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An Exploration of Animal Abuse in the Context of Family Violence

by

Amy Fitzgerald

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of Sociology and Anthropology
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor**

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2001

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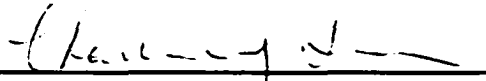
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Abstract

Recent studies have found high rates of coexistence between animal abuse and other forms of family violence. This study explores the resultant questions of how and why animal abuse and other forms of family violence frequently coexist. In an effort to address these questions, information was gathered through in-depth, semi-standardized interviews with abused women who had at least one pet while they were with their abusive partner. In particular, this study focuses on the women's experiences and interpretations of how and why these forms of abuse coexist, and the degree to which the animal abuse perpetrated by their partners was instrumental or expressive. It is demonstrated that animal abuse was predominantly instrumentalized by the participants' abusive partners to gain power and control over them and their children, and it was additionally perpetrated out of jealousy in cases where the pet posed a threat to the attention and devotion the abuser received from his partner. Recommendations are made in light of the research findings, and further research in this area, and human-animal relations in general, is urged.

Acknowledgements and Dedication

This discourse is the result of nearly two years of researching (which included eight months of data collection), theorizing, writing, revising, consulting, and consistently explaining and justifying the research topic to those who looked perplexed as soon as animals were mentioned. Thankfully, there were notable individuals who were more interested in than perplexed by this topic, and permitted me to conduct this research.

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This research would not have been possible without the twenty-six women who bravely shared their stories with me. They selflessly gave of their time, and shared things with me that they had never before discussed. This thesis is dedicated to these women and their companion pets, and to all of the human and animal victims of family violence who continue to suffer at the hands of those more powerful than them.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Why is it that the abuse of animals often coexists with other forms of family violence? This research project was undertaken because that question had not been answered. Little attention has been paid to non-human animal (herein referred to as animal) abuse in general, and research on family violence has focused on uncovering causal explanations for battering behaviour and has examined family violence from a victim-specific, and certainly a species-specific, approach. Only recently was it established that animal abuse and family violence are actually related (Ascione, 1998; Davies, 1998; Flynn, 2000A; Flynn, 2000B; Quinlisk, 1999). Yet, despite the increasing interest in this area, the research that has been conducted thus far remains segmented and limited. Specifically, the characteristics of cases wherein animal abuse and family violence coexist have not been fully explored. It is this neglected area of the dynamics of cases wherein these forms of abuse coexist that this research explores, and the purpose of this study is to address the aforementioned question. To this end, how and why animal abuse and family violence coexist according to the accounts of the battered women sampled for this research, is described and analyzed.

It is appropriate to begin by briefly defining and explaining specific terms used within this treatise, and to explicate why certain terms are employed over others. First of all, nonhuman animals are herein referred to as animals for the sake of ease in reading. For the purposes of this research, a pet was defined as any creature that is dependent upon an individual or family for his/her well being. This allowed for the inclusion of animals that were treated as pets, but that might not traditionally be defined as such, such as a racoon.

As well, in this research project, the term 'animal abuse' is employed instead of the term 'animal cruelty' for a specific reason. Arkow (1996: 32) points out that 'cruelty to animals' is an emotionally charged term which entails making a value judgment about the perpetrator. He suggests that instead the word 'abuse' be used because it refers to the status of the victim. He cites Rowan, who suggests that the term 'animal cruelty' be reserved for the small number of perpetrators that derive satisfaction from animal suffering. Arkow adds that 'animal cruelty' is also a difficult term to employ because it varies across cultural contexts and the legal definitions vary across jurisdictions. However, it is also important to note that the same is true for the term 'animal abuse'. These terms not only vary across cultures, but they also vary in important ways within cultures. For instance, what one person considers animal abuse, another may define as discipline. Rowan (as cited in Arkow, 1996: 32) also draws a critical distinction between animal abuse and neglect, wherein the latter includes the passive maltreatment of an animal, through which no satisfaction is derived.

This research project focuses on the treatment of pet animals within the institution of 'the family'. Sacco and Kennedy have defined the family as "...any relatively enduring pattern of social relationships through which domestic life is organized" (1998: 242). This definition of the family is useful for this research because it includes unmarried cohabiting couples, same sex couples (although there were not any in this sample), and childless couples. Such an inclusive definition of the family was preferred to more exclusionary ones. The term 'family violence' is used herein to refer to all forms of violence that are perpetrated within the institution of the family, as defined by Sacco and Kennedy (1998). DeKeseredy and MacLeod (1997: 21) assert that the term 'family violence' has recently been reclaimed because it acknowledges the need to focus

preventative initiatives at women, children, and men, and it also promotes the collaboration between community agencies. This term was selected for this research intentionally because it can also include the potentially numerous victims of violence within the family, including pets.

It is important to note, however, that some object to the use of the term family violence because it may obscure the differences between forms of family violence (Breines and Gordon, 1983: 492) as well as the fact that the perpetrators of family violence are predominantly men (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Marin and Russo, 1999: 21; Stordeur and Stille, 1989: 19). It is acknowledged that there are differences between forms of family violence; however, the point of this research is to examine why specific forms of abuse within the family are related, which is best accomplished through a holistic approach to family violence. The fact that men are predominantly the perpetrators of violence within the family is also acknowledged here, and it has been demonstrated in the family violence literature.¹ Although the term 'family violence' is encompassing, as well as easily recognizable and understood due to its frequent usage, it is not unquestionably employed herein. It is perhaps, not an ideal term, but it is the most appropriate term for this research project.

Within this exposition specific terms are used to refer to the prevalent ways in which animals are viewed and treated within western societies. The history of the development of these predominant views of animals will be elaborated upon in the subsequent chapter. However, at this point it is necessary to explain that the dominant western view of animals is that they are essentially instrumental, that is that they are means to human ends (Donovan, 1996: 148). This notion has resulted in a predominant attitude toward animals, which Kellert (1993: 54) terms the 'utilitarian attitude' in his

research, and defines it as a primary interest in the practical value of animals, or an interest in the subordination of animals for the benefit of humanity. The term 'speciesism' has been coined to refer to the resultant discrimination against animals due to their membership to a nonhuman species (Noske, 1989: x). This concept was borrowed from feminist and minority group theory, and Donovan (1990: 354) asserts that this term is analogous to sexism and racism (and one could add ageism, ableism, classism, etcetera), because it privileges one group over another. The term 'anthropocentric' is employed to describe an individual or group's exclusion of animals from moral consideration. For instance, in his discussion of the cleavage between radical socialist movements and nonhuman nature concerns, Benton (1993: 1-2) argues that while the radical positions generally reject human exceptionalism or speciesism, they continue to remain anthropocentric, that is they make humanity the paradigm for the applicability of moral concepts. These dominant societal notions of animals are fundamental to an examination of the mal/treatment of animals within human societies.

Since animal abuse is considered a form of family violence in this investigation, it is important to explore the pervasiveness of family violence in general. The number of human victims of family violence is in the millions. Statman (1990: 4) estimates that one half of Americans will be physically abused and that a woman is assaulted in her own home very fifteen seconds. According to Stordeur and Stille (1989: 22), the most conservative estimate of domestic violence in the United States is that 12% of women are abused by their partners each year. Others have estimated that it is as high as 50% to 60%. Battering is actually the greatest cause of women's injuries, claiming more lives than muggings, rapes, or even car accidents. Between two thousand and four thousand women are beaten to death by their partner every year in the United States, and almost

one third of female homicide victims are killed by their partners (Statman, 1990: 4).

The Canadian statistics are also very troubling. Fifty-one percent of Canadian women report having been physically or sexually abused at least once since age sixteen. Twenty-nine percent of Canadian women report having been physically or sexually abused by their partner. From 1978 to 1997, 1485 women and 442 men were killed by a spouse in Canada (Health Canada, 2000). Perhaps even more startling than the aforementioned statistics is that these forms of abuse are considered the most under reported crimes (Statman, 1990: 5), and the actual rates are likely much higher. For instance, nearly one quarter of women contacted by Statistics Canada reported that they had never told anyone that they had been abused (Health Canada, 2000).

It is likely that the majority of these victims of family violence have pets in their homes, since the majority of the population reportedly keeps pets (Fogle, 1983: xxv). As previously mentioned, recently research has established that there is a high incidence of animal abuse where forms of family violence exist. Thus, many of the pets in homes in which forms of family violence exist will also be abused. In the oft-cited classification of forms of battering delineated by Anne Ganley, a counsellor who works with male batterers, pet abuse is addressed and 'the destruction of property and pets' is identified as a specific category of woman battering. Currently, assumptions about the incidents of pet abuse that occur in the context of family violence abound. Accordingly, Ganley asserts that

Typically, the offender and the victim do not identify the destruction of property/pets as part of the battering; yet it is. The offender's purpose in destroying the property/pets is the same as in his physically attacking his partner. He is simply attacking another object to accomplish his battering of her. **Sometimes we minimize the seriousness of this form of battering by saying that at least it is better than hitting her. Unfortunately, it often has the same**

psychological impact on the victim as a physical attack
(as cited in Adams, 1994A: 147, emphasis mine).

Animal abuse has been minimized partly because, as Ganley points out, it is believed that it is preferable to striking a human victim. This belief rests upon two assumptions. The first assumption is that a human is harmed less by the abuse of a pet than by being directly victimized. Secondly, it is assumed that abuse is the result of uncontrolled anger and that individuals in the home are indiscriminately victimized. Therefore, if an animal is present when the abuser 'loses control', he can take his anger out on the animal, thus sparing the human family members.

It will be demonstrated in the following chapters that the aforementioned assumptions are false. Regarding the first assumption, previous research and the experiences of the participants in this research will be utilized to illustrate that animal abuse can be just as harmful to an individual as being directly victimized, which Ganley addresses in the above quote. The latter assumption, is more involved. This assumption finds theoretical support in the general stress model of family violence, which asserts that most incidences of family violence are the result of irrational acting out caused by frustration. This assumption is attractive to many because the alternative is that abuse is not the result of the loss of control, rather it is more deliberate. Instead of being an outlet for anger and aggression, animal abuse in the context of family violence may be perpetrated for the same reason that feminists assert that family violence is perpetrated: to achieve and exert power and control within the family. In addition to gaining power over and control of the individual abused animal, the animal may be instrumentalized in the abuse of others, for ideological and practical reasons, which is discussed in the following chapters. This research was undertaken with both of these perspectives in mind, and while neither should be used as an all-encompassing theory to explain every

case of the coexistence of animal abuse and family violence. it will be demonstrated that the latter perspective is more relevant to the participants in this research project. Many of the women who participated in this research clearly communicated that when their pet was abused they did not feel that they had been 'spared'. rather they felt that they had been targeted. which is antithetical to the aforementioned assumptions.

In order to address how and why animal abuse and family violence coexist. this phenomenon must be placed in the context of two theoretical fields. First of all. to understand animal abuse in any context in western societies². one must examine the social construction of animals. the anthropocentric nature of these societies. and the dominance of the utilitarian view of animals. Consequently. in the subsequent chapter. the progression of the construction of animals and human perceptions of animals are examined. It will be demonstrated that although some animals have become constructed as family members. the abuse of animals remains much more socially permissible than the abuse of other family members. The prevalence of anthropocentrism not only makes the abuse of animals more permissible. it also constitutes a formidable barrier to social scientific research into the abuse of animals and animal-related issues in general. The current state of the limited research that has been conducted on animal abuse and related issues is examined in the third chapter. and an effort is made to locate this study in this body of literature.

The second theoretical field that an explanation of animal abuse in the context of family violence must be placed in is the field of domestic violence. This analysis must also be located within the domestic violence discourse because certain animals have become constructed as family members. and additionally it will be argued in the fourth chapter that animals can be instrumentalized in the abuse of other family members.

Consequently, in Chapter four, the current treatment of animals within the family violence literature is explored. It is argued that theories of domestic violence are appropriate for exploring why animal abuse and family violence frequently coexist, and that analyses of family violence should include animals as legitimate victims. It will be demonstrated that in addition to drawing upon these two theoretical fields, this study makes a contribution to these two areas.

In the fifth chapter, the benefits and limitations of the research design of this study, the unique nature of the sample used for this research, the processes of data collection and analysis, and the ethical concerns that were taken into account in conducting this research, are discussed. Following this discussion of the research methodology, the results of this research project are presented. Chapter six provides an examination of how animal abuse and other forms of family violence coexisted, according to the participants in this study. In this chapter, the frequency of animal abuse in the participants' households, the forms of abuse perpetrated, and the bond between the participants and their pets are explored. Chapter six also provides background information essential for the ensuing chapter, which addresses the question of why these forms of abuse are related. Within Chapter seven, the patterns that emerged from the data are explored, and the relevance of the proposed theories of the coexistence of animal abuse and family violence are discussed. Subsequently, in Chapter eight, the implications of this research and its findings are expounded.

Although the objective of this research is to advance an explanation of how and why animal abuse and family violence are related, this treatise is about much more than that. Jacobson and Gottman (1998) conclude their book entitled Why Men Batter Women: New Insights Into Ending Abusive Relationships, by stating "We began this

study with the goal of learning about the relationship between batterers and battered women, and we learned a great deal. We expected to focus on the men...But as we followed the couples over time, we began to realize our book was as much or more about the heroic struggle of battered women” (Jacobson and Gottman, 1998: 286). Similarly, a great deal was learned through this research about the coexistence of animal abuse and family violence, and it was expected that the abuse of pets by male batterers would be focussed upon in this presentation of the research results. However, this research became equally focussed upon the plight of the abused women as they struggled to hold onto their pets. Contained herein are their heroic stories of survival, and of their close and crucial relationships with their companion pets.

CHAPTER 2

The Variable Social Construction of Animals and Their Abuse

The perception and treatment of animals has changed dramatically since they were first domesticated thousands of years ago. Since then, animals have been subjugated and instrumentalized, the rationalization for which can be found in specific religious doctrines and in the works of several influential philosophers. Specific types of animals were subjugated as pets, and increasingly these pets became constructed as family members, and concern for their well-being grew. However, contemporary western societies remain anthropocentric, and very divergent and conflicting notions of what constitutes animal abuse, and which animals deserve protection, remain. The abuse of animals, even those considered as family members, continues to be tolerated more than the abuse of humans. This has resulted in a paradox whereby the abuse of some family members is more socially, morally, and legally permissible than the abuse of others.

An Historical Overview of the Involvement of Animals in Human Society

According to C. Wright Mills in The Sociological Imagination (1959: 146), the fact that different questions would be answered differently in different societies and time periods means that sociologists are obligated to take history into account. Arluke and Sanders assert that "What is so useful, then, about the sociological imagination is that it forces us to look away from the very event or problem that initially catches our interest in order to understand it" (1996:167). They proceed to speculate that Mills would state that in order to understand the contemporary treatment of animals, one must look beyond it to more general social processes (Arluke and Sanders, 1996: 167-8). Mills (1959: 149) does state that the awareness of social structure is enhanced by an historical examination, which facilitates the awareness of larger structures because they can be seen changing.

Through the use of an analogy, Mills illustrates the necessity of an historical examination of an issue: "To eliminate such materials - the record of all that man [sic] has done and become - from our studies would be like pretending to study the process of birth but ignoring motherhood" (Mills, 1959: 147). Thus, in order to understand the 'birth' of a relationship between animal abuse and family violence, it is necessary to examine the social processes by which certain animals became part of Western families, and violent behaviour towards them became constructed as abuse.³

Evidence suggests that dogs were domesticated over 12 000 years ago and cats were domesticated 6 000 years ago (Soares, 1985: 49). It is believed that dogs may have first been attracted to human surroundings because they enjoyed the hunters' refuse heaps. The presence of the dogs was also advantageous for the humans: the dogs were useful in the search for game due to their sense of smell and speed, they defended the camp from predators, provided social companionship, and assisted in herding domestic livestock. It is believed that cats were attracted to human settlements once agriculture resulted in grain storage and subsequently the presence of rodents. This form of pest control was also advantageous for humans (Carson, 1972: 4-5).

The rise of agriculture brought specific religious beliefs about nature. Gruen (1993: 63-4) explains that due to environmental events, crops were devastated, and nature became a force to be feared. The increased risks and uncertainties of agricultural life fostered a desire to dominate, and the domination of natural forces was apparently sought through divine intervention. Noske (1989: 46) argues that it is Christian theology which has provided the moral basis for humanity's ascendancy over nature, and she cites historian Lynn White, who has called the Western form of Christianity the most anthropocentric religion in the world. In order for nature to become ideologically

harmless and economically useful, it had to be devalued, and in order to do so, humanity had to be detached from nature and made to feel independent of it.⁴ This need to dominate and control nature has manifested itself in bizarre ways. For instance, Beirne (1994) examines the medieval prosecutions of animals, and he asserts that these rituals were simply one aspect of the social control utilized by religious authorities to dominate the social and natural worlds: "To bodies such as the Holy Inquisition, then, animals were a form of life that presented a challenge no less threatening than that of other marginal beings like women and Jews" (Beirne, 1994: 39). Justifications for the subjugation of animals are also evident in the works of several influential philosophers.

In particular, Aristotle's 'chain of being', wherein humans are placed above animals and nature, and it is presumed that animals were made for humanity (Fogle, 1988: 177-80), has been an extremely powerful concept, and its ramifications are still being felt: "It was the Aristotelian notion of purpose and function, however, that especially helped to shape the Western world's instrumental view of women and nature" (Kheel, 1993: 246). Cartesian mechanism has also had profound effects upon human perceptions of animals. Descartes claimed that humans are separated from animals by consciousness, and that this consciousness survives in the immortal souls of humans. He asserted that animals, however, are merely machines, lacking souls and the ability to feel pleasure and pain (Fogle, 1988: 181). Clearly the notion that animals lack souls and do not feel pain would have negative consequences upon their treatment by humans.

Philosophers such as Rousseau and Kant asserted that it was the capacity for reason that separated humans and animals, and made the former superior. Kant played a particularly large role in the formation of the contemporary view of animals. He "...formulated what has become the dominant Western view of animals: that they are

instrumental to human interests - are means to human ends but not ends in themselves worthy of moral consideration" (Donovan, 1996: 148). The denial of rationality to animals has served as a further rationalization for regarding them in instrumental terms and for denying them moral consideration.

The foundation for the justification of instrumentalism can be found in Bentham's utilitarianism. Bentham relates his moral theory to his theory of human nature, which is that 'men' find pleasure enjoyable, and thus good. Consequently, since pleasure is good and it is part of human nature to pursue pleasure, Bentham accepts pleasure as an end of moral action (Parekh, 1974: 104). Accordingly, Bentham's principle of utility "'approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question'" (Watson, 1974: 63). Bentham's utilitarianism, whether emphasizing the happiness of an individual in question, or of the majority, is focused on that end. The means by which this goal is achieved are overlooked, as are the rights of the individuals involved.

As a result of domestication and the aforementioned religious and philosophical views of animals, they have come to play numerous and varied roles in human societies. Although the focus of this study is on the social relationship wherein animals are used as companion pets, it is essential to situate this relationship within the numerous social relationships between animals and humans. Benton (1993: 61-68) delineates several categories of human/animal relationships. First of all, animals can be used to replace or augment human labour, such as being used to herd livestock. As well, they are used to meet human bodily 'needs', for instance as a source of food, clothing, and as subjects for experimentation. Animals are also used as a source of entertainment, through hunting, racing, fighting, circuses, and zoos. Humans also use animals as educational resources.

For instance, many people feel that pets have an educational function for children. Animals are also used as a source of profit for many industries, such as the meat and dairy industries. As well, animals are used to maintain social control, for instance, individuals use guard dogs to protect their private property, and the state uses police dogs and horses to maintain social order. Animals can also be used as symbols. Animal metaphors in particular play a significant role in human thinking. Finally and importantly, animals are also used as companion pets. Benton explains that these categories illustrate that

Humans and animals stand in social relationship to one another. This is so obvious: it might be thought hardly worth saying. But it has consequences of the utmost importance. It implies that nonhuman animals are in part constitutive of human societies - any adequate specification of societies as structures of social relationship or interaction must include reference to nonhuman animals as occupants of social positions and as terms in social relationships (1993: 68).

We now turn to the 'owner-pet' relationship, which is perhaps the greatest exemplar of the social relationship between animals and humans.

Modernity, Postmodernity, and the Changing Perceptions of Animals

According to Webster's New World Dictionary (1998), a pet is defined as "an animal that is tamed or domesticated and kept as a companion or treated with fondness". Nationally, almost one quarter of homes have a pet dog and more than one fifth of homes have a cat (Preece and Chamberlain, 1993: 229-32). Additionally, it is reported that 58% of homes in industrial nations have a dog or a cat (Baenninger, 1995). The pervasiveness of pet keeping, however, is a relatively recent phenomenon. Keeping animals as pets was considered a form of heresy during the Middle Ages and Renaissance period because it was thought to elevate animals to the level of humans, which challenged the foundations of the religious and philosophical beliefs previously discussed (Serpell, 1986: 127).

However, in the 19th Century, pet keeping emerged (Mason, 1998: 255). The rise of the humane movement in 19th Century England, which is examined in the next section, was accompanied by a large increase in the popularity of pets. Pet keeping spread from the aristocracy to the expanding middle classes (Serpell, 1986: 130), which Mason (1998) asserts occurred because the middle class wanted the 'play things' that the elite had. Pet keeping by the lower classes, conversely, was condemned because it was perceived as an undeserved indulgence. Ritvo (1988: 13) asserts, however, that the actual reason for the condemnation of pet keeping by the lower classes may have been that keeping pets was believed to be suitable only for those individuals who were able to exert similar control over their fellow humans.

What early pet keepers did have in common was that they could afford to have animals that did not generate income, and they may have also enjoyed feeling superior to nature and the sense of power and control derived from it: "An examination of a few of the standard concerns of enthusiastic 19th Century pet owners reveals that beside the rhetoric of affection and admiration in which they routinely described their relationships with their animals ran another rhetoric, one expressed in action as well as in language, that was explicitly concerned with power and control" (Ritvo, 1988: 22). Modernization had diminished the close connection between culture and nature that had been evident in traditional societies, and resulted in the separation of humans and animals in everyday life (Sutherland and Nash, 1994: 175). Consequently, nature had been considered dangerous, but came to be seen as something beautiful to be possessed. With the rise in pet keeping, "Western society was not reversing dominionism, but it was moderating it into a form of benevolent dictatorship" (Mason, 1998: 255). Thus, early pet keeping may have been significantly motivated by a desire to display one's wealth and to exert control over

nature.

Societal changes also likely contributed to pet keeping becoming more pervasive in Western countries. Serpell (1986: 121) explains that the majority of people had lived in small, stable communities, surrounded by close kin. However, technological advances brought increased human mobility and the disruption of the traditional family and social structures. These social changes may have increased the need for alternative sources of emotional support and companionship, especially within large urban centres. This explanation for the rise of pet keeping can also be used to explain why pet keeping has not spread globally: it is possible that some societies do not have a need to supplement their social relationships by keeping pets.

Relatedly, attitudes toward animals have shifted, which has likely also affected pet keeping:

The spread of pet keeping in the Western world may or may not have something to do with rising living standards, or changes in family and community relationships. But it is clear that since the Middle Ages the growth and popularity of companion animals has been inextricably linked with the decline of anthropocentrism, and the gradual development of a more egalitarian approach to animals and the natural world (Serpell, 1986: 135).

There has been a progression toward more non-utilitarian views of certain animals. Sutherland and Nash (1994: 175-6) distinguish between modernistic and postmodern understandings of animals, and they argue that animals became perceived in mostly instrumental terms once modernization diminished the close connection between nature and culture found in traditional societies. Conversely, in the postmodern world animals are kept less for utilitarian reasons and more for the emotional and symbolic value that they may have. Consequently, in postmodernity, certain animals are perceived in affective instead of utilitarian terms: "Animals are companions, treated as family

members, and they are reminders of the indirect emotional relationships postmodern people have with nature" (Sutherland and Nash, 1994: 176). The fact that some animals are viewed in more affective terms, however, must not be viewed as the transcendence of anthropocentrism. Western societies remain highly anthropocentric.

It is quite common for people in contemporary society to consider their pets as part of their family and to derive benefits from keeping pets. Siegel (1993: 157) reports that 87% to 99% of pet owners consider their pet to be a family member. It is also widely acknowledged that there are benefits to 'owning' pets. The benefits of pet keeping have been recognized for the blind, deaf, aging, those suffering from stress, and those who are incarcerated (Preece and Chamberlain, 1993: 240; Siegel, 1993: 158-9). Pet keeping is also considered positive for the general population because pets are non-judgmental and they have many childlike qualities, such as their constant dependency (Siegel, 1993: 162). Postmodern people can derive many benefits from pet keeping and may form very strong bonds with their pets, which they consider members of their family.

As family members, pets can easily become involved in family disputes. Cain (1985) found in her research that pets are commonly triangled into family conflicts. In her survey of families, nearly half said that the pets were sometimes to always triangled in when there was tension, and 8% said that the pets are always triangled in. In some cases, the pet is used to diffuse the situation. For instance, someone may point out something that the pet is doing, which diverts attention from the conflict. Or someone may communicate their feelings to the pet while another person is listening in order to convey their feelings to that person in a less threatening manner. Soares (1985: 57) asserts that as a member of a dysfunctional family, the pet may actually become ill. She cites research which found that the pets of families with social phobia and schizophrenia behave in

ways that coincide with the illness of the family. In fact, Mitchell (as cited in Soares, 1985: 58) recognized in 1965 that pets are so integral to dysfunctional families that he included the human-pet relationship as one of the five subsystems that family therapists should be aware of. Thus, as pets became constructed as family members, they became vulnerable to being included in family conflicts.

The Growth of the Concern for Animal Welfare and Rights

The rise in the popularity of pet keeping coincided with increased concern for animal welfare, and beginning with the expansion of the humane movement in Britain, treating animals in specific ways became widely constructed as abuse. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was founded in Britain in 1824, and the early participants were wealthy and influential. According to Baenninger, "...the time was right for such concerns, and in a relatively short span of time it became unfashionable to display cruelty to animals, even among the British public" (1991: 13). The time was right due to the increasing mechanization of agriculture, communications, and transportation, which affected 'working' animals more than children.

The humane movement arose in North America in the later part of the 19th Century, and was contiguous with the movement to abolish slavery, and was followed by the child protection movement. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) was founded in 1866 by Henry Bergh, and in 1874 the ASPCA was presented with the severe child abuse case of 'little Mary Ellen'. During this time period child protection laws did not exist, so the concerned individuals approached Henry Bergh, who subsequently intervened on Mary Ellen's behalf. As a result of the case, a separate society for the prevention of cruelty to children was created (Baenninger, 1991: 13-15; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980: 8).

In the 1950s, the North American humane movement expanded, and organizations such as the Humane Society of the United States were founded. These animal welfare organizations focused on the problems of pet overpopulation, sheltering unwanted pets, and pet abuse. They perceived the problem of pet abuse as arising from the actions of individuals. In the late seventies, attention became focused upon the institutional roots and perpetuation of animal abuse, and a new language of 'animal rights' emerged. Animal rightists drew their 'moral vision' from the feminist and environmental movements, which articulated critiques of instrumentalism. This shift from animal protection to animal rights is marked by the emergence of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), which was founded in 1980 by Ingrid Newkirk and Alex Pacheco. In the early eighties, PETA gained notoriety due to their exposure of the maltreatment of monkeys in Edward Taub's neurological research at the Silver Springs research facility. As a result, Taub was convicted of six counts of animal cruelty and lost his research funding. This success inspired the formation of other animal rights groups and PETA's membership grew dramatically (Jasper and Nelkin, 1992: 5-31). It currently states on PETA's website, www.peta.org, that with over seven hundred thousand members, they are the largest animal rights organization in the world.

Fundamentalist animal rights organizations also emerged. These fundamentalists continue to demand the immediate cessation of all exploitation of animals. While fewer in number than the more 'mainstream' animal rights organizations, such as PETA, these fundamentalist organizations have grown in size and wealth. The most notorious of these organizations is the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), which is considered a terrorist organization. ALF, which originated in Britain, became active in North America in the eighties. ALF liberates animals from research facilities, ranches, fur farms, and other

locales where they believe animal abuse is being perpetrated. From 1979 to 1992, ALF completed more than one hundred North American missions, liberating approximately five thousand animals and causing several millions of dollars worth of damage. Few ALF members have been arrested or convicted (Jasper and Nelkin, 1992: 9-34). It is not only the means used to achieve their objectives that varies across these organizations; the construction of what constitutes animal abuse and cruelty is also variable.

The Complexity of Attitudes Towards Animals in Contemporary Society

In addition to recognizing that animals can be constructed as pets and even as family members, it is important to acknowledge that there are limits to these constructions within cultures. Arluke and Sanders (1996: 9-18) assert that the socially constructed meanings of animals vary across situations. For instance, within the family pets are named and constructed as family members. However, in other settings, the same type of animal is constructed in drastically different ways. Arluke and Sanders use the example of dog racing, where the construction of the dog requires detachment and the assignment of numbers or abstract names. These animals are not anthropomorphized as pets are. They also point out that these constructs may change over time. For instance, the construction of dolphins has changed from being merely a commodity or inconvenience to being considered friendly and highly intelligent.

There is also a contradiction within western societies whereby some animals are cared for as family members, and others are consumed. Whether cared for or consumed, however, "Both kinds of animals have a valued place in society because they are either affectively useful as companions or instrumentally useful as "tools" (Arluke and Sanders, 1996: 170). In order to be used in these ways, these animals are constructed very differently. While pets are anthropomorphized, significant steps are taken to distance

other animals from humanity: "To become tools, however, their animal nature must be reconstructed as scientific data or food. To accomplish this transformation, animals must be deanthropomorphized, becoming lesser beings or objects that think few thoughts, feel only the most primitive emotions, and experience little pain" (Arluke and Sanders, 1996: 173). An examination of the numerous ways in which these animals are deanthropomorphized and the institutions that facilitate this process is beyond the scope of this discourse. However, for the purposes of this undertaking, it is necessary to acknowledge that the construction of animals varies widely within western societies.

The ways in which animals are socially constructed greatly affects the attitudes that people have towards them. Research has been conducted into the general attitudes that are held towards animals, and has determined that several variables are involved. Opatow (1993) delineates three variables affecting attitudes towards animals, which includes the animal's perceived proximity to humanity, the animal's utility to humans, and the severity of any conflicts between the human and the animal. Kellert and Berry (1980: 41) examine the effects of additional variables to those which Opatow utilizes, such as aesthetics, intelligence, and size of the animal.⁵ Kellert and Berry (1980) used an attitude scale, comprised of nine different attitudes, to measure the knowledge, affection, and basic attitudes of American citizens towards various animals.⁶ They found that the most common attitudes in the United States at the time of their writing were the humanistic, where the primary concern is for individual animals; the moralistic, with the primary concern being for the right and wrong treatment of animals; the utilitarian, where the concern is for the practical and material value of animals; and the negativistic, which is marked by the avoidance of animals. The prevalence of these four conflicting attitudes provides insight into societal conflicts regarding animals.

Kellert and Berry (1980: 53) found that the respondents' attitudes varied according to age: respondents under twenty-five years of age are more appreciative and affectionate toward animals and less utility oriented than those over seventy-five years of age. According to Kellert and Berry (1980: 59), however, "The most outstanding result was the much greater humanistic concern for animals among females. Indeed, after adjusting for other demographic variable factors, females were only exceeded by those with high incomes, and respondents under twenty-five in humanistic concern for animals, while males were among the lowest scoring on this scale." Men also had significantly higher utilitarian and dominionistic scores. As well, the relationship of education to attitudes and knowledge of animals was strong and linear (Kellert and Berry, 1980: 70-1). Those who rarely or never attended religious services had among the highest naturalistic and humanistic scores. They scored far higher on the moralistic and lower on the utilitarian scales than those who attended religious services at least once a week (Kellert and Berry, 1980: 102-7). These scores "...suggest the importance of an anthropocentric Western religious tradition emphasizing the notion of a single God endowed with human image and characteristics, and the related belief that only man possesses the capacities for reason and immortality" (Kellert and Berry, 1980: 107). Farmers scored very high on utilitarian and dominionistic scales, and were characterized by an emotionally detached view of animals, particularly towards pets. It is important to bear in mind, however, that reported attitudes do not necessarily translate into the associated behaviours, as Braithwaite and Braithwaite (1982) found in their research into attitudes towards animal suffering.

Kellert (1985) found in his research on the historical trends of attitudes toward animals that there has been a decline in the utilitarian attitude in the 20th Century, although this attitude was the most common in the newspapers that he analyzed. The

second most common attitude was the humanistic attitude. He concludes that the significant shifts that he found in the utilitarian, negativistic, neutralistic, and ecologicistic attitudes suggest a decline in exploitive and fearful attitudes toward animals and an increase in appreciative and neutral perceptions of animals. In spite of the fact that utilitarian attitudes have declined, it is still a major force in American perceptions of animals. Similar research into attitudes towards animals has not been conducted in Canada. Although it does seem likely that the utilitarian attitude is also a major force in Canada as well, research into Canadian attitudes is warranted.

Summary

Despite the construction of some animals as family members in contemporary society and the growth in the concern for their welfare, the utilitarian attitude towards animals remains the most common, and anthropocentrism prevails in western societies. It is evident from the aforementioned research and the available historical information that the construction of, and attitudes towards, animals in western societies are complex and fluid, and that this is a fertile area for research. It will be demonstrated in the subsequent chapter, however, that research into animal-related issues is actually quite limited, which is directly related to the anthropocentric nature of society and academia.

CHAPTER 3

Social Science and Animal-Related Research

Despite the numerous and important roles that animals play in human societies and the conflicted nature of the perceptions and treatment of them, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, very little research has been conducted within the social sciences on animal-related issues. Reasons for this oversight are proposed in this chapter. Some academics have sought to rectify this paucity of attention and have called for theorizing and research in this neglected area, but to date, little has materialized. Of the limited research that has been conducted, the human-animal bond was the first area to be examined. The human-animal bond research provides insight into how and why people become attached to pets, which will later be illustrated, is a fundamental ingredient in the coexistence of animal abuse and family violence. Research has recently become focussed on the relationship between animal abuse and forms of interpersonal violence. That area of research is also examined herein, with close attention being paid to the research related to the coexistence of animal abuse and other forms of family violence and its associated limitations. The location of this study in, and the contributions made to, the animal abuse literature are also examined.

The Lack of Research into Animal-Related Issues

The general area of animal abuse is marked by a paucity of research. Despite the fact that “The extent and severity of animal abuse makes it one of the leading problems of our time” (Agnew, 1998: 203), research on animal abuse in general, and particularly within sociology and criminology is lacking. Beirne (1995: 24) asserts that the treatment of animals in sociology and criminology, coupled with the lack of research is embarrassing; and after a review of the literature (or lack thereof), one is inclined to

agree. Clifton Bryant recognized the problem of animal abuse within sociology over twenty years ago (Bryant, 1979: 412) and years later stated that "Sociologists have been particularly slow in recognizing and acknowledging the role of nonhuman animals in the social enterprise, and reticent in exploring it" (Bryant, 1992: 15). Accordingly, in the beginning of their book, Regarding Animals, Arluke and Sanders (1996: 2) comment that "Although there is an enormous literature about animals by novelists, journalists, philosophers, biologists, psychologists, and animal behaviourists we have been disappointed that there is so little by our fellow sociologists." This oversight, however, is not limited to animal abuse and the disciplines of sociology and criminology. Social scientists in general have overlooked the numerous roles animals play in human societies.

Several reasons likely exist for the lack of investigation into animal-related issues. First of all, the lack of research may be attributed to the anthropocentric ways in which animals and their abuse are viewed (Beirne, 1999). Beirne (1999: 120) and Fogle (1988: 180) specifically locate this anthropocentrism and resultant lack of research in the notion of a chain of being as espoused by Christianity and Judaism, whereby humans are seen as superior to and distinct from animals. This anthropocentrism has also been influenced by philosophers such as Aristotle, Descartes, and Kant, as previously discussed. As a result of this anthropocentrism, it is assumed that animals do not play a significant role in human societies. Beirne (1999: 120) asserts that like slaves and women were, animals are considered as 'others', and as external to the social and lacking legitimate claims to inclusion.

Noske (1992: 79) similarly claims that social scientists assume that animals have nothing to offer a science that concerns itself with the social and cultural, which are presumed to be exclusively human. In fact, in the social sciences, animals are presented

as the antithesis of what makes people human:

The social sciences tend to present themselves pre-eminently as the sciences of discontinuity between humans and animals. There are very few social scientists who seem willing to ask what animal-human continuity might mean in terms of their own field. Thus sociologists do not bother about a sociology of animals. Neither do social scientists question the common hierarchical subject-object approach to the human-animal relationship, least of all do they pose questions as to the ways in which animal subjects might relate to human subjects. By far the majority of social scientists tend to treat our continuity with animals as some kind of purely material residue from a remote pre-historical past (Noske, 1992: 80-81).

