PETS AND PEOPLE

The Ethics of Our Relationships with Companion Animals

Edited by CHRISTINE OVERALL

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To the memory of
Jean Harvey

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PREFACE

I originally became involved in this book because of the cats in my life.

In October 2013 my friend and colleague Dr. Jean Harvey, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, contacted me to ask what she admitted might be a bizarre, out-of-the-blue question: "Do you have companion animals?" She added, "Nothing to do with trying to get anyone to adopt rescues, so don't worry about that."

I wrote back to tell her that my life-partner, Ted, and I had lived with many wonderful cats. After our Ozzie died (of acute kidney disease) in early 2011 at age sixteen, Ted and I were devastated. We waited until the summer of 2012 to adopt our current family member, Nekko (Japanese for "cat"), a grey tabby. But why was she asking?

Jean wrote again to tell me about an innovative project she was starting: a philosophical anthology on ethics and companion animals. The features of the anthology were, first, that it would focus on ethical issues relating to companion animals, primarily cats and dogs; second, that the chapters would be accessible not only to philosophers but also to people from other disciplines and to interested and educated people outside academia; and third, that each contributor would provide a distinct perspective on human relationships with companion animals. In particular, Jean wanted to encourage some potential contributors who had not previously written about animal ethics to think about how their published work on human-to-human ethics might apply to the ethics of human relationships with companion animals.

In my case, she suggested that I consider whether and to what extent some of my ideas in an earlier book, *Aging, Death, and Human Longevity: A Philosophical Inquiry* (2003), might apply to cats and dogs. I had not previously written much about animal ethics, but I was intrigued by Jean's suggestion and readily accepted her invitation to contribute. (The result is my chapter in this book, "Throw out the Dog? Death, Longevity, and Companion Animals.") I was happy to be included in what promised to be a groundbreaking collection.

But just over a month later Jean wrote again to say she had been hospitalized. In the course of treatment for appendicitis, it had been discovered that she had acute leukemia. As a result, she said, her schedule for the book (originally planned to be finished in 2014) would now be delayed. But, despite starting chemotherapy, she emphasized her commitment to completing the anthology.

Unfortunately, by February 2014, she was too ill to continue working on it. Her doctors had concluded that no further treatment was possible or likely to be effective, and she returned home from the hospital to spend time with the cats she called her "furry family." Jean was realistic about her own medical prospects. In an email message to me on February 3, 2014, she wrote,

> I now realize I will not be able to bring [the anthology] to completion, I wondered if there were another way to see it through. . . . I wondered if you would be willing to edit the collection? . . . I realize this is a bit of a cheek, asking about this, but I'm so passionate about the collection being published. In case you have any interest at all, I have attached the 'basic' information from each of the six committed contributors [they included her and me]. I'm so sorry this is so quick and business-like. Just really tired and rather anxious to see the email on its way. Every one of the pieces so far planned for is excellent, both in its focus (and therefore in the 'variety' in the collection) and in the qualities of the author.

I was deeply saddened by the revelation of the seriousness of Jean's illness. Although I could not yet accept that her illness was terminal, I agreed to help with the book. My thought was to work with her until she was sufficiently recovered to take it on again. My reasons for doing so were my respect for Jean's philosophical work and my belief in the value, importance, and timeliness of the book's theme.

Jean was delighted and relieved when I accepted her invitation, although she must surely have known that my main qualification as editor was not academic but personal: a simple determination to see the project through to its completion. Over the next months she and I discussed in more detail, via phone and email, the book's focus and goals. Jean also told me she had been warned that she had only about two more months of life. During that time she was working to finish her second single-author book, *Civilized Oppression and Moral Relations: Victims, Fallibility, and the Moral Community*,[1] which was edited by her colleague and friend Antonio Calcagno (who is also a contributor to this anthology) and subsequently published in 2015. Despite her own truly dire situation, Jean continued to be upbeat, appreciative, encouraging, and supportive of my work on the anthology.

Jean Harvey died on Sunday, April 20, 2014. Hers was a life well lived. I hope that *Pets and People: The Ethics of Our Relationships with Companion Animals* reflects her intentions, hopes, and scholarly values.

