

REFLECTIVE ACCOUNTS OF CHILDHOOD INTER-SPECIES EXPERIENCES IN  
A SOUTHERN-AFRICAN CONTEXT: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL-HERMENEUTIC  
EXPLORATION

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts in Counselling Psychology

of

Rhodes University

by

SAMANTHA RUMP

Supervised by

JAN KNOETZE

December 2007

**ABSTRACT**

The aims of this research were to describe in rich phenomenological detail the recollected childhood experiences described by three South African adults of growing up with animals in the context of a traditionally African cultural perspective in South Africa; as well as to document the emotional, physical and social effects of inter-species relationships as described by these participants, in order to explore and situate these experiences in relation to broad international perspectives on the contribution of animals to human development. The question of how these described experiences correlate with broad international perspectives on the contribution of animals to human development comprised the hermeneutic of the study. Here it was found that the experiences of these South African individuals were generally in keeping with the trends found in the literature. Participants attributed to their childhood relationships with animals a variety of benefits. These benefits occur on a range of levels, from the physical to the cognitive, and the psychosocial. The emotional attachment of the participants to animals with whom they had interacted in childhood correlated with the nature of interspecies relationships as anticipated by the literature. Cultural differences in the conceptualisation of inter-species relationships, between western and traditionally African ideologies, appeared to influence the moral and ethical positions assumed by the participants, while the subjective nature of the described attachment between participants and animals remains qualitatively similar across cultures, when explored in relation to international research. The similarities between the experiences of the participants and international research findings lend credence to Wilson's hypothesis that all human beings are potentially able to connect in deep and profound ways with their natural environment, and that this connection contributes to the development of social and cognitive skills, as well as constituting emotional support and stability. The research concludes with an examination of its own limitations and suggestions are made for further research.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

To my three participants for their honest and moving recollections, experiences and insights that will contribute to such a significant field of research.

To Jan Knoetze for his support, encouragement, flexibility and unfailing belief in me.

To Henriette van Zyl, for her guidance, commitment, inspiration, love, honesty and friendship, without which none of this would be possible. For introducing me to this wonderful field of research, thank you.

To Rob, my friends – of all species – and family, for their support, care, compassion and faith in me. I am indebted to all of you.

IN MEMORY OF JOHANNES ODENDAAL WHO CONTINUES TO INSPIRE AND GUIDE THE EXPLORATIONS OF SOUTH AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL RESEARCHERS, ACADEMICS AND PROFESSIONALS ON THE NATURE OF HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONSHIPS AND WHOSE WORK CONTINUES TO HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE EVERYDAY LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BOTH HUMANS AND ANIMALS.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1) INTRODUCTION**

In mental health research, and hence Counselling Psychology, increasing significance has been given to the human-animal bond. Beck and Glickman (in Beck & Katcher, 2003) state, “No future study of human health should be considered comprehensive if the animals with which they share their lives are not included” (p. 80). In 2003 Beck and Katcher challenged researchers in the field of human-animal interactions to explore Wilson’s biophilia hypothesis within this particular field of study. In addition to this, these authors pointed to the lack of research within this field in terms of culture, inter-species and the influence of animals on human development. A dearth of information persists regarding human-animal interaction and the psychologically therapeutic benefits of this relationship in South Africa (Beckermann, 2004). Although a small number of South Africans are working to expand this field of research and therapy in South Africa, Beckermann (2004) mentions that South Africa continues to lag behind regarding such matters. South Africa is largely influenced by Western psychological theory, however, the lived experience or phenomenology of this particular relationship in South Africa might be different to that suggested by Western literature. As Beck and Katcher (2003) point out, “it is important to understand the attributes of a pet that are most likely to positively impact the health and well-being of people of different cultural backgrounds and histories” (p. 85). Research thus far has been more formal in application, such as Animal Assisted Therapy; however, to fully understand the benefits or significance of inter-species contact Beck and Katcher (2003) suggest, “we need studies of a wide variety of contacts with animals” (p. 82). Furthermore, Beck and Katcher (2003) emphasize that the significance of human-animal contact has narrowly been focused on companion animals and not other species of animals that humans come into contact with. Thus, with this challenge in mind, this research attempts to accept this challenge and, in addition to this, contribute to South African literature in this field as it originates largely from the international sphere.

This research will begin with a review of literature on the human-animal bond and introduce the reader to the biophilia hypothesis. Thereafter the social, emotional and physical benefits of this interspecies relationship will be highlighted and evidenced detailing its therapeutic effect. This will be followed by a critical overview of developmental psychology with a particular focus on physical, cognitive and psychosocial aspects of childhood development. Finally, literature will be reviewed on the effect of animal interaction on developing children thereby combining the afore mentioned

literature and some comments will be made on this field of research in South Africa and in so doing delineate the research aims and the relevance thereof in the South African context.

The review of the relevant literature will be followed by an explication of the methodology used to conduct this research with a brief exploration of the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research from the phenomenological, hermeneutic and phenomenological-hermeneutic perspectives. The process of the conceptualisation of the research aims in relation to the literature, and the influence of these on the choice of data gathering, analysis and interpretation will also be presented.

Themes emerging from the data will be detailed in relation to the data generated for this research in order to provide a detailed, in-depth exploration of the subjective, phenomenological experiences of the participants in their own terms. The emergent themes will then be explored in relation to the literature and topical research that applies. Participants' experiences will be contextualised within relevant literature, with a particular focus on ways in which their cultural identities resonate with mainstream westernised understandings of the human-animal bond and ways in which they differ. This will be followed by reflections and critiques of this research and recommendations will be made for future research.

On a personal note, as this is my particular area of interest, in 2005 I performed a small research project exploring the relationship between domestic pets and the aged in South Africa. What remains of interest to me are the childhood reminiscences of my then participants of growing up with a wide variety of animals and the meaning or significance they gave to these experiences which they seem to have carried throughout their lives. When reflecting on South Africa as a broader context I do not, however, want to limit these experiences to 'pets' or 'domestic animals', which is why I refer to these as inter-species interactions thereby taking into account any significant contact with any species.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2) LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1) Chapter Introduction**

This chapter will begin by providing the reader with an overview of the human-animal bond, grounded in the theoretical perspective of the biophilia hypothesis where particular attention will be paid to human development. As introduced by the biophilia hypothesis, the social, emotional and physical effects of human interactions with animals will then be explicated detailing influential research on these spheres. These acknowledged benefits of animals has led to the implementation of animals as therapeutic aids, a history of this development will be provided and comments will be made on its current status. As was introduced by the biophilia hypothesis, the reader will then be given a more grounded description of human development from a psychological perspective with a particular focus on physical, cognitive and psychosocial development. Some reference will be made to influential developmental theorists and finally a critique will be provided of developmental psychology on a whole. A review of literature on animals and childhood development will follow to provide the reader with an understanding of the contributions made to this field of study to date. Finally, comments will be made on human-animal interaction in South Africa where themes significant to this research will be delineated and existing research in this field of study will be made known.

#### **2.2) The Human-Animal Bond**

##### **2.2.1) The History of the Bond**

It has been well known for centuries that a social bond exists between humans and animals - 30,000 year old cave paintings include images of animals; we cannot be isolated from them and they are part of our heritage (Sheldrake, 1999). In tracing the history of this bond, Davis and Valla (in Brodie & Biley, 1998) point out that domesticated pets have played an important role in the lives of humans for thousands of years and mentions that Florence Nightingale supported the importance of animals within the healing environment. This, psychoanalyst Masson (2004), attributes to the fact that animals can, to a large extent, understand human emotions. He suggests that they share some of our most complex emotions as well (2004). Sheldrake (1999) accredits this to the fact that animals unselfishly respond to and bond with those who show them the greatest empathy, for example dogs and cats. Graham (1999) advocates that our relationship with animals is innate due to a predisposition to relate positively to certain species since they helped make us aware of danger and assisted us in finding

food. This positive relationship has remained within human beings as an instinct and has evolved into the fond relationships we have with our domestic pets today involving the companionship, comfort, social support and distraction aspects of pet ownership (Graham, 1999).

Odendaal (2000) argues that in advanced social systems, “attention-need behaviour is clearly identified” and is “a necessary ingredient for successful social interaction” (p. 277). The positive relationship between humans and animals fulfils this attention-need for both the human and the animal and the more social behaviour the animal displays the more promising the bond will be, such as can be seen in the relationship between man and dog (Odendaal, 2000).

Nebbe (1991) argues that although this bond has been widely known and accepted for centuries, the importance of the human-animal bond has only warranted study over the past two decades. Odendaal (2002) mentions that this field of expertise only became officially recognised in the eighties when scientific research began on this topic although he points out that in the 1950s, Konrad Lorenz published two books on human-animal “on a continuum from no interaction, to negative interaction, to positive interaction” (p. 1). However, although the first record of human-animal interaction was 12000 years ago, evidence now exists that pets such as dogs were first domesticated 30000 years ago by Native American Indians (Brodie & Biley, 1998). Nevertheless, the first location recorded in which animals were utilized as a therapeutic aid was in England at the York Retreat where those deemed insane were for the first time treated with compassion and benevolence (Netting, Wilson, & New, 1987). Thus, as Kale (in Sable, 1995) concludes, domestic pets provide psychological, physiological and social benefits to their owners no matter what their socio-economic status or physical appearance. Nebbe (1991) and Serpell (1986) point out that pets are so suitable within the therapeutic environment because in addition to the companionship and comfort that pets provide, they fill other emotional needs such as substituting a human relationship, as well as expanding social circles by encouraging more social contacts, all of which enhance an individual’s quality of life.

### **2.2.2) The Biophilia Hypothesis**

E. O. Wilson, an entomologist and the father of sociobiology, proposed that the human-animal bond and the human relationship with the natural world can be traced back to our earliest ancestors through the process of evolution (Gullone, 2000; Kahn, 1997; Penn, 2003; Wynn, 1997). Wilson (1984) first proposed the biophilia hypothesis as “a human innate tendency to focus on life and lifelike processes” (p. 1) as a result of evolutionary experience that is genetically based since he says this affiliation originated in the brain tens of thousands of years ago. Wilson (1984) supports this evolutionary suggestion with the notion that our natural environment must have had some effect on our

cognitions and emotions over time considering that our species survived by hunting, gathering and farming. Furthermore, Wilson added in 1993 that “[b]iophilia, if it exists...is the innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms” where he believes humans are instinctually inclined towards other species and are driven towards the aesthetics of the natural environment (Penn, 2003, p. 287). Although biophilia was more generally defined by Erich Fromm as “the passionate love of life and of all that is alive” (p. 38), Orr (1994) points out that both Fromm and Wilson agree that biophilia is innate and originates from the earliest of mankind which involved itself in nature. Wilson believes that this human tendency to affiliate to species and nature is endured as it is necessary for psychological, spiritual and physical well-being (Wynn, 1997). Wilson describes the process of biophilia’s evolution as biocultural where “hereditary learning principles have elaborated upon culture while the genes which prescribed the biophilic propensities spread by natural selection in a cultural context” (Gullone, 2000, p. 295). Wilson identifies this course of action as a “gene-culture coevolution” where a particular “genotype makes a behavioural response more likely” and “if this response enhances survival and reproductive fitness, the genotype will spread through the population” increasing the frequency of this behavioural response (Gullone, 2000, p. 295).

In 1993 Wilson further expands the biophilia hypothesis to include the human capacity to learn through association and this capacity to learn he again attributes to evolution and heredity (Gullone, 2000). Here Wilson refers to positive and negative human emotional experiences some of which are learnt and others are inherited; “from attraction to aversion, from awe to indifference, from peacefulness to fear-driven anxiety” (Gullone, 2000, p. 295). Wilson essentially proposes that in all natural settings there are associated rewards and dangers which, through human evolution, those who learned and adapted either by advance (biophilia) or avoidance (biophobia) to these settings appropriately were preferred (Gullone, 2000). And as Penn (2003) points out, biophobic responses of fear or dislike of possibly dangerous species which could only have been learned through negative experiences also provides support for the opposite where we are attracted to positive aspects of nature (biophilia) due to learned positive experiences.

Wilson suggests that biophilia is instinctual and often unconsciously present in our cognitions and emotions, tending to emerge “in the predictable fantasies and responses of individuals from early childhood onwards. It cascades into repetitive patterns of culture across most or all societies” (Wilson, 1984, p. 9). Kahn (1997) reminds us that what makes this hypothesis significant is the overarching theoretical basis it gives a multitude of disciplines for making sense of the human relationship with nature.

Since the introduction of the biophilia hypothesis a large body of literature has surfaced detailing studies in support of Wilson's proposal of biophilic or positive relationships with nature (Gullone, 2000). Ulrich (in Gullone, 2000) notes that the human propensity to preserve contact with the natural world is evident throughout history most notably seen in the homes of the ancient Egyptians, the Persians and Chinese alike where excavations and paintings reveal that these cultures kept sophisticated and often ornate gardens to retain this connection. More recently this drive to maintain contact with nature can be seen by the many nature reserves and national parks found world-wide which Ulrich (in Gullone, 2000) points out supports the notion that the experience of nature cultivates psychological well-being and reduces stress, particularly necessary in our modern times. Much research has been published detailing nature's healing capacity where it is proposed that humans respond positively both physically and emotionally to leisure activities in natural settings and even just some natural features have been known to reduce stress and decrease sympathetic nervous system activity (Kaplan & Kaplan; Parsons; Sheets & Manzer; Ulrich, in Gullone, 2000). Kaplan and Kaplan (in Kahn, 1997, p. 7) write that, "viewed as an essential bond between humans and other living things, the natural environment has no substitutes".

Kahn (1997) points out that investigating the human relationship with animals should offer information in keeping with the biophilia hypothesis, or conceivably even more so. Kellert (in Gullone, 2000) draws attention to our affiliation with other species where human survival was invested in the collaboration and association with some if not most other species serving to develop "our capacity for bonding, altruism, and sharing" (p. 305). This is most notably seen in human relationships with companion animals – dogs most likely alerted us to danger, as they still do, and the bond with such animals is often so close that it is not unusual for them to be given relational positioning equivalent to that of other humans (Katcher & Wilkins; Newby, in Gullone, 2000). It seems to be consistently reported in research that the human-animal relationship encourages emotional well-being and physical fitness especially shown in clinical studies with aged patients, autistic children and other people who suffer from a wide range of functional and organic disorders (Katcher & Wilkins, in Kahn, 1997). Research also suggests that animals increase social interaction and social attractiveness amongst humans not to mention the widely documented therapeutic and physical benefits associated with the human-animal relationship all of which will be elaborated on later (Anderson, Reid, & Jennings; Francis, Turner, & Johnson; Friedman; Hart, Hart, & Bergin; Katcher & Wilkins; Lockwood, in Gullone, 2000).

Melson (2000) recognises that biophilia has largely been limited to adults and so explores this hypothesis in the context of developing children. Melson (2000) focuses her exploration on hypotheses

extracted from biophilia and then considers three broad developmental questions, which she later uses as evidence for animal-assisted therapy (AAT) with children.

First she considers the question, “Do animals contribute to a child’s perceived security?” (Melson, 2000, p. 376). Melson (2000) reviews a range of developmental perspectives that agree that the developing child seeks safety and security from his or her immediate environment and if this is found to be so the child is confident enough to seek out other secure relationships. Melson (2000) then looks to the biophilia hypothesis where the survival of our species was dependent on us looking towards animals to alert us to danger and some animals even became linked to safety and relaxation. So, Melson (2000) goes on, children would have gained a sense of reassurance and safety in the presence of certain animal’s findings that are notable today. Melson (2000) concludes this question by posing questions of her own where she challenges more research to be conducted on the security-enhancing properties of animals for children and asks “To what extent can animals compensate for the absence or ineffectiveness of human efforts to reassure children? By what process – physical presence, holding, stroking, confiding, etc. – do animals restore perceived security?” (p. 377).

Second, Melson (2000) considers the question, “Are animals significant categories of early perceptual, cognitive, and language development?” (p. 377). Melson (2000) points out that the biophilia hypothesis posits that animals are one of the earliest categories that children obtain due to the fact that their attention will be drawn to their living environment and they will begin to extract shared characteristics from it. Thus, when a young child is frequently exposed to “four-legged, furry, tail-wagging creatures, and provided with an appropriate label” the child will categorise the animal (Melson, 2000, p. 378). Additionally, “animals embody the key perceptual characteristics – movement, aliveness, and contrast – that attract and hold attention” (Melson, 2000, p. 378). Shepard (in Melson, 2000) states, “Animals are the primordial ground for this endeavour [of category making] because they are the most nearly perfect set of distinct but related entities, and perhaps because they are alive like us” (p. 378). Melson (2000) finally looks to the fact that biophilia suggests humans have an emotional pull towards animals, which she suggests, “should motivate children’s drive to extract meaning from the world around them” (p. 378). Kellert, (in Melson, 2000) Wilson’s co-editor, proposed that being emotionally drawn by nature compels one to apply “the art of ordering and labelling so integral to language development” (p. 378). Melson (2000) reports that research shows infants are attentive to movement soon after birth and from an early age can perceive the difference between living and inanimate and moderate their behaviour accordingly. In a study conducted by Ricard and Allard in 1992, 9-month-old babies were each given a dwarf rabbit, a wooden turtle toy that made noises and moved and a young, unfamiliar woman to play with and it was found that the babies were most drawn

to explore the live rabbit which again resonates with the biophilia hypothesis (Melson, 2000). Melson (2000) points to another study of early semantic development by Nelson in 1973 where it was found that words for different animals emerge amid the first 50 words said by toddlers in the United States and animal category names appear more frequently except for *mama* or *daddy* (or their equivalent). Melson (2000), however, recognises that this research is limited and children's attention is often directed to animals by parents themselves. Yet, Melson (2000) points out that it is compelling that a child's attention is so readily held by an animal and that children seem to have an innate preference for living creatures.

Third, Melson (2000) considers the question, "Do animals play a role in emotional intelligence?" (p. 379). Goleman (in Melson, 2000) defines emotional intelligence as "recognising and managing one's own and others' feelings and mental states" (p. 379) and the development of this is usually limited to experiences with other human beings. Yet, Melson (2000) points out that the biophilia hypothesis proposes that interaction with animals can influence the emotional intelligence of developing children. When considering the biophilia hypothesis and its influence on this facet of development Melson (2000) explores two key features of emotional development: "the development of "theory of mind" ideas and the development of nonverbal understanding" (p. 380). Melson (2000) states that *theory of mind* includes the mental states of an individual and how these relate to certain feelings and actions. The theory goes that by 3-years-old most children can distinguish between dreams or ideas (mental objects) and physical objects, which can be touched or held (Meltzoff, in Melson, 2000). By 4-years-old theory of mind ideas become apparent as more complicated where "actions motivated by false beliefs will be consistent with those beliefs, "real" feelings may be masked by pretence, other minds are essentially unknowable" (Whiten, in Melson, 2000, p. 380). Melson (2000) points out that it is essential to develop a precise theory of mind where both our own and others behaviour is known to us, to survive in our well-ordered social world. Melson (2000) argues that biophilia proposes that children, as with other humans, perceive animals to have "intentions and desires whose actions are, at least potentially, intelligible from their mental states" and "humans are intrinsically motivated to decode the meaning of animal behaviour" (p. 380). This process, Melson (2000) points out, provokes humans into self-awareness of their own minds. Melson (2000) mentions that animals are valuable in providing a way in which children can develop theory of mind ideas, in some ways animal behaviour is considered more authentic as it is uncomplicated by human metaphor and deception whereas in other ways animal minds are more complex to decode as compared to human minds and children may incorrectly attribute their own feelings to animals. The way in which children understand the minds of animals and the role this plays in the theory of mind idea, Melson (2000)

believes, warrants further study. Melson (2000) then turns her attention to the development of nonverbal skills, which she argues is another important factor in emotional intelligence. Furthermore, Goleman (in Melson, 2000) mentions, “the mode of emotion is nonverbal” (p. 381). The biophilia hypothesis proposes that human affiliation with animals lies fundamentally in our decoding of their nonverbal behaviour (Melson, 2000). Melson (2000) points out that this suggests that a child’s ability to decode verbal cues may better be developed by interactions with animals and this ability may also be generalised to understanding human nonverbal behaviour. Additionally, Melson (2000) points to research suggesting that children who own pets demonstrate more emotional understanding than non-owners, findings that seem consistent with the biophilia hypothesis. Melson (2000) does, however, acknowledge that the link she has identified between animals and the emotional intelligence of children is not yet reliable enough and future research should explore this further.

Due to the fact that biophilia advocates that animals have the ability to encourage feelings of safety in children, are valuable perceptual and cognitive stimuli and assist in maintaining attention, encoding memories and organising linguistic thoughts as well as aiding children in becoming more nonverbally sensitive, Melson (2000) believes that the biophilia hypothesis can assist in directing AAT with children. Additionally, Melson (2000) points out that children are inherently interested in animals, which provides supporting evidence not only for the biophilia hypothesis but also for the implementation of animals in a therapeutic setting as well.

Kellert (in Kahn, 1997), who expanded significantly on the biophilia hypothesis with his examination of human attitudes and values towards nature, suggests nine values that he proposes “reflect a range of physical, emotional, and intellectual expressions of the biophilic tendency to associate with nature” (p. 9). These values are briefly: 1) the *utilitarian* value or materials gained from nature for human requirements, 2) the *negativistic* value or human fear or distaste for nature, 3) the *doministic* value or want to control or suppress nature, 4) the *naturalistic* value or positive experiences gained from being in contact with wildlife and the natural world, 5) the *ecologicistic-scientific* value or the study of nature itself and its scientific function, 6) the *aesthetic* value or positive affective response to the attractiveness of nature, 7) the *symbolic* value or the human inclination to use nature as a way of expressing thoughts and ideas, 8) the *humanistic* value or the human ability to bond intimately with animals and 9) the *moralistic* value or the proper and improper way of behaving towards the natural world (Kellert, in Kahn, 1997).

Due to what seems to be a human craving for a deeper affiliation with nature in a modern world where technology often threatens to overshadow this drive and obscure nature’s original form researchers have looked towards those communities, although few and far between, which do still seem

to value true biophilic ways of being (Nelson, in Kahn, 1997; Orr, 1994). Orr (1994) points out that just as violence and poverty often works against creating a sense of community so does wealth and prosperity and he proposes that biophilia flourishes best in ‘good communities’. He goes on to define a sense of good community as being a place where both the human and natural worlds are connected by a sense of mutual respect and responsibility where dignity and competence is fostered by our human bond with the earth (Orr, 1994). In this vein of thought Shepard (in Kahn, 1997) points us to wild animals “the human species emerged enacting, dreaming, and thinking [wild] animals and cannot be fully itself without them” (p. 9) so that in understanding biophilia and the human-domestic animal relationship he urges us not to overlook animals in their wild forms as well.

Despite having received increasing support, the biophilia hypothesis has been criticised for its bold statements, which, as Kahn (1997) points out are somewhat empirically and conceptually flawed. The key concerns surrounding the hypothesis are the genetic focus of biophilia and the negative association with nature within the model (Kahn, 1997). The concern regarding biophilia being determined or shaped by genetics Wilson counters by arguing that human behaviour, which therefore includes biophilic behaviour, is directed by genes – these genes have reproduced themselves from a learnt pattern of behaviour that has tended towards survival, although there is no scientific way of proving this he seems to maintain that this train of thought is logical considering the human aptitude towards survival (Kahn, 1997). Herzog (2002) acknowledges that Wilson’s original hypothesis is influential, however, finds it lacking in plausibility. Herzog’s (2002) concern lies in the fact that Wilson proposed humans have an affiliation for all of nature and all species yet he finds this difficult to believe considering species such as venomous snakes and spiders. This concern that negative affiliations with nature contradict biophilia has led to the separation by some of these responses into what is termed biophobia (Kahn, 1997). More recently Wilson seems to have adapted his original hypothesis by stating that humans have a range of feelings towards life that are both positive and negative and so maintains all affiliations fall under biophilia and thus does not set up this distinction between biophilia and biophobia (Kahn, 1997). “Biophilia is not a single instinct but a complex of learning rules that can be teased apart and analysed individually” (Wilson, in Herzog, 2002, p. 363).

Yet, in the face of the criticism that the biophilia hypothesis has received, Kahn (1997) points out that research continuously suggests that human beings, who are biological by nature with an irrefutable evolutionary past, have an affiliation with nature whether it is positive or negative. In essence, the success of the biophilia hypothesis lies in its ability to persuade natural and social science investigations into our relationship with the natural world (Herzog, 2002; Kahn, 1997).

## **2.3) Acknowledged Benefits of Animals**

### **2.3.1) Social Benefits of Animals**

The positive health benefit of human social companionship has led to the development of theoretical perspectives such as the social support theory (Beck & Katcher, 2003). This theory proposes that social support restores health by promoting feelings of self-acceptance and esteem through the significant support of others (Simoni, Frick, & Huang, 2006). Beck and Katcher (2003) point out that support varies from having friends or confidants to a successful marriage to being a member of an organized religion. Animals too are a notable source of social support as evidenced by the amount of people who regard their pet as their confidant and person they talk to, loyal friend and member of the family (Beck & Katcher, 2003).

Domestic pets are also beneficial due to their socializing effects, as animals have been known to improve social attractiveness and enhance recognition of the marginalized (Katz, 2003; Hart, 2003). Perhaps best summed up in the statement “The dog makes friends for me”, (Hart, 2003, p. 166) extracted from a Swedish study about the socializing effect of dogs, Hart refers to a broad body of research that concludes that animal ownership promotes extraversion and increased social interaction both at home and in the community. Not only do animals provide owners with companionship but also in social settings they offer a point of reference from which enjoyable and relaxed conversation can flow (Hart, 2003). Brodie and Biley (1998) propose that domestic pets appear to disband barriers encountered in social situations thus promoting free interaction. Hart (2003) points to the clearest illustration of this in a study conducted with pet owners with disabilities who report more social interaction and acceptance than non-pet owners with disabilities. The same is reported with disabled children with service dogs on the playground (Hart, 2003). Brodie and Biley (1998) go on to mention that they discovered that even pictures containing pets and other animals “were perceived more positively and the people in the interaction were described as friendlier, more relaxed and less threatening” (p. 6) thus they conclude that the presence of animals promotes positive images which assists social interaction.

Toray (2004) agrees with the above authors and proposes “companion animals help keep people involved with social contact, provide companionship, assist in daily living tasks and provide unconditional love and loyalty” (p. 1). It is also noted that the social interactions between people and animals possess very similar qualities to that of human-human interaction (Sheldrake, 1999; Toray, 2004). Hart (2003) mentions that playing with and talking to animals is particularly beneficial to children as it may reveal “some of the subtleties of social relationships” (p. 167). This came about from

research conducted with German adolescents where it was discovered that pet owners were more accomplished at deciphering human nonverbal facial expressions (Guttman, Predovic, & Zemanek, in Hart, 2003). Furthermore, Hart (2003) also states that pet owning children seem to rate themselves as more socially competent and seem to more readily make new friends than non-pet owners.

Sheldrake (1999) argues that animals possess all the qualities of a good counsellor including honesty, genuineness, empathy, non-judgmental attitude, confidentiality and good listening skills, which is reason enough for why many people admit to confiding in and talking to their pets. Children also frequently report the benefit of having a pet as having someone to tell their secrets to that will not give them away (Hart, 2003).

Although animals cannot substitute human relationships entirely, as Hart (2003) points out due to their vast socialising effects animals can assist in easing loneliness and isolation and help normalise the lives of a variety of different people by providing companionship and acting as social lubricants. Netting et al. (1987) support this argument by pointing out that animals make such appropriate companions because they are non-judgmental and provide much needed emotional support, which will now be elaborated on.

### **2.3.2) Emotional Benefits of Animals**

Sheldrake (1999) mentions that just as people are attune to one another's feelings, animals too are sensitive to how we feel through sensory information, such as our body language, but what is significant here is the often empathic way in which they respond. The emotional benefits of animals are evidently far reaching for children and adults alike if not only in giving an individual the experience of "mattering to another" (Hart, 2003, p. 169). Graham (1999) points out that the views expressed in most human-animal bond related theories reveal that "i) pets offer constant, non-judgmental, and often unconditional, love and respect to individuals and ii) pets seem to have the capacity to make one feel needed, which may be crucial to the development, re-development and maintenance of the self-esteem" (p. 47).

As Graham (1999) notes, animals play important roles in the lives of all animal lovers although much research has been conducted on this effect with children, mentally disabled people and the aged. These bonds are so special because pets provide the individual with valuable purposes such as companionship, physical stimulation, security and non-judgmental emotional support (Graham, 1999). Francis (in Brodie & Biley, 1998) conducted a study highlighting amongst 500 participants from hospitals, prisons, nursing and residential homes, that a domestic pet was the most commonly yearned for thing. Above all this demonstrates the affection, love and fondness that people feel for and gain

from animals, and this could explain why 99% of domestic pet owners regard their pet as a part of the family (Voith, in Brodie & Biley, 1998). Hart (2003) points to research conducted by Kidd and Feldman in 1981 revealing that elderly pet owners used more positive adjectives to describe themselves than non-owners. Research performed with hostile and withdrawn children showed that animals elicited laughter, animated conversation and enthusiasm (Hart, 2003). Even persons suffering from life threatening illnesses report that animals assist them by providing a distraction and helping them focus on the present (Carmack, in Hart, 2003). Companion animals are also reported to be “buffers against grief” (Hart, 2003, p. 171) where research shows that bereaved persons who own animals and share a strong attachment to them report less depression than non-animal owners who also reported more despair and loneliness (Hart, 2003; Sheldrake, 1999). Indicatively, some results show that animal ownership decreases symptoms of anxiety and depression further contributing to the notion that animals are emotionally and psychologically beneficial (Sheldrake, 1999).

Yet for all animal owners the bond that develops is beneficial largely due to an animal’s ability to provide comfort, affection and unconditional love (Sheldrake, 1999). Furthermore, Stewart (in Sable, 1995) notes that pets behave as if they are dependant on their owners for love and attention, thus encouraging in the owners a sense of being needed. This, Stewart (in Sable, 1995) suggests might account for domestic pet owners’ inclination to call their animals their “baby” or “child”. Frank (in Brodie & Biley, 1998) adds, “an animal can be a companion, friend, admirer, confidante, toy, teammate, mirror, trustee, or defender” (p. 3). Animals have many other simple roles important in the pet owners’ life including “being an outlet for one’s ancient primate grooming urges” and “facilitating humour and an excuse for idle play” (McCullough; Searles, Rowan & Beck; Smith, in Brodie & Biley, 1998, p. 4). Toray (2004) concurs with this list of roles pointing out that pets can be surrogate children, companions and best friends as well as a form of support in times of illness or life changes.

Due to this close emotional bond, Weisman (in Toray, 2004) points out that the loss of an animal after years of close companionship is a categorical occasion for bereavement. Unfortunately, a loss as great as this can lead to feelings of depression and anxiety since, as Anderson, Hart, Mader and Sife (in Toray, 2004) point out this loss is as significant and devastating as the loss of a human relationship.

In summation, Sable (1995) points out “research is beginning to support what every pet owner knows: Having a family pet enhances and enriches quality of life” (p. 1). This is due to mounting evidence that companionship in the form of an animal dramatically reduces feelings of loneliness, provides physical and emotional security and promotes a sense of well-being throughout life (Cusack; Muschel, in Sable, 1995; Peretti, 1990). Cusack and Smith (in Nebbe, 1991) confirm that the effects of

pet ownership include an improved social life as well as an enhanced positive attitude towards self and others.

