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Remaking more-than-human society: Thought experiments on street dogs as "nature"

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This paper examines the socio-legal and everyday moral geographies of human cohabitation with free-living dogs in India to think through what is implicated in living with nonhuman difference on a planet where the social and the natural are inextricably entangled. It investigates the contours of canine cosmopolitanism in Chennai city and theorises street dogs as unintentional natures to problematise dominant ideas about valued and pestilent nonhuman life, drawing out implications for biodiversity conservation and other more-than-humanisms. Through these analyses, the paper transgresses the silos of domestic/wild and biodiversity conservation/animal protection to advance scholarship on the politics of (non)dualism and offers thought experiments on making and maintaining more-than-human society in contemporary times.

KEYWORDS
animal, conservation, legal geography, more-than-human, social nature, urban nature

1 | INTRODUCTION

A most familiar animal, the domestic dog is ubiquitous not only in social worlds, but now also in the social sciences and humanities. Dogs in human societies have been theorised primarily as pets, and to a lesser extent, as pests and resources (Howell, 2015). Whether as companions in human homes, resources in laboratories or strays that need to be rescued, *Canis familiaris* tends to feature as anything but "nature" in human imaginations. In this paper, I reach beyond the usual categorisations of dogs as pets, resources or pests to investigate the place of free-living dogs in urban India. I bring together literatures on urban natures (Gandy, 2013) and more-than-human cosmopolitanism (Mendieta, 2011) to explore what might come of thinking of these creatures as "nature," drawing out implications for geographies of nature and biodiversity conservation.

The paper examines the contours of human cohabitation with free-living dogs in India to develop an analysis of the co-constitution of the legal and everyday moral geographies of human–nonhuman animal relations. Through these analyses, I investigate how zöopolises operate, addressing questions about whether and how people can share space with nonhuman life in the Anthropocene (Collard et al., 2015). These questions cut across social formations which otherwise function in silos: wildlife conservation, animal protection, environmentalism and even public health. Theorising free-living dogs as "unintentional natures" and offering thought experiments on making and maintaining more-than-human society, I problematise established notions of the valued and pestilent in conservation, resituate devalorised nonhuman life and refine scholarship on society–nature (non)dualisms (cf. Mansfield & Doyle, 2017), rendering it more directly pertinent to the challenges of the Anthropocene.

2 | MORE-THAN-HUMAN SOCIETY IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

The epithet "Anthropocene" acknowledges two key ideas: (1) human lifestyles have significantly (and adversely) affected nonhuman life and biophysical processes on the planet, and (2) the human, i.e., the social, is intricately and inextricably

intertwined with the nonhuman, i.e., the natural (Mansfield & Doyle, 2017). Embedded in these ideas is the acknowledgement that all the life-forms that inhabit the planet affect each other through complex interactions that are not fully understood or controlled – and will never be. As such, the chief puzzle for conservation and other more-than-humanisms in contemporary times is that of how to enable the flourishing of nonhuman life in more-than-human societies that cannot be divided conceptually or materially into the social and the natural, where the human and nonhuman are always already entangled in ways that are not necessarily predictable or positive. This in turn entails ideas and practices of more-than-human cohabitation that are not reliant on a dualist separation of the social and natural, and the useful and undesirable, as reflected in recent literatures on urban natures and more-than-human cosmopolitanism.

2.1 | Nature in the city

Urban nature has emerged as a significant focus of practice and scholarship in the Anthropocene. An emphasis on urban nature goes beyond problematic nature–society dualisms that underpin visions of untouched wilderness; it offers opportunities for conservation regimes that are not reliant on neo-colonial distributions of the costs and benefits of green action (Hutton & Adams, 2007) and that are relevant to a rapidly urbanising planet (Brenner, 2014). Literatures on urban ecology and social natures have emphasised the importance of remaking the urban as a more-than-human space where valued biodiversity can flourish (Francis et al., 2012).

Such scholarship has tended to focus on organisms that are valued ecologically, aesthetically or instrumentally (e.g., for food). Emerging work, however, has considered organisms and landscapes that are not conventionally valued as useful or desirable (Gandy, 2013; Nagy & Johnson, 2013). Building on earlier work on zoöpolis (Wolch, 2002), these writings have reflected on marginal ecological formations such as marshlands, pests such as pigeons, and plants seen as weeds, all of which have traditionally been viewed as the antithesis of the urban – and of the understandings of human wellbeing that go along with the urban, and indeed, the Anthropocene.

In particular, Gandy writes about unintentional landscapes, questioning conventional aesthetic and ecological imaginations:

> The unintentional landscape is not a primal landscape in the sense of 'wild nature' serving as an object of aesthetic contemplation, it is not an idealised landscape that conforms to some pre-existing conception of the innate relations between nature and culture, and it is not a designed landscape allied to particular social or political goals. It is a landscape in spite of itself; a focus of intrigue or pleasure that has emerged irrespective of its anomalous or redundant characteristics. (2016, p. 434)

While even the most carefully managed natures and non-living artefacts are always beyond full human control and often exceed the goals of their human designers (e.g., weeds in gardens, planes that crash), (un)intentionality assumes significance in relation to the *raison d'être* of the entity. Unlike protected areas, urban parks, or domesticated cows which are engineered to meet human agendas, unintentional landscapes are spontaneous, i.e., not the product of human design. Indeed, they are more often than not in direct conflict with mainstream human desires and purposes. The value of this concept thus lies in its politicisation and revalorisation of devalorised nonhuman life: unintentional landscapes do not conform to existing ideas of ecological, cultural, social or aesthetic utility, and can be unpleasant and even dangerous (Gandy, 2016).

Marshes and swamps are emblematic unintentional landscapes. They are risky, noxious natures. They are habitats for snakes and mosquitoes. Histories of the urban, which are tied to histories of development, are tied to histories of clearing and ordering noxious natures, such as marshes. However, these noxious natures are making a comeback as ecological hotspots in urban areas and beyond, including in Chennai city. To Gandy (2016), therefore, the radical re-visioning of nature is vital for equitable socio-ecological futures in the Anthropocene.

2.2 | More-than-human cosmopolitanism

A parallel vein of writing in the now substantial literatures in more-than-human geographies investigates the implications of living with risky and/or unwanted creatures, whether bugs, cougars or invasive alien species (Collard, 2012; Nagy & Johnson, 2013; Rutherford, 2018; van Dooren, 2016). This scholarship has concentrated on the contingencies of everyday, direct encounters between human and nonhuman creatures, on the "cosmopolitics" of living with nonhuman difference (Narayanan & Bindumadhav, 2018). The emphasis is on learning to care and to be mutually affected, an approach that avoids representational politics or advance decisions about positions, rights and responsibilities (Hinchliffe et al., 2005).