Note

1. This book is a follow-up to and development of her first, *Civilized Oppression* (1999).

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book was inspired and initiated by Jean Harvey, whose now-classic paper, “Companion and Assistance Animals: Benefits, Welfare Safeguards, and Relationships,” was one of the earliest philosophical discussions of ethics and companion animals. Her paper is included here and is the only chapter that has been previously published. I am deeply grateful to Jean for starting this project, and to the *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* (22 [2], 2008: 161–76) for permission to reprint her paper.

I also thank all the contributors, whose enthusiasm, insight, and cooperation made creating this anthology such a pleasure. Special thanks to the original group of contributors who were with the book from the beginning: Maurice Hamington, Kathryn Norlock, Bernard Rollin, and Cynthia Townley.

I’m grateful to editor Peter Ohlin for believing in the value of the book. Thank you to Emily Sacharin and Andrew Ward, the editorial assistants who worked with me on this project, to Henry Southgate for his careful and professional work as copy editor, and to Shalini Balakrishnan, the project manager.

Many people supported my work on *Pets and People*. Thank you to my friends Tabitha Bernard, Kathy Silver, Ruth Dubin, Tom Russell, Carol Kavanagh, Stephen Leighton, Carlos Prado, Tam Mito, and Ahmed Kayssi for their kindness. My writers’ group, “Writers Like Us”—Mary Cameron, Carla Douglas, Tara Kainer, and Kim Renders—has sustained and encouraged my writing, both academic and non-academic, over the past three years. I am especially grateful to Kim for the many opportunities she has given me to perform my words.

My friends from high school, Evan Alcock, Dave Beavan, Gisela Braune, and Nancy Chapple, connect me to our past and model hope for our future. My wonderful former students, especially Nikoo Najand, Christine Vidt, and Kassy Wayne, remind me of the value of philosophy and the importance of embedding it in our lives. Daily exercise at Kingston’s Apex Indoor Cycling lowers both my blood pressure and my stress. Special thanks to Jeff Farmer and all the instructors for their encouragement.

My mother, Dorothy Overall, was my first model for living supportively with cat companions. She has always believed in me and my work. My life-partner Ted Worth lovingly plies me with excellent food and endures my scholarly ups and downs with grace and compassion. Our children, Devon Worth and Narnia Worth, and their spouses Julie Mayrand and Michael Ashton, connect me to warm family life outside work, and our grandchildren, Ewan, Nathan, Torin, and Darren, repeatedly reawaken my sense of wonder and joy.

Most of all, I acknowledge and thank the cats who have been and remain an irreplaceable part of my family and my life: Tiger, Nudnik, Ozzie, Nemo, and Nekko.

CONTRIBUTORS

David Benatar, Professor of Philosophy, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Antonio Calcagno, Professor of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy, King's University College, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada

Michael Cholbi, Professor of Philosophy, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, California, USA

Jessica du Toit, Teaching Assistant, Philosophy Department, University of Cape Town, South Africa; Former Fellow, Department of Bioethics, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, USA

Maurice Hamington, Executive Director of University Studies and Professor of Philosophy, Portland State University, Portland, Oregon, USA

Jean Harvey, Professor of Philosophy, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada (deceased)

Josh Milburn, Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Philosophy, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Tony Milligan, Teaching Fellow in Ethics and the Philosophy of Religion, Department of Theology & Religious Studies, King's College London, UK

Kathryn J. Norlock, Associate Professor and Kenneth Mark Drain Chair in Ethics, Department of Philosophy, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada

Christine Overall, Professor Emerita of Philosophy and University Research Chair, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Jennifer Parks, Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Undergraduate Bioethics Minor Program, Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois, USA

Bernard E. Rollin, University Distinguished Professor, Professor of Philosophy, Professor of Animal Sciences, Professor of Biomedical Sciences, University Bioethicist, Department of Philosophy, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado, USA

John Rossi, Assistant Professor and Co-Director, Program in Public Health Ethics & History, Department of Community Health and Prevention, Drexel University School of Public Health, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Tina Rulli, Assistant Professor, Philosophy Department, University of California, Davis, California, USA

Chloë Taylor, Associate Professor, Department of Women's and Gender Studies and Department of Philosophy, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Cynthia Townley, Research Associate, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

Gary Varner, Professor, Department of Philosophy, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, USA