This assumption that the social and the cultural are exclusively human is fostered by the belief that social relationships depend upon the verbal use of language (Arluke and Sanders, 1996: 2). Flynn (2000B: 100) asserts that the exclusion of animals from society is the result of the influence of Margaret Mead. Mead argued that because animals lack language, they are incapable of taking the role of the other and consequently of symbolic interaction. After conducting his research on animal abuse and domestic violence, Flynn (2000B: 124-5) conversely asserts that animals take on specific roles within the family and that they are perceived as minded and emotional beings by humans, and are therefore capable of symbolic interactions. He concludes that

If animals are capable of symbolic interactions, then not only are human-animal relationships worthy of empirical investigation, but animals are social beings deserving of moral consideration. It will be interesting to see if sociology, which as a discipline has exposed and fought against social inequality based on gender, class, or race, will accept this challenge to end speciesism and include animals in its sphere of study (Flynn, 2000B: 125).

To date, however, the discipline of sociology and the social sciences in general remain decidedly anthropocentric.

In addition to the anthropocentric nature of the social sciences, another ideological

barrier exists to research that explores the relationship between humans and animals. The schism between nature and culture has made the social sciences autonomous and distinct from the natural sciences. As a result, social scientists continue to remain on guard against any form of biological determinism, which has hindered social scientific explorations of relationships between humans and animals. According to Redclift and Benton, for "...the social sciences the question remains: how do we open up to investigation the relationship between humans and the rest of nature, without letting in the 'Trojan Horse' of biological determinism?" (Redclift and Benton, 1994: 4). Noske argues that by ignoring the relationship between humans and animals, those individuals who oppose biological determinism may actually be reinforcing it:

Ironically, many scientists who hold this new position [against biological determinism] almost imperceptibly gravitate towards precisely those essentialist positions they claim to detest so much, namely as soon as another biological category comes into view, our species barrier. Suddenly rather clear-cut notions, as to what *is* human and what *is* animal crop up among anthropologists and other social scientists. Their outspoken criticisms of those who think in terms of biological essences (criticisms which I share wholeheartedly) suffer from considerable credibility loss in the face of their own assumption about human and animal essences (1992: 81).

This struggle within the social sciences to keep the categories of 'human' and 'nonhuman' nature/animal distinct has served as a powerful deterrent to research between humans and animals in general, and this struggle is noticeably present in feminist literature.

Adams (1994A: 161) draws attention to the fact that feminists such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Simone de Beauvoir have worked to sever the connections between women and animals. The alleged closeness between women and nature has been used as a justification to deny women's rights within the realm of culture. In reaction, some

feminists attempted to distance women from animals as much as possible, and some still do. Gruen argues that these anthropocentric strains of feminism have negative consequences:

...anthropocentric feminist theories focus on the full integration of women into culture and production, however conceived. A fundamental assumption of each position is that there is a distinction between the cultural and the natural and that women's liberation must occur within the former. Indeed, anthropocentric feminists understand the connection between women and nature as part of the oppressive system of beliefs that grounds the exploitation of women. Therefore, such a connection must be denied. This view, perhaps unwittingly reproduces the conception that culture and nature are distinct, a view that grounds much of patriarchal thinking. Failing to challenge this distinction undermines a more complete understanding of the workings of oppression (Gruen, 1993: 77).

Conversely, ecofeminists⁷ assert that there is a relationship between the oppression of women and nature, which must be addressed.

Lane (1998: 237) explains that the cultural feminists, also described as radical feminists, of the sixties and seventies undertook an examination of the relationship between women and nature. Subsequently, cultural ecofeminists celebrated the ways in which women have been associated with nature. Some ecofeminists asserted that women have a unique biological and spiritual relationship with nature. Clearly, this sort of biological determinism would be seen as problematic to many, including other feminists and social scientists. Many have acknowledged that such a deterministic ecofeminist theory forever separates man and woman, and is not liberatory; rather, it results in the devaluation of men (Gruen, 1993: 77-8). There has been a resultant shift away from this sort of deterministic ecofeminism, and it is asserted that the hypothesized connection between women and animals is not a 'natural' or 'biological' one, but rather it is a constructed connection within patriarchal societies (Gruen, 1993: 61). From this

perspective. Adams explains "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" (1996: 173). This sort of positioning makes research into the relationship between humans and animals, and specifically women and animals, much less taboo and more acceptable than the earlier deterministic claims of ecofeminism.

In addition to the aforementioned ideological barriers to animal related research, Bryant (1992: 16-17) has delineated several pragmatic obstacles to research in this area. First of all, a great deal of the research that has been conducted on human-animal relations is contained in books instead of journals, and within many different disciplines. This is problematic because generally books are not as well classified and indexed as journals, and journals have a degree of standardized quality. Secondly, much of what Bryant terms 'fugitive' literature is in the form of papers presented in different disciplines, unpublished monographs, and working papers, which are not easily accessed by interested researchers. Finally, Bryant finds the diversity of the research troubling. By diversity, he is referring to the variations in methodology, discipline, topic, theory and sophistication. He concludes that "...what is needed at this point is more effort at synthesis, conceptual consolidating, theoretical integration, and the identification of particularly productive directions for future research..." (Bryant, 1992: 17) Bryant does make some valuable points regarding the limitations of the research. However, given the interdisciplinary nature of the area of human-animal interactions, his assertion that the variations in the research are problematic and his suggestion that the research conducted be artificially synthesized, are both questionable.

Demands for Animal-Related Research

There have been numerous pleas for research into human-animal relations in general, and into more specific areas as well, from very diverse sources. Inquiries into the possibility of such research began a considerable time ago. In 1921, Max Weber posed the question 'To what extent is a sociology of the relationship between man and animal theoretically possible?' The first individual to attempt to answer this question was Theodor Greiger, who published an essay in 1931 on the animal as a social subject. He argued that whenever there is evidence of thou-awareness⁸ or intimacy in a human-animal association, a social relationship exists, even if it is not equally understood and equal in all respects (Teutsch, 1992: 67-73). Since then, the importance of acknowledging the social relationships between humans and animals has been declared by several authors (Arluke and Sanders, 1996; Beirne, 1995 and 1999; Benton, 1993; Bryant, 1979 and 1992; Plous, 1993; and Weigart, 1991 as cited in Sutherland and Nash 1994: 171).

Plous (1993: 2-3) outlines five reasons in particular why the role that animals play in human society should be examined. First of all, many people are extremely attached to companion animals. Additionally, animals play a large role in the national and international economies. The animal industries also have a large detrimental impact upon the environment. As well, animals are a major part of Western diets and are a large contributor to many diseases. Finally, the use of animals for human benefit raises many moral issues. Given these numerous and important roles that animals play in human societies, a great deal could be gained from examining human-animal relationships:

Studying animals and human interactions with them enables us to learn about ourselves as social creatures. It will show us, among other things, how meaning is socially created in interaction, even with nonhumans; how we organize our social world; and how we see our connection (or lack of it) to other living things. It may even reveal our most essential conceptions

of social order and our most authentic attitudes toward people
(Arluke and Sanders, 1996: 4).

Arluke and Sanders (1996: 5) suggest that sociology particularly needs to better understand what it is about society that makes it possible for people to love animals and to abuse them, to regard them as feeling creatures, yet also as objects.

It has been argued that the area of animal abuse is a particularly underdeveloped and useful area of inquiry: "Perhaps no area of human-animal behaviour is more understudied than animal-related crime and deviance" (Bryant, 1992: 26). Beirne (1999: 117) asserts that theorizing and research into animal abuse should be developed because animal abuse is a signifier of interpersonal conflict, it is an object of criminal law, it is a violation of rights, and it is one of the multiple oppressions identified by feminists as being related. The earliest research into human-animal relationships, however, was focussed upon the positive aspects of the relationship: namely, the human-animal bond.

Human-Animal Bond Research

According to C. Wright Mills, "For one's own work to count, one must relate it to what has been done before and to other work currently in progress" (1958: 127). It is essential not only to relate this research project to other research on animal abuse and family violence, or even to research on the relationship between animal abuse and other forms of violence. It is important to also examine the research that has been conducted into 'normal', everyday relationships between people and their pets. Accordingly, it is appropriate to briefly examine the research that has been conducted in the area of what has been termed the human-animal bond.

Interest in the human-animal bond is said to have originated in the 1970s when symposia were held nationally and in Britain on the role of pets in human society (Fogle, 1983: xxiii). According to Katcher and Beck (1983: xvii), academic interest was sparked

by the work of Samuel Carson and Boris Levinson, which indicated that animals could have therapeutic value for disturbed children and adults. Carson and Levinson's discovery of the therapeutic potential of animals prompted the realization that there was very little information available about 'normal pet owners' and pets. Pet keeping was, and remains, "...a majority phenomenon, yet compared to other majority phenomena so little has so far been scientifically explained. That is what is so intriguing about the human-companion animal bond..." (Fogle, 1983: xxv). Subsequently, researchers set out to explain this intriguing, majority phenomenon.

Two of the major questions addressed in the early human-animal bond research were how and why pets become so important to so many individuals and families. Hickrod and Schmitt (1982) conducted research into how pets come to be considered family members, and they isolated seven critical phases in the process.⁹ They conclude that "All animals, however, do not become pets, that is, toys or novelties, or quasi-family members. Such animals remain in an untransformed state as animals - *nonhumans*. Although the dog - as animal - is framed in various ways, for example, as a research subject or a watchdog, it is not a novelty or a keyed family member and it is treated differently" (Hickrod and Schmitt, 1982: 67). Thus, companion animals can be viewed simply as an animal: as a pet, that is a toy or a novelty; or as a family member (Hickrod and Schmitt, 1982: 60-71).

Research has also been, and continues to be, conducted into why people get so attached to pets and the functions that pets serve:

Our tie to these animals is now being explained in surprising ways. We are realizing their value for human physical health, mental health, emotional health, and human social health. They are being recognized as providing a vehicle for facilitating human interaction in such alienating urban environments as New York City. Through these new insights, we are gaining a new and much deeper

appreciation of what philosophers call the instrumental value of animals in society, the use value of these creatures for us (Rollin, 1983: 500).

It appears that individuals may be attached to animals at least partly for instrumental reasons. As previously discussed, Sutherland and Nash (1994: 175) explain that with modernization, the relationship between culture and nature existent in traditional societies was dissolved. Additionally, with this shift, the self becomes more important than the group and consequently individuals begin to cast their relationships with animals in terms of the self. Accordingly, Levinson (as cited in Brickel, 1985: 33) asserts that animals are symbolically important to people: they are expressions of the unconscious self. Brickel (1985) adds that the ways in which we initially perceive animals is learned, mostly within the family. Thus, we learn which classes of animals are to be loved, which are to be feared, and which are to be consumed. After this initial learning process, as individuals form independent cognitions about the world, animals come to represent 'tabula rasa stimuli', which individuals can inscribe idiosyncratic content upon. Animals therefore come to represent whatever people need them to.

Ryder (1973: 662-68) delineates several ways in which animals can serve human psychological means. First of all, for narcissistic individuals, the pet can become an extension of the self. The pet can represent what the owner would like to be, and may become an extension of masculinity or femininity. Consequently,

Our attitudes to dogs and cats, and also to specific breeds of dogs and cats probably reflect to a large degree our own personalities and insecurities and the type of image that we would like to project upon the world. The need for reinforcement of a macho ego is all too apparent in the young male who obtains a pit bull terrier and a studded leather collar and chain to go with it (Rowan, 1988: 6-7).

Rowan (1988: 6) suggests that the fact that dogs are more submissive than cats likely has

something to do with this choice.¹⁰ Exhibitionists can also derive satisfaction from showing off their pets. Ryder (1973: 663) explains that the magnificence of an animal becomes associated with the 'owner'. This sort of exhibitionism can clearly be interrelated with narcissism.

Animals can also serve as scapegoats. One's anger may be displaced from a dangerous target to a weaker one, which can include animals, or other oppressed groups:

Every man likes to feel that there are others who are inferior to him. This is a major ingredient in racism, where a group which is easily identifiable by skin color, is readily seized upon and thrust into an imagined position of inferiority. The racist in this way improves his own estimation of his social status. So also in our attitudes to pets - we dominate them in order to make ourselves feel more important (Ryder, 1973: 664).

Pets can also be kept as what Ryder (1973: 664) terms 'branded slaves'. They may be declawed, have their ears clipped, their tails docked, or be subjected to numerous other unnecessary mutilations. Through such procedures, "...men mutilate animals just as they used to brand their slaves, in order to assert and demonstrate to the world their control over them" (Ryder, 1973: 664). Thus, the control that one has over a pet can be demonstrated physically upon the animal.

Finally, Ryder (1973: 665-6) explains that animals can serve as go-betweens and catalysts. Mutual affection for a pet may bring people together, however, pets can also become the excuse used to initiate a fight. Therefore, pets can draw out the positive and negative emotions between humans. Cain's (1985) research supports this notion. She found that pets are commonly triangled into family disputes, as peacemaker or scapegoat.

Similarly, Veevers (1985: 11) found in her research that the roles that pets play can be categorized in terms of three major functions: the projective function, whereby pets can serve as a symbolic extension of the self; the sociability function, where the role

of the pet is in facilitating human to human interaction: and the surrogate function, through which interaction with pets may supplement human to human interaction. Katcher (1983) outlines several outcomes of these interactions between humans and animals, and suggests that these outcomes may be ways in which pets help to preserve human equilibrium. Safety is one outcome of the interaction between humans and pets, because pets make people feel safe in new situations. The interaction between pets and people also results in intimacy. In fact, many people feel that their pets understand their emotions. A further outcome of the interaction is a sense of kinship: as previously mentioned, many consider their pets as part of their family. Finally, the pet also provides a sense of constancy: "The pet is therefore as constant as death and taxes. It loves and will receive love without judgment, without condition, without change" (Cusack, 1983: 39). Katcher (1983: 517) suggests that "...if an animal acts as an efficacious generator of the feeling of constancy, then those people who have less constancy in their lives would be expected to reap the most emotional and physiological benefits from the presence of the animal." Consequently, individuals whose lives are in a state of flux, such as the victims of family violence, would be expected to benefit greatly from having a pet, but would also stand to lose a great deal in the event of the loss of a pet. It is the relationship between abused as well as abusive populations and animals to which we now turn.

Research Into the Relationship Between Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence

The majority of the research into the relationship between animal abuse and interpersonal violence has been conducted only recently. It is important to acknowledge that one might get the impression based upon the quantity of publications in this area that it has received considerable research attention. Actually, these publications are the outcome of a much fewer number of studies. It is also important to note that while this

research has yielded very important information and has provided an impetus for taking animal abuse more seriously. It does not signal the transcendence of anthropocentrism in the disciplines involved. Rather, the research on animal abuse has largely been undertaken due to the utility it has for humanity, namely in the form of risk assessment. The research into animal abuse as a valuable indicator of further forms of interpersonal violence was prompted mainly by the failures of the existing interventions to have an impact on the degree of societal violence. Research in this area has expanded in the past few years and has begun to diversify. According to Arkow (1999: 21), this research has become focussed in four areas: acts of animal abuse perpetrated by children, acts of animal abuse witnessed by children, acts of animal abuse in the context of domestic violence, and redefining animal abuse as part of the continuum of family violence.

Within the first area of research concentration, acts of animal abuse perpetrated by children (Arkow, 1999: 21), it is claimed that these acts can be early indicators of future deviance. Flynn (1999) found that committing animal abuse as a child is related to later approval of woman and child abuse. The notion that the perpetration of animal abuse as a child is also related to subsequent deviant acts is supported by many sensationalized accounts of the acts of animal torture committed by notorious serial and mass murderers. Some of the most infamous school mass murderers have histories of animal cruelty, including Marc Lepine in Montreal (Davies, 1998), Luke Woodham in Mississippi, Kip Kinkel in Oregon, and Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris at Columbine High in Colorado. Serial killers such as Bundy, DeSalvo, Berkowitz, and Dahmer also abused animals (Beirne, 1999: 123; Roberts, 1999). As a result of this research, the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the United States currently includes animal abuse as a factor in their threat assessments (Doris Day Animal Foundation Pamphlet, date unknown).

Research has demonstrated that in addition to serial and mass murderers, other types of violent criminals are more likely than non-violent criminals and control populations to report engaging in animal abuse. It is stated in the January 2000 volume of "The Voice: The Victims of Violence Newsletter" published by the Canadian Centre for Missing Children, that Rada found that 35% of rapists and 30% of child molesters sampled reported abusing animals. Additionally, 66% of Miller and Knutson's sample of prisoners reported being exposed to animal abuse, either as a witness or as a perpetrator. Arluke, Levin, Luke, and Ascione (1999) sampled animal abusers and compared them with a control group and found that the animal abusers were over five times more likely than the control population to have a criminal record. Due to research in this area, animal abuse is now recognized as one of the symptoms of conduct disorder by the psychiatric community (Agnew, 1998: 178).

Revitch conducted research into burglaries (1978) and the murder of women (1985) and he argues that these crimes are often overtly or covertly sexually motivated. He developed a list of factors that his research demonstrates are useful in predicting the potential of violence with sexual motivations, and he includes animal abuse (Revitch, 1985: 644-5). He adds that the hatred and abuse of cats in particular is a strong predictor, and that the comparison of women and cats was especially suggestive. One burglar who reported killing cats stated that "A cat is dainty like a woman. It keeps itself clean, washes itself. It is small. A cat has a woman's face. In fact you can associate a woman with the cat family by their features. Cats, they are slinky like women" (Revitch, 1978: 281). This man also reported that he had begun killing cats after his mother had rejected him. Revitch concludes that "The cat appears to symbolize a woman, so mistreatment of cats in combination with sexually motivated burglaries should be considered an important

prognostic sign" (1978: 183).¹¹ Thus, the abuse of specific animals is thought to be a more accurate predictor of risk.

Violent offenders are much more likely to have engaged in animal abuse. Felthous and Kellert (1986) interviewed aggressive criminals, non-aggressive criminals and non-criminals regarding their past treatment of animals. They examined whether those with substantial animal abuse histories as children tended to be more aggressive, and they found what they term a 'clear relationship' between early substantial animal abuse and recurrent violence against people. These results produced a statistically significant association between animal abuse in childhood and later recurrent personal violence. They report that the aggressive criminals typically perpetrated a greater variety of abusive acts, tended to abuse a greater number of species, and all of them had been abusive with cats or dogs. Conversely, the non-aggressive criminals who had abused animals evidenced more restraint during the abuse and remorse afterward. Thus, the features of child cruelty to animals may prove more valuable in evaluating individual cases than simply the presence of animal abuse. For instance, direct involvement in the act, lack of restraint, a variety of cruel acts and species victimized, and the abuse of socially valued species, such as pets, and the motivations for these acts should be considered.

Felthous and Kellert (1986) warn that it should not be concluded that animal abuse is an accurate predictor of later violence. Rather, substantial animal abuse is one of several behaviours, such as breaking windows and setting fires that can represent a pattern of impulsive and diffuse childhood aggression. Similarly, Ascione (1999: 51) cautions that the relationship between animal abuse and interpersonal violence is not necessarily a causal one: perpetrating animal abuse will not necessarily lead to

subsequent interpersonal violence¹². Although abusing animals does not cause other forms of violence, it has been hypothesized that animal abuse makes other forms of violence more likely, because abusing animals may desensitize one to suffering and reduce the ability to be empathetic, which is the premise behind the violence graduation hypothesis. Arluke et al (1999: 970-1) explain that the violence graduation hypothesis is attractive to animal advocates because it fosters public concern for animal abuse, and to those concerned with societal violence because if true, this hypothesis makes prevention and intervention easier.

Arluke et al (1999: 964) state that because of the graduation hypothesis, researchers have ignored the possibility that aggressive people may begin by victimizing humans and subsequently proceed to abuse animals¹³, or that some may restrict their violence to humans (or animals). Therefore the violence generalization hypothesis has been proposed, and its adherents argue that the same underlying factors that contribute to violence, such as violent role models, may give rise to violence directed at animals as well as people. Arluke et al (1999) found support for the deviance generalization hypothesis in their examination of the criminal records of animal abusers and control subjects. As predicted by the violence graduation and generalization hypotheses, there was a relationship between animal abuse and violent crimes. However, in accordance with the deviance generalization hypothesis, animal abusers were significantly more likely to commit other antisocial behaviours: the animal abusers were four times more likely to be arrested for property crimes and three and a half times more likely to be arrested for drug offences and disorderly behaviour. Additionally, animal abuse was not more likely to precede violent nor non-violent offences: only 16% graduated to violent crimes from animal abuse. They conclude that animal abuse is only one form of

antisocial behaviours that arises from childhood on, and they point to the assertion of social deviance theorists that many criminal behaviours tend to coexist either because one behaviour leads to involvement in others, or because these behaviours have the same underlying causes. Arluke et al's (1999) research is limited, however, because it relies on official records of deviance. Many deviant acts go unreported and undetected, especially animal abuse, and therefore fail to become part of official records. Additionally, the researchers only had access to adult records. Consequently, any information contained in juvenile records was not accessed. Thus, further research is necessary to prove or disprove the violence graduation and deviance generalization hypotheses.

Arluke et al (1999) suggest that instead of a graduation from animals to humans, there may be a graduation from distant to intimate victims, such that an individual might target human strangers before his own pet. They also point to Jacobson and Gottman's (1998) research which at least partially contradicts the violence graduation hypothesis. Jacobson and Gottman (1998) assert that animal abuse is part of the emotional abuse used against battered women, and that as physical abuse decreases, emotional abuse may increase. Therefore, "Although information is lacking about the temporal ordering of animal abuse and physical attacks on women, it is clear that animal abuse may follow physical attacks" (Arluke et al. 1999: 972). As will be demonstrated in Chapter seven, the temporal ordering of abuse within the family is variable, and the graduation hypothesis is far too simplistic.

The second focus of the research in the area of animal abuse and interpersonal violence delineated by Arkow (1999: 21) encompasses those acts of animal abuse witnessed by children, because exposure to such acts is believed to harm children and desensitize them to violence. It is believed that these acts may include individual actions

against companion animals, or may be in the forms of cultural conditioning, such as sport hunting. However, currently the evidence in support of the claim that cultural conditioning in the form of sport hunting is related to subsequent deviance is limited and inconclusive (Adair, 1995). Limited evidence of a link between participation in sport hunting and the abuse of family pets was found in this research and is discussed in Chapter seven.

There is evidence, however, that witnessing the abuse of companion animals can be very harmful to children, likely because they often form very strong bonds with pet animals and identify with them. Loar (1999: 125) maintains that because a child's only nonviolent and loving relationship may be with a pet, watching a pet harmed would be as traumatizing as witnessing domestic violence. She reports that some children are forced to participate in the abuse of a pet, and claims that this would likely put a child on the road to becoming a perpetrator him or herself. Witnessing the abuse of companion pets may desensitize children and make them more likely to engage in violence themselves. For instance, 76% of Quinlisk's (1999: 169) sample of battered women whose pets were abused indicated that their children had witnessed the animal abuse, and that in 54% of the cases, these children had subsequently engaged in animal abuse themselves. Thus, the abuse of a pet can be a very powerful tool used against children, and witnessing the abuse of a pet can be very traumatic for a child, given the degree of attachment.

The third area of research concentration delineated by Arkow (1999) is animal abuse committed in conjunction with partner abuse. Research in this area has found a high degree of coexistence between animal abuse and domestic violence. Quinlisk (1999: 169) reports that 68% of her sample of battered women reported that their pets had been abused by their partners. The Community Coalition Against Violence in LaCrosse,

Wisconsin found that 80% of those women with pets sampled reported that violence had also been directed toward the pet (Lacroix, 1999: 66). In three surveys of battered women's shelters in Wisconsin and Utah, an average of 74% of the women who had pets reported that their pets had been threatened, abused or killed by their abusive partner (Anderssen, 1999: A19). A survey based on the one used in the Wisconsin and Utah studies was conducted by the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Hamilton and Owen Sound, Ontario. Sixty-one percent of the women sampled in the Hamilton and Owen Sound women's shelters reported that their partner had harmed or killed one or more of the pets, and 48% reported that other family members (such as parents, themselves, or their children) had abused the pets (Davies, 1998: 1-2). The sample used in this Canadian research only consisted of 31 women. Consequently, these results are likely not representative nor generalizable. Canadian studies utilizing larger samples are required.

Flynn (2000A) surveyed 107 women at a South Carolina shelter. In addition to the intake questionnaire, shelter staff administered a nine question survey. Forty-three of the women had pets, and of these women, 46.5%, or twenty women, reported that their partner had threatened or actually abused the pets. Eleven of these women reported that their partner had actually inflicted harm. Additionally, there were two cases of animal abuse by children. Despite the fact that 107 women were surveyed, it is important to note that only forty-three of these women had pets, which thus constitutes Flynn's entire sample. Flynn subsequently interviewed ten women at a South Carolina shelter to gain additional information about the abuse of their pets, the responses of the animals to the women's victimization, the role of the pets as human surrogates (drawing on Veevers's (1985) concept previously discussed), and the symbolic interaction between people and

their pets within these families. Eight out of ten of the women reported that their pets were threatened or harmed. He reports that seven out of the ten women's pets were abused either physically, sexually, or psychologically.¹⁴ Flynn does not specifically state, however, how many of the pets were actually physically abused by the abusive partners in his sample. Also, he claims that "...it became clear that controlling these women by hurting, terrorizing, and intimidating them was a primary purpose of males' animal abuse" (Flynn, 2000B: 109). However, perhaps due to length restrictions, he does not provide much evidence for his conclusion that animal abuse is motivated by a desire to control their female partners, nor does he supply sufficient descriptions of these women's experiences. Additionally, the samples used in the aforementioned studies were drawn strictly from battered women's shelters, which is a definite limitation because all of their information is derived from women in the same transitional stage. Unlike the studies discussed above, the current project included participants from support groups as well as from a battered women's shelter. This unique approach had certain advantages, which are discussed in Chapter five.

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 (2000B: 118) found that 40% of his interview sample, and 19% of his survey sample of battered women delayed leaving their partners because of their pets (Flynn, 2000A: 170). Eighteen percent of Ascione's (1998: 125) sample delayed leaving, and the surveys in the Owen Sound and Hamilton shelters found that 48% had delayed leaving (Davies, 1998: 2). These large variations may be due to the sample size and/or sample selection, which tends not to be addressed in the presentation of the research results.

The final area of animal abuse and human interpersonal violence that has been focused upon is in redefining animal abuse as part of a continuum of family violence. Research has established that in families where one form of abuse is present, there are likely other types of abuse and victims. For instance, it has been recognized for some time that where partner or child abuse exists, the other form of abuse often coexists (Lacroix, 1999: 63). Partner battering is an excellent predictor of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of the women's children (Handwerker, 1998: 200). Within a sample of 1000 battered women, child abuse was present in 70% of the cases. An additional study, in which abused children were sampled, found that 60% of the children's mothers were also abused (Lacroix, 1999: 63). These children may be abused by their mother, their father/mother's partner, or both. Several studies have found that abused women are more likely to abuse their children (Lacroix, 1999: 63). One study found that women are eight times more likely to abuse their children when they are abused themselves (Adams, 1994B: 22). According to Statman (1990: 5), one third to one half of all batterers also abuse the children, and Adams (1994B: 22) reports that some have estimated that as high as 80% of batterers abuse the children. As well, the severity of the partner battering is related to the severity of the child abuse.

In addition to woman battering being related to child abuse, research has established that many women are abused while they are pregnant: one out of twelve, or 8% of women, are battered while pregnant (Statman, 1990: 4). Health Canada reports that this number is actually as high as 21%. In fact, it is estimated that 40% of women are first abused during their first pregnancy (Department of Justice Canada, 1995: 16). Messerschmidt (1993: 147) explains that a patriarchal man, in addition to being threatened by sexual competitors, may also perceive a fetus as a threat to his partner's

loyalty. Pets may also be perceived as a threat to a woman's loyalty, which is addressed in Chapter seven.

Research now indicates that animal abuse is also highly interrelated with other forms of family violence. There is a high percentage of threats against animals and animal abuse in cases of woman battering, ranging from 46.5% to 80% in various studies, as previously discussed. As well, animal abuse is commonly found in families where child abuse occurs, and vice versa: DeViney, Dickert and Lockwood (as cited in Lacroix, 1999: 66), report that in their sample of homes where physical child abuse had occurred, 88% of those with pets also reported animal abuse by at least one member of the family. In Britain, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals found that 83% of those families with a history of animal abuse had also been identified by Social Services as at risk for child abuse and/or neglect (Anderssen, 1999: A19). Perhaps even more disturbing is the fact that animals are not only being abused by adult male abusers, but are also being abused by the victims of family violence. As previously mentioned, Quinlisk (1999) found that 54% of the children that witnessed animal abuse subsequently engaged in it. Another study found that 32% of women whose partner had threatened or abused the pets reported that their child was abusing the pets as well (Boat, 1999: 84). Additional research in these areas, and into the relationship of sibling and elder abuse with animal abuse, is warranted.

Loar (1999: 66) outlines some valid criticisms of the research conducted thus far on the relationship between animal abuse and interpersonal violence. First of all, most of the studies are retrospective in nature, which may lead to distorted findings because information tends to be forgotten or distorted over time. However, it would appear that there is no alternative due to the area under investigation. Secondly, very few of the

studies define animal abuse, and they do not provide evidence of the severity, frequency, or chronicity of the abuse. This limitation identified by Loar is particularly evident in the research into the relationship between family violence and animal abuse: there is a great deal of ambiguity surrounding the number of women whose pets were physically abused and the number that were threatened. Relatedly, these studies fail to address the frequency and the severity of the abuse. In contrast, this research project provides the much needed insight into the frequency and severity of the abuse, and clearly distinguishes between the forms that the abuse against the pets takes.

One criticism of this body of research overlooked by Loar is that there is a tendency to treat animals strictly as tools to measure risk and lethality, and not as victims. Solot argues that

The published research on animal abuse - unlike the published research on any other form of violence - is motivated almost without exception by the connection to human violence...Even as we validate the connections among all forms of violence we must take care not to invalidate each separate form. The woman who beats her children, the teen who rapes his girlfriend, and the adolescent who sets a cat on fire all need attention because they have committed horrific acts of violence against other living beings - not because someday they might do something worse (as cited in Flynn, 2000A: 174).

Within this research project, the pets are considered legitimate victims and are addressed as such. In the subsequent chapter it is argued that animal abuse in the context of family violence should be analyzed as a form of family violence and that animals must be included as victims.

Summary

It is evident that the four areas of focus in the animal abuse and interpersonal violence research delineated by Arkow (1999) are highly interrelated: the incidence of

animal abuse is high in situations involving partner battering and other forms of family violence. In such situations, the children involved may witness the abuse, and even engage in animal abuse and other types of violence themselves. These four areas of focus can therefore converge in what is often considered the most violent and dangerous societal institution - the family (Barrett and McIntosh, 1991). It is at this point of convergence that this study is located, and since this first wave of research has demonstrated that a relationship exists between animal abuse and family violence in particular, this research project addresses the subsequent questions of how and why these forms of abuse are related. As demonstrated in this chapter, only Flynn (2000B) has addressed these crucial questions, but he failed to provide us with much information. It is demonstrated in the subsequent chapters that this study uses and builds upon the animal-related research reviewed in this chapter, and makes a unique contribution to this immature and fertile field of research. This study thoroughly addresses the questions of how and why animal abuse and family violence are related, as perceived by abused women. All of the samples used in the previous research in this area have been comprised of women residing in shelters. The sample used in this study is unique in many ways, which is fully discussed in the fifth chapter, and it provides increased insight into this phenomenon. Additionally, this study provides significant and useful information on the relationship between the human and animal victims of family violence, which has been overlooked in previous studies. It is demonstrated in the next chapter that this study also draws upon and contributes to the field of family violence.

CHAPTER 4

The Multiple Victims of Family Violence

Animal abuse has been acknowledged as a component of domestic violence by some scholars in the field. The abuse of animals is commonly included in classifications of forms of abuse perpetrated by batterers against women, in abuser intervention programs, and in assessments of batterer risk and potential lethality. Although animal abuse has been recognized as a part of domestic violence in these ways, animals have been included in the family violence literature as measurement tools or property, not as legitimate victims of family violence. In 1980, Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz prophetically stated "As a result of political and social action, violence toward women and children, the traditional **underdogs** in family life, has now been termed a social problem of high priority. **This should not, however, be taken to mean that there are no other types of family violence**" (1980: 11-12, emphasis mine). Straus and his colleagues were alluding to the presence of 'husband abuse' and sibling abuse. Over twenty years later, however, attention is beginning to be paid to likely the most vulnerable underdogs in the family - the pets. It is argued herein that rather than being considered as measurement tools or property, animals should be treated as legitimate victims of family violence, their abuse in this context should be analyzed as a distinct form of family violence, and the numerous forms of abuse that can be perpetrated against animals in the family should be recognized.

Acknowledging animals as legitimate victims and analyzing their abuse as a form of family violence is appropriate because, as demonstrated in the second chapter, pets are typically viewed as family members. Additionally, it is demonstrated in this chapter that animals and women have been constructed in very similar ways. It will also be

demonstrated in this chapter and subsequent ones that for ideological and practical reasons, animals can be used to control other members of the family in many ways. For these reasons, theories of domestic violence are most suitable for analyzing animal abuse in the context of family violence. The current approaches to family violence, however, are typically victim-specific and certainly species-specific. In order to explain the coexistence of animal abuse and forms of family violence, a comprehensive approach to family violence that includes animals as legitimate victims is necessary and is proposed herein. Subsequently, the forms of abuse that are perpetrated within the family, and the theories of battering behaviour that may explain the coexistence of these forms of abuse are examined, and the theoretical limitations of this research are explicated.

The Inclusion of Animal Abuse as a Component of Family Violence

Animal abuse has been classified by many researchers as a form of woman abuse. For instance, Anne Ganley includes the destruction of property and pets as a specific form of woman battering (Adams, 1995: 59; Stordeur and Stille, 1989: 20). Other systems of abuse classification include animal abuse as a form of another type of abuse. For instance, DeKeseredy and MacLeod (1997: 5-6) classify hurting or killing pets as a form of psychological abuse. They also include threats against pets as a form of verbal abuse. Jacobson and Gottman (1998) delineate four types of emotional abuse, and the first category of emotional abuse they distinguish is the destruction of pets and property. They describe how an abuser in their sample used this form of emotional abuse to instill fear in his partner: "These fits not only maintained Vicky's fear even in the absence of violence toward her, but his beating of the dog created vivid images of his capacity for disregarding the pain of living things" (Jacobson and Gottman, 1998: 149). They also describe how an attack on one woman's cat by her partner was the 'last straw' incident

for her, and prompted her to leave him. The most violent batterers in their sample tended to behave 'sadistically' toward pets and frequently used the destruction of property as an intimidation tactic. They found that after a period of time some batterers decrease their use of physical violence and supplement it with emotional abuse, because it scares their victim just as much as physical violence and assists them in maintaining power and control, without taking the risk of formal sanctions.

In a Health Canada document entitled "What is Emotional Abuse?" (1996), it is stated that emotional abuse is based on power and control, and that emotional abuse can take the form of rejecting, degrading, isolating, corrupting or exploiting, denying emotional responsiveness, and terrorizing. Although animals may be used in the other forms of abuse, animal abuse is included here under the rubric of terrorizing. Terrorizing is described as "inducing terror or extreme fear in a person; coercing by intimidation...Examples: forcing a child to watch violent acts toward others family members or pets; threatening to leave, physically hurt or kill a person, pets or people she/he cares about; threatening to destroy a person's possessions..." (Health Canada, 1996: 1).

Animal abuse has also been acknowledged as a form of woman abuse in abuser intervention programs, such as the Duluth Model. In 1984, with the input of battered women, Pence and Paymar (1993) designed the Power and Control Wheel (please see Johnson, 1995 and Pence and Paymar, 1993 for an illustration of this intervention tool). Pence and Paymar (1993) include animal abuse as a tactic of power and control under the 'using intimidation' category on the wheel. Animal abuse is listed in this category just after 'smashing things' and 'destroying her property'. It is worth noting that while they include animal abuse in the wheel, it is not explicitly addressed in their book on the

description of the model, not even in their elaboration on, and discussion of, intimidation tactics. It will be demonstrated in the discussion of the results of this study that animal mistreatment is used not only to intimidate, but it can be found throughout the wheel.

