



time to prevent Koki from killing the last of Viva's puppies; the rest were already dead. Thomas describes the feelings of the dogs—Koki's "nervousness and suppressed agitation... her unwillingness to kill puppies," Viva's "detachment" and the "extremely subdued" attitude of the onlookers—as expressing their understanding of themselves as a pack, which, at least in the wild, can raise only one litter at a time. This meant that only the puppies of the higher-ranking litter had a "right to be born."

Thomas supports this analogy between domesticated and wild canines with one drawn from her anthropological experiences. She notes that among the Ju/wa Bushmen of the Kalahari, when, as happens on rare occasions, a new baby is born too soon after a still-nursing toddler, the mother may have to force herself to commit infanticide to ensure the survival of the older child. Such analogies raise many questions. If dogs are capable of morally praiseworthy behavior, are they also capable of being wicked? Why compare the behavior of canines who live among the comforts of Cambridge, Massachusetts, to that of human beings who live among the scarcity of the Kalahari Desert? As with the marriage analogy, there seems to be some discrepancy here between what is characteristic of the entire human species and what is much more restricted. How can we tell when the behavior of domestic dogs should be interpreted as the result of their long domestication,

the rest of her family to the Virginia countryside and kept in a large enclosure near the house, excavated to elaborate underground den similar to that inhabited by the wolves of Baffin Island. In doing so did they reflect the specific inheritance of the animals involved or a propensity widespread among household pets? This is one of several questions Thomas leaves open.

Like most pet owners, Doris Lessing shares Thomas's conviction of mutual understanding and reciprocal communication taking place between humans and their animals. In *Particularly Cats... and Rufus* (reissued, after a quarter of a century, with the addition of one chapter and many fine illustrations by James McMullan) this conviction constantly informs her moving, sympathetic, and shrewdly observed descriptions of her life with cats. Thus she says of one animal she nursed through an unpleasant illness: "No, of course cats are not human; humans are not cats; but all the same, I couldn't believe that such a fastidious little beast as black cat was not suffering from the knowledge of how dirty and smelly she was." And she describes the way that another cat accepted her explanation for inadvertently threatening him, after he had let her know, by fleeing, that he feared raised sticks: "I picked him up, brought him back, showed him the harmless broom handle, apologised, petted him. He understood it was a mistake."

Lessing's experience with domestic

But "marriage" may not be the most accurate label for this admirable kind of relationship, whether among dogs or among humans. Instead, its use suggests that coyness of an earlier age, when Victorian dog breeding magazines announced the copulations of distinguished animals under headings like "Weddings" or, more daringly, "Engagements."

Thomas asks, "Do dogs have morals?" and argues that they do. In support of her view she cites an occasion on which Bingo, who was unrequitedly "in love" with Maria, nevertheless prevented her from harassing a cage of parakeets and mice. Thomas interprets this action as showing Bingo's sense of right and wrong, although she is not certain whether he was defending what he perceived as his master's property or whether he felt that Maria had reached an unconscionable and dangerous pitch of excitement. When Thomas makes claims about canine morality she cannot avoid judgments of praise and blame.

votion and fidelity, and her descriptions of both Maria's and Violet's responses when they are deprived of their "husbands" suggest that she may well be correct. When Misha's owners gave him away, and Maria realized that he would not return, "she lost her radiance and became depressed... moved more slowly, was less responsive, and got angry rather easily at things that before she would have overlooked." She was ultimately reconciled to sex, but only for businesslike procreative purposes; she never again experienced a grand passion. Violet was still more severely stricken by the death of the inconstant Bingo, making a place for herself beneath the hall table from which she moved only for eating and excretion. After a year of this hopeless vigil, she died of heart failure.

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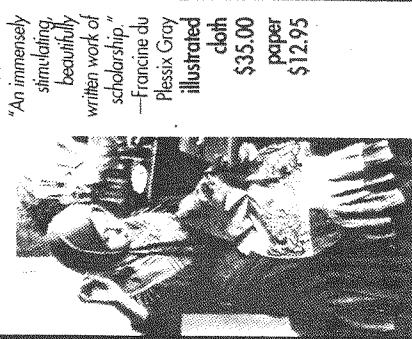
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