

“When your dog matches your decor”

Object agency of living and non-living entities in home assemblage

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Structured abstract

Purpose This paper examines two rather extreme examples of non-human entities in home assemblage, interior objects and companion animals, and how their agency appears distributed with human consumers in assembling home. We aim at drawing conceptual contrasts and overlappings in how agency expresses itself in these categories of living and non-living entities, highlighting the multifaceted manifestations of object agency.

Methodology/approach The paper employs multiple sets of ethnographically-inspired data, ranging from ethnographic interviews and an autoethnographic diary to three types of (auto-)netnographic data.

Findings The findings showcase oscillation of agency between these three analytic categories (human, non-human living, and non-human non-living), focusing on how it is distributed between two of the entities at a time, within the heterogeneous assemblage of home. Furthermore, the findings show instances in which agency emerges as shared between all three entities.

Originality/value The contribution of the paper comes from advancing existing discussion on object agency towards the focus on distributed and shared agency. The research adds to the prevailing discussion by exhibiting how agency oscillates between different types of interacting entities in the assemblage, and in particular, how the two types of non-human entities are agentic. The research demonstrates the variability and interwovenness of non-human and human, living and non-living agency as they appear intertwined in home assemblage.

Keywords: Object agency, assemblage, non-human entity, pets, home, ethnography

Research paper

Introduction

There is a growing consumer research interest in discussions on agency of non-human objects (e.g. Bajde, 2013; Bettany & Kerrane, 2011; Borgerson, 2013; Canniford & Bajde, 2016; Syrjälä, Jaskari, & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2016). This study joins this stream of research by focusing on object agency of non-living and living entities as it appears distributed with human beings. By focusing on two rather extreme examples of non-human entities in home assemblage, interior objects and companion animals, we aim to draw conceptual contrasts and overlappings, and examine how manifestations of object agency of such different entities is intertwined in the assembling and reassembling of home.

When it comes to prior examinations of the home, many consumer researchers have focused on symbols, meanings and practices, and the expressive capacities of objects in the home (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Arsel & Bean, 2012; Figueiredo, 2016). Recent studies have adopted an agency perspective, considering how objects, such as pieces of furniture, interact with and become integrated into a network of practices, spaces and other objects. In these networks, single objects receive their transformative potentialities, and material and expressive capacities as a result of interaction with the assemblage (Epp & Price, 2010; Valtonen & Närvänen, 2015; Figueiredo, 2016). We lean on Figueiredo's (2016, p. 81) definition of home assemblage as "all the heterogeneous elements that compose the sense of home and also the innumerable acts of homemaking that allow for home to emerge", which provides a particularly suitable understanding for illuminating the combinations and contradictions in object agency as it acknowledges that home is both an existing mental and physical space as well as a continuous process of home-making that gets re-constructed over and over again. Indeed, as a spatial assemblage home is

“constructed from distributed entanglements of both material (e.g. objects, physical locations, technologies) and expressive components (e.g. language, signs, gestures, codes and laws)” (Canniford, Riach, & Hill, 2018, p. 235). Furthermore, any spatial assemblage, such as a home, is to be understood as nested in, and connected to other, broader cultural systems, as well as to more localized, micro-level mundane interactions (Canniford et al., 2018; Askegaard & Linnet, 2011). Interior decoration as an activity thus reflects this process nature of connecting various material and living entities, cultural symbols and different practices in an ongoing attempt to achieve a beautiful and functional home.

Within the extant research on animals and humans, there is also an increasing stream of studies that abandon the human perspective that gives roles to animals in humans’ lives, such as regarding animals as subjects and/or objects (e.g. Belk, 1996; Hirschman, 1994; Holbrook et al., 2001; Jyrinki, 2012). The so called post-humanist studies (Bettany & Daly, 2008; Bettany & Kerrane, 2011; Smith, 2016; Syrjälä et al., 2016) take a leap beyond stable subject and object conceptualisations, and focus on the ways the non-human and human co-emerge as mutually implicative. Taking into account both the phenomena of interior objects and pets in the home, there appears a need for research that digs conceptually deeper into the particularities of non-human object agency.

Methodologically, the paper draws on multiple sets of ethnographically inspired data. These varieties range from ethnographic interviews to an autoethnographic diary (by author 1) (Anderson, 2006), and three types of (auto-)netnographic data (Kozinets, 2015; Syrjälä & Norrgrann, 2018): a blog and an online diary (by author 2), as well as discussions in two Facebook groups. Each of these data sets depart from a topic focus on either pets or interior. Nevertheless,

the content of the material reveals how interwoven these entities actually are in home assemblage; the pet-related discussions frequently touch on material aspects of the home, and vice versa.