In sum, many domestic violence researchers, such as those discussed above, now recognize that pet abuse is frequently part of woman battering. However, in these abuse classification systems, animal abuse is typically grouped with the destruction of property, and the abuse of pets is acknowledged because it is a way to victimize the female victim, not because the pets themselves are victimized. While it is important to acknowledge that animal abuse is a form of woman battering that can be just as devastating as other forms of battering, it is just as imperative not to view animal abuse solely as a form of woman battering. Animals ought to be recognized as legitimate victims of abuse, both in the absence or presence of additional forms of abuse. A multi-victim approach to family violence would facilitate the recognition of animals as family members and as legitimate victims of abuse, and draw attention to the necessity of separating pets from the category of property. Categorizing animals with property further devalues the animals, as well as the impact that their abuse has on other members of the family.

Animal abuse is also frequently included as a factor in assessing risk and predicting lethality. For instance, Meadows (1998) identifies pet abuse as one of the six factors to take into consideration when evaluating lethality. He states that "Batterers who kill or torture animals, especially those owned by a partner, are likely to kill or maim a loved one. Many serial killers (eg. Jeffrey Dahmer) exhibited those behaviours as children. They are good indications that they have no respect for life" (1998: 60-61). The other factors that he delineates are threats of homicide or suicide, fantasies of homicide or suicide, presence of weapons, obsessiveness about partner or family, and rage. Other

assessment tools take many more factors into account such as the physical abuse of a child, substance abuse, repeated destruction of property, and even threats toward pets (Straus, 1993: 593-5), not just physical animal abuse. Jones and Schechter, Statman, Adams, and Burstow also include animal abuse as a factor to be aware of when assessing dangerousness (Adams, 1994B: 40-42: 75).

The treatment of animals is used in risk assessments in less traditional ways as well. Some guides for battered women also include a man's involvement in sport hunting as a warning factor of abuse. Adams argues that sport hunting should not be overlooked: "Abusers are often cruel to animals. Many kill them for sport, and this should not be minimized" (1994B: 147). Animal abuse may also be a predictor of self-defence killings by battered women. In her interviews with women who had killed their partners in self-defence, Browne (as cited in Adams, 1994A) found that many women reported that their partner had executed animals, and "These incidents often seemed to the women as a representation of their own death" (Adams, 1994A: 148). For many of these women, the execution of their pet resulted in the loss of their last hope.

While it is useful to include the abuse of animals in assessments of risk and lethality, it is important to acknowledge that by doing so animals and their abuse are being used as tools for measuring the risk posed to others. Again, the risk posed to the animals is not at issue: they are not regarded as legitimate victims of family violence. Therefore, although animal abuse has been acknowledged as a component of family violence in this way, it has been done in an anthropocentric manner. This anthropocentric and utilitarian view of animal abuse in the context of family violence is exemplified by Loar's (1999: 127) statement that "Indeed, the role of the animal in troubled families may be to elicit intervention."

The Need for a Comprehensive Approach to Family Violence

Family violence has been studied for many years, and according to Laster (1995: 62-63), despite decades of research, there remain extremely divergent notions about its causes and the nature of the perpetrators. He argues that what is needed are forms of analysis that will lead to a comprehensive description of the dynamics of the violence, as well as an explanation of it. In order to do so, it will be necessary to analyze the violent situation holistically, wherein attention is paid to the actions, motivations, intentions and consequences. The current approaches to family violence are fragmented and far from holistic. Accordingly, Dobash and Dobash (1998A: 15) state that "Contexts, motivations, intentions, and outcomes are all vitally important, although research on these issues remains underdeveloped." Not only have the dynamics of the violence received less attention than the attempts to explain the causes of it, but the approaches to family violence have been decidedly victim-specific. Most research has focussed on one victim - either a woman or a child - failing to acknowledge commonalities between the abuse of different categories of victims and leaving out the discussion of victims such as pets.

For instance, Breines and Gordon (1983: 507) argue that since woman abuse and child abuse in particular have different histories, they should be treated separately. However, they overlook the extensive commonalities that these forms of abuse share in contemporary society. Finkelhor (1983: 18) discerns one extremely important commonality across forms of abuse within the family: they are rooted in an uneven power dynamic. Those with the power within the family are able to victimize the less powerful.

Additionally, an abusive relationship is not simply contained to that dyadic relationship. Rather, others can become involved through scapegoating and triangulation,

whereby a conflicted relationship between two people is expanded to include a third party. Generally it is the weakest and most vulnerable triangulated individual that becomes the scapegoat (Pillari, 1991: 5-18). As previously discussed, Cain (1985) discovered in her research that pets are frequently triangled into conflict within the family. Thus, it would appear that approaches that focus on one victim of family violence, or on one relationship in the presence of others, risk overlooking critical information.

Accordingly, Lacroix (1999: 63) argues that the foundation for a comprehensive or holistic solution to family violence can and should be established by examining the similarities between and relationships among the victims, which she asserts can include women, children, and pets. She argues that such a comprehensive approach would be "...superior to the current approach because it is based on the acknowledgment that acts of violence against family members do not occur in a vacuum. It forces us to focus on the repetitive nature of the violent acts and enhances our detection of the perpetrator's chronic violent behaviour" (Lacroix, 1999: 66-67). In addition to permitting the detection of chronic abuse, expanding the category of legitimate victims would likely increase the probability of early identification and intervention with at risk families (Lacroix, 1999: 64).

A further benefit of a comprehensive analysis of family violence which examines the causes and dynamics of familial violence as well as all of the victims of it, is that the focus may be more easily placed on the perpetrator: Lockwood (1999: 6) asserts that it is often easier for individuals to consider animal victims as unquestionably innocent because they are generally not perceived as provoking or deserving abuse.¹⁵ Therefore, including animal victims in family violence analyses might reduce victim blaming and

redirect the attention to the perpetrator. Accordingly, Lacroix (1999: 62) argues that paying attention to the abuse of animals "...is not a distortion of priorities but rather a recognition that the solution to a violent society does not lie in the characterization of the victims but in the characteristics of the offenders." Recognizing animals as legitimate victims of family violence also draws attention to their needs as victims, to the bond between human and animal victims of family violence, and to the need to protect the family pets if other forms of family violence are identified.

Forms of Abuse Perpetrated Within the Family

It has been argued herein that animal abuse should be recognized as a form of family violence. As such, the theorized forms of abuse that may be perpetrated against human family members also apply to the abuse of animals within the family. It will be demonstrated in the presentation of the research results that the abuse of animals within the family is not limited to physical abuse. Rather, neglect, and verbal, emotional, psychological, financial, and sexual animal abuse are apparent. It is necessary to briefly examine various categorizations of forms of abuse that exist in the family.

Anne Ganley distinguishes between four forms of battering, which includes physical battering, sexual abuse, the destruction of property and pets, and psychological abuse¹⁶ (Adams, 1995: 59; Stordeur and Stille, 1989: 20). The first three categories are self explanatory. The final category of psychological abuse is accomplished with emotional or psychological weapons, and includes suicide threats, threats of violence, and threats to harm others.¹⁷ DeKeseredy and MacLeod (1997: 5-6) do not include a 'destruction of property and pets' category in their classification system. However, their classification system contains four categories not included in Ganley's model: neglect, verbal, financial, and spiritual abuse. They explain that they distinguish between

psychological and verbal abuse, even though verbal abuse is considered a type of psychological abuse, because verbal abuse is often the first sign of abuse. On the Power and Control Wheel, Pence and Paymar (1993) delineate several behaviours exhibited by batterers, including minimizing and denying blame, and using emotional abuse, isolation, children, male privilege, economic abuse, coercion and threats, and intimidation, in addition to physical and sexual violence.

It is appropriate to elaborate upon the area of what is differentially termed emotional and psychological abuse, which is sometimes overlooked. Jacobson and Gottman describe emotional abuse as "...the use of verbal and other nonphysical forms of aggression to intimidate, subjugate, and control another human being. It is not only mean and cruel behaviour that serves to consolidate power and maintain fear. It gains its strength through past and present violence and the ever-present threat of further violence" (1998: 148). All abuse has psychological consequences, thus it is stated that all abuse includes elements of emotional abuse.

In Statistics Canada's 1993 survey on violence against women, 35% of ever-married or common-law women reported that their partner was emotionally abusive. Eighteen percent of these respondents reported that there had been physical abuse in conjunction with the emotional abuse. Many of the women who had been physically abused reported that the emotional abuse is more debilitating than the physical abuse (Health Canada, 1996: 2-4). Jacobson and Gottman (1998: 12) acknowledge that emotional abuse by itself is damaging. However, they assert that once a woman has been physically abused, emotional abuse can be especially frightening and controlling because it can be used instead of physical abuse by reminding her that she can be physically victimized at any moment. They (Jacobson and Gottman, 1998: 23) state that emotional

abuse can serve the same controlling function as physical abuse, and they (Jacobson and Gottman, 1998: 148) found in their research that severe emotional abuse is more likely to prompt women to leave their partners than severe physical abuse. This information contradicts the notion that nonphysical forms of abuse are less harmful than physical abuse.

Theorizing the Coexistence of Animal Abuse and Other Forms of Family Violence

As discussed in the first chapter, one of the implicit lay assumptions about the coexistence of animal abuse and other forms of family violence and family violence in general, is that abuse occurs when an individual 'loses control'. That is, the individual loses control over his anger and behaviour. Therefore it makes intuitive sense that animal abuse and violence against women and children coexist because if an abuser loses control and becomes violent, he may take his anger and frustration out on a proximal pet. The general public is more likely to perceive abuse as resulting from a loss of control than as an instrument used to gain control. Klein et al (1997: 53) report that people are very reluctant to perceive abuse as instrumental. Additionally, in Greenblat's (1983) sample, most individuals indicated that they believe that men abuse because they are crazy or because they lack control over their tempers and are frustrated. This belief is also apparently held by battered women about family violence. Walker found that "From the women's point of view, the violent pattern which occurred in their relationships was initiated by the batterer because of his inability to control his behaviour when angry" (Walker, 1983: 32).

Similarly, in scholarly research stress and frustration have been used to explain family violence. Farrington (1980: 103) introduces a general stress model to explain domestic violence and argues that some responses to stress produce mastery over the

stressor and consequently the stressor no longer presents a problem for the individual. However, for some, the stressor situation is not resolved by the response, and the discrepancy between the stressor and response capabilities will subsequently increase the level of stress. Farrington (1980: 108) asserts that unlike the instrumental use of violence through which the individual is attempting to gain mastery, violence also occurs as a consequence of problems of tension and frustration which result from the unresolved stress situations. He concludes that domestic violence is more likely to occur as this irrational acting out due to frustration.

Conversely, some researchers, such as Gelles, have argued against this notion that batterers lose control and assert that it is a convenient explanation of abuse:

‘In situations where status can be lost by being violent, individuals employ accepted vocabularies of motives or ‘accounts’ to explain their untoward behaviour. Thus, a violent father or mother might explain their actions by saying they were drunk or lost control. Parents who shared the same desire to batter their children might nod in agreement without realizing that a real loss of control would have produced a much more grievous injury or even death’ (Gelles as cited in Greenblat, 1983: 257).

Correspondingly, Marsden (as cited in Greenblat, 1983: 257) asserts that individuals reflect on the costs of their actions before they act violently, and that they are less likely to use violence if they think that it will be unsuccessful. As demonstrated by the Power and Control Wheel (Pence and Paymar, 1993), animal abuse has also been theorized (albeit in a limited way) as a tactic used by abusers to achieve power and control.

Richard Gelles, Murray Straus, and Suzanne Steinmetz (Gelles and Straus, 1988: 35; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980: 193) acknowledged in the 1980s that pets may be abused in the home due to an imbalance in power. They claimed that there were likely chain reactions of power confrontations in the family whereby a man would victimize a

woman, who would victimize a child, who would victimize a sibling, and the youngest child would subsequently victimize a pet. They assert that family members exert power and control over family members more vulnerable than them. They did not, however, discuss the possibility that the most powerful member of the family (the man) could use the weakest member (the pet) in his pursuit of power and control over the other family members.

Feminist analyses of family violence stand in direct opposition to the notion that abusive male behaviour is the result of irrational acting out. Feminists assert that male violence within the family must be located within society: the use of violence is a strategy for achieving power and control, and is tolerated because individuals who grow up in a patriarchal society are conditioned to believe that it is appropriate (Duffy and Momirov, 1997: 136-137). In a patriarchal culture, masculinity is socially constructed around notions of power and domination, with femininity constructed as its antithesis. Duffy and Momirov (1997: 124) argue that the hegemonic conception of masculinity is that which fulfills the needs of the social order. Thus, under capitalism, the hegemonic construction of masculinity is one of an unemotional, rational, competitive, and aggressive individual. Due to this social construction of masculinity, some men believe that they are the foundation of the family and consequently have the right to exercise power over the individuals within it.

Dobash and Dobash (1988: 57) explain that many forms of violence against women are shaped by patriarchy, but in the family men have unchecked rights and privileges. Individuals within households, including women, children, servants, and slaves, have all been constructed as the property of men, and have been legally considered as such at points in history (Dobash and Dobash, 1992: 267; Straus et al, 1980: 8), and

animals still are. These individuals are vulnerable to being victimized by the men who are favoured by the imbalance of power and backed by a culture that has historically sanctioned violence against these groups.

Research supports this notion that family violence is related to male dominance within the home. Straus et al (1980: 190-193) assert that violence is used within the family as a mechanism to control the behaviour of other family members. They found that the abuse of a woman by her partner is much more likely in a home in which there is an imbalance of power in the man's favour, and the least amount of violence occurs in democratic families. They assert that abusive behaviour is employed by the most powerful individual within the family as a means of legitimizing his/her dominant position. Dobash and Dobash (1988: 57) also found that an imbalance of power wherein the male is dominant is significant in the causation of abuse.

In a subsequent study, Dobash and Dobash (1998B: 144; 1992: 4), found four themes of arguments between couples wherein abuse is perpetrated, within which the dimensions of power and control are apparent. The themes include the following: men's possessiveness and jealousy, disagreements and expectations regarding domestic work and resources, men's sense of their 'right' to punish their partners for perceived wrongdoing, and the importance to men of maintaining or exercising their power and authority. They conclude that it is evident that abusive men do not believe that women have the same rights as men, even to do something as basic as disagreeing, because it is a threat to his authority. Violence is subsequently used because "Authority is at stake" (Dobash and Dobash, 1998B: 153). Similarly, Yllo (1993: 58) asserts that partner battering is an attempt on the part of a man to reassert the gender dichotomy and his dominance when his fear of being equal to his female partner accumulates.

Consequently, Dobash and Dobash assert that "...violence is used as a means of obtaining an end, as a product of men's power over women, and is deeply rooted in men's sense of masculinity" (1998B: 164). They point out that although male culture is variable, aggression and violence are generally valued (Dobash and Dobash, 1998B: 164).

Dobash and Dobash (1998B: 168) explain that masculinity is reaffirmed through the outcome of violence, such as silencing one's partner, not through the violence itself. The desired outcome may be achieved without engaging directly with the individual whom the outcome is directed at. Therefore, the abuse of a woman can extend to people or things beyond the woman, which is illustrated by the Power and Control Wheel. There are several sites where a batterer's control may become concentrated, such as using loved ones, coercing, threatening, and/or assaulting those close to her, and defiling her through sexual assault (Sev'er, 1997: 581). The abuse of a woman can be accomplished through the use of others in the family, as these sites illustrate.

In both of the aforementioned perspectives, animal abuse would be explained in instrumental terms: either as a way to release stress and frustration, or as a tool used in the abuse of others. It is important to recognize that animals are abused in and of themselves, however, they are also abused in domestic situations due to their construction as family members, and as similar to women and inferior to men. From a social constructionist approach, one gains valuable insight into the similar ways in which women and animals have been constructed, as opposed to men. Examining these parallel constructions, which has largely been undertaken by ecofeminists, is important to understanding why both women and animals are victimized by men. Ecofeminists have exposed that sexism and speciesism are related, and is evidenced in language and several oppressive dualisms, including the distinctions between culture and nature, public and

private, and mind and body.

Noske (1989: 40–41) explores the culture/nature dualism that exists in contemporary society, and she explains that humans consider themselves unique and vastly different from non-human animals. Humans are believed to belong to an entirely different order, the realm of culture, whereas other beings are considered simply as nature. However, membership in the realm of the cultural has not been equally afforded to humans: men have been associated with culture, whereas women have been largely identified with nature. As a result, sharp boundaries have been drawn between humans and animals, and women and men: “The emphasis on differences between humans and animals not only reinforces fierce boundaries about what constitutes humanness, but particularly what constitutes manhood. That which traditionally defined humans from animals - qualities such as reason and rationality - has been used as well to differentiate men from women” (Adams, 1994A: 11). Nature, along with those who are associated with it, has become the other and lesser.

Similarly, the public/private distinction prevalent in society has relegated women to the private domain and men to the public domain. This distinction has functioned to keep family violence in the private realm and out of the public or political realm, and has created what Barrett and McIntosh (1991: 56) term a ‘little family prison’. Therefore, the rights to private property and privacy can be invoked by those who abuse women, children, and/or animals within the family (Beirne, 1997: 332), to protect their behaviour. The mind/body dualism has also functioned as a rationalization of the oppression of women because they have been associated with the bodily or the biological, while men have been associated with the realm of the mind. Animals have also been equated with their bodies, which is evidenced in the common notion that they lack souls or minds

(Adams, 1998: 325-326). Adams asserts that

Whereas biology is no longer acceptable for determining human value, it remains acceptable for determining animals' less-than-human value. The role of biology as a central determining factor in the perpetuation of the human/animal dualism is similar to and interrelated with the way that privacy perpetuates the man/woman dualism: that is, biology and privacy provide alibis for abuse (1994A: 157).

These dualisms illustrate that a relationship does exist in contemporary society between speciesism and sexism.

This union between speciesism and sexism is manifest in language. Language can be used by men to dehumanize women and therefore to distance themselves from, and establish themselves as superior to, women and animals. For instance, women are often described as cows, bitches, chicks, and various animal metaphors for female genitalia are common (Beirne, 1997: 327). Like women, animals have also been sexualized in many ways. For instance, the word 'pet' suggests commonalities between sexual behaviour, such as fondling and caressing, and animals (Adams, 1994A: 145).

The result is that animals and women have been constructed as 'Others', and perceived as means to fulfill the needs of others (Haraway, 1990: 219). For instance, women and their bodies are viewed instrumentally. Petchesky (1987) exposes how pro-life advocates treat women as instruments, as incubators and as a means of producing and delivering babies, while denying value to the pregnant woman in and of herself. Additionally, Haraway (1990: 211) discusses the close connection between female sexuality and instrumentality, and how the body is viewed as a 'utility-maximizing machine'. Animals and their bodies are also viewed instrumentally. According to Gruen (1993: 61), "The categories 'woman' and 'animal' serve the same symbolic function in patriarchal society. Their construction as dominated, submissive 'other' in theoretical

discourse (whether explicitly so stated or implied) has sustained human male dominance. The role of women and animals in postindustrial society is to serve/be served up; women and animals are the used.” Through the objectification of women, children, and animals, their subjectivity is removed; consequently, using and abusing them is made less guilt-provoking for the abuser.

Just as the abuse of women is an outcome of a patriarchal society, the abuse of animals is the outcome of an anthropocentric society, and both appear to be mutually reinforcing. Therefore, the power and control and the social constructionist explanations of the coexistence of these forms of abuse are necessarily related. The social constructionist explanation was not tested in this research. However, it does constitute a critical part of the ideological basis for the instrumentalization of animals.

In addition to the ideological bases for the instrumentalization of animals, practical reasons exist for instrumentalizing them in the abuse of others. Consistent with the anthropocentrism prevalent in contemporary society, animals are considered chattel, and the sanctions for abusing them are minimal, and are rarely enforced. Consequently, one practical reason for instrumentalizing the abuse of animals to harm others is that the legal risk of doing so is minimal. In addition, animals are suitable instruments because they are generally small, trusting, dependant, and accessible. Animals may also be particularly powerful instruments in the abuse of others because people often form emotional attachments with animals and feel an acute sense of responsibility for their well-being, which may be especially profound in the case of battered women and children. Thus, threatening or harming an animal may be a very effective way to harm and promote submissiveness in others, keep others from disclosing the abuse in the family, and prevent individuals from leaving the abusive individual. Consequently, due

to a batterer's desire to establish his power and control, and the social construction of animals as dramatically inferior to men, yet similar to women, animal abuse may be related to family violence because animals are instrumentalized by male batterers to achieve power and control in the sites Sevrer (1997) outlines.

Arguably, in instances of family violence within an anthropocentric society, believed to be motivated by a desire for power and control, it is not only possible but probable that pets would be used as instruments in the abuse of others. Pets may be physically used as instruments to harm others through forced acts of bestiality (Adams, 1995; Beirne, 1997), or by training an animal, such as a large dog, to inflict harm upon others. More commonly, however, the abusive individual may act, or threaten to act, directly upon the body of the animal, using the actual or threatened abuse of the animal instrumentally to gain power and control over others in the family.

Despite the explanatory potential of the aforementioned theories, they leave out factors such as psychological disorders, the intergenerational transmission of abuse, and substance abuse, and tend to oversimplify the battering dynamics through implicitly assuming that all batterers belong to a uniform category. It is quite common in the family violence literature to encounter lists of characteristics that batterers reportedly share. For instance, Meadows (1998: 55) claims that batterers are characterized by a high level of dependence on their partner, they have a fear of intimacy and loss of control, they exhibit higher levels of suspicion and paranoia, they exhibit high levels of hostility, depression and anxiety, and they tend to deny responsibility for their actions and blame the victim. While the characteristics outlined may be shared by some batterers, such lists tend to lead to the impression that batterers are identical. According to Jacobson and Gottman (1998: 36), "Although there is still a tendency for professionals to talk about batterers as if they

were all alike. there is growing recognition that there are different types of batterers.” They argue that there are at least two subtypes of batterers. Using animal metaphors, they label these two batterer subtypes Cobras and Pitbulls.

Jacobson and Gottman (1998) observed that 20% of their sample of batterers actually experienced a decrease in their heart rate as their verbal aggression increased. They labeled these men ‘Cobras’, because they are calm and focused prior to attacking their victims. In addition to experiencing a decreased heart rate as they become increasingly verbally aggressive, Cobras are more emotionally aggressive than the others toward their female partner from the beginning of exchanges. As well, they describe the Cobras as hedonistic and impulsive. Cobras typically perpetrate abuse to stop their partner from interfering with their need to get what they want. Additionally, they are said to lack remorse and empathy, to be incapable of engaging in intimate relationships, and are likely to have had abusive and chaotic childhoods. Whereas the Cobras’ desire for control is motivated by a desire for immediate gratification, the Pitbull is controlling due to a fear of being abandoned (Jacobson and Gottman, 1998: 29-39).

Consistent with these battering subtypes, the dynamics of these respective abusive relationships are different. The Cobra is characterized by calm ferocity, but some can be explosive. The authors point out that it may appear that some men lose control, however, battering is actually a way to gain control, which Cobras do through their ferocious, cold, and calculating method of abuse, and at times even through their explosiveness. Pitbulls, conversely, achieve control through constantly scrutinizing and isolating their partners, and through mind control. Due to the Pitbulls’ constant feeling of not being loved and their fear of abandonment, there is continued fighting through emotional abuse and violence. With Cobras, conversely, the fighting ends when his control is reestablished

(Jacobson and Gottman, 1998: 68-76).

Cobras are said to be more severely violent, much more likely to threaten their partner with a knife or gun, and more emotionally abusive. Cobras are also more violent than Pitbulls outside of the home, and are more likely to qualify for the diagnosis of a personality disorder, particularly 'Anti-Social personality Disorder'. Individuals with this disorder tend to have long histories of impulsive criminal behaviour, and typically have a history of lying, stealing, fire-setting and cruelty to animals (Jacobson and Gottman, 1998: 93-7). Jacobson and Gottman (1998: 149) report that "The most violent batterers in our sample also tended to behave sadistically toward pets and relied heavily on destruction of property as an intimidation tactic." Thus, Jacobson and Gottman's observations are useful because they demonstrate that there are important differences between batterers, and that different types of abusers may employ animal abuse for different reasons.

In the current study, however, one can only speculate about the typology of the batterers using the accounts of their actions provided by their abused partners. Jacobson and Gottman (1998) had the benefit of observing the couples in their sample interacting, of physiological measures of heart rates, and psychological measures of personality disorders. Clearly, interviews with only the female partners of abusers cannot obtain this information and ensure its validity and reliability. Gelles (1999: 38) cautions that serious reliability and validity problems exist with attempting to construct profiles of abusers from data obtained from their partners because they may not have access to, or knowledge of, specific information. It is important to acknowledge that there were some explanations for the coexistence of animal abuse and family violence that could not be examined in this research.

First of all, as mentioned, psychological information about the abusers could not be reliably gathered from their partners. However, there is some evidence that personality traits and disorders may be related to some forms of family violence, as demonstrated by Jacobson and Gottman's (1998) finding that Cobras are more likely to be diagnosed with a personality disorder. O'Leary (1993: 23) asserts that the patriarchal nature of society is a critical factor in family violence, but it is not a sufficient risk factor. He (O'Leary, 1993: 15) argues that the fact that the majority of men do not become abusive, even when the structural variables are in favour of them doing so, illustrates that individual or psychological theories must be taken into consideration. He posits that a continuum of violence exists, from mild to severe aggression. Across this continuum, from verbal abuse to murder, some factors are believed to remain constant, such as the batterer's need to control, the misuse of power, and jealousy. He asserts that additional factors are present for physical abusers, such as the modeling of physical aggression, being abused as a child, aggressive personality styles, and alcohol abuse. Finally, he asserts that personality disorders, emotional lability, and poor self-esteem are factors in severe aggression. His research establishes that as the level of physical aggression increases, it is more likely that some personality style, trait, or disorder is present in the abuser. However, he does concede that with milder forms of aggression, the role of psychopathology is small (O'Leary, 1993: 20-26).

As previously stated, there are methodological reasons why this study could not examine psychological theories to explain the coexistence of animal abuse and family violence. Additionally, there is reason to believe that such theories would not have had much explanatory value for this study. O'Leary (1993) admits that psychological explanations of abuse are more useful for severe cases of abuse. The majority of the

sample for this research described what O'Leary (1993) would define as verbal aggression and physical aggression, not severe aggression or murder. Additionally, according to Duffy and Momirov (1997: 131), psychological explanations are unable to account for 90% of cases of family violence, which would not leave much room for psychological theories in the relatively small sample used for this research. These theories would be more useful for larger samples with more seriously aggressive individuals, where the abusers themselves can be accessed. Even if psychological theories could have been examined in this research, Straus et al (1980: 5) maintain that such theories are insufficient. They (Straus et al, 1980: 202) explain that they left psychological characteristics out of their study because "...we believe that violence in the family is more a social problem than a psychological problem. Granted psychological factors play a part, but we felt it most important to focus on what we believe to be the root and fundamental causes." The three factors that O'Leary identifies as being present throughout the entire continuum of violence - the need to control, the misuse of power, and jealousy - are focused upon in this research as the root and fundamental causes.

An additional factor which O'Leary (1995) raises, which must be acknowledged here, is abuse in the family of origin as an explanation of abusive behaviour. Others have determined (Gelles, 1999; Straus et al, 1980; Walker, 1983) that this is a significant factor. For instance, Straus et al (1980: 100-122) found that men who had witnessed abuse between their parents are three times more likely to be abusive, likely because they model this behaviour. Additionally, they found that the more physical punishment an individual experienced as a child, the more likely s/he is to be abusive with their partner and children. However, individuals who were not abused nor witnessed abuse, also become abusive. Therefore they conclude that the family may be the main training

ground for abusive behaviour, but the overabundance of violence in society also plays a part. Gelles (1999: 40) argues that although evidence suggests that the relationship between experiencing and witnessing abuse in the family of origin is strong, it is not the most important explanatory factor of battering.

An effort was made in this study to obtain information from the participants about their ex/partner's childhood experiences. As anticipated, this did not result in much useful information because while some women reported that their ex/partner grew up in an abusive home, many others reported that they did not know much about his childhood, and they knew even less about his witnessing or perpetrating animal abuse as a child. It is necessary to acknowledge, however, that learning to use aggression against family members and even animals, likely explains some of the coexistence between animal abuse and family violence. However, power and control still likely play an important role. As Straus et al (1980: 195) explain, an individual may use violence to control others because he observed a role model do so.

An additional factor which O'Leary (1995) puts forth is alcohol abuse. Gelles (1993B: 182-183) asserts that this substance abuse explanation of family violence is one of the most commonly believed explanations of family violence in the popular and professional literature. It is claimed that alcohol and other drugs serve to release inhibitions and violent tendencies. Gelles (1999 and 1993B) argues, however, that with the exception of amphetamines, the use of alcohol and drugs do not cause violence, and he provides substantial evidence for this assertion. For instance, he points to cross-cultural evidence suggesting that the effect of alcohol is related to what people believe the effects are, not to any actual disinhibiting effects. He also cites a study which found that only 20% of a sample of abusers arrested were intoxicated. Finally, he cites numerous

methodological problems with the research that has found a causal relationship, such as the variable definitions of terms, and the use of clinical samples. He concludes that the influences of substances are affected by numerous other factors. Again, there would have been methodological difficulties with ascertaining reliable information on substance abuse from the participants in this research, and it does not appear that this factor holds much, if any, explanatory potential.

Given the volume of the theorized and researched explanations of family violence, taking them all into account in one study would be problematic. Accordingly, Straus et al (1980) admit that they were unable to include every variable in their research, and in some cases they did not feel that inclusion was warranted. The methodology used for this research does preclude the inclusion of some theories of family violence, such as those just discussed. The methodology used for this research must not be mistakenly perceived as a hindrance to exploring animal abuse in the context of family violence. Rather, battered women were sampled for this research because it was felt that they would provide the most reliable and detailed information about the abuse of pets within the context of family violence, and whether it appeared expressive or instrumental. The alternatives of sampling children or batterers are problematic. There are pragmatic difficulties with accessing children, not all families have children, and they may not be able to provide much information. It was believed that male perpetrators of the abuse would also be a poor source of information, which has been substantiated in two studies. Adams (1995: 74-75) reports that male perpetrators rarely discuss their abuse of animals, even those who discuss the physical and sexual abuse they have perpetrated against humans. Additionally, Dobash and Dobash (1998B: 160) found a statistically significant discrepancy between women and men's reports of his threats toward the pets, with the

men failing to report such behaviour. This may arguably be attributed to the fact that abusing and threatening pets exposes the deliberateness of an abuser's actions.

Indeed, in examining something as complex and dynamic as family violence, it is inevitable that every possible contributing factor will not be addressed in each piece of research. In responding to a critic of his research who listed factors that his research did not investigate, Straus explains "Everything on such a list needs to be investigated, but not by every scholar" (Straus, 1991: 181). Sometimes methodological trade-offs are necessary so that a researcher can focus on an area that they feel is fundamental, and other areas are left for others to subsequently investigate. Straus et al (1980: 202) also admit in their research that "to explain violence in the family fully, one should consider more than we were able to study." Similarly, every possible explanation could not be investigated in this study, and in order to fully understand animal abuse in the context of family violence, it is necessary to explore more than what I was able to in this modest exploratory study.

Summary

Although there are limitations to what this study could examine, it is demonstrated in the subsequent chapters that the areas focused upon in this research provided a wealth of information. Through the generalized stress model of family violence, the coincidence of animal abuse and other forms of family violence would be attributed to expressive violence due to frustration. While this approach is easily comprehensible and assumed by many, some important factors are overlooked. The parallel constructions of women and animals, as opposed to men, and the pervasiveness of anthropocentrism and the use of animals as instruments are not taken into consideration. Ignoring anthropocentrism in an analysis of the relationship between animal abuse and family violence is tantamount to disregarding patriarchy in an

examination of woman battering. With the generalized stress model, both social structures are overlooked. It will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters that the assertion that pets are abused due to frustration or generalized aggression, is a gross oversimplification.

In order to explain why animal abuse coexists with other forms of family violence, it is important to incorporate the parallel ways in which women and animals have been socially constructed, and the instrumental ways in which they are viewed. Using a feminist analysis of domestic violence through the power and control approach, it is hypothesized that animal abuse and family violence coexist because animals are used as instruments in the batterer's desire to demonstrate his power and establish control. The feminist theory of domestic violence, however, is not without its drawbacks. Gelles (1993A: 43) argues that feminism cannot be applied to other types of abuse such as child abuse, sibling abuse, and elder abuse. It is appropriate to acknowledge that Gelles' criticism is more applicable to earlier rather than current feminist theorizing. In addition, it is asserted that feminism focuses on patriarchy to the exclusion of other social structures (Gelles, 1993A: 42). Importantly, the feminist theory does not examine the heterogeneity of masculinities and account for why most men are not violent (Duffy and Momirov, 1997: 131), especially given all of the benefits of violent behaviour which the feminists outline. Jacobson and Gottman (1998) remind us that family violence cannot be oversimplified to the point that all batterers are perceived as being the same. They argue that there are different types of batterers, and that they behave in different ways and for different reasons.

Despite these limitations, the feminist perspective is extremely useful in examining animal abuse as part of the interrelated forms of patriarchal violence, which is

demonstrated in the subsequent chapters, and it is arguably essential to understanding the abuse of animals as part of family violence. However, as Yllo explains, understanding violence requires more than feminism: "My point is that feminism is a necessary, but not sufficient lens for understanding violence, which is a challenge to all of us to deepen our views" (Yllo, 1993: 60). In the subsequent chapters it is demonstrated that while some of these aforementioned theoretical 'lenses' make important contributions to explaining why animal abuse and family violence are related, gathering information on the coexistence of these forms of abuse through the eyes of the women who witnessed and experienced it, is the truly necessary lens, through which the views presented by these theories are deepened.

CHAPTER 5

Research Methodology

Prior to discussing the experiences of the research participants, it is necessary to examine the methodology used in conducting this research, including its advantages and limitations. In this chapter, the design of this study is explained, and consideration is given to the reasons for the use of this specific design. Attention is also paid to the characteristics of the unique sample used for this research. The processes of data collection and analysis undertaken in this study are also outlined, and the chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations involved in this research.

Research Design

According to Gubrium and Holstein (1997: 14-15), typically the 'what' research questions are at the forefront of examinations in a topic area. After the 'what' questions have been addressed, the 'how' and 'why' questions emerge. As discussed in the third chapter, research has been conducted into 'what' types of abuse are related and has revealed that animal abuse is disproportionately present in situations where violence exists within the family (Ascione, Weber and Wood, 1998; Boat, 1999; DeViney, Dickert and Lockwood as cited in LaCroix, 1999; Flynn, 2000A; Flynn, 2000B; LaCroix, 1999; Quinlisk, 1999). This research project was designed to address the 'how' and 'why' questions, which Gubrium and Holstein (1997: 14) argue are specifically amenable to qualitative analysis. Accordingly, this research project is situated within the qualitative paradigm, and a brief examination of some of the integral assumptions of the paradigm will elucidate why it is specifically suitable for this research project.

Qualitative methodology was considered preferable for this project for numerous reasons. First of all, qualitative research focuses mainly on the process, instead of the

outcomes of a situation. Secondly, qualitative researchers are concerned with the meanings attributed to experiences. Additionally, qualitative research facilitates description of the process and meanings. Finally, qualitative research is inductive, whereby the researcher develops concepts and theories from the collected data (Creswell, 1994: 145). Qualitative methodology was therefore useful for this research because the objective was to describe animal abuse in the context of family violence, as well as the meanings attributed to this form of abuse.

Qualitative methodology is considered particularly useful in 'immature' areas of research (Morse as cited in Creswell, 1994: 146). The immaturity of this area of research was established in previous chapters. The inductive process, which allows categories and theory to emerge from the data, is useful in this respect. This inductive approach facilitates rich context-bound information which leads to patterns or theories that may assist in explaining a phenomenon (Creswell, 1994: 7), and was particularly useful for this project.

A paucity of research in an area does not necessarily mean that research is warranted. Rather, there must be a need to explore and describe the phenomenon and to develop theory (Morse as cited in Creswell, 1994: 146). Specifically, the fact that the questions of how and why animal abuse and family violence coexist have been inadequately addressed does not necessarily prove that there is a need to explore these questions. However, there are several indicators that a need does exist to explore and develop theory in this area. Research in this area is warranted because gaining a greater understanding of the coexistence of animal abuse and family violence may facilitate the identification of families at risk and perhaps the prevention of human and animal abuse. Research in this area also provides information that can be used to reduce the number of

women who delay leaving the abusive environment due to fear for their pets' safety. Developing a greater understanding of the connection between animal abuse and other forms of family violence also provides insight into family violence and animal abuse in general, and perhaps the prevention of both.

