlement of the subcontinent from the mid seventeenth century onwards and by the start of the nineteenth century was a ubiquitous presence in the colonial countryside.²⁹ ‘[E]very farm-house was apparently overstocked with these animals, [but] the boors, knowing their value, could seldom be persuaded to part with any.’³⁰ Their primary utility, according to Burchell, was

25. *Ibid.*, 304.

26. H. Epstein, *The Origins of the Domestic Animals of Africa* (New York, 1971).

27. Hall, ‘Indigenous Domesticated Dogs’, 309.

28. M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest: Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa* (London, 1936), 297; J.B. Peires, *The House of Phalo* (Johannesburg, 1981), 32; and W.B. Rubusana, *Zemk’ inkomo Magwalandini* (London, 1911), 271. Thanks to Helen Bradford for these references.

29. A.W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900 to 1900* (Cambridge, 1986).

30. W.J. Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, vol. 1 (London, 1822), 176.

their alarm function and he regarded a 'good pack of dogs, of different kinds ... a very necessary part of the equipment' for travelling in the region.³¹

Our pack of dogs consisted of about five-and-twenty of various sorts and sizes. This variety ... was of the greatest service on such an expedition, as I observed that some gave notice of danger in one way, and others, in another. Some were more disposed to watch against men, and others against wild beasts; some discovered an enemy by their quickness of hearing, others by that of scent: some were useful only for their vigilance and barking; some for speed in pursuing game; and others for courage in holding ferocious animals at bay ... their services were invaluable, often contributing to our safety, and always, to our ease, by their constant vigilance; as we felt a confidence that no danger could approach us at night without being announced by their barking.³²

Burchell's favourite, *Wantrouw*, was the epitome of the colonial mongrel *boer hond*: 'a large white flap-eared dog having two or three brown spots, wiry hair, and a bearded muzzle'.³³ Such Dutch *vuil-* and *steekbaard* varieties were leavened during the nineteenth century with the dogs imported by the British military to hunt indigenes and game under the *Pax Britannica*. As one Eastern Cape settler recalled:

In the early [eighteen] sixties, when military posts were scattered about the frontier ... As a rule there were to be found at each post bloodhounds, staghounds, greyhounds, bulldogs, terriers, mastiffs, pointers, and occasionally foxhounds, and ... the Boer dog was a cross between one or other or more of the dogs mentioned, for it was generally in the vicinity of military posts that the best Boer dogs were to be found.³⁴

The *boer hond* also crossed the frontier, Xhosa guerrillas operating in the Fish River Bush during Mlanjeni's War in the early 1850s reportedly employing 'wolf hounds' trained to pull down British soldiers.³⁵ Thus when a detachment of newly arrived troops became lost in the area during a skirmish in September 1851, '[m]any of these brave men were caught alive, having been hunted down with dogs. They were heard calling for help. It has been a most murderous affair. The Kaffirs hunted after the poor fellows with dogs.'³⁶

31. *Ibid.*, 175.

32. W.J. Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, vol. 2 (London, 1824), 174.

33. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 266.

34. J.J.K., 'The Boer Dog: Another Version', *Agricultural Journal of the Cape of Good Hope* (hereafter *AJCGH*), 34 (1909), 188.

35. J.B. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise* (Johannesburg, 1989), 18 and W. King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland* (London, 1853), 96 and 217-19. Thanks to Helen Bradford for these references.

36. For a November 1851 action in the Fish River bush in which 60 British soldiers from the same regiment were killed, see *Graham's Town Journal*, 13 Sep. 1851 and Peires, *The Dead Will Arise*, 16. Thanks again to Helen Bradford for these references.

The growth of towns and closure of the frontier in the second half of the nineteenth century marked a major watershed in the canine history of the region. A new sensibility towards animals emerged among the urban middle class modelled on Victorian Britain.³⁷

The separation of town from countryside was achieved through the ever more extensive control and ultimately exclusion of animals from the new urban spaces.³⁸ An animal presence was tolerated in towns only when servicing the food, transport and aesthetic needs of inhabitants, but even then was confined to specified routes, rendezvous and spaces (such as market place, shambles and zoological garden). Although livestock animals remained a ubiquitous presence in pre-industrial urban spaces, this too was steadily erased by railways, refrigeration and motorised road transport, which removed the need for towns to maintain their own resident populations of draught and food animals. Urban civilisation defined itself not only in opposition to the animal countryside, but also to backveld sensibilities towards animals, deemed backward and brutish. The urban middle class thus championed a new sensibility embodied by the notions of 'humanitarianism' and 'sportsmanship' in their increasingly detached and ritualised relations with domestic and wild animals.

The new sensibility first found expression through the growing middle class activism against all forms of brutality towards the 'dumb creation' in the towns. Cruelty against animals was made a criminal offence in the Cape (1856), Natal (1874), the Orange Free State (1876) and the South African Republic (1888) and the urban middle class rallied to the standard of the new societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals that proliferated in their wake.³⁹ The mother SPCA was founded in Cape Town in 1872 and spawned both associate branches and allied organisations across the region in the final quarter of the nineteenth century.⁴⁰ Assisted by a steady increase in penalties and encouragement to public prosecution, the societies sought to civilise the towns by eradicating the innate brutality of the underclass and countryside from their public thoroughfares. Similarly, game law reform sought to rescue a wide range of wild animals from

37. See Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, and Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*.

38. See C. Philo, 'Animals, Geography and the City: Notes on Inclusions and Exclusions', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 13 (1995), 655-81; P. Brummett, 'Dogs, Women, Cholera and Other Menaces in the Streets: Cartoon Satire in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press 1908-11', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 27 (1995), 438-43; and K. Mackenzie, 'Dogs and the Public Sphere: The Ordering of Social Space in Early Nineteenth-Century Cape Town', *South African Historical Journal*, 48 (May 2003).

39. See Cape of Good Hope Act No. 8, 1856; Natal, Act No.?, 1874; Orange Free State, Act No. 2, 1876; and South African Republic, Act No.?, 1888.

40. For the animal anti-cruelty movement on the north Atlantic rim, see E.S. Turner, *All Heaven in a Rage* (London, 1964); Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 143-91; Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, 125-66; and Kete, *Beast in the Boudoir*, 5-21. The movement in southern Africa, exemplified by the formation of local SPCAs, has yet to find a historian.

alleged imminent destruction at the hands of farmers through the enforcement of a hunting licence and close season and substitution of the urban hunters' code of 'sportsmanship' for the brute demand of the market.⁴¹

These new sensibilities found their ideal expression in the 'pets' of the new urban middle class.⁴² This category initially included a wide menagerie of wild and domestic consorts, but was gradually narrowed to exclude all except canine and feline companions. A middle-class dog fancy boomed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century characterised by the importation of British standards, through the formation of a South African Kennel Club in 1883, and dog breeds.⁴³ The 'underclass mongrel pack' was anathema to the colonial breed clubs. The institutionalised dog breed was founded on Victorian typological thinking about race, quality, purity, and progress. Harriet Ritvo has described this process for English dogs in the nineteenth century, emphasising the developing urban professional classes, for whom the ideology of social position based on competitive merit was fundamental.⁴⁴ Unlike the aristocratic breeding of horses, for example, breeding dogs necessitated only modest means and offered a useful way of demonstrating their breeders's status. Ritvo has shown that the ideology of 'pure blood' permeated their thinking. Urban middle-class Victorians celebrated the power to manipulate the raw material of dogs to manufacture something novel, to 'invent' a breed with standards divorced from the merely utilitarian.