### **2.3.3) Physical Benefits of Animals**

Graham (1999), Hart (2003) and Odendaal (2000; 2002) mention that much research was done in the 80's on the physiological effects of dogs on humans performed largely by Erica Friedmann and her colleagues. This research focused particularly on the survival rate of people treated for myocardial infarction (heart attacks) and it was noted that considerably more of those who survived these attacks, after a year's follow-up, owned animals and showed improved health than non-animal owners. Hart (2003) points out that while there is little evidence to say that stroking an animal can produce long-term health benefits, numerous studies have revealed that individuals suffering from hypertension benefit from stroking an animal as shown by a drop in their blood pressure. Similarly in a study with child participants, Friedmann (in Hart, 2003) noted that these individuals blood pressure dropped merely on being in the presence of a dog. The significance of this and other findings has led to numerous studies relating to understanding the physiological benefits of animals on humans. Odendaal (2002) draws attention to recent work of Erica Friedmann where she indicates that since the 80's it has been recorded that pets, in addition to assisting in decreasing blood pressure, provide relief for anxiety and stress in human beings. Odendaal (2002) further details that when an individual is repeatedly exposed to stress without respite damage can occur to the cardiovascular system. Yet, animals have been shown to be effective in reducing stress by helping "people to avoid stress responses or decrease their impact, and they can help remove the stress hormones more rapidly by encouraging people to exercise" (Odendaal, 2002, p. 80). It is not surprising then that Cairns (2002), Graham (1999), and Odendaal (2000) note that it has been proven by scientific means that stroking an animal can reduce blood pressure, relieve stress and increase a sense of overall well-being. Odendaal (2002) also points to research performed by Anderson, Reid and Jennings in 1992 and Patronek and Glickman in 1993 that concludes that pet owners in their study showed fewer risk factors for cardiovascular disease even when taking factors that add to this disease, such as hypertension, smoking, diet, cholesterol, body weight, anxiety and socioeconomics, into account. Roseberry and Morstein Rovin (1999, p. 435) concur with these suggestions and point out that petting a pet "sets the tone for immediate relaxation" while Nebbe (1991) mention that domestic pets encourage feelings of calmness and peace which is often reciprocated onto the animal. Likewise, this sense of calmness and relaxation when being touched or stroked has been noted to decrease the animal's heart rate and blood pressure too (Lynch & McCarthy, in Hart, 2003). In fact, Odendaal (2002) points out that this calming effect on animals was first noted in

1929, quite some years prior to any recognition of the same effect on the individual stroking the animal.

Serpell (in Odendaal, 2002) researched the long-term effects of animal ownership on human health and found that this relationship can have positive long-lasting effects on an owner's health shown by a decrease in small illnesses, an increase in self-esteem and well-being and being physically fit from doing more exercise. Mugford and McComisky, Delafield, and Robb and Stegman (in Brodie & Biley, 1998) mention that owning a pet helps individuals maintain fitness and health by reducing cardiovascular risk and increasing blood circulation and decreasing tension in muscles. He supports this with studies that conclude that pet owners develop significantly less minor health problems; get more exercise, have lower depression levels and improved self-esteem. Hart (2003) mentions research by Serpell in 1991 that shows that dog owners are more inclined to take walks and also take notably longer walks than non-owners thereby boosting the amount of exercise they get and aiding their physical health. Siegel (in Sable, 1995) discovered that elderly pet owners visited physicians less than non-owners and described a smaller amount of psychological distress which could be attributed to the calming effect of their pets and them feeling encouraged to take small walks. Serpell (in Hart, 2003) points out that in addition to the physical and psychological benefits of pet companionship individuals who own animals also feel less scared of crime due to the sense of security and safety some animals bring them. Katcher and Friedmann (in Brodie & Biley, 1998) identify 9 issues pets can be helpful with, these include "providing companionship and pleasurable activity, facilitating exercise, play and laughter, being something to care for and a source of consistency, allowing feelings of security, being a comfort to touch and pleasurable to watch" (p. 3).

In 2000 Odendaal, a South African academic, published an article titled, *Animal-assisted therapy – magic or medicine?* on his study of the physiological changes that take place during interspecies interaction with results that can be further used in support of animal-assisted therapy (Odendaal, 2000). In 2002 this research was published in more detail in his book, *Pets and our Mental Health: the why, the what and the how* (Odendaal, 2002). Again he recognizes what Friedmann and Wilson conclude that "pets can decrease anxiety and sympathetic nervous system arousal by *providing a pleasant external focus for attention* (Odendaal's emphasis), promoting feelings of safety and providing a sense of contact comfort" (Odendaal, 2000, p. 278). Odendaal's experiment consisted of an experimental group where dog lovers interacted with dogs familiar to them (their own dogs) and a control group where dog lovers interacted with dogs unfamiliar to them. In addition to these groups, Odendaal (2002) also tested his participants, recording the same measures as with dogs, while they were quietly reading a book. Odendaal (2002) measured blood pressure in both species while

interacting together also with the focus on neurochemicals (or metabolites) by performing blood analysis on the participants – measures that have not before been recorded. From his research, Odendaal (2002) concluded that shown by the results of his study there was a considerable drop in blood pressure indicating that “other physiological effects can be achieved between five and twenty-four minutes of positive dog interaction” (p. 133). He also concluded “the dog experiences the same physiological effects as the patient” (Odendaal, 2002, p. 134). Finally, the use of the book-reading intervention revealed that this relaxing activity produced similar physiological advantages as positive dog interaction although, as Odendaal (2002) points out, animal interaction has the added benefit of “live interaction” and “the effects of bonding” (p. 135). With these valuable results, Odendaal (2002) could make useful recommendations for using dogs in therapeutic settings suggesting that rather than long contact sessions of more than an hour it would be more beneficial to repeat shorter contact sessions with the animal, particularly where the animal is familiar. Odendaal’s (2000) results also confirm the positive effects of human-animal interaction, in both species, and physiologically, positive interactions with animals results in “a significant decrease in blood pressure” and other physiological changes “linked to a feeling of well-being” (p. 279).

In conclusion, it can therefore be noted from the above literature and the numerous studies concerning the physiological benefits of pet ownership on humans that animals can promote healthy living by decreasing the risk of cardiovascular disease and other sympathetic nervous system arousal such as anxiety and stress while also decreasing feelings of sadness and loneliness by providing companionship and support as well as a sense of safety and, with certain animals, motivation to increase physical exercise (Friedmann, in Odendaal, 2002).

Hart (2003) does, however, point out that the above-mentioned benefits are dependent on a sense of affiliation with and attachment to the owner’s animal and where this is present positive aspects of ownership outweigh negative ones.

#### **2.3.4) Therapeutic Benefits of Animals**

The acknowledgement of this human-animal bond and the social, emotional and physical benefits of human-animal interaction have led to the development of the use of animals in a therapeutic setting (Cusack & Smith, in Nebbe, 1991). Sigmund Freud was well aware of the benefits of pets in the therapeutic environment as his pet Chow-Chow accompanied him in his therapy sessions and Freud claimed that the dog helped to calm and reassure his patients (Coren, 1998). Regardless of Konrad Lorenz’s contribution in the 1950s it was Boris Levinson, a New York psychiatrist’s therapeutic contribution to the field of human-animal interaction in the 70s that afforded him the status of “father”

of this field of study as it is known today (Odendaal, 2002). This was due to Levinson's emphasis on the emotional benefits of animal interaction in his own therapy setting with child patients who suffered from communication problems (Odendaal, 2002). Largely three therapeutic terms exist to describe the aid of animals in the therapy setting, namely; *Animal-Facilitated Psychotherapy* (AFP), where an animal is introduced to an individual or group for the therapeutic purpose of interaction for remedial responses (an adaptation of Jules Cass's Pet-facilitated therapy where the term 'animal' is more general), *Animal-Assisted Activities* (AAA), developed by Burch, Bustad, Duncan, Fredrickson and Tebay where "motivational, educational, recreational, and/or therapeutic benefits to enhance quality of life" are provided by animals and professionals and *Animal-Assisted Therapy* (AAT), "a goal-directed intervention in which an animal is used as an integral part of the treatment process" also developed by Burch, Bustad, Duncan, Fredrickson and Tebay (in Odendaal, 2002, p. 59).

Netting et al. (1987) mention that AFP and AAT began to be used more widely in the 1960s and since then literature on this phenomenon has gained momentum. Cairns (2002) and Odendaal (2002), however, state that animals were used therapeutically as far back as the 9<sup>th</sup> century to support people with disabilities. The most commonly used animal in AFP and AAT is the dog (Graham, 1999; Odendaal, 2002). These authors point out that dogs' other roles of assistance include guiding the blind, hearing for the deaf, providing support for the physically disabled and even playing nurse and predicting seizures (Graham, 1999; Odendaal, 2002). Odendaal (2002) tracks the progress made since the 1960s of the therapeutic aid of animals where it was first acknowledged by Levinson that animals could "break down certain psychological barriers" for his child clients and thereby aid therapy "based on the abilities of pets to offer love and tactile reassurance" with the aim of "improving non-verbal communication, self-confidence" and "reality orientation" (p. 61-62). Katcher (in Odendaal, 2002) proposed that animals could be psychologically beneficial to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression due to their ability to "relieve loneliness, fulfil a nurturing need, occupy people in a way that they remain active, used as attachment figures that can be touched and pampered, to enjoy the aesthetic value of pets, to experience a feeling of safety and security" (p. 63). Katcher (in Odendaal, 2002) also noted that the therapeutic relationship is more easily established as trustworthy and unthreatening with an animal present in addition to the animal providing a safe and interesting discussion point for otherwise anxious patients.

Katz (2003) points out that the rationale for the therapeutic use of animals is simple as the emotional bond between people and animals is powerful enough to ease loneliness and to assist in the individual feeling loved. Odendaal (2000) goes on to mention that companion animals play a particularly therapeutic role for individuals who struggle for attention amidst healthy, active people.

Domestic animals are increasingly being recognised as suitable substitutes for humans due to their innate ability to fill emotional holes and build self-esteem due to their tolerant, accepting and nurturing natures (Bauston, 1998; De Grave, 1999; Katz, 2003; Serpell, 1986). Sheldrake (1999) mentions that many studies have been conducted revealing that people at risk, for example the bereaved and the elderly, feel less anxious, lonely, depressed and are in better physical health because of the pets they keep – the secret, Sheldrake goes on, is unconditional love. Among these benefits of AFP and AAT, Kalfon (in Brodie & Biley, 1998) mentions that domestic pets “can be used to stimulate awareness and interaction and provide pleasure” (p. 2). Francis (in Brodie & Biley, 1998) explains further that animals “improve social interaction, psychological function, life satisfaction, social competence, psychological well-being and reduce depression” (p. 3). Cusack and Smith (in Nebbe, 1991) recognise that animals contribute to “positive attitude to self and others and enhance social life” (p. 1). These authors remark that the human-animal relationship is simple and secure thus low in risk, and that an animals’ propensity towards displaying affection, honesty, loyalty, acceptance and consistency can accomplish human beings necessary desire to be loved and feel worthwhile (Nebbe, 1991; Odendaal, 2000). Salotto (1999) points out that therapy pets have recently been acknowledged for their capacity to encourage people in rehabilitation; to change prison inmates into responsible people; to comfort the aged and help educate school children.

Yet, despite this alarming body of research reporting the therapeutic benefits of animals Odendaal (2002) points out that since the 90s the application of animals in a therapeutic setting has been marginal. With the awareness of the therapeutic benefits of animals in the 60s came scientific criticism in the latter half of the 80s, which led to more cautious research in the 90s and therefore lack of financial support in this field (Odendaal, 2002). Odendaal (2002), however, points to research that highlights the significant underreporting of the use of animals in health settings yet he goes on to say that it is clear that the phenomena of the human-animal bond and the health benefits of animals are still attracting great attention – the challenge is for researchers to investigate and report on their findings in this field to foster understanding and acceptance of this therapeutic aid.

## **2.4) Developmental Theory**

### **2.4.1) Developmental Psychology Defined**

Muir and Slater (2003) describe developmental psychology as the discipline that endeavors to illustrate and understand changes that take place over time with regards to an individual’s behaviour, thought, reasoning and general functioning because of biological or genetic, individual, and external environmental influences. Developmental psychologists vary in perspectives but their study is usually

of the way individuals develop, from as early as conception, and how this continues across human lifespan to death (Muir & Slater, 2003; Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Muir and Slater (2003) remind us that in order for human development to take place there are factors of maturation and experience that continuously influence this process. The term 'maturation' refers to the genetic or biological components of development that are largely independent of environmental influences (Muir & Slater, 2003). Yet we are reminded that individuals are continuously relating to an environment that assists in determining its own unique development in addition to the maturation process already occurring (Muir & Slater, 2003).

Newman and Newman (2006) point out development involves growth at every stage of one's life where individuals show an aptitude for adaptation through life challenges and different roles that are taken on which results in increased capabilities and changes in psychological, neurological and behavioural functioning. Processes of continuity and change also play a part in and are necessary for understanding human development where certain characteristics remain stable within an individual while others change but these two forces continuously interact (Newman & Newman, 2006). Additionally, Newman and Newman (2006) argue that since humans operate in an integrated way it is essential that the whole person is understood including social, emotional, physical and cognitive components of their development and how these relate to each other. Yet these components should only be interpreted in relation to an individual's context or related setting and significant relationships due to the fact that humans adapt and give meaning to their social environment (Newman & Newman, 2006). In a similar vein it is important to keep in mind that individuals "contribute actively to their development" by the expression of choice and preference however, opportunity for this is sometimes restricted by certain societal influences (Newman & Newman, 2006, p. 5).

In broad terms, however, the changes that developing individuals undergo fall into the following three spheres: physical development, cognitive development and psychosocial development (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Physical development refers to all physical changes an individual goes through including growth and aging as well as other physiological changes influenced by genetics (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Cognitive development refers to the development of mental processes such as language, perception, learning and memory (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Finally, psychosocial development refers to changes in personality traits, relationships, emotions, interpersonal skills, roles in the family and society that constitutes both personal and interpersonal features of development (Sigelman & Rider, 2006).

In traditional psychological research theorists have focused on one of the particular domains of development often to the exclusion of others. Contemporary developmental theory has tended to view

these domains as part of a greater whole taking them all into account as important aspects of overall human development. Burman (1999), best known for her deconstruction of developmental psychology, urges her readers to consider a multitude of influences and contexts when considering the development of an individual. It is not possible to fully explicate the numerous and diverse theoretical views on human development in psychology in order to contextualise developmental psychology in South Africa, so a brief exploration of a few dominant theoretical developmental perspectives will be discussed.

#### **2.4.2) Physical Development**

Although no one explicit psychological theory exists in terms of physical development, all cognitive and psychosocial developmental theories acknowledge the physically developing body of human beings. Louw, van Ede and Louw (2004) maintain that physical development includes both growth of the body and organs as well as physiological changes or the development of the internal structure and function of the body. Physical development usually occurs at a rapid rate in the prenatal stage and in adolescence and declines in adulthood finally deteriorating in old age (Louw et al., 2004). Physiological systems that have significant psychological implications and are therefore paid attention to in developmental psychology include the development of the senses, the nervous system, the sex glands and the endocrine glands (Louw et al., 2004). An individual's senses and nervous system are intricately linked to most features of cognitive functioning and perception while the endocrine gland, or specifically the thyroid gland, plays a role in an individual's energy levels and the sex glands play a dramatic role throughout an individual's life most notably during puberty (Louw et al., 2004). Physical development includes motor development from a child learning control over parts of his or her body and learning to utilize his or her body effectively to later decline in motor functions in adulthood and old age (Louw et al., 2004). Slater, Hocking and Loose (2003) mention that the development of motor skills in infancy such as sitting, crawling and walking is a significant aspect of physical development as it encourages a sense of accomplishment and independence, which has emotional and social consequences. Additionally, other motor skills that are integral to survival are developed during infancy and childhood such as grasping, crying, sucking, coordination, looking and the understanding of height, distance and space and these motor skills continue to develop throughout life (Slater et al., 2003). Thus, physical development is regarded as the inevitable unfolding of maturational processes, which are influenced by an individual's environment. Environmental enrichment is considered necessary for the development of physical prowess, and as previously mentioned; animals can provide this environmental enrichment (Odendaal, 2002).

### 2.4.3) Cognitive Development

Louw et al. (2004) propose that cognition is defined as “the processes and products of our minds” (p. 10). Furthermore, cognition is the way in which we obtain information about the outside world, convert this information into knowledge, store it and recover it to later guide our behaviour (Louw et al., 2004). The alteration and maturation of cognitive processes and products is known as cognitive development where developmental psychologists seek to recognise, describe and explain cognitive changes that transpire at various stages of an individual’s life (Louw et al., 2004). Cognitive processes include “paying attention, perceiving, remembering, thinking, reasoning, planning, solving problems, imagining, inferring, conceptualizing, classifying, associating, relating, symbolising, dreaming and fantasising” (Louw et al., 2004, p. 10). While products of our minds include many things such as “writing a book, solving a mathematical problem, creating a painting or inventing something” (Louw, van Ede & Louw, 2004, p. 10). Louw et al. (2004) mention the distinction between sensation, the way in which our senses are stimulated by our environment and thus gather information, and perception, the way in which we give meaning to the information harvested by our senses – these are two separate but complimentary processes. Cognitive development also includes the development of language where initially communication is merely at a nonverbal level (facial expressions, crying, touching) but gradually it becomes their mother tongue (Louw et al., 2004).

It is not possible to discuss cognitive development without acknowledging the contribution of Jean Piaget (1896-1980) an influential twentieth century Swiss psychologist (Louw et al., 2004). According to Piaget, the child is an interactive learner in the shaping of his or her own development and is seen as an explorer and independent thinker (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Piaget regards cognitive functioning as “the interaction of individuals with their environment” and this occurs through processes of *organisation* and *adaptation* (Louw et al., 2004, p. 73). Organisation is the coordination and integration of various cognitive structures that allow individuals to carry out certain tasks and adaptation is the way in which individuals evolve and adapt to their environments as they come to better understand the world (Louw et al., 2004; Slater et al., 2003). Piaget suggested that there are four key stages of cognitive development and that the interaction between an individual’s developing brain, or biological maturation, and their experiences is what progresses an individual through each of these stages (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). The first of these stages is the *sensorimotor* stage (birth to age 2) where Piaget proposes that “infants use their senses and motor actions to explore and understand the world” and by the end of this stage “they are capable of symbolic thought using images or words” (Sigelman & Rider, 2006, p. 42). The changes that take place during this stage are as a result of the

infant's environment and the objects and people within it (Slater et al., 2003). The second stage is the *preoperational* stage (2 to 7 years) where children “use their capacity for symbolic thought to develop language, engage in pretend play and solve problems. But their thinking is not yet logical” (Sigelman & Rider, 2006, p. 42). During this stage thinking is based on perception and intuition but not logic where some basic acts of classification (of objects of the same colour) can occur but not multiple classification or hierarchical classification (Louw et al., 2004). The third stage is the *concrete operations* stage (7 to 11 years) where “children acquire concrete logical operations that allow them to mentally classify, add, and otherwise act on concrete objects in their heads. They can solve practical problems but have difficulty with abstract problems” (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). A key characteristic of this stage is that the child has developed the ability to concentrate his or her attention on one task (Slater et al., 2003). The fourth and final stage is the *formal operations* stage (11 to 12 years or older) where adolescents can understand abstract concepts and use hypothetical thinking (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). In this final stage individuals are better able to understand reason, logic and are able to be reflexive; as age and experience increase so are these cognitive abilities tested and more readily applied (Louw et al., 2004; Slater et al., 2003). Piaget attributed the above-mentioned ages to the stages of cognitive development as guidelines and furthermore mentioned that the stages form an *invariant sequence* meaning that children follow through the stages in order without omission or regression (Sigelman & Rider, 2006).

Piaget has been criticized for underestimating children's cognitive abilities, for not focusing enough on the role of emotion and motivation in the development of thought, for only focusing on childhood development and finally he was challenged for assuming that culture does not have an influence on cognitive development (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Yet despite these criticisms, it is not surprising that Piaget's work remains influential within the realm of developmental psychology (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Although developmentalists today allow more diversity when understanding human development, most accept Piaget's perspective that children are active participants in their own development, along with their environment, which produces cognitive changes (Sigelman & Rider, 2006).

Another influential cognitive theorist, Lev Vygotsky, (1962) born in the same year as Piaget, asserted that we cannot take learning and cognitive processes into account out of context (Louw et al., 2004). His work, translated from Russian only after the Cold War, has fast become as synonymous with theories of cognitive development as is that of Piaget who lived productively to the age of eighty-four years old (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Vygotsky died at the age of thirty-eight and did not live to see the international appreciation of his work in the late twentieth century (Sigelman & Rider, 2006).

This sociocultural cognitive theory, influenced by Marxism, provided a broader, contextualised perspective on cognitive development - which had unfortunately been lacking from much early theorising about the development, structure and functions of cognitive processes (Louw et al., 2004). Piaget's cognitive theory placed the locus of learning within the individual, while Vygotsky (1978) asserted "patterns of social interaction do not simply assist, but actively construct the formations and patterns of internal cognition" (p. 9). Vygotsky (1962) created the notion of a "Zone of Proximal Development" (p. 45), locating learning within the pillars of an actual developmental level - determined by independent problem solving, like tests and exams; and the level of potential development, as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in "collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 46). Here, the social influence of learning is of critical importance, the child performs as an active participant in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1962). Important to Vygotsky (1978) was the phenomenon of talking to oneself, particularly in young children, he came to the conclusion that this private speech plays a central role in cognitive development. Here, the child does not necessarily adjust his or her speech to the perspective of a particular listener, but egocentrically assumes the listener's perspective will be the same as their own. According to Vygotsky (1978), private speech represents an important early transition in becoming socially communicative, and is a precursor to the development of inner speech, which he defines as the process of internalising social interactions; silent speech is used to consciously guide thought and behaviour. Vygotsky (1978) found that children who frequently and confidently engage in private speech appear to be more socially competent than those who are encouraged to remain silent. A safe space to practice the use of the newly acquired sign and symbol system that represents human language provides a secure basis from which to explore social interactions (Louw et al., 2004; Vygotsky, 1978). Rather typically for a western psychologist, Piaget conceptualised this kind of speech as "ego-centric" and a-social in nature (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Though criticised for its cultural specificity, the work of Vygotsky provides a useful bridge between cognitive and psychosocial developmental theories (Louw et al., 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2006). While cognitive development is rigid and universalisable, childhood environmental and social experiences radically influence the actual structure and function of the individual cognitive domain (Louw et al., 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2006).

#### **2.4.4) Psychosocial Development**

Newman and Newman (2006) define psychosocial development as the constant interaction between an individual's "psychological needs and abilities" and "societal expectations and demands" (p. 39). Louw et al. (2004) propose that when considering psychosocial development it is important to

consider an individual as a whole and one of the most inclusive ways in which to do this is by understanding personality. Personality is defined as “values, attitudes, habits, emotions, prejudices and intentions that determine a person’s behaviour in interaction with the environment” (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, in Louw et al., 2004, p. 12). Personality development occurs across the lifespan and is integral for the formation of identity and self-esteem as it relates to the way in which individuals come to view themselves, others and society (Louw et al., 2004). Louw et al. (2004) define social development as the relationships individuals have with other people and society and the influence of these on the individual and resultant psychological changes that occur for the individual throughout their life. A significant aspect of social development is that of moral development, which entails the individual’s belief of right and wrong, and the changes that occur in these beliefs (Louw et al., 2004).

Moral development is considered both from a societal perspective, taking into consideration the way in which society influences one’s moral judgment, and from an individual perspective, focusing on an individual’s moral attitudes, values and reasoning and the way in which these may change over time (Louw et al., 2004). Psychosocial theory acknowledges the fact that growth occurs in all areas of an individual’s life and that individuals have the ability to add to their own development and that this development is very often influenced by culture and society (Newman & Newman, 2006). It is not possible to discuss development, and specifically social development without acknowledging the work done by Kohlberg (Grant, 2002; Louw et al., 2004). Kohlberg was particularly concerned with the moral development of the individual and he constructed moral dilemmas, which he presented to children from a range of specific age-groups and from their responses he judged the advancement of their moral reasoning (Grant, 2002). Though interesting, his work is not generalisable, though it has been taken as representative of westernised male development during the early and mid twentieth century (Grant, 2002; Louw et al., 2004). Conducted with and by only males, his research is criticised for its gender bias and the fact that the scenarios and the interpretations of choices made rely on the moral and ethical judgments of the researchers - judgments which are socially, geographically, and temporally determined (Grant, 2002). It is for this reason that the content of the work of Kohlberg does not feature in this particular exploration of childhood development, though moral and ethical concerns, and the cultural influences on these, are of significance.

Erik Erikson (1902-1994) an influential German psychoanalyst is well known for his contribution to developmental psychology and particularly for his emphasis on social influences and culture in development (Sigelman & Rider, 2006; Slater et al., 2003). Erikson proposed that an individual’s personality evolves through a number of psychosocial stages where crises occur and are largely overcome as people are active in their own development (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Erikson

maintained that stages of human development continue throughout an individual's lifespan characterised by developmental tasks and crises (Louw et al., 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Erikson identified eight key psychosocial stages that he believed humans experience throughout their lives (Louw et al., 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Erikson stated that if a certain crisis at a particular stage is not successfully managed the individual will move onto the next stage by the demands of society and maturation, however, the unresolved crisis from the previous stage will effect each of the later stages (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). The first stage is *trust versus mistrust* (birth to 1 year) where the challenge is for the infant to "learn to trust their caregivers to meet their needs" (Sigelman & Rider, 2006, p. 32). Here the child must develop feelings of trust and overcome feelings of mistrust as they gradually begin to interact with their environment and motor and physical development progresses (Louw et al., 2004). Erikson mentions that this stage takes courage for the new child and is characterised by the word 'hope' which is carried throughout the child's life (Louw et al., 2004). The second stage is *autonomy versus shame and doubt* (1 to 3 years) where children must "learn to assert their wills and do things for themselves" or they will begin to doubt their own abilities (Sigelman & Rider, 2006, p. 32). Erikson believes that during this stage children are confronted with the task of developing a sense of independence and defeating feelings of shame and doubt (Louw et al., 2004). During this stage children are physically maturing rapidly and developing a better sense of movement and self-control (walking and control over excretory functions), which contributes to their sense of autonomy but also brings about failure and discipline, which is significant for moral development (Louw et al., 2004). Erikson reflects on the significance of the role of caregivers in this stage where it is important that children be allowed to assert their autonomy and that their failures be dealt with sympathetically so as not to harm their self-confidence and so that they emerge from this stage with *will-power* (Louw et al., 2004). The third stage is *initiative versus guilt* (3 to 6 years) where children learn initiative by "devising and carrying out bold plans, but they must learn not to impinge on the rights of others" (Sigelmn & Rider, 2006, p. 32). At this stage children begin to explore the world and become interested in society and other people yet this sometimes leads to inappropriate social behaviour, which can induce feelings of guilt in the child that need to be overcome (Louw et al., 2004). Erikson believes that the key characteristic of this stage is for the child to endeavor to achieve their goals with *purpose* and confidence, which will assist them in overcoming feelings of guilt (Louw et al., 2004). The fourth stage is *industry versus inferiority* (6 to 12 years) where the child "must master important social and academic skills and keep up with their peers" to avoid feeling inferior (Sigelman & Rider, 2006, p. 3). Feelings of success and mastery are important at this stage and the most likely opportunity to achieve this is through education and this should lead to a sense of *competence*, which is carried with an

individual throughout their life (Louw et al., 2004). The fifth stage is *identity versus role confusion* (12 to 20 years) where “adolescents ask who they are and must establish social and vocational identities” if not confusion will arise about their adult role (Sigelman & Rider, 2006, p. 32). During this stage Erikson believes individuals question their identity both socially (which group do they belong to) and personally (what are their values and ideals) usually driven by the physical and psychological transformations of puberty and sexual maturity (Louw et al., 2004). Erikson believes that the best result of this stage lies in *reliability* where an individual accepts his or her identity and also acknowledges that there are other identities available that could have been chosen (Louw et al., 2004). The sixth stage is *intimacy versus isolation* (20 to 40 years) where “adults seek to form a shared identity with another” but may also “fear intimacy and experience loneliness and isolation” (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Here individuals seek to develop a common sense of identity with a partner besides that of their own sense of identity yet individuals also seek to protect themselves against intimacy, which could lead to feelings of isolation (Louw et al., 2004). Erikson describes the ideal of this stage as *love* where an individual shares an intimate relationship with another that promotes the positive development of the relationship (Louw et al., 2004). The seventh stage is *generativity versus stagnation* (40 to 65 years) where “middle-aged adults must feel that they are producing something that will outlive them” whether this be in terms of work or children if not they may feel stagnant, inert and pre-occupied (Sigelman & Rider, 2006, p. 32). Erikson defined generativity as a broad concept that includes all creativity as well as the passing on of one’s culture to another or educating children (Louw et al., 2006). Here, Erikson suggested that the focus for individuals is on *care* both at inspiring one’s own life and the lives of others (Louw et al., 2004). The eighth and final stage is *integrity versus despair* (65 years and older) where “older adults must come to view their lives as meaningful to face death without worries and regrets” (Sigelman & Rider, 2006, p. 32). Erikson believed that if individuals have successfully managed the previous life stages they review their lives with a feeling of contentment as they approach death, if individuals feel dissatisfied with their life he believes they will feel despair (Louw et al., 2004). If an individual feels content and satisfied with their life at this stage, Erikson believes they have achieved *wisdom* (Louw et al., 2004).

Erikson has, however, been criticised for paying no attention the cognitive development of developing individuals and too little attention to emotional development (Louw et al., 2004). Additionally, critics believe that Erikson does not provide a sufficient explanation of how human personality develops although he does provide a compelling description of it (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Yet, Erikson is hailed for providing a more inclusive developmental theory and for his emphasis on

social influences and the adaptive nature of human beings (Louw et al., 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2006).

#### **2.4.5) Critique of Developmental Psychology**

Burman (1999) takes a critical view on developmental psychology and draws attention to what she feels are the often-detrimental effects of this particular field of research. Burman's (1999) concern lies in the rigid application of developmental theories in society that "has a powerful impact on our everyday lives and ways of thinking about ourselves" (p. 2). Burman (1999) argues that developmental theories should be considered with caution as they are largely influenced by Westernised cultures not taking into account the host of other cultures that influence modern society today. While Burman (1999) consents that contemporary developmental psychology has begun to embrace a more culturally and politically fair view of developing individuals she cautions us to critically evaluate historical structures that current developmental psychology is based on today that informs the way in which both home and schooling systems operate on. Burman (1999) points out that "inequality and differential treatment on the basis of class, culture, gender, age and sexuality permeate the deep structure of developmental psychological practice" (p. 188) and she challenges her readers to be critical in their application of developmental theory and to take into account these concerns.

#### **2.5) Animals and Childhood Development**

Nebbe (1991) mention that in studies conducted on the relationship between humans and their domestic pets, participants note how significant certain animals were to them during their upbringing. The participants mentioned that they "learned responsibility, empathy, sharing and companionship from their pets" and mention that their pet also provided them with someone to talk to (p. 1). Roseberry and Morstein Rovin (1999) argue that most peoples' fondest memories of growing up include those of family pets. In keeping with this point, Beck and Katcher (in Nebbe, 1991) propose that the nature of the relationship between adults and their domestic pets is dependant on positive experiences of and feelings for animals as a child, and they suggest animals seem to commonly provide positive influences in childhood. In taking evidence from studies where animals have been used in a therapeutic setting (AFP or AAT) with children it has been shown that they offer exceptional physical, emotional, educational and social support to children of all ages (Jalongo, Astorino & Bomboy, 2004). Fontaine (in Jalongo et al., 2004) researched the positive effects of AFP or AAT on children and concluded that this therapeutic method "decreased feelings of loneliness, feelings of increased physical and psychological well-being, decreased need for medications, enhanced quality of life, improved physical

function, decreased stress and anxiety, and increased motivation” (p. 12). These authors maintain that the alarming success rate of the therapeutic use of animals with children is due to the fact that most children are naturally inclined to respond positively to animals and open up to them as they feel relaxed accepted in their presence (Jalongo et al., 2004). The simple fact that children’s enthusiastic and enchanted responses to animals, that have usually dominated their paintings, fantasy games, imaginations and stories, should be enough to warrant a closer look at how animals can aid childhood development (Jalongo et al., 2004). Endenburg et al. (2002) researched the long-term effect of ‘normal’ children interacting with animals and concluded that children benefit from both the involvement with the animal and attachment to the animal as this enhances a child’s self-esteem and induces more positive emotions. They also found that animals are integral in providing children with opportunities to develop relationship and communication skills whether it be a donkey, pony, sheep, dog or even pig (Endenburg et al., 2002). Their research indicates that the psychosocial benefits of animals to children include appearing to be more focused, better behaved and exhibiting more co-operative behaviour in the presence of animals.