According to Morse (cited in Creswell, 1994: 146), a characteristic of a qualitative research problem is that the nature of the area of interest may not be amenable to quantitative measures. Indeed, addressing the questions of how and why animal abuse and other forms of family violence coexist through quantitative measures would not be appropriate because the dynamics and context of the abuse would not be adequately elucidated. In order to examine how the forms of abuse coexist and to expose the patterns which might explain why they coexist, in depth and detailed information, not quantification, is necessary. Additionally, the nature of this information is very sensitive, and gathering the data requires more rapport-building than afforded by quantitative measures, such as a survey. Regarding the use of quantitative methods, Dobash and Dobash explain that

While this is a powerful technique when used in the investigation of certain issues, it has inherent limitations when applied to the study of complex phenomenon such as violence...it can provide little explanatory information regarding the processes associated with a sensitive problem such as wife beating (1988: 58).

Consequently, it was determined that the questions of how and why these forms of abuse coexist would more adequately be answered by a qualitative method which permits thick description and a more thorough examination of the reality of these experiences.

The method or design within the qualitative paradigm that was used to guide the data collection, analysis, and writing of this research is the grounded theoretical approach. This approach, developed by Glaser and Strauss, is termed 'grounded theory' because it is

a method for discovering theory from data (Turner, 1981: 225). It is important to acknowledge, however, that while the intention was to allow theory to emerge from the data collected during the research process, the preexisting notions and theories discussed were useful in illuminating aspects of the research and in constructing interview questions, and arguably could not be ignored.¹⁸

Tesch (1990: 84-89) divides qualitative research into the following four categories: research that studies the characteristics of language, research that aims at the discovery of regularities, research that seeks to discern meaning, and research that is based on reflection. Within this categorization, grounded theory is designated as a form of research that aims at the discovery of regularities. Tesch then subdivides this category into research in which connections among elements are sought, and research in which the identification of regularities are sought in the form of patterns, and she places grounded theory into the former grouping. Tesch's subdivision of this category is useful because a distinction is made between research that simply seeks patterns, and research that attempts "...to find out more than just what is: they also try to find out *why* it is" (Tesch, 1990: 85). Research that addresses the question 'why', which includes grounded theory, facilitates theorizing. As well, Tesch (1990: 89) explains that the second subgrouping, which only seeks patterns, including phenomenology, action research, and critical/emancipatory research, never establishes conceptual categories for organizing data before the data is collected, but instead derives them from the data. This specific research project falls under the first subgrouping, therefore, the grounded theoretical approach is employed in this research because the goal is to generate theory and explain why animal abuse and family violence are related. As previously discussed, in addition to permitting categories to be derived from the data, some conceptual categories were inevitably

established prior to data collection.

The grounded theory approach is not simply appropriate for this research for abstract reasons. rather there are also two major pragmatic advantages to this approach. The first pragmatic advantage of using grounded theory is that it facilitates the development of theoretical accounts that conform to the situations. Consequently, the theory is likely to make sense to and be useful for the individuals in the situations being studied. It is sincerely hoped that this research will be useful in assisting both the human and non-human victims of family violence, and it was undertaken and is presented with this objective in mind. A second advantage of the grounded theoretical approach is that the theories which it generates will likely reflect the complexity of the studied situation, which enhances its appeal and utility (Turner, 1981: 226-227). This particular advantage of grounded theory became notably evident while collecting and analyzing the data. It became increasingly apparent that the initial assumptions with which I entered the field were far too simplistic, and that the experiences of the participants were much more complex and nuanced, which will be elaborated upon shortly.

Research Sample

The research sample was comprised of twenty six women who had been, or currently were in, abusive relationships. Participation was limited to women who had a pet while they were with their abusive partner. In this sample, the most commonly reported pets were cats, with twenty two out of twenty six women reporting having had at least one cat while with their partner, with a total of eighty four cats 'owned' by the entire sample. Dogs were the second most commonly reported pet, with twenty women reporting having had at least one dog, and with a total of forty dogs 'owned' by the entire sample. Less common pets such as fish, birds, rabbits, hamsters, Chinchillas, lizards, a

rat, and a raccoon were also reported. The sample included both women whose pets were abused and those whose pets were not abused, thus facilitating a comparison between these disparate experiences.

The initial research design included interviewing only women residing in shelters for battered women in Southern Ontario. Numerous women's shelters were contacted by telephone and were asked if they would consider participating in the research project. Further to Creswell's (1994: 148) suggestion that institutional proposals be sent to potential research sites, the five shelters that indicated an interest in the study were sent an institutional proposal in January of 2000 (please see Appendix A for the institutional proposal). After a substantial amount of follow up, only one shelter formally agreed to grant access to their clients for this research. The interviews were conducted strictly at this one shelter from May until September of 2000, and had resulted in only nine interviews over this five month period. It is believed that a major contributing factor to this low response rate was that the shelter and its staff were simply overwhelmed by the number of shelter residents at this specific point in time, and that the research project understandably had to be given lower priority. It is believed that the influx of shelter residents during this time can partly be attributed to the fact that the summer tends to be a busy time at shelters because many women choose to leave while their children are out of school for the summer, thus minimizing the disruption to them. Additionally, during the summer of 2000, in Southern Ontario there was a spate of highly publicized cases of women being brutally attacked, some fatally, by their current or estranged partners. It was reported that shelters in the region noticed significant increases in requests for their services at this time due to the heightened awareness (Cryderman, 2000: B1; Procuta, 2000: A1).

I felt that the nine interviews conducted up to this point were not sufficient to constitute all of the data for the study. It was not simply an issue of quantity, but also one of quality: these nine interviews did not provide the detailed information necessary for this study. Several of these women appeared to be quite protective of their partner during the interviews, likely due to the fact that they had only recently left their partners, many for the first time. Likely as a result, only one of these nine women indicated that her ex-partner had physically abused the pets. Therefore, there was insufficient information in these nine interviews to explain to suggest how and why animal abuse and family violence coexist. As a result, an attempt was made to access abused women who were not residing in a shelter. Access was granted to women participating in a support group in a different city in Southern Ontario, and a total of six interviews were conducted there. Access was also granted to women through a support group in the city where the shelter interviews were conducted, and nine interviews were conducted through this support group. Two additional interviews were conducted at the shelter during this time period. Thus, out of this sample of twenty-six participants, eleven interviews were conducted with women currently in the shelter, and fifteen interviews were conducted with women through the two support groups.

Conducting interviews with women through the support groups permitted access to women who had been separated from their partner for a significant amount of time, thus generally allowing for more distanced and detached accounts of the dynamics of their family and the treatment of their pets. The length of time that the women had been separated from their partners ranged from five months to three and a half years, with the average time of separation being fifteen months, as opposed to separations of only days or weeks for women in the shelter. As well, three women who were still involved with their

abusive partner at the time of the interview were also accessed through the support groups. This study is therefore different in a critical way, and arguably more representative, than the few studies discussed in chapter three that have been conducted on the relationship between animal abuse and domestic violence, because they collected their data strictly from women residing in shelters.

Data Collection

The data was collected from the research sample through face-to-face, semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted until it was felt that sufficient information had been collected, which resulted in a total of twenty six interviews over an eight month period. There were several reasons for using interviews to collect the data. First of all, obviously abusive family environments are not amenable to direct observation. As well, interviews permit the respondent to provide historical and background information, which was recognized as important for this research. Interviews also allow the researcher to maintain a certain degree of control over the questioning. Drawbacks to using the method of interviewing also exist, and must be acknowledged. For instance, interviews provide indirect information through the view of the respondent, in this case the abused woman; they do not occur in the natural setting; the researcher's presence may affect the responses of the participants; and there is a discrepancy between how articulate and perceptive people are (Creswell, 1994: 150). Despite these drawbacks, however, it is believed that interviews provided the greatest depth of information possible about the coexistence of animal abuse and family violence.

The decision was made to interview battered women because it was felt that they would be the best source of information about familial violence and animal abuse for the reasons outlined in the previous chapter. It is appropriate to acknowledge that what these

women reported may have been affected by their feelings toward their partner at the time, as well as their own trauma, confusion, and recall difficulties. Despite these factors, however, it is felt that this method of data collection was the most effective way to gather the information required for this research.

The interviews conducted were semistandardized, which permitted asking a number of predetermined questions, which is not possible in unstructured interviews (please see Appendix B for the interview schedule). The semistandardized structure also allowed the participants to digress and elaborate, and permitted probing beyond the given answers. This structure also encouraged the participants to interject information that they felt was relevant. A standardized interview structure, which is appropriate for research where the researcher has a clear idea of what he or she wants to uncover (Berg, 1998: 60-61), clearly was not appropriate for this research due to the lack of research and information on the coexistence of animal abuse and family violence. The interviews, which tended to last approximately one hour, were audio tape recorded and later transcribed.

Data Analysis

The goal of the data analysis is to condense and interpret the data (Berg, 1998: 223; Creswell, 1994: 153). In accordance with the grounded theoretical method, data analysis was used to produce concepts that fit the data. First, the process of open coding was undertaken in an effort to identify themes and patterns. Upon the completion of open coding, the categories were individually analyzed, in some cases dropped or combined, and categorized according to their explanatory power or potential. Certain coding categories were chosen as what Tesch (1990: 86) terms the 'core' categories, and were further developed.

In discussing data analysis, it is important to address the question of the confidence that one can have in the accuracy of the patterns she or he suggests during data analysis. In order to make the interpretations made during data analysis more transparent, several steps have been taken. When making inferences about patterns or latent meanings, excerpts from the interviews are provided so that others can examine the interpretation. Berg (1998: 152, 256) suggests that the best way to convince the audience of a given pattern or observation is to present the proportion or frequency of the pattern or observation. He argues that this "...is not a reductionistic, positivistic approach, rather it is a passport to listening to the words of the text, and understanding better the perspective(s) of the producer of these words" (Berg, 1998: 225). However, he does suggest that magnitudes not be presented as findings in themselves (Berg, 1998: 226-227). Additionally, it is likely that some (Stern, 1994), would consider using frequencies and proportions in the presentation of data as antithetical to the grounded theoretical method. This 'divergence' is noted, and in the presentation of the research results, extreme caution is taken in the presentation of descriptive statistics. Additionally, as effort has been made to detail the experiences of all of the participants in the applicable places. Presenting the data so that the way in which it was analyzed is accessible to the reader is considered imperative. Accordingly, excerpts from the interviews as well as pertinent proportions and frequencies are provided where useful.

In addition to the data analysis being open to the reader, verification measures have been undertaken. Berg (1998: 158) argues that it is important for qualitative researchers to address the concepts of validity and reliability. However, in qualitative research, these concepts may be addressed differently than the traditional positivistic manner: "...the researcher seeks believability, based on coherence, insight and

instrumental utility and trustworthiness through a process of verification rather than through traditional validity and reliability measures" (Creswell, 1994: 163). Accordingly, the necessary steps for verification have been taken in this research project, and a discussion of these steps is appropriate.

Berg (1998: 158) defines internal validity as accurate information that matches reality. In order to ensure internal validity, or Guba and Lincoln's (1989: 236) parallel criteria of credibility, the data received in the interviews was 'fed back' to the respondent immediately for elaboration or correction, further to Guba and Lincoln's (1989: 244) suggestion. A consistent effort was made to make the interviews as thorough as possible, and to confirm what the respondents were communicating during the interview.

Due to the nature of qualitative research, external validity or generalizability may be limited. Consequently, Guba and Lincoln (1989: 241) propose the parallel criteria of transferability. In order to enhance the degree of transferability of this research, further to Guba and Lincoln's (1989: 241) suggestion, thick description is used in the presentation of the research results. Thick description entails the extensive description of the circumstances, such as the time, context, and culture, under which the hypotheses in the research were supported. However, thick description does not make research entirely transferable. Therefore, as Creswell (1994: 158-159) recommends, the limitations to generalizing from this research must be addressed.

First of all, the sample used in this study was comprised of women who had either left their partner and were staying at a shelter, or who had decided to join a support group for abused women. How generalizable this research is to women in abusive relationships who have not decided to leave or to seek help through a support group is unknown. Secondly, there may be important differences between the women who were in the

research sites and agreed to participate in this research, and those who declined to participate. Therefore, perhaps this research cannot be generalized to those women who chose not to participate in my research, or those who would choose not to. Additionally, the research was conducted in two moderately sized cities in Southern Ontario. The degree to which this research may be generalizable to cities of different sizes, more Northern cities in Ontario, other provinces, countries or cultures is questionable. As well, it is important to acknowledge that twenty five out of the twenty six women interviewed were Caucasian. It is unknown how generalizable this research would be to women of other ethnic or racial backgrounds. Finally, all of the women interviewed were in heterosexual relationships. It is unclear what the results of this research would be if undertaken with same sex couples. Therefore, while caution is urged in generalizing these results to populations other than the one specifically studied in this research, further research is also urged in order to gain a greater understanding of the relationship between animal abuse and family violence within these potentially disparate populations.

Clearly, as Creswell (1994: 159) points out, there are limitations to replicating qualitative research due to the uniqueness of each context. One way to enhance the reliability of the research, or the parallel criteria of dependability, is to make the researcher's assumptions, values, and biases clear (Creswell, 1994: 159). Perhaps the best way to understand my values and biases is to begin by explaining why my interest in this area of research was stimulated. I became increasingly familiar with feminist thought as an undergraduate student, and as a self-identified 'feminist', the issue of domestic violence is both personal and political for me. Additionally, as a volunteer at a no-kill animal shelter, I have become too frequently acquainted with abused animals. As a graduate student considering topics for my thesis research, the relationship between

family violence and animal abuse interested me personally and academically. Like many, I have strong values and feelings surrounding the issue of family violence, and additionally, I have strong feelings regarding the abuse of animals, perhaps more so than most individuals. Admittedly, due to the aforementioned factors, this research has been emotionally very difficult for me to conduct. There were times when I was quite upset by what I heard during the interviews, and I think that I was able to maintain my composure. However, I cannot be sure that the respondents were entirely unaware of my feelings of shock, disbelief, and horror. I certainly cannot claim that I was entirely objective, but I also did not enter the field under that pretense.

Additionally, reliability can be enhanced by thoroughly tracking and reporting any methodological changes or changes in constructions that may occur throughout the research process (Guba and Lincoln, 1989: 242). As previously mentioned, one methodological change that occurred in this research was the shift from using participants at a shelter, to interviewing women from support groups. As well, the original intent was to interview women who were separated from their partner. Due to the inclusion of women in support groups, however, three women in the sample were with their partner at the time of the interview, which adds another dimension to this research.

Additionally, some interview questions were modified as the participants assisted me in recognizing my own mis/pre-conceptions, and some questions were added to the interview schedule as new topics were brought up by interviewees. After the first interview, in which the interviewee's response to numerous questions was a simple 'no', the questionnaire was amended so that any negative response would be followed up with several probes. For instance, the question regarding whether or not the participant's partner hunted, to which the first interviewee responded 'no', in subsequent interviews

was followed up with 'Why do you think he didn't hunt?' and 'Did he hunt as a child?' As well, single questions that addressed both the abuser and his partner's beliefs or behaviour were subsequently divided into two questions, in an attempt to gain more accurate information about both of them individually, instead of as a unit. For instance, a question that had asked whether the participant or her partner dislike certain animals, was separated into a question addressing her dislike of animals, and his dislike of animals.

Throughout the eight months that the interviews were conducted, questions were also added, such as questions addressing how important the pet is to the family, where the pet sleeps, whether there were changes in the family after getting the pet, why the participant came to the facility or support group, his and her feelings surrounding vegetarianism, his participation in sports and entertainment involving animals (in addition to sport hunting), whether he is nicer to pets when others are present, how the pets react when there is stress in the home, whether he accused her of bestiality, and whether the pet stayed inside or outside of the home.

Questions related to the abuse of the participant and the abuse of the children were modified to differentiate between physical and other forms of abuse, because the interviewees assisted me in recognizing that the blanket term 'abuse' was too ambiguous. I had also wrongly assumed that all of the women in the shelter would have experienced some form of physical abuse. In fact, three of the eleven women interviewed in the shelter did not identify themselves as having been physically abused. Several women in fact pointed out to me that the non-physical forms of abuse were worse than the physical. In retrospect, I had also assumed that abusers were all the same, or quite similar. I quickly realized how inaccurate this assumption was and began to recognize that despite several similarities, the abusive partners of the participants were not only different from

each other in several ways, but also acted quite differently with different members of their families, different pets, and social groups. Additionally, due to my own experiences, I had assumed that the participants' pets would spend at least some time indoors. Conversely, some women indicated that their pets were kept strictly outdoors. Therefore, my own constructions and assumptions surrounding the notions of 'abuse', 'abusers', and 'pets' shifted as the interviews progressed. This was also my first time conducting interviews and in comparing earlier and later interviews, my inexperience in the beginning is evident. As the interviews progressed, I became much more proficient and comfortable, and my increasing comfort level and proficiency likely affected the comfort level of my interviewees and the information they were willing to provide me with. Thus, there are several factors to keep in mind in considering the reliability of this research.

Ethical Considerations

As with any research project, the most important ethical issue is that the participants give voluntary and informed consent. Due to the different research sites used, voluntary and informed consent was ensured in different ways. At the shelter research site, once the woman was deemed to no longer be in a state of crisis and if it had been ascertained at intake that she had a pet while she was with her partner, she was given a letter outlining the research (please see Appendix C). Those interested in participating were asked to advise a residential counselor, who then contacted me. I would then speak with the woman and schedule a convenient time to meet with her at the shelter. The women interested in participating were advised that they could cancel the appointment at any time. The shelter required that I have the interviewees sign consent forms prior to the interview (please see Appendix D). The consent forms were kept together in the shelter away from the women's files, to ensure that if her file was

subpoenaed, there would be no evidence that she had participated in the study.

At the support group located in the same city as the shelter, the counselors distributed a letter outlining my research (please see Appendix E), and those interested in participating wrote their phone number on the paper along with times that they could be reached, and whether or not it was safe to leave a message. Those women interested in participating in the research were called and convenient interview times were scheduled with them. These women were also advised that they were able to cancel the appointment at any time. These interviews were held in secured meeting rooms and offices at the shelter.

At the other support group, I was asked to give a verbal overview of my research. Three women indicated their interest in participating at these meetings, and were subsequently interviewed in an office in the building where the meetings were held. Through word of mouth three other women heard about the research and advised their counselor that they were interested in participating, and I was subsequently advised. I contacted these women and scheduled convenient times to meet with them, and at their request, these interviews were held in their homes.

Consent forms were not required through the support groups. In order to ensure voluntary and informed consent in all cases at the time of the interview, the interviewees were all informed of the following information, which was read directly off of the interview schedule cover sheet to them (please see Appendix F for the interview cover sheet): that the audio tape recorder would be on for the interview, but that it could be turned off at their request; that participants may experience emotional discomfort due to some of the questions; that participants are free to decline to answer any questions; that participants can stop the interview at any time; and that the information given by

participants is kept confidential, aside from any cases of undisclosed child abuse, which I would have a legal obligation to report. After being given all of this information, all participants were asked if they wanted to proceed with the interview, and their consent to do so was audio tape recorded as part of the interview, and subsequently included in the transcription. All of the interviewees consented to be interviewed.

A further ethical issue, especially in qualitative research, is the assurance of confidentiality: "In most qualitative research...because subjects are known to the investigators (even if only by sight and a street name), anonymity is virtually nonexistent. Thus, it is important to provide subjects with a high degree of confidentiality" (Berg, 1998: 48). Further to Berg's (1998: 48-49) recommendations, in order to provide a high degree of confidentiality, pseudonyms are used for all interviewees and their family members (including the pets), and any elements that might indicate the participant's identity, such as city names, have been either excluded from the research results, or altered to protect confidentiality. In using the signed consent slip method at the shelter, a record of the participants' names was created. To protect confidentiality, this record was securely kept, with access to it severely limited.

According to Berg (1998: 35), for a research project to be ethically sound and viable, the potential benefits must outweigh the potential harms. Due to the protection of the interviewees' confidentiality, the requirement of voluntary consent, and the ability of the interviewees to withdraw at any time, this research posed little foreseeable harm to the participants. Some of the potential harms or costs included the inevitable disruption to the clients and the staff of the shelter and the support groups, however, every effort was made to minimize such disruptions by conducting interviews at convenient times and by maintaining open communication with the staff. The impact that the research had on the

participants included the loss of their time spent in the interview and the discomfort involved in reliving their experiences of abuse. It is believed that these few foreseeable costs were greatly outweighed by the potential benefits of this research, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters. In fact, many of the interviewees indicated that they were glad that this type of research was being conducted and were happy to participate. This sentiment was best expressed by one participant, who stated: "The staff come to me the other day wanting to know if I'd be interested in answering questions for you, and I thought it was good. I'm an animal lover. I've had them all my life. And if you can get some good out of this, then go for it." Indeed, it will be demonstrated in the subsequent chapters that some good has come, and will hopefully continue to come, from these women bravely sharing their stories for this research.

Summary

As demonstrated in this chapter, steps were undertaken to ensure the informed and voluntary consent of the participants and their confidentiality. In the subsequent chapters, the results of this research are presented in a manner which assures the continued confidentiality of the participants. The validity and reliability of this research, examined in this chapter, must be taken into account in reading the research results and attempting to generalize from this research. It was demonstrated in this chapter that an effort has been made to make the data analysis in the following chapters transparent and clear, and that this research was designed to maximize the information obtained while minimizing the costs to the participants. In the subsequent chapters the wealth of information that was accessed using this methodology is presented.

CHAPTER 6

An Analysis of How Animal Abuse and Other Forms of Family Violence Coexist

In this chapter, how animal abuse and other forms of family violence coexisted in the lives of the participants in this study is described. The frequency of animal abuse reported by the participants, and the various forms that animal abuse can take are discussed. Additionally, it will be demonstrated that companion animals can be extremely important to women who are victimized by their male partners. Reasons for this strong bond and some of the consequences of it are also discussed. The objective of this chapter is to adequately contextualize the incidents of animal abuse and to provide the reader with sufficient background for the subsequent analysis of why animal abuse coexisted with family violence in certain cases in this sample.

Overview of the Sample and the Forms of Abuse Reported

Eighteen of the twenty-six participants in this research identified themselves as having been physically abused, and the estimated number of times that they had been physically abused ranged from one relatively minor incident over a ten year relationship, to over seventy-five incidents within a one and a half year relationship. The other forms of abuse experienced by the participants included verbal, emotional, financial, psychological, and sexual abuse.

The age of the participants ranged from twenty-one to fifty-two years of age, with the mean age of the participants being thirty-seven years. The age of the participants' ex/partners ranged from twenty-four to sixty-one years, and the mean age of the participants' ex/partners was forty and a half years. Twenty-two of the participants were mothers, and on average they had two children. The age of the children ranged from eleven months to thirty years. Only eighteen of the participants had dependant children

at home with them.

Information was gathered about the occupations of both the participants and their ex/partners. Sixteen of the participants reported that they did not work outside of the home at the time of the interview. Of the participants who did work outside of the home, one reported working as a hairdresser, two worked as cashiers, two worked in the medical field, three were in clerical positions, and two were employed in the food industry. Seven of the participants reported that their ex/partner was a general labourer, and one was a retired general labourer, two reported that their ex/partner worked in the tool and die industry, one worked in retail, two worked in the gaming industry, five of their ex/partners were in managerial positions, four were on disability, one was a drug dealer, and three were unemployed at the time of the interview.

When asked about their ex/partner's level of education, two participants reported that they were unsure, three reported that their ex/partner had an eighth grade education or less, eight reported that their ex/partner had more than an eighth grade education but had not graduated from high school, five reported that their ex/partner had graduated from high school but did not have further education, four reported that their ex/partner had taken some college courses, two women reported that their ex/partner had taken some university courses, and two women reported that their ex/partner had a university degree.

Of the three participants who were together with their partners at the time of the interview, two were legally married and one was living common-law. Of the twenty-three participants who were no longer together with their abusive partner at the time of the interview, one was divorced from her ex-partner, sixteen were legally married but separated at the time of the interview, and seven had been living common-law.

As illustrated in Table 6.1 on the following page, twelve women reported that their ex/partner had perpetrated what they would consider physical animal abuse against

Table 6.1 Forms of Familial Abuse Reportedly Perpetrated by the Participants' Ex/Partners

Name	Forms of Woman Abuse*	Forms of Child Abuse
<i>Women who reported that their ex/partner engaged in physical pet abuse:</i>		
Gina	Property Destruction	Physical Child Abuse
Laura	Physical Abuse (10 incidents)	Physical Child Abuse
Melissa	Physical Abuse (12-13 incidents)	Not Applicable
Noreen	Physical Abuse (over 10 incidents)	Physical Child Abuse
Olivia	Physical Abuse (over 75 incidents)	Physical Child Abuse
Penny	Physical Abuse (3 incidents)	Physical Child Abuse
Stacey	Emotional Abuse	Emotional Abuse
Rachelle	Emotional and Sexual Abuse	Physical Child Abuse
Theresa	Physical Abuse (10 incidents)	None Reported
Lindsay	Physical Abuse (1 incident)	Not Applicable
Vanessa	Emotional and Sexual Abuse	Not Applicable
Yvette	Physical (2-3 incidents)	Physical Child Abuse
<i>Women who reported that their ex/partner engaged in psychological animal abuse, but did not make verbal threats toward the pet or engage in physical animal abuse:</i>		
Kerri	Physical (4-5 incidents)	Not Applicable
<i>Women who reported that their ex/partner threatened to harm/kill the pet, but did not engage in physical animal abuse:</i>		
Kara	Physical Abuse (1 incident)	None Reported
Hannah	Physical Abuse (6 incidents)	None Reported
<i>Women who reported that their ex/partner engaged in animal neglect, but did not make verbal threats toward the pet nor engage in animal abuse:</i>		
Dana	Emotional and Financial Abuse	None Reported
Evelyn	Physical Abuse (5 incidents)	Not Applicable
Ingrid	Physical Abuse (3-5 incidents)	Physical child Abuse
Whitney	Physical Abuse (1 incident)	Not Applicable
<i>Women who reported that their ex-partner did not engage in physical animal abuse, animal neglect, psychological animal abuse, nor make verbal threats toward the pet:</i>		
Annie	Physical Abuse (3 incidents)	None Reported
Brittany	Physical Abuse (8 incidents)	None Reported
Carmen	Emotional Abuse	None Reported
Fran	Physical Abuse (8-9 incidents)	Not Applicable
Sarah	Physical Abuse (2 incidents)	None Reported
Erin	Emotional Abuse	None Reported
Jenna	Emotional and Verbal Abuse	Not Applicable

* These are the forms of abuse that the participants reported. Other forms may have been present (e.g., emotional abuse in conjunction with physical abuse). Included in parentheses are the participants' estimations of the number of physical abuse incidents.

the pets in the home. Additional participants indicated that their ex/partners had engaged in physical discipline which they did not consider animal abuse, and other participants indicated their ex/partner scared the animals in other ways, such as by chasing and stomping feet, without ever actually making physical contact with the animal. Two of the participants reported that their ex/partner had threatened to harm or kill a pet, but did not physically abuse the pet.

Eight out of the eighteen participants who reported being physically abused also reported physical pet abuse. If one adds the seven women who reported psychological pet abuse, threats to kill pets, and animal neglect, the result is that fourteen out of the eighteen women who were physically abused also reported some form of animal maltreatment. Thus, only four out of eighteen of those women who reported being physically abused reported that their pets were not harmed, threatened with harm, nor neglected. Exactly two-thirds of the twelve men who reportedly engaged in physical pet abuse had physically abused their partners. Additionally, six out of seven of the participants who reported psychological animal abuse, threats to harm, and animal neglect, but no physical animal abuse, were physically abused themselves. Four out of seven of those women who reported that their pets were not threatened, harmed, nor neglected, were physically abused. Therefore in this sample, those participants who were physically abused were more likely to report physical animal abuse, psychological animal abuse, threats to harm, and animal neglect, than those who were not physically abused themselves.

Eight out of the eighteen women with dependent children reported that their ex/partner had physically abused their children. Of these eight women who reported physical child abuse, seven also reported physical pet abuse by their ex/partner, and the

other woman reported that her ex-partner was neglectful with the pets. Nine of the twelve women whose pets were physically abused, had children, and of these, seven of the women reported that their ex/partner had physically abused their children. Only one woman reported that her ex-partner had physically abused the pets, but not her or her children. Her ex-partner was, however, emotionally abusive with her and the children, and the pets were utilized in this emotional abuse.

The two women who reported that their ex/partner had threatened to harm and kill their pet but had not actually physically abused the pets, reported that their children had not been physically abused by their ex/partner. The woman who reported that her ex-partner had psychologically abused her pet had been physically abused herself, and did not have children. Two of the four women who reported that their ex-partner had been negligent/neglectful but not physically abusive with the pets had dependent children, and one of these women reported that her ex-partner had physically abused her children. Of the seven women who reported that their ex-partner had not physically abused, neglected, tormented, nor threatened to harm their pets, five had young dependent children at home, and none of these five women reported that the children had been physically abused by their ex/partner. Therefore, in this sample, there is a very strong association between animal maltreatment and physical child abuse.

Making Demands, Making Threats, and Taking Action to Get Rid of the Pets

It is striking that fifteen out of the twenty-six participants in this study reported that their ex/partner had threatened to get rid of the pets or demanded that they do so, and it becomes even more so when one looks at the actual number of pets that were discarded. According to the participants, approximately fifty-four pets were gotten rid of, and seventeen went missing and were never found. The reactions of the participants to their ex/partner's demands and threats to get rid of their pets varied. Some women seemingly

did not take the demands or threats seriously. some complied and got rid of the pets. and others outright refused to do so. Patterns emerged with regard to which pets are more at risk of being disposed of. and how and why threats to do so are employed.

Several women already had pets when they met their ex/partners. and many of these women reported that their ex/partner demanded that they get rid of their pets. Some of these women's partners wanted them to get rid of their pets immediately. and others made the demand after a longer period of time. Both Hannah and Jenna's ex-partners demanded that they get rid of their pets before they moved in together. Jenna's children were quite upset when she got rid of their cats. and she clearly felt guilty for having done so: "I should have never gotten rid of them...I mean he had that much control. I didn't even think of my children. nothing...I told my children when we got them that they'd have them for life...They must have gone through a lot thinking about it. I was the bad guy. I got rid of them. but I had no control over it." A while after she and her partner moved in together. Jenna acquired two dogs. Squeaker and Honey. Before the dogs had bonded with her ex-partner and shown their devotion to him. he had wanted to get rid of them. She stood firm this time and reported telling him: "There's no way I'm getting rid of them." She also had the dogs registered in her name. so that legally he could not get rid of them. Hannah also had to get rid of two cats before she moved in with her ex-partner. She was angered when he brought a new cat home shortly thereafter to avoid an argument over his tardiness. because she had just gotten rid of her two cats against her wishes.

Kara was also upset when her partner brought a dog home after he had just convinced her to get rid of her eleven and eight year old cats. A while after Kara's partner moved into her apartment. he began demanding that she get rid of her cats. When she refused to do so. he began threatening to do it himself. Kara describes the threat he would make and her response: he would say. "'Next time you go out I'm getting rid of

these cats and you'll come home and they won't be here.' That's when he was in his really horrible moods. I'd say 'No you will not, you wouldn't do that-- You wouldn't do that to me. You would make sure that I could say good-bye to them or something. I know you wouldn't do that.' And he never did." He never did get rid of them while she was gone, and she did get to say good-bye to them, because she finally gave in to his demands and got rid of them. A short time later he brought a dog home, which upset her because she had just gotten rid of her cats.

Olivia also fought to keep her pets as long as she could. Initially her ex-partner moved in with her and her children. At first he did not say much about the pets, but after they had been together for some time he started demanding that she get rid of them. She refused to do so: "...I specifically told him when he moved in about the pets and that the pets were the kids and mine and they weren't going." He particularly disliked her daughter's cat, Gizmo, and was physically abusive with, and threatened to kill him. She said that her daughter feared for her cat's safety and so did she, however. Olivia had reassured her daughter, saying "...Don't worry, I'm not gonna let anything happen to the pets. I'm not going to get rid of them." Eventually, however, her children left and she had to move out of her home, and when she and her ex-partner moved he would not allow her to bring any of the pets with her. Instead they went to the local Humane Society.

Melissa also got her pets, Momma, the cat, and Buddy, the dog, before she met her ex-partner. Similarly, a while after her ex-partner moved in he began demanding that she get rid of her cat and dog. Specifically, he told her that she should have both of them put down. Melissa explains "...He just thought he'd come in and take over. I said 'No, this is my house, these are my pets, and if you don't like it you can leave.'" She noticed that her ex-partner particularly wanted her dog gone. He did not like the dog sleeping on the bed, and he began to make accusations about her engaging in bestiality with her dog.

which she thinks was another ploy to get her to get rid of her dog. After Melissa consistently refused to get rid of her pets, he began to threaten to get rid of them himself. He told her once that he had come close to getting rid of Momma Cat while she was gone, and that she was lucky that he had not done so. When she told him that he had no right to get rid of her pets, "...He just said 'I can do whatever I want.'" He also made threats to kill Momma Cat and her dog Buddy. Only Evelyn, Fran, and Ingrid had pets before they met their ex-partners that, to their knowledge, were not threatened, frightened, or mistreated by their ex-partners.

Gina and Lindsay's ex-partners entered their relationships with pets that they already had, and both women quickly grew attached to these pets. Gina reported that her ex-partner would threaten to take the pets and dump them off in the country. She said that this was a common threat that he would make when he was angry because things were not going his way. Despite his threats, she believed that he would not follow through with them and that he was just saying it to upset her. Lindsay's ex-partner did not threaten to get rid of his dog Hillary. Rather, he threatened to take the dog with him if they separated, which immobilized Lindsay: "In fact, that's why I stayed with him for a long time, 'cause he threatened to take her if he left, and that's why I stayed for so long." Almost immediately after they were married, Lindsay felt that she had made a mistake and was unhappy, which is when her ex-partner began making the threats. For nearly two and a half years her ex-partner successfully used the threat to take the dog if they separated to keep her in the relationship.

Four of the participants reported that their ex/partner had gotten rid of pets without their permission. Laura admitted that her memory of what transpired with her ex-partner was not perfect because she had "...blanked out a lot of this because of the abuse." However, she did recall her ex-partner getting rid of at least five cats. She remembered

that he and a friend of his had taken one of her cats and dumped it off at the beach, which she had found out about afterwards from his friend's wife. She said that she and her ex-partner would argue a lot when he wanted to get rid of a cat, and then one day the cat would disappear. Laura believed that her ex-partner had gotten rid of her cats because he did not want them to have attention from her, and she noted that he would do so just after she had gotten attached to the cat. Clearly, the most effective way to ensure that the cats would not detract from the attention that she gave him was to get rid of them.

While Vanessa and her ex-partner were together, he frequently threatened to get rid of the pets, which she says he did to upset her. He continued to do so after she had left him. Vanessa moved into an apartment and she could not bring the dog, Ebony, or the cat, Scooby III, with her, so they remained in the home with him. She described how her ex-partner used threats to euthanize the pets to maintain his control over her, even after they had separated: "[He] would say to me, 'I've got to put Scooby down, I've got to put Scooby down.' And just dangle that in front of me. And he knew that the animals were a real weak spot for me..." Eventually he got rid of Scooby III. He said that he had given him to someone, however, Vanessa clearly was not convinced:

He [Scooby III] was gone before I even knew, he told me after the fact. But he dangled that damn cat in front of me for so long, what he was going to do to it, you know, 'Gotta put it down, gotta put it down' and all this stuff. And then out of the blue he phones me up and said 'Oh, you know, the cats been gone for two weeks, I gave it away.' I cried, I cried my eyes out because I didn't know if I believed him or not.

At the time of the interview, Vanessa had stopped speaking to her ex-partner: it was too upsetting for her because he was still threatening to euthanize the dog.

Rachelle's ex-partner also frequently threatened that he was going to get rid of the pets to both her and their son, which Rachelle believed he had done to upset them. Upon

inquiring about the fate of one cat. Rachelle reported that the cat had simply disappeared. When subsequently asked where she thought the cat may have gone. Rachelle said that she believed that her ex-partner had gotten rid of some cats. Her response when asked how many cats had disappeared is both sad and startling: "More than ten...Yeah, like they would be there one day, and then the next day they were gone. And growing up on the farm, I know our cats used to disappear for like weeks at a time, and they'd always come home. Well, I'm still waiting for all of them to come home." She said that when she questioned her ex-partner about it, his theory was that someone had stolen the cats. Aware that they were average cats, of which there is an overabundance, Rachelle seriously doubted his theory and offered her own theory: "I think he used to take them and dump them." The cats that disappeared were considered 'her' cats. He did have two cats of his own, which comparatively lived with them for a long period of time. It does seem quite likely given the threats, the fact that his cats were around much longer, and the numerous disappearances, that Rachelle's ex-partner did get rid of at least some of her cats, as she suspects.

