

"THEY GAVE ME A REASON TO LIVE": THE PROTECTIVE EFFECTS OF COMPANION ANIMALS ON THE SUICIDALITY OF ABUSED WOMEN

Amy J. Fitzgerald
University of Windsor

ABSTRACT

Previous studies have documented the frequent coexistence of companion animal abuse and forms of family violence. The frequent coexistence of these forms of victimization is illustrative of the interconnectedness of forms of oppression and provides evidence in support of the claim that true social justice requires ending all forms of oppression—including the oppression of other animals. This paper moves beyond documenting the degree of coexistence between these forms of victimization and interrogating why they coexist—both goals of my initial study (Fitzgerald 2005)—to more fully examine the roles of "pets" in the lives of abused women. Using data from the larger project wherein 26 abused women were interviewed, this paper examines how "pets" can moderate the abuse experienced by the human victims of family violence. Illustrative of this moderating role played by "pets," some participants report they stayed with their abusive partner longer than they otherwise would have because their "pets" "kept them going" by providing them with the social support necessary to cope with the abuse. The importance of the social support provided by "pets" is further evidenced by the finding detailed herein that some participants cite their "pets" as the reason they did not end their own lives. It is argued that "pets" are uniquely situated to provide social support to some abused women and can even serve a protective function against suicidality. Therefore, in order to adequately address the needs of abused women, particularly related to suicidality, the important roles "pets" can play in their lives must be taken seriously and, ideally, fostered.

REFLEXIVE STATEMENT

My interest in the relationship between animal abuse and family violence (and in animal studies more generally) developed during my years volunteering at a no-kill cat shelter, The Jazzpurr Society for Animal Protection, as an undergraduate

and Master's student. I now serve on the Board of Directors of that organization. Additionally, in alignment with my continued interest in gendered violence and my appointment as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Windsor, I am a member of the Health Research Centre for the Study of Violence against Women at the University of Windsor, developed and operated by Dr. Charlene Senn. The Centre is comprised of researchers and trainees across the University who conduct research related to women's health and violence against women, and it operates in partnership with community members and organizations.

*Animals are such agreeable friends—they ask no questions,
they pass no criticisms. —George Eliot*

Few would argue with the statement that social inequalities based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality are interconnected or the claim that social justice cannot be accomplished without attending to all these forms of inequality. However, the statement that social justice cannot be accomplished without the dismantling of speciesism is sure to be met with skepticism. Nonetheless, the axis of oppression based on species membership—which is socially constructed in important ways and views humans as agential subjects on one hand and other animals as objects on the other—is problematic in its own right and is interconnected with the more commonly acknowledged forms of inequality. This interconnectedness has been theorized and documented by a growing group of scholars dedicated to examining and problematizing the human/other animal axis of inequality (for a sampling and overview of their work see Linda Kalof and Amy Fitzgerald 2007). Scholars working in this area have drawn specific theoretical connections between the marginalization of animal Others and various oppressed human groups including women (Adams 1991), slaves (Spiegel 1996), Jews (Patterson 2002), and those most vulnerable under capitalism (Nibert 2002).

Other scholars who have focused on the human/other animal axis of inequality have documented empirical connections between the victimization of groups of humans and other animals, with a notable contingent focusing on the relationship between animal abuse and family violence as an illustrative case. Research by these scholars has documented a high degree of coexistence between child abuse and animal abuse (DeViney, Dickert, and Lockwood 1983) and intimate partner violence and animal abuse (Ascione 1998; Carlisle-Frank, Frank, and Nielsen 2004; Davies 1998; Fitzgerald 2005; Flynn 2000a, 2000b; Quinlisk 1999).

Supporting the theorizing of Carol Adams (1994, 1995), some of these studies have demonstrated that the abuse of pets¹ by abusive partners is used instrumentally to attain power and control over the human victims of family violence and may also be motivated in some cases by jealousy (Fitzgerald 2005; Flynn 2000a, 2000b).

Research has also demonstrated that many abused women with pets delay leaving their abusive partners out of fear for their pets' safety because most battered women's facilities do not allow pets on their premises and abused women often have to make their own arrangements or leave their pets with their abusive partner (Ascione 1998, 2000; Carlisle-Frank et al. 2004; Davies 1998; Flynn 2000a, 2000b). My own research into the coexistence of animal abuse and family violence (Fitzgerald 2005) corroborates that finding.

Some of the participants in my study, however, described another reason why the presence of their pets kept them from leaving their abusive partner earlier. This alternative reasoning was articulated succinctly by one participant who stated, "They kept me going." In other words, for some abused women, their pets provide them with the support they need to cope with the abuse, which may result in their staying with their partner longer than they think they otherwise would have. Furthermore, for some of the participants the ways in which their pets "kept them going" extended beyond decisions about when to leave their abusive partner and into decision-making related to taking their own life. For instance, in describing her relationship with her pets one participant stated quite simply, "They gave me a reason to live."

In my study of the relationship between animal abuse and family violence (Fitzgerald 2005), I explored why these forms of abuse frequently coexist. In this paper I go beyond the original focus on how the abusers were able to exercise agency through the abuse of pets to provide some insight into the agency and resistance exercised by abused women through their relationships with their pets. Many of my study participants described these relationships as reciprocal, supportive, and unique; additionally, some participants discussed how they used the relationships to cope with the abuse and sometimes even to mitigate suicidality.

I begin with a review of three distinct areas of literature within which this paper is situated: the literature documenting a link between animal abuse and family violence; the literature detailing the social support function of pets; and the literature examining the suicidality of abused women. The review of these literatures is followed by a description of the method used to gather the data and a brief overview of the characteristics of the sample. Next, the findings are presented, followed by a discussion highlighting the key findings and their connections to earlier scholarship and, finally, by suggested directions for future research.

This paper demonstrates throughout that in order to fully understand both the victimization and survival of abused women who have pets, we must include the animal Other in our analyses. Concomitantly, we must recognize animals as victims. As Piers Beirne (1999) reminds us, the abuse of animals must not concern us solely because it is interconnected with the abuse of some groups of people—the victimhood of animals must also be acknowledged and confronted. Indeed, the treatment of animals in our society is a multifaceted social justice issue.

EMPIRICAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Theorizing the connections between the oppression of animals and human groups (by scholars including Carol Adams 1991, David Nibert 2002, Charles Patterson 2002, and Marjorie Spiegel 1996) has stimulated empirical research on the link between the (mal)treatment of animals and the victimization of people. Within this area of research it has been argued that because of the bond between humans and animals and the more general fact that animals are sentient beings, animal abuse can be indicative of a propensity for deviant behavior including violence against humans (see the overviews provided by Beirne 2004; Nigel South and Piers Beirne 2006).