George (1999) in her article titled, *The Role of Animals in the Emotional and Moral Development of Children* proposes that introducing animals to developing children can be a successful way of assisting these individuals in developing healthy “self-esteems, self-control and responsibility” (p. 381). She proposes that normally developing children will usually encounter stress and personal obstacles, whether it be physical, emotional, cognitive or social, in their development and animals can aid them in learning to come to terms with difficult emotions and relationships in a safe environment (George, 1999). Even without unforeseen childhood stressors, George (1999) reminds us that normal childhood involves “developing self-esteem, achieving independence, learning to relate to others, peers in particular, coping with a changing body, and forming basic values” (p. 381). What is important in managing these stages of development is how a child copes in stressful circumstances and perceives themselves (Louw et al., 2004). Developmentally, some experiences are managed with a sense of achievement and accomplishment attributing to a child’s sense of esteem and confidence, other experiences may not be successfully managed leading to a sense of failure, disappointment and feelings of inadequacy (George, 1999; Louw et al., 2004). With the increasing demands of society, poor socioeconomic conditions, increase in drug use and violence and broken homes it is becoming more necessary to provide children with positive external support to assist them in what can often be a tenuous time in their lives to avoid the development of later psychological difficulties (George, 1999; Hart, 2003). George (1999) looks to Erik Erikson’s model of the first 12 years of development and proposes that animals can be used as a way to assist children in this process with particular focus on

moral development. Briefly, from infancy to 12 years of age, Erikson proposes that individuals learn trust that they are valued and will be taken care of, autonomy and assertiveness, learn to explore and discover purpose, industry and mastery in their lives (George, 1999; Louw et al., 2004). George (1999) sums up the values that children strive towards as they approach adulthood: “self-esteem, integrity, honesty, respect for others, courage, self-discipline, compassion, patience, courtesy, responsibility, cooperation and a work ethic” (p. 382). Hart (2003) proposes that animals can greatly enhance a child’s chance of successfully navigating their way through childhood due to an animal’s ability to aid a child to better cope with stress and heighten their sensitivity. Furthermore, she notes that animals encourage children to realize their identity as animals help “bring out their personalities” and playing with an animal encourages a child to focus on the reality of the relationship while also serving to release tension and anxiety (Hart, 2003, p. 169). George (1999) also highlights the importance of the development of empathy in children, which she proposes can be cultivated through direct contact with animals where an awareness is instilled of the requirements and feelings of the animal that can be related to other relationships. Looking after an animal can create for a child a sense of responsibility, achievement, self-esteem, nurturing, discipline, trust, mutual respect and love – all concepts that can be transferred to other relationships throughout one’s life (George, 1999; Hart, 2003). Through their relationship with animals, children also learn to understand concepts of death and suffering, notions that are important to comprehend conceptualize to be able to recognize when others are in need of care when in pain or when experiencing loss (George, 1999; Hart, 2003). George (1999) concludes by mentioning that with the amount of adults who confess to having been helped through their childhood by their pets the role of animals in the lives of developing children is insurmountably significant.

Hart (2003) mentions that animals may be developmentally beneficial to children as they provide a sense of security for a child endeavoring to explore away from his or her mother. Additionally, Hart (2003) points out that pets are regularly employed to combat feelings of loneliness and unhappiness or provide emotional support to children. In a study conducted by Bryant in 1990 it was revealed that children expressed empathic concern about their “pet’s death, welfare, needs and care” (Hart, 2003, p. 169). This supports the idea that through caring for their pets, children learn to care for others and develop empathy (George, 1999; Hart, 2003). In another study by Davis in 1987 65% of the 22 10-12-year-olds in the study believed that when a dog gave an enthusiastic and affectionate response to them it was because the dog thought that they were a good person (Hart, 2003). This seems to support the notion that animals are beneficial in the development of positive self-esteem that is particularly necessary in adolescence where feeling significant to another and receiving consistent positive feedback is important (George, 1999; Hart, 2003; Louw et al., 2004).

## **2.6) Human-Animal Interaction in South Africa**

### **2.6.1) The Cultural Significance of Animals in South Africa**

*Culture* is a concept that is used in a variety of different ways and as Lonner and Malpass (1994) point out the fact that over 175 definitions of culture exist indicates how complex a concept it is to define. Lonner and Malpass (1994) come to the conclusion that culture can be understood as the multitude of different ways people of various backgrounds and contexts live in the world. At the very least culture is an exploration of the differences between various groups of people but more so it is an understanding of these differences and the meaning that can be elicited from them (Lonner & Malpass, 1994). Matsumoto (1996) mentions that the term *culture* can be used to describe a persons ancestry, taste in music, art, food or clothing, traditions, heritage or rituals and even physical or biological characteristics. Due to the diverse and complex nature of this term, it is therefore important to be clear as to what one is including in the meaning of the term *culture* when using it in research. For the purpose of this research, the phrase *culture* refers to the ancestry, traditions and rituals of Xhosa South Africans.

Morris (1998) points out, Western culture often places emphasis on animals as pets and food sometimes overlooking the variety of other significant and diverse roles that they could take as in other cultures. Here, Morris (1998) is referring in particular to the varied roles that animals perform in traditional African culture where these people place emphasis on the healing properties of animals as well as incorporating animals into their social interactions and folk traditions. Morris (1998), although fleetingly, mentions that in many African cultures animals hold great significance for their importance in dreams to the extent that in some cultures individuals will chose to keep more of certain animals over others due to superstition and the belief that this affiliates them with their ancestors. An excellent example of how animals are incorporated into African social interaction is through the Xhosa tradition of *lobola*. Richards (2004) describes the process of *lobola* or “bride-price” as payment in the form of cattle from the husband-to-be’s family as a “deposit” to “ensure the good treatment of the wife” (p. 126). The *lobola* ceremony has great importance attached to it and while both families sit on either side of the kraal the cattle pass individually between them “animals which, it must be remembered, are like members of the community” (Richards, 2004, p. 126). What is significant about this transmission is the “tremendous value and sentiment attached to the cattle” that speaks to the importance of the marriage contract – *lobola* cattle should not be sold and if any die within the first year of marriage they should be replaced (Richards, 2004, p. 126). Although the significance that animals hold to Xhosa culture has not been well researched it is evident through rituals such as *lobola* that animals play an integral part in the

lives of such communities. With the influence of Western currency rituals such as *lobola* may not be as prevalent as they once were but it is nevertheless interesting to understand what significance animals do still play in Xhosa culture for as the highly respected South African sangoma Credo Mutwa (in Hinz, 2003) wrote, “We considered ourselves as part of all life. It was believed that (four-legged) animals, birds and fish exist in spiritual form, that it was a prime necessity that one remained in contact with that form in order to give the human family a footing” (p. 20).

### **2.6.2) Research in the Field of Human-Animal Interaction in South Africa**

As mentioned, a dearth of information persists regarding human-animal interaction and Animal Assisted Therapy in South Africa (Beckermann, 2004). Although a small number of South Africans are working to expand this field of research and therapy in South Africa, Beckermann (2004) mentions that South Africa is still lagging in this discipline. This is made more noticeable when considering that much of the information gathered for this study is based on Euro-American literature and research. Beckermann (2004) argues that this scant amount of available literature in South Africa could also be due to the fact that the public possesses so little knowledge of animal-assisted therapy and its benefits; little or no awareness exists. This may also be related to the fact that there is a significant lack of contextual research available in South Africa at present.

Much stress has been put upon this country for economic growth but this is impossible without proper social development and, while our country has come far in the last 13 years, social development is impossible without a more compassionate and psychologically aware society. In the 1980s the South African Johannes Odendaal expressed his interest in the field of human-animal interaction and he published the first South African paper on the subject in 1981 entitled *The Veterinarian, Pets and Psychotherapy* (Beckermann, 2004). Since the publishing of the research performed by Odendaal awareness and support groups have been developed such as the “Human-Animal contact Study Group” in Bloemfontein, “Pets as Therapy” (PAT) and “Paws for People” (group that visits old age homes in Cape Town) (Beckermann, 2004; Cairns, 2002).

Due to the limited amount of research and public involvement in work relating to the human-animal bond in South Africa and particularly the Eastern Cape, the benefits of this form of therapy has been limited and not enough practical application of it exists. Thus, a very necessary amount of research still needs to be done in South Africa concerning this field of expertise so as to inform our society of the benefits of our animals, beyond those of labour and food. In order to accomplish such a task it is, therefore, imperative that human-animal experiences are explored in the South African

context with a particular focus on the psychological effect of these experiences within the culture unique to its population and that this be compared to existing human-animal literature.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3) METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1) Chapter Introduction**

In this chapter the methodology used to conduct this research will be elucidated. A brief exploration of the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research from the phenomenological, hermeneutic and phenomenological-hermeneutic perspectives encapsulates the research design of this study. This will be followed by the process of the conceptualisation of the research aims and subsequent research question in relation to the literature. The way in which these processes inform the choice of data gathering, analysis and interpretation in this research will also be presented. Finally, comments will be made on the ethical considerations taken into account while conducting this research and issues of validity and reliability.

#### **3.2) Research Design**

##### **3.2.1) Qualitative and Quantitative Paradigms in Psychology Research**

This research study is situated within the qualitative research paradigm, and has followed phenomenological-hermeneutic methodological principles. According to Kvale (1996) and Berg (1989), the qualitative research paradigm is particularly applicable to this kind of study as it embraces the sensitive nature of the human situation and supports the use of compassionate dialogue while radically situating individual participants in their unique contexts. Shank (2002) points out that qualitative research is concerned with capturing the nature of an experience rather than following a strict set of directives with the intention of measuring that experience or expressing it in mathematical and statistical terms, as is the aim of positivist research endeavors. Positivist researchers are concerned with accessing an objective and external reality that can be neutrally and accurately described, and from which broad generalizations can be made (Shank, 2002). Quantitative research methods serve the purposes of positivist research, as they accommodate large numbers of participants from which generalized inferences can be made, often a-contextually (Shank, 2002).

Researchers located within the social and human sciences have traditionally been criticized for relying on quantitative research methods to explore the nature of subjective, context-bound experience (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor & Tindall, 1994; Bickhard, 1992; Feyerabend, 1998; Kvale, 1996; Popper, 1988; Silverman, 1993; Smith, 2003;). Criticism has also been directed at claims that human beings are able to conduct objective research on anything, much less on humans (Banister et al., 1994).

Qualitative researchers have embraced these criticisms, and responded by constructing research as a collaborative knowledge generating enterprise between unique individuals, which takes place within a specific context (Parker, 2005; Smith, 2003). In interpretivist and constructionist research, the subjective role of the researcher is central to the sense made of the research (Banister et al., 1994; Parker, 2005). Language is viewed as approximate and shifting, as opposed to positivist beliefs that language simply transmits accurate reflections of reality (Smith, 2003). Interpretation is thus central to the qualitative research ventures, with researchers on the constructivist end of the spectrum examining in detail the function and operation of language and rhetoric, while interpretivist researchers explore the experiential nature of subjectivity, often with transformational intentions (Banister et al., 1994). Here the focus is not on accurate descriptions of tangible events, but on critical, subjective and active engagement with and intervention in the processes of knowledge production that constitute the functions of research (Kvale, 1996).

In order to address the question of subjectivity in this research, the phenomenological perspective forms the ideological basis of the data collection procedure, while the hermeneutic interpretivist approach is employed in the analysis of the data. Phenomenology and hermeneutics are brought together in the discussion, which constitutes a critical and active engagement with the process of data interpretation in relation to the context described in chapter two.

### **3.2.2) Phenomenology**

Shank (2002) proposes that as human beings, nothing we experience is direct but rather is known to us through our consciousness, so we are aware of the effects but not the actual experience in itself. Lye (1996) points out that reality is shared through common signs but no two persons' reality is actually the same in terms of the symbolic world. According to Heidegger (in Kruger, 1988), the nature of subjective human experience is mediated by the context of what he called "being-in-the-world" (p. 29). In order to gain empathic access to the unique life-world of the individual, he argued that in-depth, rich, detailed and contextually situated information is required (Heidegger, in Kruger, 1988). In order to fully understand an individual one must experience as much as possible that person's symbolic world and true meanings (Lye, 1996).

The phenomenological perspective is concerned with understanding, through description and interpretation; conscious processes that mediate subjective experience (Shank, 2002). This includes focusing on the lived world of the participant and being open to these experiences and descriptions so as to discover the multitude of meanings behind them (Kvale, 1996). Thus, phenomenology is concerned with the 'phenomenon' or basic reality shrouded in a web of meanings constructed by our

personal world of experience (Smith, 2003). A premise of early phenomenology is that it would be possible to accurately represent linguistically, the nature of our own specific lived experiences, and those of others (Banister et al., 1994). This conviction has been criticized for failing to acknowledge the impossibility of objectivity on the part of the subjective and contextually embedded researcher, which is embraced in later qualitative research (Banister et al., 1994).

### **3.2.3) Hermeneutics**

The hermeneutic perspective emphasizes the contextual and interpretative nature of human meaning making (Kvale, 1996). Shank (2002) describes the hermeneutic approach to research as the interpretation of texts by exploring contextually all the possible and potential meanings with which the researcher resonates in relation to the data. In hermeneutics, the role of subjectivity in the process of interpretation is central to the construction of meaning (Kvale, 1996). Thus, it is important when considering hermeneutics to explore the multitudes of meanings generated by experiences that are mediated by specific contexts, which are historically situated within broader social webs of meanings (Banister et al., 1994).

According to Habermas (1985), the process of critical engagement with the world is informed by what has come before. He argues that this process is not simply descriptive, but rather, is agentic in the construction of the subsequent interpretations made (Habermas, 1985). The reflexive nature of this process is described as the “hermeneutic circle” (Becker, 1992, p. 32). This dialectical process involves bringing context to bear on experience, as well as the interpretation of context in relation to individualised experience, while simultaneously reflecting critically on the circularity and the subjectivity of the interpretative enterprise (Becker, 1992; Habermas, 1985).

### **3.2.4) Phenomenological-hermeneutics**

According to Giorgi (1985), phenomenology searches for psychological understanding behind certain occurrences by investigating and interpreting participants’ lived-experiences. Lye (1996) maintains that in order to understand one must “for-understand” (p. 2) which means that in order to understand one must be prepared to understand, thus demonstrating the principle of the hermeneutic circle always remaining open to other information that might better explain the experience (p. 2).

The hermeneutic component of this study involved acquiring literature relevant to the topic, to assist in gaining theoretical knowledge and insight about the data so as to inform the analysis and interpretation (Habermas, 1985). Phenomenological-hermeneutics entails treating our experiences and perceptions of the world as if it were a multifaceted text, open to being read and interpreted (Shank,

2002). This process proceeds in a dialectical pattern whereby the interpretation of the data is continually referred back to the relevant literature and the literature is then explored in relation to the data, thus facilitating better awareness of the experience being interpreted (Shank, 2002). This will build up a thorough and highly developed dialogue of interpretation (Habermas, 1985). In order to generate valid phenomenological data for hermeneutic exploration, participants should be interviewed on a particular experience, the data transcribed and interpreted using relevant literature (Shank, 2002). These interpretations should be made available to participants, whose responses can be taken into account in the process of critical assessment of the validity of the researcher's account (Shank, 2002).

### **3.3) Aims of the Research**

Through a phenomenological-hermeneutic framework, the researcher attempts to fulfill the following aims:

- a) to describe in rich and phenomenological detail the participants' recollected childhood experiences of growing up with animals in the context of a traditionally African cultural perspective in South Africa
- b) to document the emotional, physical and social effects of inter-species relationships as described by three South African adults who work with animals
- c) to explore these experiences in relation to the relevant international literature.

### **3.4) Research Question**

For the purpose of addressing these aims, the following research question has been formulated: What is the nature of childhood experiences with animals among South Africans situated within a traditionally African culture, and how does the psychological significance of these experiences correlate with international developmental perspectives on the role of animals in physical, psychosocial and cognitive human development?

### **3.5) Data Collection Methods**

#### **3.5.1) Qualitative Interviews**

The interview method is appropriate to this topic and paradigm as it yields in-depth, rich data for qualitative analysis (Berg, 1989; Silverman, 1993). Taylor and Bogdan (1984) point out that in-depth interviewing involves understanding the participant's point of view in their own words and based on their lived-experiences. Phenomenological data was generated for this research by means of in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Kelly (2006) points out that semi-structured interviews are one of

the most commonly used ways of conducting an interview and these are usually accompanied by an interview guide drawn up by the researcher in advance. Semi-structured interviews were also applicable to this particular method of research as they allow for the experiences of the participants to flow naturally as in normal conversation although, as Kelly (2006) suggested, a rough guide to points of interest concerning the research question was drawn up before the interview and adhered to (Kvale, 1996). This interview guide can be found in Appendix B. These interviews were dynamic and accommodated the participants' needs, for example not being able to concentrate for long periods of time, bathroom breaks and lunch or tea breaks, to assist in the comfort of the participant (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

### **3.5.2) Participants**

Participants were selected by means of purposive sampling, also referred to as judgmental sampling, where the sample relies on the availability of the participants, their readiness to participate and those who are characteristic to the population of study (Durrheim & Painter, 2006). This means of sampling also involves having particular knowledge and understanding of a certain group in order to obtain an accurate representation of that particular population (Berg, 2004). Snowball sampling was also utilized to assist in gathering further participants through the direction of a particular contact (Durrheim & Painter, 2006). According to Smith (1993) this defines the group more accurately and remains true to the interest of the research question.

With regards to this particular research a specific individual, with knowledge of this research, directed the researcher to an individual fitting the description of a Xhosa South African woman, working at kennels in Grahamstown who then became the first participant. As is true to the nature of snowball sampling the researcher was again directed to two other individuals fitting the profile of the sample and who met the selection criteria and thus the three participants were approached to take part in this study.

The three participants were selected based on the following criteria:

Inclusion Criteria:

- a) Participants must be 21 years or older.
- b) Participants must have some recollection of childhood animal contact.
- c) Participants must have had a non-western traditional African upbringing.
- d) Participants must be currently, and for the last 3 years, residing in South Africa.

Exclusion Criteria:

- a) Participants must not have had a predominantly significant negative human-animal interaction.

The three participant profiles have been tabulated as follows:

<b><u>PARTICIPANT</u></b>	<b><u>AGE</u></b>	<b><u>GENDER</u></b>	<b><u>LANGUAGE</u></b>	<b><u>PLACE OF RESIDENCE</u></b>	<b><u>EMPLOYMENT</u></b>
1	41	Female	First language: Xhosa	Grahamstown	- Farm worker - Kennels assistant (current position)
2	32	Female	First language: Xhosa	Grahamstown	- Farm worker - Kennels assistant - Domestic worker (current position)
3	25	Male	First language: Xhosa	Grahamstown	- Student - Animal welfare organisation assistant (current position)

Table 1. Participant Profiles

### **3.6) Data Processing**

Each of the three interviews were digitally taped and transcribed verbatim by the researcher after the interviews for analytical purposes and these transcriptions appear in Appendix D, E and F. As noted by Kelly (2006) the meaning elicited later when analyzing the data is usually contextual so it is imperative that the interviews are transcribed verbatim. Once the interviews were transcribed, as advised by Kelly (2006), they were again read through while listening to the recorded data and careful notes were made of nonlinguistic expressions such as exclamations, sighs, laughs and pauses which further enriches the content of the data.

### **3.7) Analysis and Interpretation**

The transcribed material was then analyzed by means of content analysis. Berg (1989) proposes that content analysis enables the researcher to find themes within each data transcriptions that can then be matched to each other in ways in which they appear similar or different and eventually related to the

relevant literature hermeneutically. These identified themes were colour-coded to provide quick and easy visual access to them after which they were then categorized for exploration (Banister et al., 1994). A guide to these colour-coded categories appears in Appendix C. These categories were then explored hermeneutically, which means that the information gathered in each interview was interpreted in relation to the other interviews, and in relation to relevant literature, to be explored in relation to the participant's lived-experiences (Kvale, 1996).

### **3.8) Ethics, Reliability & Validity; Credibility, Transferability & Dependability**

The two fundamental roles of ethics in social science research are the protection of the research participants by conducting research in such a way that is in the best interests of the participants (Wassenaar, 2006), as well as to ensure that the interests of the broader project of research - the transparent generation of dependable data for analysis and interpretation - are protected. In order to ensure that strict codes of ethics were followed while conducting this research, informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to the commencement of the interviews (Kvale, 1996). The informed consent agreement was developed according to research ethics guidelines stipulated in the South African Health Act (Wassenaar, 2006). This informed consent agreement clearly states the nature of the research, the qualifications of the researcher and the academic ends to which the researcher intends to utilize the data collected. A timeframe of how long the participant is expected to participate is also specified although it is made clear that participation is voluntary, that they have the right to withdraw from the research at any point and the limits of disclosure are up to the participant. Finally it is made clear that the participant's identity including all identifying information will be protected and therefore this information has been omitted from all records. The participants who took part in this research were briefed thoroughly regarding their participation in this research and they were invited to voice any concerns they may have to the researcher before proceeding. Informed consent was discussed and obtained both verbally and in writing to ensure that the participants fully understood the implications of the agreement, as their first language was not English. This gave the researcher the opportunity to expand on certain aspects of the informed consent agreement so that it was felt, both by participant and researcher, that it was altogether grasped. Thus ethical consideration was exercised and the informed consent agreement appears in Appendix A. Additionally, objectivity as well as considering the potential consequences of the interviews and subsequent study were taken into account while conducting this research (Berg, 1989). The participants will, therefore, be welcome to view the research after it has been completed to check for accuracy of interpretation and will be welcome to change anything that is not consistent with their lived experience.

Issues of reliability, validity and generalisability in qualitative research are not as easy to address as are those of ethical orientation. The issues are closely related to conceptualizations of the role of the researched within the research, with qualitative researchers embracing participants as collaborators in the research project, while quantitative research has traditionally positioned the participants as “subjects” of objective and empirical study (Silverman, 1993). Qualitative researchers are generally skeptical of the quantitative notions of reliability and validity, which rest on the belief that universal and quantifiable truths can be revealed by objective human observers and explorers (Kvale, 1996). Silverman (1993) suggests that qualitative researchers altogether abandon the terms “validity”, “reliability” and “generalisability”, and create new and more appropriate ways of speaking about, and assessing, the credibility of qualitative research endeavors. These terms will be discussed in relation to their applicability to this particular research, followed by a description of ways in which these issues were addressed in the process of conducting this research.

According to Wassenaar (2006) when the research design, method and analysis are accurate, reasonable and viable the research question will be answered with what is traditionally known as validity. Validity refers to issues of truth whereby the information obtained should not rely on generalizations but on known truths (Kvale, 1996). In phenomenological data this refers to the lived world experiences of as described by the participants in depth, and in detail. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that we speak rather of the “credibility” (p. 67) in qualitative research. This term encompasses the subjectivity of the researcher, who presents a coherent and detailed account of the process of reflexive awareness on the part of the researcher of his or her own subjectivity - an essential component of honest qualitative research.

In quantitative research, reliability and replicability are often mistakenly conflated. As a result, many researchers believe that research is only reliable if it can be replicated exactly by another researcher. Qualitative researchers believe that is not possible to generate exactly the same findings when research is conducted by various individuals on various individuals and population samples, due to the subjective and contextual nature of knowledge production, particularly within the social sciences (Kvale, 1996). In qualitative research reliability can be described as ensuring that the research material is at all times consistent so as to eliminate misunderstandings and misinterpretation of the data (Silverman, 1993). This can be done by using the technique of inter-rater reliability, or “peer-debriefing” which can be defined as “a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the enquiry that might otherwise remain implicit within the enquirer’s mind” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301). The peer debriefer for this study was a lecturer in the Department of the Psychology at Rhodes University with a

particular interest in the relationships between humans and other animals, with a particular specialization in South African contexts.

The term “generalisibility” in quantitative research refers to the relevance of the study to broader contexts than those within which it has been conducted (Silverman, 1993). Although qualitative research does aim to generate relevant knowledges, it is not conducted in the hope of universalisability; the researcher must always be aware that the knowledge produced is rooted in the contextual and subjective realities of the researchers and the researched. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the term “transeferability” is more appropriate. The depth and rich detail provided by qualitative research data collection methods; and the hermeneutic of suspicion adopted by the reflexive researcher who describes in detail the process and procedure of the research conceptualization, analysis and interpretations will enable others to critically explore ways in which the findings of particular research endeavors can appropriately be applied to diverse situations (Silverman, 1993).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4) RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1) Chapter Introduction**

This chapter will present the themes that emerged from the transcriptions of each participant's interview. Nine overlapping themes emerged that became sub-themes as they were then categorized into three main themes. These three main themes and the emergent nine sub-themes will be reported on with an accompanying description of the implication of each individual theme within the context of this research. These descriptions will be linked to the participant data by relevant key quotations from the participant's transcriptions to provide supporting evidence of the above-mentioned themes. These quotations are formatted in such a way that line numbers have been given to each participant's transcription, allowing the reader easy access to the context from which these quotations have been extracted, for example P. 2, L. 212-215 denotes to the transcript of Participant 2, lines 212 to 215. It is important to note that these themes are not mutually exclusive so some repetition is inevitable but this serves to further enrich the data.

The emergent thematic categories and accompanying sub-themes have been tabulated as follows:

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>SUB-THEME</b>
1. Developmental Implications	1. Psychosocial Development 2. Cognitive Development 3. Physical Development
2. Emotional Effect	4. Significant Attachment 5. Grief 6. Emotional Support
3. Contextual Influences	7. Familial Attitudes 8. Cultural Significance 9. Poverty

Table 2. Emergent Themes

## **4.2) Definition of Categories and Themes**

### **4.2.1) Developmental Implications**

This category includes the Psychosocial Development, Cognitive Development and Physical Development sub-themes. These sub-themes are similarly linked by the fact that they speak of the developmental implications of inter-species interactions on the participants during childhood and across their lifespan. At times the experiences that the participants tell of these interactions influence more than one of these aforementioned spheres of development so they will be explored under this broad category in the discussion of this research.

#### **4.2.1.1) Psychosocial Development**

This theme includes inter-species interactions that are believed to impact on an individual's psychosocial development. This incorporates attitudes and values of the participant where animals have shown to contribute to the development of the participant's perception of their personality in relation to their social environment. This theme identifies the challenges that arise within individuals during childhood and that continue to develop across one's lifespan such as learning responsibility, courage, sharing, trust, self-control, and to navigate feelings of loneliness by seeking companionship or by developing social skills contributing to a healthy sense of esteem.

All three participants mention experiences that reveal the above-mentioned attributes pertaining to psychosocial development. Participant 1 states,

“When you go there, there was hills and hills and then the water. I hear something crying, crying...ooh, what's that what's that? And then, if you go alone on that road you are very scared because its full of bush and everything but I tried to check and check and check but I found there was a little animal in a trap...It's a baby buck. It was crying and crying. There was a man on the other side who said to me “Don't touch, don't touch!” But no, I can't listen to that cry! I went straight and took my jersey and tried to take it out and wrap it with my jersey. I took it straight to my farm and gave it to my owner there. And every morning I went there to feed it, because it was still a baby. And I feed and feed. And they call that little buck Participant 1. But then I was 9 years old when we got him” (L. 126-143).

She continues,

“Oh, I was so worried; because I knew that everybody wants to eat this thing but I like it I don't want it to be dead. I tried my best to get it quick to the farm because the white man doesn't like the animal to be dead but the blacks always want to eat. So I tried to do my best to go straight to

the boss. So every morning he ask me to go feed the buck. Maybe he saw that I'm worried about that, I like it, he knows me that I like animals" (L. 197-207).

Participant 2 recalls,

"At my work the madam had a cow and the cow had a baby but the cow died after the baby born. And my madam buy a bottle and every morning before I go to clean the house I go to feed the baby cow. Yes, I feed every morning" (L. 308-313).

Similarly, Participant 3 mentions,

"And then in my school holidays I ask permission from my parents to come stay here so that I can keep close to my animals. They give that permission to me, they say, "No, you can go". And then I came here and then on the weekends I would help, do some kennels cleaning and everything and then even if it's mid-week I just come here and help and just do stuff until now" (L. 198-201).

Participant 1 responds to being asked whether her animals assisted her socially with, "Yes yes, you not so alone, even mine I'm sleeping with them on my bed now" (L. 329) and reflects on her childhood,

"We had a black cat at home...I'm so scared of the little cat it's better when it is big. But from that day I must take it because she follow me everywhere she follow me, so I had a friend" (L. 335-341).

Similarly, Participant 2 states, "Because with my monkey we used to play but my friends stay far so only used come play on the weekend but I used to play lots with my monkey, lots" (L. 407-408).

This theme includes the way in which the participants perceive animals in assisting them in promoting feelings of safety and security. Participant 2 and 3 both mention this function of human-animal interaction,

"[T]he animals is good – especially the dog because they guard me. They guard me, yes. Even the cat, because the cat – if there is something not right inside the house he tells me, I know. Like a dog, if he is outside and sees if something is not right he barks, yes, because they have brain man. Like a cat, even a dog they make a "grrrrr". Yes, so you know something is wrong. And sometimes a dog will come and fetch you and show you what is wrong" (P. 2, L. 381-390) and "The puppy grew up to be big, yoo, he was a good dog and he was a good guarding dog, a good guard dog!" (P. 3, L. 191-192).

Additionally, learning respect, both for oneself and others and empathy, or to nurture and care for oneself and others, constitutes moral development, an integral part of psychosocial development. Although already implicit in the above-mentioned experiences, moral development is further highlighted by the following words of the participants. Participant 1 states, "Yes, and if you've got

respect for the animals it's easy to get respect for the people" (L. 299) and "Because if you want to talk bad to somebody then you must try learn that if I can say this to a dog "voetsak" how much can I say to a person?" (L. 375-376). She goes on to reflect,

"They [animals] made me a better person." "I've got my neighbours in my house, I'm staying in a two bedroom little house and the neighbours are like the animals they love me and I love them. If they've got a problem I'm the first person who will help them, they take me as their family they always looking after me and I'm looking after them so the animals teach me a lot so that I must know to help other people" (L. 512-518).

Participant 2 recalls nurturing her monkey and cat as a child,

"And then one day, the following day I go to school and my mother say, "Bongi doesn't eat" and I ask my mother why, I say, "Give Bongi food", she say, "I did". I take Bongi food I give Bongi, Bongi's eating. In the morning before, I wash Bongi, I take tooth...toothbrush I wash Bongi's teeth and I wash Bongi. I take my, my soap to wash Bongi and my towel to wash Bongi. And then one day...what I want to say...Bongi is sick. I take the towel; I put Bongi on my back and then Bongi sleeping on my back. Then I take panado pill, I chop it up for Bongi, chop, chop, chop for Bongi and then I put water I feed him and I just hope Bongi's nice now. Yooo, I was feeling bad, I can't eat even because if my animal is sick I'm also sick!" (L. 49-65).

And,

"I sleep with my cat. If my cat is asleep I take my cat I put my cat slowly back on the bed. I broke my T-shirt – I look at my cat, how my cat look – I cut it round for the neck and then after that I look how to put it through the arms and legs and I make holes there. For when it's cold I make my cat warm" (L. 133-143)

She points out "Well, the animals they teach you lot of things – how to care and love, lots of love" (L. 347). "I tell them they must talk to their animals softly; you mustn't hurt your animals. Must not shout the animals, don't do anything wrong to the animals because the animals are brave" (L. 372-374).

Participant 3 mentions,

"[W]hen I was at school I like to convince my friends and talk about animals. Some of them they say they do not like dogs and cats and other stuffs so I say, "No, you must take care of your animals as part of your family". And then, ja...em, before I came to work at the animal welfare organisation, eeh, there's some boys they make some cruelty, sort of cruelty...like ja. I did form a team called \*\*\*\*\*. And that name I took because of some boys that use the donkey-cart and then they, you know, they overload and they beat the donkeys. And then some of the other boys they were

dog fighters. And then I tried to stop them. I called them in and convince them “No man, what are you doing? This is not good” (L. 20-35).

