

Chapter 6

“I Don’t Want the Responsibility:”

The Moral Implications of Avoiding Dependency Relations with Companion Animals

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Philosopher Jean Harvey argues for a moral obligation to develop relationships of “loving interaction” with animal companions, “and possibly to enable dogs in general and most cats to enter into such a relationship” (2008, 175; also in Chapter 1 in this volume). Her recommendation to enable relationships offers a striking contrast to the reasons some people report for not having a companion animal in their homes. For example, in a study of the 45 percent of Canadian households that do not have dogs or cats (Perrin 2009, 49), main reasons reported include “I don’t want the responsibility” (58 percent) and “I travel too much/they don’t fit my lifestyle” (41 percent).¹

I sympathize with the intuitions reflected in the survey responses. I believed for years that if I acquired one of these animals then I would have responsibilities to them, and therefore, if I had no relationship with a pet, I would have no such responsibilities. In retrospect, I think I committed the error of denying the antecedent and believing that in doing so, I could deny the consequent. It is clearer to me now that it does not follow from avoiding a closer relationship that one has no relationship to dogs and cats available for adoption. To be petless is not the same as to be free of responsibilities to would-be companion animals in communities with a supply-and-demand imbalance in dog and cat populations.² In this chapter I draw attention to the nature of the relationships between humans and companion animals, with an eye to clarifying the responsibilities of petless people to unhoused animals and their caregivers. The responsive capabilities of petless individuals may vary, but we can at least reflect on the implications of our choices for the communities in which we live, and the sorts of communities in which we expect to live.

The petless people responding to the polls above demonstrate some awareness that individual adoption of a dog or cat will create a particular, concrete dependency relation between at least two specific relations with specific obligations, and a sense of the consequent secondary dependence of pet owners as caregivers. I clarify my use of these concepts below, building on Eva Feder Kittay’s (1995) account of human-human dependency relations and secondary dependence. I extend her account to cover human-companion animal relationships in a way that she may not have intended, but that evidently applies to pet owners. I then argue that many non-owners also have palpable, but indefinite, dependency relations with dogs and cats that they could adopt but do not. Indefinite dependency relations avoid the secondary dependence of the non-caregiver, but they yield duties to current caregivers of not-yet-adopted dogs and cats, as well as to the dogs and cats themselves; in other words, in avoiding the secondary dependence of pet owners, the petless increase the caregiving burdens of any others who are currently caring. In order to live up to a moral obligation like the one Harvey identifies, to enable dogs and cats to enter into loving relationships, those who do not care for companion animals may bear responsibilities toward those who do, as well as to the animals themselves.

I focus on dogs and cats in this chapter, not just because they are paradigmatic companion animals, but because Harvey is persuasive that dogs' and cats' capacities for love and loyalty to their human owners are morally important. Dogs and cats with capacities for such affectionate bonding, whose natures and very existences are partially due to human actions, make a moral demand on those humans with the power to do something about the conditions in which these animals live and love. The moral obligations of those of us who refrain from incurring particular relationships with dogs and cats are correlative with the power of persons like me, that is, those with what Harvey (1999, 43-44) elsewhere called "interactive power," the power to take the initiative in and direct the course of a relationship. I connect Harvey's points about interactive power to my application of Kittay's dependency critique, to show that those of us who refrain from incurring particular relationships of dependency rely on caregivers in our communities and regions to fulfill the moral and social demands that an abundance of companionable animals makes on the community. As Kittay suggests, dependency relations are to some extent inevitable (and can be value-neutral or even desirable), but they give rise to problems in a sociopolitical context in which the fact of dependency is ignored or deplored; these problems include the neglect of secondary dependents. Since avoiding a particular relationship with one dog or cat increases our obligations in other sorts of relationships with companion animals and their caregivers, those without pets who yet possess interactive and sociopolitical power ought to provide monetary, material, and socio-political forms of support to caregivers of companion animals.