Everyday life unfolds within a socio-legal substrate that is co-constitutive with everyday experiences and direct encounters, and as such, the investigation of how everyday encounters intersect with socio-legal institutions and processes is crucial to understanding more-than-human cohabitation (Delaney, 2015). For instance, the management of organisms as invasive alien species, endangered species, or biosecurity threats is fundamentally tied to legal and socio-political conditions, and as such cannot be understood through a lens that explores only direct encounters. It is thus that a strand of more-than-human work examines how legal and socio-political institutions account for human relationships with a variety of nonhuman creatures (Crowley et al., 2017; Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011; Ojalammi & Blomley, 2015).

Of these, Donaldson and Kymlicka's (2011) elaboration of more-than-human citizenship explores how democracies can facilitate zoöpolitically inclusive habitats. To Donaldson and Kymlicka, citizenship "is a relationship that holds amongst those who cohabit a common territory and who are governed by common institutions" (2011, p. 61) and is thus relevant to humans *and* other animals insofar as they inhabit the same geo-socio-legal territory. While recognising that people fall into a multiplicity of categories that pertain to political belonging, Donaldson and Kymlicka focus on three main categories – citizenship, denizenship and sovereignty – to develop their relational approach to more-than-human politics. These categories pertain to a spectrum of rights and responsibilities, with citizenship associated with the broadest set of rights and duties, and sovereignty implying a largely hands-off relationship.

Donaldson and Kymlicka bring these three categories together with a typology of animals – domestic, liminal, wild – based on their place in society, i.e., on "varying levels of interaction, mutual vulnerability, and interdependency" with human society (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011, p. 65). In their account, the concept of full citizenship is pertinent to domesticated animals; that of denizenship to liminal animals; and that of sovereignty to wild animals. In developing these reflections, their interest is *not* in drawing analogies between people and nonhuman animals, but to explain how categories of citizenship can be deployed to create socio-legal and political institutions for nonhuman Others.

In this paper, I bring together these two strands of scholarship on the everyday experiential *and* socio-legal dimensions of living with nonhuman difference to think through more-than-human cosmopolitanism. While the idea of cosmopolitanism has been debated widely, what remains fundamental to the concept is a lived openness to difference, and an ethos of moral accountability towards even those to whom one does not feel connected by special ties (Appiah, 2006). Cosmopolitanism has been deployed mainly in relation to axes of human difference such as religion, ethnicity, class, nationality, race and sexuality (Benhabib, 2006). But as Mendieta (2011) points out, the norm of universal openness inherent in the idea of cosmopolitanism makes its customary application to the solely human contradictory. Mendieta's (2011) case for interspecies cosmopolitanism rests on the many shared vulnerabilities of humans and other life-forms, and the fact that nonhuman life-forms are, "even if unwittingly, members of our community." They are "communities of the affected" (Barnett, 2014), even though existing political systems do not provide for their participation.

In conversation with the above literatures on urban natures and more-than-human cosmopolitanism, in this paper I explore human cohabitation with free-living dogs – exemplary noxious Others. I investigate the socio-legal and everyday underpinnings of canine cosmopolitanism in Chennai and theorise free-living dogs as unintentional natures to draw out lessons for "abundant futures" in the Anthropocene (Collard et al., 2015, p. 323). Through thought experiments on street dogs as nature, the paper advances debates in geography on the politics of (non)dualism (Mansfield & Doyle, 2017) by identifying the prevalence of ethical dualism as one of the key challenges of the Anthropocene. These analyses transgress the silos of domestic/wild and biodiversity conservation/animal protection that continue to underpin conservation scholarship and practice to demonstrate how the long and multifaceted histories of canine cosmopolitanism offer useful insights for biodiversity conservation and remaking more-than-human society in a post-natural world.

3 | DOGS AND URBAN NATURE

Under what circumstances do dogs display qualities that lend themselves to thought experiments on nature? While dogs in Anglo-American societies are restricted to life under human management, dogs in other parts of the world have access to life-opportunities that are relatively independent of human control and care (Jackman & Rowan, 2007). The Indian subcontinent is one such place, and is home to thriving free-living dog populations across diverse bio-geo-physical terrains (Narayanan, 2017). These dogs, commonly referred to as "stray" or "feral" in Anglo-American discourse, live alongside people in and around rural and urban settlements. Like house crows and sparrows, these liminal animals occupy ecological niches created by human lifestyles and have co-evolved with people (Majumder et al., 2014; Pal, 2001). Unlike pet dogs that get drawn into their owners' consumer cultures, free-living dogs subsist primarily on food waste generated by their human cohabitants, and take shelter wherever they can find it – parked cars, unoccupied plots of land, beaches, and porches. They

face a range of risks associated with living alongside human beings – road accidents, intentional attacks, etc. (Karlekar, 2008). They equally pose risks to people – biting, chasing, and rabies (Abbas & Kakkar, 2013). The long history of human–dog cohabitation has also involved conflict.

Dogs are not usually understood as "nature" in the sense deployed in biodiversity conservation – the very moniker "domestic dog" indicates that dogs are viewed within the framework of domestication (Serpell, 1995). Yet, free-living dogs lead lives that are independent enough of human management that they cannot be classified as domesticated organisms. Neither are they "feral" – they are habituated to and even actively seek out human company. They are ordinary, "unintentional natures" that unsettle established notions of nature and culture, wild and the domestic, and that have "proliferated alongside human activities" like the unintentional landscapes described by Gandy (2016, p. 434). Just as marshes were seen as noxious entities that were to be cleared in the pursuit of urbanity and human wellbeing, free-living dogs too are viewed as noxious organisms that need to be controlled and even eradicated for reasons of human health and safety, and notions of the urban that are underpinned by the exclusion of "unsanitary" nonhuman Others (Atkins, 2012).

By theorising these animals as unintentional natures, the paper explores a real-world instance of what is implicated in living alongside creatures that are risky and unwanted. This becomes particularly relevant on a planet where the social and the natural are inextricably entangled, and where conservation and more-than-humanisms are having to experiment with human cohabitation with a variety of inoffensive, pleasant, *and* noxious organisms.

