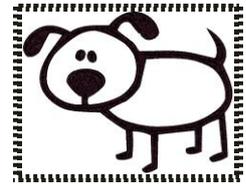


Bernd Rohrmann

## A little essay about dogs - status feb 2022

22-05-16 & 27-01-19 & 01-12-20 & 23-07-21 & 13-02-22



*As you may be aware of, I observe for quite a while how dogs, and their owners, behave. Dogs are everywhere - impossible to overlook them. Here are my present thoughts about dogs and their impact. This was originally written 22-05-2016.*

*And now, 01-12-2020, four years later, I have new knowledge and a revised attitude regarding dogs - and this I add hereby to my essay.*

*Plus, info bits + pieces from 2021 I've now added as well.*

### What are the reasons to have a dog ?

Originally: To protect one's house and oneself and to use them when hunting. Nowadays different reasons dominate, such as, to have company, to be in line with cultural conventions, and to have something which can be fully controlled.

*Meanwhile social facets are vital: Dogs as crucial aids of blind persons, as therapy dogs, and mental health benefits of dogs as mates of lonely people.*

*There is a less fine attribute though which is obviously a significant issue in Australia - dogs are very much a status symbol,*

*so they must be large, appear expensive, and in any case express wealth.*

### The nature of dogs

*Scientists assume that the extinct "Pleistocene wolf" is the ancestor of the dog (as of current wolves).*

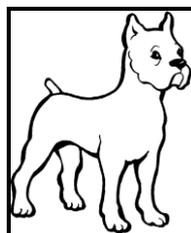
*Different to wolves, dogs have a social orientation, and want a 'master'.*

*Dogs are canivores. Strong biting is their core equipment. Dogs are focussed on smell and taste - that's why they lick all the time, including humans.*

*By nature most dogs are harmless and friendly, however, they will bite people when feeling threatened. This can be very harmful.*

### Do I have links to dogs ?

Yes. I never owned a dog myself, yet some of my relatives did. Plus, when at high school and then studying at university, my income source was to work as an interviewer for social research companies. When I had to contact residents, often a dog blocked my access to the door so that I could not reach and interview the relevant person - bad luck for me!



*And I remember now that the mill-plus-mini-farm, where I lived for some years after World War 2, had a large and aggressive dog which blocked the access to the house. Only when he was on a leash could I enter my home.*

*I also remember that just once in my life I have encountered sled dogs - which are common in the very north of Europe, Asia and America (in Canada & Alaska). And then I even participated in a sled dog race (which I of course did not win).*



### **Are dog owners happy about having one ?**

Indeed, most are. It feels good to do what everyone does, and the power about dogs pleases many (which is much harder to have regarding humans). Also, for elderly people, especially widowed ones, a dog is often a valuable company. Furtheron, women may feel safer with a dog when walking somewhere alone. It is very common to stroke and fondle dogs and sometimes even to hug or kiss them.



A long-known special habit is to have dogs as toys - usually very little ones which are carried around and placed on one's knees when sitting somewhere.

There is a further 'purpose' I hardly dare to mention - some special dogs get trained to intensely lick very personal parts of men or women.

*I notice that toy dogs are becoming more attendance, and are even dressed carefully - regardless of whether it's actually cold or not (in Melbourne frost never occurs anyway).*

### **Why can dogs become a nuisance ?**

Unfortunately for quite some reasons! The main one is that they pee and shit about everywhere. House entrances or the facilities in outdoor cafes are common areas. And the tree in front of my house is a favourite place, urghh.

Secondly, some are endlessly barking. These may be little dogs, creating a shrill/high sound, who are missing their owner while being hooked up outside a shop.

When I walk along a street some dogs bark at me. And a dog (only a neurotic one) may bark whenever another dog passes by, day or night. Bad luck for me, such a dog lives in a neighbouring property, being an almost permanent noise source.

*Last year I asked the Yarra City Council whether I can do anything against a dog in a nearby house which barks up to 12 hours a day. Result: Nothing. Maybe dogs are 'holy' in Melbourne? So, what I do is to play loud music records in my house.*

*Two further nuisances I had forgotten in my first essay: Firstly, dogs like to lick people, yet I can't stand this. Secondly, many people feed their dog while having lunch or dinner. Thus dogs put their head on the table. Sometime dogs of others did that even with me, or they licked my icecream - urghhh.*

Finally, dogs may attack people - see below.

### Have dogs injured people ?

Yes. I know about three types of pertinent events.

Occasionally dogs, when they are not on leash, bite pedestrians, or joggers. This has never happened to me because I always stop running when a dog is approaching me. However, my partner got once bitten, and she had to go quickly to a doctor, for treatment, and an injection against rabies. (By the way, the dog owner didn't care).

Sometimes dogs run on the road. In one case, two cyclists coming along changed direction, to avoid to cycle into these dogs -- and were then hit by a car and got seriously injured.