Prior research highlights effects and intentions as key elements of (non-)human agency (Borgerson, 2013), and concludes how some capacity of intentions may emerge both within living and non-living entities in the case of the same animal being by comparing agency of a living horse and non-living horsemeat (Syrjälä et al., 2016). The current research adds to this discussion by exhibiting how different non-human entities create effects and show intentions in relation to human beings in home assemblage. As a starting point for our analysis, we regard non-living entities such as furniture to illustrate agency in terms of effects, while pets as living entities are able to highlight the intentional dimension of object agency.

However, we lean explicitly on the notion of *distributed agency* (Bajde, 2013; Brembeck, 2008) and thereby zoom into two of the entities between whom the agency is distributed at the time, while acknowledging the presence of the third entity - and the whole set of thousands of other elements in the home assemblage. In this manner, we examine interactions between these three analytic categories (human, non-human living, and non-human non-living), and when related to human entities we emphasise those moments of agency, where human agency momentarily steps more into the background and agency oscillates to non-human entities. Furthermore, our findings show particular instances in which the agency emerges shared between all three entities. The contribution of the paper comes from advancing existing discussion on object agency towards the focus on distributed, and eventually shared agency. Our findings demonstrate the variability and interwovenness of non-human and human, living and non-living agency, as they appear integrated in the home assemblage.

Non-human agency in home assemblage: theoretical underpinnings

From the traditional viewpoint, agency is seen as possessed solely by the human consumer, in charge of making consumption choices. For instance, the acquisition of any consumption object into one's home, be it a dog, or a sofa, is considered to be based on a more or less conscious decision-making process of the human consumer. According to this perspective, the non-human objects fulfill various functions for the human consumer (Zwick & Dholakia, 2006). In this regard, the home and its spaces emerge as sites guided by humans' actions, meaning-making and everyday practices (cf. Hirschman, Ruvio, & Belk, 2012).

If we question this dominant assumption and take the notion of oscillating agency and ontological shifting between subject and object relations (e.g. Bettany & Daly, 2008) into account, we move to a post-human view in consumption. In this view, even when the human entity is holding agentic power to make consumption-related decisions, the non-human entity may be considered as agentic and effect-evoking for instance through grasping the attention or creating an emotion in the human consumer, like an invitingly displayed sofa in a store or the tail-wagging of a puppy. Zwick and Dholakia (2006) state that the social relations between human and non-human are not supposed to be *just* like between humans, but when holding agency, the "things" are experiencing and reflexive beings, not mere accomplishees.

When it comes to the agentic capabilities of material objects in the home Epp and Price (2010) and Figueredo (2016) understand their agency not as purposefully intentional, but as capable of being agentic through their relations. If we move towards the examination of other types of non-human entities than material objects, the spectrum of how agency exhibits itself becomes broader. Borgerson (2013) has suggested that agency may be analysed in terms of effects and intentions. According to her (Ibid.) both subjects and objects are seen to cause effects, yet, only subjects have the capacity to plan and initiate, and thereby to show intentions. Non-living objects

are thus not intentional, but instead, their functional qualities - what can be done with those objects - becomes significant (Ilmonen, 2004).

To draw attention to the variability of agency that different non-human entities are capable of expressing in an assemblage, we present a conceptualisation (Figure 1) grounded in the works of Borgerson (2013) and Syrjälä et al. (2016) on non-human agency in terms of effects and intentions. At the bottom of the figure (human) the agency may take shape as effects and intentions. In the non-human end (upper part of the figure) the expression of agency differs according to whether the object is living (e.g. pet) or non-living (e.g. furniture), implying that only living entities are capable of purposefully intentional agency.

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Fig 1. The agency of non-human and human, living and non-living entities.

However, adhering to actor-network theory, we acknowledge the ontology of objects within consumption spaces as *relational* (Hill, Canniford & Mol, 2014), implying that the value of an object is not fixed, but negotiated in relation to other entities in the assemblage. Agency always emerges as *distributed* (Bajde, 2013; Brembeck, 2008), referring to the view that any purposeful action and intentionality may not be seen as a property of an object, but neither do they belong solely to subjects. Instead, they are properties of collectives consisting of human and non-human entities (Latour, 1999), which currently is the heterogeneous network of home assemblage.

