Hello, my name is Rebecca Jordan. I'm a PhD candidate at Washington University in St. Louis. My pronouns are she, her. And the title of this presentation is Cheetos and too many fingers, human illness and the search for animal empathy in cyborg spaces. I'd like to first begin with a quote. Quote, I am the rare bird who loves your kind. The ones who walk on two legs and built the things you'd ramped up, including the Chido. I owe my life to you as an honorary mofo. I'm here to be utterly honest and to tell you what happened to your kind. The thing that none of us saw coming into as he introduces his story as t, a self-proclaimed, domesticated Crow establishes his personal connection to humans. Even going so far as to suggest he had a mofo or human himself. Concurrent with the unfolding at Estes narration, most of the humans suffer from an incurable illness that renders the planet liter void of human life. However, influence of humans remains and fixtures such as houses, aquariums, and paved highways. Karen Jayne Buxton's hollow kingdom, published in 2019, eerily arrived as the COVID-19 virus began to affect human health worldwide. Reading the novel as we transition out of a global pandemic may prompt the uncanny question. What would happen if we were gone and animals were left? The novel follows the crows st and his bloodhounds companion Dennis, as they venture out from their own or big gems honed home to find a cure for a mysterious life-threatening illness that only affects humans. Initially optimistic as the animals search for the cure for humans, the reader later lives of that virus remains incurable and that animals must learn to live without thereby IPO counterparts. Both tragic and darkly comedic, hollow kingdom introduces an immersion environment in which animals are trapped in humans and created spaces, spaces and yet know humans are apparent. The animals notably do not celebrate the loss of human life, but mourn and yearn for the human companionship that is now gone. And yet while Buxton's novel elicits animal sympathy, insists of loss, German author dq man das novel, the abolition of species or dApp shaft from the Ottoman from 2008 complicates the human extinction narrative. The novel reports the perspectives of animals as they wage war and redefined boundaries of their nations, truly mimicking the follies of their predecessors, the humans, display the gloomy themes of human extinction. The two novels referred to an optimism that is reflected in contemporary media, namely animal empathy. Humans as they interact with things we leave behind. And we'll empathy may at first be hard to define though in most recent and the most recent wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This trend emerges in the discussion of animal interaction in traditionally human spaces. For example, the 2020 National Geographic graphic article titled fake animal news abounds in social media as Coronavirus appends life. Author Natasha daily outlines general social media optimism referring animals interacting in human spaces as a sort of return to nature without the nature referring to retweeted examples like Venetian dolphins. There were filmed an imported into denial or drunk and sleeping elephant in Yunan province, China. Daily breaks the bad news that these poster often only emotionally driven, fictitious, and even a temporary self-esteem boost during a worldwide pandemic.
setting. Erin Vogel daily contains the ideas the animals and nature could actually flourished during a crisis, could help us get, help give us a sense of meaning and purpose that we went through this for a reason. My paper reacts not only to the optimism you may have heard or seen in everyday media, but also explicate how human illness and contemporary literature is connected to a desire for animal flourishing only through human influence. I suggest animal flourishing and traditionally human occupied spaces. As a part of a larger discussion regarding the impact humans have had on the planet, most infamously known as the Anthropocene. Furthermore, I offer an alternative lens with which we read the paradox of the tragedy of human illness in conjunction with the hope of animal flourishing. Utilizing Donna Haraway's conception of the Cyborg, as well as Marshall McLuhan's media theory. I argue that the cyborg isn't limited to bodies, but may also extend to spaces. Humans are never fully absent from the environment, just as dolphins may swim into Venetian canals. So to do the animals in the text I study, occupy human spaces. The animal cannot be separated from the human in these cyborg spaces. Rather they are part of human life and even empathize for the extinct or dying humans. In her preliminary chapters of wind species me, Donna Haraway establishes the connectedness or networking in a sense of sensory engagement with the world of all things in nature, while also positing the agency and space occupying place of the animal. Hair way. Explicate this distinction using Jacques degree does 997 lecture and say the animal responded. She said it's dagger does conception of the animal's looking back at humans, suggesting that the case may not be that the animal speaks as we might anticipate and literature, but that the animal actually responds in their own ways, that we aren't necessarily aware of how even going so far as to criticize Derrida. Hair Gray writes, quote, he was sidetracked by his contextual canon of western philosophy and literature and by his own linked worries about being naked in front of his cat. He knew there was no nudity, but among animals that the worry was his, even as he understood the fantastic blur of imagining, he