Such capability, Ritvo argues, reinforced notions of instrumentalism, progress, earned wealth, and meritorious leisure. The ideal of the purified lineage was seen as an end in itself; accordingly, the studbook was structured to reflect and to enforce that ideal rigidly and absolutely. The value placed on breed purity was animated by older ideas of human aristocracies and thoroughbred horses; and was to resurface in the Nazi endeavour to breed an Aryan superman. As Ritvo has demonstrated, the power to sculpt dog flesh symbolically destabilised rank based on nature, adding support to the respect given the hard-won status of the professional classes, while simultaneously reinforced the nexus tying together race, blood, genealogy, merit, and purity in 'good breeding'. This ideology,

41. J.M. Mackenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester, 1988) and Cape of Good Hope, Game Law Amendment Act No. 36, 1886.

42. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*; Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*; and Kete, *The Beast in the Boudoir*.

43. See J. Harpur, 'South African Kennel Club: Its Origin and Development', *South African Kennel Club Gazette* (hereafter *SAKCG*), 1 (Mar. - June 1908), 24-5, 37-9, 49-51 and 68-70. The *SAKCG* ceased publication in 1914 and was only re-launched a quarter of a century later in 1938 as the *South African Kennel Union Gazette*. In May 1964 the name was shortened to *Kennel Union Gazette* and in August 1992 to *KUSA*. Finally, in July 1996 the journal changed its name again to *Dogs in Africa*, which title it still bears. For convenience the abbreviation *SAKUG* will be used throughout for the post-1938 publication.

44. H. Ritvo, 'Pride and Pedigree: The Evolution of the Victorian Dog Fancy', *Victorian Studies*, 29 (1986); Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 82-121.

permeated with the urgency of racial thinking, was imported into the colonial discourses from the metropole.⁴⁵

The new dog mania in southern Africa was closely associated with the rise of the 'urban sportsman', hunting breeds dominating both imports and the shows. The middle class demanded the same freedom of movement and protection in law for their dogs as themselves. The latter thus enjoyed the liberty of the town and protection from theft or assault through legal recognition as private property of their owners. The growing canine underclass, however, roaming the streets in packs and indulging its animal appetites in the public thoroughfares, threatened the social order of both class and town, and was relentlessly persecuted through a combination of punitive licensing and occasional pogroms of ownerless 'strays'.⁴⁶

The closure of the frontier in the second half of the nineteenth century similarly transformed the dog's place in the countryside. The shift from transhumance to permanent settlement and emergence of commercial agriculture prompted efforts by self-styled 'progressive' farmers to contain the threat posed by the dogs of the rural underclass and wild canines to livestock, cultivation and game.

Canis familiaris menaced domestic stock both independently and as the accomplice of stock thieves. Small stock were particularly vulnerable to the depredations of 'vagrant dogs' and thieves in a still largely unenclosed countryside, the latter relying on their animals to consume all evidence of their crimes. Thus, according to one farmer, the 'Kaffirs ... idea in having a large number of dogs was, that when they took a sheep, the dogs would eat all the offal, and in that way there would be no trace of the animal left'.⁴⁷ Cultivated land was similarly vulnerable to damage by dogs at large and wine farmers in the south-western Cape were permitted to destroy canine trespassers out of hand in defence of their vineyards during the summer harvest.⁴⁸ Lastly, dogs poached game in cahoots with or separately from their owners. An initial attempt at checking rural canine population growth was made through taxation, dog tax acts being duly passed in Natal (1875), the Cape (1884), Orange Free State (1891), South African Republic (1892) and Namibia (1907).⁴⁹ Opposition from both settlers and natives and the cost of collection blunted the impact of punitive taxation as a population control

45. See S. Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge, 1995).

46. See L. van Sittert, 'Class and Canicide in Little Bess: The 1893 Port Elizabeth Rabies Epidemic', *South African Historical Journal*, 48 (May 2003).

47. Cape of Good Hope, *Report of the Select Committee on the Destruction of Vermin* [A2 - 1904], evidence of W. Rubidge, 19.

48. Cape of Good Hope, Pounds and Trespass Act (No. 15, 1892), Clause 26(c).

49. Natal, Act No. 27, 1875; Cape of Good Hope, Act No. 23, 1884; Orange Free State, Act No. 2, 1891; and South African Republic, Act No.?, 1892. For Namibia, see Union of South Africa, *Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Rebellion of the Bondelzwarts, 1923* [UG16-23], 8-9.

mechanism and, as in the towns, canicide became the last resort of the rural gentry against the underclass canine horde.

Farmers shared little of the new urban sentimentality for 'man's best friend', being well aware of *Canis*' ability to slough off the thin veneer of domestication and revert to its wild prototype.⁵⁰ Suspicious even of their own dogs, few farmers regarded those of the underclass as domesticated at all, but likened them instead, in both discourse and action, to the indigenous wild canids that stalked the 'howling wilderness' beyond the fence lines of the farm.⁵¹ The wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*) was the most feared of the wild canines, but the black-backed and other associated 'jackals' were the most common.⁵² With the wool boom in the nineteenth century the latter displaced the large wild cats (lion and leopard) from their pre-eminence on the earlier bounty lists of the cattle-keeping Dutch East India Company. In the wake of a sharp downturn in the wool price in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, progressive farmers in the Eastern Cape pastoral heartland formed wild animal poisoning clubs and initiated co-operative poisoning campaigns against the jackal and other carnivorous vermin in defence of their flocks and profits.⁵³ Their efforts were rewarded with an official subsidy from 1889 converted into a public bounty in 1895 and further enhanced by the state distribution of strychnine at cost and subsidisation of vermin proof-fencing. In the twenty years after 1889 more than 350 000 jackal proofs were rewarded, but even this represented only a fraction of the canine poisoning mortality in the countryside (see Figure 10 below).⁵⁴ Indeed, strychnine was liberally employed against both wild and domestic dogs, extermination of the latter constituting in many instances a welcome and intended bonus of the official extermination campaign against the 'jackal'.⁵⁵

The imperial canine class order was fired in the furnace of epidemic emergency in the decade 1892-1902. A rabies outbreak in Port Elizabeth in 1892-94 provided the pretext for a canicide of underclass dogs and disciplining the urban middle class to the priorities and practices of quarantine.⁵⁶ A second rabies pandemic, starting in Northern Rhodesia in 1902 and raging through Southern Rhodesia and the Bechuanaland Protectorate over the next decade, met with a similar response; the canicide of 'native dogs' saw the destruction of 30 000 in Matebeleland alone in 1902-03 and the imposition of a regional canine

50. See L. van Sittert, 'Keeping the Enemy at Bay: The Extermination of Wild Carnivora in the Cape Colony 1889-1910', *Environmental History*, 3 (1998), 341-4.

51. T. Hoole, 'Jackal Proof Fencing Its Advantages and Economies', *AJCGH*, 25 (1904), 561.

52. See F.W. Fitzsimons *The Natural History of South Africa: Mammals*, vol. 2 (London, 1919) for wild canids, and Van Sittert, 'Keeping the Enemy at Bay', 338-41 for the generic 'jackal'.

53. Van Sittert, 'Keeping the Enemy at Bay', 341-4.

54. *Ibid.*, 345-51.

55. See J. Tropp, 'Dogs, Poison and the Meaning of Colonial Intervention in the Transkei, South Africa', *Journal of African History*, 43 (2002), 451-72.