Hence, the vertical axis of Figure 1 is to be understood as distributed or oscillating agency, because people cannot be seen as isolated from other entities. This means that agency is not possessed exclusively by any entity (be it living or non-living, human or not). Instead, agency

accumulates through interaction as non-living elements sustain agency and take part in co-creation (Ruckenstein, 2015). Following this notion, for instance the interconnectedness of a consumer and a pet has been characterised as a co-consuming unit, in which agency fluctuates, being in certain moments more inclined to the human, and on other occasions it is the animal partner that holds more of the agentic power (Kylkilahti et al., 2015). In this manner, different entities are ontologically indeterminate, as their boundaries and meanings are not fixed, but co-constituted and in a continuous state of mutual becoming (Haraway, 2003). Bettany and Daly (2008, 410) describe this type of a approach to focus “...on iterative processes by which both human and non-human actors co-emerge to reproduce or transgress cultural norms and categories in specific cultural milieus”. By acknowledging this continuous process of co-emergence, the current paper investigates the kind of snapshots within agency oscillation in which a specific entity “flickers” in an agentic position in relation other entities within the home assemblage.

Methodology

As agency is an elusive and fluctuating phenomenon and empirically difficult to attain, we have chosen to use a pluralistic combination of ethnographic methodologies to achieve our research aim. These range from ethnographic interviews and an autoethnographic diary (Anderson, 2006), to three varieties of (auto-)netnographic data (Kozinets, 2015; Syrjälä & Norrgrann, 2018) representing differing degrees of privacy, extent of social interaction, amount of participants and degree to which the authors themselves contribute. The range of data sets allows us to address the phenomenon in both breadth (netnography, interviews) and depth (autoethnography and auto-netnography), and root our autoethnographic observations in a broader cultural context in which we are natural members. Similar to how Syrjälä and Norrgrann (2018, p. 148) describe auto-

netnography the plural methodologies provide us “an in-depth understanding that can only be provided by using the researcher as a research tool (Anderson, 2006; Syrjälä, 2016), [and] netnography within social media platforms extends the perspective and provides breadth to the analysis (Kozinets, 2015).”

Even though the data sets differ by topic (pets/interior objects), in all of them, both types of non-human entities and their interlinkages within home assemblage are discussed. Thus, these different data sets (Table 1) enable us to delve into assembling home in terms of how animals, and furniture and other interior objects exhibit agency. All data were generated in Finland.

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Table 1. Data sets of the research.

The interviewees (data 1) were recruited during fieldwork in pet supply stores, vet clinics and communal dog parks, as well as through snowball sampling. Altogether 40 different kinds of pet owners were interviewed on their pet-related lifestyle, 28 women and 15 men took part in the interviews, ages varying from 21 to 75 years. During the interviews, pet owners’ everyday life and pet-related consumption were discussed from several angles. Interviewees were asked and encouraged to tell freely about their daily routines, problematic situations, service encounters and products, and also about potential pet-related hobbies and hobby communities. Thus, although the focus was on pets in these interviews, also domestic life and aspects relating to home came up.

The autoethnographic data (2) consists of the first author’s analog diary about her dog-related lifestyle, and it stems from doings, meanings, discourses and practices that are carried out and socially constructed in the everyday life of the author. Thus, these series of diary entries are based on “living” within the community of dog owners and thereby it is a tool to make visible the

cultural and social meanings and practices in the intertwined processes of object agency (cf. Moisander & Valtonen 2006, p. 63; Anderson, 2006). This data set is mostly focused on companion animals as its original aim was to describe the processes of becoming a serious dog devotee (see, Syrjälä, 2016), however such process of change touches various life spheres, such as family life and home (construction).

Data sets 3 and 4 present different varieties of auto-netnography (Kozinets, 2015, p. 256-261; Syrjälä & Norrgrann, 2018) as they consist of diary-like representation on the second author's project of house planning and construction, continuing into a hobby of interior design and decoration in the online platforms. Dogs are also part of this home assemblage. The online diary in a closed discussion forum (data 3) comes closer to an autoethnographic diary by being a spontaneous expression of feelings and ponderings, as well as an account of how practical events unfold. However, the fact that the diary was written online in a closed discussion forum, rather than only for oneself, entails the element of social interaction as in netnography. The forum consisted of 152 members that had joined the community by invitation several years earlier, which means that most members knew each other fairly well enabling a candid and personal manner of writing and sociable interaction.