It may not be obvious that the owner of a dog or cat exists with the animal in a dependency relation. Kittay describes a dependency relation as a relationship between a dependent, that is, one who "requires care," who is "unable either to survive or to thrive without attention to basic needs," and a caregiver or "dependency worker" who provides this care (1995, 8). Kittay's conceptions of dependency (1995, 2002) include ranges and types of dependency. A dependent is "inevitably dependent" (1999, x) or "utterly dependent" (1995, 8) to the extent that she relies on a caregiver for "basic needs" (1995, 8) or "basic life functions" (2002, 260); a caregiver is a "derivative" (1999, x) or "secondary" (1995, 12) dependent insofar as her dependency is not inevitable but "derivative of the care of dependents" (1999, x) or constituted by the social arrangements in which care is provided (1995, 12). "The dependency worker acquires a dependence on others to supply the resources needed to sustain herself and the dependents who are in her charge" (1995, 12).

I suggest that this relationship applies quite directly to the relationship domesticated dogs and cats bear to pet owners. Whether or not an individual dog or cat could fend for itself when an owner ends care-provision, it seems clearly the case that the practice in which many pet owners engage, of locking companion animals inside houses most days with only the food and water that the human chooses to supply, renders a dog or cat dependent upon that human for basic needs. Dogs and cats who have food and water may survive, but not thrive if other basic needs are not met as well, including their capacities for affectionate bonding, for love and loyalty; it is an irony of the results of human domestication efforts that cats and dogs were domesticated in part because of their desirability as loyal and affectionate companions, and these desirable qualities are also basic needs that dogs and cats present in dependency relations.³

Arguably, the application of Kittay's account admits of ambiguity with respect to what it means to be inevitably dependent or secondarily dependent, since companion animals are not utterly helpless, and since it is not clear that secondary dependence is the dependence of caregivers only. However, the ambiguity as to which type of dependency we are discussing is not an obstacle to identifying companion

animals as dependents of some sort. And it is possible that the dependency relation of dogs and cats to human owners is both inevitable and derivative from social arrangements. Consider that, to an extent, this is a dependency that is human-caused; as economist Joshua Frank argues, “Humans have a certain responsibility for the welfare of companion animals. Dogs . . . have been bred for thousands of years to serve our needs. They have therefore ceased being truly ‘wild’ animals and instead become dependent on humans for survival” (2004, 108). Cats have been bred for less time, but in many regions cats are the largest “input” (Hamilton 2010, 279) into shelters, and studies in North America and the United Kingdom refer to their cat populations as a crisis.⁴ Although breeding choices and shelters are the result of social arrangements, in a material and undeniable sense, dogs and cats inevitably live or die by the decisions of humans who care for them (or do not).

Further, dependency relations have moral import in the social contexts in which caregivers operate; caregivers can become secondarily dependent or derivatively dependent themselves, in virtue of social arrangements, as the moral demands upon them from being caregivers of dependents are made easier with supportive social structures, or more difficult with obstacles built into social structures. In human-human dependency relations, the secondary dependence of caregivers is readily recognized. For example, parents with newborn children or adults with disabled parents are derivatively dependent upon social arrangements providing medical care (or not), parental and family leave (or not), and accessible services for varieties of bodies.

Although Kittay did not include human-animal relationships among dependency relations, it is also the case that caregivers of animals face a number of social arrangements that make their tasks easier or more difficult. Someone who has worked in animal husbandry may find that caring for farm animals is made easier or harder depending on governmental systems regulating veterinarians, corporate structures that offer or limit available feed, and the willingness or resistance of neighbors to honor clean water practices. Those who have taken in companion animals know that they are vulnerable to the presence or absence of humane societies and shelters, the fee schedules of veterinarians, the availability of insurance to cover the fees, and the affordability of food and medicine for animals. In short, not only is it the case that domesticated animals are dependent upon those who own them, but by entering into dependency relations, pet owners become vulnerable as well. So a complete picture of dependency relations is one in which one who can give care is in a relationship with a dependent who creates obligations to care, and those obligations result in some new or further vulnerabilities of the caregiver.