The paper draws on field research carried out in Chennai city in 2015–2016. A key goal was to understand public perceptions of and experiences with free-living dogs, which was pursued through semi-structured interviews[1] with the general public in 2015. As rabies is known as the "disease of the poor" (Malerczyk, 2013), participation was solicited from two socio-economic groups: low-income (LIG) (24 interviews – 12 women and 12 men, and three group interviews – one mixed gender and two men only) and upper/middle-income (UMIG) (25 interviews; 13 women and 12 men), covering a diversity of age groups (18–25; 25–45; 45–60; 60+). The sample included participants from different religious backgrounds. However, not all participants shared information on religion and so the exact distribution was not determinable. Key policy documents, published research, news articles, and interviews with animal welfare practitioners are other materials used for the paper. Qualitative coding techniques were deployed to identify and refine themes inductively. In what follows, I elaborate on the institutional and everyday contours of human–street dog cohabitation in Chennai, India.

4 | THE LEGAL GEOGRAPHIES OF FREE-LIVING DOGS IN INDIA

Like other liminal organisms such as rats and weeds, free-living dogs are often perceived as trash animals, as noxious Others: they defecate in the open, bark, bite, chase, carry disease, and can be nuisances. It is these characteristics that got free-living dogs eradicated from many parts of Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries (Howell, 2015). Yet, in India, they continue to exist and flourish (Abbas & Kakkar, 2013). Dogs in India have possibilities for life other than being pets or resources under human control.

Underlying these possibilities for canine life is a fluctuating history of cohabitation, management, and policy. While free-living dogs have always been a part of human society in India, it is during British colonial rule that they became visible to the gaze of the state (Karlekar, 2008). State-led programmes to control free-living dogs in the interest of public health were initiated in the 19th century by the British Indian administration. These programmes were centred on killing, and were continued by local authorities in independent India. More than a century of state-administered dog control through killing did not make any significant dent on India's free-living dog populations (Krishna, 2010a). In the year 2001, central government legislation – Animal Birth Control (Dogs) Rules (ABC Rules) – replaced killing with birth control/neutering and anti-rabies vaccination for dog management (Government of India, 2001). This legislation was motivated by animal welfare concerns, but neutering–vaccination programmes equally have public health endorsement as effective dog management and rabies control strategies (Cleaveland et al., 2014; WHO & WSPA, 1990). In Chennai, which had an estimated population of 80,000 street dogs in 2016, neutering–vaccination programmes were introduced by an animal welfare organisation in 1964 and replaced killing as a municipal strategy in 1996, five years ahead of the rest of India, thanks to nearly three decades of lobbying by local animal groups (Krishna, 2010a; Padmanabhan, 2016). In the ensuing years, the number of reported human rabies cases in the city have declined: from 120 deaths in 1996 to 0 in 2008 (Rahman, 2012). Similar trends can be seen across India. In 2005, there were 274 reported cases of human rabies in India; this dropped to 86 by 2016 (Central Bureau of Health Intelligence, 2006, 2017).

Nonetheless, the replacement of killing with neutering–vaccination has faced some opposition in Chennai and other parts of India, including legal cases asking for repeal of the ABC Rules (Supreme Court of India, 2016). With the flourishing of

the news media, conflict between people and free-living dogs has increasingly become a matter of national and even international debate (Biswas, 2016). The ABC Rules continue to remain in place, however, and dog control through killing remains unlawful, even if it happens once in a while (HT, 2016).

5 | CANINE DENIZENSHIP FOR ZOÖPOLIS

Donaldson and Kymlicka's (2011) theorisation of more-than-human politics is useful in unpacking the (complicated) possibilities for dog life articulated by the ABC Rules. The relational character of their approach becomes clear in the case of domestic dogs. Dogs which are pets or resources can be understood as archetypal domestic animals and therefore candidates for citizenship in this model for zoöpolis. Free-living dogs, however, are liminal organisms, and to Donaldson and Kymlicka, the category of denizenship is useful in thinking through "strategies of inclusion and coexistence" (2011, p. 216) for liminal animals which live in the midst of human communities, but are not socialised and bred into human life like domesticated animals. Denizenship has three features (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011, pp. 241–242):

- Secure residency, i.e., the right to inhabit a particular society without persecution, even if the organism in question is not viewed as belonging to that society. For example, a rat would have the right to live in human settlements without persecution.
- Fair terms of reciprocity, i.e., "a reciprocal reduction in rights and responsibilities" (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011, p. 241) as compared to full citizenship. Fair terms of reciprocity allows for measures that reduce the risks posed by denizens to citizens. In the context of animals, these could include installing barriers to entry, reducing food sources, and birth control. But equally, it will also include mitigating risks posed by humans to the animals (bird-safe high rises; corridors for urban animals).
- Anti-stigma measures*:* interventions by the state to stop discrimination against those who have denizenship by those who might dislike them or not want them in that society. For example, many people might not want rats in human settlements, but recognising their denizenship would require the state to prevent the extra-legal extermination of rats.

The legal and institutional arrangements for street dogs in India can be understood as an example of nonhuman denizenship in practice. For one, street dogs in India have secure residency. The ABC Rules classify dogs in India as pet dogs and street dogs. By referring to dogs without human owners as street dogs as opposed to "stray dogs," the ABC Rules render legal the existence of free-living dogs (Srinivasan, 2013). Dogs in India don't have to be pets or guard dogs or laboratory animals or some other kind of human property. They can exist independent of human ownership and control, and cannot be deprived of the opportunity for life simply because they don't have human owners – individual or institutional. The ABC Rules also ban the killing of street dogs (unless they are seriously ill), thus providing legal protections for the secure residency of free-living dogs.

This does not mean that street dogs are free from human-induced harms – they are subject to a range of intentional and accidental harms that can be attributed to human individuals and institutions (Srinivasan, 2013). Extreme acts of violence against street dogs as well as organised killing continue to occur (Nath, 2016). Interviews with animal welfare practitioners in the city reveal that canine victims of road and rail traffic accidents, plastic ingestion, and acts of cruelty (such as being thrown off buildings, beaten with rods and sticks, scalded with boiling water, and slashed with knives) are seen in the city's animal rescue centres.

However, what the ABC Rules do is stop the kind of sustained institutional killing of dogs that was in practice from colonial times until 1996 in Chennai, and 2001 in other parts of India, and continues in many other countries. They provide opportunities for canine life that are not available in societies where dogs must be always already owned. At the same time, the legislation provides for their management through birth control and anti-rabies vaccination programmes aimed at creating stable and safe dog populations, thereby reducing risks related to dog bites and rabies. These institutional arrangements for population management can be understood as fair terms of reciprocity as they are aimed at reducing the risks and inconveniences posed to people by these canine denizens, even while facilitating their secure residency. Finally, guidelines issued by the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) can be seen as anti-stigma measures (Chairman, AWBI, 2015). These guidelines were issued in response to incidents of harassment of people who feed street dogs by members of the public who perceive street dogs as out of place and undesirable. The guidelines emphasise that it is legal for people to feed street dogs and otherwise care for them. It points out that this can be understood as a fundamental duty as laid out in the Indian Constitution, and highlights that "beating and driving away street dogs is NOT ALLOWED" (Chairman, AWBI, 2015,

p. 5; emphasis as in original). At the same time, the guidelines appeal to those who feed street dogs to do so in a manner that does not unduly disturb other human residents.