Stacey's family also went through numerous pets, although her ex-partner did not hide the fact that he was the one getting rid of them. Her ex-partner would tell her and the children that he was going to get rid of a pet. Additionally, Stacey did not try to stop him: "I didn't argue because I knew it was coming. That's why we never really got attached to the animals." Stacey actually did not want pets. Consequently, she says that when he would threaten to get rid of the pets, he did not say it to upset her. Rather, he would use threats to get rid of pets as a tool to manipulate their children. For instance, he would reportedly threaten to get rid of a pet if the children were not listening to him. Stacey's ex-partner had acquired and then gotten rid of numerous pets: so many, in fact, that when asked about the pets that they had had, Stacey replied "There's probably more

than I can count...We didn't have them long because he would get bored with them and then he would want something different....And then a few months later we'd get another one. then it would be gone. I think the longest we ever kept one was like maybe four or five months." When asked what the dog's names were, again Stacey honestly replied "Isn't that terrible? That's how quick they were in and out of our house...That's terrible. I can't. They were in and out so fast. I can't remember any of them." She estimated that over the ten years that she and her ex-partner had been together they had had six or seven cats and six or seven dogs.

The question that naturally arises is 'Why did Stacey's ex-partner keep getting pets?' Stacey maintains that it was because he was overly concerned with appearances. They had the perfect nuclear family, with one girl and one boy, and she said that they needed the perfect pets: one cat and one dog, even though he disliked cats and she disliked dogs. She indicated that he would get rid of the pets because he either grew bored of them or because the dogs that he trained to be aggressive, were not aggressive enough. A month or two after he had gotten rid of a pet, he would 'get the itch' and get another one. Stacey feels that the rapid turnover of pets in their home contributed to her children's separation anxiety. She explains that

...nobody can see how much it hurts inside, because there are no marks on the outside. But I know that, having two children that are ten and seven who suffer separation anxiety - because they're afraid you're gonna be gone, who do not sleep through the night - is wrong. And those fears are real to them, that I'm not gonna be there when they wake up, because you know what, those animals weren't there when they woke up.

The participants whose ex/partners demanded that they get rid of pets, threatened to do so themselves or actually did, demonstrated that the effects of threats to get rid of pets and actually having pets taken, can be quite profound, and must not be underestimated.

Threats to Harm the Pets

In addition to fearing that their pets would be removed, many women reported fearing for their pets' safety. Some women feared for their pets' safety despite the fact that their ex/partner had not explicitly threatened to harm the pet. For instance, Whitney reported that her ex-partner never threatened to harm their pets, which she thinks is because he was aware that she would report it: "He never came out and said 'I'm gonna wring that dog's neck.' I think he was too smart. He knows that I would have a few professionals that I just would have told that this is what he's threatened to do. And he was kind of sneaky..." According to Whitney, her ex-partner was too sneaky to make outright threats and he operated in more insidious ways, which will be elaborated upon in the subsequent section. Similarly, Yvette reported that her partner's threats against their pets had become much less common since they both entered counseling, which she suspects is because he knows that now she would report it to the counselors, and she thinks that he is trying to win her favour. She did recount incidents in the past when her partner had threatened to kill the pets.

Some participants reported hearing their ex/partner threaten to kill a pet when the pet had done something in particular that made him angry. Hannah said that their cat would defecate in inappropriate places and her ex-partner would then chase the cat in an attempt to catch her, saying that he was going to kill her when he did. Fortunately, he never caught the cat. Gina reported that her ex-partner would threaten to harm their dog when he was angry at the dog for behaviours such as barking. Laura and Penny reported that they remembered hearing their ex-partners threaten their pets, but they could not recall the exact circumstances under which this had occurred. However, Penny did recall that she and her children "...lived in fear that he was going to hurt them when we did leave."

Conversely, Kara recalled exact threats that her partner had made against her cats: "He'd say 'I could take this cat and throw it up against the wall.'" She said that she was not afraid that he would follow through with his threats, because she believed it was "all just talk" and he did it to intimidate and manipulate her. Rachelle also reported that her ex-partner had threatened to harm and kill their pets and that she was not concerned that he would follow through with his threats. She maintained that she was not concerned for their safety because he was aware of the consequences of following through with his threats: "...he knows that if-- I think he knew that if I ever found out that he had done it that he would have been done. Just done like dinner." However, she had seen him strike the dogs, and as previously mentioned, she does believe that he got rid of over ten of her cats. She said that he would make these threats to "get under her skin", which apparently worked.

Lindsay also reported that she believed that her ex-partner threatened their dog to hurt her. However, unlike Kara and Rachelle, in spite of the fact that she knew that he was making these threats to upset her, Lindsay feared that he might follow through with them. According to Lindsay, "...he'd say he would kill her [dog] to get to me and he would hurt her to get to me." She reports that the threats to harm the dog and to take her with him if he left kept her in the relationship. She said that he made these threats approximately once a month throughout the relationship.

Olivia's ex-partner frequently threatened to kill her cat Gizmo: "...he was always saying that he was going to kill the cat because he hated the cat." She was also afraid that he would follow through with his numerous threats. He was even specific about how he would kill Gizmo, telling Olivia that he would snap his neck, and that it would be easy to do. Olivia said that she would tell him not to touch Gizmo, and when he did, she would intervene to protect the cat. When asked how she felt about the threats he made to kill the

cat. Olivia replied "Angry. Like, this was the cat's home before it was his. It's my daughter's pet since she was maybe six years old, and she didn't get close to a lot of things, but her cat was special. And I fought with him on it." Were it not for Olivia's interventions, Gizmo may have been killed.

Scooby III in particular got on Vanessa's ex-partner's nerves, and he wanted him gone, and threatened to kill him. As previously mentioned, after numerous threats to put Scooby III down after Vanessa had moved out, Vanessa's ex-partner told her that he had given him away, which she doubted. He continued to threaten to put the dog, Ebony down. Vanessa believed that he threatened to kill the pets solely to upset her.

Melissa's ex-partner also repeatedly threatened to kill her dog Buddy. Melissa recalled how her ex-partner had threatened to kill Buddy one time because Buddy had tried to protect her when he was beating her. In another incident, when Melissa was trying to get her ex-partner to leave, he said that he was going to kill Buddy. He had also threatened to kill her cat, Momma, when she got pregnant. He said that he was going to break her neck. He was also specific about how he intended to kill Buddy: he said that he would poison him. Buddy died some time later, and while his death appears to be consistent with poisoning, the cause of death was never determined because Melissa could not afford an autopsy, much to her regret: "He said he would poison the dog. And that's why, like when he died, I'm not sure, but I think when a dog's poisoned they will bloat up, I think. It was-- I don't know. I wish I could have had an autopsy done." Shortly after Melissa broke up with her ex-partner she began receiving threatening phone calls from him, wherein he would say "Remember what happened to Buddy." It would appear that Melissa's ex-partner followed through with his threats to kill her beloved dog, Buddy.

The Neglect of Pets by Abusive Partners

Some women indicated that their ex/partner had not been physically abusive with their pet, but that he had been neglectful. The neglect of their pets by their ex/partner was clearly very troubling for the participants who had witnessed it. The neglect of pets has not been discussed in previous research on this subject, however, it deserves attention due to the deleterious effects that it has on the pets and on other family members, and because it appears to be quite common. As one participant pointed out, neglect is likely more pervasive than active physical animal abuse: "Well, hopefully your work will help, because I know there's probably a lot-- I know there's a lot of animals out there that are being abused just more from neglect than anything. You know, like, a lot more of it is just sheer neglect, and not like anything physical, like people hitting them and stuff, or kicking them and stuff." In this study the majority of the sample, fourteen out of twenty-six participants, indicated that animal neglect by their ex/partner was an issue of concern for them.

Ingrid and her children were acutely aware of her husband's negligence when it came to their pets. She said that when they were going to leave her husband, they had to make arrangements for the care of their pets because they knew that he would not take care of them. Ingrid's nine year old son entered the room at one point during our interview to speak to his mother, and Ingrid asked him if he would like to tell me how he feels about his pets. Anticipating a typical child's response, such as an expression of how much enjoyment is derived from playing with the pets, or perhaps a story or two, I was surprised by this nine year old's response to his mother's question: "I feel insecure [sic] leaving my dog and rabbit with my dad 'cause he will not feed them, he has no respect whatsoever." He continued to stress that his pets could not be left with his father, and innocently explained "My dog can not go a month or so without food. My dog has to

have something to eat.” In spite of (or perhaps because of) the fact that their family members are so attached to these pets, some of the participants’ ex-partners refused to do something as basic as feeding the pets.

Dana’s ex-partner was permitting their pets to go without food while she was at the shelter. Dana explained that since she had come to the shelter, “Sometimes they [the pets] go without food and then I figure that out and then I buy food.” She would leave the shelter, purchase pet food, bring it to her emotionally and financially abusive ex-partner, and make sure that the pets ate. Similarly, Kara left her partner once and feared that he would neglect to feed the dog. These three women feared for their pets’ well-being once they decided to leave their ex/partners because they would no longer be there to care for the pets, and they were aware that the pets would be neglected. The knowledge that their ex/partners would neglect something that means so much to them and their children was clearly very upsetting. Additionally, animal neglect may cause a woman to delay leaving her partner, and may be used after she does leave to keep a tie to her, such as in Dana’s case, because she had to return home to ensure that the pets were fed.

Whitney feared that her ex-partner’s negligence would harm her pets while she and her ex-partner were still together, and she cited several instances when she felt that it had. When asked whether her ex-partner had threatened to harm the pets Whitney replied that he had not, because he was too smart and he did things in more insidious ways, such as through a lack of protection and neglect. She described incidences when he had let pets loose in dangerous situations. Whitney was particularly upset by one incident which led to the injury of her dog, Gene. She and her ex-partner had argued about walking the dogs without a leash, which he had done with his dog. Whitney insisted that he walk her dog, Gene, on a leash. She explains

...he just seemed to have-- I don’t know if it was resentment

towards Gene or if it was my overprotectiveness coming out, but he wanted to do the same things with Gene: take him off leash. He took him off leash in the woods and came back with his leg injury. So, I don't know how to look at that. I'm sure he didn't plan-- plot it, but I mean due to his negligence. I think that's how it happened.

The dog was in pain and required surgery to repair his leg, which Whitney could not afford because she was unemployed, and her ex-partner refused to pay for it. Eventually people who knew the dog and noticed him limping donated money so that the surgery could be performed. As well, their other dog had had a skin allergy that needed to be treated, but her ex-partner refused to do so. Whitney explained that he had the money to treat the dogs, and that his neglect through withholding medical care was the one way that he could exercise control over her.

Nine of the participants reported that their ex/partner had neglected, as well as physically abused, the pets that they had. One of these women was Olivia, and similar to Whitney, she reported that she feared that her ex-partner's negligence would result in serious injury. She was afraid that he would let Gizmo, a house cat, out and that he would be lost or injured. In fact, he had let Gizmo out a few times, and he left him outside and did not look for him. He was aware that Gizmo was an indoor cat and that Olivia and her children did not want the cat going outside for his own safety, which concerned Olivia because of her ex-partner's hatred of the cat. Similarly, Penny was concerned that her ex-partner would neglect their dog if she left him "Because he knew that the dog-- I would take the dog with us. That when I did get out of here [women's shelter] and get my own place, that I was going to take the dog with me. So I figured that itself would give him enough reason to neglect it." Rachelle, Vanessa, and Yvette also discussed how they would worry about their pets' safety if they were not there to care for them because they knew that their ex/partner would not tend to them. In fact, Rachelle

was so depressed at one point that the only thing that would get her up in the morning was the knowledge that she had to care for the pets because her partner would not.

Gina, Noreen, Stacey, and Lindsay discussed their ex/partner's neglect of the pets related to the fact that their ex/partners had acquired the pets, yet they failed to take care of them, and the pets were not only physically neglected, but emotionally neglected as well. As soon as Gina moved in with her ex-partner, his pets became solely her responsibility. In addition, she noticed that her ex-partner was emotionally neglectful with them. When the pets would approach him for attention, he would simply push them away. Gina saw this neglect as quite significant and similar to the way that he treated her and her daughter. Noreen also saw a similarity between the way in which her ex-partner treated the pet and her. Her ex-partner had acquired a cat after they split up, and after two weeks of being back together, he started neglecting the cat physically and emotionally. She explains that she ended up caring for the cat:

I ended up keeping the animal because he never took care of it and I ended up being the one giving the medication and making sure that all of the other needs were met for the animal and that's how I felt like it was comparable to our relationship. Like, when he was lonely and needed something in his life he came to me, and maybe at the max of like two weeks, was the amount of time I felt like I was cared for. And that's how it was with-- I compared it to this cat.

At one point her ex-partner changed the locks on her home and locked her out, while he remained there with their daughter and the cat. Eventually, once she knew he was gone and it was safe for her to return, she went back and realized that the cat had not been fed. Thus, she had to leave the shelter and go home regularly to take care of the cat. She said that the fact that he neglected the cat made her realize that he could not care for her and the children either: "...it did make me realize that he wasn't able to care for even a pet for more than two weeks. So I really couldn't see that he would be able to take care of us,

you know? That's what kind of made me realize it. That's why I was interested in this survey, because that's one point that stuck out for me."

As soon as Lindsay and her ex-partner moved in together he began neglecting his dog, Hillary, and Lindsay took over the responsibility, even financially. Hillary quickly became more 'her dog' than 'his dog'. Similarly, Stacey's ex-partner neglected the numerous pets that he brought home almost immediately, which angered her because she had not wanted the pets in the first place, yet she ended up being responsible for them: "...it would be my responsibility to take care of it, to clean it and it was just another thing for me to do." She would tell him, "'I'm not the one that wanted this thing. I'm not the one that wanted this dog. You did. You clean it.' But he wouldn't." She also said that she felt bad for the pets because no one gave them love and attention: Stacey's ex-partner paid little attention to them, she resented them, and she and the children did not get attached to them because they knew that he would soon get rid of them. She said that her ex-partner did not care about the pets and he neglected them in many ways. According to Stacey, "...he was neglectful in a lot of ways. He didn't give them the attention that they needed. He would never, ever take those animals for walks, never. He never gave them any emotional attachment that those animals were looking for." Stacey was upset by his neglect, both because it was unfair to the animals and it was unfair to her. She had explained this to her ex-partner, but he was relentless in bringing new pets home.

The Psychological Abuse of Pets by Abusive Partners

Some of the participants also discussed things that their ex/partners had done to their pets that can neither be defined as neglect nor physical abuse, but may more appropriately be described as psychological animal abuse, a concept introduced by Flynn (2000B: 108). Kerri and Hannah described how their ex-partners had frightened them and their pets without making physical contact with the pets. Kerri's ex-partner would

stomp his feet to scare the cat, which would send her running. Kerri explained "...he wasn't abusive to her, unless he started being a real jerk to me, and then he started to get a little-- I don't know, just get almost nasty and like stomp his feet on purpose." She said that he would do this because he knew that it scared the cat: it caused her to run into the bedroom and hide. Sometimes he would go in the bedroom after the cat, but Kerri would not let him get near the cat. According to Kerri, her ex-partner never actually had a chance to physically abuse her cat because once he would stomp his feet or yell, the cat would run and then she would not let him go near her cat. Similarly, Hannah's ex-partner never actually made physical contact with their cat Sammy because he could not catch her. She described how "...he would chase her, and it depends if there was a broom, he's tried to get her to hit her...But he never hit her. He never actually got to her because she's too fast and she knows: as soon as he raises his voice she'd be gone." Hannah thinks that he would have hit the cat if he had he been able to catch her. She said that her children would witness him chasing the cat and they would yell 'Don't you hurt my cat' at their father.

The Physical Abuse of Pets by Abusive Partners

As previously mentioned, twelve women shared their stories of how their ex/partner had physically abused their pets. Some of these women indicated that there had only been one or few acts of physical animal abuse, and others indicated that it was a persistent and chronic problem. The degree to which these women discussed these incidents also varied: some women were hesitant and others were quite forthcoming. Additionally, some women indicated that the abuse of their pets was so traumatic for them that they had 'blocked it out'. Therefore, there may be incidents that these women did not recount. As well, it is necessary to acknowledge that the other fourteen women who did not indicate that their ex/partners had physically abused their pets may have

similarly repressed this experience: it may have been too painful for them to discuss: they may have felt guilty because they had not been able to prevent it, or because they had been included in it: or they may have felt a need to protect their ex/partner. It is interesting that only three out of eleven of the women interviewed in the shelter indicated that their pet had been physically abused by their ex/partner, and one of these three women had actually been separated from her ex-partner for a significant time and came to the shelter for security because he was threatening her. Conversely, nine of out the fifteen of the women interviewed in support groups indicated that their pets had been physically abused. The fact that more than double the proportion of women in support groups, who had been separated from their ex-partners an average of fifteen months (aside from those three women who were still with their partners), reported physical animal abuse than those in the shelter does suggest that it is possible that there were more than twelve women in this sample whose pets were physically abused.

Of the twelve women who reported that their pets were physically abused, three indicated that there had been relatively few incidents of physical animal abuse. Theresa had been in the shelter for two days, and she indicated that there had been one incident of animal abuse before she left her ex-partner. She described the incident rather reluctantly as follows: "Well.-- Well, one time we-- Just the one time though, he was in an argument with me... He grabbed the dog by the neck and he tried to drag him towards the door. And I started screaming, I'm just like 'Leave him alone.'" She said that they had been arguing about which one of them should move out of their home, and that she believes that he had dragged the dog to demonstrate his control and to scare her. Laura also discussed only one incident of physical animal abuse: her ex-partner had punched her dog in the face after he had jumped on him. She said that this dog was extremely protective of her and that she had to get rid of him after a 'domestic fight' because the

dog was really scared and aggressive. He had also gotten rid of several of her cats. Laura indicated during the interview that she had blocked a lot out and this was the only incident that she was able to recall. Noreen said that she could recall her ex-partner throwing the cat, which he had acquired when they broke up, a couple of times. Shortly after he got the cat they reconciled. However, this reconciliation only lasted approximately two weeks, and it was during this time that she had witnessed him throw the cat. He would also lock the cat in the bathroom. Her ex-partner's actions towards the cat began to bother Noreen: "...he locked it in the bathroom, and then it would cry, so I would go to it. And I got to the point where I didn't even want to be near him. It was just annoying because he didn't care for the cat and I didn't care for his behaviour, so I didn't want to be around him. So I'd end up sleeping somewhere else with the kids, and then I'd let the cat sleep with us." Her ex-partner abused and neglected the cat in the short time that they were together with the cat, and Noreen ended up keeping the cat when they split up.

Several participants reported that their ex/partners' abuse of their pets was more frequent. Stacey's ex-partner, who repeatedly got pets against her wishes, was also physically abusive with them. She described several circumstances under which her ex-partner was abusive with the numerous dogs they had had. When he would discipline the dogs, he would do so harder than she thought appropriate and he would occasionally use a belt, which she considered to be brutal. She also said that the dogs would play and be aggressive as they had been trained to be, which he would grow tired of, and when the dogs would not leave him alone he would hit them and they would cower. As well, there were several incidents when her ex-partner was yelling at the children and the dogs would get in between them, and in an effort to protect the children would bare their teeth and growl at her ex-partner. Stacey said that her ex-partner would get angry at the dogs

because they had challenged his authority, so he would hit them and put them outside for a long period of time, even in cold weather.

Gina's ex-partner had the dog, Shelby, and cat, Daisy, before they met. He had gotten another cat, Taffy, for her daughter as a present, and he kept her at his house because they could not have her at theirs. Gina told him when they moved in that she did not want him abusing the animals, because she had seen him do it in the past. However, he continued to abuse not only his pets, but he also abused her daughter's. Her daughter had seen him hit her kitten very hard off of a table. Gina did not mention this incident to him, she says because she did not want to challenge his authority because he would get angry. Gina, her mother, and her daughter had also witnessed him throw things at the dog, kick the dog, and throw and shake the cat, Taffy. His abuse of the pets had gone on for quite some time, and Gina felt that perhaps the dog's fear of men and her limp were a result of it.

Similarly, Lindsay's ex-partner had acquired his dog, Hillary, before they met. However, she noticed him being abusive with the dog shortly after they got together. She said that he would strike the dog with the newspaper, but what disturbed her the most was when he would rub the dog's genitalia: "...he'd rub her and he'd say he's gonna get her pussy. And I didn't like that, it just kind of disgusted me. So then I wondered what he really did to her sometimes." She said that the dog was clearly upset by him touching her this way, and she would try to get away from him. Lindsay also suspected that her ex-partner forced the dog to lick his genitalia.

Penny and her children had their dog, Andy, before she met her ex-partner. From the time her ex-partner moved in with them, he seemed to take over with the dog, and would not allow her children to interact with him. Penny said that when the dog would do something that her ex-partner did not want him to, he would hit him and pour Tabasco

sauce down his throat. He frequently played rough with the dog, which he liked to do so in front of other people. Penny explains, "That was his thing, to show people how tough he was...And how he could make the dog listen." Members of their families, and even his friends, had expressed their concern that he was being too rough with and hurting the dog. When the dog would bite him in an attempt to defend himself, Penny's ex-partner would strike the dog, often in the face. Penny said that she was always afraid that her ex-partner was going to severely hurt the dog, and she estimated that he had struck the dog two hundred to four hundred times.

Olivia's ex-partner also moved into her home and began threatening and abusing her pets. Their dog, Taz, would run and hide from him, but her ex-partner was especially abusive with their cat, Gizmo, who was only friendly with Olivia and her children. Olivia was afraid that he would eventually kill Gizmo. She had witnessed her ex-partner choke, throw, and kick Gizmo. Due to Gizmo's speed and Olivia's interventions, Gizmo was not severely injured or killed by his attacks. Olivia's ex-partner would get very angry when she would intervene and defend the cat. He would struggle with her to get Gizmo back, and he had physically abused her for protecting the cat. The severity of the abuse Olivia endured for protecting Gizmo varied: she said that if the children were not home, the assault could last for hours.

Rachelle also intervened to protect her pets when her ex-partner was abusing them. She had seen him strike their most recent dog, Squirt, and some of her cats, although she said that he had never struck his two cats. He had also tied Squirt's mouth shut to prevent him from barking. When asked how many times her ex-partner had struck Squirt, Rachelle replied: "Oh, probably more than I can remember..." She also said that her ex-partner had run her favorite cat over. He maintains that he was unaware that he had hit the cat, which Rachelle does not believe. Additionally, there was another cat

which she believes he ran over, and when she called him at work crying because the cat was dead he replied "Yeah, it's been on the road since I left this morning." When Rachelle asked him why he had not removed the cat from the road, her ex-partner replied "Well, it's dead, big deal." He never did admit to running the cats over, but Rachelle made it clear that she believed he had.

Yvette and two of her children witnessed her partner kill one of their pets. Her partner had struck their puppy over the head with a board because he was injured. She said that this incident really upset her, and she felt that instead the puppy should have been taken to a veterinarian. She clearly remembered witnessing it and recalled what she said to him "Did you have to do that?" It was a long time ago. It was so long ago, but I remember it clear as day, seeing it." She had also witnessed him kill two of his parents' dogs because they were barking. One dog was shot in the forehead and the other was dragged to death behind a truck. She said that she was too scared to say anything to him at the time, but afterward when she did, he replied "It's only a dog." She said that she still hears him brag about killing those dogs.

Yvette had also seen him kick the pets when they would come to him for attention, and most of the time he did so when his brothers or someone else was present. She explains "I think he would do that just so he could show them 'I'm not going to put up with this.'" He had struck the pets hard enough that she heard them yelp from the pain. She said he was especially abusive with the aggressive types of dogs they had. She noticed that he had stopped abusing the pets, in front of her at least, since she had left him one year ago and he had started counseling. She had told him how much his abuse of the pets bothered her, and she thinks that now he is trying to win her favour so that she will not leave him again. Additionally, now he knows that she has people that she can confide in about the abuse.

Vanessa said that because of the volatile point that she and her ex-partner were at in their relationship when they had Scooby II and Scooby III, these cats were abused quite a bit, which she felt he had done to upset her. Her ex-partner was particularly abusive with the cats, which were primarily 'her' pets, while the dogs were more 'his'. She said that when she would witness him throw and kick the cats, she would "...freak out and I'd say 'Don't you treat the animals like that...' and he'd say 'Oh, they're only cats. They'll land on their fours'", which Vanessa advised did not hold true every time. Like Rachelle, Vanessa also suspected that her ex-partner had run over one of her cats, Scooby II. She and her ex-partner had been fighting and he opened the door and let the cat out. She found Scooby II freshly hit on the side of the road, after her ex-partner had just left, and she said that she had always wondered if he had killed the cat.

Vanessa was particularly haunted by a specific incident that she had never before discussed with anyone. She had attempted suicide more than once by giving herself a lethal overdose of pills. She said that one day when she was especially distraught, she gave two of her cats some pills. They were still alive when her ex-partner took the cats outside and shot them: "...he just put them in a box and he went and shot the box all to hell." She said that her ex-partner later brought the incident up to upset her. It was clear as she sobbed recounting the story that it still deeply upsets her. Even after she left him, he would call her and use the memories of her pets, and threats against the pets that he still had, to upset her.

Melissa's ex-partner had also called her after they had separated and used the memory of her pet to threaten and upset her. Approximately four months before she and her ex-partner had broken up, Melissa noticed that her dog, Buddy, was drinking a lot of water and not eating much. She did not have the money to take him to the veterinarian and approximately one month later Buddy died at home. As previously mentioned,

Melissa also did not have the money to have an autopsy performed on Buddy, so the exact cause of death was never determined. A few months later, after Melissa had broken up with her ex-partner, she began receiving threatening phone calls from him. Melissa brought the phone calls up when asked why she was currently in the shelter, to which she replied, "Because I don't feel safe at home. I have my own place, but I don't feel safe there because he's made threats. And one of his threats was 'Remember what happened to Buddy.' So I don't know if that means that he did something to the dog or not. I don't even want to think that way right now." She said that he had made this particular threat a couple of times. However, a judge said that he could not listen to the answering machine tapes because her ex-partner did not know that he was being recorded, which angered and frustrated Melissa: "I have all this proof and everything and him saying it, but they can't listen to it. So, I don't know if he did something to my dog or if he just said that to get to me because he knows I still cry about my dog. He knows I loved that dog with everything I had...He's still just trying to hurt me."

While they were together, Melissa's ex-partner had threatened to kill Buddy and had also physically abused Buddy on several occasions. One time Buddy had intervened when Melissa's ex-partner was beating her, and he was consequently abused. According to Melissa, "...he was hitting me one night and the dog tried to grab his leg and he kicked back at the dog. The dog was trying to protect me. And he said 'I'm going to kill that dog', so I hurried up and run and let the dog out. I wanted the dog-- I didn't want the dog near him because I didn't want him to hurt him..." On another occasion, Melissa and her children witnessed him abuse the dog. Melissa had told her ex-partner to leave her house because her children were there and they did not like him. As he left, Buddy got out the door. Melissa and her children went to the door to call Buddy back in the house. Melissa explains how the incident unfolded: "...we're trying to call the dog in, but Buddy

wouldn't go in, he was standing on the porch wagging his tail and looking at us. So [ex-partner] goes 'I'm going to kill that fucking dog' and then he kicks him, and he really gave him a good boot and Buddy yelped. And my kids seen that. My daughter started to cry, and my son went out and grabbed the dog." Melissa also described another incident when her ex-partner had hit the dog because he was on the bed with her.

Melissa's ex-partner had also threatened to kill her cat, Momma, and she described one incident when he literally kicked the cat out the door. Additionally, Momma had a litter of kittens and one of the kittens was ill. Melissa told her ex-partner that she was going to have to take the kitten to the vet and have her euthanized. Afterward Melissa and her father were outside and witnessed her ex-partner pick the kitten up and strangle her. Melissa said that she was crying and she tried to stop him, but was unsuccessful. Her father left and went into the house. Her sixteen year old daughter came out of the house, saw her ex-partner killing the cat, and screamed at him and ran back into the house crying. Melissa said that after he had strangled the kitten to death, "...he kind of said 'Well, you asked me to do it.' And I said 'I didn't ask you to do it. I said I was taking it to the vet.' But that's what he said afterwards, and I didn't say that." Melissa had nearly failed to mention this incident during the interview. She explains, "That kitten, I almost forgot about it-- Not forgot, but maybe I didn't want to think about it." The aforementioned incidents are those which the participants recalled and volunteered. There may have been other incidents that they, like Melissa, did not want to think nor talk about. One thing that nearly all of the participants did talk about were their close relationships with their pets.

The Relationship Between Battered Women and Their Pets

Most of the women in this sample indicated that they were extremely attached to their pets, as were the children involved. Many of the women expressed the sentiment that pets are not merely animals: they are part of the family. Ingrid explained that her pets were considered "...a part of you. They weren't just a watchdog, or go-catch-the-mice, it wasn't that kind of thing. They are a part of the family." Additionally, many of the women discussed similarities they saw between the way that their ex/partner treated them and the way that he treated the pets and how they empathized with the pets. Several women noticed that their ex/partner would call her, her pets, and her children, where applicable, the same names. Some women also mentioned that their ex/partner would attempt to control her and the pets in the same ways: by frightening them through screaming or throwing things, and by restricting what they could do. While some of the participants were put on a short leash by their abusive partner figuratively, some of their pets were put on one literally.

Many of the participants also saw the way that their ex/partner had neglected the pets and her, and her children where applicable, profoundly similar. Stacey said that the reason that her ex-partner had a wife, two children, a dog and a cat was to fit the image of a perfect family: "So we were there because it was the textbook perfect family: boy, girl, wife, cat, dog." It was clear that her ex-partner did not value the pets, rather, they were expendable, which was evidenced by the speed with which he got rid of them. Similarly, he made no investment in his children and was consistently uninvolved. At the end of Stacey's interview she remarked "I hope I was helpful. I mean I know it wasn't a lot of the physical abuse for me and the kids, but I do see how it related to the kids: how he treated the animals and how he treated the kids were the same. Like, they were there, but

there was no involvement. And I see how its affected the kids now.” Vanessa, Whitney, Yvette and Gina felt that they had been tossed aside and neglected just as the pets had. In retrospect, Gina felt that she should have known that her ex-partner would neglect her emotionally. She cried as she explained, “Pushing the animal away is just-- That’s-- I should have thought if he’s doing that to an animal, he’s gonna be doing that to me. The way a person treats their animals most likely is the way a person is going to treat a relationship and your children.” Noreen said that she saw the same pattern occur with her and the cat that her ex-partner acquired after they separated: when he is lonely he will be attentive for a short period of time, and then once the novelty wears off, he can not be bothered. She said that she finally recognized this pattern when she witnessed it with the cat. Apparently, witnessing someone else being treated the way that you have been can make that treatment more apparent. It also prompts one to empathize with another who is suffering the same treatment, which Gina clearly articulates: “...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.’” In a very real way, many of these women and their pets became allies in the wars waged in their homes.

Many of the women discussed how the pets assisted them and their children emotionally. In talking about her pets, Ingrid explained that “...they bring much joy to our life, and ease the tension and stress of the abuse that we’ve had to deal with.” Several of the women echoed this sentiment. Melissa, Sarah, Theresa, and Yvette said that it seemed as though their pets knew when they were upset, and they were often the only emotional support these women had. They described how their pets would come to them and comfort them when they were distressed. For instance, Yvette described how when she was suffering from severe depression she would lay in bed with the blankets covering her, and her cat would consistently pull the blankets off of her face. She said that she was

able to express her feelings to her dog and cat at a time when she was unable to express them to people:

With the dog and 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... It was comforting for me... 'Cause I would try to talk to my husband. and 'Shut up. I don't want to hear that. There you go again. whining.' The dog would show like he cared. or even the cat. The cat. if I-- I used to have to sleep all the time 'cause I just couldn't stay awake. and I was on Prozac...And whenever I'd lay on the couch with the blanket. the cat will come and lay right on top of the blanket. 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.

Yvette was not alone in her belief that the pets were her allies and had assisted her through troubling times. Evelyn stated that her pet rat helped to calm her when she was upset. or to cheer her up when she was depressed. in addition to keeping her company. She explains "I didn't feel as alone. I felt like there was somebody there...At least I had somebody on my side..." She said that her pet rat kept her going for some time. Kerri also found the companionship provided by her cat. Sassy. very important. The thought of not having Sassy seemed unbearable to Kerri: "I've got to 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 Sassy's my company. So I would go nuts."

Rachelle also felt that she 'wouldn't be around' if it were not for her pets. She described how she would lay down outside when she got home and wait for her ex-partner to fall asleep before going inside. and her dog and cats would lay down around her and she felt that they were protecting her. She also felt that her pets needed her. and she said that some days the only reason she got out of bed was because she knew she had to

take care of them. because her ex-partner would not. Her pets not only gave her a reason to get out of bed. they also gave her a reason to live: "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." It may be difficult to initially understand why this woman who had contemplated suicide daily would credit her pets with her survival. and in fact. if one considers them merely as 'animals'. it would appear ludicrous. However. these pets were much more than animals to Rachelle. She was all alone: her abusive partner had alienated her from her family and friends. She felt a special bond with these pets. partly because they had also suffered at the hands of her ex-partner. She felt that her pets were the only beings that cared about her. and perhaps understood how she felt. After conducting this interview with Rachelle. I began to wonder what would have happened to Rachelle if something had happened to her pets - to her lifeline. Two weeks later. when interviewing Vanessa. I caught a glimpse of what could have happened to Rachelle under different circumstances.

Vanessa's pets were also her lifeline: "The animals brought me a lot of pleasure and the animals kept me alive...Because they were like family. and I just--they were there when I needed them." Given this sort of dependence upon and attachment to pets. the loss of them is profoundly difficult. and for Vanessa it certainly was. During an argument. Vanessa's ex-partner opened the door and let the cat. Scooby II. out. He was hit by a car and Vanessa found him soon after:

He had just been hit. like. it was fresh. And of course I picked his body up and I took it with me. and he died. And I know it's gonna sound really morbid. I didn't wanna bury him right away. And I cried and cried. and I just-- I wrapped him up in something in a rocking chair and I just--my sister came over 'cause she knew that I would really take his death bad. And we buried him beside the house.

As she recounted the story, it was evident that this had been a significant loss for her.

Soon Vanessa's relationship with her partner became nearly intolerable. She joined a support group for abused women, and one night on her way home from a meeting, she stopped at a friend's house and got a kitten, and named her Hope. She and her husband were separated and living in different parts of the house, which her lawyer had recommended because he had a tendency to destroy her property. Vanessa kept Hope in her bedroom because her ex-partner was not allowed in there. He was angry that she had brought another cat home, but Vanessa considered it temporary: she had gotten Hope with the intention of leaving her partner and moving into an apartment with the cat. A few weeks later, however, her ex-partner's dog killed Hope in front of Vanessa.

Vanessa's ex-partner was not at all sympathetic, and she was devastated: her final lifeline was gone. Vanessa explains what happened after Hope died:

...that was the breaking point of my leaving. That's when I left. I left by ambulance that day. I-- when she died, I took her body upstairs to my room, and I took a huge overdose...Anyway, I took this overdose and 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...I was in the hospital for a couple of months. And that was it, I never went back home.

Vanessa was aware that people might be shocked by the fact that her cat's death prompted an obviously serious suicide attempt: "You know people would think because of what I did like 'Oh god, she tried to kill herself over a cat'...That cat was my last lifeline, and that was--I snapped." Given that Vanessa's pets were this important to her, it might not be as shocking to learn that she delayed leaving her ex-partner because of the pets.

Leaving an Abusive Partner When Pets Are Involved

When asked if she thought that she would have left her partner earlier if she had not had pets. Vanessa replied "You know that's a really good question, it is. 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 would have left him earlier, I know for a fact. And I can't believe that." Even Vanessa was in disbelief that she had delayed leaving her abusive partner because of her pets. She explained that the pets were like children to her, they had given her something to go home for. She did not want to leave them, and she was aware that she would likely not be able to take them, especially his dog. Vanessa was not the only participant who reported that she delayed leaving because of the pets: out of the twenty-three women in the sample who had ever left their ex-partners, ten indicated that they would have left sooner if it were not for the pets. Additionally, one participant was unsure if she had delayed leaving. It is worth noting that of the twelve women who did not delay leaving, Annie said it was because her twenty year old daughter was at home to care for the pet, and Kerri said that she knew that she would take her cat with her: leaving her cat was never an option for her. In fact, her cat was flown to Ontario from a southern American state instead of being left with her partner.

