



Importance of Relationship in Helen Brown's *Cleo: How a Small Black Cat Helped Heal a Family*

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ABSTRACT:

The relationship between humans and animals has positive effects for both parties, but there are situations in which it has poor or even negative effects for animals or for both humans and animals. Helen Brown, the New Zealand-born author best known for her memoirs about cats and the meaning of life, including her pet, Cleo. The novel *Cleo: How a Small Black Cat Helped Heal a Family* (2010) is a heartwarming memoir that chronicles the journey of a grieving family and the unexpected arrival of a furry companion who mends their broken heart. The story revolves around Helen Brown, her husband, and their two sons, Sam and Rob. Their idyllic life is shattered when nine-year-old Sam tragically dies in an accident. The book opens with the devastating loss of the Brown family's son, Sam. Cleo's arrival coincides with this immense grief, forcing the family to navigate the overwhelming sadness while welcoming a new life into their fractured home. Brown delves into the raw emotions of grief, showcasing the various ways they manifest and evolve over time.

Keywords: Human-Animal relationships, Animal behaviour, Companion animals, Emotional attachment

Cleo: The novel:

The novel, *Cleo: How a Small Black Cat Helped Heal a Family* begins with the emotional attack to the readers quoting "To those who say they aren't cat people but deep down know they are" (ch 1). The quote triggers the readers to get involved about the psychological connection between animals. The entire book talks about the helping and healing of family with the help of small black cat. It brings out the interest and new area of study about the behaviours of humans and animals or their relationship. The theme of the book deals with the psychological emotions of the family with a cat named Cleo. The name was referred by Helen Brown's son Sam, though the small cat's mother was elegant and had pride in her looks. It was Sam, who made an analogy of the mother cat with that of the Egypt queen Cleopatra and then the name was shortened into Cleo.

Helen Brown has given a wide perspective of the psychology with animal behaviour and bonding. Animals in general, possess the traits of sense as humans have, but they need guidance to look after. Cleo had a special impact on Brown's family, which made them to realise the important aspects of emotional touch with one. The brave cat, Cleo exposed the relation of the family with the characteristic traits, and gave a new experience to learn and know more about cats and their breeds.

Developing knowledge of the behaviour of animals has led to an awareness of their interests and of the importance of our relationship with them. The parallel interest in educational and moral improvement gave rise to social reforms and also to new organizations concerned with animal welfare and conservation. Changes in human-animal relationship has varied around the world according to the geographical and cultural contexts, and also to be affected by economic conditions. Human poverty relegates, animal interests, but where there is wealth, greed and human self-indulgence, these interests can be set back.

The relationship and experience with humans and animals, and also economic conditions has promoted the ideas in animal rights movements. It has not hesitated to draw analogies between the situation of laboratory animals and the inhumane. An understanding of the psychology of the human-animal bond can only be enhanced by a better understanding of animal behaviour. The anecdotal phase represented the first attempts to find behavioural links between humans and non-human animals, to learn more of the effects on the relationships between heredity and the pressures of the environment. Developing knowledge of the behaviour of animals has led to an awareness of their interests and of the importance of our relationship with them.

An understanding of the psychology of the human-animal bond can only be enhanced by a better understanding of animal behaviour. The analysis of the interactions and the attachment with the animal community grows and brings out a healthy society to live in. A large body of literature has investigated the beneficial effects of this relationship in which both human and animals appear to gain physical and psychological benefits from living together in a reciprocated interaction. Analysing literature with a different perspective, clearly emerges that the ideas are not rarely organized with human-animal relationships but are characterized by different forms and levels of discomfort and suffering for animals. Scientific evidence from different disciplines,

including psychology, sociology and animal welfare, shows that the relationship between humans and animals is complex, multifaceted, ambivalent and even paradoxical, with different consequences for animals and humans.

The novel can be analysed through various theoretical perspectives, each offering valuable insights into the story's themes and dynamics. The further research ideas can relate with the cognitive approach towards the development from infancy to adulthood in connection with pet or companion animals. The findings of the early researchers were seen as an important factor of understanding human parental behaviour and child development in relation with human-animal bond theory.

Helen Brown's narrative techniques in *Cleo* gives the reader about the story's emotional core. By employing a close first-person perspective, vivid imagery, and symbolic details, she creates a deeply affecting narrative that transcends the simple tale of a cat helping a family heal. Instead, it becomes a universal story about resilience, love, and finding light in the darkest of times.

The language style of Helen Brown's novel *Cleo* are, Warm and conversational: Brown writes with a friendly and engaging tone, often using the second person to directly address the reader, as if having a chat over a cup of tea. This creates a sense of intimacy and draws the reader close to the characters and their experiences.

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