The ABC Rules put into place institutional arrangements for the denizenship of India's free-living dogs and provide the legal foundations for their existence. These Rules stopped state-sponsored eradication and provide the (minimum) legal means necessary to contest the ad-hoc killing of street dogs. Their significance, and their co-constitution with everyday practice, is further borne out in court cases asking for their enforcement or repeal. This legislation demonstrates that the concept of more-than-human denizenship need not remain within the bounds of theoretical scholarship: it is a practicable concept. As I argue later in the paper, Donaldson and Kymlicka's model is by no means perfect, but it does offer a set of tools that are legible to existing socio-legal registers in democratic societies – at the end of the day, the lives and deaths of nonhuman creatures continue to be strongly influenced by such decision-structures in human society. In deploying the framework of citizenship to think through the place(s) of domestic, liminal and "wild" animals, their model offers a ready reckoner for the remaking of societies that are more egalitarian in a more-than-human sense.

India's ABC Rules are the outcome of prolonged and ongoing debates between various key human actors – the state, animal protection groups, the public health sector, civic action groups (Srinivasan, 2015). The section that follows explores everyday experiences and interactions between free-living dogs and "lay" people, drawing on field research in Chennai to discuss the range of views on human–dog cohabitation and their intersections with socio-legal arrangements.

6 | PEOPLE AND DOGS: EVERYDAY COHABITATION

Of the varied things that were discussed in the semi-structured interviews, the most striking was the surprise expressed by people that free-living dogs constituted a topic worth discussing. As Mariamma (F/LIG)[2] put it, "people normally talk about food, water crises, business disputes, but not such stuff. No one talks about dogs, you are the first people to come and talk about dogs." Free-living dogs are omnipresent, but not really noticed: "each street has around 2–3 dogs … but I have never thought of the dogs" (Kanakam/F/LIG). "Theru nai" – Tamil for street dogs – were background. In Deepa's (F/UMIG) words, "I don't *see* them. They are just there" (emphasis mine); unlike dogs in the Anglo-American world, dogs on Chennai's streets without human "owners" are background; these denizens are visible but *not noticed* for the most part. It is only occasionally that they became foreground and that too in a transient manner. Bala (M/UMIG) explains: "it [issues relating to street dogs] does occasionally appear in the news … it happens every once in a while. As to whether people discuss it on a day-to-day basis, I find that hard to believe. I don't observe it in my peer group, people I interact with, my neighbours, there may be a few individuals who are particularly concerned, but a majority of population does not consider it a big issue."

The situations in which free-living dogs become foreground vary and cover both positive and negative interactions between people and dogs. Dogs are noticed if they are nuisances, say, because "they bark, are too noisy" (Murugan/M/LIG) or because "they dirty the road … you have to pass and then you stamp it [sic]" (Hema/F/LIG). Incidents of chasing vehicles or biting also bring them to attention: "I was going on the bike and the dog bit me on my leg" (Murugan/M/LIG). This includes negative encounters experienced by others: "About 10 days ago … one dog came and jumped on … and scratched my niece and chased her on the stairs of the building" (Mini/F/UMIG). Poornima (F/UMIG) has seen dogs chasing motorists: "I have seen people fall off the vehicle and getting injured. They [dogs] just do it without any reason." Free-living dogs, unlike pet dogs, are nonhuman denizens that have *not* been socialised into human life.

Some people participate in loose relationships of care with particular street dogs, such as providing food, water or shelter. "There are about 4 dogs [4 individuals, not a group] in my street which I feed regularly and pet. We provide food and water for the dogs when it's hot. We don't chase them away from the compound when they take shelter under cars" (Poornima/F/UIG). Often, this sort of care is incidental, i.e., not structured or regular. Hema (F/LIG) explains that it is usually leftovers that are fed to street dogs "if they [people] have something extra they will feed [the dogs], they never take extra steps to feed them … like specially preparing extra food, they will not do." Deepak (M/UMIG) talks about how "occasionally I try to keep a bowl of water" since street dogs don't have easy access to drinking water.

Padma (F/LIG) ends up sharing her tea with passing dogs: "when I drink my tea they come, and see me with puppy eyes. I feel if I do not share the tea, I will get stomach-ache. So I promptly give them tea and biscuits." This sort of relationship can be seen not only between dogs and individual people, but also between dogs and establishments. Two police officers (group interview/M), for instance, spoke about how many police stations in the city have two or three street dogs that hang around the station and are fed by the staff members there. Care can extend beyond food and shelter to medical assistance, administered either by individuals – "There was once two dogs who fought and one got hurt, so I put turmeric

on the wound and the bleeding stopped" (Padma/F/LIG) – or by an animal rescue centre – "when they [street dogs] get hurt, I call the Blue Cross [rescue centre]" (Susila/F/LIG). It is to enable these occasional acts of care that the AWBI issued the guidelines discussed earlier as anti-stigma measures.

Encounters of the kind described above are *not* the norm. The usual state of affairs when it comes to human–dog interactions is this: nothing noteworthy happens. It is because of the infrequent quality of negative interactions such as bites that they (negative interactions) are noticed and become issues of public debate. These negative encounters are co-produced by people and dogs. It could be because a dog has littered: "the dog had just had puppies and I went near her. I am not angry that I was bitten" (Ramesh/M/LIG), or because the dog had been hurt: "It was sleeping and I stepped on it so it bit me so I had to go to Stanley Government Hospital to get myself vaccinated … It was not its fault. I made a mistake" (Muthu/M/LIG). This awareness of how negative encounters are co-produced often goes along with ideas about how to avoid conflict. "When a street dog is around I maintain my distance with it. I do not hurt it, it will not hurt me" (Ramesh/M/LIG), or "If there is a female dog that has just littered then people are careful not to go close near the dog as they know it will bite" (Babu/M/LIG). Arun (M/LIG) reveals a similar tactic: "I can figure out when dogs have an intention to bite. I stand still," while Ravi (M/LIG) adopts a more proactive approach: "give dogs a biscuit and they are fine." These vernacular knowledges arguably reflect an understanding of free-living dogs as fellow cohabitants of the city, an understanding that finds legal grounding in the secure residency guaranteed by the ABC Rules. This is not to say that dog bites, rabies, or other negative incidents are dismissed as insignificant. As explored in the next section, "problem" dogs regularly face the threat of displacement and other harms.