This research on the relationship between the (mal)treatment of animals and forms of interpersonal violence has become concentrated in roughly three areas (which should not be considered mutually exclusive or exhaustive): the hypothesized connection between sport hunting and deviant behavior, the relationship between animal abuse generally and forms of interpersonal violence, and the coexistence of animal abuse specifically with family violence. An examination of the first two areas is beyond the scope of this paper. In order to properly contextualize the current study, the focus here will be on the growing literature documenting the connection between animal abuse and forms of family violence.

The few studies conducted to establish the rate of association between intimate partner violence and animal abuse have found a high rate of coexistence between the two types of violence, ranging from 46.5 percent to 80 percent (Ascione 1998; Carlisle-Frank et al. 2004; Davies 1998; Fitzgerald 2005; Flynn 2000a, 2000b; Quinlisk 1999). These studies, conducted in several states in the United States and in the province of Ontario in Canada, mainly have relied on surveys of women in battered women's shelters and have documented a high incidence of pets being abused, threatened, and even killed by abusive partners. Further, a recent study by Benita Walton-Moss and colleagues (2005) found that

pet abuse by an individual is the strongest factor in predicting whether or not he will engage in intimate partner violence.

Clifton Flynn (2000a, 2000b) has used both surveys and interviews in order to better understand the dynamics of these situations. He surveyed 107 women at a South Carolina shelter. Forty-three of these women had pets, and of these women, 46.5 percent, or 20 women, reported that their partner had threatened or actually abused the pets. Eleven of these women reported that their partner had actually inflicted harm (Flynn 2000a). He subsequently interviewed ten women at a South Carolina shelter to gain additional information about pet abuse, the responses of the pets to the women's victimization, the role of the pets as human surrogates, and the symbolic interaction among the people and pets within these families. Eight out of ten of these women reported that their pets were threatened or harmed. Seven of the women reported that their pets were abused physically, sexually, and/or psychologically² (Flynn 2000b).

Feminist power and control theory has proven useful in explaining the relationship between animal abuse and family violence (Fitzgerald 2005; Flynn 2000a, 2000b). Briefly stated, proponents of the power and control theory assert that woman abuse is motivated by a desire to obtain power and control, which is sanctioned in our culture, and that abusers can accomplish the abuse of their victims through the abuse of loved ones. To this, the ecofeminist perspective³ contributes insights regarding the relationship between women and animals, asserting that pets make particularly useful instruments in achieving power and control over the victims of family violence (Adams 1994, 1995).

As mentioned earlier, research into the relationship between animal abuse and domestic violence has also established that many women delay leaving their partners due to fear for their pets' safety. Flynn found that 40 percent of his interview sample (Flynn 2000b) and approximately 19 percent of his survey sample of battered women (Flynn 2000a) delayed leaving their partners "due to their concern for their pets' safety" (Flynn 2000a: 170). Additionally, 18 percent of Frank Ascione's (1998) sample, 48 percent of the sample used by Pamela Carlisle-Frank and colleagues (2004), and 48 percent of samples in shelters in Owen Sound and Hamilton, Ontario (reported by Davies 1998) stated they delayed leaving their partner due to concern for their pets. Of the women sampled in my study (Fitzgerald 2005), 44 percent of those who had left their partners reported that they delayed doing so because of their pets.

The literature explains that it is out of concern for the well-being of their pets that some battered women with pets delay leaving their abusive partner; these women have few alternatives to leaving these pets behind with the abusers when they flee (however, see Ascione 2000 for programmatic suggestions). While fear for their pets' safety surely influences many abused women, there may be an additional pet-related reason why some women delay leaving: the support

provided by their pets may assist some women in coping with the abuse and therefore delay their leaving the abusive situation. Admittedly, in reporting on the original aim of my study on animal abuse and family violence (Fitzgerald 2005), I failed to fully unpack the reasons reported by my participants for their delay in leaving and what this reasoning signified. This paper is intended to provide a more robust explication of the social support pets can provide to abused women and two notable implications thereof: first, as just described, some women may delay leaving their abusive partner because their pets provide them with the support they need to cope with the abuse and; second, for some abused women the support provided by their pets may prevent them from escaping the abusive situation through another means—suicide.

OUR UNIQUE RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMPANION ANIMALS

Relationships with pets may impact beneficially at least some abused women, notably by providing them with much needed emotional and social support. The beneficial effects of pets more generally are substantiated in a growing literature, of which only a brief overview is possible here.

Christine Morley and Jan Fook (2005) have divided the benefits of animal companionship into three categories: physical health, emotional health, and social interaction and responsibility. The latter two categories relating to emotional and social benefits clearly apply to the issue at hand. Emotional and social benefits might be particularly salient for abused women, who suffer emotionally and are commonly socially isolated by their partners. The importance of pets to those who are socially isolated is evidenced by the fact that Suzanne Hetts and Laurel Lagoni (1990) identify "pets who are their owners' most significant sources of support" as one of six relationship factors contributing to a strong human-animal bond. The emotional benefits of pets reported in the literature include providing a sense of security, social support, and unconditional acceptance; providing a source of trust and; mediating stress, decreasing depression, and reducing anxiety (Morley and Fook 2005).

Pets also fulfill social interaction and responsibility functions, including facilitating communication, providing a sense of purpose, and teaching children a sense of responsibility, loyalty, and empathy (Morley and Fook 2005). Meaningful symbolic interactions between pets (who are commonly considered family members) and the human victims of family violence have been documented by Flynn (2000b). Indicative of the interaction between people and their pets, the vast majority of the women sampled by Christina Risley-Curtiss and colleagues (2006) reported that they consider their pets family members and that their relationships with their pets are characterized by reciprocity.

Due to these familial and reciprocal relationships, the death of a pet can have quite profound effects (Carmack 1985; Clements, Benasutti, and Carmone 2003; Morley and Fook 2005), not simply because the beneficial effects of "pet ownership" are lost, but because a unique relationship is terminated. Jack Kamerman (1988) includes a chapter on the death of pets in his sociological examination of death and mourning, wherein he explains that pets have become constructed as family members; they are sometimes even considered preferable to their human family member counterparts in terms of their ability to be loyal, their amiability, and their constant state of dependence. For these reasons and more, the death of a pet can be extremely difficult, so much so that veterinarians are urged to consider "the importance of the animal to the psychological and social well-being of pet owners" (Glickman 1992: 850). It is reported that occasionally the grief caused by the loss of a pet can be so strong that it results in a suicide attempt by the human companion (Beck and Katcher 1996; Carmack 1985). The death of a pet entails the loss of a unique relationship and potentially the loss of an important form of social support for the caregiver. As Lynette Hart, Benjamin Hart and Bonnie Mader (1990) note, "For many persons, a companion animal may provide crucial social support. Increasingly, social support is viewed as a major life-style factor that can promote health and reduce susceptibility to disease and suicide, perhaps by buffering the adverse effects of stress..." (p. 1292).

