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Edited by Francine L. Dolins
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Part I

Attitudes to animals

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A look back in the mirror: perspectives on animals and ethics

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A bundle of grey and gold hair, three *Eulemur fulvus rufus*, the red-fronted brown lemur, were huddled on an angled branch at least 50 feet above where I sat. Most lemur species are highly endangered; I watched these *fulvus*, recognizing that their fate relied not on their survival by finding food and shelter when necessary, but on the fate of a conservation project whose success precariously balances between various interconnected programmes of education, health, research, eco-tourism, and foreign investment. This delicate balancing act attempts to keep itself upright amidst an onslaught of human needs, desires, and at times, greed.

Lemurs are endemic only in Madagascar. This makes it a special place for those who are concerned about the conservation and welfare of wild species of non-human primates. Yet, for those humans who inhabit this land where the forest is their primary resource for survival, their needs come into direct conflict with the lemurs, a westernized version of a valued 'flagship' species. The Malagasy who live in rural areas depend almost entirely on the land, what they can grow and what they can extract from it. In the cities, the people are dependent on those who have grown and extracted from the land. Their immediate survival needs depend on land and forest clearance, and are not always in parallel with those of the many species of lemurs. The lemurs' state of conservation, however, may be of little consequence when human poverty and sickness are more than apparent. This example, when the needs of human animals come into conflict with those of non-human animals, is just one type of relationship in which humans have come to find themselves; just one side of a multi-faceted issue reflecting the many possibilities of human relationships to non-human animals. There are many other ways that humans relate to animals, such as by keeping them as pets, subjects in experiments, objects of study or reverence, the basis for subsistence, or financial gain.

In a recently published book, *The Frankenstein Syndrome: Ethical and Social Issues in the Genetic Engineering of Animals*, the well-known ethical philosopher, Bernard Rollin (1995), made the important point that most people consider ethical issues to be ‘dilemmas’. A dilemma, according to Rollin is ‘a situation or question where there are two and only two choices or answers, both of which lead to unsatisfactory conclusions’ (1995, p. 9). Luckily, most ethical issues are not dilemmas, but are matters of choice (Rollin, 1995). An important point made by Rollin (1995) is that, in dealing with most ethical issues, we are in the process of choosing from a selection of many possible choices. Moreover, any choice made, whether informed or not, will have impact. The purpose of this book, *Attitudes to Animals*, is to inform in order to provide a foundation from which to judge in making ethical choices regarding animals. Most importantly, this book should prompt the reader to question their current views, attitudes, and perspectives from which their long-held beliefs may have been derived.

The two threads of this narrative so far can be understood as the intertwined fates of animals and humans as a consequence of ethical choices. Underlying these choices is the nature of the human–animal relationship and how (understood only from the humans’ point of view), this relationship developed. Human perspectives on the human–animal relationship reflect what has been learned, both spoken as well as unspoken attitudes and assumptions, from our families, society, media, education, and in our type of employment. For instance, in James Serpell’s chapter, ‘Sheep in wolves’ clothing? Attitudes to animals among farmers and scientists’, he discusses how agricultural workers employ distancing mechanisms in relationship to the animals they tend from birth until slaughter, as an answer to their ethical choice. Likewise, Serpell illustrates how scientists and technicians working with animals in laboratories typically use similar psychological devices, also compensating for the sacrifice of ‘the many’ by keeping a few animals as ‘mascots’. This portrays the difficult emotional states of animal ‘exploiters’ in relation to the animals they tend, as well as their response to public criticism and pressure.