Furthermore, Participant 3 continues,

“First I can say, like to take your animals as part of your family is good first - just because if you can take them away from you it means there will be a gap between you and pet, which means you will never take care of them. Just for instance, I can’t take my sister in the rainy weather and just close the door – close her outside of the house, you see? What I’m trying to say is, she will cry because it is cold, you see? That’s why I said I take my animals as part of my family, you see, because I must apply what I feel and then what they are feeling, you see?” (L. 238-245).

Participant 3 states,

“[T]o work here at the animal welfare organisation, it makes me proud. So to me, its like I work for the parliament, I’m proud to work here and it’s good for me to work for the animal welfare organisation so that I can have power or whatever it is to help the people to see how to look after your dogs” (L. 131-137)

This speaks to the way in which animals have assisted him in feeling proud of himself and developing a healthy sense of self-esteem.

Aspects of psychosocial development are highlighted within this theme and will be explored in relation to relevant literature in the discussion with emphasis on the effects of animals on these features of development as reported by the participants.

#### **4.2.1.2) Cognitive Development**

This theme incorporates inter-species interactions that would influence an individual’s cognitive development. This includes cognitive processes that begin in early childhood and continue to develop throughout ones lifespan through fields of sensation, perception, language and intelligence, which are stimulated by our environment. Examples of these cognitive processes include imaginary thinking, dreaming, classifying, symbolic thinking, associating, reasoning, paying attention, planning, problem solving and remembering.

Participant 1 and 2 in particular made references to the cognitive processes of dreaming, imagining and fantasising, for example Participant 1 mentioned, “I was very happy to be do that [work on a farm] because my wishes was to be one day I’m going to work as a farmer or I’m going to have my farm” (L. 34-35) and again she mentions that even now “At night when I’m dreaming, I’m

dreaming of the dogs and cats and even the tortoise!” (L. 105-106). Participant 2 also mentions “I wish when I finish school to stay on the farm – my own farm. And all the animals I would put there” (L. 466-468). Again, Participant 2’s experience with her monkey reveals imaginary thinking and fantasy as well as cognitive processes of relating, perceiving and paying attention,

“I want to play with, with monkey. And I’m going to the kennel, I said to Bongi, “Bongi, you must scratch my hair”. I take Bongi’s hand into mine and I scratch like this. And Bongi scratch like me also. After this I say, “Bongi, stand up”. And Bongi stands. I say, “Bongi, dance”. And he dance like me! (L. 8-15).

An important aspect of cognitive development is the development of language and communication on both non-verbal and verbal levels. Participant 2’s experience with her animals also speaks to cognitive processes of language development both verbally and non-verbally, “I say, “Bongi, what’s wrong?” “Hmmm, Hmmm, Hmmm” he won’t talk but he can’t because he’s not a person (laughs) (L. 46-47), and “Yes she’s not moving but standing looking for me – I say, “What are you looking, cat?” You know the animals don’t talk but they look, animals don’t talk but you still feel what... I: You feel as though they are still talking to you in a way? P:2 Yes, yes” (L. 162-165), and later when she recalls pretending to be sick so that she could stay at home to be with her cat,

“I say, “Yes, I need chance to talk to my cat Mama, I’m not sick really!” I hear my mama talking outside saying, “Yoo, my child, she like the animals very much! She say to me she’s sick but she’s not sick she wants to talk to her animal” (L. 176-178).

Participant 1 also mentioned that as a child “I liked to play with the dogs everyday” (L. 193) which would have stimulated her senses thus enhancing her perception in addition to involving cognitive processes of fantasy and developing her verbal and non-verbal communication.

Participant 1 and 3 point to experiences where cognitive processes of classifying, associating, paying attention and remembering were utilized,

“So from then I started working on the farm and I started helping my brother collect the sheep’s and cattle’s in the afternoon and the calf’s and later they come and meet the cows and take them straight to the boss” (P. 1, L. 17-19).

And,

“[F]rom the animal welfare organisation to the nature conservation it was 6 years so I was 6 years old, ja 6 years old. It was my first time to see some animals like rhinoceros and buffaloes so it was difficult to understand them. And then there was some classes there where some teachers teach about wild animals. So what happens, I think I was 8 or 10 years at that time, I saw the cobra! And then I decided “No, I’m not just going to take these animals far away from

me”. And then my father teach me very well about animals and how to handle with other animals. “Don’t be scared about this and this and this”, some of them are dangerous, like buffalo are too dangerous and then rhino and others. So...ever since then I say, “Okay, no, I’m not scared of wild animals”. (P. 3, L. 148-180).

Furthermore he states,

“No, I didn’t grow up knowing that this is wild or this is a domestic animal – no I didn’t, but as a child when my father transferred to nature conservation I could see, “Oh, now this is the wild animals!”(P. 3, L. 263-264).

Now, Participant 1 states, “I’m always looking and counting. I’m always the first person to see small babies when it’s the time to have babies. (L. 318-319) again pointing to cognitive processes of paying attention, remembering, perceiving and classifying.

Participant 1 mentions experiences where cognitive processes of reasoning, planning and problem solving come into play both as a child, “I went straight and took my jersey and tried to take it [the buck] out and wrap it with my jersey. I took it straight to my farm and gave it to my owner there” (L. 134-135).

And later,

“So when you go there [to the dam] you must, somebody must tie a rope to a tree and fetch but she [the farmers wife] couldn’t go down there. So I quickly called my big brother, let’s go there straight and I was holding and my brother pulled the baby [cow] and it was fine. [W]e were still young but I can’t remember how old we were at that time but around 9. The problem was it came with the legs first not he face” (P. 1, L. 231-236).

More recently as an adult Participant 1 mentions,

“I make a plan. I’m using a pipe to clean the dogs and then for the cats. I was there to try to sprinkle the dogs so that the fire doesn’t come for the dogs on the roof because it is no use now it is dry - it is easy to burn. But when I went straight to my sister the dogs are barking again, maybe someone is burning now...I come back again, but they were okay, there was no fire, because of that water I saved them so they were wet, wet, wet, everything was wet down there. And even the fire was down here until 2 o’ clock in the morning” (L. 153-169).

Participant 3 also demonstrates these cognitive processes as well as processes of communication,

“[W]hen I was at school I like to convince my friends and talk about animals. Some of them they say they do not like dogs and cats and other stuffs so I say, “No, you must take care of your animals as part of your family” (L. 20-22).

This theme thus seeks to highlight the products of cognitive development and the effects of animals in this domain as perceived both implicitly and explicitly by the researcher through the participants' experiences, which will be explored in relation to relevant literature in the discussion.

#### **4.2.1.3) Physical Development**

This theme includes inter-species interactions that would effect and support an individual's physical development. Here the focus is on ways in which the participants perceive animals to have aided their central nervous systems by inducing relaxation and decreasing anxiety, as Participant 2 and 3 point out "As I say you just think of nothing when you with your animals, you relax. And when you playing with them, after that you tired and you sleep" (P. 2, L. 475-477) and,

"[L]ike stroking the dog it can make you feel very much relaxed – maybe you can sit more than two hours just brush your dog or do whatever, brush your dog and play with them, you see? Then you are not wasting lot of energy you are just sitting down and brushing dog and relaxing, yes" (P. 3, L. 633-636).

Additionally, this theme incorporates any effect that animals may have on the participants in terms of the development of physical fitness across the lifespan and the perception that animals have an effect on their physical health. Participant 1 notes,

"[E]ven when I'm working here [at the kennels] I never be sick here, so when I'm here everything feels right – even if I feel a little bit sick in the morning I feel better here around them [the animals]" (L. 489-490).

Similarly, Participant 3 mentions,

"Yes, I can say they keep me healthy just because if you believe in something, which is going to help you in your health, it can. What I'm trying to say is, I believe in my dogs, even if I'm sick you see, if I see my dogs I just go and play with them then I just forget about that I'm sick, you see?" (L. 603-605). "And when there is a sick dog here I go and play with them because I know it's also going to make them well, you see?" (L. 609-610). "For instance I do have one pit bull who loves to walk very much... So I like to run and I like to take him too and run with him – run, run, run do lots of running. And then when I come back I take another one and play with another one in the yard, so I do only have a little time to rest! So they keep me strong you see?" (L. 621-628).

This theme also includes processes of physical maturation that interactions with animals may assist in developing such as the senses and motor functions. Participant 1 mentions working with animals on a farm that would have developed her senses and motor functions,

“[B]ut we were the poor people in that farm so we leave the school early, so I have std 5, leave the school because my father passed away... So from then I started working on the farm and I started helping my brother collect the sheep’s and cattle’s in the afternoon and the calf’s and later they come and meet the cows and take them straight to the boss. We grow and grow and grow and when I was 17 the farmer take me as a worker there, proper worker there. I work there for 12 years worked in the bush; I did everything what the guys doing” (L. 14-22).

These aspects that assist where the participants experience animals to have assisted them in their physical development will be further elaborated on and explored in the discussion with reference to relevant literature pertaining to this topic.

#### **4.2.2) Emotional Effect**

This category includes the Significant Attachment, Grief and Emotional Support sub-themes. These sub-themes are interconnected in that they all reflect on the way in which animals of different species have had/have an emotional impact or influence on the participant. The way in which this emotional effect is made more tangible and can be explored through the participant’s experiences of attributing relational status to their animals, their grief at the loss or death of an animal and the ways in which they experience their animals to be emotionally supportive. It can therefore be seen that these particular sub-themes often merge into a similar broad experience as will be more fully examined in the discussion.

##### **4.2.2.1) Significant Attachment**

This theme comprises of the way in which the participants chose to describe their relationship with their animals. This includes references made to animals as part of the family where for example Participant 1 points out that her animals, “They family to me” (L. 258) and Participant 3 states, “I took my animals as part of my family” (L. 117-118). This also includes references made by the participants where they consider their animals as children (dependents), “Because I love like my child” (P. 2, L. 67)...“He know who is his mother, I am his mother” (P. 2, L. 272) and as siblings (co-dependents), “just take the dog or the cat as your brother or your sister” (P. 3, L. 114-115) as well as references to animals as friends (equals), “They are my friends” (P. 1, L. 251), “domestic animals, they are here to be friends of mine” (P. 3, L. 392-393). Additionally, this theme incorporates instances where the participants have attributed their own names to their animals such as Participant 2, “My cats name is Participant 2...that’s my name” (L. 100-102) and “they call that little buck Participant 1” (P. 1, L. 138).

Here the focus is on the nature of the relationship, the effect it has/had on the participant and the perceived meaning elicited from this often emotional bond will be further explored and discussed in relation to relevant literature in the discussion.

#### **4.2.2.2) Grief**

This theme includes both the participants' subjective experience of grieving for the loss of or death of an animal and the way in which the participants perceive animals to have assisted them in their grief for others.

When Participant 1 was asked to reflect on her first significant experience of the death of an animal she recalled that

“Everyday I’ve got a happiness inside of me that I’m going to see it [her buck] again, every morning when I get up the first thing I must do is go and check but when I woke up and he was gone” (L. 447-448), “I was so wrong that day!” (L. 455).

She goes on to recall how the death of her animal influenced her experience of the death of her grandmother;

“I had a grandmother at that time I used to stay with her sometimes. I was very happy when my grandmother died because we are going to eat a lot of food but when the days goes on so that we are going to bury her on the Saturday I’ve got memories for that buck now, I was crying for the buck. Why I must not cry for my granny because I’m going to eat a lot of food? I feel so wrong inside. I said to myself my granny was looking after me for so many years and she was the only help my mother had with us. So they were equal to me the buck and my grandmother – was same size in my heart” (L. 470-478).

Participant 2 similarly reflected her grief at the death of her first animal when she stated,

“Oh!! Bongi is dead! Yoo, I was crying crying crying! Yoo, I didn’t eat about two days. And I say to my brother we must take a cup and make a hole and put Bongi in. And then I pray for Bongi that He must take Bongi with Him. No man, you know I love Bongi! Even now and I miss him. And I take a stick in the bush and I make the...what is it? (Signs a cross with her fingers) I make a cross and I, I, and I take a cardboard and I write here, “Bongi, Rest in Peace” (L. 74-88).

Participant 3 recalls his grief at having his dogs put down,

“Yooo, it was very terrible, it was not good for me, I cried! But then that guy got new dogs and it was difficult to understand them because I’m used to Rover and Blake and the other dogs, you see.” (L. 295-296).

“...it’s like you lose someone you love. Like, you lost, for instance, your parents, your father passed away – you get that feeling. And maybe you are going to take 6 months or a year to be right again. But what I’m going to say is when my dogs were put down I felt sad for maybe 6 months just because...I took my dogs at that time, even now, as my brothers” (L. 570-573).

As with Participant 1, Participant 3 also reflects on the way in which animals have helped him cope with the death of loved ones “...because they close the space between my sister and me because my sister passed away” (L. 442-443).

The psychological effect that the loss of or death of an animal had on the participants will be explored in relation to relevant literature in the discussion and comments will be made on how these experiences may have informed the participants as children of the concept of death and the impact this may have had on their development. Furthermore, this theme will also explore the supportive role that animals have played for the participants in coping with the deaths of their own loved ones.

#### **4.2.2.3) Emotional Support**

This theme features ways in which the participants perceive animals as having been actively emotionally supportive. Emotional support includes times when the participants feel animals have assisted them in dealing with difficult emotions such as sadness or loneliness,

“[E]ven when I feel sad they jumping over me so that I must laugh – they know that there is something so they try to make me happy” “They know me, they know me, they know when I’m not right” “If I’ve got my problem at home then I come here [to the kennels] and everything is disappeared” (P. 1, L. 349-356).

Or anger,

“They make me happy just because even if I’m like angry, maybe my father made me upset or my mother or my little brother, you see? So the best way is to just go outside and then I can be with my dogs so that I can forget what happened, you see? And then I feel okay so I can just go back. Even if I’m wrong, I did something wrong, and then they shout at me and I become angry, then I just go and play with my animals and in that time I’m playing with my animals I realise, “Oh, I did something wrong” so I can go back and say, “I’m sorry”, you see?” (P. 3, L. 639-649).

This theme also includes times when the participants experience animals as evoking positive emotions in them such as happiness or love as described by Participant 2, “If I’m coming back my dog is looking, he’s jumping” “So animal is good to me. And they make me happy! Very, very happy” (L. 264 & 390).

Here the meaning of the participants experience will be elaborated on in relation to relevant literature in the discussion as well as the kinds of emotional support that they report animals have provided for them.

#### **4.2.3) Contextual Influences**

This category is comprised of the Familial Attitudes, Cultural Significance and Poverty sub-themes. These sub-themes are interrelated in that they all suggest some contextual influence on the participants experience whether if be of a familial context, cultural context or political context. Again these sub-themes occasionally overlap and therefore make for better exploration in relation to each other as will be realised in the discussion.

##### **4.2.3.1) Familial Attitudes**

This theme focuses on the familial attitudes of the participants towards animals of a variety of different species. Familial attitudes vary from indifferent or opposite to that of the participant concerned, or were in keeping with the participants’ attitude towards animals. Participant 1 reflects, “My mother, she was feeding the pigs there on the farm so she loves animals – we were worried even when she had to slaughter one pig for money because it was difficult for her” (L. 381-383) and “My brother, he was a shepherd there [on the farm] and he likes the animals too much” (L. 181). When asked about her families’ attitude towards animals Participant 2 mentions, “My home had 4 cats” (L. 300) “I want to take my mom to the salon to say thanks for growing me up with animals” (L. 484-485). Similarly, Participant 3 responded,

“My father grew up in a family who likes animals, he used to tell me stories of animals – he always love animals very well. I can say all of my family, from my mum, my dad, cousins, sisters – we all love animals, all!” (L. 449-451).

This theme also includes instances where family members have encouraged participants to engage with animals or the participants have themselves encouraged family members to engage with animals as is described by Participant 1, “I’ve got, um my first-born working here [at the kennels] and he loves the

animals so much” “I like them to grow up with animals because it’s right to grow with animals” (L. 370-373).

Here attention will be paid to the potential meaning and significance to the participants of the emergent attitudes within their familial context and this will be explored in relation to relevant literature.

#### **4.2.3.2) Cultural Significance**

This theme incorporates the ways in which the participants perceive animals to be culturally significant both to them and to the Xhosa culture on a whole. This theme, therefore, aims to explore the various Xhosa traditional practices of which the participants report animals play a significant role in their definition. Participant 1 and 3 in particular point out the various ways in which animals are used in Xhosa rituals for example at the birth of a child,

“And then there are some or other things from the childhood, maybe you are two days or three days old and they slaughter a goat – they call it imbeleko, if I can say, ja, it’s the day of birth which means you MUST if you don’t then there will be some wrong things - maybe you pee when you sleeping or you doing something wrong” (P. 3, L. 501-505)

“Because sometimes when the baby grows its fine and fine and fine but when you find that in 18 years he’s stealing somebody’s things and that – but when you slaughter a goat to make a culture for him it sometimes get a little bit better so the animals are very important” (P. 1, L. 402-404).

Participant 1 also mentions the healing power of animals in the Xhosa culture;

“It is also the muti for us” (L. 406), “Like when you are going to the Sangoma if my Sangoma says he need the skin of the lion you must go and check for the lion somewhere...Must go into the bush and check for the gemsbok or the springbok – just for the skin. To be healthy! If your dream says you must get this kinds of animals you must so that you will be healthy and fine” (L. 422-432).

Participant 1 and 3 also mention the significance of animals, dogs in particular, with regards to their ancestors, “Like in my culture when you dreaming about a dog you must not tell everybody because it’s my ancestors visiting me” (P. 1, L. 501-502) and,

“I can say they put more...emphasis, ja, on them just because the Xhosa, ja – first the Xhosa, we do believe dogs they are part of our culture, like, for instance, if you dream about a dog they

say don't tell anyone...Just because that is your ancestors telling you something" (P. 3, L. 455-459).

Participant 3 also refers to the significance of animals in the Xhosa tradition of becoming a man,

"The goat in Xhosa we do lot of, especially in the traditional works in Xhosa like we – when we go to the bush to be a man at 16 or 18 years, first before we go there we must slaughter a goat and then we must eat from the neck, which is half-done – half cooked. They must eat and then they make a sort of necklace from that stuff, the skin, and then you can go to the bush. And then, maybe two weeks or three weeks before you go back home you must slaughter another goat so that you are telling the ancestors you are going back home now" (L. 490-497),

and their inclusion in funerals,

"And when someone passed away you have to slaughter a goat or a cattle. If it is a man, then you have to slaughter a male cattle or if it is a female then you have to slaughter a female cattle. So you must do that stuff. And then animals in Xhosa, or in our culture, they help us very well just because we believe in animals. For instance, we believe in dogs, we believe in cattle's, we believe I goat, you see. So that's why it makes us, Xhosa, to be proud of animals" (L. 508-512).

All three participants make reference to the Xhosa cultural tradition of lobola where animals play a significant role in the negotiation of marriage contracts; Participant 1 and 3 speak of lobola in a more traditional sense,

"The cows for lobola. When you are going to marry my parents are going to say we need 8 cows or 5 cows and 3 horses and then when they come with those cows and horses a goat must be slaughtered" (P. 1, L. 414-416)

and "lobola, ja you see, like in old generations ja, but you see we are still doing it now. But you see if you are going to marry in Xhosa, you can marry but first you must do ilobola." (P. 3, L. 531-532), while Participant 2 referred to lobola in a more contemporary way where animals play a lesser role or none at all "My husband take me and then he propose lobola. He use money" (L. 499).

As was found to be true to the participants experiences, and is therefore difficult to delineate here from culture, this theme also includes the ways in which the participants experience animals to be significant to them spiritually. The distinction within this theme lies in the way in which the participants seem to experience Xhosa traditional practices as more community orientated whereas their spiritual experiences seem to be more individual. Participant 2 reflects, "God made the animals. And first I want to thank God because he gave me this like for the animals" (L. 487-488) while Participant 3 comments,

“I can say they [animals] have been helpful spiritually because like, if we can go to the bible first. I know, God before the human being was, was, was created by God. First He created the animals. And then He said to Himself, “No there is someone or there is something I missed just because these things can’t look after themselves. So what can I do? I must create a thing that can look after them” and then He started to create someone, Adam and Eve. And then they look after the animals; they look after everything on the earth at that time, you see? So I can say they help spiritually because I am here to look after them like God had created me for – to look after the animals” (L. 655-661).

The ways in which animals are culturally significant to the participants both in terms of Xhosa cultural practices and in a spiritual sense will be explored more thoroughly in the discussion. Additionally, the ways in which non-western South African cultural experiences of animals differs or is congruent to those of Western South African experiences will be highlighted and commented on for further discussion.

#### **4.2.3.3) Poverty**

This theme includes the ways in which the participants have experienced the influence of poverty both while growing up and now. The focus here is how poverty, as perceived by the participants, has restricted their access to nature and animals and appropriate ways in which to care for their animals, as Participant 2 recalls, “My mom give me money for eat at school, I didn’t eat at school I buy the milk...I know the milk is good for the cat” (L. 113-115) and “I don’t have the money to buy it [shampoo], I took it at work and then I wash the dog” (L. 244). Some comments will also be made on the way in which participants, in the face of poverty, seek out what they experience as aesthetically pleasing and beneficial as found in nature and the company of animals, for example Participant 2 mentions,

“At the location it’s not nice but at the farm it’s nice! Because at the location you hear the people screaming...everything’s bad but at the farm it’s nice because if you don’t have nothing to do you go to the bush and it’s peace, you take a walk with your friends or alone and you’re looking there at the animals – even the birds, the birds sometimes are singing nicely!” (L. 451-454).

Similarly, Participant 1 mentions that she is

“Very happy to be here [at the kennels] – even here we’ve got Zebras its like a reserve a little game reserve. Yes, everyday, in the bushes. I’m always looking and counting. I’m always the first person to see small babies when it’s the time to have babies” (L. 316-319).

This theme also includes reflections of the participants on how poverty and poor education restricts the financially disadvantaged in their access to and relationship with animals as Participant 3 points out,

“If I can for instance to the township and can get opportunities like to go and teach the people how to treat your dog...just because sometimes you see the dog in a bad state” (L. 61-63) “I know other people are going to complain, “No we don’t have money to buy good food for my dogs”...like I do try to help other people like just where I stay because I stay in the poor area, like it’s not a good areas – we are staying like in the mud houses” (L. 67-70) “I can say in the rural areas there are a lot of problems – there is a lack of facilities like vets. And, for instance, those villages like \*\*\*\*,...they have dogs there and some of them bring their dogs here in a very terrible state...sometimes we can’t do anything” (L. 558-565).

The way in which the participants political context affects them will be further explored in the discussion of this research in relation to their experiences and some conclusions will be drawn highlighting the contextual disparities between Western and non-western interspecies interactions.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5) DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1) Chapter Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the themes that emerged from the data collected from the three participants, as described and evidenced in chapter 4, in relation to relevant literature that has been presented in chapter 2. This chapter, therefore, endeavours to reflect on and explore where the experiences as told by the participants are in keeping with the literature and where they differ and to make interpretations as to what this could possibly mean as the researcher attempts to answer the research question. As overlapping occurs, the themes will be discussed in relation to each other and will be presented here under the broad near encompassing category headings as detailed in chapter 4.

Finally, the notion of biophilia will be explored in relation to the themes that emerged in this study as a broad theoretical perspective that should reveal its contribution to the research question and a better understanding of the human-animal bond with a particular focus on developmental aspects and the cultural significance of animals.

#### **5.2) Developmental Implications**

This category and its accompanying sub-themes and key terms have been tabulated as follows:

<b><u>CATEGORY</u></b>	<b><u>SUB-THEME</u></b>
1. Developmental Implication	1. Psychosocial Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Responsibility</li><li>- Courage</li><li>- Social skills</li><li>- Self-esteem</li><li>- Moral development</li></ul>
	2. Cognitive Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Imaginary thinking</li><li>- Classifying</li><li>- Problem solving</li><li>- Reason</li><li>- Development of language</li></ul>
	3. Physical Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Central nervous system</li><li>- Fitness</li><li>- Senses</li><li>- Motor function</li></ul>

Table 3. Overview of Developmental Implications

Nebbe (1991) reflects that adults often mention how significant their childhood pets were to them during their upbringing, particularly in assisting with the certain developmental aspects such as learning responsibility, empathy and to share. As reflected by George (1999) any normal development is sometimes met with physical, emotional, cognitive and social difficulties that can be stressful and if not correctly managed, lead to even greater difficulties. Yet, Nebbe (1991) and George (1999) seem to agree that animals can assist children to cope better with these developmental obstacles through their capacity to show unconditional love and provide companionship thus affording children a safe and collaborative environment. Even without unforeseen childhood stressors, Erikson proposes aspects encapsulated in what is known in developmental psychology as psychosocial development, that a child should accomplish (Louw et al., 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Erikson's stages of psychosocial development point in particular to developmental tasks that must be achieved and crises that must be overcome in order for an individual to develop successfully (Louw et al., 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2006). At various defined stages Erikson points out that individuals must develop feelings of trust by taking courage in their environment, develop a sense of independence, take initiative, endeavor to achieve goals with confidence and a sense of mastery in order to feel competent, form a set of values and morals, form a reliable sense of identity and feel as though they are being productive in their lives (Louw et al., 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2006).

Each of the participants mentioned experiences from their childhood that highlight the many ways in which animals have assisted them in their psychosocial development. Participant 1's experience, when she was nine years old, of finding and saving a buck caught in a poachers trap and taking it back to the farm where she worked reveals a number of characteristics of psychosocial development that it can be assumed she had already begun developing while working with animals at the farm. Yet, this experience in particular highlights her courage and moral responsibility towards others. As she was then given the responsibility of feeding the buck at the farm every morning until it died she would have felt proud of herself for saving the buck and feelings of success and mastery which, Erikson points out, leads to a sense of competence which is carried with her throughout her life. Similarly, Participant 2 and 3 highlight in their experiences of being given the responsibility of feeding a baby cow every morning and helping at the kennels during the holidays, respectively, the psychosocial developmental aspects of sharing, responsibility, self-control and relating to others.

As suggested by the literature, animals can assist in developing the essential psychosocial aspect of morality, where in addition to providing children with a chance to develop healthy self-esteems, self-control and responsibility, they also provide children with the ability to develop empathy (George, 1991; Hart, 2003; Newman & Newman, 2006). Coming into contact with animals often

enhances this important aspect of development where the child is made aware of the needs of animals that they can often relate to (George, 1999). When a child can relate to an animal they will soon begin to nurture, care for, love and respect it and as these psychosocial characteristics are refined through this human-animal relationship so too can these characteristics be conveyed to other human relationships (George, 1999; Hart, 2003).

As already mentioned and implicit in the above-mentioned participant experiences, moral development is highlighted particularly in Participant 2's experience where she recalls taking care of Bongi, her monkey, when he fell ill. Evident here by the despair she felt at him being ill and the effort she took to help get him well is the deep empathy she felt for him, this experience also reveals her ability to care for and nurture someone else. These characteristics are again evident in her experience with her cat where she took one of her own T-shirts and made it into a jacket for him to keep him warm. This participant herself points out that animals taught her to love and care, concepts that she feels animals assist her in teaching her own children today. Participant 1 best sums up the central psychosocial value of respect when she reports, "if you've got respect for the animals it's easy to get respect for the peoples" (L. 299) and "Because if you want to talk bad to somebody then you must try learn that if I can say this to a dog "voetsak" how much can I say to a person?" (L. 375-376).

Additionally Participant 3 highlights the theme of respect and moral values through his experience where he speaks of convincing friends at school to take care of their animals and take them as part of their family. This experience reveals empathy as well as courage, responsibility and confidence, which would have contributed to him developing a healthy self-esteem. This latter concept is realized through reflecting on his experience of working at his current place of employment where it is clear that he feels proud of himself as he likens it to working in parliament.

Another integral part of psychosocial development highlighted by Erikson is the development of feelings of trust, which should be facilitated by a safe and secure environment (Louw et al., 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2006). As reflected in the literature, animals can also be helpful companions as they promote feelings of safety and security in their owners (Katcher & Friedmann, in Brodie & Biley, 1998; Serpell, in Hart, 2003). Participants 2 and 3 in particular, perceive animals in assisting them in promoting feelings of safety and security. Although they refer to this benefit of human-animal interaction in current terms, it can be elicited from the fact that the participants grew up with animals they would have experienced these feelings of security and safety that promote the development of a sense of trust during childhood.

Additionally, the literature points out that pets are regularly employed to combat feelings of loneliness and unhappiness as they provide emotional support to children and are beneficial due to their

socializing effects (Hart, 2003; Katz, 2003). Animals are suggested to be beneficial in promoting social interaction as they possess similar qualities to humans yet are usually always supportive, show unconditional love, promote extraversion and provide a safe environment in which to practice social skills (Hart, 2003; Katz, 2003; Sheldrake, 1999; Toray, 2004). Social skills are also developed by children when they play with and talk to their animals and it is reflected in the literature that pet owning children seem to rate themselves as more socially competent and seem to more readily make new friends than non-pet owners (Hart, 2003; Sheldrake, 1999). This is emphasized by the fact that animals possess all the qualities of a good counsellor including honesty, genuineness, empathy, non-judgmental attitude, confidentiality and good listening skills (Sheldrake, 1999).

As anticipated by the review of the literature, the participants agree that animals assisted them as children and continue to assist them with feelings of loneliness by providing them with companionship. Participant 2 recalls that her friends lived far from her and could only visit on the weekends so her monkey provided her with good companionship. Participant 1's experience reflects, "They [animals] made me a better person" (L. 512) and it seems as if the qualities that she most appreciates in her animals, that they love and help her, her neighbours recognize in her and can see that she is a helpful and kind person so she recalls how she is the first person they go to when they need help. This, as the literature mentions, supports the idea that through caring for their pets, children learn to care for others and develop empathy.

Cognition is the way in which we obtain information about the outside world, convert this information into knowledge, store it and recover it to later guide our behaviour (Louw et al., 2004). The alteration and maturation of cognitive processes and products is known as cognitive development (Louw et al., 2004). Cognitive processes include "paying attention, perceiving, remembering, thinking, reasoning, planning, solving problems, imagining, inferring, conceptualizing, classifying, associating, relating, symbolising, dreaming and fantasising" (Louw et al., 2004, p. 10).

Cognitive development also includes the development of language where initially communication is merely at a nonverbal level (facial expressions, crying, touching) but gradually it becomes their mother tongue (Louw et al., 2004). Piaget theorized that children are centrally located within their own learning whereas Vygotsky proposed that learning takes place as an interaction between the child and the social and physical environment. Vygotsky's conceptualisation of cognitive development seems more fitting to the experiences of the participants as he proposed that learning is enhanced when it is participatory in nature. Through the supportive and non-judgemental presence of an animal the participants reveal experiences from their childhoods where they were provided with a

safe space for play in which to explore skills crucial to social and cognitive development. The relationship with an animal is often experienced as collaborative so is motivating and encouraging which develops a positive self-esteem for the child.

Participant 1 and 2 in particular made references to the cognitive processes of dreaming, imagining and fantasising when they recall dreaming of becoming farmers and owning their own farms as children. Participant 2's experience of playing with her monkey is an excellent example of play where cognitive processes such as fantasy and imaginary thinking are employed, however, these processes are bridged by the social interaction of her monkey thus developing social skills as well.

In addition to play as revealed in Participant 2's previous experience, an important aspect of cognitive development is the development of language and communication on both non-verbal and verbal levels. Participant 2's experience with her animals where she actually recalls speaking to her animals and imagining them speaking back would have facilitated cognitive processes of language development both verbally and non-verbally. Participant 1 also mentioned that as a child "I liked to play with the dogs everyday" (L. 193) which would have stimulated her senses thus enhancing her perception in addition to involving cognitive processes of fantasy and developing her verbal and non-verbal communication.