The social support provided by pets may be particularly critical for relatively isolated groups of people. Youths have been recognized as one such group that might rely heavily on pets for social support. Accordingly, responsibility for pets has been recognized as a factor protecting youths from suicide attempts (Kaslow et al. 2002), and the loss of a pet has been identified as a risk factor in at least one suicidal risk assessment tool developed for children and adolescents (Rose 2000). Further, anecdotal evidence suggests that animal-assisted therapy may mitigate suicidality among prison inmates suffering from isolation (Lai 1998).

ABUSED WOMEN AND SUICIDE

Abused women tend to be socially isolated and have an increased risk of suicide. According to Evan Stark and Anne Flitcraft (1996), up to 80 percent of women who attempt suicide indicate that an abusive relationship was a factor in their decision to try to take their own lives. A meta-analysis of thirteen studies of suicidality among abused women reports prevalence rates ranging from 4.6 percent to 77 percent, with a calculated weighted mean of 17.9 percent. This is compared to suicide attempts among the general public ranging from 0.1 percent to 4.3 percent (Golding 1999). A study of African American women found that suicide attempters report significantly more physical and nonphysical abuse than

the controls (Kaslow et al. 1998). A follow-up to that study found that in addition to physical abuse, emotional and sexual abuse were significantly associated with suicidality (Houry et al. 2006).

In explaining why abused women are more likely to attempt suicide than are non-abused women, Nadine Kaslow and colleagues (2002) argue that abusers commonly exert control over all aspects of their victims' lives, notably their social networks and material resources. This leaves abused women feeling powerless and isolated. They may therefore turn to suicide in an attempt to gain power, have their pain recognized, and "extricate themselves from an intolerable situation" (p. 312).

Research has been conducted to better understand the protective and risk factors associated with suicide among abused women. Identified risk factors include: high levels of stressful life events, maltreatment as a child (Kaslow et al. 2002), high levels of distress and depression, hopelessness, and substance abuse problems (Kaslow et al. 2002; Kaslow et al. 1998). The protective factors identified thus far include receiving social support (Coker et al. 2003; Kaslow et al. 2002; Kaslow et al. 1998; Meadows et al. 2005), hopefulness, self-efficacy, coping skills, effectiveness in obtaining material resources, and spiritual well-being (Kaslow et al. 2002; Meadows et al. 2005).

From this literature, social support has emerged as a critical protective factor. Sometimes social support proves to be a significant moderating variable when other protective factors do not (Kaslow et al. 1998). The effects of other protective variables may be mediated by social support, and among African American women at least, social support from family is uniquely associated with not attempting suicide even when the other protective factors are controlled (Meadows et al. 2005). This has led some to conclude that "social support may be one of the most important protective factors in suicide interventions" (Meadows et al. 2005: 117).

One potential form of social support for abused women—relationships with pets—has not been addressed in this literature. Further, the protective role of pets related to suicidality among abused women was not thoroughly examined and the connection to the wider literature on suicidality among abused women was not made in the original discussion of my study of animal abuse and family violence (Fitzgerald 2005). This paper is an attempt to begin to fill these gaps by drawing together the three literatures reviewed above and highlighting the following four findings uncovered in the reanalysis of the data from my original study: most of the participants considered their pets family members, their relationships with their pets often figured into their decisions regarding leaving their partners, these relationships were quite unique and centered around mutual protection and fellow suffering, and some of the participants explicitly described

incorporating these special relationships into their "plans of survival." These findings are detailed following the discussion of methods below.

RESEARCH METHOD

The data analyzed for this paper were collected over an eight-month period in 2001 through face-to-face, in-depth, semi-standardized interviews with 26 abused women. The participants were accessed through a battered women's shelter and battered women's support groups in two southern cities in Ontario, Canada. Contacting potential participants through the support groups permitted access to three women who were still involved with their abusive partner at the time of the interview, as well as women who had been separated from their partner for a significant amount of time. The participants accessed through the shelter had been separated from their partner for a period of only days or weeks; in contrast, the participants accessed through the support groups had been separated from their partners an average of 15 months.

The only criterion for participation in my study was that the participant had had a pet at some point while involved with her abusive partner. The definition of a "pet animal" was broad, including any creature dependent upon an individual or family for his or her well-being. This permitted the inclusion of animals who were treated as pets but who might not typically be defined as such, such as a raccoon. Individuals who met this criterion were given a form outlining the project by the shelter/support group staff. Those who were interested in participating notified a staff member, who then contacted the author, and subsequently an interview time was scheduled. For the purposes of this paper, the data from my original study were reanalyzed in order to more fully explore themes related to the supportive roles played by the pets and the participants' suicidality.

Sample Characteristics

The reported mean age of the 26 participants was 37 years, and that of their partners was 40.5 years. Twenty-two of the participants were mothers, and on average they had two children. All abusive relationships discussed by the participants were with men. The participants in my study were overwhelmingly White and working class.

In this sample cats were the most commonly reported companion pet, with 22 women reporting having had at least one cat, and a total of 84 cats cared for by these women. Twenty participants reported having at least one dog, with a total of 40 dogs cared for by the women. Less commonly reported pets included fish, birds, rabbits, hamsters, chinchillas, lizards, a rat, and a raccoon.