could only write naked words. Derrida, you not become curious about what the cat might actually be doing, feeling, thinking, or perhaps making available to him. And looking back at him that morning. In the discussion of the room in which Derrida is cat occupied, the nakedness of the human filtered through the human's perspective, is the central connection of cat, man and space. The human's feelings or potential interaction in the space, how it senses the space is not focalized. We may expect such shrunk vocalization as humans are often writers, narrative theorists are often they are writers. Narrative theorist interested in animal interiority and the paradox of human authorship, creating such inner lives like David Herman, I've written extensively on such topics. Herman offers various levels of animal experience as represented in literature and yet does not necessarily sever the animal from the human in the texts though the category is sensing in space. Therefore, just as research, researchers may observe the cheetah at a great distance with a camera. It appears worldwide we access the inner lives
of animals and our abs and yet read about it from our homes. In this case, we watch a documentary about a cheetah. A space, I argue become cyborg as human technology creates it. Even after the human is gone, they continue to bind in trap and influence the animal. Like media theorist Marshall McLuhan, Donna Haraway conceives of the organic and inorganic mixing of a new technologically impacted human and living creature. Humans then are no longer the sole recipients of modernization. Animals to then can experience cyborg change. I go a step further and suggests that if living things, especially humans and animals can benefit from technologies, space itself might be impacted by modernization. Specifically, humans can carve space, which is a canal, aquarium or neighborhood, and connected both to its function such as transportation, entertainment and shelter. And another living creatures such as efficient at Canal an aquarium or dogs occupying a home. The human may thus be extended wide into these spaces that they may not actually be present in and yet do not postulate the sensory experience of the animal in these spaces like Derrida, that we turned back always to the human emotion and the human sensory experience. It is at this junction that I find media philosopher Marshall McLuhan may best exit, exit assist, excuse me. A lot of us are familiar with Marshall McLuhan in his discussion of extension of the census through technologies such as the light bulb, extending the human eye by allowing us to see in the dark. I find no How curiously in similar vein to Haraway, McLuhan also read the splitting and dividing of things, a means of control. And this is part of the process of networking. Therefore quote, the persona and social consequence of any medium, that is any extensions of ourselves result from the new scale that's introduced into our fears. But each extension of ourselves or buy any new technology and quote, thus in the process of fragmentation species or telegraphs, for example, we create networks and simultaneously attempt to place ourselves within them. The animal is reminded of a cyborg space in the novels I study, because the objects often recalls the memory of the human, thereby extending the human. In this way though there are hardly humans even represented in the text animal concern reflection memory of the human pervades, suggesting the paradox of human extinction and yet the desire for animal flourishing with our influence to occur. It is here now that I turned to cure at Jane Buxton's hello kingdom, that foregrounds animal experience through various structural techniques. Although there is global catastrophe, it is only relevant insofar as it spotlights animal survivorship and regain agency. Nevertheless, humans or human influence are never fully erased in the novel. For example, animals suffer from starvation, from being trapped in homes or zoos in cages. Before we even learn that however, we are vocalize or St. explains his face in which he lives, emphasizing a symbiotic relationship with his human big gem, quote, We live together. You see, it's a platonic relationship with a zesty sprinkle of symbiosis. I get the perks of living with an employed electrician in a decent neighborhood of Seattle. And he gets his own private live in funny man. By reflecting on his relationship to Big Jim is a symbiotic one rather than one
rooted in ownership. Sd establishes an alternative hierarchy in which animals live in a balanced ecological network with humans. Moreover, the space appears to be equally occupied and owned by St. He utilizes human turn terminology for this face such as Seattle. This I bought the spaces, the cyborg in the sense that it is a technology of division, neighborhood and city. And that it is a human technology that is occupied and inhabited in later owned by a crow. St, not only gives us then a bird's eye view of the surreal, but he also elicits the complexity of the interiority of animal light. When big gym falls ill, SDK cares for his human friend, checking in on him hourly and quote, bringing him baloney finance and the two Cheetos I was willing to spare and quote. And these passages not only does as t interact with big gym, as if he was the owner of a pet, the crow Demisto in demonstrates his intimate understanding of Big Jims love and interest that grow this defies our expectation for him as he understands the elements of human culture and really integrates into human culture cell as is especially present after big gym devolves into a zombie-like creature as t does