The fourth data set, the public blog, also relates to the second author's house project. The aim of such a platform was to document the project in a more structured and searchable way, keeping better track of links, pictures and work phases. In contrast to the diary, the blog adhered to a more neutral expression, influenced partly by the fact that the blog became part of a co-operation with the house supplier, and was publicly available for anyone to read and comment. In line with discourses in similar interior design oriented blogs, the focus was not only on describing a construction process, but applying a more aesthetic angle to it, discussing and negotiating what

is stylistically desirable. Also, a more dominant use of images is characteristic for blog platforms to construct and convey symbolic meanings. In this sense, these two sites for documenting the process served different purposes; one being the public facade more consciously presented towards an audience, and the other revealing the more personal ponderings “behind the scenes”.

Lastly, we draw from typical forms of netnographic data, two Facebook groups. On the one hand, we followed and participated in a group for dog owners, labelled “Life with dogs”. In this group, the social interaction is casual, funny and supportive in nature, even though most members (28 398 altogether) are unfamiliar to one another. The posts commonly delineate everyday life with dogs, for instance funny things dogs do, and how life is organized and sometimes troubled because of them. The second Facebook group (labelled “Modern and Scandinavian interior decoration”) focuses on a decoration style that is typical in contemporary Finland. In the group, members share inspiring pictures from their homes, and ask for, and provide ideas and advice. Interestingly, pictures with pets and topics concerning pets in the home, interacting with the decor, are abundant. Also in this group, the members (87 309 altogether) are gathered around a shared interest, and social interaction is casual and mostly positive in nature. In the dog-related Facebook group, we searched for and participated in the discussions on home-related matters, whereas in the interior decoration groups we did the same in relation to pets in home assemblages.

Findings

Next, we use our empirical data to elaborate on how object agency appears when distributed with other non-human and human entities. We rely on the understanding of agency (i.e. effects and intentions) discussed in the theoretical section to identify agency oscillation in relations between human and non-human, living and non-living entities. In order to pinpoint the momentary shifting

of agency among these entities more specifically, we structure our discussion according to the triadic illustration presented in Figure 2, comprising the three types of entities (human, animal, and material object) and the relations and agency overlappings between them. By doing so, we base our findings on the idea of distributed agency, however acknowledging the presence of the multiple elements of the assemblage. In the following, we discuss our findings each dual relation at a time to illuminate the flickering of agency of certain relations and actors.

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Fig 2. Distributed and shared agency in relations between human, animal and material object.

Distributed agency in the human - animal relation

When agency oscillates between human and other living beings - as both able to exhibit agency in terms intentions - we can observe, on the one hand, instances where the decisive power appears to be more possessed by the human entity, and the pet's role remaining more passive or indirect. On the other hand, there are situations where the distributed agency between human and animal is more inclined to the pet. The first type resembles how Kylkilahti et al. (2015) describe the pet as an intermediary in a co-consuming - human and pet - unit, referring to the idea that the pet is involved in different consumption activities that may or may not relate directly to the pet, but where the final call is held by the human.

All of the data sets include a wide variety of illustrations of instances where pets have a significant impact on consumer decisions, from smaller purchases to major life choices. For instance, the first author describes in her diary the ways dogs show agency by implying effects on quite notable life circumstances, like the location and type of residence (also, Kylkilahti et al., 2015): "We decided to move to this small village, to the countryside. The most important thing is

of course that we have easy access to walks in the forest right from our doorstep, and that it is possible to build agility courses in the yard.” Furthermore, many everyday practices appear to be constructed so that the animal effects are taken into account. The data show, for instance, how the transition between outdoors and indoors is arranged in the houses; many have paw wash basins or paw towels nearby the front door so that they can be easily accessed when coming from the outside.

In contrast to these examples where the human consumer’s role as an assembler is more pronounced, agency in the human-animal relation can also shift towards the non-human. In such instances, the human’s role recedes into the background, while the non-human living partner steps forth as a consumer, much like Kylkilahti et al. (2015) state, the experiencer in a co-consuming unit. In a similar sense as Bettany and Daly (2008, p. 411) describe the concept of ownership relating to Afghan hounds: “If ownership is spoken of at all, then hounds ‘own’ humans, not the other way around”.