Eighteen of these participants identified themselves as having been abused physically by their partner.⁴ Other forms of abuse experienced by the participants included verbal, emotional, financial, psychological, and sexual. Twelve participants⁵ reported their partner had perpetrated what they considered to be physical animal abuse against the pets in the home. Additionally, one participant reported that her partner had psychologically abused her pet, but had not threatened the pet nor engaged in physical animal abuse; two participants reported that their partner had threatened to harm or kill a pet but did not physically abuse the pet; and four women reported that their partner neglected the pets but did not threaten or physically abuse them. Finally, seven women reported that their partner did not mistreat or threaten their pets at all. (For an extended discussion of the study sample and the forms of abuse perpetrated against the human and animal victims, see Fitzgerald 2005).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Four ways that pets figure into the lives of battered women emerged from the data analyzed in this study. These findings are detailed in this section. First, the role of pets as family members is described in order to properly contextualize the relationship between the participants and their pets. Next, an important implication of the close relationship often shared between abused women and their pets—delaying leaving the abusive partner due to the pets—is examined. It is demonstrated that some of the participants believe they would have left their abusive partner sooner in the absence of their pets because their pets provided them with the support they needed to live and cope with the abuse. Third, the ways in which the participants' pets served as protectors and were perceived as fellow sufferers is discussed. It is demonstrated that the roles of pets as protectors and fellow sufferers facilitated the development of unique relationships between the participants and their pets. Finally, the third finding leads into the fourth: one consequence of the unique relationship that developed between participants and their pets is that for some of them, their pets became an integral part of their "plans of survival."

Pets as Family Members

The vast majority of the women interviewed indicated they considered their pets to be members of their family. The close relationships between many of the participants and their pets, and the pets' status as family members, was evidenced by the memorabilia several of them brought to the interview. Participants shared pictures of their pets kept in their wallets and calendars dedicated to keeping

information about their pets, including birthdays and other milestones. Further, six of the participants were visibly moved to tears when discussing their pets.⁶

Although most of the participants indicated they had very close relationships with their pets, and to varying degrees considered them family members, three participants indicated they were not attached to their pets. Brittany stated quite simply that she does not like animals and that it was not her choice to have pets. Penny and Stacey did like animals; however, they purposely avoided getting attached to the animals in their homes. Penny avoided bonding with their dog because her partner was trying to make him vicious. Stacey indicated that due to the high turnover in dogs (her partner would acquire and quickly discard them), she purposefully did not get attached to them because of the loss that she knew was imminent: "after the first few would come and go I didn't want them because I didn't want to get attached and then it would be gone."

Of the participants who were attached to their pets and considered them part of the family, it was clear from the descriptions they provided that they interacted with the pets in meaningful ways. In addition to considering them family members, consistent with Flynn's (2000b) findings, some of the participants indicated that they were able to communicate with their pets by interpreting each other's vocalizations and body language. Some said they found talking to their pets helpful. When she was angry at her partner, Gina would talk to her dog about it instead of confronting him directly. She explained, "I didn't say that in front of him; I just said that to the dog. I was talking to the dog like the dog's a person."

The fact that many of these pets had very special places in the family was especially evident when the participants discussed their experiences with pet loss. Sixteen of the participants described the difficult loss of a pet. Eight of these women lost their pets to death. When discussing the death of her 16-year-old dog Annie explained: "It's like losing a part of your family." Other participants described the difficulty of losing pets to circumstances other than death: three women explained that they had or were about to lose their pets because of their housing situation, two stated that their partners made them take their pets to the Humane Society, and three participants reported that their partners had removed their pets. Laura and Rachelle lamented the removal of five and ten cats respectively by their partners without their knowledge or permission.

The Effects of Pets on the Decision to Leave an Abusive Partner

Because these abused women considered and interacted with their pets as valuable family members, it is not surprising that many of them took their pets into consideration when deciding to leave their abusive partner. Out of the

twenty-three women who had ever left their partner, ten reported that they would have left sooner if it were not for their pets. According to my participants, there are two main reasons why the presence of pets in the home might cause an abused woman to delay leaving her abusive partner (outlined in Fitzgerald 2005). The first, which has been detailed in studies discussed earlier, is related to the reality that most battered women's shelters do not allow pets and that many abused women face difficulty finding an appropriate place for the pets to stay while they are in shelter. This results in fear for the pets' safety (especially if being left with the abuser) and concerns about having to be separated from the pets. Illustrative of this, Lindsay refused to go to a battered women's shelter after an abusive incident because the police advised her that she could not take the dog along. She also reported that she had stayed with her partner for nearly two-and-a-half years because he threatened to take the dog if they split up.

The second reason expressed by some of the participants was that the pets gave them the support they needed to stay in the abusive situation—their pets made it minimally bearable. This sentiment was summed up by Evelyn as follows: "She [pet rat] kept me going for awhile." Vanessa also reported that she left her partner later than she otherwise would have because her pets gave her support and a reason to go home. When asked if she had delayed leaving her partner because of her pets, Vanessa responded: "That's a really good question. Because I spent a lot of time with the animals because I didn't wanna spend time with him. I probably would have left him— If I didn't have the animals. I would have left him earlier, I know for a fact." Thus, for some abused women, having close relationships with pets might cushion the effects of the abuse, at least temporarily.

The two central reasons given by the participants for why the presence of their pets influenced them to delay leaving their partner need not be mutually exclusive: for some women both reasons may factor into the decision. The important point here is that for some of the participants, the support provided by their pets assisted them in living with the abuse (even to the point that they delayed leaving their partner because of it).

Pets as Protectors and Fellow Sufferers

Many of the study participants considered their pets to be protectors and fellow sufferers. They described many ways that their pets assisted them, one of which was through providing physical protection. Ten of the participants stated that their pets, mostly dogs, had protected them and their children from their abusers. Of these women, six reported that they themselves had been physically abused, two reported sexual abuse, and two reported emotional abuse. They described instances of pets barking or meowing when their partner was becoming abusive,

standing in between the abuser and the target of his abuse, and even physically attacking the abuser in some cases.

In addition to having physically protected the women, their pets had protected them by providing much needed emotional and social support. For instance, Kara stated that her cats had been more supportive and loyal than her partner; Evelyn, Gina, Melissa, Theresa, and Yvette described how their pets would comfort them when they were sad; Sarah and Rachelle described spending significant time with their pets when they were upset because they made them feel better; and Lindsay, Vanessa, and Whitney described their pets as filling voids left by the isolation created by their abusive partners. Vanessa clearly articulated the importance of the support provided by her pets, describing them as "The only thing I had."

Some of the participants believed that their pets had assisted their children. Ingrid believed that the way her children interacted with their dog, who had a medical problem when they acquired her, helped them in interacting with people and developing compassion, which they were not learning from their father. She also felt that their pets had assisted her and her children in dealing with the abuse, stating "In fact, they bring much joy to our life, and ease the tension and stress of the abuse that we've had to deal with."