7 | LIVING WITH NONHUMAN DIFFERENCE: CONFLICT AND COEXISTENCE

Gandy writes that unintentional landscapes evoke "responses ranging from delight or indifference to various forms of fear and hostility" (2016, p. 438). Free-living dogs in Chennai evoke a similar diversity of responses in people, as outlined in the previous section. But what is common to the range of discourses is the recognition of the dog as an organism that shares with people the quality of being a life-form, a "*jeevan*." To Indira (F/LIG), "they are also living beings," and to Deepa (F/UMIG), "like we deserve to live, they deserve to live … I don't think we should be bothering them and I don't think they will bother us if we let them be." The word "*paavam*" was used often in reference to free-living dogs: "We do not chase them away as they are *paavam*" (Kanakam/F/LIG). *Paavam* is a Tamil word that acknowledges vulnerability and innocence, while also conveying a mixture of pity and compassion. Even those who profess to disliking dogs see them as *paavam* or as living beings: "No, I do not like dogs … their hair falls in the food … [but] they are also living beings" (Vaani/F/LIG). Roja (F/LIG) says something similar: "I do not like street dogs … [but] dogs are innocent beings, they are *paavam*. I get angry only when they try to bite."

Thus, this *jeevan* possesses qualities that make him/her noxious, and yet this does not preclude coexistence. This comes through in Gokul's (M/UMIG) comments: "I think they are a nuisance. They aren't trained; they eat from the garbage and end up scattering garbage everywhere. The ones sleeping on the roads are a problem for pedestrians as well … [but] you can't just remove them from the street. They have a right to live there as well." Others express thoughts along the same lines, explaining how people live alongside these creatures even if they pose risks. As Aparna (F/UMIG) says "I'm scared of street dogs … [but] I just let them be. I don't interact with them. I walk away from dogs in my path."

These views articulate *not* a conscious welcoming of another creature – hospitality as described by Derrida (2000) and critiqued by van Dooren (2016). Instead, there is an implicit recognition that the cityscape has always already been more-than-human, that it has always already been a zoöpolis (Wolch, 2002): "I think it's their [the dogs] space just like its mine" (Azad/M/UMIG); "they are a part of the environment that I'm a part of" (Shishir/M/UMIG). The idea that dogs belong in urban public spaces – as opposed to belonging only in human homes or in areas not inhabited by people – is reflected in the Tamil term for free-living dogs: *theru nai*, or street dog. "Stray" is *not* a word that is used to refer to free-living dogs in Tamil. It is this long-standing recognition that finds legal articulation in the ABC Rules and their arrangements for canine denizenship.

This zoöpolis however does involve conflict, whether bites or barking or chasing, and accidental and intentional acts of human violence towards dogs. Coexistence goes with conflict: coexistence/conflict is perhaps one way of writing it. This comes through in Kanakam's (F/LIG) words: "If we hear that there is a dog that bites, we are careful, that's all." Others respond in ways that might be harmful to dogs, say, through removal: "When dogs bite, or become a problem we call and someone comes and gets them" (Murugan/M/LIG). Harm can include physical violence, but in general killing is not seen as acceptable: "People when they are annoyed with a dog, maximum, they will throw stones but not suggest killing" (Siva/

M/LIG). This is a manifestation of Hinchliffe et al.'s understanding of cosmopolitics as involving "a double injunction: to take risks … and to allow others … to intervene in our processes as much as we intervene in theirs" (2005, pp. 655–656). In Chennai, these risks also lead to vernacular knowledges about how to cohabit with free-living dogs (discussed in the previous section) – knowledges that are reflective of "practices of accommodation" as a response to nonhuman alterity (Barnett, 2005, p. 8).

This recognition of the city as a zoöpolis jostles alongside shifting perceptions of what cities – and human habitats – ought to be like. It jostles alongside shifting ideas of human wellbeing which are increasingly in tune with a globalised development – though imperfectly so. At the most basic level, the pursuit of contemporary development is about insulating the human from the vagaries of nature, including the threats and dangers associated with disease, pathogens and vectors (and of maximising human capabilities). As Lorimer puts it, "securing the human through the control of unruly ecologies is one of the defining objectives of … the Anthropocene" (2017, p. 1). This in turn translates into the desire for a sanitised living environment, one free of dirt, bugs, microbes, and other risky creatures such as pigeons and free-living dogs. This is evident in articulations about how India, in its quest to climb the development ladder, should emulate "developed" countries that don't have street dogs because of systematic killing in the early 20th century: "I don't think in any other country in the world there are stray dogs. Dogs always have some owners" (Mini/F/UMIG; see also Vanak, 2012). Free-living dogs, like unintentional landscapes, "clearly unsettle the organisational telos of modernity" (Gandy, 2016, p. 435).

In this view, free-living dogs are stray and out of place, and need to be eliminated for reasons of health and aesthetics. But here too, overtly violent approaches are not supported: "Culling is unwarranted in a civilized society" (Kanika/F/UMIG). As Ajay (M/UMIG) expands, "No one supports killing, but everybody does want these dogs out." Sanitisation rules even when it comes to getting rid of these creatures, and the preference is just for "removal," though the specifics of how remain unarticulated and the adverse consequences unrecognised: "No, no one here will kill, they will maybe relocate" (Soumya/F/UMIG). To those who don't recognise the city as a more-than-habitat, dogs have to belong to some human (individual or institution).

The face-off between traditions of more-than-human coexistence/conflict and new(er) visions of a sanitised and "safe" urbanity result in a complex set of views about free-living dogs and their place in Chennai. Even among those who are supportive of coexistence or indifferent to sharing the city with street dog, a different point of view prevails when it comes to diseased or aggressive street dogs. "As long as the dog doesn't do any harm, it is good. Let it stay there. But if it does harm, I might not like it" (Rajan/M/UMIG). Such "problem" dogs are seen as needing to be removed from the cityscape: "two dogs have been relocated as they used to chase all the vehicles and would bite people" Murugan (M/LIG). A range of issues can provoke such responses, from biting and chasing behaviours, to the appearance of being sick, such as in the case of dogs with skin diseases. The aesthetic appearance of the dogs might matter more than actual physiological condition in influencing opinions about their health: "they [street dogs] are good things … but the dogs with mange are not so good looking and I fear that it will give disease" (Ramesh/M/LIG).