56. Van Sittert, 'Class and Canicide'.

quarantine.⁵⁷ The spectre of disease both confirmed the need for the separation of the canine familiars of the urban middle class/rural gentry from those of the urban/rural underclass and legitimised the use of canicide to enforce an impermeable class/race quarantine. The withdrawal of British control over the region after 1910 and the rising tide of settler nationalism both endorsed the fundamental tenets of the imperial canine order and forced a continual revision of the boundaries of class and quarantine to suit the requirements of an ever-changing imagined community. Fitzpatrick's *Jock of the Bushveld*, first published in 1907, signals the shift by pairing its young English proconsul with the runt of a mongrel (*boer* dog) litter and suggesting that the hybrid – not the thoroughbred – was destined to inherit the colonial earth by virtue of its Darwinian competitive superiority (see Figure 1).⁵⁸

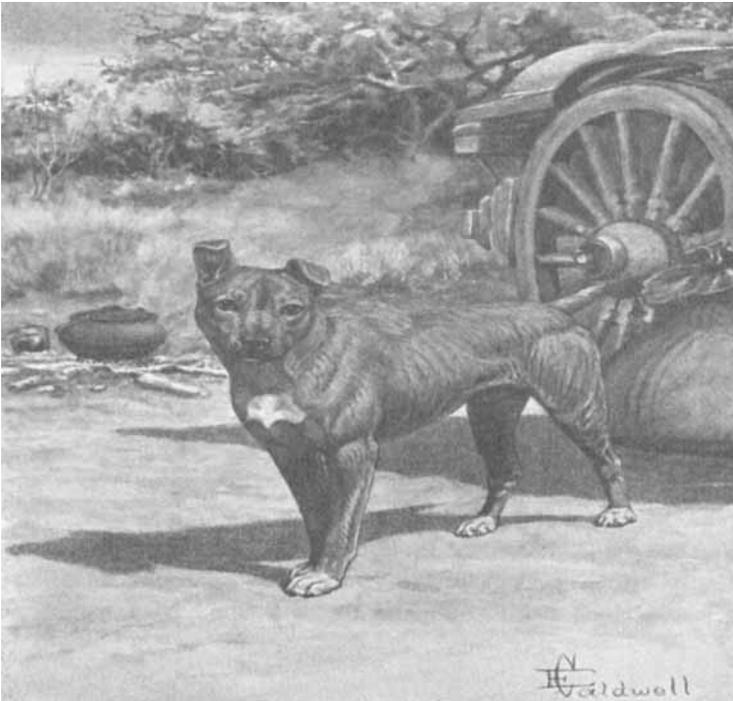


Figure 1: 'Jock', 1907⁵⁹

57. Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Chief Native Commissioner Matabeleland for the year ended 31 March 1903*, p. 7.
58. P. Fitzpatrick, *Jock of the Bushveld* (London, 1907).
59. *Ibid.*, fontispiece by D.W. Caldwell.

The new settler nativism inspired by Union initiated the rehabilitation of the *boer* dog from mongrel outcast to 'pure-breed' in order to have 'something South African as an addition to the breeds on the show bench'.⁶⁰ On the eve of Union, the 'old Boer hunting dog' was being lauded for its pluck, endurance and talent for killing leopards, baboons and other vermin, and it was deemed 'a great pity that no effort seems to have been made to keep this fine old South African dog pure-bred'.⁶¹ In the mid 1900s the president of the SAKC initiated a futile search for a breeding pair 'of the well-known and useful Boer Hond ... to breed to type and if possible improve the breed'. Farmers everywhere claimed the dogs had been 'exterminated during the late war'.⁶² Another rural aficionado, signing himself 'A South African', writing in 1909 blamed the fancy for the *boer* dog's demise, claiming 'Useful dogs have been and are being discarded for many useless fancy-dogs, by dog-fanciers'.⁶³ Thus was the old imperial fear of degeneracy, expressed in the waking dread of the urban middle class and rural gentry for the underclass mongrel pack, given a new national inflection. Class and quarantine remained as urgent and integral to nation building as empire and *canis familiaris*, because of ubiquity, a key indicator of national health and well-being.

Post-Colonial Dog

The 1911 census provides a unique glimpse of South Africa's canine geography at the start of the twentieth century (see Figure 2). It revealed a total dog population in excess of 650 000 with heavy concentrations in both the major urban areas and African reserves, separated by a largely dog-depopulated white countryside.⁶⁴ This colonial canine topography was entrenched over the course of the twentieth century through the continuation of the established practices of quarantine and extermination.

60. 'The Boer Hond', *SAKCG*, 2 (Mar. 1909), 24.

61. Dog-fancier, 'The Boer Hunting Dog', *AJCGH*, 34 (1909), 96.

62. 'The Boer Hond', 24.

63. A South African, 'The Boer Hunting Dog', *AJCGH*, 34 (1909), 187.

64. Union of South Africa, *Census 1911 Annexures to the General Report Part 9: Live Stock and Agriculture* [UG32h-1912], 1222-25; C.H. Blaine, *Dog Law: A Compilation of the Law in South Africa relating to Dogs with Appendices: South West Africa, Southern Rhodesia* (Johannesburg, 1928), 4-7 and R.R. Byrne, 'Taxation of Dogs', *SAKUG*, (Nov. 1945), 171. The 1911 census was the first and last to enumerate dogs nationally, and thus just 17 years later Blaine grossly (under)estimated the national canine population at just 400 000 from licence and tax returns. Seventeen years later again, Byrne guesstimated it at just 150 000. The available proxy data from the SPCA lethal chambers and SAKU registrations suggest exactly the opposite trend.



Figure 2: Canine Census 1911⁶⁵

The urban dog fancy was indigenised through the admission of the *boer hond* to the SAKC/U register in the 1920s and Afrikaners to club ranks after 1945.⁶⁶ The rehabilitation of the *boer* dog was secured, not by South African, but Rhodesian settlers, where, in the full flush of impending white statehood, a Rhodesian Ridgeback (Lion Dog) Club was formed in the mid 1920s and campaigned successfully for the ‘fiddleback’ breed’s admission to the SAKC/U register in 1924 on grounds that ‘the Ridgeback pertains to this country in the same way that

65. *Census 1911*, 1222-25.

66. See R.D.S. Gwatkin, ‘Dogs and Human Migrations’, *Journal of the South African Veterinary Medicine Association*, 5 (1934), 37-40; G.C. Dry and T.C. Hawley, *The Rhodesian Ridgeback: Its Origin, Development and Treatment* (Pretoria, 1949?); M.Yule, ‘The Rhodesian Ridgeback’, *SAKUG*, (Feb. 1951), 7; M.D.W. Jeffreys, ‘The Origin of the Rhodesian Ridgeback’, *Africana Notes and News*, 11 (1953), 10; M. Wellings, ‘The Origin and Short History of the Rhodesian Ridgeback Dog’, *SAKUG*, (June 1954), 102-4; T.C. Hawley, *The Rhodesian Ridgeback: The Origin, History and Standard of the Breed* (Pretoria, 1957); M.L. Arsenis, *Dog Tales and Trimmings* (Cape Town, 1957); J.N. Murray, *The Rhodesian Ridgeback 1924-74* (Verwoedburg, 1976); M.L. Arsenis, *Ridged Dogs in Africa* (Randburg, 1981); C.A. Hromnik, ‘The Ari Ridgeback of the Qurena’, *SAKUG* (Nov. and Dec. 1991), 402-10 and 455-64; and M.R. Darwin, ‘On the Origin of the Breeds: Rhodesian Ridgeback’, *SAKUG* (Nov. and Dec. 1991), 412-17 and 464-7.

the Australian Cattle Dogs [*sic*] does to Australia, and are equally valuable'.⁶⁷ The ridgeback purportedly stood in a direct line of descent from the *boer* dogs of the Cape Colony, fortuitously translocated via missionary endeavour to the Zimbabwe plateau where they survived the extinction of their mongrel progenitors in the Cape as 'lion dogs' in the service of settler hunters. The twenty dogs paraded at the club's first meeting in 1922 were reportedly 'a heterogeneous collection' comprised 'of all types and sizes, from what would be regarded as an undersized Great Dane to a small Bull Terrier; all colours were represented, Reds and Brindles predominating'.⁶⁸ Stressing a character forged in the bush and fitting it to a Dalmatian standard, its promoters invented a new indigenous breed as the appropriate canine companion for a florescent settler nationalism across the region (see Figure 3).