Katherine Wayne, Instructor, Department of Philosophy, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Zipporah Weisberg, Research Associate, Animals in Philosophy, Politics, Law, and Ethics (APPLE), Department of Philosophy, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

INTRODUCTION

Christine Overall

Fueled in part by a mounting awareness of the mistreatment, exploitation, and misappropriation of animals as sources of food, clothing, entertainment, work, and research material, animal ethics is generating growing interest both within academia and outside it. This book focuses on ethical issues connected to a group of animals who play an extremely important role in human lives: companion animals. Companion animals are both vulnerable to and dependent upon us. What responsibilities do we owe to them, especially since we have the power and authority to make literal life-and-death decisions about them? What kinds of relationships should we have with our companion animals? What might we learn from them about the nature and limits of our own morality? How should we (re)create our lives with them?

There are many commonplace assumptions about companion animals. For example, most people probably hold at least some of the following beliefs: that those who do not choose to live with pets have no moral responsibilities to them; that there is nothing wrong with pedigree-breeding or merely permitting animals to reproduce; that it is important to feed meat to our animals; that using canines as guide dogs or service dogs is morally unproblematic; that sex with animals is nothing but a bizarre perversion unrelated to ordinary human sexual behavior; and that in a lifeboat situation of extreme scarcity, it makes complete sense to sacrifice a dog rather than a human being. *Pets and People: The Ethics of Our Relationships with Companion Animals* challenges all of these assumptions, and many more.

This book is comprised of the work of philosophers from Canada, the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, and South Africa. Some chapters are by senior well-known philosophers and some are by more junior philosophers who are helping to develop the field of animal ethics. The contributors write from a

variety of philosophical perspectives, including utilitarianism, care ethics, feminist ethics, phenomenology, and the genealogy of ideas.

Pets and People is divided into two parts. The first examines the nature of our relationships to companion animals, the foundations of our moral responsibilities to them, what our relationships with companion animals teach us, and whether animals themselves are ethical beings (chapters by Jean Harvey, Cynthia Townley, Antonio Calcagno, Maurice Hamington, Gary Varner, Kathryn Norlock, and Bernard Rollin).

The second part explores specific ethical issues related to crucial aspects of companion animals' lives. The topics include breeding, reproduction, sterilization, cloning, adoption, feeding, training, working, sexual interactions, longevity, dying, and euthanasia (chapters by John Rossi, Katherine Wayne, Jennifer Parks, Jessica du Toit and David Benatar, Tina Rulli, Josh Milburn, Tony Milligan, Zipporah Weisberg, Chloë Taylor, Christine Overall, and Michael Cholbi).

The best way to indicate the scope, goals, and content of this book is by means of a discussion of three significant words in its title: "pets," "relationships," and "companion animals."

"Pets"

"Pet" is probably the term employed by most people to refer to the animals who share their homes. I use that word in the book's title because it is both familiar and obvious. But although in common parlance we often refer to "people and their pets," I have chosen to place "pets" before "people" to indicate both the book's philosophical focus and the importance of the animals whom we call our pets.

What exactly is a pet? "Pet" can be a term of endearment, and in most cases its use reflects genuine love and attachment. Nonetheless, the word is not unproblematic, and some of the contributors to this anthology choose not to use it at all.

To start, we could define a pet, perhaps perversely, as an animal whom meat-eating human beings would, for moral reasons (and other things being equal, that is, absent extreme conditions of famine), regard as unthinkable to eat.[1] Indeed, there is often an outcry in North America when dogs, for example, are used as food in some Asian countries, yet from the vast majority of North Americans there is no similar outcry when pigs, cows, or chickens are eaten—even though some pigs, cows, and chickens are occasionally treated as pets. This difference in reactions raises questions about the nature of the distinction between pets and non-pets, and why many people eat other animals who happen not to be classified as pets.

Pets are, uniquely and virtually by definition, not *consumable* items *because we do not eat family members*,[2] the beings who share our homes and lives. Significantly, the many meanings of "pet" include "[a]n indulged, spoiled, or favourite, child"; "[a] person who is indulged, spoiled, or treated as a favourite, esp. in a way that others regard with disapproval," and "[a]n animal (typically one which is domestic or tame) kept for pleasure or companionship." A pet is also "[a] sweet, obedient, or obliging person."[3] Thus to call an animal a "pet" simultaneously expresses both fondness and condescension. It suggests a hierarchical relationship of a particularly insidious kind, in which the animal so labelled is both singled out for special favor and also expected to be submissive and obsequious.