One of the commonplace ways pets show agency in the home assemblage is to alter the spatial boundaries of assigned (by the human) to them, as this quote illustrates: “Whoops! We haven’t allowed Daisy on the couch or bed... but now the guest bed was too much of a temptation.” In the Facebook group for dog owners, there were indeed a plurality of pictures of sleeping dogs, occupying all sorts of furnitures. Valtonen and Närvänen (2016, p. 380) call this as a “power struggle” in which the animal companion might find its way to the (originally only) human domain. Thus, pet’s intentional agency very tangibly appears to produce effects on how the home assemblage gets remoulded. A similar example in which the animal entity had revised the human actor’s choices came up in the ethnographic interviews, when a couple owning cats told how the cats’ climbing apparatus was originally placed in the office room, away from the other family actions, but “... it seems that even cats are so social that they didn’t feel happy in there, so we

needed to bring the climbing apparatus back to the living room so that they would use it continuously. It appears that even cats at least to some extent want to be where we are.”

Another example from a Facebook-discussion on where/how to (neatly) store dog food highlights dog agency in opposition with human home decorating efforts and the implications for use of spaces in the home: “I have to ask you, don’t your dogs push those cans, baskets etc. over, and eat it all when they are left alone? I’d sure like to store the food somewhere nice too, but right now I have 30 kg of dog kibble stacked up in our sauna.” Thus, it is not only effects, but also intentional behaviours of the animal entities that appear in these agentic actions.

Distributed agency in the human - material object relation

Non-living entities in the home assemblage, such as pieces of furniture, textiles, decorative objects or surface materials do not possess intentional agency like pets, but their agency is activated as part of the actor network of the home, of its distributed agency; where their characteristics momentarily can oscillate to provide meanings and cause effects in relation to other entities in the processes of home assemblage. Sometimes these effects can even be concrete, like wellbeing after sleeping in a comfortable bed or a cleaner house, enabled by a special shower for washing dirty dogs paws at the house entrance (data 3).

In the interior decoration context, much of the general discourse revolves around “how things fit together”, either aesthetically, spatially, practically or even within the frame of the economic or temporal resources available, reflecting the relational nature of objects. For instance, the importance of aesthetic matching in pet homes gets discussed in the Facebook group for interior decoration enthusiasts: “Is there anyone else here who has a cage [of a rabbit] as a part of their interior decoration? I would like to see pictures. Cages from the pet stores didn’t really persuade me, so I made this one myself and saved some money :). I was anyway desiring to use warehouse

shelves in the decor”. The quote highlights how the pet-related material objects interact and induce effects (like persuade, or not) with the human entity in assembling the home, as the human consumer rejects the traditional object for the purpose and engages in online negotiation with others about how objects in the home could be re-assembled for this pet-related purpose.

In all of the interior-related data sets, there are many examples of similar, non-living object agency taking place through a process of interacted influence, where an object triggers mental processing and/or concrete behaviours. The object agency appears distributed with human actors who combine or transform material objects in the home in novel ways through customisation or reuse. As in the rabbit cage example above, the human consumer may post pictures of objects or constellations of interior elements that may evoke admiration, or provide ideas and inspiration for others’ interior projects. From the perspective of consumer culture, this sharing functions as a form of expression of a taste regime (c.f. Arsel & Bean, 2013). In this, the members use (pictures of or references to) interior constellations to express their adherence to e.g. Scandinavian modernism, being aware of the objects, brands and designers considered as its common markers, but also participating in the dynamic negotiation and redefinition of the style, together with the material entities in their assemblages. Sometimes the effects are seen at a more practical level, like in a discussion thread on where to store dog kibble (data 5), which resulted in one of the members ordering online the same container whose practicality another member had just praised.

Thus, the agency of a specific material entity is closely linked to the actor network in which is it embedded and where its meanings and possibilities become activated. In the netnographic data, it could be argued that the home assemblages in fact link, through the communication and influencing platforms beyond the own home into the assemblages of other homes. A case in point from the interior Facebook group is the frequency of requests to show how a specific a decoration

piece “looks in the real life settings”, in other people’s home assemblages, or whether members have experience of how a specific product works in a pet household. In this sense, the communication platforms can be considered as agentic parts of the assemblage, similarly as referred to by Arsel and Bean (2013).