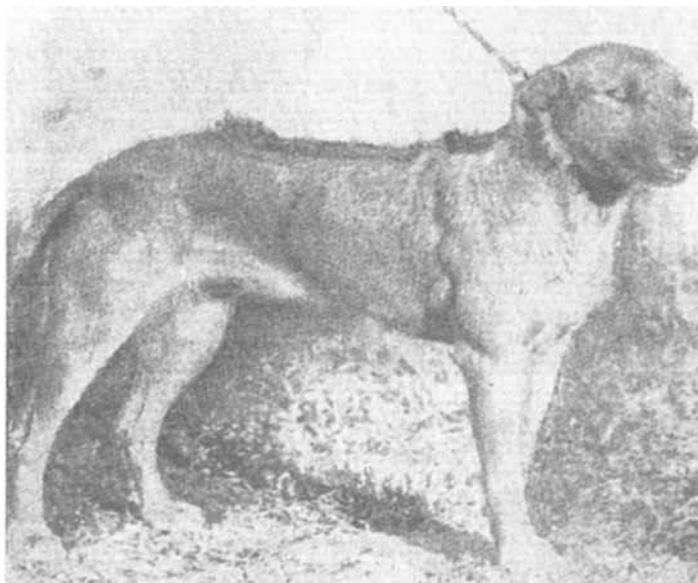


Figure 3: Rhodesian ridgeback: 'Eskdale Connie', Bulawayo Show 1925⁶⁹

67. G.F. Downes, 'Bulawayo Dogdom 1909-1959: A Brief History of the Bulawayo Kennel Club', *SAKUG* (Nov. 1959), 222.
68. Wellings, 'The Origin', 104, and B.W. Durham, 'Origin and Standardisation of the Rhodesian Ridgeback', *SAKUG* (Dec. 1950), 246.
69. Hawley, *The Rhodesian Ridgeback*, 25.

The ridgeback enjoyed a brief popularity in South Africa between 1945-50. The Transvaal Rhodesian Ridgeback Club became the first bilingual affiliate of the SAKU in 1945, the breed topped SAKU registrations between 1946 and 1948, and it was presented to the royal family during their 1947 visit and curled up at the feet of the first National Party prime minister (see Figure 4).⁷⁰



Figure 4: D.F. Malan and family with their ridgeback *Leeu* and collie *Wagter* c.1952⁷¹

The ridgeback boom was a product of broader societal changes. The Second World War accelerated African urbanisation and the rise of militant black nationalism in the cities. Amidst rising fears of a *swart gevaar* on their doorsteps, a growing number of urban whites looked to Afrikaner nationalism for political salvation and a dog breed forged on the frontier and sought after by the military

70. Dry and Hawley, *The Rhodesian Ridgeback*, 8; Figure 5 below; Downes, 'Bulawayo Dogdom', 223; and Darwin, 'On the Origin', 465.

71. A.V. Stevenson, *Aristocrats of the Show-ring* (Cape Town, 1953), frontispiece.

during the war for 'a first-class house-guard'.⁷² As a Potgietersrus ridgeback breeder confided in his fellow dogmen in 1946:

I'm sure I would have considerable difficulty in finding a better watch-dog and I have often had to replace a native's whole rig-out which my dogs have torn to ribbons off his back and also to give the boys a few shillings to keep it quiet.⁷³

The post-war demand was so great that purists held it to have briefly jeopardised the maintenance of the breed standard, 'pirate catch-as-catch-can breeders' flooding the market with pups to capitalise on public demand and gullibility.⁷⁴ The wartime fame of *Just Nuisance* thus represented the swansong of the imperial canine order, the death of the drunken, dissolute great dane 'symbol of the British Navy in the Peninsula' in 1944, ceded the stage to Fitzpatrick's long-heralded indigenous hybrid and its accompanying new political order.⁷⁵

Rising white affluence during the long post-Second World War boom, however, also popularised and commercialised the previously elite middle-class dog fancy, making fidelity to a national breed impossible to maintain. The market introduced a democracy of taste that diluted the SAKU's authority over national dogdom and shifted local canine cultural reference points from Britain to the United States. The former was reflected in the number of recognised breeds, which doubled in the half century after 1945 from 88 to 177.⁷⁶ The latter in the usurpation of the ridgeback's pride of place in popular affection by the collie in 1949 and the alsatian in 1952 following the latter's immortalisation in Hollywood films (see Figure 5).⁷⁷

72. See 'Dogs Wanted' advertisement, *SAKUG* (Oct. 1942), 105; V.H. Brisley, 'Rhodesian Ridgeback Types', *SAKUG* (Nov. 1945), 170; and H.G. Mundy, 'Rhodesian Ridgebacks', *SAKUG* (Feb. 1946), 6 for the wartime increase in the minimum height and weight specifications in the breed standard in favour of the guard over the traditional sporting dog role. The quote is from Mundy.
73. E. Trinder, 'Rhodesian Ridgebacks', *SAKUG* (Feb. 1946), 7.
74. Hawley, *The Rhodesian Ridgeback*, 41, and Wellings, 'The Origin', 104.
75. L.M. Steyn, *Just Nuisance: Life Story of an Able Seaman Who Leads a Dog's Life* (Cape Town, n.d.), 35. See also L.M. Steyn, *Just Nuisance Carries On* (Cape Town, n.d.) and T. Sisson, *Just Nuisance AB: His Full Story* (Cape Town, 1985).
76. 'Report of the Chairman of the Federal Council for the year 1946/47', *SAKUG*, 10 (Jan. 1948), 268 and 'Comment', *SAKUG*, 59 (Jan. 1995), 14.
77. J. Walker, ed., *Haliwell's Film Guide 8th Edition* (London, 1991). There were no fewer than seven *Lassie* films between 1943 and 1951, starting with *Lassie Come Home* starring Elizabeth Taylor. While the interwar Alsatian movie star Rin Tin Tin received a new lease on life with a five-year-long television reincarnation on ABC recycled as shorts in South African cinemas.

Years	Total Registrations
1934-39	10096
1940-49	35009
1950-59	31339
1960-69	61828
1970-79	172591*
1980-89	179929#
1990-99	144755

* Data 1971-74 missing

Data 1983 and 1988 missing

Top Breed	Years	Total Registrations
Pekingese	1934	166
Scottish Terrier	1935-41	1436
Bulldog	1942-45	1711
	1998	1752
Ridgeback	1946-48	2735
Collie	1949-51	2098
Alsatian	1952-70	24557
	1979-88	41849
Dobermann	1976-78	9057
Staffordshire	1989-97	46270
Labrador	1999	1710

* Data 1971-75 missing

Figure 5: SAKU Total and Top Breed Registrations, 1934-1999⁷⁸

The enduring popularity of the alsatian (the top national breed 1952-89) and its brief displacement by the dobermann pinscher (1976-78) also reflected escalating black opposition to apartheid after 1960, producing a clear preference for large, fierce dogs on the part of the white public. By 1980 just four out of the 177 recognised breeds – alsatian, rottweiler, bull terrier and dobermann – accounted for a third of all SAKU annual registrations.⁷⁹ The Staffordshire bull

78. Compiled from *SAKUG*, 1938-2002. The SAKU's administrative capacity was overwhelmed by the surge in registrations in first half of the 1970s and it published no annual league table 1970-75. These could, however, potentially be reconstructed from the monthly listings in the *Gazette*.