All three of the participants pointed to experiences where cognitive processes of classifying, associating, paying attention, remembering, reasoning, planning and problem solving were demonstrated. Participant 1 recalled working on the farm where she helped herd sheep and cattle from a young age, which would have aided her development of classifying, associating and reasoning cognitive processes. Similarly, Participant 3 mentions that from as young as 6 years old he was learning to distinguish between domestic and wild animals and being educated about various characteristics of them also assisting in the development of cognitive processes such as classifying, associating, paying attention, remembering and reasoning. When Participant 1 recalls her experience of saving the buck from the trap she would have employed and perhaps further developed cognitive processes such as planning and problem solving, again reflected in her experience of helping the cow stuck in the dam give birth. From these experiences it is revealed that through her contact with interspecies and living on a farm she would have been exposed to a variety of experiences that served to enhance her cognitive development as demonstrated by her successfully managing to deal unassisted with a fire at the kennels where she works a few years ago and save all the animals.

Thus, the participants' experiences seem in keeping with developmental literature demonstrating that their interspecies interactions as children and now assisted in their development of various cognitive processes.

The literature reviewed maintained that physical development includes both growth of the body and organs as well as physiological changes or the development of the internal structure and function of the body and that these changes have significant psychological implications and are therefore paid attention to in developmental psychology (Louw et al., 2004; Slater et al., 2003). Physical development includes the development of the senses, the nervous system, the sex glands and the endocrine glands as well as motor development (Louw et al., 2004; Slater et al., 2003). Cairns (2002), Graham (1999), and Odendaal (2000) note that it has been proven by scientific means that stroking an animal can reduce blood pressure, relieve stress and increase a sense of overall well-being, thus aiding important aspects of physical development. The literature also reflects that pet owners are usually more inclined to exercise which research has proven aids their physical health (Hart, 2003; Odendaal, 2002). Odendaal (2002) has proven that in addition to animals inducing relaxation effects on humans by positive interaction such as stroking, so can stroking induce the same physiological effect on the animal.

Thus, physical development is regarded as the inevitable unfolding of maturational processes, which are influenced by an individual's environment. Environmental enrichment is considered necessary for the development of physical prowess, and as previously mentioned; animals can provide this environmental enrichment (Cairns, 2002; Graham, 1999; Hart, 2003; Odendaal, 2002).

Here the focus is on ways in which the participants perceive animals to have aided their central nervous systems by inducing relaxation and decreasing anxiety. All three participants' experiences confirm that stroking an animal produces feelings of relaxation as pointed out by Hart (2003), Cairns (2002), Odendaal (2002) and Graham (1999). Additionally, the effect that animals have on the participants' physical health is also noted in their experiences and concurs with the literature.

Participant experiences with animals where processes of physical maturation may have been developed, such as the senses and motor functions, are more implicit. However, Participant 1 mentions working with animals on a farm as a child that would have developed her senses and motor functions. This experience elicits information that indicates that the participant was young when she began working with the animals on the farm and therefore would have still been developing physically. Her duties on the farm, such as collecting sheep and cattle would have aided the development of her senses in addition to assisting her with the development of motor control and physical fitness, important aspects of physical development (Louw et al., 2004).

Thus, the participants' experiences revealed that their interspecies interactions as children assisted in the maturity of important physical developmental characteristics and these interactions

continue to provide physical support for the participants in terms of stress reduction and an increase in a general sense of physical fitness and well being.

### **5.3) Emotional Effect**

This category and its accompanying sub-themes and key terms have been tabulated as follows:

<b><u>CATEGORY</u></b>	<b><u>SUB-THEME</u></b>
2. Emotional Effect	4. Significant Attachment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Animals as dependents</li> <li>- Animals as co-dependents</li> <li>- Animals as equals</li> </ul>
	5. Grief <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effect of loss of an animal</li> <li>- Support in loss</li> <li>- Impact on development</li> </ul>
	6. Emotional Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assisting with difficult emotions</li> <li>- Evoking positive emotions</li> </ul>

Table 4. Overview of Emotional Effect

Much research has been conducted on the human-animal bond with a particular focus on the emotional effect of this relationship. As Masson (2004) points out what is significant about this relationship is that animals can, to a large extent, understand human emotions. Sheldrake (1999) mentions that just as people are attune to one another’s feelings, animals too are sensitive to how we feel through sensory information, such as our body language, but what is significant here is the often empathic way in which they respond. Yet for all animal owners the bond that develops is beneficial largely due to an animal’s ability to provide comfort, affection and unconditional love (Sheldrake, 1999). This demonstrates the affection, love and fondness that people feel for and gain from animals, and this could explain why domestic pet owners regard their pet as a part of the family (Voith, in Brodie & Biley, 1998). Furthermore, Stewart (in Sable, 1995) notes that pets behave as if they are dependant on their owners for love and attention, thus encouraging in the owners a sense of being needed.

The strong emotional attachment that many feel for their animals as suggested by the literature is in keeping with the reported experiences of the three research participants. As demonstrated by the supporting quotations found in chapter 4, these participants all described the bond they share with their animals in fond relational terms. The participants refer to their animals as being part of the family, as children, as siblings and even as friends. Thus, the nature of the participants relationship with their animals can be explored in a hierarchical sense where Participant 2 considers her animals as children (dependents), demonstrating what Stewart (in Sable, 1995) mentions encourages the owner to feel needed. Participant 3 emphasises that he regards his relationship with animals as siblings (co-dependents), as well as friends (equals). This again speaks to the emotional significance this participant attributes to his relationship with his animals that he clearly feels is reciprocated enough to attribute the status equivalent to siblings and friends. Participant 1 also refers to her animals as friends, here she speaks of how much she values her animal friends' astute ability to understand her emotions and respond in an empathic way (P. 1, L. 343-350; Sheldrake, 1999). Participant 1 and 2 both refer to instances where their own name has been given to animals reflecting fondness and love for these animals and revealing the significant emotional attachment of these interspecies relationships on the participants for the reader.

Due to the significant emotional benefits that people often experience from their relationship with animals Weisman (in Toray, 2004) points out that the loss of an animal has a great emotional impact not unlike bereavement. Unfortunately, a loss as great as this can lead to feelings of depression and anxiety since, as Anderson, Hart, Mader and Sife (in Toray, 2004) point out this loss is as significant and devastating as the loss of a human relationship.

This experience reflected in the literature was found to be true for all of the participants who report on their experiences of the death of their animals in a similar way, as one would expect them to experience the death of a loved one. In fact, Participant 1 mentions that the loss she felt at the death of her pet buck was equivalent for her to the death of her grandmother. It is clear from Participant 2's extract of when her monkey died that she experienced this as a significant loss and as expressed in the literature, possibly experienced feelings of depression as she recalled not being able to eat for two days. The devastation of this loss is also revealed through this participant's recollection of burying her monkey and she expressed still missing him today pointing to the significance of the relationship that they had. Similarly, Participant 3's experience of grief at having his dogs put down again resonates with the literature where this participant equates his experience to that of the death of a parent, so great was his bereavement.

Companion animals are also reported to be “buffers against grief” where research shows that bereaved persons who own animals and share a strong attachment to them report less depression than non-animal owners who also reported more despair and loneliness (Sheldrake, 1999; Hart, 2003, p. 171). Indicatively, some results show that animal ownership decreases symptoms of anxiety and depression further contributing to the notion that animals are emotionally and psychologically beneficial (Sheldrake, 1999).

Participant 3 reflects on the way in which animals have helped him cope with the death of loved ones best captured by “...because they close the space between my sister and me because my sister passed away” (L. 442-443). Here Participant 3 reflects on the way in which animals provided him with emotional support in overcoming his grief for his sister. As the literature reflects, this reveals not only the strong emotional bond this participant has with his animals but also the way in which animals are emotionally and psychologically beneficial (Sheldrake, 1999; Hart, 2003).

Participant 1 recalls how the death of her animal influenced her experience of the death of her grandmother. This participant recalls feeling overwhelmed with feelings of sadness at memories of her dead buck at her grandmother’s funeral, which she experienced as confusing at the time. Here it can be noted how the death of this participant’s animal informed her concept of death as a child which has important developmental implications. At the time of her grandmother’s death she may not have experienced much death in her life and so it was significant to her that she recall the most recent significant loss – that of her buck. As George (1999) maintains through a child’s relationship with animals, they learn to understand concepts of death and suffering, notions that are important to comprehend and conceptualise to be able to recognize when others are in need of care when, in pain or when experiencing loss.

The emotional benefits of animals are evidently far reaching for children and adults alike if not only in giving an individual the experience of “mattering to another” (Hart, 2003, p. 169). As revealed in the literature, animals have been shown to significantly lift one’s mood and many pet owners report that their animals help them to feel happier even when they feel very sad (Brodie & Biley, 1998; Sheldrake, 1999; Toray, 2004). In summation, animals have shown to be emotionally beneficial due to their ability to decrease feelings of anxiety and depression by providing comfort, affection and unconditional love, which enhances an individual’s quality of life (Hart, 2003; Sable, 1995; Sheldrake, 1999).

All of the participants reported times when they feel animals have assisted them in dealing with difficult emotions such as sadness, loneliness, or anger as well as experiences where animals have evoked positive emotions in them such as happiness or love. As revealed by the participants’ words in

chapter 4, they report that animals have been emotionally beneficial to them when they have been feeling sad or angry because animals make them laugh, feel happy or feel calm. Thus, as revealed by the literature and in keeping with the experiences of the participants’ animals can evoke positive emotions and assist in the alleviation of negative emotions thus providing significant emotional support and the enhancement of quality of life. The literature reveals that it is in keeping with the experiences of the participants where they report ways in which they feel animals have been emotionally supportive to them.

**5.4) Contextual Influences**

This category and its accompanying sub-themes and key terms have been tabulated as follows:

<b><u>CATEGORY</u></b>	<b><u>SUB-THEME</u></b>
3. Contextual Influences	7. Familial Attitudes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effect on participants</li> <li>- Participants own familial attitude</li> </ul>
	8. Cultural Significance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traditional Xhosa practices</li> <li>- Spiritual significance</li> <li>- Western and non-western disparities</li> </ul>
	9. Poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial restrictions</li> <li>- Western and non-western disparities</li> </ul>

Table 5. Overview of Contextual Influences

Roseberry and Morstein Rovin (1999) point out that most peoples’ fondest memories of growing up include those of family pets. In keeping with this point, Beck and Katcher (in Nebbe, 1991) propose that the nature of the relationship between adults and their domestic pets is dependant on positive experiences of and feelings for animals as a child, often mediated by our parents or other influential caregivers. Newman and Newman (2006) point out that individuals are active in their development and are readily influenced by their social environment. Developmental theory places emphasis on the role of the caregiver in childhood development and the way in which children learn from their parent’s important emotional and behavioural responses (Louw et al., 2004).

Participant 1's reflections on her family's attitude towards animals reveals that the environment she grew up in is in keeping with her positive attitude towards animals indicating that she would have been encouraged to develop this attitude as a child by her familial context. Participant 1's positive attitude towards animals, although revealed throughout her interview, is well expressed at the end of the interview when she adds, "I want to say that all the animals need is only love and care – if you don't like animals you don't like nobody and they look after you if you look after them – all they need is love and care that's all" (L. 524-525).

Similarly, Participant 2's experience also reflects her acknowledgement of her mother particularly for allowing her the opportunity to grow up with animals and this gratitude reflects the benefits that she feels growing up with animals afforded her. Although it is noted that this participant's mother at times seemed a little exasperated by her daughters enthusiasm for animals it can be elicited from the data that this was out of financial concern and anxiety that Participant 2 was playing with her animals rather than attending to her school work as opposed to lack of encouragement.

Participant 3's experience is also in keeping with those echoed by Participant 1 and 2 but what seems particularly pertinent to his childhood experiences is that he was encouraged to engage with animals and to learn about animals which has had the effect of encouraging him to educate others about animals and to work with animals.

Furthermore, just as the participants grew up in families that encouraged them to engage with animals, so do participants also described themselves as encouraging their own family members and children in particular to engage with animals thus acknowledging the importance that growing up with animals holds for them.

In South African Xhosa culture animals are considered significant in a number of diverse ways. These differ from Western views where emphasis is largely placed on animals as pets or food (Morris, 1998). Morris (1998) referring in particular to the varied roles that animals perform in traditional African culture where these people place emphasis on the healing properties of animals as well as incorporating animals into their social interactions and folk traditions. Additionally, in traditional Xhosa culture, animals are believed to have religious or spiritual significance where it is believed that by dreaming of certain animals, dogs in particular, one is being communicated to by your ancestors (Morris, 1998).

It is clear through the experiences, detailed in chapter 4, of Participant 1 and 3 in particular that animals play a significant role in traditional Xhosa culture. Participant 1 and 3 point out the various ways in which animals are used in Xhosa rituals for example at the birth of a child these participants

detail this ritual called *imbeleko* where on the day a child is born the parents must slaughter a goat for the ancestors to ensure that the child will grow up to be healthy. They also mention the significance of dogs in particular and narrate that in Xhosa culture if one dreams of a dog this should be kept a secret until the meaning of the dream is known to you as it signifies that your ancestors are communicating with you. Participant 1 highlights the healing powers of animals in the Xhosa culture where she mentions that animal skins are sometimes requested by sangomas for the sick as muti to help them get well again. Participant 3 also refers to the significance of slaughtering goats in the Xhosa tradition of becoming a man, and at funerals. He recounts that when boys, at the age of 16-18, are about to go into the bush to become a man they slaughter a goat to inform their ancestors of this and wear a piece of the goats skin around their necks. Similarly, when they are about to return from the bush as a man they again slaughter a goat to inform their ancestors of their approaching return. Goats are also significant at funerals, Participant 3 details that if a man has died a male goat must be slaughtered and offered to the ancestors and if a woman has died a female goat must be slaughtered. Participant 3 emphasizes the significance of animals in his culture with, “animals in Xhosa, or in our culture, they help us very well just because we believe in animals. For instance, we believe in dogs, we believe in cattle’s, we believe I goat, you see. So that’s why it makes us, Xhosa, to be proud of animals” (L. 510-512).

Morris (1998) mentions that an excellent example of how animals are incorporated into African social interaction is through the Xhosa tradition of *lobola*. All three participants make reference to the Xhosa cultural tradition of lobola where animals play a significant role in the negotiation of marriage contracts. Participant 1 and 3 speak of lobola in a more traditional sense, although Participant 3 refers to it as an old tradition though he states it is still used, while Participant 2 referred to lobola in a more contemporary way where she reports that her bride-price was paid with money.

As Richards (2004) points out what is significant about the tradition of lobola is the “tremendous value and sentiment attached to the cattle” (p. 126) that speaks to the importance of the marriage contract and the importance of animals within this tradition as echoed by the participants’ experiences. Although the significance that animals hold to Xhosa culture has not been well researched it is evident through rituals such as *lobola* and the experiences expressed by the participants that animals play an integral part in the lives of such communities. With the influence of Western currency rituals such as *lobola* may not be as prevalent as they once were, as evident in Participant 2’s experience, but it is nevertheless clear that animals do still play an influential role in traditional Xhosa culture yet one must wonder how much the impact of Western culture will have on these traditions in years to come as it should be noted that the participants reflected on these traditions in a somewhat retrospective way. Whereas in the past, as revealed by sangoma, Credo Mutwa’s, words it was

considered a necessity to remain in contact with animals, yet with South Africa's poor economy and unemployment rates it is possibly near impossible for traditions such as these to be kept up as obtaining game for muti is expensive as is cattle for traditions such as imbeleko, lobola, becoming a man and the slaughters performed at funerals.

Yet Western influence does seem in conflict with what Participant 3 refers to as, "the wrath of the ancestors" (L. 525) where he describes the ancestors get angry if one does not perform the traditional slaughters or rituals and bad luck will befall you which suggests strong motivation to keep these traditions going. Participant 1 points out a difficulty she feels is experienced when performing these traditional slaughters, "The problem is they don't like us to do the slaughter and to kill them. But we supposed to do something like that" (L. 438-440). This also highlights the conflict experienced between western and non-western cultures. Participant 1 also mentions a subjective conflict where she states, "It's not easy for me when they are going to do a thing like a slaughter, I must not be there at that time. (L. 395-396). Although Participant 1 acknowledges the significance of animals within her culture and the important role they play in Xhosa traditions such as slaughters she also experiences this as personally emotionally difficult.

As is difficult to delineate from culture, the participants also reported animals to be significant to them spiritually. The distinction within this theme lies in the way in which the participants seem to experience Xhosa traditional practices as more community orientated whereas their spiritual experiences seem to be more individual. In particular, Participant 2 and 3 reflect on the ways in which they feel animals benefit them spiritually. These participants' experiences reveal that they feel that animals help them feel closer to God. Participant 2 expresses her gratitude to God for creating animals and her love of animals while Participant 3's experience details that he believes God created animals for mankind to look after which reveals this participant's vocational motivation.

This category includes the ways in which the participants have experienced the influence of poverty both while growing up and now. The participants all highlight ways in which poverty has restricted their access to nature and animals and appropriate ways in which to care for their animals. The experience recalled by Participant 2 who used the money her mother gave her to buy lunch at school to buy her cat milk and then again when she takes dog food and shampoo from work to take care of her dog reveals the way in which financial restraints were significant in this participant's experience. However, what is significant about this participant's experience is the way in which she demonstrates such empathy for her animals to go hungry herself and perseverance to gain access to the materials she needs in order to take care of her animals as best she can. The influence of poverty is also gleaned

through the participants' comparisons of the township or location, where they emphasise the fact that these poor areas have difficulties that negatively impact animal ownership, with farmland where they experience peace and have better access to animals and nature. Yet Participant 3's experience reflects that even in farming areas conditions are not adequate for animals and he suggests that more veterinary clinics should be based in rural farming areas to accommodate small villages that cannot afford to travel far to bring their sick animals into bigger towns. Thus, from the participants' experiences it can be elicited that often in the face of poverty they have sought out what they experience as aesthetically pleasing, by working with animals, and beneficial as found in nature and the company of animals. These experiences highlighted by the participants differ quite significantly to Western interspecies interactions where access to adequate veterinary care is often without difficulties and neither are the particular financial constraints mentioned participants due to the political context from which they reported their experiences.

### **5.5) The Biophilia Hypothesis**

Despite the criticisms that have been lodged at Wilson's biophilia hypothesis it remains as an interesting theoretical perspective with which to discuss the human-animal bond. Although already discussed in the literature review, see 2.2.2, this section reflects in particular on the participants lived experiences while linking these to the biophilia hypothesis where applicable. As Kahn (1997) reminds us, what makes this hypothesis significant is the overarching theoretical basis it gives a multitude of disciplines, such as psychology, for making sense of the human relationship with nature.

To summarize Wilson's (1984) argument, he hypothesised that biophilia, or the human affinity towards animals and our natural environment in general, originated thousands of years ago through an evolutionary drive for survival, which in turn had an effect on human cognitions and emotions. The participants' experiences reflected in this research seem in keeping with Wilson's hypothesis particularly those categorised under Emotional Effect. Here the participants' experiences reveal their affiliation towards animals and this is illustrated by the way in which they describe their relationship with their animals, the emotional impact of the death of an animal and the ways they experience animals to be emotionally supportive.

Additionally, Wilson asserted that this human connection with animals and our natural environment is maintained due to its positive effect on our spiritual, physical and psychological well-being (Wynn, 1997). These notions are reflected by the participants' experiences where they attribute great cultural significance to animals in various Xhosa traditions and the way the experience animals as assisting them in feeling more attuned to God. The participants' experiences also placed great emphasis

on the way in which animals assist them in their health and in promoting feelings of general well-being as explored under the theme of Physical Development.

It is also suggested that biophilia is instinctual and often unconsciously present in our cognitions and emotions in the form of childhood fantasies (Wilson, 1984). This instinct, Wilson (1984) believes, occurs across most cultures and societies. This seems consistent with the experiences reported by the participants where they recall dreaming of animals as children and as is evidenced by the research conducted in this exploration; this innate affiliation with nature is very evident within the particular cultural context of the research participants.

Demonstrated by Melson's (2000) exploration of the biophilia hypothesis and developing children, she believes Wilson's hypothesis can be of assistance in guiding AAT with children. Her conclusions, based on valuable facts about biophilia (i.e. that animals promote feelings of safety in children, provide stimuli, maintain attention, encode memories, organise linguistic thought and develop nonverbal sensitivity) provide evidence for the therapeutic value of animals for children as well as the biophilia hypothesis (Melson, 2000).

From Melson's (2000) application of the biophilia hypothesis to aspects of childhood development highlighted in this research, such as the development of a trust as encouraged by a safe and secure environment, the development of cognitive processes and empathy, it can be deduced that this hypothesis is similarly applicable here providing evidence for the application of AAT in the particular cultural context of the participants as it is usually referred to in a strictly Western sense.

As reflected in the literature, we live in a modern world where technology often makes a true affiliation with nature difficult (Orr, 1994). Researchers have discovered that it is often in communities where mutual respect and responsibility for both human and natural life is promoted that biophilia thrives, as opposed to violence and poverty or even wealth and prosperity (Nelson, in Kahn, 1997; Orr, 1994). Additionally, when understanding the biophilia hypothesis, the literature urges us to consider animals not only domestic but wild as well to fully appreciate our affiliation and evolutionary past (Shepard, in Kahn, 1997). Finally, these comments seem relevant and fitting to the experiences expressed by the participants explored in this research where they point out their longing to be in more natural areas where they feel closer to animals, wild or domesticated, and nature as opposed to the township or location which is dominated by poverty and does not provide a good community for them to feel connected to nature.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **6) CONCLUSION**

The aims of this research were to describe in rich phenomenological detail the participants' recollected childhood experiences of growing up with animals in the context of a traditionally African cultural perspective in South Africa; as well as to document the emotional, physical and social effects of inter-species relationships as described by three South African adults who work with animals, in order to explore and situate these experiences in relation to broad international perspectives on the contribution of animals to human development.

The research question posed to address these aims was, "What is the nature of childhood experiences with animals among South Africans situated within a traditionally African culture, and how does the psychological significance of these experiences correlate with international developmental perspectives on the role of animals in physical, psychosocial and cognitive human development?"

The aim of collecting rich and detailed phenomenological data for analysis was addressed through the utilisation of in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews, which were conducted with three participants who were purposively selected according to the cultural orientation of their families. As the researcher is situated in the Eastern Cape, it was appropriate, though not intentional, that the participants were Xhosa speakers who had grown up in the Eastern Cape. The interviews were dynamic, and participant-directed, though a semi-structured interview schedule provided an access point for participants, as well as focus for the researcher. The transcription of the interviews was verbatim, which meant that participants' descriptions of their lived experiences remained true to the words and phrases with which they expressed themselves. The aim of collecting rich phenomenological data regarding the emotional, physical and social effects of childhood interspecies relationships as recalled by three African people was therefore successfully fulfilled.

The question of how these described experiences correlate with broad international perspectives on the contribution of animals to human development comprised the hermeneutic of the study. Here it was found that the experiences of these South African individuals were generally in keeping with the trends found in the literature. Participants attributed to their childhood relationships with animals a variety of benefits. These benefits occur on a range of levels, from the physical to the cognitive, and the psychosocial. The emotional attachment of the participants to animals with whom

they had interacted in childhood correlated with the nature of interspecies relationships as anticipated by the literature.

Cultural differences in the conceptualisation of inter-species relationships, between western and traditionally African ideologies, appeared to influence the moral and ethical positions assumed by the participants, while the subjective nature of the described attachment between participants and animals remains qualitatively similar across cultures, when explored in relation to international research. The similarities between the experiences of the participants and international research findings lend credence to Wilson's hypothesis that all human beings are potentially able to connect in deep and profound ways with their natural environment, and that this connection contributes to the development of social and cognitive skills, as well as constituting emotional support and stability.

Limitations of this study include the limited number of participants interviewed. This is a limitation in that it curtails the prospect of broad generalisations. However, the small sample allowed the researcher to contribute to the generation of rich and detailed phenomenological data for analysis.

Furthermore, the interviews were conducted in English, which, due to the criteria for participant selection, was not the first language of any of the participants. Future research should address this concern, and interviews conducted in participants' first language will serve to enhance the phenomenological depth of the data.

Each theme identified in the data constitutes a potential direction in which future researchers on the nature of interspecies relationships in childhood within South Africa can choose to follow, in order to contribute to the currently scarce literature in this area.

As reflected in the opening lines of this research, mental health research has been denoting increasing significance to the human-animal bond although more practical application of this still needs to be applied in South Africa. The experiences revealed by the participants who took part in this research serve to reinforce the notion that future studies in human health cannot be thought to be complete if the animals, with which people share their lives, and the psychological benefits of this relationship, are not taken into account.

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## **APPENDIX**

APPENDIX A

RHODES UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

**AGREEMENT**

BETWEEN STUDENT RESEACHER AND RESEARCH

PARTICIPANT

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to participate in the research project of  
\_\_\_\_\_ on reflective accounts of childhood inter-species experiences.

**I understand that:**

1. The researcher is a student conducting the research as part of the requirements for a Master's degree at Rhodes University.
2. The researcher is interested in the reflections of South Africans situated within one or more non-western traditional African cultures on their childhood interspecies interactions.
3. My participation will involve a 90-minute interview.
4. I will be asked to reflect on some personal aspects but I can choose not to answer any questions about aspects of my life, which I am not willing to disclose.
5. I am invited to voice to the researcher any concerns I have about my participation in the study and to have these addressed to my satisfaction.
6. I am free to withdraw from the study at any time – however I commit myself to full participation unless some unusual circumstances occur or I have concerns about my participation, which I did not originally anticipate.
7. The report on the project may contain information about my personal experiences and accounts, but that the report will be designed in such a way that it will not be possible to be identified by the general reader.
8. I have the right to review the research after it has been completed to check for accuracy of interpretation and will be welcome to change anything that is not consistent with my lived experience.

Signed on: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**Explain interview procedure:** semi-structured so I will be guiding the interview but it should be as conversational and comfortable as possible. We will be going as in-depth as is comfortable for you – take breaks when necessary and we can stop the interview at any time. The aim of the interview is for you to tell me about your experiences of growing up with animals as a child; this includes any kind of animal and any experiences that you feel are significant to you personally.

- What is the earliest memory you have of animals? How old were you? Tell me about it.
- What effect if any did this encounter have on you?
- What other childhood experiences/interactions with animals can you remember?
- Do you feel that you had a relationship with the animals you grew up with? What was this relationship?
- Did you grow up distinguishing between pets and other animals?
- How do you think growing up with animals has benefited you – both then and now? In what way and why?
- Do you think growing up with animals helped you develop as a child in any way? How? What do you think you learnt?
- Do you think that growing up with animals had a positive effect on you socially? How?
- Do you think growing up with animals helped you develop better than if you had not grown up with animals?
- Do you think growing up with animals has not benefited you in any way?
- What is/was your parents attitude towards animals?
  
- What, in your opinion, is the cultural significance of animals?
  
- Culturally, what do you feel is the significance of childhood interactions with animals?
- How do you think your encounters with animals differ from other South African's encounters?
  
- Was the death of an animal significant to you? Can you tell me about what you remember, how it affected you and what you may have learnt from this experience if anything?
  
- Can you think of a situation where animals have been particularly beneficial to your health both emotionally and physically? Spiritually?
- Do you think that growing up with animals has enhanced your quality of life? In what way?
- How did your childhood experiences with animals shape the way you see yourself, the world and others?

## APPENDIX C

### GUIDE TO CODED TRANSCRIPTIONS

#### COLOUR CODES

- |                             |                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Psychosocial Development | <u>Red underline</u>       |
| 2) Cognitive Development    | <u>Yellow underline</u>    |
| 3) Physical Development     | <u>Green underline</u>     |
| 4) Significant Attachment   | <u>Blue underline</u>      |
| 5) Grief                    | <u>Black underline</u>     |
| 6) Emotional Support        | <u>Pink underline</u>      |
| 7) Familial Attitudes       | <u>Turquoise underline</u> |
| 8) Cultural Significance    | <u>Orange underline</u>    |
| 9) Poverty                  | <u>Brown underline</u>     |

**APPENDIX D**

**INTERVIEW WITH PARTICIPANT 1**

1 I: There we go - lets get this going (digital recorder)  
2 P: Okay  
3 I: Okay, if you could just ignore it and try to be as comfortable as you possibly can  
4 P: Okay  
5 I: I'm just going to refer to this (interview guide) every now and again...  
6 P: Okay  
7 I: ...just to focus us a little bit but be free to talk about whatever you feel comes up, okay?  
8 P: Okay  
9 I: So basically I just wanted to start with, I wonder what your first memory of an animal experience  
10 was? When you were younger, when you were a child, what can you remember?  
11 P: Okay, when I was a child I was living on the farm near 7 fountains and there were cows and sheep  
12 there...  
13 I: Oh okay  
14 P: ...and my mother had chickens, but we were the poor people in that farm so we leave the school  
15 early, so I have std 5, leave the school because my father passed away...  
16 I: Okay  
17 P: ...and we started having problems. So from then I started working on the farm and I started helping  
18 my brother collect the sheep's and cattle's in the afternoon and the calf's and later they come and meet  
19 the cows and take them straight to the boss.  
20 I: Okay  
21 P: We grow and grow and grow and when I was 17 the farmer take me as a worker there, proper  
22 worker there. I work there for 12 years worked in the bush; I did everything what the guys doing.  
23 I: Yes, wow...  
24 P: I went to the bush to catching the sheep, we went to the mountain to check the goats it was...I was  
25 very happy to do that because I said one day I am going to be having one of the animals, even a cow,  
26 but luckily I have 2 dogs now.  
27 I: Oh lovely!  
28 P: 2 little dogs, 2 jack russles  
29 I: Oh lovely...  
30 P: So I grew and grew and grew and grew and my, my bigger brother go to the bush to change to be a  
31 man.  
32 I: Yes  
33 P: Yes, I was working for - the farmer asked me to have that job. I was driving a tractor, collect the  
34 little goats and put in the trailer...so I was very happy to be do that because my wishes was to be one  
35 day I'm going to work as a farmer or I'm going to have my farm  
36 I: Ja, Ja  
37 P: (Sigh) my mother died, unfortunately. So she had 8 children, I was the 4<sup>th</sup> one...  
38 I: Okay...  
39 P: ...she tried to grow those children, take them to school. We were working there at that time it was  
40 me and my big brother...  
41 I: Ja  
42 P: ...my big sister married quickly after my mother passed away, my sister married...doesn't care  
43 about us who grew and grew all of who have Std 10, then when she's got Std 10 work, go and check  
44 for work.  
45 I: Ja  
46 P: And then my brother, that follows me...  
47 I: Ja  
48 P: ...went to Port Elizabeth to look for a job because all of us were working there in the farm. And then  
49 the farmer said to them he's going to come with the comrades there and going to do something with the

50 farm. Then we were not comfortable then, then we went to look for another place and I found another  
51 place on another farm where there were sheep's and goats.  
52 I: Okay  
53 P: We stayed there alright until 1995 and we looked for a place in P.E. and my family stay there now.  
54 I: Okay, the rest of your family lives there now?  
55 P: Yes, they stay in P.E. And then we find out that father is not our father.  
56 I: Okay...  
57 P: My mother was married with me and my brother – we were two and then married another man, so  
58 we thought that that guy was really our father. And then my step-sister from my other father went to  
59 Port Elizabeth, I was working there for at a crèche, at a family - I was really happy because they had  
60 dogs and things so I was busy doing everything. And then my step-sister comes from Grahamstown to  
61 ask me if I would come and look after my father in Port Elizabeth and says I can go because I have no  
62 job now and then I came here in Grahamstown to look after my father for 2 years – after 2 years he  
63 passed away.  
64 I: Oh no...  
65 P: But, I was selling sweets and vetkoek at school for maybe one and a half year and then my stepsister  
66 was working here at the house and said to me there's a job here but I don't think you will be fine for  
67 that job. I said, "What is that job?" She told me that it's with the animals. I said I would be very happy  
68 because you know that on the farm I was very good in animals.  
69 I: Yes...  
70 P: 1998 then...  
71 I: Okay  
72 P: September I came here.  
73 I: And did you say it was 12 years here?  
74 P: No, not 12 years, 1998 since now.  
75 I: Oh okay  
76 P: It's 12 years on that farm.  
77 I: Oh okay I see.  
78 P: Yes on that farm, I was dipping the cattle's and do everything there, even when it was time for  
79 cutting the wool.  
80 I: Ja, you were there  
81 P: Uh-ha  
82 I: Okay, I see  
83 P: And then if the farmer goes to cattle she ask me to look after the dogs and cats and everything, when  
84 she comes back all the dogs are clean...  
85 (Laughter)  
86 P: So, it was my aim to be working with animals.  
87 I: Ja, wow. Two things have come up for me, it sounds as though throughout your life you've always  
88 been near to animals, even when you went to P.E...  
89 P: Yes, yes!  
90 I: ...you were even looking after animals, and now you've come here and this sounds like a place  
91 you've always wanted to be at...  
92 P: Yes, yes, yes...  
93 I: And you seem very happy?  
94 P: Oh yes, I'm very happy to be here, yes very happy. And then here, and I can't speak English  
95 properly and I wonder how am I going to be...but I tried, since now I'm here with my broken English!  
96 I: Well, I think you speak very well  
97 P: (Laughs) No, not very well (sigh). So working here for 3 days. But there were 3 men working here  
98 with me. The first thing, the dogs doesn't like the men...if they see the men they growling and then the

99 boss find out no there's something happened here, "why these dogs barking but they very happy to see  
100 me", then he take me as full time worker  
101 I: Oh, wow. So that's actually the other thing I was going to mention, it sounds like you seem to have a  
102 natural way with animals?  
103 P: Yes, yes!  
104 I: They really respond to you?  
105 P: Yes, yes. So I like to be here, I like this job. At night when I'm dreaming, I'm dreaming of the dogs  
106 and cats and even the tortoise!  
107 (Laughter)  
108 I: Oh wow...  
109 P: Oh, we have everything here, even the birds too.  
110 I: Oh that's lovely. It sounds like as much as the animals work for you, like they did on the farm when  
111 you were little, you were also working for them?  
112 P: Yes, yes.  
113 I: So there was a kind of bond going on?  
114 P: Yes, yes.  
115 I: Okay. Do you feel as though you have got a special bond with animals?  
116 P: Yes, yes, yes!  
117 I: It sounds like they've always been there for you in your life?  
118 P: Yes, yes, that's true!  
119 I: Can you think of, um, any one experience from when you were little, and maybe tell me how old you  
120 were then, where it's especially significant to you – any experience you had with an animal like maybe  
121 a dog that you found or a cow that you rescued or something that sticks out for you?  
122 P: Okay. The shop in that farm, it was about 5 km from the place we were staying  
123 I: Ok, is this when you were on the farm?  
124 P: Yes, but it's not the shop for our owner it's a shop for another farm...  
125 I: Okay yes...  
126 P: When you go there, there was hills and hills and then the water. I hear something crying,  
127 crying...ooh, what's that what's that? And then, if you go alone on that road you are very scared  
128 because its full of bush and everything but I tried to check and check and check but I found there was a  
129 little animal in a trap...  
130 I: Oh no...  
131 P: It's a baby buck.  
132 I: Oh, from the poachers?  
133 P: Yes, yes. It was crying and crying. There was a man on the other side who said to me "Don't touch,  
134 don't touch!" But no, I can't listen to that cry! I went straight and took my jersey and tried to take it out  
135 and wrap it with my jersey. I took it straight to my farm and gave it to my owner there. And every  
136 morning I went there to feed it, because it was still a baby.  
137 I: Oh shame...  
138 P: And I feed and feed. And they call that little buck Participant 1.  
139 I: Oh wow!  
140 P: We were crying when that buck died because there was a dog, the farmer's dog, he was very  
141 naughty and he catch him and he died after 5 years. But then I was 9 years old when we got him.  
142 I: 9 years old when you saved the buck?  
143 P: Yes, yes, I was 9 years old.  
144 I: Wow...  
145 P: And here again, in 2000, there was a huge fire here...  
146 I: Okay...