Distributed agency in the animal - material object relation

The third category delves into the most imaginative interaction type by elaborating on the manners in which non-human (living and non-living) entities interact to produce home assemblage. However, sometimes these interactions require human participation or orchestration, for instance by being the one who acquires and connects the non-human entities in the first place. This is how an interviewee describes all the things bought for the home after getting a cat “..this apparatus for sharpening the claws was the first thing, then this litter box, which we call the throne, it is in the bathroom. And then of course all the food bowls, scoops and that stuff... and toys seem to be laying here and there, all over the place when one is vacuuming”. Thus, the material objects, brought in to the home by the human, but used and shuffled by the living non-human, re-construct the home continuously.

The interaction between non-human entities - or a lack of interaction - may appear as decisive. For instance, a pet may refuse to play with a toy acquired for him/her, so the owner may act like the first author in her autoethnographic diary describes her actions“...so I changed the toys wandering on the floor to news ones (as the old ones had not been played with for a while).” Another example from the interior group on Facebook shows how a dog as a living creature with its own intentions can refuse to perform a part in the assemblage that the human has composed:

“Last Friday, a Labrador puppy moved in with us. I had bought this gorgeous bed that fit our interior, but damn, the puppy hasn’t slept in it once! :)”

A more successful example of human stagesetting of non-living and living entities is this Facebook comment to how dogs and their ways of using furniture in the home have been taken into consideration: “We just reorganised the furniture in the room, and for our dog it’s important that (s)he sees out the window, so we bought this ottoman just for the dog.” Similarly, a quote from a Facebook group shows how an exclusive and rather expensive designer vase may end up as a drinking vessel due to the distributed agency between non-human entities: “Our boys [cats] agree to drink only from the Aalto vase, and occasionally from a running tap... We have two Aalto vases, white and blue-white, of which the white one is the boys’ favourite”.

Intentional agency of companion animals interacting with non-living entities may also happen in combinations without (or against) human involvement, such as in cases when pets have made a mess when home alone, or taken objects into possession in their own ways, such as an image in Facebook group of a cat lying in the rattan basket of a piece of Alvar Aalto furniture, the owner commenting “.. let’s put it this way, I didn’t exactly buy this tea trolley for this purpose”, and one of the comments seconding that “that definitely is a cat’s den <3”.

Discussion: Towards shared agency in the triadic relation among human, animal and material object

In discussing the potential emergence what is termed as ‘shared agency’, we turn towards those instances in which agency appears shared between all three entities. These occasions comprise efforts to match human wishes for aesthetics and functionality through assembling interior objects with animal acceptance, or remoulding, of this material implementation. This triad connects the

three entities, as well as reveals tensions between the entities and the actions, objectives and particular considerations related to them.

A typical example is the way of organising everyday life activities in pet households such as feeding pets, going for walks and playing with pets, in relation to the house, its material elements, and how its functions are organised. These different functional and practical requirements negotiate with aesthetic objectives of the human actors in the home. In the Facebook group for interior decoration, for instance discussions on how and where to keep items such as dog leashes, how practical different textiles or surface materials are, illustrate the touchpoints and tradeoffs between dog-related everyday functions and the desired appearance of the home. For instance the previously mentioned example from data 5 on discussing different solutions for storing dog food illuminates not only a relation between a human and an object, but also between agency of the animal in this particular function, as well as its implications for space use in the home, as the agentic dog, capable of tipping over nice looking food containers, has forced the owner to allocate a space intended for human relaxation and cleansing (sauna) to rather serve as dog-proof storage space.

Indeed, the dog as a living entity with features such as fur, claws, and drool impact on the conscious home assembling actions and decisions of the human. The second author's blog received comments about the implications of dogs on interior-related material decisions. These may imply restrictions to consumer choices, like the FB-posts "We are considering Wicanders White oak [as floor material], but is that a crazy idea in a dog family?" or "When buying a sofa, the most important thing is detachable and washable fabrics". This creates a consumption paradox for the human actor in terms of balancing between an interior design logic and a pet owner logic in the home.

However, companion animals are present in the interior decoration not only through the practical considerations their presence entails, but many pet owners also eagerly want to manifest their pet-ownership with a visual representation of their relationship in the house decor, like displaying dog/cat breed products or pictures of their pets in the house. This is how an interviewee tells about pictures taken by a professional photographer of her dogs: "...I wanted those pictures as a memento, so that I have a kind of a photo wall where I have all sorts of different pictures of different sizes and stuff, of both past and present dogs". The past-away dogs may indeed still be part of the home, as their urns may be placed on the living room bookshelves (also, Hirschman, 1994). Thus, even deceased animals may exhibit certain amount of agentic effects on their human partner's behaviours (also, Syrjälä et al., 2016).