not rely on Jim from first of April, but actually seeks out a cure for his friend. He appears ready even for the pursuit to find a cure. When he says quote, Big Jim was in the grips of a medical crisis and it was up to yours truly to make things right again, I felt confident I knew what to do and innate natural instinct thrumming inside of me as a reflector that's in the post apocalyptic world as T's conception of identity is revealed, he is not necessarily even as symbiotic or does not have a symbiotic relationship to big drum Jim, he actually wants to become a savior based on his duty or what he refers to as neat instinct. However, we see later that these innate instincts are, are troubled as he, as he searches for a cure. For example, when he enters into an aquarium, he reflects on quote, dead stingrays floated and pulls a couple with chunks missing from their slated bodies. And enemies also lay dead in the water. Tentacle stiffen and feeling, end quote, the impact of human laws can be felt insofar as certain animals like stingrays are trapped in tanks and require humans to be both fed and protected. In contrast to his mobility SDK encounters how human technologies such as doors and tags prevents animal life after human death. Distinguish, for example, are rendered cyborg as their bodies and lives are connected to the tanks in which they live. Just as STC say cheetos. So to have the other animals come to be connected through human, through entrapment or food resource is an octopus later calls st out on, on his human-like behavior. Voting URI or excuse me, quote, You are a CRO who believes he is human. You have lost your connection to the world and to the world of man. And you've come all the way from their Ravenna neighborhood where you've been hiding in a small craftsmen home. To ask me what happened to my mankind. Despite his protests, really advocating for humans. As he learns that human extinction has begun and cannot be Skulpt from this up octopus, he must only really wait and quote Humankind stories and paint and ink and machine and structures that reach up for the sun, they will all go. What is left is you. Millions of domestics have died, but there are so many, many
more stuck and abandoned and looking for a savior. Growth and evolution depend on our changing relationship to the being around is if you want to help mankind, this is what you do. Therefore, growth and evolution really become the center of the texts. And unfortunately SD cannot be the savior of humans, but instead to human of animals are yes, the savior of animals. Buxton prohibits SDS desire to return humans back to their former stays. Rather. Most of Halakhah Nim reflects the stages of grief. Grief as he has to go through when he learns that he has to return to the animal world following st and other animals experiences in the post you enroll, especially implicit, implicitly stresses that animals will just be find that out us. And that brings us to dogma. Does novel. Unlike Buxton's hello kingdom, dq my doubts, the abolition of species refers to the challenges that humans and animals experience in a hostile environment. Humans, animals in this novel actually are at war with one another and animals have gained control of genetic manipulation. Dots, novel blurs the boundaries between animals, humans, genders, identities, and even individual, individual characteristics. It also reflects on the potential of animal evolution. Much like Buxton's novel, also speculates what may occur when any animals take over and really take on human technologies. As discussed in bucket, Buxton's hollow kingdom, deaths novel changes or excuse me, challenges their narrative of humans is owners and distributors of technology. As mostly humans become actually victims to animal technology, leading them to near extinction and for lack of a better term towards minimalism. Abolition exemplifies the modern cyber Borg environment by establishing humans lack of biological understanding of adaption and survival. And employing the Darwin's theory of evolution, death doth reconfigures power dynamics in the narrative by having the ghetto or the newly genetically manipulated animals flip the evolutionary theory itself, their adaptability allows the chimeric species to circumvent typical reproduction and live longer. The evolutionary based civilization. This is an embodiment of a literal corporate corporeal adjustment. As the animals adapt themselves to have human features, they become stronger. For example, after the humans lose their hands, the Gen2 or the modified animals modify their own bodies to access to really incorporate human hands. Quote, many Gen2 who could afford it, could go around in an anthropomorphic body. Now we get to have thumbs to, in fact, of all earlier fashions with Dimitri, a wolf, liked the most was that he had hands. There are now six each for him. He had transceivers place in the skin of the pads of his feet and between his fingers. And quote, The Ghent as multiple sets of hands are ridiculous and impractical and yet they are really purchased for fashion. And even later we learn for as extensions of the animals in order to write in, in, in, excuse me, more than just an immediate link to the object. We may also be human fingers or hands as an extension of the animal. Just as McLuhan would argue, a light bulb has extended the humans senses. The animal has thus become cyborg by utilizing human traits not simply for practical use, but to denote social status and to permit animals to communicate through written, written word. This use of human's