Indeed, the label "pet" implies dependency; the pet is "kept," which means that she is maintained and supported at the whim of the person by whom she is kept. Consider one of the standard questions between individuals getting to know each other: "Do you keep any pets?" Pets are certainly loved—the adjectival version of "pet" is defined as "[s]pecially cherished; for which one has a particular fondness or weakness; favourite; (also) particular"[4]—but the concept suggests they are maintained (and *retained*) at the favor of the persons to whom the "pets" belong. (Here the analogy that comes to mind is a "kept woman," whose food and shelter are supplied by someone who expects sexual services in return.)

To be kept implies being used by or being in the service of those who do the keeping. But under what circumstances, if any, is it justifiable to use companion animals for entertainment, work, therapy, comfort, commercial benefit, or even sex? In her chapter, "Companion and Assistance Animals: Benefits, Welfare Safeguards, and Relationships," Jean Harvey opens the book with a critique of the still-prevalent view that animals may be put to a variety of human uses, provided only that their welfare is protected.

Numerous kinds of animals are compelled to play the role of pets, including gerbils, hamsters, fish, birds, rabbits, lizards, turtles, skunks, pigs, and many others. Whether it is justified to "pet-ify" (to coin a term) all of these animals is questionable, since many of them are by nature not constituted to be the in-house companions of human beings, and so to force them to be pets is to mistreat them and likely cause them suffering, all in the interests of the personal gratification of human beings.

By contrast, contemporary dogs and cats have been created and modified through millennia of breeding practices to facilitate their lives with human beings. And indeed, except for those who are feral, most dogs and cats seem to *want* to live with us. They are also the two main types of nonhuman animals with whom human beings in the West choose to share their homes. For example, the Canadian Animal Health Institute reports that in 2014, Canadians

were living with at least 7 million cats and 6.4 million dogs (Canadian Animal Health Institute 2015). The Humane Society of the United States (2015) quotes statistics from the American Veterinary Medical Association indicating that in 2015, 79.7 million American households had a pet of some kind; these included 163.6 million dogs and cats.

For all these reasons, the particular emphasis of this book is on dogs and cats. Nonetheless, even for these animals, there are legitimate questions about the practice of "keeping" pets. One question is whether it is morally justifiable for human beings to continue breeding them, and/or to allow or facilitate their reproduction; perhaps cats and dogs should be encouraged to gradually die out by preventing them from procreating. For example, legal scholar Gary Francione famously claims, "[W]e should not continue to bring more animals into existence so that we may own them as pets" (Francione n.d.).

Questions about feline and canine procreation are dealt with in several chapters of this book. In "Our Whimsy, Their Welfare: On the Ethics of Pedigree-Breeding," John Rossi presents and supports the case specifically against pure-breeding companion animals. In "Does Preventing Reproduction Make for Bad Care?," Katherine Wayne argues that a commitment to our cats' and dogs' flourishing is consistent, under certain conditions, with taking steps to prevent them from reproducing. From a feminist care perspective, Jennifer Parks contends that commissioning a clone of one's beloved dog or cat, after his death, is not justified ("'Lassie, Come Home!': Ethical Concerns about Companion Animal Cloning"). But Jessica du Toit and David Benatar go further: in "Reproducing Companion Animals," they argue that there are three strong reasons not to create any more companion animals at all. And in her chapter, "For Dog's Sake, Adopt!," Tina Rulli defends the existence of a duty to adopt companion animals instead of creating them.