Ten of the participants saw notable similarities between the ways in which their partner mistreated them, their children, and their pets. Gina noticed similarities between the ways her partner would threaten to get rid of the pets and the ways in which he would threaten to kick her out of the house; the names that he would call her and the pets; and the degree to which he attempted to control her and her pets. Melissa also described the similar ways her partner controlled her and her pets and how after abusing them he would try to win them over with presents: flowers for her, steaks for the dog. Rachelle and Lindsay noted that their partners called them and their pets the same names and degraded them similarly. Jenna found that her partner was nicer to both her and their pets when other people were around. Vanessa and Yvette saw similarities between the ways their partners "tossed" them and the pets aside and neglected them. Olivia noted that the abuse against her and her pets escalated in similar ways and at similar paces. These similarities fostered a high degree of empathy for the pets, described by Gina as follows: "I could see the way he reacted to the pets is the way he reacted to me. And I'm thinking, oh those poor animals, they must be feeling the same way as me." Due to the similarities in the abuse perpetrated against the women, their children, and their pets, and the empathy that resulted, for some of the participants their pets were in a unique position to provide them with support as fellow sufferers.

Illustrative of the unique position occupied by the pets in the participants' lives, nine of the participants felt that their pets were particularly in tune with

their emotions and could therefore provide them with support when it was most needed. Regarding her dog, Carmen stated simply: "He reads me." Similarly, describing her rat Evelyn stated, "It's almost like she knows what I'm thinking." Sarah, Kerri, and Yvette described how their cats would come and lie down on them when they were upset. Gina, Theresa, and Melissa described how their dogs would somehow know when they were upset and rush to their assistance. Melissa described the close relationship she had with her dog as follows: "We were so close, me and my dog. If I was crying or upset, he'd come and put his big nose under my hand, and just look at me like that and put his face in my lap. And he was just so—he was smart. I don't know, it was just like, we had a bond. That might sound stupid, but he just seemed to know what I was thinking at times."

In addition to feeling that the pets were uniquely in tune with their emotions, many of the participants indicated that their pets listened to them in ways that people, especially their partners, did not. For instance, Dana and Whitney explained that it was nice to be able to talk to their pets because they would not talk back and argue, and Ingrid and Laura considered their pets preferable confidants. Yvette expressed that her pets were the only outlet she had for expressing her emotions:

With the dog and the cat, I could talk to them and tell them how I felt, and it was like maybe if they weren't there I would have never been able to say it. 'Cause I would sit in the dog pen for hours with the dog, without even realizing that it was cold outside or something. It was comforting for me... 'Cause I would try to talk to my husband and [he would say] "Shut up, I don't wanna hear that," "There you go again whining." The dog would show like he cared—or even the cat.

Yvette's remark that perhaps if she had not had her pets to confide in, she never would have been able to express her feelings is telling of how important pets are to some abused women.

The Role of Pets in Abused Women's "Plans of Survival"

Aware of all of the ways their pets helped them, some of the participants purposefully acquired additional pets. Melissa described acquiring her cat to fill a void in her life: "When I got her I had separated from my husband maybe a month before that. So, she kind of, to me, filled a void in my life, because my husband left, took the children with him... I transferred my love onto her, and like, I had a lot to go around." Similarly, Vanessa described getting a cat to provide the love and affection that she lacked from her husband: "All I wanted was somebody affectionate, you know. Because I didn't get it from my husband,

and I just wanted some kind of animal affection." Years later after the passing of that cat she acquired a kitten on her way home from a battered women's support group meeting because "going home was just hell." Vanessa was planning to leave her partner, but she was afraid she would be unable to take their dog with her to an apartment, so she acquired the kitten. In describing the kitten, she explained, "he was my lifeline."

Whitney's decisions to get her dog and cat were also calculated. She wanted a dog so badly for the companionship she was not getting from her partner that she made a deal with him to forgo all future presents from him if she were "allowed" to get a dog. Sometime after she got her dog, Whitney realized that it was time to leave her partner. She was concerned, however, that any apartment she could afford would not allow dogs. So she decided to get a cat, despite being allergic, so that she would have companionship at this critical time in her life. She explained how she made this decision: "So I brought this cat into the home. I was really out on [a limb] as to my breathing. 'Cause I think cats, the furrier they are the more it can—but I had a plan of survival. I thought if I move into an apartment and have to give [the dog] up I'll be broken hearted, it would be just so good to have this cat." When asked how her partner reacted to her bringing the cat into the home she replied, "I don't think he had a choice. It was just one of the very few independent things I did in the marriage."

Whitney's reference to having the pets as "a plan of survival" really is not an overstatement. Several of the participants clearly considered their pets the source of support they so desperately needed: they saw similarities between the treatment of their pets and themselves, felt that their pets protected them in various ways, and believed that their pets were uniquely in tune with their emotional states. Consequently, some of the participants felt that their pets had helped them with the depression and despair they were suffering as a result of the abuse. For instance, Evelyn referred to her rat being able to cheer her up when she was down and stated that her rat "kept her going for awhile," and Ingrid referred to her pets as easing the tension and stress associated with her and her children's abuse.

Other participants described more intensive emotional assistance provided by their pets. Rachele described regularly coming home late after shift work and lying outside with her dogs and cats until her partner fell asleep inside the house; they gave her a reason to go home and the sense of protection and affection that she desperately needed. Vanessa also explained that her pets were the one reason she continually went home instead of going to her sister's house.

Yvette described how over the years her pets had helped her cope with cancer and the abuse perpetrated by her husband:

When I was sick, after I had cancer and I was in the hospital for depression and everything, the cat used to—I would hide under a blanket and cover up all the time, and she would pull the blanket off my face... I used to have to sleep all the time 'cause I just couldn't stay awake and I was on Prozac, and actually I still am. And whenever I lay on the couch with the blanket, the cat will come and lay right on top of the blanket, right up here on me, or somewhere near me. It's like "It's okay, go to sleep, I'll be here with you." That's how I feel, that they're trying to protect me and help me. So I think there's a big communication between animals.

Kerri similarly considered her cat an essential source of support and went to great lengths to keep her: when she fled her partner and traveled by bus from the Southern United States to Ontario, she sent her cat there by plane because pets were not allowed on the bus. She responded as follows when asked how important her cat is to her: "Oh, I've gotta have her. I wouldn't be around. Like, she's company to me, because I'm alone now, and I don't go out a lot because I have this problem with trusting people. So, I don't go out a lot and [my cat is] my company. So, I would go nuts."