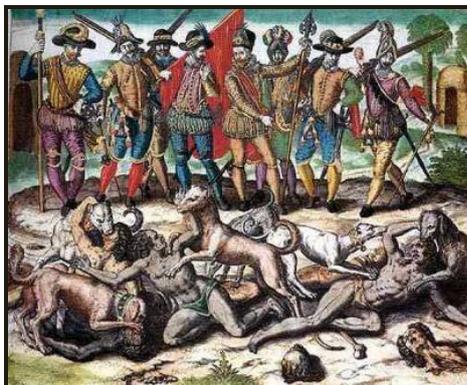


The by far worst case is that dogs which are not controlled by the owners may attack kids. This happens frequently, sadly so, and every year some kids die because of their injuries. The cause for this are negligent owners, especially if the dogs are aggressive ones, such as the pit bulls - - but that doesn't make it any easier for the parents who loose their kid!

*For a long time I didn't know anything about war dogs (I actually had refused military service). War dogs have been used for thousands of years, by the Egyptians, Greeks, Persians, Romans, Slavs, Britons, and so on.*

*The earliest documented use of dogs in a battle referred to Lydia, around 600 b.c. Attila the Hun used molosser dogs in his campaigns. In the Far East, the Vietnamese emperor Le Loi raised a pack of 100 hounds, and war dogs were also utilized in the Chinese empires.*

*Around 1500, the Spanish conquistadors used various strong dogs against*



*the native Americans in middle and south America. The most cruel Spanish explorer was Vasco Nunez de Balboa (1475 – 1519), who regularly used dogs to torture and kill aborigines.*

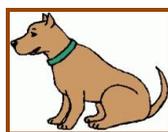
*So, war dogs were used to satisfy the sadism of Spanish officers - horrible!*

### *What are my personal conclusions?*

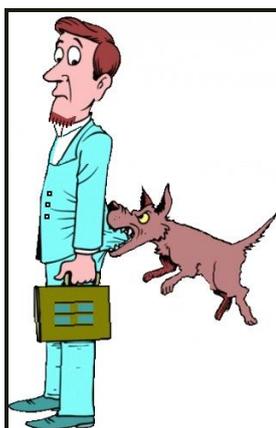
I can not change the behavior of dogs, nor the attitudes of their owners. As most people are loving dogs, I have to accept how things are.

However, I reduce sitting outside in cafes or bistros, because there are the dogs. And I will not accept dogs in my house or garden.

The very frequent noisy barking of a dog in my neighbourhood can mostly be compensated by playing music.



*Recently I considered what I should do if getting attacked by a dog. Large dogs will try to bite into my neck (a habit shared with wolves). I reckon all I can do is to stand upright, looking at the dog, and try to lean against a wall.*



*Meanwhile I got informed that this is wrong - I shall not look into the dog's eyes, rather elsewhere, and on the floor.*

*The owner of the dog may try to stop the dog's attack, yet that's not overly likely. However, I can hope for other people nearby to contact police immediately.*

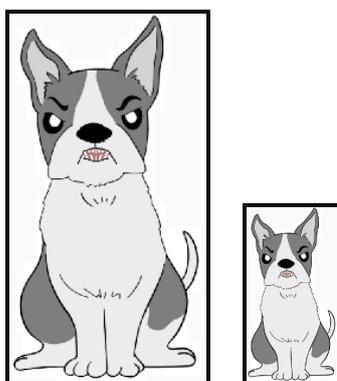
*Finally, in case you think my thoughts are neurotic - in fact every year up to 100 000 people in Australia need medical treatment after dog bites...*

### ***Injuries caused by dogs***

*There are two types. Firstly, dogs sometimes bite people, usually in the legs. Sadly so, they occasionally kill little kids.*



*No difference between little and large dogs - both have very sharp teeth, and the same aggressiveness if they flip out.*



*Secondly, they can induce illnesses. These are:*

- <> Tetanus Occurrence: rare, can have serious impacts*
- <> Rabies Occurrence: rare, very dangerous, at least in Asia*
- <> Capnocytophaga canimorsus Occurrence: very rare, yet often deadly.*

*These diseases get distributed by bites of dogs, or by the dog licking wounds of humans, this enables the infection.*

*Medical treatment: Due as soon as possible (even in cases of low suspicion). Most GP's will know what to do.*

*Thirdly, dogs may trigger allergies, and can induce asthma. This is relevant for people with pertinent health trouble.*

To sum up - in most contexts dogs are lovable and beloved animals, plus, dogs are part of the Melbourne culture - no way to change this.  
Nevertheless, dogs must be on a leash (this is a legal prescription), and caution is indicated.

In any case, I need to use my profound knowledge to avoid dog hazards. This includes to avoid dogs, especially if they are not leashed,

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