Kittay argues further that the provision of bare survival does not fully meet the moral demands of a dependency relation. Dependents call upon caregivers for positive care, not just an absence of cruelty or interference (2002, 260). She argues, and I agree, that the newborn baby and the disabled parent arrive with vulnerabilities and capacities to thrive, and these require active support and provision of goods, not just avoidance of harms. When my sister leaves her infant in my supervision, I am in a dependency relation with my nephew; if he stops crawling, then suddenly spits up and cries, it is not sufficiently responsive of me to refrain from crossing the room and harming him. I care for him: I clean him and comfort him, and I later spread a fresh blanket on the floor so he may crawl again. I work to create conditions for his thriving.

I should note that in so describing dependency relations, Kittay mainly addresses only human relationships with other humans. She argues that nonhuman animals do not require the sort of positive

care that humans require, “the full-blown sort,” and she suggests that “for nonhuman animals, it may be sufficient to invoke the principle that harm inflicted on them is wrong because of what it does to those who do the injury” (2002, 272); animals may do just as well in the absence of cruelty. Elsewhere, I have argued against this view (Norlock 2004). I suggest it is more accurate to see companion animals as dependents requiring positive care in their dependency relation with human caregivers. The social and individual relationships that humans cultivate with companion animals combine to render companion animals dependent upon humans for positive care and not just an absence of cruelty. They are moral patients whom humans have gone to lengths to encourage to affectionately bond to us, through our historical breeding practices (as these come to influence the natures of the companion animals we bring into being), ongoing commercial reproduction, animal control policies, and sheltering provisions generally, and the particular relationships incurred by individuals in concrete contexts. Further, some breeds of dogs, in particular, are distinctively vulnerable, or sicklier than other breeds. This too is a legacy of some deliberate and some accidental endeavors, with the result that it is entirely up to humans whether or not to meet companion animals’ needs as members of particular species, or to enable their capacities to thrive.

So far, I have discussed the relationships of dogs and cats to humans in both general and specific terms. Generally, organizations of humans set or support many of the social arrangements regarding such goods as the availability or affordability of pet food, accreditation in veterinary medicine, and social policies regarding animal control and kill- or no-kill shelters. More specifically, when an individual decides to acquire a dog or a cat, she calls a new and distinctive concrete relationship into existence, especially one in which, to use Harvey’s term in *Civilized Oppression* (1999), she has almost all the “interactive power,” that is, the power to take the initiative in a relationship, to begin or end it, and to set its terms. Harvey refers to interactive power as “a major part of assigned direct power in positions of responsibility” (1999, 43). If one calls a dependency relationship like this into existence, by acquiring a companion animal with a social and emotional nature, then one therefore has the power and the responsibility to navigate that relationship, to maintain it, even to end it, if that is what is called for in the service of the flourishing of the one cared-for, based on its nature. Ending the relationship may not sound as if it serves the relationship, but consider those who have chosen, after some deliberation, to give an animal to another household when the owner cannot afford to feed it, or to opt for their animal’s euthanasia rather than its continued persistence in a bad state. Although pet owners disagree, some have argued that the decision to give a companion animal away, or request its death at the hands of a compassionate veterinarian, is made in order to avoid a decrease in their pet’s flourishing.⁵