Second, this face-off goes along with support for the socio-legal arrangements for canine denizenship that curtail dog populations and behaviours in the service of human interests, i.e., neutering programmes: "They should definitely sterilize [neuter] all the dogs. So that they don't multiply. It's better than killing them" (Aparna/F/UMIG). Neutering is also seen as a means of keeping the denizen population low and healthy enough to avoid negative human responses: "They have to be neutered or else their population will increase and people will not like it" (Vaani/F/LIG).

8 | CANINE COSMOPOLITANISM

This complex of views and practices relating to street dogs conveys the impossibility of describing attitudes towards these creatures as either positive or negative. Free-living dogs are risky, noxious natures. Yet, there is a recognition even among those who dislike them that they are "*jeevan*," and as such shouldn't be exterminated simply because they pose threats and inconveniences. In this view, the city is always already a more-than-human space, and therefore free-living dogs, "*theru nai*," are an integral part of the cityscape, even if they are considered to be problems. However, this clashes with contemporary ideas of development, urbanity, and a good human life, which rely on dualist concepts of society and nature, and demand insulation (of people) from the risks posed by nature: obvious and unintentional. It is the coming together of these competing approaches to free-living dogs, i.e., (1) that they are an integral part of the cityscape, and (2) that urbanity and human wellbeing requires insulation from the risks and inconveniences posed by these unintentional natures, that results in denizenship interventions like the neutering and vaccination programmes. These programmes have problematic implications for the animals that are their targets (Srinivasan, 2015); yet they offer a means of continued more-than-human cohabitation,

for zoöpolis. Central to all of this is an ethos, albeit one that is in flux and under debate, which allows for cohabitation, even in the face of problems and risks (Figure 1).

The analyses of everyday human–dog cohabitation raise further questions. For example, what might influence people to hold certain types of views about free-living dogs? As discussed earlier, it is not anything as simple as liking or disliking dogs. Does everyday encounter affect how people relate to and think about free-living dogs? If yes, how might this work and what relation might it have to the socio-economic geographies of human habitation and to axes of difference such as gender and religion?

The reputation of India as a land of holy cows, upper-caste vegetarianism, and associated sectarian violence has led to the association of Indian animal protection with right-wing, upper-caste Hindu agendas. People–street dog relationships complicate this picture of the links between religion, caste, and attitudes towards animals in the country. In contrast to animals such as cows and monkeys that are considered sacred in Hindu mythology, dogs are considered "unclean" (albeit loyal) because of their association with sites of death such as crematoriums (Doniger, 2009; Krishna, 2010b). With the advent of colonialism, free-living dogs started being referred to as *pariah* dogs, "pariah" being the term attached to the most marginalised human groups in Hindu society, i.e., those who were considered to be "out-caste" (Srinivasan & Nagaraj, 2007). These Hindu traditions intermingle with ideas from other religions such as Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, as well as with ideas about modernity and urbanity that exemplify the Anthropocene. For instance, Gandhi's notion of *ahimsa* excluded street dogs from its ambit, deeming these animals killable on grounds of human health and safety (Lenin, 2007).

In Chennai, the interviews do not evidence any systematic relationship between religion/caste and people–dog relationships. Furthermore, India-wide public debates around street dogs show that both anti- and pro-street dog groups tend to draw membership from people from *different* religious but *mostly* upper-middle/upper socio-economic backgrounds (Karlekar, 2008). In all, this indicates that religion, class, or caste do not predict people–street dog relationships in any

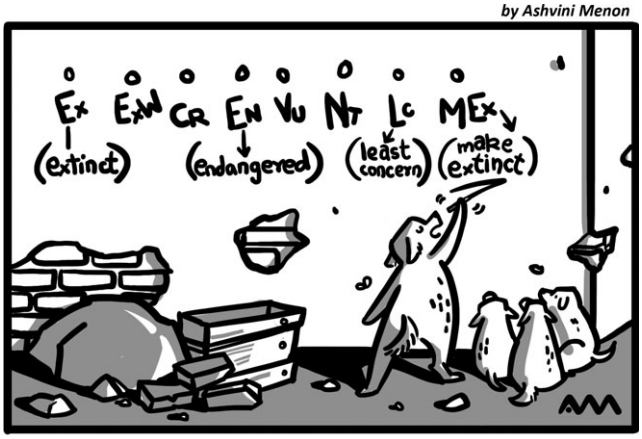
FIGURE 1 Canine cosmopolis. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

straightforward manner and that the interactions between traditions, visions and ideals of modernity, class, gender, and everyday encounters need to be researched further.

More crucially, the above analyses suggest that habitual encounter and the proximity engendered by sharing living and working spaces with street dogs goes along with an ethos of tolerance to them as cohabitants, as captured by this remark: "I am indifferent to street dogs, they live their lives and we live ours, we do not have to bother about them much" (Muthu/M/LIG). Proximity here refers to not just spatial relations but also temporal relations: the ethos of tolerance is *not* one that emerges from post-materialist values that arise *after* separation from nature or as responses to violent exploitation or displacement (like Anglo-American conservation or animal protection movements). Rather, it is embedded in the long histories of human–street dog cohabitation in the region and the recognition of the city as always already a zoöpolis. The opposition to killing across socio-economic, gender, and religious divides, seen not only in the Chennai interviews but also in protests by a wide range of people, including slum-dwellers, against a short-lived dog-culling initiative in Bengaluru in 2007 (Karlekar, 2008), suggest that this ethos is rooted in the ordinariness of more-than-human cohabitation. The significance of this ethos is noted by veterinary scientists Totton et al. who write: "due to cultural tolerance, it is unlikely that stray dogs will ever be completely eliminated from India" (2010, p. 56).

Tolerance has been theorised with suspicion in geography (Gill et al., 2012). Nonetheless, in conservation scholarship, tolerance is a descriptor of a way of human cohabitation with risky wildlife, one that recognises that coexistence goes with conflict and that emphasises the ability to coexist despite conflict, despite mutual risk (Karanth et al., 2013; Sekar, 2013; van Dooren, 2016, emphasis as in original). As van Dooren writes, "what is needed here is a willingness to support, or at least tolerate, *other species' own experiments* in emergent forms of life … experiments that will sometimes make us uncomfortable" (2016, p. 205). It is this ethos of cohabitation that is not predicated on the absence of conflict – a fluctuating yet tolerant canine cosmopolitanism – that is key to this paper's thought experiments.

9 | UNINTENTIONAL NATURES



In what senses does the canine cosmopolitanism discussed here help think through biodiversity conservation in today's world? Free-living dogs are liminal animals: they live alongside humans but are fairly independent of direct human care. Even if they may not conform to what is normally considered "nature" in biodiversity conservation, by virtue of being born and leading lives that are mostly outside the realm of human control, they can be theorised as unintentional natures. This serves two inter-linked purposes.