Similar positive and effortless combinations of the characteristics of the pet, the material decor items, and the conscious attempts of the human in interior decorating, where the living pet becomes incorporated into an aesthetic assemblage, are the numerous picture posts in "When you pet matches your decor"- type of discussion threads in data 5, and generally the common tendency to post interior pictures where the pet is present as a visible element. The Facebook posts depicting funny and touching pictures of dogs in their home environments seem to evoke abundant emotional responses in social media (data 5), which showcases how pets through their mere existence cause effects on humans. Indeed, the emotions brought by animal entities highlight the spiritual aspects of how home assemblage may be constructed. "Home is where my animals are" states one participant in the Facebook group and describes her living abroad saying that she wouldn't miss home, except for her furry children that were left behind in Finland. Actually, it seems that the human's sense of home is inseparably related to animal existence (also, Cheetham & McEachern, 2013): "You only need to go home to find a happy dog waiting for you, to get into good mood"

says one of the interviewees, showing the capacity of an animal to integrate the an emotional sense of home, animal and human into a shared co-emergence.

Conclusions

In the current paper, we examined how different non-human entities create effects and show intentions in relation to human beings in home assemblage. We delved more specifically into the different dimensions of non-human agency by making an analytical distinction between living and non-living entities, here exemplified by pets and interior objects, interacting in the heterogeneous assemblage of home. The current findings showcase agency as distributed between three kinds of entities - humans, companion animals, interior objects - in a way that highlights each of them having momentarily agentic power and thereby showing agency in distinctive ways. In our analysis, we elaborated on the notion of distributed agency by focusing on two of the entities between whom agency is distributed at a time, however bearing in mind the presence of the third entity - and the whole set of thousands of other elements of the assemblage.

We found that pets and pet-related practices influence (trigger, moderate, limit etc.) the home assembling acts of the human actors, in minor to major consumption decisions related to the home, from small purchases, ways to organise activities in the home, to decisions on what and where the home should even be. When the distributed agency of the home assemblage is viewed as oscillating momentarily towards the pet, we find that their intentional behaviours may differ from the way human actor envisages the assemblage (e.g. by breaking behavioural rules set by the human), illustrating the inability of the human actor to fully be in control when other living entities are involved.

If we in turn focus on distributed agency in relation to human and material objects, we may find slightly similar instances, when things visually or practically 'click or clash', fit together,

or fail to do so. Albeit here, it is the human actor orchestrating them, as well as making the assessment of whether materials or objects suit together into the aesthetic or practical objectives that the human actor has for the home. Thus, the objects or constellations of objects are capable of exhibiting agency in terms of evoking effects in humans.

Furthermore, we examined the intriguing interface between living and non-living non-human entities in home assemblage, which is less addressed in previous research. Here, the human actor is present, but stepping back into the role of a more passive enabler of the interactions between the non-human entities; agency oscillates to the acts (or non-acts) of the living pets onto material objects, and the mutual effects between animal and materials in the home, such as furniture enabling actions for pets (e.g. access to a view out the window, or a desirable spot where to sleep), pets carrying out acts on material objects (e.g. making mess), but also how they assemble home in combination.

Presently, we focused on each entity as a singular representative of each kind of element within the home assemblage, however, further examinations could elaborate this more at the network level, taking multiple actors of a similar kind into account, such as several members of the household or the different pets of the family. The analytical boundary could also be stretched to explore other types of entities beyond the proposed human/animal/material object categorisation. Particularly the (auto)netnographic data hints at the agentic role that the technological platforms may have in establishing relations between entities, suggesting this as a topic deserving more detailed study. Furthermore, there are fruitful chances for forthcoming studies to open up the effects and intentions as key elements of agency in a more fine-tuned manner.

In conclusion, based on our findings, we have discussed of the notion of ‘shared agency’, showing instances in which agency appears momentarily distributed among all the three entities - human, animal, and material object. By examining agency oscillation in a triadic constellation, we are able to reveal tensions between the entities and the actions, objectives and particular considerations related to them, but also harmonious co-emergence of the agencies. A particularly fit illustration of such successful co-emergence comes from the interior decoration group on Facebook, where a post asked if people have dogs/other pets that match the colour scheme of the interior, receiving numerous pictures of accessory-like pets blending beautifully into the decor. One of them, with a picture of a German shepherd resting its head on the armrest of a dark sofa, commented (freely translated) “Pretty good colour match with the sofa, and the dog and the sofa are otherwise also pretty inseparable.”