As a primatologist, I am often asked why I study primate behaviour and how the information I learn is useful for improving the lives of humans. Underlying these questions are certain implicit assumptions. The first is that non-human primates are not worthy of consideration in their own right; and the second assumption is that non-human animal life has no intrinsic value because the world was created for humans’ use. These assumptions maintain a human-centred perspective. The origins of these beliefs, however, are not necessarily pervasive across all peoples, but rather

arise from particular concepts present in particular cultures. In the chapter by Phyllis Passariello, 'Me and my totem: cross-cultural attitudes towards animals', perspectives on the human–animal relationship are examined through an anthropological looking glass. As examples of humans' perspectives towards animals and our shaping of this long relationship, Passariello discusses the domestication of animals and totemism. What characteristics have we idealized and shaped in generations of animals, and what characteristics of animals have we taken on, to wear or to hide behind, as disguises? As Passariello states, 'Attitudes, of course, do not fossilize', and so our study across cultures is a window on our personal and cultural evolution of attitudes towards animals: the tension between the cultural and the natural. It is, of course, the attitudes that we eschew that create the foundations for our choices.

Considering and even producing animals' existence merely for our own use suggests that we have taken on the role of 'creator', 'protector', or 'steward', tending and preserving nature for our own purposes. Control over animals is one consequence of our anthropocentric attitude toward animals. Humans have exerted their control over what was once wildlife, in zoos, sanctuaries, private menageries, and in laboratories for conservation, breeding, cloning, as well as for experimental purposes, respectively. Our goal has been, and is, to maintain this control in order to preserve endangered species. This is even true in the face of the likelihood that it was our control in the first place that has brought many species to the very edge of their existence. The problem that now faces us is how to keep endangered species from disappearing. The answer eludes us, as we can only but watch many species of animals and plants head toward extinction.

Do some humans have the right to maintain control over animals' lives in order to save them from other humans and/or from extinction? Charles Bergman's chapter 'In the absence of animals: power and impotence in our dealings with endangered animals' investigates this thorny issue of control over animal life, and where it may lead us and them. He examines the plight of the last wild California condors as an example. David Cooper's chapter 'Human sentiment and the future of wildlife' takes the argument of natural preservation from yet another perspective. Wildlife management exemplified our concern for animals' continuing presence on earth. Cooper discusses human concerns about the rights of animals to exist, highlighting the four reasons that dominate human concerns: the right of individual animals, the right of a species, the benefit to humans, and the benefit to the ecosystem. The chapter concludes that the final realistic (not idealistic) solution to the future of wildlife is to create and maintain

'relative' wildernesses which are inhabited by managed wild animals. The reader is called upon to view this solution not as second best, but as a pragmatic means which allows for human interactions with animals and for species survival. Under these circumstances Cooper considers this to be a limited interaction, although one which provides an enriching life experience. Mary Midgley's chapter 'Should we let them go?' takes yet another perspective on human control over animals. She discusses control in relation to the ethical problem of whether it is correct to keep animals in captivity at all, and if so, in what manner. Thus, taken together, these chapters provide various and at times contradictory views on the subject of human control over animal lives and destinies.

Some radical animal rights groups suggest that we should limit or cease our interaction with animals altogether, for animals' benefit. They question whether it is necessary for humans to interfere with animals at all in their daily lives. However, if we do limit these experiences, are we limiting our development as human beings as well? Patricia Hindley's chapter "'Minding animals": the role of animals in children's mental development' deals with the issues of human-animal interactions as it affects the development of a moral self. Correspondingly, Andrew Petto and Karla Russell, in their chapter entitled 'Humane education: the role of animal-based learning' explore the challenge of educating children humanely using concern for animals as the basis for ethical behaviour. They do not prescribe a set of rules but invite creative means by which to achieve a pathway to this goal. Petto and Russell define the aims in two ways. The first is to have the learning process provide the opportunity to understand the 'natural' and the 'cultural' animal. Secondly, they suggest modifying teaching methods with a view towards developing humane attitudes in children about the natural lives of animals, the effects of captivity, their role in the ecosystem, and resultant costs and benefits to both humans and animals. Similarly, David Dewhurst's chapter, 'Alternatives to using animals in education' is devoted to viable alternative methods for teaching biology to students while maintaining humane standards, ethical responsibility, and respect for animal life.

Through these chapters, I am reminded of a conversation in which a colleague bemoaned the fact that, once we begin the study of any system, we irrevocably alter that system. He explained that, once we impose measurements or observations even with careful regard, we cannot know with complete certainty the original state of that system. This, my colleague argued, was the irony of science: that we can never know what a system was like prior to our study of it (also see Mackenzie, 1997).