Whatever one's perspective on pet reproduction, one might also wonder whether the very practice of having pets can be morally justified. After all, keeping pets requires that the animals' behavior be restricted in certain ways, that some of their inherent inclinations be modified in order for them to fit in with human customs, and that their interests sometimes be subordinated to those of the people with whom they live.[5] Our relationships with cats and dogs thus also raise important questions about when and under what circumstances we are justified in setting limits to their independence. In this volume, several chapters respond to these questions. In "A Two-Level Utilitarian Analysis of Relationships with Pets," Gary Varner makes a general case on consequentialist grounds for keeping pets. In "The Animal Lovers' Paradox? On the Ethics of 'Pet Food,'" Josh Milburn explains and offers a resolution to the moral paradox of feeding animal companions with

the flesh of non-companions. Ideas about animal discipline are explored in "The Ethics of Animal Training" by Tony Milligan, who provides a genealogy of theories about the scope and justification of molding animals to meet human needs and desires. Two additional chapters also investigate the harms that particular forms of training can potentially generate. Zipporah Weisberg's chapter, "Animal Assisted Intervention and Citizenship Theory," discusses the recruitment of animals into therapeutic work with human beings, describing both the potential harms of such practices and how they can be avoided. Chloë Taylor's chapter, " 'Sex without All the Politics'? Sexual Ethics and Human-Canine Relations," offers a feminist critique of the use of domesticated animals, especially dogs, for human sexual pleasure.

"Relationships"

Another crucial term in the title of this book is "relationships." There can be many kinds of relationships—ranging from exploitive, domineering, uncaring, and unjust, to supportive, loving, sensitive, and fulfilling. Like human-human relationships, animal-human relationships are complicated, and they can exemplify contradictory characteristics. Nonetheless, it seems safe to say that all human relationships with companion animals are unequal, and that fact must be taken into account. Although it may sometimes feel as if our cats and dogs have power over us, either because we love them so much or because their behavior is sometimes counter to our own desires and goals, we have almost complete power over the animals who live with us.

In her chapter, Jean Harvey argues that "the primary moral obligation we have with respect to companion animals is to develop, nurture, respect, and protect this relationship." Indeed, all of the contributors to this book seek to contribute to the extension of morally good relationships between human and nonhuman beings: relationships that adequately take into account the animals' own interests, needs, desires, and vulnerabilities, that are cognizant of the built-in inequality of human and animal, and that support the flourishing of both the animal and the human being.

At the same time, many of the contributors also explore what we, as human beings, can learn from our relationships with our companion animals. In "Building a Meaningful Social World between Human and Companion Animals through Empathy," Antonio Calcagno draws upon the concept of empathy to explain how we create our relationships with companion animals. Maurice Hamington ("Care, Moral Progress, and Companion Animals") argues that these relationships help us to develop our ability to be more caring moral individuals, and

thereby contribute to the habits and skills needed for genuine moral progress. In "Ethical Behavior in Animals," Bernard Rollin shows how animal companions themselves model and demonstrate ethical behavior.

On the other hand, Kathryn Norlock, in " 'I Don't Want the Responsibility': The Moral Implications of Avoiding Dependency Relations with Companion Animals," interrogates the moral implications of deliberately choosing *not* to live with companion animals. She urges people who do not live with companion animals to recognize what she suggests are their moral obligations to provide monetary, material, and sociopolitical forms of support to those who are caregivers of companion animals.

Two chapters focus on the endpoint of the human-companion animal relationship. My own contribution to the book, "Throw Out the Dog? Death, Longevity, and Companion Animals," argues that longevity for companion animals, as for human beings, is important: barring great suffering, a longer life is a better life, and we should not be insouciant about sacrificing animal lives for human lives. And in "The Euthanasia of Companion Animals," Michael Cholbi offers an account of when and why companion animals ought to be euthanized, and who is entitled to make the decision to end their lives.

"Companion Animals"

The third term in the title that warrants special discussion is "companion animals." It is widely used because it seems to be a respectful alternative to "pets" and does not carry the hierarchical connotations of that word. In his chapter, Gary Varner stipulates that a companion animal is a pet who has "significant social interaction with its owner and would voluntarily choose to stay with the owner, in part for the sake of the companionship," a definition that incorporates a recognition of the agency of companion animals. Still, one might have doubts about the appropriateness of the term "companion animal." In human interactions, a companion is usually someone who has chosen to be with us, but dogs and cats in fact have little real choice about the human beings whose lives they share. Perhaps "companion animal" misleadingly implies a kind of equality between human being and animal that does not exist.

Katherine Wayne suggests a different criticism of the term "companion animal." Her main concern is that it is "at best, misleading and painfully naïve to call animals of those kinds who are abandoned, neglected, or otherwise mistreated 'companion animals,' given that they have been denied companionship" (personal communication, January 22, 2016). Her point is that while animals such as dogs and cats are seen as archetypal companion animals, thousands of dogs and cats never acquire that status in any literal sense: they live as feral animals, or they

die, unwanted, in shelters or on the street. To call all dogs and cats "companion animals," then, is to discount the reality of what many cats and dogs experience.