147 P: My owners are working in town – the wife at \*\*\* the owner at \*\*\*\*\*. My sister is working in the  
148 kitchen down there. And I was standing outside under the tree and there was a big fire coming straight.  
149 I: Shew!

150 P: Oh, I don't know what to do now! Because there was animals here, it was full cats and dogs, I was  
151 alone, there was nobody. My sister is there in the kitchen; she can't go out because of the fire.  
152 I: Ja? Oh no...

153 P: Oh...I make a plan. I'm using a pipe to clean the dogs and then for the cats. I was there to try to  
154 sprinkle the dogs so that the fire doesn't come for the dogs on the roof because it is no use now it is dry  
155 - it is easy to burn.

156 I: Ja...

157 P: I hear my sister down there, she is crying, crying, she don't know what to do. She doesn't know even  
158 the phone number now to ask for my boss to come.

159 I: Oh no!

160 P: I can't stay; I hear the voices, maybe she burning. I open all the cages and put straight the net so that  
161 I can put the sprinkler on the animals.

162 I: Oh wow...

163 P: I went down then to save my sister. Now I think it was risky for me to do that, what if I had burnt,  
164 what am I going to do?

165 I: Ja...

166 P: But when I went straight to my sister the dogs are barking again, maybe someone is burning now...I  
167 come back again, but they were okay, there was no fire, because of that water I saved them so they  
168 were wet, wet, wet, everything was wet down there. And even the fire was down here until 2 o' clock  
169 in the morning

170 I: Shew! And you saved them all?

171 P: Yes!

172 I: That's incredible!

173 P: Yes, all of them.

174 I: Wow, and all by yourself?

175 P: Yes!

176 I: From the two stories you've told me now it sounds like you were so brave, even when you were 9  
177 that when you hear an animal calling you have an instinct to go and rescue them whereas some people  
178 may not have done the same?

179 P: Yes, yes, or they would kill them and eat them.

180 I: Ja, ja. So it sounds like there's something really special there?

181 P: Yes. My brother, he was a shepherd there and he likes the animals too much and he was worried that  
182 when a sheep died he feel guilty that a sheep died. Like he was worried that it died.

183 I: Okay, so he also seems to care about animals like you do?

184 P: Yes, yes.

185 I: And when one of them died it sounds like it really made his heart sore?

186 P: Yes!

187 I: Okay. And are there any other memories that you can remember of when you were little of animals?  
188 Did you like to have them near you? Did you play with them?

189 P: Yes, yes!

190 I: Tell me about that...

191 P: It was dogs and cats only on that farm; my mother was working at the dairy...

192 I: Okay...

193 P: And then I was always next to her and I liked to play with the dogs everyday and then one day I  
194 thought that I was rough and he bite me here (shows me her arm)

195 I: Aah, was that a dog?

196 P: It was a dog, but it was not bad, the owner came quickly and helped.  
197 I: Ok, okay. Um, remember the buck that you saved? I wonder, how did that make you feel, first of all  
198 when you heard the buck calling and then when you rescued the buck, how did you feel then?  
199 P: Oh, I was so worried; because I knew that everybody wants to eat this thing but I like it I don't want  
200 it to be dead.  
201 I: Ja...  
202 P: I tried my best to get it quick to the farm because the white man doesn't like the animal to be dead  
203 but the blacks always want to eat.  
204 I: Okay.  
205 P: So I tried to do my best to go straight to the boss. So every morning he ask me to go feed the buck.  
206 I: And why do you think he asked you to do that?  
207 P: Maybe he saw that I'm worried about that, I like it, he knows me that I like animals.  
208 I: Yes, it sounds like he saw that you had a special bond with this buck that you had saved?  
209 P: Yes. Even when the cow died I was feeding the calves with the teat. Even at one o' clock, the school  
210 was not far away from the bosses house and at one o' clock I would go out of school and he asked me  
211 from the teacher that at one o' clock I must go there and feed the cow. And do you know what he gave  
212 me?  
213 I: What?  
214 P: Sugar!  
215 I: Okay, sugar?  
216 P: Yes, he paid me with sugar to look after the calves. I didn't ever worry because I was poor at that  
217 time but it was fine for me because I liked the animals.  
218 I: Ja, ja, so you would have done it for less?  
219 P: Yes, yes.  
220 I: Wow that sounds great. And are there any other experiences you can think of when you were  
221 younger?  
222 P: Hmmm, let me think...  
223 I: Maybe births of animals...  
224 P: Yes, yes. There was one cow, she had a problem. Her calf doesn't want to go out so I go straight and  
225 call the madam because she was willing to help the dogs and cows when the babies doesn't want to  
226 come out.  
227 I: Oh I see...  
228 P: But the problem was the madam was old she couldn't come quickly and it was down there next to  
229 the water.  
230 I: Ja?  
231 P: So when you go there you must, somebody must tie a rope to a tree and fetch but she couldn't go  
232 down there. So I quickly called my big brother, let's go there straight and I was holding and my brother  
233 pulled the baby and it was fine.  
234 I: And it was fine, wow!  
235 P: Yes, we were still young but I can't remember how old we were at that time but around 9. The  
236 problem was it came with the legs first not he face.  
237 I: Oh okay, and did you feel scared?  
238 P: Yes. He asked me to hold the legs and then I hold and then look this side to look to see that she's  
239 still alive...shew!  
240 I: Wow, so it sounds like you were quite scared that the baby might die?  
241 P: Yes, yes I really wanted him to be okay but he was fine.  
242 I: Okay, and did you feel proud of yourself?  
243 P: Yes, yes I did. Even with this job, when I am at home at night I'm very proud  
244 I: Absolutely!

245 P: Because everywhere, everybody here in Grahamstown knows me because I'm working here.  
246 Everybody's happy when they come to collect the dogs.  
247 I: And it sounds like they can see that you really do look after them so well.  
248 P: Yes yes, even when they come in with their owners, they come in the gate and come jump straight to  
249 me so every time they're happy!  
250 I: Aah, wow. And do you feel as though you had a relationship with the animals that you grew up with?  
251 P: Yes, yes, they are my friends.  
252 I: Okay, and can you tell me a bit more about that?  
253 P: Its like...(Pause) I don't care about you...more than the animals.  
254 I: Okay, so you feel more for animals than some people?  
255 P: Yes yes! Because they're always waiting for someone to do something wrong for them so I'm  
256 always on their side.  
257 I: That's wonderful; it sounds to me like you protect them?  
258 P: Yes yes, and they family to me.  
259 I: Ok ok, and what would your life be like without animals?  
260 P: Whew! I can't stay without them!  
261 I: You can't live without them?  
262 P: Yes yes, even when I was on maternity I was boring, I couldn't wait to see them animals, I must see  
263 the animals. And even \*\*\*\*\*, when I meet her, when she goes away she leaves her dogs for me to  
264 look after.  
265 I: So it sounds like other people also see your love for animals and trust you to take care of them?  
266 P: Yes, yes.  
267 I: And as much as you do things for the animals it sounds like they also give you a lot? In terms of  
268 love and companionship?  
269 P: Oh yes, yes!  
270 I: And when you were growing up on the farm was there any difference for you between animals and  
271 pets or were they all just animals to you?  
272 P: There was no difference but the difference was the farmer was feeding the dogs with meat and bones  
273 so our dogs we were feeding with porridge and milk.  
274 I: Oh okay, so you'd feed them differently?  
275 P: Yes, yes.  
276 I: And how do you think that growing up with animals as opposed to some people getting animals only  
277 later in life has benefited you? Do you think it's helped you in any way?  
278 P: I think it is nice to grow up with animals, I comes when I'm big like this if I had come without  
279 knowing animals, you must know them and they know you well. Even now I'm stinking like dogs I'm  
280 not stinking like a people.  
281 I: Okay, it seems like you've taken on some part of the animal you're so close to them?  
282 P: Yes, yes.  
283 I: So it sounds like growing up with animals taught you about them more than any other people who  
284 maybe had not grown up with animals?  
285 P: Yes, yes.  
286 I: And that has helped you especially now in your career with animals  
287 P: Yes, yes.  
288 I: So if you didn't have that experience of when you were younger of being around animals and saving  
289 animals and having them near you do you think you might not be in the same position as you are now?  
290 P: I may be because if you feel in your heart that "I wish" ...  
291 I: It sounds like it's much more than a job for you?  
292 P: Yes, yes!

293 I: Okay okay. And you know when children are little they learn things, they've got to learn how to  
294 walk and love, trust, feel in your heart for someone else, how to be brave like with the buck, respect?  
295 P: Yes...

296 I: Do you think that animals have helped you learn any things like these?  
297 P: Yes, yes!  
298 I: Okay, what kind of things?  
299 P: Yes, and if you've got respect for the animals it's easy to got respect for the peoples.

300 I: Absolutely, okay ja. Do you think that they have helped you love – by you showing love to an  
301 animal?  
302 P: Yes, oh yes, even when I'm going down there now (points) they're very happy to see me, everybody  
303 wants to come to see me, even my boss doesn't go there the dogs are barking like mad, they don't  
304 know him.  
305 I: Ja, so the animals really know you and they really love you?  
306 P: Yes, yes.  
307 I: And you feel the same way towards them?  
308 P: Yes!  
309 I: And it sounds like that you would have developed from when you were little, that kind of  
310 relationship with an animal?  
311 P: Yes yes, so I thought I was going to school and having something to do and then after that I wanted  
312 to be a farmer but that wasn't possible.  
313 I: Okay, so your dream was to become a farmer?  
314 P: Yes.  
315 I: And how do you feel about being here now?  
316 P: Very happy to be here – even here we've got Zebras its like a reserve a little game reserve  
317 I: Oh wow!  
318 P: Yes, everyday, in the bushes. I'm always looking and counting. I'm always the first person to see  
319 small babies when it's the time to have babies.  
320 I: Oh wow...you've got such an interest!  
321 P: Yes, yes.  
322 I: Okay, um and do you think that, because some research has shown that children who grow up with  
323 animals have...it helps them to socialise, you know because its important for you to learn to play and  
324 communicate with others so you learn these things when you're little – do you understand?  
325 P: Yes...

326 I: Do you think that animals helped you in that way?  
327 P: Yes, yes!  
328 I: To learn social skills?  
329 P: Yes yes, you not so alone, even mine I'm sleeping with them on my bed now.

330 I: Oh okay, so they really keep you company. And do you feel they kept you company like that when  
331 you were little?  
332 P: Yes, yes.  
333 I: Can you remember specifically anything about them keeping you company when you were little and  
334 how that made you feel?  
335 P: We had a black cat at home; it was for my little sister. But the first time the cat it was not my friend,  
336 proper friend, because I was so scared because when you go to it, it follows you that little kitten.  
337 (Laughter)  
338 P: One day I go to the shop and it follow me and it doesn't want to go back, I try to take it back, uh-uh,  
339 its coming, I'm so scared of the little cat it's better when it is big.  
340 I: Okay...  
341 P: But from that day I must take it because she follow me everywhere she follow me, so I had a friend.

342 I: Do you feel that the animals you grew up with were your friends?  
343 P: Yes!  
344 I: Did you have lots of animal friends?  
345 P: I had my neighbour but she was like me she also liked animals  
346 I: Okay, so you had both animal and people friends.  
347 P: Yes, yes.  
348 I: And do you think that they both gave you the same kind of happiness?  
349 P: No, not the people friends. The animals more – even when I feel sad they jumping over me so that I  
350 must laugh – they know that there is something so they try to make me happy.  
351 I: Oh wow, its amazing how animals can pick up on how you feeling?  
352 P: Yes, yes!  
353 I: When you feeling sad?  
354 P: They know me, they know me, they know when I'm not right.  
355 I: Okay. And do they help bring you out of your sadness?  
356 P Yes yes, if I've got my problem at home then I come here and everything is disappeared  
357 I: Wow, that's amazing. Okay, um do you think that having grown up with animals helped you develop  
358 more as a person than if you hadn't grown up with animals?  
359 P: No, it is right to grow up with animals.  
360 I: Okay, so you feel as though they have helped you develop?  
361 P: Yes, they have helped me develop.  
362 I: And do you think that there is anything bad about a relationship with an animal? Can you think of  
363 anything negative that growing up with animals has don for you?  
364 P: No, nothing!  
365 I: Okay, do you think it's better for children to grow up with animals?  
366 P: Yes.  
367 I: Okay, do you have any children of your own?  
368 P: Yes.  
369 I: Have they grown up with animals?  
370 P: Yes. I've got, um my first-born is working here and he loves the animals so much.  
371 I: Okay, do you think that its better for your children to have grown up around animals than if they  
372 hadn't?  
373 P: Oh yes, I like them to grow with animals because it's right to grow with animals.  
374 I: Okay.  
375 P: Because if you want to talk bad to somebody then you must try learn that if I can say this to a dog  
376 “voetsak” how much can I say to a person?  
377 I: Ja...So you feel that if you are brought up well to speak nicely to animals then you are more likely to  
378 speak well to other people?  
379 P: Yes yes, respect.  
380 I: That's wonderful. Ja. Um how did your parents feel about animals?  
381 P: My mother, I didn't grow up with my father, she was feeing the pigs there on the farm so she loves  
382 animals – we were worried even when she had to slaughter one pig for money because it was difficult  
383 for her.  
384 I: Yes, yes...  
385 P: But we were very poor.  
386 I: Okay, so there's also that toss up between needing money and having animals that you know can  
387 give you money but also feeling that you love the animal...  
388 P: Yes, yes.  
389 I: Okay, okay. And I wonder if we can talk about – because I'm specifically studying South Africans in  
390 an African culture – I wonder if we could talk a little bit about culture now?

391 P: Okay.  
392 I: I wonder if you feel there is a cultural significance to animals – I know about cattle herders...  
393 P: And slaughter.  
394 I: Yes, I wonder if you could tell me a little about that?  
395 P: It's not easy for me when they are going to do a thing like a slaughter, I must not be there at that  
396 time.  
397 I: Ja, you don't like seeing that?  
398 P: I don't want to see...  
399 I: And do you think that for other black South Africans animals play an important role in their culture?  
400 P: Yes!  
401 I: In the slaughtering of animals?  
402 P: Yes, because sometimes when the baby grows its fine and fine and fine but when you find that in 18  
403 years he's stealing somebody's things and that – but when you slaughter a goat to make a culture for  
404 him it sometimes get a little bit better so the animals are very important.  
405 I: Okay, so you're saying that if a child starts stealing...  
406 P: Yes and doing something wrong – it is also the muti for us  
407 I: Oh okay so when you slaughter the goat then it has significance and helps the child get better and not  
408 to do that?  
409 P: Yes, so they're very important but it's not nice when you see them cut their neck.  
410 I: Ja ok, so although they really do have an important role in your culture it's also not nice for you to  
411 see?  
412 P: Yes, yes.  
413 I: And are there any other ceremonies where they might use animals?  
414 P: Yes, yes, the cows for lobola. When you are going to marry my parents are going to say we need 8  
415 cows or 5 cows and 3 horses and then when they come with those cows and horses a goat must be  
416 slaughtered.  
417 I: Ok okay, so it sounds like a really big handing over ceremony?  
418 P: Yes, yes, oh the animals are very important.  
419 I: Okay so it sounds like they really are quite symbolic?  
420 P: Yes, yes.  
421 I: Are there any other cultural things?  
422 P: Like when you are going to the Sangoma if my Sangoma says he need the skin of the lion you must  
423 go and check for the lion somewhere... just example because you can't find a lion somewhere!  
424 (Laughter)  
425 P: Must go into the bush and check for the gemsbok or the springbok – just for the skin.  
426 I: What does the skin give you?  
427 P: To be healthy!  
428 I: Oh okay...  
429 P: Or if you dreaming that I want the skin of a bushbuck I must go to the game reserve to buy some  
430 bushbuck but it's not easy.  
431 I: No I'm sure...  
432 P: If your dream says you must get this kinds of animals you must so that you will be healthy and fine.  
433 I: Okay, so there's health, payment (lobola), and asking for help when you slaughter so animals mean  
434 so much more, it seems, than just a pet or meat?  
435 P: Yes, yes!  
436 I: I wonder if you can think how your cultural experience differs from a white South African's  
437 experience?  
438 P: The problem is they don't like us to do the slaughter and to kill them.  
439 I: Okay...

440 P: But we supposed to do something like that.  
441 I: Ja, ja, and these ceremonies go back for many, many years...  
442 P: Yes, yes.  
443 I: It sounds like it's for very special occasions and also to celebrate?  
444 P: Yes, yes.  
445 I: Okay. Now you were talking about some of the deaths of animals that you have experienced, the  
446 buck and that, and I wonder how you felt about these animals dying?  
447 P: Everyday I've got a happiness inside of me that I'm going to see it again, every morning when I get  
448 up the first thing I must do is go and check but when I woke up and he was gone  
449 I: Okay, and how did this feel?  
450 P: Oh, I didn't even eat that meat because the boss ask the small boys to take ad eat it I did not want to  
451 see even any of it.  
452 I: Ja, ja...  
453 P: It was lot of blood.  
454 I: Did it make you feel very sad?  
455 P: Oh yes, I was so wrong that day!  
456 I: Ja, and did you cry?  
457 P: Yes!  
458 I: And were you angry?  
459 P: I was angry but it was not my dog, I can't - and the dog doesn't know he do something now but two  
460 minutes he's waiting for me to feed or play with it, he forget about the buck.  
461 I: Ja, ja...  
462 P: It was my favourite friend.  
463 I: It sounds like as you go through life you experience life and death and as a child you experienced this  
464 and the feelings that come with losing something important to you.  
465 P: Yes, yes.  
466 I: And sometimes they say that learning this experience with an animal makes it a little easier to  
467 understand when a human person dies?  
468 P: Yes, yes I feel this.  
469 I: Can you tell me more about this understanding?  
470 P: I had a grandmother at that time I used to stay with her sometimes. I was very happy when my  
471 grandmother died because we are going to eat a lot of food but when the days goes on so that we are  
472 going to bury her on the Saturday I've got memories for that buck now, I was crying for the buck. Why  
473 I must not cry for my granny because I'm going to eat a lot of food?  
474 I: Hmm...  
475 P: I feel so wrong inside. I said to myself my granny was looking after me for so many years and she  
476 was the only help my mother had with us.  
477 I: Ja...  
478 P: So they were equal to me the buck and my grandmother – was same size in my heart.  
479 I: Hmm, so it sounds like when each of them died you had the same feeling in your heart again?  
480 P: Yes, yes but I'm happy because I'm going to eat my roesterkoek and too much coffee but the buck I  
481 did not even want to see even the body.  
482 I: Ja, ja. Okay, and we've spoken about how animals can teach you lots of things when you are growing  
483 up – how they can teach you to love and be strong and be brave and many people say that having  
484 animals around you and having relationships with animals can help you physically as well. So you keep  
485 fit because you are around the animals all the time and you look after them so you walk them so you  
486 get fresh air then and also patting an animal can really relax you so it lowers your heart rate.  
487 P: Yes, yes...  
488 I: Do you find that experience with animals as well?

489 P: Yes, yes, even when I'm working here I never be sick here, so when I'm here everything feels right  
490 – even if I feel a little bit sick in the morning I feel better here around them.

491 I: So there's some aspect that you find about being around animals that makes you physically feel well?

492 P: Yes, yes!

493 I: And do you think that they help you emotionally as well? I know that you already mentioned that  
494 when you go near them they make you feel happy when you feel sad – so just to clarify, do you feel as  
495 though they do benefit you in an emotional way as well?

496 P: Yes, yes they help me.

497 I: Ok. And spiritually?

498 P: Yes, I think that they are going to help me in their way even when I am dying because they know  
499 that this person very special for them.

500 I: Ja, ja...

501 P: It's not inside my mouth, inside my heart! Like in my culture when you dreaming about a dog you  
502 must not tell everybody because it's my ancestors visiting me.

503 I: Oh okay...

504 P: And they maybe try to tell me something.

505 I: Oh wow, okay. Do you think that growing up with animals enhanced your quality of life? Do you  
506 think they made your life better?

507 P: Yes, yes because other people they don't even want some piece of hair on them I don't mind, I like  
508 it.

509 I: Okay. How do you think the experiences you had with animals when you were growing up how do  
510 you think they have shaped the way that you see yourself now? Helped you become the person that you  
511 are now?

512 P: They made me a better person.

513 I: Yes okay. And how do you think growing up with animals have helped you in the way that you see  
514 other people? In your relationships with other people?

515 P: Yes, I've got my neighbours in my house, I'm staying in a two bedroom little house and the  
516 neighbours are like the animals they love me and I love them. If they've got a problem I'm the first  
517 person who will help them, they take me as their family they always looking after me and I'm looking  
518 after them so the animals teach me a lot so that I must know to help other people.

519 I: So it sounds like growing up with animals has helped you become someone who looks after others  
520 and it sounds like people see you as this kind of person and they know to come to you with their  
521 problems because they know you will look after them?

522 P: Yes, yes.

523 I: And is there anything else that you would like to add?

524 P: I want to say that all the animals need is only love and care – if you don't like animals you don't like  
525 nobody and they look after you if you look after them – all they need is love and care that's all.

526 I: Absolutely, thank you so much Participant 1 I really appreciate you sharing your time and  
527 experiences with me I really appreciate it so thank you.

528 P: Thank you.

**APPENDIX E**

**INTERVIEW WITH PARTICIPANT 2**

1 I: Okay, I'm just going to turn the volume up...there we go. Okay, so Participant 2 maybe we can start  
2 by...maybe you can think back to what your earliest memory of an animal was? Can you think back to  
3 when you first can remember meeting an animal?  
4 P: First time I meet an animal I saw a little monkey...  
5 I: Okay...  
6 P: I, I, I like monkey very much. The monkey his name was...what's the name? It was Bongi!  
7 I: Bongi, okay.  
8 P: Yes and Bongi, sometimes I'm not go to school, I say my head is sore, I want to play with, with  
9 monkey.  
10 I: Ja...  
11 P: After my sister and brothers is going to school I'm fine.  
12 I: Ja...  
13 P: And I'm going to the kennel, I said to Bongi, "Bongi, you must scratch my hair". I take Bongi's hand  
14 into mine and I scratch like this. And Bongi scratch like me also. After this I say, "Bongi, stand up".  
15 And Bongi stands. I say, "Bongi, dance". And he dance like me!  
16 I: Aah...  
17 P: I say, "Bongi, sit down". And he sits and, "I'm tired let's sleep", and he sleeps.  
18 I: Wow...  
19 P: And then I go to the house...  
20 I: Ja...  
21 P: After that I'm coming back again. I say, "Bongi, take me down", you understand what I say?  
22 I: Yes, you want him to put you down?  
23 P: Yes, and then after that Bongi he's standing he's dancing.  
24 I: Oh wow!  
25 P: As I say before, I say, "Bongi my name is Participant 2".  
26 I: Ja...  
27 P: And other people he don't answer to.  
28 I: He didn't know? He didn't recognise?  
29 P: Yes, yes, like me.  
30 I: Ja, it sounds like he knew you as someone quite special?  
31 P: Yes, yes, yes!  
32 P: And then I say "Bongi", (clears throat) I took, I took a food from my house. If you give him food he  
33 won't want it he want my food.  
34 I: Aah.  
35 P: Not your food.  
36 I: Ja...  
37 P: Even if I give you a food to give Bongi, Bongi won't!  
38 I: He'll only take food from you?  
39 P: Mmmm, from me. And I take Bongi out of the kennels, I walk him around the house I take Bongi to  
40 my sister, my junior sister, I say, "Bongi, she is my junior sister" and he shake his head – shake it like  
41 this (shows me)  
42 (Laughter)  
43 P: Okay, I take Bongi back to the kennels, I sit with Bongi and he's sleeping and then I'm sleeping and  
44 snoring and he's (makes tapping noises)  
45 I: He tapped you?  
46 P: Yes, yes, I wake up, I say, "Bongi, what's wrong?" "Hmmmm, Hmmm, Hmmm" he won't talk but  
47 he can't because he's not a person (laughs)  
48 I: Ja...

49 P: And then one day, the following day I go to school and my mother say, “Bongi doesn’t eat” and I  
50 ask my mother why, I say, “Give Bongi food”, she say, “I did”. I take Bongi food I give Bongi, Bongi’s  
51 eating. In the morning before, I wash Bongi, I take tooth...toothbrush I wash Bongi’s teeth and I wash  
52 Bongi. I take my, my soap to wash Bongi and my towel to wash Bongi. And then one day...what I  
53 want to say...Bongi is sick.

54 I: Ja...

55 P: Bongi doesn’t eat, doesn’t need anything, doesn’t play...

56 I: There’s something different about him?

57 P: Ummm, ummm. I take the towel; I put Bongi on my back and then Bongi sleeping on my back.  
58 Then I take panado pill, I chop it up for Bongi, chop, chop, chop for Bongi and then I put water I feed  
59 him and I just hope Bongi’s nice now. I take sour milk, you now sour milk?

60 I: Amasi?

61 P: Yes, amasi. And I cook mieliemeal and I give Bongi and he eats it with spoon, not eating like  
62 monkey he is eating like me, as I eat. He is eating and I also eat. If I put my spoon down he put his  
63 down.

64 I: Wow. How did you feel when he was sick like that?

65 P: Yooo, I was feeling bad, I can’t eat even because if my animal is sick I’m also sick!

66 I: Ja...

67 P: Because I love like my child.

68 I: Yes. How old were you when you had Bongi?

69 P: I was...grade 5, 14?

70 I: Okay, and it sounds like you were really close?

71 P: Yes. One day I go to school and I’m back from school and take off my uniform and check the  
72 kennel. My animal, what’s wrong with him, is he sleeping? I go back to the house and help my mom  
73 with supper and after that I do my homework. After that I go back to the kennels, “No man, Bongi’s  
74 still sleeping, wake up Bongi!” Oh!! Bongi is dead! Yoo, I was crying crying crying!

75 I: And how did you feel then?

76 P: Yoo, I didn’t eat about two days. And I say to my brother we must take a cup and make a hole and  
77 put Bongi in. And then I pray for Bongi that He must take Bongi with Him. No man, you know I love  
78 Bongi!

79 I: Ja...

80 P: I still love Bongi.

81 I: Ja.

82 P: Even now and I miss him.

83 I: It sounds like you remember him so well as well?

84 P: Yes, yes. After that I said to my brother he must broke the kennels - I didn’t want to see it anymore.

85 I: Because it reminded you of him?

86 P: Yes, yes and I take a stick in the bush and I make the...what is it? (Signs a cross with her fingers)

87 I: A cross?

88 P: Yes, I make a cross and I, I, and I take a cardboard and I write here, “Bongi, Rest in Peace”.

89 I: Aah that sounds beautiful.

90 P: And then after that on the farm there is lots of bush, I’m walking I saw the cat, nice cat. The cat is,  
91 the colour of the cat is, is brown and white, lots of hair, even the tail, lots, lots of hair. Then I, I, I took  
92 it. “Oh, I, I love you!”

93 I: Ja...

94 P: “I love you come with me, I give you something nice”.

95 I: Ja...

96 P: And then it is quiet. I take it home and my mom say, “Hey Participant 2, where did you find this?” I  
97 say, “Mama, I found it in the bush”. She says, “You didn’t steal on the houses?” I say, “No, no, I found  
98 in the bush”. I say to mama, “This is my cat, he is replacing Bongi”.

99 I: Ja...

100 P: Uh-ha, so my cats name is Participant 2.

101 I: Oh...

102 P: That’s my name.

103 I: Yes...

104 P: But, so I take the boxes, the castle boxes, and I put the sand and I put under the table. I take another  
105 cardboard again and I put blanket in and I put in my bed

106 I: Oh, okay.

107 P: Not on the ground.

108 I: So the cat’s bed was on your bed and the litter tray was on the ground?

109 P: Yes, yes. My mama said, “Put this cat in the kennels because it’s going to wee on your bed”. I say,  
110 “That’s fine I wipe, wash the blanket”. “Where did you find money to buy a soap?” I say, “From you  
111 mama”.

112 I: It sounds like you wanted your cat close to you?

113 P: Yes. Okay, I buy a milk, my mom give me money for eat at school, I didn’t eat at school I buy the  
114 milk, every time I go to the shop I buy the milk. I don’t have the proper food for the cat; I don’t know  
115 what the cat eat. I know the milk is good for the cat and I give my cat milk and I cook porridge – you  
116 know that porridge? I put milk in, I give my cat, my cat is eating.

117 I: Ja...

118 P: If my mom by a meat, I take a piece of meat and I chop, chop, chop and give my cat – he’s eating!  
119 Then I take my soap, I wash my cat and I take a brush and shampoo, shampoo that is for the hair.

