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Introduction

> To me you are still nothing more than a little boy who is just like a hundred thousand other little boys. And I have no need of you. And you, on your part, have no need of me. To you, I am nothing more than a fox like a hundred thousand other foxes. But if you tame me, then we shall need each other. To me, you will be unique in all the world. To you, I shall be unique in all the world . . .
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> (*The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, 1945: 64).

Not so long ago, the idea of studying social relationships between humans and other animals would have been regarded as tantamount to heresy. In Europe, until the early modern period, animals were viewed as irrational beings placed on earth solely for the economic benefit of mankind, and most scholars would have insisted that affectionate relationships between people and animals were not only distasteful but depraved. Happily, those days are now gone. Attitudes to animals have changed, and, during the past three decades, the subject of relations between people and other animals has become a respectable area of research. The field of 'anthrozoology', as it is often called, now crosses a wide variety of academic disciplines, including anthropology, art and literature, education, ethology, history, psychology, sociology, philosophy, and human and veterinary medicine. In 1991, the International Society for Anthrozoology (ISAZ) was formed in Cambridge, England, its stated aim being to promote the study of all aspects of human–animal relationships by encouraging and publishing research, holding meetings, and disseminating information. To facilitate this process, there are now two academic journals dedicated to publishing original research in the field: *Anthrozoös* (published since 1987), and *Society & Animals* (published since 1993). In addition, ISAZ publishes a biennial Newsletter containing review articles and book reviews.

But why study relationships between people and animals in the first place? What purpose does it serve? The key to answering these questions lies in the unique ability of anthrozoology to create theoretical and conceptual bridges that not only link together widely separated disciplines but also span the gulf between the world of humans and the life of the rest of the planet. As the fox intimates in his speech to the little Prince, it is through the medium of social relationships that we find our true connection with others, irrespective of whether those others are human or non-human. Poised as we are on the brink of environmental catastrophe, the importance of establishing or reinforcing this sense of connection and identity with other lives can hardly be over-emphasized. In the past, medicine, psychology, sociology, anthropology and the humanities have all been guilty of studying humans in isolation, as if our species somehow evolved in the absence of interactions with anyone or anything except other humans. The existence of relationships with beings outside this strictly 'human' domain was either denied or dismissed as aberrant. And yet humans have been dependent on animals as sources of food, raw materials, companionship, and religious and artistic inspiration since the Palaeolithic Period, and animals have continued to mould the shape of human culture and psychology ever since. We are who we are as much because of our relationships with non-human animals as because of the human ones, and we do ourselves a great disservice – and probably great harm – by denying or ignoring this.

Anthrozoology is still a young science, and the primary goal of this book is to introduce readers to the richness of this emerging, interdisciplinary field by bringing together a collection of diverse and eclectic research papers and reviews representing the broad theme of human–pet interactions and relationships. While this compilation is designed to be illustrative rather than exhaustive, we hope that the breadth of topics covered, and the results achieved so far, will not only help stimulate discussion and debate, but also encourage the field to move ahead with new and ground-breaking research.

For convenience, the book has been divided into four parts. Part I addresses fundamental questions about the origins of the human–companion animal relationship, and highlights some of the cultural differences and similarities that exist in how these relationships are perceived. In Chapter 2, a novel interpretation of why Amazonian Indians tame animals and keep them as pets is presented. Chapter 3 explores the importance of pets in the lives of the ancient Greeks and Romans through an examination of pet epitaphs. Chapter 4 moves to the Middle Ages and examines the positive impact of aristocratic hunting on the nobility's

attitudes and attachments to dogs. In Chapter 5 the importance of insects in the lives of Japanese children is examined from both historical and contemporary perspectives. Chapter 6 looks at the reasons why many people impose human celebrations and festivals upon their pets. Finally, Chapter 7 looks at conceptions of animality in various cultures, and discusses the potential for pets to help people psychologically by reconnecting them with the natural world via the 'animal within'.

Part II deals with other aspects of our relationships with pets. Chapter 8 takes a critical look at the evidence for the potential health benefits that pet owners are thought to derive from their animals, including the possible mechanisms responsible. In Chapter 9 conceptual issues to do with human and pet personalities are discussed. In addition, literature is reviewed on whether human personality can influence pet personality and whether the personalities of pet owners are significantly different from those of non-owners. Chapter 10 considers the emotive question of whether or not love of pets is associated with love of people.