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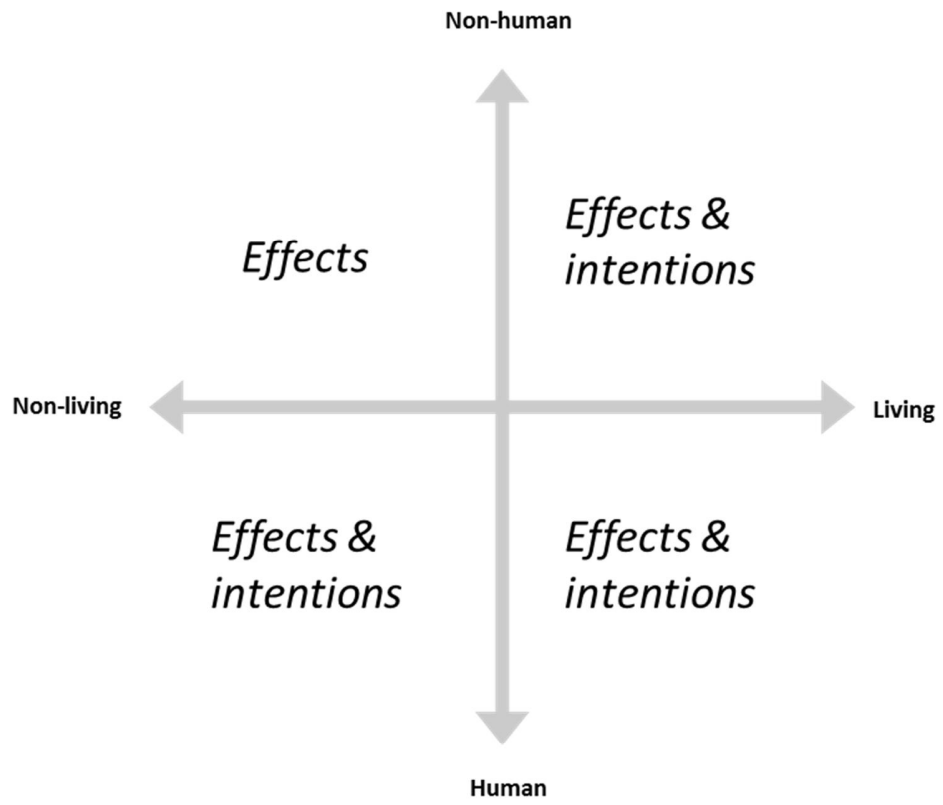


Fig 1. The agency of non-human and human, living and non-living entities.

Varieties of ethnographic data	Ethnographic interviews (1)	Autoethnographic diary (2)	Auto(-netno)graphic diary in a closed discussion forum (3)	(Auto-)netnographic blog as a diary (4)	Social media groups (5)
Sharing	Private conversations	Not shared at all, no interaction	Limited audience, interactive	Public, interactive	Public, based on communal interaction
Digital vs. analog	Analog	Analog	Digital	Digital	Digital
Focus: Pets vs. Interior objects	Pets	Pets	Interior objects	Interior objects	Pets and interior objects
Amount of data	40 interviewees, 360 pages of transcripts	Two years, 88 pages of diary	4 years, 5 months, 1880 posts/comments	3 years, 241 posts, 130 000 views, 30 followers	"Life with dogs", 28 398 participants "Modern and Scandinavian interior decoration", 87 309 participants

Table 1. Data sets of the research.

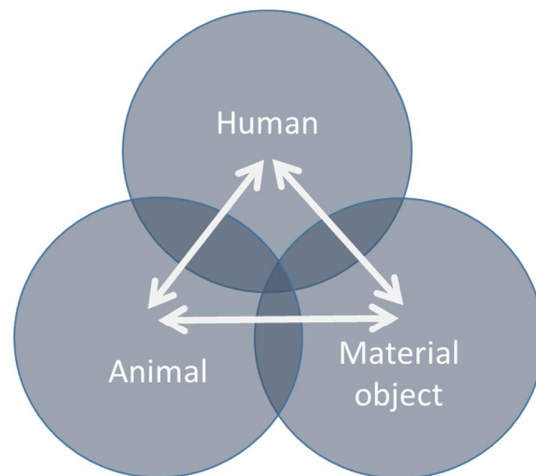


Fig 2. Distributed and shared agency in relations between human, animal and material object.