These aspects of dependency relations—the inevitable dependency of companion animals, and the consequent vulnerabilities of their caregivers to social arrangements—are the reasons that I have never adopted a dog or cat myself. As I said at the outset, it seemed to me that if choosing a relationship to a companion animal entailed obligations to its wellbeing, then no relationship meant I had no responsibilities. For years, I saw this as even praiseworthy, especially since it meant the sacrifice of a desire to have a pet. (Look how good I am not to have a pet, despite wanting one!) Instead of being a neglectful owner, or a forgetful one, or a wicked one, I am no owner at all, avoiding special responsibilities. As Harvey says, “People who bring animals into their lives thereby acquire special responsibilities toward them” (2008, 173) because a companion animal and its human owner have a relationship of a “huge difference in power between the two parties” (169). Rejecting any model of a pet-owner relationship as contract-like, she says, “Dogs cannot reflect on proposed arrangements,

foresee their practical implications, raise concerns or propose revisions. . . . In virtually every respect, humans are in control” (169).

Additionally, control over these relationships is not limited to the humans who house companion animals. Harvey goes well beyond discussion of interactive power within particular relationships when she identifies our primary obligation to companion animals. Describing the natures of dogs and cats as at least partly constituted to “give love and loyalty to human companions,” she argues that “as with anyone who loves, it makes them vulnerable—to the hurt of not being loved at all, to being manipulated, exploited, or traumatically abused or abandoned” (2008, 170). Due to such animals’ “deep and abiding affection, the profound emotional and physical vulnerability they face because of it, and the blunt fact that humans in general control the relationship and have the power either to treasure or betray their animal companions” (170), Harvey concludes that “the primary moral obligation we have with respect to companion animals is to develop, nurture, respect, and protect this relationship” (171). In short, her model requires that “we place the loving relationship in centre stage,” calling for “a far more pro-active engagement” with such relationships. Her critique of alternative models of human-nonhuman relationships notes, “The magic of a loving relationship is chillingly absent. . . . Love values the loved one for who she is in herself; the focus is on the one loved, not the love received, and it is a kind of cherishing that has commitment at its heart” (171).

Harvey is persuasive that philosophers of moral theory, especially in European and American traditions, have neglected love’s moral importance. Bearing in mind Harvey’s conclusion that the primary moral obligation we have with respect to companion animals is to develop, nurture, respect, and protect this relationship, I appreciate anew her different description of the appropriate attitude: “Love and respect are not laissez-faire attitudes; they are attitudes of engagement” (171). It is not sufficient to the moral tasks Harvey outlines to refrain from owning a companion animal when one is not prepared to positively support its thriving; my commitment to refrain is still rather preoccupied with human benefits, namely, avoidance of my own failure to engage, my secondary dependence, and my time commitment, at the expense of animals who are already constituted to love and be loved, but lack a companion role or a home.

In light of Harvey’s arguments to see our primary obligations to companion animals more clearly as relationships with love-capable beings, I have come to think my petlessness implies a view of animal companions as having bodies that I know are constituted for love and affection, which is precisely why I avoid the moral demands that such bodies bring. Mine is not demonstrative of Harvey’s recommended attitude of engagement, and rather bespeaks an attitude of wishing to avoid costs to myself by entering relationships. It is an avoidance of already-existing demands, already-existing dependents currently capable of relationship and currently living in shelters in my region. This is an implication I am not comfortable with, and suggests that my attitude is not appreciative of the realities of what millions of households actually do, by taking attitudes of engagement and sheltering animals.

The unavoidable fact that Harvey so effectively features is that while I avoid all the concrete relationships I want to avoid, those animal bodies with loving natures already exist. Their existences pose some challenges where dog and cat populations constitute problems for communities and the agencies and animal shelters that work within communities. Not all communities have the same problems; the expectation of unowned and roaming cats and dogs in an area may be accompanied by indifference toward unowned animals’ effects on humans or other animals, as well as a lack of interest