Part III focuses on the role of the pet in contemporary Western families. Chapter 11 asks whether people sometimes adopt or purchase pets because of a lack of one or more social provisions in their relationships with humans. Chapter 12 examines the role of the pet in family networks: are human–pet relationships similar to human–human relationships in terms of the social provisions they provide? And this theme is further explored in Chapter 13 in relation to pets and the elderly. All of these chapters use Weiss' theory of social provisions as their theoretical framework. The human–cat relationship forms the focus of Chapter 14, in which owner assessments of cat behaviour, together with independent observations of the interactions between owners and different breeds of cats, are reported.

Part IV examines some important welfare and ethical issues concerning our relations with companion animals. Chapter 15 reports on an understudied aspect of animal abuse: secondary victimization in pet owners; while Chapter 16 explores the ethical dilemmas that veterinarians face on a day-to-day basis when dealing with pets and their owners. Finally, Chapter 17 re-evaluates the topic of bestiality, and proposes a new definition of this ancient and long-tabooed practice.

The idea for this book was conceived at a conference organized by the first editor at Downing College, Cambridge, in 1996 for the International Society for Anthrozoology. Although the conference covered many kinds of animal–human relationships, the wealth of material addressing different facets of the human–pet relationship was particularly striking, and we decided that this would be an opportune

time to re-examine the field critically. Thanks are due to Pauline and David Appleby for their invaluable help with conference organization, and to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), Waltham, Pedigree Petfoods, Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) and the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) for providing funding for this meeting. This book contains chapters based on talks presented at the conference as well as some invited ones which we considered complementary to the book's overall theme.

All of these contributions were subjected to peer review prior to publication. We thank Alexa Albert, Ron Anderson, Warwick Anderson, Frank Ascione, Alan Beck, Marc Bekoff, Penny Bernstein, John Bradshaw, Juliet Clutton-Brock, Mary Ann Elston, Nienke Endenburg, Bruce Fogle, Lynette Hart, Hal Herzog, Adelma Hills, Robert Hubrecht, Tim Ingold, Elizabeth Lawrence, Richard Lobban, June McNicholas, Jill Nicholson, Harriet Ritvo, Irene Rochlitz, Andrew Rowan, Clinton Sanders, Boria Sax, Ken Shapiro, Aki Takumi and Cindy Wilson for their careful reviews and helpful, constructive comments on one or more manuscripts. We are grateful to the contributors to this book for their enthusiasm and quality of work. Thanks also to Tracey Sanderson at CUP for her support and patience.

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Part I
History and culture

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The social significance of pet-keeping among Amazonian Indians

INTRODUCTION

The passionate relationship native lowland South Americans maintain with a wide array of pets has long been a favourite topic of chroniclers and scholars, such as Im Thurn (1882) and Guppy (1958), to name but two. Yet, its social significance and contrasted stance with regard to hunting have until now attracted surprisingly little attention.

Most studies devoted to native hunting in the neotropics emphasize the importance of predation in the symbolic universe of Amazonian peoples. Yet, despite its valorization as a key metaphor for social life, hunting, as a unilateral appropriation of wildlife, seems to clash with the great emphasis Amazonian ideology generally places on reciprocity. Along with its positive aspects, hunting therefore also engenders a kind of conceptual discomfort. A number of institutions (linked to shamanism, hunting ethic and hunting rites, prohibitions and so forth) tend to reduce the logical consequences of this imbalance. But these might not fully suffice to give 'a good conscience' to the hunter and his society (Hugh-Jones, 1996; Erikson, 1997). This chapter suggests that Amerindians solve the problem with their household animals, which I propose to consider as the semantic counterpoint of prey animals.

Considering pets and prey animals as two complementary facets of human–animal relations in Amazonia allows one to understand hunting as more than a simple means of obtaining protein. It also offers an alternative to the widely accepted interpretation of Amazonian pet-keeping as a kind of proto-domestication. Before turning to hunting itself, let us briefly examine the connections between wildlife and household animals, and the place the latter occupy in Amerindian ideology.