The reasons that these ten women cited for delaying leaving their abusive partners because of their pets included fear for their pets' safety, their pet had 'kept them going', they did not want to be separated from the pet, and they were concerned about financially being able to take care of the pet and the ability to find affordable housing that would allow pets. The amount of time that these women delayed leaving also varied. Some women reported a short delay because their pets kept them going for a short period of time, but then the abuse became unbearable. Conversely, others had delayed leaving for significant periods of time. For instance, Lindsay said that she knew almost immediately

after her wedding that she had made a mistake. However, her ex-partner had told her that if she broke up with him, he would take the dog and that he would hurt or kill the dog to get to her. Lindsay explained that the dog was the reason that she had stayed with her ex-partner for nearly two and a half years: "In fact, that's why I stayed with him for a long time 'cause he threatened to take her if he left...I mean she loved me unconditionally, and you know, that's why I stayed." Lindsay had clearly placed the dog's safety and well-being ahead of her own: "...I was more worried about her than anything. So I just put up with all that other shit that was going on to protect her." She reported that she refused to go to a shelter at one point because the police advised her that she could not take the dog with her to the shelter. Her statement was followed up with a question to ensure that there was not a misunderstanding:

Q: So you weren't going to go to the shelter because of the dog?

A: Yes. I was more worried about her than me. I guess I am a good mom. I put my puppy first, right?

Lindsay did not recall being advised of a program to shelter her dog while she was at the women's shelter. Unfortunately, many other women in the sample also reported that they were unaware of such programs.

All of the women in the sample who had looked into going to a battered women's shelter were asked if they had been advised of programs to shelter their pets while they stayed at the shelter. The shelters in the areas in which the research was conducted did have such programs: either an agreement with the local Humane Society or foster care through volunteer homes. Out of the twenty-one women in the sample who had either looked into or gone to a shelter, one participant reported that she was unsure if she had been advised of programs to shelter pets, thirteen women said that they were not advised of such a program, and seven women indicated that they had been informed about the

program. What was most surprising was that of the seven women who were aware of the program, only one woman had made use of it, and she indicated that she would not do so again because her dog had gotten sick there: "...that was a mistake. I shouldn't have done that. I didn't know the conditions were like that. They keep them real close to other dogs."

The six women who chose not to use the pet sheltering program had done so for different reasons. Penny was not told about the program until she was in the shelter, and she had already left the dog with her ex-partner, where he stayed until she left the shelter. Dana had left her pets home with her ex-partner because she was told that her pets could only be sheltered for two weeks, and she knew that that would not give her adequate time to find another place to live. Evelyn could not use the program because the Humane Society that the women's shelter had an agreement with did not take pet rats. Theresa's mother was originally going to take care of her dog, but her ex-partner came home early from work, so her mother left the dog there with him. Gina was told that their cat could be sheltered, the dog however could not be because she was her partner's 'property'. She said that she thought that he would take care of the cat, so she left her with him. At the time of the interview, Melissa had been in the shelter for two days and was still trying to decide whether or not to have her cat sheltered. She explained her concerns with doing so: "I don't know if I really want to put him in the Humane Society because he might think I've abandoned him, and I don't want him to think that way. That might sound stupid, but if he goes there with all those cats and stays, I can't go see him there, it's too far. I don't have a car...I don't know what to do about that 'cause it could be a while until I find an apartment." The negative consequences of so few women being informed of and using programs to shelter their pets are apparent in the following examination of where the pets do stay when the women leave the home.

Out of the twenty-one women in the sample who had left their ex/partner, only one woman took her pet to the local Humane Society for sheltering, as previously mentioned. Four women had taken their pet to a family member's or friend's house, and surprisingly none of these four women were among those who had reported that their pets had been physically abused by their ex/partner. Two of the participants reported that their ex-partner no longer lived in the home and the pets were left there alone. Fourteen of the women reported that their pets had stayed in the home with their ex-partner. Of these fourteen women, seven were among those who had reported that their pet had been physically abused by their ex/partner: one had reported that he was neglectful with the pets, specifically he would not feed them at times; and two women had reported that their ex-partner had threatened to kill their pets, but had not yet physically abused them. Therefore, only four out of the fourteen men who had the pets in their care while their partner sought safety had not demonstrated any harmful intentions or behaviours toward the pets in the past.

Gina and Hannah, whose pets stayed with their ex-partner, reported being advised by him while in the shelter that the pets missed her and the children. Dana and Vanessa, whose pets also stayed in the home with their ex-partner, reported being concerned that he would euthanize the pets. It was specifically because Fran did not want her ex-partner to be able to use her cat in these ways to maintain a tie to her that she declined his offer to care for her cat while she was at the shelter:

...I didn't want to have any reason to have to go back there, so I found somewhere else for her to stay. Like, he said he would take care of her, but then it came to I realized that was just one of his ways of having a tie to me. You know, for me to come back there when I get my own place, to come back and pick my cat up, you know, just one more way he can get close to me. So I just took her out of there and said I don't need any reason to have to go back.

Thus, for some of the participants, the use of their pet to get to upset and manipulate them became even more evident once they left and left the pets in the home with their ex-partner.

Not only may the pets' safety be in jeopardy when left in the home, but in some cases the woman's safety may also be jeopardized as a result. Erin, Dana, and Noreen, whose pets were home with their ex-partner, reported going home to visit or care for their pets. Erin reported that she would go home and visit her dog while her partner was at work. Her partner knew that she was visiting the dog, and she said that he encouraged her to do so. As previously mentioned, Dana reported purchasing pet food and taking it home to ensure that the pets were fed, because he was not doing so. Noreen reported going home when her ex-partner was gone and realizing that the cat was not being cared for: "...once I knew he was out of there and it was safe then I went back and realized that I had to leave food for the cat and things for the cat, and I was pretty concerned. I didn't really know what to do, if I could leave the cat with anybody. So, I just had to go there on a regular basis and check up on her." She adds that going back to the home to care for the cat was very stressful on her for the month that she was in the shelter.

Brittany and Melissa, who had left their cats home alone and figured that their ex-partners likely knew that the cats were there, discussed going home to care for them. Brittany had not yet gone home, but she was clearly concerned for her cats' well-being, and was planning to do so: "I've got to go. I've got to find a way to get home and feed them [cat and kittens]. She's probably starving to death." Melissa, whose ex-partner had threatened her by saying 'Remember what happened to Buddy', had gone home and fed her cat by herself the day before the interview. After reporting that she had gone home by herself, she added "...which I shouldn't have done...", but she was concerned for her cat and had no one else to care for him. Even after some of these women leave their

ex/partners. they still put their pets' well-being ahead of their own.

Summary

As illustrated in this chapter, many of the participants had very strong relationships with their pets, which may have been augmented because they empathized with the pets and the pets provided them with the companionship and support they were being deprived of. As a result, many of the participants delayed leaving their abusive partners, risked their safety to protect their pets, and refused to get rid of their pets when their ex/partners demanded that they do so. Many of the participants described how their ex/partners began threatening to get rid of the pets himself when she refused to, and some of the men actually took it upon themselves to do so. The majority of the participants reported that their ex/partner had threatened, neglected, or abused their pets in some way, and the forms of the abuse as well as the severity of it varied greatly. The one constant, however, was the way in which their ex/partners' maltreatment of their pets upset the participants. It will be demonstrated in the following chapter that the strong bond that the participants had with their pets and the degree to which their ex/partner's maltreatment of the pets upset them is integral to explaining why animal abuse coexisted with other forms of family violence in this sample.

CHAPTER 7

An Analysis of Why Animal Abuse and Other Forms of Family Violence Coexist

In this chapter, an attempt is made to explain why animal abuse and family violence coexisted in some cases in this sample, mainly utilizing the participants' own interpretations. It will be demonstrated that pet abuse is not linked to the abuser's feelings towards pets in general. Additionally, pet abuse is not related to the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of the pet. In the context of family violence, men do not abuse pets because they hate them or do not want them; rather, it is about control. It will be illustrated that, even among the few women who believe that their ex/partner abused the pets because of frustration and anger, the issue of control is a vital part of the explanation of this abuse. Furthermore, it will be explained that control is related to animal abuse in the context of family violence in two ways: animal abuse may be perpetrated to gain control over others, and animal abuse may be perpetrated out of jealousy when a pet poses a threat to an abuser's exclusive control of his partner's attention and devotion.

The Participants' Views of Their Ex/Partners' Attitudes Towards Animals

The majority of the participants in this study actually reported that their ex/partner liked animals. Only six out of the twenty-six participants indicated that their ex/partner was not fond of animals, and only one of these six participants explicitly stated that her ex-partner did not like animals. The other five women commented that their ex/partner did not consider the pets very important, and would prefer not to have them. In fact, some of the women whose pets had been threatened and/or abused by their ex/partner reported that their ex/partner actually liked animals. For instance, Gina reported that her ex-partner "...likes a lot of animals...If he could he would have a farm...with all kinds of

animals.” However, he had kicked, shaken, and thrown their pets. According to Melissa, her ex-partner “...likes animals, he had a lot of them when he was a kid...” However, he routinely threatened to kill her pets, was abusive to them, and killed at least one of them. Kara explains that her partner “...has a love for animals, the same as I do” and told stories of animals that he had rescued. However, he would threaten to get rid of her cats while she was gone and would describe ways that he could harm them. The point here is not that these women were incorrect about their ex/partners; on the contrary, they were likely quite correct about their ex/partners liking animals in general. Their ex/partners’ acts of animal abuse, however, were directed at specific pets. It is important to recognize that the majority of these women’s ex/partners are not generalized animal haters or abusers. Rather, they are violent with certain animals.

Additionally, most of these men did not dislike and become violent with the pets immediately. Most of the participants whose pets were physically abused reported that their ex/partners became physically abusive with the pets after some time, and that there was an escalation of events. The only exceptions were Stacey, Gina, and Yvette. Stacey indicated that her ex-partner was abusive and neglectful with the pets almost immediately after he brought them home. Gina’s experience was somewhat different because she noticed that her ex-partner was abusive with his pets before they moved in together. As well, Yvette’s experience differed from the majority because she maintained that her ex-partner had always been abusive to her and their pets, however, since he had begun counseling he was treating the pets better. The other participants indicated that the abuse of the animals commenced after some time, and that there was an escalation in the threats and the abuse.

Melissa said that her ex-partner had become abusive and threatening with her pets two to two and a half years into their four year long relationship. In the last year of their

relationship he began accusing her of bestiality with her dog. She noticed an escalation in the threats and the abuse: "...it seemed to escalate, what he would say about me. Like he accused me of doing it with my dog. Him hitting him-- It seemed to escalate, you know. Once it started it seemed to get worse." Olivia also indicated that her ex-partner was not abusive with her pets immediately. She said that he became threatening and abusive with her pets about a year after he had moved in with them. He lived with her for a year and a half. She also said that his criticisms of her regarding the pets became more frequent near the end of their relationship. Olivia also noticed an escalation in the abuse: "...the abuse on me became worse and worse and worse each time. The same with-- It seems like the anger for the cat, it would get worse each time." Penny noticed her ex-partner become excessively rough with her dog after he had been living with them about a year.

According to Lindsay, her ex-partner was nice to the dog when they first got together, and she believes that he became abusive and neglectful with the dog once she wanted out of the relationship: "...as I was getting to know him and I knew I made a mistake, I think that's when he started on her..." Rachelle and Vanessa indicated that the abuse and threats against their pets occurred mostly at the end of their relationships.

The escalation of the abuse against the pet was the norm in this sample, and Melissa provided some insight into why this may be. In discussing how her ex-partner eventually began demanding that the dog not sleep in the bed, Melissa explained that he was trying to control her in every way, even through her pets. Thus, the escalation and gradual involvement of the pets may be related to the successive attempts of the abusive partner to achieve control. Olivia reported that her ex-partner even tried to control her diet eventually. She had been a vegetarian since before they had met, and he began threatening to break up with her if she did not start eating meat. She believes that he became abusive with her and her pets because he was a 'control freak' and their

relationship was deteriorating, which is elaborated upon later in this chapter.

It is appropriate to briefly note that there was less consistency within the sample regarding the applicability of the violence graduation hypothesis, whereby it is hypothesized that individuals begin by abusing animals and subsequently graduate to abusing humans. Some women who participated in this research indicated that her ex-partner had abused the pets first and then her, however, others reported that they were victimized first, and still others indicated that they could not recall or that it was not so clear cut. For instance, Noreen's ex-partner got the cat after he had become abusive with her. Of those women who could recall and could specify the order of the abuse, Rachelle and Vanessa reported that their ex-partner had been physically abusive with their pets before being abusive with them. Vanessa explained, "I think that at the beginning he might have taken a little of it out on the animals to get to me, and at the end it was just straight to me." Rachelle and Vanessa, however, were not physically abused by their ex-partners. They both reported that they had been emotionally and sexually abused. Contrary to the violence graduation hypothesis, Melissa, Olivia, and Lindsay reported that they had been physically abused before their pets had been. Thus, in this sample, according to those women who were able to delineate who was victimized first, there is neither strong support, nor refutation of the violence graduation hypothesis. Given the complexities of these situations, such a simplistic hypothesis is not useful. The forms of abuse perpetrated by the abusive individuals against human and animal victims varies significantly, and the reasons for the coexistence of these forms of abuse may vary as well.

Although animal abuse in the context of family violence may not be related to whether a man generally likes or dislikes pets, as evidenced in the previous discussion of their attitudes towards animals and the escalation of animal maltreatment, it may be

related to his perceptions of the roles animals play in society. In order to gain further information about these men's attitudes towards animals, a series of questions was asked surrounding their participation in 'sports' that utilize animals. These sports vary across a continuum of social acceptability, from the commonplace and socially sanctioned sport of fishing, to the illegal and denounced realm of dogfighting.¹⁹ These questions resulted in interesting information. When asked about their ex/partner's participation in sport hunting, Olivia, Rachelle, Lindsay, Vanessa, and Stacey indicated that to their knowledge, their ex-partner had hunted for sport. All five of these women were among the twelve who indicated that their ex/partner had physically abused their pets. Gina, Laura, Melissa, Rachelle and Stacey reported that their ex-partner had attended horse races. Again, all five these women reported that their ex-partner had abused their pets. Melissa, whose ex-partner physically abused her pets, indicated that her ex/partner had attended dog fights. The finding that all of the women who reported that their ex-partner enjoyed the 'sports' of horse racing, hunting, and dog fighting also physically abused the pets within the home is likely important. The instrumentalization of animals is inherent in these sports: animals are used for human pleasure and for some, profit. To engage in these sports requires the acceptance, to varying degrees, of a utilitarian view of animals. This utilitarian perception of animals may also be related to the coexistence of animal abuse and family violence, which is discussed in a subsequent section.

The Circumstances Surrounding the Acquisition of the Pets

Several reasons were given for why the participants and their families acquired their pets, and numerous factors were often involved in the acquisition. The reasons given for acquiring the pets in this sample include the following: the pet was a stray, to replace a previous pet, because the children wanted the pet, because the participant wanted the pet, because her ex/partner wanted the pet, because the pet was given to a

member of the family as a present, or because a joint decision was made to get the pet. Remarkably, only Erin and Dana indicated that they and their ex/partner had actually made a joint decision to actively acquire their pets. In discussing the acquisition of the pets, the strong need that some of these women had to have pets, and the issues of control surrounding the acquisition of pets by abusers, become apparent.

Eleven of the participants reported that they had acquired pets. For instance, Whitney got her dog, Gene, to take the place of her ex-partner's dog, who was dying. She says that she thought that "...maybe it was something that my husband could transfer his good emotions to." She later adds that additionally she was desperate for companionship, and in a way the new dog would provide her with what her husband was failing to: "...I was terribly lonely...and I think I just wanted a dog as a companion because at that point we'd had two years of not doing well, my husband and I, and I think just another dimension to my life...someone to keep my company and someone to put love onto." She wanted a dog so badly that when she asked her ex-partner, she told him that she would forego future gifts in exchange for a dog. However, things did not go exactly as Whitney had planned. Instead of her ex-partner transferring his positive feelings from his dog to the new dog, he quickly decided that Gene was not worthy of his affection. "I think it was the first day when we brought Gene home, [ex-partner] said, 'Oh well, he's a lady's dog, I think he's a lady's dog.' And he may have been quite right by that, but I certainly couldn't tell if the dog was one way or the other. I was just thrilled to have him." Gene never did 'grow on' her ex-partner, although he did not physically abuse him.

Some time later it became clear to Whitney that she was going to have to leave her husband, and she realized that with the little money she had, it would be difficult to find an apartment that would allow dogs, so she started making plans: "I was very much thinking this is bad, I should leave, I've got to leave at the right time, I have to prepare

myself. Going from a house to an apartment it probably won't allow the dog. I won't be able to keep him. It would break my heart to give him up. I would like to have a cat to keep me company." She explains "...I had a plan of survival...", which included leaving her partner and making sure that she would have animal companionship, in spite of the fact that she is allergic to cats. This time she did not ask him if she could get another pet. She brought the cat home and actually told her husband the reason why she had gotten the cat. When asked how her ex-partner felt about her bringing the cat 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 did leave her husband and fortunately found an apartment where both the dog and the cat were welcomed.

Jenna had brought a dog, Squeaker, home one day without her husband's knowledge. She had done so for two reasons: her husband's doctors had urged them to get a pet because they believed that it would have therapeutic benefits for his heart condition, and Jenna was in need of companionship. Her husband was not pleased, but Jenna told him "She's [Squeaker] staying. If she goes, I go." Reluctantly he dropped the issue and bonded with the dog and came to think of her as his dog. Six months later, Jenna brought another dog home, Honey, who was to be her dog. He was very upset about the second dog and wanted to get rid of her. For some time Honey did not grow on him, until "...a few weeks later...he had heart failure and the dogs sensed that. Both of them wouldn't leave him...And so that's how she [Honey] bonded with him. Like, you know, she wouldn't leave him, so after that, 'Oh, she can stay.'" Until Honey had demonstrated this concern for Jenna's husband, he had not been interested in her and insisted that she was 'a lady's dog'. After this incident, however, her ex-partner took over both of the dogs as though they were his.

Vanessa had brought a total of three cats, Scooby I, Scooby II, and Hope home.

which her ex-partner got quite upset about, partly because he did not like cats. Like many of the other participants, Vanessa demonstrated a strong need to have pets. She stated that "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." She described how she longed for love, and to have something to love and live for. She knew that her husband would be upset when she brought these cats home, but she was desperate. She describes making the decision to bring Hope home: "...I played with Hope for so long and then I said 'Fuck it.' I knew he wouldn't like it, but I needed something." She was quite right about his reaction "...when I brought Hope home, he flipped. 'That's all we need is another goddamn cat in the fucking house.'"

Three of the women who had children stated that they had gotten a pet because their child had wanted one. For instance, Hannah's children had wanted a pet cat because they were afraid of dogs, but her ex-partner wanted a dog. Hannah explains that one day, quite unexpectedly, her ex-partner decided to take them to get a cat, and she suspects that he had ulterior motives: "He might have got in an argument with us, and maybe he tried to make up for it or something...It was just out of the blue: it wasn't a planned thing." Her ex-partner is not fond of their cat, Sammy, and has threatened to kill and get rid of her.

It is not, however, always the case that the women and children want the pets and the male partner is opposed. On the contrary, ten of the participants indicated that their ex/partners had brought at least one pet home, which a couple of the participants had been pleased about. More commonly, however, the women were upset and it resulted in conflict. Brittany recounted how her ex-partner had brought home a male cat to impregnate her cat. When asked who wanted the cat to get pregnant, she replied, "Everybody but me. I already had to flush three [dead kittens] down the toilet. I didn't

want to go through that again.” Kara also did not want more pets. however, her partner brought a dog home. A couple of weeks before, at his insistence, they had gotten rid of her two cats. When asked how she felt when her partner brought the dog home, Kara chuckled and said “I wasn’t too thrilled about it, because I had just-- What, two weeks before that, three weeks before that, we had to get rid of my cats, so I didn’t really want any pets for a long time after that, ‘cause, well, my heart was broken about having to get rid of Kelly especially, both of them, but mostly Kelly. So I really wasn’t ready for another pet...” Her cat, Kelly, whom she had had for eleven years, and her other cat, Pepper, whom she had had for eight years, were taken to the Humane Society.

Sarah and her ex-partner had a year and a half battle over fish. Sarah says that her ex-partner’s obsession with fish caused a great deal of conflict in their relationship. He had several aquariums and was constantly getting more fish. He knew that this was something that upset Sarah, and he would tell her that she had no right to tell him what to do and how to spend his money. Stacey and her ex-partner had a similar struggle, except theirs was over cats and dogs. Stacey estimates that over the ten years that she and her ex-partner were together, they had six or seven cats and six or seven dogs. Her ex-partner got cats despite the fact that he did not like them, and when asked why she thought he had done so, Stacey replied “Image. We had the son, we had the dog, and we had the daughter, and we needed the cat.” He brought dogs home, despite the fact that Stacey did not like them, and she explained that the more dogs he got, the less she liked them: “They’re so aggressive, they’re too hyper, they’re too-- They require so much attention and I found it draining, I found it very draining. And the more he pushed dogs on me the more I didn’t like them...It was kind of like shoved down your throat.” He would not keep the pets long, usually only a few months, and then he would get rid of it and acquire another one. When asked how she felt about getting these pets, Stacey quickly replied “I

hated it. I hated. I hated. hated every time a new one would come into the house because I knew financially we weren't in a position for more pets...I would be so angry that he would take whatever little money we had to buy another stupid dog." Aware of how much Stacey did not want pets, her ex-partner consistently acquired more. Noreen's ex-partner acquired a cat for a different reason: he got Abbey after he and Noreen had separated, and Noreen thought that he had done so to get her and the children's attention. Soon after he got Abbey, he and Noreen got back together, and after two weeks he started neglecting and abusing the cat.

Twelve women reported that someone in their family had received at least one pet as a present. Four of the pets were given to a member of the family from someone outside of the home. Vanessa was the only participant who had given her ex/partner a pet as a present. Conversely, several of the participants reported that their ex/partner had given them or their children a pet as a present. Five of the women's ex/partners had given their child(ren) a pet as a present. Gina's ex-partner had gotten a cat, Taffy, as a Christmas present for her daughter, prior to them living together. Gina and her daughter were unable to keep Taffy in their apartment, so her ex-partner took Taffy to his house. A short time later they moved in with him. He threatened and abused the pets later on, and Taffy was one of his victims. Noreen's ex-partner, whom she believes got the cat after their separation to get her and her children's attention, later got his daughter a Guinea Pig, which stays at his house, and has promised to get her a dog. Noreen is unable to have pets in her apartment, and consequently her daughter "...kind of boasts about having things, you know, like she gets special things from her dad. So she comes and boasts about it." Sarah's ex-partner also got their children pets after they split up: he got his daughters some lizards, which stay at his house. Similarly, Stacey reported that her ex-partner had gotten a cat for their daughter to stay at his house after they separated, despite

the fact that he dislikes cats. She explained that she believes that he is trying to win the children over in an effort to get her back. Thus, giving pets as presents can be useful in winning the favour of children, and in some cases may also be directed at their mother.

Two of the participants' ex/partners had given them a pet as a present. Laura's ex-partner had given her some birds as presents, and Hannah's ex-partner had given her a cat. Hannah discussed her ex-partner's motivation for giving her the cat: "Actually, we got in an argument, and the first cat he brought home was to make up for the argument that we got into...Because he was supposed to pick me up at work and he was late. I had waited like three or four hours for him to come and get me." So, he took a cat from the person's house he was at and brought it home so that she would not be upset with him. However, Hannah was not very happy about him bringing the cat, Malcolm, home. She had just had to get rid of her two cats: "...I just got rid of my two other cats...And when he brought that one back, it was like, why did I get rid of Jack and Patches, now I got Malcolm. Because my other two cats, I really didn't want to get rid of, but I had to."

Although several of these women discussed getting pets because they needed companionship and love, many of the women's ex-partners had also acquired pets. The acquisition of pets by these abusive men demonstrates two things. First of all, as previously discussed, the majority of these men like animals and choose to have them around. Secondly, it is evident that even the acquisition of a pet by an abusive man may be undertaken for instrumental reasons: to win a woman or child's favour.

Animal Abuse as the Result of Generalized Aggression or as Instrumentalized Abuse?

Due to the variety and complexity of abusive individuals and relationships, there will never be one blanket explanation for why all of the men who abuse human and animal family members do so. There may be some explanations, however, that can apply

to the majority of cases and hold the most explanatory potential. Additionally, due to the complexity of these situations, in an attempt to understand why animal abuse and family violence so commonly coexist, one cannot only examine the physical animal abuse as if it occurs in a vacuum. Rather, in addition to physical animal abuse, it is necessary to examine the neglect of pets, psychological animal abuse, as well as the threats to harm them, all within the context in which they occurred. It is also important in this analysis to discuss the abused women's perceptions of why the pets were also victimized.

When the participants were asked why they thought their ex/partners had physically abused the pets, only Gina stated that it was solely because he had lost control and abusing the pets was an outlet for his anger: "I think he just abused the pets because he was frustrated, and that's how he got his anger out..." She did not believe that he had abused the pets to upset her at all. She explained that he lashed out at the dog when he was stressed, or when he became frustrated by the dog's barking or the dog's failure to obey him. She felt that his abuse of the pets stemmed from an inability to control his anger, and that perhaps he had learned to react this way in childhood. Gina expressed her belief that if they had not had the dog she would have had to leave her ex-partner sooner, because she would have received the brunt of his anger had the dog not been there for him to take it out on. She explains, "So he probably would have relieved his stress a lot more-- You know what I mean, on me, without having the dog. So I probably would have been here [the shelter] a lot sooner..." Later she paradoxically states that when she moved in with her ex-partner she told him to stop hitting the dog, and consequently the dog had a three year break because he took his anger out on her and her daughter. Subsequently, she does indicate, however, that the animal abuse continued while she lived with him. Despite Gina's conviction that her ex-partner abused the pets because of his frustration and anger, he had used the animals instrumentally in other ways, which

should not be overlooked. She indicated during the interview that he likely threatened to get rid of the pets to upset her. As well, when she spoke to her ex-partner from the shelter he was sure to bring up the pets that she desperately missed: he told her that the dog and cat are sleeping with him, and that the cat misses her daughter.

Two participants mentioned during their interviews that one of the reasons that they believed their ex/partner had abused the pets was that he lost control of his anger and took it out on the pets. Yvette indicated that she believes that her partner's abuse of animals was a behaviour that he had learned growing up, and that he abused their pets because he would lose control and it was a learned reaction. While Yvette did not describe his physical abuse of the pets as something done specifically to upset her, she said that he would do it in front of her aware that it did upset her. Additionally, she felt that his threats toward the pets, such as his threats to get rid of them, were ways for him to manipulate and upset her. When asked why she thought her partner threatened to get rid of the pets, Yvette stated:

...to see my reaction. I think he thrives on getting me all riled up about something.

Q: So he knows that's one thing in particular that will get you upset?

A: Oh, yeah. 'Cause he knows how much I like the animals.

Q: And how common is it for him to make these threats?

A: Whenever something's not going his way.

Q: So fairly common?

A: Oh, yeah. It's happening less now.

Since she briefly left him one year ago, and they both started counseling, Yvette has noticed that her partner is better with the pets, which she thinks is because he is afraid that she will tell someone, and he is trying "To butter me up..." Thus, Yvette believes that her partner both used the pets to upset her, and is now using them to win her favour. There appears to be some degree of control in this.

Rachelle also indicated at one point in her interview that her ex-partner was

abusive with her pets because he could not control his anger. However, when asked specifically why she thought her ex-partner abused the pets, she replied "'Cause they didn't like him...The animals know when somebody's just rotten.'" She felt that the fact that the animals did not like him actually upset him. She also believed that he would frequently make the threats to get rid of or kill the pets "Just to get under my skin", because he was aware that it upset her. When asked how she reacted to these threats she replied, "Oh, I'd fly off the handle. He'd hit the right-- That right button..." Thus, while Rachelle did mention her belief that he abused the pets partly because he lost control, she believes that other factors were involved. She maintained that he had made threats towards the pets to upset her, and he would achieve the desired response.

The majority of the women whose pets had been physically abused understood their ex/partner's actions in instrumental terms, and not because he could not control his anger and took his aggression out on the pets.²⁰ Rather, they felt that their ex-partner had abused and/or threatened the pets as a means to 'get to' them and/or their children. Not only was the abuse of the pets understood as a tool in the abuse of the women and their children, the animals were used in other ways by these men, which must not be minimized. As illustrated in the previous section, even the acquisition of pets can be instrumental. For instance, Noreen believed that her ex-partner had acquired a cat after a previous separation to get her and her children's attention and to show her that he could be responsible. They reconciled, and only two weeks later he was neglecting and abusing the cat. He also changed the locks on their home and kept their daughter and the cat hostage.

Stacey's ex-partner had similarly acquired a cat and held a cat hostage, to his advantage. Stacey's ex-partner does not even like cats, and yet he went out and got a cat to keep at his home because their daughter likes cats. Stacey explained this by saying

“Understanding him is that the only way to get to me is through the kids. So if he can get the kids to have lots of things at the house that they like and they want then they will want to spend more time with him and less time with me, and take them more away that way.” She also discussed how he had changed the locks on her home and held their cat hostage and used the cat against her: “I wanted the cat and he knew it was a power-- It was like a piece of a chess game. It was a pawn for him. He had the cat so my daughter would have to come back and he would play on that. ‘[daughter], you know, Kitty misses you, Kitty wants you.’ thinking that if he could get the kids to come back because of the cat then I would come back.” During their relationship, Stacey’s ex-partner had brought home many cats and dogs that she did not want. He was aware of how upset this would make her, yet he persisted in acquiring pets, getting rid of them, and then getting more. She said that she purposely did not get attached to the animals because she knew they would soon be gone. When asked if her ex-partner had made threats to get rid of the pets to upset her, Stacey honestly replied “No, he wouldn’t say that to upset me, he would say that to the kids, like ‘I’m gonna get rid of him, that’s it, they’re going to be gone,’ because he knew I was so happy. If I could live with no pets, I would have no pets at all.” Thus, he directed his threats at the children, such as if they were not listening. Stacey explained that her ex-partner was not physically abusive with her children, but he was emotionally abusive with them, and the animals were a useful tool in his abuse of them because he would use “...whatever he could, whatever tool he could use to get to you”, including animals.

Noreen and Stacey’s ex-partners had not severely abused their pets: rather, they were rougher with them than Noreen and Stacey deemed necessary and they considered it abusive. The fact that the animal abuse was not more severe may be a reflection of the fact that Noreen and her ex-partner were only together a couple of weeks with the cat, and

Stacey was self-admittedly unattached to the animals. In these cases the pets were used in various ways to manipulate and control the women and their children, and the abuse of the pets was not central. However, Noreen and Stacey both clearly expressed their feeling that their ex-partner had used the pets to his own advantage.

Both Lindsay and Olivia explained that they felt that their ex-partners' abuse of the pets stemmed from a sense of loss of control on his part, but they did not believe that his abuse of the pets was due to frustration or that it was an outlet for his anger. Rather, they both discussed how controlling their ex-partners were and how at the time that he began abusing the pets, his control was being eroded. Olivia explained that her ex-partner abused the pets "...because he was losing control, he's a control freak, and everything seemed to be going wrong. Like our relationship was going wrong." Similarly, Lindsay's ex-partner "...had to have control over everything. He was a very controlling person.", and Lindsay and her ex-partner had begun to have problems in their relationship. Both Olivia and Lindsay indicated that they had been abused before the pets were, and they both felt that their ex-partner's abuse of the pets was an attempt to regain control over her. According to Olivia, her ex-partner was upset that she had the authority in the house, and he abused the cat "...because he knew that would upset me the most because it was my daughter's cat, and that was the only thing that was close to her, that meant something to her. And I think he knew that would get to me, if he went after the cat." Additionally, her son did not like her ex-partner and her ex-partner said that her son was spoiled and he would tell Olivia to get rid of his dog to teach him a lesson, which she refused to do. The pets were a weak spot for Olivia and her children, which her ex-partner was apparently aware of.

When asked why she thought her ex-partner had abused and threatened the dog, Lindsay replied "To hurt me really. To get back at me." She believed that her ex-partner

wanted to 'get back at her' for wanting out of their marriage. Her ex-partner had explicitly told her that if she broke up with him, he would take the dog and that he would harm or kill the dog to get to her. In fact, during their divorce he demanded custody of the dog. Lindsay knew why he wanted the dog: "...I expressed to my lawyer, 'He's only doing it to hurt me, he really doesn't want her.'" It was apparent in speaking with Lindsay that his use of the dog in his abuse of her really troubled her: "It always upset me. Why would you hurt something that you supposedly love to get back at somebody else?" She had been separated from her ex-partner for over two years, and it still upset her. She recounted a dream that she had approximately a month before hearing about this study. In her dream, the dog was killed, and she recalled saying to her ex-partner 'Why would you kill her? Why wouldn't you just kill me and then you could have her?' She also said that she worried when the dog did not greet her at the door when she got home that her ex-partner had broken in and made good on his threats. Thus, while Lindsay and Olivia asserted that the animal abuse and threats were the result of a lack of control, they did not perceive it as a result of his inability to control his anger. Rather, they saw it as an attempt on his part to regain some control in their increasingly volatile relationships.

Even though Theresa's ex-partner had only physically abused their pet once, she nonetheless recognized it as a control strategy. When her ex-partner had grabbed the dog by the neck and dragged him to the door during an argument, Theresa started screaming and stopped him. She explains, "I just think he was trying to show that he was in control of the situation and could put the dog out of the house." She later added that she thought that he was probably also trying to scare her. Thus, she did not perceive his actions towards the dog as the result of a loss of control, rather she understood it as an attempt to demonstrate and solidify his control.

When Vanessa was asked about the chronological order of the abuse of her and

the pets. she said that he had first abused the pets to get to her. then the abuse became more concentrated upon her. Her statement was followed up for clarification:

Q: And you think it was to get to you?

A: Oh. yeah. always.

She said that he would do things such as throwing or kicking the cats or hitting the dog to upset her. although he particularly targeted the cats. While they were together. Vanessa's ex-partner also frequently threatened to get rid of the pets. Vanessa said that the only reason he would do this was to upset her: "Just to get a reaction out of me because he knew that was one of my main buttons." Since they had split up he had repeatedly threatened to put down the dog and cat that she had had to leave with him. which Vanessa recognized as a tool to upset her. Even after they had separated. Vanessa's ex-partner was still using the pets to maintain some control over her.

Penny described how when her ex-partner moved in with her and her children "...he took over the dog like the dog was his." She said that he would not let her or her children play with or train the dog. When asked why her ex-partner acted this way with the dog. she replied "I know why. because I mean I know his childhood background and he needed to be an authority to somebody. He needed to be in control of the situations." Abusing the dog was one way for him to feel in control. She said that he liked to show off how he could dominate and control the dog to others. including her and her children. Penny was aware that she had distanced herself from the dog once he came in and took him over. but she said she often felt that he was abusive to the dog to upset her children. After she described how he would strike the dog when the dog defended himself. she was asked if she thought that he abused the dog because he was frustrated and angry and lost control. She replied "No. I think it helped him to gain more control." She explains how his abuse of the dog enhanced his control over her and her children: "...when you see

somebody that's not afraid of a dog that's trying to bite him then that makes you more fearful of that person...It made me more fearful of what he could do to us." Penny had left him and gone to stay at a shelter, and she had left the pets with him. She said that he had taken care of the pets while she was in the shelter to get her to come back to him: "...he was hoping I would come back to him and so he figured he needed to take care of the animals. It became a priority. So if he kept the animals alive that--I heard from other people his biggest concern was the fish and he said 'If I kill even one of those fish she's going to be so angry she'll never come back.'" Even after Penny left her ex-partner, he was attempting to use the pets to manipulate and control her.

Similarly, even after the death of her dog, Melissa's ex-partner continued to use him in his abuse of Melissa. The threats that he left on her answering machine after they broke up that simply said 'Remember what happened to Buddy', were obviously made to upset and scare Melissa, which they had: she fled to a battered women's shelter for safety. Melissa believed that her ex-partner had planned to abuse her dog because he was aware of how close Melissa and Buddy were and he hated that. When explicitly asked why she thought he had abused her pets, she said it was because he knew how much her pets meant to her, so "He knew that would get to me." She also believed that he had made the bestiality accusations against her because he thought that it would make her get rid of Buddy. Additionally, she saw his insistence that the dog not sleep on the bed as an attempt on his part to gain more control over her: "He was slowly just trying to control me in every little way. He probably would've--if Buddy would've been still alive he probably would've threatened to kill him, you know, to really do him in, right in front of me probably. That's what it was building up to." Melissa's ex-partner had also threatened to kill and get rid of Momma cat. When she told him that he had no right to harm or get rid of her pets, he told her that he could do whatever he wants. These threats

were a clear demonstration of his power. Melissa also felt that he gained a sense of control from his treatment of her pets: "He needed to control things. Like, he had them [the pets] controlled, where like, when he would raise his voice, they would all scatter. So he had control...just like he controlled me for a long time."

Melissa saw her ex-partner's need for control as central to his treatment of her pets. She did not believe that he had abused her pets because he was frustrated and had lost control, which is illustrated in the following exchange:

Q: Do you think that he abused the pets because he lost control at all?