120 I: Yes...

121 (Laughter)

122 P: But I wash my cat! And then I go to, my mom is going to town to shopping I said, “Mama give me  
123 money I want to buy something”. She say, “What you want?” I say, “Give me money I want to buy  
124 something”. I buy dip – you know what’s dip?

125 I: Yes, for fleas.

126 P: No, but I know nothing at that time, I buy Jay’s fluid!

127 I: Oh, Jay’s fluid!

128 P: Yes, I wash my cat for – I don’t want gogga’s.

129 I: Oh!

130 P: And I mix in water, sometimes I buy detol or savlon – I wash my cat and I brush my cat and put her  
131 under my bed.

132 I: You didn’t want her to be dirty?

133 P: Yes, I sleep with my cat. If my cat is asleep I take my cat I put my cat slowly back on the bed.

134 I: So she doesn’t wake up?

135 P: Yes. And I cover with blanket.

136 I: I hear that you really cared for your cat, even taking the money that you didn’t really have?

137 P: Yes, yes.

138 I: You spent that money on your cat.

139 P: Yes, you see I even sewed the jersey for my cat, I broke it...

140 I: You broke your jersey?

141 P: I broke my T-shirt – I look at my cat, how my cat look – I cut it round for the neck and then after  
142 that I look how to put it through the arms and legs and I make holes there. For when its cold I make my  
143 cat warm.

144 I: So you took your own T-shirt and made a special jersey for your cat?

145 P: Yes, for my cat. And then every morning my cats coming, mioaaw (makes stretching and yawning  
146 movements)...

147 I: Stretching and yawning?

148 P: Yes! And he's washing.

149 I: He's licking?

150 P: Yes, yes and he's looking and looking and looking and I take a, a little bowl I take warm water and I  
151 take my face cloth I wipe my cat (wipes around her eyes)

152 I: Around his eyes?

153 P: Yes, I don't know anything at that time! And I take the matches and then I put a lap on it and I clean  
154 my cat there in the ears...

155 I: Aah...

156 P: Yes, yes, I know and I clean inside the nose too. I clean, I clean it. And I open the mouth and I take a  
157 brush, I have a lot of brushes, spare toothbrushes.

158 I: Ja...

159 P: And I take Colgate and I brush my cat's teeth. Every time I wash my cat my cat is looking good. If I  
160 didn't brush her he is looking for me!

161 I: Oh...

162 P: Yes she's not moving but standing looking for me – I say, "What are you looking cat?" You know  
163 the animals don't talk but they look, animals don't talk but you still feel what...

164 I: You feel as though they are still talking to you in a way?

165 P: Yes, yes. And then I go to school and I'm back from school and I say, "Mama, yoo I'm tired today"  
166 - I do same thing I do with Bongi!

167 I: Yes...

168 P: After school I say, "Mama my head is sore I want to go to bed" – Mama say, "You must lie down".  
169 And then I took cat and lie down with it under.

170 I: So your cats under the blanket with you?

171 P: Yes, yes. My mom say, "Participant 2 you sick why you talking under that blanket?" I say, "Mama,  
172 I'm talking to my cat, I'm still sick Mama". She say, "Yoo, you are lying Participant 2!"

173 (Laughter)

174 P: "You are a liar you need chance to play with your animal".

175 I: Yes...

176 P: I say, "Yes, I need chance to talk to my cat Mama, I'm not sick really!" I hear my mama talking  
177 outside saying, "Yoo, my child, she like the animals very much! She say to me she's sick but she's not  
178 sick she wants to talk to her animal".

179 I: Yes...

180 P: Yes. Tonight my cat isn't sleeping – he's playing and I play with my cat.

181 I: Ja...

182 P: Yoo, my cat is big, he's big, big, big and he's heavy! One day my teacher ask, "Participant 2 you  
183 have a...who has a cat or dog?" I put up hand. And then my teacher ask me, "Participant 2 are you do  
184 your work?" I say, "I do my work" and... She say, "Don't say and, I know you not doing your work  
185 you looking your animal". My mom write a letter to my teacher saying Participant 2 isn't reading her  
186 books at home, she busy with the animals!

187 (Laughter)

188 P: Yoo, I say, "Sorry, I like my animals very much!"

189 I: Ja...

190 P: After than, about 6months, I think 6 months, my cat is sick again like Bongi. He's vomiting and the  
191 stomach is loose.

192 I: Aah...

193 P: I wonder what is wrong with my cat, who feed my cat poison?

194 I: Ja.  
195 P: My mom say, “No I don’t know I saw your cat today and he’s not right”. And my cat is, is dead on  
196 my bed!  
197 I: Oh, Participant 2, how did that make you feel?  
198 P: After that I say, “I don’t want animals anymore”.  
199 I: Ja...  
200 P: I was crying, crying, crying.  
201 I: It sounds like you were very sad?  
202 P: Yoo, very sad.  
203 I: And you say you didn’t want any more animals - was that because you were just so heart sore?  
204 P: Oh yes! I was crying, crying, crying for a long time. Crying, crying, crying, crying, crying! And I go  
205 to doctor too.  
206 I: Did you go to the doctor?  
207 P: Mmm, my head is sore and my back is sore, sore and my face is red!  
208 I: Ja, it really affected you?  
209 P: Yes!  
210 I: Ja...  
211 P: The doctor says its stress. The doctor says, “What’s wrong with you?” I say to doctor, “No my  
212 animal is dead”.  
213 I: Yes.  
214 P: “That’s why I’m sick”. Yoo, I was very, very angry.  
215 I: Ja.  
216 P: But, even now I’m still needing animals.  
217 I: Ja. I’ve heard that you do like having animals around you?  
218 P: Yes, yes!  
219 I: Can you tell me about that?  
220 P: Yes, listen last year my sisters child is dead on November – he had, his head was sore, and only  
221 three day he died.  
222 I: Oh shame...that’s terrible!  
223 P: He had a dog.  
224 I: Ok?  
225 P: Yes, the dogs name is Cola...  
226 I: Cola?  
227 P: Yes, Cola, the colour of Cola is brown and black and he has a piece of white hair on his chest.  
228 I: Okay...  
229 P: After my sister’s child is dead Cola comes to my house every night. I just hear a noise outside the  
230 door (makes scratching sounds)  
231 I: Scratching?  
232 P: Scratching yes, on the door (makes whining sounds) I say, “What’s that?” I open the window to the  
233 outside and I see it’s a dog but its dark and in the morning I go outside to check where’s this dog.  
234 I: Ja...  
235 P: I see but this is Cola! Cola is lying by the tree next to my house. I tell my sister, “Okay, your son’s  
236 dog is to my house”. She say, “We looking Cola we don’t know where he’s been”. I say, “No he’s  
237 here”. Hey, Cola doesn’t go, he’s staying by my house. I went to my work at the kennels and I took dog  
238 food, without even boss permission. I put it in my pocket yes, in my pocket.  
239 I: Okay...  
240 P: In my overall pocket for my dog – one o’ clock I give my dog food – well my sisters dog...  
241 I: Okay  
242 P: Well, he’s eating and he’s drinking. I took shampoo, dog shampoo, I wash the dog.

243 I: Aah...

244 P: It's not mine, I don't have the money to buy it, I took it at work and then I wash the dog, I wash the

245 dog.

246 I: Yes.

247 P: Every morning if I go to work the dog follow me. My boss ask me, "What's that dog for?" - And the

248 farmers doesn't like another dog.

249 I: Okay

250 P: At all! But I tell them they must leave this dog because I'm moving him to stay at home with me. So

251 I say, "Please boss don't shot him!"

252 I: Aah, yes and how did that make you feel that he wanted to shoot your dog?

253 P: Yoo, because that's not right! That is not right to want to shoot and kill the animals is not right!

254 Even the birds, even the ants, its not right!

255 I: Ja, did it make you feel sad or angry or upset?

256 P: Umm, umm, upset, upset!

257 I: Ja, Ja...

258 P: So I take my dog inside my house and I say to my dog, "If you want to wee go outside, if you want

259 to poo go outside" – he doesn't understand but I'm just saying. Okay, I'm coming to the location to

260 stay in December.

261 I: Yes...

262 P: Why, not nice people here. So if I want to go to work I, I, I put a rope around him to a tree.

263 I: You tied him to a tree.

264 P: Yes, yes. If I'm coming back my dog is looking, he's jumping, jumping, jumping!!

265 I: So excited to see you!

266 P: Yes! I say, "Cola, Cola, Cola yay, yay!!" My son, my first-born he is 14 years...

267 I: Yes...

268 P: He take my dog out and take my dog to me – yoo, my dog is jumping, jumping! And licking and

269 scratching me! I say, "Yoo, my dog like me, this dog is not yours, he is mine". I say, "Look why this

270 dog is playing with me, because it's mine".

271 I: Ja, ja.

272 P: He know who is his mother I am his mother. I get inside the house; my dog is standing with his head

273 like this...(points to her lap)

274 I: On your lap?

275 P: Yes, I love my dog he is looking up for me. I say to my husband and children, "This dog is asking

276 me: "Who is this, who is this, who is this?" and then I answer my dog, "This is my husband, this is my

277 son, this is my other son".

278 (Laughter)

279 P: And then I say, "Cola sit down", and then he come back – he wants to sit on me!

280 (Laughter)

281 P: I say, "Look my child, this is my baby!"

282 I: Aah...

283 P: If I'm going to the shop or to my friend, Cola staying, when I'm coming back Cola's waiting for me.

284 I: Aah...

285 P: Yes, and dancing. One day the person staying near me he say, "Please Mama you must give me this

286 dog because this dog is a big one he can catch things" – I say, "no".

287 I: Ja...

288 P: I go to work, after I'm back from work that man has took my dog!

289 I: He took your dog?

290 P: Yes, to Mtatha!

291 I: Oh no!

292 P: Yoo, I was sick to have no Cola! Even now I buy something for Cola.  
293 I: Yes  
294 P: And I send for him. I say if I have a house, my own house I take Cola back because I love that dog.  
295 I: Ja  
296 P: I really love him. So now I don't have nothing in the house.  
297 I: It sounds like you'd like to have animals if you could?  
298 P: Yes, ummm. Yoo I like animals really, really.  
299 I: Ja. Did your parents like animals?  
300 P: Yes, yes. My home had 4 cats.  
301 I: Wow, 4 cats?  
302 P: Yes, 4 cats.  
303 I: And you grew up on a farm, am I right?  
304 P: Yes, yes.  
305 I: Okay and what other animals were on the farm?  
306 P: There were cow – cattle, goat, sheep and chicken.  
307 I: Okay, okay.  
308 P: At my work the madam had a cow and the cow had a baby but the cow died after the baby born.  
309 I: Oh no.  
310 P: Yes it died. And my madam buy a bottle and every morning before I go to clean the house I go to  
311 feed the baby cow.  
312 I: Oh wow!  
313 P: Yes, I feed every morning. About 5 days, yoo, the cow – if I'm coming down the cow is coming to  
314 me – “Waaaa, waaa!”  
315 (Laughter)  
316 P: The cow is standing at the door! And then I say to the madam, “What is the little cows name?” She  
317 say, “I don't know, why you ask me?” I say, “I want to give the cow a name”. I say, “It's Clover!”  
318 (Laughter)  
319 P: Because it knows me, every morning “Waaa, waaa” – so now it's Clover!  
320 I: Oh, that's funny!  
321 P: And I feed it until it's big and then they move it to, to Port Alfred and they sell it.  
322 I: It sounds like you have a very caring and special connection with animals. Is that right?  
323 P: It's right, it's right yes.  
324 I: Would you say that you have relationships with animals?  
325 P: Yes, yes.  
326 I: And it sounds like you have had relationships with the ones that you have described...  
327 P: Yes, (laughs) yes.  
328 I: To me now, with the monkey Bongi, and Participant 2 the cat and Cola the dog and even the cow?  
329 P: Yes, yes.  
330 I: What kind of relationship would you say you had with these animals? What kind of relationship did  
331 you have?  
332 P: I don't like friends – I don't have friends because friends sometimes say bad things or push you into  
333 bad things. My friends are the church, my children, my husband and the animals.  
334 I: Okay, okay...  
335 P: Uhhmm.  
336 I: Okay. And how do you think that you growing up with animals have helped you develop as a  
337 person?  
338 P: Mmmmmmmmm, what do you mean?  
339 I: How do you think that growing up with animals has helped you become the person that you are now?  
340 P: Ummm, I want to speak but I can't the words are going. Let me have some tea.

341 I: That's okay, okay.  
342 (Pause)  
343 P: Ask again?  
344 I: How do you think that growing up with animals has helped you become the person you are today?  
345 I'm wondering how your experiences growing up with animals has affected you and made you into the  
346 person that you are today – if they have at all?  
347 P: Yes, yes, okay. Well, the animals they teach you lot of things – how to care and love, lots of love.  
348 And they teach me to teach my children – like with an animal, I show my children, “This is hot” I say,  
349 “No, this is wrong” and also she or he know this is dangerous. If my child want to touch on that jug I  
350 say, “No Peli, don't touch there - if you touch there it is broken”. I teach everything...like an animal!  
351 I: Ja...  
352 P: I teach the animals, “don't eat this, this isn't good for you, don't go here, don't go there”...  
353 I: Do you think that it's better for children to grow up with animals than for then to not grow up with  
354 animals?  
355 P: No, I think it's better together.  
356 I: For children to grow up with animals?  
357 P: Yes, yes.  
358 I: Why do you think it's better?  
359 P: Because...you know the children's likes the animals! When they the age of 3, 5 – I talking about me,  
360 my children – the children didn't want to eat, I gave the children bread, I say, “Why you wont eat” they  
361 say, “I don't want this bread I'm full” I say, “You must take this bread and eat”. My children go  
362 outside and calling Cola – that bread they give to Cola!  
363 (Laughter)  
364 P: I was looking out the windows! So, the children likes the animals.  
365 I: Ja...  
366 P: Yes, also they like to play with the animals yes, yes.  
367 I: Do you think that for children growing up with animals – it teaches them, um respect? Respecting  
368 animals and also people?  
369 P: Umm, umm, I think so, yes because children and animals are always close together if they grow up  
370 together. If you teach the children the animals is listening they will listen too.  
371 I: They learn together...how do you feel about people who are cruel to animals – who hurt animals?  
372 P: Yoo, I don't like it! I shout at them! I tell them they must talk to their animals softly; you mustn't  
373 hurt your animals. Must not shout the animals, don't do anything wrong to the animals because the  
374 animals are brave.  
375 I: Ja, Ja...  
376 P: And the animals look after you – so you must keep the animals and not hurt the animals otherwise  
377 one day the animals bite you! You must respect the animals and they respect you.  
378 I: So do you feel that growing up with animals has benefited you?  
379 P: Yes, yes.  
380 I: And I know we've been talking about many different ways but can you tell me again how?  
381 P: Um, the animals is good – especially the dog because they guard me.  
382 I: Yes...  
383 P: They guard me, yes. Even the cat, because the cat – if there is something not right inside the house  
384 he tells me, I know.  
385 I: Yes...  
386 P: Like a dog, if he is outside and sees if something is not right he barks, yes, because they have brain  
387 man. Like a cat, even a dog they make a “grrrrr”  
388 I: Oh they growl?

389 P: Yes, so you know something is wrong. And sometimes a dog will come and fetch you and show you  
390 what is wrong. So animal is good to me. And they make me happy! Very, very happy.  
391 I: Oh yes, I can hear that.  
392 (Laughter)  
393 I: Can you think of any other reasons why they are good for you?  
394 P: Oh, and the old age people like them.  
395 I: Old people?  
396 P: Yes, they like them because you can see the old people looking like a child  
397 I: Yes?  
398 P: There is something the animals help them forget about the bad – yoo, English is going!  
399 I: Are you meaning that the animals help the old people because they are good company because they  
400 are lonely and they make them feel better?  
401 P: Yes, yes, thank you!  
402 I: Okay  
403 (Laughter)  
404 P: You understand me, yes, yes.  
405 I: Umm, do you think that animals are good for you for helping you to make friends when you were  
406 little?  
407 P: Ummmhmm, yes, yes. Because with my monkey we used to play but my friends stay far so only  
408 used come play on the weekend but I used to play lots with my monkey, lots. But some of my friends  
409 were scared of my monkey.  
410 I: Okay, okay. Do you think that there is anything bad or negative about growing up with animals or  
411 having animals?  
412 P: No, no, I, I still need the animals!  
413 I: Ok, so you can't think of anything?  
414 P: No. Like at my work now, I'm working on Monday, Wednesday, Friday on \*\*\*\*\* street they  
415 have two cats. The one is white and the other is brown and black.  
416 I: Ja...  
417 P: I say, "Please cat come, I like you cat".  
418 I: Oh Ja...  
419 P: The other day I take the cats dishes to the scullery and I wash the dishes and put the food back.  
420 I: Ja, Ja, it sounds like even though you don't have an animals of your own anymore you still enjoy  
421 being around animals and find ways of being around them?  
422 P: Yes, yes. Like even, I clean the cats dish like I clean my dish I put milk and food for the cat in clean  
423 dishes.  
424 I: Ja...  
425 P: Not dirty dishes! Because what if the animals catch an infection? Yooo!  
426 I: It sounds like you really have such deep care and respect for animals...  
427 P: Yes, yes. Like that cat at my work, he was sleeping on a blanket – every Friday I clean the beds and  
428 the blankets.  
429 I: Ja...  
430 P: I clean that beds because this is a person!  
431 I: Ja, Ja...  
432 P: Every Friday, because sometimes they go roll outside in the grass and sand so the beds is dirty.  
433 I: Ja, Ja, so you make sure they are sleeping in clean beds.  
434 P: Yes, yes, yoo I really like the animals.  
435 I: What do you think is the cultural significance of animals?  
436 P: Sorry?  
437 I: What do you think is the importance of animals, culturally, to black South Africans?

438 P: I don't know what that mean...culture?  
439 I: In black tradition?  
440 P: Yooo, this English is difficult now.  
441 I: Ummm, do you know lobola?  
442 P: What's lobola? This is difficult man! Like a soccer coach?  
443 I: Um, no.  
444 P: Must come back to this question.  
445 I: Okay, lets come back to that one. Um, how do you think that its different for people growing up with  
446 a farm with animals compared to people living in a town?  
447 P: I think its better to grow with more animals on a farm than just a cat and dog.  
448 I: Yes, okay...  
449 P: Because you learn lots of different things – lots, lots, lots!  
450 I: Okay...  
451 P: Like, at the location it's not nice but at the farm it's nice! Because at the location you hear the people  
452 screaming...everything's bad but at the farm it's nice because if you don't have nothing to do you go to  
453 the bush and it's peace, you take a walk with your friends or alone and you're looking there at the  
454 animals – even the birds, the birds sometimes are singing nicely!  
455 I: Ja, Ja  
456 P: Or you go to the dam and you see the birds and the frog and the skilpad – you know skilpad?  
457 I: Um, tortoise?  
458 P: Yes! And you sitting, you not standing because you feeling relaxed.  
459 I: Yes...  
460 P: Yoo, sometimes you sit there and you dreaming there's something in the bush, the animals.  
461 Sometimes if you not happy you see Zebra and Impala and everything and it makes you happy and  
462 elephant – you can't think nothing, you can't think bad things.  
463 I: Yes, yes, that's wonderful.  
464 P: So you just rejoice!  
465 I: That's really wonderful and so peaceful.  
466 P: Yes! I wish when I finish school to stay on the farm – my own farm.  
467 I: Yes, yes...  
468 P: And all the animals I would put there.  
469 I: That would be wonderful, hey?  
470 P: Yes, oh yes.  
471 I: Um, Participant 2 do you think that animals have ever helped you when you have been sick before?  
472 Do you think that animals are good for your health?  
473 P: I think so, yes I think so.  
474 I: Okay.  
475 P: As I say you just think of nothing when you with your animals, you relax.  
476 I: Yes, yes...  
477 P: And when you playing with them, after that you tired and you sleep.  
478 I: Yes, they keep you fit? And they keep your heart strong?  
479 P: Strong! Yes, yes just like that, just like that.  
480 I: Okay, okay. Um, and also emotionally – I know we've already spoken a bit about this but do you feel  
481 that animals keep you emotionally well? They make you happy...  
482 P: Yes, yes and they love you and you love them, yes - no I like animals.  
483 I: Okay, okay.  
484 P: Like when I have money I want to take my mom to the salon to say thanks for growing me up with  
485 animals.  
486 I: Do you think that animals help you spiritually?

487 P: Well, God made the animals. And first I want to thank God because he gave me this like for the  
488 animals.  
489 I: Yes, yes...  
490 P: I want to say, “Thanks God, thank you, thank you, thank you”.  
491 I: ...Um, we’re back at the culture question...  
492 P: Oh, we’re back!  
493 (Laughter)  
494 I: Do you understand any Afrikaans?  
495 P: Oh, no I can speak it!  
496 I: Okay, um you don’t know anything about lobola?  
497 P: Lobola, lobola – oh when we marry?  
498 I: Yes! I’m asking about when animals are used in black African ceremonies and traditions?  
499 P: Oh! I’m married. My husband take me and then he propose lobola.  
500 I: Okay, did he use animals?  
501 P: No he use money.  
502 I: Oh okay. Can you tell me about any other black African traditions where animals are used?  
503 P: Yoo, this question is difficult!  
504 I: Okay. Do you think that animals are important to black people because they are used for some  
505 ceremonies and lobola?  
506 P: I think its true but not all black people like animals the same as me.  
507 I: Okay, okay, yes I understand that.  
508 P: Yes, yes.  
509 I: Well, I think that’s about all. I really appreciate the time you’ve taken to talk to me and all the  
510 wonderful things that you’ve shared with me.  
511 P: I want to thank you, its nice to use my brain like this to talk!  
512 I: Oh, thank you Participant 2, it’s been lovely talking to you.

**APPENDIX F**

**INTERVIEW WITH PARTICIPANT 3**

1 I: Okay, so Participant 3...

2 P: Ja, so I grew up here in the animal welfare organisation. I was born in 1982 and then my father was  
3 working here...

4 I: At the animal welfare organisation?

5 P: At the animal welfare organisation, yes. And then...I grew up here and then my father took a job  
6 working at the \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* Nature Conservation, eeeeh, it was 1988 at that time.

7 I: Okay...

8 P: He worked there at the nature conservation for 6 years and then he came back again here to the  
9 animal welfare organisation. So my life was with animals very well. Eehh, and then I used to stay with  
10 animals each and every time; I like to stay with them.

11 I: Yes...

12 P: And then from now...I do have 4 dogs and 3 puppies.

13 I: Wow!

14 P: And last year I stayed with the animal welfare organisation and then, eh, but it doesn't mean ever  
15 since I worked with the animal welfare organisation I love animals, from only last year – no, its from a  
16 long time ago because I grew up with animals. We used to have some dogs, like 4 dogs here at the  
17 animal welfare organisation and then I would come here just to visit the dogs and do stuffs with the  
18 dogs and then also go to the nature conservation, \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* nature conservation.

19 I: Yes...

20 P: And I did lots of stuff...for instance at school I like, when I was at school I like to convince my  
21 friends and talk about animals. Some of them they say they do not like dogs and cats and other stuffs so  
22 I say, "No, you must take care of your animals as part of your family". And then, ja...em, before I  
23 came to work at the animal welfare organisation, eeh, there's some boys they make some cruelty, sort  
24 of cruelty...like ja. I did form a team called \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*.

25 I: Called? Sorry?

26 P: \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*.

27 I: \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*?

28 P: Yes. And that name I took because of some boys that use the donkey-cart and then they, you know,  
29 they overload and they beat the donkeys.

30 I: Ja...

31 P: And then some of the other boys they were dog fighters. They, eeh, have pit bulls, if you know that  
32 dog?

33 I: Yes, yes...

34 P: And then I tried to stop them. I called them in and convince them "No man, what are you doing?  
35 This is not good"

36 I: Ja, ja...

37 P: Like..."Yes, it's good when you watch the fight but tomorrow it's very painful for the dog".

38 I: Yes...

39 P: Just because...you see? And then I formed that team.

40 I: Wow.

41 P: And then, yes, some of them go back again to do that stuff but I'm still battling to stop that just  
42 because someone needs to support me.

43 I: Ja...

44 P: And then I took one dog to them called Mishka, it's a pit-bull.

45 I: Uh-ha...

46 P: A female one who broke her leg last year. And then she was in a terrible state at that time.

47 I: Aah, shame...

48 P: And she didn't want to see any dog, you know?

49 I: Yes...

50 P: And then, as the person who knows how to treat their dog, you know, I try to change the mind of my  
51 dog and now she is very good.

52 I: You still have her?

53 P: Yes, I still have her. And then, what I am trying to say is even if I can get the opportunity to work  
54 for the animal welfare organisation – I did apply for a position to work for the police but I said “No”, I  
55 don’t want to leave animals, animals is my life.

56 I: Yes...

57 P: And I like animals very much...even – you can go to my home you will see what I’m telling you.  
58 Even of my friends you can ask, I am always with my animals, when I walk, I walk with my dogs even  
59 in the township.

60 I: Yes...

61 P: And, what can I say? If we can go for instance to the township and we can get opportunities like to  
62 go and just teach the people how to treat your dog or how to, you know, just because sometimes you  
63 see the dog in a bad state or...

64 I: Ja...

65 P: So, which means if I can help those people to, to, to, to treat their animals very well I can...but the  
66 problem is I don’t have someone who can support me but it doesn’t mean I can’t, if I can have the  
67 opportunity to just show them this thing is not right, this thing is not good – just try. I know other  
68 people are going to complain, “No we don’t have money to buy good food for my dogs” or whatever.  
69 You see so, like I do try to help other people like just where I stay because I stay in the poor area, like  
70 it’s not a good area - we are staying like in the mud houses, eehh, but we are still waiting for the RDP  
71 houses.

72 I: Okay...

73 P: Ja, so okay. So I’m trying always when I see someone, “No come what is it?” “This is right and this  
74 is not right”, you see? And then some of them they say no, I’m mad. No, I’m not mad; I know what I’m  
75 doing! Before I was in the animal welfare organisation, when I was in school, I convinced some people,  
76 “No, this and this and this, whatever” you know? For instance, a month ago me and my father we  
77 caught these boys who tried to stab this dog, it was a Friday night and they tried to fight with us. So we  
78 say, “No guys, we are not fighting but what you are doing is wrong”. You see so...and then we call the  
79 lady, \*\*\*\*\*, and then she came and we tried to explain what is going on. But the following day,  
80 because the boys at that time were under alcohol, so the following day I call them and I say, “No guys,  
81 what you did yesterday, I didn’t like it and then we try to convince you and you want to fight with us  
82 which is not right. But we are not fighting at that time, we are trying to stop you because what you are  
83 trying to do is not right, you see?” and then they say, “Okay, we do understand” and they try to  
84 apologise to me. And I say, “No, its good, if you can see in yourselves you are guilty just okay, but  
85 please don’t do this”. And then I think last week one of my friends, but I’m not going to mention...

86 I: Names, ja...

87 (Laughter)

88 P: Ja, one of my friends he went to \*\*\*\*\* to do the pit bull fighting. And then he didn’t go because I  
89 said, “No my friend what are you going to do? You are going to take your dog and fight with them and  
90 then you are going to come back to me and you want the animal welfare organisation to help you just  
91 because, (sighs), it’s not an accident”...

92 I: Ja, ja...

93 P: Just because you take the dog and then...

94 I: The dog gets hurt?

95 P: Ja, ja! So, what I’m trying to say is animals, you see is...first we are human beings; we are created  
96 so we can look after the animals. What I’m trying to say now is if we are the human beings destroying  
97 the animals then that mean Jesus or Lord there’s no need to create us or whatever you see, so what I’m

98 trying to say is animals, shew, I, I, I'm not just pretending or whatever, it's something in my heart you  
99 see? (Pats his heart)

100 I: Yes, yes...

101 P: In my heart. So what I'm trying to say, ja, I worked here because I love animals and then from what  
102 I feel for animals before I come here.

103 I: Yes, yes...

104 P: So, if I can get support for instance for me and my dad and get some opportunity to go to the  
105 township just because there's some bad things happening in the township so we don't have the  
106 opportunity to just go there and just tell them what is right and what is wrong, you see?

107 I: Ja...

108 P: So if we can get just a little opportunity so we can go to the township to tell those people, "Guys,  
109 what you are doing is not right, what you are doing is right" and then, "Please just try to do what is  
110 good for your animal" you see? And then maybe I can say we can just get the number of cruelties is  
111 decreased.

112 I: Ja, ja...

113 P: So, for instance this week or I think next week we are going to the schools so we can just educate the  
114 children so that they can just grow up with a mind that can just take the dog or the cat as your brother  
115 or your sister.

116 I: Yes, yes...

117 P: Because to my father and my mother they are too, but my sister passed away in 2002. But I took my  
118 animals as part of my family so my animals they close up that space that make me feel like I don't have  
119 a sister – I do have a sister because I have my animals everyday so...

120 I: They really have become your family?

121 P: Ja! They are, they are part of the family for since long. I bought 3 puppies, pit bulls, I like pit bulls. I  
122 bought 3 puppies they were R3600.

123 I: Shew!

124 P: All three. I keep them inside my room, inside my room everyday, everyday and night they stay there  
125 you see. So what I'm trying to say is I want to show those people who fight them how to look after  
126 them - your animals.

127 I: Yes...

128 P: So...ja. And, what I'm trying to say...like, ja, I love animals, I love animals.

129 I: Ja, and it sounds like you have such a great passion for them as well. You've really been on their side  
130 and helped them...

131 P: Yes, for instance I told \*\*\*\* last year, ja, to work here at the animal welfare organisation, it makes  
132 me proud. You see, just because this place, you see, some people – especially blacks, they think this  
133 place is not good because they think dogs is like a piece of something.

134 I: Ummm...

135 P: So to me, its like I work for the parliament, I'm proud to work here and it's good for me to work for  
136 the animal welfare organisation so that I can have power or whatever it is to help the people to see how  
137 to look after your dogs.

138 I: So this place has given you that opportunity?

139 P: Ja, just because it helps to show them.

140 I: Yes...

141 P: Ja, ja.

142 I: They're lucky to have you here!

143 P: I think they're lucky, just because I did apply at the police and then an answer come back and they  
144 say I can come and I say, "No", no I don't think I can leave this place.

145 I: Ja, ja. Um, I wonder if you can tell me a little more about when you were growing up – maybe you  
146 can start by telling me when you first met an animal in your life. Can you remember that? And tell me  
147 how old you were then.

148 P: Okay, from the animal welfare organisation to the nature conservation it was 6 years so I was 6 years  
149 old, ja 6 years old. Ja, my first time I'm going to tell you about nature, nature conservation, \*\*\*\*\*  
150 \*\*\*\*\*

151 I: Uh-ha?

152 P: Ja, it was my first time to see some animals like rhinoceros and buffaloes so it was difficult to  
153 understand them. And then fortunately there was a rhino that was called Harry - he was very gentle,  
154 with big horn!

155 I: Ja!

156 (Laughter)

157 P: He was very friendly, very friendly. And then we saw a warthog, I was then very close to him to his  
158 head, ja, I still remember, and then the guy was called Mr...ummm...\*\*\*\*\* and then there was another  
159 guy, I forgot his name but he took this huge snakes, emmm, pythons!

160 I: Ohhh!

161 P: Ja, it was my first time to catch a snake on that day, my first time!

162 I: Wow! And how old were you?

163 P: At that time I was 6 and a half years at that time.

164 I: Shew, so you were young?

165 P: I was little and it wasn't so scary.

166 I: Wow...

167 P: And then there was \*\*\*\*\* Centre, at the big dam. And then there was some classes there where  
168 some teachers teach about wild animals. So what happens, I think I was 8 or 10 years at that time, I saw  
169 the cobra!

170 I: Oh!

171 P: The cobra! (Laughs) I was me and my dad no, it was me and my mum, my dad was at work at that  
172 time. And then I took a stick so big (gestures with his hands) and then did like this (shows me how he  
173 picked up the snake with the stick). It was the first time I catch a snake that day.

