

2. How does the fact that this issue involves *international* trading policies affect this case?
3. It would not be acceptable in the United States for workers to be exposed to the kinds of risks these foreign coffee workers are being exposed to. Nor could any U.S. worker be paid such low wages. Can these sorts of things nevertheless be acceptable for workers in other countries? Relate your answer to the claim that moral principles should be universal.
4. If moral principles are indeed universal, could we justifiably criticize another culture for its farming practices and the way it allows its workers to be treated?
5. To what degree do you think the rest of the world could justifiably take action against foreign farming practices when these could potentially harm farmers and the surrounding people (via chemical poisoning or environmental damage, for example)? Formulate some moral and nonmoral claims to support your views.

Case 2

Jurassic Kitty: Should I Clone My Cat?

It has been a business failure: In December 2006, Genetic Savings and Clone, the company where, for a mere \$32,000, you could clone your cat, closed down. Apparently, there was no demand for a cloned cat. Not at that price, anyway.

Aside from not being a very profitable business venture, is kitty cloning ethical? Let's first look at what cloning actually is. The word "cloning" refers to the creation of a genetic copy of a living organism. Indeed, we routinely clone plants when we cut off a shoot from one plant to grow another one. But that way of cloning doesn't work for animals. Instead, scientists basically create a genetically identical twin by transferring the nucleus of the cell from the body of one animal into the egg of another. This process is called "nuclear transfer."¹² The resulting embryo is implanted into the womb of a host animal who will, with some luck, carry the clone to term. Beginning with Dolly the sheep in 1996, sixteen different mammalian species have been cloned so far, but science is still far from even attempting to clone a human being.

The idea of cloning one's departed pet should perhaps give one pause. Isn't one's pet supposed to be irreplaceable, special, one of a kind? Well, as it turns out, that remains the case even if someone did clone their cat: only 99.8% of the animal's DNA is reproduced in the cloning process—the rest comes from the host egg. Given that the genetic difference between us and a chimpanzee amounts to less than 1%, the 0.2% genetic difference between a cat and its copycat could be significant. Also, the copycat would gestate in a different kitty womb, thus creating additional differences between it and the original. The surrogate mom's health and nutrition can affect the pattern of the clone's coat, despite the strong genetic disposition to look like the original. In addition, the environment in which the copycat would grow up would be different. So its personality could be very different as well.

Continued

Case 2 (Continued)

Adding it all up, the copycat and the original probably wouldn't be very much alike after all. And indeed, all the Web site of *Genetic Savings and Clone* promised was "resemblance," not identity. As one cloning scientist put it, "There's no such thing as resurrection. At least not in pets."¹³ Add to this that the cloning process is fraught with technical difficulties: fewer than 10% of fertilized eggs implanted in a uterus result in live births. Many clones also die shortly after birth. The clones that live often have genetic abnormalities. Meanwhile, there are thousands and thousands of cats in animal shelters, waiting to go to a good home.

But although the moral of this story might be that there are better and more ethical ways to dispense with a superfluous \$32,000, there is another twist to animal cloning that is worth taking more seriously. With the steady decrease in biodiversity caused by our irreverent—sometimes downright ruthless—extension of our human habitat, some scientists have come to see animal cloning as the answer to preserving endangered species. In keeping with this sentiment, in 2003 the Audubon Center for Research of Endangered Species cloned a small African wildcat called Ditteaux (faux French for "ditto"). Thinking on a larger scale, Japanese scientists are working to resurrect the long-extinct woolly mammoth, so far without success. The San Diego gene bank already has frozen samples of over 450 different animal species. And one day, this "Frozen Zoo," as it is sometimes called, may be the last best hope for their survival.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Formulate some moral value claims and prescriptive claims that you think are relevant to this case. Which of these do you think are most important? Which of these do you think would override other claims about this case?
2. Formulate some nonmoral normative claims that you think are relevant to this case. Do you think any of these override the moral claims? Why or why not? Which of the facts provided in this case (which descriptive claims) are most relevant to deciding whether pet cloning is moral?
3. Consider the differences between pet cloning and cloning an endangered species. What are some important descriptive and normative claims that apply to endangered species but not to pets? Do you think cloning an endangered species should be morally permissible? Is biodiversity a fundamental value that we need to promote?
4. One problem with trying to resurrect an extinct species is that we do not know what effects the resurrection would have on existing species. For example, think about trying to resurrect an extinct species of insect. What if that insect has no natural predator and is able to destroy other insects or crops? What problems do concerns like these raise for whether we should try to bring extinct species back to life?

¹³David Quammen, "Clone Your Troubles Away," *Harper's Magazine*, February 1, 2005. The facts

CHAPTER TWO



Moral and Nonmoral Values

I. THE ROLE OF VALUES

What is *really* important to you? What sorts of things do you live for, and what do you set your hopes upon? What guides your decisions, plans, and projects? When asked these kinds of questions, people give many different answers. Still, certain answers seem to surface again and again: friendship, love, family, faith, self-determination, life, health, loyalty, happiness.

These sorts of things are called **values**—and they are the foundations upon which we build our lives. We have, of course, encountered values already: they are the subject matter of *value claims*. In one way or another, any value claim refers to some value. Since we value what appears to us to be good and desirable, values are also often called *goods*—implying that they have genuine worth in themselves.