I believe Katherine Wayne is correct. "Companion animals" should not be applied to all cats and dogs, but only to those fortunate enough to live their lives as part of a human household. The reality of the lives of feral cats and dogs, and of those who are not adopted or are abandoned, must be recognized for what it is: these animals are not companions, not through any fault of their own but because human beings have failed to act on their own moral responsibilities. Hence the importance of companion animal adoption, as Tina Rulli argues, and of acknowledging responsibilities to dogs and cats even if we do not live with them, as Kathryn Norlock maintains.

In this book, the term "companion animals" is employed because it reflects the nature of the relationships between human and animal beings that many people—including the contributors to this volume—value and are seeking to promote. The idea that a dog or cat is a *companion* suggests the depth, value, and emotionality of the relationship. Indeed, as Cynthia Townley argues in her chapter, "Friendship with Companion Animals," the relationship can be legitimately interpreted as friendship.[6]

Yet as companions or friends, our relationship with a dog or a cat is unique. Dogs and cats live with us in our households. They are not companions whom we see only intermittently, friends from whom we part at the end of the day. Instead they are companions who go home with us, or who greet us when we come home. For that reason, many people think of their dogs and cats as not just companions but members of their family. Since they are not biologically related to us, these animals are like the relatives we acquire through marriage or marriage-like relationships (parents-in-law, siblings-in-law, stepchildren), or through the process of adoption. Indeed, we use the term "adoption" to describe the process by which many dogs and cats enter our lives.

Of course, not all human companions acquire their animal companions through adoption; sometimes a stray cat simply shows up in the backyard, is left on our doorstep, or is spotted by the roadside. But often we go through a formal process of picking out the animal, choosing it over other cats and dogs who are available. Some shelters and breeders also evaluate the potential human adopter for suitability.

In these respects, the creation of a relationship between human and animal companions is similar to the creation of a relationship between an adult and an adopted child. And indeed, some people analogize their dogs and cats to human children. This analogy is, perhaps, a good thing in that it may involve recognizing the individuality, needs, and interests of cats and dogs. But the child metaphor is also problematic, for three reasons. First, most human children eventually

become the equals of their parents; they develop into fully functional adults and establish independent lives of their own. But our animal companions almost always live with us and depend on us in crucial ways for all their lives. Second, although human beings do feed and discipline their children, many of the choices we make for our companion animals—related to their reproduction, their work, and their death—are not usually choices we make or legitimately should make for our human children.

Third, as Tony Milligan points out in his chapter on training, the child metaphor fails to capture the fact that our companion cats and dogs do grow up to be adults of their species; they do not remain babies or children. So the parental metaphor is inapt given that dogs and cats outgrow puppy- and kitten-hood. Infantilizing an adult of any species fails to acknowledge the intrinsic value of the adult and its capacity for self-determination. Regarding one's feline or canine companion as one's child may be a manifestation of a kind of paternalism that is inconsistent with respect for the reality of the animal's existence. For these reasons, it seems preferable to regard the cats and dogs who share our lives as companions, rather than as children.

As I hope this discussion has shown, living with cats and dogs raises many complex and difficult moral issues. The contributors to *Pets and People: The Ethics of Our Relationships with Companion Animals* offer insightful perspectives on responsible decision-making for our companion animals. By encouraging careful thought about pets, these perspectives will help to make our relationships with dogs and cats both more just and more fulfilling for all concerned.

Notes

1. Of course, meat-eaters might also refrain from eating certain animals because of the animals' taste or ostensible lack of nutrition, or for reasons pertaining to the meat-eaters' religious or nationalistic commitments, or even out of fear of legal repercussions (if, e.g., consumption of an animal were outlawed by the state).
2. However, as I shall suggest later, the use of family metaphors for animals can also be problematic.
3. The word "pet" originally denoted "a hand-reared lamb" in Scotland and northern England, where it also meant "a spoilt or favourite child." The word came from Scottish Gaelic "peata," meaning "tame animal." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "pet," accessed August 3, 2016, http://www.oed.com.proxy.queensu.ca/view/Entry/141778?rskey=F11mER&result=5&isAdvanced=false#eid.
4. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "pet," accessed August 3, 2016, http://www.oed.com.proxy.queensu.ca/view/Entry/141778?rskey=F11mER&result=5&isAdvanced=false#eid.