The sentiment articulated by Kerri that she "wouldn't be around" if it were not for her pet was conveyed by other participants as well. When simply asked how important the pets are to her family, Rachelle replied, "For me, they're very important. Um, some days that was the only reason why I'd get up, is because I would feed them." Later in the interview when asked if her pets factored into her decision regarding when to leave her partner, she stated: "My animals kept me grounded. They were part of my lifeline to stay alive. If I wouldn't have had them, I would have been dead..." When asked to clarify what she meant when she said that she would have been dead without her pets, Rachelle stated honestly, "Oh, I used to sit down at the river front and debate every night whether I wanted to live or die." It was clear that Rachelle's close relationship with her pets and her sense of responsibility for their well-being kept her from attempting to commit suicide.

Vanessa also felt that she "wouldn't be around" if it were not for her pets. The below exchange occurred when I asked Vanessa about her pets:

- A. Well, the animals brought me a lot of pleasure and the animals kept me alive a lot.
- Q: And how do you think they kept you alive?
- A. Because they were like family, and I just—they were there when I needed them.

Like Rachelle, Vanessa used the term "lifeline" to refer to her pets, specifically the kitten she had picked up on her way home from the battered women's support

group meeting and with whom she was planning to leave her abusive partner. However, before Vanessa could leave her partner the kitten was killed by her partner's dog in front of her. This is how Vanessa described what happened when her kitten—her lifeline—died:

That was the breaking point of my leaving. That's when I left, I left by ambulance that day. I—when he died, I took his body upstairs to my room, and I took a huge overdose... Anyway, I took this overdose and I went into a seizure. And my husband phoned the ambulance. And they flew me to [the hospital] and I died, and they brought me back, and I died and they brought me back, type thing like that. I had my last rights. But I was in the hospital for a couple months. And that was it, I never went back home.

In order to understand Vanessa's actions, as well as the sentiment expressed by her and other participants that their pets were their "lifeline," we must return to the broader findings discussed here. As demonstrated by the participants in this study, pets are commonly considered family members, fellow sufferers, and critical sources of support. If we acknowledge that for those reasons pets can serve as a protective factor against suicidality among abused women (and my study makes clear that for at least some abused women pets certainly can fulfill this role), then Vanessa's actions after the death of her pet are more easily understood. The implications, however, extend well beyond the actions of one individual, and are addressed in the next section.

DISCUSSION

The accounts of the women discussed here corroborate the findings of earlier studies and push our thinking in a new direction—namely, that pets can play an important role in moderating suicidality among some abused women. The finding that most of the women interviewed considered their pets to be part of their family confirms earlier research (Flynn 2000b; Risley-Curtiss et al. 2006). The participants in this study who considered their pets family members also described these relationships as reciprocal, which is congruent with research conducted by Risley-Curtiss and colleagues (2006). Further, the findings reported herein make clear that one key thing these abused women received in their reciprocal relationships with their pets was social and emotional support. Flynn (2000a) also found that this was the case when he surveyed a sample of abused women; in recognition of this relationship he aptly titled his important article "Woman's Best Friend." It should be noted, however, that not all women in this study considered their pets family members and sources of support: three women in the sample reported not being attached to their pets (for various

reasons, some related to the actions of their partners) and certainly did not consider them to be family members.

Like other studies (Ascione 1998; Carlisle-Frank et al. 2004; Davies 1998; Flynn 2000a, 2000b), a sizable proportion of the sample (44%) reported they had delayed leaving their partner because of their pets (Fitzgerald 2005). The study participants expressed a couple reasons for their delay. As reported in other studies, these women reported delaying leaving their partners due to concern for their pets, who cannot go to (most) battered women's shelters and might be left at home with the abusive partner. Consistently, my participants described long-term concerns about finding affordable housing that would allow them to keep their pets. (For a further description of these reasons see Fitzgerald 2005). In addition to concern for their pets' well-being, a second distinct reason for their delay leaving was that the support supplied by the pets made the abuse and stress more tolerable.

The accounts of some of the participants also indicate that the pets kept them from "leaving" the abusive situation through suicide. Several of the participants described how their pets had assisted them through times of stress and depression, and three (12%) indicated that they had seriously contemplated suicide. The level of suicidality found here is consistent with the research described earlier documenting higher rates of suicidality among abused women (Golding 1999; Houry et al. 2006; Kaslow et al. 1998). What is not addressed in that literature and elsewhere, however, is that sometimes abused women's pets may be at least part of what is preventing them from taking their own lives.

The participants who contemplated committing suicide described two interrelated ways in which the presence of their pets prevented them from doing so. The first is that they felt a strong sense of responsibility for their pets. In that context, they worried about who would care for their pets after their death, as they did not want to violate the reciprocal nature of the relationship by letting their pets down. The pets moderated suicidality for some of the participants in a second way: they provided the women with the emotional and social support they needed to stay alive. The literature on abused women and suicide has highlighted social support as a critical protective factor (Coker et al. 2003; Kaslow et al. 2002; Kaslow et al. 1998; Meadows et al. 2005) but the role of pets in providing that social support has not been explicitly addressed.

In acknowledging that abused women tend to be isolated by their partners (Kaslow et al. 2002) and that in some cases pets may be their only support, it is important to not assume that pets perform only a surrogate function—standing in for humans who have been exiled from the abused woman's life by her partner. Certainly, as Flynn (2000a) points out, the role of human surrogate (as described by Jan Veevers 1985) can be an important function played by pets in the lives of battered women. However, it is important to avoid reducing the role of pets in

battered women's lives to that function. As demonstrated by the participants in my study, pets seem to be especially well-suited to assist abused women: they do not judge; they have often suffered similarly at the hands of the abuser; and many appear uniquely in tune with the emotions of the women, often comforting them when no one else could (or would). As Kamerman (1988) points out, pets may be preferable to other family members in some contexts due to their unique characteristics including unquestioning loyalty. I therefore agree with the following statement by Leslie Irvine (2004) regarding the therapeutic value of animals: "animals are not substituting for something that humans could and should get from other humans. They are providing something unique to animal companionship" (p. 22). Ecofeminists have sought to draw attention to exactly this type of unique relationship between those who have been similarly situated on the denigrated side of the culture/nature binary (see for instance, Adams 1991, 1996b; Birke 2002; Donovan 1990; Gaard 1997; Gruen 1993; Mies and Shiva 1993; Shiva 1989; Warren 1996). Pets may be such important sources of social support for abused women not simply because there is no one else there to do so, but because the support they provide is unique.