A: No, I think he did it because he wanted more control. There's only two ways to get to me, and that's through my kids and my pets.

Q: And he didn't have access to the kids [the children did not live with her].

A: That's right. So he started on the pets.

Melissa was extremely close to her pets and her ex-partner had access to them, which made them the ultimate weapon with which to harm and control her. She will no doubt forever be haunted by the words "Remember what happened to Buddy."

These excerpts illustrate that the majority of the women whose pets were physically abused by their ex/partners believe that their ex/partner used the pets to gain control over them and their children, by instrumentalizing the pets to intimidate, upset, and scare them. Additionally, the notion that animal abuse and other forms of family violence coexist because the abuse of pets is a further way to further victimize and control the human victims of family violence and not the result of generalized aggression, is supported when one examines which pets these men chose to abuse, neglect, or threaten. Of the twelve women whose pets were physically abused, four of them mentioned that there were pets in the home that their ex/partner was not abusive with nor threatening towards. In all of these instances, the pets that were not abused were those animals that their ex/partner felt that he had ownership of.

For instance, Yvette said that almost all of their pets had been considered hers and the children's, and her partner had been physically abusive and threatening with them. There was one animal, however, that her partner liked and did not threaten nor harm: it was a racoon that he had brought home. Vanessa's ex-partner also had a pet that he considered to be his. The cats that he had abused were all her pets. However, she said that he was very good to and loved his dog, Ebony. In fact, he told Vanessa to spend more time with his dog: "You don't spend enough time with Ebony, you spend too much time with the cats. Ebony feels left out. Ebony is jealous..."

Melissa's ex-partner also had a pet that he considered to be his. Scruffy had been born to Momma Cat while Melissa and her ex-partner were together. Her ex-partner liked him, which Melissa thinks is because he was a tough cat that got into a lot of fights, and he claimed that the cat was his. He had threatened to get rid of and kill Momma Cat and Buddy, which were her pets, however, he had never threatened to get rid of nor harm Scruffy. He had also abused her other pets and even killed one kitten, however, he was not physically abusive with Scruffy. Similarly, most of the pets that Rachelle had were considered hers. Her ex-partner had threatened to get rid of and kill her pets, he had physically abused them, and she suspects that he got rid of ten cats and ran two over. Rachelle suggested many reasons for his behaviour, such as he wanted to get under her skin, and that he may have lost control of his anger and struck the pets. What is interesting is that he had two cats that he considered to be his that he never lost control with and hit or got rid of, nor did he ever threaten to do so. He was also noticeably nicer to his cats: he brushed them daily, gave them treats, and played with them. Additionally, his cats were also allowed to live inside the house, and her pets were not. The fact that these men were not abusive with, and were even kind to, the pets that they claimed ownership of illustrates that these men are not generalized animal abusers, nor do they

lack control over their anger which would cause them to lash out at the closest being. Rather, they mistreat pets that their partners appear to have ownership of.

There is clearly something about the pets in this sample that the participants 'own' that makes them more likely to be the targets of both abuse and removal. If one 'owns' something, they control it. Thus, it may be that the pets that women 'own' are more of a threat to the men's control. The easiest way to deal with this threat is to get rid of the pet. As discussed in the previous chapter, five participants reported that their ex/partner had wanted them to get rid of their pets when they got together, and four of these women ended up having to do so. Hannah had gotten rid of two cats before she moved in with her ex-partner, and she was very upset when shortly thereafter he brought a kitten home for her as a present because he was late picking her up. Jenna's ex-partner had demanded that she get rid of her two cats before they moved in together. She felt that she had no choice in the matter and got rid of the cats. Later they got two dogs that her ex-partner considered his and did not abuse nor get rid of. Neither Hannah nor Jenna reported that these cats, which they had swiftly gotten rid of, had been threatened with harm or abused by their ex-partners. Kara's partner demanded that she get rid of her two cats for some time, but she resisted: she had had the cats for a long time and was quite attached to them. In the meantime her partner threatened to get rid of them himself and to kill them. Eventually she conceded and got rid of her cats. Shortly thereafter he got a dog, which upset her because she had just had to get rid of her cats. He considered this dog to be his, and when asked why he had selected a specific name for the dog, she explained that it was because she was "his special little girl dog." He never threatened to harm or get rid of his dog.

Olivia's ex-partner also demanded that she get rid of her pets when he moved in with her and her children. For some time she refused to do so: "...I specifically told him

when he moved in about the pets. and that the pets were the kids' and mine and they weren't going." He proceeded to be very abusive and threatening with the pets. Olivia, however, was adamant that she would not get rid of her children's pets. Eventually, however, when her children left Olivia had to move out of her house and her ex-partner demanded that she get rid of the pets before they moved in together elsewhere. Melissa's ex-partner also demanded that she get rid of her pets after he moved in, with the exception of Scruffy, which he considered to be his cat. Melissa consistently refused to get rid of her pets, and he threatened to get rid of them and kill them, and he became physically abusive with them. Melissa never did get rid of her pets, however, her ex-partner may have done away with her dog, Buddy.

It is possible that if Hannah and Jenna had refused to get rid of their pets that their ex-partners may have become abusive and threatening toward these pets. Additionally, if Kara had continued to resist getting rid of her cats, her partner may have followed through with his threats to get rid of or to harm them. It is also possible that if Olivia had not eventually gotten rid of her pets that her ex-partner would have managed to kill them. With the exception of Olivia's ex-partner, all of these men subsequently had animals that they considered to be theirs and that they did not abuse.

In addition to the removal of pets belonging to the women, seven of the twelve women whose pets were physically abused reported that the abused pets were considered her pets. The other five women reported that their ex/partner had abused pets that were considered either family pets or his pets, and a pattern emerges when one examines these five cases. Gina's ex-partner was particularly abusive with his dog, which he had acquired before they met. Once she moved in, Gina became responsible for the care of the dog. Noreen reported that her ex-partner was abusive with the cat that he had acquired when they split up. He neglected the cat and Noreen became responsible for her.

Stacey's ex-partner would bring pets home and would make Stacey solely responsible for them. Lindsay described how when she and her ex-partner moved in together she became entirely responsible for his dog. The dog that Theresa's ex-partner had dragged to the door by his neck was considered a 'family' pet that they jointly took care of. However, the dog was very protective of Theresa, and had growled at her ex-partner in defense of Theresa. Theresa's ex-partner was aware of the dog's loyalty to her. According to Theresa, "He likes the dog, but he knows the dog loves me and is my protector..." and "...[ex-partner] knows that he [dog] likes me more." Therefore, even though the pets in these five cases were considered 'his' or 'family' pets, these women took care of them and the pets were loyal to them. The ownership of an animal can be very fluid, therefore, a pet that was once considered 'his' can easily become more 'hers'. Lindsay described this shift in ownership of the dog from being her ex-partner's to becoming hers. She asserts that this shift resulted in her ex-partner being jealous of the relationship between her and what used to be considered 'his' dog.

In addition to the abusive men's use of the pets to demonstrate power and gain control, some of the women indicated that jealousy may have also been a contributing factor in his maltreatment of the pets, and one of the participants considered jealousy the sole reason for her ex-partner's abuse and removal of her pets. Seven of the twelve women who reported physical animal abuse, discussed the issue of jealousy, including both those whose ex-partners had abused pets considered to be hers and those who abused pets considered his or the family's. Noreen, Stacey, and Lindsay said that their ex-partner made comments suggesting that they spent too much time with the pets and gave them too much attention, even though these pets were not technically owned by these women. Lindsay, in particular, felt that her relationship with 'his' dog really bothered her ex-partner. She explains, "I think it hurt him in a way that she and I got so close so fast."

She also said that he was bothered by the amount of attention she gave the dog, and she admits "...I did give her more attention than him. I liked her more than him." She believes that his jealousy of how close she and the dog were may be part of the reason that he abused the dog. Lindsay explains that his abuse of the dog was "Because of me. I think it's because she took to me. You know, with us talking like this, I really think it is now because she took to me as quickly as she did. He might have took it out on her, you know, that she was so close to me, maybe."

Rachelle, Vanessa, Laura, and Melissa's ex-partners also complained about the time that they spent with the pets, except these pets were considered the women's. These complaints ranged from comments about the women giving the pets more love and attention than their partner, to accusations of bestiality. Rachelle's ex-partner frequently criticized the amount of attention that she gave the pets, and she thought that one of the reasons that he abused her pets was because they did not like him, which she believed upset him. Laura, Melissa and Vanessa's ex-partners were also jealous of the love and attention that they gave their pets. Vanessa's ex-partner even told her that his dog was jealous of the attention she gave her cats, and that she should pay more attention to him. He also said that she spent more time with the pets than with him and that she must be having sex with them because she was not having it with him. Additionally, Vanessa recalled her ex-partner saying that he should have sex with the animals "...because I don't give him anything."

Melissa also discussed her ex-partner's jealousy of the relationship that she had with her dog, Buddy. He persistently tried to make her get rid of her pets, especially the dog, and he would get upset when she refused to do so: "He was mad and he said 'Oh, your precious dog, precious dog.' He said 'You know, you love that dog more than you love anybody.' And I said that I didn't love him more than I love anybody, not more than

my kids, but Buddy right there behind them. And he says 'So I'm in third place?' and I goes 'Well, I guess so. My dog's more loyal than you are.'" He also asked her once who she would select if she had to choose between him and the dog. She told him she would choose the dog, and he told her that she was sick. He began making accusations about her being involved sexually with her dog. Melissa explains why she thinks he made these threats and accusations:

It was mostly the dog that he was on me about. So I think he was jealous because my dog-- When I went to bed that dog come with me on the bed. I have a queen-sized bed and then when he would go to get in there wasn't a lot of room. And he'd say 'Get this dog off the bed.' I said 'No, I've cuddled with him since he was a puppy.' And Buddy would be right up there with me happy as hell on the pillow. And he would get so childish and jealous about that. He would say 'What are you doing, screwing your dog?' but not in that nice of a way, and make accusations like that. And I think he thought that if he told me that enough times that I would get tired of hearing it and so hurt that I would probably get rid of my dog. I wouldn't have gotten rid of him for nothing. Nope, nothing.

Melissa refused to get rid of the dog and the accusations continued. Her ex-partner also threatened to get rid of the dog and even kill him himself: "...he told me that he was gonna kill Buddy...Like I told you, I was very close to the dog and the dog was close to me, and I know he was jealous. And then saying those terrible things, accusing me of bestiality, I think it's called. And I couldn't believe that." Melissa explains that she believes that her ex-partner had abused her pets because of the how important they were to her and because of his jealousy: "I think he did it because he knew how much my pets mean to me. I love my pets, I give them everything I have, I treated them good, they had a good home. And in return they gave me that too. And he was jealous of anybody taking my attention, even an animal."

Laura also believed that her ex-partner had behaved toward her pets the way he

had because he was jealous. Unlike the other participants whose pets were physically abused, Laura did not indicate that her ex-partner had abused, threatened, or gotten rid of her pets because he had lost control of his anger or because he had wanted to upset her. Rather, when asked why she thought he had treated the pets the way he had, she attributed it solely to his jealousy. Her ex-partner had also accused her of being involved with her dog sexually and stated his concern that the dog would come between them. Laura's ex-partner had gotten rid of many of her cats, at least five, and she noticed a pattern in the timing of his removal of her pets: "Just when I got all attached to the animal, he takes it." Laura discussed how her ex-partner was upset by the attention that she gave her pets and that he did not want anyone taking her attention, even an animal. When asked why she thought he had gotten rid of all her cats, she responded "Well, probably because he didn't want any of them having attention from me. That's the deep root of it all." While she had the cats, her ex-partner would intentionally keep them away from her, and he would torment the cats to get her attention: "He was doing this to get to me. He wanted more attention from me. I guess, even negative. He didn't want the cats around because he wouldn't be getting the attention." Her ex-partner would hold the cats to keep them away from her, and would not even let her pet them. She said that this really bothered her because she did not want him to touch her cats "...because he's an abuser, and I don't trust him". Laura, who was physically abused while pregnant and whose children were physically abused by her ex-partner, saw a similarity between the jealousy that her ex-partner had of the attention she gave the pets and the attention she gave the children: "...he felt extreme neglect, that somebody is here and I won't get all the attention. That is a big change too when a baby comes along. It's all about attention." It appears that anyone, whether it be an animal, fetus, or child, who is perceived as a threat to a woman's complete devotion to an abuser, is at risk of being abused and/or eliminated.

Nonphysical Forms of Abuse and The Issues of Control and Jealousy

For some of those women interviewed in this study whose pets were not physically abused by their ex/partner, their pets were nonetheless instrumentalized by their ex/partners in their abuse, and the pets were neglected, psychologically abused, and/or threatened. The issues of control and jealousy are also apparent in these cases. For instance, when the police were removing Ingrid's ex-partner from the home, he lied to the police and said that the dog belonged to a friend of his and that he had to take her with him. Ingrid told the police the truth and they refused to let him have the dog. If he had been permitted to take the dog, it would have devastated Ingrid and her children. As well, her ex-partner used threats to get rid of pets against Ingrid and her children. He would tell them, "You don't deserve goddamn pets." He also refused to take care of the pets. Consequently, his family could not just leave him, they would have to make plans for the pets' care.

Animal neglect can be a useful instrument to control and harm family members, and it may also be motivated by jealousy in some cases. Due to her ex-partner's negligence, Dana had to buy pet food and leave the shelter and actually go back to their home with the food so that her ex-partner would feed them. Through his neglect of the pets, Dana's ex-partner was able to maintain a tie to her. Evelyn's ex-partner also did not physically abuse her pet, but he would tell her that her pet rat was stupid and "You pay too much attention to that thing." Her grandmother told Evelyn that her ex-partner was not feeding the rat after she fled the home, which would have quickly resulted in the rat's death and a great deal of pain for Evelyn. When the police escorted her back to pick up her belongings, the first thing Evelyn grabbed was her pet because she did not trust her ex-partner with her.

Whitney's ex-partner was also not physically abusive with the pets. However,

like Ingrid's son had. Whitney discussed her ex-partner's lack of respect: "...it was just lack of respect, and what things meant to me, what would hurt me, and what would make me happy..." Her ex-partner would take liberties with, and be negligent with the pets, which he was aware upset Whitney. When asked if her ex-partner had been physically abusive with the pets she replied "Well, just maybe not outwardly, that somebody could see it happening and define it as such, but I just don't know what it was with this dog [Gene]. I thought there could have been more care there." Later on Whitney speculates about why her ex-partner was so negligent with Gene: "...I think maybe he was a little jealous that-- I mean the dog was impartial. He liked both of us, but I think, I don't know, but **I think maybe my husband was jealous of the fact that I had this dedication to this dog and this was a dog that didn't go back in history with him, type of thing. And that I did take ownership of him...**" (Emphasis mine.) Whitney felt that Gene's injury was the result of her ex-partner's negligence. Her ex-partner refused to pay for Gene's surgery, and it was very difficult for Whitney to see her dog in pain for one year until friends offered the money for the operation. She explains "I think the main threat was that he held the purse strings in the family and he could say the animal can't walk without a leg operation, but no, I don't want to spend the money." Thus, Whitney's ex-partner did not need to physically abuse the pets, his negligence with her dog was enough to upset her and demonstrate that he was in control and could do as he chose.

In the cases just outlined, the treatment of the pets by their ex/partners, even though not physically abusive, had several consequences for the women. For instance, Ingrid's ex-partner's attempt to take the dog and his threats to get rid of the pets were demonstrations of his power. These threats may have also been quite successful in controlling his family. As well, the neglect of a pet is clearly upsetting to someone who

deeply cares about the pet, and it may actually enhance one's control and be a weapon unto itself. As well, the knowledge that one's pets will be neglected if they leave means that a woman may not be able to leave immediately and entirely. For instance, because she knew her ex-partner would neglect the pets, Ingrid had to make plans for the pets to stay elsewhere before she could leave him. Additionally, Dana's ex-partner's failure to feed the pets after she left him resulted in a situation where she could not entirely break away from him. So Dana's ex-partner retained some degree of control through animal neglect. Whitney felt that her ex-partner exerted control through animal neglect. She felt that her ex-partner was too smart to outwardly abuse the pets, but that they had been harmed through his negligence. Additionally, she explains that his refusal to pay for medical care when the pets needed it was the one way he had of exerting control.

Similarly, although Kara's partner had never physically abused their pets, he had employed threats to get rid of and kill her cats, which Kara believes was a means to control her. Kara actually did not think that he would follow through with his threats because she recognized them as a tool to scare and control her: "No, I didn't really think he would [harm the pets]. I think it was just talk. Just intimidation...just to scare me or to maybe get me to shut up and stop arguing with him, if I thought 'Oh, I better quit because he's going to hurt my cat.'" Kara reports that he never did physically abuse her cats: perhaps it was because he never needed to, since Kara did get rid of them.

Kerri's ex-partner also did not physically abuse her cat. She described how when they were arguing or fighting, he would stomp his feet because he knew it would scare her cat. She also said that he never really had an opportunity to physically abuse the cat because she would run and hide. Hannah said the same thing about her ex-partner: the only reason that he had not physically abused the cat was because he could not catch her. Therefore, there may also be very practical logistical reasons that the pets are not

physically abused. As well, making the pets run scared and witnessing their partner's fear and upset as a result, may be a sufficient expression of his power and control.

Explanations of Why Some of the Abusive Partners Did Not Mistreat the Pets

In order to explain why animal abuse and other forms of family violence commonly coexist, it is also necessary to examine cases in which they do not coexist. Seven women reported that their ex/partners had not threatened, neglected, nor physically abused the pets that they had together. Some of the ingredients that were present in cases where the abusive ex/partners had physically abused, neglected or threatened to harm the pets, were conspicuously absent in these seven cases. First of all, the parallel element of child abuse is not present in these cases. Five out of these seven women had dependent children and all reported that the children were not physically abused. As well, three of these seven women had not been physically abused, and reported that they had strictly been emotionally abused. Based on what the women reported, some of these seven cases were comparatively the least severe cases of abuse. Perhaps in some of these cases if the woman had not sought help when she had, it may have progressed to include child and/or animal abuse, and become physically abusive in the three cases where it had been restricted to emotional abuse.

As well, none of these seven women had pets that were considered theirs, and they were not solely responsible for their care. Rather, they were either family pets or belonged to one of their children. Additionally, out of these seven women only Jenna reported that her ex-partner criticized the amount of attention she gave the pets. However, she also reported that he liked their pet dogs because they gave him attention and because they attracted attention to him when he took them out in public. Thus, the dogs were not necessarily threats to the amount of attention he received; rather, they appeared to enhance it. Overall, these women's ex/partners did not appear jealous of the pets.

It is also worth noting that two of these seven women did not appear to be attached to the pets. When Sarah and her husband split up she let him take the pets because she felt that they would be better off with him. As well, Brittany said during her interview that she does not even like animals, but her children and ex-partner had wanted the pets. Thus, the maltreatment of the pets may not have been an effective tool in these cases and there was no reason for jealousy. However, Sarah's ex-partner did nonetheless use some pets to upset her and demonstrate his power, as did Jenna's.

Sarah described how she felt her ex-partner had used pets to upset her without being abusive. He kept several fish tanks and he was constantly getting more fish, which became a source of conflict in their relationship: "I think it got to the point, because of our relationship, that it ticked me off because he was spending money on so many fish...It became almost like a power struggle. It sounds warped, but--" Sarah thinks that because it upset her, her ex-partner consistently acquired more fish. They frequently argued about it, and her ex-partner would tell her "You can't tell me what to do or how to spend my money." This battle went on for a year and a half, and Sarah thinks that he did it to demonstrate that he could do what he wanted. Jenna discussed how her ex-partner used the fact that he controlled the finances with regard to the pets to control her. She explains how "He threatened to keep me in control with my two little ones. That's control like, you know, like sort of in a sense insinuating that I should tow the line and do what he wants because he's paying for their care...He was using them that way." She explained that he would use that as leverage to get her to do what he wanted. Therefore, the men were able to use pets to demonstrate their power and control without mistreating them.

Summary

Thus, not only in the cases where forms of family violence and physical animal abuse coexist do we find evidence that contradicts the theory that these forms of abuse are

related due to generalized aggression and the loss of control. Additional evidence is also found in cases where physical animal abuse and family violence do not coexist. As demonstrated, in some cases animal neglect, threats, and psychological animal abuse are used to achieve power and control, and the use of physical animal abuse may not be necessary, or even logistically possible. Additionally, in cases where physical animal abuse, neglect, threats, and psychological animal abuse are not reported, specific elements are absent, such as the perceived ownership of pets by the women, jealousy of the attention given to the pets by the women, and in some cases the attachment of the women to the pet. In the absence of these elements, animal abuse appears to be less likely. Therefore, the mere presence of an animal in a home where there is violence does not necessarily mean that it will be abused, as the generalized aggression theory would lead one to assume. On the contrary, as the participants in this study illustrated, specific animals are abused for definitive reasons. In the ensuing discussion, an examination of what should be done in light of these results is undertaken.

CHAPTER 8

Discussion and Conclusion

To assume that animal abuse is the result of generalized aggression and that any animal in a home with an abuser is a potential victim is clearly a gross oversimplification: the data in this study demonstrates that animal abuse within the context of family violence is much more complicated than that. The threats that the participants' abusive ex/partners made to them about the pets, the circumstances under which they mistreated the pets, their selection of specific pets to threaten and mistreat, and the perceptions of the participants in this research, serve as evidence that animal abuse in the context of family violence is not the result of 'irrational acting out'. As illustrated in the previous chapter, these participants' pets were instrumentalized in numerous ways to gain power and control over them and/or their children, and it was not only the physical animal abuse that was instrumental: animal neglect, threats to get rid of or harm them, and psychological animal abuse were also clearly utilized to that end. This research, however, also reveals that the answer to why animal abuse and family violence frequently coexist is even more complex than the instrumentalization of pets to gain power and control. Animal abuse in the family may also be motivated by jealousy.

This research also demonstrates that those pets that appear to be 'owned' by the partners of abusive men are particularly at risk of being removed or abused. Ryder (1973) provides insight into these occurrences in his work on the human-animal bond. He explains that the perceived ownership of a pet is integral to understanding how people relate to the pet:

The concept of ownership is important here. To own a thing makes it a part of one: so its magnificence rebounds upon the owner. **Ownership implies control...**This business of control is especially important in the case of the man who keeps fierce animals in order to boost his own ego, to prove his own virility - he simply has to control them (Ryder, 1973: 663, emphasis mine).

This 'business of control' is also especially important in the case of abusive men. If

'owning' something means to have control over it. then a lack of ownership over something indicates a lack of control. Many of the participants reportedly felt that their ex/partner's jealousy of their relationship with their pets was a factor in his abuse of the pets. Jealousy is about exclusive possession. so if an abusive man does not possess or own the pet. he may appear jealous of the relationship that his partner does have with the pet. Thus. while animal abuse in the context of family violence is clearly related to issues of control in this sample. as hypothesized using the feminist power and control perspective of family violence. it appears to be related in two ways. First of all. the maltreatment of a pet can be instrumentalized in the abuse of others to gain power and control over them. Secondly. the abuser may feel a lack of control over the relationship between his partner and the pets that he does not own and control. and may appear to remove them or abuse them out of jealousy.

As discussed in the fourth chapter. conclusions cannot be drawn from this research about the psychopathology of the abusers nor about the intergenerational transmission of violence. However. some speculation is warranted. The two subtypes of batterers delineated by Jacobson and Gottman (1998) appear to be related to the reasons for pet abuse perceived by the participants. As discussed in Chapter four. Jacobson and Gottman (1998: 36-38) explain that Cobras are controlling due to their desire to do what they want. whereas Pitbulls are controlling due to their fear of abandonment. They assert that Cobras gain control through their ferocious. cold. and calculating abusiveness. and sometimes through explosiveness. Pitbulls gain control by isolating their partners. and through total mind control (Jacobson and Gottman. 1998: 68-71). Due to their fear of abandonment. Pitbulls are constantly dissatisfied with the amount of attention provided by their partners. Importantly. Pitbulls do not want to share their partners with anyone (Jacobson and Gottman. 1998: 76-77). However. Jacobson and Gottman (1998) do not discuss the possibility that Pitbulls could even be threatened by their partners' relationships with pets.

In light of the close relationships between battered women and their pets uncovered in this research, it is clear that such relationships could be very threatening to controlling partners, especially those who do not want to share their partners. Therefore, the men who appeared jealous of the relationship between their partner and the pets may belong to the Pitbull subtype. It is possible that an abuser may abuse the pets both because he instrumentalizes the pet to upset his partner or to get her to do something he wants, and because he lacks control over the relationship his partner has with the pet and he is jealous. In fact, some of the participants asserted that their ex/partner had abused the pets both to control her and due to his jealousy. Only one participant indicated that jealousy was the only factor. Thus, the motivations for an abuser's abuse of the pets may appear different at different times: jealousy and instrumentalization may be evident at different points in the progression. Jealousy was more apparent in the beginning. Many of these women's ex-partners tried to get them to get rid of their pets, and some men took it upon themselves to do so when she refused. Just as many of them had alienated the participants from their family and friends, they sought to get rid of the pets that soaked up their attention as well. Some women refused to get rid of their pets, and the threats to harm them turned into animal abuse. The threats and the abuse were used to intimidate, frighten, and upset the women and their children in an effort to establish control, and in some cases, to regain control. Whether it is manifested as instrumentalized abuse or as jealousy-motivated abuse, the participants who recognized the animal abuse as such also indicated that it was perpetrated to achieve power and control.

In contrast, three women suggested that their ex/partner's abuse of the pets may have been caused, at least partially, by a loss of control over his anger. These women provided information that indicates that their ex/partners may belong to the Cobra batterer subtype. For instance, these three women reported that their ex/partner had engaged in cruelty to animals when younger, which is a characteristic of antisocial personality disorder, which Jacobson and Gottman (1998: 97) claim is much more common among

Cobras than Pitbulls. Specifically, Gina reported that to her knowledge, her ex-partner had shot animals as a child, and he had built bombs. Rachelle's ex-partner had shot small animals and he bludgeoned two of his neighbour's dogs to death as a youth. Yvette's partner had also killed dogs: he had fatally shot two of his parent's dogs, and dragged another one to death behind a truck. Yvette's partner had also physically assaulted one of his co-workers, another characteristic of a Cobra (Jacobson and Gottman, 1998: 30). Gina and Rachelle were unsure if their ex-partners had gotten into physical fights with co-workers or friends, but they knew that there had been verbal confrontations. Gina stated that she believes that her ex-partner learned to be angry, controlling, and not to express his feelings in his abusive family of origin. She also speculated that he may have witnessed his father or brother abuse animals as a child. Yvette also stated that her partner's abuse of the animals and his inability to control his anger were learned in his abusive family of origin. Rachelle did not know much about her ex-partner's childhood. Jacobson and Gottman (1998) claim that Cobras are also more likely to have had abusive childhoods. Interestingly, none of these three women mentioned jealousy as a possible factor in their ex/partner's abuse of the pets.

These women's belief that their ex/partner, at least at times, had abused the pets because he lost control may be explained by the fact that these men may have been Cobras. Jacobson and Gottman (1998: 67) state that although the Cobra is characterized by calm ferocity, the abuse of some appears impulsive, as if they are out of control. They point out that Cobras also gain control through this explosiveness (Jacobson and Gottman, 1998: 70). Conducting research with batterers, however, is necessary to determine exactly what roles personality disorders and abuse in the family of origin may play in explaining the coexistence of animal abuse and other forms of family violence.

Although there are theoretical limitations to this study, this research was able to expose areas where further research is needed, to generate a great deal of insight into why animal abuse and other forms of family violence may coexist, and why it is important to

recognize animals as victims of family violence. Including animals as legitimate victims of family violence promotes the acknowledgment of the seriousness of animal abuse. However, animal abuse must also be taken seriously because it involves the victimization of a sentient being, not only because it is related to other forms of violence. Beirne (1999: 139-140) questions whether the feminist argument that animal abuse should be condemned because it is interrelated with other types of oppression is useful. Rather he argues that animal abuse should be condemned due to the effect it has on the animals, not simply because it is related to the abuse of humans. Although animal abuse should be condemned on both fronts, Beirne's criticism is valid. A major impetus of the currently proposed amendments to the Canadian Criminal Code by Justice Minister Anne MacLellan to stiffen the penalties for animal abuse is the "...growing scientific evidence that suggests animal abuse can be an early warning sign for violence against humans" (Tibbetts, 1999: A2). In recognizing the importance of animal abuse, it is important to avoid substituting the very anthropocentric and utilitarian beliefs that have limited research in this area, with new anthropocentric and utilitarian notions that animal abuse is solely important because it is related to interpersonal human violence. Feminists and other theorists dealing with this issue are constrained to a degree by the reality of the anthropocentric and utilitarian notions of animals currently prevalent in society, however, as Beirne points out, such notions must be actively challenged.

It is evident that for the area of animal-related research to expand, the anthropocentrism prevalent in society, and certainly in academia, must be challenged. There are many areas in which such research is warranted, and this research project points to a few. For instance, Canadian research into the rate of the coexistence of animal abuse and other forms of family violence utilizing larger, more representative samples is necessary. Additionally, while this research provides valuable exploratory information using the perceptions of the adult female victims, research utilizing samples of batterers, or ideally of batterers and their partners, to explore the relationship between animal abuse

and family violence and to provide further information on the instrumentalization and jealousy explanations, would be useful. Examining the perspectives of male batterers would likely introduce additional explanations and shift the focus from the instrumentalization explanation. Research into the relationship between animal abuse and family violence should also be conducted with different populations, for instance, in different cultures and with same-sex couples. This study found a strong connection between child abuse and animal abuse perpetrated by the male abuser, and this aspect deserves further exploration. Research is also needed on the relationships between elder abuse and animal abuse, and sibling abuse and animal abuse. As well, it has been asserted that a relationship exists between sport hunting and domestic violence (Adams, 1994B), and this research did provide some limited evidence in support of that assertion. However, in depth research on this topic is necessary. This study also demonstrated that getting rid of pets is an important aspect of the relationship between animal abuse and family violence, which deserves continued attention. Additionally, research attention should be paid to the close relationships that the human victims of family violence, and perhaps victims of other forms of violence, have with their pets.

Numerous benefits exist to utilizing the power and control approach in examining family violence from a comprehensive perspective, wherein animals are recognized as legitimate victims of abuse within the family. This approach provides increased insight into battering behaviour. For instance, Breines and Gordon (1983: 514-15) acknowledge that the distinction between instrumental and expressive, or 'out of control' violence, is useful. However, they argue that acts of violence can contain both instrumental and expressive elements, and that categories such as instrumental and expressive violence become blurred in analyzing this behaviour. Messerschmidt also cautions against assuming that all family violence is instrumental and that all men are motivated to control women through violence: "Although some men are clearly motivated to control women through violence, not all violent men share this specific goal. Indeed, radical feminists

simply bulldoze away the complexity in which gender (masculinity) is situationally, therefore, differently accomplished throughout society” (1993: 45). Although instrumental and expressive violence are not dichotomous, the abuse of animals in the context of family violence appears to expose the high degree to which family violence contains elements of power and control.

Adams’ (1995) claim that instrumental violence is particularly evident when animals are harmed by batterers is supported by this research. She argues that “There is not much leeway for a man to say he tortured animals and it was out of his control. It is clearly wilful and deliberate. But our culture does not want to recognize this willfulness, this deliberateness, or so far has failed to, and thus sexually abusive and possessive behaviour is not stopped” (Adams, 1995: 181). This research demonstrated that in addition to physical animal abuse being instrumentalized by batterers, threats, animal neglect, removal, and psychological animal abuse are also instrumental. Due to the exposure of this deliberateness through animal abuse, Adams (1995) argues that animal abuse should be recognized as a specific form of woman battering. This research also uncovered additional reasons why animal abuse should be recognized as a specific form of battering.

Within many of the categorizations of abuse previously discussed, animal abuse is classified as a form of emotional or psychological abuse. Additionally, on the Power and Control Wheel, animal abuse is listed as a form of intimidation. As demonstrated in this research, animal abuse is additionally related to other forms of abuse and tactics of control, such as financial abuse, whereby the abuser exerts control over the finances related to the pets to control his partner; verbal abuse, whereby threats are made to the woman regarding the pets; neglect, whereby in addition to neglecting his partner’s needs, an abuser may also neglect the needs of his partner’s beloved pet to upset her; sexual abuse, whereby a woman’s partner may degrade her by accusing her of engaging in bestiality, or may even force her to do so; and physical abuse, which may be perpetrated

because the woman defends her pets from abuse, as demonstrated in this study, as well an animal could be used to physically abuse a woman or child, although this was not mentioned by the participants in this study. Clearly, animal abuse is not restricted to the realm of emotional and psychological abuse or intimidation, and to classify it as such ignores the numerous ways in which animals can be used in the abuse of others and the fact that the animals themselves are also victims of family violence.

Under Anne Ganley's categorization of battering previously discussed, animal maltreatment is categorized under 'the Destruction of Property and Pets', which is also unsatisfactory. First of all, this categorization also ignores the numerous ways in which animals can be used to harm women, such as through threats, psychological animal abuse, and neglect, and is limited to the physical abuse or 'destruction' of pets. Secondly, categorizing pets with property is to merely regard them as such, and the participants in this research clearly considered their pets much more important than a piece of property. Categorizing pets with property also minimizes the bonds that battered women have with their pets, and may serve to invalidate the strong feelings that women have about their pets and their victimization. Understandably, a woman would be reluctant to discuss her strong feelings about her pets with those who view them merely as property. Destroying a material possession is clearly not the same as killing a pet, and it should not be classified as if it is. Recognizing the maltreatment of pets as a specific form of family violence and separating it from the destruction of property would validate these women's experiences and feelings, and would demonstrate the importance of taking this form of abuse seriously and not treating it as a form of incidental abuse.

In addition to providing evidence in support of the claim that cases of family violence are largely deliberately perpetrated, a comprehensive approach to family violence also provides greater insight into the repetitiveness and severity of the abuse. Once the abuse of pets within the family is taken into consideration, a more accurate account of the frequency and severity of the abuse in the family is available. For instance,

a woman may be physically struck once and it may be perceived as an isolated incident. However, the removal and abuse of her pets can serve as evidence of the repetitive nature of the abuse. As well, the abuse of the pets likely indicates that the abuse is becoming more severe, as demonstrated by the escalation of events which the participants discussed.

Paying increased attention to the abuse of pets will also assist in identifying families in which other forms of violence exist, or are likely to. The results of this research indicate that attention should not only be paid to the physical abuse of the pets, but also to the removal of pets, animal neglect, psychological animal abuse, and threats against the pets. A high turnover in pets and the removal of pets by the partner are likely very important warning signs. This research also demonstrates that an abuser's fondness of animals and kindness towards pets does not necessarily mean that animal abuse or other forms of abuse are not occurring. It is important to pay attention to the perceived ownership of the animal, and to specifically examine how the male partner treats pets that are not 'his' or entirely under his control.

In light of these research results, several suggestions can be made. First of all, the relationships that battered women have with their pets must be addressed and discussed with them. It was apparent in conducting these interviews that many of these women have very strong emotions about their pets: many cried during the interviews and some brought in pictures of their pets. Unfortunately, many of these women had not previously had an opportunity to discuss their pets and their victimization, and many women appeared relieved after doing so for this research. After Rachelle's interview was completed she expressed her gratitude for being given an opportunity to talk about her pets, and she said that she felt better after having done so. Only a couple of the participants indicated that they had discussed the maltreatment of their pets with someone, and these few discussions had been very limited. For instance, Melissa was quite upset after her ex-partner strangled her kitten to death, and she attempted to talk to

some friends about it. They were not very sympathetic, and they made her feel guilty for not being able to stop her ex-partner. Melissa had tried to explain that she was not strong enough to stop him and that she was scared. She had brought this incident up because she was upset, but in the end Melissa ended up feeling more guilty. She did not bring it up again until the interview.

A concerted effort needs to be made to address issues related to their pets with battered women and abusive men. As previously discussed, batterers appear particularly unlikely to discuss their abuse of pets, which is all the more reason to pursue the issue. Additionally, assuming that battered women will bring the abuse of their pets up if it is bothering them is inadequate. Many women feel guilty for not preventing the abuse and they may be unlikely to bring it up. Additionally, because relationships with pets are trivialized in contemporary society, many women likely will not bring their close relationship with their pet up and risk appearing ridiculous. It is unreasonable to expect a woman to volunteer the fact that she is delaying, or did delay, leaving her abusive partner due to concern for her pet, or because she does not want to be separated from her pet (this is likely even more difficult for women with children to admit); or that her pet is the lifeline that is keeping her from killing herself; or that the loss of her pet prompted a suicide attempt. Clearly many would not, and do not, volunteer this information, despite its importance. Issues surrounding the treatment of pets by the abuser, the relationship between the human victims and the pets, and the current location and condition of the pets must be specifically addressed with all battered women who seek help, and have or had pets while with their abusive partner.