hands, it's especially poignant since it is both exacerbated by the, again to who poisons the humans to lose their hands. And we began to also attack escaped humans targeting their hands. The human illness further, unlike in hollow kingdom, is directly caused by the animals themselves. For example. We hear quite a bit about animals killing off humans, and yet the animals continue to have sympathy and even empathy for humans. This is evidence when Dmitri, our protagonist who is a Woolf, sees a graveyard or a pile of bones and, and kind of reflects, quote, the white bones cracked and splintered beneath his feet as he stepped carefully, thoughtfully. If the fewer the bodies were still dressed in the shabby remains of a lost life in rags that recalled such stuff as cuddling up under open skies and a human night June, kicking the ball about on a green and money field. Workers revolts in Russian mining towns. Tall, tolerable pop music, the ties, a close friendship. Dimitri had been interested in human emotion since his student days, but could glean nothing from the frozen faces. We see Dimitri is careful, nearly respectful of the bodies and projects really represented Memory's onto them. He appears to care even for these humans, despite the lack of individuality. Like as teen hollow kingdom, there appears to be an intricate appreciation for human spaces and experience. Though, unlike Buxton's novel, Dimitri himself falls into the materialism of the human body as he purchases hands for fashion. And later when he comes across a human who he deems a mad man, leaves him no choice but to quote, bite off both of the human hands. Therefore, the human is an object to be studied. But living human with hands presents a problem like his materialistic consumption of hands for fashion, Dimitri physically consumes the hands, rendering the humans felt powerless to fight and really I'm taking away what denotes them as humans. The novel does, rejects the humans separate for a reason trope that we see in the aforementioned National Geographic article. And instead has animals that tear and kill humans either for materialistic or social benefit. Dimitri did have the choice to spare the humans, but he decided ultimately not to. Minimizing the gaps between animals and humans. Dot is illustrates how delicate are differences may be. But it is not simply biology that dictates understandings of selves. Here it is really technology itself. Human illness leads to a loss of anthropocentric power. But the MIT, excuse me, memory and influence of the human continues to exist even after their death. However, dots reunite, denies his redo the same comfort that daily and even Buxton provide. Abolition provides a perspective, an animal's redefining human national and species boundaries as well as the employment of human as object or a new technological extension of the self. I would then like to conclude with the sympathy of the animal and human suffering and the pages of these non novels, the positionality of humans and animal hierarchy is changed. Yet the animals appear to feel the loss of human long after their extinction. Animal empathy subverts the lack of agency often attributed to animals, this DEM versus US aligning creatures with us with the ability MS. Us or more in US. Narrative theorist David Herman, for example, considers the portrayal of non-human agents as
either emerging from or contributing to broader attitudes towards human life. Herman contends that his emphasis lies in the power of narrative to reframe the cultural modes, models, or ontologies that undergird hierarchical understandings of humans place in the larger biotech communities in which they are members is also important to acknowledge. However, the way narratives can at the same time to be used to shore up reproducing, even amplify human centric understandings of animals and cross-species relationships. Herman emphasizes how conceptions of animals were dictated, dictated by mythopoetic, bio, biological, ecological, social, historical and legal political resonances. Further, he acknowledges that because of these influences, human understandings of animals often pervade these narratives. Making the task of the narrative theorist difficult to really understand and animals worldview. However, I argue Buxton index dots, novels frame human wishes to be memorialized in our spaces and objects. And I argue permits are present a unique perspective of animal life that is simultaneously anthropocentric and departs from anthropocentrism. Humans exist in the texts either peripherally or insofar as extensions, whether in technologies of foods such as Cheetos or even becoming technologies herself hands. Though our influence may exist in the forms of highways and buildings, the animals appear, right, nice texts even flexible enough to utilize our own technologies. Further, these narratives, the narrative animals becoming cyborgs as they take on our body, objects and fragments and live in our space is really indicated survivability. The message then appears in both novels that humans, whether extinct or ill, with through pain for a reason. And that is to ensure extensions via technology and other living organisms. And I really do encourage further study of animal flourishing human technological spaces to think of animals apart from a strictly scientific lens. Wait, what might occur? For example, if we think of animals as sympathetic to our suffering. In this way, I would argue we are following heroin suggestion to quote, require a multi-species, multi expertise way of doing thinking worlds and ways of life that require muting the command communication, control, intelligence in idiom of cyborgs. Thank you very much for listening and have a wonderful day.