5. Thus, some people speak of "house-breaking" their pets. Although it is obvious that animals who share homes with human beings must follow certain rules, just as the humans themselves do, the term "house-broken" suggests that the animal cannot simply be itself but must be reconstructed for the human being(s) with whom it lives.
6. In his chapter, Bernard Rollin gives several examples of genuine friendships between animals.

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THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN/ COMPANION ANIMAL RELATIONSHIP AND ITS ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS

1 COMPANION AND ASSISTANCE ANIMALS

BENEFITS, WELFARE SAFEGUARDS, AND RELATIONSHIPS

Jean Harvey

This chapter has to do with our moral responsibilities toward companion animals, although because of space and my own background, I focus on dogs and cats in Western societies.[1] My main goal is to assess one approach to the ethics of companion animals (which I call the "utilization with welfare safeguards" model) that emerges from the dominant historical tradition, and to point to an alternative account. Given space restrictions, I have separated out work on other recent positions[2] and selected for examination a view that is familiar in everyday thinking and the most prominent in institutional thinking (in scientific and medical research, and veterinary training, for example). Given the work that this appraisal involves, a full development of arguments in favor of the alternative position (which I believe is far more morally sound) would be the subject of another paper. I do, however, explain how it differs from the "utilization with welfare safeguards" model and how some of the moral dangers of that approach are avoided.

The Historical Legacy

Speaking of moral obligations owed directly to animals goes against the dominant tradition in Western thought, which traces from Aristotle through Aquinas to Descartes and Kant. It emphasizes the value of "self-controlled," rational subjects, who are thereby deemed to have intrinsic value and also moral standing: they are beings to whom obligations can be owed. It is held that animals lack reason and so also intrinsic worth and moral standing: we have no direct moral obligations toward them. Their value is merely instrumental, and their role in the natural order of

things is to be of use to humans. Moral constraints on our treatment of them arise only because some obligations to human beings are involved.

This is greatly simplified, but so too is its non-academic, social legacy. Signs of this derivative conception of their moral status are easily found. We have discovered a correlation between cruelty to animals and later violence toward people, but when people call for tougher laws against animal cruelty on this basis alone, animal suffering has no inherent significance. It matters solely as an indicator of human suffering to come. For example, when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, many people refused to vacate their homes when ordered to leave their companion animals behind. A US law now requires that provisions be made for the evacuation of both people and their animal companions (if emergency funding from the federal government is to be received), but the rationale given is that human compliance depends on it.[3]

The sense of entitlement in using animals for human benefit is immense and still largely unshaken. There is a growing awareness of the suffering involved in some uses of animals (although deeply resisted in medicine, science, and sport), but we can see the historical legacy in what I call the "default position." Most people do not question our general entitlement to make use of animals and offer no justification for it. Any concern raised has to do with some specific use.[4] Challenges to specific uses, though, whether because of the benefit's triviality or the animal's suffering, do not dislodge the conviction that, other things being equal, it is our prerogative to use animals for our benefit.

The "Utilization with Welfare Safeguards" Model

Given this settled conviction, welfare concerns can enter the scene as a proviso on this prerogative, what I call the "utilization with welfare safeguards" model. Such a proviso can come in weaker and stronger forms.

In his book *Rain without Thunder*, Gary Francione refers to "welfarists" whose main goal is "to ensure that animals, who are regarded as property under the law, are treated 'humanely' and not subjected to 'unnecessary' suffering" while still being used (1996, 2). He insightfully explains the disastrous moral implications of this approach (and why so many so-called animal rights activists have taken this same welfarist approach, at least for the foreseeable future).

This is a fairly weak form of the welfare clause, since accessing the various uses the animals serve takes precedence over eliminating welfare violations, although the violations are to be minimized. In this chapter, though, I will consider what seems to be a stronger and morally safer proviso, where animals can be used only if their full welfare (or, at least, as much as is within human reach) is sustained. It goes beyond reducing welfare infringement to the minimum needed in order to

use the animal. Our longstanding practice of using animals continues, but now it must be morally combined with ensuring their welfare.