This research also underscores the importance of providing adequate sheltering for the pets of battered women. Unfortunately, many of the women interviewed were not aware of the program to shelter their pets while they sought help at the battered women's shelter, and of those participants who were aware of the program, only one made use of it. This research demonstrates that the abuse of pets in the context of family violence is

about maintaining and exerting control, and an abuser's control is clearly undermined when his partner leaves him. Consequently, his use of the pets, if they are left with him, to regain control over his human victims may become accentuated, which Quinlisk illustrates in the following statement:

My first client [as a counselor at a women's center in Wisconsin] came in very apologetic and said 'I have to go home.' When I tried to tell her that she didn't have to go home, she said 'No, you don't understand.' She pulled out of her purse a couple of pictures and handed them to me without comment. They were pictures that her mother had forwarded to her that her husband had sent to her mother...They were pictures of him chopping off the ears of her dog with gardening shears. She said, 'I have to go home...If I want to save my dog's life and the lives of the other animals on the farm, I have to go home.' I didn't have any answers for her. I didn't have any way of helping her...We never heard from her again (Quinlisk as cited in Ascione, 2000: 1).

Clearly, the pets of battered women must not be left with the abusers, even if he has not yet physically abused the pets, because he may do so once she leaves him. Obviously, pets are particularly vulnerable to abuse once their protector is gone, and once an abuser feels he is losing control of his partner and his jealousy likely becomes heightened. Additionally, as this research demonstrates, abusers may use the pets in other ways to retain control over their partners, such as through threats and neglect. Pets should also not be left with the abuser because it jeopardizes the woman's safety. Some of the participants continued to put their pets' safety ahead of their own once they were in the shelter, and they returned home to visit and care for the pets. This is a serious safety concern. Therefore, it is essential that the pets are provided with safe shelter. It is evident, however, that the programs currently offered in these two Southern Ontario cities are inadequate.

The fact that only one of the women who was aware of programs to shelter animals used the program, and further, this woman said that she would never do so again, warrants examination. As previously mentioned, the programs offered consisted either of placing the pet in a foster home or at the local Humane Society. One participant did not

want to have her cat sheltered at the local Humane Society because she feared that he would feel abandoned, and she would not be able to visit him because she had no way to get there. Another participant said that she did not use the program because she was told that her pets could only be sheltered for two weeks, which she knew did not give her adequate time to find a new home. Additionally, another participant was not able to use the program because the local Humane Society did not accept rats. Clearly such programs must accommodate all types of pets and should not have time restrictions.

The concern that the pet will feel abandoned and that one will not be able to visit, however, is more difficult to deal with within the confines of these current programs, and is less easily rectified. In addition to those women who entered shelters and chose not to use these programs, there are women who will not enter shelters because they cannot take their pets with them. For instance, Lindsay refused to go to a shelter because she did not want to be separated from her dog. This information was only ascertained because Lindsay had subsequently joined a support group. Additionally, while conducting this research, a counselor mentioned that one of her clients wanted to leave her abusive partner, but she had a fragile elderly dog that required medication for a chronic condition. Her dog was very difficult to medicate and she was afraid that the stress of being away from her would kill the dog. Consequently, she was not willing to enter a shelter and have her dog taken to a Humane Society or foster home, or to leave the dog at home. There are likely many women like these two women, who will never set foot in a shelter because their pets cannot accompany them. In these cases, the currently available programs are also inadequate.

In Ascione's (2000: 20) survey, two or 9.5% of domestic violence agencies he sampled reported housing pets at their shelter. This was likely only short-term sheltering, because animals are typically not allowed in shelters due to client and staff allergies, space restrictions, and safety concerns. However, the Grey Bruce Women's Centre in Owen Sound, Ontario had a dog kennel built on its grounds to house the pet dogs of

abused women, and it is believed to be the first in Canada to do so (Avery, 2000). Sheltering the pets of abused women and children on the grounds of the shelter is a solution to the concerns voiced by the participants. These women could visit their pets and would not have to be entirely separated from them. Given the strength of the human-animal bond, the reported therapeutic benefits of animal companionship, and the strong relationships between the human victims of family violence and their pets discovered in this study, having the pets on the grounds of the shelter would not only mean that women who otherwise would not have gone to a shelter will, and women who otherwise would have delayed leaving because of their pets would not - it would also likely have therapeutic value for the women and children.

In the introduction to this discourse, Anne Ganley was quoted as saying that the seriousness of animal abuse in the context of family violence is minimized, frequently because it is considered better than striking a human victim. It was asserted that this notion was based upon two assumptions: that a human is harmed less if a pet is abused than if they are directly victimized themselves, and that abuse is the result of uncontrolled anger and if an abuser 'loses control' and takes his anger out on the pet, then the human family members are spared, at least for the time being. This research demonstrates that these two assumptions are erroneous. With regard to the former assumption, the importance of their pets to battered women, and the frequently devastating effects of their ex/partners' victimization of their pets upon them, was certainly illustrated. Clearly it is not accurate to assume that a battered woman is harmed less if her pet is physically abused and she is not. In fact, many of the participants indicated that their ex/partner targeted their pet because it was the only way that he could get to her.

The latter assumption is also clearly refuted by this research. Animal abuse within the context of family violence is not the result of generalized frustration whereby an abuser abuses a pet to 'blow off steam.' Rather, pet abuse in the context of family violence is about gaining control, and it manifests itself as instrumentalized abuse to gain

control over the pet and the human victims, and as jealousy-motivated abuse because the abuser lacks ownership and control of the pet, and the relationship between the woman and that pet. Therefore, the seriousness of animal abuse in the context of family violence must not be minimized: it results in harm to the pets, to the human victims of family violence, and it can prompt women to stay with abusive partners, thus risking their safety, their pets' safety, and their children's safety where applicable.

This research found that the majority of the participants had very close relationships with their pets. Several participants stated that their pets helped them and their children cope with and survive the abuse perpetrated by their ex/partners. One respondent reported that her pets kept her from killing herself, and another admitted that the death of her pet prompted a suicide attempt. The truth is that animal abuse may so frequently coexist with other forms of family violence specifically because of this strong bond between battered women and their pets. Due to this bond, the women are unwilling to get rid of their pets when their abusive partners demand that they do so: many abused women are attentive to and empathize with their pets, which may foster jealousy; and the pets are consequently useful tools in the pursuit of power and control by abusive men.

Notes

1. Health Canada (2000:1) reports that 88% of the victims of spousal violence are women, and according to Dobash and Dobash (1992: 265), Canadian and American reports indicate that 90-95% of the victims of domestic violence are women.
2. An examination of cross-cultural variations in the treatment of animals is beyond the scope of this discourse. However, it is appropriate to note that this research was conducted within, and pertains to, a western industrialized society, and would likely lack relevance in other contexts.
3. The meaning of 'abuse' is socially constructed and variable. With regard to woman abuse, DeKeseredy and MacLeod (1997: 3-4) explain that although it has existed in different cultures and periods, the forms that abuse takes and the societal responses to it are historically variable. The same is true of animal abuse.
4. Conversely, in hunter-gatherer societies a sharp distinction is not drawn between human and nonhuman: they do not consider themselves as opposed to nature, rather nature is spiritually, morally, and socially significant. Within these societies a strict hierarchy between humans and animals does not exist (Noske, 1989: 41-53). As well, some religions, such as Jainism (Baenninger, 1991: 8-9) and Buddhism (Baenninger, 1991: 8-9; Noske, 1989: 42) emphasize the unity and continuity of all life.
5. In Kellert and Berry's (1980) random sample of 3,107 American respondents, the most liked species were the dog and horse. The cat ranked twelfth, after the swan, robin, butterfly, trout, salmon, eagle, elephant, owl, and turtle.
6. The attitudes that Kellert and Berry (1980: 42) delineate are as follows: the naturalistic attitude, where the primary interest and affection is for wildlife and the outdoors; the ecologicistic attitude, which is characterized by a primary concern for the environment as a system, and for the interrelationship between wildlife and their natural habitats; with the humanistic attitude the primary interest and affection is for individual animals, especially pets; those who exhibit the moralistic attitude have a primary concern for the right and wrong treatment of animals, and with a strong opposition to the exploitation of animals; the scientific attitude is characterized by a primary interest in the biological functioning of animals; those with an aesthetic attitude have a primary interest in the artistic and symbolic attributes of animals; the utilitarian attitude is characterized by a concern for the practical and material value of animals, or the animal's environment; the dominionistic attitude is evident typically in sporting situations, and is evidenced by an interest in the mastery and control of animals; the negativistic attitude is characterized by the avoidance of animals; and finally they delineate the neutralistic attitude, wherein the primary orientation is a neutral relation to, and an emotional detachment from, animals. Kellert subsequently uses this same scale in his 1985 research into the historical trends and attitudes toward animals in the United States, as well as in his cross cultural examination of attitudes toward animals in 1993.

7. The term **ecofeminist** is believed to have originated with **d'Eaubonne**, a French feminist, in 1974 (Lane, 1998: 236).
8. **Thou-awareness** is said to occur when a being that was at first accidentally chosen as a companion becomes an **unchangeable and irreplaceable partner** as a result of **intensive association** (Teutsch, 1992).
9. The first phase of the seven which **Hickrod and Schmitt (1982)** delineate is the **pet's entry into the home**. At this point, the pet is a toy or a novelty, and is **interchangeable**. Naming is the second phase, whereby the pet is given an identity. The third phase is termed the **probation phase**, through which pets will pass if they obey the 'house rules'. Pets that were given as presents or were gotten **impetuously** may experience additional problems in this phase because the caretakers are not always aware of the pets' needs. As well, family members may disagree regarding whether or not the pet has **successfully negotiated this phase**. The next phase is the **engrossment phase**, within which those families that kept the pet, with few exceptions, develop intense feelings for them. The fifth phase is the **realization phase**, wherein it is realized that things would not be the same without the pet and that the pet is part of the family. The sixth phase, termed the **mood-joining and routinization phase**, is the process through which individuals fit their moods together through interaction, into a common feeling-state. Individuals communicate their feelings for their pets to others, but due to others' comments, factors, or pets' activities, people can be reminded that 'it is just an animal'. The final phase is the **separation phase**, which is brought on by the death of the pet. Some people may name a new pet after the deceased one, and many continue to talk about the pet after his or her death.
10. Relatedly, **Gaard (1993: 303)** draws attention to the fact that in the English language, nature and many animals, such as cats, which cannot be controlled, take on a feminine pronoun.
11. Similarly, in his historical account of bestiality, **Dekkers (1992: 146-7)** states that the act of bestiality is not the only way in which humans are aroused by animals. Rather, for some people, animal abuse is linked with sexual arousal. He specifically addresses the fact that some individuals are aroused by watching the slaughtering of animals.
12. In fact, most animal abusers do not subsequently become violent with humans; "They have the symptoms but do not get the disease" (Arluke et al, 1999: 973). Further research into how and why some animal abusers also act out violently against humans while others do not, is required.
13. For instance, serial killer **Arthur Gary Bishop**, upset after killing his first human victim, tried to de-escalate his behaviour. He acquired fifty puppies, tortured and killed them. "Instead of reducing his need for violence, Bishop found that he so enjoyed the tortured cries of animals, it helped motivate him to abduct, torture, and kill more children" (Arluke et al, 1999: 972).

14. Flynn (2000B) asserts that animals can be psychologically abused. He states that "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" (Flynn, 2000B: 108).
15. It is worth noting, however, that animals may also engage in behaviours that some may believe makes them deserving of abuse, such as the destruction of property, failure to obey, or aggressive behaviour.
16. Ganley asserts that the abuse of pets is no less of a form of abuse than physical, sexual, and psychological abuse (Meyer, 1998: 9), however, she admits that this category has been largely overlooked (Adams, 1995: 59).
17. Ganley distinguishes between psychological and emotional abuse. Psychological abuse is said to be perpetrated within a climate of fear with physical violence preceding it (Stordeur and Stille, 1989: 20).
18. According to Turner, "...there is an element of polemic in Glaser and Strauss' advocacy of grounded theory which leads them at times to overstress the extent to which existing theory can be completely ignored..." (1981: 228). Accordingly, Stern (1994) emphatically argues that little research can be considered pure grounded theory, which she feels is not necessarily a problem: "It may be that all seasoned researchers tinker with the method they use until it works for them. The point is that maybe it is not heresy; rather, it may be an effort to be true to the data and to develop an end product of quality and use" (Stern, 1994: 214). Stern (1994: 219) argues that the problem arises when researchers do not acknowledge the ways in which they have adjusted the methodology, because then others cannot learn from it. Accordingly, in this research close attention was paid to the adjustments made to the methodology, which are discussed later in this chapter.
19. It is necessary to note that perceptions of these 'sports' are at least partially related to social class issues.
20. It is necessary to acknowledge that the women in this sample likely came into contact with the Power and Control model in the shelter and support groups, which may have resonated with them and affected their interpretations.

Research Proposal
An Exploration of Why Animal Abuse and Family Violence Are Related

Amy J. Fitzgerald
University of Windsor

Introduction:

Researchers have recently established that animal abuse is disproportionately present in situations where forms of family violence exist (such as Ascione, 1998; Ascione, Weber, and Wood, 1998; DeViney, Dickert, and Lockwood, 1998; and Quinlisk, 1999). Why these forms of abuse commonly coexist, however, remains to be explored. As a Criminology student in graduate studies at the University of Windsor, I have chosen to devote my Masters thesis to addressing this worthy question. Accordingly, my proposed research project will explore the dynamics of the circumstances in which these related forms of abuse occur and will seek to uncover existing patterns across cases where these forms of abuse coexist.

I am hypothesizing that the abuse of animals within violent families is not random nor irrational. Rather, a pet animal may be purposely used as a powerful instrument in the abuse of others within the family. For instance, an individual may threaten to harm a beloved pet in order to maintain power and control over the human victims of abuse. Pet animals would be easily instrumentalized in the abuse of others because they are viewed as property, are generally easily accessible and smaller than the abuser, are trusting and dependant, and the formal costs of abusing animals are mild and are rarely enforced.

Methodology

Interviews would be conducted both with battered women who had pets that were not abused, and with battered women who had pets that were abused, in order to permit a

comparison between these different circumstances. It is believed that interviews will be the most effective means of gathering data for this research because certain answers may require more explanation and probing than other forms of data collection, such as a questionnaire, would permit. As well, questionnaires lack the flexibility which will be required to explore the dynamics of abuse. The interviews will be semistandardized, and the pre-determined questions would be presented to you prior to the interviews for your approval (please see appendix A for a list of some tentative questions). This form of data collection will provide an opportunity for the women to discuss what they feel is relevant and to provide details and further information where they deem necessary. It is estimated that the interviews will take thirty minutes; although they will vary according to the amount of information which the women wish to share.

What would be required of your facility for this research:

- *The distribution of a letter outlining the research project to the women receiving services from your facility* - The letter would introduce the researcher and the research project and ask for participants who had pets at the time of their abuse, regardless of whether or not those animals were abused. In addition, at your request, I could explain my research in person. Those women interested would then be asked to either contact me or advise your staff of their interest, depending on which your facility would prefer. A convenient time for an interview would then be established.
- *The provision of private space where the interviews can be conducted* - I would

require a private area within your facility to conduct the interviews, so that I can ensure the women's privacy and confidentiality.

Ethical issues:

- *Voluntary Consent* - Only those who voluntarily consent will be interviewed. In addition, those who consent may withdraw at any time before or during the interview. Prior to the interview, the purpose of the study, potential risks, and benefits will be explained to the participant and her statement of consent will be audio tape recorded.
- *Anonymity* - The audio tape-recorded form of consent will eliminate the need for signed consent slips, thus providing the participants with anonymity.
- *Confidentiality* - Confidentiality will also be assured: in reporting the results pseudonyms will be used, and any information which may indicate the participant's identity will be altered or omitted.
- *Researcher Accountability* - An elaborated academic research proposal will be developed for the University of Windsor over the next few months and will require the approval of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the Ethics Committee at the University of Windsor before the research can commence. After the proposal is approved and before the research begins, you would be provided with a copy of the formal proposal submitted to the University of Windsor. Additionally, you would be provided with a copy of the final thesis paper, wherein the findings of the research would be presented.

Potential Costs and Benefits:

For a research project to be ethically sound and valuable, the potential benefits must outweigh the potential harms (Berg, 1998:35). As previously mentioned, given the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality, the requirement of voluntary consent, the ability of the participants to withdraw at any time, and my accountability to the University of Windsor and to your facility, this research poses few foreseeable harms. It is believed that the benefits of this research will far outweigh the few associated costs, and therefore that this research is ethically permissible and will be overall beneficial.

Costs:

- *Disruption* - Inevitably, the presence of the researcher may slightly disrupt the staff members and the clients of your facility. Every effort will be made to minimize such disruptions, and your suggestions in this regard are certainly welcomed.
- *Impact on the staff* - The distribution of the letter outlining the research project and the allocation of space for the interviews are two foreseeable impacts of this research on the staff.
- *Impact on the participants* - The costs which the participants might incur include the loss of their time spent in the interview and the discomfort involved in reliving their experiences of abuse.

Benefits:

- *The identification of at risk families* - One of the benefits of the proposed research project is that gaining an improved understanding of the coexistence of

animal abuse and family violence may assist in identifying at risk families.

Animal control agencies are often the first agencies to come into contact with violent households (Arkow, 1999: 25), for several reasons: the abuse of an animal may be more easily detected and reported than that of a human. people may be more likely to report animal abuse than the abuse of family members, and individuals may be reluctant to intervene in violence against family members due to inaccurate beliefs, which are generally not present in cases of animal abuse. Further research on the coexistence of animal abuse and family violence will likely provide an impetus and support for animal agencies and agencies concerned with family violence working together and sharing information, which could assist in stretching limited resources, as well as in the early identification of abusive homes.

- *The Reduction in the number of women who delay leaving abusive environments -* Research has also established that some women delay leaving their abusive partner specifically because they are afraid of what their partner will do to their pets. One study found that 18% of a sample of battered women had delayed leaving their abusive partner due to their fear for their pets' safety (Ascione, Weber, and Wood, 1998: 4). A further study found that concern for their pets kept 22.6% of women with children and 23.1% of women without children from going to a shelter sooner (Roberts, September 1999 presentation). The proposed research project would examine this issue and would likely not only draw attention to the fact that adequate programs for sheltering battered women's pets

are necessary everywhere, but just as importantly the women need to be aware of such programs so that they do not delay leaving.

- *Exposure of the deliberateness of abuse* - Examining the dynamics of animal abuse within violent families and the ways in which the animals may be instrumentalized to abuse others in the family would expose the deliberateness of battering and animal abuse, and the fact that these acts are acts of control, not the result of a loss of control.
- *Animal abuse as a predictor and lethality indicator* - By examining the patterns of the circumstances in which animal abuse and family violence coexist and the circumstances in which they do not, the proposed research may uncover whether animal abuse is a predictor of other forms of violence, as well as a useful lethality indicator, and under what circumstances.
- *The contribution of knowledge to an unexplored area* - Due to the fact that exploratory research of this nature has never been conducted, the proposed research project will generate a great deal of much needed insight into why animal abuse and family violence often coexist. Once we understand why these forms of abuse coexist, our ability to detect, treat, and even prevent such abuse, will be enhanced.

Conclusion:

The recent research that has established a link between family violence and animal abuse has been of significant importance. However, simply acknowledging that animal abuse and family violence are related is insufficient. Conducting research into

the dynamics of these abusive environments is necessary in order to understand how and why they are related. My proposed research project has been designed to minimize the disruptions and 'costs' to the participants and staff of your facility, which are far outweighed by the significant foreseeable benefits of this research. Conducting research in an area in which little is known always promises to yield valuable information and is important. Conducting research in an area which involves the abuse and death of an increasing number of victims and is marked by a paucity of information, is long overdue and imperative. I sincerely hope that your facility will offer me an opportunity to conduct this valuable research.

Appendix A

Tentative Interview Questions

Questions for all participants:

1. What kinds of pets did you have in your home during the time which you were abused by your partner?
2. Where are the animals now?
3. Where did you get the animal(s) from?
4. Were you aware of any programs designed to shelter pets while women reside in this facility? If so, how did you hear about the program?
5. If you did not have pets, do you think that you would have come to this facility sooner or later than you did? If so, why?
6. Are you aware of any abuse that your partner perpetrated against animals other than your pet(s)? If so, please describe.
7. Could you please describe, in whatever detail you feel comfortable with, the abuse that your partner inflicted upon you.
8. Did your partner ever threaten to harm or kill your pet(s)? If so, could you please describe the threats and the circumstances.
9. Were any of your pets abused by your partner?

Additional questions for those women who indicate that animal abuse occurred:

10. Could you please describe, in whatever detail you feel comfortable with, the abuse that your partner inflicted upon your pet(s).
11. To your knowledge, did your partner abuse you or your pet(s) first?
12. Did your partner ever communicate any reason for abusing the pet(s)?
13. Do you have any idea why your partner abused your pet(s)?
14. Did your partner ever threaten to harm the pet(s) in order get you to do something?
15. Did your partner ever give you a pet? If so, did he ever abuse that pet?
16. Did your partner have any pets that he considered to be his? If so, did he abuse them?
17. Did your partner ever threaten to hurt or kill your pet(s) if you left him? If so, did he carry out this threat? Did this threat prevent you from leaving?
18. Is there anything that I have neglected to ask you that you feel is relevant or important?

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APPENDIX B**Demographic Information:****Interview No.** _____

1. Age of respondent.
2. Respondent's occupation.
3. Age and gender of children (if applicable).
4. Age of current partner.
5. Partner's occupation.
6. Marital status of respondent.
7. Religion of respondent.
8. Partner's religion.
9. Languages spoken by respondent.
10. Languages spoken by partner.
11. Country respondent was born in.
12. Country partner was born in.
13. Partner's highest level of education completed.
14. Number of times that the respondent's partner has physically abused her.
15. Was the respondent abused while pregnant.

Interview questions for all participants:

1. Could you please tell me what you have heard about my research. other than what I have told you.
 - who did you hear this from?

2. Can you please you tell me about the pets that you have had while you have been with your current partner.
 - how many pets have you had over this time span in total?

 - what types of animals?

 - what were the pet(s)' names?

 - who named them?

 - why were the names chosen?

 - how many of these pets do you still have?

 - how old is/are the pet(s) you currently have?

 - what happened to the pet(s) that you no longer have?

 - **(if there are deceased pet(s))** how old were the pet(s) that have died at the time of their death?
 - what was/were the cause(s) of death?

 - what kind of animals do you prefer (ie. cat/dog)?
 - why?

- what kind of animals does your partner prefer?
 - why?
- what specific breeds do you prefer?
 - why?
- what specific breeds does your partner prefer?
 - why?
- do you dislike certain kinds of animals?
 - (If so) why?**
- does your partner dislike certain kinds of animals?
 - (If so) why?**
- **(if there is more than one pet)** which of the pets would you consider your favourite?
 - why?
 - which pet is your partner's favourite?
 - why?
- where did the pet(s) sleep?
- was the pet indoor or outdoor?
- why has your family had the pet(s)?
 - was/were the pet(s) used to guard property?
 - was/were the pet(s) used to kill rodents?
 - was/were the pet(s) used for hunting?

- how important would you say the pet(s) is/are to your family?
- did you have any pet(s) when you met your partner?
 - **(if so)**, could you explain if your partner wanted you to keep the pet or to get rid of it.

3. Could you please explain how the animal(s) came to be pet(s) in your home.

- why did you get the pet(s)?
- where did you get the pet(s) from?
- was a fee paid for the pet(s)?
- who brought the pet(s) into the home?
- how did you feel about getting the pet(s)?
 - did you want the pet(s)?
- did your partner ever give you, or someone in the family, a pet as a present?
 - **(if so)** why do you think he gave it to you / the recipient?
 - how did you / the recipient feel about receiving the pet?
- could you please describe any changes that occurred in your family after the pet(s) came into the home.

4. How was/is your pet(s)' health?

- did/does the pet(s) see a veterinarian?
 - **(if so)** what for?

- how often did they see the veterinarian?
 - how did your partner feel about taking the pet(s) to the veterinarian?
5. Could you please tell me about why you decided to come to this facility at this time.
- how long have you been here?
6. **(If the respondent currently has pet(s))** Currently, where are the pet(s) that you had when you left your partner?
- does your partner know where they are?
 - were you aware of any programs to shelter pets while you are in this facility?
 - do you think that if you didn't have pets you would have come to this facility sooner or later than you did.
 - why?
 - could you please describe any threats that your partner made to hurt or kill the pet(s) if you left him.
 - **(if so)** did he carry out the threat(s)?
 - did this threat keep you from leaving?
7. Is anyone in your family a vegetarian?
- **(if so)** who?
 - do you know why the individual is a vegetarian?
 - **(if no)** what are your feelings about people who are vegetarians?
 - To your knowledge, what are your partner's feelings about people who are vegetarians?

8. Could you please tell me about what your partner does for fun with his friends.
- has he ever hunted?
 - **(if so)** what did he hunt?
 - how did you feel about his hunting?
 - did you ever hunt with him?
 - why do you think he hunted?
 - **(if no)** he didn't hunt even as a child?
 - why do you think he didn't hunt?
 - did he ever go fishing?
 - **(if so)** how often?
 - what did he do with what he caught?
 - did he attend and/or bet on horse races. or watch them on TV?
 - did he attend and/or bet on dog races. or watch them on TV?
 - did he attend and/or bet on cock/rooster fights?
 - did he attend and/or bet on dog-fights?
 - did he attend the rodeo. or watch it on TV?
 - to your knowledge. what does your partner think about sports that involve animals?
9. To your knowledge. how does your partner get along with his co-workers or friends?
- has he ever physically fought with them?
10. Could you please describe times when your partner has been nice or kind to the pet(s).

- do you think that your partner is nicer to the pet(s) when other people are present?

- **(if respondent has had more than one pet)** is he nice to specific pet(s)?

11. To your knowledge, what are your partner's feelings about animals?

- does he like or dislike them?

- **(if he likes them)** do you think that people would consider him an animal-lover?

12. Has your partner ever discussed his interactions with animals as a child?

- **(if so)** please describe.

- did your partner have pets as a child?

- **(if so)** what kinds of animals? (Cats/Dogs/Specific breeds)

- do you know why they had the pet(s)? (For hunting, for killing rodents, to guard property)

- Do you know what happened to the pet(s)?

- many young boys experiment with harming animals as children. To your knowledge, in what ways did your partner experiment with animals as a child?

13. To your knowledge, in what instances has your partner had to destroy an animal?

- has he ever had to destroy an injured animal?

- has he ever killed farm animals for food?

14. To your knowledge, has your partner ever been charged with animal cruelty or neglect?

- **(if so)** please describe.

15. Could you please describe the circumstances surrounding any times that the Humane Society/Animal Control has been called to your home?

16. Could you please describe how your pet(s) behave around your partner.
- do they seem to like him?
 - **(if so)** what is it about their behaviour that makes you think that they like him?
 - do they cower or hide?
 - are they aggressive with him?
17. Could you please describe how the pet(s) react when there is stress in the family.
- how does the pet react when people argue or fight?
18. Have you and your partner ever gotten into an argument about the pet(s)?
- **(if so)** what was/were the argument(s) about?
 - how did the argument(s) end?
 - **(if no)** were there ever arguments about feeding or taking care of the pet(s)?
 - did your partner ever criticize the amount of attention that you gave the pet(s)?
19. Aside from confining a pet while no one is home, could you describe any times your partner tied up or confined a pet to a room or cage for a long period of time?
- **(if so)** did he give a reason for doing it?
 - how long was the animal confined and where?
 - who released the animal and why?
 - **(if no)** not even to punish the pet for doing something wrong?
20. Could you please describe any times your partner kept you from taking care of the pet(s)?
- **(if so)** which pet(s)?

- did he give a reason for not wanting you to take care of it?

- what eventually happened?

- **(if no)** did he ever criticize the way that you take care of the pet(s)?

21. Could you please explain if your partner has ever done something to or with an animal that some may consider offensive.

- research has indicated that some men are interested in watching or engaging in sex with animals. Do you know if this is something that your partner is or was interested in?

- **(if no)** did he ever joke about it?

- **(if so)** did he watch it in videos or look at it in magazines?

- to your knowledge, did he ever engage in sex with an animal?

- to your knowledge, did he ever watch others engage in sex with an animal?

- some women have indicated that their partner has asked them or forced them to engage in sex with an animal. Has your partner ever asked or demanded that you engage in sex with an animal?

- did he ever make comments/accusations about you being involved sexually with any of the pets?

22. Could you please describe how your partner disciplines the pet(s)

- has your partner ever spanked or hit a pet to discipline or punish it?

23. Could you please describe any times that you have feared for your pet(s)' safety?

- **(if so)** which pet(s)?

- was the pet injured?

- what was the outcome?

- **(if no)** has there been a time when someone else may have feared for your pet(s) safety. such as a friend or a family member?

24. Could you explain if your partner has ever used an animal to threaten or harm you or anyone in your family?

- **(if so)** which pet(s) was/were used?

- who was harmed or threatened?

- what was the outcome?

- how often has this occurred?

- **(if no)** has he ever threatened to get rid of the pet(s)?

25. Could you please describe any times that your partner has threatened to harm or kill your pet(s)?

- **(if so)** what was/were the threat(s)?

- who was the threat directed at?

- which pet(s) did he threaten?

- did he follow through with his threat?

- how did the threat(s) make you feel?

- **(if no)** not even like saying 'I could kill this dog/cat' at a time when he was angry?

26. Could you please tell me what you think is meant by the term 'animal abuse'.

- what are some acts that you would consider to be animal abuse?

- what are some acts that you would not consider animal abuse?

- **(explain the operationalized definition to the respondent)** For the purpose of this interview. animal abuse will be defined as any intentional act that results in

either the physical or psychological discomfort of an animal.

27. Could you please describe any incidents where your previous partners have abused animals?

- **(if so)** did this individual abuse you or your children **(if respondent has children)**?

- please describe the abuse of the animal(s) as fully as possible.

- was/were your pet(s) abused?

- how severe was the abuse?

- what were the circumstances that led up to the abuse?

- was the animal taken to a veterinarian for treatment?

- **(if so)** who took it? What did the vet say?

- did anyone witness the abuse?

- **(if no)** do you suspect that any of them might have?

28. Could you please describe the circumstances surrounding any times that your partner has hurt or killed animals, other than your family pet(s).

- **(if no)** has he ever had to get rid of a nuisance animal, such as an animal that was getting into the garbage or had gotten into the house?

29. Could you please fully describe any times that your current partner abused, neglected, or killed the family pet(s)?

- which pet(s) were abused/neglected?

- how severe was the abuse/neglect?

- what were the circumstances that led up to the abuse/neglect?

- was the pet taken to a veterinarian for treatment?

- **(if so)** who took it? What did the vet say?

- did anyone witness the abuse/neglect?

- **(if he hasn't)** has he ever done anything that someone might consider abuse or neglect?

30. **(If respondent indicates that there were children in the home)** To your knowledge, did your partner physically abuse your children?

- did he verbally or emotionally abuse them?

31. **(If respondent indicates that there were children in the home)** Do you know if your children ever witnessed your partner threaten to abuse or actually abuse an animal?

- **(if so)** what type of animal(s) was/were threatened and/or abused?

- what was the nature of the threat or abuse?

- what was the child's reaction?

32. **(If respondent indicates that there were children in the home)** How do you think the abuse in the home has affected your children?

33. **(If respondent indicates that there were children in the home)** Could you please describe how your children interact with the pets.

- some women report that their children abused animals. Could you please explain if your children ever threatened to abuse or abused an animal?

- **(if so)** which child?

- please describe the animal. Was it a pet?

- what was the outcome?

- was the child punished?

- did the child explain why s/he had done this?

- did the child express feelings of guilt?

- how did your partner react?
- how did you feel about what the child had done?
- **(if no)** did the children ever unintentionally harm an animal?

Additional questions for those women who indicate that animal abuse occurred:

34. Please think back to before the abuse began. To the best of your knowledge, were you, your children **(if applicable)**, or the pet(s) the first to be abused by your partner?

- how long after the first incident was the next victim abused
- who was the next victim?
- did your partner abuse the pet(s), yourself, and your children **(if applicable)** at the same time?

35. Would you please fully describe the times when the pet(s) were abused.

- who abused them?
- how many times were they abused?
- was/were the pet(s) ever denied food and/or water?
- to your knowledge, did anyone outside of your home know the pet(s) were being abused?
- what was the worst incident of abuse?

36. Could you please describe any similarities you see between your abuse and that of the pet(s).
37. How do you feel about the abuse of the pet(s)?
- have you discussed it with others?
 - **(if so)** with whom and what did they say?
 - do you talk about it often?
38. Why do you think your partner abused the pet(s)?
- did he ever give you a reason for the abuse?
 - could you please describe times he threatened to abuse or actually abused the pet(s) to get someone in the family to do something?
39. Could you please describe what your partner does after he is abusive.
- has he ever given the victim of the abuse a present?
 - **(if so)** who was the victim and what was the present?
 - has your partner ever given the pet(s) a present or treat after abusing him/her?
40. Did your partner have any pets that he considered to be his?
- **(if so)** did he abuse them?
 - **(if he hunts)** was/were the pet(s) used for hunting?
41. Could you please explain whether or not you feel that your partner planned to abuse the pet(s)?
- do you think that he abused the pet(s) to upset you or others in the family?

- do you think that he abused the pet(s) because he lost control?

42. Is there anything that I have neglected to ask you that you feel is relevant or important?

Those are all of the questions that I have to ask you. Thank you very much for your time and participation.

APPENDIX C

My name is Amy Fitzgerald, and I am a graduate student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Windsor. For my Master's thesis I am conducting research on the relationship between families and their pets.

I am conducting face to face interviews with women who have experienced various forms of abuse, and who had a pet animal at the time of their own abuse. The interviews, which will take approximately one hour, will be held in privacy at [name of facility], at a time which is convenient for you and acceptable to the facility. Anything you say will be kept strictly confidential, and you will be able to withdraw at any point before or during the interview.

If you had a pet animal during the time of your abuse, and you are interested in participating in this study (*participation is voluntary*), please advise one of the residential counselors, and a convenient time for the interview will be established. Please be advised that you will be asked to sign a consent form for the purposes of the interview.

Thank you very much for your time.

Amy Fitzgerald

APPENDIX D***Interview Consent Form******Researcher: Amy Fitzgerald***

This interview will take approximately one hour of your time. You may experience some emotional discomfort as a result of the questions that I may be asking you. Please remember that you are free to withdraw at any point during the interview. The interview will be audio taped and the information that you give me will be kept confidential.

I am exploring the relationship between families and their pets. Therefore, the information you provide me with will be very useful. Your time and participation are greatly appreciated.

I have read this consent form in its entirety and hereby voluntarily consent to participate.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX E

Description of Research Study

My name is Amy Fitzgerald, and I am a graduate student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Windsor. For my Master's thesis I am conducting research on the relationship between families and their pets.

I am conducting face to face interviews with women who have experienced various forms of abuse, and who had a pet animal at the time of their own abuse. The interviews take approximately one hour, are held in privacy at [name of facility], and would be scheduled for a time which is convenient for you and acceptable to the facility. You would be free to withdraw at any point before or during the interview, and to decline answering any questions. The interview would be audio taped and the information that you provide me with would be very useful, and kept confidential.

If you have had a pet animal during the time of your abuse, and you are interested in participating in this study (*participation is voluntary*), please fill out the bottom of this form and return it to the [name of support group] counselor, and I will contact you by phone to schedule a convenient time for the interview.

Thank you very much for your time.

Amy Fitzgerald

Name: _____ **Phone Number:** _____

What is the best time to reach you? _____

Is it okay to leave a message for you? _____

I have read this form in its entirety and hereby voluntarily consent to participate.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX F**Interview**

Interview No. _____

- **Introduce yourself and inquire as to how the respondent is doing**
- **Turn the tape recorder on and specify the date and time of the interview**
- **Advise the respondent of the following:**
 - **the tape recorder has been turned on and it will be on for the duration of the interview;**
 - **you may experience some emotional discomfort due to the questions that I will be asking;**
 - **you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to;**
 - **you are free to leave or stop the interview at any time;**
 - **the information that you give me will be kept confidential (except for cases of undisclosed child abuse).**
 - **(have respondent sign the consent form)**
- **Any information that you provide me with will be very useful and I appreciate your time and participation**
- **Would you like to begin the interview now?**
- **Explain the operationalized definition of a pet:**

For the purpose of this interview, a pet will be defined as any creature that is dependent upon you or any member of your family for its well being.

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