in animal welfare.⁶ But I do not live in such a community, nor do most, nor do I think it is ideal that some may. The International Companion Animal Management Coalition points to good reasons to manage unowned and roaming cat and dog populations, including where the welfare of the cats and dogs is compromised, where they “present a public health risk to humans, either through the transmission of zoonotic disease (e.g. rabies, toxoplasmosis) or contamination of the environment (through urine, faeces), . . . where cats pose a significant threat to wildlife through predation,” especially birds, and where there is risk of human-animal conflict, especially with dogs, and conflict between owned and unowned dogs and cats, to the detriment of the wellbeing of both.⁷ As Francis Hamilton, a former owner of a clinic that sterilized feral cats in an effort to decrease animal euthanasia, observes, “Governmental agencies and shelters are charged with controlling the animal overpopulation problem”; he unequivocally states that the costs and burdens of doing so are a problem for the municipalities and for the individuals who must work to manage the input (especially of cats) (2010, 277).

Activists such as Nathan Winograd argue that “overpopulation” is an inaccurate depiction of the problem in the United States, since there are enough households in the country to house every animal (2007, 161–62). However, as blogger Leslie Smith (2013) argues regarding Winograd’s “repeated assertion that overpopulation is a myth,” whether or not to call the problem one of overpopulation is beside the point. “The fact is, we have too many animals who need homes—some with looks or behaviors or years behind them that are not considered desirable by a fair portion of the animal-acquiring public. And that’s a problem” (2013). She and other authors note that while a cursory look at the numbers suggests that homes outnumber homeless animals, people looking for companion animals tend to acquire them from friends, family, neighbors, and breeders rather than shelters, and they tend to acquire young and able kittens and puppies. Roaming cats and dogs present problems as sometimes homeless, sometimes ill, and sometimes surrendered (owned but no longer wanted) beings, and these problems must be handled by someone.

The concerns of practitioners like Hamilton, Smith, and Winograd reveal that Harvey’s arguments for attention to human relationships with animals are not, therefore, limited in application to dyadic, individualized dependency relations. Like Kittay’s arguments that caregivers become secondarily dependent upon the wider society when social arrangements are obstacles to their caring labors, Harvey’s arguments imply some moral recommendations regarding wider relationships between humans and animal companions generally. This is clearest in her consideration (2008) of cases of former service animals with “lost ability” and would-be service animals determined to have “no ability” (173–74). Here, she considers the situations of service animals put to sophisticated, complex uses for human benefit, especially police dogs and guide dogs. She notes that police dogs can outlive their usefulness to their trainers and employers, and are routinely retired from duties and from any monetary or material support just at an age when they may be most likely to need it. She notes that guide dogs and therapy dogs are selected from groups of dogs trained for the purpose, with selection rates as low as one in twenty trained dogs successfully placed.

What happens, Harvey asks insistently, to the other nineteen? What becomes of dogs with a lost ability (such as retired police dogs or elderly guide dogs), or no ability (such as dogs not selected after training), when the human-centered motivation for the relationship is not present, when they are not service animals and will only be companion animals? While I was patting myself on the back for adopting none of them, guaranteeing my success at non-creation and therefore non-violation of particular dependency relationships, Harvey’s injunction to cultivate an attitude of engagement indicates that in avoiding

particular relationships with any one of these no-longer-service, now-companion animals, we neglect attending to the changed but pre-existing relationships with these currently living and love-capable dogs. She concludes, “We should highlight and explore the relationship of loving interaction that cherishes the animals for the wonderful individuals they are. . . . The moral obligation to develop such a relationship with our animal companions (with dogs and cats at least) and possibly to enable dogs in general and most cats to enter into such a relationship provides a morally more secure basis for an ethic of companion animals” (2008, 175).

Turning to Kittay’s dependency critique clarifies that a pressing ethical task for petless people may be to attend to the needs of those who provide animal care in our stead, for the sake of both workers and their charges. Kittay offers a dependency critique of societies predicated on liberal ideals of equality, arguing that “by construing society as an association of equals, conceived as individuals with equal powers,” one neglects “the condition both of dependents and [of] those who care for dependents” (1995, 11). Populations of dogs and cats as a civic, social, relational, and moral problem for communities are destined to be invisible in such liberal polities, because material dependencies, in a socio-political arrangement organized along principles of social cooperation among equals, are ignored or deplored, and if they are recognized as unavoidable, they “are sustained by a social organization that creates a secondary dependence on those who care for dependents” (11). Not coincidentally, dependency workers then tend to be undervalued and underpaid. In the case of animal care, they also tend to be women.⁸ (This too seems not coincidental.)