First, the analyses of the institutional and everyday realities of how people cohabit with these creatures become a productive thought experiment on human cohabitation with a host of other more obvious natures. On an urbanising planet, where the human and nonhuman cannot be retained in zones of separation and exclusion, learning to live with urban liminal creatures might well be a necessary stepping stone to living with other more valuable and risky creatures. At the very least, the canine cosmopolitanism of Chennai raises some provocative questions. If the human residents of the urban cannot live with the risks these unintentional natures pose, then how can one expect others – usually socio-economically marginal rural peoples – to share life-worlds with far more dangerous creatures such as pythons, bears, elephants and tigers (Nyhus,

2016)? How can wolf reintroduction projects in rural Europe expect to be successful if the residents of London are not able to share their cities with foxes? Indeed, rewilding projects involving predators and crop-raiders often face significant opposition by local communities, and consequent implementation failures.

Second, it repositions these creatures in (human) socio-political imaginations: from a pest that invites eradication for reasons of public health and wildlife conservation to a creature that may one day be protected as valued wildlife. It might be that foxes, gulls, and dogs are not seen as ecologically valuable, but neither were wolves when they were exterminated as agricultural pests and dangerous predators in Europe of yesteryear. The histories of conservation show that those organisms that are protected for their ecological value in today's world are the very same organisms that were – and are – eradicated as threats or pests, and killed and/or displaced in service of various human pursuits, including industry, agriculture, recreation, research, and settlement development (Adams, 2004). Even the extinction of parasites is now expected to have problematic implications (Carlson et al., 2017). This long, multispecies view of history suggests that certainties about the (lack of) value of free-living dogs and other noxious creatures are misplaced. Indeed, if there is anything that the idea of the Anthropocene tells us, it is that human knowledge about the entanglement of the social with the natural, the human with the nonhuman, is never complete or certain. As such, reframing pests, invasive alien species, and other noxious creatures as unintentional natures becomes a political tool that challenges their violent control, and a crucial first step in setting aside the hubristic assumption that the nonhuman world can be known, designed, and controlled to meet human ends.

10 | THE POLITICS OF (NON)DUALISM

These thought experiments on street dogs as unintentional natures point to the need to refine scholarship on social natures. An established line of literature has contested dualist ideas of society and nature, highlighting ontologies, including from non-Western traditions, which capture the hybrid character of the social and natural, the human and the nonhuman (Sundberg, 2014). Such non-dualist conceptions have gained currency outside the social sciences and humanities (Mansfield & Doyle, 2017). Nonetheless, nature–society dualisms still dominate discourse and practice, including that which pertains to the Anthropocene, in today's world (Bauer & Bhan, 2016).

The analyses in this paper indicate that these contradictory features in nature–society discourse can be understood by distinguishing between *ontological* and *ethical* dualisms. Anthropocene discourses, in their recognition of how humans affect and are affected by nature, might reflect an acceptance of non-dualism. However, this acceptance is restricted to *ontological* non-dualism. *Ethical* dualism, wherein humankind is granted a privileged position over the rest of nature, still prevails with respect to human–nonhuman relations.

Free-living dogs exemplify ontological non-dualism: they are neither social nor natural. This ontological non-dualism, however, does not automatically translate into ethical non-dualism. India's canine cosmopolitanism is uneven. In general, street dogs have lower ethical status than humans and are subject to many more human-induced harms than people are to dog-induced harms. The general tolerance for street dogs does not extend to "sick" dogs or "biting" dogs. The legal framework in India reflects the anthropocentrism that embeds legal systems across the world (Deckha, 2015). The ABC Rules offer street dogs secure residence, but court orders[3] in some places have permitted the "destruction" of those that are considered to be "nuisance" animals (Radhakrishnan et al., 2008). And while the killing of street dogs is not permissible (unless they are rabid or seriously ill) under Indian law, extra-legal violence towards dogs, including killing, does not provoke the same kind of legal or social sanction that similar violence towards humans would face (Nath, 2016). Furthermore, the denizenship arrangements put in place by the ABC Rules mandate neutering with the aim of keeping these denizens under control without any reciprocal recommendations for changes in human society to enable safe cohabitation. Neutering (castration and ovariohysterectomies) are invasive procedures with the potential to cause significant immediate harm to the dogs as well as long-term physiological side-effects (Srinivasan, 2015). Forced neutering is a crime if done to humans (Article 7, United Nations, 2002), but is seen as "welfare" if done to nonhuman animals. Even Kymlicka and Donaldson's model of denizenship retains a "residual humanism" (Lulka, 2009) in its assumption that cities, towns, and villages belong first and foremost to humans who have the prerogative to determine the terms under which nonhuman animal(s) can enjoy secure residence.

This ethical humanism can be found in the ground-level translation of non-dualist philosophical and/or religious thought from the Indian subcontinent too. For instance, in tribal, Buddhist, and Hindu philosophies, humans, plants, and animals easily change places through rebirth, while gods can be human, animal, or even both (Krishna, 2010b; Srivastava, 2005). Nonetheless, here too, ontological non-dualism is often stronger than ethical non-dualism when it comes to everyday practice in the contemporary world. As Govindarajan (2018) shows, the religious sacrifice of animals assumes value *precisely*

because the depth of the affective relations between the sacrificer/caregiver and the sacrificed makes the animal a suitable substitute for a human sacrificial offering. In these affective logics of sacrifice, ethical dualisms underlie the substitution of an animal for a human, even while ontological non-dualism enables the forging of strong affective more-than-human relations and human/animal substitution.

In sum, the social (the human) may be recognised as intertwined with the natural (the nonhuman) in ontological terms, but is still seen as separate and superior to the rest of nature for matters of ethics. Barring marginal deep ecological or animal rights discourses, anthropocentrism continues to mark law, scholarship, institutions, and everyday practices. Even Anthropocene narratives are ultimately concerned about retaining those ecological configurations and processes that have supported *human* life. These ethical dualisms are at the root of the socio-ecological harms that characterise the Anthropocene.

As such, if scholarship on social natures and the more-than-human is to move beyond the "impasse" of simply rejecting dualism (Mansfield & Doyle, 2017, p. 23), we might start with refining conceptualisations of social natures to make distinctions between ontological (non)dualism and ethical (non)dualism. This refinement needs to take into account the difficulty of equating in any straightforward manner the social with the human and the natural with the nonhuman (life). When it comes to questions of ethics, such categories display all sorts of slippages and ambiguities. Nonetheless, these ambiguities do not imply non-dualism. Rather, as explained below, they are indicative of plural ethical dualisms.