Similarly, our interactions with animals will invariably create changes in their lives, which may be for better or for worse. And, our study of animals will create changes in our human lives, which may ultimately prove to be an enriching process, or not, depending on our subjective perspectives and on the framework through which we perceive and define our experiences.

The scientific view of animals, from the influence of Behaviourism, is one of objectivism, ignoring the subjective qualities of animals altogether. However, this perspective often leads to animals being treated as ‘black boxes’, responding purely to environmental stimuli without reason or sentience. In this manner, the question of animal subjectivity affecting their actions and behaviour was not taken into account in scientific thought and methodology. Currently, scientific perspectives on animals are being re-examined. Henk Verhoog’s chapter, ‘Animals in scientific education and a reverence for life’ carries us through logical argument, detailing the basis of scientific inquiry of animals’ behaviour and the limitations of this methodology. In doing so, Verhoog makes suggestions for a paradigmatic shift in scientific inquiry. Similarly, Françoise Wemelsfelder in her chapter ‘The problem of animal subjectivity and its consequences for the scientific measurement of animal suffering’ describes a research model that uses animal subjectivity as a means to understand the motivation for animals’ behavioural actions. ‘Are animals aware of their own suffering?’ is a fundamental question in animal welfare, and Wemelsfelder together with Verhoog provide a theoretical framework and experimental basis for investigating the subjective states of animals. It is only through research of animals’ subjective states that this important question can be addressed.

The underlying subjective states of animals may also be investigated via other methods. Susan Healy and Martin Tovée present a chapter discussing the environmental effects on neurophysiology during development, ‘Environmental enrichment and impoverishment: neurophysiological effects’. Their discussion centres on experimental evidence from animals raised in impoverished (versus enriched) environments where interaction with the environment and stimulation were minimal or highly controlled. The result is that, not only is the animal’s ability to problem solve severely impaired, but its overall behavioural repertoire is significantly reduced. The behavioural deficits are reflected in developmental neurophysiological deficits as well. The authors point out that the major neurophysiological difference between an animal raised in an impoverished environment from that of an enriched environment is a significant decrease in cortical connections. Thus, the lack of variability in the behavioural repertoires of captive

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animals inhabiting impoverished environments can be correlated with, if not explained by, a lack of neuronal connections and density in important higher order processing areas of the brain. The benefit of this chapter in this book is to provide the reader with an understanding of the neurophysiological mechanism(s) directing behavioural variability. This chapter also provides empirical evidence of the long-term effects of impoverished environments on animals, not only behaviourally, but also neurophysiologically. It enables us to have a greater understanding of how to alter the environments to provide stimulation for captive animals. Incidentally, information gained through this chapter may aid in establishing additional means to measure and enhance the welfare of animals on a neurophysiological plane in correlation with their behavioural repertoires, as well as provide benefits to diminish effects of disease and trauma in humans and animals.

Descartes declared that animals did not possess the capacity to process rational thoughts or to experience pain (1956). An extension of the Cartesian ideology set the past criteria for distinguishing humans from other animals, based on four major differences. Humans alone were thought to have the ability to use tools and language, to possess self-awareness and consciousness, and to be able to anticipate and plan intentionally for future events. In contrast to Descartes, Darwin (1859) believed that there were biological, psychological as well as emotional continuities between humans and all other animals. Conceptually, this placed all animals, including humans, along the same plane of subjective existence.