79. See, for example, A. Hazeldene, 'The Alsatian as Tracker', *SAKUG* (Sep. 1954), 182 and 'Statistics of Registrations for the Period 1 September 1979 - 31 August 1980', *SAKUG*, 44, 10 (1980), 363-66.

terrier's final ousting of the alsatian in 1989 was the result of a neat congruence between international and domestic influences. The casting of a 'staffie' as the *boer* dog lead in the Hollywood version of Fitzpatrick's novel in 1986 started a trend, reinforced by the *glastnost* of the early 1990s, which produced a SAKC/U record of 8557 'staffie' registrations in 1991.⁸⁰ The resurrection of the old emblem of white nationhood at Union was short-lived, however, and the current popularity of imported breeds (bulldog and labrador) masks an underground preference for American pitbull terriers in both the white suburbs and countryside as the last line of defence against the barbarians loosed by democracy.⁸¹ The popularity of the pitbull has been further enhanced by the post-apartheid promotion of casino capitalism in which dog-fighting has provided another outlet, albeit illegal, for the national gambling mania.⁸²

More interesting still has been the ongoing attempt to substitute the ridgeback as national breed with its purported African ancestor.⁸³ Although the ridgeback never regained the brief national popularity it enjoyed in the late 1940s, it was adopted as the SAKU emblem in 1968, tracked the upward curve of white paranoia over the subsequent two decades and appeared on the national postage in 1991 to mark the centenary of the SAKU (see Figure 6).⁸⁴

The ridgeback's inventors always accepted that it was the product of canine miscegenation and proudly claimed the feisty, but extinct, 'Hottentot hunting dog' as its indigenous 'ridged' ancestor, rejecting counter-claims of an Asian origin for the breed's defining whorl.⁸⁵ They did, however, regard the admixture of European canine blood as decisive and the resulting hybrid as a superior animal to its progenitors. The promoters of the 'Kaffir dog' rejected 'Hottentot' for 'Nguni' origin and claimed that, far from being extinct, 'the original Iron Age dog' could still be found in 'isolated rural areas'.⁸⁶ Hence 'the dogs we glance at while

80. See Figure 5 above.

81. The most (in)famous pitbull breeding establishment in the country is the Noupoort Christian Centre, ironically located in the purported nineteenth-century heartland of the ridged Hottentot/*boer* dogs.

82. See N. Jackson, 'The Pitbull: A Modern History' (BA History third-year essay, University of Cape Town, 2002).

83. S. Swart, 'Dogs and Dogma: A Discussion of the Socio-Political Construction of Southern African Dog Breeds as a Window on Social History', *South African Historical Journal*, 48 (May 2003).

84. See L. Megginson, 'Kennel Union Emblem and Rhodesian Ridgeback Jubilee', *SAKUG* (Nov. 1984), 612; 'First South African Dog Stamp', *SAKUG* (Feb. 1991), 50 and Darwin, 'On the Origin', 407. The stamp issue on 21 February 1991 included the boer horse, bonsmara cattle, dorper sheep and pouterie racing pigeon alongside the ridgeback while a poultly breed, the Potchefstroom koekoek, graced the commemorative envelope.

85. See footnote 66 above for this debate.

86. See S. Hall, 'Indigenous Dogs of Southern Africa', *SAKUG* (July 1994), 283; J. Gallant, 'Exploring the Pre-History of the Rhodesian Ridgeback', *SAKUG* (Nov. 1996), 14; and J. Gallant, 'The Africanis: The Remarkable Dog of Africa', *SAKUG* (Aug. 1999), 15-16.

speeding past a township or rural kraal are the very same type of dogs which accompanied Shaka or Moshwesh on their royal ceremonial hunts'.⁸⁷ In a call to action echoing the SAKU's alarm over the *boer hond* ninety years earlier they warned that:

With the comparatively recent emphasis on urbanisation and westernisation, together with the protection of dwindling game resources and the introduction of foreign breeds, these dogs are becoming increasingly endangered. They should not be allowed to disappear and it is our responsibility to ensure their survival as part of the cultural and historical African heritage.⁸⁸



Figure 6: RSA 21c Stamp, February 1991⁸⁹

87. S. Hall, 'The African Indigenous Dog Project', *SAKUG* (Jan. 1996), 19.
88. S. Hall, 'Indigenous Dogs of Southern Africa', *SAKUG* (Oct. 1994), 420. See also Gallant, 'Africanis', 15-16.
89. Republic of South Africa, Philatelic Services and Intersapa, *Postage Stamp Programme 1991*, 4.



Figure 7: Isiqha into Africanis⁹⁰

90. Gallant, 'Exploring the Pre-History of the Rhodesian Ridgeback', *SAKUG* (Sep. 1999), 15 and Gallant, 'Africanis', 16. Gallant appealed to readers of the *SAKUG* not to be 'offended' by the first photograph.

An 'African Indigenous Dog Project' was duly established, under the aegis of the SAKU and National Cultural History Museum, to initiate a breeding programme.⁹¹ The latter focused on the *Isiqha/Sica*, dubbed the 'thornveld German Shepherd', and deemed 'the perfect dog for the Third World: eager and obedient workers, adaptable, loyal, brave, tough and economical feeders'.⁹² 'Homing' and DNA testing were duly employed to reinvent this 'mangy township mongrel' as *Canis Africanis* – the dog of Africa – a new national breed appropriate to the post-1994 rainbow/pan-African nationalism (see Figure 7).⁹³

The rehabilitation of the 'Kaffir dog', however, remains an exclusively white project with no perceptible purchase on the popular imagination of the black majority for whom dogs remain alternatively a symbol of white oppression (see below) or animals prized for their utility rather than their bloodline.⁹⁴ African dog hunting, however, continues to be stigmatised as poaching and subject to canicide in defence of stock and game with no indication of any change in official attitudes on this front.⁹⁵

The massive growth in white dog-keeping after 1960 also created a burgeoning market for specialist services and products. Private veterinary practices flourished in the white suburbs as vaccination against previously fatal diseases prolonged the life of middle-class pets and created a demand for a host of ancilliary veterinary services to treat the effects of aging and protein-rich diets. Thus of the 333 registered vets in South Africa in 1962, more than half worked in some 140 private practices clustered around the major urban centres, a third being located in the PWV alone.⁹⁶ Thirty years later the number of private veterinary practices had more than tripled to over 500 and fully two-thirds of them depended on domestic animals for more than 75 per cent of their annual gross income, which

91. See 'New Project on Dogs in Africa', *SAKUG* (June 1994), 251; N.S. Kay, 'By the Way', *SAKUG* (July 1994), 282-3; 'The African Indigenous Dog Project', *SAKUG* (Apr. 1995), 167; and Gallant, 'Africanis', 15-16. The AID comprised a small group of archaeozoologists, anthropologists and canine entrepreneurs.
92. Hall, 'African Indigenous Dog Project', 22. Character and honing by natural selection in a harsh environment where, of course, also the purported attributes of the rehabilitated *boer hond* a century earlier.
93. See Hall, 'African Indigenous Dog Project', 19-22 and Gallant, 'Africanis', 15-16. The Africanis Society of Southern Africa was formed in 1998 and claimed its mandate was not the development of a breed, but rather to 'conserve a 'natural dog' threatened with extinction as 'a pure African breed' by admixture with European and Eastern breeds.
94. Similarly the rehabilitation of the *boer hond* was the project of the English-speaking dog fancy not nascent Afrikaner nationalism.
95. See, for example, A. Abacar *et al.*, 'Traditional Hunting with Dogs – A Contemporary Issue in KwaZulu-Natal' (MA thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1999) and J. Steinberg, *Midlands* (Johannesburg, 2002), 225-7.
96. Calculated from Republic of South Africa, Bureau of Statistics, *Special Report No. 267: Census of Veterinary Services years ending 30 June 1962 and 30 June 1963*.

amounted to more than R9 million in 1978.⁹⁷ The urban middle class also extended birth control to its pets – sterilisation becoming routinised and a mainstay of private veterinary practice – as prophylactic and more humane alternative to canicide. Vaccination also encouraged a new affection for and anthropomorphism of dogs among the middle class (see Figure 8).