The dependency worker is so situated that “her responsibilities lie with another who cannot survive or thrive without her ministrations. Her attention is directed to another’s needs; even her understanding of her own needs are enmeshed with the needs of a vulnerable other whose fundamental wellbeing is entrusted to her. And yet, within a liberal doctrine of society as a contractual agreement between equals, she should be an autonomous individual” (Kittay 1995, 11). The realities of the tasks of care-workers are difficult in “an economy” built on the presumption “that each will assume a share of the burdens and each will claim her own share of benefits” (12).

The salience of Kittay’s observations is demonstrated by the high turnover of employees in animal shelters (Rogelberg et al. 2007; Lopina et al. 2012) and the evidence of their high rates of burnout and stress (Ferrari et al 1999), as well as “compassion fatigue” (Rank et al 2009), a “secondary-traumatic stress disorder” (Figley 1995, 7-8) that can lead to depression and suicide. One can see why a historical sociopolitical legacy endowing only (some) humans with rights, expectations of medical care, and a presumed capacity for love could lead to a political sphere in which veterinarian price schedules are unpredictable, euthanizing and no-kill shelters are overcrowded and under-funded, and dogs and cats become sources of stress, heartbreak, or aggravation for underpaid workers, rather than a relational and publicly embraced responsibility. If we take rather more seriously that, whether or not we each individually wish to have the responsibility of a privately owned dog or cat, some caregivers elsewhere are providing the positive care that love-capable dogs and cats require, then those of us who do not own dogs or cats in regions with these groaning social supports can at least attend to the requests for secondary support of the caregivers serving in these dependency relations.

However, the dependency critique enjoins us to take seriously the actual circumstances of the political and social situations currently in place. The responsibilities and the real expenses of providing positive care for dependents are not trivial for all the members of a region that benefits from others’ caregiving

to dogs and cats. Estimates suggest that dogs cost over a thousand dollars a year to house well; cats cost about a thousand a year but live longer, and these are not trivial amounts for all non-owners.⁹ Nor could all easily afford the monetary support that caregivers in shelters and animal control agencies may need. I return to Harvey's concept of interactive power to clarify that our obligations depend upon the extent of our interactive powers. Members of communities with burdened shelter populations bear the responsibilities to provide political, financial, and social support to caregivers in the public and non-profit spheres when they can.

Those of us who can afford to take in companion animals but do not are already exercising our interactive power when we refuse to initiate dependency relations. Instead of seeing this as an individual and unencumbered consumer choice, we can further exercise our interactive power to navigate our already-existing relationships with sheltered animals and their caregivers by—depending on which of these capabilities we each have—adopting or fostering a dog or cat, centering the local shelter's concerns in community affairs, donating money, prioritizing shelter funding in political and non-profit gatherings, volunteering our time, donating wish-list items that are usually easy to find on shelter websites, and speaking and writing to “encourage all pet parents to spay and neuter their dogs and cats” (The Dodo 2015), to assist in breaking the breeding cycles that contribute to the stresses on animals and workers in shelters.