Furthermore, because we seek what we consider to be good, we commonly choose how to act in accordance with our values. This idea—that we usually act in keeping with our values—can be taken further. If something is genuinely *good*, then we presumably *ought* to act in ways that are consistent with our valuing that good. Thus, each genuine value supports—and thus can explain—one or more *prescriptions* for action.¹ For instance, if respect for the law is an important legal value, then people normally *ought* to act in keeping with what the law requires. If it violates the law to report false information on a government form, then Sandra has a *legal* responsibility, at least, to report the truth about José on that form. On the other hand, the value of life may call for Sandra to avoid actions that could lead to José being deported and possibly murdered in his home country. Yet again, the moral value of loyalty may oblige Sandra to protect José rather than put him at risk.

In these ways, each of the values relevant to Sandra's situation supports a corresponding prescriptive claim. These examples reveal a number of other interesting

¹Acting "consistently with" one's valuing some good does not necessarily mean promoting or maximizing some sort of *consequence*. For instance, my act of showing respect toward another person is consistent with my valuing persons in themselves, but that respect is an aspect of the act itself, not something separable from it. Thus, no commitment to consequentialism is intended in what is being said here.

points as well. For instance, Sandra's story clearly demonstrates how, in a given situation, value conflicts can arise. Several important values pull Sandra in the direction of telling the truth and reporting José. A number of other important values pull Sandra in the opposite direction. These conflicting values in turn give rise to the conflicting prescriptions that Sandra both should and should not report José. No wonder Sandra is torn about what she should do!

As we imagine Sandra working her way toward a decision, we can make a few further observations about values. First, it may seem natural to assume that values are things a person just either has or doesn't have—and that when people disagree, it is because they hold different values. In fact, however, people tend to share a great many values. Where they often differ is not in *what* values they hold, but in the *importance* they assign to their values. If we ask Sandra what she values most, she might say that friendship and loyalty are especially important to her. If we ask another teacher the same question, he might instead say that although he values friendship, he has the greatest respect for telling the truth. Given the different degrees of importance each assigns to these values, these two people are then likely to act differently—even in closely similar situations. Sandra's emphasis on loyalty, for instance, would likely lead her to protect José, while her fellow teacher's respect for honesty might instead induce him to report José to the authorities.

Since an understanding of someone's priorities can help us anticipate *how* that person might act in a given situation, knowledge about their values can give us important insights into that person and their behavior. Yet it doesn't give us much help with Sandra's urgent question about what would actually be the *right* thing for her to do in this situation. In addressing *that* question, we encounter yet another important fact about values: although values from any category can be important, moral values tend to *override* other types of values, just as moral claims override other sorts of normative claims. Let's explore this a bit further.

It seems fairly uncontroversial to say that values of etiquette should not take precedence over moral values. Yet what about legal and prudential values—don't these sometimes rival moral values in importance? There is no tension, of course, when one of these other values corresponds to a moral value—if, for instance, Sandra is both legally and morally called upon to value honesty. Conveniently, legal and moral considerations often overlap in this way, because many laws are based upon fundamental moral values. Yet doesn't this in itself imply a certain priority of moral values over legal values? The latter are often based on the former, but not the reverse. More importantly, there is a long-standing precedent for deferring to the demands of morality when laws violate important moral values. In opposing racially discriminatory laws, Martin Luther King appealed to the moral requirements of justice, as did those nations that united in a boycott against South Africa and its system of apartheid. Abolitionists likewise battled slavery on moral grounds.

As for prudential values, it must be admitted that people sometimes *do* put their own interests before the demands of morality. However, it is interesting to

note that we often judge such choices to be *wrong*, even if we are not so sure we would act much differently. We condemn the politician who sacrifices the good of the country for the sake of keeping himself in office. On the positive side, meanwhile, we admire people who sacrifice their own interests for the sake of some greater moral good. For instance, we praise the civil rights protesters who promoted the moral value of human equality ahead of their own interests as they risked being attacked by dogs and being clubbed by police. We likewise commend those soldiers, doctors, and relief workers who risk their lives to combat genocide and injustice around the world. There is thus a strong intuitive case for the priority of moral values over other categories of values.

You may have been wondering whether it is also possible for one *moral* value to take precedence over other *moral* values. Although this is a question we must return to later, we can here observe that in cases (like Sandra's) where several moral values come into conflict with each other, it seems that this must be possible. For instance, Sandra's situation pits the moral value of truth telling against the moral value of loyalty. Therefore, one of these values will have to take precedence over the other if Sandra is to resolve her dilemma.

Summary

Values are the things we seek to achieve and maintain. Our values normally drive or determine our actions. Further, different people often place differing degrees of importance on different values. Values support (and thus explain) prescriptive claims, because we normally ought to act in ways that are in keeping with important values. Because prescriptive claims and value claims come in many different categories, it is not surprising that they can be categorized along similar lines—as, for instance, prudential values, values of etiquette, legal values, and moral values. Although circumstances can give rise to value conflicts, moral values tend to override other sorts of values.

Key Terms

- **Values:** *things that we consider important and desirable and that we seek and base our choices upon.*

II. FUNDAMENTAL AND INSTRUMENTAL VALUES

As we have seen, normative claims in general—and thus values as well—can be distinguished in that some have to do with etiquette, some with law, etc. But values can also be distinguished in another way. We value some things for their own sake; we value other things because they help us attain something we desire. Some things we value for both reasons.

A value that is desirable in itself is a **fundamental value**. The idea here is that certain goods are worth having purely for their own sake. Such values do not