Figure 8: You May Never Forgive Yourself⁹⁸

This was reflected in a home-grown popular literature on dog psychology and rapidly expanding range of specialised dog products.⁹⁹ Anthropomorphism and commodification helped consolidate the dog's place as an integral member of the white middle-class household.

97. Calculated from Republic of South Africa Department of Census and Statistics, *Report No. 06-05-01: Census of Veterinary Services, Animal Hospitals and Care Centres, 1978* and Republic of South Africa Central Statistical Services, *Report No. 06-05-02: Census of Veterinary Services, Animal Hospitals and Care Centres, 1984*.

98. SAKUG (Sep. 1965), 252.

99. See, for example, S. Shapero, *Dog Training's Easy This Way* (Johannesburg, 1964); J.K. Lowson, *Baz* (Johannesburg, 1965); S. Shapero, *Dog Training with Love* (Johannesburg, 1967); P.J. Whyte, *Who Wants a Dog?* (Cape Town, 1975); I.D. du Plessis, *Buster, Sally and Mark: The Story of Three Dogs* (Cape Town, 1978) and A. Markowitz, *This is Your Dog* (Johannesburg, 1978).

The growth of a middle-class dog culture was paralleled by the ongoing containment of the underclass mongrel horde. Urban local authorities continued to employ dog licenses and 'lethal chambers' to this end, assisted by the Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCAs) established in all the major urban centres. Thus the Cape Town municipality opened its 'dogs home' in the rabies year 1893 and the local SPCA no fewer than eleven lethal chambers during the inter-war decades, which in 1939 destroyed more than 5 000 animals by electrocution rather than the coal gas favoured by the municipality.¹⁰⁰ The number of animals destroyed in the major urban centres rose so alarmingly after 1945 that the Cape Town SPCA stopped disaggregating its statistics in 1951 and publishing them altogether in 1953 (see Figure 9). By the start of the twenty-first century, it was alleged that some half a million domestic animals were destroyed in South Africa annually at an estimated cost of R37.5 million and the SPCA nationally was destroying nearly 80 000 dogs and 60000 cats per annum.¹⁰¹

Years	Cape Town Total	Cape Town Dogs	Johannesburg Total	Johannesburg Dogs
1896-99	100	?	?	?
1900-09	658	?	?	?
1910-19	1,646	?	?	?
1920-29	6,535	142*	?	?
1930-39	35,567	?	18,694	4,244
1940-49	75,513	10,224*	99,418	37,505
1950-59	38,967*	3,401*	165,716	60,617
1960-61	?	?	43,022	23,858
Total	158,986	13,767	326,850	126,224

? Data unknown

* Data incomplete

Figure 9: Animals Destroyed by the Cape Town and Johannesburg SPCAs, 1896-1960¹⁰²

100. Cape of Good Hope SPCA, *Annual Report*, 1939.

101. See 'Bodies Pile Up in Pet Cemetery', *Tabletalk* (29 Aug. 2002), 20.

102. Compiled from Cape of Good Hope SPCA, *Annual Report* 1923-52 and Johannesburg SPCA, *Annual Report* 1935-61. The Cape Town SPCA data is complete as published, but that for Johannesburg only reflects the holdings available at the National Library Cape Town, omitting the periods 1902-34 and 1962-2002. The Cape Town SPCA only disaggregated dogs for the periods indicated.

Although horrified at the negligence and brutality of whites and coloureds towards their dogs, the middle class believed they could be reformed through the pedagogy of the classroom and courtroom. Africans, however, were deemed to lack reason and compassion and hence practise innate cruelty in obedience to irrational superstition. As one dogman reminded others in the late 1940s:

Most of us are aware of the prevalent superstition existing among natives that in order to cure a dog of its ills its ears must be cut off, or a cruel and senseless amputation must be made beneath its tongue in order to remove a so-called 'worm' which, as any enlightened person knows, is a muscular ligament necessary for the proper control and movement of the tongue. Well some scores, probably hundreds of dogs are roaming around these locations minus their ears and tongues that are lacerated by cruel natives under the mistaken notion that they are helping their dogs to recover from their illnesses.¹⁰³

Then there was the 'charming native custom of winding wire tightly around pet's (?) jaws to prevent it stealing or barking' and the endemic neglect evidenced by 'the hordes of starving, mangy dogs in the native locations'.¹⁰⁴ 'Natives', the middle class agreed, 'have no thought ... but for their own wretchedness' and hence 'Jim Fish' was best prevented from owning dogs by the stringent application of the dog tax.¹⁰⁵

The increasingly rigid segregation of urban space after 1948 also forcibly removed the 'gutter-hunting' mongrel stray to the urban periphery and quarantined it in the apartheid city's ghetto archipelago out of sight and mind of the middle class, thus reducing the need for the institutionalised urban canicide so offensive to the bourgeoisie's delicate sensibilities.¹⁰⁶ Thereafter the SPCAs and their growing number of imitators, whose earlier devotion to the defence of the urban work horse was rendered redundant by the combustion engine, undertook the management of the urban canine underclass preaching and practising population control in the ghetto through both sterilisation and canicide. An interwar proletarian predilection for greyhound racing was also suppressed in the late 1940s by Afrikaner nationalists worried about its corrosive effects on *volks* unity and morals.¹⁰⁷ The only permissible post-1945 public canine presence was utilitarian, the South African Guide-Dog Association being founded in 1953 and police patrol dogs appearing a decade later (see below).

103. G.R. Vivyan, 'Starving and Wretched Dogs', *SAKUG* (June 1942), 52-3.

104. C.I. Cocker, 'Cropping Dogs Ears', *SAKUG* (Jan. 1947), 269.

105. Vivyan, 'Starving and Wretched Dogs' and M. Vane, 'Cropping Dogs Ears', *SAKUG* (Dec. 1946), 241.

106. For the quote, see 'Dogs in the Home: Thoroughbreds and Mongrels', *SAKCG* (Aug. 1942), 79.

107. A. Grundlingh 'Gone to the Dogs: The Cultural Politics of Gambling: Rise and Fall of British Greyhound Racing on the Witwatersrand 1932-1949', *South African Historical Journal*, 48 (May 2003).

In the countryside too, provincial dog taxes differentiated owned from stray/feral dogs and marked the latter for extermination. They also imposed a disproportionate share of the cost of rural local government on blacks by specifically targeting their dogs, variously referred to as 'bastard greyhounds' (Cape) or 'Kafir hunting dogs' (Natal) with massively punitive annual licence fees and taxes in the name of game conservation.¹⁰⁸ So onerous were these demands that the extension of the dog tax to the new Namibian colony in 1922 pushed erstwhile allies, the Bondelswarts, into rebellion against the South African administration.¹⁰⁹ Rural canicide continued after Union, most vigorously in the Cape, where a host of wild canids remained proclaimed vermin with bounties on their heads until as late as the mid 1950s.¹¹⁰ In the 45 years after 1910, the Cape provincial administration organised and subsidised their extermination, paying for no less than one million jackal and more than 300 000 fox, wild dog and hyena proofs along with those of numerous other species (see Figure 10).