Following Darwinian tradition, the research of Jane Goodall (van Lawick-Goodall, 1976) and others (e.g. McGrew, 1992) have provided strong evidence for chimpanzees' abilities to both use and create tools. Additionally, language use in apes has been studied extensively by numerous researchers (e.g. Savage-Rumbaugh *et al.*, 1986; Fouts, 1973; Patterson & Cohn, 1990). While the controversy still exists about whether apes generate novel sentences flexibly using syntactical structures (Terrace *et al.*, 1979; Miles, 1994), recent evidence from studies of captive, language-reared pygmy chimpanzees (*Pan paniscus*) has provided strong support for their use of complex communication, their ability to use semantics in sign-based languages, and to comprehend syntax in human speech (Rumbaugh, 1996). Studies of the cognitive aspects of non-human animal behaviour complement both the study of language abilities and these animals' capacity for self-awareness and/or consciousness (see Parker, Mitchell & Boccia, 1994). The two remaining frontiers are the areas of self-awareness and consciousness, including empathy, and anticipation

and intentionality. These are not wholly separate from each other: an animal that can anticipate a future can anticipate a future event where it is likely to be aware of its own suffering.

In Richard Byrne's chapter 'Primate cognition: evidence for the ethical treatment of primates' the themes discussed are non-human primate intelligence and capacity for anticipating future unpleasant events. Byrne provides evidence for classifying whether a non-human primate is sentient of its own future pain and thus worthy of 'welfare' considerations. This chapter should be read in relation to Françoise Wemelsfelder's ideas for comparison. Donald Broom's chapter 'Animal welfare: the concept of the issues' suggests that the welfare of an animal should be attended to in relation to its "needs, freedoms, happiness, coping, control, predictability, feelings, suffering, pain, anxiety, fear, boredom, stress and health". Broom provides a detailed conceptual and theoretical discussion of ways in which to assess the welfare of captive animals. On a related theme, in 'New perspectives on the design and management of captive animal environments', David Shepherdson's chapter is on the theoretical background and examples of environmental enrichment for captive animals in zoological parks. By modifying the environment in which captive animals live, their behavioural repertoire may be transformed from a paucity of stereotypical behaviours to a greater number of more natural types of behaviours that correspond to their wild counterparts.

It is obvious from the widely different backgrounds of the authors included in these chapters that opinions vary greatly amongst them. The authors of the chapters derive from interdisciplinary and varying backgrounds. Within these multiple viewpoints, the reader may choose lines of thought to follow on theoretical, conceptual and practical levels.

The section headed 'Animal awareness', a play on words, invites speculation on whether animals are self-aware, and our awareness of animals' behaviour and capacity for suffering. Robert Young's chapter 'The behavioural requirements of farm animals for psychological well-being and survival' addresses areas of concern in the welfare of captive animals, and in particular, agricultural animals. Given that the main purpose of farm animals is to provide financial benefit to their owner and food for people, the question of farm animal welfare is often only considered in relation to the monetary costs and/or economic effects. However, Young's chapter takes us beyond the financial concern of costs and benefits to the human owners and consumers, and deals with the underlying psychological states of these farm animals. Approved methods of animal husbandry for farm animals often deprive these animals of basic needs. The questions that

Young answers are whether farm animals have specific behavioural needs, what kind of suffering will be incurred if these needs are not met, and, what environmental modifications can be achieved to enhance these animals' behavioural repertoire? But, what if the behavioural needs of a captive animal are satisfied? Will the basic satisfaction of needs be enough to ensure an animal's 'happiness'? James King's chapter 'Personality and the happiness of the chimpanzee' deals with this question: where can we draw the line between when an animal has had its welfare addressed sufficiently so that we can claim that it exhibits 'psychological well-being', and when it is actually 'happy'? Also, are the two the same or can they be distinguished from each other? If we were to establish psychological well-being for humans, would we also be able to claim that they were happy? By taking a novel twist on the almost clichéd term 'psychological well-being', King evaluates previous research in this area and presents findings, illuminating the contexts and personalities that lead to chimpanzees' states of happiness.

The intentions of the following chapters, as the titles of this book and introduction suggest, is for the reader to take a look in the mirror once more, asking, what is it to be human, what to be animal, and what are the nature of the relationships therein? The text should provide the reader with the means to glance back to past assumptions, to analyse, test and challenge both new and old perspectives on these issues by following the diversity of its many authors' thoughts. Finally, the subject matter of this book should pose a challenge to the reader to make choices, ethical choices, about their own human stance in their relationship to non-human animals, and by expansion to other human animals.

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