174 I: Wow!

175 P: And then, after that I was like, "No, animals are like human beings".

176 I: Ja?

177 P: And then I decided "No, I'm not just going to take these animals far away from me". And then my  
178 father teach me very well about animals and how to handle with other animals. "Don't be scared about  
179 this and this and this", some of them are dangerous, like buffalo are too dangerous and then rhino and  
180 others. So...ever since then I say, "Okay, no, I'm not scared of wild animals". The domestic animals,  
181 because I grew up here at the animal welfare organisation, at that time Mr \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* was  
182 managing. Ja, and then I was staying here and then there was four dogs, it was Rover, em, Blake, Fox  
183 and another one was Hero. This dog Hero I must tell you about. This other dog was put down but must  
184 have had a puppy.

185 I: Ja?

186 P: And there is a place here to bury some dead dogs...

187 I: Ja...

188 P: Right, they buried this dog and it was about ten o'clock in the evening and there was sort of like a  
189 building of stone. What happened was that puppy, we didn't know that puppy was not dead you see,  
190 but that puppy the following morning was sitting in front of my door. And then we took that puppy and  
191 we gave that puppy the name Hero. The puppy grew up to be big, yoo, he was a good dog and he was a  
192 good guarding dog, a good guard dog!

193 I: Ja?

194 P: And then my father, hit my cat with his car.  
195 I: Aah, no!  
196 P: It was very terrible for me. And then he came here and ask Mr \*\*\*\*\* to close that space. And  
197 then in 1995, ja, that time we were staying in the location, but my father was still working here and our  
198 animals stay here. And then in my school holidays I ask permission from my parents to come stay here  
199 so that I can keep close to my animals. They give that permission to me, they say, “No, you can go”.  
200 And then I came here and then on the weekends I would help, do some kennels cleaning and everything  
201 and then even if it’s mid-week I just come here and help and just do stuff until now.  
202 I: Wow. So from a young age it sounds like you’ve been around animals?  
203 P: From a young age, ja! As I said before I own 4 dogs and 3 puppies, I got 7 dogs!  
204 (Laughter)  
205 I: Ja!  
206 P: I got 7 dogs! I always spend my time with my dogs.  
207 I: Ja...  
208 P: I can say if I can give percentage, I give 70% to my dogs and 30% just to everything else.  
209 I: Ja...  
210 (Laughter)  
211 P: They very important to me, just because even if I am the first one to say, “Okay this dog is sick”  
212 because I know, I know, because I can see, “Okay yesterday he is very friendly, if he’s friendly he’s  
213 friendly and today he is quiet he is not the same so...”  
214 I: Ja...  
215 P: So each and every time I spend...even my friends, they complain but I say, “No, if my dogs are here,  
216 I’m okay” (pats his heart).  
217 I: Yes...  
218 P: I’m okay! And I did have an album, in Grade 5 or 6, all of them was my dogs and my cats, you  
219 know? All of the time!  
220 I: Aah...  
221 P: And then one of my dogs passed away then and I could just take out my album...  
222 I: Okay, okay...and what do you think that the effect of growing up with these animals had on you? Do  
223 you think they changed you in any way?  
224 P: Yes, I can say that. But I can also say that if I did not grow up in the nature reserve and the animal  
225 welfare organisation, maybe I was born with that nature of wanting to be with animals anyway, I can  
226 say...ja, ja.  
227 I: It was a feeling you already had?  
228 P: Yes, it was a feeling, a feeling you know just because, as I said before, we created to look after  
229 animals you see so that’s why I had that feeling like, “No, I must look after animals” you see?  
230 I: Ja, ja.  
231 P: Whether it is a wild animal or a domestic animal, just because we are here for the purpose of to look  
232 after animals, ja.  
233 I: Yes. And it sounds like that realisation and that feeling in your heart happened for you when you  
234 were very little?  
235 P: Yes, yes.  
236 I: Okay, um, you spoke a little about your animals being part of your family – maybe you can tell me a  
237 little more about your relationship with animals? How do you see them?  
238 P: First I can say, like to take your animals as part of your family is good first - just because if you can  
239 take them away from you it means there will be a gap between you and pet, which means you will  
240 never take care of them. Just for instance, I can’t take my sister in the rainy weather and just close the  
241 door – close her outside of the house, you see?  
242 I: Uh-ha...

243 P: What I'm trying to say is, she will cry because it is cold, you see? That's why I said I take my  
 244 animals as part of my family, you see, because I must apply what I feel and then what they are feeling,  
 245 you see?

246 I: Yes.

247 P: Ja, so what I'm trying to say is, if I get hot I must go outside.

248 I: Yes...

249 P: If they are getting hot I must put them outside in the shade so if they are getting cold I must put them  
 250 inside the house.

251 I: Yes...

252 P: So I take them as part of my family.

253 I: Yes.

254 P: Each and everything I am doing, they are part of, you see?

255 I: Yes, you really take care of them?

256 P: Yes, yes.

257 I: It's really as if your animals are your family?

258 P: Yes, yes, yes – like my sister or my brother you see just because I must take care of them!

259 I: Yes.

260 P: Ja, to take care of them and to see what is wrong and what is right – ja.

261 I: Wow, okay. And, ja, you mentioned about pets and wild animals – so did you grow up knowing that  
 262 there was a difference?

263 P: No, I didn't grow up knowing that this is wild or this is a domestic animal – no I didn't, but as a  
 264 child when my father transferred to nature conservation I could see, "Oh, now this is the wild animals!"

265 I: Oh, okay because he was working on a nature reserve?

266 P: Ja, on a nature reserve so I could see that they are not the same thing. And I was here and I see dogs  
 267 and cats and donkeys and other things. Now I'm in nature and I'm seeing rhinoceros, buffalo, kudu's  
 268 and impalas and alles, you see?

269 I: Yes...

270 P: So right, I saw these are the wild animals but it doesn't mean I must be away from them – if I can  
 271 get the opportunity like, okay I can go to \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* to see Harry, but okay I can't just play with  
 272 him but I like to be close and watch. And then to maybe get two metres, three metres closer to him.  
 273 And then also we went to \*\*\*\*\* , emmm, Buck reserve?

274 I: Yes?

275 P: We went there and then we saw some hippos and giraffes and other animals!

276 I: Wow!

277 P: It was my first time I'm seeing those! And then I'm thinking, "Okay I didn't now about these  
 278 animals!" So then I was with my friend's dad, he's also with the \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* , on the same  
 279 team, and I ask him what's this name? We call it in Xhosa 'Imvumbu'...I say, "What is this?" he say,  
 280 "This is Imvumbu" he say, "No, it stays inside the water". I say, "Oh, how?" - because this is a huge  
 281 thing to see!

282 I: Yes!

283 P: And then he starts to laugh at me. And then I saw the giraffe, tall things! And say, "What is this?"  
 284 and we call it a 'Indlula Mthi' in Xhosa. He say, "No, Indlula Mthi". "What is he eating?" "No he's  
 285 eating the leaves" "Oh!" And then we go and watch some sort of movie about the animals like leopards  
 286 and lions and they were eating, like, kudus – like, some of the stories were not good but they must eat  
 287 and also otherwise they are going to like, overpopulate and get too many.

288 I: Ja, yes, yes...

289 P: And so, then I can say, "Okay these are wild animals and these are domestic animals".

290 I: And that's how you came to understand the difference?

291 P: Ja, but when I was little I didn't like it because we couldn't take my dogs to the nature reserve. I  
292 couldn't take into the bush because they were biting dogs and the guy eventually decided to put my  
293 dogs down.  
294 I: Aah...  
295 P: Yooo, it was very terrible, it was not good for me, I cried! But then that guy got new dogs and it was  
296 difficult to understand them because I'm used to Rover and Blake and the other dogs, you see. But no, I  
297 understand them and then I stay here again and then we stay in the township and then one of my dogs  
298 was hit by a car...  
299 I: Aahh...  
300 P: And then I picked up a little puppy but like, it's a township – it was full of mange!  
301 I: Oh...  
302 P: So, I have someone who can help me, \*\*\*\* my father.  
303 I: Yes...  
304 P: And then I've got a beautiful dog!  
305 I: Aah...  
306 P: And I think she died in 2002, ja – she lived long though.  
307 I: Okay...  
308 P: And then I, in 2002, got another dog called Rover and I put him down this year, 3 weeks back  
309 because he got cancer and I put him down.  
310 I: Aah...  
311 P: But now I have some pit-bull dogs, good dogs, very good dogs.  
312 I: Ja...wow. Okay, um, how do you think that growing up with animals benefited you? If at all?  
313 P: Ja, they helped me very much. For instance, if I didn't grow up here maybe I will have a negative  
314 feeling about animals, you see?  
315 I: Yes?  
316 P: And to grow up here, it gave me that positive feeling about animals just because each and every time  
317 I was staying here I used to play with this children that used to stay here – it was the children of the  
318 owner – and they teach me about animals, some things I didn't know.  
319 I: Yes...  
320 P: They say just take the dog as your friend or as your family and I knew they were telling me a good  
321 thing, you see?  
322 I: Yes.  
323 P: And I learn and learn and learn and now I am trying to teach other people to do the same, you see?  
324 I: Ja...  
325 P: So, some of my friends they understand, you see? And they...some, for instance those boys who  
326 were the dog fighters, four of them, I convinced them. Now they are not fighting anymore.  
327 I: Oh, wow!  
328 P: They are not fighting anymore.  
329 I: You did a good job!  
330 P: I did a good job! And then others who were using the donkey-cart – ja, I know there are no jobs in  
331 Grahamstown, I know that and they are working with their donkey-cart. But you can't use it today and  
332 tomorrow and the next day, you see?  
333 I: Ja...  
334 P: Just because they are over using, the donkey is getting tired! And if you make it run too much, yoo!  
335 And then they must know they must skip maybe two days to give the donkey rest, you see?  
336 I: Yes, yes...  
337 P: And then some of them, really, they are not using the donkey-cart as much. And then I formed that  
338 football club, \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* , you see? And it's still going.  
339 I: Oh, it's a football club?

340 P: Yes, it's a football club. You see, it's not just for the animals, other people they were housebreakers,  
341 you see? And I sit down and I say no, first they must know that crime doesn't pay but some of them do  
342 not know this so first I must go to them and show them that they are doing the wrong thing. So I called  
343 them and I said, "Guys what you are doing is the wrong thing. For instance, you are stealing a  
344 television and maybe it will cost about R5000 but you will only get R150 so that means nothing and  
345 you are going to go to jail for that which means you are going to waste more than 5 years and when you  
346 come back there is a gap between you and your friend!" And they say, "Yes, yes". And they ask,  
347 "What can we do?" And I think it would be good social thing to form a football club and really my  
348 father bought me a football and then I take them to a practice and we practice – really we teach! And  
349 now my team is number one, it's a good team!

350 I: Wow, that's really great...amazing.

351 P: It's a good team, but we are still needing kit just because I do not have money to buy some and then  
352 it's just difficult but I did try to get some sponsorship but I failed but it doesn't like mean, no I must go  
353 back to what I did before! No, I want to do this because I say, "No guys, we never know what is going  
354 to happen tomorrow".

355 I: Yes, yes.

356 P: Maybe someone say, "Come guys, here's some kit for you" and then ja...

357 I: Yes, and so it sounds like with this club you have the opportunity to talk to them about crime but also  
358 about how to treat their animals?

359 P: Yes, yes. I teach them, you know, "Guys we must know that we come from a different time" –  
360 other's they are house-breakers, other's they are dog-fighter's, other's they use donkey-carts very badly  
361 and other's they are smoking this stuff, dagga you see? So they are using drugs. "So we must talk about  
362 all these things that confine us and put it together and just share our views - what do you think about  
363 breaking house? What do you think about fighting dogs?" And most of them they say to fight the dogs  
364 it is not good because they like to say to those boys who fight the dogs, "Okay, you get money but the  
365 dog gets pains and how do you think that dog can fight then?", you see?

366 I: Yes, it sounds like you're making a difference?

367 P: Ja, a difference. Because last year, no not last year, year before last, ja. We went to \*\*\*\*\* to play  
368 a tournament there and then, as the founder of the club, I gave some letters and put the club stamp on  
369 so they could give to their parents. Their parent's say, "No, we can't give you this money", they can't  
370 give them the money they must call me first and then I explain what this is about and then their parent's  
371 they trust me very well because they know that I took their children from the bad things to good things,  
372 you see?

373 I: Yes.

374 P: I, I, I teach them the right things, you see?

375 I: Yes, wow. Do you think it's better to grow up with animals as a child than not to grow up with  
376 animals as a child?

377 P: I can say, yes, it's better to grow up with animals as a child just because you grow up under that  
378 atmosphere of animals, you see? For instance, if grow up knowing how to treat a dog or a cat that  
379 influence can change you just because your father is going to teach you "Look, don't handle this dog  
380 like this" and then you are going to say, "Oh" and then you are going to know you must feed your dog  
381 three times a day or whatever. But to grow up without a dog, ja, it can affect you just because it is  
382 going to take you much time to get that feeling to love dogs just because some people they grew up  
383 without dogs and they leave their dogs outside even if it's raining or whatever, you see?

384 I: Ja...

385 P: But if they can get someone, someone who can just teach them maybe they can understand how to  
386 treat their dog.

387 I: Yes, yes. Okay, do you think that growing up with animals as a child – the dogs and the cats and the  
388 wild animals – do you think they helped you develop as a child in any way?

389 P: Yes, they helped me very well to develop as a child. I can say just because, eemm, if for instance I  
390 didn't grow up with animals I don't know, but to grow up with both domestic and wild animals they  
391 helped me very well because I know, for instance, I mustn't go to the veld to hunt, you see? Just  
392 because I can kill something but they are there to live too. And here, domestic animals, they are here to  
393 be friends of mine and then to be friends of them. So you see, they helped me very well I can say, both  
394 of them, both of them.

395 I: It sounds like they taught you how to respect life?

396 P: Yes! And to care for them, to care for them. Yes, and this is important to learn as a child, very  
397 important.

398 I: Oh, yes!

399 P: For instance, I like to say to my friends, if you get that opportunity just use that opportunity because  
400 you will never get it again. What I'm trying to say, if for instance I say, "No, don't do this to the dog"  
401 maybe other people they will never stop them, you see, just because they don't care about animals. So  
402 if I can help by saying, "Stop it, just stop it" – you see, what I'm trying to say is, if they get the  
403 opportunity for somebody to give them a chance or to educate them they can understand – they can  
404 learn something.

405 I: Yes, yes, and things that are really important to know...

406 P: Yes, ummm!

407 I: Okay, and do you think that growing up with animals had a positive effect on you socially? In terms  
408 of the animals helping you make friends and the animals also being your friends? Do you think they  
409 helped you learn to interact better?

410 P: Yes, it helped me positively just because I can say to socialise with animals is a very good thing just  
411 because – even the animals, they know someone who doesn't like them, they have that feeling, okay  
412 this guy or this lady is not good for me. For instance, you can ask \*\*\*\*\*, there was a dog here called  
413 Danger, he was a bull dog, this dog the owner donated this dog to the animal welfare organisation  
414 because this dog bite the small child – it was a vicious dog. And then if you want to go into the kennel  
415 you must have pole, I told my father, "No look, I can go into that kennel without a pole" just because I  
416 had that feeling if the dog bites, if you love it he will see. They say, "No, no, no" – "Okay, give me  
417 three days".

418 I: Ja?

419 P: It was on Thursday on that day and I took some bread and I gave that dog some piece of bread and  
420 then on Friday – because it's not good to just close the dog in like this – I said, "Just leave it I'm going  
421 to open for that dog". He said, "No China" – he called me China – "No, no, no" – okay, I open the gate  
422 and I stand straight and he go and he come back to me. Yoo, I was scared because I didn't know what  
423 he do to me! Then I tried to brush him and he jump on me and then I brush him. On Wednesday that  
424 dog must go to the vet. So I say, "No, I want to stay with this dog in the kennels bakkie" - our kennels  
425 bakkie it look like this (gestures size of bakkie).

426 I: It's very small in the back?

427 P: Yes, and it's a big dog! So, I go with him and I put him in the back with me and I close the door.  
428 Yoo, the other's, they didn't believe it! They didn't believe it! Okay right, we go to the vet, there the  
429 vet must give that dog a tranquilliser because the dog wants to attack the vet!

430 I: But he didn't attack you?

431 P: Nothing! I sit with that dog in the same kennels – you see, if you show that you love this thing he  
432 will see that you love it because, you see, they feel it, they feel it (pats his heart).

433 I: They can feel the love?

434 P: Yes, they feel it. You see, they influence me very much to grow up with animals – they help me so  
435 much!

436 I: Ja, okay, umm, do you think that there is any way that animals have not benefited you – have not  
437 helped you in any way?

438 P: No I don't think so, no I don't think so!  
439 (Laughter)  
440 P: Just because I gain something from them, just because they love me and I love them – dogs they are  
441 very friendly, they like the humans and they need love too! So, if I can say, no there is no way they  
442 have not benefited me even if I can again say because they close the space between my sister and me  
443 because my sister passed away.  
444 I: Yes...  
445 P: So that space has been closed up. So I can't say, no, no – I benefit from them because they are part  
446 of my family they are part of my sister, you see, they are my sisters.  
447 I: Yes, yes. It sounds like your father had a positive attitude towards animals – did both your parent's  
448 feel this way?  
449 P: Yes, yes – my father grew up in a family who likes animals, he used to tell me stories of animals –  
450 Ja, he always love animals very well. I can say all of my family, from my mum, my dad, cousins,  
451 sisters – we all love animals, all!  
452 I: Okay. Um, I wanted to talk a bit about the cultural significance of animals...  
453 P: Culture?  
454 I: Yes...what, in your culture, do you think is the significance of animals?  
455 P: Oh, I can say they put more...emphasis, ja, on them just because the Xhosa, ja – first the Xhosa, we  
456 do believe dogs they are part of our culture, like, for instance, if you dream about a dog they say don't  
457 tell anyone...  
458 I: Yes...  
459 P: Just because that is your ancestors telling you something.  
460 I: Uh-ha  
461 P: So what I'm trying to say, that is why I take dogs as my friends just because I can't take my  
462 ancestors away from me.  
463 I: Yes...  
464 P: You see what I'm trying to say?  
465 I: Yes...  
466 P: Ja, that's why I take dogs close to me, yes. For instance, I did dream about two months back – and  
467 then I tried to explain to my mum it was me and my mum in my dream on a river, see, and then we are  
468 singing our cultural songs. And then a blanket came out from the water and then in Xhosa we must take  
469 tobacco and put on the piece of paper or whatever and then put on the blanket, yes?  
470 I: Uh-ha...  
471 P: Okay, so mum did that and then put this thing on the blanket and then the blankets go back again to  
472 the water, it sinks. And then this blanket came back again with a dog, a pure white dog.  
473 I: Ja?  
474 P: With, emm, sort of orange on the ears. And then I was trying to run but then I was like, "No don't  
475 run" - just because this is trying to tell me something, you see?  
476 I: Yes...  
477 P: And then I wake up and I wonder, "What is going on?" So I went to tell my mum the following  
478 morning and she say, "No, okay your dream tells you something" - just because you must know that.  
479 I: Yes...  
480 P: If you dream a dog or whatever you must know that is your ancestors – so that's why I say to my  
481 culture it put more emphasis because dogs they are part of my culture.  
482 I: Yes, yes.  
483 P: They are part of my culture, ja, ja, I can say that.  
484 I: Okay, okay. And culturally, what significance do you think there is for children growing up with  
485 animals?  
486 P: Culturally?

487 I: Yes.

488 P: Ja, you see, I can say those children who grow up with animals they know how to handle and look  
489 after animals you see, because our grandfather's they tell us first about the dogs and what does this  
490 mean you see? So – especially if I can talk about the goat. You see, the goat in Xhosa we do lot of,  
491 especially in the traditional works in Xhosa like we – when we go to the bush to be a man at 16 or 18  
492 years, first before we go there we must slaughter a goat and then we must eat from the neck, which is  
493 half-done – half cooked.

494 I: Uh-ha...

495 P: Yes, they must eat and then they make a sort of necklace from that stuff, the skin, and then you can  
496 go to the bush. And then, maybe two weeks or three weeks before you go back home you must  
497 slaughter another goat so that you are telling the ancestors you are going back home now...

498 I: Okay...

499 P: You see. And then...

500 I: So when you first slaughter the first goat are you telling the ancestors that you are going to the bush?

501 P: Yes, that you are going to the bush, ja. And then that you are going back home now. And then there  
502 are some or other things from the childhood, maybe you are two days or three days old and they  
503 slaughter a goat – they call it imbeleko, if I can say, ja, it's the day of birth which means you MUST if  
504 you don't then there will be some wrong things - maybe you pee when you sleeping or you doing  
505 something wrong, you see?

506 I: Okay, so when a child is born then you need to slaughter a goat to ask for the child to be healthy and  
507 for things to go well for the child?

508 P: Ja, things to go well, yes. And when someone passed away you have to slaughter a goat or a cattle. If  
509 it is a man, then you have to slaughter a male cattle or if it is a female then you have to slaughter a  
510 female cattle. So you must do that stuff. And then animals in Xhosa, or in our culture, they help us very  
511 well just because we believe in animals. For instance, we believe in dogs, we believe in cattle's, we  
512 believe I goat, you see. So that's why it makes us, Xhosa, to be proud of animals, you see?

513 I: Ja, ja.

514 P: That's why, because they do lots of things for us.

515 I: Yes, so it sounds like they're very significant?

516 P: Ja, they're very significant, in culture, yes. Just because, if even things are not going well, maybe  
517 I'm married and things with my wife are not going right or there is some conflict between me and my  
518 wife or we don't have babies, you see?

519 I: Uh-ha?

520 P: Say, "No, must slaughter a cattle and must apologise to our ancestors", say, "No man, if we did  
521 something wrong we are saying sorry to you". Or even if I am working but I don't see my money or  
522 whatever or I always fight with my employer. Did you see that story about – they called it the W-R-A-  
523 T-H of the ancestors?

524 I: Oh, the wrath?

525 P: Yes, the wrath of the ancestors. Those people they didn't do all the right things and they didn't like  
526 the slaughter of the cattle's and then the ancestors they become angry! And then they realised no, they  
527 must do all these things!

528 I: Yes...

529 P: Really, it works, that's why I say in our culture they put more emphasis on the animals.

530 I: Yes. And can you tell me about lobola?

531 P: Lobola! Yes, lobola, ja you see, like in old generations ja, but you see we are still doing it now. But  
532 you see if you are going to marry in Xhosa, you can marry but first you must do ilobola. It goes like  
533 this – I'm going to marry my girlfriend. First I must know that my girlfriend didn't have any baby  
534 outside, before I marry her, just because it going to effect the lobola. If she's got a baby to another guy  
535 the lobola is going to be lower, you see?

536 I: Yes...

537 P: But if didn't get baby or she is still a virgin, I'm sorry to call that name – then the lobola is high, you

538 see?

539 I: Yes, okay...

540 P: So, if she doesn't have any babies then they're going to say, "We want twenty cattle's for her and

541 R50 000".

542 I: Shew!

543 P: It's a lot! It's a lot of money, but we must do it just because we want our marriage to go well

544 because if we don't do that we will go through a lot of troubles in our marriage, you see? So you must

545 do it.

546 I: Okay, yes...

547 P: And then, even if I make someone pregnant, you see?

548 I: Yes...

549 P: I must pay it! I MUST pay it, you see? Ten cattle's or 5 cattle's - whatever they say - and R6000 so

550 that I can demand that that child is mine now.

551 I: Yes...

552 P: If I do not do that, then it is not mine - it is not my child. Yes, biologically it is mine but I have no

553 rights to that child – so that's why lobola is very important to us, you see?

554 I: Yes, I can see it's very important.

555 P: It's very important, very important, very important.

556 I: Okay, okay. Um, and how do you think that non-western South African's encounters with animals

557 differ from Western South African's?

558 P: You see, I can say in the rural areas there are a lot of problem's – there is a lack of facilities like

559 vets, just because you see, the animal welfare organisation here in Grahamstown is close to town and

560 then is far to the farmers. So that, you see, if we can have some sort of, maybe 4 days a week we are

561 going to go to \*\*\*\*\* farms and farms near there, just because most of the animals there are dying on

562 farms and most people there don't know what to do. And, for instance, those villages like \*\*\*\*\*, if we

563 could go there – they have dogs there and some of them bring their dogs here in a very terrible state,

564 they are so sick and sometimes we can't do anything, like for distemper. So if we can have sort of like

565 a vet clinic or something for the rural areas.

566 I: Ja, ja...

567 P: Not big but to open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday it would help a lot to those animals there

568 I: Yes, yes. Okay, and you mentioned before about some of the deaths of animals in your life – can you

569 tell me a bit more about how these deaths affected you?

570 P: Ja, like I can say, it's like you lose someone you love. Like, you lost, for instance, your parents, your

571 father passed away – you get that feeling. And maybe you are going to take 6 months or a year to be

572 right again. But what I'm going to say is when my dogs were put down I felt sad for maybe 6 months

573 just because...I took my dogs at that time, even now, as my brothers.

574 I: Ja...

575 P: You see, so now, I was lonely at that age I was lonely, my grandmother was in \*\*\*\* Township and

576 my sister had passed away so I was lonely, I no longer had friends to play with. But after 6 months I

577 realised no, they will never come back again so I must forget about them. But when my father hit my

578 cat with the car, yoo, it was very sad, it happened in front of me, I saw everything what happened and

579 her eyes were outside!

580 I: Ooh, no...

581 P: But he really didn't see, just because he got in the car and didn't see her there. Yoo, but I cried that

582 whole day and then the following day I didn't talk to him just because I was angry but I knew it wasn't

583 his fault. And then he helped me bury her, but, ja...

584 I: Oh, shew. Do you think there was anything you learnt from the experience of your pets' deaths?

585 P: Yes, yes, I learnt experience, you see, as I said before, to lose your friends – I’m calling my pets my  
586 friends – it makes me feel bad. Like on that day my father hit my cat with the car, I cried the whole day  
587 and I didn’t want to talk. And then he came here and he ask to give me a dog and it close the gap  
588 between me and the cat that I lost. And then one of my dogs was shot by another guy because this guy  
589 took my dog and my fathers to go hunt with him and both our dogs were dead and he brought our dogs  
590 on his bakkie and I was so upset that day, I was trying to pick up the dogs and I was full of blood that  
591 time, full of blood. It was my first time to see something so terrible. And then the guy explained to my  
592 father that it was another guy who shot the dogs and he said he would really pay it back, really pay it  
593 back.

594 I: Ja...

595 P: And then, we got another dogs and I named them Rover and Fox again. So...it was my first time to  
596 see my pets dead and then it affect me very much just because to see something, to see something you  
597 love is dead, no...it’s not good.

598 I: Yes, absolutely, ja.

599 P: It’s not good, it’s not good.

600 I: Um, can you think of any way that you think animals might be helpful for your health?

601 P: For my health?

602 I: Yes...

603 P: Yes, I can say they keep me healthy just because if you believe in something, which is going to help  
604 you in your health, it can. What I’m trying to say is, I believe in my dogs, even if I’m sick you see, if I  
605 see my dogs I just go and play with them then I just forget about that I’m sick, you see?

606 I: Yes...

607 P: So, again I’m well! Ja, they make me happy and I am well, you see?

608 I: Yes, yes...

609 P: And when there is a sick dog here I go and play with them because I know it’s also going to make  
610 them well, you see?

611 I: Yes.

612 P: So I said to myself, because I was sick one day and then my dog came to me because my door was  
613 open and they came to my room and they lick on my face, you see and I forget that I am sick and I  
614 wake up and I play with them and then the following day, I’m okay.

615 I: Yes...

616 P: You see, so I believe that they can help you with your health.

617 I: Yes, yes. And some people say that they also keep you healthy because they keep you fit and keep  
618 your heart strong because you take them for walks?

619 P: Walks! Yes!

620 I: Animals keep you quite active?

621 P: Yes! For instance I do have one pit bull who loves to walk very much...

622 I: Yes?

623 P: So I like to run and I like to take him too and run with him – run, run, run do lots of running. And  
624 then when I come back I take another one and play with another one in the yard, so I do only have a  
625 little time to rest!

626 (Laughter)

627 I: Yes!

628 P: So they keep me strong you see?

629 I: Yes.

630 P: You understand what I’m trying to say?

631 I: Yes, yes! And um, they also say that animals can be very relaxing and that’s why they also say they  
632 can be helpful. I wonder if you agree with that?

633 P: Yes, yes, yes – like stroking the dog it can make you feel very much relaxed – maybe you can sit  
634 more than two hours just brush your dog or do whatever, brush your dog and play with them, you see?  
635 I: Yes...

636 P: Then you are not wasting lot of energy you are just sitting down and brushing dog and relaxing, yes.  
637 I: Yes, yes. Okay, um and can you think of how animals may have been good for you emotionally?  
638 When they make you feel happy, like you said before?

639 P: Yes, yes, they make me happy just because even if I'm like angry, maybe my father made me upset  
640 or my mother or my little brother, you see?  
641 I: Yes...

642 P: Okay, most of the time if I'm angry I don't like to stay just because it make me more angry, you see?  
643 I: Yes?

644 P: So the best way is to just go outside and then I can be with my dogs so that I can forget what  
645 happened, you see?  
646 I: Yes...

647 P: And then I feel okay so I can just go back. Even if I'm wrong, I did something wrong, and then they  
648 shout at me and I become angry, then I just go and play with my animals and in that time I'm playing  
649 with my animals I realise, "Oh, I did something wrong" so I can go back and say, "I'm sorry", you see?  
650 I: Yes.

651 P: And then, you know, I say, "I know I did a wrong thing and I'm sorry", you know?  
652 I: Yes, yes.

653 P: They make me relax, you see?  
654 I: Yes, yes. And can you think of any way that animals have been helpful for you spiritually?

655 P: Yes, yes, yes, ja, I can say they have been helpful spiritually because like, if we can go to the bible  
656 first. I know, God before the human being was, was, was created by God. First He created the animals.  
657 And then He said to Himself, "No there is someone or there is something I missed just because these  
658 things can't look after themselves. So what can I do? I must create a thing that can look after them" and  
659 then He started to create someone, Adam and Eve. And then they look after the animals; they look after  
660 everything on the earth at that time, you see? So I can say they help spiritually because I am here to  
661 look after them like God had created me for – to look after the animals. Ja, I can say it does!  
662 I: Yes yes. Um, and do you think that growing up with animals has enhanced your quality of life –  
663 made your life better?

664 P: Yes, they have made it very much better, you see in life you must deal with different things. If I can  
665 say there was no dog and I just grew with the human beings which means you can't each and every day  
666 teach someone. It's better to teach something that...what I mean is if you teach a dog to sit he will sit.  
667 You see, what I'm trying to say is ja, ja, ja, they make my life better.

668 I: Okay, and how do you think that your childhood experiences growing up with animals has shaped  
669 the way that you see yourself now?

670 P: Oh, okay, it changed me very well having animals just because it gave me that thought okay, now  
671 I'm a human being, okay? And I must look after these animals and then...okay!  
672 I: Okay!

673 (Laughter)

674 I: That's great. Okay and how do you think that growing up with animals has changed the way you see  
675 the world and other people?

676 P: Ummm, yes I can say animals they changed the world just because...what I'm trying to say is that,  
677 you see, the most, ummm.... that's a difficult one...(pause)

678 I: That's okay, that's a difficult question we can leave that one if you want. I think you've answered it  
679 already in some of the other things you've said.  
680 (Laughter)

681 P: Okay, thank you.

682 I: Participant 3 thank you so much...  
683 P: Okay my friend.  
684 I: ...for chatting to me I really appreciate everything you've said and it's been wonderful hearing about  
685 your experiences!  
686 P: Okay  
687 I: So thank you.  
688 P: Okay and can I say thank you because to chat about animals is very good just because...so that I  
689 cannot to kill something inside, so that other people they can see what is my feelings about animals you  
690 see?  
691 I: Yes!  
692 P: So, I, I, I don't want to just keep my feelings inside you see, I want each and everyone to know okay  
693 there is someone who care about animals you see?  
694 I: Yes!  
695 P: So I want to say thank you very much!  
696 I: Yes, that's wonderful, thank you, thank you.