Years	"Jackal"	Other
1890-99	204,951	1,736
1900-09	145,277	198
1910-19	115,960	0
1920-29	416,202	0
1930-39	265,809	39,867
1940-49	252,018	135,710
1950-56	451,026	271,563
Total	1,851,243	449,074

Figure 10: Cape Vermin Bounty Wild Canid Kills 1890-1956¹¹¹

The growth of wildlife tourism and a new ecological approach to environmental management after 1945 prompted the gradual rehabilitation of predators and abolition of official Cape vermin bounty in 1956, four years after the establishment of a provincial Department of Nature Conservation.¹¹² Farming

108. Cape of Good Hope, Game Law Amendment Act 1908 (No.11, 1908), Section 11 and Editorial: 'Dogs in Natal', *SAKUG* (July 1950).

109. Union of South Africa, *Report of the Administrator on the Bondelzwarts Rising 1922* [UG30-22] and *Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the Rebellion of the Bondelzwarts, 1923*.

110. For Cape exceptionalism, see W. Beinart, 'The Night of the Jackal: Sheep, Pastures and Predators in South Africa 1900-1930', *Past and Present*, 158 (1998), 172-206 and R. Bigalke, 'A Biological Survey of the Union', *South African Journal of Science*, 31 (1934), 396-401.

111. Compiled from Van Sittert, 'Keeping the Enemy at Bay', 343, Table 1; and *Province of the Cape of Good Hope Official Gazette*, 1910-56.

112. D. Hey, *A Nature Conservationist Looks Back* (Cape Town, 1995), 74-99 and 160-75.

practice, however, was much slower to change and the resurgence of rabies in Natal in the 1960s forced a resumption of the extermination of wild/feral dogs across a large swath in the south-east of the country. Dogs were also increasingly used to maintain social boundaries in post-colonial South Africa (see Figure 11).¹¹³



Figure 11: Police dog and handler at the Voortrekker Monument¹¹⁴

They were first employed by the police in Natal in 1909 and a training centre established in the Transvaal in 1911.¹¹⁵ The police used dogs as ‘trackers’ in the rural areas where, Shear speculates, Africans understood them as operating within the idiom of witchcraft by ‘sniffing out’ the guilty.¹¹⁶ *Spykerbekke* were first employed in an urban ‘patrol’ capacity only half a century later in 1962, to assist in containing a growing underclass youth rebellion of white ducktails and black nationalists and their scope of operation was expanded again in the early 1970s to include narcotics and explosives detection.¹¹⁷ Over this period, the number of

113. See J.R. Lilly and M.B. Puckett, ‘Social Control and Dogs: A Sociohistorical Analysis’, *Crime and Delinquency*, 43 (1997), 123-47.

114. M. de W. Dippenaar, *The History of the South African Police 1913-1988* (Silverton, 1988), 305.

115. *Ibid.*, 41.

116. K. Shear, ‘Police Dogs and State Rationality in Early Twentieth-Century South Africa’, in S. Dubow, ed., *Science and Society in Southern Africa* (Manchester, 2000), 143-63.

117. Dippenaar, *History*, 297, 304-5 and 483. See also Republic of South Africa, *Prisons Department Report for the period 1963-1966* [RP71/1967], 24 for the experimental deployment of ‘service dogs’ trained by the police dog school in prisons particularly to control ‘the gangster type of prisoner’.

police dogs rose sharply from around 167 in 1960 to near more than 1 000 by the mid 1980s, in direct relation to the escalation of black rebellion against the apartheid state (see Figure 12).¹¹⁸



Figure 12: A police dog keeps protestors at bay while National Party Minister of Co-operation and Development, Piet Koornhoff, receives the freedom of Soweto, 15 October 1980.¹¹⁹

A military dog unit was also established in 1964 to assist the army in ‘sniffing out’ guerrillas in its escalating counter-insurgency wars against the region’s nationalist movements.¹²⁰ The South African practice was replicated in its neighbouring settler states and colonies by both export and example.

The police and military employed a range of existing dog breeds, but also experimented with the creation of new breeds closer to the animal’s wild ancestors. Thus the police dog school experimented with Canaan dogs from Israel in the 1970s and scientists working at the Roodeplaat Breeding Enterprises near Pretoria, developed a wolf-dog to track down insurgents and guard the country’s segregated farms and suburbs in the 1980s.¹²¹ A German-born geneticist, Professor

118. Compare Republic of South Africa, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the South African Police for the year 1960* [RP19/1961], 2 and Republic of South Africa, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the South African Police 1 July 1985 to 30 June 1986* [RP91/1987], 26. The actual number of police dogs employed in 1985-86 was 1137.

119. J. Frederikse, *South Africa: A Different Kind of War* (Johannesburg, 1986), 55.

120. H-R. Heitman, *South African War Machine* (Johannesburg, 1985), 38.

121. Dippenaar, *History*, 626-7 and M. Soggot and E. Koch, ‘A Trip around the Bizarre World of Apartheid’s Mad Scientists’, *Mail and Guardian*, 27 June 1997.

Peter Geertshen, introduced Russian wolf genes into alsatians in an effort to improve the strain. The 'howling, yellow-eyed animal' was the product of a South African Defence Force experiment to improve the patrol dogs used during its bush wars in Angola and Namibia. Geertshen observed of his first wolf-dog: 'One problem is that he doesn't like blacks because he was trained in the army – and he's become temperamental in his old age.'¹²² Although bred to be *überdogs*, many of these animals suffered from an Achilles heel that embarrassed the apartheid state. They had soft paws, better suited to the tundra than the Namibian desert and they had to wear custom-designed booties.¹²³

Dogs were also widely employed in defence of private property, many of them trained or even manufactured by the state security apparatus. By the 1970s the police dog school was graduating 300 animals per annum, which, together with a proliferation in private obedience training schools, produced a large pool of dogs for corporate and private security.¹²⁴ De Beers pioneered the corporate practice by deploying police dogs to patrol its Kimberley compounds in the inter-war period to deter illicit diamond buying and their use was generalised to the rest of the mining industry thereafter.¹²⁵ The canine defence of white privilege and property was miniaturised to the private farm and home where breeds renowned for their fierceness were kept or created – such as the *boerboel* and colossus – as deterrent to the real and imagined threat of black revolt and redistribution (see Figure 5 above).¹²⁶

Thus dogs, as much as people, patrolled and maintained the white cities and countryside of post-colonial South Africa and time and again were catalysts and actors along its social frontiers. Thus the 1976 Soweto revolt, in one recent retelling, was sparked by the killing of a police dog.¹²⁷ The first six police patrol dogs with black handlers were graduated from the police dog school in 1971 and deployed to the Soweto and Jabulani police stations.¹²⁸ A witness to events five years later explained:

A police dog kept chasing the kids until they went inside the yard of the school. And then immediately they went in, turned and then the others just grouped against the dog. The kids started stoning this dog. Some with knives were stabbing the dog.¹²⁹

Once the dog was dead, 'everything started, and there was fire all over, and there was teargas all over that is why I say it started with a dog'. An icon of authority,

122. Soggot and Koch, 'A Trip'.

123. *Ibid.*

124. Dippenaar, *History*, 483.

125. H.A. Chilvers, *The Story of De Beers* (London, 1939), 38-9.

126. *Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa*, vol. 4 (Cape Town, 1971), 55-7.