Because free-living dogs are not viewed as nature, they are *not* bestowed with the ethical status and legal protections that equally (or more) risky animals might have by virtue of being considered "pure" nature, i.e., wildlife. For instance, rhinos in some parts of India, like wildlife elsewhere, are protected with problematic shoot-to-kill anti-poaching measures (Rowlatt, 2017). Street dogs, on the other hand, continue to be subject to social violence that usually goes inadequately challenged. What's more, the law guaranteeing their secure residence continues to be contested in Indian courts. In some ways, street dogs are seen to be *too social* to be granted the ethical status and protections that other nonhuman organisms that are viewed as nature have, but *not social enough* to have the ethical status attributed to humans. Indeed, they are increasingly persecuted because of purported impacts on valued "natures" (Lenin, 2007; Vanak, 2012). It is this ambiguity that makes their theorisation as unintentional natures a political act.

Thus, ethical dualism in society–nature relations involves shifting statuses and hierarchies of value, and is better described in the plural – as ethical *dualisms*. In general, the human (the social) holds a higher ethical status than the rest of life on Earth. But in some situations, those nonhuman that epitomise nature are accorded higher ethical status than some humans who are seen as transgressing existing social norms (about valued wildlife, in this example) – and thereby not "social" enough to be guaranteed privileges normally accorded to humans. And as has been well-documented (Deb, 2009; Hutton & Adams, 2007), these tend to be people from marginal socio-economic backgrounds, including indigenous communities, who are not seen as meeting the standards of human exceptionalism embodied in development (van Dooren, 2016).

By contrast, those nonhuman that are seen as not being "natural" enough – hybrids of socio-nature – have ethical statuses inferior to not only the purely social (the human) but also the purely natural (wildlife). These include organisms like free-living dogs, pigeons, rats, cockroaches, and weeds that create niches for themselves in the midst of human life but are then persecuted, controlled, and eradicated because they are undesirable or risky to people and/or valued wildlife. They also include organisms that are conceptually "tainted" by the human, as exemplified by invasive alien species that are exterminated because they were introduced by *humans* in particular regions at some point in history. In other words, material or conceptual intertwining with the social, the human, results in the "denaturalisation" of some nonhuman and concomitant ethical disprivileging. All these are just some instances of how ethical dualisms operate.[4] As such, it is vital that geographical scholarship on nature and the more-than-human go beyond the label of non-dualism to explicitly engage with the prevalence of ethical dualisms in society–nature interactions.

11 | CONCLUSION

The canine cosmopolitanism explored in this paper offers conceptual and empirical provocations to biodiversity conservation and geographies of nature. First, the above analyses highlight the importance of simultaneous attention to the socio-legal and everyday geographies of human–animal interactions to fully understand more-than-human cosmopolitanism, and offer insights into tricky questions of how humans can share the planet with other life-forms. This is a timely intervention in geographical scholarship where attention to the socio-legal is emerging but yet marginal (Philippopoulous-Mihalopoulos, 2018). Canine cosmopolitanism in contemporary Chennai is enabled by the minimum legal foundation of denizenship incorporated in the ABC Rules, and is equally reliant on long histories of people–dog coexistence that includes conflict. More-than-human cohabitation *cannot* be contingent on positive attitudes and interactions, and on relationships of care,

benefit, or awe. Since conservation can no longer rely on exclusionary protected areas requiring *all* human spaces to become more-than-human societies, acknowledging the mutuality of cohabitation/conflict implies that *all* people, especially those who lead lives (often urban) insulated from the risks posed by "nature," learn to live alongside dangerous or unwanted nonhuman creatures. These risks are material, but also conceptual, in the sense of questioning established notions of a "good" human life that are underpinned by ethical nature–society dualisms.

Second, the paper offers fresh arguments that develop recent calls in geography for a more considered approach to organisms that are considered useless or noxious – pathogens, pests, invasive alien species, feral animals (Rutherford, 2018). A long view of history reveals that ideas about which creatures are valuable are constantly in flux. Animals and plants that were exterminated and cleared as noxious by one human generation are often subject to protection and reintroduction by another – albeit in time-spaces where traditions and memories of cohabitation are disappearing or even fully lost. Given that many rewilding interventions go wrong in the face of human–animal conflict, it might well be useful to safeguard existing habits of coexistence – such as with free-living dogs – regardless of whether the creatures in question are considered valued "natures" or not. This calls for a lens that sees creatures that are categorised as pests or vectors or just value-less *not* as "inauthentic" natures but as cosmopolitan ecologies (Gandy, 2016).

Third, these analyses advance scholarship on social natures (Castree, 2014; Mansfield & Doyle, 2017; Sundberg, 2014) by distinguishing between ontological and ethical (non)dualism to track their material implications: ethical frameworks influence what people do or don't do – as individuals and societies – to the rest of the world. Non-dualist ontologies might be celebrated in some fields of scholarship but do not automatically result in ethical non-dualism. Ethical dualism can be seen in the unevenness of India's canine cosmopolitanism and in nature–society relations more broadly. In making distinctions between ethical and ontological dualisms, the paper argues that investigating and dismantling the plural ethical dualisms that prevail in conservation (and other domains of nature–society interaction) is a crucial first step in remaking more-than-human societies. The challenge for geographical scholarship will lie in examining and moving beyond ethical dualisms in nature–society interactions to explore what it might mean for (privileged) humankind to live as part of/as "nature."

In times where the divisions between the domestic and the wild, the natural and the social, and the valued and the noxious are amorphous and constantly shifting, but ethical dualisms still hold strong, tracking and examining thriving examples of more-than-human cohabitation in the context of urban and liminal natures becomes a vital step in conceptually and materially remaking a planet that is not solely human. It is thus that thought experiments on dogs as unintentional natures excavate novel and more expansive paths for conservation and other more-than-humanisms in the Anthropocene.

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ENDNOTES

[1] In Tamil or English; Tamil interviews were translated into English.

[2] Participants are referred to by pseudonyms, gender (M/F) and socio-economic status (LIG – low income group/UMIG – upper/middle income group).

[3] These orders were then stayed and challenged in the Supreme Court.

[4] The lynching of people in India in the name of cow protection denotes a different kind of ethical dualism at play, one which seemingly privileges one kind of animal (female cattle) that has the highly "social" status of "sacred" over some kinds of people (religious/caste minorities). However, this "protection" is in name only and does not translate into better life-experiences for cows.

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