Importantly, this study provides an opportunity to appreciate the ways in which abused women exercise agency and resist the effects of abuse. Agency and resistance were evident in some of the participants' descriptions of their pets' roles in their lives: two participants used the term "lifeline" to describe their pets, and for some of the participants their pets were essential elements in what one participant referred to as her "plan of survival." The exercise of agency by the participants was also evidenced by their actions in acquiring pets. Two participants described getting cats (one in spite of allergies) intentionally so that when they left their abusive partners they would have animal companionship in the event that they were unable to take their dogs with them. Several other participants described how their partners either forced them to get rid of their pets or did it themselves (see Fitzgerald 2005 for a full description of this pattern). These women, like many of the other participants who reported their pets had been removed, reported that they obtained more pets to replace those lost. Without understanding the supportive functions played by these pets in these women's lives, one might perceive their actions in acquiring more pets as merely reckless—bringing more potential victims into an abusive situation. However, it is clear that for some of these women, having animal companionship and support was part of their plan to survive the abuse, and for others it was a way to simply survive at all.

The details of the moderating effects of pets on suicidality described herein were volunteered by the participants—they were not in response to explicit questions about suicidality. The participants offered the information in the context of questions about their partner's abuse of their pets and why it occurred,

which was the original purpose of my study (Fitzgerald 2005). It is hoped that this paper will encourage research focusing specifically on the insulating effects of pets on suicidality among abused women in order to gain a better understanding of its scope and circumstances. Such research could assist in further making the case that the relationship between abused women and their pets, and the potential moderating effects of pets on suicidality more generally, need to be taken seriously by both academics and those providing services to abused women.

Research focusing specifically on the roles of pets in mediating abused women's suicidality could also bolster the case for developing shelters for pets on the grounds of battered women's facilities. Although the findings of this modest study cannot be generalized to all battered women, for obvious reasons (i.e., the women who participated in my study were mostly White, working class, in heterosexual relationships, in cities in Southern Ontario, and had reached out for assistance from battered women's facilities, support groups, or both), they do indicate that for some abused women at least, their relationships with their pets are critical for their well-being and even their life. Severing these relationships when abused women are at the critical stage of leaving their abusive partner (and such severing is generally what happens when a woman flees to a battered women's shelter) could have serious consequences—for both parties in these reciprocal relationships.

Not only is there much to be gained from studying the moderating effects of pets on the suicidality of abused women, there may be serious consequences of failing to attend to the critical role often played by pets in the lives of abused women. Among the most notable of these consequences is the risk of pathologizing abused women, particularly those who delay leaving their partners due to their pets (especially when children are involved), those who rely on their pets for the support to keep from killing themselves, and certainly those who try to kill themselves when they lose their pet—their "lifeline." Thus, efforts should be directed toward better understanding and supporting these relationships; however, fully actualizing these goals will require a truly inclusive vision of social justice, wherein the victimization of other animals is recognized and problematized alongside the victimization of categories of people.

Note: I would like to thank Linda Kalof for her thoughtful comments on an earlier draft of this paper. I am also extremely indebted to the women who generously gave of their time in participating in my research.

ENDNOTES

¹Although I am somewhat uncomfortable with the term "pet" to refer to companion animals (see Leslie Irvine 2004 for a thorough discussion of the distinction between the two terms), I follow others (e.g., Risley-Curtiss et al. 2006) in using the term here because it is used by the research participants.

²Flynn (2000b) points out that like people, animals can be psychologically abused. He explains, "For many animals, having to witness their human female companions being assaulted can be very stressful. This was an indirect form of emotional abuse. A few women reported more direct forms of psychological aggression. Andrea's husband would sometimes stomp his foot in the face of Boomer, their dachshund, in order to terrify and intimidate him" (p. 108). Psychological animal abuse was also reported by the participants in my study.

³It is infrequently acknowledged that there are at least two strains of ecofeminism. These strains—cultural ecofeminism and social ecofeminism—interpret the relationship between women and nature differently. In brief, cultural ecofeminists consider the relationship between women and nature a natural and biologically-based one that should be celebrated. Many cultural ecofeminists suggest that women consequently possess a relational ethic of care. By contrast, social ecofeminists consider the relationship between women and nature to be the result of their similar social construction and their shared experiences of oppression. Illustrative of this perspective, Adams (1996a) states "I value nurturing and caring because it is good, not because it constitutes women's 'difference.'" Similarly, I do not value animals because women are somehow closer to them, but because we experience interdependent oppressions" (p. 173). Unfortunately, many critiques of ecofeminism, which are more applicable to the cultural ecofeminist perspective, fail to distinguish between the two strains and therefore may turn some scholars off to ecofeminist theorizing entirely.

⁴The term "partner" is used throughout to refer to the current and former partners of the participants.

⁵Pseudonyms are used in the paper to protect the identity of the participants.

⁶It is possible that some of the participants either purposely or inadvertently failed to disclose relevant information because of the emotional impact of discussing their pets. For instance, when asked specific questions related to their pets, two of the participants indicated that they had "blocked out" certain events—the number of pets that went missing in one case and the threats made by a partner against the pets in the other. It is possible that some "blocked out" material was not disclosed in the interviews.

REFERENCES

- Adams, Carol. 1991. *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*. New York: Continuum.
- _____. 1994. "Bringing Peace Home: A Feminist Philosophical Perspective on the Abuse of Women, Children, and Pet Animals." *Hypatia* 9:63-84.
- _____. 1995. "Women-Battering and Harm to Animals." Pp. 55-84 in *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, edited by Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan. Durham: Duke University Press.