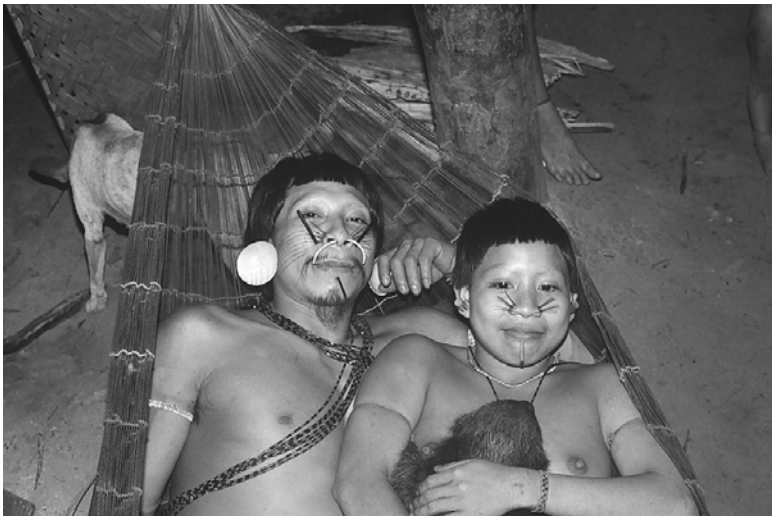

Fig. 2.1. Matis couple in a hammock with their pet sloth.

PETS AND PREY

Tamed and hunted animals usually belong to the same species. In most cases, prospective pets are brought back to the camp or village by the hunter who has just killed their mother. The little animal is then often given to the hunter's wife, who premasticates food for the fledglings, or breast-feeds the mammals. Men, women, prey, and household animals thus appear to be in a complementary distribution. But one could also consider that the relation between wildlife and pets has normative as well as factual groundings. For the Kalapalo (Basso, 1977: 102): 'birds, monkeys and turtles are the only wildlife kept as pets. Other animals are occasionally captured and briefly held in the village . . . but such animals are not referred to as *itologu* [pets], except in jest'. Interestingly enough, these animals, along with fish, happen to comprise the only flesh judged edible by the Kalapalo. Other animals are neither hunted nor 'tamed' in the Kalapalo sense of the term, being denied the status of *itologu*. Numerous other instances could be cited in which the favourite prey, however uncommon, also provides the favourite pet – e.g. sloth for the Matses (Fig. 2.1), capybara for the Txicão, coati for the Aché.

If there is indeed a continuity between those animals that are hunted and those that are tamed, they appear as mirror-images of each other rather than as analogues. In fact, the captive animal is so differentiated from its wild counterpart that it sometimes bears a name which is no longer that of its original species. Among the Wayãpi, the *yele* (*Touit pur-*

purata) and the *tapi'ilaanga* (*Piontes melanocephala*) parakeets, once tame, are respectively called *kala* and *paila paila*, the *kule* (*Amazona farinosa*) parrot becomes *palakut*, and the capuchin monkey *kai'i* (*Cebus apella*) becomes *maka* (Grenand, 1980).

According to Reichel-Dolmatoff (1978: 252), for the Desana: 'animals can be classified into *vai-mera bara*, edible animals, *vai-mera nyera*, bad, that is inedible animals, and *vai-mera ehora*, "fed animals" or "pets".' Given that the first two categories cover the entire spectrum of animal species, the simple existence of the third bears witness to its importance (and to the importance of the criteria of its definition). Once tamed, an animal changes status to the extent of nearly ceasing to belong to its original species.

Ethnography provides numerous cases in which pets appear as symmetrical to prey animals. Among the Maquiritare, for example, the feathers of birds killed for food are thrown away (in order to guarantee the reproduction of wildlife), while those belonging to tamed birds are carefully stored (Wilbert, 1972: 143). The Matis display little (if any) sensitivity when it comes to finishing off wounded prey animals, but very strictly prohibit even the slightest mistreatment of household animals, however boisterous their behaviour (Erikson, 1988). Furthermore, in dream symbolism, tamed animals often appear as being to women what wildlife is to men (Perrin, 1976: 146). Finally, that household animals and prey animals are complementary opposites, like the sexes with which they are associated, can be made explicit, as in the transmission of local rights among the Kaiapo: 'just as only men receive the *o mry* [rights to receive specific parts of certain animals in food distribution], only women receive the rights to raise certain animals (*o krit*) such as wild pigs, parrots, coati and ocelots' (Verswyver, 1983: 312).