In early work on human oppression of other humans, Harvey suggests that those of us who can issue a “power-backed refusal to engage” possess “systematic and morally inappropriate control embedded in relations that are morally unacceptable” (1999, 53). I hope I have shown reasons for holding a parallel argument to be true of some of us who shove the responsibility for companion animals off on those we do not think of as providing labor we refused. Given that the direct monetary costs are too high for some, I should add that the reluctance of community members living in constrained circumstances may amount to a refusal to engage in dependency relations with companion animals, but theirs is not a power-backed refusal. On the contrary, the choice to refuse a potentially loving relationship with a companion in the absence of wealth is arguably a loss to those without more monetary options. The rest of us who live in communities and regions structured to offload the responsibility without compensating the caregivers have more work to do, however, to explore all of our relationships with love-capable animals and their caregivers. Living up to our obligations to provide indirect support to caregivers in dependency relations would achieve Harvey's “morally more secure basis for an ethic of companion animals.”

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Notes

1 Primary reasons cited by companionless Americans in a similar survey included veterinary and general expenses, travel, “no time,” and the burdens of cleaning up (especially after a cat). See American Humane Association (2012, 19).

2 Indeed, I cannot find evidence of communities without any shelter population problems. In what follows, I will rely on the statements and statistics provided by those with expertise in shelter population problems. I enjoin readers to determine whether or not their community has imbalances in supply and demand with respect to dogs and cats, or at least to speculate whether roaming animals in their community are managed by someone.

3 Of course, as Jared Diamond (2002, 700) points out, there are many reasons for domestication: “Especially instructive are cases in which the same ancestral species became selected under domestication for alternative purposes, resulting in very different-appearing breeds or crops. For instance, dogs were variously selected to kill wolves, dig out rats, race, be eaten, or be cuddled in our laps. What naive zoologist glancing at wolfhounds, terriers, greyhounds, Mexican hairless dogs and Chihuahuas would even guess them to belong to the same species?” My point is not that all owners of cats and dogs equally desire their pets to actually need affection and loyalty; rather, I am arguing that whether or not one currently desires an animal to present these moral demands, dogs and cats are dependents in part because they have been cultivated by humans to thrive when their capacities for love and loyalty are realized.

4 See, for example, Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (2012); for similar information in the UK, see RSPCA (2014). Information from the USA is available from many sources, and best summarized by the American Humane Association (2013) Pet Fact Sheet, which estimates that fifty million cats are feral or roaming community cats, and notes, “Recent regional and national trends suggest that the intake and euthanasia numbers are increasing in U.S. shelters, unlike dogs where intake and euthanasia numbers are decreasing and trends are more positive.” The Humane Society (2013) observes another part of the problem; 30 percent of shelter dogs are reclaimed by their owners, but only 2 to 5 percent of shelter cats are reclaimed by owners; see their US shelter and adoption estimates for 2012–13, “based on information provided by the (former) National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy.”

5 It is possible to imagine a change in the relationship, such that the companion animal is currently thriving and the human is not; a study of owners’ reasons to relinquish pets in the UK indicated that almost 5 percent cited the owner’s illness (Diesel, Brodbelt, and Pfeiffer 2010), and a broad report in the US noted the citation of caretakers’ personal issues (Coe et al. 2014), which can include the grounds that they will not be able to care for them in the future due to a caretaker’s illness or new financial stresses. Even then, I suggest the animal is still being surrendered for the animal’s sake, as its future thriving is perceived to be endangered.

6 See International Companion Animal Management Coalition (2007, 2010) for helpful discussion of what factors must be considered in saying that a community does or does not have a dog or cat population requiring management.

7 See International Companion Animal Management Coalition (2007, 2010); in both publications, ICAM attentively notes that roaming animals can include owned as well as unowned animals; for brevity I occasionally use “roaming” to refer to the larger category of “roaming and unowned” cats and dogs.

8 For example, in Canada, 80 percent of employees in animal care, animal control, and pet grooming are women (Statistics Canada 2011). In the UK, the sector is estimated to be 87 percent women (National Careers Service 2015). In the US, women are estimated to be 70 percent of sector employees (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015). Volunteers are not counted in these statistics, and tend to be reported as also likely to be women. See Davis 2013, pp.9-10, and Neumann 2010, p.363.

9 See Perrin (2009, 51, table 6).