376 HUMANITY & SOCIETY

- _____. 1996a. "Caring about Suffering: A Feminist Exploration." in *Beyond Animal Rights: A Feminist Caring Ethic for the Treatment of Animals*, edited by Josephine Donovan and Carol Adams. New York: Continuum.
- _____. 1996b. "Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals." in *Ecological Feminist Philosophies*, edited by Karen J. Warren. Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Ascione, Frank. 1998. "Battered Women's Reports if their Partner and Children's Cruelty to Animals." *Journal of Emotional Abuse* 1:119-133.
- _____. 2000. *Safe Havens for Pets: Guidelines for Programs Sheltering Pets for Women who are Battered*. New Jersey: Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.
- Beck, Alan and Aaron Katcher. 1996. *Between Pets and People: The Importance of Animal Companionship*. Purdue University Press.
- Beirne, Piers. 1999. "For a Nonspeciesist Criminology: Animal Abuse as an Object of Study." *Criminology* 37:117-147.
- _____. 2004. "From Animal Abuse to Interhuman Violence? A Critical Review of the Progression Thesis." *Society and Animals* 12:39-65.
- Birke, Lynda. 2002. "Intimate Familiarities? Feminism and Human-Animal Studies." *Society & Animals* 10:429-436.
- Carlisle-Frank, Pamela, Joshua Frank, and Lindsey Nielsen. 2004. "Selective Battering of the Family Pet." *Anthrozoos* 17:26-41.
- Carmack, Betty. 1985. "The Effects of Family Members and Functioning After the Death of a Pet." *Marriage and Family Review* 8:149-161.
- Clements, Paul, Kathleen Benasutti, and Andy Carmone. 2003. "Support for Bereaved Owners of Pets." *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care* 39:49-54.
- Coker, Ann, Ken Watkins, Paige Smith, and Heather Brandt. 2003. "Social Support Reduces the Impact of Partner Violence on Health: Application of Structural Equation Models." *Preventive Medicine* 37:259-267.
- Davies, Lee. 1998. "Cruelty to Animals and Family Violence: Summary of Research Study." *Women's Shelter Research* July:1-2.
- DeViney, Elizabeth, Jeffrey Dickert, and Randall Lockwood. 1983. "The Care of Pets within Child Abusing Families." *International Journal for the Study of Animal Problems* 4:321-329.
- Donovan, Josephine. 1990. "Animal Rights and Feminist Theory." *Signs* 15:350-375.
- Fitzgerald, Amy. 2005. *Animal abuse and family violence: Researching the interrelationships of abusive power*. Lewiston; Queenston; Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- Flynn, Clifton. 2000a. "Woman's Best Friend: Pet Abuse and the Role of Companion Animals in the Lives of Battered Women." *Violence Against Women* 6:162-177.
- _____. 2000b. "Battered Women and their Animal Companions: Symbolic Interaction between Human and Non-Human Animals." *Society and Animals* 8:99-127.
- Gaard, Greta. 1997. "Ecofeminism and Wilderness." *Environmental Ethics* 19:5-24.
- Glickman, Larry. 1992. "Implications of the Human/Animal Bond for Human Health and Veterinary Practice." *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 201:848-851.
- Golding, Jacqueline. 1999. "Intimate Partner Violence as a Risk Factor for Mental Disorders: A Meta-Analysis." *Journal of Family Violence* 14:99-132.

- Gruen, Lori. 1993. "Dismantling Oppression: An Analysis of the Connection between Women and Animals." in *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, edited by Greta Gaard. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Hart, Lynette, Benjamin Hart, and Bonnie Mader. 1990. "Humane Euthanasia and Companion Animal Death: Caring for the Animal, the Client, and the Veterinarian." *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 197:1292-1299.
- Hetts, Suzanne and Laurel Lagoni. 1990. "The Owner of Pet with Cancer." *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice* 20:879-896.
- Houry, Debra, Robin Kemball, Karin Rhodes, and Nadine Kaslow. 2006. "Intimate Partner Violence and Mental Health Symptoms in African American Female ED Patients." *American Journal of Emergency Medicine* 24:444-450.
- Irvine, Leslie. 2004. *If You Tame Me: Understanding our Connection with Animals*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Kalof, Linda and Amy Fitzgerald. 2007. "The Animals Reader: The Essential Classic and Contemporary Writings." New York: Berg.
- Kammerman, Jack. 1988. *Death in the Midst of Life: Social and Cultural Influences on Death, Grief, and Mourning*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Kaslow, Nadine, Alexandra Okun, Sharon Young, Sarah Wyckoff, Martie Thompson, Ann Price, Marnette Bender, Heather Twomey, and Jennifer Goldin. 2002. "Risk and Protective Factors for Suicidal Behavior in Abused African American Women." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 70:311-319.
- Kaslow, Nadine, Martie Thompson, Brandon Gibb, Leslie Hollins, Lindi Meadows, Diana Jacobs, Susan Chance, Hallie Bornstein, and Akil Rashid. 1998. "Factors that Mediate and Moderate the Link Between Partner Abuse and Suicidal Behavior in African American Women." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 66:533-540.
- Lai, Janet. 1998. "Literature Review: Pet Facilitated Therapy in Correctional Institutions." edited by Correctional Service of Canada Office of the Deputy Commissioner for Women.
- Meadows, Lindi, Nadine Kaslow, Martie Thompson, and Gregory Jurkovic. 2005. "Protective Factors Against Suicide Attempt Risk Among African American Women Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 36:109-121.
- Mies, Maria and Vandana Shiva. 1993. *Ecofeminism*. New Jersey: Zed Books.
- Morley, Christine and Jan Fook. 2005. "The Importance of Pet Loss and Some Implications for Services." *Mortality* 10:127-143.
- Nibert, David. 2002. *Animal Rights/Human Rights: Entanglements of Oppression and Liberation*. Lanham; Boulder; New York; Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Patterson, Charles. 2002. *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust*. New York: Lantern Books.
- Quinlisk, Jane Ann. 1999. "Animal Abuse and Family Violence." Pp. 168-175 in *Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, and Animal Abuse: Linking the Circles of Compassion for Prevention and Intervention*, edited by Frank Ascione and Phil Arkow. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press.
- Risley-Curtiss, Christina, Lynn Holley, Tracy Cruickshank, Jill Porcelli, Clare Rhoads, Denise Bacchus, Soma Nyakoe, and Sharon Murphy. 2006. "'She Was Family': Women of Color and Animal-Human Connections." *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work* 21:433-447.

378 HUMANITY & SOCIETY

- Rose, John Creighton. 2000. "'Faced with Guilt': A Suicide Risk Education Tool." *Adolescent Psychiatry* 39:273-274.
- Shiva, Vandana. 1989. *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*. New York: Zed Books.
- South, Nigel and Piers Beirne. 2006. "Introduction." Pp. xiii-xxvii in *Green Criminology*, edited by Nigel South and Piers Beirne. Aldershot; Burlington: Ashgate.
- Spiegel, Marjorie. 1996. *The Dreaded Comparison: Race and Animal Slavery*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.
- Stark, Evan and Anne Flitcraft. 1996. *Women at Risk: Domestic Violence and Women's Health*. Thousand Oaks; London; New Delhi: Sage.
- Veevers, Jan. 1985. "The Social Meanings of Pets: Alternative Roles for Companion Animals." *Marriage and Family Review* 8:11-30.
- Walton-Moss, Benita, Jennifer Manganello, Victoria Frye, and Jacquelyn Campbell. 2005. "Risk factors for intimate partner violence and associated injury among urban women." *Journal of Community Health* 30:377-389.
- Warren, Karen J. 1996. "The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism." in *Ecological Feminist Philosophies*, edited by Karen J. Warren. Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Copyright of Humanity & Society is the property of Association for Humanist Sociology and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.