127. E. Brink *et al*, *It All Started With A Dog* (Johannesburg, 2001).

128. Dippenaar, *History*, 483-4.

129. Brink *et al*, *It All Started With A Dog*, 58-9.

the proxy of state power in the township, had been assaulted in the canicide.

Similarly, in a telling court case in 1994, shortly before the first democratic elections, a white magistrate caused a storm of protest by merely fining a right-wing couple who had been accused of beating to death a black farm labourer for letting his dog mate with their bitch.¹³⁰ The magistrate acquitted Ken Finlay and his wife Lynn of culpable homicide. He fined them a total of R2 200, payable in instalments, for assault. The Finlays attacked black farm worker Molatudi Lebeta with whips and a pickaxe handle in 1991 because his dog had mated with their female Rhodesian ridgeback, which they had found racially repugnant. The Finlay's 'did not want a kaffir dog mating with a white man's dog'.¹³¹ Lebeta died the next day of his injuries. The Finlays were both members of the AWB, and uniformed members of the AWB paraded in the halls of the Vereeniging court during the trial. The African National Congress (ANC) said in a statement: 'Once again, white man's justice was dispensed in a white man's court, where a black man's life is worth less than a dog's.'

Given its prominent role in defence of white power and property, the dog became an easy metaphor for apartheid. The canine metaphor has also been employed to emphasise the rainbow nation's enduring continuities with the past. Thus Steven Paswolsky's film, *Inja* ('dog'), deals with a farmer who teaches his *boerboel* puppy to hate black people and the ramifications of this as the dog reaches maturity.¹³² More provocatively still, Willie Bester's sculpture *Dogs of War* equates the new with the old government for its prioritising of military over social expenditure (see Figure 13). The work, when displayed at the parliamentary club, so offended the ANC's preference for 'decorative' art that the chief whip ordered its removal. Paswolsky and Bester's art was also merely tracking life in the 'new' South Africa where a shockingly graphic demonstration of the dog's iconic role was provided when four white policemen 'trained their dogs' on three black Mozambican illegal immigrants in 1998. A video, taped by one of the officers, showed the officers laughing as their dogs savaged the men. Before broadcasters got hold of the video, it was a popular movie at police parties.¹³³

130. <http://www.anc.org.za/anc/newsbrief/1994/news0107>.

131. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pr/1994/pr0105a.html>

132. 2002 Sundance Film Festival, *Inja* (Dog) (Steve Paswolsky, 17 min., South Africa/Australia, 2001).

133. See <http://artthrob.co.za>. Bester subsequently used the video in his 'Dogs of War' series.



Figure 13: Willie Bester, Dogs of War 2001 ¹³⁴

Paws for Thought

Social history revolutionised historical enquiry in southern Africa through enlarging its remit to include a variously constituted underclass. By refracting the received wisdom about the past through this new lens – ‘from the bottom up’ – much of the existing orthodoxy was revised or rejected. The animal turn holds a similar potential for southern African studies, as Gordon’s pioneering analysis of dogs in colonial Namibia demonstrated and the essays in this volume confirm.¹³⁵ They remain, however, preliminary reconnaissances of a vast and unexplored terrain pointing out many rich and varied trails still to be followed, but also hinting at others lost or still to be explored. What might some of the latter be?

134. G. Thiel, ‘Not African Enough Artist Told’, *Cape Times*, 16 Feb. 2001.

135. R.J. Gordon, ‘Fido: Dog Tales of Colonialism in Namibia’ (Paper presented at African Environmental History Conference, Oxford, July 1999).

Firstly, the essays all survey and map the region's shifting canine geography from the vantage point of the settler/white middle class and there is still no social history of African hunting that would reveal the changing place and meaning of the dog in African cultures across the region.¹³⁶ Without it, the canine history of the majority of the region's population remains an ahistorical caricature culled from settler accounts, archaeological middens and ethnographic asides onto which the shifting prejudices of the moment can be freely projected.

The second lacuna where caricature substitutes for analysis is the dog's place in Afrikaner society, for the essays in this collection are not only middle class, but also mainly urban, English-speaking in perspective – the location and language of the state and organised dog fancy in the region. Afrikaans dog culture presumably found an outlet and expression elsewhere. Albert Grundlingh's pioneering exploration of this subject hints at the creation of a polite dog-culture among the nascent urban Afrikaner bourgeoisie around mid century.¹³⁷ The origin and trajectory of the *boerboel* and colossus, however, remain unknown, but suggests at an alternative (rural?) canine nationalism to the English promoters of the ridgeback.¹³⁸

Thirdly, the literary and artistic signals of the region's canine presence have yet to be systematically studied.¹³⁹ We have alluded above to some of their more obvious manifestations, but the treatment is by no means exhaustive and completely ignores homespun variants.¹⁴⁰ Our readings of Fitzpatrick's novel and contemporary visual art both suggest the metaphoric power of the dog and that its pursuit in this form is a potentially very rich line of enquiry, even more so if it were done across class, race, language and even national divides.¹⁴¹

Finally, the pioneering work of Susie-Newton King suggests the need to broaden the focus on the animal moment beyond *Canis familiaris* to include the

136. Shear, 'Police Dogs' and Tropp, 'Dogs'. Both allude to the place and social meaning of dogs in African society, but through the eyes of white observers. No comparable historical work has been attempted to the rich contemporary sociology of Abacar *et al's*, 'Traditional Hunting', supervised by the late Ruth Edgcombe.

137. Grundlingh, 'Gone to the Dogs'.

138. *Standard Encyclopaedia*, vol. 4, 55-7.

139. For the social history potential of such inquiry, see, for example, S. Kaul, 'Why Selima Drowns: Thomas Gray and the Domestication of the Imperial Ideal', *PMLA*, 105 (1990), 223-2 and L. Wyett, 'The Lap of Luxury: Lapdogs, Literature and Social Meaning in the Long Eighteenth Century', *Literature Interpretation Theory*, 10 (2000), 275-302.

140. An alternative (female) canine representation to Fitzpatrick's (masculine) 'Jock' can be found in the very different role of 'Doss' in Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* (London, 1883), while an example of local canine pulp fiction in English is M. Arsenis, *Rip the Ridgeback* (?), 1962). Thanks to Helen Bradford for the Schreiner example.

141. See, for example, *De Hond in de Boekenkast* (Amsterdam, 1992). Thanks to Etienne van Heerden for bringing the collection to our attention.

cultural construction of all humanity's non-human consorts in the region.¹⁴² The trajectory of the *boer* dog from pariah to totem was one followed by the colonial mongrel progeny of a host of other species in southern Africa – from horses to sheep, cattle and chickens – each with its maligned, usually 'Kaffir' doppelganger. The synchronicity of the cycles of rejection and rehabilitation with the rise and fall of competing nationalisms suggests the central place of the animal in the imagining, construction and maintainence of human society in the region.

Dogs are invested with human identity – both individual identity as part of a human family and domestic unit, and an identity derived from belonging to a group or community. Dogs thus serve as a *proxy* – and a blow against them therefore serves as a blow against their owners. The emotional investment people made in their dogs in smaller community groups in pre-colonial and colonial society has not disappeared in the hyperstratified globalised modern South Africa. Dogs of the past were fewer and hungrier, but equally integral to identity politics and practical workings of society.

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142. S. Newton-King, 'A Short Paper about a Dog' (Paper presented at South African Historical Society Biennial Conference, University of the Western Cape, 11-14 July 1999).

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