Selecting this approach for comment may seem odd when thinking of companion animals, but the model is more relevant than it first appears. I will consider "companion animals" in a broad sense, where the basic requirement is that the dog or cat lives with humans in a "home setting" at least most of the time.[5]

"Utilizing animals (with safeguards)" is a self-interested project; humans expect to gain from it. To phrase it more gently, there are benefits involved, but when we move from the language of "using" to that of "benefits," the heavily empirical disciplines (including medicine) contain plenty of material on "the benefits of having pets." When we add in a pervasive assumption in the same literature that these benefits are why we have "pets," we then have the self-interested motive that completes the package: we have the "utilization with safeguards" model applied to companion animals, but in the gentler form of "seeking benefits while ensuring welfare." In one fairly representative empirical study of pets, Sheila Bonas, June McNicholas, and Glyn M. Collis write,

> This high level of pet ownership [about 50%] persists despite many potential costs. In addition to the financial costs of food, veterinary care and other pet products, disadvantages of pet ownership can include: time spent caring for the pet; restrictions on lifestyle; daily hassles resulting from caring for and cleaning up after pets; worry due to destructive or anti-social behaviour of pets; emotional distress, e.g., on the death of a pet; and risks such as bites, allergic reactions and other zoo-noses. . . . Given this long list of potential costs, and that relatively few pets are working animals 'earning their keep' in a practical way, owners presumably perceive substantial benefits from pets to persuade so many to keep them. (Bonas, McNicholas, and Collis 2000, 209)

Since, it is claimed, having a pet must be in the human's interest, the benefits must outweigh the costs. What are these benefits?

> Pets may have functional roles . . . such as impression management (e.g. dogs as fashion accessories, or acquisition of a fierce dog to fit a macho image), or avocation (the pet as a diversion or hobby, e.g. those kept for breeding or competing in shows). However, most accounts of positive aspects of pet ownership focus on pet ownership as a social relationship with advantages arising from relationship-based concepts such as support and attachment . . . and protection against loneliness. (Bonas, McNicholas, and Collis 2000, 209)

Another empirical study emphasizes, in its list of benefits, promoting calmness, relaxation, and social interaction, but "above all, a pet provides an outlet for nurturant and care-giving behaviour. Through its various gestures of attachment, affiliation, and dependence, it provides its owner with a powerful sense of being valued and needed" (Council for Science and Society 1988, 37). In the report as a whole, the underlying framework is clearly the "utilization with safeguards" model. For example, the report's authors observe, "It is one of the moral assumptions of our society (and of many others) that a duty exists to protect the interests of animals, thereby setting limits on what may be done to them in order to satisfy human needs and desires" (Council for Science and Society 1988, 64). "It is evident from this study that the keeping of companion animals . . . satisfies human interests; it is not ordinarily contrary to the social or public interest and, in the absence of abuse, is not in itself contrary to animal interests" (Council for Science and Society 1988, 69).

Other examples in the social science literature are readily found. The "utilization with safeguards" model, then, can be captured in the gentler language of "seeking benefits while ensuring welfare," and it can be exemplified in various practical forms, depending on what the "use" (or "benefit") involves. There are, of course, many benefits to be gained by humans when this model is applied to companion animals in the broad sense specified earlier. The welfare of the dogs and cats is apparently ensured as well. However, the comments below point to a less rosy view of the model.

Dangerous Motives

"Utilization" is goal-oriented, and what is used in the process may, rightly or wrongly, be seen by the agent as merely instrumentally valuable. Adding in a self-interested motive is straightforward in the case of an individual: the person uses something or someone as a tool to achieve some personal advantage. Talking about motives takes more care when speaking about groups, particularly when members of one group utilize members of another group for their advantage.

If belonging to a certain group is an important part of who I am, I feel a kinship with others in that group and typically want them to thrive. When my self-conception as a group member is strong, threats or harms to other members feel deeply personal. Similarly, I can be especially delighted when others in the group receive some improvement in their situation. This role of group membership in one's self-conception can appear in various actions, responses to events, and ways of talking without being explicit in the person's mind. Even with no change in my own life, "we" have made headway if some in the group have received substantial