It is therefore tempting to imagine that raising the young of animals killed in hunting is part of the logic of re-establishing a 'natural' balance, a way of cancelling (or at least compensating for) the destructive effects of hunting by their symbolic opposite. In taking care of young animals, and therefore keeping them alive, women would be playing the reverse of the destructive role of their male companions. Turning to the ideology of hunting, we may now seek the origin of this need to counterbalance its effects.

THE HUNTER'S PROBLEM

In Amazonian societies, one finds a widespread belief in the existence of 'masters of animals' (Rodrigues Barbosa, 1890; Zerries, 1954),

Fig. 2.2. Matis hunter carrying a pet spider monkey (*Ateles pamiscus*).

who seem to relate to wild species just as humans do with their household pets (Ahlbrinck, 1956: 123; Clastres, 1972: 39; Weiss, 1974: 256; Menget, 1988: 68; (Fig. 2.2)). Grenand (1982: 208) states that the Wayãpi consider that the real food of humans – i.e. meat – necessarily comes from the forest (i.e. the domain of spirits (*ayã*) who see animals as their *ima*, their 'domestic animals'). The consequence of this is clearly articulated in another text by Grenand (1980: 44): 'hunting is a risky business since a man most often kills an animal which does not belong to him, wherefore the perpetual fear of the spirits' retaliation'.

The idea that the relations between wildlife and spirits are of the same nature as those between humans and tamed animals is an important point, to which I will return. For the time being, let us simply point out that obtaining meat, apart from a strenuous chase, also implies a fearsome interaction with the 'masters of animals'. Since entering into competition with them is obviously out of the question, Amerindian hunters are left with three types of strategy to avoid the wrath of wronged spirits. They can pretend that they are eminently generous, they can negotiate with them, or they can contract an alliance with them. The following review of these strategies will show why none of them is totally satisfying.

ATTEMPTS AT RESOLUTION

Resolution through the 'gift'

The first option amounts to denying the problem by maintaining that humans benefit freely from the spirits' assistance. This is the solution, for example, which Dumont (1972: 20) points out in the case of the Panaré. Analysing the opposition between savannah and forest, he writes that if the former is 'the place where one neither gives nor receives' (since there is commerce with the Creoles), the latter 'is perceived as exactly the opposite since one helps oneself to it at will. The forest shelters the masters of plants and wild animals, and they are basically generous since they give to the Panaré even though the Panaré have nothing to offer in return, as long as they appropriate the "children of the forest" with moderation'.

The Matsiguenga seem to have adopted a similar viewpoint since, according to Renard Casevitz (pers. commun.), the Matsiguenga hunter never refuses prey sent (i.e. offered) to him by the spirits. He simply *has* to kill it. Nonetheless, this sounds more like a double bind (a paradoxical injunction) than a solution to the hunter's dilemma: whether or not you kill, you expose yourself to the spirits' wrath. Besides, in spite of their 'reassuring' talk, neither the Panaré nor the Matsiguenga are exempt from a certain fear of the spirits. In the evening, when a Panaré has not yet returned from the forest, 'there is a high degree of nervous tension within the group, whereas this attitude does not prevail at all if they know the hunter has stayed in the savannah' (Dumont, 1972: 19). The Matsiguenga too, even though they may have accepted the gift of the spirits, remain prudent, since the hunter should not bring back or even touch the game he has slaughtered: 'the convoy is always *innocent* of the death of the victims' (Renard-Casevitz, 1972: 245, my emphasis).

It is likely that the absence of a counter-gift is what produces the hunters' fear. If reciprocity had its rights, the spirits would have to eat humans (a theme which is amply covered in mythology); one would literally have to pay with one's own person (Siskind, 1973: 154 *et seq.*). It is to avoid such a dilemma that certain ethnic groups try to re-establish the balance through the influence of shamanism.

Resolution through negotiation

The most flagrant (and famous) example of this second solution is that of the Desana (Tucano). Their shamans gather with the master of the